

Bema'aglei Tzedek Circles of Justice

Annual Report
2009-2010
5770

Creating a more just Israeli society inspired by Jewish values

במעגלי צדקה



BEMA'AGLEI TZEDEK: Addressing Israel's Pressing Needs

In the State of Israel today:

- 90% of public institutions are not accessible to people with disabilities
- Over 40% of the workforce does not receive its legally-mandated wages
- 783,600 children live under the poverty line

Imagine a State of Israel where:

- Parents would earn enough money to support their families with dignity
- Individuals with disabilities would have easy access to public spaces
- All people would have equitable access to education, healthcare and welfare

Imagine a Jewish State worth its name.

Bema'aglei Tzedek does more than just imagine a brighter future for Israel. It empowers the next generation of young Israelis to engage their Jewish identity and become powerful agents of social change.



Bema'aglei Tzedek believes in:

- The importance of **addressing the root causes** of Israel's socioeconomic issues
- The ability of local movements to trigger **lasting, sweeping, and systemic change**
- The relevance of **Jewish tradition as a springboard for social reform**
- The essential role of **empowered youth** in shaping a more just society for the future

Championing the belief that every person has the ability to make a difference, Bema'aglei Tzedek has managed to inspire and empower thousands of young people in Israeli society, religious and secular alike, to effect change in their communities and in society at large.



"Justice, justice you shall pursue so that you may live and inherit the land" (Deut. 16:20)

BEMA'AGLEI TZEDEK'S 2009-2010 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Expanding the Tav Chevrati (Social Seal) certificate to over 380 businesses throughout Israel, and inspiring similar models in the United States
- Running 151 educational seminars, which reached over 8,000 young Israelis
- Spearheading a campaign that made Jerusalem's only bowling alley wheelchair accessible
- Working with the Tel Aviv Municipality to ensure that over NIS 4 million were returned to exploited contract workers
- Running two successful social justice conferences, which drew hundreds of participants from all over the country

"Bema'aglei Tzedek is a unique example of how the combination of Jewish values and social justice can inspire young Jews both in Israel and around the world."

*- Alan Hoffmann, Director General,
Jewish Agency for Israel*

"Bema'aglei Tzedek is an unparalleled leader in galvanizing all sectors of Israel to realize the vision of a Jewish society rooted in values of justice, fairness, and concern for the other. Bema'aglei Tzedek is a vital force for bringing tikkun to the Israeli community."

*- Dr. Alisa Rubin Kurshan,
Senior Vice President,
UJA Federation of New York*



THE TAV CHEVRATI: CUISINE WITH A CONSCIENCE

Bema'aglei Tzedek is a pioneer in the field of ethical Kashrut. Our Tav Chevrati, a certificate granted free of charge to restaurants that respect the rights of their employees and are accessible to people with disabilities, is the first and most successful experiment in ethical Kashrut in the world. The Tav Chevrati is maintained by Bema'aglei Tzedek staff and a team of over 60 volunteers, including 15 volunteer supervisors who perform monthly spot checks of certified establishments.

To date, the Tav Chevrati has been awarded to **over 380 businesses** throughout Israel, including **one third of all restaurants in Jerusalem**. More than 20,000 consumers are exposed to the Tav every month and, for the first time, there is a waiting list of restaurants actively seeking the Tav.



Bema'aglei Tzedek high school students receiving an award at the Knesset for their activism

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2009-2010:

- Partnering with three of Israel's **major student festivals**, including running a massive Hebrew University student event on Yom Yerushalyim (Jerusalem Day), in which **thousands of students** ate in Tav-certified restaurants
- Giving **"Tav Talks"** to promote the Tav among Israeli school groups, youth movements, educators, IDF units, as well as summer and long-term programs from abroad
- Inspiring and advising Tav volunteers in a campaign to make Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus accessible to people with disabilities
- Ensuring that 100 restaurants and cafés in Jerusalem now have Braille and large print menus, making Jerusalem home to the **highest number of blind-accessible menus in the world**

IN THE PRESS:

The Tav Chevrati has established partnerships with GoJerusalem.com; TimeOut Magazine; City Mouse, a major resource for culture and events in Israel; and Al Hashulchan, a culinary magazine which issued a special supplement for socially responsible restaurants co-sponsored by the Tav Chevrati.

