

**The Peoplehood Index Project**  
**Year-End Report**  
**January, 2010**

Dear partners, donors, and friends of the PI Project,

We're writing to update you about the PI project. We were hoping to avoid a 2009-was-a-great-year-and-2010-promises-to-be-great-too letter, but failed, since both statements are true. Here's a summary of the main events that took place from inception and through 2009:

- Early 2008: Inception (many thanks to Prof Uzi Arad)
- Mar - Dec 2008: First exploratory study
  - o Broad study of mutual connections between Israeli and American Jews
  - o Followed the ABC trichotomy (Affective, Behavioral and Cognitive dimensions)
  - o Professionally led by Profs Steven M. Cohen and Eppie Yaar
- Feb 2009: The Herzliya Conference
  - o Public launch of project
  - o Report of first exploratory study's findings
- Apr 2009: Presentation at the JFN annual conference
- Feb – Aug 2009: Institutionalization
  - o Fundraising (many thanks to the Jim Joseph Foundation and Nadav Foundation)
  - o Establishing a temporary home at the Re'ut institute (many thanks to Gidi Grinstein, Netaly Ophir, and Omri Dagan)
  - o Hiring a project manager; welcome aboard, Serena Eisenberg!
  - o Establishing a website; see below
- Sep – Nov 2009: Second exploratory study
  - o In partnership with the DC Federation (many thanks to Misha Galperin and Marsha Sussman)
  - o Studied the correlation between markers of peoplehood attachment on the one hand, and levels of giving on the other, among the DC Federation donors
  - o Professionally led by Prof Steven M. Cohen
  - o Report issued (available on our website; see below) and Steven interviewed by J'post
- Nov 2009: Presentation at the GA in Washington, DC
- Jan 2010: Hiring a domain expert to lead the conceptualization of a standardized Peoplehood Index; welcome aboard, Zvika Arran!

All but the latest development have been public knowledge, and you probably knew them. If you don't remember all the details, you can be reminded at our website (thanks, Serena!):

[www.peoplehoodindex.org](http://www.peoplehoodindex.org)

The website is very recent, and we're definitely accepting suggestions on how to improve it, subject to the constraint that we're not willing to put much money or time there; PR is not our main focus at this time.

The project seems to have struck a chord with many people, which accounts for the relatively high exposure (in addition to the presentations above the project was featured widely in the press, primarily in Israel). However, our focus really has not been on external communication but rather on content, which will also be our focus in 2010. Our goals for the coming year are as follows:

- Establish a conceptual and methodological framework; more on this below
- Conduct specialized deployments with operating partners
- Make progress towards identifying the permanent home for the PI, possibly making a final decision in this regard

The PI project will succeed or fail based on how well we do on the first item above. We aim to establish a thoughtful conceptual framework for measuring Jewish Peoplehood, and, based on it, craft a repeatable and replicable index. This is not only the most important task facing us, but also the hardest. There are three types of challenge:

- Conceptual unclarity: As topical as Jewish peoplehood is today, it is fraught with competing conceptualizations and terminology. What is the connection (and distinction) between Jewish peoplehood and Jewish identity? What are the dimensions of peoplehood? How do some of the linguistic choices we make when discussing peoplehood affect the content of discussion?
- Methodological options and data availability: Should the PI be based, or based solely, on surveys? Panels? Focus groups? Traditional econometric methods? Mining of online data? Which method is most relevant to capturing the dimensions of peoplehood we care about, and has access to the relevant data?
- Budget: Different methods have different costs associated with them, and we may need to trade off comprehensiveness for cost effectiveness.

These challenges are quite humbling when you think about them. Our approach to tackling them is twofold. First, we have put together a strong kernel team to manage the process and produce a durable product. Zvika “Biko” Arran cut his teeth on peoplehood matters at the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI), where he worked on a variety of research projects. He then initiated and led Midot, Israel’s first NGO index, which rigorously evaluates Israeli NGOs along several dimensions. He thus brings to the task both subject matter sensibilities and methodological experience, and we’re fortunate to have him lead the product management effort. Serena, in addition to her project management duties, will aid Biko in the process, bringing to bear her substantial sense for the topic among American Jews.

But it would be presumptuous for us on the project to think we can tackle the challenges on our own. There are many smart and dedicated people with far superior knowledge of Jewish Peoplehood as well as of the relevant methodologies from the social sciences, and we would be insane not to tap into their collective wisdom. And that is precisely our approach. The core team is a catalyst and synthesizer, but will be guided by the collective wisdom of many others. We have assembled a core consultative team, consisting of some (but not all, alas) of the best minds in the social science, modern Jewish thought, organized Jewish life, and disorganized Jewish life, to serve as an intimate partners in the design process. These individuals are phenomenal in their own right, and in addition bring the perspectives of some of the most relevant organizations: The JPPPI, the newly created Jewish Peoplehood Hub, and the Gutman Institute at the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI), adding to the organizational perspectives we already enjoy from the DC Federation, the Wexner Foundation, JAFI’s Partnership2000, and others. Once a draft of the product is ready, we plan to distribute it for comments among a much larger set of Jewish leaders, before casting it in concrete. Shortly, the team will disseminate more details about the process and the people involved.

So, 2009 was indeed a very eventful year, and 2010 indeed promises to be no less so. Thank you for your support thus far, and please keep it coming. We need every bit of it.

On behalf of all of us at the PI Project we wish you a healthy and fulfilling 2010.

Yoav and Nimrod