



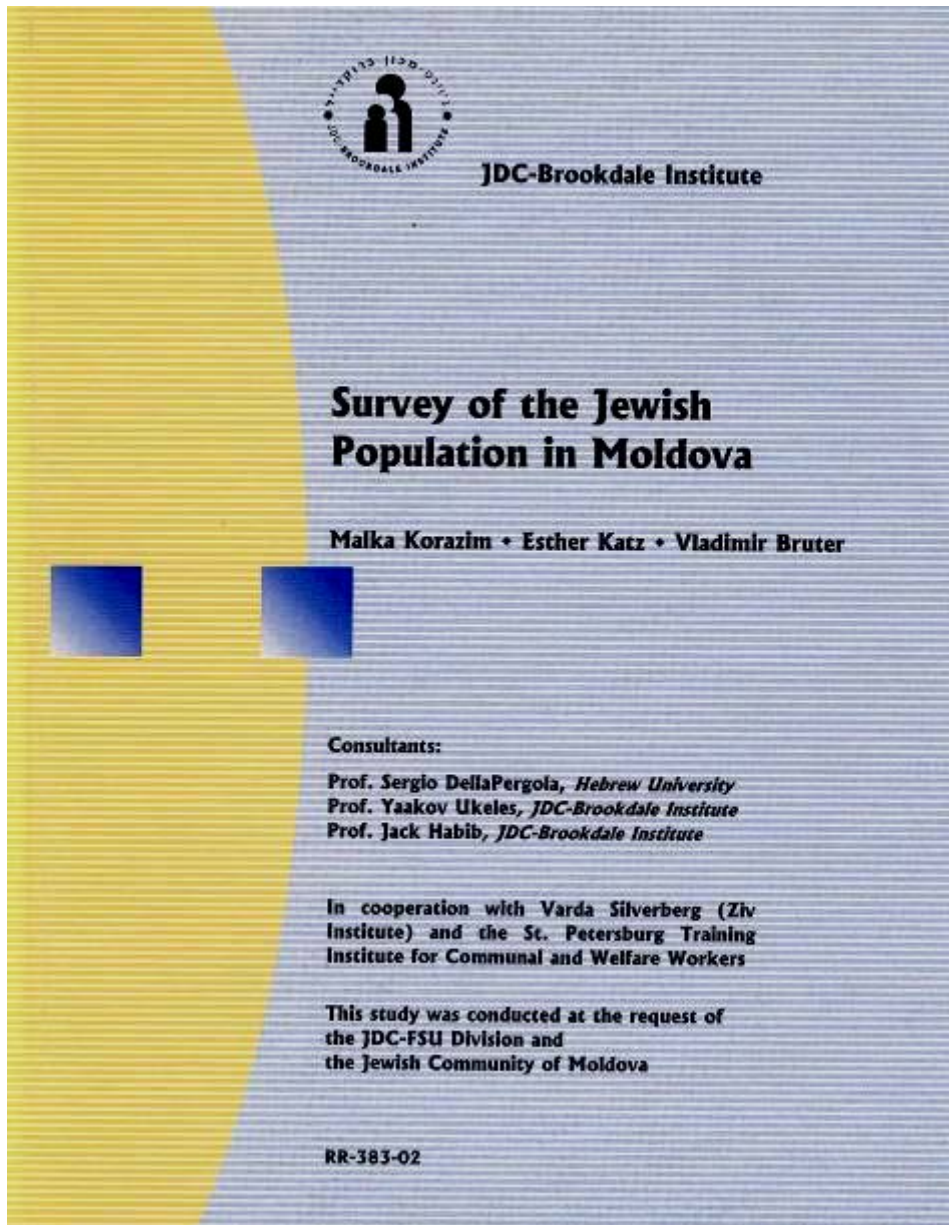
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Research Report



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JDC-Brookdale Institute

Survey of the Jewish Population in Moldova

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Prof. Sergio DellaPergola, *Hebrew University*

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Prof. Jack Habib, *JDC-Brookdale Institute*

In cooperation with Varda Silverberg (Ziv
Institute) and the St. Petersburg Training
Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers

This study was conducted at the request of
the JDC-FSU Division and
the Jewish Community of Moldova.

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Abstract

This report presents findings from a needs assessment survey of the Jewish population of Moldova. The survey was initiated by the leadership of the Jewish community in Moldova and the JDC-FSU Division. It was conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute in cooperation with the Jewish community in Moldova, the Ziv Institute, and the St. Petersburg Training Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers. The survey was part of the strategic planning effort by the Jewish community focusing on community development and the renewal of Jewish life. It reflects the interest of the Jewish community leadership in Moldova for systematic information on the Jewish population.

Moldova, formerly a republic of the FSU, gained independence in 1991. Since then, the country has experienced a serious economic crisis, with its standard of living declining from one of the highest in the FSU to one of the lowest in Eastern Europe. At the same time, Moldova has safeguarded minority rights in law and the Jewish community has had the opportunity for spiritual and cultural revival and renewal. The JDC has been helping to rebuild organized Jewish communities in different cities in Moldova.

The Jewish population of Moldova has a rich past as a well-organized community up to the 1940s. During the Second World War, it was destroyed physically. During the Soviet period, the nationalist policy of the regime destroyed the Jewish community spiritually. During the 1970s and the 1990s, the Jewish population of Moldova declined due to emigration. There is no reliable and precise information on the number of Jewish people living in Moldova today; estimates vary from 25,000 to 40,000.

The survey provided information on Moldova's Jewry in terms of socio-demographic characteristics; the need for and utilization of communal services; Jewish identity; the nature of communal life; and involvement in the Jewish community. Data were collected from a random sample of households in which one Jewish adult was interviewed. The sample included 791 adult respondents representing persons living in 3,941 households in three cities in Moldova: Kishinev, Beltsy and Bendery.

The population database, from which we sampled, was created by the Ziv Institute. The databases were created by collecting available lists of the Jewish population, primarily from Jewish organizations as well as Jewish names from the phonebook and 'snowballing' for new names. From further research we know that the population of families with children is significantly underestimated. The questionnaire was developed by the Brookdale staff and the fieldwork was performed by the staff in Moldova.

Findings from the Survey

1. Socio-demographic characteristics

- ♦ A relatively high percentage of the population is elderly (27% are age 65 or over). Children up to age 18 constitute 13% of the population.

- ♦ The household composition regarding age of family members reveals that 28% of households have at least one child age 18 or under living in the household. In 74% of the households there is at least one person over 55 years old.
- ♦ The population in Beltsy is older than in the other two cities.
- ♦ A high percentage (77%) of survey respondents reported that their current income is not sufficient to cover most of their basic needs.

2. Jewish identity

- ♦ Some 70% of household members were born or raised Jewish; 78% consider themselves Jewish.
- ♦ There is a significant group of families of mixed marriages (45%). In about half of the couples, one of the spouses considers himself non-Jewish.
- ♦ Religion plays a less important role in the self-definition of Jewish identity. (Only 32% of the respondents define themselves as Jewish by religion, compared to 51% by culture.)
- ♦ The younger groups, in particular, view their identity more in cultural than in religious terms.
- ♦ A very significant emphasis is placed by the respondents on the importance of knowledge of Jewish history, culture and traditions as a key component of being Jewish.

3. Connections to the local Jewish community

The findings show a quite strong sense of community among the respondents along with some indications about potential for expansion :

- ♦ Over half of the respondents feel part of the Jewish community.
- ♦ More than half (59%) characterize Jewish life in their city as active.
- ♦ Over half (56%) estimate the prospects for developing Jewish communal life in Moldova as good or satisfactory.
- ♦ One-third of the respondents are definitely interested in being more involved in the communal life in their city.
- ♦ One-third are interested in volunteering in the Jewish community. This percentage is even higher in the middle-aged group (40-49).
- ♦ There is a large group that is uncertain or wavering about their degree of involvement (40%), representing a very significant target group. The youngest age group (19-39) has a large proportion (62%) that is uncertain about their interest in more involvement.
- ♦ A significant minority (20%) did not express an interest in involvement in communal activities. A major challenge for the Jewish community is to find ways to identify their interests and involve them in Jewish communal life.
- ♦ The 40-49 age group is an important potential target group for the community because, on the one hand, it has a relatively negative view of Jewish life in Moldova at present but, on the other hand, a very high rate of interest in volunteering.
- ♦ A comparison among the cities shows that the Jewish community is viewed more positively on all indicators in Bendery than in Kishinev and Beltsy.

4. Participation and interest in activities with a Jewish element

The findings demonstrate that the population studied has a strong interest in links with all forms of Jewish activities.

- ♦ During the past twelve months, 78% reported reading Jewish newspapers; 52% attended plays, films or concerts on Jewish themes; and 30% attended a lecture on a Jewish theme.
- ♦ Approximately 70% are interested in more meetings with other Jews for recreational and intellectual activities.
- ♦ A great deal of interest was expressed in various kinds of activities with Jewish content: learning about Jewish history and traditions (80%), learning about Israel (83%), and learning about religion (49%).
- ♦ The respondents indicated that Israel and the Hebrew language are an important part of their Jewish identity. Also, a very large percentage of families have relatives and friends in Israel. There is significant interest in activities focused on Israel and the Hebrew language among all age groups and especially among the younger respondents.

