

Change Together

Standing Together's
Theory of Change

נִקְפּוּ מֵעַתָּה
עוֹמְדִים בְּיַחַד

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נقف מַעָא
עומדים ביחד



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לשנות ביחד

תיאוריית השינוי של תנועת "עומדים ביחד"

أن نغير معًا

نظريّة التغيير لحراك "نقف معًا"

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עומדים ביחד נقف معًا

www.standing-together.org

Political and social change from within the foundations of Israeli society is possible, and it's what we're striving for. We know that this change is possible because the majority of people living here hold a legitimate interest in living in an egalitarian, just, and free society; a society supported by a government intrinsically different from the one we currently have, a government that does not serve to maintain an occupation of civil and social segregation or perpetuate wealth disparity nation-wide. Our current government has structured and organized Israeli society around social distress to guarantee prosperity, security and social and economic fulfillment for the small fraction of the society that is politically aligned with the status quo. The perpetuation of this societal structure hurts members of diverse communities the most, including our multicultural public. Indeed, these policies negatively impact the majority of Israeli civil society.

The current government serves the interests of a small group: the financial elite and the politically influential, all of whom have endorsed the Settlement project at the expense of the wider Israeli public's long term interests. Despite these projects being at the expense of the majority, they are in fact dependent upon the consent of the majority. The majority has agreed to consent to these projects, not through overt consent, but through a silence that stems from despair and the perceived absence of any other alternative. The current political structure in Israel is weaker than it appears, and therefore, we are thoroughly convinced that through proper organization, action and joint Jewish-Arab struggle, Standing Together can generate the desired change within Israeli society. We seek to replace the rule of the elite with the rule of the people and institute a democratic government that serves the interests of all of us, not just that of the ruling minority.

The path to change is through recruiting a majority in Israeli society and building a broad camp that includes a diverse community: Jews and Arabs, Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, women and men, religious and secular, queer and straight, rural and urban. We will identify alternative solutions that foster solidarity among those who constitute the majority, recognizing and correcting the failures that have continued to impede social mobilization.

Strategic change on the left will only manifest when we act as a left that expresses the interests of all who live here, a left that does not discuss abstract principles of justice but instead offers implementable solutions, a Jewish-Arab left whose composition reflects the diversity of Israel's social groups. We aim to be a left force that encourages broad political involvement in different struggles and among different social classes, ultimately engendering political change.

As a movement, “Standing Together” is not only defined by symbolic protest and our attempts to block dangerous initiatives by the government. “Standing Together” also seeks to establish and advance a comprehensive alternative to the right and restructure the political map of Israel. In order to do this, we must work to realize the vision of our movement: the promotion of a socialist, democratic, solidarity-based, and egalitarian society for a just end to the occupation and its control over the Palestinian people and efforts towards establishing a government that works in the interests of all of Israel’s inhabitants.

In order to bring about this change, it is necessary to build a cumulative force to tackle the different struggles plaguing our diverse communities. A force of joint struggle enables the gathering of people and propels them towards action, acknowledgment, agreement, and influence across diverse audiences. As a political movement, we will continue to exert pressure on the government, but will also focus on building a majority that will enable long term political and social change.

This is achievable through:

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The creation of a politics of hope: presenting an alternative to the existing order and establishing a collection of forces to sustain it. The Occupation and the rule of the bureaucracy are strong because they are publicly accepted as the inevitable and necessary reality. In light of this understanding, all criticism becomes delegitimized. **It is important to offer alternative and real solutions that will serve everyone living here.** These alternatives should be practical solutions to specific problems. This implies broad political, economic and structural change, as well as reforms to the political map. The solutions we present will be concrete and feasible. By placing the alternative at the center of public agenda through the use of mobilizing tools such as demonstrations, strikes, and virtual campaigns, we can choose campaigns that express a broad range of solidarity, helping us give a voice to the voiceless. **We will also set small goals in order to achieve small victories.** Victories on a smaller scale will ensure the public that we, as a movement, can create realistic change. Finally, through the existence of our movement, we will continue to build hope and act as a uniquely cohesive political community.

Expressing the voices of all the people who live here, Jews and Arabs alike, and refusing to speak for just one particular nation. We will speak in the name of everybody living here - for the combined majority of distinct identities. The right-wing government strives to split the people and present our social reality as one defined by immutable conflict between ostensibly opposing groups (Arabs versus Jews, Ashkenazim versus Mizrahim, etc). Our task is to dismantle this discourse of hatred and separation and to replace it with a discourse of joint struggle and action.

We will continue to work to isolate the elites and will continue to resist their attempts to isolate us: We will not only defend the rights of minorities, but we will also continue to promote solutions that reflect the common interest of the majority - solutions that are contrary to the interests of the small elite who benefit from the existing political and economic order. We will show the public how our initiatives serve majority interests. **We will work to connect separate (but interrelated) struggles under common motives to prove how the solutions we propose present comprehensive policy for the benefit of the majority.** This includes local and specific struggles, which will help us connect different groups. **We will speak Hebrew and Arabic,** and any other language

needed to act upon our stance of solidarity. **Bilingualism is an expression of our commitment to Jewish-Arab partnership** and is undoubtedly necessary to achieve our aspirations for a future society. **With this cooperative mindset, we will unite the fragmented majority** and reorganize it into the consciousness of a unified society. In addition to tackling our separate struggles, we will work to promote solidarity and sustainable connections between social, ethnic and economic groups.

