



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית  
World Zionist Organization

המחלקה לפעילות בתפוצות  
Department for Diaspora Activities

# Beit Ha'am

Z-Talks

**בית העם**

שיג ושיח ציוני

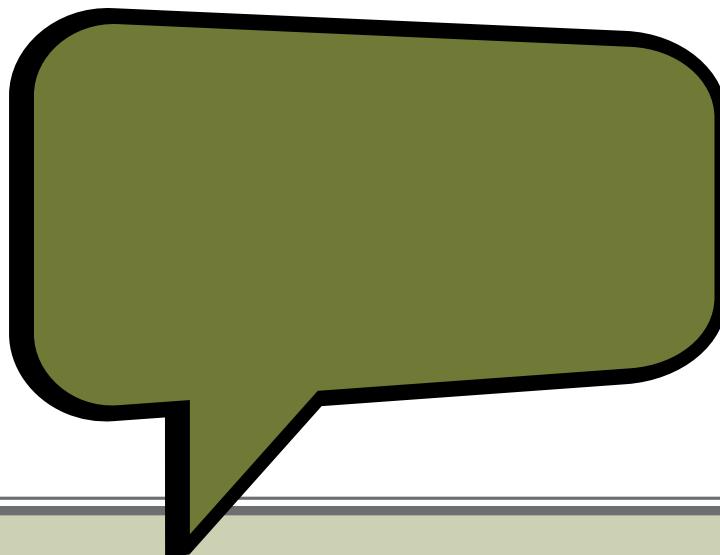
**IDF - The People's Army  
An Army of People  
for People**



Concept & Development: Department for Diaspora Activities, WZO 5772-2011

Research & Compilation:

This booklet is for internal use only



The *Beit Ha'am* program was developed by the Department for Diaspora Activities in the World Zionist Organization to encourage discussion on the subject of Zionist identity and attitudes to the State of Israel.

The program includes diverse traditional and modern texts on a range of subjects.

Through encounter with these texts, we hope to encourage lively discussion of Zionist identity among Diaspora Jews in general, and the younger generation, in particular.

The discussion will address what binds the Jewish people, wherever they may be, as well as what divides and separates us.

We will consider the meaning of Jewish political independence of the people dwelling in Zion and the reciprocal relationships between Jews living in Israel and those who live in the Diaspora.

This represents an opportunity for everyone, irrespective of prior knowledge, to get to know and enhance their knowledge about the significance of Zionism in the 21st century, to engage in discussion, reflect on its substance and the extent of its relevance to our lives.

The *Beit Ha'am* program is currently available in Hebrew and English, and will be translated into other languages according to demand.

If you are interested in using the *Beit Ha'am* program, or would like to hear more about training counselors to work with the program, please contact the Department for Diaspora Activities at [noam@wzo.org.il](mailto:noam@wzo.org.il)

## Introduction

The IDF is the State of Israel's armed forces, and it safeguards its security, fights its wars, and protects its residents. The establishment of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) was announced in 1948 soon after Israel was founded.

A decision was made that military service would be compulsory – every young man enlists at the age of 18 and serves for three years, whereas women serve for two years. After their release from compulsory army service, former soldiers are called up, when needed, for about 30 days of reserve duty once a year, up to the age of 45.

The IDF defends Israel and its citizens around the clock, safeguards its borders, and has prevailed in 7 wars, in 2 major Palestinian uprisings [Intifadas], and in 3 large-scale conflicts in Southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

Coupled with its heavy responsibility in defending Israel against Arab nations and terrorist attacks, since its inception the IDF has also been involved in nation building and has helped develop Israel's social infrastructure.

In recent years, the IDF has also been called upon to harness its capabilities in humanitarian operations overseas, especially following natural disasters in countries both near and far. We can easily recall: the IDF hospital in Haiti (2010), the assistance extended to Turkey in rescuing victims of an earthquake that occurred there (1999), the IDF hospital in Rwanda (1994), the help given to the Americans in rescuing victims of terrorist attacks committed against the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Nairobi (1998), and aid to India following an earthquake there (2001), and more.

Since the establishment of the State, the IDF (also known as the People's Army) has been a partner in the Zionist enterprise, and not only by defending its borders and warding off enemies from the outside. The "Nahal," "Gadna," "Women Soldier-Teachers" and "Rafal Youth" are just a few examples of the IDF's effective role in fulfilling Zionist tenets and building Israeli society according to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence.

The IDF spirit is geared towards securing and defending the State, its citizens and Jews around the world, in addition to humanitarianism, safeguarding human dignity, extending assistance, global mutual aid and "tikkun olam" ('repairing the world').

We wish to dispel, or at least challenge, misconceptions held by those who often view the IDF as an occupying force, which is far from its perception as the Israel Defense Forces, not to mention its image as the "people's army." This will be achieved by unveiling the IDF's widespread humanitarian operations which it is called upon to conduct in different parts of the world, alongside its involvement in education and nation building – efforts that articulate the fundamental values upon which the Zionist vision was formulated.

We hope that the kit accurately reflects the ethical foundations of the IDF's operations and will give the participants tools to help them address and counter the criticism voiced against the IDF and its soldiers.



## **How will the activity be conducted:**

1. We'll choose a representative who will be responsible for coordinating the activity in the group and presenting it to the plenary once it's over.
2. Each group will choose an activity topic from the booklet.
3. There is a DVD containing films for each group work module – you should watch the film that is related to the group topic chosen at the beginning of the activity.
4. There are also texts associated with each module. We recommend that they be read out loud to everyone.
5. After becoming familiar with the material, we suggest starting with a brief discussion.
6. During the discussion, you should address the 'group work questions' and summarize your conclusions in writing.
7. You can present your summary to the plenary in the form of a simulation, debate, preparation for a TV interview, or present the topic visually using cardboard sheets.
8. Writing utensils, newspapers, scissors, glue and paper are available for your use.

## **Objectives**

### **We hope that the participants in the activity will:**

1. Form a positive sentiment about the IDF
2. Gain more knowledge about the IDF's involvement in operations which are not of a military/defense/security nature, both in Israel and around the world
3. Feel more confident that the IDF/Israel will be there for them should they come under attack ('they' meaning their community as opposed to them personally)
4. Dispel misconceptions or prejudices concerning the IDF, whose roots are usually in hostile media
5. Be in possession of tools to help them address the criticism voiced against the IDF (media, family, university)
6. Have more self-confidence about being proactive in raising positive aspects about the IDF in the Diaspora
7. Establish an active group, stemming from the study group you facilitate, who are interested in more meetings and setting up web-based discussion groups that deal with the IDF, in particular, and Israel and Judaism, in general
8. Develop a collective sense of belonging (through the particular group taking part in the activity) to a wider group – the Federation, the Jewish people, the State of Israel.



