



# EXPERIENCING ISRAEL IN REAL TIME:

The Causes and Consequences  
of a Masa Israel Journey



## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the mission and vision of Masa Israel Journey is the promise to “live it like a local” – to gain an authentic experience of living in Israel over an extensive period of time. Instead of discovering Israel through the windows of a tour bus or through the facilitation of a tour guide, Masa promises a direct, often unmediated encounter with Israeli people, society and culture over a period of weeks and months.

Masa also promises other experiences and outcomes, specifically through exploring Jewish peoplehood and Jewish identity, and through stimulating personal and professional and growth. This report does not address those dimensions of the Masa experience. It focuses instead on **MASA AS AN ISRAEL EXPERIENCE**. It concentrates on what research reveals that Masa participants seek from their experience in Israel, how they relate to Israel while they’re in the country, in what ways participants’ knowledge of and attitudes towards Israel are shifted, and if and how Israel continues to be part of their lives once they return home.

This report builds on a previous study of Masa alumni and of a comparison-group of individuals who applied to a Masa program but then did not take part. It draws on two important new sources of data that have never previously been collected: a survey of Masa participants just before they started a program (in this instance, between July 2014 and June 2015) and a second survey of the same people eight months after they returned home (between August 2015 and March 2016).<sup>1</sup>

**These data make it possible to track in real time which understandings of Israel, which attitudes towards it and which Israel-related behaviors are changed among hundreds of Masa participants.**

<sup>1</sup> Pre/post data collection involves asking respondents the same questions about their thoughts and actions at different moments in time. Comparing respondents’ answers in this way is widely viewed as a gold standard in program evaluation, relative to asking individuals to reflect retrospectively on how much they perceive their thoughts and actions to have changed over time.



## THE PARTICIPANTS

Between two and four weeks before the start of their program, surveys were sent to 10,108 individuals who participated in Masa-supported programs during the 2014-2015 academic year. 2,435 people (24% of participants) completed the survey. The programs in which these participants took part started at different times during the academic year and lasted for between four months and twelve months. Eight months after returning home, all participants were sent a post-program survey, which 2,257 people (22% of the

sample) completed. **In total, 775 individuals (65% female, 35% male) completed both the pre-program and post-program surveys.** These individuals constitute the core group of Masa alumni investigated in this report.

The survey respondents were evenly distributed across the program areas supported by Masa.

38%

Took part in programs at Yeshivot and religious seminaries, or in youth group programs (what Masa classifies as **Group A** programs). These programs are assumed to attract participants who are highly engaged in Jewish life and are connected to Israel before they arrive for their Masa program.

32%

Took part in career development programs, which include internships, academic, professional development, and leadership programs, as well as other miscellaneous programs for college-level and post-college participants (what Masa classifies as **Group B** programs). These programs are assumed to attract participants who are less engaged in Jewish life and Israel.

30%

Came from Russia or France and took part in programs catering to individuals who are considering making Aliyah (what Masa classifies as **Group C** programs). For these participants, the Masa experience functions as a prelude or “trial run” to spending the rest of their lives in Israel.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

### Educational Status

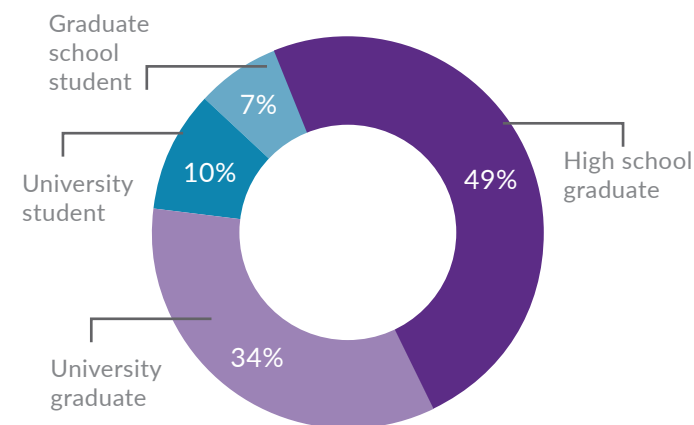
The educational status of the survey respondents reflects the balance of program offerings currently supported by Masa, with **just over half of the respondents being either gap-year or undergraduate students.**

### Jewish Background and Experience

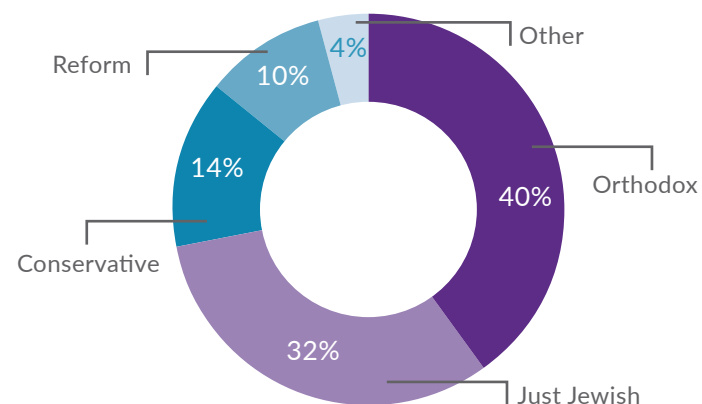
Data about the Jewish background and experiences of participants indicate that a majority of them came to Masa with extensive prior Jewish experience and/or they identify with traditional Jewish denominations. Nevertheless, 32% of survey respondents classified themselves as Just Jewish, **and 22% reported not having participated in Jewish day school, supplementary school, youth group or camp of any kind.** A significant minority of Masa participants, therefore, whether from North America or other parts of the world (especially the Former Soviet Union) **were exposing themselves to a genuinely novel educational and Jewish experience in terms of their own educational biographies.** Notably, the great majority of respondents (85%) had been to Israel at least once before.

