



Livnot U'Lehibanot

45 Years of
Building Israel
& Strengthening
Jewish Identity



Livnot U'Lehibanot
TO BUILD & TO BE BUILT • לבנות ולהבנות

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Letter from Aharon Botzer

CEO & Founder, Livnot U'Lehibanot

Shalom Chevre,

In 1980, Livnot was founded because something essential was missing from the Israel experience for young adults: **Jewish depth.** From the beginning, Livnot integrated hands-on community service with learning Jewish values through hiking the Land of Israel, alongside a spiritual Shabbat in Tzfat.

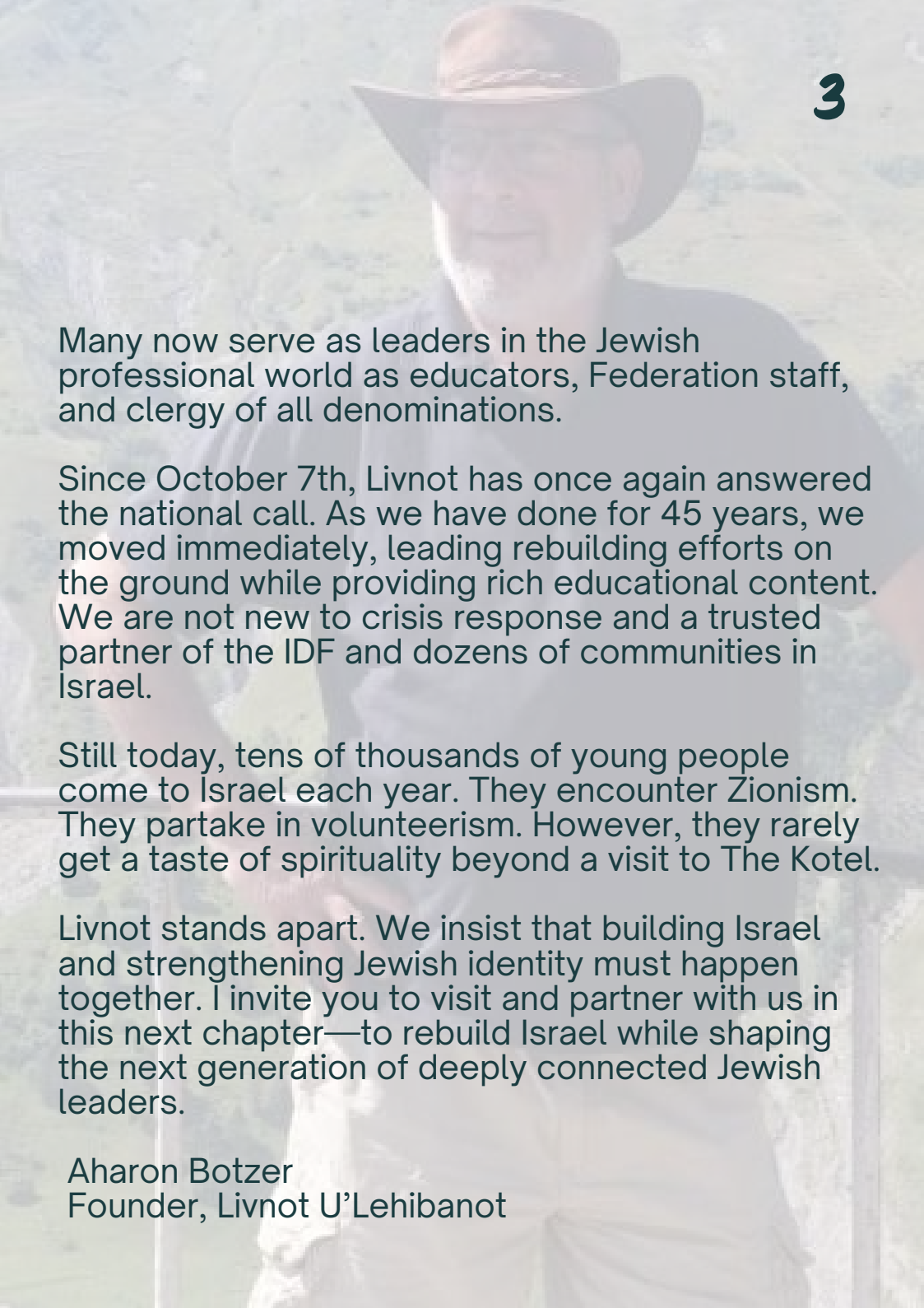
We were built for seekers: travelers, students, and young professionals searching for purpose, identity, and belonging in the Holy Land of Israel.

