



Facilitator Guide- Beit Ha'Am Seminar, South Africa

Background:

The South African Jewish community is divided in its relationship to Israel as there are few platforms for discussion that are inclusive of and receptive to different communal voices. In light of this, there is a need to create a safe space to establish a dialogue on the topic of identity and connection to Israel.

Mission:

To create an opportunity to talk, to discuss, and to highlight **the unifying elements within our community without ignoring the differences and the disagreements that exist among us!!**

Goals:

- To create a meeting place for individuals of different generations, different ages, and different perspectives.
- To understanding the importance of dialogue among diverse groups of people.
- To understanding that we can be critical of Israel while still standing under the banner of Zionism.

Target Population:

- Youth group leaders
- Community leaders
- Sunday school teachers
- Educational coordinators
- Community members
- Shlichim

Date: 10th May, 201



First Unit 11:50-12:50

Goals-

The first unit deals with the individual elements that contribute to the participants' Jewish identities. Participants will explore the artistic images of Piven, which offer portraits that reflect elements of identity through the various materials he chose to include in those portraits.

The goal of the unit is to create a space for personal dialogue, allowing participants to reflect on the elements included in their own Jewish identities, with the goal of highlighting the diversity and differences among the participants' elements of identity. Each participant will take a turn answering these questions: Is it important to me to be part of the Jewish people? Why? Why did I choose to come here today?

Questions for the Facilitator

What is identity in general? Do universal values take precedence over Jewish values? Where does the South African identity manifest itself in my personal identity?

Introductions and Elements of My Jewish Identity

Opening Activities:

Ice breaker "This Object Is Me" – Between the Individual and the Group: Examining Identity Issues with Hanoch Piven.

Name Game in Big Group (10 Minutes)

1. Ask each participant to tell group (15 seconds per pp):
 - Name?
 - Where are you are from?
 - Position/Profession?
 - If you have a Hebrew name. If you do, what is it?

Arrange Piven's images on the floor of the room.

10 minutes - Allow the participants to walk around the room and view the images. Ask them to choose an image that they especially identify with, an image that embodies their own Jewish identity.

30 minutes - Discussion

The facilitator will summarize the activities while emphasizing the range of views expressed, the nature of the identities that were shared in the discussion, and the participants' own relationships with their Jewish identities. This will help illustrate both the wide range of perspectives present, but also that many common threads that connect us as one people, with a shared past, present and future. How do we understand that which connects us, or how we would *want* to understand the connection between us?

Each participant will take a turn answering these questions: Is it important to me to be part of the Jewish people? Why? Why did I choose to come here today?

Questions for the Facilitator -

What is identity in general? Do universal values take precedence over Jewish values? Where do you locate your South African identity in your own spectrum of identities?



12:50-13:00 break

Unit 2 13:00-14:00

Unit 2 - Why not Uganda?

One of today's goals is to impart the message that you can be critical of Israel and still be a Zionist. The goal of this workshop is to move beyond the limited view of Israel and the conflict and to imagine what would have happened if Israel was in Uganda or if it hadn't been established at all. Another goal is to raise **meaningful questions that examine our relationship to the State of Israel and its place and importance in each of our Jewish identities.**

Why Not Uganda?

From the Beit Ha'am Booklet: "The Vote"

1. Before you begin: Put copies of Yo'av Gati's art on the walls of the room.

2. Opening question:

Had the state of Israel been located in Uganda, what would it be like? What would be its achievements and challenges?

* You can choose to have the group read a short part of Herzl's opening speech at the sixth congress in which he presented the Uganda proposal (please see index below in English and in Hebrew)



* Another option: Watch a short part (4 min) of the film [Theodor Herzl - A Living Portrait \(43:15-47:25\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWi3pV8_XQY) that reenacts the Uganda speech and the discussion that followed it.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWi3pV8_XQY

3. Yo'av Gati's art work:

Yoav Gati, a young Israeli artist, related to the question we've just discussed in his art work. Ask the participants to walk around and look at the art pieces on the walls. Ask them to try to figure out, while looking, what is Gati's view on this issue- What would Israel look like had it been founded in Uganda instead of in Palestine?

4. Discussion – part A:

If there is more than one facilitator, it is recommended to have the discussion in smaller groups.

Optional leading questions:

- What is the State of Israel's narrative according to Yo'av Gati? Is it or is it not different than the historical narrative that we know?
- Does the local culture influence the culture of the newcomers? In what ways?

- Does the newcomers' culture influence the local culture?
- What is the relationship between the newcomers' community and the local community, according to Gati?
- What are the values the new state is based on?
- What is the role of Judaism and/ or Jewish culture in the new state?

5. Discussion – part B:

After looking at Gati's take on the question we're discussing today, do you agree with him? Do you think differently? In what way?

Optional leading questions:

- Is the Zionist narrative deterministic and known? If yes, why? If not- how could it develop differently?
- Does the state of Israel's location in the Middle East influence its values? If yes, in what way?
- What are the symbols that were chosen by our leaders to be in the center of our daily life (The symbols on the flag, the money bills, the post stamps, etc.)? Could or should they be different? Which symbols would you suggest instead or in addition to the current ones?
- Had the state of Israel been founded in Uganda, how do you think the demography of the Jewish people around the world would be? How would it affect Aliya?
- If there had not been a State of Israel or if it had been in Uganda, how would this have influenced your lives here?
- What is a legitimate criticism of Israel?
- Do we have to agree with all that Israel does?
- What are the limits of criticism? When are they crossed?
- How are we supposed to react to someone who sits on the fence and doesn't offer criticism?
- Is there a place for criticism of Israel in the Jewish Diaspora?

