

## Kol Ami – Jewish Peoplehood Leadership Academy

### Overseas Participant Information Pack 2021-22

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Kol Ami Information Pack. We are excited and looking forward to your participation on the program. We hope that the details here will help you with your preparation before you join us in Israel. There is lots of information here. It is important that you read and understand it all. Please let us know if you have any questions after reading it.

As well as the technical information we also hope that this pack serves as an introduction to the program and gives you some more background about the exciting adventure that will begin on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions overseas participants may be required to arrive in Israel earlier than this date.

We also want to highlight a few important points before beginning:

1. This year we have *chanichim* (participants) joining the program from over ten different countries! Language used in this pack tries to take into account regional differences in English and also uses some Hebrew words. If something is not clear, please ask.
2. The participation of Israeli chanichim in *Mechinot Kdam Tzvaiyot* (pre-army preparation programs) is financially supported by the Israeli Department of Education and the I.D.F. Therefore there is a difference in the amount Israeli chanichim pay to participate in the program because of this subsidy. In addition, Israeli chanichim (who have completed a *tsav rishon*) receive a state subsidized public transport pass (*Rav Kav*).
3. **Language** - We strongly advise that chanichim coming from abroad spend time learning Hebrew before the program begins. This will serve you well during the second half of the program (December-February) when the language used in the program switches to Hebrew.

There is some Hebrew tuition during the first half of the program (September-December) but chanichim who wish to learn Hebrew fluently should start learning before their arrival at the program.

One of the campuses of Kol Ami, Kibbutz Bahan, will remain in English for the whole six months. That being said, there will be more of an emphasis on learning Hebrew at that campus and in the second part of the mechina there will be more use of Hebrew.

As mentioned in your interviews and worth reminding:

4. The mechina schedule is intense. There are, for example; early mornings, late evenings, sports classes, hikes and all in addition to the organic intensity of up to forty people living and studying together in close quarters for six months.
5. Room and board on the mechina is clean and comfortable but simple. Some examples of this; there are usually 3-5 people sharing a bed room, breakfast and dinner (on a regular day) is made by the chanichim, during hikes we sleep outdoors, during seminars away from the mechina building we usually sleep on the floors of community centers, synagogues etc.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding any details in this pack.

**We are looking forward to seeing you in Israel and starting the adventure together!**

## COVID 19 PANDEMIC REGULATIONS

Kol Ami receives regulations concerning health, safety and security from the Safety and Security Department of the Jewish Agency, who in turn receive their guidelines from Israel's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. Whilst we have not yet received specific regulations for the new cohort of 2021-22, we are very happy to say that, with strict adherence to all regulations received, we operated a very healthy, safe and successful program during the 2020-21 cohort. For the 2021-22 cohort, we will of course adhere to all regulations once they have been decided. More details will be published in the coming weeks.

## CHOOSING A *SHLUCHA* (campus)

Kol Ami has different *shluchot* (campuses) around the country. Participants give their preference for which *shlucha* they would like to attend before starting the Mechina, however the staff takes the final decision.

The curriculum is the same at *shlucha* and the daily schedule is very similar.

There is usually an opportunity to meet with one or all of other *shluchot* around at least once every three weeks (Covid-19 regulations permitting).

*Chulnikim* (participants coming from outside of Israel) are divided equally amongst the *shluchot*. There will be up to 40 participants on each *shlucha* and around ten of them will be *chulnikim* (numbers may vary).

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Requesting which *shlucha* you want is very personal. Things to take into consideration:

1. You may wish to be in a new area of Israel that you are unfamiliar with and haven't spent much time in.

Alternatively

2. You may want to be in a location close to Israeli family or friends that you may spend the weekends/vacation time with.

Information about the different *shluchot* will be given out during the information meetings on Zoom and you are very welcome to contact us for additional information.

**The *shlucha* preference questionnaire will be sent in a separate email and will include more information about each *shlucha*.**

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

### Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

The program does not require any level of religious observance. However, no program activities will be conducted contrary to the laws of Shabbat/*Chaggim* (Jewish Festivals). Kol Ami encourages a tolerant environment where all participants feel comfortable with their own Jewish expression. Kol Ami participants will be involved in actively celebrating Shabbatot and all *Chaggim* such as Yom Kippur and Sukkot, in a manner that is appropriate to the group.

## Free time

Throughout the course of the program participants will have free time, however, the program is very intense. The daily schedule generally starts at around 6.30-7am and finishes at around 9.30-10pm. Apart from a few short breaks during a regular day, free time will mostly be on free weekends (usually twice a month) and Jewish holidays.

## Shabbat

Usually we alternate closed shabbatot (Shabbat at the mechina) and free shabbatot (participants leave the mechina). On a free Shabbat, participants are expected to make their own plans but staff will help if needed. On an open Shabbat participants are usually released from the program on Friday morning (occasionally on Thursday afternoon) and need to be back on Sunday morning (occasionally Sunday afternoon or Monday morning). We strongly encourage the Israeli chanichim to host the chulnikim at their houses for shabbatot and chagim and see this as very much within the spirit of the program.