## Setting Logistics

### How should you prepare for the session with the group?

1. Choose a central location where the activity can be held under satisfactory conditions
2. Ascertain that the venue is appropriate for the activity: a pleasant-looking room that can accommodate the number of participants, with chairs that can be rearranged for working in smaller groups, a computer, projector, and screen. An Internet connection is also recommended.
3. Inviting the participants – the group should be comprised of 20-30 participants, preferably of similar age (15 and older)
4. On the day of the event, try and serve Israeli food such as oranges, cactus fruit, hummus
5. Needed supplies for working in groups: paper and writing utensils, cardboard sheets, color newspapers, scissors, glue, crayons
6. For those willing to make a special effort: bring peaked caps bearing the IDF's logo (to be lent to participants)

## Using the IFD kit

**Note:** the kit, in its current format, is meant for a single, 2-hour session in which the participants are divided up into groups that work on the different topics specified below.

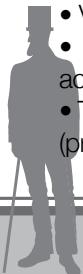
However, should a series of sessions be planned, each session lasting about an hour can be devoted to one of the topics suggested in the Information and Background DVD. Additional material is enclosed for more activities and expanding on each topic.

### **“The IDF – ‘The People’s Army’: Humanitarian Aid Worldwide” is a kit containing the following:**

1. This Facilitator’s Guide which is designed to equip you with tools and guidance when studying the themes in the group (use of the masculine form has been made solely for the sake of uniformity)
2. An Information and Background DVD in which you’ll find video clips, photographs, articles and interviews, in addition to references to other materials and relevant links which you can utilize in preparation for studying the module and during the session itself. In addition, a selection of films for the group work.
3. Feedback forms pertaining to the activity

### **How can you best prepare yourself for effective facilitation of the session?**

- Read the guide and familiarize yourself with the different components of the activity
- Review the contents of the Information and Background DVD to enrich your knowledge
- View the video clips that are scheduled to be shown during the activity
- It's possible and recommended to add your own ideas about the topics in the booklet, based on your personal acquaintance with the community, its knowledge, and the challenges posed by leading the session there
- To keep abreast of the details, refer to the local and Israeli press to read about recent events in which the IDF was involved (preferably in the past 3-4 days)



**Suggested activity format:**

Content	Planned Time (in minutes)
Opening and introductions	30
Experiential video clip	5
Discussion questions after the video clip	10
Breaking out into smaller groups – discussing predefined topics	30
The groups report their conclusions to the plenary – 3-5 minutes each	20
Additional relevant information is provided by the facilitator	5
Questions	10
General wrap-up of the day's activities and motivating the participants to take action in the future	10
Total	120 minutes





## 1. Opening

### Suggestions for what to include:

#### **Share a personal story**

About an event or occurrence related to the IDF's humanitarian aid that touched you in particular. For example: where you were when you first heard about the IDF's arrival in Haiti, what did you feel about the delegation's mission after seeing the grim images that were conveyed, etc.?

#### **A brief description of the session's program**

The activity will last approximately 2 hours and include work in the plenary and in smaller groups. During the activity the participants will be shown video clips and important materials to help them better understand the topic, which will also as triggers for discussion.

#### **An explanation of the schedule and themes**

Following a discussion in the plenary, the participants will break out into smaller groups to address the different topics proposed for this activity, such as: despite the considerable distance, the IDF was among the first to arrive in Haiti after the earthquake in 2010 and managed to treat and save hundreds of people? In the course of the activity we'll find out why the Israel Defense Forces bothered to go to Haiti? We'll discuss the significance of the IDF's core values, and how the army not only defends Jews in Israel, but around the world as well. We'll also ask ourselves what do we really know about the IDF and the humanitarian aid it extends globally? Following the group discussions, we'll return to the plenary to present the conclusions reached by each group and summarize the entire session with questions and ideas for continued activities.

It's important that the participants feel connected to the activity, and their active participation is crucial to its success. Ask the participants what they would like to receive from the activity.

#### **Getting acquainted**

Each participant should introduce himself and complete the sentence: "what I like about Israel is..."



## 2. Experiential film (a film summarizing the operations of the Haiti delegation)

The film summarizes the aid extended by the IDF delegation to the victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

### Recommended reading prior to showing the film:

On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, an earthquake - 7.3 on the Richter Scale - shook Haiti. The epicenter, which was near the state capital, Port-au-Prince, led to a huge disaster in this small, poor and troubled country. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed or injured, scores were trapped under the rubble of collapsed buildings, and many infrastructures were destroyed. By deciding to dispatch a military delegation whose main mission was to set up and manage a field hospital run by the Medical Corps, the State of Israel joined many other countries around the world which began sending humanitarian aid to Haiti.

The Medical Corps' activities in Haiti were a continued expression of a long-standing tradition of humanitarian medical aid, a tradition that has been witnessed in many places across the globe where natural and human-made disasters have occurred. The readiness of the Medical Corps to undertake these missions articulates, in practice, the fulfillment of the value of 'human life' deriving from the IDF spirit and the values of the Medical Corps.

### Recommended reading after showing the film:

Read the remarks made by Dr. Yitzhak Kreiss, the commander of the medical delegation to Haiti:

"We, in the Medical Corps, have set a goal for ourselves to be prepared to save human lives and be ready to join missions to save human lives in any place and at any time.

We came to Haiti to help, to save lives, and to lend a helping hand, but above all we were there to give hope. We came in order to demonstrate that even in tough situations, a person can serve as a symbol of hope to others, whoever they may be. In Haiti, we saved the lives of Mary Ness, Elaya Numo, George Levelein, Joseline Soraya, Brahms, Michael Collins and hundreds more. We brought Israel, Abraham, George, the twins Daniel and Vladimir, and 12 more babies into this world. We received a smile from a baby, a smile from a child whose pain we relieved thanks to a simple toy, and a dance of prayer from a grateful mother.

We did not give up. We dealt with difficult questions, dilemmas characteristic of disaster medicine. Our aim was to save as many lives as possible. We did this with sensitivity and wisdom, stemming from professionalism and a love for mankind."

## 3. Discussion following the short film

1. How do you feel about what you've just seen?
2. Were you aware that the IDF is involved in these types of operations?
3. Did you ever come across any media reporting of the IDF's delegation in Haiti? If so,
4. how was it reported? How did you feel/ what did you do about these reports?



## 4. Group activity

From the list provided, you can choose the topics which you feel are most suited to you and to the group. Divide the plenum into 3-4 smaller groups. Choose someone to be in charge of coordinating each group's activity and later presenting it to the plenary. Each group's appointed representative will be responsible for leading and presenting the following:

1. A brief description of the IDF's operation that is related to the particular group's topic
2. What do I feel about this operation?
3. How is an operation of this nature articulated in my world (namely – what do I get out of it)?
4. Thoughts and ideas for the future – how can I leverage what I learned here today?

