Leave it *wild.*

Discover the desert. Responsibly.



I made this while living in Sderot.
The south deserves more attention.

Sderot is technically southern Israel, though not quite the Negev. Living there made me want to bring attention to an area I feel is often overlooked. When people talk about tourism in Israel, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and the Kinneret get most of the attention.

My only trip to the Negev was on Taglit in 2019. I wanted to design a campaign that gets young people down south, and makes sure the places they find are still worth finding when the next group comes.

> Two problems that pull against each other: young people don't go, and when people do go, the land pays for it.
>
> — Yaaqov

The desert is not empty.
It is alive.

The Negev and Arava hold open land, wildlife, dark skies and the communities who live there. The more people come, the more it matters how they come.

45%

of Israelis admitted they had littered in nature in the past year.

UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA STUDY, 2021

ACCESS

Young people should get to know the south, safely and with respect.

PRESSURE

More visitors without new habits means more litter, off-road driving and light in fragile places.

OWNERSHIP

Young people can be the ones who look after it, not just the ones passing through.



Turn a faraway landscape into a *shared responsibility.*

The south isn’t short on beauty. The problem is distance, unfamiliarity, and the gap between “that’s amazing” and actually doing something about it.

01	**See it**	Make the south feel close, surprising and worth the trip.
02	**Understand it**	Show what makes desert life fragile, and what makes it special.
03	**Protect it**	Turn one visit into a habit, and young visitors into the people who speak up for it.

CAMPAIGN GOAL Get Israelis aged 15 to 24 to visit the Negev and Arava, and make leaving no trace the normal thing to do once they’re there.

Take in the view. *Leave it wild.*

Discover with care

Make the desert a place young people want to go, and make looking after it part of the fun. Leave the land, the wildlife and the dark the way you found them.



TAGLINE · DISCOVER THE DESERT. RESPONSIBLY.

Lead with youth. *Build a coalition around them.*

THE CORE AUDIENCE

Israelis aged 15 to 24

Reached through the groups that already take them south: youth movements, school trips and student organizations. Plus young hikers, campers, and the creators they follow.

THE PARTNERS THE CAMPAIGN CAN'T WORK WITHOUT

- **A field school** to run the trips
- **The Israel Nature and Parks Authority** for facts and access
- **Local and Bedouin communities** who live there and know the land
- **Parents, educators, municipalities and local businesses** who make it possible

Three habits. *One promise.*



01 Go lightly

Stay on marked trails, take your trash home, carry enough water, and don’t drive off-road in protected areas.

02 Keep the dark

Use less light at night, point it down, and leave the sky for the stars and the animals that need the dark.

03 Know what lives here

Watch wildlife from a distance, never feed or touch it, and stay away from nesting areas.

The 24-hour *Desert Reset*

A weekend run by young people, for young people.



DAYLIGHT

A guided hike, and how to walk a trail without leaving a mark

SUNSET

Set up a leave-no-trace camp, and hear the land from people who live there

AFTER DARK

Stargazing, lights off

NEXT MORNING

A short clean-up before heading home

WHAT PEOPLE TAKE HOME

A pledge, and photos worth posting.

They go home as the friend who explains why it matters.

A sky full of stars is *worth protecting.*

The part I'm proudest of: a 16-year-old can check this from their own street tonight.

In 2017, Makhtesh Ramon became the first International Dark Sky Park in the Middle East. Worldwide, more than a third of people can no longer see the Milky Way from where they live. The story starts with one question: **how many stars can you see from your street?**

