

"If you will it, it is no dream."

Theodor Herzl

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Public Diplomacy Division
Information and Visual Media Department



State of Israel
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- The wonder of Israel comes from the essential drive to build and improve; to consider constraints as mere challenges to overcome; to extend a hand to others, and to be intellectually curious; to always seek creative solutions, and above all, to persevere – values that are deeply rooted in the millennia-old Jewish tradition. The wonder also stems from the unprecedented revival of an ancient language, Hebrew, and the re-establishment of an ancient nation, the Jewish people, in their indigenous homeland, Israel.
- **Today, Israel is a thriving, open and culturally-diverse democracy, one that continuously shares its innovative spirit with the world.**
- In just a few decades since it was established (1948), Israel has grown dramatically from a developing nation into a robust economy leading the way in ICT, medical, cyber, space, water and agricultural innovation.
- With tenacity and an abundance of optimism (and, yes, the famous Israel hutzpa – audacity), and powered by the greatest resource of all – human ingenuity – the people of Israel have overcome security and political challenges, as well as social, economic and environmental hurdles to build the wonder that is Israel.

- There is a lot to be happy about – so it is no wonder that Israel ranks as the world's 11th happiest country in the UN's 2017 World Happiness Report.



Israeli society, which is as young as its roots are ancient, is home to a widely diverse population of over 8 million citizens from many ethnic, religious, cultural and social backgrounds - a mosaic of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, atheists and many others living together and contributing to its vibrant democracy.



Arab Israeli students at Hebrew University

Life in Israel is anything but static. With a socio-economic mobility rate of over 70% - among the highest in the world - Israelis choose their own destinies, regardless of their background.

Outstanding Israeli Women



Golda Meir
Prime Minister,
1969-1974



Mariam Abu-Rkeek
Founder of the first
Bedouin cosmetic
label in the world



Ester Rada
Singer-songwriter



Lucy Aharish
Television news
reporter and anchor



Ada Yonath
Nobel Prize
Laureate in
Chemistry, 2009



Miriam Naor
Current President of
the Supreme Court



Yael Arad
Judoka; frst Israeli
Olympic medalist,
1992



Kira Radinsky
Computer scientist;
on MIT Technology
Review's 35
Innovators Under 35



Adi Altschuler
Entrepreneur,
selected among
TIME Magazine's
Next Generation
Leaders

“The State of Israel will be based on freedom, justice and peace... it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants... it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture”

(from Israel’s Declaration of Independence)

Key values in the Declaration of Independence



Freedom



Equality regardless of religion, race & sex



Justice



Safeguarding the holy places of all religions



Peace



Self-determination



Family of Nations

Israel is a parliamentary democracy in which citizens vote for their party of choice in national elections. All Israeli citizens have the right to elect and be elected, and they enjoy many rights, including freedom of religion, expression and association, subsidized education, national healthcare and many others.

Legislation protects the rights of minorities, children, the elderly and other groups. For example, over the decades the LGBTQ community gained rights and protection; today, Tel Aviv is one of the best gay-travel destinations in the world. It is also home to one of the largest pride parades in the world, drawing more than 200,000 people in 2017.



Election Day

Equality, human rights, and fundamental freedoms are the cornerstone of Israel’s democracy, both in law and in practice.

About 25% of Israeli citizens are not Jewish. The largest minority are the Arab Sunni Muslims, some 1.5 million, including the formerly nomadic Bedouin community. The Christian communities number about 162,000. Other minority groups include members of the Druze faith, the Baha'i faith - whose global center is in the city of Haifa - and the ancient communities of the Karaites and the Samaritans, as well as others.



The Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem

Equal Opportunities Case Study: Medical Students



54%
Women



22%
Arabs*

*The Arab sector forms 21% of Israeli society.



Soccer team with Jewish, Arab and Druze children in Israel



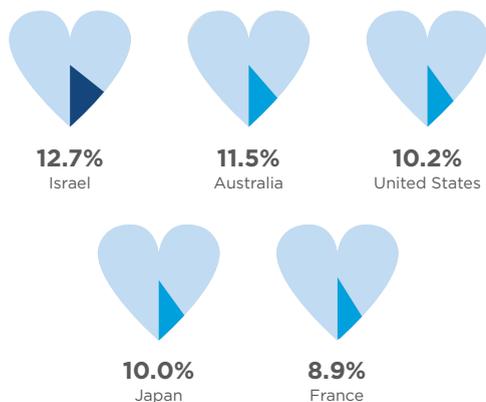
Israel's first Arab Supreme Court justice, Salim Joubran

Many Israelis hold social activism dear to their hearts, and strive to improve the lives of people both locally and internationally.