## Conclusion

### Some pointers for summarizing the day's activities:

1. Review the main parts of the activity: the opening film and the reactions it generated, the work in groups, the presentations and the reactions they generated
2. Highlight the favorable comments and positive experiences that emerged during the session
3. Focus on the conclusions that are relevant to the objectives of the activity: the IDF spirit; its humanitarian operations to save lives around the world; rescuing Jews across the globe; its social and ethical involvement in Israel
4. Hand out the feedback forms pertaining to the activity (included in the Information and Background DVD)
5. Ask the audience about possible ideas for continued group activities
6. Suggest additional meetings, Internet discussion groups, etc.



### Example of conclusion questions

- Summarize: which operations has the IDF undertaken that are not purely for the sake of security?
- Is it fitting that the IDF be engaged in operations that are not of a security nature? Doesn't the "spreading out" compromise its strength?
- Doesn't it make more sense to establish civilian bodies to be engaged in these tasks? (rescuing Jews worldwide, humanitarian aid to disaster areas, settlements, education, absorbing new immigrants)
- Are other armies around the world engaged in non-military operations?
- Why is the IDF called "The People's Army"?



## Proposals for future activities:

- Tell your friends and family about the IDF's humanitarian operations.
- Every so often, add some information about the IDF's search and rescue operations and its humanitarian aid to your own Facebook page.
- You could organize an informational event in your community, making use of the materials you were shown today. Feel free to contact us and we'll gladly send you information.
- If and when you come across negative opinions about the IDF, you're asked to cite examples of its positive operations which you learned about today.
- Keep abreast of new events on the IDF's official website.

## A film to end the day: – “Happy Independence Day”



## Group 1

# Emergency Aid Delegations to Disaster Stricken Areas Worldwide



**A film about the IDF's emergency aid delegations**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7OyAb20zww>

### **An historical overview of IDF delegations**

The sign hanging in the briefing room of the National Search and Rescue Unit is large and conspicuous: **SAVING LIVES**. For the past 26 years this room has witnessed the departures of many delegations for search and rescue operations in Israel and across the globe.

The IDF's Search and Rescue Unit is primarily comprised of volunteer reservists who have widespread experience in search and rescue operations. The members of the unit have expertise in rescuing people from buildings which have collapsed, including the use of special equipment. A team of medical professionals who specialize in mass casualty events are also attached to the unit.

When disaster strikes anywhere in the world, whether a natural disaster or one resulting from an act of terror or war, the unit is put on alert and the State of Israel offers its help to the affected country.

Do they go to every country? There are enemy countries which emergency aid has been offered to, but they typically do not accept it. But any country that requires assistance and authorizes our arrival, receives it.

To date, more than 25 delegations have extended humanitarian aid in different parts of the world.



### **Below is a partial list of events which IDF search and rescue teams been sent to:**

1994 – Aid to the victims of the bombed Jewish community center in Buenos Aires

1994 – Aid to refugees in Rwanda

1998 – Aid to victims of the bombed U.S. Embassy in Nairobi

1999 – Aid to war refugees in Kosovo

2001 – Aid to earthquake victims in India

2010 – Aid to earthquake victims in Haiti



## Newspaper clippings about the delegation sent to Greece – when it all started

*More than 50 years ago, in August 1953, a major earthquake hit a group of Greek islands. At its epicenter, entire villages were wiped out and many of their residents were killed. Many others were injured or remained homeless and without food and water. A flotilla of 4 Israeli Navy ships, which at the time were in the Aegean Sea, rushed to the site, and during the first three critical days served as the main search and rescue team. Their crews saved hundreds of lives, extended medical treatment to approximately 1,600 people, and transferred about 400 of the seriously injured to hospitals on the mainland. The first aid administered by the Israeli Navy was greatly admired and appreciated by the Greek people. Newspaper headlines in Athens sung their praises: "The Israeli Sailors of Salvation" and "The Fleet of Love and Hope." The operation was acclaimed worldwide.*

### An excerpt from an interview with Tzofia Moskowitz, a nurse with the IDF's delegation to Haiti:

*"The phone rang – pack your things and join the delegation for 3 weeks. It all happened very fast. The flight, and then landing in what looked like a ghost town 89 hours after the earthquake occurred. Harsh sights and smells. Our team included 220 people, of whom 120 were medical personnel and the rest were search crews and support staff for the hospital. Despite our weariness and exhaustion, the hospital was up and running within 8 hours and ready to receive the injured. The hospital had emergency rooms, hospitalization wards, an x-ray facility, a lab, a unit for treating babies in incubators, a food distribution center, and technical support provided a large team.*

*Surrounding us were poverty, hunger, thirst, homeless people wandering around aimlessly, and children in trees next to the hospital, asking that food be thrown to them.*

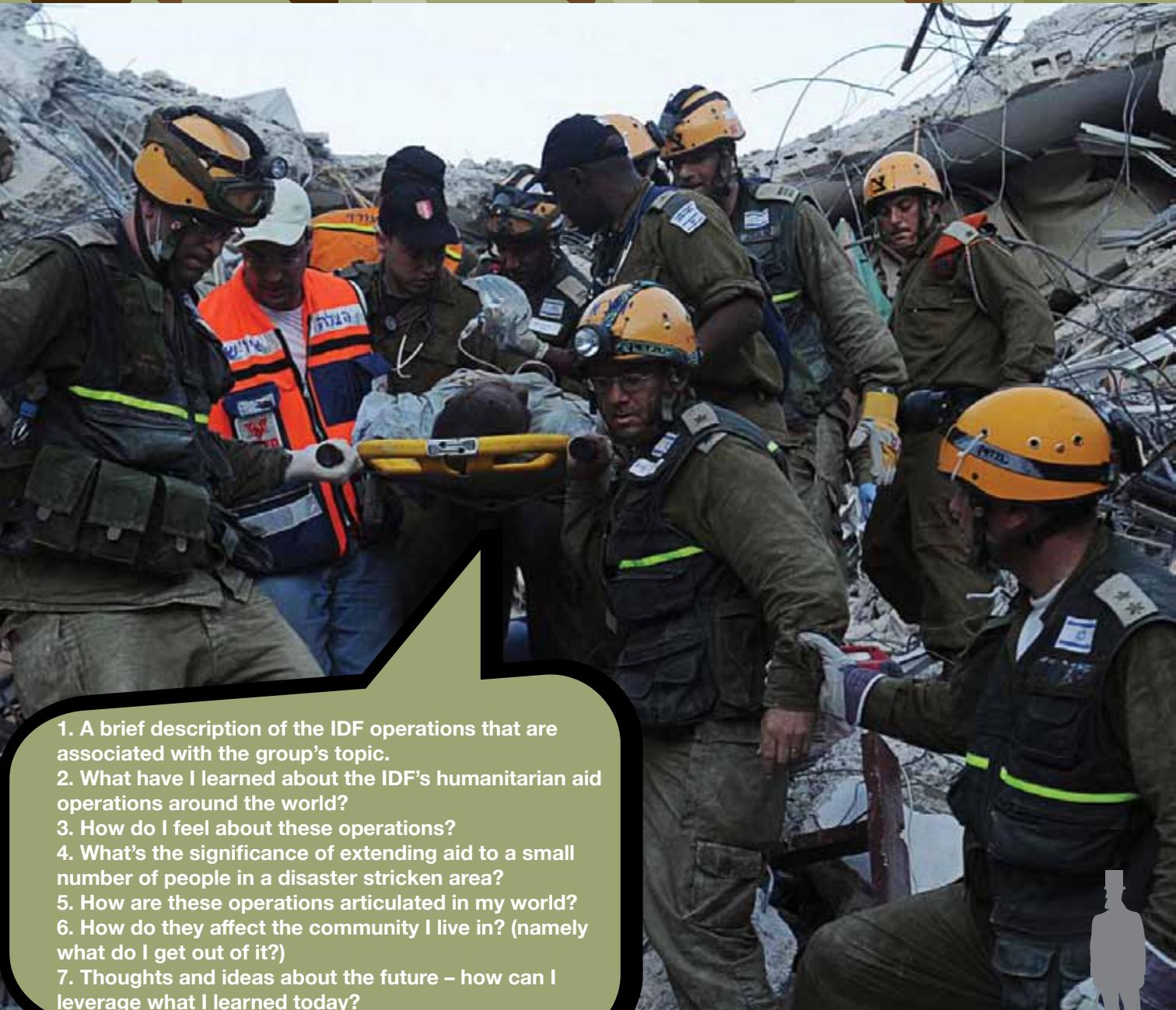
*We worked around the clock. We left the hospital only 5 days later, and were then able to witness the disaster stricken city first hand.*

