

AMERICAN ZIONIST MOVEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR PRESENTATION TO THE AZM NATIONAL BOARD

September 22, 2016

CO-CHAIRS:

KENNETH BOB AND SONDRASOKAL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Ms. Ellen Hershkin
Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, President
Rabbi Bennett Miller
Mr. W. James Schiller
Mr. Leonard Petlakh
Ms. Judy Shereck
Rabbi Josh Weinberg
Dr. Marilyn Wind
Ms. Sara Zebovitz

Karen J. Rubinstein, Executive Director

AMERICAN ZIONIST MOVEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2016

Statement of Purpose

The mission of the American Zionist Movement (AZM) is to bring the American Jewish community closer to Zionism.

The AZM is composed of organizations representing a broad array of Zionist perspectives and engaging in a variety of philanthropic, educational and advocacy activities on behalf of Israel. In this capacity, the AZM carries out activities and programs on behalf of the World Zionist Organization and represents American Zionists within the National Institutions of Israel. In addition, the AZM strives to provide services and programming for member organizations, as well as serve as a catalyst for new Zionist ideas, a convener of Zionist discussions, and an incubator of new initiatives.

Goals

- Facilitate collaboration among member organizations through and with the AZM
- Become the central distribution hub of Zionist resources
- Deepen and expand the active relationship of the American Jewish Community to Zionism in a contemporary context
- Ensure financial stability and sustainability for the AZM

Appendices

- Organization and Governance
- Staffing

GOAL ONE: FACILITATE COLLABORATION AMONG MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH AND WITH THE AZM

Rationale: Collaborative efforts among the organizations result in increased effectiveness and reach for each of the organizations and the AZM as a whole. As an umbrella organization for all of its constituents, the AZM should work with these constituents in a collaborative fashion and, at the same time, work individually with each constituent to promote its programs and agenda. An environment characterized by trust and cooperation is essential to accomplishing this goal. While AZM must remain neutral on both political and religious issues, it can easily find common bonds with each of the organizations and its leadership in order to promote Zionist education and Israel-oriented programs.

Strategies:

1. Create opportunities for continual dialogue between and among the member organizations and with the AZM leadership, both staff and volunteers (lay and professional).
2. Build a cohesive AZM presence and perspective within the National Institutions through the creation of the position of AZM Vice-President for WZO Relations.
3. Activate the American Zionist Youth Council, including the recruitment of a coordinator for Zionist youth activities.
4. Develop methods to incentivize collaboration between member organizations.

Metrics of Success:

Year One:

1. Establish a forum of organizational staff members of constituent organizations with regularly scheduled meetings.
2. Develop opportunities for volunteers from different organizations to exchange ideas both in person and online.
3. Create the position of Vice-President for WZO Relations and establish a work plan for the committee chaired by that Vice-President.
4. Establish a working relationship between the AZM and the American Zionist Youth Council (AZYC), including staffing.

Year Two:

1. Over the course of the year, schedule at least four meetings of staff professionals of constituent organizations with the aim of the development of cooperation between the participants and collective action to further the goals of the AZM.
2. Establish a venue for staff and volunteers to engage in on-line dialogue on Zionist issues.
3. Increase the number of AZYC programs, including both national and local joint activities.

GOAL TWO: BECOME THE CENTRAL DISTRIBUTION HUB OF ZIONIST RESOURCES

Rationale: Each of our member organizations, as well as the AZM and the WZO, produce Zionist materials and initiatives which are not effectively shared and do not reach the maximal target audience outside of their respective organizations.

Strategies:

1. Create an online clearing house of programmatic and educational materials, as well as leadership development and advocacy initiatives, developed by member organizations and the WZO for AZM members and unaffiliated individuals.
2. Work collaboratively with member organizations and the WZO to publicize Zionist activities.
3. Build visibility for the clearing house through the use of digital marketing techniques as well as leveraging the AZM organizational networks.
4. Increase AZM presence at national communal events.

Metrics for Success:

Year One:

1. Increase staff time assigned to collect and disseminate materials from all the organizations, as well as from the WZO and Jewish Agency.
2. Begin development of website to properly present collected materials.
3. Expand e-commerce effort using SWAG- (i.e., posters, mugs, pens, bobble heads) to create awareness and generate income.

Year Two:

1. Increase use of social media, as well as having a physical and/or virtual presence at national and local events including communal and rabbinical conventions and organizational listservs.
2. Complete and roll-out website to properly present collected materials, with established system for managing the site.

GOAL THREE: DEEPEN AND EXPAND THE ACTIVE RELATIONSHIP OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH TO ZIONISM IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Rationale: Because the AZM represents the spectrum of Zionist ideologies, it is well-placed to facilitate engagement around the overarching Zionist issues facing Israel and the Diaspora. Different groups of Jews, based on age and other factors, can relate to different issues, and can become the focus of AZM programming in order to involve them in the Zionist.

Strategies:

1. Connect parts of the Jewish community that focus on Tikkun Olam, environmental issues and other non-Israel related projects with Zionist partners in the United States and in Israel (e.g. Mazon is connected to a hunger organization in Israel).
2. Convene think tank style gatherings involving a select group of people/ thinkers/ practitioners/ lay leaders to discuss ideas and to articulate Zionism's relevance.
3. Encouragement of venues for the philosophical discussion of contemporary Zionism.
4. Hire staff capable of leading this effort.

