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JDC-Brookdale Institute
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Nazareth Municipality

The Needs of Youth in Nazareth

Final Research Report – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Khaled Abu-Asbah ♦ Miriam Cohen-Navot ♦ Bashir Abdo

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Khaled Abu-Asbah¹ Miriam Cohen-Navot¹ Bashir Abdo²

¹JDC-Brookdale Institute

²Nazareth Municipality

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JDC-Brookdale Institute
The Center for Children and Youth
P.O.B. 3886
Jerusalem 91037
Tel: 972-2-6554700
Fax: 972-2-5612391

website: www.jdc.org.il/brookdale

The Project's Research Team

Nazareth Municipality

Bashir Abdo, Director of the Department of Pedagogic Planning, Education Division

Fadi Sweidan, Assistant to the Director-General of the Municipality, and Coordinator of Field Work for the Research

Mahmoud Nassar, Director of Nazareth Community Centers

Samia B'soul, Director of the Unit for Dropout Prevention, Education Division

Shadia Iskandar, Team Leader, Welfare Division

Sai'b Zreiq, Director of the Youth Promotion Unit, Nazareth Community Centers

JDC-Brookdale Institute

Khaled Abu-Asbah, Senior Researcher

Miriam Cohen-Navot, Senior Researcher

Antigone Ashkar, Research Assistant

Muna Houri-Kasabri, Research Assistant

Sharon Amiel, Research Assistant

Osnat Lavenda, Research Assistant

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1. Foreword

In recent years, municipal policymakers, decisionmakers, and professionals have shown increasing interest in the welfare of adolescents. Efforts are being made to better identify the needs of adolescents, so as to develop services that will better meet those needs. This trend is noticeable in political and professional circles in Arab towns and cities, where realization is growing that a focus on youth and on the development of solutions for youth must be central to the setting of priorities in local authorities.

The project reported herein was the fruit of an initiative by the heads of the Nazareth Municipality, who sought to improve the services for youth in their city. Nazareth is the largest Arab city in Israel, with some 60,000 residents, who come from a heterogeneous socio-economic and religious background. The city has a well-developed system of services; moreover, much effort has been devoted to improving the formal education system, with significant results. However, increasing problems among the city's youth, such as violence and vandalism, have caused deep concern among professionals and policymakers, who wish to work extensively and comprehensively to improve the solutions for youth. It was in light of this that the JDC-Brookdale Institute responded to a request from the Nazareth Municipality to help compile data on youth that could be used in planning municipal services for them. The resulting project was composed of various research activities, including (a) a survey of students in grades six through eleven; (b) a survey of youth who had dropped out of the formal education system; and (c) mapping of the city's informal education and recreation services, through interviews with all of the directors of those services. The project was conducted jointly by staff from the Nazareth Municipality and the JDC-Brookdale Institute.

A Project for Comprehensive Planning

The project is based on the principles of comprehensive planning, which recognizes that youth have needs in many areas. In order to meet these needs, it is necessary to learn about the situation and problems of youth in all relevant areas. At the same time, it is necessary to address the needs of youth as a whole, both because the various aspects of a young person's life are intertwined, and because the service system reaps benefits when it works in an integrative manner.

Data were collected on the main aspects of life for youth in Nazareth, with the aim of examining their needs from their perspective. The main subjects examined from the youths' perspective were socio-demographic characteristics; school; organized and non-organized recreational activities; work; social life, including marginal and violent behavior; values; the youths' relationship with their parents and other adults; and the youths' attitude toward their neighborhood, toward Nazareth, and toward its services.

Informal Education and Recreation Services

In designing the study, special emphasis was placed on informal education and recreation. In Israel, informal education services are provided by youth movements, community centers, informal education programs implemented by schools, after-school and other programs implemented by welfare services, and the treatment services of the education system. The professional literature

stresses that these services can benefit youth, by both promoting their personal development and preventing risk behaviors and other problems (Whalen and Wynn, 1995; Wynn, 1995; Kahane, 1997).

Professionals in Israel recognize the important role that informal education can play in the overall system of services for youth. Nevertheless, there is a lack of informal education programs, particularly for Arab children and youth. Moreover, to date, in Israel as elsewhere, little research has been conducted in this area. The findings of this study therefore constitute an important contribution to the development of services in this area.

The Needs of Youth Who Drop Out of School

Since dropping out puts youth at severe risk, we were particularly interested in the problems and needs of youth who had dropped out of the education system and remained disattached from any normative framework. A survey was therefore conducted among them. School is central to the lives of youth; successful completion of secondary school is a condition for entering higher education and attaining job mobility. For these and other reasons, dropping out of school may have far-reaching negative consequences for the future of young men and women (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001; Abu-Asbe, 1999; Richman and Bowen, 1997). Moreover, the school drop-out rate among all of the Arab youth in Israel is extremely high: About 20% of Arab youth ages 14-17 do not attend school at all, and about 30% of them do not complete secondary school (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002).¹

Arab Youth in Israel

Beyond contributing to our knowledge about the needs of youth, in general, it was important that this study was conducted in the large Arab city of Nazareth, given the pressing need to identify needs and plan services for Arab youth. While the data indicate significant gaps between the situation of Arab and Jewish youth in key areas, the level of services and resources provided to Arab youth remains relatively low, and is inadequate. In addition, professionals are concerned that the dramatic social change that Arab society in Israel is undergoing causes the youth and their families confusion and difficulty, which are often accompanied by social problems and risk behaviors (Haj Yihye, 1994).

Arab youth are recognized as having a unique background, culture, and characteristics, which require special attention. However, to date, this population has yet to receive appropriate or sufficient attention from researchers in Israel. The lack of an adequate information base on Arab youth makes it difficult to set policy, implement professional activity, or develop the necessary services. This project was meant to help establish a base of information and knowledge about Arab youth and the services they need. It should be noted, however, that the project reported here was conducted in only one city, such that the findings concern the population and services in that city (albeit, the largest Arab city in Israel). Naturally, it is very important to conduct similar studies in additional towns and cities. In fact, the JDC-Brookdale Institute is today implementing similar

¹ The data refer to youth who do not attend a school that is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

projects to identify the needs of youth in Tamra, an Arab town in northern Israel, and of Bedouin children and youth in localities in the Negev Desert.

Description of the Research Activities

Data collection involved the following:

- ♦ Exploratory research activities, including in-depth interviews with key professionals in the municipal system of services, and focus groups with youth (both students and dropouts), parents, and teachers. These activities took place in 1997.
- ♦ A survey of 729 students in the sixth, ninth, and eleventh grades, who represented a random sample of 20% of the students in all of the schools in Nazareth, including private schools and recognized, unofficial church schools. The survey was anonymous, and utilized a self-administered questionnaire. This survey was conducted in 1998.
- ♦ A survey of 98 young people who had dropped out of the formal education system. These dropouts are in contact with the municipal services for youth. The youth were interviewed in their homes by youth counselors, who used a structured questionnaire similar to the one used in the student survey. This survey was conducted in 1999.
- ♦ Mapping of informal education and recreation services. Interviewers from the JDC-Brookdale Institute conducted face-to-face interviews with all 76 directors of such services in Nazareth, using a structured questionnaire. These interviews were conducted in 1998.

