

# **ANU - Museum of the Jewish People: Organizational Transformation**

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This case was written by Dr. Ravit Cohen Meitar from Tel Aviv University and Lisa S. Duke for the purpose of class discussion. It does not intend to illustrate effective or ineffective handling or business processes or decisions.

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*Summer 2024. Chairwomen Irina Nevzlin and CEO Dan Tadmor reviewed the display of Codex Sassoon at ANU - Museum of the Jewish People (formerly Beit Hatfutsot or Museum of the Diaspora). The American Friends of ANU had purchased the Codex with the aid of a donation from Alfred H. Moses in May 2023; an exciting addition to the museum's display that would certainly attract high numbers of visitors. It was a far cry from 2003 when the museum was threatened with closure. Irina and Dan had started their Chair and CEO positions in 2012 and had fundraised and overseen the transformation of the museum while continuing business as usual. The museum opened in 2021 to great acclaim. The Codex was the jewel in the museum's crown, but Irina and Dan knew it would not be enough to secure the museum's financial stability. As they looked into the future, they had to consider what their next steps should be ...*

### **Brief History of Beit Hatfutsot (Museum of the Diaspora)**

The idea of Beit Hatfutsot was floated in the late 1950s. It was planned to show the cultural and spiritual ties of Israel and diaspora Jews (those who live outside Israel). The first plan for the museum was suggested in 1960. It would have four components: (a) a research institute with archive and library, (b) permanent core and temporary exhibitions, and (c) an auditorium. The museum, an independent organization, would be built on the Tel Aviv University (TAU) campus, north of the center of Tel Aviv, on approximately 4,000 sqm across three floors. After much discussion and debate about design and then construction, the museum opened on May 15, 1978 to raving reviews. The exhibitions took visitors on a historic journey of the Jewish people through the millennia. The story told how Jews lived outside of Israel but were persecuted for their ethnicity and faith. Visitors would pass through seven gates representing different aspects of the Jewish story such as family, community, practices etc, moving upwards through the building. The final gate was immigration to Israel (known as "making aliyah" – literally to ascend). This was the embodiment of the ultimate journey for Jews, to move to Israel as the only Jewish country in the world, and the place where they could truly fulfil their Jewish identity and live in peace without persecution.

Beit Hatfutsot was seen as a trailblazer in the use of multimedia materials, including AV technology and computers, to tell the story of the Jewish people as it did not have artifacts in its collection like other museums. It also had small a collection of maquette models of famous synagogues. By the end of its first year, the museum had attracted approximately 400,000 visitors. By the end of its first decade, visitors numbered over two million. Beit Hatfutsot opened a Jewish Genealogy Center in 1985. Over the years, it curated many temporary exhibitions including historical exhibitions about Jewish communities around the world, photography exhibitions of well-known Jewish photographers, thematic exhibitions about periods in Jewish history in the diaspora, and art and Judaica exhibitions. Unlike other museums where visitors would walk around unguided, Beit Hatfutsot introduced visitor guides to more meaningfully explain the exhibits and their significance. Additionally, there was a teaching center for educational groups from schools and colleges.

After its decade-long heyday and several successful temporary exhibitions, the museum suffered a drop in visitor numbers during the 1990s. Its displays and the technology that powered them aged and malfunctioned. Fundraising attempts were unsuccessful, and the museum survived hand-to-mouth. By 2002 the museum was in terminal decline. On most days there were more staff than visitors. It survived through emergency funding from the Government and by closing for part of the week.

By mid-2003, Beit Hatfutsot's debt reached NIS 10M (approximately US\$2.3M). Jointly owned by the State of Israel, the Jewish Agency, World Zionist Organization, TAU and the World Jewish Congress, the museum received only NIS 14.5M (approximately \$3.36M) budget after decline in government support; far short of what it needed to operate and address the debt. Self-generated revenue was decreasing due to falling visitor numbers. By September 2003, the museum was in crisis. Permanent closure seemed inevitable. Another rescue package was put together with \$4M raised from the State of Israel, from the Claims Conference, and from philanthropist and businessman Leonid Nevzlin.

In 2003 Leonid Nevzlin immigrated to Israel from Russia, where he was a highly successful businessman and instrumental in supporting the Russian Jewish community. In 2005, Leonid created the Nadav Foundation to continue his philanthropic work. Supporting the museum was the Foundation's flagship project. As a businessman, however, he made his donation contingent on the museum undertaking a turnaround and insisted that the State partner with him formally, rather than the previous informal arrangement. Consequently, in December 2005, the Israeli parliament approved the Beit Hatfutsot Law recognizing the museum as "the national center for Jewish communities in Israel and around the world". Critically, the Law meant that there would be regular government funding for the museum's operations as well as a matching grant for its renewal (i.e. the Government would match money raised). In June 2006, Leonid Nevzlin became the Chairman of the museum's first Board of Governors.

### **Searching for a New Narrative**

It was clear that what had been the "perfect museum" back in 1978 was no longer relevant to a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience. It held a mystique but was a one-visit experience. Over the years, the narrative of the Jewish people had also changed. Jews thrived both in the diaspora (outside Israel) as well as in Israel. Yet the museum's story did not reflect this. Drastic action was required. Professor Gideon Shimoni, Member of the Content & Steering Committees, explained:

*"The concept of the original museum was to create an exhibition that would enable Israelis of all generations to understand with empathy, the whole story of the Jewish people in the diaspora. It emphasized that Israel was the ultimate stage of Jewish existence. Visitors from the diaspora were disappointed by the way the museum depicted Jewish existence as a whole. This was a major consideration for how the museum should be reconstructed. Not underestimating the importance of the creation of the state of Israel but at the same time perceiving Jewish existence as a continuous process, which has not come to an end because of the creation of the sovereign state of Israel."*

A plan was created to develop and upgrade the permanent exhibition, with the Government offering NIS 40M in financial support across five years (the Government's share later increased to NIS 64M). In January 2008, the idea was raised to focus not just on the past but also on the present story of the Jewish people and their success in the diaspora. Irina Nevzlin, who was present at that meeting and was passionate about identity, wanted to be part of this new narrative. She immediately joined the Board of Directors as an observer:

*"There were financial and management problems. But I think the first problem was that the DNA of the organization, its identity, was outdated. My strong opinion is that because it was not telling the right story, Beit Hatfutsot quickly became irrelevant... Telling the story of the Jewish people as they are today, is something I believe in."*

Beit Hatfutsot needed a complete overhaul. Two months later, the Board approved a comprehensive strategic plan to re-establish the museum with a new narrative. A steering committee was created in February 2008 to oversee the plan (see **Exhibit 1** for timelines).