Metrics of Success:

Year One:

1. Dedicate a day at the AZM Biennial to think tank style discussions around "Imagining Zionism Today."
2. Begin the development of a practical methodology for engagement of the various segments of the Jewish community in contemporary Zionist thought.

Year Two:

1. Organize two events, which by employing conversation-type dialogue with an invitation only audience, lead to the development of creative programmatic initiatives for AZM.
2. Begin incubation of two new Zionist projects and the related funding search.

3. Produce and disseminate contemporary Zionist thought for a wide variety of audiences, utilizing but not limited to the AZM website, existing publications and online venues, be it Moment Magazine, the Huffington Post, Kveller, JewSchool and everything in-between.

GOAL FOUR: ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE AZM

Rationale: Implementation of the strategic plan will require increased resources to insure the stability and sustainability of the AZM.

Strategies:

1. In order for the AZM to have a serious fund raising component, some of the officers and cabinet members' main focus should be the AZM, not their member organizations.
2. Each officer should be required to make a minimum annual contribution of \$1,000 and each cabinet member should be required to make a minimum annual contribution of \$250. Where required, exemptions for youth representatives should be established.
3. Fundraising activities such as those listed below should be investigated for viability:
 - a. Direct mail campaigns, utilizing both snail mail and digital marketing avenues.
 - b. Annual fund raising programs such as the existing Purim Connection.
 - c. Annual fundraising event for the general community such as a concert with a name star in connection with a celebration such as Yom Yerushalayim. This could be held in New York as well as in other regions.
 - d. Specific projects in coordination with the WZO that would give donors the opportunity to have their name on a plaque, building, scroll etc., in Israel such as at the Herzl Center.
 - e. Project fundraising via crowdsourcing
3. Retain a grant writer on a consultant basis to apply for grants from pertinent foundations for various AZM programs and initiatives.
4. The AZM should make the case and request WZO funding for specific projects and initiatives that are included in this plan.
5. The next Executive Director should have fundraising experience.

Metrics of Success:

Year One:

1. Recruit Vice President of Fundraising and other Cabinet members to focus on AZM fundraising.
2. Reach agreement with relevant WZO departments regarding the Strategic Plan and partnering opportunities, resulting in increased funding.

3. Evaluate all of the possible fundraising options, prioritization of best prospects and work begun pursuing the top items.
4. Increase income by 15% per year.

Year Two:

1. Implement the fundraising program established by fully functioning fundraising committee.
2. Increase income by an additional 15% per year.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE APPENDIX

Goal: To improve the governance of the AZM and ensure best practices

Rationale: The successful implementation of the goals and strategies proposed in this strategic plan will require improved governance and implementation of best practices.

Strategies:

1. Establishment of functional definitions for officers:
 - a. Vice President for Inter-organizational Relations and communications
 - b. Vice President for World Zionist Organization Relations
 - c. Vice President for Financial Resource Development
 - d. Vice President for Programming
 - e. Treasurer
 - f. Secretary
2. Establishment of functional standing committees corresponding to the Vice-Presidential functions and chaired by each VP respectively.
 - a. Committee members should not be limited to members of the Board.
 - b. Committee decisions to be ratified by the Cabinet.
3. Presentation of the proposed annual budget to the cabinet and the Board for approval not later than November 15 of the year prior to start of the budget.
4. Presentation of committee work plans to the cabinet and Board for approval, not later than November 15 prior to the start of the plan.
5. Implementation of a board development strategy
 - a. Role of board member as a representative to the AZM on behalf of his/her organization as well as from the AZM back to his/her organization.
 - b. Financial responsibility of board members
 - c. Educational opportunities for board members regarding the history of the Zionist Movement; the nature and functions of the National Institutions; the programs and activities of the AZM member organizations.
 - d. Board Letter to each member at the start of their term outlining functions of the board and board member responsibilities.

- e. Inclusion of *Ad Personum* board members whose primary commitment is to the AZM. This will require the combined efforts of the President and Executive Director In order to identify and cultivate appropriate individuals.

6. Integration of members of the American Zionist Youth Council into the Board and Cabinet.

7. Redefinition of the Executive Director’s job description to include primary responsibility for facilitation of the Strategic Plan

Metrics of Success:

Year One:

1. Ratify an amendment to the bylaws to allow an additional Vice–President.
2. Recruit an appropriate Executive Director.
3. Recruit an appropriate Programming Coordinator.
4. Recruit an appropriate AZYC Coordinator.
5. Develop a “Board Letter” that clearly explains the responsibilities of Board Members.
3. Develop and maintain functioning committees.

Year Two:

1. Implement budget and work plan recommendations.
2. Identify and include youth and non-organizational nominees into the governance structure.
3. Develop and implement a Comprehensive Board Development and Education program.

STAFFING APPENDIX

In order to accomplish the goals outlined in this strategic plan, the following minimal staff are required:

Executive Director

An Executive Director with fundraising experience and familiarity with the Jewish-Zionist communal world must be recruited to be in place not later than February 15, 2017.

Program Coordinator

A Program Coordinator with familiarity with the Jewish-Zionist communal world must be recruited in conjunction with the incoming Executive Director. This position should be filled when feasible.

American Zionist Youth Council (AZYC) Coordinator – Part-time

A Coordinator with Zionist youth movement experience should be in place as soon as possible.

Administrative Assistant

This position should be filled in conjunction with the incoming Executive Director.

In addition, some level of consultants and freelancers in the following areas will likely be needed to fulfill this plan, subject to decisions made by committees and budget constraints:

- Grant writing
- Web development
- Information technology
- Public relations and marketing