Planning for the Development of Services

The survey findings were discussed by the research team, which was composed of staff from the Nazareth Municipality and the JDC-Brookdale Institute. This led to the formulation of recommendations regarding directions for the development of services for youth in the city (presented in the last section of this executive summary). These recommendations are serving as the basis for comprehensive planning of local services, including formal education services, services that address special problems, and informal education and recreation services. It is hoped that the planning process will meet the varied yet inter-related needs of youth over time.

2. Summary of Principal Findings about the Youth

2.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Students

As noted, the youth who participated in the student survey were attending the sixth, ninth, and eleventh grades.² About half of the students in the sample are boys, and half are girls. About half (49%) of the students are from large families (that is, with four or more children). About one-third of the students' mothers and fathers attended school until middle school, and about one-fifth of them obtained post-secondary education. Twenty-three percent of the students reported that their father was not currently working, due to unemployment, disability, retirement, or another reason. Two-thirds (66%) of the students are Muslims, and the remainder (34%) are Christians. Most of the students reported observing religious traditions. However, only a minority of them reported being either "religious" (17%) or, conversely, "secular" (16%).

About half (49%) of the students in Nazareth attend private schools under church auspices and the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The remainder of them attend public state schools under the auspices of the Nazareth Municipality. Almost all (90%) of the students in the public schools are Muslims, while most (58%) of the students in the private schools are Christians (and the remaining 42% are Muslims). The average socio-economic level of the families of students in private schools is higher than that of the families of students in public schools. While two-thirds (63%) of the students attending public schools reported that there were four or more children in their family, only one-third (36%) of the students attending private schools reported this. In addition, a larger proportion of students attending public schools reported that their parents had relatively little education (up to middle school), and that their father was not currently working.

2.2 The Students' Perception of School and the Formal Education System

General Satisfaction and School Atmosphere

The students' perception of school was important to the survey, because of the decisive impact school has on the youths' lives in the present, and on their future lives as adults. Most of the students in Nazareth expressed much satisfaction with school. For example, 89% of them reported that they liked school, 81% reported that they felt they "belonged" at school, 85% believed they could get additional help from their teachers if they needed it and that the teachers were interested in them as people, and 88% of them reported that liked being in each others' company.³ The

² Some of the students drop out of school before they reach the upper grades. Therefore, while the data pertaining to the sixth grade students relate to all of the youth in Nazareth, the data pertaining to the students in the upper grades relate only to those youth who have stayed in school. thus, these data do not include the youth who dropped out, many of whom suffer from school adjustment difficulties or other problems.

³ The students were asked to note the degree to which they agreed with certain statements made in the questionnaire, as follows: agree completely, agree, no opinion, disagree, disagree completely. Here we present the proportions of students who responded "agree completely " or "agree".

satisfaction with school of students in Nazareth is similar to that among the total Arab student population in Israel, and greater than that among Jewish youth.⁴

Along with revealing significant satisfaction, the findings revealed problems with the school atmosphere. A notable percentage (30%) of the students believed that their school's rules and regulations were unfair, and most (63%) of the students believed that there was no cooperation between the administration and the students in setting these rules. In addition, a significant proportion of students reported that some teachers speak in an insulting manner (38%), and that some teachers use corporal punishment (38%).

In general, no difference was found between students in the public and private schools regarding school atmosphere. One exception was in the perception of the student-teacher relationship: Students in private schools reported a higher level of satisfaction with this relationship. It is particularly striking to note that more than half (56%) of the public school students reported that corporal punishment was used in their school, compared to a much smaller percentage (19%) of the students in private schools.

Satisfaction with Studies and Scholastic Achievements

Reports of a positive atmosphere at school were accompanied by reports of success in school. Most (about 80%) of the students reported feeling that their teachers assessed their scholastic achievements as being above average. At the same time, the data indicate that students often feel that scholastic success exacts a high price. A central problem is their sense that their parents and teachers have expectations that are not appropriate to their abilities; consequently, they are under excessive pressure to excel in school.

- ♦ Forty-eight percent of the students believe that their parents expect too much of them in terms of their achievements at school.
- ♦ Forty-three percent of the students believe that their teachers expect too much of them.
- ♦ Twenty-nine percent of the students reported feeling stressed at school. This was more prevalent among the girls than among the boys, among students in the upper grades than among those in the lower grades, and among students in private schools, as opposed to those in public schools.

One way of coping with pressure at school is to receive tutoring. Indeed, such help was fairly common: About half (46%) of the students reported that they received help with their studies. However, 48% of the students reported that they would like additional help. More public school

⁴ The data on all of the Arab and all of the Jewish students in Israel were taken from a survey of health behaviors in school-aged children (HBSC). This is an international survey, which examines the social well-being, health, and risk behaviors of youth. In Israel, the survey was conducted on a national representative sample of students in sixth through tenth grades in State and State religious schools in the Jewish and Arab school systems (Harel et al., 2000). The survey in Nazareth was conducted during the year in which the HBSC was conducted. In many cases, the Nazareth survey used questions identical to those used in the HBSC, so as to facilitate comparison between the youth in Nazareth and their peers in the total population.

than private school students were already receiving help with their studies. However, according to their reports, a larger percentage of them need additional help. This need increases with age, and students in the upper grades were more apt to report feeling pressured. It appears that their distress is related to the decrease in the percentage of them who receive help as they advance in school.

Problems of Truancy and Disengagement

While some students continue to function at school despite stress or other problems, other students have difficulty adjusting, and display behaviors that signal disengagement from learning and from the school itself. We examined disengagement in this study using a variety of measures: reports of multiple absences, skipping classes without permission ("cutting class"), and self-reports of disinterest in learning, despite class attendance.

Six percent of the students reported that they had been absent from school for three or more days during the past month, and not because they were ill. This percentage is similar to the percentage of absences among all Arab students in Israel (as reported in the HBSC survey). Most (80%) of the students who were absent for four or more consecutive days received an inquiry from their homeroom teacher, their school principal, or the truancy officer. The students also reported behaviors that signaled disengagement, even though they were still attending school: 15% had skipped classes without permission at least once during the past month, usually because "they didn't feel like" going to class. Twelve percent of the students reported feeling disinterested and disengaged during classes, despite being physically present. These students reported that they often engaged in activities unrelated to the class, sought an excuse to leave the class or the school, or disturbed the class. These behaviors were more typical of boys than girls, students in upper as opposed to lower grades, and students in public as opposed to private schools.

It is interesting to note that despite reports of varying degrees of disengagement, such behavior does not necessarily indicate a conscious intention to drop out of school. Almost all (97%) of the students who participated in the survey reported that they intended to complete twelfth grade.

2.3 The Dropouts' Perception of School and the Circumstances of Their Leaving School

Parallel to the survey of students, we also collected data on youth who had left the formal education system, and who, as such, are at high risk. Because of the difficulty of locating dropouts and obtaining their consent to be interviewed, data were collected primarily on dropouts who had contact with community services. Although they did not constitute a representative sample, there was much to be learned from them about the impetus to drop out, and about the advantages and disadvantages of doing so, as they perceived them.

Most of the dropouts who participated in the study were boys from families with low socio-economic status and four or more children. Almost all of the dropouts who were interviewed were Muslims. About half of the dropouts had been out of school for one year or less at the time of the survey. The dropout rate was highest in ninth grade (47% of the dropouts), and most (56%) of them reported that they had left at the end of the school year, at the point of transition to high school.