Had the discussion been conducted in groups, return to a full group and ask each group to share one new/ interesting/ surprising insight that was brought up in their discussion.

6. End with a smile:

Watch the video of the Israeli song "[Why not Uganda](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUnGtbR0OeU)"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUnGtbR0OeU>

To the [video with English subtitles:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sgcdo2Ovj0k)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sgcdo2Ovj0k>

The Uganda proposal Segments from Herzl's opening speech in the 6th congress, 1903

The offer has been extended to us in a way which cannot but contribute to the improvement of the condition of the Jewish people, without our relinquishing any of the great principles on which our movement is founded.

[...]

Zion this certainly is not, and can never become. It is only a colonizational auxiliary help - but, be it noted, on a national and state foundation. This will not give the sign to our masses to set themselves everywhere in motion. It is, and must remain, an emergency measure which is intended to come to the rescue of our helpless philanthropic enterprises and prevent the loss of these detached fragments of our people.

[...]

With renewed courage, and with better prospects than ever before, we can continue our efforts for Palestine."

From the closing speech at the end of the congress:

And when it seemed to me, in one of those difficult moments which were not lacking, that all hope was lost of retaining an immediate or visible goal, that is, one which could be attained within our lifetime, then I wanted to come to your rescue in your sore need, and to lift up your hearts, which had been opened up to me, with a word in the language of our forefathers, a word which meant both encouragement and duty: 'IM ESHKAHECH YERUSHALAIM TISHKACH YEMINI'. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand wither.



Unit 3 2:45-4:30

The goal of this session is to discuss how influential the Holocaust is as a meaningful element in each of our Jewish identities. How does the Holocaust influence the State of Israel, the state's behavior, and the Jewish people and her future?

2:45-3:30 Testimony of Holocaust survivors, together with a grandchild, in each group

The Goal - To generate a conversation on the place of the Holocaust as a foundational event in Diaspora Jewish life and on the need for the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael.

To raise a question regarding the relationship between survivors that chose not to move to Eretz Yisrael after the Holocaust and the importance of the state of Israel in light of the Holocaust.

3:30-4:30 Loosing Survivor Testimonies - The State of Israel, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in the Beit Ha'Am educational booklets (specifically, Kaf-Tet B'November). Wrap up the day's activities in groups.

Discussion -The connecting path

Is it wrong to suggest Israel was a direct result of the holocaust?

Page 9 in the Kaf-Tet B'November booklet.

The holocaust and the state of Israel

This session will explore the connection of the holocaust to the foundation of the state of Israel. We will focus on the question – if there is such a connection using a response written by Moshe Arens (former Israeli defense minister) to the president Obama's speech in Cairo where he suggested there Israel was established as a response to the holocaust.



1. Ask the participants how they found the story of the holocaust survivor they have just heard. Did you hear anything new that you didn't know before? What did it make you think of?
2. Read the reading part by Moshe Arens and discuss using the following questions.

It's wrong to suggest Israel was direct result of Holocaust

Obama exposed his ignorance regarding Zionist movement's history in his Cairo speech last year.

By Moshe Arens | Feb. 2, 2010 | 2:17 AM

The United Nations has declared the day the Auschwitz death camp was liberated as International Holocaust Memorial Day. It was only appropriate that Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was invited to address the ceremonies commemorating the 65th anniversary of the liberation by the Red Army of that place of horrors. In the minds of some, the establishment of the State of Israel is linked to the Holocaust, or even seen as a direct result of the Holocaust. U.S. President Barack Obama, probably unaware of the history of the Zionist movement, implied as much in his speech in Cairo last year.

But the truth is almost the exact opposite. The extermination by the Germans of six million Jews during World War II came close to putting an end to the dream of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. The reservoir of Jewish immigrants to Palestine was decimated. Vladimir Jabotinsky, in his testimony before the Peel Commission in London on February 11, 1937, spoke of the aim of Zionism as the establishment of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River in which there would be room for "the Arab population and their progeny and many millions of Jews." At that time, the Jewish population of Palestine was no more than 400,000.

By the time the war had ended, millions of Jews had been exterminated in Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, Sobibor and the killing fields of Russia. To Zionist leaders, it became clear that not only were there not enough Jews to constitute a solid Jewish majority, which was the condition for establishing a Jewish state, on both sides of the Jordan River, but that Jewish immigration would not even suffice to establish such a majority in the entire area west of the Jordan.

It was the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who grasped the full potential of the destruction of European Jewry for ending Zionist aspirations, and therefore allied himself with Hitler. Arab leaders in Egypt and Iraq similarly found good reason to hope for Hitler's victory. Yet after the war, the Yishuv (the Jewish community in pre-Palestine) and the remnants of European Jewry, who overcame British efforts to block their way to Palestine, had enough vitality and strength to bring about the establishment of the State of Israel in part of the territory that the League of Nations had originally mandated to Britain for the establishment of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River...

Discussion

1. How much is the Holocaust a meaningful part of your identity?
2. Do you agree with Prof. Arens that the establishment of the state of Israel was not a direct result of the holocaust?
3. How do you think the holocaust affected the establishment of the state of Israel?
4. Is the memory of the holocaust significant today, when the world speaks about Israel?
5. How does the Holocaust influence the State of Israel, the state's behavior, and the Jewish people and their future? Is there importance in the establishment of a state for the Jewish people in light of the Holocaust?
6. What is our take-away today when reflecting on the Holocaust?