Partnership 2000: The Next Stage
Building a Model Partnership

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Executive Summary

Background and Introduction

1. The goal of this report is to offer a strategic framework for the potential vision and structure of partnerships between Israeli and Diaspora communities, within the broader context of Partnership 2000 of the Jewish Agency (recently renamed as 'Partnership 3.0', hereinafter 'the Partnership(s). **This report seeks to answer the question: "What does a cutting edge, 21st century model partnership look like, and how can a given Partnership become one?"**

2. **This report is intended to offer principles and guidelines for a model partnership**. Implementing these ideas would require additional work on the part of the partnership at hand.

3. This report is based on the work done by the Reut Institute's team dealing with the future of Israel's relations with the Jewish world, and on dozens of conversations with lay leaders and professionals in a wide range of Partnerships.

Chapter 1: Broader Context: Major Trends Affecting the Jewish World

4. **The broader context for this report are the major trends affecting the Jewish world that are transforming the relations between Israel and Diaspora Jewry** and therefore also the work of the partnerships. **The most significant of these trends include**:

   - A call for a renewed Zionism, which emphasizes the concept of Peoplehood and blends it with Zionism, demanding greater focus on world Jewry;
   - Israel's economic success during an economic downturn in the USA replaces the 'Rich uncle-poor nephew' mindset with an expectation for synergy, mutuality and true partnership;
   - Relationship between Israel and Diaspora is shaped by multiple direct people-to-people and community-to-community connections instead of the previous old-boys-network where decisions were made by a few individuals at the leadership of organizations such as UJC (now JFNA) or JAFI;
   - A controversy around Israeli policies not only impedes on community-wide engagement with Israel, but also makes Israel a divisive issue in some synagogues;
   - The relationship between Jewish communities is moving from relationships between institutions to partnerships around issues.

   Six major issues prominently capture attention, energy and resources: Tikkun Olam, fighting anti-Semitism and Israel's delegitimization, embracing Jewish heritage, Israel, building prosperous and resilient communities and Hebrew.

5. **In order to thrive in this changing reality, partnerships need to adapt their model.** In general, organizations that will creatively embody the emerging trend will thrive, while those that will cling to the old mindset may find themselves declining in support base, resources and membership.

Chapter 2: What Does a Model Partnership Look Like?

6. **Hence, based on these trends, a model partnership should strive to meet as many of the following criteria as possible:**
   - Seek partnership, mutuality, and synergy between the two communities;
   - Hold the concept of Jewish Peoplehood as its core value;
   - Where possible, transcend the old 'rich uncle-poor nephew' mindset;
   - Gather around the six issues that are central to the Jewish world.
7. In general, **the basic quid-pro-quo of a partnership is the following**:
   - For the community in the US, the partnership fosters a deeper connection to Israel, enriches Jewish life, and strengthens Jewish identity.
   - On the Israeli side, the partnership shows Israelis the value of the Jewish Diaspora, instills a sense of Jewish Peoplehood and responsibility for the future of our people, and connects Israelis to their Judaism.

   Together, the partnership model connects people and institutions in the two communities, provides a model for operational and financial partnership and gives value to surrounding non-Jewish communities as well.

Towards the Next Stage of the Partnership Model: Leveraging Unique Assets

8. The Partnership 2000 (P2K) platform has gone through two main stages: Project Renewal during the 1970s-1980s and geographically connecting between regions during the 1990s-2000s.
9. **Today, partnerships are challenged to evolve into their third phase** i.e. leveraging the unique needs and assets of each community in a way that fosters synergy and brings mutual value.

Building a Unique Story based on Unique Assets

10. **Unique assets are special attributes that exist on each side of the partnership, which could be leveraged towards a healthy relationship.** Unique assets can be a leading institution, a geographic feature, a specific demography, or history and culture.
11. **The advantages of mapping and synergizing unique assets of regions stems from the ability to bring unique value.** In today's globalized world, in the absence of unique value, it is very difficult to be heard, get attention, mobilize people and raise funds.
12. **A unique 'story' emerges out of merging several unique assets into one coherent vision.** The story then serves as compass for local entrepreneurship,

determining priorities and focusing resources, branding, and for local pride and esprit de corps.