**50%** Jewish day school  
**37%** Jewish day camp  
**48%** Jewish overnight camp  
**53%** Jewish youth group  
**22%** None of the above

### Educational Status



### Jewish Denomination



## WHY GO ON MASA? IT'S PRIMARILY, BUT NOT ONLY, ABOUT ISRAEL

Masa Israel Journey serves as a platform for a great variety of program experiences. Some programs focus on the intense study of traditional Jewish text or the exploration of Jewish tradition, others are university-based semester abroad programs that provide a conventional academic experience in a distinct cultural context, some emphasize opportunities to engage in social justice activities, and yet others promise career advancement through internships or the study of a particular profession. Pre-program survey data reveal that while participants' motivations for enrolling in programs are as diverse as the programs themselves, having the opportunity to **experience life in Israel** is an interest common to almost all participants. Asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a set of 21 statements about their motivations for applying to a Masa program,

**"I wanted to experience living in Israel" was one of the top five motivations for respondents across all program types.**

And yet, as Table 1 demonstrates on the following page, wanting "to experience living in Israel" was not on average the top motivation for coming on a Masa program for the participants in many types of programs. Sometimes it was superseded by a more intellectual Israel-focused concern – "wanting to learn more about Israel" – and sometimes it was superseded by motivations that were not directly related to Israel at all, such as "gaining valuable work experience" or having "fun and adventure."

The following statements, shared by Masa alumni in our previous study, reflect the diversity of participants' motivations for spending time in Israel:

*"I was given the opportunity to be in Israel and to decide what Israel meant to me and see what it was to live as an Israeli."*

*"I went to a Yeshiva because I was already solid in my Jewish identity and wanted to learn more Talmud and Halacha L'Maaseh."*

*"I went to an Israeli program, because I knew I wanted to make Aliyah afterwards."*

*"I originally went to Israel wishing to become a rabbi."*

*"I came in to [university in Israel] for my gap year thinking it would be a great orientation to studying the Middle East, improving my Hebrew and Arabic."*

# TABLE 1: STRONGEST AND WEAKEST MOTIVATIONS FOR GOING ON MASA

| Groups                     | Highest Motivations (highest from left to right) – on a scale of 1 to 5 |                                    |                                      |  |                                      | Lowest Motivation  |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| A Torani                   | Strengthen Judaism (4.63)   | Learn more about Judaism (4.49)    | Connect to roots/ heritage (4.44)    | Experience living in Israel (4.36)                     | Get to know myself better (4.34)     | Having concerns about Israel and wanting answers (2.55)  |
| A Youth Movement           | Have fun and adventure (4.72)   | Learn more about Israel (4.65)     | Get to know myself better (4.51)     | Opportunity to live abroad (4.51)                      | Meet other Jews (4.51)               | Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel (2.74) |
| B Gap                      | Have fun and adventure (4.54)   | Get to know myself better (4.46)   | Experience living in Israel (4.29)   | Learn more about Israel (4.25)                         | Contribute to Israeli society (4.23) | Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel (2.71) |
| B Academic                 | Learning more about Israel (4.45)                                       | Experience living in Israel (4.39) | Opportunity to live abroad (4.39)    | Develop professionally (4.30)                          | Have fun and adventure (4.26)        | Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel (3.27) |
| B Internship               | Gain valuable work experience (4.67)                                    | Experience living in Israel (4.59) | Opportunity to live abroad (4.56)    | Develop professionally (4.52)                          | Get to know myself better (4.50)     | Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel (3.16) |
| B Professional Development | Opportunity to live abroad (4.60)                                       | Experience living in Israel (4.57) | Get to know myself better (4.37)     | Have fun and adventure (4.34)                          | Learn more about Israel (4.31)       | Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel (2.97) |
| B Service                  | Experience living in Israel (4.60)                                      | Opportunity to live abroad (4.58)  | Learn more about Israel (4.50)       | Have fun and adventure (4.48)                          | Gain valuable work experience (4.44) | Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel (2.48) |
| C French                   | Experience living in Israel (4.50)                                      | Learn more about Israel (4.31)     | Explore option of Aliyah (4.31)      | Prepare myself for living permanently in Israel (4.21) | Connect to roots/ heritage (4.17)    | Making a difference in the world (4.58)                  |
| C FSU                      | Experience living in Israel   | Learn more about Israel (4.42)     | Gain valuable work experience (4.32) | Get to know myself better (4.26)                       | Develop professionally (4.19)        | Expressing my love of Judaism (2.81)                     |

Israel
  Professional Development
  Self-Development
  Judaism
  Aliyah
  Adventure