5. Participation in religious-cultural activities

While there is a group with an interest in religious activities or synagogue attendance, the vast majority does not view religious affiliation as a basis for their Jewish identity and are interested in Jewish educational activities of a non-religious nature.

- ♦ Ten percent attend synagogue at least once a month (mostly elderly).
- ♦ Jewish holidays most frequently observed are: Purim (54%); Passover (40%); Yom Kippur (33%) and Hanukah (30%).
- ♦ Interest in Jewish holidays is defined more in cultural and family terms than in religious terms.
- ♦ In Beltsy, there is a higher rate of respondents that are observing Jewish religious practices than in the other two cities.

6. Use of services provided by the Jewish community, satisfaction with services and needs

- ♦ Over two-thirds of the households use at least one social-medical service provided by the Jewish community. Among the most common are food packages (68%) and doctor visits (22%). These services are used more by the 55+ age group than the younger ones.
- ♦ Half of the households use at least one cultural-educational service provided by the Jewish community.
- ♦ There is a high level of satisfaction with the services that are provided by the Jewish community. Scores for all services range from satisfied to very satisfied.
- ♦ The familiarity with the diverse kinds of activities provided in the Jewish community is low among non-participants or non-users. Even respondents who use various community services are often unaware of many other services available in the community.
- ♦ The respondents expressed interest in the development and expansion of social-medical services as well as Jewish educational and cultural activities provided by the Jewish community.

- ♦ The population has a strong belief in the importance of the Jewish community in addressing the health, social, educational and cultural needs of the Jewish community. There are differences of emphasis: the younger groups place more emphasis on cultural and educational activities and have a very strong interest in vocational assistance; the older members without children are more interested in health and social welfare needs.
- ♦ We found a disparity between the reports by the respondents about their personal participation in educational and cultural activities and their reports on the utilization of community-sponsored activities. This raises the possibility that there is a significant amount of informal Jewish cultural educational activity that is not necessarily under the auspices of the community or identified with it.

Issues for Planning

The findings demonstrate that the population studied has a very strong interest in links with all forms of Jewish activities as expressed in its current participation, in its interest in greater participation and expanded services, in its view of the roles of the Jewish community and in its desire to contribute and be more involved. The findings of the survey illustrate in a number of ways that the Jewish population in Moldova is not a homogenous group. There are differences in the needs and attitudes to Jewish life and community involvement among different sub-groups such as younger and older households; households with and without children; households with spouses from mixed religious backgrounds; and households in which all members are older people. In light of this interest, the findings of the report raise a number of key issues that were presented to the local planning committee assigned to develop a strategic plan for the Jewish community in Moldova. These include:

- ♦ How should the community take advantage of the unrealized interest in participation in Jewish activities and a greater contribution to community life?
- ♦ How can the community best expand the information available to the Jewish population about communal services and activities?
- ♦ How can the community best give consideration to diversity in the needs and attitudes to Jewish life among different sub-groups within the Jewish population in planning its services and activities?
- ♦ How can meaningful opportunities for Jewish education be best made available for those with a less religious perspective? Are there adequate opportunities for Jews with more religious interests? What activities can these two groups share and what should be provided on a differential basis?
- ♦ How can the community best address the unique needs of mixed households (with Jewish and non-Jewish spouses) and facilitate their involvement.
- ♦ How can the significant willingness of the middle-aged group to take a more active part in the community be best realized?
- ♦ How prevalent is informal educational and cultural activity? To what extent should the community take this into account in its planning and how? Does the community have any role in promoting these informal processes.

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1. Introduction

This report presents findings from a needs assessment survey of the Jewish population of Moldova. The survey was initiated by the leadership of the Jewish community in Moldova and the JDC-FSU Division. It was conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute in cooperation with the Jewish community in Moldova, the Ziv Institute, and the St. Petersburg Training Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers. The survey was part of the strategic planning effort by the Jewish community focusing on community development and the renewal of Jewish life. It reflects the interest of the Jewish community leadership in Moldova for systematic information on the Jewish population.

Moldova, formerly a republic of the FSU, gained independence in 1991. Since then, the country has experienced a serious economic crisis and its standard of living has declined from being one of the highest in the FSU to one of the lowest in Eastern Europe. At the same time, Moldova has safeguarded minority rights in law and the Jewish community has had the opportunity for spiritual and cultural revival and renewal. The JDC has been helping to rebuild organized Jewish communities in different cities in Moldova.

The Jewish population of Moldova has a rich past as a well-organized community up to the 1940s. During the Second World War, it was destroyed physically, and during the Soviet period, the national policy of the regime destroyed the Jewish community spiritually. During the 1970s and the 1990s, the Jewish population of Moldova declined due to emigration. At present, estimates of the number of Jewish people living in Moldova today vary from 25,000-40,000.

2. Study Goals and Methodology

2.1 The Goal of the Survey

The goal of the survey was to provide information on the following aspects of the Jewish population in Moldova:

- ♦ socio-demographic characteristics;
- ♦ nature and components of Jewish identity;
- ♦ connection to and involvement in Jewish communal life;
- ♦ patterns of utilization of services provided by the Jewish community;
- ♦ needs and expectations from the Jewish community.

2.2 Methodology

The study was conducted in three cities in Moldova: Kishinev, the capital city, with an estimated two-thirds of the Jewish population of Moldova; and Beltsy and Bendery, two cities in the periphery, with active Jewish communities. In the first stage of the study, we created a separate data base for sampling in each of the three cities. The data bases were created by collecting available lists of the Jewish population, primarily from Jewish organizations. These lists were then combined

into one integrated list. In Kishinev, names were not obtained from the largest Jewish day school and from some Jewish Sunday schools. All the people on the list were called to validate that there was at least one Jewish person in the household, and to receive additional names not known to Jewish organizations (“snowballing”). The telephone directory was also used as an additional source for new names. In the other two cities, persons on the list were not called because they are smaller communities and had updated information on their members.

Table 1: Source of Households in Sample, by City

Cities and sampling categories	Total Households		Households in Sample	
	N	%	N	%
Total	3941	100	791	100
Kishinev	2616		510	
HESED	1425	36%	210	26%
Jewish day school, kindergarten, Jewish university	341	9%	102	13%
Phone book	462	12%	97	12%
New names	388	10%	101	13%
Beltsy	621		138	
Households with people over 45	458	11%	62	8%
Households with at least one person under 45	163	4%	76	10%
Bendery	704		143	
Households with people over 45	553	14%	72	9%
Households with at least one person under 45	151	4%	71	9%

The final data base of the Jewish population in the three cities included 3,941 households, which on the basis the survey were estimated to represent 9,240 family members. We know from a later study, which focused on health, nutrition and welfare of Jewish children in Moldova and was carried out in May 2001, that the population of families with children is considerably underestimated. This should be taken into account when considering the results. Based on this later survey, the total population is more likely 12,000 and the number of children is estimated as about 3,100 instead of 1,478 children in this earlier survey

A stratified sample of households was drawn in each city by subcategories (see Table 1) to assure an adequate representation in all groups. In the peripheral cities, Beltsy and Bendery, the categories of sampling were based on the age composition of the households: households with at least one person under 45 and households with people over 45. In Kishinev four sample categories were created based on the sources of information used for the data base: “Hesed”, the Jewish Community Center, the phone book, and “new names”. The final survey population included a random sample

of 791 households - 510 in Kishinev (out of 2,616), 138 in Beltsy (out of 621) and 143 in Bendery (out of 704).

A questionnaire was developed by the Brookdale staff using inputs from a number of experts in the field of Jewish communal surveys and different survey instruments utilized in other countries. The data were collected through home interviews conducted in October-December, 1999. In each household, one adult over age 18 was interviewed. The respondent also provided basic information on other members of the household. The fieldwork was coordinated and performed by the staff in Moldova.

3. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The data collected in this study provide socio-demographic information on the respondents, including age, education, income and family composition, as well as information on other members of the household.

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that over half (58%) of the respondents are over 60 and only 11% are under 40. The average age is 61. Over half of the respondents are married, more than a quarter (28%) are widowed and 18% are single or divorced.

Table 2: Selected Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (percentages)

	Survey Sample N=791
Sex	100
Male	42
Female	58
Age Composition	100
19-39 years old	11
40-49 years old	12
50-59 years old	19
60-74 years old	37
75+ years old	21
Marital Status	100
Married	54
Not married (single, divorced)	18
Widowed	28
Education	
Higher education (M.A.)	48
Technological education (B.A., B.Tec.)	26
High school diploma	13
Less than high school education	13
Employment	
Employed	34
Retired	54
Unemployed	12

Most of the respondents have up to two children (74%) and 19% have no children at all. The educational level is high: 48% have Master's degrees and an additional 26% have Bachelor's degrees. Two-thirds of the respondents are not working (54% retired and 12% unemployed).

