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ENGELBERG CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## Israel Emergency Campaign (IEC) Initiative of the United Jewish Communities (UJC/Jewish Federations of North America) after the Second Lebanon War

Evaluation of the Initiative for Children and Youth  
Implemented by JDC-Israel/Ashalim,  
the Jewish Agency for Israel and  
the Israel Trauma Coalition in the Galilee  
and Gaza Border Areas: Summary of the Findings

Paula Kahan-Strawczynski ♦ Dganit Levi

The study was initiated by the UJC/Jewish Federations  
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## Related Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute Publications

Levi, D.; Kahan-Strawczynski, P. 2009. *Evaluating the Implementation of an Initiative for Children and Youth by JDC-Israel, Ashalim, the Jewish Agency and the Israel Trauma Coalition in the Galilee and Gaza Border Areas with Emergency Resources Raised by the UJC/Jewish Federations of North America after the Second Lebanon War: Findings from Parents' Surveys* (forthcoming Internet publication, Hebrew).

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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 The Initiative to Rehabilitate the Galilee and Gaza Border Areas – General.....	1
1.2 Goals of the Initiative for Children and Youth in the Galilee and Gaza Border Areas ...	1
1.3 Target Population.....	2
1.4 Duration of the Initiative.....	2
1.5 Organizations in Charge of the Initiative.....	2
1.6. Evaluation Study.....	2
2. Study Design.....	3
2.1 Study Goals.....	3
2.2 Study Questions.....	3
2.3 Data Collection.....	3
2.4 Sources of Information.....	4
2.5 Localities Included in the Study.....	5
2.6 Data Analysis Strategy.....	6
2.7 Evaluation Reports.....	6
3. Main Findings.....	6
3.1 The Initiative and Changes in Geographical Distribution and in the Extent of Activities between the Two Measurement Points.....	6
3.2 Principles of Implementation in the First Year and Main Conclusions.....	10
3.3 Preparing for the Second Year of the Initiative.....	12
3.4 Goals of the Initiative and Changes of Emphasis in the Second Year.....	12
3.5 The Impact and Contribution of the Initiative.....	14
3.6 Difficulties Implementing the Initiative.....	17
3.7 Summary of Evaluation Findings.....	20
4. Directions for Action in Future Emergency Situations.....	22
4.1 Recommendations Proposed by Respondents at Locality Level.....	22
4.2 Directions for Action for a Future Rehabilitation Initiative at the Regional Level.....	25
Bibliography.....	28
Appendix – Study Questions, by Year and Source of Information.....	30

## List of Tables

Table 1: The Initiative, by Organizations in Charge, Areas of Activity and Participating Localities.....	9
Table 2: Students' Participation in the Activities, by Year of Activity and Population Group.....	10

# 1. Introduction

This report summarizes the findings from both years of the evaluation (2006/7, hereinafter the first year, and 2007/8, hereinafter the second year) of the implementation of the Israel Emergency Campaign Initiative for Children and Youth in the Galilee and Gaza border areas (hereinafter the IEC Initiative). The evaluation was funded by the United Jewish Communities (UJC/Jewish Federations of North America, hereinafter UJC).

## 1.1 The Initiative to Rehabilitate the Galilee and Gaza Border Areas – General

The initiative for children and youth in the Galilee and Gaza border areas is part of a more extensive initiative implemented in these areas. The goals of the Initiative were based on a holistic strategy to enhance the quality of life and empower residents by focusing on three areas – long-term educational needs, economic development and community empowerment through post-traumatic therapy – which were incorporated in both educational and community empowerment programs (UJC, undated). The Initiative included the following elements (Kahana, 2008):

- ◆ ***Strengthening crisis services through training:*** In order to create a system of emergency services within the local authorities, social workers and other professionals from different population groups, including educational staff, received special training.
- ◆ ***Expansion of existing programs:*** This was done by increasing the number of localities in which existing programs were implemented and by intensifying the work in localities where the programs were already being implemented. Examples of programs that were expanded include: The MALEH (Alternative Learning Space) program, for high school students on the verge of dropping out; the Third Half of the Summer Semester program to improve matriculation grades; the centers for demobilized soldiers and young people who have completed National Service; The Municipality Promotes Employment program; supportive communities for the elderly; communities supporting independent living for people with disabilities; and Mishol (for the integration of immigrants and non-immigrants) in neighborhoods with large concentrations of immigrants.

In addition to the rehabilitation Initiative, which was implemented with UJC emergency funding, the public sector and philanthropic organizations also funded and implemented programs in the north of Israel and the Gaza border areas.

## 1.2 Goals of the Initiative for Children and Youth in the Galilee and Gaza Border Areas

The Initiative had several defined goals (Michaeli and Dolev, 2006).

The Initiative was designed to respond to the direct impact of the Second Lebanon War (summer of 2006) on children and youth in the north of Israel and of the intensive barrage of missile attacks that have been launched from Gaza on children and youth in the south of the country

since 2006. Beyond coping with the impact of war, the Initiative strove to enhance educational activity and outputs considerably. Specifically, the objectives of the Initiative were:

1. To respond to the impact of the war on the children's emotional state and performance
2. To improve scholastic achievements, help weak students and reduce gaps
3. To increase utilization of enrichment and recreational programs.

### **1.3 Target Population**

Children and youth aged 3–17, their parents and the educational staff in each locality.

### **1.4 Duration of the Initiative**

From the outset, the Initiative to rehabilitate the Galilee and Gaza border areas was intended to last two years – 2006/7 and 2007/8 – starting January 2007. Its continuation into the second year (2007/8) was conditional on the evaluation of its implementation in the first year (2006/7).

### **1.5 Organizations in Charge of the Initiative**

The Initiative was based on a partnership of the Ministry of Education, the UJC and third-sector organizations in Israel. Three organizations were selected to be in charge of implementation: JDC-Israel/Ashalim (hereinafter JDC), the Jewish Agency Enrichment Fund for Children and Youth (hereinafter the Jewish Agency) and the Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC). The programs implemented were selected according to priorities set by the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Office. Before implementation began, the Ministry of Education convened all project partners to establish work methods that would optimize the use of resources. The division of responsibility among the organizations was as follows:

- ◆ **Jewish Agency:**
  - Enrichment and informal activities
  - Enhancing matriculation achievements (summer of 2007 only)
  - Value-related activities (May and June 2007 only)
- ◆ **JDC:**
  - Post-traumatic therapy
  - Interventions in schools and preschools
  - Training programs for educational staff
- ◆ **ITC**
  - Post-traumatic therapy.

### **1.6. Evaluation Study**

The work of these three organizations was the subject of an evaluation study commissioned by the UJC and conducted by the Engelberg Center for Children and Youth at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute together with the Planning, Research and Information Unit, Israel Department

at the Jewish Agency. A steering committee, comprising representatives of the UJC and representatives of the three organizations in charge oversaw the study.

## **2. Study Design**

### **2.1 Study Goals**

The study had two major goals:

- ◆ To monitor implementation of the main components of the Initiative, including the extent of the activities, the participation rates, activity features and participant characteristics, as well as the main strengths and weaknesses encountered during implementation
- ◆ To evaluate the progress of the population participating in the Initiative towards the desired goals.