### **A New Museum: Focus on a Different Identity Story**

The Content Committee of the museum was chaired by Raanan Rein, chaired Professor of Latin American & Spanish History at Tel Aviv University and a member of Beit Hatfutsot's Board of Directors. It would take center stage in creating the museum's new narrative, making decisions about points of interest in history, expressions of Jewish identity, religious practice and cultural representation. Critically, it had to decide what to include and what to leave out. Raanan explained:

*"Transforming the museum of the Jewish people into a place where any Jew from anywhere would feel at home and give them legitimacy was probably the most ideological decision taken. A second decision was to make the museum's exhibitions as inclusive as possible. This provoked all sorts of reactions about too many representations of one group of people and not enough of another. A third decision was to include original objects rather than replicas."*

The committee, which numbered 17 members including admin staff from the museum, held heated debates mainly related to religion, ethnicity and identity. Jews were never a homogenous group, and the challenge was to be inclusive while balancing representation (religious and non-religious- (Haredi, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform etc. - and origins eg. Ashkenazi (eastern European), Sephardi (Spanish), Mizrahi (Jews from Arab countries). A further challenge was also to refer to different aspects of Jewish experiences such as cultural, gender (LGBT) and economic issues. The committee decided that it would allot limited space to the Holocaust, as there was already a main Holocaust Museum and research center (Yad Vashem) in Jerusalem.

Israeli curator and author, Dr. Orit Shaham Gover, was appointed lead curator for the new museum, working on the plans for its three floors between 2009-2010. In 2011, US-based Patrick Gallagher, was selected as Chief Designer. It was a contentious decision as the presumption was that an Israeli designer would be chosen. Irina described her perspective:

*"I come from a communications background. Israelis are fantastic at making things happen and horrible at communicating them outside Israel. We required two things that Israel lacks as a nation. One is long-term planning – building a story and telling it. Second, it required nuances and understatement. My idea was to have Israeli-developed content because we are great at that but Americans to tell the story. I never wanted it to become just about Israel. I wanted it to be an inclusive story of 15 million people worldwide and promoted both to Jews and non-Jews."*

Dan Tadmor, CEO of ANU, continued:

*"Transforming a museum requires a significant capital campaign. You need to hire professionals who bring the campaign legitimacy. There was a tender process, and Gallagher & Associates, a renowned firm, won. We may have been building the museum in Tel Aviv, but we were going to be raising money all over the world. To have a world-class designer made a difference."*

Patrick and his team were passionate about the project. Although his company wasn't considered a "Jewish company", Patrick had converted to Judaism on marrying his wife. The museum held meaning for him as

part of his personal journey. There was one issue that the team had not taken into consideration – the implications of the seven-hour time difference between Washington DC and Israel. The process was intensive and included face-to-face meetings and workshops. Travelling between the two locations with a team would be hugely expensive. Conference calls would be inconvenient to both sides, but Irina believed they would get through this.

Orit and the Content Committee determined the content, Gallagher & Associates interpreted it. It was critical that Orit and Patrick's team were aligned on the narrative and the message. Medy Shvide, who had extensive project management experience, was appointed CEO of the museum's Renewal Project in January 2012. Medy would manage the project, budget and, coordinate the "three divas", as she affectionately called Patrick, Orit and the construction company.

### **New Team, New Style of Governance**

Governance changes occurred throughout 2012. Irina was appointed as Chair of the Board of Directors in July (see **Exhibit 2** for bio). Her appointment followed the recommendation of the Board's Institutional Development Committee. Before accepting the role, Irina made two requests: (1) that the Chair was an active rather than a ceremonial role, and (2) that she could recruit a CEO she could work well with, and they would have adjoining offices. The committee agreed. In September, the Board took over steering the new permanent exhibition. In December, Dan Tadmor was appointed CEO (see **Exhibit 3** for bio). Irina had met Dan two years previously. He had spent his career in the private sector and successfully completed a turnaround of a high-profile television company at the time. Irina believed that Dan had the background to make the changes happen:

*"I interviewed 25-30 people, all of them from the not-for-profit sector and all with extensive knowledge of Jewish history. In my opinion, all were irrelevant to the transformation. None of them could suggest how to handle the huge budget deficit we had... Then Dan called me, and we had a series of meetings. He's very concise – after three sentences I understood what he had done in his turnaround. I had not managed someone with 20 years of management experience before and was somewhat intimidated by him. But it was clear we understood each other very well. Dan understood there are two organizations to run here – managing what exists and building something new. No one else I interviewed got this, nor why there had to be two people at the top."*

Dan was not an obvious choice for the Board, but they understood that he had the skills needed for this moment in the museum's history, Dan explained:

*"Organizations like this one need different CEOs at different periods. I wouldn't necessarily have been the right choice in other times. Two of my predecessors were streamliners and they deserve credit for reducing full-time employees from 150 to 50, which was needed. There are times when you need a manager, or a visionary, or a fundraiser. I think that Irina realized that what we needed is somebody who can manage content and deliver turnarounds."*

See **Exhibit 4** for organization charts.

### **Reducing the Noise, Creating a Way of Working**

Dan and Irina were intellectually well matched. While they approached problems and solutions from different angles, they quickly built a high level of trust. Dan would run the everyday business, and Irina

would focus on fundraising and the transformation. It would be impossible for one person to manage them both. Governance was also critical, Irina decided that she did not want anyone to bypass Dan to get to her. Meeting the Chair meant first getting the CEO's approval. Noga Steinmetz, who had previously worked with Irina at the NADAV Foundation, became Company Secretary, which also created a buffer and 'reduced the noise'. Noga was more accessible to people and was a gatekeeper for any politicking.