*Giving means going there, to a foreign nation we didn't know before, because they need help and we're there for them.*

*You don't think about political interests. You see a patient suffering, and your whole being is there to help. A woman came to us who had given birth to triplets two days before the earthquake. One baby had died during the disaster. She came to the hospital with two babies, and one of them was already dead. There was only one baby left, who weighed 1,300 kg. Thanks to the incubators in the hospital, he survived. He was there for two weeks, reached a weight of 1,900 kg, and became stronger. His parents were by his side all day long, and the rest of the time slept in their car next to the hospital. And he survived. They named him Daniel – the Little Prince."*

**The delegation treated 1,111 patients, performed 317 surgeries, and assisted in 16 deliveries. More than 200,000 were killed in the Haiti disaster and more than 250,000 were injured.**





1. A brief description of the IDF operations that are associated with the group's topic.
2. What have I learned about the IDF's humanitarian aid operations around the world?
3. How do I feel about these operations?
4. What's the significance of extending aid to a small number of people in a disaster stricken area?
5. How are these operations articulated in my world?
6. How do they affect the community I live in? (namely what do I get out of it?)
7. Thoughts and ideas about the future – how can I leverage what I learned today?



## Group 2 Military Medicine for Everyone



A film that shows part of the farewell ceremony held for IDF's delegation to Haiti

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsjlalSM4vM>



### About the Medical Corps

***"We, in the Medical Corps, have set a goal for ourselves to be prepared to save human lives and be ready to undertake missions to save human lives, in any place and at any time."***

The Corps is responsible for treating IDF soldiers in normal times and in states of emergency, and for formulating the medical treatment policies and medical assistance procedures governing all IDF units.

Heading the Corps is a physician with the rank of brigadier general, whose job is to set policy and run the Corps in normal times and in states of emergency.

The essence of the Corps' work – saving lives and administering optimal medical care.

Every soldier and officer in the Medical Corps takes an oath to "lend a helping hand to anyone who is injured and to every patient, whether contemptible or dignified, whether friend or an enemy – and to every individual without discrimination."





### **“Strength and faith in the State and in the Medical Corps”:**

Dr. Hezi Levi, who served as Surgeon General between 2002 and 2006, led and managed many aid missions. One of the delegations he commanded was to Kosovo, where they extended assistance to refugees who were victims of ethnic strife - following acts of genocide and brutality. He recalls the harsh sights of refugees evicted from their homes, searching desperately for family members, and scores of people murdered due to their ethnic origin.

What did it do to you, being there in the field, wearing an IDF uniform?

**“In one sentence? It gave me strength and faith in the State and in the Medical Corps.”**

**“When you’re in these places of genocide, especially as a Jew, and all the more as a soldier in the IDF, you’re proud of your ability as a nation and as an army to extend assistance to whoever needs it.**

*For me, one of the most meaningful experiences was treating a pair of pitiable twins who had nearly starved to death. Accompanied by their mother, they came to the clinic we had opened, small and filthy, and extremely weak. We improvised an incubator and began trying to rehabilitate them. Later on, we received assistance and supplies from Israel for this purpose. Afterwards I approached the Macedonian Minister of Health and asked him if the twins could continue their treatment at one of the hospitals (something which Macedonia did not commonly do for the war refugees). A few hours before our flight back home, I went to the hospital and asked to visit them. I saw them in their room, clean and healthy, and receiving proper treatment and food. Naturally, they looked totally different. That picture is engraved in my mind because I understood the power of process: we had saved lives.*

*When I stood next to the bed, I recalled the entire process, which began with the news about the genocide, followed by the request to send a delegation and our arrival in the field, etc. There, next to the bed, in a single image I saw the entire process – embodied in the healthy faces of these refugee twins. It was something formative.”*

### **The Oath of Maimonides**

“Almighty God, Thou has appointed me to watch over the life and death of Thy creatures. As I now apply myself to my sacred vocation, I bow before Your Throne and ask to be given the courage and vigor to perform my duties faithfully, and not be blinded by thirst for glory or a great reputation.

Allow me to see in every patient a fellow creature, whether rich or poor, friend or foe, good or bad. In the sufferer let me see only the human being.

Should physicians wiser than I wish to instruct me, allow my soul to gratefully follow their guidance, for vast is the science of medicine. However, should conceited fools censure me, then let the love for my profession steel me against them, so that I remain steadfast without regard for their age or honor.

Only truth shall be my guiding light, because any surrender would bring to Thy creatures sickness and death. Please, my merciful and compassionate Almighty God, strengthen my body and soul and imbue me with a spirit of peace.”