### **2.2 Study Questions**

In accordance with the above goals, the following study questions were asked (for details of questions and source of information, see the appendix):

- ◆ What were the geographical spread, extent and diversity of the programs implemented in the localities? What changes were introduced between the first and second years of implementation?
- ◆ To what extent did the Initiative meet the needs of the target population?
- ◆ What strengths and difficulties were encountered during implementation?
- ◆ To what extent were the professionals at the head office and field levels, as well as the parents, satisfied with various aspects of the Initiative? What improvements did they propose?
- ◆ What was the Initiative's impact and what did it contribute to the children, the schools, the implementers and the organizations in charge?
- ◆ Would the Initiative continue until all the emergency funds had been allocated and, if so, in what format?
- ◆ What lessons could be learned and applied should another crisis situation arise in the future?

### **2.3 Data Collection**

- ◆ Data were collected from the professionals at two points in time:
  - T1: Several months after the Initiative had begun (April-June, 2007)
  - T2: One year after the Initiative had begun (January-April, 2008)
- ◆ The data from the parents were also collected at two points in time:
  - T1: At the end of the first year of implementation (July-August, 2007)
  - T2: At the end of the Initiative (June-July, 2008).

## 2.4 Sources of Information

The study collected data from three sources of information, as follows:

- ◆ ***Face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews with professionals:***
  - Head-office staff of the organizations in charge and the UJC (18 interviews in the first year, 18 in the second)
  - Ministry of Education personnel (4 in the first year, 5 in the second)
  - Professionals in the localities (37 in the first year, 45 in the second)
  - Program implementers (8 in the first year, 12 in the second)
  - Teachers (8 focus groups in the second year)
  - Middle and high school students (5 focus groups in the second year)
- ◆ ***Mapping of programs:*** The mapping compiled information about all of the programs implemented through the Initiative – the extent of the program, geographical distribution, areas of activity and target population.
  - Mapping of the Jewish Agency's work: In the first year, the data on work under the Jewish Agency's responsibility were collected from regional coordinators and reports of the implementing organizations. In the second year, the information was obtained from the coordinator and director of the Jewish Agency Enrichment Fund for Children and Youth and from regional coordinators, based on data stored in the Enrichment Fund's computerized reporting system. The second-year data differ in a few aspects from those obtained in the first year. Reporting in the second year included information about programs for special populations (enrichment programs for children with special needs and children at risk). The different categories of activities of each implementer were not itemized in the first year and the number of programs was therefore calculated according to the number of implementers. In the second year, the categories were specified and therefore the number of programs reflects the number of actual activities. The disparity between the number of programs and the program units implemented by the Jewish Agency in the first and second years evidently stems from this.
  - Mapping of JDC's work: In the first year, we started by contacting the implementing organizations and subsequently approached department heads at JDC and Ashalim. The data were checked and updated according to the JDC database and missing data were added. In the second year, the data were updated by department heads at JDC and Ashalim based on those from the first year.
  - Mapping of the ITC's work: The data were obtained from head-office staff and were later checked with member organizations of the ITC and the activity implementers. No data were collected in the first year since the ITC was not yet working in the Initiative.
- ◆ ***Parents' survey:*** The survey included telephone interviews with parents of first- through twelfth-graders. It did not include parents of children in special education or those who had dropped out of the education system. It was based on a representative sample of parents whose children went to schools in the localities of the study (one parent per family was interviewed). In the first year, 1,298 parents were interviewed about 2,374 children in the

relevant age groups. In the second, 1,346 parents were interviewed about 2,446 children. Each interview lasted around 10 minutes. The parents could choose to be interviewed in Hebrew, Arabic or Russian. The questionnaires were worded according to place of residence (parents living in the north were asked about the Initiative following the Second Lebanon War; parents in Sederot were asked about the Initiative in the wake of the security situation in the south).

Since there were no data files on the children and parents participating in the Initiative programs, it was decided to sample them from all families in the locality with children of the appropriate ages. The assumption was that a comprehensive initiative of this magnitude, which aimed at the entire locality, would have reached most of the children whose parents were interviewed in the survey. The sample size in each locality was determined by the proportion of families receiving child benefits out of the total families receiving child benefits in all localities of the study. In the second year, the sample of parents in Sederot was increased to allow for a more in-depth analysis of the group. The families were selected at random from the telephone directory. The interviews were conducted after a screening question had ascertained that the families were indeed suitable for the study population. The interviews continued until the required quota had been reached in each locality (per sample size). For details of the questions and source of information, see the appendix.

## 2.5 Localities Included in the Study

Twelve localities were included in the study in the first year and 14 in the second. They were selected during the first year of implementation, when two of the three organizations in charge (JDC and the Jewish Agency) were involved in the Initiative. The selection was deliberately aimed at areas where both the Jewish Agency and JDC offered a significant range and extent of activities. No Arab/Druze locality was found with a significant range and activities by both organizations. Thus, Beit Jann, where the Jewish Agency is very active, and Sakhnin, where the JDC activities are significant, were selected. Note that there are other localities with populations including members of the Arab/Druze sector.<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ ***Localities included in the study in the first year:*** Migdal Haemeq, Kiryat Yam, Matte Asher Regional Council, Upper Nazareth, Maalot Tarshiha, Sakhnin, Tiberias, Beit Jann, Acre, Karmiel, Safed, Sederot
- ◆ ***Localities included in the study in the second year:*** Towards the end of the first year of implementation, the ITC began its activities. Since the intention was also to focus on localities where the ITC was already significantly active, it was decided to collect information about its work in Nahariya and the Misgav Regional Council as well. The data on the work of the Jewish Agency and JDC were collected from the same localities as in the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> Maalot Tarshiha and Acre in the Matte Asher Regional Council.

## **2.6 Data Analysis Strategy**

All those interviewed were asked to report on the Initiative's impact and contribution, on the difficulties encountered and on the changes between the first and second years. Several strategies were employed to achieve an integrative analysis of all the data collected, with regard to:

- ◆ Integrating the reports received from different sources: head-office staff, key personnel in the localities, the authoritative sources at the implementing organizations, and school principals, teachers and students
- ◆ Issues and contents relevant to all the localities (as opposed to focusing on a specific locality)
- ◆ All the programs (as opposed to focusing on a specific program)
- ◆ The Initiative as a whole, with no distinction between the organizations in charge.

The integrative analysis combined and compared the data obtained from all the sources. When respondents were not unanimous on an issue, the reporters are noted. Unless noted otherwise, there was consensus among the respondents.

## **2.7 Evaluation Reports**

Three research reports on the evaluation of the Initiative have been written:

- ◆ Summary report of the findings of the evaluation of the first year (Kahan-Strawczynski et al., 2007)
- ◆ Summary report of the findings of the parents' survey (Levi and Kahan-Strawczynski, 2009)
- ◆ Summary report of all the study findings (the current report).

# **3. Main Findings**

## **3.1 The Initiative and Changes in Geographical Distribution and in the Extent of Activities between the Two Measurement Points**

### **a. Variety of Programs**

- ◆ The Initiative comprised 50 different types of program in the first year and 211 in the second. The disparity primarily reflects the difference in the reporting of Jewish Agency activities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Jewish Agency data provided in the second year differed from those provided in the first year in several ways: (1) In the first year, no information was provided about programs for special populations, which were included in the data for the second year; (2) In the first year, the reporting was by implementer and the types of activity conducted by each implementer were not specified. As a result, each implementer was counted as one program. In the second year, the types of activity of each implementer were reported. Hence the number of types of activity was counted rather than the number of implementers (leading to an increase in the number of enrichment programs).