Over decades, Livnot has touched the lives of thousands of young adults ages 21–35, almost all arriving with limited Jewish background or connection. The impact is unmistakable.

When participants come back to visit us in Tzfat with their family, they often tell their children: “my time at Livnot is why you are who you are.”

Post-program evaluations show that over 90% of participants describe Livnot as a transformative experience. Alumni feedback collected 10–45 years after participation—representing thousands of respondents—consistently identifies Livnot as a pivotal point in their lives.

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Many now serve as leaders in the Jewish professional world as educators, Federation staff, and clergy of all denominations.

Since October 7th, Livnot has once again answered the national call. As we have done for 45 years, we moved immediately, leading rebuilding efforts on the ground while providing rich educational content. We are not new to crisis response and a trusted partner of the IDF and dozens of communities in Israel.

Still today, tens of thousands of young people come to Israel each year. They encounter Zionism. They partake in volunteerism. However, they rarely get a taste of spirituality beyond a visit to The Kotel.

Livnot stands apart. We insist that building Israel and strengthening Jewish identity must happen together. I invite you to visit and partner with us in this next chapter—to rebuild Israel while shaping the next generation of deeply connected Jewish leaders.

Aharon Botzer
Founder, Livnot U'Lehibanot

About Livnot



The Livnot Model: **To Build and To Be Built**

Building & Service:

Hands-on building & service in Israel, working alongside professionals.

Jewish Learning:

Open, non-denominational learning that invites introspection.

Nature & Land:

Jewish values experienced through walking the land and reflective time in nature.

Community:

Shared living, meals, and collective responsibility.

Shabbat:

A shared pause for rest, reflection, and spiritual connection.