Both CEO and Chair had to learn to play different roles in their collaboration. Neither was a politician, although Irina had more exposure to the world of government. Both were direct in their communications approach, which did not help when they needed to work with politicians and government officials to get a budget. They had to learn to play politics. There were clashes of leadership styles and personalities with other people. For example, between Dan and the US-based chief fundraising consultant, Dr. Misha Galperin. Misha was a seasoned development professional who advised the Nevzlin family. He had a dominant personality and, from Dan's perspective, was a lot to swallow, especially since he was in direct contact with museum senior staff. Irina described:

*"Dan has a healthy ego. Misha has a strong presence. For two years I often had to mediate interactions between them. We had weekly fundraising calls where the only role I played was to ensure the kids played nicely. It took me a while to understand that Dan tried but couldn't reduce himself to zero, however, at the same time, we needed to raise \$100M. Patrick also had a strong personality and focus on how things should be done. Managing these relationships is where my determination, impulsiveness and lack of experience didn't help. In hindsight, I could have managed them better."*

Despite initially not getting along, Dan acknowledged that Misha brought structure to the fundraising effort that neither he nor Irina had considered. It was clear that Misha wasn't going to change his approach. Ultimately Dan decided to put his ego aside every two weeks, for the good of having Misha on board and directing the vital capital campaign.

Irina was conscious of what she did not know as Chair. She found a mentor who could support her. For 18 months she met her mentor every two weeks to develop her leadership style. She described:

*"I think I am a strong leader in terms of inspiration and communication. When long-term staff talked to me about the museum being in competition with other museums, I replied we are not a museum. We are not a place you get excited about something; we are the place you get interested and curious about yourself. A lot of barriers went down because it was authentic, emotional and personal."*

Irina and Dan continued to build their ways of working but it took time. As Irina described:

*"I needed someone who could get things done and that came with the price of not explaining himself. I tried to persuade him to have a Chief of Staff, he didn't want one. It took Dan a couple of years to hold management meetings. Eventually he had to because the team grew. Before that he absolutely believed he could do everything better and by himself. But we could have had better interaction between departments."*

### **Working with the Board**

The Board of Directors met four times a year. They were unpaid and not financially incentivized to ensure organizational success nor meeting goals. Irina wanted the board to be supportive, or at least not obstructive. She explained:

*“Half of the Board are owner-appointed, meaning I had no influence over their appointment. It took me a while to understand the composition of the Board I needed to get things done, what their role should be and to exit Board members who didn’t believe in the transformation and support it. If I had had more experience, I think the Board would have been more effective and active quicker.”*

There were significant risks facing everyone involved in the transformation, particularly the Board, as no one could predict whether the radical change would be a success. Risks included individual reputational damage; lack of funds to pay for the transformation; and since the old museum had strong brand awareness, the new museum would have a new brand that would need time to build recognition. The Board included several transformation-linked committees such as the Content and Marketing Committees, to enable board members to add value based on individual knowledge and understanding. Patrick spent time with the Board focusing on the interpretation of identity.

Dan and Irina set out to work closely with the Board to build trust and enable the project to progress. The Nevzlin family’s investment in money and time into the museum also brought prestige and Irina’s ability to bring others along in a sense of purposeful action, inspired board members and gave them a sense of security. Dan described:

*“Board members sensed that they were participating in something important and meaningful. This was a major factor in overcoming natural suspicions and conservatism.”*

Avi Pazner, former Ambassador, and Board Member, commented:

*“We have a good management. It’s not that we don’t have questions, but we appreciate our management. It is also our duty to give backing to the management –helping them succeed is our task.”*

Ruth Shamir Popkin, public representative for 15 years and member of the Content Committee, agreed:

*“Dan is very careful with money. Everything is brought before the Board, and he is very meticulous. There were also people here who thought he wouldn’t take advice from a woman, but Dan was responsible for creating a very harmonious relationship with Irina.”*

To continue to give reassurance to the Board over the finances, the project was divided into two phases, which meant the new wing of the museum could remain open while the main building was closed for renovations for four years. Phase I, which was launched in 2015 and completed in 2016, was smaller in scope than the second and was fully funded at inception. Phase II, launched in 2017 and completed in 2021, had two substages, designed with a break between to raise further necessary funds.

Eyal Gabbai, Chair of the Finance Committee, described:

*“It’s uncommon for the Chair, the management and the Finance Committee of non-profit organizations to take on commitments in advance without having secured all the funding upfront. We took a huge risk but there was certainly both cost and time advantages to commit to the full project in advance. At the Finance Committee had to ask ourselves if the Chair and CEO had the abilities to raise the funds and if the museum could commit to the financial burden. We decided to go forward creating a ‘horizon of incomes’ that we forecast we could achieve. With great difficulty, we managed to obtain a bridging loan from the museum’s shareholders to close the gap between the commitment and forecasted resources just before the COVID lockdown in 2020 when government departments closed. If we hadn’t secured it then, we would have been*

*further delayed. It enabled us to continue the construction and bridge our forecasted incomes from visitors when the museum couldn't physically open."*

Ultimately the break was necessary, but the robustness of the planning meant the only additional costs incurred during the break were small and concerned the extended employment of permanent project staff. All suppliers operated to milestones (deliverables rather than time) which allowed for the stop/restart without penalties.

Irina and Dan worked very closely with the Finance Committee, which met regularly for updates and was involved in every aspect of budgeting and cash flow. Every significant step was taken in consultation with the committee and its recommendations to the Board. The Finance Committee played a significant role in creating an atmosphere of trust.

### **Fundraising**

To renovate a museum approximately 25% of the budget was needed for planning and 75% for execution, while 75% of the time was needed planning and 25% for building. Thus, it wasn't necessary to have all the money required in the early years of transformation. In 2009, the Nadav Foundation committed to donating \$6M for the museum's renovation. The Government of Israel matched these funds but \$12M was far from the \$100M needed. A Capital Campaign was required, which would typically take between 6-10 years compared to the renovation of a museum which would take between 15-20 years. One early prospective donor offered \$12M for the museum if it were named after him. Initially everyone, including the Board and the former CEO, agreed. Irina strongly objected:

*"I said 'I'm amazed we are even discussing this' – if it's a museum that tells the story of the people, it cannot be named by money. Saying 'no' to a \$12M donation when we had nothing, created a lot of negative feeling and a slight lack of belief in my ability to fundraise. But I also had absolute faith we could make it happen."*

Two initial 'lucky' gifts of \$5M each in December 2014 led into a false sense of security. It was difficult to raise more, and Irina spent countless hours soliciting potential donors who she later realized were not interested in supporting the museum in the first place. Dan had never fundraised:

*"It took me a while to understand fundraising and at first, I was all over the place. I had to shut myself in a room and formulate - what are we? I came away with 'we strengthen the sense of belonging through engagement in Jewish identity'. That helped me focus"*