- ◆ The Initiative focused on the following areas: Improving scholastic achievements (including matriculation exams) and preventing dropout; post-traumatic therapy:<sup>3</sup> early childhood programs and programs for children with special needs; enrichment programs and value-related education. The main focus was on two of these areas – enrichment programs as well as improved scholastic achievement and dropout prevention – which were addressed by 185 types of programs in the second year.
- ◆ The large number of types of program and the variety of areas they addressed illustrates the extent and diversity of the Initiative.
- ◆ Most of the programs were for children at elementary school, with the exception of post-traumatic therapy, which was provided mainly in preschools and for educational staff and parents.
- ◆ A small percentage of the children received direct therapy (individual or group) through the post-traumatic therapy activities.

**b. Focus of Activity of the Three Organizations in Charge** (see Table 1)

***Jewish Agency Activities:***

- ◆ At the end of the first year, the implementation of programs on value-related education and matriculation exams was concluded.
- ◆ Enrichment programs were implemented in 36 localities. They were divided into two categories:
  - General enrichment: 41,000 children participated in the first year and 54,000 in the second.
  - Special enrichment for children and youth at risk (e.g., immigrants): Approximately 6,000 children participated in each of the two years.
- ◆ In the first year, it was planned that 55% of all elementary-school aged children in the 36 localities in which the Jewish Agency was active would participate in enrichment programs in school or after school, each child taking part in two programs.
- ◆ In the second year, enrichment activities were arranged differently. The plan was for 100% of the children of elementary school age in the 36 localities in which the Jewish Agency was working to participate in one activity (two activities in the Gaza border areas) either in school or after school.
- ◆ According to the parents' reports:

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<sup>3</sup> "The term 'psychological trauma' [is used] to describe a condition in which a person has experienced a difficult event that has wounded his psyche ... Two factors make an event traumatic: Threat of death or serious injury to us or to another person and a strong feeling of fear and helplessness ... The traumatic event is usually unpredictable and uncontrollable. It may shatter our sense of security and leave us feeling vulnerable and agitated." From The Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychotrauma (ICTP) website: <http://www.traumaweb.org/content.asp?PageId=1&lang=En>

- About half of the children at elementary school participated in enrichment programs in school in the first year and about two-thirds (63%) participated in the second year.
- In the second year, every Jewish child (in Sederot and in the north) participated on average in more enrichment programs in school (an increase from 1.6 enrichment activities per child, on average, in 2006/7 to 2 activities in the second year). In the Arab/Druze sector, no significant difference was found between the two years (2.4 enrichment activities on average each year).
- In both years, 44% of the students participated in after-school enrichment activities.
- In the first year, every child participated on average in 1.45 after-school enrichment activities and, in the second year, 1.53 after-school enrichment activities. In the second year, children in Sederot participated in fewer enrichment activities; in the Arab/Druze sector, they participated in more enrichment activities; in the Jewish sector in the north, the participation rate was similar in both years.

#### ***JDC Activities:***

- ◆ In the first year, activities were implemented in 58 localities with 51,500 children participating in them. Some of the activities were for parents and for the staff of schools and preschools.
- ◆ The second year was marked by cutbacks and a sharper focus in both the extent and categories of programs:
  - The programs were implemented in only 38 localities. The participation rate declined by 22%, as compared with the first year.
  - Programs that had been implemented on a small scale were discontinued in the second year, as were programs that JDC representatives felt had a relatively minor long-term impact, programs in localities where cooperation with the local authority had failed and programs with implementation difficulties.
  - There was greater emphasis on activities in the Gaza border area and in the Arab/Druze sector.
  - In certain cases, successful programs were expanded.
  - With regard to emotional support, the parents' reports revealed that in the first year about a fifth (19%) of all the children received emotional support; in the second year, there was a sharp decline to 6%.

#### ***ITC Activities:***

- ◆ Activities of ITC member organizations in the second year of the Initiative actually began towards the end of the first year of activity.
- ◆ Activities were conducted in 57 localities. Some 4,600 adults participated in counseling and training programs and 9,600 children participated in preventive programs (6,000 were identified with emotional problems and a few of them were referred for direct therapy).

- ◆ The ITC's work focused more on strengthening the support systems for children than on providing them with direct emotional help.

**Table 1: The Initiative, by Organizations in Charge, Areas of Activity and Participating Localities (Absolute Numbers)**

Organization in Charge	Area of Activity	No. of Programs*	No. of Localities	No. of Participants
<b><i>Jewish Agency</i></b>	- Enrichment in school and after school - Value-related education - Matriculation exams	162	36	60,000 children
<b><i>JDC-Israel/Ashalim</i></b>	- Post-traumatic therapy - Promoting scholastic achievements and preventing dropout - Preschool programs - Programs for children with special needs	35	Year 1: 58 Year 2: 38	51,500 children
<b><i>Israel Trauma Coalition</i></b>	- Training of professionals and parents - Identifying children with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms - Minimal direct therapy for children	14	57	4,600 adults

\*The word "program" refers to all the localities and locations where the programs were implemented (e.g., all the localities and the schools where a particular program was implemented). The information is taken from the mapping of the localities in the study, which was conducted in the second year.

- ◆ The parents' survey, which, as noted, focused on children aged 6–17 (see Table 2) revealed that:
  - Three-quarters (75%) of the children of elementary school age participated in activities in at least one of the following areas: Enrichment programs in school, after-school enrichment programs, scholastic assistance and emotional support.
- ◆ The change between the first and second years in the number of areas of activity in which each elementary schoolchild participated is particularly prominent in the Arab/Druze sector: The percentage of children who did not participate in a single activity rose from 22% in the first year to 30% in the second. Accordingly, there was a decline in the participation rate in two or more areas, from 36% to 20%, respectively. About a fifth of the parents felt that during the two years that rehabilitation activities were implemented, there was a greater number of activities for children and youth in the locality.

**Table 2: Students' Participation in Activities, by Year of Activity and Population Group (Percent)**

	2006/7				2007/8			
	Total	Jewish, Sederot	Jewish, North	Arab/Druze, North	Total	Jewish, Sederot	Jewish, North	Arab/Druze, North
<b>Area of activity<sup>1</sup></b>								
Enrichment in school <sup>2</sup>	<b>50*</b>	49	49	63	<b>63**</b>	67	59	78
After-school enrichment <sup>2</sup>	<b>44</b>	39	45	42	<b>44**</b>	41	48	30
Scholastic assistance <sup>3</sup>	<b>28**</b>	36	31	11	<b>22**</b>	24	25	11
Emotional assistance <sup>3,4</sup>	<b>19**</b>	34**	15	35	<b>6**</b>	19**	5	3
<b>Number of areas of activity in which each elementary schoolchild participated –</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100**</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100**</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
0	<b>25</b>	26	25	22	<b>25</b>	20	25	30
1	<b>35</b>	24	35	42	<b>41</b>	36	39	50
2	<b>30</b>	35	29	31	<b>27</b>	35	29	16
3-4	<b>10</b>	15	11	5	<b>7</b>	9	7	4

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

Note: Asterisks in the "Total" columns indicate a significant difference between the three population groups in the study – Jewish in Sederot, Jewish in the north, and Arab/Druze in the north. Asterisks in the "Jewish Sederot" column indicate a significant difference between the Jewish sector in Sederot and the Jewish sector in the north.

<sup>1</sup>Percentages do not add up to 100% since every student could take part in more than one activity.

<sup>2</sup>Elementary school students only

<sup>3</sup>All students

<sup>4</sup>In the first year survey: The children received emotional support in the first year. In the second year survey: The children received emotional support in the first or second year or in the first and second years.

