

Machanaim Fact Sheet

How it started...

...What was to become **Machanaim** originated in Moscow - in the shadow of the KGB - in the end of the seventies and soon developed into an underground network of Jewish learning, characterized by an open-minded, non-coercive, grass-roots approach.

On arriving in Israel, the core group established **Machanaim** in Jerusalem as a formal organization. We launched activities in two directions: work with new olim from the USSR all over Israel and educational help to Jews still in Russia. The dual character of the work gave birth to the name **Machanaim**, taken from Genesis 32:3 and meaning "two camps" - Moscow and Jerusalem.

Why Machanaim?

Russian speakers in Israel in many cases combine high intellectual and general education level with almost complete ignorance of Jewish Tradition.

Few organizations have addressed this issue on a systematic basis. Various government agencies took on parts of the puzzle and their consequences, but no one looked at the whole issue from a cultural and educational perspective.

Machanaim stepped into this void with a multi-tiered, multi-faceted open approach to teaching what being Jewish can mean to someone acculturated in the Russian Communist environment.

Machanaim's Approach

Russian speaking Jews all over the world in many cases combine high intellectual and general education level with almost complete ignorance of Jewish Tradition. Few organizations have addressed this issue on a systematic basis. Various government agencies took on parts of the puzzle and their consequences, but no one looked at the whole issue from a cultural and educational perspective. **Machanaim** stepped into this void with a multi-tiered, multi-faceted open approach to teaching what being Jewish can mean to someone acculturated in the Russian Communist environment. Some **Machanaim** projects develop and disseminate Russian language Jewish educational tools and materials for wide use around the world through publication and the Internet. Some focus on building a cadre of leaders and teachers for the next generation. Others provide direct services and classes to Russian-language olim and the reawakening communities around the world.

Machanaim's Main Projects:

Book Publishing

Includes 21 publications in Russian on Judaism.

Internet and Mass Media

Various programs on Jewish life cycle events, Jewish culture, history and heritage on Israeli radio, Russian-language newspaper, and Russian Israeli television; an educational site on the Internet that contains over 8,000 pages, including the world's most extensive collection of materials on Jewish tradition in Russian, and new interactive academic courses on various Jewish Heritage topics.

JEWISH HERITAGE ULPAN

Lectures and classes given in Russian and Hebrew on different aspects of Judaism, Jewish History, and Jewish Philosophy.

"ONE PEOPLE" PROJECT

Joint attractive activities for immigrants, Jewish and non-Jewish together are aimed at preserving the Jewish character of the society. Includes weekend seminars, tours, cultural and social events, as well as meetings with public figures.

GIYUR PROGRAMS

For over 15 years **Machanaim** has been running some of the most successful programs for converting non-Jews. The program is in accordance with the Chief Rabbinate's requirements, and 100% of those who complete the course, convert successfully.

TEACHERS' TRAINING PROGRAM

Machanaim's special educational approach requires a special kind of training in tolerance and the participatory techniques that create a friendly atmosphere. This project provides an educational framework for beginning immigrant teachers from all over the country.

WEEKEND SEMINARS

This project offers immigrants attractive activities that acquaint them with the Jewish mode of life and better integrate them into Israeli society.

EDUCATIONAL TOURS

These are tours conducted in Russian by an experienced professional guide. They let the immigrants come to know their land better, develop an interest in its history and culture, as well as an emotional link to Israel.

FOUNDATIONS OF JUDAISM FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Machanaim teachers give Judaism courses in Russian for over 700 Bar-Ilan immigrant students.

GOLDEN AGE ACADEMY

Classes in Jewish subjects for elderly Russian immigrants provide these people for whom adaptation in a new place may be the hardest with meaningful activities, and help them develop, in spite of all the hardships, a sense of belonging.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Machanaim runs Jewish Identity programs for children, designed to help them develop a sense of belonging and involvement in Jewish life through arts and crafts activities.

TEACHING JUDAISM FOR JEWS IN THE USSR

Machanaim has not forgotten the Jews in the former USSR and their struggles to learn Jewish History, Jewish Culture and Heritage. In conjunction with Jewish Identity project of Jewish Agency **Machanaim** organizes seminars in Russia, in a variety of contexts, to reinforce and provide advanced content to local efforts.

For more information about program development and partnerships, contact Miriam Kitrossky at tel. 053-270186, Miriam@machanaim.org.