The 791 respondents represent 3,941 households with 9,240 family members. The age distribution of household members shows that the majority of the population (61%) is age 45 or over, 26% are age 65 or over and 16% are children under 18 (Table 3).

Table 3: Age Distribution of Household Members, by Gender (percentages)

Age	Total	Males	Females
	100	100	100
0-5	4	4	3
6-13	7	7	6
14-18	5	5	4
19-29	9	11	9
30-44	14	13	15
45-54	16	17	16
55-64	19	18	20
65-74	13	14	12
75+	13	11	15

Table 4: Dimensions of Household Composition (percentages)

	Households
Number of children (in or out of the household)	100
None	19
1 child	40
2 children	34
3+ children	7
Number of children in the household age 18 or under	100
None	72
1 child	13
2 children	11
3+ children	4
Number of people in household	100
1 person living alone	27
2 persons	36
3 persons	21
4+ persons	16

The household composition regarding age of family members reveals that 28% of the households have at least one child age 18 or under living in the household. In 74% of the households, there is at least one person over 55 years old; 12% of the families have both a child under 18 and an adult over age 55. In other words, very few families include very young and older persons together.

Another perspective on household composition is in terms of generations and the number of people in the household. There are a large number of one-generation households (54%). This is consistent with the 63% that have one or two persons in the household. Almost all the rest (35%) have two generations. Three-generation households are only 11 percent.

Regarding the economic situation of the households, most of the survey respondents (77%) reported that their current income is “not sufficient to cover most of their basic needs” and, in addition, 18% reported that their incomes “are sufficient to cover only part of their basic needs”. A much higher percentage (84%) of the older age group (50+) reported that their current income is not sufficient to cover most of their basic needs compared to 54% of the younger ones (19-39).

3.1 Comparison by Cities

There are some variations among the three cities regarding age and household composition.

Table 5: Selected Socio–Demographic Characteristics of Respondents, by City (percentages)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Sex	100	100	100	100
Male	42	43	32	44
Female	58	57	68	56
Age Composition	100	100	100	100
19-39 years old	11	12	14	5
40-49 years old	12	13	8	9
50-59 years old	19	20	20	15
60-74 years old	37	35	35	45
75+ years old	21	20	23	26
Marital status	100	100	100	100
Married	54	56	49	52
Not married (single, divorced)	18	18	16	15
Widowed	28	26	35	33

The findings presented in Table 5 show that Beltsy has a larger percentage of females (68%) compared to the other two cities (56% and 57%). There are more young Jews (aged 19-49) in Beltsy (22%) and Kishinev (25%) than in Bendery (14%). Consistently, the percentage of elderly Jews over age 60 is highest in Bendery (71%), compared to 55% and 58% in the other cities. In Beltsy and Bendery, there are more widowed respondents (35% and 33%), compared to 26% in Kishinev.

The household composition varies among the cities (Table 6). In Beltsy, more households consist of one person living alone (38% compared to only 24% in Kishinev). It has also the highest rate of households reporting financial difficulties - 84% reported that their income is not sufficient to cover most of their basic needs, compared to 75% in Kishinev and 79% in Bendery.

Table 6: Number of Persons in Household, by City (percentages)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Number of persons in household	100	100	100	100
1 person living alone	27	24	38	30
2 persons	36	35	33	38
3 persons	21	23	17	19
4+ persons	16	18	12	13

4. Jewish Identity

One of the purposes of this survey was to examine the nature of the Jewish identity of the population in Moldova. The survey examined three different dimensions of the Jewish identity of the respondents: self-identification, the behavioral dimension, and the normative dimension.

4.1 Self-identification

Self-identification as Jewish was measured by two variables: being born or raised as a Jew and considering oneself Jewish. The respondents were asked separately about each of these measures - first, about themselves and then about each of the household members. Table 7 shows that the vast number of respondents (83%) reported that they were born and/or raised Jewish. An even larger percentage (93%) consider themselves Jewish and/or Jewish and other nationality.

Table 7: Personal Definition of Jewishness and Importance of Being Jewish (percentages)

	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
Born/raised Jewish:	100	100	100	100
Yes	83	70	76	86
No	17	30	24	14
Considers oneself as:	100	100	100	100
Jewish	86	74	77	89
Jewish and another nationality	7	16	15	5
Undecided	2	8	4	1
Non-Jewish	5	2	4	5
Importance of being Jewish:	100	100	100	100
Very important	23	14	17	25
Important	51	47	53	51
Not important	19	26	23	18
Undecided	7	13	7	6

The pattern of self-identification as Jewish differs by age. The percentage born and/or raised Jewish is lower among younger respondents (70% among those 19-39 years old versus 86% among 50+), as is the percentage of those considering themselves Jewish (74% versus 89%). A larger percentage in the younger age groups (under 50) consider themselves a combination of Jewish and other (15-16%) or undecided (8-4%). It is important that in all age groups – including those aged 19-39 - the percentage of those who consider themselves Jewish is higher than the percentage born Jewish.

A somewhat different picture on self-identification emerges when we examine the data on household members as reported by the respondent. Lower percentages of household members were born/raised Jewish or consider themselves Jewish - 69% were born Jewish, and 71% consider themselves Jewish or Jewish and another nationality (7%). Seventeen percent of the household members defined themselves as non-Jewish.

Table 8: Households by Whether Respondents and Spouses Consider Themselves Jewish and Were Born/Raised Jewish (percentages)

	Consider themselves Jewish or Jewish & other	Born/raised Jewish
	100	100
Respondent and Spouse	55	34
Only respondent	39	49
Only spouse of respondent	3	7
Neither	3	10

We also examined the Jewishness of the respondent and his spouse. We found that in 55% of the households, both consider themselves Jewish compared to 34% of couples in which both were born or raised Jewish (Table 8). Thus, the rate of inter-marriages ranges from 45% to 66% of the couples.

To try and gain a better understanding of the nature of self-identification as Jewish, we showed the respondents a list of components and asked them to indicate whether they defined themselves as Jewish by these components (Table 9). We found that along with birth (90%) and family history (71%), the most frequent components listed are related to ethnicity, such as: culture (51%) and reaction to anti-Semitism (63%). At the same time, education (58%) also plays an important role. A large percentage (71%), referred to being a Jew by registration of nationality in passport.

Two-thirds of the respondents listed over five components of Jewish identity, and one-third listed over eight. There is significant variation by age in the importance of the different components of Jewish identity. The older age groups use more components in their self-definition of Jewish identity than the younger ones. Religion plays a less important role in the self-definition of Jewish identity - 32% of all age groups, but only 15% of those aged 19-39, said that they were Jewish “by religion”. This rises with age to 26% among those aged 40-49 and 35% among those age 50+. Similar findings are revealed in another question related to religion. Some 37% of the respondents define themselves as somewhat religious and the rate rises with age - 19% among the 19-39 age group versus 40% among those 50+.

Table 9: Responses to Various Components of Self-Definition of Jewish Identity (percentages)

	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
Are you Jewish:				
By birth	90	86	83	92
By choice	33	36	37	32
By culture	51	40	48	53
By education	58	43	52	60
By passport	71	57	60	74
By religion	32	15	26	35
By relation to Israel	65	63	61	65
By reaction to anti-Semitism	63	62	67	62
By political decision	13	6	7	15
By history of the family	71	65	64	73

The lack of importance attributed to religion in defining Jewish identity is even more evident when we asked about the meaning of being a Jew in Moldova. Most of the respondents defined Jewish identity in Moldova primarily in terms of ethnicity. To be Jewish means, first of all, to be a member of an ethnic group (79%) or a member of a cultural group (71%). Only 14% defined Jewishness in Moldova as belonging to a religious group.

Table 10: Respondents who Strongly Agree and Agree with Statements regarding Jewish Identity (percentages)

	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
I am proud to be Jewish	85	79	80	86
I feel part of the Jewish people	91	83	85	93
It is important that Jews survive as people	99	99	99	99
An unbreakable bond unites Jews all over the world	88	88	82	89
When it comes to a crisis Jews can only depend on each other	62	50	53	65
The existence of the State of Israel is important for Jews	99	100	99	99
Belief in God is central to being a good Jew	46	34	47	48

Another aspect of self-definition relates to attitudes. This was measured by the degree of the respondents' agreement with a number of statements related to Jewish identity (Table 10). Overall, the degree of agreement is very high for all the items relating to a link with the Jewish people. Almost all the respondents feel part of the Jewish people and reported that the existence of the State of Israel and the survival of Jews as a people are important to them. About 85% in all age groups are proud to be Jewish. For 74% of the respondents, being Jewish is very important or important in their lives (see Table 7).

4.2 Behavioral Dimension of Jewish Identity

Behavior, as related to activities, is a visible and active way of expressing Jewish identity. In this study, we asked the respondents about three main areas that reflect behavioral elements of Jewish

identity: observing Jewish practices, having Jewish items in the home and participating in activities with Jewish content.