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1. A brief description of the IDF's Medical Corps and its principles.
  2. How are the Medical Corps' values articulated in the work done by the humanitarian delegations?
  3. Can a contradiction emerge between the Hippocratic Oath and a doctor's commitment and service as a soldier in the IDF?
  4. Do you face similar ethical dilemmas in your life? How do you resolve them?
  5. Would a soldier who doesn't belong to the medical profession behave differently towards the wounded? Is it only the oath that's binding, or should any person, by virtue of that he's a human being, be obliged to assist other people regardless of who they are? Are we all brothers?
  6. What would you do if someone from a different religion were injured near you? From a different nationality? From an enemy nation?
  7. What have I learned about the IDF's humanitarian aid operations worldwide?
  8. How does this affect the community I live in?
  9. Thoughts and ideas about the future – how can I leverage what I learned today?



## Group 3 The IDF as a Rescue and Aid Army for World Jewry



**Film: Operation Solomon (it's advisable to watch 90 seconds before the activity, and 90 seconds when it's over)** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YWXNmDPw4>

**Brigadier General Shalom Ben Arie, the Commander of the National Search and Rescue Unit, said the following:**

*"The State of Israel exists. That's a fact. There's no place on the globe that we won't be able to reach in order to help Israelis and Jews in the quickest and most professional manner possible. What happened in the Holocaust in Poland cannot be repeated."*

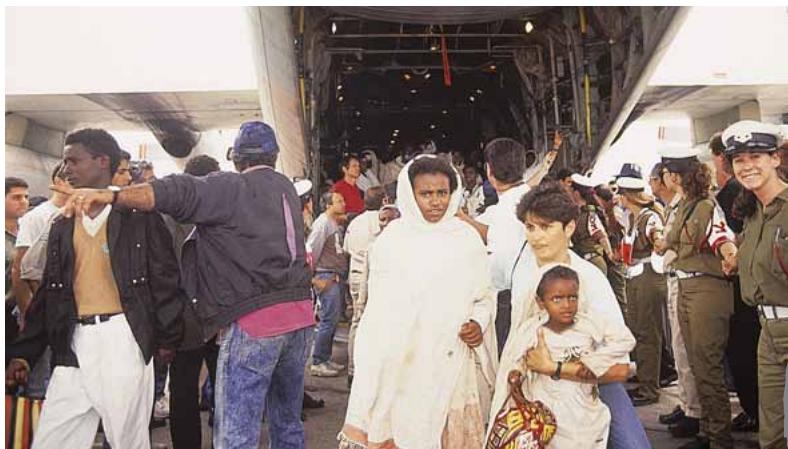
**The rescue delegation sent to Argentina in 1994 following the bombing of the Jewish community center**

On July 19, 1994, the explosion of a car bomb shook the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. More than 100 people were killed and about 200 were wounded, and many were buried alive under the rubble. Israel sent a search and rescue delegation that included over 40 officers, soldiers and doctors. The delegation helped rescue many who were buried under the wreckage and saved their lives.

**Operation Solomon – bringing Ethiopian Jews to the Land of Israel**

At the beginning of 1991, the Ethiopian government headed by President Menigistu Haile was about to collapse as rebel forces advanced on the capital. Menigistu's imminent downfall raised concerns about the fate of the thousands of Jews who were waiting in the city to emigrate to Israel. Mediated by the Americans, the Israeli government therefore decided to negotiate with the Ethiopian ruler, hoping to reach an agreement regarding the Jews' swift removal from Ethiopia and transfer to Israel.

A few days before Addis Ababa fell into the hands of the rebels, Menigistu escaped from Ethiopia and was granted asylum in Zimbabwe. The negotiations between the parties were accelerated and an agreement was eventually reached between senior officials in Menigistu's government and Israel, enabling Ethiopian Jews to leave for Israel in exchange for \$35 million and the promise of asylum for some of the government officials in the United States. After the agreement between the two countries was drafted, the Israeli government instructed the IDF to launch an airborne mission to rescue some 15,000 Ethiopian Jews.



Over a period of about 34 hours, 30 passenger jets and cargo planes flew from Ben Gurion Airport to the airport in Addis Ababa, bringing back with them the thousands of Jews who were waiting in transit camps.

One of the airlift pilots later recounted: "Huge numbers of people suddenly stood up at the end of the runway, a few hundred meters away from us, and begin walking in the direction of the area where the planes were parked. An endless stream of people approached the planes, organized in groups of 200. The IDF's doctors and medics were treating them all the time."

The JDC, the Mossad and hundreds of IDF soldiers also took part in the operation.

*When the operation was completed, then Chief of Staff Ehud Barak said: "This was a very special operation in all respects. It embodied the essence of the reasons why the State of Israel was established, both from a logistical perspective as well as a Jewish and Zionist perspective. That's the difference between Jews of this generation and those of other generation throughout our history."*

### **Operation Entebbe - Operation Jonathan**

A rescue mission carried out by the Israeli Air Force in Uganda

– 4,000 kilometers from Israel, in order to rescue 98 Jewish and Israeli hostages

The hijacking of the plane – on Sunday, June 27, 1976, an Air France jet took off from Ben Gurion Airport en route to Paris. It made a stopover in Athens, where 38 passengers got off and 58 others boarded. Among those who boarded were also four terrorists. Fifteen minutes after take off from Athens, the terrorists pulled out their weapons and hijacked the plane. Wilfred Bose, a German who headed the gang of terrorists, burst into the cockpit and instructed the pilot to fly to Libya. After searching their belongings, the hijackers also seized the passengers' passports.

The plane landed in Benghazi, Libya. After refueling and stocking up on food and water, it took off for Entebbe in Uganda. After landing there, the passengers were assembled together in the old airport terminal, guarded by Ugandan soldiers. The Israelis and Jews were later separated from the rest of the passengers. The 'selection' process carried out by the German terrorist was frightening to the Jews and Israelis, and especially to the Holocaust survivors among them. The foreign passengers were released on Wednesday and Thursday, apart from the Jews and Israelis.

Israel attempted to negotiate with Uganda's ruler, Idi Amin, who was collaborating with the hijackers. But, at the same time, preparations were underway for a military operation based on intelligence Israel had gathered regarding the Entebbe Airport. The logistical planning of the operation was painstaking. After the plan was approved by the government, four large transport planes took off from Sharm-el-Sheikh and flew directly to Entebbe. Five Israelis were killed in the rescue mission, including Jonathan (Yoni) Netanyahu, the brother of MK and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was an officer in the General Headquarters' elite reconnaissance unit.

At a special and festive session of the Knesset, held on July 4, 1976, the government announced the release of the hijacked Air France passengers in Uganda. Before giving the floor to the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Knesset, Yisrael Yeshayahu, read a verse from the Book of Psalms: *"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good..."*





**An excerpt from an interview with Tzofia Moskowitz, a nurse with the IDF's delegation to Haiti:**

"It was the first time that I flew overseas wearing a necklace with a Star of David on it. I shouldn't have tried to conceal my Judaism for fear of how others would react. I was proud, and everywhere I went in Haiti, I felt the admiration and respect they had for our efforts and for the State of Israel. The Star of David was a clear expression of Jewish national pride.