### 3.2 Principles of Implementation in the First Year and Main Conclusions

In the first year, decisions were coordinated at the head-office level. The localities that would benefit from the Initiative were selected according to priorities set by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Education. In the first year, the respondents from the organizations in charge – JDC and the Jewish Agency – established the main guidelines and working strategies for developing the Initiative, as follows:

- ◆ To achieve the broadest geographical distribution and impact within a short time, by means of:
  - Taking advantage of existing physical and organizational infrastructures, e.g., personnel, by increasing existing staffing positions and strengthening the existing framework of the extended school day

- Selecting national implementing organizations that were well known to the organizations in charge, that were able to organize quickly and that had worked with the organizations in charge in the past
  - Selecting long-running programs that were considered effective and that could be expanded in two ways: (1) By increasing the number of participants and the number of locations in localities where the programs were already being implemented; (2) By extending existing programs to new localities. In order to provide a suitable response to needs that arose due to the war, the programs were sometimes modified in the course of implementation.
  - Utilizing knowledge that had accumulated from previous security crises in Israel (e.g., the Disengagement and the first and second Intifadas); by taking advantage of existing knowledge and infrastructures and recruiting properly-trained professionals and volunteers, and by utilizing tools developed in previous years
  - Implementing programs that had been fully planned but never actually implemented, such as the JDC/Ministry of Education's School Change program.
- ◆ To achieve maximum transparency and ensure that the planned responses would reach the target population, it was decided not to transfer funds directly to the authorities (but, rather, via the programs).
  - ◆ The UJC funding was earmarked for expanding activities or implementing new activities, rather than to cover the costs of programs already being implemented in the localities.

The speed with which the Initiative organized and began implementation in the localities had its shortcomings and compromises between the optimum and the viable in the short term were necessary. Some of these disadvantages are listed in the summary report of the first year:<sup>4</sup>

- ◆ The most prominent difficulty was the explicit sense of many local authorities that they had been excluded from the decision-making process with regard to areas of activity, types of program, ways of working, the number of children and the division of activities between schools and external frameworks.
- ◆ There was a sense of being flooded with programs and having no agency to coordinate them.
- ◆ Little was done to suit the programs to the localities' needs. In addition, some localities reported that the process of examining needs had been skipped, while others said the process had been partial or superficial.
- ◆ Not all the relevant partners were included (e.g., in some localities, representatives of the municipal absorption office or the social service department were excluded).
- ◆ The reporting system was neither standardized nor satisfactory.
- ◆ There were difficulties hiring professional, quality staff.

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<sup>4</sup> Kahan-Strawczynski et al. 2007

The swift entry into the localities also had some noteworthy successes:

- ◆ The rapid deployment of a large number of programs for a large number of children and youth
- ◆ Programs based on infrastructures that already existed in the localities
- ◆ The sense of satisfaction among professionals with the extent, diversity and quality of the activities.

### **3.3 Preparing for the Second Year of the Initiative**

The findings of the first year, which were presented to the organizations in charge and to the UJC in 2007, contributed to the preparations for the continuation of the Initiative in the second year.

In the second year, the organizations conducted deliberations, which included planning and preparation in an attempt to improve and fine-tune the match between the programs and the needs of the children, schools and local authorities. The process was conducted methodically and with great transparency, including a change of emphases, as described below. This reflected the good and productive procedural work done by all parties involved at the local authority as they prepared for the upcoming school year. As a result of the methodical planning process and of learning the lessons of the first year of implementation, the quality of the programs provided was greatly enhanced. The improvement was reflected in programs that were implemented by more professional facilitators, in adherence to contents, in re-writing the professional materials, in providing a support system for employees and in stronger cooperation with the schools.

### **3.4 Goals of the Initiative and Changes of Emphasis in the Second Year**

- ◆ Through the Initiative, the donors sought to create a strong, proficient and well-coordinated system that would cope better with crises in the future. In the first year, two strategies were employed to achieve their goal:
  - Providing responses to salient needs arising from the war. This was done by identifying children with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms of emotional problems, providing guidance to educational staff on how to speak to children about the events of the war, assisting children with special needs and providing enrichment activities – a return to normal routine.
  - Strengthening organizational infrastructure for the future by training educational staff in areas of emotional support, scholastic assistance and early childhood programs.
- ◆ In the second year, there was greater emphasis on strengthening organizational infrastructure for the future. In addition to continuing programs with these emphases, which were already

being implemented, more efforts were made to help build up community resilience<sup>5</sup> and strengthen local and civil society; these were given high priority. This meant investing in long-term programs, searching for ways to continue the activities in the future, strengthening infrastructure, assimilating work procedures and strengthening community forces, such as the family, local organizations and the local authority. For example:

- The Jewish Agency strove to empower local organizations and agencies, inter alia by expanding work with local nonprofit organizations, involving volunteers in activities, working with municipal institutions and organizing community events. These processes enabled the Agency's Enrichment Fund to conceptually formulate its work methods.
  - In the parents' survey conducted in the second year, the parents were asked about various aspects of participation in activities and the strengthening of their children's social environment. The findings reveal that about half of the parents (51%) reported that the enrichment activities included joint activities for parents and children, in which they had taken part. Most of the parents (68%), particularly in the Arab/ Druze sector (80%), believed such activities were important.
  - Furthermore, a significant proportion of the parents reported that their children had participated in activities that contributed to the school environment or to the locality, within the framework of the school enrichment classes (47%) and after-school enrichment programs (40%). Here too, children in the Arab/Druze sector evidently participated in more activities of this type (69% at school and 53% in after-school enrichment). No difference was found among the population groups as to the degree of importance that parents attach to activities contributing to their children's environment: the great majority viewed this activity as important.
  - JDC worked to strengthen the localities in three main ways: Training and workshops for school staff; creating stronger ties among the services at the local level through the *Moutav Yachdav* ("Better Together") program; implementing consultancy programs for the local authority through JDC-ELKA<sup>6</sup> regarding the interface between civil society, the business sector and youth volunteerism.
- ◆ In the second year, many of the respondents from the organizations in charge, the implementers and the localities stressed the great importance of continuing activities that had begun through the current Initiative so as to improve infrastructure and long-term responses in the localities.

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<sup>5</sup> Community or social resilience is defined as the ability to withstand potential loss or to recover from loss/damage. In other words it is the ability to cope quickly and effectively with severe situations including trauma and deviation from routine (Bleich, 2007; Kimhi and Shamai, 2006, Ben-Nesher, Lahad and Schacham, 2002 in Zieigelman et al., no year given).

<sup>6</sup> The Association for the Development and Advancement of Manpower in the Social Services in Israel, established by JDC-Israel and the Government of Israel.

### 3.5 The Impact and Contribution of the Initiative

#### a. Sense of Support for the Localities

Many of the respondents from the localities noted that the UJC, the state and the various organizations involved in the Initiative had given them a sense of backing, support and of an attempt to meet the war-related needs, especially in the areas of education and children, which were the focus of the Initiative.

#### b. Contribution to the Different Population Groups

In the first year, administrative staffs in the localities were asked how they perceived the children's situation in the aftermath of the war. Additionally, both times the parents were interviewed, they were asked to note the main war-related problems their children had experienced to which the locality had not responded. The question aimed to examine the extent to which the responses provided for children and youth were meeting their needs. Several characteristics were identified among the children and youth after the war.

