Introduction

The title “Israeli Global Impact” stands for a group of people who have dedicated and continue to dedicate their lives to life-altering action. Action which presents the best side of Israel and of Israelis, bringing to the developing world the knowledge, technology and experience that have accumulated in Israel; action that, more than anything, is rooted in a deep moral commitment.

The past year has been particularly significant for Israeli international development: Following a comprehensive process led by SID-Israel with the aim of presenting the Israeli government with a set of recommendations about the appropriate strategic policy vis-à-vis the developing world, the government adapted a resolution leading to the launch of an ordered internal governmental process, which will formulate governmental strategy in relation to the developing world. Underlying this step is the understanding that Israeli action in the developing world holds great diplomatic and economic potential.

The past year has been a turning point for international development, to a great extent, thanks to the enlistment of Israeli President Reuven Rivilin. The President has placed this topic on the public agenda and emphasized Israel’s responsibility to use its knowledge and capabilities for the benefit of others.

The President has also led a campaign of historic significance, calling for collaborations between Israel and the Jewish diaspora in meeting global challenges. Rivlin’s call was met in his trip to Ethiopia, where he was accompanied by a large Israeli delegation that included representatives from businesses, non-profits and academia, as well as a delegation of representatives from various Jewish foundations and organizations.

The President’s call bringing together different sectors of society to cooperate in addressing global development goals accords with SID’s belief in inter-sector dialogue. Our fundamental position is that the government must update its position on this topic, but we also believe that real change with real effects will take place only if the various parts of society join together to act in synergy. Concrete examples of this potential may be seen in the winners cited in this publication. In it can be found people working through a range of organizations and pathways: civil society, private corporations, government offices, and independently. The process we have initiated, our collaboration with the President’s Office and the outcomes of our strategic planning, are the beginning of a change in orientation for Israeli foreign policy and Israeli involvement in the developing world.

The task of selecting the honorees for our annual award ceremony has become more difficult each year thanks to the growing number of worthy and impressive candidates. This year the list of candidates came close to a hundred. A public selection committee was appointed to this end, composed of: Ilanit Litay, Chairman of the Board, SID-Israel; Tamar Pashtan, ESG and Impact Associate, Vital Capital Fund; Oren Nahari, Foreign News Editor for Walla News!; Dr. Aliza Belman Inbal, Director of the Pears Program for Global Innovation at Tel Aviv University; Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of Britain; Dyonna Ginsburg, Executive Director of OLAM; and Adv. Janet Levy Pahima, of HFN Law Firm. We wish to express our gratitude to the candidates and to the committee members who gave of their time and energies to the selection process.

As you will find in the following pages, this year’s honorees clearly reflect the wide range of Israeli organizations, companies and individuals acting to create a global impact: multinationals, innovative technology initiatives, humanitarian relief organizations, and outstanding people, all paragons of successful Israeli involvements in the developing world.

We are in the midst of a long-term process, with the hope that Israeli contributions to the developing world intensify and continue to thrive, and the expectation that our award winners inspire many others to follow in their footsteps.

Alon Beer, Director, SID Israel

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It is perhaps natural that foreign news editors, people whose job it is to see the larger world beyond Israel’s borders, should be members of the Society for International Development – Israel. When speaking of the “world” I don’t just mean the “important” world, the influential arena where the likes of Putin and Trump operate, but also the other world, which we rarely pay attention to in our daily lives. This is the world of a billion and a half Africans, over a billion Indians, of hundreds of millions in South America and in Southeast Asia. Their world affects us in many ways: they attempt to immigrate to the West when they experience drought and their land becomes barren; or when they are stricken by plagues – after all viruses don’t recognize international border lines; or when they cut down forests in order to make a living and exacerbate the greenhouse gas effect for us all.

The reasons for helping are many, from long term interests to short term interests – such as securing a UN vote – to simple humanity. I am constantly heartened by the incredible good will, compassion and humanity in Israel, and when this is combined with entrepreneurship, high-tech and thinking outside the box, the sky is the limit.

It might be natural for my colleagues and myself to be members of an organization such as SID-Israel as individuals. What should be less taken for granted is the fact that a media organization such as Walla News! should partner with this initiative. I was proud to have played a role in connecting Aviram Elad, Chief Editor at Walla News, with Alon Beer, Director of SID-Israel. The connection led to a collaboration between the two organizations in this worthy endeavor to recognize the work of Israeli and Jewish people and organizations who strive to improve life in the developing world and bring their touching stories to the attention of Walla News’ audience.

The selection committee realized very quickly that our task was complicated. We had no idea, or at least I didn’t, of just how many people and initiatives there were working to make the world a better place; just how many individuals give of their time and energies, at the expense of their families, and sometimes even at the risk of their lives, for the sake of strangers.

Various critical questions led to hours of deliberations: should we favor the initiatives of individuals? Should we prioritize startups over well-known conglomerates? Should motives be taken into considerations, or in other words, should altruism be valued over the desire to create a product that might eventually also bring profits? Should making the story public be a consideration? Should there be different award categories, and if so, what should they be? Should an initiative that is already in play be preferred over an initiative, however promising it might be, that hasn’t yet fully matured to a concrete product? The answers to these questions can be seen here: the list of winners speaks for itself. Our honorees are extremely varied: small and large companies, local and global initiatives, from Israel and across the Jewish world.

It is important to make them public. It is essential that Walla News tell their stories and the President of Israel honor the occasion with his presence. Such recognition is equally important for individuals laboring in Indian and African villages, to companies manufacturing the products, and to hospitals that send doctors to perform lifesaving surgeries among populations that don’t otherwise have access to doctors. And it is important for us, in Israel, to learn about the amazing members of our society, and perhaps to join one of these projects, contribute to it, and to devote some thought to what we can do for others, both those living next door and those living on the other side of the world.

Oren Nahari, Foreign News Editor, Walla News!

Member of the SID-Israel public advisory committee

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Ziv Koren

For the past 25 years of his career as photojournalist, Ziv Koren has labored to increase awareness and expose the Israeli public to events in the developing world, motivated by a sincere desire and mission to promote change and action to make the world a better place for the generations to come. Koren has made public in Israel and on the global stage a range of critical humanitarian issues, both local and global.

Koren specializes in photographing disaster situations, extraordinary circumstances in which one’s professional and individual abilities are challenged. Disaster photographers go to extraordinary lengths, often at great personal risk, to arrive at the epicenter of an event within 24 hours, and are part of the first responders in the field, tasked with providing the greater public with immediate testimony on the situation, and reporting transparently and objectively on the actions taken during the crisis. Koren succeeds in maintaining the dignity and humanity of those whose message he conveys to the outside world thanks to his great sensitivity.

Koren has made crucial contributions to the world of international development and to the promotion of the State of Israel abroad. His photography and documentation serve to substantiate written reports and reveal the truth on the ground in a humane and clear fashion, eliciting empathy from viewers and even spurring them into action.

Koren’s professional achievements and his contribution to society are evident in the widespread publication of his photography in the local and global press, including on the cover of leading magazines. Koren’s work has been shown in group and individual exhibitions around the world, including in leading museums, and he has won some thirty awards, including some of the most important in the field photojournalism.

Gifts to this year’s honorees are courtesy of Ziv Koren.