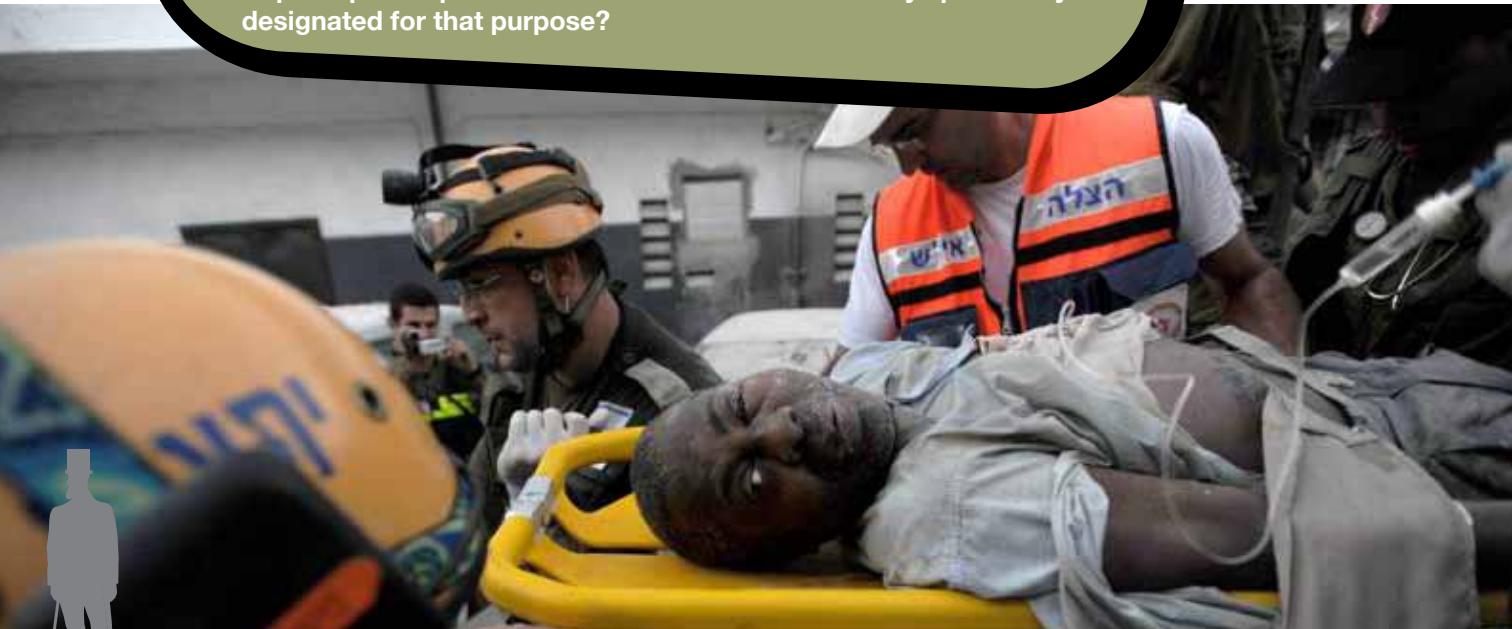
The delegation treated 1,111 patients, performed 37 surgeries, and assisted in 16 deliveries.

A few weeks after the delegation returned, I was invited to give a lecture to representatives of Jewish communities in Canada.

They told me that, thanks to our delegation, they now commanded a lot of respect from their surroundings. Instead of the regular criticism voiced against the State of Israel and the IDF, they now heard accolades and praise that gave them a tremendous sense of pride."



1. A brief description of the IDF operations that are associated with the group's topic.
2. How do I feel about these operations?
3. What significance can these operations have in my world?
4. How do they affect me and the community I live in?
5. Thoughts and ideas about the future – how can I leverage what I learned today?
6. Is it tacitly understood that the IDF will extend assistance whenever and wherever a disaster involving Jews occurs in the world? Under all circumstances?
7. Even if such assistance entails a high level of risk? Even if it means saving a distant and uncommitted community?
8. Is it the IDF's role to serve as this kind of a rescue organization, or perhaps is it preferable that Israel establish a body specifically designated for that purpose?



## Group 4 Absorbing New Immigrants

The spirit of the IDF is also founded on love for the homeland and loyalty to the State. Love for the homeland, commitment and dedication to the State of Israel – a democratic country which is the national home of the Jewish people – and to its citizens and residents, are the foundation underlying service in the IDF.

One of its practical manifestations: the IDF has helped establish Israel as the national home of the Jewish people. Since the State was founded, the IDF has been involved in absorbing the waves of immigration that have come to Israel. It has served as an important, egalitarian and effective ‘melting pot’ in the socialization process of new immigrants in Israeli society, who came to the country from all corners of the Jewish world.

David Ben Gurion set objectives for the IDF that extended beyond safeguarding Israel’s borders and citizens: “[...] the IDF’s primary objective is State security, but that is not its sole function. The army must also serve as a pioneering education center for youth in Israel, whether natives or new immigrants. The must educate a pioneering generation, healthy in body and mind, daring and loyal, who will mend the rifts between the tribes and the diasporas and be trained to fill the historic mission of the State of Israel, out of a sense of self-fulfillment as builders of the homeland and settlers of its wastelands [...]”

“...During his first year of service, the IDF will impart to every recruit who doesn’t know Hebrew and hasn’t received a general and Jewish education – the basics of language, Jewish history, Land of Israel geography, the status of the Jewish people in the Diaspora, the history of settling and establishing the State, and human brotherhood.” (From: Ben Gurion, David. (1955).

Army and Security. Ma’arachot. Tel Aviv: The Ministry of Defense - Publishers).