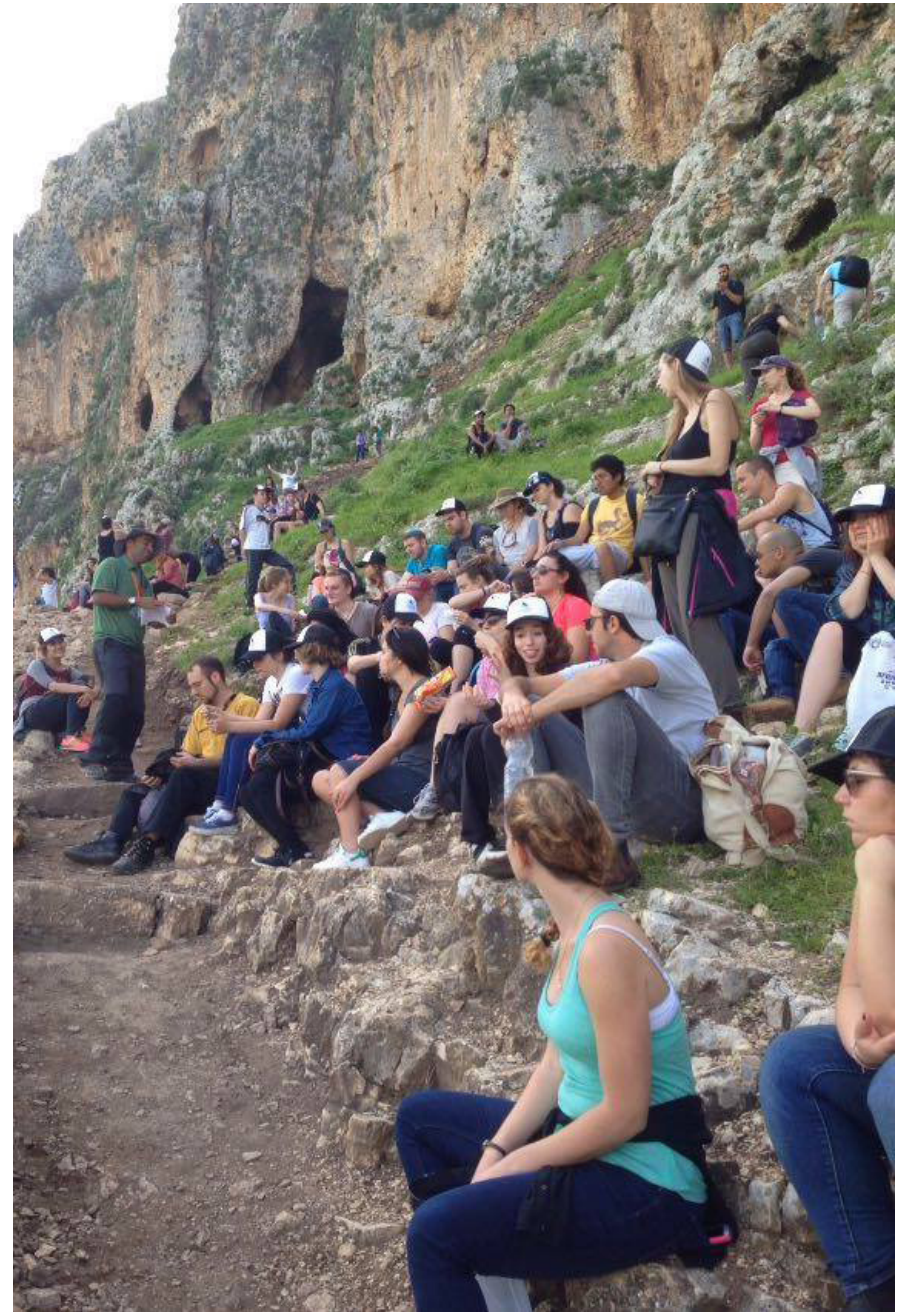
## STRONGEST AND WEAKEST MOTIVATIONS FOR GOING ON MASA

Table 1 illustrates that whatever the differences between the variety of Masa programs, all the programs appeal to participants for at least one shared reason: they all promise an authentic Israel experience.

**Whatever the specific hook that catches their applicants, Israel is an important part of what holds their attention.**

This finding may seem to state the obvious. Why, after all, would someone choose voluntarily to spend at least four months living in a country if they do not have some strong interest in that country? And yet, as obvious as it may seem, this is indeed a finding of significance. It indicates that Masa programs attract participants who have more than just a casual interest in Israel. Enrolling in a Masa program requires a higher level of investment and interest than does a ten-day program, such as Birthright, where all expenses are paid. It is no wonder therefore that 85% of survey respondents have visited Israel at least once before, and of those who've visited Israel before, 64% have visited Israel more than one time.

**These programs are offering to deepen a connection with Israel and to contribute a textured nuance to this connection, not to create one that didn't previously exist.**





# PROGRAM IMPACT

Having established how important the opportunity to experience Israel is in attracting participants, we turn now to considering the consequences of spending time in the country. We turn to the outcomes produced by these experiences.



## KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, THEN BEHAVIORS

In both the pre-program and post-program surveys, 11 question-items explored the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills of participants in relation to Israel. Across the sample as a whole, aggregating responses from all programs, **there were statistically significant increases in eight of these Israel-related items from one survey to the next.**

Two aspects of these findings are striking: first, the relatively positive responses to these questions before participants even came to Israel, such as in being able to “articulate what Israel means to me” (76%), “feeling at home in Israel” (72%), and “feeling connected to Israelis” (69%). These responses express positive attitudes that help explain what brought participants to Israel in the first place. In fact, it’s suprising that although these responses started at such a high baseline, they still increased significantly and were not limited by a ceiling effect.