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Translating progressive ideas into a comprehensible language that is designed to persuade and invoke cooperation, not outrage or separation. We will present our goals with unifying language and abstain from language that necessitates compromise. Radical solutions in themselves do not denote extremism. In politics, discourse can change reality, and if the words we choose to describe reality makes it difficult to recruit partners and promote our solutions, we will not use them. Our goal is to create change, not dictate standards of morality based on discursive reform. We will, however, not give up on language that we believe is vital to our effort to create change - language that expresses the characteristics of our motives and our prominent struggles, such as ‘occupation.’

We will emphasize practical solutions instead of simply rephrasing contemporary discourse.

The men and women of this movement come from diverse backgrounds and hold diverse identities, and as a populist movement, we strive to create a space for all who wish to take part in the joint struggle. At the same time, **we will remember that certain words, flags, and symbols have conflicting meanings for different groups and may exclude potential political partners.**

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We will act to undermine conventional politics which reduces and denies the nuanced nature of both Israeli and Palestinian society, as well as the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a black and white framework.

When political camps become rigidly defined and discourse is confined to these definitions, change becomes impossible. The current socio-political atmosphere is one in which political affiliation is confined by ethnic and religious identities as well as geographical locality. This atmosphere only serves the existing order, allowing the political right to claim that it represents the people, despite acting against the people. Therefore, the task of Standing Together is to challenge the existing political framework by dismantling these underlying political definitions and equations.

In order to generate real change, alliances must be developed across different struggles to formulate a new language that changes our political reality. Struggles that fall outside of the “obvious” aspects of Israel’s political map will be prioritized. Those struggles will create a new political identity that connects social identities and promotes new alliances and coalitions that hold the potential to replace existing structures.

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We must be as diverse as the society we intend to change. Therefore, we will strive to ensure that the composition of the movement and its leadership reflects the diversity of the people and acknowledges social, ethnic and national backgrounds as well as geographic regions, religion, level of religious observance, and gender and sexual orientation. We will ensure the composition represents all of the groups that are not represented among the political and economic elite, giving adequate representation to underrepresented minorities. This principle will guide the growth of the movement: **We will ensure that local chapters in the peripheries hold significant weight, especially disenfranchised and disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities and excluded groups. This will also determine the priorities of the campaigns.**

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We will become a movement that belongs to all of its constituents. Activism in Standing Together will be shaped by our local chapters throughout the country. The chapters will act to realize the vision of the movement and will receive autonomy, support, and assistance from the national leadership. We will preserve membership in an open movement for all, and strive to form a movement that is a **political home** for all who have a vested interest in change. We will focus on promoting political change with all those who have an interest in promoting the change that members of the movement strive for.

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We will consistently promote activism, increasing the number of members registered and involved in political mobilization around the country. With each new member that joins we amass greater strength for the movement and continue to build the force needed to make social and political change in Israel. In every place where social and political mobilization takes the form of on-the-ground activism, our movement becomes stronger, and Standing Together gains the ability to expand our partnership base and connect with more struggles.

In order to build power, the movement will create

an infrastructure aimed at organizing and motivating people, providing tools for activists to do more efficient and impactful work, and training workshops based on accumulated experience from struggles in Israel and around the world. **This organizational theory and the accompanying training will equip the movement's active members with the knowledge and theory necessary to develop a conscious common struggle.**

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We will ensure that the internal culture of the movement reflects the politics we want to promote. We will ensure a **democratic, participatory, transparent, and non-exclusive organizational culture**, one in which people from diverse backgrounds will feel comfortable, **allowing for every individual member's involvement** according to age, status, and resources. We are careful not to exclude those who do not control the political discourse of the movement.

Within our movement, we will promote cultural activities that build solidarity between diverse social groups in both daily life and political activity and alliances. Within the movement there exists an **ideological pluralism**: we must remember that what unites us are political demands and political strategies, not abstract ideological principles.

Therefore, we cooperate with various political parties but **do not identify with any particular political party**, and we will avoid such identification.

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We will insist on taking part in a peaceful joint struggle for coexistence against the Occupation. We will struggle to end Israel's control over the Palestinian people, knowing that this is the only way to achieve real security for all people living here. In order to succeed in this ongoing struggle, we will constantly try to create new and contemporary strategies that appeal to additional partners and mobilize strength and support.

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We will strategically prioritize mobilization. There are many just and worthy struggles, however, when we must decide whether to mobilize around existing struggles or start and allocate resources to new struggles, we will take strategic considerations into account and give priority to:

- **Urgent struggles** where our involvement may dictate its success and have a positive impact on human life.
- **Struggles that can reorganize the political field**

and map of identities and political alliances that connect new communities to the movement and express our leftist values in ways that surprise others. In particular, **priority will be given to campaigns that address problems concerning disadvantaged communities.**

- Struggles where our involvement will help to present them as a broader process. This kind of involvement will also allow for new alliances.
- **Struggles that are non-polarizing and have not yet been clearly “marked” by the government on the right-left axis:** non-partisan issues such as environment, health, counterfeiting, violence against women, and public transportation. Through this type of joint political action, Standing Together will be able to form a broader and more diverse base of activists.