"In Jerusalem we have a lot of workers from East Jerusalem who are uneducated about their rights and in many cases afraid to approach their employer for fear of losing their jobs. This is a targeted sector of employees that really need information. In one case, a young worker told me he made 'minimum wage,' when in fact he was making NIS 18.50 an hour. When I told him minimum wage is NIS 20.70, he was in shock. That showed me there is a lot of work needed here just to get the basics down."

Excerpt from an interview with Tzuriel Schoffman who oversees the Tav Chevrati's contact with restaurant workers and employers in Jerusalem

THE CONTRACT WORKERS' INITIATIVE:

Giving Voice to the Voiceless

In Israel, only 22 government-appointed supervisors oversee a workforce of close to three million people. As such, more than 40% of the workforce does not receive its legally-mandated rights. Two hundred thousand Israelis are employed by manpower companies, primarily in the fields of security and cleaning. Most of these "contract workers" are new immigrants who lack basic Hebrew and are thus particularly susceptible to exploitation at the hands of corrupt employers.

Bema'aglei Tzedek offers a unique model for ensuring the rights of contract workers, which places the responsibility for their protection in the hands of the consumer. Our advocates do not work with manpower companies, but with institutions that hire their services, such as schools and municipalities, helping them create infrastructures for supervising the conditions of their employees.

EMPLOYMENT WATCHDOGS:

Empowering Youth to Make a Difference

Bema'aglei Tzedek trains high school students to act as "watchdogs" for the custodians and security guards working in their own schools. As part of their training, students are taught how to: look for discrepancies in a custodian or guard's pay slip; inform custodians and guards about their rights; advocate on behalf of these workers to principals and other school authorities; and organize various awareness-generating activities within the school. This initiative creates a network of high school students who are well-versed in Israeli labor laws and are deeply passionate about lobbying on behalf of workers' rights.

Spearheading Change in Society at Large

Bema'aglei Tzedek also redresses exploitation of contract workers on the municipal and national level, by lobbying for better legislation and working together with CEOs of companies and public institutions to ensure that their cleaning and security staff are afforded their due rights.

Jerusalem: Four years ago, Bema'aglei Tzedek's advocates convinced the Jerusalem municipality to institute checks on the rights of the cleaning staff working in Jerusalem schools. This year, as a result of additional lobbying efforts, the municipality committed to expanding this model to include cleaning staff and security guards on the premises of official municipality buildings. To mark this achievement, Bema'aglei Tzedek ran a day-long seminar for all security guards employed by the Jerusalem municipality, informing them of their rights.

Tel Aviv: Bema'aglei Tzedek brought about a major change in the bidding procedure for contract work conducted in Tel Aviv, requiring the municipality to set standards of fair labor practices within the manpower companies it hires. As a result of this model, 800 workers received NIS 4,000 of retroactive payment, as well as an additional NIS 300-500 per month. All 800 workers now also hold active pension plans. Altogether, over NIS 4 million were returned to exploited contract workers in the Tel Aviv municipality this year.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2009-2010:

- The appointment of an internal supervisor for contract workers' rights at Yad Vashem
- The continuation of a battle against exploitation in Israel's National Insurance Agency, Bituach Leumi, which has included petitions, a public demonstration, and a Knesset-sponsored inquiry
- The publication and distribution of a new informational pamphlet to 1,500 workers and employers

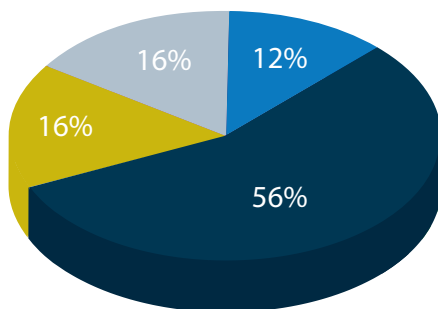
WIDENING THE CIRCLES: EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Bema'aglei Tzedek aims not only to change the reality on the ground, but also to shift national discourse, through a wide variety of educational programming, from "accessibility tours" to seminars that use Jewish holidays as a springboard for exploring our relationship to the "other." These programs, each rooted in Jewish sources, reach youth and adults, secular and religious, from every region of the country, as well as visitors from abroad.