Israel's civil society sector is one of the largest in the world in terms of the contribution it makes to the country's gross domestic product (13.5% of GDP) and the number of people it employs – some 12.7% of the economically-active population. There are around 50,000 registered not-for-profit organizations, covering a broad range of issues, including human rights and equality, the environment, youth at risk, animal rights, welfare, health and many others.

Working for a Good Cause

Percentage of the economically active population working in the not-for-profit sector



One of the oldest environmental protection organizations in the world, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) has, since 1953, worked to protect Israel's natural assets, landscapes, flora and fauna. SPNI is active on all levels, from advocating policy, legislation and urban planning, to operating eco-tourism centres and guided nature tours. SPNI is also in charge of maintaining Israel's nature walking and cycling trails, including the beloved Israel National Trail, which spans the entire country from North to South for over 1,100 km (680 miles) and has been explored by hundreds of thousands of Israelis and tourists alike. Over the years, many more NGOs have joined Israel's environmental movement.



Teenagers volunteering on a farm in Israel

Building a Sustainable Future



Israel recycles some 77.5% of bottles and cans



Israel recycles over 86% of its water



Over 85% of Israeli households use solar energy



240 million trees planted in the 20th century



Israelis planting trees in the Ben Shemen forest

Israel is also a world leader when it comes to empowering and integrating people with special needs. In Israel, 60% of children with special needs are integrated into the mainstream public education system, while companies with more than 100 employees are required to employ workers with disabilities totaling at least 3% of the work force.



The late President Peres with special-needs children

Israel is a country of immigrants. Since it was established in 1948, Israel has absorbed over 2.6 million immigrants (Olim) from all over the world. These Olim faced many challenges, from cultivating the land and establishing Kibbutzim (agricultural communities) in the 1920s, to fighting defensive wars, overcoming economic hardships and developing a competitive economy.

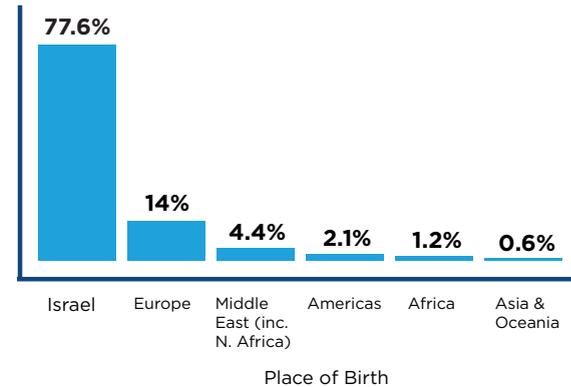
In the first decade of its existence, the population of the young country more than doubled, as Jews, many of them refugees, came to Israel from Europe and Middle East countries to build their homes in the Holy Land. In the 1990s, the population of Israel again shifted as over 1.2 million Jews came to Israel, mainly from the former Soviet Union, but also from Ethiopia and North and South America. Given its diversity, Israel is a multi-cultural as well as a multi-lingual country. Walk the streets of the country and you will hear lively conversations in Russian, French, Amharic, Arabic, Spanish, and other languages. The vast majority of Israelis are also fluent in English.



Israeli girls celebrating the Jewish holiday of Shavuot

Diverse Origins

77.6% of Israelis are “Sabras,” the nickname given to persons born in Israel. The other 22.4% of Israelis immigrated from all regions of the world:



What is Sabra?

The Sabra is a prickly pear indigenous to Israel - it thrives in harsh conditions and is rough on the outside but soft and sweet on the inside. It is said that the character of many Israelis tends to be similar.

The Jews became known as the 'People of the Book' for two reasons: they gave the Bible to the world, and they have always been literate, due to the centrality of education and Bible study in Jewish culture.