With each struggle that we partake in, we will aim for achievable goals with the understanding that small victories have a significant impact on gaining and maintaining momentum and creating hope. We will always remember that the path to change should be initiated by the people, not constantly a reaction to government policies and actions.

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We will partner with, express solidarity with, and support those around us who lead their own struggles that align with ours, but we will be careful not to dominate, appropriate, or exploit. We know that those who lead struggles against abusive policies are the ones most affected by systematic disenfranchisement and whose lives will be affected most directly and severely by the results of social struggles. We will mobilize members to move around local agendas, and maintain dialogue and contact with affiliated groups and organized communities outside of Standing Together who share some of our goals. We will also work to bring these groups closer to the movement.

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We will work to encourage broad democratic involvement among those who are on the sidelines and work to involve as many groups and communities as possible in our political activity. We will mobilize with a sense of urgency for the sake of common good, through promotion among groups who have been discouraged from political activity, supporting long-term struggles and lesser known community organizations and encouraging political mobilization.

As a general rule, we refrain from modes of operation that leave political activity in the hands of “experts” only, beyond the filing of petitions to courts or expert reports. **We will fight both liberal and conservative attempts to reduce political activity to the discourse of legal or economic experts,** and we will enable people to uniquely contribute in different ways according to their ability. We will promote an anti-elitist agenda that will undermine the economic, political and cultural power that is currently concentrated in the hands of few.

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We will capitalize on opportunities: We will not immediately dismiss those who address the struggles Standing Together is interested in solving through methods or rhetoric we disagree with. Instead, we will act with a willingness to engage in dialogue that aims to broaden their framework and acknowledges nuance within struggles. We take an inclusive approach, willing to join in struggles of the public agenda that aligns with the spirit of our movement, without giving up on our principles.

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We resolve to recognize potential partners across the whole nation. Ordinary people who hold right-wing positions

today are not adversaries; they are people who have the potential to share our views through the proposition of solutions that express common sense and a shared interest. Therefore, each and every one of these so-called “adversaries” has the potential to partner in our struggle and be potential members of our movement. We will be grateful for every step that they take toward our positions and we will never dictate political morality. We invite them to forge a new political identity with us, an identity that correlates with the values and political interests that we promote. **We will not give up on the unconvinced:** Alongside demonstrations, which albeit have the ability to polarize, demonstrate power and demand change, we will invest in fieldwork and ongoing communications that appeal to those who are not yet a part of our movement.

We will avoid a moralistic position that presents us as just and others as morally unworthy, or from branding entire groups as fascists or racists. We will emphasize that people who do not hold our positions are not automatically “bad” and still worthy of human respect. Instead of high-minded talk about polarizing ideological principles and arrogant moralistic preaching, we would rather examine together how the solutions we offer serve people who do not agree with us. Pointing to solutions that serve the general good bridges gaps and mobilizes support. As a result, we will refrain from using the legal language of human rights, and instead, we will translate ideological questions into

comprehensible proposals that address real needs such as housing, education, and livelihood.

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We will work with groups, organizations, and movements who share our goals, even when they do not share our broader world view or when their motives do not align with ours.

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We will promote change through the creation of a vibrant community that is continuously learning and standing in solidarity: The movement and its chapters are a social fabric that teaches and grows, a movement in which we meet for joint study, training for action, learning from past experience, and developing leadership skills. As a culturally and socially active community aimed at integration and bringing together family and friends, Standing Together deviates from direct political activity and focuses on creating the diverse and unified society we wish to build. We will, however, emphasize that the success of the movement will not come at the expense of openness and heterogeneity, but will help build a larger, stronger, and more diverse network of social influence.

The strategy proposed in this document is new and has not yet been tried by the Israeli left: we do not speak in the name of philosophical, legal, or academic principles. These principles are perceived as elitist as they function without consideration of the reality that most people live in. We are also not distancing ourselves in a seemingly radical discourse that deliberately chooses to alienate itself from the majority. Instead, we will insist on speaking with all of Israeli society, trying to influence it, and striving to represent it and express its' interests.

The existing order is based on three defining factors: on the division of the majority, on passivity and indifference, and on the belief that there is no alternative. Our activism is centered on addressing three measures: connecting people from different communities despite the differences between them, driving people from indifference to activity, and offering a hopeful alternative.

The task that “Standing Together” has chosen to tackle is a revolutionary one: We strive to create profound change within Israeli society, the Israeli economy, and Israeli politics. This is not a simple task, but we are inspired by our faith in people: their open minds, their genuine intentions, and their hearts filled with compassion and empathy. We love the people who live here. We are a part of them and we insist on fighting with and for them. Through joint solidarity and struggle, we will succeed.

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