This year alone, Bema'aglei Tzedek's educators ran 151 educational programs, reaching over 8,000 young Jews.

Participants in Educational Programs:

Breakdown of populations



■ Secular ■ Religious ■ Mixed ■ Other

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2009-2010:

- Seminars in partnership with the city of Holon, including special programming for Passover and Shavuot, reaching over 2,000 students and educators
- Workshops for bat-mitzvah students looking to integrate Jewish values of justice into their bat-mitzvah learning and ceremonies
- Tikkun Leil Shavuot, all-night Jewish social justice learning sessions, attended by 1,000 people throughout the country

A Meaningful Fast: Bema'aglei Tzedek's Conferences

Every year, Bema'aglei Tzedek runs two large-scale conferences linked to fast days on the Jewish calendar, promoting a tradition of devoting public fast days to communal and individual introspection.

- This year's **10th of Tevet conference, entitled, "All Rights Reserved?!"**, was attended by more than 500 people. The conference focused on a variety of issues related to the Israeli workforce, including foreign workers, workers' unions, Fair Trade, equitable access to work, contract workers, and child labor.

- On July 29, **our 17th of Tammuz conference** was held at Jerusalem's International Convention Center. Bem'aglei Tzedek partnered with two other non-profits, Gvanim and Bat Ami, to tackle the important issue of integration of people with disabilities in society and national service. Over 700 people attended the conference, which began with small learning sessions co-led by youth with and without disabilities.

>> Jerusalem mayor, Nir Barkat at the 10th of Tevet conference holding a Bem'aglei Tzedek award honoring the Jerusalem municipality for improving its treatment of contract workers.



MEET SOME OF OUR EDUCATORS



Yael Wolfenson

Originally from Rishon Letziyon, Yael received her bachelor's degree in political science and psychology from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Yael has been involved in formal education for many years, working with youth on issues of citizenship and democracy, social justice and Judaism, and civic involvement. This year, she led a Bema'aglei Tzedek activist youth group, which addressed issues of exploitation of contract workers.



Noa Fuxman

A native of the Galilee, Noa participated in the Ma'ayan program at Kibbutz Ein Hanetziv, which combines intense Jewish text study with full army service. Noa later studied in the alumnae program at Ein Hanetziv, while teaching new immigrants who are in the process of converting to Judaism. She went on to receive her bachelor's degree in philosophy, political science and economics at Hebrew University. Noa began volunteering with Bema'aglei Tzedek as a student at Hebrew University, running educational programs and coordinating our student chapter on the university's Mt. Scopus campus. She recently received her teaching certification from Machon Kerem, the Institute for Humanistic Jewish Education.



Ori Gil

Ori grew up in the northern moshav Avi-Chayil. He participated in Nachshon: The Israeli Midrasha for Communal Leadership, the first secular, pre-army Mechina program in Israel. Ori served as an officer in the Israeli Air Force and, following his army service, moved to Jerusalem to study philosophy and Jewish thought at Hebrew University. Today, he is completing his teacher's certification at Machon Kerem and is forging his path in the world of education.



OUR FUNDING STRATEGIES

Promoting transparency: Bema'aglei Tzedek believes in the importance of transparency and providing donors with up-to-date information. As such, all of our financial documents, from the organization's inception until today, can be found on our website. Bema'aglei Tzedek was also awarded the "seal of transparency" from Midot, which assesses and ranks Israeli NGOs.

Enabling small change to make a big difference: Bema'aglei Tzedek believes in increasing the *ma'agalim* (circles) of involvement, empowering as many people as possible to take small actions in their everyday lives to effect change. Our funding strategy reflects this belief. Bema'aglei Tzedek actively encourages online donations – big and small – and is featured on websites such as **JGooders**, **Litrom** and **IsraelGives**. Bema'aglei Tzedek was also chosen by a public committee headed by former president of the Supreme Court, Justice Meir Shamgar, to be part of a unique initiative called "Round Up Israel," which enables holders of Israeli credit cards to round up every credit card transaction and donate the difference to charities of their choice.