Impact in Numbers

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15,000+

Participants on Shabbat, weeklong & long-term programs

100,000+

Workshop participants and National Heritage Site visitors

3,000+

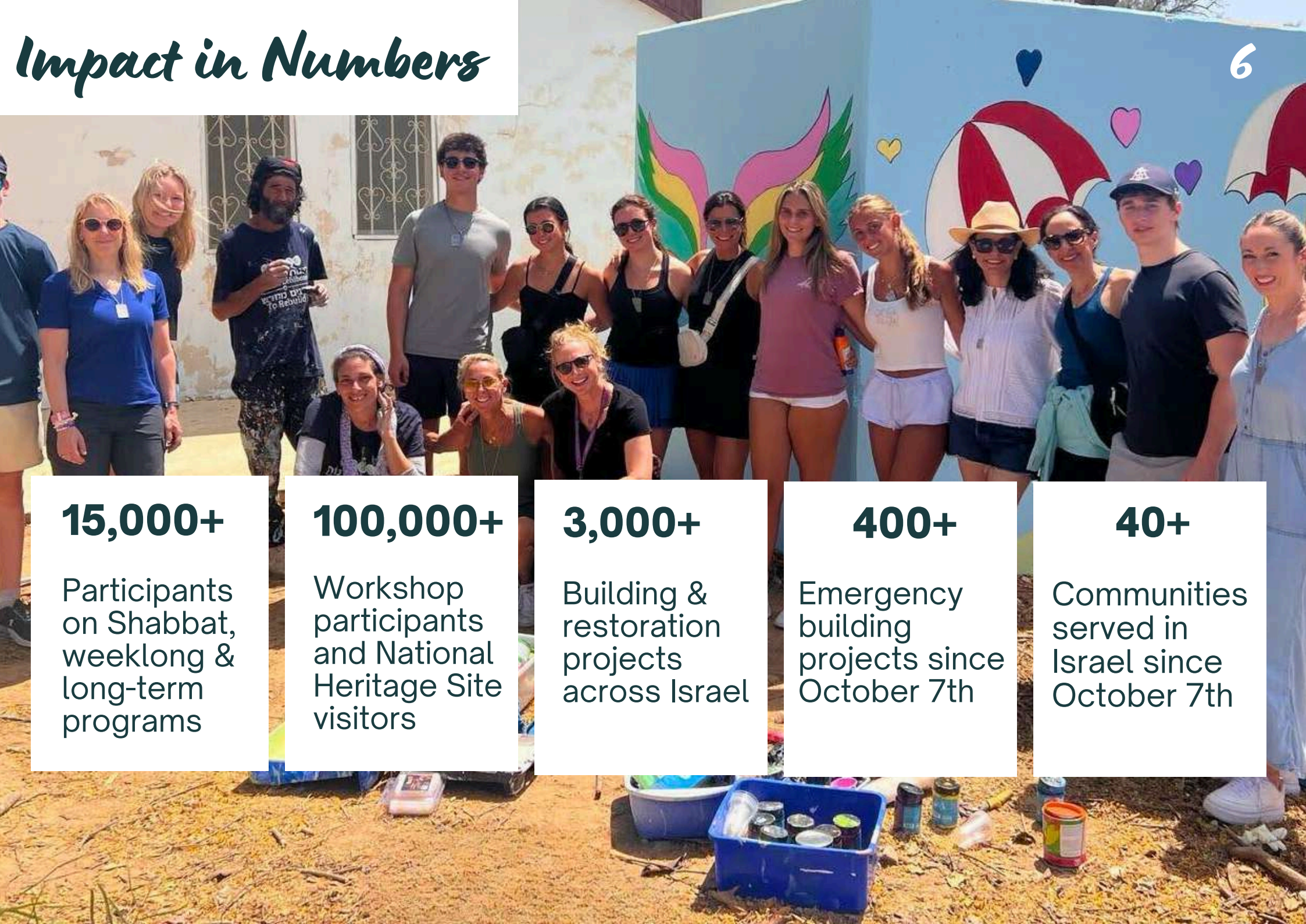
Building & restoration projects across Israel

400+

Emergency building projects since October 7th

40+

Communities served in Israel since October 7th



Livnot Programs

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Rebuilding Programs (8 days)

Hands-on rebuilding in war-impacted communities. Participants work alongside professional teams to address real needs, while spending afternoons engaged in touring the North and Jewish learning.

Holiday Programs (8 Days)

Integrating Jewish learning, hiking, communal living, and volunteering.

One-Day Volunteering

Service-learning for Birthright, corporate, and organized groups. Combines hands-on rebuilding with facilitated educational sessions.

Shabbat Experiences (3 Days)

An immersive introduction to Shabbat through hiking, shared meals, learning, music, reflection, and community.

Tzfat Campuses:

Your Home
in the Old City &
Artist Colony

The Atmosphere:

Located in the heart of Tzfat, the physical environment is integral to the experience.

Shared Living:

Two residential campuses with 80 total beds, communal kitchens and activity spaces.

The Result:

Participants explore the city, meet local artists, learn its history, and feel a part of the city.



Music & Meditation



Baking in a 500-year-old Oven

10



Livnot Workshops

Livnot U'Lehibanot offers hands-on, experiential workshops for international and local tour groups, teams, and families.