**Chofesh** (vacation) – Please see program schedule for chofesh times.

## Health & Travel Insurance

'On ground' health insurance is covered in the cost of the program. Participants are covered from the start to the end of the program. The health insurance provided does not cover pre-existing conditions or payment of medication for pre-existing conditions and as such additional cover may be required in such cases. The program does not provide travel insurance; we recommend that all participants take out some form of travel insurance.

The program does not provide theft insurance.

In some health cases participants will need to pay first and will be reimbursed by the insurance company afterwards (for doctor's appointment, surgery, medication etc.).

For full details of the insurance policy please download here:

[tinyurl.com/mechinainsurance](http://tinyurl.com/mechinainsurance)

## Health Insurance (Olim Chadashim)

If you are making Aliyah before the program you will receive medical insurance as part of your *sal klitah* (benefits given to Olim by the state). It is very important that you bring us all the documents you receive concerning medical insurance at the *misrad hapnim* (Ministry of Interior) on arrival to Israel.

## Flights and arrival at the program

The cost of airfares is **not** included in the cost of the program.



Generally all participants are expected to arrive on their own to the mechina on the first day, 29<sup>th</sup> August. However, buses to the mechina will be provided to each shlucha from one or two central locations on the first day of the program. Details of the times and locations of the buses will be published a few days before the program starts.

Kol Ami does not provide transport to and from the airport. However, let us know when you are arriving in Israel and if you need help arranging transport from the airport and somewhere to stay before the start of the program we will do our best to help.

### Spending Money

It is the responsibility of the participant to provide all pocket money for personal expenses in Israel. A budget of about \$100 per month is recommended for spending money. One can manage on **much less** and there have been participants known to spend a lot more!

### Glasses

If the participant wears glasses or contact lenses, please ensure that a spare pair and a copy of the prescription is brought to Israel. These items can be replaced in Israel if necessary. (Optical medical insurance cover is **not** provided.) We also recommend that the participant take a pair of prescription sunglasses with them to Israel.

### Weather

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It is still very hot in Israel at the end of August and September! But it can be very cold and wet in February and March (especially near Jerusalem), so it is important to pack accordingly.

### Searches

For security reasons, participants can expect to be searched when entering public buildings in Israel. This is a regular occurrence.

### Medicines and Prescriptions

If the participant requires special medication, we ask that copies of all relevant prescriptions are brought to Israel. All medications can be replaced in Israel, but only with an appropriate prescription. Note that prescriptions are dispensed in Israel by reference to generic (chemical) formula and not by brand name. Medications containing habit-forming drugs should be identified, and the participant should bring a prescription or letter from the doctor stating that such medicine is being used under doctor's direction and is necessary for their well-being whilst abroad.

Please note that for pre-existing conditions, replacing medication in Israel will be at the participants' own expense. It is recommended that, if possible, the participant bring their own supply of the required medicine for the duration of the program.



Participants must notify program coordinators of any pre-existing medical conditions and any prescription medication needed. Failure to do so may affect the staff's ability to assist participants in case of medical events.

### Emergency Treatment

In the event of a participant requiring emergency treatment (including operations) the program directors will endeavor to contact a parent/guardian to obtain parental/guardian consent. However, the program directors reserve the right to make decisions without contacting a parent/guardian should this prove necessary. Signature of a parent/ guardian on the consent forms for the program is considered as acceptance of this condition.

### Family Visits and absences

We are delighted that parents/guardians often wish to come to Israel and we try to facilitate visits when we are informed of them in advance. It is important however, that parent's/guardian's visits are planned and coordinated with the Kol Ami campus director.

Prolonged absences from the program may result the participant being asked to leave the program.

### Leaving Israel

If participants wish to leave Israel, the Kol Ami campus director must be consulted in advance. A signed letter from the parent/guardian of the participant to the program will be required stipulating "total release of any liability" of the program for the duration of the absence from the program and acknowledgment there is no medical coverage during this period of time.

### Public Transport

There are times during the program when participants will need to use public transport (e.g. to and from volunteering placements, free weekends, vacation time, during some of the *chovek Israel* trip etc.).

When using public transport for **program activities** (e.g. volunteering, chovek Israel etc.) participants will be refunded for tickets by the mechina.

Participants will not be refunded for use of public transport for non-program periods (e.g. free weekends – leaving and returning to the mechina, vacation time, medical appointments, personal visits and personal trips etc.)

It is important to note that participants who will be joining the I.D.F., once they have completed the *tsav rishon*, are issued with a public transport pass by the I.D.F. for the duration of the program. This is available only for those joining the IDF and is issued by the army, only after completing the *tsav rishon*.

## Some personal advice from alumni:

### Lauren, Australia:

"1) Although the first half of the program is in English, I would still encourage everyone to work on their Hebrew as it's a good skill to have, helps you on the streets when you aren't with your Israelis.

2) Be prepared to experience a language barrier/culture shock in the first few weeks. You will adapt to quickly but at first it can be overwhelming.

4) Come prepared with a few ideas of what you can cook for the group so you aren't stressing and thinking about it on the day you are on *Toranut* (cooking duty).