Increasing revenue through fees-per-services and profit-generating activities: Over the last three years, Bema'aglei Tzedek has made a concerted effort to diversify our revenue sources. This year, fees from our educational seminars, as well as sales from the social justice Haggadah supplement, represent 23% of our total budget.



OUR PARTNERS IN 2009-2010:

- > The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco
- > The Jewish Federation of St. Louis
- > The Jerusalem Foundation
- > The Stichting Levi Lassen Foundation
- > The UJA-Federation of New York
- > The Charles H. Revson Foundation
- > Matan: Investing in the Community
- > Numerous private donors in Israel and throughout the world

OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Shlomi Avramzon, Asaf Banner, Shmuli Bing, Efrat Degani-Toperoff, Pini Lozowick, Chili Tropper



MEET OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dyonna Ginsburg assumed leadership of Bema'aglei Tzedek in October 2008, after having served on the board of the organization since its inception. Upon completing her bachelor's degree in political science at Columbia University, Dyonna made aliyah in 2002 and obtained a master's degree in Jewish Education from Hebrew University.

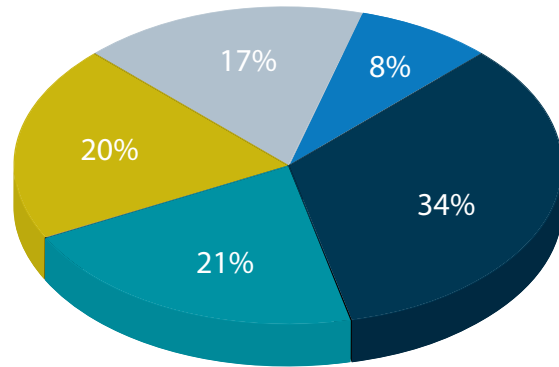
From 2003-2006, Dyonna served as International Director for Yavneh Olami, a student organization based in Jerusalem, and from 2006-2008, she served as Senior Advisor to the Director of the Education Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel. In 2008 Dyonna was awarded the World Council of Jewish Communal Service's Ted Comet Exemplar Award for Outstanding Leadership in Strengthening the Jewish People.

BEMA'AGLEI TZEDEK'S FUNDING*

Annual Budget 2009 = \$408,960

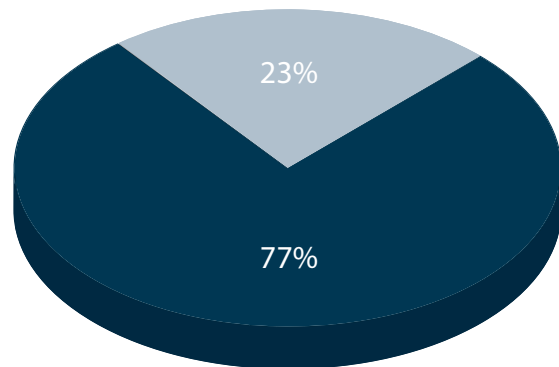
Expenditures

- Education
- Tav Chevrat
- Advocacy for Exploited Workers
- Overhead
- Awareness-raising activities (conferences, publications, etc.)