13. **Hence, mapping unique assets and needs on both sides is a precondition for developing the 'unique story' that brings the highest value to both communities.** Naturally, if the two communities are unable to write an attractive shared 'unique story', it is doubtful they will have a prosperous future.

What is an Optimal Partnership Project?

14. Realizing the unique story of a given partnership requires synergy among a critical mass of projects that are focused on the unique assets and serve the unique story. Therefore, **establishing effective selection criteria for projects is vital**.

15. **The criteria below create a scale by which the Partnership's leadership can rank each proposed project.** An optimal project would meet all eight criteria; a mediocre one, perhaps three; and so on.

16. **The proposed criteria are**: (1) leveraging of unique assets of each community; (2) promoting Jewish Peoplehood; (3) engagement of the community in the public sphere; (4) creation of links between institutions; (5) provision of unique qualitative value the community ('Only the Partnership Can'); (6) scalability; (7) synergy with a cluster of projects with the same theme; (8) potential for fundraising.

Value to the Broader, non-Jewish community

17. **Many partnerships take pride in the unique value they bring to the broader, non-Jewish community. This added value may be bolstered by identifying an area of expertise in Israel that is lacking or is less developed in the Diaspora**, **and vice versa** (see examples below).

Chapter 3: Recommendations for Reform

18. **Embark on a process (designed as a retreat or a 'laboratory') to transition the partnerships to the Third Stage of their development** by mapping unique assets, articulating the unique story, and developing 'clusters' of projects among local institutions;

19. **Adapt general project criteria [specified in the report] to the unique needs of the given Partnership;**

20. **Leadership reform –** Partnerships that have a permanent lay leadership that manages operations ought to consider shfiting into a rotating lay leadership that provides strategic vision;

21. **Tying financial support to project criteria / 'tough Love' with the Partnership** – Mutuality is a crucial aspect in any successful partnership. Therefore, Jewish Federations should make it clear that they expect *some* contribution to a given project (mutuality, not symmetry).

Building a Model Partnership

Guidelines for Quick Reading

This document can be skimmed by reading the bolded phrases. Each paragraph contains only one idea, captured in the bolded sentences. Footnotes do *not* contain new ideas, but examples, sources, and references.

Background and Introduction

22. The goal of this report is to offer a strategic framework for the potential vision and structure of partnerships between Israeli and Diaspora communities, within the context of the Partnership 2000 platform of the Jewish Agency (recently renamed as 'Partnership 3.0').**This report seeks to answer the question: "What does a cutting edge, 21st century model partnership look like, and how can a given Partnership become one?"**

23. **This report does not intend to assess or evaluate any specific project or program carried by a given partnership.** Rather, it focuses on the strategic level and examines the Partnership model as a whole.

24. **This report is intended to serve as a strategic framework for a model Partnership**. Its implementation and translation into concrete programs would require additional work and research by the leadership of the given Partnership.

25. **The structure of the report is as follows**:

- **Chapter 1 discusses the broader context within which Partnership 2000 operates** and maps the major trends affecting the Jewish world today.
- **Chapter 2 addresses the question: "What does a 21st century model partnership look like?"** This chapter discusses the value of the partnership model, possible next stages in its development, and generic criteria for project selection.
- **Chapter 3 sets forth recommendations** designed to leverage the unique assets of the two communities and create a structure that would support the partnerships' vision.