The main inducements to drop out of school were poor scholastic achievements and a negative experience at school. The importance of the school atmosphere to remaining in school is clearly apparent from the interviews with dropouts. These youth reported that the things they had disliked the most about schools was the atmosphere, and primarily the teachers' attitude toward them. About 30% of them even reported that the teachers' attitude toward them was the reason they left school. Nevertheless, about two-thirds (65%) of the dropouts reported that the decision to leave school was theirs, and not the school's. Only a small percentage (6%) of them reported that the school staff had recommended that they leave.

In addition, some of the dropouts were bothered by the negative stigma attached to the school they had attended, and some of them disliked the hours of study, which they felt were too long. It is interesting to note that contact with classmates was the main attraction of school for them.

Despite the prevalence of severe scholastic problems among the dropouts interviewed during the period that preceded their leaving school, only one-third (31%) of them had received remedial help during the year preceding their dropping out. Other reasons for leaving school were related to outside pressures, primarily a desire to help support their family. Seventy-seven percent of the dropouts reported that, while still attending school, they were troubled by problems, primarily family problems, that made it difficult for them to study. It was also found that 29% of the dropouts (boys only) worked regularly, even while still attending school. While the main reasons for leaving school were adjustment difficulties, it appears that problems in the youths' environment increased their distress and contributed to their ultimate decision to drop out.

The dropouts were asked what they felt were the advantages and disadvantages of leaving school. The main advantages they reported were freedom, and the chance to attend an alternative learning framework. In contrast, the most notable disadvantages they cited were too much free time, fatigue from work (among those who worked), and missing the opportunity to study. The findings indicate that in many cases, the dropouts did not want to stop studying: About one-third of them reported that they would like to go back to school. Among those who were not interested in returning to school, the main reasons were an obligation to a job, and their memory of the negative atmosphere at school. Many dropouts reported that they would rather receive vocational training than go back to school: About half (53%) of those who had dropped out reported that they would like to learn a trade in some framework, if possible.

As will be described below, most of the dropouts who are boys work for pay. In contrast, none of the girls who dropped out of school work for pay. Thus, given the lack of community services, girls who drop out may remain completely disconnected from any framework or activity outside their home.

2.4 Work

As noted, some of the youth engage in paid employment, usually as unskilled workers. As expected, paid employment is far more central to the lives of dropouts than to those of students: About two-thirds of the dropouts who were interviewed were working for pay, compared to 12% of the

students (22% of the boys and 3% of the girls). Although dropouts were similar to students in other areas, in this area we found significant differences between them – in their reasons for seeking employment, the scope of their employment, their salary, and so forth.

Most (64%) of the dropouts reported working to help support their family. Unlike them, students who worked reportedly did so because they enjoyed it, or to meet their own needs (35%); only a few of them (about 20%) reported that they worked to help support their family. This finding highlights the differences in the needs of dropouts and students, arising from the lower socio-economic status of the families of dropouts. Most of the dropouts work in a steady job, earning an average of NIS 2,690 a month. Most of them work long hours – an average of 48.5 hours a week, with 68% of them working between 40 and 55 hours a week. About 20% of the dropouts even reported working between 56 and 72 hours a week. This is indicative of the heavy burden these youth bear, as well as of severe infraction of the youth employment laws.

The students work to a much more limited extent. Most (70%) of those who work do so only during school vacations. However, the students who work regularly during the school year report working an average of 22 hours a week – certainly a heavy burden for youth who attend school.

Most of the employed dropouts and students were very satisfied with their job. Additional evidence that youth perceive work as being positive is offered by the large percentage of youth who are not working, but who would like to work: as many as two-thirds of the students.

Working is more prevalent among older youth, and among boys. For example, only a few (3%) of the girl students work for pay, and none of the girls who had dropped out were working for pay. It is important to note that the girls are not pleased that they are not working for pay: About two-thirds of the girl students reported that they would like to have a job.

2.5 Recreational Activities

A main focus of the survey was an examination of the youths' patterns of participation in informal education and recreation frameworks in the city, as well as their attitude toward these frameworks, which are considered important for youth. Effective informal education and recreation services can contribute to the personal and social development of youth, provide fruitful opportunities for them to form significant relationships with adults and their peers, close scholastic and other gaps among some of the youth, and facilitate early detection of personal and social problems, so that it will be possible to provide support or treatment before the problems become serious.

The findings of the survey indicate a clear need to expand the system of informal education and recreation services. At the time of the survey, only about half (48%) of the students and one-third of the dropouts actually participated in extracurricular courses or organized group activities.⁵ Sports

⁵ The youth were asked whether they had participated during the past month in any extracurricular or group activity (including a team sport) under the auspices of the municipality or any other organization, at any

are the activity in which participation was particularly great (65% of the students participating in activities). Many also participated in trips (28%), extracurricular classes (27%), and computer classes (24%). Smaller percentages of students participate in other enrichment classes (such as drama, dance, music, drawing, and arts and crafts).

Fifty-nine percent of the students, and a similar proportion of the dropouts, would have liked to participate in additional activities, were they given the opportunity to do so. This group included youth who were already participating in activities, and youth who were not participating in any activity. Only 19% of the students reported that they were not participating in any activity and did not wish to participate in any activity.

The questionnaire for students included an open question about the problems that most concerned them. They reported that the lack of informal frameworks for youth was their most serious problem; their principal recommendation was to develop more such frameworks. The dropouts who were interviewed also reported a need to establish more recreational and leisure frameworks for youth. The lack of such frameworks was reflected in extensive reports of boredom and a lack of places to spend time.

- ♦ Thirty-nine percent of the students reported not having anything to do after school, and often being bored.
- ♦ Forty-six percent of the students reported that there was no appropriate place for them to spend time outside their homes.

As is apparent from a description of the system of services, Nazareth has over 70 informal education and recreation services. We were interested in understanding the barriers to participation in these services. Indeed, the youth reported encountering many such barriers. The following were the main reasons the students reported for not participating in extracurricular or other group activities:

- ♦ The hours are inconvenient for them (51% of the students).
- ♦ They have no time (42%).
- ♦ They are not interested in the activities offered (40%).
- ♦ It is hard for them to participate if their friends don't participate (31%); they feel alienated from the other youth (21%).
- ♦ They lack information about the activities and where they are held (29%).
- ♦ It is hard for them to afford fees (22%).
- ♦ They lack a convenient form of transportation (20%).

Review of this list reveals that some of the barriers to using existing services are inherent in the services themselves and their attractiveness – that is, whether they are interesting or socially

location, such as a club, community center, their school (after school hours), church, mosque, or private school.

enticing to the students. Other barriers arise from how the services are organized and implemented – that is, where they are located and the need for transportation to them, and insufficient or incorrect dissemination of information about them (for example, leading the youth to think that participation incurs a high payment, which is not necessarily the case). Other barriers to the use of services arise from aspects of the youths' lives that affect their willingness to engage in such activities. It was found, for example, that students who feel a great deal of pressure at school tend less to participate in organized extracurricular and recreational activities.

According to the professional literature, the uniqueness of informal education services lies in the nature of their contribution to youth. Most importantly, they are intended to promote the personal and social development of youth, and give them an opportunity to participate in decisionmaking processes. We conducted an in-depth analysis of how the youth perceive the activities in which they participate, and how these contribute to them. We found that the main contribution of informal education and recreation activities perceived by the youth was to their personal and social development, and less to their participation in decisionmaking or in taking on significant new roles.

The students were also asked their preferences for planning extracurricular and other activities in the future. Most (87%) of them said they would prefer co-educational activities, that activities be held on the weekends (78%), that youth help lead the activities (67%), that activities be held in their neighborhood (79%), and that activities not be held too close to the end of the school day (82%).

