

## **Content Brief for the Ben-Gurion Centre**



### ***Executive Summary***

#### **Background**

Ben-Gurion House on 17 Ben-Gurion Boulevard in Tel-Aviv, operates under the Ben-Gurion Law and is open for visitors and hosting activities since 1974. In 1982, Beit Hillel Cohen was added to the house. The venue is used for conferences, lectures, workshops, community activities, film screening - in addition to visits to Ben-Gurion House.

In order to increase, expand and diversify the existing activities, it was decided in 2015 to build a new building in Beit Hillel Cohen that will enhance, expand and expand the experience of visiting Ben-Gurion House.

#### **Document Objective**

This document is a guiding document for the content, exhibition, presentation and educational experience of the new space, which will serve as a "civic arena" in the Ben-Gurion House. The document will be a guiding tool for the team/teams of professionals creating the exhibitions for the center.

The document was written by a multidisciplinary team and in cooperation with various bodies.

## Highlights

- The Ben-Gurion Center will be a place for open discourse that will encourage critical thinking on issues of civil responsibility and active citizenship.

Statehood and democracy will constitute the central themes in the arena, as worldviews in the background that give room to the varied identities of the people living in Israel, and as forms of government and citizenship that operate according to the values of cooperation, mutual responsibility and equality, which were central to Ben-Gurion's views.

- The arena will be an inviting place and accepting to all the people living in

- By presenting Ben-Gurion's unique story and the main intersections of David Ben-Gurion as prime minister at the stages of establishing the State of Israel and its early and formative years, the Center will deal with values and principles of thought and action, taken by Ben-Gurion the man and the leader.

- The exhibition and the educational program will link the historical discussion topics to contemporary and current content and will be developed through principles of sharing, pluralism and active participation of the audience in the creation of the experience.

## 1. The subjects

### **Decisions - Making choices**

Ben-Gurion was first and foremost a leader and the decisions he was involved in making, were based on a clear worldview and the great challenge that he faced - the establishment of an independent Jewish state alongside the transformation of the Jewish society into an independent, responsible, productive, just and open society. By discussing key decisions, which were in fact key moments that led to the creation of the State of Israel, we are currently familiar with, the exhibit will reflect on the ways of building and managing a state, and enable focused discussion in the case of the State of Israel alongside broad and universal discussions. In observing each decision, the participants will be asked to think: In what way does the decision reflect the worldview of Ben-Gurion and the tensions that exist within it? What are the pros and cons of each option? What would have happened had a different decision been made? How does this decision affect me now and in the future? Can I change something myself, and if so - how?

The visitor, through the method of presentation and instructional mediation, will link the decision and the manner in which Ben-Gurion dealt with it with the present and the future, so that the dilemmas will stimulate thinking and debate about society today. In light of Ben-Gurion's vision, directions of thought, questions and possible solutions will arise, which will examine whether we must adhere to the values that these decisions reflect or that we should develop new values and methods of action.

## Statehood and Democracy

Statehood (ממלכתיות) was in fact the branch of Ben-Gurion thought and action that dealt with the building of civil society and the state; "Operating system" of Israeli society. Its essence is recognition of the close connection between individual freedom and life in society, as well as values of mutual responsibility, active citizenship and equality before the law. The concept of statehood, its embodied values, and its civic and democratic importance to Israeli society will stand in the background of activity, but the word itself will not be expressed and given weight to the values of the state and to the decisions derived from them.

### 2. The Display space

The arena will be an extension of the Ben-Gurion House, in order to create a place and a connection between the personal home and the national home. In the main display floors, the decisions will be presented in a nonlinear manner so that visitors can roam among them and choose what to focus on, as opposed to the linear path that exists in most memorial centers. The decisions will be delicately delineated in a way that will create different "rooms" and hint to the rooms of the house, but in a way that suits the small exhibition space. The bridge between Ben-Gurion House and the new building will reflect the transition from the personal and collective story through its design and exhibits.

The lobby will serve as a community meeting place, where a contemporary exhibition will be presented to attract recurring visitors to the museum and allow them to feel at home. The roof floor can function as a continuation of the lobby, where there will be a discussion space where for working, thinking and creating groups with different worldviews, can meet. The possibility of combining an archive with historical materials on Ben-Gurion, which will exhibit materials from various archives in Israel and abroad, will be exhibited and will enable the physical and digital materials to be investigated.

### 3. Principles of exhibition design

- **Cooperation and active participation:** The main method of planning the 'civic arena' is cooperation and participation. The partnership and civic participation, being a significant part of the democratic experience and Ben-Gurion's views, are not only a value for the exhibition, but also a guiding principle in its planning, from planning and thinking in non-hierarchical teams to the audience taking an active part in the experience, exhibition and knowledge creation

- **Multidisciplinary approach:** The exhibits for the decisions will be developed in groups of artists, creators, researchers, designers, historians, scientists and academics with different approaches and backgrounds. This is done in order to produce multiple voices and multiple approaches in a manner that will open the accepted narratives and encourage discussion.

- **Technology and direct encounter:** The exhibits will emphasize interactivity using innovative technology on the one hand, and through human mediation on the other. With the intention of allowing visitors to experience the display in their own way and at the same time encouraging them

to converse with human intermediaries with knowledge that will bring them closer to the values of the place, while creating a valuable and educational experience.

#### 4. Educational principles

The educational activity will take place at the same time and in the same spaces of the exhibition, as opposed to many other commemorative centers, in which these activities take place in separate spaces. This is in order to create an inseparable connection between the educational values and the experience of the visit:

- **"Transparent Guiding" or "Expositional Guiding"**: guiding in which the most important part is the clear articulation of goals. The explanation is intended to give the participants an overall understanding of the educational process and their part in it. Thus, the audience becomes a partner to the process rather than undergoing instructional manipulation.

- **A combination of investigative learning and constructivist learning**: an approach that combines the two pedagogies, so that the guidance will also direct the visitor to knowledge of value and importance, but also include the opportunity for creation of new knowledge and ideas.

- **Education for civil political consciousness**: education directed at the design of a political and active person rather than the design of a person charged with one particular ideology.

- **Linking Hidden Pedagogy and Open Pedagogy**: The educational space will reflect a clear congruence between the subject or value studied, the pedagogic method, and the aesthetic-aesthetic design of space.

- **Adaptive learning based on the concept of 'multiple intelligence'**: the perception that different people learn differently.

- **Accessible learning based on the inclusion of diverse audiences**: In recognition of the diversity and multifaceted of the local population and in order to enable anyone who wishes to visit, learning in the field will be accessible to all populations.