While the staff in Israel were very enthusiastic, nobody had fundraised on the scale the museum needed, nor they had the contacts. Misha Galperin was a senior development professional at the Jewish Agency. He retired in 2015, and Irina asked him to support the campaign. Misha explained:

*"You start with leadership, and you put together what most development professionals refer to as the pyramid. How many gifts at different levels do you need? You also work on what the case for giving is – define the 'why?' you are raising the money, what's it going to go for. It must be a compelling case. You put together the materials that are needed including your elevator pitch, what your 'dollar buys' and what the various naming opportunities could be."*



Misha pulled together a US-based team including some marketing people and existing representatives to develop materials. Shula Bahat, CEO of ANU America, who was already representing the museum in North America since 2011, was heavily involved. She would go on to play a key role in securing Codex Sassoon for the museum. Noga took on the role of Campaign Coordinator which needed excellent organizational skills. The team worked closely with Patrick – as Misha described “fundraising is a team sport. It’s never any single person that does it.” Noga described:

*“We had people in the US, new people in Israel, Irina, Dan and Misha. We had to learn to work together, requiring everyone to change their habits, which was very challenging. The hardest thing was the way people communicated with each other. We would meet every week to update our spreadsheet of prospects and foundations but not everyone was ready and prepared to update. We needed to create a system that everyone would work by, but it wasn’t easy as everyone had their own pace and ways of working.”*

The system put in place to collect data on donors, potential donors, gifts, pledges and contract information among other things was difficult to manage. With different people across the globe, information became scattered and reliant on people’s memories, which was not effective for the organization. Only once it had opened, the museum was able to switch to using Salesforce, a more advanced system. But then a process of cleaning up the legacy data had to be undertaken.

It took a year to plan the campaign, including making connections and researching potential donors. By the end of a year, the basic materials and list of potential prospects were in place. The next step was to qualify prospects, individuals and foundations who had the capacity to donate. Then accessing and engaging with them to cultivate a relationship before finally approaching them for a gift. For a major gift it would take, on average, two years from beginning to end. Critically, getting the leadership in front of qualified prospects was key, as people gave to people rather than causes. Irina, for example, was involved with a donation from a child of Holocaust survivors in the US who was interested in refugee resettlement. Misha made the initial connection and then brought Irina over, who was able to talk about her own struggle to integrate into a new society. Irina took on the bulk of the fundraising:

*“It was really intense for me. The fact that I am a woman and a daughter of a philanthropist helped, because I am much less of a threat. I had easier relationships with self-made people. They could see and appreciate my skills. But I worked and built relationships with many other types of donors. Early on I would spend hours talking to donors and trying to get them excited. After a while I realized that if I didn’t manage to cut through the stigma in someone’s head of who I am in a half an hour, then it wasn’t going to happen. If they managed to ‘see me’ and we built a connection, then it was easier to get them excited.”*

Fundraising wasn’t only in the US. In 2018, Adi Akunis joined as Director of External Relations and CEO of the museum’s Israeli Friends. Her team’s task was in part to raise Israeli money. Adi explained:

*“It was very difficult at first because we are Israeli and the question of identity and what kind of Judaism I belong to is not an issue. Also, we were still under Beit Hatfutsot – a very strong brand but one that people believed is old fashioned. And philanthropy is not part of Israeli culture as it is elsewhere.”*

It took two years to get support from one high profile Israeli donor, supported by considerable research into understanding their background and interests. Similarly, Adi’s team would send proposals to foundations to bring children through education programs to the museum. After three to four months, foundations which had not engaged with the museum started to be curious about what was going on. Adi’s

team showed the plans to people from business, government sectors and Jewish organizations, talked about the programs they would be running, and challenged them to be part of it. It would be an ongoing process to engage with individual donors and foundations within Israel.

### **The Process of Renewal**

When Medy Shvide joined she first asked what the mission was:

*"I was told that first, it was to build the biggest museum that would tell the whole story of the Jewish people. Second, to design to international standards, be innovative, modern, and for global audiences. Third, the museum must keep operating. Finally, do everything on time and within budget. Plus, Orit told me that her target was to build an important collection as there wasn't one. It is much easier to build a new building than to renovate an old one and there was no money for a collection. I didn't sleep much!"*

From Medy's perspective, the project was always ahead of the Capital Campaign. She had to pay salaries and commit to suppliers. She did not have a solution for 'no money' but instead had to take risks, supported by Dan and Irina. Suppliers in Israel were supportive too, knowing they could count on Medy's word that they would be paid.

Splitting the project into two phases to manage the budget gave everyone a way forward. It also enabled the museum to continue to operate. One lasting memory that many visitors shared of the original museum was the models of synagogues from across the world. These showed Jewish life through time and place. In March 2015 they were taken away and restored while construction took place in the 2,000 sqm new wing. The new wing would house the Synagogue Hall, the Children's Gallery and a space for temporary exhibitions. Medy delivered on time and on budget, and the new wing would now serve visitors as the main building was closed for the next four years.

Dr. Orit Shaham Gover had years of experience in museum curation. She had 12 curators and 60 academic consultants working with her. In the wider ecosystem were script writers, film directors and exhibition designers and illustrators; in total over 200 people. Dan described her as being "intellectually honest" creating the conditions for her team to say anything and be listened to, the idea or argument impartially weighed up, even if it negated her decision. He believed it was one of the reasons why mistakes were often corrected before it was too late to change them. One example was a short film script ready for production for part of an exhibit. Despite the time and energy invested, Orit decided it was not good enough to go to production. She described:

*"Everyone felt that this is a once in a lifetime project. People loved to work here, and we worked very hard. Of course there were disagreements. For every square centimeter, I had 4,000 decisions to make. I believe in allowing everyone to share their opinion, even if it's not in their field. If the electricity guy came to me and asked, 'why is this?' I would pause and think 'why is this? Why didn't he understand it?' Maybe he's right and I'm wrong. Everyone's talented, why not listen?"*

Patrick's highly experienced team started with two tracks. The first was the interpretive framework of the narrative, working closely with Orit. The second was to make sense of the existing architecture and working with Medy and the construction company. Patrick recalled his first site visit:

*"The building hadn't been designed as a museum, so it had a series of different circulation patterns that were hard to navigate. It was a 60's brutalist building with an annex attached to it that I didn't even know*