Differences were found in the participation of different populations of youth in informal education and recreation activities:

- ♦ **Boys versus girls.** Boys use the existing system of services more than do girls: 55% of the boys reported participating in extracurricular activities, compared to 42% of the girls. Similarly, more girls than boys reported not having a convenient or pleasant place to spend time outside their home (54% versus 37%, respectively), and not having anyone to spend time with (23% and 13%, respectively). It appears that some of the girls have needs that differ from those of the boys, and which were not met to the same extent as those of the boys. The needs of girls who drop out are particularly pressing. It is important to note that in the wake of the survey's preliminary findings, significant strides have been made in developing services for girls: Four new frameworks have been established for girls, and community centers have focused on planning activities for them.
- ♦ **Grade levels.** The proportions of youth reporting participation in extracurricular activities decreases with the increase in grade levels, from 58% in sixth grade to 41% in eleventh grade. Also, students in the upper grades ascribe less value to the contribution of these activities to their well-being. Accordingly, the proportion of youth reporting feeling bored increases with an increase in grade level, from 33% in sixth grade to 47% in eleventh grade.
- ♦ **Socio-economic situation.** Participation was similar among all strata of the population, and was not found to be related to a family's socio-economic status. This indicates the effort that has been made to develop opportunities for youth from different backgrounds. At the same time, it should be noted that dropouts participate less in these activities.

2.6 Social Relationships and Emotional State

Social Relationships

About one-fifth (18%) of the students reported feeling that they lack friends or do not have anyone to spend time with. More than half (60%) of them tend to spend time in groups.

The girls suffer from a lack of friends more than do the boys. We found no difference among grade levels or between types of school (public or private). Also, the responses of dropouts were similar to those of students. One exception to this was the greater tendency of dropouts to befriend youth who encourage forbidden and dangerous behavior – a finding corroborated by other findings regarding the many risk behaviors of dropouts (see below).

Emotional State

Most (81%) of the students reported that they were happy, 13% reported that they were only somewhat happy, and only 6% reported that they were not at all happy. The students' reports of their happiness were similar to those among all of the Arab youth in Israel reported in the HBSC survey, and greater than those reported among all Jewish youth. As in the general population (of Arabs and Jews), reports of happiness were similar among boys and girls, although happiness decreased with age among both genders. Findings indicating that problems intensify as the youth get older, both objectively and subjectively, are echoed in the various sections of the survey. These findings are given expression in a need for assistance with school work, pressure at school, disengagement from school, and the limited participation of older youth in extracurricular classes and other activities.

2.7 Violence and Risk Behaviors

To a large extent, the study presented here was initiated due to concern over violence and risk behaviors among youth, which professionals feel are becoming increasingly severe. Indeed, both the students and the dropouts who were interviewed reported that violence and alcohol and drug use were important problems for Nazareth's youth. In analyzing violence, we distinguished between victims and perpetrators of violence.

The extent of violence. About one-quarter of the students felt there were many incidents of teasing, harassment, or bullying at their school. More than half (56%) of the students reported being harassed on school grounds at least once during the current school year. Harassment was also prevalent outside of school: About half (48%) of the students reported being exposed to harassment in their neighborhood at least once during the year in which the survey was conducted; no differences were found among neighborhoods. A notable percentage (34%) of the students reported participating in a fight on school grounds during the past year; in addition, 30% of the students reported participating in a fight outside of school. It was also found that, during the past month, 21% of the students in Nazareth reported that they had carried a weapon for self-defense (including a knife, club, or tear gas).

Reports by students in Nazareth of harassment and bullying at school, and of participation in harassment or carrying a weapon, were lower than reports by all Arab students and the Jewish population in general in Israel (according to the HBSC survey). Nevertheless, reports of the number of victims were similar.

The extent of these problems differs among sub-populations:

- ♦ Boys are more involved in violent acts than are girls, both on school grounds and outside of school.
- ♦ Violence is more common among students in the lower grades. For example, 32% of the students in sixth grade reported being hit hard while on school grounds at least once, compared to 12% of the students in eleventh grade. In this, the experience of violence and victimization differs from other problems examined in this survey, most of which are more severe among students in the upper grades.

Like most of the findings on school atmosphere, no difference was found between public and private schools regarding nearly all of the types of violence examined.

Alcohol and drug use. Fourteen percent of the students reported that they had drunk alcohol to the point of intoxication. While only 5% of the girls reported this, the percentage of boys reporting this reached 24%. Unlike violence, use of drugs and alcohol increases as students advance in grade level, becoming more prevalent among students in the upper grades. Drinking alcohol is also more prevalent among students in private schools than among those in public schools. In their reports of drinking alcohol to the point of intoxication, the students in Nazareth were similar to all Arab students according to data from the HBSC survey. A comparison with the total Jewish population revealed similar percentages of intoxication among students in sixth grade, but larger percentages of intoxication among Jewish students in ninth grade than among their peers in Nazareth.

The students were asked whether they had encountered anyone who used drugs (for non-medical purposes). Twenty percent of the students responded affirmatively: 26% of the boys and 14% of the girls.

Violence and risk behaviors among dropouts. The findings of the study revealed that the dropouts who were interviewed engage in a great degree of problematic behavior and that violence and other risk behaviors were far more prevalent among dropouts than among students. For example, about half of the dropouts reported carrying a weapon during the past month, compared to only one-fifth of the students. The dropouts also reported a greater extent of intoxication from alcohol (40%), and more contact with people who take drugs (about 60%) than did the students, only a minority of whom reported either.

2.8 Future Orientation and Values

The survey also explored the values and future orientation of the youth, a topic of particular importance given the rapid and dramatic changes that Arab youth, and Arab society in general, are

undergoing. Most (71%) of the students believed they would acquire post-secondary or academic education. Similarly, about half of the students were interested in engaging in an academic profession, and an additional one-quarter (27%) of them wished to pursue a professional or technical occupation.

We examined the degree to which the youth believed in equality between young men and women in the acquisition of higher education and freedom of action, as opposed to holding a more traditional world view. In general, most of the students supported equality between men and women. However, some of the students also had a more traditional attitude: For example, about half of the students believed it was preferable for girls not to leave their home after dark, about 20% of the youth believed that girls should not receive the same treatment as boys, and 10% of the youth opposed allowing girls to attend university.

We also examined the youths' attitudes toward marriage between relatives. Two-thirds of them agreed that it was preferable not to marry a relative, but one-third of them did not agree with this.

It is interesting to note that we found significant differences in the values orientation of different sub-populations:

- ♦ ***Girls versus boys.*** Girls have higher aspirations regarding education and tend more to support equality between the sexes than do boys. The boys, in contrast, tend to have liberal norms regarding their own behavior, but restrictive ones regarding the behavior of girls.
- ♦ ***Different grade levels.*** Students in the upper grades expect to attain more education, and have more liberal norms.
- ♦ ***Types of school.*** Students in private schools, compared to students in public schools, were greater proponents of equality between men and women, and also aspired to a higher level of education.

We also observed differences in the values of dropouts and students. In general, the dropouts had more traditional views than did the students.

2.9 Relations with Parents

The family – the first agent of socialization and the main source of support – has significant influence on an adolescent's behavior, character, well-being, and aspirations for the future. We examined several aspects of the youths' relationship with their parents.

