



Who are we?

Memizrach Shemesh, is a Beit Midrash (House of Study) and Center for Jewish Social Activism and Leadership in Israel.

We cultivate leaders and train activists who are dedicated to the values of communal responsibility and social action rooted in all Jewish traditions including those of the Sephardi and Mizrachi heritage.

The Center was founded in 2000 by the Avi Chai Foundation and Alliance "Kol Yisrael Chaverim"

What Does Memizrach Shemesh Stand for?

-We believe in strengthening a Jewish identity that emphasizes the social values of solidarity and justice

-We develop leadership in Israel's geographic and social periphery, with hundreds of participants every year working towards improvement and change in their communities.

Our Programs:

- **Expanding the Boundaries**
- **Rabbinic Leadership for Social Change –MERHAV**
- **Communities Believe in Education- Kemach Parent leadership**
- **Jewish Student Leadership**
- **Volunteer Youth Leadership**

Our Method:

Jewish Text Study: Our participants learn how Jewish text study can serve as a tool for community development and social change. Participants are exposed to a wealth of Jewish sources from all Jewish traditions, including those of Sephardic Jewish communities.

Personal Journey: Our pedagogical method emphasizes the life experiences of participants. These stories, together with group dialogue put the participants in the center of the learning process. Activists and leaders who are self-aware are most effective.

Agents of Change: Our curriculum strengthens the individual and the group, giving both tools to effect change in society. Group members learn how to listen, participate in effective group discussions and develop opinions about social issues within Israeli society.

Inspiring Role Models: Our group facilitators are experienced and skilled activists who serve as positive role models for group participants by creating a feeling of belonging within the group.



The Jewish Social Leadership Training Program- New York, Budapest, Jerusalem

The Social Action Exchange connects Hebrew University, NYU students, and young Hungarian Jews to each other and to a serious interdisciplinary Jewish and secular social justice curriculum through weekly meetings and three exchange missions, over two years, between Jerusalem, New York City, and Budapest.

Social Action Exchange Program Facts

- The program is currently in its 6th year
- 80 students have participated so far
- Every year we have 10-12 participants in each country
- Initially this was a 1 year program
- With the expansion into a 3 country partnership, the program now runs on a 3 semester cycle
- Each exchange visit includes a 1 week stay in each country

Goals:

To present Jewish values and traditional texts as sources for solutions to modern social issues.

To strengthen professional and personal connections between Jewish students from different communities.

To expose students to social justice issues inside and outside their own communities and learn about organizations addressing these issues.

To raise awareness among students, preparing them for community work while at the same time providing a space for them to learn about the relationship between Judaism and social justice.

How Do We Measure Success?

- On-line surveys - track participants' personal growth, growth of the group, and program's impact on participants and their community.
- We measure increases in Social Action opportunities and global Jewish educational activities in the various sites, as planned by members of the particular cohorts.
- Findings from 4 years of mid-year reflections and final reports for the Social Action Exchange, provide incredible evidence of the successes and challenges to the various aspects of program implementation.

What Do Participants Say?

“The program changed my life. Meeting the students from abroad was very meaningful to me and to this day I am in touch with many of them...they are my friends!”

-Aaron, Jerusalem-based student '08-'09'

“After the exchange I can definitely say that I am more familiar with social issues in Israeli society!”

-Sara, NYU student '07-'08

“It is amazing for me to sit with other Jewish students and talk about our origins and our traditions. As a Hungarian Jew, this is a new experience for me.”

-Sophia, Budapest-based student '09-'10

