Shorashim

**Activities to Date**

Activities in the Field

* Launch, recruitment and operation of 20 field agents in the following towns:
  + Afula
  + Ashkelon
  + Be’er Sheva
  + Eilat
  + Jerusalem
  + Kiryat Gat
  + Or Akiva
  + Ramat Gan
  + Rishon Lezion
* Joint conference with agents and Shorashim representatives
* Process of establishing cooperation with the following organizations:
  + Veterans Association
  + Canada Houses
  + Six senior citizens’ homes
  + Ulpanim (intensive Hebrew language programs) for new immigrants
  + Several meetings were held with the relevant entities that are responsible for bringing thousands of immigrants per year from the CIS, who expressed willingness to cooperate with Shorashim at the document submission stage.

Public Relations, Media and Awareness Activities

* Publication of articles in local publications in areas with high concentrations of immigrants – Afula, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Be’er Sheva, , towns in the Shfela region, Kiryat Gat.
* Publication of articles in local publications in Russian
* Interviews with Shorashim representatives in Russian on Channel 9
* Two interviews with Udi Segal on the radio about the Shorashim initiative
* News item about the Shorashim initiative in Israel Hayom newspaper
* News item in Israel Hayom about the Veterans Association’s declaration of support for the verification of Jewish identity
* Interview on Ta’agid (Israel Public Broadcasting Station) about the Shorashim project
* Report on Channel 7 about the Shorashim project
* Report on Channel 2 News about a grandmother from Dnipro who is unable to make aliya – the report was not aired because the problem was solved, apparently following the intervention of reporter Nir Arad.
* Interview on Galei Zahal radio station with Razi Barkai. This was scheduled three times but was postponed each time due to news events relating to Iran.
* A telemarketing pilot was conducted on 120 past verifiers (led to 7 new verifiers)

**Obstacles**

* The level of general awareness of verifying one’s Jewish identity and understanding why it is necessary is still low.
* Deep suspicion among immigrants from the former Soviet Union, serious block among members of the second generation (Israelis) who feel embarrassment / shame / lack of need / lack of connection.
* To date, over 160 files have been sent, but verification has been completed for only a few. Therefore the public feeling is that Shorashim has not been successful in verification, and this negatively effects the public’s willingness to carry out verification.
* Lack of coordination between the promises made in Shorashim advertisements and the training sessions provided by Shorashim regarding assistance in locating documents and guidance, resulting in the responsibility being put back in the hands of the individuals themselves.
* There is a long lapse of time between checking the forms and the in-person meeting with the individuals.
* At first, a proposal was made to cooperate with immigrant organizations in order to work with immigrants upon their arrival in Israel. This would lead to a significant number of verifiers, but this process has not yet been approved.
* The agents have to wait a long time until they are paid for their work. For this reason, many field agents have left.

**Future Activities**

In the Field

* Recruit a “service consultant” whose role will include: shortening the waiting time between submitting the forms and the actual meetings; shortening the length of the entire process from start to finish; and encouraging the verifiers to make progress.
* Reach a cooperation agreement with the Veterans Association – **we must be prepared to handle the quantity of forms and progress efficiently with the verification.**
* Cooperate with the other organizations that were originally proposed:
  + The Israel Federation of Russian Speakers
  + Organizations of immigrants from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus, Bukhara, etc.
  + Representatives of the relevant communities and sectors in dozens of local authorities.
* Sales and publicity training sessions
* Joint ventures with organizers of large events for Russian speakers

Awareness, Media, and Public Relations

* Expand the scope of telemarketing to develop additional leads.
* Expand awareness through a long magazine-style piece on Channel 2 News (approval for this has been granted).
* Send a letter to the Masa mission in July.
* **Create a significant shift in consciousness and send a positive message to the Israeli generation of Russians** through a network mini-series project, with the participation of leading opinion-makers.
* Bring the obstacles and examples to the awareness of the public agenda (e.g., registration as a Christian blocks the possibility of requesting to make aliyah, intentional change of nationality...).