The parents as a source of support. Most (76%) of the students in Nazareth believe that their mother or father would be willing to help them a great deal if they had a problem at school. Communication with the mother was perceived as being better than communication with the father: Only 14% of the students reported that it was difficult for them to talk to their mother about what bothered them, while 23% of the students reported that it was difficult for them to talk to their father. It is interesting to note that the students in Nazareth had less difficulty talking with their

fathers and mothers than did students in the total Arab population or in the total Jewish population in Israel (according to the HBSC survey).

The girls reported having a less close relationship with their father than the boys, as reflected in their willingness to talk about personal matters (74% versus 80%, respectively), and in their belief that their father would be willing to help them if they had a problem at school (68% versus 76%, respectively). In addition, older youth found it more difficult to talk to their fathers than did students in the lower grades (76% versus 82%, respectively). Students in public schools had less confidence than did students in private schools that their mothers would help them if they had a problem at school (71% versus 79%, respectively).

Only a minority (14%) of the dropouts reported finding it difficult to talk to their mother, but most (56%) of them reported finding it difficult to talk to their father. Thus, we see that dropouts have a more difficult relationship with their fathers than do any other group of students.

Thirteen percent of the students reported that they do not spend enough time with their parents, and 23% of them reported that their parents are often too busy to be available when they need them. The percentage of youth who think that their parents are too busy was particularly large among students in the sixth grade, reaching 31%.

Disagreements between the students and their parents. About one-quarter (24%) of the students reported feeling that their parents do not understand their concerns. The main issues around which disagreements arose were help with housework (38% of the students), curfew (36%), and religious observance (33%). Most of the students cited a number of points of conflict.

Boys disagreed with their parents more than girls about religious observance, how they spend their free time, and money. In contrast, girls disagreed with their parents more than boys about how much they should help with household chores (apparently because they are more involved in these chores). Tension between students and their parents decreases, in general, with the increase in grade level. A larger proportion of students attending public schools than those attending private schools reported disagreeing with their parents about their degree of religious observance and about their friends.

Punishments used by parents. We also examined aspects of the students relationship with their parents by asking them how their parents responded to inappropriate behavior by them. Most (81%) of the students reported that their parents' typical response would be to yell at them, about half (45%) of them reported that their parents would forbid them to leave the house, and about one-third (31%) reported that their parents would hit them. More severe punishments were reportedly used to a much lesser extent: 7% of the students reported that their parents would forbid them from entering the house, and 4% reported that their parents would deny them food.

The punishments examined, especially hitting and sanctions against entering or leaving the house, were used with boys more than girls. The proportion of students reporting that their parents beat

them, locked them in their rooms, or denied them food decreased with the increase in grade level. A larger proportion of students who attend public schools reported that their parents hit them, compared to students who attend private schools. There was no difference between students in the different types of school regarding other methods of punishment.

2.10 Satisfaction with the Neighborhood and City

The surveys addressed the youths' attitude toward their area of residence and the city as a whole. Two-thirds of the students were satisfied with the neighborhood they lived in, and about half of the students were satisfied with Nazareth. Similarly, with regard to a sense of security, the students were more satisfied with their neighborhood than with the city as a whole. About half of the students said they would like to live in Nazareth when they grew up.

Boys more than girls, and those from upper as opposed to lower grades, reported feeling safe in their neighborhood and in Nazareth. However, this sense of security was not accompanied by greater satisfaction. In fact, the opposite was the case: Those in the upper grades were less satisfied than were younger students.

3. Summary of the Main Findings on Informal Education and Recreation Services in Nazareth

Another focus of the project was the collection of data on informal education and recreation services (also known as "after-school activities"), which can play an important role in the system of services for youth. Data from the survey of youth revealed significant gaps in the ability of these services to meet the needs of the youth. We compiled a list of 76 frameworks for informal education and recreation for youth in Nazareth. These include schools that hold informal education activities after school hours, neighborhood and municipal clubs, youth movements, and after-school programs. Information about all of these frameworks was collected through face-to-face interviews with their directors, using a structured questionnaire.

Usually, these frameworks are meant to serve all youth. Their principal goals are to provide values education, cultural activities, leisure activities and sports, social activities, and scholastic assistance. In addition, some of them impart knowledge and teach skills, or provide support, treatment, or prevention services. According to the directors, particular emphasis is placed on long-term goals such as development of the youths' personal abilities, and the inculcation of values and ideology.

Informal education and recreation frameworks exist in all nine of the neighborhoods in Nazareth. One-third of these frameworks only serve youth who live in the neighborhood where they are located, and the remainder serve all of the city's youth.

Most of the frameworks receive funding from various departments of the municipality. Government ministries and voluntary organizations also finance the frameworks. Most of the activities are subsidized to some extent; about half of them do not require any payment from participants. When

payment is required, it is usually in the sum of no more than NIS 100 for the duration of an extracurricular course or for one month's activity. The issue of financing concerns the directors, some of whom discussed the need to increase financing.

3.1 Manpower

The frameworks primarily employ group leaders, sports trainers, and coordinators of activity. Usually the staff quota is small; one of the problems cited by directors was a lack of staff positions. The average number of staff for all of the frameworks is 4.7. However, the number of salaried employees was much smaller: an average of 3.5 employees per framework. More than one-third of the frameworks have only one or two salaried employees. To a large extent, these frameworks are supported by a cadre of volunteers. One-third of the frameworks rely on at least some volunteer staff, and 16% of the frameworks have no salaried staff at all. In rare cases, even the director of the framework is a volunteer.

There is no doubt that the recruitment of volunteers significantly increases the number of staff, and expands the possibilities for these services. At the same time, the data reveal significant differences in the education and job seniority of salaried employees and volunteers. The majority (88%) of staff have post-secondary education. The volunteers have less education (about half of them only attended school through twelfth grade). Most of the directors and the salaried employees have been in their jobs for less than five years (48% of the staff and 49% of the directors), and a few have been in their job for less than one year (2% of the staff and 9% of the employees). The volunteers have even less job seniority – for example, brief periods of up to one year.

3.2 Characteristics of Youth Who Participate in Activities

As noted, most of the frameworks serve the total youth population of Nazareth. In fact, most of the frameworks are attended by youth with a variety of problems and needs. For example, about 60% of the directors reported that among the youth who visit their framework, some have scholastic problems (e.g., learning difficulties or disengagement behaviors), about 45% of them reported that some of the youth suffer from family problems (primarily violence), and about 47% of the directors reported that some of the youth suffer from health problems (primarily physical disabilities). These findings support the professional literature, which stresses the potential of informal education services to identify and help youth with special needs.

3.3 Activities Provided by the Frameworks

Most (68%) of the frameworks offer enrichment and educational activities, half of them offer sports, and half of them offer arts or crafts. Only about one-quarter of the frameworks offer a varied program (including four or more types of activity). Some of the frameworks offer many activities of the same type. Framework directors are aware of the need to expand the variety of activities: They recommended establishing multi-functional clubs (modeled after community centers) that will provide educational, cultural and other services, have playing fields, a swimming pool and other sports facilities, and offer a place for youth to spend time.

According to the literature on informal education services, the strength of these services lies in their unique underlying principles, which make it possible to give youth a different experience than that provided by school. These principles emphasize personal development through close ties and relative equality between youth and staff, involvement of youth in decisionmaking about activities, and giving them opportunities to take responsibility and lead activities. According to the literature, quality services that succeed in contributing significantly to the development of youth excel in implementing these principles. Consequently, the study devoted special attention to the principles underlying these frameworks – especially whether those principles recommended in the literature were indeed implemented by the frameworks in Nazareth, and if so, to what extent.