Chapter 1:
Trends affecting the Jewish World

26. The broader context for this report are the **major trends affecting the Jewish world that are transforming the relations between Israel and world Jewry and therefore also the work of the Partnerships** between Israeli and Diaspora communities**.**[1]

27. **In recent years, the nature of the relationship between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora**, which used to be based on Classical Zionism and the building of the State of Israel, **has changed**. The new relationship is being affected by trends such as:

- **The prominence of the idea of Peoplehood** that emphasizes the Jewish interconnectedness, has been affecting the meaning of Zionism[2] to view the mission of Israel in a broader more nuanced context of the Jewish people;
- **Negation of the Diaspora is being replaced by the understanding that a vibrant Diaspora is an imperative** for the long-term survival of the Jewish people;
- **A strong call for 'aliyah' has morphed into encouraging cycles of movement and commitment** between different Jewish communities;
- **A controversy around Israeli policies not only impede community-wide engagement with Israel in many places, but also makes Israel a divisive issue in some synagogues;**[3]
- **The rich uncle-poor nephew mindset is being replaced by an expectation for synergy, mutuality and partnership among equals**, as Israel ascends to first-world prosperity;
- **In the past, world Jewry underwrote Zionism and significant budgetary needs of the Israeli government.** Now it seeks its unique voice in Israeli society;

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1 The Reut Institute deploys a policy team, which has extensively researched the future of Israel's relations with the Jewish world and the major trends affecting Jewish communities. To read the original document, see: A New Relationship between Israel and the Jewish World: A Conceptual Framework (click here).

2 There is no agreed definition on the concept of Peoplehood, yet the following may capture its essence: Peoplehood emphasizes the sense of the Jewish people as a 'large family' that shares history, stories, memories, fate or destiny, and the desire to promote its well-being. It cherishes and seeks to preserve the great geographic, ethnic, ritual or cultural diversity of the Jewish people through collaborations, acquaintances, and relationships while ignoring playing down differences of faith, observance or nationality. Its constituency includes all those who want to be or feel a part of the Jewish people and are committed to living in Jewish households and raising Jewish children.

3 Cohen, S. and A. Kelman, Beyond Distancing: **Young Adult American Jews and their Alienation from Israel**, 2007.

- **Power to shape the relationship has been disseminated from the Government of Israel and a few big organizations to countless direct people-to-people and community-to-community connections** instead of the previous 'old boys network', where decisions were made by a few individuals at the leadership of organizations such as UJC (now JFNA) or JAFI;
- **The relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry is moving from relationships between institutions to partnerships around issues.** The six major issues that will capture the bulk of attention, energy and resources in the Jewish world in the coming decades are: community building, Tikkun Olam, Israel, Hebrew, Jewish heritage and tradition, and fighting anti-Semitism and the de-legitimization of Israel.

28. **These major changes led to a shift in the nature of the relationship between Israel and world Jewry.** These changes are inevitably affecting the reality in which the Partnership operates.

29. **Thriving in this changing environment requires creatively adapting to the new reality. Failure to do so risks the organization with decline due to shrinking base, while success may ensure prosperity and longevity.**

Chapter 2:
What does a Model Partnership Look like?

30. **This chapter provides a generic description of what a cutting-edge, 21st Century, model partnership between North American and Israeli communities could look like.** It offers a possible vision for the partnership, a suggestion for the next stage in its development, and selection criteria for projects.

Vision of a Model Partnership

31. The Partnership model should reflect the 'new relationship' between Israel and the Jewish world outlined above. In other words, **a model Partnership should be based on mutuality and synergy between the two communities. It should hold the concept of Jewish Peoplehood as a core value, and it should work to transcend the old 'rich uncle-poor nephew' mindset.**

32. Hence, **the mutual value in the relationship between North American and Israeli communities through the partnership model is as follows**:

- **On the American side, a Partnership should foster a deeper connection to Israel, strengthen Jewish identity, and promote the Hebrew language**;
- **On the Israeli side, the Partnership shows Israelis the value of the Jewish Diaspora, instills a sense of responsibility for the future of our people, and connects Israelis to their Judaism.**

33. **Together, the Partnership connects people and institutions in the two communities, provides a model for operational and financial partnership and gives value to surrounding non-Jewish communities**.