*about because there was no logical way to get to it. Finally, we opened a door and entered a massive space that had never been finished, open air at one end, full of pigeons and trash. It was a nightmare.”*

In total 400 tons of trash would be removed from the museum throughout the renovation. Patrick’s team first focused on the narrative for the visitor experience and what that would look like, working to interpret Orit’s curation vision. Orit came to the project with two convictions. The first that the museum should have a collection rather than just props and depictions. The second was to rethink the way the Jewish story had been told. She believed that everything was connected – culture, art, literature and history – rather than separated into compartments. Orit wanted the museum to be about life and its connections. She explained:

*“The Jewish story is a huge story, and to properly tell it meant I had a lot to learn. I would come up with a line-up and the Content Committee would agree or disagree. Raanan understood the content and would be very decisive. Nobody tried to interfere with whatever we did. We wanted everyone to enter the museum, Jewish or non-Jewish, and see themselves in the story. Rather than start with Abraham and Sarah, we start with who we are today – identity and culture. They would find something that speaks to them and feel belonging, whether in the way identity was presented, or in theater, film, dance, music, literature or folklore.”*

Interpreting Orit’s vision, Patrick’s team brought their expertise in understanding what visitors want and how they can consume the content. They explored how to tell the historical narrative from a completely different perspective, less history, more identity and culture, answering visitors’ typical first question of ‘what does this have to do with me? Where’s the context to my life?’. Considering the physical architecture, Patrick’s team realized that the journey through the museum did not have to be structured on history. He explained:

*“I’m a big advocate of getting people to use buildings in a more organic way and not having to depend on elevators. Let visitors discover a building as they move through it. We decided to reverse the circulation and asked them only to take the elevator once to the third floor and then circulate their way down. Let’s start people in a world they understand and then get them to find a cognitive connection to historical points in time that have shaped the world they live in. We tested this model and came to a deeper refinement that there isn’t one path to history. Everyone has their own sense of identity. Identity became the infrastructure of how we would get visitors into the story of the Jewish people in all its diversity – both cultural and religious.”*

Most people would start at the modern world on the third floor, then find the pathway back to moments in history on the second level. The first floor was the foundations of Judaism and religious practices and holidays. Visitors would move to the exit through the temporary exhibition space, shop and coffee shop.

Another challenge that Orit and Patrick had to consider was what would bring people back to the museum after their first visit. Modern museums had to consider ‘pre-visit’ – the experience on the website that would convince them to visit in the first place, an online experience for people who couldn’t physically visit, and finally a post-visit set of experiences. Orit described how:

*“I didn’t want everyone to see everything in one visit. I want you to be drawn to something that relates to you. I believe human memory doesn’t stay in the head but in the heart. Whatever touches us emotionally we remember. I believe feeling is the best learning. This is how it’s designed, big images, open spaces, well lit, there are colors, sounds.”*

For Patrick, bringing people back meant not necessarily answering all visitor's questions during the visit but opening new doors to further questions to pursue more knowledge. He also saw that for the resident market, a larger temporary exhibition gallery was needed with a full program of events plus a digital program. A temporary gallery was part of the final museum. The online platform, making the museum's extensive databases accessible over the internet, was outside Gallagher & Associates' remit. Offers were sought from website developers, but it was decided to build the site internally and recruit the team. However, it was a big project and team members had not worked together before. In the end, the team was disbanded at some cost and the project went back out to tender.

Some problems could not be resolved nor exhibits designed that were not good or interesting enough in Orit's opinion. Like Medy, Orit also had sleepless nights over design choices. The exhibit on the history (second) floor, showed the different centers of Jewish life in the world across the ages after the destruction of the first temple. A video was planned about the two main centers – the USA and Israel. Script after script was developed but they were not good enough. The team had been working on it for eight years. While typically no changes are made due to cost and logistics complications towards the end of production, Orit changed her mind:

*"I thought - why don't we give up this idea we were in love with? Let's give the State of Israel the respect it deserves. The video and sound system were already installed, and it meant moving things around. I called Dan at 7pm and told him my idea and warned him it would cost money. He said 'yes'. I called Medy, saying, 'I had nothing curated on the State of Israel – no concept, nothing. I'm going to give Israel a huge space. Instead of it taking five years, I'll do something interesting and impressive'."*

The team showed their flexibility and agility to support Orit to develop an inspiring exhibition on the State of Israel.

### **Managing Conflicts**

Medy's first challenge was to manage the differences between Israelis and Americans. It was not just the time zone but the culture and language differences. She explained:

*"Israelis are very loud in meetings, we often shout at each other but once the meeting is ended, we stop and hug each other – no hard feelings, which the Americans didn't understand. They thought we hated each other. Another example was a case in which we agreed on something in a meeting, but then later Orit wanted to make a change. I emailed the Americans to tell them. After two weeks of silence, I received an email asking if I would reconsider. I replied saying I had reconsidered and please just do it. I didn't understand that when an American says reconsider, they mean I've crossed the line, and they aren't going to do it. Over time we became a little more American and they became a little more Israeli."*

Orit and Patrick worked closely together and separately on design and content. Sometimes each side would bring ideas that the other side had not thought of. At other times, huge arguments would ensue. Patrick described:

*"What happens in the process of creating a museum is that when I slide into content and Orit slides into design - we are both in dangerous territory. We would argue a lot and not always see each other's perspectives. But ultimately, we always found a good middle road, and I found that when we created a mock-up, it was easier to get to an agreement."*

Medy was an excellent mediator when the two sides did not agree. There were also times when she forced both sides to compromise. On one occasion she had to cut the budget by NIS 10M. She brought Patrick, Orit and the builders to the table asking, “who will cut what? Because I’m going to cut 10M and I don’t want to do it by myself.” Her stance worked and each side decided what they could give up and what they wanted to keep. From such conflict also came new ideas. Having to cut the budget, the first-floor exhibition was too small for the space. Medy suggested converting the spare space to a conference area. The idea went ahead and became a further source of revenue for the museum.

