

# OUR IMPACT

## Overseas Stories:

## Supporting New Immigrants to Israel



Yindra Alfonso, 39, is a new *olah* (immigrant to Israel) from Cuba, arriving in Israel with her husband and two children,

ages 6 and 8. “It’s been a difficult change, but now we’re OK—we’ve adapted, totally,” she says. In Cuba, Yindra was a doctor—a neonatologist—and she plans to study toward getting Israeli licensure after completing intensive courses on conversational and medical terminology Hebrew at her **Jewish Agency**-operated Absorption Center in Beersheva.

The **Jewish Agency for Israel** operates Absorption Centers throughout the country—temporary living quarters which provide a soft landing and supportive framework for new immigrants to Israel, including intensive Hebrew classes and other supportive

services tailored to an immigrant’s needs.

“The students here today come from 35 countries and speak 14 languages,” said the Director of the Yeelim Absorption Center in Beersheva. “I’m always amazed by young people who leave their studies, jobs, homes, and languages to make Aliyah (immigrate to Israel). I’m proud of Israel for being a country that absorbs people from all over the world.”

At a recent party in Yeelim Absorption Center, 100 new immigrants gathered to socialize and sing, using their newly developing Hebrew language skills. After a round of Hebrew songs, an Absorption Center staff member shared his thoughts on the importance of immigration to the State of Israel:

“Israel is a strong country. We are strong militarily. We are strong economically. We are strong with the way we take care of our citizens. This

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summer, some of you experienced rockets. They cannot overcome us. We are unified and strong, and *Aliyah* (immigration) is a blessing to this country. It strengthens us. Many of the soldiers who fought in Gaza are immigrants. We are strong and we are not afraid. I will share with you a saying that has been true during every wave of immigration to Israel: *me’oleh l’oleh, kochenu oleh*—with each immigrant who comes, our strength grows. We wish you success in your studies.”