- ◆ Increased anxiety and disquiet at school – resulting in behavioral problems
- ◆ Symptoms of emotional difficulties of various levels, from mild anxiety through emotional troubles requiring individual therapy
- ◆ Breakdown in the confidence in the community and a diminished sense of belonging among youth, particularly immigrant youth
- ◆ Increased risk behavior among the youth
- ◆ Exacerbated chronic distress conditions among children and youth, such as poor scholastic performance and emotional problems (unconnected to the war), etc.
- ◆ Exacerbated chronic distress among families, e.g., neglecting children, greater poverty, etc.
- ◆ A need for places to go and for recreational activities, particularly in the Gaza border areas and in the Arab/Druze sector.

The findings from the two years of the study reveal that in the localities and areas in which programs were implemented, there was a positive change among the children, parents and educational staff at preschools and schools compared with the situation in the aftermath of the war, which the parents had reported in the first year.

Contribution to population groups:

- ◆ **Preschoolers:** Efforts were made to build playgrounds at preschools and to train staff how to work with children in the playground and how to identify children with paramedical problems.
- ◆ **Students:**
  - The Initiative made it possible to provide therapy and services, such as enrichment activities and scholastic assistance, to a population that in most cases does not usually benefit from such activities. For example, the parents' survey in the first year revealed that

parents in all population groups, particularly in the Arab/Druze sector, believed that enrichment programs had been expanded since the year before the war. Positive comment was also made about the process of identifying and treating personal and scholastic problems caused directly by the war or existing problems exacerbated by the war.

- In the first year, professionals from the local authority reported that the Initiative had provided an opportunity to promote topics that had not previously been budgeted, e.g., the development of enrichment programs in the Arab/Druze sector. The Initiative also enabled some of the localities to broaden the diversity of activities in existing areas, such as programs to promote achievement.
- With regard to scholastic assistance, the parents reported a fair amount of scholastic difficulties: In the first year, it was reported that over half (58%) of the students at high school and 40% of the children at elementary school had difficulty in at least one school subject. In the second year, the extent of difficulties reported declined (to 40% and 30%, respectively). About half of the students received some form of scholastic assistance (students at elementary school and high school, in both years that the Initiative was implemented).
- Importantly, the parents of children who participated in the UJC Initiative (scholastic, emotional support and enrichment activities) expressed relatively great satisfaction with the activities. For example, some 60% of the parents reported that the scholastic assistance their children were given was sufficient and helped them to advance (in both years).
- ◆ **Parents:** Several programs included activities with parents. The implementers of these programs felt that the activities helped strengthen the parents' confidence in their children's schools. Training programs and workshops for parents were also conducted and provided them with tools to cope with their children's behavior and emotional problems. The parents' survey revealed that in the first year, 11% of the parents and, in the second, 17%, participated in counseling regarding post-traumatic therapy. These parents expressed great satisfaction with the counseling. Over half of the parents who participated in the counseling in the first year and 74% in the second considered that it had helped them to a great extent or a very great extent. A high percentage of all the parents expressed a wish to participate in counseling in the future: 55% of the Jewish parents in the north, 63% of the parents in Sederot, and 85% of the parents from the Arab/Druze sector.
- ◆ **Educational staff:** Professionals from the implementing organizations and from the organizations in charge noted that at the schools where programs were implemented, members of the educational staff had become more aware of the children's overall needs (in addition to their scholastic needs) and their ability to cope with these needs had improved. These same professionals reported that they considered the staff members better able than previously to identify children with emotional difficulties and refer them for therapy.

### **c. Organizing Post-Traumatic Therapy**

- ◆ Regarding post-traumatic therapy, a strategic decision was taken to focus chiefly on training service staffs (chiefly at schools) and parents and on getting the services organized (e.g.,

setting up resilience centers). This was to supplement the direct therapy for children that the Ministry of Education's psychological-counseling service was expected to provide.

- ◆ As stated, between a tenth and a sixth of the parents participated in the counseling on coping with their children's emotional difficulties. Between half and three-quarters of them were satisfied with the counseling and most would like to receive such counseling in the future.
- ◆ According to the implementers of post-traumatic therapy at JDC and ITC, the Initiative contributed to consolidating the post-traumatic therapy system by preparing emergency teams.
- ◆ With the assistance of ITC, the concept of a "resilience center" – i.e., the mapping of needs and the integration of services and responses for emergency situations and emotional difficulties in the locality – was assimilated in several localities in the north and Sederot.

#### **d. Cooperation within the Local Authorities**

Relations among the various players at the local authorities were consolidated. Pre-existing platforms in some localities were strengthened and new platforms for future cooperation were established. In many of the localities, office staffers were very involved in the locality and in some, there was a real sense of mobilization – the authorities were committed, acknowledged the programs' importance and in some cases even provided co-funding.

#### **e. Professionalization of the Implementing Organizations**

For many of the implementing organizations, the Initiative constituted a unique opportunity to build up a professional staff, to develop and to learn about issues such as working with schools, developing documentation skills and identifying the characteristics of the participants. The Initiative also allowed these organizations to position themselves and to strengthen and expand activities in the localities.

#### **f. Building a Civil Society**

In several of the localities, the Initiative began a process of building a civil society and increasing resident involvement by consolidating cooperation within the locality, encouraging community activities and expanding work with volunteers. As noted, with regard to enrichment, various community and volunteer activities were conducted. For example, about half of the parents who participated in the parents' survey in the second year reported that activities had been conducted that contributed to the locality or the school environment within the framework of enrichment activities at the school.

#### **g. Increasing Motivation to Participate in Additional Enrichment and Recreational Activities**

One of the goals of the rehabilitation programs was to increase the utilization of enrichment and recreational activities. When this topic was examined, the parents' reports revealed that:

- ◆ Most of the parents in the Arab/Druze sector (70%) reported that their children had expressed interest in participating in enrichment activities in the future. A significant proportion of parents in the Jewish sector (51% in Sederot and 43% in the north) reported likewise.
- ◆ In fact, about a third of the parents (30%) sought information on or registered their children for after-school enrichment programs, after their children had participated in enrichment activities in school or after school. In the Arab/Druze sector, 53% of the parents did so.
- ◆ The great majority of Arab/Druze parents (90%) noted that they now attached greater importance to their children's participation in enrichment after-school programs. Parents in the Jewish sector also attached great importance to it, but to a lesser extent (approximately 65%).

#### **h. Contributions Specifically to Sederot**

Two particular aspects of post-traumatic therapy apply specifically to Sederot.

- ◆ In contrast to the north, post-traumatic therapy was expanded in Sederot.
- ◆ Special efforts were made to coordinate the many therapy providers working in the city, with regard to the division of work and the definition of each provider's work.

### **3.6 Difficulties Implementing the Initiative**

Alongside the Initiative's contributions, the study findings brought to light several difficulties in implementation:

#### **a. Coordination and Inadequate Cooperation**

- ◆ ***At the head-office level:*** As noted, before implementation of the Initiative began in the first year, the organizations in charge reached agreement as to how to divide the work and areas of activity among themselves. However, during implementation, each of the organizations in charge worked independently. The UJC's representatives in Israel operated similarly, working separately with each organization. During the evaluation study, a steering committee comprising representatives of the organizations in charge and the UJC was appointed. The committee discussed research proposals as well as receiving progress reports and being presented with the research findings. These committee meetings were the only point of contact among all the partners.
- ◆ ***Among the organizations in charge at the locality level:*** Before implementation began in the first year, it was decided that where several organizations would be working in the localities, one of them would assume the task of coordinator and would work with all the parties involved in the Initiative in the locality. Nevertheless, it was reported that the plan to appoint a coordinator for each locality did not come to fruition.
- ◆ ***Among the organizations in charge, the implementers and the local authorities:***
  - Although some local authorities were satisfied with the cooperation with the organizations in charge and the implementers, some implementing organizations reported difficulties establishing formal cooperation.