**Evidently, time on Masa programs is able to deepen the connection to Israel of those who already come to the country feeling quite at home there.**

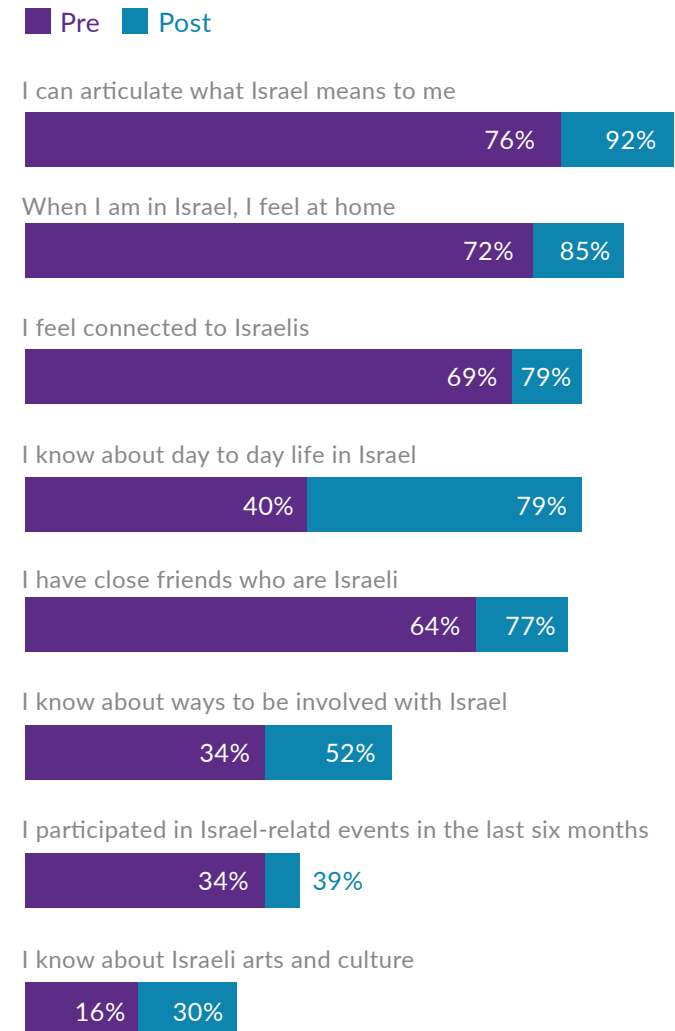
For example, one participant who had previously spent time in Israel, shared:

*“I now connect to Israel on a more personal, relatable level, as I have actually lived there for an extended period of time, rather than just frequent visits.”*

Note on chart: For attitudinal items, those who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” are displayed; for knowledge-related items, those who selected “a lot” or “a great deal” are displayed; for behavioral items, those who selected “often” or “always” are displayed.

## Areas of Greatest Change

Pre and Post: Percentage of participants who chose the two highest scale points



## KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, THEN BEHAVIORS

A second, related, point is that these general patterns reveal that participants were most changed in terms of what they knew about and understood about Israel, as reflected in statements such as “knowing about day to day life in Israel” and “knowing about ways to be involved with Israel”, where there were increases of between 50% and 100% between the pre-program and post-program survey. The starting point may have been lower, compared to some of the attitudinal items, but the growth produced was greater.

Overall, as can be seen from the figure on the previous page, the changes stimulated by time on a Masa program were greatest in the cognitive realm, then attitudinally and then behaviorally – a pattern that is consistent with general patterns in behavioral psychology.

People’s idea shift first, followed by their attitudes and then the ways in which they behave, as participants showed they themselves understood when sharing the following reflections:

*“My experience in Israel allowed me to see first-hand what it is like to be a citizen there rather than a visitor. Taking an Israel advocacy course, attending seminars, and being a participant on the IDF program Marva helped me gain the knowledge and confidence that I needed to become more involved in Jewish and Israeli advocacy at my university and in my community.”*

*“I feel a much closer connection to Israel. I feel that it is my home, and whenever I hear about things that happen there it means a lot more to me than it did before. I am much more invested in knowing what is going on there. I am on at least ten Israel-related Facebook groups.”*



## WIDESPREAD IMPACT – ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WITH LESS ENGAGED JEWISH BACKGROUNDS

To explore for whom Masa’s impact is greatest, we look closely now at the participants in what Masa classifies as Group B programs, that is, academic programs, internships, and professional development experiences. The diversity of personal Jewish background is greater among respondents in these programs than among those who participate in Group A or Group C programs.

Surprisingly, when comparing the respondents within the different Group B programs in terms of their prior Jewish experiences, the outcomes observed were fairly consistent.<sup>2</sup> It is true that those in this sample who came from more highly engaged backgrounds did indeed offer more positive responses to the pre-program survey; typically 20% more of them responded at the two highest points on the scale than did those from less engaged backgrounds. And yet when pre-program and post-program responses of those with more and with less engaged backgrounds were compared, the increase was of a similar scale of significance.

