

Birthright begins flagship business fellowship in Israel

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By JERUSALEM POST STAFF JUNE 8, 2021 13:57



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[Birthright](#) opened its program inviting the next generation of business leaders this week to take part in its 10-week fellowship, according to a release by the organization.

The program, "Birthright Excel," began this week at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, where cohorts from over six different time zones - Brazil, Argentina, England, Italy, France and Australia, in addition to those from Israel, USA, Mexico and Canada - took part in an online formatted introduction, marking the beginning of their 12-week journey.

"This project is considered to be the most prestigious program in the Jewish world today, with only a few dozen young people being accepted from thousands of applicants," said CEO of Birthright Gidi Mark to the participants. "Members of the community prove themselves every day as leaders of both the business and Jewish worlds."

The selective fellowship builds bridges and leadership skills among the next generation of business leaders in the hopes to "propel the success of the global Jewish community."

The program invited 56 students and entrepreneurs to Israel for this year's program, after sifting through thousands of applicants from around the world.

During the 10 weeks, the cohorts will be paired with some of the best companies in Israeli tech and the business ecosystem. Each cohort also receives an Israeli peer who are either outstanding undergraduate students or officers from leading units in the IDF.

At the end of the program, the cohorts become part of an active community that creates social business opportunities throughout North America and Israel - consisting of CEOs, entrepreneurs, investors and key players in the technology industry or business world.

"While COVID-19 has certainly presented challenges for our organization, we've actually found that the pandemic has been a catalyst for growth and expansion", said Executive Director of Birthright Israel Excel Idit Rubin. "The increased use of video conferencing tools accelerated our ability to connect with talented young individuals around the globe and actually helped drive additional international interest in our program.

"As a result, we are delighted to have participants this summer from Australia, South America, and Europe for the first time."

In relation, the [first Birthright trip to Israel](#) following the COVID-19 pandemic resumed in May.

The last trip took place on March 13, 2020, just before Israel's first nationwide lockdown.

This trip, as well as those scheduled for the near future, will only be available to eligible individuals between the ages of 18-32 from the US who have received a coronavirus vaccine or have recovered from the virus.

Dozens of trips are scheduled for May and June, and hundreds more are expected to take place between July and October. Unlike before the pandemic, each group will be restricted to 20 participants.

"I am extremely excited that we are renewing the connection between the Young Diaspora and the State of Israel," added Mark. "We've developed the best plan to safely and efficiently resume our trips, which play such a critical

part in strengthening the Jewish identity of hundreds of thousands of young people around the world and connect them with the State of Israel."

"Following the rise of antisemitism over the past weeks, this is now more important than ever before," Mark concludes.