Musical (weekday) Kabbalat Shabbat



Art & Kabbalah

Tzfat Visitor's Center & Tunnels Tour



The Experience:

Visitors journey seven levels beneath the Old City, walking seven levels underground through tunnels accompanied by an artistic sound-and-light experience that brings four Kabbalists of Tzfat to life. The tunnels lead into The Beit HaKahal, a restored 16th-century community center and marketplace.

The Impact:

The Visitors Center welcomes tens of thousands of visitors annually and serves as a core educational component of Livnot programs and local tourism.



Beit HaKahal

Beit Hakahal is a 16th-century marketplace excavated by Livnot volunteers and designated an **Israeli National Heritage Site** by the Ministry of Antiquities since 2011. The site welcomes tens of thousands of visitors annually for educational workshops and seasonal activities, and features a 500-year-old stone oven and a heated, historic mikvah.



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Why Tzfat?

- One of Judaism's four holy cities and the birthplace of Jewish mysticism, Tzfat offers a natural setting for spiritual depth and inner exploration.
- A city that has drawn seekers, artists, and thinkers for centuries, creating an atmosphere where Jewish learning and creativity feel alive and ongoing.
- Spirituality is part of everyday life through ancient synagogues, the shared rhythm of Shabbat, historic stone streets, and the surrounding Galilee landscape.
- Tzfat allows the space for deep relationships, meaningful service, and the kind of personal growth that stays with participants long after they leave.



Responding to Crisis



Livnot Rebuilds

the South & North

Rapid expansion of operations
Since Oct 7th from the Gaza
Envelope to the Northern Border.

Collaboration:

Coordinated with local
municipalities & IDF Liaison.

Approach:

Trauma-sensitive service
grounded in Jewish values and
communal responsibility.

Result:

Up to 25 professional builders
alongside volunteer groups
almost every week since January
2024.



Renovating a Senior Center on Kibbutz
Yachini in the Gaza Envelope | April, 2024.

One of fifteen projects completed on the Kibbutz.

Livnot Project Numbers

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In Southern & Northern Israel Since October 7th

Click to see an interactive map of Livnot's work in the [South](#) and [North](#)

From emergency response to long-term rebuilding, Livnot restores not only buildings, but also community life and Jewish resilience.

90

Homes for displaced, bereaved, and returning families

75

Kindergartens & early childhood centers

50

Youth, school & special-education facilities

3

Pre-army facilities, dormitories, and dining rooms shaping Israel's next leaders

12

Senior & therapeutic facilities

155

Community buildings, including 100 bomb shelters in Tzfat and several synagogues

Continuity & Feedback



Alumot: Livnot's Alumni Network

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Goal:

Helping former participants stay connected to Jewish life and community after Livnot.

Relaunch:

Expanding Alumot chapters toward our pre-COVID scale (22 chapters).

Key Activities:

Shabbat gatherings, community service, holiday celebrations and nature hikes.



Participant Outcomes: *Survey Results*

Out of 155 surveyed participants from 2024-2025

Program Quality & Experience



Rate their overall experience as 4 or 5 out of 5



Rate Livnot's staff and educators as excellent

Rate Livnot's educational activities as high quality



Participant Voices: Sukkot 2025

These quotes are from
**all Sukkot 2025
program participants**
who were asked: “sum
up your Livnot program
in one sentence.”

- I felt like I was able to fully experience my judaism in such a powerful way during this sukkot. So much awareness given about the holiday and kabbalah, the city of tzvat, and specifics of the jewish story. I really felt like I could enhance my perspectives of my judaism on this program.

- My experience at Livnot has left me refreshed, restored, strengthened, and my heart is bursting full with compassion, love, and in awe of such a beautiful life.

- Meaningful Jewish experience with amazing people!

- It was a more mature and spiritual version of birthright with more opportunities to connect with our inner self and each other in a safe and welcoming environment of like - minded and open-minded individuals willing to learn and connect.

- This experience felt very meaningful, especially when we volunteered at Avivim. I also enjoyed our group activities/discussions. It really resonated with me.