- According to key personnel at the organizations in charge and the implementing organizations, as in the first stage of the evaluation, in localities where the organizations in charge and the implementers had not previously worked together or had a history of failed attempts at implementing programs, it was hard to consolidate their efforts. At best, they managed to implement programs on a small scale, leaving most of the population's needs unmet.
  - Some local authorities indicated that in the second year, the organizations in charge showed greater flexibility regarding local needs and requests. However, others reported that decisions were made without consulting them.
- ◆ ***Regular reporting to the UJC:*** No standardized reporting system was established for the organizations in charge. Each organization had its own system, which made it harder to monitor implementation of the Initiative and to ensure coordination among the organizations.

#### **b. Uncertainty regarding the Continuation of the Initiative**

The uncertainty applied to two main areas:

- ◆ ***Uncertainty about the duration of continued implementation:*** Already in the first year, one of the issues that most preoccupied the professionals at all levels was the uncertainty about the duration of the Initiative. This feeling persisted in the second year, hampering ongoing work and posing a dilemma about starting the process of phasing out the Initiative or continuing the process of developing it.
- ◆ ***Uncertainty about the continuation of the Initiative's component parts:*** At the Initiative's organizational stage in the first year and, especially, the second, the Jewish Agency and JDC gave thought to the way that the Initiative should be phased out and took steps to ensure continuity (albeit partial). They sought alternative means of funding and looked into the following: Funding by the implementers; joining up with existing programs; funding by the local authorities and the state; enlisting new partners. Although these efforts met with some success, at the time of writing it remains unclear to what extent the programs will continue. In most of the localities, it was emphasized that the swift mobilization of the organizations and the wide scope of the programs produced a sense of solidarity and support. In contrast, the phasing out of the Initiative was accompanied by a sense of disappointment.

#### **c. Limited Extent of Direct Responses for Therapy for Children with Emotional Difficulties**

- ◆ ***Direct emotional support for children:*** As noted, a strategic decision about post-traumatic therapy was made in the second year to concentrate mainly on training service teams (particularly in schools) and parents. However, various findings indicate that many children in need of emotional support (to varying extents) did not receive any:
  - The mapping of the work of the organizations in charge, which was conducted for the first-year evaluation, showed that direct emotional assistance provided to children through the Initiative was very limited and the number of children receiving it was very small: Some 6,000 children in the Galilee and Gaza border areas received post-traumatic therapy. The vast majority (5,600) were preschoolers diagnosed with PTSD symptoms or participating

in the *Hibuki* ("huggy") program, for which the staff taking care of them received special training. In the second year, despite the ITC's participation, the response was even more limited. Some 4,100 children participated in programs – JDC continued to coordinate the work with preschoolers and ITC worked with junior high and high school students.

- The parents' reports revealed that in the first year, 78% of the children in Sederot and about half of those in the north (Jewish and Arab/Druze sectors) had emotional problems. In the second year, the figure remained similar in the Jewish sector (north and south) while the percentage of Arab/Druze children with emotional troubles declined to 20% (according to the parents' reports). Nineteen percent of the children reported to have emotional difficulties in the first year and 11% of those in the second year received some form of direct emotional support. The percentage of children with emotional problems who received assistance declined in the second year, both in absolute terms (the number of children who received assistance) and in proportion to the children in need of emotional assistance.
  - In the first year, most of the parents (79%) noted (in an open question) that the locality had not responded to the emotional difficulties among children and youth. The percentage declined to 32% in the second year. The decline may have also stemmed from the greater awareness of parents in the second year of the assistance provided. With regard to children in Sederot, in both years about half of the parents reported that their children's emotional difficulties posed a problem and that the response of the locality had been inadequate.
  - In the second year, only 5% of all parents reported (in an open question) that the emotional assistance and professional counseling their children had received helped them cope with difficulties caused by the war.
  - In interviews, ITC professionals reported that the children's emotional state was still not good, citing studies conducted by ITC professionals (Lahad et al., 2008; Benbenishty et al., 2007, Lahad, 2007).
  - Further evidence of this was revealed in studies monitoring JDC's post-traumatic therapy work (Cohen, 2007; Sadeh, 2007).
  - Professionals from the implementing organizations providing training for teachers reported that teachers found it hard to cope with their students' difficulties in this area.
- ◆ ***Extent of therapy per client:*** Post-traumatic therapists noted that children receiving therapy had had up to 12 sessions and that, in some cases, it had not met their needs. The parents also reported that the assistance was insufficient. Thus, only 55% of the parents in the first year and 62% in the second, believed the assistance was sufficient.

#### **d. Difficulty Recruiting Skilled Staff of a High Quality**

Professionals reported difficulties recruiting skilled, high-standard staff, chiefly post-traumatic therapists though also other professionals in the Arab/Druze and ultra-Orthodox sectors. As a result, teachers reported feeling that some staff members in various programs were unqualified.

### **3.7 Summary of Evaluation Findings**

This section is a brief summary of the main findings of the study. They indicate a high degree of coordination in the decision-making process at head-office level. The geographic spread was in keeping with priorities set by the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Office and there was a clear division of work among the organizations in charge.

The Initiative included over 200 programs in a range of areas: enrichment, value-related education, scholastic achievement and dropout prevention, post-traumatic therapy, early childhood programs and programs for children with special needs. The programs were implemented in 36–58 localities and tens of thousands of children participated. These data illustrate the magnitude and diversity of the Initiative.

During the initial implementation in the localities, the Initiative took advantage of existing program staff and infrastructure and the long-standing contacts between the organizations in charge and implementing organizations known to them through previous work in the localities. This helped facilitate the rapid deployment process. Moreover, the authorities coped well with the challenges presented by having to implement the Initiative in a short time, by means of one or more of the following:

- ◆ Some localities reported that they had a clear picture of the desired directions of the work, the needs of the population of children, etc., which helped focus the activity.
- ◆ Some localities reported that a local dialogue forum met regularly and underpinned decision-making.
- ◆ Some of the local authorities mobilized for the Initiative. They made a commitment, recognized the importance of the programs and provided co-funding.

The study findings indicate that the Initiative contributed much to residents (children and parents), to the local organizational infrastructures and to the organizations in charge. Among the main contributions were:

#### **a. Residents**

- ◆ Services were provided to a population that generally had not benefited from activities such as enrichment and scholastic assistance. The parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with these programs.
- ◆ The residents gained a sense of support and felt that "someone cared."
- ◆ Residents acquired a deeper understanding of the importance of enrichment programs and their desire to participate in such activities in the future increased, particularly in the Arab/Druze sector.
- ◆ The parents were given tools to identify children's emotional difficulties and problems and to cope with their own stress and that of their children.

- ◆ Although the coverage of programs in areas such as scholastic assistance and post-traumatic therapy was limited in relation to the needs noted by the parents, the latter expressed a high level of satisfaction with the programs provided and reported that they had been helpful to their children.
- ◆ The sense of equality between the Jewish and Arab/Druze sectors was strengthened.
- ◆ The extent of activities for children and youth in the Arab/Druze sector in all areas, particularly enrichment and scholastic assistance, increased.