### **Managing Business as Usual**

In the decade running up to Dan’s arrival, there had been major employee-management disputes. Workers, who were unionized, believed the former management did not appreciate the employees, some of which had given up their salaries and donated money to help the museum survive. The lack of certainty over the museum’s future finally culminated in a 40-day strike. It took two years for the management and the Union to finalize a collective bargaining agreement. Dan calculated that 70% of the museum’s energy was used in labor relations and disputes. Legally he was not obliged to, but his first action as CEO was to sign the agreement. He wanted to move away from labor disputes and concentrate his energy on growth. Benny Madmon, Head of the Workers’ Union described what this meant to employees:

*“Dan made some very minor changes and immediately signed. It was the first step to build trust. We felt there was someone who sees us as we are and wants to build a relationship with the employees.”*

The agreement was extended again and again. Subsequently, employees and management built a spirit of cooperation under Dan’s leadership. He described:

*“What happened was amazing. Some of the oldest, most tenured employees who were labelled as ‘lost causes’ became the most phenomenal. By being appreciated they were re-invigorated, found their sense of purpose, and remembered what had attracted them here in the first place.”*

There was transparency and Dan made a point of sharing his plans with the employees, operating an open-door policy. Dan ensured that no one felt left out, even if they were not directly involved in the transformation project. He told all employees that they were part of the new museum, openly communicated updates and the thinking behind decisions. While the curation and design plans for the new museum were being put in place, Dan tried to build a new sense of purpose with some easy wins such as bringing the Amy Winehouse exhibition over from the Jewish Museum in London in 2014 to attract visitors. Dan was also open to ideas from the staff. Benny Madmon described one example where Dan was listening and connecting with employees at a deeper level:

*“I said to Dan that it didn’t make sense to me that some historical figures were left out such as famous Yemeni Rabbi, Shalom Shabazi. Dan listened and spoke with the curator who said it was in the digital materials. Dan insisted that the Rabbi had a physical representation in the exhibition.”*

Yet there were still tensions. Irina believed that while a lot of the communication problems between employees and management were resolved not all of them were. Some worried about the narrative and their jobs or other changes such as Saturday opening. The museum had not previously opened on Saturdays due to not being able to afford to pay staff rather than for religious reasons. The new museum would open on Saturdays. Some people could neither agree with this nor with the new narrative. The Director of Tour

Guides resigned as a result. Other employees left or retired, which enabled Dan to bring in new people, changing the culture.

Beit Hatfutsot used guides to show visitors around. Prospective guides had a week's training with a big manual of the exhibits. At the end of the week were exams on the materials and on guiding methods – including using body language to tell a story. Guides were a vital part of the experience when the main building was closed for renovations and only the new wing was open. Orit had conceived of the museum as a place where guides were not necessary as visitors should find their own way through the museum, attracted to what interested them. An audio guide would also be developed. During an update workshop with guides, she had mentioned that visitors would in future not need guides. Some were upset and thought their roles would be made redundant. Sharon Hayat, who joined Beit Hatfutsot as a guide during the transition, recalled:

*“During the transition, we just had the small Hallelujah and Humor galleries. If visitors didn’t take a guide, they would get mad – they’d say, ‘Is this all you’ve got? We just paid all this money for this?’ During the transition it was difficult to keep visitors engaged. I think that what Orit said was taken out of context and in the new museum there was greater freedom of choice – guided or not guided.”*

Guides brought the visit to life, giving a deeper, richer experience and explaining the meaning and stories behind exhibits. For example, many people would walk past a plastic handwashing cup on display that only cost four shekels. The guide would explain about ritual handwashing and the symbolism and significance of the plastic cup. Guides were particularly useful for groups of visitors, as they could engage them in stories. Previously, guides worked on an ‘as needed’ basis. Once the new museum opened, guides had more regular hours. This meant they could become more of a cohesive team.

### **The New ANU**

By September 2020, a rebranding exercise was complete. The museum changed its name to *ANU – Museum of the Jewish People*, ANU meaning ‘we’ in Hebrew. Construction continued during the COVID-19 pandemic and in March 2021 ANU opened to great acclaim and a lot of interest from individuals, families and schools. It also received positive coverage from the media.

Not everything worked out as expected and there were teething problems. Circulation and orientation became issues. Sending everyone to the third floor to start their visit created traffic jams during busy times. Dan explained:

*“Visitors start at seven screens with 21 revolving individuals talking about what it means for them to be Jewish. This creates a severe bottleneck. It was staring us in the face during the design phase, but we didn’t see it. Now we send people to start at different points of entry. We could have done a better job in the beginning.”*

The second floor had a definitive track to follow but the third floor did not. The museum introduced a map to help visitors who became disoriented. This was also built into the pre-visit orientation. It was not a perfect solution but addressed the problem. Another complaint was from individuals looking for an exhibit on their specific origins such as Yemeni, Romanian or Iraqi, and who could not find their ‘section’. The museum focused on similarities across Jews of different origins, but some visitors seemed open to that only after they were satisfied that their specific country or origin had been represented. Multiple ethnicities were represented, but the locations were not clear. The team created ‘tracks’ where someone for example

from Turkey could find exhibits on Turkish Jews. Religious sensibilities also caused challenges. A group of 70 teachers from religious schools visited. They were split into half with one group visiting floor three, then two, then one. The other started at two, then one, then three. The first group was dissatisfied with the museum while the second group was happy. Dan explained his views on what occurred:

*“Group one steps into the museum and the first thing that they're seeing is an onslaught of pluralism: a Reform trans rabbi, a same-sex family. Automatically they're on the defensive and feel uncomfortable. Whatever happens later doesn't matter. They're preconditioned now for a bad experience. Group two only gets to the third floor after they've seen the synagogues, the history, the famous rabbis and the Bible etc. They are less sensitive to floor three's exhibits. It was a clinical test that we didn't plan, but it was good learning.”*

As a result, some religious groups or individuals were sent to the first or second floor first.

### **Securing the Future**

By summer 2024, over a million visitors had enjoyed exploring the new exhibition. The teething problems were being ironed out with better solutions. Irina reflected:

*“I have no idea how many times I cried over the years. Only now can I look back and say, ‘we did it!’... The times that nothing worked, the former CEO not being the right person to take the transformation forward, not believing I could influence half the board members, the hours wasted on uninterested potential donors. I saw only opportunities but lacked sensitivity and understanding that not everyone felt the same way. I used to set fake deadlines to keep momentum going for myself and for the museum staff. I had faith and determination but perhaps lacked confidence.”*

Dan recalled:

*“It was a learning curve. The challenge was how to convince people that this organization, that for years was on a downward spiral, could be a phoenix. We were working against perceptions. I'm very proud that the process involved very open dialogue, if you have an idea - raise it. I kept saying ‘it's never too late to do the right thing’. Now we have a wonderful museum, but we also have a cautionary tale of the old museum. It too was wonderful, then fizzled and became non-functioning. That's what we need to avoid.”*

Irina believed that after the transformation there was a period of adjustment with growth and new departments. It would take two to three years for ANU to stabilize. Like Dan, she knew that there would be a moment in the future which would require further adaptation, although not another transformation. She believed the narrative should stay the same, but the tools would need to evolve with available technology to avoid decline.