TOO MUCH LIGHT



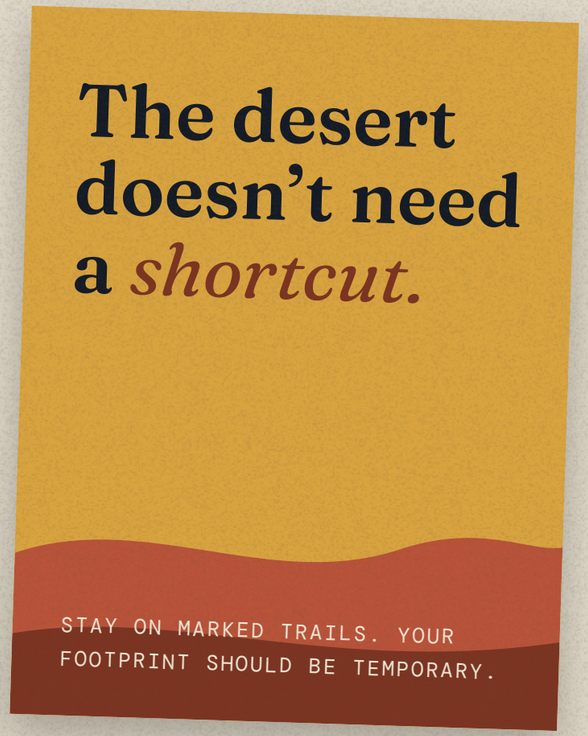
DARK-SKY FRIENDLY



#GIVETHENIGHTBACK YOUNG PEOPLE AUDIT THEIR OWN STREET SOUTHERN BUSINESSES PLEDGE TO SHIELD THEIR LIGHTS

A look built on *contrast,* not clichés.





WHAT THE CREATIVE HAS TO DO

Show the desert as it is. It doesn't need to be "greened" to be beautiful.

Use real local voices, and check every species and place name.

Make the ask simple enough to remember and easy to share.

No scare tactics. Lead with wonder, and the feeling that this place is yours too.

Get noticed. Get people involved.
Keep the story going.



1 Earned media

Pitches on young conservationists, dark skies and low-impact travel, to local, national, travel and environment desks.

2 Creators and social

Young creators film low-impact trips and short explainers. The prompt for everyone else: “What I left untouched.”

3 Youth groups

Toolkits for schools and youth movements, field-school trips, and local guides telling the story in their own words.

4 Municipalities and businesses

Short briefings on shielded lighting, signs, waste and managing visitors.

Give journalists more than *an event announcement.*



HUMAN INTEREST	**Meet the teenagers becoming desert ambassadors.**
TRAVEL	**A better way to see the Negev: the rise of low-impact travel.**
SCIENCE	**Why the dark matters: light pollution and the animals of the night.**
LOCAL	**Southern communities are shaping how tourism works in their backyard.**

IN THE PRESS KIT — Fact sheet · spokespeople · approved photos · route and safety information

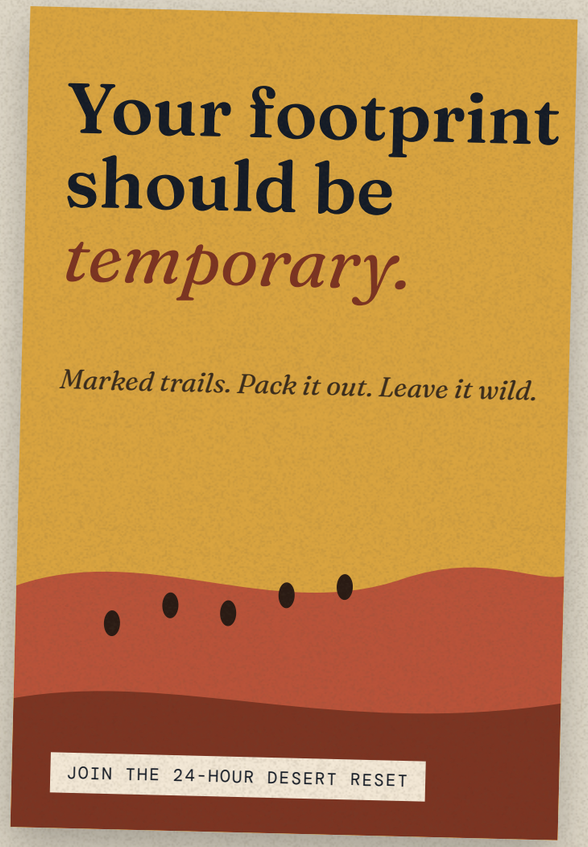
Two launch posts, *ready to adapt.*



POST 1 · KEEP THE DARK

Same desert. Same night. The only thing that changed is the light. Too much artificial light hides the stars and disturbs the animals that live after dark. Turning off what the desert doesn't need is the easiest way to give the night back.