#### **b. Locality Organizational Infrastructure**

- ◆ Educational staffs were given training in post-traumatic therapy as a supplement to direct therapy for children. The training included identification of PTSD symptoms among children, on which to base referrals to professional therapy, methods of preparing for and managing emergency situations and ways of coping with stress.
- ◆ Relationships among the various parties at the local authorities were consolidated: Platforms that existed in some of the localities were strengthened and new platforms for future cooperation were created.
- ◆ An interdisciplinary, inter-organizational work model was set up.
- ◆ The planning and organizing of post-traumatic therapy services (e.g., setting up resilience centers) were enhanced.
- ◆ The Initiative helped to empower local nonprofit organizations.
- ◆ The project strengthened civil society and increased resident involvement in several localities, by encouraging community activities and expanding work with volunteers.

#### **c. The Organizations in Charge and the Implementing Organizations**

- ◆ Their presence in the localities was positioned, strengthened and expanded.
- ◆ An opportunity was presented to the implementing organizations to develop and learn about topics such as working with different agencies, e.g., schools, while becoming more professional and better acquainted with the residents.

Along with the achievements and contributions made by the Initiative, there were a number of difficulties in implementation, most notably:

- ◆ Inadequate cooperation and coordination among the organizations in charge: The organizations worked separately both at the head office and local levels. The UJC representatives worked with each organization separately since in practice none of the coordinating bodies planned for each locality was appointed. This led to the situation in which the meetings of the study's steering committee (which comprised representatives of all the organizations in charge) provided the main opportunity for them to meet and update one another. The lack of a standard reporting system also made it hard for the UJC to monitor implementation of the programs and ensure coordination among the organizations.

- ◆ Dissatisfaction of the local authorities about not being included in decision-making processes about matters that concerned them: The need to start working quickly over a broad geographical spread in the first year (2006/7) created difficulties regarding the way the process was conducted at locality level. There was a feeling in many local authorities that they had not been involved in decisions about areas of activities, types of programs, number of children and the division of activities between schools and external agencies. In the second year, there was greater planning and involvement of the authorities in an attempt to enhance and fine-tune the suitability of the programs to the needs of the children, schools and authorities. The organizations in charge and the implementing organizations had difficulty establishing a methodical system of working in local authorities where they had never worked together or where past attempts to do so had failed. This was reflected in the limited extent of activities and the low participation of the target population in the various activities in these localities.
- ◆ Having to cope with uncertainty about the future of the Initiative, particularly about the continuation of its components.
- ◆ Limited extent of direct responses to the children's emotional needs, since most of the efforts in this area had been aimed at training staff in post-trauma.

## **4. Directions for Action in Future Emergency Situations**

The recommended directions for action are presented in two parts:

- ◆ The first part presents the recommendations proposed by respondents in interviews conducted in the second year (towards the end of the Initiative), focusing on the locality level.
- ◆ The second part elaborates directions for action regarding the method of implementing a regional initiative, with the involvement of several external agencies in a locality immediately after an emergency situation – such as the UJC Initiative. These recommendations are based on information gathered in the entire evaluation study.

### **4.1 Recommendations Proposed by Respondents at Locality Level**

The Galilee and Gaza border rehabilitation Initiative taught the local authorities much about the way to prepare for emergency situations and helped them to structure processes of intervention during a time of crisis and subsequent rehabilitation. Respondents were asked to recommend a course of action for future emergencies and to note the main lessons they had learned from the current Initiative. Their responses frequently related to issues beyond the boundaries of the UJC Initiative and concerned the entire array of needs of children and their families during and after an emergency. Likewise, some of the recommendations reflect steps that were taken during the current Initiative but never evolved into full-fledged responses.

The recommendations relate to three different periods: During the emergency, during the rehabilitation immediately following the emergency and in periods of calm. It was recommended that the following processes be improved and strengthened.

#### **a. Recommendations for Action during an Emergency**

Steps should be taken to:

- ◆ ***Expand the information system for residents and ensure a constant flow of information:*** Respondents emphasized the importance of an available, ongoing information system updating residents about the services in operation (e.g., clinics, post offices and stores) and about professionals and their areas of competence (e.g., the authorities responsible for providing food and water, etc.).
- ◆ ***Ensure that children in need receive the right scholastic, emotional and tension-relieving responses:*** Respondents noted the importance of these responses, particularly in the Arab/Druze sector, which reported a paucity of responses during the Second Lebanon War.
- ◆ ***Improve the joint response of all professionals in the local authority to any possible type of emergency situation:*** It was emphasized that the authorities need to continue improving their preparedness to mobilize professionals in the locality and allow for an emergency's special circumstances in order to attend to the essential needs of different population groups in the locality – e.g., care for the elderly, medical treatment, etc.

#### **b. Recommendations for Rehabilitation Immediately after an Emergency**

Steps should be taken to:

- ◆ ***Increase the identification of children showing symptoms of emotional difficulties and the provision of therapy to those in need of it:*** Respondents noted the need to expand identification of children exhibiting symptoms of emotional difficulties, including PTSD symptoms, and offer them direct therapy for a year or more after the emergency is over since the symptoms may only appear then.
- ◆ ***Expand the direct responses to children's emotional needs:*** Many respondents believe that future rehabilitation programs should provide more extensive direct assistance to children and youth and offer a broader diversity of responses in addition to the training and workshops for staff and parents.
- ◆ ***Make budgets more flexible:*** Some respondents from the local authorities asked for greater flexibility in the budgeting of rehabilitation programs in their locality to ensure a better match between needs and programs in every locality. In contrast, professionals from the implementing organizations preferred not to transfer funds directly to the localities, in keeping with the current Initiative. However, they did recommend that the local authorities be more involved in planning and implementing the Initiative.
- ◆ ***Ensure gradual and differential phasing out of the Initiative while programs are still being implemented:*** Respondents from the implementing organizations indicated the importance of phasing out the component programs of the Initiative gradually and of implementing the

various programs differentially according to needs and type of program. This flexibility will ensure that the programs in the Initiative are properly developed and implemented in the best way to help residents recover from the emergency and to strengthen personal, family and community resilience.

- ◆ ***Strengthen coordination of regular school staff and program staffs:*** Better coordination between school staff and staff of external programs implemented at the schools could prevent tension between them.

### **c. Recommendations for Activities in Periods of Calm**

All respondents agreed that in order to function efficiently in future emergencies, it is necessary, above all, to utilize periods of calm to prepare for them. This should be done at several levels:

- ◆ ***Strengthening the existing array of emergency programs, by:***
  - Monitoring children's needs
  - Examining the extent to which existing emergency programs are suited to various age groups, special needs, different population groups, different situations and different regions
  - Perfecting imperfect programs
  - Defining more sharply the areas of responsibility and division of work among the third sector organizations, the local authorities and the state at all times, particularly in emergencies, and investing greater effort to create a roundtable bringing together all relevant parties (in localities where there is no such forum)
  - Expanding the training of permanent staff in the locality
  - Routine drills of various emergency programs
  - Maintaining a reserve emergency budget.

Special stress was placed on the need to continue preparing educational institutions for emergencies.