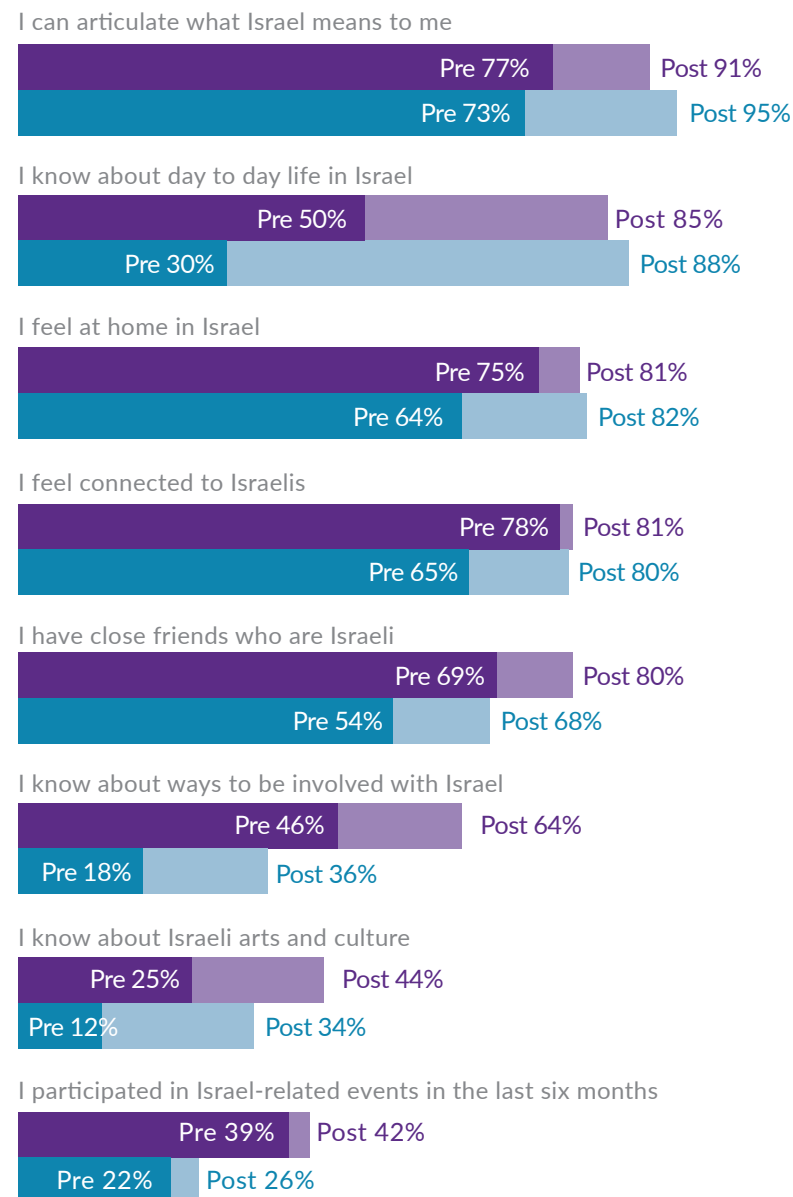
Intuitively, one might expect that those with more room to grow (those with less engaged Jewish backgrounds) would grow more. In this instance, that has happened much of the time, but not always.

**A Masa experience has been impactful in terms of Israel-related knowledge, attitude and behavior, for all participants, whatever their Jewish background, and this is especially so for those with less intensive prior Jewish experiences.**

<sup>2</sup> The prior Jewish backgrounds of survey respondents was determined using a Cluster Analysis based on participants’ reported prior Jewish educational experiences—whether they took part in a Jewish overnight camp, youth group, supplementary school, and/or day school.

## Israel Outcomes among Group B Participants, in Relation to Prior Jewish Background

Pre and Post: Percentage of participants who chose the two highest scale points ■ Higher Engaged ■ Lower Engaged



## DIFFERENT PROGRAMS, CONSISTENT OUTCOMES

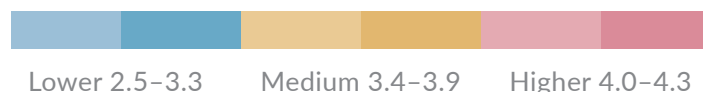
Just as Masa's impact is experienced in generally consistent ways by participants of dissimilar backgrounds, so too different kinds of Masa programs are associated with similarly consistent outcomes. Again, focusing on Group B programs, where there is a greater diversity of program types than in other organizational categories, the findings are striking; **there was a statistically significant increase in participants' Israel-related knowledge and attitudes in almost all Group B programs.** (Israel-related behaviors demonstrated an increased trend following the program, but this increase was only found to be statistically significant among internship program participants.) We suggest that these findings are striking, first because these particular programs are quite different from one another; they include, for example, university, work-based and volunteering programs. As such, though they may be different in their make-up and mission, they still produce similar Israel-related outcomes. Secondly, although the programs don't have the same consistent effect when it comes to Jewish outcomes (not shown here), the Israel-related outcomes they generate are much more consistently positive.

A last, unexpected, feature of these data is worth highlighting. Despite the greater diversity of their Jewish backgrounds, the levels of knowledge and attachment to Israel reported by Group B participants *before* the start of the program displayed no statistically

significant difference from the levels of knowledge and attachment reported by the aggregate of participants in Group A programs. This was surprising given that on the whole, Group B participants had less extensive prior Jewish educational experiences compared to Group A participants, in terms of attending Jewish day schools, supplementary schools, and overnight camps.

Mean Scores of Categorized Israel Outcomes for Different Types of Group B Programs<sup>3</sup>

|           | Academic<br>(n=66) |      | Gap<br>(n=36) |      | Internship<br>(n=63) |      | Professional<br>Development<br>(n=35) |      | B Service<br>(n=52) |      |
|-----------|--------------------|------|---------------|------|----------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|---------------------|------|
|           | Pre                | Post | Pre           | Post | Pre                  | Post | Pre                                   | Post | Pre                 | Post |
| Knowledge | 3.4                | 3.9  | 3.4           | 4.1  | 3.3                  | 3.9  | 3.2                                   | 3.7  | 3.1                 | 3.8  |
| Attitudes | 4.1                | 4.2  | 3.8           | 4.3  | 4.0                  | 4.1  | 3.9                                   | 4.3  | 3.6                 | 3.9  |
| Behaviors | 3.3                | 3.2  | 3.3           | 3.5  | 2.8                  | 3.1  | 2.8                                   | 2.8  | 2.5                 | 2.7  |



<sup>3</sup> "Knowledge" includes being able to articulate what Israel means to oneself and knowing about day-to-day life in Israel, Israeli arts and culture, and ways to be involved with Israel. "Attitudes" include feeling at home in Israel, connected to Israelis, and having close friends who are Israeli. "Behaviors" include participating in Israel-related events.