#GIVETHENIGHTBACK #LEAVEITWILD



POST 2 · GO LIGHTLY

Take the view. Leave the rest. Stay on marked trails, pack out what you pack in, and sign up to hear when the 24-hour Desert Reset opens: a guided hike, stargazing and a morning clean-up, built by young people for young people.

#LEAVEITWILD #WHATILEFTUNTOUCHED

A 12-week pilot, built to *gather momentum.*



WEEKS 1 TO 3

Listen and build

Line up partners, design it with young people and local communities, run a baseline survey, make the content.

WEEKS 4 TO 6

Launch

Launch film and social, media briefings, creator previews, sign-ups through schools and youth groups.

WEEKS 7 TO 10

Activate

The Desert Reset weekends, the dark-sky challenge, business lighting pledges, follow-up stories for the press.

WEEKS 11 TO 12

Learn

Stories from the people who took part, a snapshot of results, partner feedback, and what to change before it grows.

PILOT LOCATIONS CHOSEN WITH LOCAL PARTNERS, BASED ON ACCESS, HOW SENSITIVE THE SITE IS, AND WHO CAN HOST

Measure what people do, *not just what they like.*



DID THEY SEE IT?

Reach, video completion, the quality of press coverage, and whether the key messages came through.

DID THEY JOIN IN?

Saves, shares, challenge entries, toolkit downloads and youth-group sign-ups.

DID THEY ACT?

Pledges completed, volunteer hours, and how well trails and campsites are kept.

DID IT STICK?

Businesses that change their lighting, municipal pilots, and partners who stay on.

I had no numbers of my own, so I didn't make any up. Targets get set once partners and a baseline are in place, and the results are published at the end, good or bad.

A campaign about respecting a place has to *respect the people there.*

Design it with them	Southern residents, Bedouin communities, local guides and conservation experts help shape it from the start. It isn’t just about them.
Protect the places	Keep big groups away from sensitive sites. Use approved routes, group limits and seasonal guidance.
Check every fact	Wildlife, access rules, heat and route safety are checked with the authorities before anything goes out.
Know the limits	Bigger questions, like transport to the south, are a separate policy conversation, not something a 12-week pilot can promise.

Come closer.
Tread lighter.

The best way to experience the desert is to help keep it wild.

Thanks for reading. — Yaaqov



Research notes

LITTERING	University of Haifa, “45% of Israelis admit to littering in the past year” (2021). pr.haifa.ac.il
DARK SKY	DarkSky International, “Ramon Crater Named First International Dark Sky Place in the Mideast” (2017). darksky.org
LIGHT POLLUTION	Falchi et al., “The new world atlas of artificial night sky brightness,” Science Advances (2016), as reported by the World Economic Forum.
PARTNER MODELS	Nature Israel / SPNI conservation and education programs (natureisrael.org). Israel Nature and Heritage Foundation, Adopt-a-Class (inhf.org.il/en/adopt-a-class).
SAFETY	Israeli government hiking guidance: plan desert routes for cooler hours, stay on marked trails and carry enough water. Check current local guidance before publishing.
ASSUMPTIONS	A proposed campaign that hasn’t run. No partners, funding, permits, results or municipal commitments are presented as confirmed. Wildlife and light-pollution claims need local expert review before release.
PHOTOS	Desert photographs are illustrative. Image rights have not been cleared for publication.