- Livnot offers an immersive, soul-enriching experience, weaving together service work and meaningful connection to the land and people of Israel.

- Extremely affordable, beautiful campus, safe city, opportunity to meet all sorts of people. It was meaningful to me because there aren't very many Jews back in my hometown, so I loved how I could learn more about Judaism, Jewish history, and the mystical city of Tzfat.

- I was exposed to many different spiritual identities and encouraged to engage with my Judaism and my spirituality in adventurous ways.

- The advantages are that you guys offer hiking, volunteer work, and more singing and free spirited stuff than traditional text based torah learning Jewish programs.

- New surprises and support.

- It was a great, fulfilling, spiritually charging and experience.

- I plan to take home my greater knowledge and understanding of the jewish experience.

- An amazing week of connection, spirituality, pushing boundaries, and Judaism.

- Valuing and living my Judaism.

- Livnot was an opportunity to get in touch with my spiritual side.

- I plan to take home my greater knowledge and understanding of the jewish experience.

- The Livnot experience has been spiritually awakening and life-changing.

- An amazing week of connection, spirituality, pushing boundaries, and Judaism.

- Sharing our experiences with Judaism and antisemitism felt validating and reassuring.

- It reminded me I'm not alone - and that we are an incredible people. I left feeling proud of my Judaism.

- An unpredictable and spiritual journey I didn't know I needed.

- The best week of my life... SO FAR.

- A way to meet great people and connect on another level.

- Sharing our experiences with Judaism and antisemitism felt validating and reassuring.

- The Livnot experience has been spiritually awakening and life changing.



Photo: Sukkot Program 2025

Masa Partnership: 2025 Highlights

Capacity:

Hosted 2 groups of 30+ participants for weeklong programs.

Resilience:

Hosted the June group for 2 additional weeks during the Iran escalation.

Continued Partnership: Summer 2026

Expansion:

Hosting 2 groups of 30+ participants for 2-weeks of a 6-week educational volunteer programs.



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Testimonial from a Masa-Tlalim Guide

"My name is Erez and I led the Across Israel Masa program in May 2025, which included a week with Livnot U'Lehibanot in Tzfat. According to our participants, this was the most meaningful part of their entire journey.

Volunteers found a deep sense of purpose rebuilding northern communities, complemented by tours and evening sessions with Kabbalah teachers. When the Israel-Iran war broke out, the Livnot team provided exceptional leadership and support. They maintained stability through meaningful programming and unique service opportunities, like painting bomb shelters for children. I look forward to our future collaboration. Thank you for your support".

Invitations to Partner



Invitation to Partner

Educational Programs: Join us in a shared mission to make the Israel experience also a Jewish experience.

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Support our Educational Programs

- Ongoing Jewish educational content within 2 of the 6-week Masa Volunteer Programs
- Monthly workshops reaching thousands of participants
- Two Shabbat retreats each month
- Renewal and expansion of Birthright extensions with Livnot

Invitation to Partner:

2027 Program Goals in Numbers

MONTHLY IMPACT:
125 lives
transformed monthly

26



OUR VISION:

- 2 x 8-Day Programs: 50 participants (2 x 25)
- 1 x 2-Week Program: 25 participants
- 2 x Weekend Retreats: 50 participants (2 x 25)
- 1 x Month: staff training for other organizations


EXPECTED ANNUAL REACH:
1500+
Participants
Empowered



Invitation to Partner:

Beit HaKahal Expansion Projects

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- 
- The background image shows a construction site where two people are working. A woman in the foreground, wearing a white apron over an orange tank top and black leggings, is using a shovel to mix concrete in a large black bucket. A man in a maroon shirt is also working nearby, also with a bucket. The ground is dirt and there are various construction tools and materials scattered around. In the top right corner, the number '27' is displayed.
- Chamber of Hassidic Music
 - Interactive Experience:
Spanish Expulsion &
Immigration to Tzfat
 - Room dedicated to 16th
century Scholars of Tzfat

Invitation to Partner:

Rebuilding Kiryat Shmona—Again

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Returning to Rebuild Kiryat Shmona

- **Proven impact:** \$2.5M rebuilding effort after the Second Lebanon War, renovating 120 bomb shelters.
- **First to return:** Re-entered Kiryat Shmona immediately following the January 2025 ceasefire to provide hands-on rebuilding support.
- **Deep local roots:** Long-standing partnerships and trusted, on-the-ground experience with residents.