Next Stage of the Partnership Model: Leveraging Unique Assets

34. **Historically, the Partnership 2000 platform has gone through two main stages and it is now has the opportunity to enter the Third Stage**:

- **Stage 1: Project Renewal (1970s-1980s)** - This stage was characterized by the old 'rich uncle - poor nephew' mentality structured around a give-get relationship between Diaspora Jewish communities and Israel. The attention was focused on providing Israel with invaluable aid focused on transforming disadvantaged communities in Israel through building physical and social infrastructure[4];
- **Stage 2: Geographic Connection (1990s-2000s)** – This stage is characterized by forging relations that were based on a geographic connection between two communities in North America and in Israel. It reflected the changing reality that called for partnership between the two

[4] Website of the Jewish Agency for Israel: Partnerships with Israel.

communities and therefore created mechanisms for direct relationships such as joint steering-committees, joint decision-making processes, etc.;

- **Stage 3: Leveraging unique needs and assets (21st Century) –** Today, partnerships have a unique opportunity to evolve into the next phase of their development, i.e., a relationship that is based on leveraging the unique needs and assets of each community in a way that fosters a sustainable partnership.

Building a Unique Story based on Unique Assets

35. **Unique assets are attributes that exist on both sides, and could be leveraged toward a healthy relationship**. A unique asset could be a local expertise, climate, history, heritage, nature and landscape, modes of work, and so on. The asset can also be based on a burden that characterizes the city or the region. For example, it is possible to envision regions in the Israeli Negev serving as a global laboratory for the fight against the processes of desertification.

36. **The advantages of mapping the unique assets of regions rests on the fact that today's globalized world allows human capital, goods and knowledge to rapidly and easily move from one place to the other.** Therefore, sustainable growth, in all its forms, requires communities to tap into qualities – whether economic, social or environmental – that are rooted in place, and that are also likely to bring value at the national and global levels[5].

37. **Under the same logic, communities that seek long lasting partnerships should make sure their engagement is based on these unique assets.** Each side in the Partnership should first develop a clear understanding of its unique assets and needs.

38. **The addition of unique value derives from creatively linking unique assets into a new 'story'.** Assets of nature or historic sites are not sufficient for formulating a competitive advantage and creating industries, services and high-quality jobs. Only the integration of these assets with the high-quality and relevant human capital can create new value through innovation.

39. **A new 'story', one that takes into consideration human and physical assets, can serve as a vision and a compass for local entrepreneurship, based on a desired picture of the future.** It can determine priorities, prevent the dispersion of resources, can be a common thread linking various projects in the region, and can brand the city or the region worldwide.

40. **Hence, once a Partnership undertakes a thorough mapping of all assets and needs in the regions in which it operates, it can then connect the assets of one community to the needs of the other and merge them into a 'unique story' that brings the highest value to both communities.**

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5 To read the conceptual framework on how to leapfrog the periphery, click here [Hebrew].

What is an optimal Partnership Project?

41. In order to establish a model partnership, it is critical that a critical mass of projects leverage the unique story of the partnership. Therefore, **establishing effective selection criteria is vital**. The criteria are designed to move the partnerships forward in a sustainable way, and ensure that their operations are in line with the innovative vision of Partnership 2000.

42. **The criteria below create a scale by which a partnership's leadership can rank each proposed project.** An optimal project would feature all eight criteria; a mediocre one, perhaps three; and so on. **The proposed criteria include projects that**:

- **Leverage unique assets of each community**;
- **Promote Jewish Peoplehood** with a clear people-to-people logic that promotes Jewish peoplehood and serves the vision of the Partnership;
- **Engage a critical mass of people in the community in the public sphere** such as in a community center or public space. In other words, this criteria discourages projects with small groups that take place in a closed space, removed from the rest of the community;
- **Create links between institutions –** It has been proved that projects that take place between institutions (as opposed to ad-hoc groups of individuals) are more likely to have longer sustained impact. An ideal partnership project connects between similar institutions in both communities;
- **'Only the Partnership Can' provide a unique qualitative experience –** An ideal Partnership project is one where the Partnership can bring unique value in a way that other existing programs or institutions cannot;
- **Scalable** – The project can be replicated and scaled, within the Partnership and outside of it;
- **Part of a cluster of projects with the same theme –** The project should be in synergy with other projects of the Partnership. Ideally, there should be a small number of organizing logics to the Partnership and clusters of projects around those logics (for example, projects in the realm of Cinema & Culture);
- **Can be leveraged for fundraising** – The project should leverage the support of an existing or new donor base of the Partnership.