In studying the frameworks' activity, we addressed five main principles of practice:

- ♦ Enabling youth to develop their abilities and creativity.
- ♦ Emphasizing values education.
- ♦ Developing close ties between staff and youth.
- ♦ Involving the youth in decisionmaking about the nature of activities.
- ♦ Involving the youth in decisionmaking about the time and place of activities.

Examination of the frameworks' patterns of activity revealed empirical evidence of these underlying principles, and this supported the approach presented in the literature. Data distinguished among the degree to which the different principles were implemented by each framework. For example, nearly all (91%) of the frameworks implement the principle of enabling youth to develop their abilities and creativity. In addition, most (84%) of the frameworks implement the principle of providing values education. Aspects of the principle of developing close ties between staff and youth are implemented to varying degrees: Almost all of the directors reported that staff invest great effort in developing such ties; however, other aspects of this principle were reported by only some of the directors. Also, the principles of involving the youth in decisionmaking about the nature of activities, or about the time and location of activities, are implemented by only some of the frameworks (between 16% and 68%, depending on the specific subject).

These findings corroborate the reports of students who participate in informal education and recreation activities that these activities make a greater contribution to their personal and social development than to their involvement in decisionmaking.

Enforcing rules of behavior. Most (88%) of the frameworks are attended by at least some youth who have behavior problems, and who bother other youth (56% of the frameworks), behave aggressively (53%), or lie and use lewd language (53%). Almost all (94%) of the directors reported that their framework had rules of behavior. Typical responses to youth who broke these rules were initiating a meeting between the young person and the staff, and expelling the offender from activity – often with the stipulation that his return to the framework was conditional on his not repeating the offending behavior. The directors of only a few (17%) frameworks reported that their staff used corporal punishment or acted violently toward participants.

3.4 Types of Framework

It is possible to divide the frameworks in Nazareth into four types, based on the agency that implements them. Following is a summary of the findings regarding the unique characteristics of each type of framework.

1. Frameworks of the municipal Department of Education implemented in municipal schools after school hours (17 frameworks). These frameworks, which represent one-quarter of the frameworks surveyed, emphasize the principle of developing a young person's abilities and values education. Relationships between staff and youth are relatively hierarchical and structured, with little involvement of the youth in decisionmaking. Although these frameworks are meant to provide informal education, and to do so in a way that differs from the formal education provided during school hours, in reality they largely perpetuate the norms accepted in schools. At the same time, these frameworks have a significant advantage over other frameworks, in that they are easily accessible to the total youth population. The youth themselves enter or are referred to these frameworks following the assessment of school or other professional staff in the education system that they need assistance of some kind. This is reflected in the heterogeneity of the participant population.

2. Frameworks of the municipal Department of Social Welfare (10 frameworks). The characteristics of these frameworks also clearly reflect the implementing agency. Relative to the other frameworks, these frameworks are more geared toward populations at risk, and admit youth based on their need for assistance. The young people who attend these frameworks have various problems, including behavior problems – even violence. These frameworks emphasize the development of close staff-youth relations; their goal is to provide support, treatment, and prevention. In the spirit of "enhancing professionalism" that has suffused welfare services in general, these frameworks rely more than do others on salaried staff, and tend not to use volunteers.

3. Community centers implemented by the municipality (17 frameworks). Unlike the other types of framework, community centers are implemented by a division of the municipality whose main purpose is to offer informal education and recreational services. The community centers in Nazareth are relatively large, and have a great many staff – both salaried and volunteer. The goals of the centers' activities are varied, and the activities offered are varied, with sports playing a central role. These frameworks invest a great deal in recruiting participants, and use unique methods to do so: They publicize activities in newspapers and in public buildings, hold camping trips and hikes, visit schools, and meet with the youth in their neighborhoods.

4. Other public and private agencies (32 frameworks). A variety of private and public organizations, including private schools, implement recreational or informal education programs for youth. Because of the vast differences among these organizations, it is not particularly helpful to try and describe the frameworks as being of one type: No similarity arises from their principles or emphases. At the same time, these frameworks share several interesting characteristics. Their strong relationship with the voluntary sector is reflected in particularly heavy reliance on volunteers to provide services: A notable minority of the frameworks have not one salaried employee. These

frameworks enjoy relative prestige, and are geared for "stronger" populations more than are the frameworks implemented by the municipality – in part because their activities require a relatively high payment. Moreover, reports of behavior problems among participants in these frameworks were limited.

4. Recommended Courses of Action

The wealth of information collected as part of this research project is facilitating identification of focuses for continued improvement and development of the system of services. In the following pages, we present the conclusions arising from the study regarding key recommended directions for action that may help the system of services better meet the needs of youth. These recommendations are meant to be the basis for continued efforts to comprehensively plan services for youth in Nazareth.

4.1 The Formal Education System

In the years preceding the project, the Nazareth Municipality invested much effort in improving the education system, and indeed succeeded in reducing the dropout rate and improving the system in general. At the same time, the findings of the surveys highlight important issues regarding the formal education system, which should be addressed.

- ♦ ***There is a need to improve the school atmosphere, student-teacher relations, and communication between teachers and students.*** Although the students' overall satisfaction with school is fairly high, a significant portion of them feel that the rules of their school are unfair. Some students feel that teachers disrespect, humiliate and insult them. Such harmful relations were even cited as one of the main reasons students drop out of school. It is thus necessary to improve the school atmosphere and improve relationships between teachers and students, especially students who have difficulties. Some students reported that certain teachers use corporal punishment. There is a need for special attention to the problem of teacher violence toward students.

In addition, some students, especially those attending private schools and those in the upper grades, feel stressed and worried by the demands of their teachers and parents (29%). It is worth considering how to alleviate this distress. One significant direction for action may be to initiate interventions that will improve communication between teachers and students, and between students and their parents, thereby facilitating an adjustment of expectations.

- ♦ ***There is a need for more educational assistance.*** A significant proportion (48%) of the students reported having difficulty with their studies, and not receiving the assistance they need, even though assistance is particularly important for students who have difficulty. In addition, such assistance can relieve the stress that some students feel. The need for educational assistance increases with grade level. It is necessary to increase the number of students who receive special assistance, and the amount of assistance to each student, in order for such assistance to meet their needs. In addition, it is necessary to involve the students in decisions about the type of educational assistance they need.

- ♦ ***Coping with disengagement and preventing dropping out.*** A significant group of students exhibits behaviors indicative of disengagement from school, despite still being officially enrolled. Disengaged students (also known in Israel as "hidden dropouts") are those with multiple absences, who leave school for part of the day, who avoid learning despite being present in class, who feel alienated from school, who have social problems and feel rejected, and who perpetrate or are victims of acts of violence. In Nazareth as in the general population in Israel, disengagement is prevalent in the upper grades, and more among boys than among girls, who usually adjust to school more easily. In addressing disengagement, schools must pay particular attention to these groups of students.

It would be desirable to adopt strategies to induce disengaged students to once again engage in significant learning, both because they are losing the opportunity to benefit from their studies, and because disengagement often begins a process that ends with dropping out (that is, leaving school entirely). The following steps are important to effectively addressing disengagement:

- identify disengaged students
- generate interest in school – for example, through experiential learning and use of varied teaching methods
- make a variety of levels, subjects and paths of study, which are suited to the students' abilities and interests, available to students in the upper grades
- provide augmented remedial assistance
- reinforce the relationship between teachers and disengaged youth – by improving the level of acquaintance and communication, and increasing the teachers' commitment to helping these youth.