## CHANGED BY ISRAEL, IRRESPECTIVE OF PRIOR MOTIVATIONS

A Factor Analysis<sup>4</sup> of the motivation statements in the pre-program survey reflected two over-arching Israel-related motivations to participate in a Masa program: (i) authentically experiencing Israel and (ii) contributing to Israeli society.<sup>5</sup> While most individuals expressed strong interests in these two realms, there were also those who were less interested in these purposes and were drawn to a Masa program for other reasons too. In considering the eight separate Israel-related outcomes as one large outcome that symbolizes overall growth in Israel-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, we see the following:

**All respondents—regardless of whether they reported low, medium, or high prior interest in authentically experiencing Israel and contributing to Israeli society—exhibited statistically significant growth in Israel-related outcomes eight months following their Masa program.**

As expected, those who were less interested in these goals reported lower levels of Israel-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors prior the program, as reflected in the relatively lower mean values; however, these individuals still grew in these areas despite being less interested in them. Their motivations when enrolling in a particular program did not predict the outcomes they experienced.

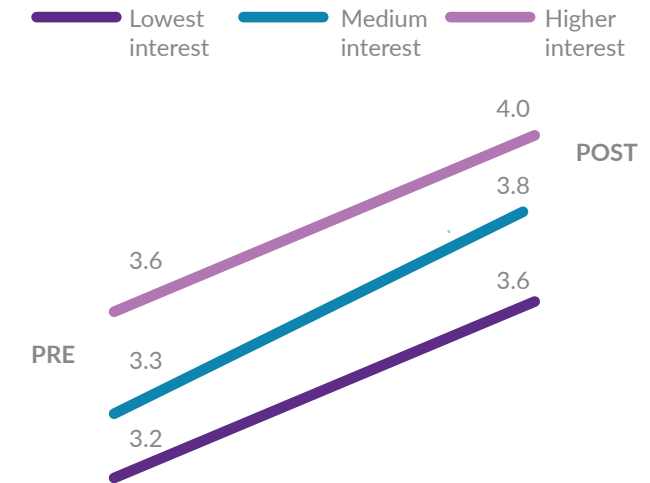
<sup>4</sup> Factor analysis is a method for looking at underlying patterns behind responses to different survey questions.

<sup>5</sup> The factor named “authentically experiencing Israel” was composed of the following motivation statements: “I want to learn more about Israel,” “I want exposure to a different side of Israel than is portrayed in the media,” and “I want to experience living in Israel.” The factor named “contributing to Israeli society” was composed of the following motivation statements: “I want to join people working for change in Israel” and “I want to contribute to Israeli society.”

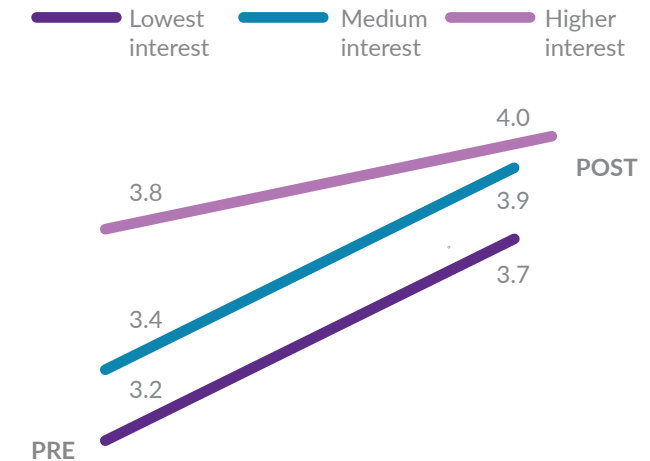
## Israel-Related Motivations and Outcomes

Increase in mean values of outcome from “pre” to “post”  
(Scale of 1 to 5)

### Motivation 1: Authentically Experiencing Israel



### Motivation 2: Contributing to Israeli Society



## MASA: ON-RAMP OR SPRINGBOARD TO ALIYAH?

Only a minority of the participants in Masa come to Israel with the intention of making Aliyah (emigrating to Israel) or of exploring the possibility of doing so. “Preparing myself for living permanently in Israel” was the lowest ranked motivation for enrolling in a Masa program among those who participated in youth movement, gap year, academic, internship, professional development, and service programs.

Nevertheless, a third of the respondents from Group A and Group B programs did indicate before the start of the program that they intended to make Aliyah, whatever their immediate interests.

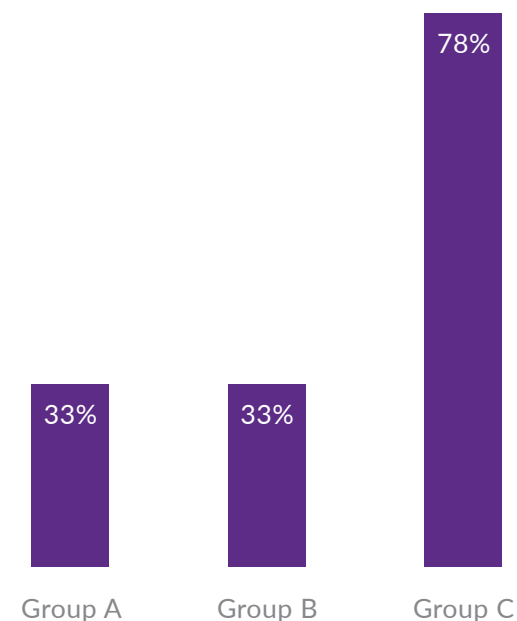
Among survey respondents who participated in programs specifically aimed at French or Russian-speakers, the situation was dramatically different.

Around 80% of French or Russian speaking respondents indicated that they planned to make Aliyah.

Participants in French-speaking groups specifically indicated that their top motivations for coming on the program included “exploring the option of Aliyah” and “preparing myself for living permanently in Israel.”