It is interesting to examine the current data regarding immigrants’ absorption in the IDF, faithfully presented by Lieutenant Colonel Carmit Naftali – the Head of Immigration and Integration in the IDF, the Ministry of Defense. At a meeting of the Knesset’s Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Committee (January 19, 2011), she reported: *“In the army, every fifth soldier is a new immigrant. Actually, either a new immigrant or a veteran immigrant, but answering to the definition of a new immigrant. As for lone soldiers who are new immigrants, I can say that, as of December, there are about 2,100 lone soldiers who are new immigrants. That’s the figure I am able to cite. The IDF is active in a number of spheres. When we look at the soldier, we are looking at a continuum of service, namely from the stage where he’s considered ‘a candidate for military service’ starting in 10th and 11th grade, through his induction in the army, what happens to him in the course of his military service, and his preparation for civilian life. There are different programs for different sectors of the population. Some of the programs are designed for those who came from the CIS as well as those who came from Ethiopia, and there are other programs which are just for one group or just for another. There’s an entire network called the “Shield Network” which is active in the schools in the preparation stage, during the two years prior to induction in the IDF. I don’t know if you’re familiar with the “Gideonim” project. Dorit will be able to tell you more about it than I can. Another project that’s currently taking place is called “Netiv Haneurim.” It entails going to about 60 residential facilities for teens, where most of residents are new immigrants. I can report that at 40 of these 60 residential facilities, there are quite a few teens belonging to the Ethiopian community. Senior army officers go there and lead activities for the teens in order to have an impact on their future in the IDF and their army service.”*





“I can only say that when a soldier enters the army, we offer him, if needed, a number of courses. They are offered, first of all, to new immigrants, and there we see that most of them come from the CIS. I’m referring to Hebrew courses at Michve Alon, which is our main base for absorbing new immigrants in the army. After their induction, these soldiers attend something similar to an ulpan (Hebrew school). From our perspective, it’s a Hebrew course that’s combined with basic training. During the course, the soldiers improve their Hebrew so we can place them in higher level courses because, without the Hebrew, they can’t take part in them. We also offer a Hebrew course for those who come from the Ethiopian community. It’s a different course, but also given at the beginning of their service. We also offer the “Netiv” course to new immigrant recruits who are not Jewish when they start their service. “Netiv” is a preparatory course for conversion to Judaism, Those who wish to continue with the conversion process following the course, can do so at the beginning of their service. A similar course is offered in the course of their service. I believe that everyone here is familiar with “Netiv.” Just for the sake of clarity, I can tell you that, to date, roughly 17,000 soldiers have taken part in “Netiv.” “Netiv” has been in operation for 10 years now. In my opinion, within the next two months, we will reach the number of 5,000 converts through the IDF.”

### **Lone Soldiers**

Hundreds of young Jews, from different countries around the world, decide to be part of that experience which is called the IDF, and do so in a very personal and meaningful way. They move to Israel and enlist for compulsory army service in the IDF, receiving the status of ‘lone soldiers’ who came to Israel without any family members. The IDF and Israeli society do their best to help them in many different ways.

#### **The activity:**

Watch the short film on the DVD and hold a discussion focusing on 3 questions:

1. Is this what is expected of young Jews in the Diaspora – to move to Israel, to serve and defend the people and State, and be deeply assimilated in Israeli society?
2. What arguments can be made against the decision made by Jessica?
3. Is the ‘contract’ between Israel and Jews in the Diaspora one-sided: the IDF will always be there to rescue, at any price and risk – whereas Jews in the Diaspora will not be part of the effort to physically boost the ranks of the IDF, and at most will send money?



## **Group 5** The IDF and Building Israel: The Pioneering Spirit and Education

To build the State of Israel, the IDF was called upon to perform national tasks – two of which still exist to this very day: the pioneering spirit – namely, establishing new settlements and reinforcing existing ones, and education – active assistance in activities targeted towards the more disadvantaged groups in Israeli society. Ben Gurion was the one who conceived the IDF's commitment to building the country in these two spheres, achieved by establishing the corps of women soldier-teachers as well as the Nahal and Gadna.



## Raful Youth

It was the late Rafael Eitan (1929-2004), the IDF's former Chief of Staff, who shifted the emphasis of Ben Gurion's educational legacy from new immigrants to disadvantaged groups in Israeli society. He was behind the IDF's considerable investment in recruiting and educating young people from these groups who, according to any other accepted criterion, would not have enlisted in the army. Their recruitment under the "Raful Youth" project offered them a last opportunity to integrate within Israeli society as active and contributing citizens.

On December 15, 1979, the then Chief of Staff, the late Rafael Eitan, appeared before the Knesset's Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, where he made a surprising announcement that the IDF had spent 90 million pounds (equivalent to about \$2.25 million) of its annual budget on educating teens found at the margins of society. Soon after his appointment as Chief of Staff, Eitan took upon himself an important task – drafting underprivileged youth into the army. The IDF began converting recreational army camps into schools for teens from disadvantaged backgrounds who had dropped out from school, and began preparing them for enlistment and integration within the army's ranks.

Soldiers from the Center for Promoting Special Populations - (also called Raful Youth) – are groups of teens who were identified as having an enlistment problem when first called in to the induction center – e.g. teens with a criminal record, personal or family problems, low motivation, or poor qualifications. After completing the Raful Youth track, they can, each according to his ability, also join combat basic training.

The first 'regular' basic training course for these teens took place in 2009. The commander of the boot camp, Lieutenant Colonel Sammy Edri, said the following at the close of the graduation ceremony: "This was an experimental program that demanded a different kind of attention from the boot camp officers and from me. Our work was very attentive, and entailed a lot of educational content, discussions, and patience. I'm glad that we now have the ability, as a boot camp, to advance these soldiers." According to Edri, when the new recruits arrived at the base, it wasn't clear that all of them would successfully finish the training. "They proved themselves. Today they are completing an adjustment process and I'm proud of each one of them. Our boot camp managed to absorb this group and give these soldiers a framework and an opportunity to make a contribution to the State."

For Lieutenant Yafit Hen, the commander of Company "C", it was the first time she had commanded a company comprised of Raful Youth. "It was a great challenge," she said when summing it up, "to transform these teens, who came here with little education, no matriculation diplomas nor a framework. Most of the soldiers were used to dropping out of other frameworks all their lives, and this was the first time they fulfilled their commitment. They came from homes with an abundance of personal problems, some of them with no family at all, and thanks to the gentle treatment and our listening to them, we managed to help them get settled and gave them the power of an IDF soldier. I have a sense of satisfaction when I look at them today, and compare how these young people were when they first arrived at the boot camp, and what they are today. They did it themselves and thanks to a lot of hard work."

The above project is part of the IDF's Education Corps which is founded on women soldier-teachers – an initiative instituted by Ben Gurion in 1951.



It's interesting to see how the Corps' objectives are worded today:



### The Functions of the Education Corps

1. Developing the ability of commanders to optimally perform their command, educational and leadership-related responsibilities.
2. Reinforcing the sense of belonging and commitment to the State of Israel, the Land of Israel, the Jewish people and its heritage – among both the IDF's commanders and soldiers.
3. Transforming the inter-cultural encounter that occurs in the People's Army into a tool that develops awareness and sensitivity to the complexity of Israeli society, thereby enhancing solidarity and social resilience.
4. Helping the units to foster a climate of attentiveness, dialog and human dignity in order to promote the fulfillment of the units' objectives.
5. Helping to assimilate the "IDF spirit" among the IDF's commanders and soldiers in their respective units and as citizens of the State of Israel.
6. The People's Army in a democratic country: strengthening and fostering awareness of the IDF's role and the significance of its activities as the People's Army – in a democratic country – among commanders, soldiers, youth and the community.
7. Spearheading and promoting the absorption of new immigrants in the IDF.
8. Fostering the willingness and readiness of teens to fill meaningful positions in the army in general, and as combat soldiers in particular.
9. Coordinating and performing national tasks, with an emphasis on educational-social tasks, and cultivating special groups, both in the IDF and in Israeli society.