In addition, it is necessary for both school staff and community support services to offer professional and therapeutic assistance that will help the students adjust to school and overcome difficulties. The findings of this study revealed that dropouts usually leave school because of a negative experience there. It appears that programs to prevent dropping out must strive to improve relations between school staff and students who have adjustment difficulties.

It should be noted that adjustment difficulties become acute during the transition to a new school – at entry to junior high school and entry to high school. Consequently, special attention should be devoted to structuring these transitions in consideration of the students' needs, and to preparing them for the scholastic, emotional and social challenges arising from the transition.

- ♦ ***Helping dropouts return to school or seek vocational training.*** Youth who have dropped out of school represent a special risk group. Many of the dropouts reported wanting to return to school (47%) or obtain vocational training (53%). The education system should make various possibilities available to dropouts, so that dropping out does not become irrevocable, and so that dropouts can continue to receive an education in accordance with their abilities.

- ♦ ***Coping with violence at school.*** The violence observed in both public and private schools is cause for much concern. Most types of violence are particularly prevalent in elementary and junior high schools. Following the preliminary findings of this study, a city-wide commission was established to address the problem. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, school principals and municipality staff underwent in-service training, which focused on effective ways to address violence in the system as a whole. Given the severity of this problem, these efforts should be augmented.
- ♦ ***School as the first address.*** Since school is a "universal" service provided to all of the city's children, school teachers, especially homeroom teachers, should be alert to problems and difficulties that arise among their students, and make the necessary referrals to support services in and outside the school. This necessitates open, meaningful communication between teachers and students, as recommended above, as well as the establishment of working relations and partnerships between schools and support services in the community.

4.2 The System of Informal Education and Recreation Services

Comprehensive, detailed information was gathered on the needs of students and existing activities in informal education and recreation frameworks. There is consensus that this area should receive special attention in the continued development of services in the city. The principal recommendations in this area are summarized below.

- ♦ ***There is a need to expand and improve the system of informal education and recreation services.*** Although there are many informal education and recreation services in Nazareth – probably more than in most Arab towns in Israel – the findings clearly indicated a need to expand and improve these services. Only about half of the youth participate in some organized activity, and most of them, both students and dropouts, expressed the desire to participate in more activities.

The directors of some of the frameworks, especially those implemented by voluntary organizations, noted that a lack of financing and sufficient support impede their ability to offer activities. They reported a need to seek ways of increasing their funding sources.

In addition to offering organized group activities, there is a need for facilities where youth can safely meet and spend time with each other, without feeling threatened or disturbing others. This need is especially pressing for girls, who are less free to wander the city in general, but exists for boys as well, as the lack of appropriate meeting places can lead them to loiter in public places that are inappropriate.

- ♦ ***There is a need to upgrade the types and quality of activities offered.*** When asked to explain why they do not attend extracurricular classes, the students responded that the main reason was a lack of interest in the classes offered. The youth need activities that develop both their

cognitive and social skills – the former to respond to and expand their interests, and the latter to combat loneliness and help them meet friends.

A larger variety of activities should be offered, including new activities that are interesting and relevant to youth.

- The youths themselves asked that there be more activities to help them with their studies; apparently, many of them feel that the scholastic assistance currently available is insufficient.
- The findings on the extent of violence and risk behaviors among youth highlight a need for preventive programs that provide the tools to cope with conflict and negative peer group influence.
- The findings on the youths' values and relationship with their parents reflect the significant social-cultural changes that Arab society is undergoing. Informal education frameworks can play a key role in implementing programs that will help the youth and their parents better cope with the challenges arising from these changes.

It would be worthwhile to offer a variety of activities not only at the municipal level, but also in neighborhood-based services, as many youth prefer using the services in their neighborhood. One suggestion for increasing accessibility to a variety of services and satisfying the interests of youth is to establish multi-functional neighborhood clubs.

Populations that need special attention are girls and older youth. In general, most programs are geared for boys and younger youth, such that there is a need to develop programs that meet the needs of all youth.

- ♦ ***Implementation of effective underlying principles of informal education.*** The survey of students and the survey of services revealed that some of the important principles underlying informal education services are not implemented to a significant extent by the frameworks in Nazareth. This may be one of the main reasons for the difficulty services have had attracting participants. Closer and more open relations between youth and staff that differ from the hierarchical, structured relations typically found in schools, are particularly needed. Also, the youth should be more involved in decisionmaking about the nature of activities, as well as where and when they are held.
- ♦ ***Upgrading the staff who implement services.*** As noted, some services do not employ any professional staff, leaving a need for more highly skilled staff. Other frameworks need more staff positions. In addition, any changes in the principles underlying the work of the frameworks will require staff to learn the recommended approach, as well as other relevant skills and knowledge.
- ♦ ***Special attention to the needs of girls.*** There are not enough activities tailored for girls, given that limitations are often placed on their participation in certain activities (such as sports) or

situations (such as activities with boys). As noted, loneliness, boredom, and alienation were especially severe among girls who had dropped out of school: They do not work, and since no special programs are currently available for them, they often remain at home, and have no contact with anyone other than their family. The informal education and recreation system is thus challenged to develop activities that will attract girls. Following these findings, the Nazareth Municipality has begun emphasizing programs and services for girls, and is planning to establish a large multi-functional center that will meet the needs of girls, in particular, for informal education and recreation.

- ♦ ***Greater attention should be paid to the needs of youth at risk and dropouts.*** Dropouts cope with loneliness, arising in part from their having left school, where they would normally meet their peers. Despite having left school, many of the dropouts do not wish to remain outside any framework at all, and in fact expressed interest in informal education and recreation activities. These can be an effective means of initiating contact with them and drawing them back into additional normative frameworks. The system of services should attract dropouts to activities, as well as planning activities whose content and meeting time are suited to their needs.

Even though most services are not directed at youth at risk, a significant proportion of their participants have problems in various areas. Consequently, these services could provide significant solutions for youth at risk, as part of the total system of services in the city. If informal education services are to help youth, their directors and staff should set the additional goals of providing preventive and support services. In addition, since the youths' problems often manifest as behavior problems, the staff of these services needs to be trained to address these, and help the youth to the extent possible.

- ♦ ***Setting convenient times for activities.*** Given that the youth attend school all day and then must do homework, and given the sanction against girls leaving their home after dark and other constraints, the time an activity is held can present a barrier to participation. Activities should be held at times that are convenient for the youth.
- ♦ ***Development of effective strategies to attract participants.*** Information about activities and the conditions of participation should be disseminated more effectively. A significant portion of the youth reported not knowing about various activities. Moreover, although the municipality subsidizes many of the activities so as to ensure that payment for participation remains low, some of the youth are unaware of this, and do not attend activities because they fear the cost of participation.
- ♦ ***Use of a variety of frameworks to provide informal education and recreation activities.*** The system of informal education and recreation services in Nazareth includes frameworks of different types, which are implemented by various municipal agencies (the departments of education and welfare, the network of community centers), as well as by public and voluntary

organizations. The findings indicate that organizational affiliation influences a framework's patterns of activity. At the same time, no one type of framework appeared to have a significant advantage in all of the areas examined. Rather, all of the frameworks together contribute to creating a diverse system equipped to meet the varying needs of different youth.