### Masa as Preparation for Aliyah

"I wanted to prepare myself for living in Israel permanently"  
Percent who selected "agree" or "strongly agree" in pre-trip survey



## ALIYAH RATES AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Eight months after the end of the program, a sizeable proportion of Masa alumni had settled in Israel, or were in the process of doing so. Among Russian and French speakers, and – more surprisingly – among participants in Group B programs, this was a fairly similar proportion to those who had intended to make Aliyah before the start of the program. While the proportions are lower among those who participated in Yeshiva or Youth Movement programs, at least one-in-ten of the respondents from these programs had nevertheless made Aliyah. These rates are exceptionally close to those we found among alumni in our previous retrospective study.

Digging more deeply into these data, we can identify what proportion of those people who settled in Israel were the individuals who had previously planned to come, or whether some of those who came had not previously intended to do so. The data indicate that among the different types of programs displayed above, **at least two-thirds of respondents who made Aliyah had indeed intended to do so prior to the program.** However, it is important to note that among Group B respondents who made Aliyah, **a third of them had not indicated that they intended to;** in fact, this resonates with “preparing myself for living permanently in Israel” reigning as the lowest ranked rationale for attending a Masa programs, as reported by Group B participants prior to their respective program.

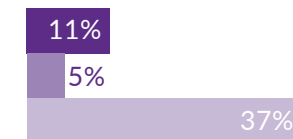
The finding that of those who made Aliyah, a third *did not* initially intend to, is particularly significant, and suggests that the Masa experience indeed impacted these participants not only in their attachment to Israel, but in their desire to settle in Israel, transforming their Masa experience of “living like a local” and contributing to Israeli society into their new reality.

*“[My involvement with Israel changed] very much. I made Aliyah, which I had never in my life considered doing until I came on a Masa Israel program. I learned a lot about Israel during the program and my feelings for the country developed considerably.”*

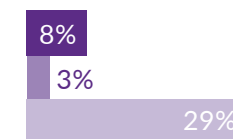
### Aliyah Rates among Survey Respondents

- Made Aliyah
- In process of making Aliyah
- Did not make Aliyah, but seriously considering it

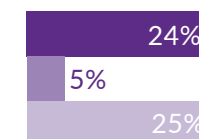
#### A Torani



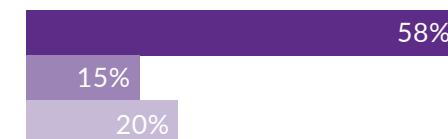
#### A Youth Movement



#### Group B



#### C French



#### C FSU



# CONCLUSIONS

The Masa experience deepens participants' connection to Israel through providing opportunities to think about, explore, and understand Israel in new, more personal ways.



## ACCOUNTING FOR IMPACT

There may be a self-fulfilling quality to the strong Israel-related outcomes associated with spending time on a Masa program. Survey respondents have indicated that many enroll first and foremost with the goal of experiencing life in Israel. This is what draws them to spending at least four months and often as long as a year in the country. No doubt, many of these participants set out to make sure that they find what they are looking for. Spending time on programs where there is both time and the opportunity to fulfill these objectives, that is what they successfully do. They truly experience the country for themselves, at their own pace.

And yet, as the philosopher of education John Dewey put it more than a century ago, experience and education are not the same thing; all experiences are not equally educative. The educational quality of experiences depends on the scaffolding and facilitation provided by educators. Providing emergent adults with opportunities to experience Israel for themselves is important but is not enough; it is necessary, but not sufficient.

Another important consideration in making sense of the strong positive Israel-related outcomes observed is that most of those who come on Masa programs do not come with some prior engagement with Israel. Even participants in some of the least traditional of programs often come with deep prior knowledge and understanding of Israel. This is one of the most unexpected findings of the study. These participants are not blank slates, and neither are they without pre-existing resources or animating questions of their own. They are already looking for something when they enroll in a program. They are coming back to Israel in search of something more.

Opportunity and interest, undoubtedly, are two of the main ingredients that account for a range of strong Israel-related outcomes. And yet, in combination, these elements are probably not strong enough to affect powerful outcomes. They require a catalyst if they are to be ignited. They require the facilitation of thoughtful mediators who know when to give learners space and when and where to probe with unexpected questions. In our previous retrospective study of alumni, the role played by such mediators was one of the facets of a Masa experience that alumni highlighted as having been important: people who created space for participants to discover Israel for themselves, and who were also available to help with thinking through tough questions and with making sense of nuanced experiences.

In this study, we have seen that the recollections of alumni were not merely rose-tinted reminiscences.

**In real time, we have seen that participants' understanding of and connection to Israel are indeed changed through the powerful combination of these elements, sometimes coming together in ways more powerful than they expected.**

This study has provided an indication of what is changed by spending time on a Masa program. We don't yet have an account of **how** exactly this change happens in real time, even while we now know what contributes to it. That, we hope, will be the focus of a future study.

APPENDIX A

# MASA'S IMPACT ON THE LOWER ENGAGED

How Participants with a Less Extensive Jewish Background  
Relate to Israel

## WHO ARE THE LOWER ENGAGED?

The broad diversity of Masa programs attracts individuals coming from a variety of Jewish backgrounds and connection to Jewish life. One way to assess participants' level of Jewish engagement is through their prior Jewish educational experiences—the number of years in which participants attended or worked at a Jewish day school, day camp, overnight camp, and youth group. Among of sample of 775 individuals who took part in a Masa program during the 2014-15 academic year, there were 169 participants (22%) who had not taken part in any of these experiences prior to their Masa program. A closer look at the composition of this group of participants reveals that more than half (59%) came from Russia or France and took part in programs catering to individuals who are considering making Aliyah (National programs), 34% took part in career development programs geared towards college-level and post-college participants (Discovery programs), and 7% took part in programs at Yeshivot, religious seminaries, or youth group organizations (Legacy programs).