A family celebrates the Passover holiday, which commemorates the Biblical Israelites' exodus from Egypt and their return to the Land of Israel

Learning is a fundamental value for all Israelis; to ask questions, to challenge, to reevaluate, to improve and to implement ideas is a key part of the Israeli DNA.

For centuries, Jews used Hebrew mainly as a language of study, prayer and written communication. It was revived as a spoken language at the end of the 19th century by Eliezer Ben Yehuda, and was recognized as an official language of the Land of Israel under the League of Nations Mandate in 1922. Indeed, this was a rare and spectacular case in which an ancient language was revived.

Hebrew, the language of the Jewish People



Today, both Hebrew and Arabic are official languages in the State of Israel.



All road signs in Israel are written in Hebrew, Arabic and English

Every day, Israelis are driving ideas that are changing the world, for example, by deriving drinking water from air, or paving the way to autonomous driving; by reducing food waste with tech that keeps produce fresher, longer, or pioneering ways to harness clean hydrogen energy from algae.

A hub for innovation, Israel has seen a number of major mergers and acquisitions in the past decades. Most recently in 2017, Mobileye, an Israeli technology company that develops vision-based advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) for collision prevention, was acquired by Intel for 15.3 billion USD – the largest tech exit in Israeli history. Mobileye technology is currently in use for developing autonomous cars.

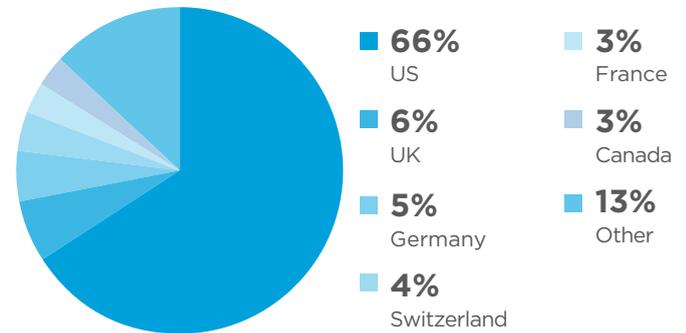


Ziv Aviram, CEO, Mobileye

Israel has one of the highest number of companies (94) listed on NASDAQ. It also ranked first on the 2014 Global Cleantech Index, which rated 40 countries' cleantech startups, and won the 2014 World Smart Cities Award for high-tech developments that promote civic engagement and improve the lives of its citizens.

Most of the world's leading high-tech companies, including Intel, Google, Facebook and Microsoft, have established research and development centers in Israel

Some 300 Multinational Corporations with R&D Centers in Israel (by Country), 2015



International companies like Google, Nestle, Intel, Tata, and Xiaomi have all chosen to be part of the Israeli high tech ecosystem.

With the highest concentration of startups outside Silicon Valley - some 3,000 in the Tel Aviv metropolis alone - Israel earned the names Silicon Wadi and the Start-Up Nation.

Some 500 new start-ups are established every year, many making major breakthroughs in areas such as nanotechnology, cyber, big data and medicine. Some of the best known technologies developed in Israel and used by people around the world every day include the USB key and several microprocessors.



Israelis at an accelerator in Tel Aviv

“It is no exaggeration to say that the kind of innovation going on in Israel is critical to the future of the technology business”

Bill Gates

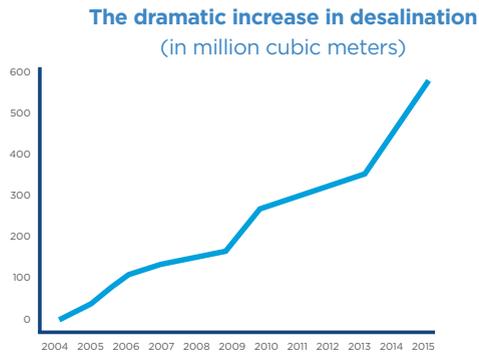
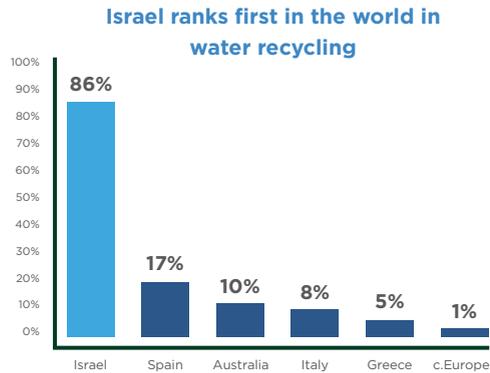
Twelve Israelis have been awarded Nobel prizes, in a country of just 8.5 million people. Six of them were awarded a Nobel Prize in chemistry in under a decade. Israel has the highest number of engineers per capita, and the second highest Research and Development as percent of GDP in the world.