Table 11: Respondents Reporting the Observance (Always or Often) of Jewish Practices, by Age (percentages)

Jewish Practice	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
Light Sabbath candles	22	21	17	23
Celebrate Purim	54	51	49	55
Participate in Passover Seder	40	41	41	40
Fast on Yom Kippur	33	20	19	37
Being in Succah	7	6	6	7
Celebrate Simchat Torah at the Synagogue	11	7	11	12
Light Chanukah candles	30	29	31	30
Read Jewish religious books	18	14	17	19

a) Observing Jewish practices - Table 11 shows that the most frequently observed Jewish practices are celebrating Purim (54%), Passover (40%), Yom Kippur (33%) and Chanukah (30%). In general, less than half observe each of the individual practices, but 62% observe at least one. There is no significant difference in relation to Jewish practices between younger and older respondents with the exception of Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah. Only 20% of young respondents fasted on Yom Kippur versus 37% of those in the older age group. We also examined synagogue attendance. We found that only 10% attend synagogue services at least once a month and 59% never. The percentage attending at least once a month rises with age from 1% to 12%.

In the survey, we examined the **meanings** attributed by the respondents to the celebration of Jewish holidays. The question was posed as a general question relating to all the holidays.

Table 12: Meanings Attributed to the Celebration of Jewish Holidays (in percentages)

Meaning of the Jewish Holidays	Total	Great Extent	Some Extent	Small Extent or Not at All
				All
A religious activity/event	100	15	40	45
A cultural activity/event	100	44	43	13
A way to express your sense of belonging to the Jewish people	100	49	41	10
An essential way to maintain your Jewish culture and tradition	100	58	33	9
An activity that links you to other Jews	100	39	42	19
An important activity for maintaining Jewish tradition in your family	100	37	35	28
An occasion for a family gathering	100	39	28	33

As shown in Table 12, the respondents primarily attribute cultural and ethnic meaning to practices related to Jewish holidays. Only about half viewed the holidays as a religious event (55%), primarily “to some extent”. These findings reveal an important issue regarding the interpretation of the observance of holidays. This issue of meanings and interpretations regarding Jewish religious practices should be further investigated to understand more specifically which holidays have a more religious meaning, what are the specific reasons for celebrating each holiday and what is the meaning of holiday celebration as a cultural event.

b) Jewish items in the home - Another indicator of Jewish identity at the behavioral level is the presence of Jewish items in the home. The main Jewish items the respondents have in their home are books (76%) and Jewish newspapers (71%). A significant percentage have books on Jewish themes in Hebrew or Yiddish; 18% have Jewish religious books. The young have more books in Hebrew than the old (53% versus 34%, respectively). The most frequent Jewish ritual items in the home are Sabbath candlesticks (38%) and Chanukah menorahs (20%); only 14% have a mezuzah.

The vast majority (88%) have at least one of the various Jewish items and a third have more than three. In general, there are no major differences between the age groups in the prevalence of these items. This may in part be due to the fact that Jewish items can belong to or have been purchased by anyone in the family and the fact that most families include an older member.

c) Participating in activities with Jewish content - An additional behavioral aspect of Jewish identity is undertaking activities with Jewish elements (Table 13). The most frequent activities undertaken in the last year are those that take place at home: reading books on Jewish themes or Jewish newspapers (70%) and watching TV programs on Jewish themes (54%). The main out-of-home activities are attending films, plays or concerts on Jewish themes (52%), attending lectures on Jewish themes (30%), or participating in a Jewish club (27%). Going on tours of Jewish interest or visiting Jewish museums or exhibitions are the least frequent activities (from 9% to 14 %).

Table 13: Respondents Participating in Activities with Jewish Content in the Last 12 Months, by Age (percentages)

	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
Attended a play, film, concert on Jewish theme	52	66	66	49
Attended a lecture on Jewish theme	30	32	35	28
Visited Jewish museum	14	19	21	13
Read a book on a Jewish theme	70	71	70	70
Read Jewish newspaper	78	66	78	80
Watched Jewish TV shows	54	45	45	57
Listen to Jewish radio	33	23	21	37
Visited a Jewish Club	27	32	36	25
Went on a visit/tour of some Jewish interest	9	16	19	7

In general, almost everyone (95%) participated in at least one of these activities, 24% in one or two, 39% in three or four, and 31% in over five types of activities. Naturally there are age differences regarding these activities. The younger respondents participate much more in activities outside the home, the older in those in the home. All groups read books on a Jewish theme to the same extent.

The respondents were also asked about their interest in various kinds of activities with a Jewish content (Table 14).

Table 14: Respondents Reporting Interest in Participation in Activities with Jewish Content, by Age (percentages)

	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
Meeting with Jews for recreational activities	77	75	70	78
Meeting with Jews for intellectual activities	69	77	64	69
Learning more about Jewish history and tradition	80	82	80	80
Learning more about Israel	83	88	83	82
Learning more about Jewish religion	49	48	51	49
Learning more Hebrew and/or Yiddish	61	76	72	57
Becoming more involved in Jewish culture - music, dance, theater, art, literature	67	80	74	64

There is high rate of interest in various kinds of activities with Jewish content. The respondents from different age groups revealed a similar degree of interest in learning about Israel (83%), learning about Jewish history and tradition (80%), learning about religion (49%), and meeting with other Jews for recreational (77%) and intellectual (69%) activities. If we combine all five activities with cultural elements (items 3 through 7 in Table 13), we find that 76% are interested in three or more activities. Younger respondents, compared to those age 50+, are much more interested in learning Hebrew (76% versus 57%) and in becoming more involved in Jewish art, music, and literature (80% versus 64%).

4.3 Normative Dimension of Jewish Identity

The normative dimension of Jewish identity relates to a more cognitive view of Jewishness. The respondents were asked about characteristics which are important, in their opinion, for a person to be considered a genuine Jew (Table 15). These characteristics were grouped into three major domains: behavior, knowledge and attitudes.

There is widespread agreement (over 90%) about the importance of almost all items related to attitudes and knowledge. In the area of attitudes, almost everyone views almost all the issues as important, including “to remember the Holocaust” (99%), “to defend the honor and dignity of Jewish people” (98%) and “to feel close to Israel and to care for its fate” (92%). “Believe in God,” which reflects a religious attitude, was rated as less important.

The second group of items, related to knowledge of Jewish matters (such as “to know Jewish traditions and customs” - 98%, “to know Hebrew” - 85%) are also perceived as being important almost to the same extent as the previous domain.

The third group of items, related to behavior and primarily reflecting religious practice (such as, “to observe the Sabbath” - 70%, and “to attend a synagogue” (62%), are viewed as less important to the normative definition of Jewishness. Younger respondents attached less significance to religious practices than the older ones (for example, “to circumcise one’s son” - 38% versus 60%; “to keep kosher” -39% versus 56%; and “to marry a Jew” - 44% versus 59%).

It is interesting to note that although the religious practice components are relatively less important in the normative definition of Jewishness, higher percentages rated its importance than in the behavioral level of Jewish identity. In other words, the findings show a gap between behavioral and perceptual levels of Jewish identity.

Table 15: Items that are Important for a Person to be Considered a Genuine Jew (percentages)

(percentages)		Total	Age		
			19-39	40-49	50+
Behavior	Keep kosher	54	39	50	56
	Observe Sabbath	70	58	69	71
	Attend a synagogue	62	50	64	63
	Circumcise one's son	58	38	59	60
	Marry a Jew	57	44	56	59
Knowledge	Provide Jewish education for one's own child	88	85	90	87
	Know Jewish tradition and customs	98	93	98	98
	Know Yiddish	82	65	78	84
	Know Hebrew	85	82	85	85
Attitudes					
	Believe in God	68	60	69	69
	Feel close to Israel and care for its fate	92	87	88	93
	Help other Jews	99	97	96	99
	Defend the honor and dignity of Jewish people	98	94	96	99
	Remember the Holocaust	99	98	100	99

4.4 Comparison by Cities

Some variations were found among the three cities regarding the various aspects of Jewish identity. First, regarding self-identification as Jewish, there were variations among the three cities in the number of components used and their prevalence. In general, we found that respondents from Kishinev use a smaller number of components for self- definition of Jewish identity than those in the other two cities (Table 16).

The component of Jewish education is more emphasized in Beltsy (87%) and Bendery (70%), than in Kishinev (48%). The same trend was found regarding culture as a component of Jewish identity (Beltsy - 62%, Bendery - 74% vs. Kishinev - 42%) and religion (Beltsy - 59%, Bendery - 48% vs. Kishinev - 21%). Reaction to anti-Semitism is a significant component of self-identification of respondents from Bendery (76%) and Kishinev (62%), compared to those from Beltsy (50%).