Both Irina and Dan knew more needed to be done to secure ANU's future, both externally and internally. The \$100M raised transformed the museum but what could they do, coming off the back of the Capital Campaign, to build an endowment to fund new developments and not fall prey to shortfalls in revenue-generating activities? How could ANU remain relevant and ensure it was not just a one-visit experience? How to attract more non-Jewish audiences to learn about the identity of the Jewish people and find their own neighborhood story within the museum? Internally, what needed to be done to motivate the teams to work together closer and be more aligned? What did they need to do to secure ANU a successful future?

## Exhibit 1: Milestones of Beit Hatfutsot / ANU - Museum of the Jewish People

2001	The museum was running a major deficit and on the brink of failing.
October 25, 2003	After a visit to Beit Hatfutsot with Natan Sharansky, Leonid Nevzlin decides to donate \$1 million to the museum as part of a \$4 million "rescue package" that included two other partners: the State of Israel (\$1 million) and the Claims Conference (\$2 million). The donation was earmarked for improving the permanent exhibition and databases and was conditioned on government matching.
2005	The establishment of the Nadav Foundation, which has supported the museum as its flagship project since its establishment by covering ongoing expenses and projects like the school, marketing, and deficits.
December 6, 2005	The Knesset plenum unanimously approves the "Beit Hatfutsot Law" which recognizes the museum as a "national institution" and defines Beit Hatfutsot as "the national center for Jewish communities in Israel and around the world."
February 2006	Hasya Yisraeli begins serving as CEO of Beit Hatfutsot.
June 2006	The Board of Governors is established, headed by Leonid Nevzlin.
2007	Beit Hatfutsot receives word of the Israeli Government's decision to join Beit Hatfutsot's development plan for the next five years, distributing 40 million NIS during that term, subject to raising funds from donors (matching).
2008 Q1	<p>The Shaldor report and the Board's decision regarding their presentation:</p> <p>The Board of Directors unanimously approves the principles of the plan to change and strengthen Beit Hatfutsot and the proposed decision in the following version:</p> <p><i>To approve the principles of the plan to change and strengthen Beit Hatfutsot that was presented to it at the meeting of the Board on February 27, 2008 ("the Plan"), which includes the need to work in several directions in parallel (resource development, marketing, changes to organizational structure, developing and upgrading the permanent exhibition, and alterations in the institutional governance).</i></p> <p><i>To approve, to advise and counsel the Board of Directors about how to execute the plan, the establishment of a steering committee comprised of Yaron Neudorfer and Prof. Raanan Rein as members of the Board of Directors. In addition to them, Board of Governors Chairperson Leonid Nevzlin, Yaakov Peri, Eitan Ben Eliyahu, Cheryl Fishbein, and Harvey Krueger of the Board of Governors, as well as Avi Armoni, shall be permanent participants in every steering committee meeting. The Board of Directors shall be asked to approve the names of additional members as needed.</i></p> <p><i>To guide the steering committee toward formulating recommendations for specific courses of action within the plan's framework, and to bring them for approval by the Board of Directors. The steering committee will submit a report to the Board of Directors of Beit Hatfutsot at its regular meetings and will obtain approval of its recommendations. The term of operation of the steering committee is limited to 18 months from the date of this decision.</i></p>
January 2008	The first meeting at which Irina Nevzlin was present; at the meeting, Shaldor presents its report. Also at that meeting, the following sentence is uttered: "If the museum would tell the story not only of the past but also of the present, it would have reason to exist." This is the moment when Irina made the decision to change the face of the museum and to take part in the transformation. She immediately joins the Board of Directors as an observer.
March 2008	The Board of Directors of Beit Hatfutsot approves a comprehensive strategic plan to reestablish Beit Hatfutsot as a leading, publicly appealing museum that will work to strengthen the link between Jews in Israel and the diaspora. The strategic plan defines the vision, sets goals, and outlines courses of action.
2009	The Nadav Foundation commits to donating \$6 million for museum renovation.
February 26, 2009	Approval of the foundational document of the Museum of the Jewish People.
June 15, 2009	Approval of the steering committee, approval of the branding strategy.
August 18, 2009	Irina Nevzlin joins the Board of Directors as a representative of the public following the recommendation of the Institutional Development Committee on August 13, 2009.
August 18, 2009	The Board of Directors approves the new logo (a mosaic Star of David). As part of the branding, the English spelling will be changed from "Beth Hatefutsoth" to "Beit Hatfutsot". (From the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting on that date)
2009–2010	Orit Shaham Gover presents the plans for the three floors of the new museum to the Board of Directors.
Mid-2011	Patrick Gallagher is selected as chief designer.



April 2, 2012	The appointment of Irina Nevzlin as Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of Beit Hatfutsot (under Chairperson Yaakov Peri) is for the transitional period upon Avi Armoni's notification of his departure and move to a part-time administrative position with the museum.
July 31, 2012	Irina Nevzlin is appointed Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Beit Hatfutsot (from the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting on that date), following the recommendation of the Institutional Development Committee.
September 24, 2012	The steering committee for the new permanent exhibition is dismantled, and the Board of Directors is appointed in its stead. In addition, a content committee for the new museum is established within the Board of directors, headed by Board member Prof. Raanan Rein.
December 9, 2012	Dan Tadmor is appointed CEO of Beit Hatfutsot.
2013	The decision is made to split the renewal process into two phases: Phase I – the synagogue gallery, children's gallery and the galleries for temporary exhibitions; Phase II – the permanent exhibition.
2013-2014	The fundraising campaign kicks into high gear
2014	Fundraising for Phase I (Milton Maltz and Alfred Moses).
2014	The Amy Winehouse exhibition.
March 2015	Phase I commences construction
May 2016	Phase I is launched
2017	Major fundraising campaign for Phase II (Koret Foundation, Tad Taube, Andrew Tisch)
2017	Phase II commences construction
2019	The beginning of the rebranding process includes market and public opinion surveys.
September 9, 2020	The rebranding process concludes, and it is decided to change the name of the museum to <i>ANU – Museum of the Jewish People</i> .
2020-2021	Construction continues during COVID-19.
March 2021	<i>ANU – Museum of the Jewish People</i> opens.