Israel's leading pharmaceutical, Teva, is also the largest generic drug manufacturer in the world, and is responsible for one out of every eight generic drugs sold in the United States.



Dr. Michal Leskes, Department of Materials and Interfaces, Technion Institute of Technology

Once water-scarce, Israel has grown dramatically into a water-tech powerhouse, developing solutions that drastically reduce water and food scarcity around the globe. Today, nearly half of all water consumption in Israel comes from desalinated or recycled sources. The country recycles 86% of its water for use in agriculture – the highest percentage on the globe.



The Shafdan water recycling plant in central Israel

Israel is constantly developing new methods of irrigation and crop cultivation in hot arid regions such as the Israeli Negev desert, which covers 60% of Israel. Water technologies invented in Israel, like drip irrigation, have been utilized throughout the world, in particular, in other arid regions across Asia, Africa and the Americas.



Orchards in the arid Negev desert

Israel strongly believes that by sharing its know-how, people around the globe will be empowered to improve their own lives.

Israel launched an international development cooperation program in 1957 with the aim of sharing with the rest of the developing world the knowledge and technologies which provided the basis for its own rapid development.

MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation) began as a modest program focused on grassroots human capacity building, at a time when Israel itself was a developing country. Since then, it has blossomed into an extensive program that promotes social, economic and environmental sustainable development around the globe. As of 2017, more than 290,000 trainees have taken part in Mashav courses and projects in training centers in Israel and abroad.



Growing lettuce in Senegal using drip irrigation, a technology developed in Israel to grow crops with less water

MASHAV's vision:

"We envision a world in which those living in poverty are empowered to improve their own lives."



The GalMobile, a first of its kind, Israeli-made portable emergency water purification and desalination system; it was deployed by MASHAV in the Marshall Islands in 2015



Growing fruit trees in the highlands of Ethiopia

“I see an endless flow of new ideas being generated here, and an ongoing parade of foreign companies coming to Israel to find the ones that meet their needs”

Serial entrepreneur, Yossi Vardi

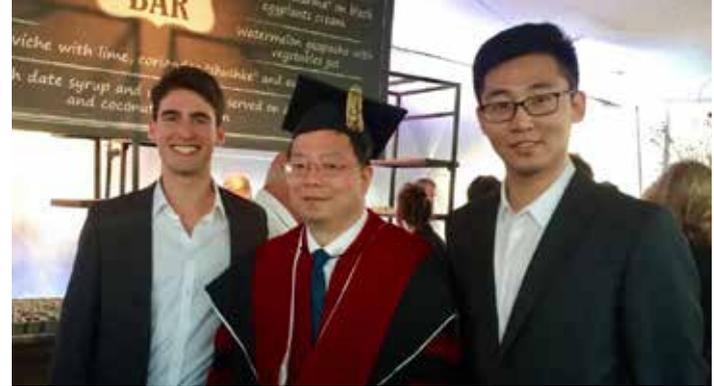
Israel is a global high-tech exporter, and enjoys strong economic partnerships on every continent - including close ties with superpowers such as the USA, Canada, China and India.



In 2010, Israel became the 33rd country to join the OECD

Israel is a popular choice for major international research. For example, Israeli and US institutions collaborate through the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) which supports collaborative research in a wide range of basic and applied scientific fields. In 2012, India and Israel signed a \$50 million Academic Research Pact to support collaboration in sciences, IT, technology, the humanities and agriculture.

Tel Aviv University jointly runs an executive MBA program with Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, and also runs the joint \$300 million XIN research center focused on nanotechnologies with Beijing's Tsinghua University. Major Chinese companies have already opened R&D centers in Israel, including Xiaomi and Huawei.



President Qiu Yong of Tsinghua University together with students