Table 16: Respondents Using Various Components of Self- Definition of Jewish Identity, by City (percentages)

Are you Jewish by:	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Birth	90	90	93	89
Choice	33	39	6	35
Culture	51	42	62	74
Education	58	48	87	70
Passport	71	65	86	80
Religion	32	21	59	48
Relation to Israel	65	58	77	79
Reaction to anti-Semitism	63	62	50	76
Political decision	13	10	24	14
History of the family	71	68	72	84

In terms of behavior, a higher percentage of respondents in Beltsy reported observing traditional Jewish practices: fasting on Yom Kippur (57% versus 29% in the other two cities), participating in a Passover Seder (67% versus 40% in the other two cities), and reading Jewish religious books (26% versus 16% in Kishinev). Synagogue attendance is more frequent in Bendery - 31% of respondents reported attending a synagogue monthly or more often compared to 10% in Beltsy and 4% in Kishinev.

On the normative level, the main differences among the cities are in the perceptions of behavior. More respondents in Beltsy viewed the various aspects of religious practices as important for being genuinely Jewish than in the other cities (“to observe Sabbath” – 91% versus 63% in Kishinev; “to attend a synagogue” – 89% versus 54% in Kishinev).

5. Connections to Jewish Community and Emigration

5.1 Connection to Jewish Community

Links with the Jewish community were analyzed on two dimensions: the informal Jewish network of friends and relatives, and the links to the organized Jewish community. Both the actual links and their interest in these links were examined.

The respondents have a wide informal Jewish network and it is important to them. For most of the respondents it is important to meet with other Jewish people (84%). Most have Jewish friends

(84%) and meet/talk with friends daily (37%) or often (38%). There are no differences among age groups regarding the intensiveness and the extent of their informal Jewish social network.

Regarding links to the organized Jewish community, we found that half of the respondents feel very or pretty much a part of the organized Jewish community in their city. The younger age groups feel less a part of the organized community than the older ones - 36% of those aged 19-39 do not feel at all a part of the community, as opposed to only 13% aged 50 and over (Table 17).

Table 17: Respondents' Attitudes to Jewish Community in Moldova, by Age (percentages)

	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
Feel part of the Jewish community	100	100	100	100
Very much	13	9	4	15
Pretty much	37	30	38	38
A little	33	25	31	34
Not at all	17	36	27	13
Interested in being more involved in the Jewish community	100	100	100	100
Yes	35	29	33	36
No	19	9	14	21
Maybe	30	38	34	28
Not sure	16	24	19	15
Opinion of Jewish life in Moldova	100	100	100	100
Active	59	56	45	60
Weak	17	15	26	17
Does not exist	1	3	2	1
Do not know	23	26	27	22
Prospects for developing Jewish life in Moldova	100	100	100	100
Good	24	27	20	24
Satisfactory	32	23	31	33
Poor	11	11	14	11
No prospects	11	13	13	11
Do not know	22	26	22	21
Interested in volunteering	100	100	100	100
Yes	13	8	17	13
Maybe	19	19	29	18
No	55	51	37	58
Don't know	13	22	17	11

The respondents were also asked to indicate their interest in being more involved in the Jewish community. A third of them definitely want to be more involved in the Jewish community in their city, 46% are unsure and only 19% say no. A similar percentage (32%) are interested (yes and maybe) in volunteering in the Jewish community. The percentage of respondents interested in volunteering is even higher among those in the 40-49 age group (46%). These findings might indicate that there is room for further development of the potential for engaging new active members in the organized Jewish community.

More than half of the respondents (59%) characterize Jewish life in their city as active, although there is a relatively large group of respondents with no opinion about Jewish life in their city (23%). More respondents aged 40-49 view Jewish life in their city as weak (26%) compared to other age groups (17%). The respondents were asked to evaluate the future of Jewish life in Moldova in general. More than half (56%) are positive about the prospects of Jewish life. A relatively large group (22%) are undecided, similar to the percentage of those who could not evaluate the activeness of Jewish life at present.

5.2 Emigration

The vast majority of respondents (92%) have relatives and/or friends who have left for Israel; every fifth person has children who live and/or study in Israel. More than 70% have relatives and/or friends who have left for other countries in Europe, United States, Canada, or elsewhere; 11% have children who live in these countries.

The feelings about plans to emigrate are subject to a great deal of uncertainty (see Table 18). Most of the respondents (95%) are unsure regarding emigration and only 5% have decided to leave within a specified time frame. This declines from 11% in the 19-39 age group to about 4% in the other age groups.

Table 18: Intentions to Emigrate to Another Country, by Age (percentages)

Intentions to emigrate	Total	Age		
		19-39	40-49	50+
	100	100	100	100
Do not intend to emigrate	55	36	45	59
Don't know/difficult to decide	12	10	11	13
Decided to emigrate, but don't know when	28	43	39	24
Decided to emigrate, have decided when	5	11	5	4

Two-thirds of respondents reported that they do not intend to emigrate to another country or are undecided. As expected, there is a significant difference between age groups: 46% under 40 do not intend/are undecided to emigrate, versus 72% of those aged 50 and over. The last group (28%), are those who intend to emigrate but do not know when. The percentage in this uncertain group declines with age from about 43% of those aged 19-39 to 24% of those over 50. There are no differences in intentions to emigrate between those who feel part of the Jewish community and those who do not.

The reasons cited by respondents who do not intend or have not made a decision to emigrate vary by age. For those over 50, it is linked to health problems (54%), poor material conditions (29%) and graves of parents they cannot leave (45%). Those aged 40-49, mainly cite fear of losing status (20%) and uncertainty of opportunities in a new country (58%). For the youngest age group (19-39), the uncertainty of opportunities is of great importance (68%), as well as unwillingness to be separated from relatives (45%).

5.3 Comparison by Cities

The comparison among the cities regarding connection to the Jewish community shows that the Jewish community is viewed most positively on all indicators in Bendery - more respondents characterize the Jewish life in their cities as active (75% versus 51% in Kishinev); more feel part of the Jewish community (54% versus Beltsy 43%); more people are interested in being involved in Jewish community life (45% versus 29% in Beltsy); and a higher percentage believe that there are good or satisfactory prospects for the development of Jewish community life (Table 19).

Table 19: Respondents' Attitudes To Jewish Community In Moldova, by City (percentages)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Feel part of the Jewish community	100	100	100	100
Much	13	14	11	14
Pretty much	37	37	32	40
A little	33	29	46	35
Not at all/ undecided	17	20	11	11
Interested in being more involved in Jewish community	100	100	100	100
Yes	35	33	29	45
No	19	20	15	19
Maybe	30	30	34	24
Not sure	16	17	22	12
Opinion of Jewish life in Moldova	100	100	100	100
Is active	59	51	73	75
Is weak	17	21	5	16
Does not exist	1	2	--	--
Do not know	23	26	22	9
Prospects for developing Jewish life in Moldova	100	100	100	100
Good	24	19	24	42
Satisfactory	32	30	38	33
Poor	11	12	5	12
No prospects	11	15	6	4
Do not know	22	24	27	9
Interested in volunteering	100	100	100	100
Yes	13	12	5	24
Maybe	19	21	14	17
No	55	58	50	52
Don't know	13	9	31	7

In Beltsy there is a sense that the community is active but it has the lowest percentages of those feeling themselves as a part of the community. It also has a relatively high percentage of respondents who expressed a lack of opinion regarding questions on volunteering (31%) and involvement in community life (22%).

Kishinev has the largest group of respondents who feel that Jewish life in their city is weak (21% versus 5% in Beltsy), and also a large group of those who think that there are no prospects for developing Jewish life in Moldova (15% versus 4% in Bendery). Regarding intentions to emigrate, no significant differences were found among the cities.

6. Utilization of Services and Programs Provided by the Jewish Community

The issue of services was addressed in the survey from three major perspectives: the utilization of services provided by the Jewish community, familiarity with services which are not utilized, and interest in the expansion of existing services or the development of new ones. In addition, respondents were asked about their satisfaction with each of the services used.

These three aspects were addressed separately for three areas: social-welfare-medical services; educational programs and services; and cultural-religious programs and activities. The questions were open-ended. For each area the respondents were asked to name the programs and services they use, those that they are familiar with and those that should be developed and/or expanded and/or improved by the Jewish community. In responding to these questions, the respondents related to their own immediate or possibly future needs, as well as to the needs of their families and friends who may live in separate households or the community in general.

6.1 Social-Medical Services

Services Used

To obtain information on the utilization of services, the respondents were asked if, in the last two years, they or other members of their household had used any social-medical service or program provided by the Jewish Community.

The respondents reported using 13 types of social-medical services. There is a high level of satisfaction with the services used. We created an average satisfaction score for each service, ranging from 1 (very satisfied) to 4 (not satisfied at all). The average score for the various services was between 1 and 1.5, in other words between very satisfied and satisfied.

The data on **utilization** of social-medical services shows that (Table 20):

1. Food packages are the most highly used social service - 68% report using this service (2,665 households). The second most commonly used service is doctor visits (22%), followed by general-medical services (14%) and assistance in purchasing and the provision of medication (13%).
2. Warm home, home care and meals are each used by 4% of the population.
3. Almost threequarters of the population (71%) use at least one social-welfare-medical service. Most use one or two services and 15% use more than three services.