THEN | Livnot Volunteers in K.S | 2007



NOW | Livnot Volunteers in K.S | 2025



Appendix:

Additional Resources & Materials



Selected Media

& Presentation Resources

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Rebuilding Short Documentary

- A 13-minute overview of Livnot's work since Oct 7th from voices on the ground

Flagship Program Video

- A 2-minute promo clip about Livnot's Educational Volunteer program

2025 Program Voices

- A 2.5 minute video of volunteer program participant voices

Selected Published Articles

- Featured Articles from:
 - Y Net News
 - JNS
 - The Jewish Standard,



Educational Materials & Publications

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Learning
Under The
Tree



Judaism &
Nature Guide

Building
Jewish
Roots



Doctor's
Thesis
centered on
the Livnot
experience

Tu B'Shvat
Companion



Holiday
Seder Guide

Zmirot from
Livnot
U'Lehibanot



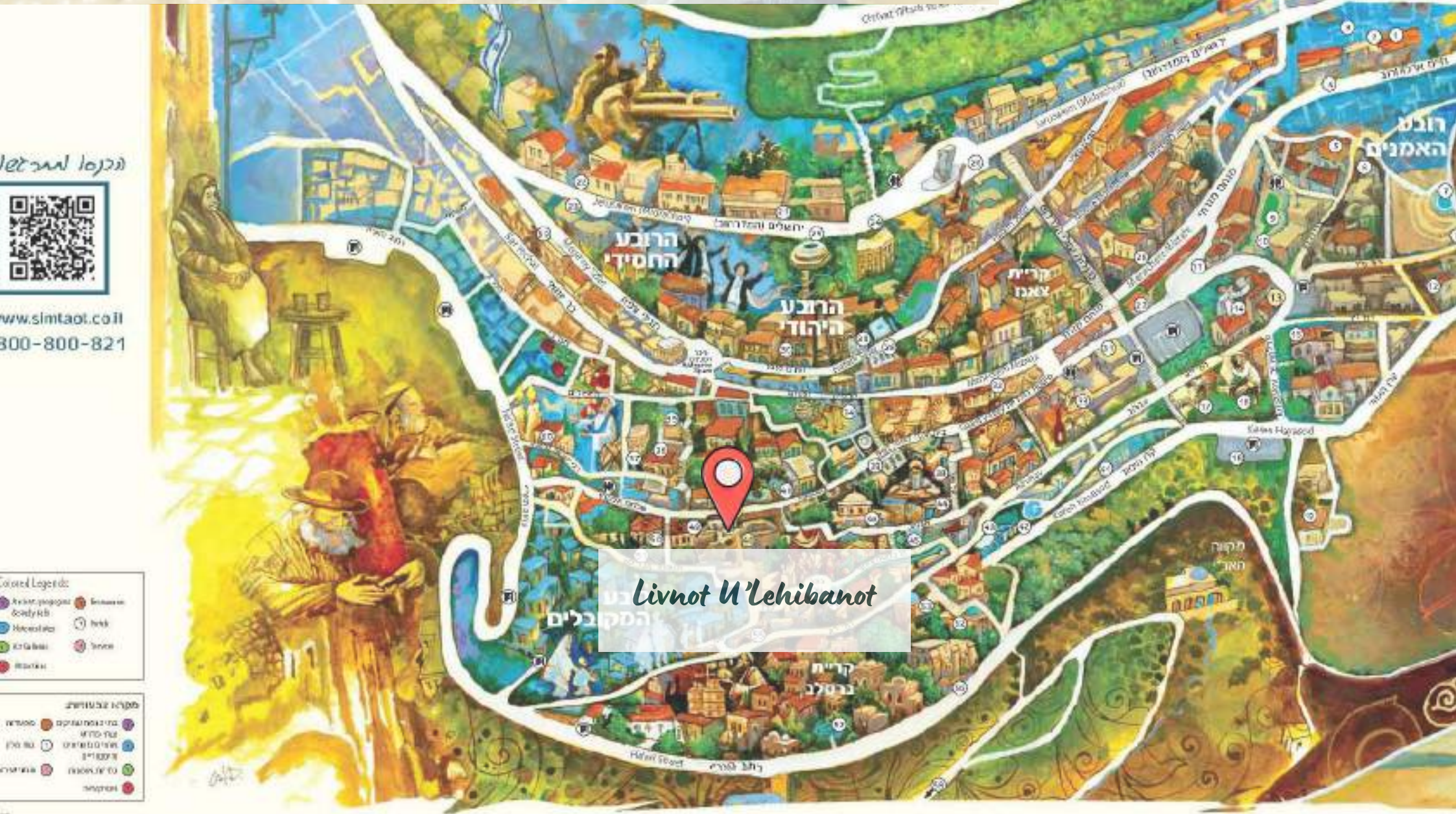
Livnot
Songbook

Alumot
Handbook



Educational
resources
for Alumni

Livnot Campus on the Map: Old City, Tzfat



Livnot U'Lehibanot

Livnot U'Lehibanot Timeline

A Legacy of Building & Being Built

Over Four Decades of Heritage, Education, and Community Service

- **1980 | Official Recognition**

The program receives prompt approval from the Department of Aliyah (Kibbutz Ulpan office).

- **1980 | Inception**

Livnot is born, launching its inaugural program with 13 participants to combine physical building with spiritual exploration.

The start of 3-6 three-month programs annually for the next 20 years.

- **1982 | Forged in Crisis**

After the First Lebanon War, Livnot participants filled sandbags in bunkers on the Syrian Border, establishing an ethos of immediate crisis response.