Based on this distribution, when measuring Israel-related outcomes among participants with less extensive Jewish backgrounds, we are most interested in focusing on individuals who took part in career development programs (Discovery), since National-program participants are largely considering Aliyah already before the start of the program, and there are too few Legacy-program participants with a lesser-engaged Jewish profile. Since the sample of Discovery-program participants who never took part in a Jewish day school, day camp, overnight camp, or youth group is relatively small ( $n=58$ ), we must consider an analysis of the length of time in which participants were involved in these Jewish educational experiences, as an indicator of the extent of participants' Jewish background. Based on this analysis, of the sample of 252 Discovery participants, 165 (65%) were classified as having a lower-engaged Jewish profile (less involvement), and 87 (35%) were classified as having a higher-engaged Jewish profile (greater involvement).



## REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING

Before their Masa programs started, these lower-engaged participants cited the following top five motivations for enrolling in a Masa program: experiencing living in Israel, learning more about Israel, having the opportunity to live abroad, having fun and adventure, and getting to know themselves better. These participants were least interested in Masa as a way to prepare themselves for living in Israel permanently.

## MASA'S IMPACT

Eight months following their Masa program, these participants exhibited statistically significant growth in their knowledge about and connection to Israel. Particularly in terms of knowledge about day-to-day life in Israel, Israeli arts and culture, and ways to be involved with Israel, at least double — and in some cases, nearly triple — the number of participants reported that they knew a lot or a great deal about these topics after completing their Masa program compared to before the start of the program. Additionally, participants reported an increase in their ability to articulate what Israel means to them, feeling at home in Israel, and having close friends who are Israeli.

*Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree, before and after program*

I can articulate to others what Israel means to me



I know about day to day life in Israel



I feel at home in Israel



I have close friends who are Israeli



I know about ways to be involved with Israel



I know about Israeli arts and culture





APPENDIX B

# MASA'S IMPACT ON ALIYAH

Aliyah Rates among Masa Participants and Prior Motivations

Many Masa participants choose to make Aliyah following their experience in Israel. Among of sample of 775 individuals who took part in a Masa program during the 2014–15 academic year, a sizable proportion had settled in Israel eight months after the end of the program, or were in the process of doing so. Not surprisingly, Aliyah rates were highest among individuals who came from Russia or France, with respectively 73% and 80% of participants making Aliyah within a year after the program. Additionally, slightly less than a third of individuals who took part in college-level and post-college career development programs (Discovery programs) made Aliyah, and less than a fifth of participants from programs based at Yeshivot, religious seminaries, and youth groups (Legacy programs) made Aliyah.

Prior to the start of their Masa program, participants were asked to what extent they were interested in Masa as a way to prepare themselves for living permanently in Israel. In general, this motive was not found to be very popular, having been rated the lowest by participants from most programs. And yet, surprisingly, there were a handful of participants who made Aliyah or were in the process of doing so eight months after the program, who at the start of their program did not agree or strongly agree with the statement, “I want to prepare myself for living permanently in Israel.” In particular, among the “Olim” who took part in career development programs (Discovery), a third had not considered doing so at the start of their program.

| Program Type            | Percent of respondents who made Aliyah, or in process of doing so | Percent of “Olim” who had not strongly considered Aliyah before Masa |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Legacy - Torani         | 17%   | 21%  |
| Legacy - Youth Movement | 11%   | 0%   |
| Discovery               | 29%   | 33%  |
| National - French       | 73%   | 15%  |
| National - FSU          | 80%   | 15%  |

Along these lines, when exploring participants' motivations for enrolling in a Masa program, among those who made Aliyah after taking part in "Discovery" or Torani programs, preparing oneself for living permanently in Israel or exploring the option of Aliyah were not included in the top five motives selected by participants. However, "Olim" from these two program types identified experiencing living in Israel and learning more about Israel as two of their strongest interests, thus suggesting that time spent on a Masa program may contribute to

the decision to make Aliyah. As expected and based on their program design, French and Russian participants who made Aliyah following the program had already indicated they were interested in Aliyah before the start of the program; for these participants, Masa confirmed a journey they were already thinking seriously of taking.

| Groups of "Olim"              | Highest Motivations (highest from left to right) |                              |   |                               |   | Lowest Motivation                                |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Legacy - Torani (n=39)        | Strengthen Judaism                               | Experience living in Israel  | Learn more about Judaism                        | Connect to roots and heritage | Learn more about Israel                         | Having concerns about Israel and wanting answers |
| Legacy - Youth Movement (n=4) | Prepare myself for living permanently in Israel  | Meet other Jews              | Experience living in Israel                     | Learn more about Israel       | Have fun and adventure                          | Make a difference in the world                   |
| Discovery (n=70)              | Experience living in Israel                      | Get to know myself better    | Opportunity to live abroad                      | Gain valuable work experience | Learn more about Israel                         | Express love of Judaism                          |
| National - French (n=48)      | Experience living in Israel                      | Explore the option of Aliyah | Prepare myself for living permanently in Israel | Learn more about Israel       | Connect to roots and heritage                   | Make a difference in the world                   |
| National - FSU (n=121)        | Experience living in Israel                      | Learn more about Israel      | Gain valuable work experience                   | Get to know myself better     | Prepare myself for living permanently in Israel | Strengthen Judaism                               |

Israel
  Professional Development
  Self-Development
  Judaism
  Aliyah
  Adventure