4.3 Additional Areas

To this point, we have presented recommendations that concern two main areas: school, and informal education and recreation. A variety of other community services also address the varying needs of youth. Following are recommendations that are meant to help the entire municipal service system better cope with these needs.

- ♦ ***Providing professional, therapeutic inputs for youth at risk and in distress.*** As noted, many of the youth reported engaging in risk behaviors such as violence, use of alcohol, and joining other youth who engage in dangerous acts. In addition to the preventive programs cited above, there is a need to develop and implement professional support and treatment services, which can help youth at risk and in distress.

Youth who drop out are characterized by a particularly high level of violence (as both perpetrators and victims), risk behaviors (both excessive drinking of alcohol and contact with drugs), and falling in with peers who encourage such activities. Clearly, this group in particular has a great many needs that require therapeutic intervention.

- ♦ ***Educational intervention regarding marriage between relatives.*** One of the main issues on the educational agenda for working with Arab youth is that of marriage between relatives, which can create health problems for offspring. The findings indicate a need for educational programs that will make youth more aware of this issue.
- ♦ ***Inputs regarding families.*** Many of the youth, especially girls, hold untraditional values such as equality between men and women, and freedom of movement and action for women. This can cause friction between them and their parents. It would be desirable to initiate programs that promote effective communication between youth and their parents, especially fathers.

It was particularly interesting to learn that boys who drop out of school tend to have difficulty talking to their fathers. Interventions aimed at improving the parent-child relationship may be able to help these youth cope with the difficulties that led to their dropping out, as well as with other problems.

In a fair number of cases, problems within the family – such as the need to help support the family financially (among boys) or help around the house (among girls) – burden the youth, and make it difficult for them to meet the demands of school. Activities to prevent dropping out should also address family problems, as well as helping youth at risk in other areas of their lives.

Additional findings revealed that corporal punishment is used rather extensively by the students' families. This phenomenon should be examined, in an attempt to help the system of services prevent parental violence toward children.

- ♦ ***Assistance obtaining paid employment.*** Most of the dropouts work for pay. Concern was raised that in some cases, employers may be taking unfair advantage of them, since the number of hours they reported working far exceeded that permitted by law. Furthermore, and also in contrast to what is indicated by law, only half of the dropouts who work have a work permit. This indicates a need to increase supervision of the work of dropouts, so as to prevent infractions of their rights and harm to their well-being.

Some of the dropouts are not working even though they would like to work. Consequently, it would be desirable to help those who have not found work through their family or close environment to find work. Work is particularly significant for dropouts, since without it they usually remain outside any normative or meaningful framework, and this increases the likelihood that they will turn to risk behaviors such as loitering, vandalism, and drug use.

A minority of the students also work for pay, although usually for a limited number of hours. However, more than half of the students expressed interest in working. Salaried employment gives youth the opportunity to learn work habits and skills before they have left school, as well as an opportunity to earn money for their own use. It is possible that the discrepancy between the number of students who would like to work and those who are actually working reflects a lack of supply of jobs. Nevertheless, it would appear to be worthwhile to develop programs that help students find part-time jobs while still in school.

The need to help girls find employment is a special issue. Although hardly any girls – students or dropouts – work for pay, most of them expressed a desire to do so. Factors such as a lack of jobs and traditional norms that discourage girls from working outside the home – present a barrier to girls' working. Professionals should consider how to address the girls' desire to work for wages despite these barriers, as well as interventions and programs that could be initiated.

- ♦ ***Increasing the youths' satisfaction with the city.*** The personal well-being of the youth is also influenced by their satisfaction with their neighborhood and city. The findings of the surveys revealed a need to increase their sense of security, as well as their sense of "belonging" in Nazareth. Services should be developed that foster social cohesion among the city's youth, whether through informal education or other services.

4.4 Preliminary Implementation of the Recommendations of the Report

Following discussion of the findings and review of the interim reports that have been disseminated, action has been taken by municipal and other staff. For example, significant steps have been taken to expand the system of informal education and recreation services, and a number of new

frameworks for youth have been established. Special attention has been paid to the needs of girls in developing these frameworks.

Another example of the municipality's efforts in the wake of the findings is the formulation of a system-wide strategy to address violence in the schools, involving various professionals in Nazareth.

The findings of this study are meaningful to national policy development in Israel, as well, as this is one of the few studies to offer a comprehensive picture of the needs of an entire youth population. For example, the findings on dropouts have been used extensively in a special report commissioned by the Knesset regarding school dropouts and school disengagement (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001), as well as in the work of a special Knesset Committee established to develop recommendations on how to more effectively address the problem of school attrition.

Table 1: Selected Indicators of Student Characteristics and Needs, by Gender and Grade (in %)[#]

	Total	Boys	Girls	6 th Grade	9 th Grade	11 th Grade
Total in absolute numbers	730	341	379	277	251	200
School						
I feel I "belong" at school	81	75	86**	81	83	77
The teachers will give extra help	85	84	85	89	84	81**
The teachers care about me as a person	85	84	87	86	84	88
Some teachers are insulting	38	46	31	47	35	30**
The students enjoy being together	88	89	88	88	88	90
The teachers assess my achievements as good or very good	81	76	85**	87	75	80**
Feels pressured or very pressured at school	29	25	34*	--	26	35*
Gets help with his studies	46	46	46	58	48	26**
Would like to get more help	42	42	43	33	48	47**
Missed 3 or more days in the past month (not due to illness)	6	7	5	7	5	6
"Skipped" class during the past month	15	22	8**	--	16	14
Recreational and Social Activities						
Participated in a course or organized group activity (during the past month)	48	55	42**	58	43	41**
Would like to participate in another activity	59	53	65**	62	53	61
No convenient places to be with friends outside of home	46	37	54**	45	43	52
It's boring, nothing to do after school (often or always)	39	38	41	33	40	47**
No one to spend time with	18	13	23**	21	17	18
Salaried Employment						
Currently works for pay	12	22	3**	4	19	15**
Would like to work for pay	64	66	63	--	55	72**

Table 1: Selected Indicators of Student Characteristics and Needs, by Gender and Grade (in %)[#] (continued)

	Total	Boys	Girls	6 th Grade	9 th Grade	11 th Grade
Risk Behaviors						
Has been harassed at school (during the past year)	56	60	51 [*]	58	57	51
Participated in a fight on school grounds (in past year)	34	55	15 ^{**}	40	37	23 ^{**}
Has been harassed outside of school (during the past year)	48	50	47	43	49	55 ^{**}
Total in absolute numbers	730	341	379	277	251	200
Participated in a fight not on school grounds (in past year)	30	51	10 ^{**}	31	34	22
Carried a weapon (knife, club, chain, tear gas) in self-defense (during the past month)	21	38	7 ^{**}	20	25	19
Drank alcohol to intoxication (ever)	14	24	5 ^{**}	10	16	17 [*]
Relations with Parents						
Difficult to talk to father	23	20	26 [*]	18	28	24 [*]
Difficult to talk to mother	14	14	13	10	19	11
Parents too busy to help when needed (often or always)	23	23	22	31	20	16

^{*}P <.05

^{**}P <.01

Significance in the column "11th Grade" concerns differences among the grades; significance in the column "Girls" concerns differences between girls and boys.

[#]These data are based on the responses to the survey of students (and do not include data from the survey of dropouts). We present the percentage of students who agreed with the statements. In order to shorten the questionnaire for students in 6th grade, we did not ask them about some of the topics.