**View the collection of photographs related to the Raful Youth project. Read the text dealing with the conclusion of the Raful Youth training course.**

1. Is the project a Zionist endeavor?
2. Why in his time did Ben Gurion believe, and after him Rafael Eitan, that it is the IDF's duty to invest in this kind of project? What objectives are achieved through projects of this nature?
3. Are there any similarities between the ideas underlying Birthright and the Raful Youth project?
4. To what extent do the principles of the Education Corps meet the current needs of the Jewish people?
5. To the best of your knowledge, are any other armies in the world engaged in education?
6. Is the IDF engaged in education because it is army of the Jewish people? Explain your answer.



## Group 6 Nahal, Gadna – Educational and Settlement-Related Tasks

An excerpt from “The Spirit of the IDF” – A Mission: A soldier should view his army service as a mission. He should be prepared, to the best of his ability, to contribute to defending the State, its citizens and its residents. He does so in his capacity as a representative of the IDF, which operates by virtue of and under the authorities that were granted to it by the Army Ordinance.

On September 12, 1948, the Gadna Structure Ordinance was promulgated, which reestablished the foundation, officially and legally, for the pre-military activities of teenagers within a special IDF framework. In the appendix to the ordinance, which stipulated that the unit would be called the Gadna (Youth Battalions), reference was also made to the purpose behind establishing another body within the Gadna that would preserve the pioneering element of settlement, called the Nahal – an acronym in Hebrew for “Fighting Pioneering Youth”



### The Nahal

It was founded with the approval of David Ben Gurion on August 19, 1948, in response to a letter sent by all the Zionist youth movements on August 10, 1948, in which they asked to form a military cadre in which members of core groups (“garins”) would serve together rather than be split up into different units.

Nahal soldiers would undergo two to three months of basic training, after which they were sent to settlements in outlying areas for nine months where they fulfilled military duties, worked the land, and completed their agricultural training.

In 1949, Nahal companies were given different assignments such as paving the road between Sodom and Ein Gedi and preparing Eilat for future settlement. The hope was that after a year of service, Nahal soldiers would choose to remain in the border settlements. This hope, however, was not realized and most Nahal soldiers left the border settlements, whether immediately following their year of service or some years later. According to estimates, about 35% of Nahal soldiers remained in these settlements.

Several years later, the Nahal began establishing Nahal outposts that were populated by its core groups during their army service.

In many instances, these outposts fulfilled national settlement objectives as they were established in areas where few Jews lived and were considered high on the settlement priority list. In the Nahal's early years, its settlements were built in preferred areas such as the Negev, Galilee and Arava. Following the Six Day War, the interest shifted to Judea and Samaria, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and Sinai. Many current settlements, including a number of IDF army bases and primarily kibbutzim, started out as Nahal outposts.

The first pilot project was established on the Green Line border, where Kibbutz Nir Eliyahu is currently located. Nir Eliyahu's success in warding off infiltrators, while at the same time sustaining themselves independently, paved the way for widespread implementation of this model at dozens of settlements throughout Israel until the end of the last millennium.



### **Garin Tzabar (Tzabar Core Grop)**

Many Israelis have tried their luck outside the country. And when times are difficult, those teens who decide to return to Israel and enlist in the army, without their families, are the ones who stand out. Garin Tzabar is designed for them.

Garin Tzabar is a unique project which began in 1991. It offers an organizational-educational framework to Israeli teens who have lived abroad with their families for many years. After they finish high school, they choose to come to Israel and voluntarily enlist in the IDF for full-term service. They reach that decision following a long and profound personal process that involves a lot of hesitations. Upon arrival in the country, the members of Garin Tzabar are welcomed at a kibbutz that 'adopts' them, which also serves as a warm and supportive home throughout their army service.

During their first three months in Israel, the members of the core group undergo an induction process at the IDF, study Hebrew (those who need to improve their proficiency), tour the country, and learn about Israel. As much as possible, these activities aim to bridge the gaps between them and the graduates of the Israeli school system. During their army service, the members of Garin Tzabar make new friends, undergo maturing experiences, and formulate their sense of belonging to the country.

It's worth mentioning that all of the IDF's units are open to soldiers in the Garin Tzabar track. They can however choose to enlist as a group under the Nahal core group track and serve together in the infantry. A large number of Garin Tzabar members stay in Israel after their army service. The ties between them clearly remain close and meaningful, constituting a kind of new family which they created for themselves.



**Watch the film dealing with the Nahal. Listen to the song about the Nahal Outpost in Sinai (whose lyrics have been translated into English). Use the information appearing in the review, and in particular the information pertaining to Garin Tzabar.**

Try to make a schematic plan of the required stages for forming a Nahal core group in your community that would go to Israel. You can make use of the Garin Tzabar model. Hold a discussion about the difficulties inherent in this challenge in a community such as your own.



**The Nahal Outpost in Sinai**, Lyrics and music: Naomi Shemer

At the Nahal outpost in Sinai  
Many nice things caught my eye  
Like, for example – a barefoot women soldier  
And the braid resting on her shoulder.

And there were soldiers in the yard  
Grilling fish over coals  
Many nice things caught my eye  
At the Nahal outpost in Sinai.

There, all the Sarahs, Dalits and Rinas  
Walked slowly along the row of casuarinas  
With all the light and all the leisure  
That I saw with my own eyes.

At the Nahal outpost in Sinai  
I could hardly believe my eyes  
When I saw an act of magic  
Small poetry books on the shelves.

Poems by Rachel and “Stars Outside”  
Like a millennium ago on the kibbutz;  
I actually rubbed my eyes,  
At the Nahal outpost in Sinai.

When all the Sarahs, Dalits and Rinas...

At the Nahal outpost in Sinai  
I couldn't believe my eyes  
When suddenly in the corner I ran into  
The old Land of Israel.

The lost, beautiful and forgotten  
Land of Israel,  
And it's as if she stretched out her hand  
To give – and not to take.

I couldn't believe my eyes  
At the Nahal outpost in Sinai.

How all the Sarahs, Dalits and Rinas...

At the Nahal outpost in Sinai  
Many nice things caught my eye  
Many nice things because of which  
I wanted to hug everyone there.

To whisper to the bewildered faces;  
Oh, who will give me an 'inn' in the desert?  
Oh, who will give me an 'inn' in the desert?

With all the Sarahs, Dalits and Rinas...  
I'll walk slowly along the row of casuarinas  
With all the light and all the leisure  
That I saw with my own eyes.