- **1982 | Operation Moses**

Livnot played a critical role in the historic Ethiopian Aliyah, helping new immigrants acclimate to Israel.

- **1990-1991 | Anchoring Roots**

Strategic purchase of the Tzfat Campus and the Kahal property to establish a permanent home.

- **1991 | Immigrant Vocational Training**

Launched B'Aaretz U'B'aam, a specialized program training Russian builders.

- **1992 | Federation Partnerships**

Commenced a longstanding partnership with UJA Federation NY. Simultaneously, West Palm Beach Federation selected Tzfat as a Sister City largely due to Livnot's impact.

- **1995-2004 | Leadership Development**

Hosted the OTZMA leadership training program, shaping future Jewish leaders for the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA).

- **1997 | Excellence in Service:**

Expanded the community service model across five cities; (Hatzor, Hadera, Jerusalem, Beit Shemesh, Tzfat) and was awarded Best Volunteer Organization in Jerusalem.

- **1998 | The Blueprint for Birthright:**
Philanthropist Michael Steinhardt visited the campus, declaring Livnot's model "the inspiration for Birthright". This influence is documented in Steinhardt's book, "Jewish Pride."

- **1999-2008 | Birthright Launch:**
As Birthright Israel launched, Livnot was selected as one of the first providers. Livnot operated distinct 14-day Birthright programs emphasizing learning and hiking, and two Shabbatot after a full week.

- **2000-2001 | Elite Alliance:**
Recognized as one of six elite educational programs (Alliance Programs) alongside Pardes and WUJS.

- **2002-2004 | Shabbat Programs for IDF**
Launched Shabbat programming for IDF and opened the Tzfat Information Visitors Center.

