

Immigrants help Israel grow

Israel is currently ranked in about 30th place globally in terms of GDP per capita, and if the present rate of growth continues, Israel will continue to stagnate in this ranking, which does not reflect its potential.

Gidi Greenstein, the CEO of the Reut Institute, who presented these figures at the Herzliya Conference this week, presented a goal, the "Israel 2015 Vision," which sees Israel climbing to 15th place in per capita GDP by 2015. In order to do so, Israel must double its rate of growth to at least 6 to 8 percent a year.

Israel has one of the best private sectors in the world in terms of innovativeness and quality, whereas part of the public sector is inefficient relative to developed countries, and is conducted hesitantly and with oppressive regulatory conservatism.

Apparently this sector is having difficulty promoting large and complex national missions, and therefore only a combination of the sectors, with a certain privatization of national missions, will enable Israel to achieve the hoped-for advance.

According to the combined model, private bodies that care, including "obsessed" people of vision, provide the passion, innovative spirit, vision and energy, whereas the public sector helps with the funding and provides the institutional mantle and the necessary support. Such privatization is already taking place by means of outsourcing in the fields of aliyah (immigration), and the settlement of the Negev and the Galilee.

The best example of such a combination of forces is the cooperation between the aliyah organization Nefesh B'Nefesh and the government. Another example is the Or movement, which is building new communities in the Negev and is strengthening existing ones, with the assistance and support of the government.

The continued implementation of the central values of Zionism is no less important today than it was 120 years ago. Nefesh B'Nefesh, with generous government assistance, seeks to bring 100,000 immigrants from the Western countries where the organization is active – the United States, Canada and Great Britain – by 2015.

If we meet those goals, Israel will be able to maintain levels of growth that will enable it to continue to compete in the global world and even to improve its relative situation, in accordance with the "Israel 2015 Vision."

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