Table 20: Utilization of Jewish Social-Medical Services, Familiarity With Services Among Non-Users and Interest in Development/ Expansion/ Improvement of Services

	Services Used		Familiarity with Service among Non-users		Interest in Develop/Expand/ Improve Services	
	# of households	% households	# of households	% of households	# of households	% of households
Food packages	2,665	68	411	10	736	19
Home care	158	4	200	5	64	2
Warm home	153	4	198	5	94	3
Meals	156	4	342	9	50	1
House maintenance	52	1	76	2	53	1
Financial assistance	135	3	67	2	1,276	32
Humanitarian help	43	1	20	1	15	0.4
Medical-general	536	14	529	13	694	18
Doctor visits	884	22	237	6	964	25
Medication	501	13	190	5	453	12
Medical equipment	34	1	20	1	14	0.4
Other medical	15	0.4	26	1	491	12
Employment	--	--	12	0.3	71	2
Other	34	1	24	1	44	1
At least one service	2,803	71	378	33	2,645	67

We analyzed the utilization of these services by household with respect to age (at least one member of the household under 55 or at least one 55 or over) and by the presence of at least one child under the age of 18 in the home (Table 21). We found that both variables are related to the extent of utilization of these services. The percentage of users of social services is much higher in households with at least one older member aged 55 and over (85%) than in those without (27%). Households with older members also use a greater **number** of services (56% are using two or more services compared to 11% in younger households).

This is also expressed in the rate of utilization of different individual services, for example, food packages are used by 85% of older households versus 24% of younger ones; doctor visits are used by 28% of older households and 5% of younger ones.

Table 21: Number of Jewish Social-Medical Services Utilized by Age Composition and Presence of Children under 18 in the Household (percentages)

	Total	At least 1 person in household		Children under 18 in the home	
		under 55	Over 55	With child up to 18	No child under 18
	100	100	100	100	100
None	30	73	15	62	19
1 service	25	16	29	17	28
2 services	30	8	38	14	36
3-5 services	15	3	18	7	17

Familiarity with Services

In addition to the use of services the respondents were asked about their **familiarity** with social-medical services that they are not using, which could affect current as well as potential future rates of utilization. A very small percentage of non-users are familiar with the different types of social-welfare-medical programs provided by the Jewish community (Table 20).

The medical services and food packages are among the services that are more commonly known among the non-users. No differences were found in familiarity with the various types of social-medical services between younger and older households.

When we examined utilization and familiarity with at least one social-medical service as a combined variable we found that 24% use services and are familiar with other services; 46% use services and are not familiar with other services; 10% do not use but are familiar; and 20% do not use and are not familiar. This indicates that the use of services does not necessarily ensure exposure to other services. Almost half of the population is using services but is not familiar with other social services provided by the community. Moreover, a majority of non-users are not familiar with any community services.

Interest in Development and Expansion of Services

The data presented in Table 20 show that two-thirds of the respondents expressed interest in the development and expansion of at least one social-medical service. The three most often cited services required are: the expansion of financial assistance (32%), doctor visits (25%) and food packages (19%). None of the respondents suggested the expansion of meals and medical equipment. Interest in the expansion of other types of social-medical services, such as home maintenance, home care, and employment was very low (1-2% of the respondents).

No differences were found between older and younger households regarding an interest in expanding food package services and medical-general services. Differences by age were found regarding interest in developing or expanding medications, other medical services and financial assistance. The rate of those suggesting expansion of the service was higher among the older respondents: medications (16% versus 4%); other medical services (13% versus 8%); and financial support (38% versus 27%).

As we indicated before, 71% of the households use at least one social-medical services. When we examined the correlation between an interest in expanding services and service utilization we found that a higher percentage of users expressed interest in expanding at least one social-medical service than non-users (71% versus 41%). This may be due to the fact, as we indicated previously, that many of those who do not use the services are not aware of their existence. This could reflect the fact that the users are in greater need and therefore they express more interest in the expansion of these services.

6.2 Jewish Educational Programs and Services

Services Used

To obtain information on the use of educational programs and services, the respondents were asked if, in the last two years, they or any member of their households, used any educational programs or participated in any educational activity sponsored by the Jewish Community.

Table 22: Utilization of Jewish Educational Programs and Services, Familiarity with Programs among Non-users and Interest in Development/Expansion/ Improvement of Programs

	Services Used		Familiarity with Service among Non-users		Interest in Develop/Expand/ Improve Services	
	# of households	% households	# of households	% of households	# of households	% of households
Jewish day school *	366	9	547	14	740	19
Sunday school *	113	3	109	3	9	0.2
Jewish kindergarten	130	3	270	7	509	13
Enrichment classes for children	26	1	104	3	--	--
Learning Hebrew	159	4	200	5	153	4
Classes on Jewish Tradition	117	3	270	7	405	10
Lectures and Seminars	63	2	114	3	49	1
Study programs in Israel	10	0.3	10	0.3	39	1
Vocational training	30	1	81	2	210	5
Various courses	37	1	57	2	111	3
At least one	711	18	1,068	33	461	37

* The figure on the use of Jewish day schools and Sunday schools is an underestimate because in Kishinev we were not able to get the list of names from the largest Jewish day school and from some Jewish Sunday schools.

The data on utilization of educational programs (Table 22) show that the population uses a variety of educational programs. With the exception of the Jewish day school, the rate of utilization ranges from one to four percent; 18% use at least one educational service (Table 23).

For each service the respondent was asked to rate his level of satisfaction. The findings indicate a high level of satisfaction with the services used. Similar to satisfaction of social-medical services, the average score for the various services ranged between 1.0 and 1.5 - in other words, from very satisfied to satisfied.

When the data were analyzed by age and the presence of children, we found that the presence of children affects utilization more than does age. Nine percent of the households without children

under 18 participate in at least one educational program, versus 40% in the households with at least one child under 18 (Table 23). This is not surprising since four of the ten types of programs used are for children.

Table 23: Number of Jewish Educational Programs Used, by Age Composition and the Presence of Children Under 18 in the Household (in percentages)

	At least 1 person in household			Children under 18 in the home	
	Total	under 55	Over 55	With child up to 18	No child under 18
	100	100	100	100	100
None	82	71	87	60	91
1 program	13	21	10	28	6
2 programs	3	6	2	8	2
3-5 programs	2	2	1	4	1

The same trend was found regarding the individual programs. In all types of programs, we found more users among households with children than without, (including programs such as lectures, learning Hebrew and vocational training).

Although as noted there is an under representation in the survey of families with children, the percentage reporting at least one child in a Jewish day school or kindergarten among families with children is about 40%. This is just a bit lower than the percentage in the second survey.

Familiarity with Jewish Educational Programs and Activities

In addition to the use of services, we asked the respondents about their **familiarity** with educational programs and activities which they are not using. As in the previous group of services, familiarity is a factor that could affect current as well as future utilization.

The data in Table 24 show that for all types of Jewish educational activities, the rate of familiarity is higher than the rate of utilization - more people know about the programs than use them. The services more familiar to non-users are the Jewish day school (14%); the kindergarten (7%) and programs on Jewish tradition (7%). No differences were found by age with respect to familiarity with the various types of educational programs.

Among families with children, the vast majority are not aware of the services (Table 24). When we examined utilization and familiarity with educational programs as a combined variable we found that 7% use at least one educational program and are familiar with other programs; 10% use at least one and are not familiar with other programs; 26% do not use but are familiar; and 57% do not use and are not familiar. This finding indicates that over half of the population is not exposed to these services, either as a user or at the informational level.

Table 24: Households not Using the Service but Familiar with Educational Programs, by Presence of Children in the Household (percentages)

	Total	Households who are familiar	
		With children under 18	No children under 18
Jewish day school	14	12	15
Kindergarten	7	6	7
Sunday school	3	4	2
Learning Hebrew	5	7	4
Learning Jewish tradition	7	9	6
Lectures and seminars	3	4	2
Studies in Israel	--	--	--
Vocational training	2	4	1
Courses	2	2	1
Classes for children	3	3	2

Interest in Development and Expansion of Programs and Activities

One-third of the respondents expressed interest in the development and expansion of at least one educational program. The highest interest was expressed in day schools (19%), kindergarten (13%) and learning about Jewish tradition (10%). Very few people were interested in the development and expansion of Sunday schools and lectures. No differences were found between older and younger households regarding the expansion of educational services. Interest in the expansion of programs was somewhat higher among households with children under 18 in the home.

The service that is most extensively used (day schools) has the highest rate of interest in its expansion. At the same time, vocational training, which has a very low rate of utilization, has a relatively high rate of interest in its expansion.

6.3 Jewish Cultural and Religious Programs and Activities

Programs Used

To obtain information on the use of cultural and religious programs and activities, the respondents were asked if, in the last two years, they or any other member of their households had used any types of cultural or religious programs or participated in any cultural activity provided by the Jewish Community. For each service used, they were asked to rate their level of satisfaction.