- ◆ ***Making sure that residents have access to an information system:*** As noted, respondents at the localities recommended operating an information system during emergencies. To this end, existing information systems need to be upgraded and in some localities, they need to be set up.
- ◆ ***Continuing to strengthen civil society and community leadership:*** To strengthen the communities and localities so that they are better able to cope with future emergencies, professionals from the organizations in charge and the implementing organizations recommended continuing to invest in strengthening civil society.
- ◆ ***Cultivating the adult population as an auxiliary corps:*** The post-traumatic therapists noted the importance of continuing to cultivate the adult population (parents, educators, etc.) as an auxiliary corps to help the children by continuing to provide counseling on how to cope with children's emotional difficulties. This recommendation is borne out by the parents' reports that their support and the family's support of children coping with difficulties were the main form of assistance given to them during the war/missile attacks in the south: 52% of the

parents in Sederot and 40% of the Jewish parents in the north reported this. However, only 11% of the parents in the Arab/Druze sector reported this and most of them (85%) asked to participate in counseling on helping their children cope with emotional difficulties.

## **4.2 Directions for Action for a Future Rehabilitation Initiative at the Regional Level**

The following are possible directions for action for a future rehabilitation initiative, immediately following an emergency situation. As noted, they relate to the implementation of a regional initiative in which multiple agencies are involved.

Attention must be paid to:

- ◆ The construction of a rehabilitation program immediately after an emergency situation poses a dilemma for planners and donors: Should the program focus on essentials, such as life-saving activities, operating the education system and restoring damaged buildings or should it focus on activities that strengthen the population, such as enrichment and reduction of tension. The current rehabilitation activity for children and youth focuses on strengthening the population, with post-traumatic therapy at the core.
- ◆ Similarly to the recommendations proposed by the respondents, some of the directions for action discussed below reflect steps taken in the current Initiative. However, some of these steps were only partially implemented – some were not implemented in all the localities, others were not implemented in full.
- ◆ Note that the Initiative was defined in advance as a special project to be implemented for a short time. Consequently, there are problems that cannot be solved in this framework and some of the programs will be discontinued when the Initiative is concluded. Therefore, efforts must be made to maximize the contribution of the rehabilitation Initiative and to minimize its inherent difficulties.

The following directions for action are proposed:

### **a. Organizations' Work**

#### ***(1) Maximizing local-authority involvement in preliminary planning and implementation***

- ◆ In the first year, the greater part of the Initiative was directed at the recent emergency. The organizations in charge and the implementing organizations worked quickly to help large numbers of children and youth. As noted, the rapid organization came at the expense of the involvement of the relevant agencies at the local authorities. The emphasis in the second year was on rehabilitation. Great efforts were made to strengthen ties with the local authorities and to build organizational infrastructures that would endure beyond the Initiative.
- ◆ Looking ahead, the question arises, whether it is advisable to work in the same way or to invest more time and energy on structuring cooperation with the local authorities – a process that includes reviewing the situation before starting to work, identifying unmet needs and searching for ways to respond to them. Note that the answer to the question may not be the same for all activities and responses.

***(2) Consolidating the joint work of the organizations in charge and the external implementers at the local authority and finding methods of working in localities where they have never worked together before***

Better cooperation was found in localities where the organizations in charge and the implementers had infrastructures and experience of joint work, prior to the current Initiative. In localities where there had been no joint work previously, or where there was a history of failed attempts to implement programs, it was, naturally, hard to consolidate the work. Thus, the children in these localities benefited from fewer programs. It is evidently necessary to find ways to ensure properly organized work in those localities too.

***(3) Increasing coordination among the organizations in charge and between them and the implementing organizations***

As noted, the current Initiative was organized within a very short time. The coordination of the organizations in charge and their division of work were done by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Education. However, the plan was for one of the organizations in charge to take responsibility for coordinating the work with all agencies in each particular locality. This was not done. The process of fostering coordination and cooperation has to be based on activities both in periods of calm and, obviously, in the aftermath of an emergency. However, the goal should be to strengthen cooperation between the organizations in charge and the implementing organizations. This provides an opportunity to create multi-organizational roundtables at the localities that focus on subjects relating to and going beyond a particular activity. After this has been done, a standardized reporting system should be instituted for the UJC to help monitor the implementation of activities and encourage coordination.

**b. Phasing Out of the Initiative and Ensuring Continuity**

- ◆ ***Reducing the period of uncertainty as to the continuation of the programs:*** During the second year, it was uncertain which components of the Initiative would receive further funding. The uncertainty created confusion, while raising hopes of continuation, as noted by respondents from the implementing organizations, the local authorities and the schools. In the second year, the organizations in charge made efforts to find funding to ensure the continuation of some of the activities. Efforts should be made to minimize the period of uncertainty and phase the project out in an orderly manner.
- ◆ ***Continuing to build local capacity and partnerships among the various local authority agencies:*** In the current Initiative, steps were taken to build community capacity as well as cooperation among the various local authority agencies. To prevent these efforts going to waste, it is important to examine ways of continuing to consolidate them with the help of existing programs in the locality.

**c. Expanding Direct Post-Traumatic Therapy Programs**

One of the main goals of the Initiative was to treat children with emotional problems caused by the war. As noted, a strategic decision was made to focus mainly on training service providers (mainly at schools) and parents, and organizing services in the area of post-trauma (e.g., by

creating resilience centers). As a result, the direct emotional support for children (both group and individual therapy) was limited. In the parents' survey conducted in the study, many parents noted that their children had to cope with emotional difficulties as a result of the war. This statement requires qualification: the study did not examine the degree of emotional difficulty reported by parents nor did every child with emotional difficulty need therapy. Furthermore, different children need different forms and intensity of treatment. Future rehabilitation initiatives should examine the need for post-traumatic therapy in greater depth, particularly children's needs for direct therapy, the extent of the response, the duration of treatment and the various forms of therapy.

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## **Appendix – Study Questions, by Year and Source of Information**

### **Work of Professionals in First Year of Implementation:**

1. What are the distribution, extent and range of programs implemented in the communities and to what extent do they correspond to the needs of the target population?
2. How do professionals at the national and local levels perceive the needs of the target population in wake of the war and the missile attacks in the south; what are the strengths and weaknesses at the various stages of implementation; how do the programs contribute to children, to the systems and to the localities and to what extent do they respond to their needs; what are the challenges for further development of the Initiative?
3. To what extent are the various parties satisfied with different aspects of the Initiative, and what are their proposed improvements?

### **Work of Professionals in Second Year of Implementation:**

1. How did the Initiative develop – what changes occurred between the first and second years of implementation?
2. What is the impact of the Initiative and what is its contribution to the children, the localities and the implementing organizations?
3. What difficulties arose in the first year?
4. Continuation of the Initiative – will it continue and in what form?
5. What recommendations and proposals did the respondents have for future emergency initiatives?

### **Implementing the Initiative at the School Level in the First Year:**

1. Were the students' needs that arose in wake of the war met?
2. What is the contribution of the programs implemented in school through the Initiative and to what extent are the teachers and students satisfied with them?
3. What recommendations and proposals did the respondents have for future emergency initiatives?

### **Implementing "the Initiative" at the School Level in the Second Year:**

1. What is the evaluation of the programs implemented in school in the area of improving scholastic standing?
2. Does the school staff constitute support for the students?
3. What additional scholastic needs are there and what are the needs in other areas?

### **Evaluation Questions on which Parental Surveys Focused:**

1. To what extent do the children participate in enrichment activities at school and outside of school, in scholastic assistance programs and in programs providing emotional support?
2. What are the needs of parents and children in wake of the Second Lebanon War and the missiles attacks in the south, and to what extent are the activities in the various areas responsive to them?
3. How do the parents perceive the various components of the Initiative?
4. To what extent are parents satisfied with the responses offered to their children?