Value to the Non-Jewish community

43. In addition to the value to the Jewish communities, Partnerships take pride in the value they bring to the broader, non-Jewish community as well. Examples include:

- **Emergency preparedness –** Israel is relatively well-trained in dealing with emergency situations, and the knowledge and experience gained in this area may be of value to overseas communities;

- **Living on the edge of the desert [resources] –** Israel has developed an expertise in addressing an ongoing scarcity of natural resources, and especially water. This knowledge if of value to communities that are on the 'edge' of the desert, thus facing similar (though not identical) challenges, such as LA, Las Vegas, in Arizona or New Mexico.

Chapter 3:
Recommendations for Reform

Strategic Reform: Creating a Unique Story

44. Partnerships are currently in their second stage of their development, i.e., geographic connection between cities. As mentioned, **in order to transform into the next stage of their development, partnerships should seek to leverage the unique assets of each community into the operations of the individual partnership in order to address the needs of each community.**

45. **In order to embed these ideas into operational guidelines, each partnership will need to undertake this mapping through a structured joint process involving the two communities.**

46. Hence, a partnership willing to continue with the path suggested in this report should consider **establishing a taskforce with the mission of eliciting the mutual story of the two communities, based on their unique needs and assets from all the relevant stakeholders.** These 'stories' need to later be translated into the operations of the Partnership.

Structural Reforms: Rotating leadership, Efficient decision-making, Financial mutuality

47. As stated, the Partnership 2000 platform has a very relevant vision and the unique potential to address the needs of each community. **However, there are a number of structural reforms that should be considered in order to transform the partnerships in a more efficient way, in line with the new relationship between Israel and the Jewish world.**

48. There are three broad areas which need to undergo structural reform. These include:

- **Rotating lay leadership where needed** – Today, some of the partnerships' lay leadership is permanent, lacking a rotation mechanism. Accordingly, partnerships with a permanent lay leadership should instill a rotation mechanism, thus ensuring a steady fresh flow of energy and ideas;
- **Empower the professionals** – In some cases, the partnerships' lay leadership is involved in many of the daily operations of the partnership with many 'pet projects'. A more efficient decision-making process may designate the lay leadership with the responsibility to provide strategic direction, while empowering the professional staff to design and implement projects;
- **Ensure greater financial mutuality** – Today, many partnerships still have an asymmetric funding mechanism, as the North American community provides most of the funding. Instead, Federations should use the

partnerships to issue challenge funds in which the American side demands that the Israeli side contribute a certain portion of any project's required budget in order for the project to take place.

Summary of Recommendations

49. This section is a summary of the broad recommendations offered throughout this report:

- **Embark on a process (designed as a retreat or a 'laboratory') to transition the Partnership to the Third Stage of its development** by convening the relevant stakeholders and eliciting the 'clusters' of mutual stories and their corresponding institutions;
- **Adapt general project criteria to the unique needs of the Partnership –** Proposed projects should be ranked according to the number and quality of criteria they fulfill, using the eight criteria mentioned above.
- **Leadership reform –** Partnerships that have a permanent lay leadership that manages operations should transform into a rotating lay leadership that provides a strategic vision;
- **'Tough Love' with the Partnership**- Mutuality is a crucial aspect in any successful partnership. Therefore, Jewish Federations should make it clear that they expect *some* contribution to a given project. Accordingly, they should think twice before it decides to sponsor a project with zero financial mutuality.