The data on utilization of cultural and religious programs indicate that eight types of programs are being used by the respondents. There is a high level of satisfaction with the programs used. The average score for each service ranged from 1.0 to 1.5, in other words, very satisfied to satisfied. Three programs with a high rate of utilization are: Jewish holiday activity (27%), the Jewish library (20%) and Passover Seder (16%). Almost half of the population (45%) participates in at least one type of cultural program (20% participate in one program and 25% in more than one). The data in Table 26 show that there is no correlation between the rate of utilization and the two variables of

age composition of household (age of respondent and the presence of children under 18). When we analyzed each type of program separately, we found the same pattern.

Table 25: Utilization of Jewish Cultural and Religious Programs and Activities, Familiarity with Programs among Non-users and Interest in Development/ Expansion/ Improvement of Programs

	Services Used		Familiarity with Service among Non-users		Interest in Develop/Expand/ Improve Services	
	# of households	% households	# of households	% of households	# of households	% of households
Jewish Library	803	20	247	6	802	20
Family clubs	177	5	78	2	471	12
Jewish cultural and artistic performances	123	3	215	5	126	3
Various clubs	54	1	69	2	75	2
Art and sports classes	13	0.3	62	2	26	1
Learning foreign languages (including Yiddish)	---	--	53	1	68	2
Passover Seder	644	16	52	1	418	11
Jewish holidays activities	1045	27	334	8	865	22
At least one	1,737	44	752	34	1,461	37

Table 26: Number of Jewish Cultural and Traditional Programs Used, by Age and Presence of Children under 18 in the Household (percentages)

Number of cultural programs used	Total	At least 1 person in household		Children under 18 in the home	
		under 55	Over 55	With child up to 18	No child under 18
	100	100	100	100	100
None	55	61	53	56	55
1 program	20	20	20	19	23
2 programs	16	11	17	16	13
3-5 programs	9	18	10	9	9

It seems that the use of some of the cultural programs is affected by degree of religiousness. The two most utilized cultural programs are related to the Jewish holidays - 34% of those who identify themselves as religious participate in Jewish Holiday celebrations provided by the community versus 22% of the non-religious; 21% of the religious participate in the Passover Seder versus 11% of non-religious.

Attending Jewish performances could be also related to preferences for leisure activities. Based on information collected in this survey on leisure time activities, we found that very few go to movies of any kind (5%) and 36% attend concerts or the theater of any kind.

Familiarity with Programs and Activities

As in the other services, here we also asked the respondents about their familiarity with programs which they are not using. Familiarity is a factor that could affect current as well as future utilization.

Jewish holiday activities (8%), the Jewish library (6%) and cultural performances (5%) are the services with the highest rates of familiarity among non-users, but this is still very low. It is interesting to note that art and sports classes and the various clubs have a larger percentage of those who know about the programs than who use them.

When data were analyzed by age and the presence of children in the household, no differences were found regarding familiarity with cultural activities. Here again, as in utilization of these programs, familiarity could be related to other factors, such as degree of religiousness for some of these programs, and personal leisure time habits for other type of programs.

When we examined utilization and familiarity with cultural programs as a combined variable, we found that 18% use cultural programs and are familiar with other programs; 27% use and are not familiar with other programs; 16% do not use but are familiar; and 39% do not use and are not familiar. A large percentage of non-users are not familiar with other programs and most of those who use some services are not familiar with others.

Interest in Development of Programs

One third of the population expressed an interest in the expansion of at least one cultural/religious program. The four programs for which a relatively high percentage of respondents expressed interest in their expansion are Jewish holiday celebrations (22%), the Jewish library (20%), family clubs (12%) and Passover Seder (11%).

No differences were found between older and younger households in the percentage who suggested expanding any of the cultural/religious services. For two programs, interest in expansion was found to be related to the presence of children under 18 in the home: the Jewish holidays (27% vs. 20%) and family clubs (16% vs. 10%).

When we examined interest in expanding cultural/religious programs, we found that most of those interested in expansion are users. Here again we have to consider the high percentage of non-users who are not familiar with the cultural programs currently available. Rectifying the lack of information about these programs may have an impact on interest in programs that should be developed.

Interest in learning more about Jewish subjects is even more pronounced when respondents were asked about their personal interest in an activity. As presented in Table 14 and discussed in the section on Jewish identity, 80% expressed interest in learning more about Jewish history and tradition; 49% in learning more about Jewish religion; 83%, in learning more about Israel; 61% in learning Hebrew and Yiddish; and 67%, in becoming more involved in Jewish culture, music, dance, theater and literature.

6.4 Integrated View of Service Utilization

We have analyzed above each of the areas of service: social-medical, educational and cultural. In Table 27 we integrate this analysis. When we examine how many households use at least one service in one area, we find that the vast majority (82%) of the population is using some kind of service; only 18% are not using any service.

The number of areas of service used is affected by the age composition of the home and the presence of children. The percentage of non-users of any service is higher in younger than older households (42% versus 9%) and in households with a child versus without (31% versus 12%).

Table 27: Use of Services from any of the Three Areas (Social, Education, Cultural Combined) (percentages)

	Total	At least 1 person in household		Children under 18 in the home	
		Under 55	Over 55	With child up to 18	No child under 18
None	18	42	9	31	12
One area of service	41	28	46	28	47
Two areas of service	33	25	37	28	36
Three areas of service	8	5	8	13	5

The distinction between educational and cultural services and activities is a very fine one. In distinguishing between the two, we followed the way in which the respondents classified their answers. Therefore, it is also useful to look at educational and cultural services together (Table 28). Some 50% use at least one of these two areas, whereas 44% used at least one educational and 18% used at least one cultural. Thus, the overlap between the users of these two categories is not great. Moreover, more use at least one social-medical service than one educational and cultural combined.

Table 28: Use of at Least One Service for the Individual Areas, for Culture and Education Combined, and All Three Areas Combined (percentages)

Uses at Least One Service:	% of Households
Social-medical	71
Educational	18
Cultural	44
Cultural and educational	50
Social, educational and cultural	82

The respondents were asked to what extent their utilization of services is affected by the following factors: closeness of the service to their home, quality and professional level of the staff, treating the client properly, and the fact that they are provided by the Jewish community.

All the factors were rated by the majority of the respondents as affecting the use of the services provided by the Jewish Community. There were differences among younger and older households regarding these factors. Location and Jewishness of the service affected the use of service more among older than younger households: 58% and 78%, respectively, in older households versus 36% and 60% in younger ones.

The respondents were asked to evaluate the current services with respect to their location, the publicity about them and their professional level; 83% indicated that they are properly located, 73% said that they are properly publicized and 77% said that they are highly professional.

6.5 Perceptions of What Should be the Major Roles of the Community

The respondents were also asked about their perception of the roles that the community should play in the provision of services. They were given a list of activities and asked to indicate the three most important roles for the community (Table 29).

The most frequently cited roles are: health services (78%), assistance to the poor (66%) and mutual economic support (38%), Jewish educational and cultural activities (48%), and creating employment opportunities (27%).

There were significant differences between the younger and older households and between households with and without children regarding the perception of these roles. Older households and those without children viewed provision of health services and assistance to the poor as more important. Among the younger families and those with a child, health, financial, and cultural and educational areas received equal weight and employment services became much more important.

Table 29: What the Three Main Roles of the Jewish Community Should be in Moldova, According to Respondents (percentages)

	At least on person in household			Children under 18 in the home	
	Total	Under 55	Over 55	With child up to 18	No child under 18
1. Health services	78	64	82	65	83
2. Jewish educational activities (such as Jewish schools)	26	37	22	41	20
3. Cultural activities (such as movies, concerts)	23	26	21	24	22
4. Religious-traditional services	10	7	11	8	11
5. Recreational activities (clubs, sports)	5	7	4	8	3
7. Assistance to poor (meals)	66	54	70	56	70
8. Mutual economic support	38	22	44	25	43
9. Fighting anti-Semitism	16	13	18	13	18
10. Creating employment opportunities	27	44	21	37	23
11. Providing vocational training	7	10	6	10	5
Combined					
Health services	78	64	82	65	83
Financial services	79	67	82	70	82
Cultural and educational services	48	66	42	66	41
Employment services	30	48	24	41	26

6.6 Comparison by Cities

The findings indicate several major differences among the three cities in utilization of and interest in the development of various services and programs.

Social-Welfare-Medical Services

The percentage of households not using any social-welfare-medical service is higher in Kishinev (36%) and Beltsy (28%) than in Bendery (15%). The percentage of households using two or more social services is higher in Beltsy (60%) and Bendery (52%) than in Kishinev (38%) (Table 30).