- **2005 | Partnership with MASA**
Launched the first five-month MASA program. An Alliance study rated Livnot top-tier in follow-up, relationship with staff and Israel connection and received the prestigious Yakir Tzfat Prize.

- **2006 | Crisis Leadership (Second Lebanon War):**
When the local municipality staff of Tzfat evacuated, Livnot provided for the elderly who needed around the clock assistance after their caretakers were notified by their embassies to leave the North.

After the war and over the course of a year, a staff of 25 builders and volunteers on two week programs restored over 100 bomb shelters in Tzfat/Hatzor—supported by West Palm Beach Federation—and 120 Bomb Shelters in Kiryat Shmona, supported by New York Federation.

- 
- **2011 | National Heritage Site:**
The Beit HaKahal was officially declared a National Heritage Site by the Israeli Government.
 - **2012-2013 | Tzfat Restoration:**
Participants built infrastructure at the Citadel (Metzudah). Renovated 17 apartments for vulnerable populations in Tzfat with the JDC.
 - **2013 | Shabbat Book**
After an article about Shabbat by Michael Steinhardt came out, 300 Livnot participants wrote to him about their unique experience.
 - **2014 | Strategic Collaboration:**
Facilitated a collaboration between the Jewish Agency and Shapira Foundation to create Onward Israel.
 - **2016–2017 | Birthright Plus:**
Successfully integrated into the Birthright Plus extension with Maimonides support.
 - **2020 | Digital Pivot:**
During the Corona crisis, Livnot engaged thousands of alumni globally via 70 Zoom programs.
 - **2023–2026 | Swords of Iron Response:**
At the request of the Army, Livnot mobilized immediately to begin critical work in the Gaza Envelope and Lebanese Border in over 400 support war relief projects with 25 professional builders and hundreds of volunteers on a regular basis.

A Call for Unity

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For the Rabbis signed here, from all denominations, Livnot was the pivotal point in their journey towards serving their communities as rabbis. They have come together in agreement to add their voice to the following statement:

We, the Jewish People, are a small nation with great gifts, endless potential and a lofty destiny. Our goal as a people, defined by the prophets, is to actualize the talents and skills and wisdom of each and every one of us for the benefit of all humanity. Despite this well-defined vision, the Jewish people of our generation faces accelerating fragmentation and mutual alienation between religious groups and denominations leading to a divisiveness that threatens achieving our national destiny as a light unto the nations.

Consequently, we believe it to be incumbent upon all responsible Jewish leaders to work together to bridge and heal these rifts, to help all Jews of all persuasions feel connected to each other and to their heritage in personal, meaningful and effective ways. We call on all who can help in this mission to seek ways to engage with our tradition and to reach out to all Jews in the spirit of inclusiveness and the understanding that we are all responsible for one another.

Rabbi David Bar Cohn | Orthodox
Rabbi Mark Miller | Reform
Rabbi Zvi Solomons | Orthodox
Rabbi Baruch HaLevi | Conservative
Rabbi Mois Navon | Orthodox
Rabbi Susan Schein | Reconstructionist
Rabbi Jeffrey Lipschultz | Conservative
Rabbi Michael Ragozin | Conservative

Rabbi Shmuel Birnham | Conservative
Rabbi Gershon Clymer | Orthodox
Rabbi Richard Rheins | Reform
Rabbi Howard Goldsmith | Reform
Rabbi Jennifer Maggin | Reform
Rabbi Baruch Rock | Orthodox
Rabbi Avi Rosenfeld | Orthodox

Stay Connected

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Website

www.livnot.org



Donations

www.livnot.org/donate



Social Media



Email

Botzer@livnot.org



A group of five young adults are smiling and looking towards the camera. In the center, a young man holds a large, golden-brown braided loaf of challah. Below it, a young woman holds a box filled with various types of bread, including rolls and loaves. The group is diverse in appearance and is dressed in casual clothing. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

Thank you!



Livnot U'Lehibanot

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