## Exhibit 2: Irina Nevzlin Biography

Irina Nevzlin is an Israeli entrepreneur, president of the Nadav Foundation, and Chair of the Board of Directors at *ANU - Museum of the Jewish People* in Tel Aviv.

Ms. Nevzlin was born and educated in Moscow, worked as a communications consultant in London, and then immigrated to Israel in 2006. Her passion to help both individuals and organizations led her to establish and manage “Habogrim for a Better Future”, a not-for-profit dedicated to providing equal opportunity in health and education so that Israeli youth can reach their full potential. She also leads the Nadav Foundation, where she promotes projects that build a sense of Jewish peoplehood and nurture values of liberalism.

Ms. Nevzlin is also award-winning author of the book “[The Impact of Identity – The power of knowing who you are](#),” which has been published in three languages.

At *ANU*, Ms. Nevzlin conducted a comprehensive, bottom-up transformation of the then-Diaspora Museum, which, under her guidance, morphed into *ANU*, the biggest Jewish museum in the world. Her bold leadership during this re-branding phase helped the museum establish a novel paradigm of what it means to be Jewish, placing greater emphasis on developing a sense of belonging to your people, forging a stronger cultural identity, and celebrating the different narratives that reflect Jewish diversity.

In 2019, her global thought leadership led her to found IMPROVATE, a platform that makes Israeli technology and innovation accessible to countries around the world. Recognizing the growing and crucial need for cyber-security and cyber defense technologies, IMPROVATE created the Israel Cyber Campus in early 2023 and CYBER FOR ALL, a nonprofit organization that gives all populations in Israel equal opportunity for access to technological studies and integration into the world of hi-tech.

Ms. Nevzlin was chosen by The Jerusalem Post newspaper as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.

### **Exhibit 3: Dan Tadmor Biography**

Dan Tadmor was appointed CEO of *ANU - Museum of the Jewish People*, in December 2012.

Prior to joining Beit Hatfutsot he held several senior executive positions in Israeli media, dealing with content development and management. He was CEO of Tel-Ad Broadcasting Channels, a privately held company specializing in the production of television channels for the multichannel TV industry in Israel and abroad, CEO of the Music 24 channel, a privately held television channel broadcasting music and music-themed programming, and CEO and Editor in Chief of Yediot Shurot (of the Yediot Ahronot group), which specializes in premium magazines for the Israeli market, and which he launched.

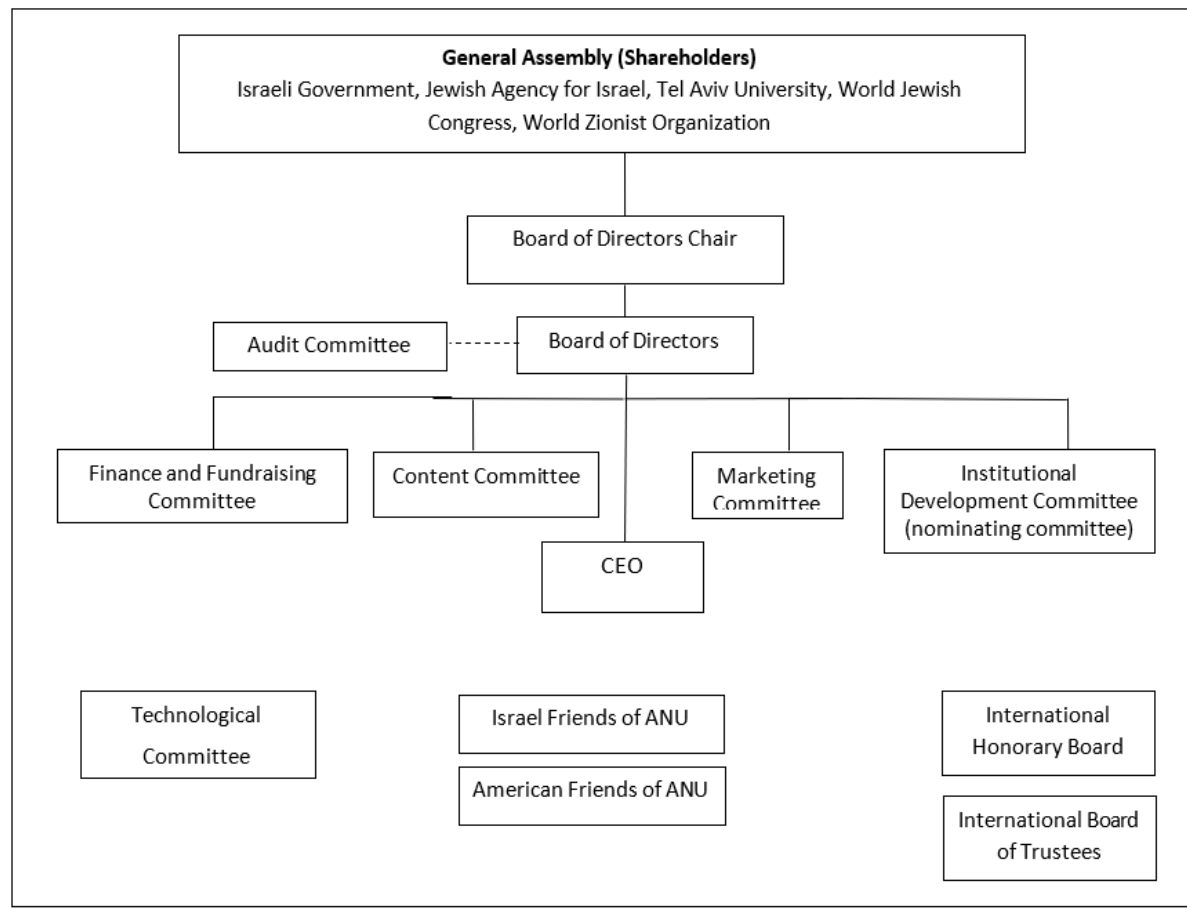
In the IDF Dan Tadmor served as an officer in an elite intelligence unit.

He is a graduate of the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he completed a Bachelor's degree with honors.

Dan Tadmor is married + 3, and resides in Rehovot.

## Exhibit 4: ANU Organizational Charts

### a. Lay Leadership



### b. Senior Management