Table 30: Number of Jewish Social-Medical Services Utilized, by City (percentages)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
	100	100	100	100
None	30	36	28	15
One service	25	26	12	33
Two services	30	26	40	33
Three or more services	15	12	20	19

Differences were found also regarding the use of individual services. For example, food packages are utilized more in Bendery (82%) than in Beltsy (70%) or Kishinev (63%). The utilization of doctor visits is higher in Bendery (43%) and Beltsy (29%) than in Kishinev (15%) (Table 31). These differences in utilization rates could reflect variation among the cities in the provision of services, the age structure of the population and its financial condition.

When we look at the data on interest in expansion, we found that in Bendery there is a very low rate of respondents interested in the development of social services. The most interest in the expansion and development of special kinds of medical services was found in Beltsy (46%).

Table 31: Utilization of Selected Social Programs, Activities and Interest in Development/Expansion/Improvement of Programs, by City (percentages)

	Services used (%)				Interest in development/expansion of services (%)			
	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Food packages	68	63	70	82	19	20	27	5
Doctor visits	22	15	29	43	25	27	35	5
Medical-general	14	16	12	8	18	20	28	9
Medication	13	10	25	12	12	15	-	9
Financial assistance	3	3	6	4	32	37	39	19
Other medical	-	1	-	-	13	7	46	1

Cultural and Religious Programs

The percentage of households utilizing the cultural-religious services provided by the Jewish community is lower than for social services and differs by city.

Table 32: Number of Jewish Cultural-Religious Services Utilized, by City (percentages)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
	100	100	100	100
None	55	63	38	42
One service	20	20	22	19
Two services	16	11	28	21
Three or more services	9	6	12	18

The percentage utilizing at least one cultural-religious service is much higher in Beltsy (62%) and Bendery (58%) than in Kishinev (37%). A higher percentage of households in Beltsy (40%) and in Bendery (39%) participate in two or more services, than in Kishinev (17%). The same trend can be seen by the rates of participation in the individual cultural-religious programs (Table 33).

Table 33: Utilization of Selected Jewish Cultural-Religious Activities and Interest in Development/Expansion/Improvement of Programs, by City

	Services used (%)				Interest in development/expansion of services (%)			
	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Jewish holiday activities	27	20	45	33	22	24	37	2
Passover Seder	16	5	45	32	11	10	28	-
Jewish library	20	18	17	31	20	18	16	31
Family clubs	5	4	8	5	12	12	21	5

For example, participation in Jewish holiday activities is higher in Beltsy (45%) than in Bendery (33%) and Kishinev (20%). Respondents in Beltsy expressed the highest rate of interest in the development and expansion of cultural activities with the exception of the library.

Educational Services

The percentage of those using two or more educational services are similar in the three cities (Table 34).

Table 34: Households Utilizing Jewish Educational Services, by City (percentages)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
	100	100	100	100
None	82	82	84	84
1 service	13	14	8	11
2 services	3	3	5	4
3 or more services	2	1	3	1

In general, there is much more interest in developing educational programs in Kishinev and Beltsy than in Bendery. In Beltsy and Kishinev there is interest in developing Jewish Day Schools and

Table 35: Utilization of Selected Jewish Educational Programs and Activities versus Interest in Development/Expansion of Programs, by City (percentages)

	Services used (%)				Interest in development/expansion of services (%)			
	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Jewish day school	6	8	3	2	19	20	28	5
Learning Hebrew	4	3	3	7	4	6	2	-
Sunday school	3	1	8	6	-	-	1	-
Jewish kindergarten	3	5	-	-	13	14	18	4
Classes on Jewish tradition, lectures, courses	6	4	10	5	15	11	33	9
Enrichment classes for children	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-

kindergartens. A high percentage of households in Beltsy (33%) are interested in the development and expansion of classes and lectures on Jewish tradition, compared to Kishinev (11%) and Bendery (9%) (Table 35).

Table 36 presents the respondents' view on the main roles of the Jewish community, by city. There were no differences among the three cities in the top three roles attributed to the community: provision of the health services, assistance to the poor and mutual economic support. Regarding other roles, we found that creating employment opportunities was cited more by respondents in Beltsy and Kishinev (31%) than in Bendery (9%); in Kishinev, there was also an emphasis on Jewish education.

Table 36: The Main Roles of the Jewish Community in Moldova According to Respondents, by City (percentage)

	Total	Kishinev	Beltsy	Bendery
Jewish education activities (such as Jewish schools)	26	30	17	18
Jewish cultural activities (such as movies, concerts)	23	23	14	31
Health services	78	78	64	89
Religious traditional services	10	7	18	16
Recreational activities (clubs, sports)	5	4	2	8
Assistance to the poor (meals)	66	62	72	75
Fighting anti-Semitism	16	18	12	13
Mutual economic support	38	34	51	45
Create employment opportunities	27	31	30	9

7. Conclusions and Issues for Discussion

The findings of this survey provide a detailed picture of the Jewish population in Moldova. The aim of the survey was to generate information to assist the local community in Moldova in developing a strategic plan for community development and the renewal of Jewish life. There are several issues that arose from these findings that might be addressed in developing this plan:

a. Involvement in the community

- ♦ The findings demonstrate that the population studied has a very strong interest in links with all forms of Jewish activities as expressed in its current participation, in its interest in greater participation and expanded services, in its view of the roles of the Jewish community and in its desire to contribute and be more involved.

Question: How can the Jewish community take advantage of this unrealized interest in greater participation in activities and contribution to communal life?

b. The need for cultural and educational activities

- ♦ Significant emphasis is placed by the respondents on the importance of knowledge of Jewish history, culture and traditions as a key component of being Jewish.

Question: How should the community expand opportunities for Jewish educational activities in the most effective way?

- ♦ While there is a group with an interest in religious activities or synagogue attendance, the vast majority does not view religious affiliation as a basis for their Jewish identity and are interested in Jewish education in a non-religious context. Even the interest in Jewish holidays is defined more in cultural and family terms than in religious terms. The younger groups in particular view their identity more in cultural than religious terms.

Question: How can meaningful opportunities for Jewish education be best made available in a non-religious framework? Are there adequate opportunities for Jews with more religious interests? What activities can these two groups share in common and what should be provided separately?

- ♦ The respondents indicated that Israel and the Hebrew language are an important part of their Jewish identity. Also, a very large percentage of families have relatives and friends in Israel. There is an interest in activities focused on Israel and the Hebrew language among all age groups and especially among the younger respondents.

Question: How can the community best address these areas of interest in developing cultural and educational activities?

- ♦ We found a disparity between the reports by the respondents about their personal participation in educational and cultural activities and their reports on the utilization of community-sponsored activities. This raises the possibility that there is a significant amount of informal Jewish cultural educational activity that is not necessarily under the auspices of the community or identified with it.

Question: How prevalent is informal educational and cultural activity? To what extent should the community take this into account in its planning and how? Does the community have any role in promoting these informal processes?

c. Considering the needs of various groups

- ♦ There is a large group of families in which the spouses consider themselves non-Jewish. Yet, there does not seem to be significantly less interest on the part of respondents in these households in Jewish activities and community participation.

Question: How can the community best address the unique needs of these mixed households and facilitate their involvement?

- ♦ The 40-49 age group is an important potential target group for the community because, on the one hand, it has a relatively negative view of Jewish life in Moldova at present but, on the other hand, a very high rate of interest in volunteering.

Question: How can the willingness of this group to take an active part in the community be best utilized?

- ♦ The findings of the survey illustrate in a number of ways that the Jewish population in Moldova is not a homogenous group. There are differences in the needs and attitudes to Jewish

life and community involvement among different sub-groups such as younger and older households; households with and without children; households with spouses from mixed religious backgrounds; and households in which all members are older people.

Question: How can the community best give consideration to this diversity in planning its services and activities?

- ♦ The population has a strong belief in the importance of the Jewish community in addressing the health, social, educational and cultural needs of the Jewish community. All the respondents tend to take a broad view of the needs of the community and assign significant importance to meeting the needs of all age groups in the community in all three areas. Yet, there are differences of emphasis. The younger groups emphasize more cultural and educational activities and also have a very strong interest in vocational assistance, whereas the older members without children are more interested in the health and social welfare needs.

Question: What are the mechanisms by which the community can choose between these different priorities? To what extent are they competing for the same resources or are different resources available to them? To what extent is it feasible to develop a role in vocational assistance given the considerable interest on the part of the community?

d. Familiarity with the services available in the community

- ♦ Familiarity with the diversity of activities and services provided in the community is low. This lack of information needs to be addressed. Even respondents who use various community services are often unaware of many other services available in the community.

Question: How can the community best expand and disseminate information to the Jewish population about services and activities available?

- ♦ The services that are most widely used are the social-medical services. The respondents viewed the provision of these services as a major role of the Jewish community.

Question: How can these services be provided in a way that also promotes and strengthens the participants' Jewish identity, cultural life, and link with the Jewish community?

The issues presented above can assist the local Jewish community in developing its strategies and recommendations for the future development of Jewish life. There are various ways to approach these issues. It is for the Jewish community to decide what to do and how to go about meeting the needs of the community.

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