



“The Rising Discourse” Encounter Insights

An encounter between Israeli civil servants and American Jewish organizational leaders

The following document is based on notes taken throughout the process, surveys, and personal outreach to participants

Initial Basic Assumptions

- Showing up for a dialogue is an end in it of itself. At the same time, when individuals in positions of power and authority participate in dialogue, it raises the stakes and potential;
- There is value to dialogue in resolving conflict and ensuring continuity of the Jewish people;
- American Jewish professionals and Israeli government advisors and officials are and ought to see the other as colleagues;
- Everyone in this room came devoted to the future of Israel and the Jewish people – there are many different versions of what that future is and how to get there.

General Observations

- Language was viewed by the group as the most challenging barrier to dialogue. Americans came with an expectation for strong English by the Israeli participants and expressed surprise at level of Israelis' English.
- Side conversations brought about the greatest connections and surprises.
- The group had limited religious, tribal and political diversity. Israelis made up the center-left to right – inside and outside the coalition. Americans all worked for mainstream Jewish organizations. This was acknowledged throughout the Encounter.
- Before, during and after the Encounter, the American side assumed and expressed their high-level of familiarity with the other side (Israeli politics, Israel-American Jewry relations, Israeli policy issues), particularly in relation to their Israeli counterparts. In a follow-up survey, an American participant went so far as to say that the American side surpassed the Israelis, not only regarding American Jewry but, “in knowledge of Israeli society, government structures, politics, and culture.” They expressed their desire to “be heard” by the Israelis before, during, and after the Encounter.

- Israelis expressed gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity to participate despite receiving in some ways less (no flight, hotel, break from work) for participating. Overall, their feedback was more positive and emotionally neutral.
- Small group work (groups of four) vs. one-on-one or full group settings were most valued by participants

Evaluating Initial Goals

- **Establish new ties and working relationships between the participants**
 - "I now know who to call in the government." - an American participant
 - Both sides expressed (in the encounter and survey) that new personal and professional relationships were established
 - Success Indicator: Two Israeli participants invited their American counterparts for a tour of the Knesset. Americans still in Israel took up the offer.
- **Foster long-term relationships between rising players in Israel and the Jewish world.**
 - All participants surveyed said they would engage their offices/organizations on the experience
 - This is yet to be seen. Intentional follow-up and programming required to build on desired long-term effect
- **Generate consensus on how each side will consider, engage with, and cooperate**
 - Americans expressed a strong desire to be consulted by the Israelis
 - Israelis agreed (in theory) that they would consider and reach out to their American counterparts in future issues impacting American Jewry.
- **Develop best-practices, language, and ultimately, a model, around tailored "Jewish civil discourse," collaborative problem-solving and conflict transformation.**
 - This would require a deeper, longer process. With that said, the encounter showed the ability for two groups far apart to build bonds and work together.