5) When choosing a shlucha, choose somewhere which isn't close to anywhere you have been before as it will give you the opportunity to explore a new part of Israel.

6) Go into navigation week with an open mind rather than pre-set expectations!"

### Josh, Australia:

"There are cultural clashes at the beginning. The first month is all about learning to live with one and other in such an environment, which is really difficult. Yet, after the first month passes, you get over most of it, and you learn to love the people around you, appreciating what each one brings to the group.

It is also really important to share that it was a bit difficult with regards to getting things done - running errands as such. The Israelis have the ability to message their parents during the week, e.g. "mum/dad, i need this..." etc., where it was harder for us to get the same things.

With regards to the hikes - important to have bladder (water), and exercise clothes. I didn't have and struggled a bit."

### Ella, Australia:

"The one thing I would recommend including is information on any clothing restrictions that will be in place this year e.g. No singlets or flip flops at some activities. Last year I packed mostly singlets and only a couple of t-shirts and needed to order t-shirts online in the first week because I didn't have enough. Probably worth mentioning to IBC participants before they leave Australia because it might be a bit late for people now unless they have parents coming between now and when Mechina begins. "

## WHAT TO BRING

As participants become more and more excited about the wonderful opportunity lying ahead, there is a lot to prepare.

The most important advice we can give regarding packing goes is - **pack light!** Bring what you need, and no more. The lighter you travel, the easier it is to get around. Remember you'll be moving around quite a bit, packing and unpacking, getting on and off buses when there will be no-one to carry your luggage for you. Also remember, you can purchase anything you need in Israel, you don't need to bring 6 months' worth of shampoo! Also many program T-shirts and sweaters/jumpers will be acquired when in Israel.

N.B. Check your airline's luggage weight allowance. If the limit is exceeded and payment for any excess baggage is requested, it is at the expense of the participant.

Regarding climate, you'll be here for both the hottest and coldest months so be prepared!

**As the program brings together young people from many different backgrounds (e.g. Orthodox, secular, Israel, outside of Israel etc.) and due to the location of some of the shluchot, we want everyone to feel comfortable and therefore we ask that everyone pays attention to what they wear during the mechina. For example, for men and women, 'short shorts' and vests (e.g. singlets, spaghetti tops/tank tops) are inappropriate attire.**

There are also some occasions when we do have clothing requirements e.g. when volunteering in other institutions (e.g. schools etc.), on some visits (e.g. to the Kotel, Haredi families etc.) and when hiking.

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When hiking, participants are required to wear closed shoes (not sandals) and hats. We do not allow vests/tank tops when hiking and we strongly suggest people wear trousers/long pants and not shorts.

For hikes and trips away from the mechina you will need to bring a camping mattress. Inexpensive mattresses can be bought easily in Israel.

## **RECOMMENDED PACKING LIST**

**To avoid disappointment label everything with your name**

### **Important:**

- Documents and copies of any important documents
- Health and travel insurance
- Photocopies of passport (X2)
- Passport
- Debit/credit card
- Spare glasses

### **Clothes**

Clothes for two weeks

As well as:

- Clothes for Shabbat and chagim
- Clothes for running and sport
- Suitable clothes for hiking
- Clothes you don't mind getting dirty or ruined
- Warm clothes for winter
- Rain coat
- Swimming suit
- Flips flops and sandals
- Small medical kit
  
- Sleeping Bag - Essential
- Camping matt (inexpensive foams matts can be purchased easily in Israel) - Essential
  
- Hiking boots - Essential
- Sports shoes - Essential
- Sandals – Highly recommended
  
- Small backpack (for short hikes and short trips) - Essential
- Large hiking backpack (60 liters) for longer hikes - Essential
  
- Bed linen, pillow, blanket, towel – Kol Ami will provide at the beginning of the program but you may want to bring your own.

### Miscellaneous

- Hat - Essential
- Torch / flashlight - Essential
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent
- Kippot/Tefillin
- Towel
- Washing bag / Clothes line
- Portable Charger
- Diary
- Basic recipes
- A copy of your favorite book to create a Kol Ami library in each shlucha.
- Musical instrument (if you play one)
- Pictures and photos for your bedroom
- Disposable facemasks and hand sanitizer

### Tiyulim (Hikes and trips)

These trips can last up to two weeks and the participants will need warm clothing, good walking shoes, a hat, and a water bottle (on hikes everyone must carry at least 3 liters of water). Participants should have a three-day backpack (minimum 60 liters) for such trips, as well as a day pack for one day trips.

### Electricity

The electric current in Israel is 220 volts AC, 50 cycles. (This usually has no significant impact on 240V appliances, but plug adapters for Israeli plugs are necessary.)



## PAYMENTS POLICY

The total cost of the program is:

**Kibbutz Bahan and Kiriat Yearim campuses: US\$11,000**

**Kibbutz Kiriat Anavim (NOAM): US\$11,000**

**Galil Elyon: \$US13,000**

- Nonrefundable registration fee - \$50. Must be paid before scheduling the online interview.
- \$1000 deposit. After confirmation of the acceptance letter. Guarantees a spot on the program.
- The remainder of the payment must be completed before the start of the program.
- Payment schedule will be published shortly.