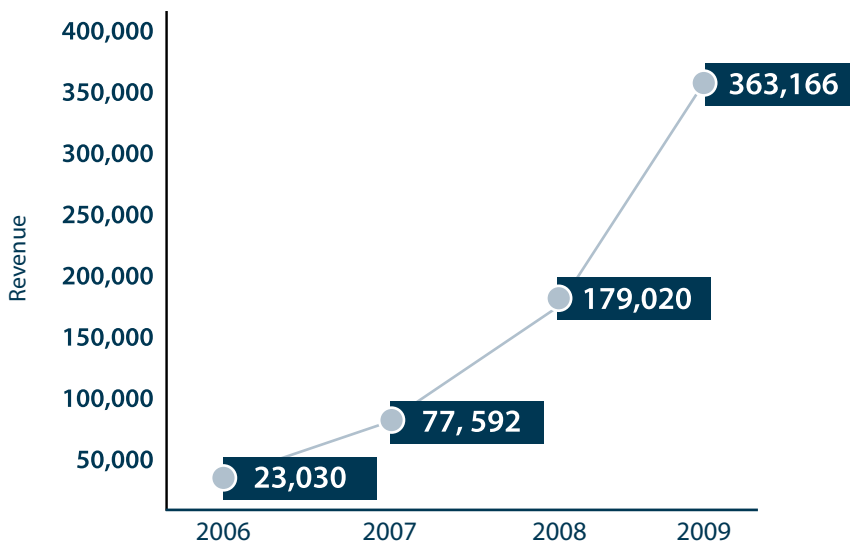


Income

- Donations: Federations/Foundations, private philanthropy
- Fees per services



Revenue through fees-per-services (NIS)



MAKING ISRAEL ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

90% of public institutions in Israel are not wheelchair-accessible. Bema'aglei Tzedek operates in a variety of ways to change this reality:

Accessibility Tours

Believing that "where you sit determines where you stand," Bema'aglei Tzedek runs accessibility tours of main thoroughfares in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, enabling participants to explore a bustling city street from the vantage point of a wheelchair and learn about issues of accessibility first-hand. In 2009-2010, we ran 29 tours for Israeli youth, students, army officers, and educators, as well as overseas Israel programs such as Pardes, Hebrew Union College, Ramah Seminar, and Young Judaea.

Youth Empowering Youth: Accessibility Advocates

This year, one of Bema'aglei Tzedek's youth activist groups focused on making Jerusalem more accessible. Upon discovering that Jerusalem's only bowling alley was inaccessible to people with disabilities, the teens approached the owner of the bowling alley, and convinced him to build a ramp. To celebrate their success, Bema'aglei Tzedek youth and peers from Beit Hagalgalm, an organization for young people with disabilities, threw a party at the alley – where, for the first time, the new friends could all bowl together.

"I was totally taken with these kids. They did not come shouting or protesting. They came as friends. We talked, and they put forth their ideas with such passion that I knew this was the right thing to do."

*-Yoav Svolohi, Owner,
Bowling Lev Talpiot*



In a relatively short period of time, Bema'aglei Tzedek has succeeded in making a tangible and significant impact on Israeli society, improving the lives of thousands of people and raising a new generation of Israeli youth who are passionate about Tzedek and Tikun Olam.

The impact can be measured quantitatively – over 380 Tav-certified restaurants, 8,000 participants in our educational programs, and millions of shekels returned to exploited workers. But it is also felt in other, less concrete ways: a university student who enthusiastically asks to see the Tav Chevrat certificate in her favorite café; an IDF soldier who appreciates the deep connection between Jewish tradition and social justice; a school custodian who rejoices as the students who fought to improve his working conditions throw him a surprise birthday party.

In the coming year, we look forward to breaking new ground, reaching out to thousands more Israelis, and engaging those already involved in deeper and more meaningful ways.

"We are grateful for the support of our numerous donors and volunteers in Israel and around the world - partners who enable us to ever widen the circles of justice."

- Bema'aglei Tzedek staff





"Bema'aglei Tzedek represents one of the most important change agents in Israeli society today. It presents a clear message to the entire Jewish world: we must connect Torah, morality, and tikkun olam."

*- Rabbi Yuval Cheslow,
head of the Hesder Yeshiva in Petach Tikvah*

"Bema'aglei Tzedek fosters a more human, just, equal, and Jewish state that pays heed to the distress of its people, and is not satisfied with the status quo, but rather works to change it. Let's hope that the circles of Bema'aglei Tzedek continue to widen and grow!"

*- Dr. Aviad Hacohen,
Dean, Sha'arei Mishpat College*

"Bema'aglei Tzedek gives me hope day in and day out that Israel is on its way to a better civil society infused with social responsibility. It is a creative group of people who are committed to Israel's future and to tirelessly working on behalf of the collective. I've participated in Bema'aglei Tzedek for years and find it to be the most meaningful volunteer work I can do."

*- Aharon Horwitz,
co-Director, Presentense Group*

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