



RESEARCH REPORT

Executive Leadership Development Program for Civil Servants: Summary of the Experience over 28 Years

Yehonatan Almog ♦ Lior Kadish

The study was commissioned and funded by the JDC-Israel Institute
for Leadership and Governance

Executive Leadership Development Program for Civil Servants: Summary of the Experience over 28 Years

Yehonatan Almog

Lior Kadish

The study was commissioned and funded by
the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance

Jerusalem

April 2016

Editor: Ronit Ben Nun

English translation: Evelyn Abel

Print Layout and Production: Leslie Klineman

Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

P.O.B. 3886

Jerusalem 9103702, Israel

Tel: (02) 655-7400

Fax: (02) 561-2391

Web site: <http://brookdale.jdc.org.il>



Related Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute Publications

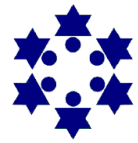
Almog, Y.; Gorbatsevich, J. 2014. *Leadership Program for Affordable Housing: Evaluation Study*. RR-668-14 (Hebrew).

Kadish, L.; Almog, Y. 2015. *Merhav – A Program to Promote the Interface between Government and Civil Society: Evaluation of the First Cycle a Year after Completion of the Program*. RR 711-15 (Hebrew).

Kadish, L.; Almog, Y. 2016. *The "Digital Leaders" Program: Evaluation of the First Cycle, Interim Findings*. On website only. (Hebrew).

To order these publications, please contact the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, P.O.B. 3886, Jerusalem 9103702; Tel: (02) 655-7400; Fax: (02) 561-2391; E-mail: brook@jdc.org.il

Reports are also available on the Institute website <http://brookdale.jdc.org.il>



**Civil Service
Commission**

Foreword by the Civil Service Commissioner

The Executive Leadership Development Program for Civil Servants was established 28 years ago. Hundreds of senior managers participated, and they did and do make up the administrative backbone of the civil service. The program's reputation preceded it. Top administrators passed through it. It was a melting pot for administrators from a wide range of pursuits and of reaches (at times remote) of the civil service. It exposed them to new content, insights, lessons, challenges and more. Alongside this exposure, professional ties were forged and the program contributions extended far beyond the specific subjects that were studied.

Since the summer of 2013, we have been working on implementing widespread reform in the management of human capital in the civil service. This reform includes the establishment of the National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management alongside substantial changes in the administration of the senior staff. The purpose of the reform is to significantly strengthen the systematic and systemic management of the senior staff. As such, we felt it was essential to create a connection between career management for the senior civil servants and their training opportunities. We believe that we need to work holistically and thus responsibility for the management of staff and for their training should be integrated under one commission.

The very success and prestige of the Executive Leadership Program also served to convince us that such programs should be managed by the Civil Service Commission. We attribute great importance also to our direct exposure to the discourse among the executives that takes place in the training activities: this is highly valuable input for those in charge of managing the human capital in the civil service, and particularly the most senior levels.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank JDC-Israel and its Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka) for their partnership in our common efforts and their significant contribution to the civil service over the years. Their Executive Leadership initiative has served as a cornerstone of the establishment of the Academy, and it continues to be a living influence.

In anticipation of continued collaboration,

Moshe Dayan,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moshe Dayan'.

Civil Service Commissioner

Foreword by the Director, JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance

Dear Civil Servants, Academics, Members of the Public, and Graduates,

I am both pleased and excited to share with you the enclosed comprehensive review of 28 years of activity of the Executive Leadership Program. The program began functioning in 1987 and though it went through numerous stages and changes over the years, it always constituted the cornerstone of efforts to develop senior-leadership in the civil service.

This report describes the development of the various stages of the program through the years as the result of an ongoing learning process. In addition, it presents the findings from a survey of program graduates, who were asked to reflect on the contribution of the program to their personal development and to their ability to more effectively address the important public challenges for which they had responsibility.

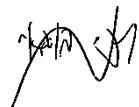
In my view, beyond its impact over the years on each and every graduate, the program also had a broader structural impact as expressed in the establishment of the National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management. The organizational DNA of JDC-Israel is the development of innovative services and approaches and their subsequent incorporation into government bodies. Thus, upon the establishment of the Academy under the leadership of the Civil Service Commissioner Moshe Dayan and the director of the implementation of the civil service reform Ron Tzur (graduates of cohorts 20 and 21 of the program, respectively), it was only natural that the program be incorporated into the Academy and help shape its development. The experience and important lessons learned in the program are serving as a cornerstone of the Academy's development. They are also serving as a cornerstone for the design of future programs of the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance.

I would like to express my special thanks to Merav Horev Malul and Inbar Almagor, the program directors for the last three cohorts, who brought the program to the finish line and passed the baton to the State of Israel and the Civil Service Commission.

I would also like to thank the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute researchers, Yoni Almog and Lior Kadish, for preparing this in-depth report. The Institute made important contributions over the years to the process of learning and change of the Executive Leadership Program.

We are proud that we were privileged to play an important part over the past three decades in shaping the face of Israel's Civil Service, and we look forward to the coming decades.

Rani Dudai



Director, JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka)

Foreword by the Program Directors

The Executive Leadership Program was one of the hallmarks of the shared work of the Civil Service Commission and the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka) for many years. Many sought to be part of this program, spoke of its magic, the impact it had on participants and the collective sense of a common mission – for the benefit of the public services and a fairer, more egalitarian and prosperous society.

As this report attests, the program had a significant long-term impact on the participants and their work. Moreover, the program participants expressed their appreciation for the value of the encounter with other civil servants in a shared learning environment. These are the same colleagues with whom they may have been in confrontational or competitive situations in their daily work. The program allowed them to explore their commonalities and shared interests and to better understand the motives and needs of each. These relationships were to prove to be an important asset in their future work.

Behind the negative images of government processes and civil servants, we discovered so many worlds of highly professional efforts supported by a deep sense of purpose. The task was to put the negative images aside and to promote the best possible efforts.

The strength of the program was in its substantive and methodological anchors on the one hand, and its ability to be flexible, and adaptive to both the needs of the participants and the challenges posed by changing circumstance (elections, economic or security crises, nascent reforms etc.) on the other hand. The "external" environment, which in fact is the daily environment of the participants, was both the raw material and the substance of the program. This was not the regular academic program; it was a program seeking to place the actual work of the participants and the world in which they functioned at its center. The learning was based not only on external knowledge but on an effort to uncover and share through a group process the latent or partially revealed knowledge and understandings gained from their own professional experience.

Nearly 30 years of work were devoted to the training of 22 cohorts of senior civil servants, women and men from a broad range of ministries as well as district administrators and directors of government hospitals. We regard this work as a contribution of JDC-Israel and the Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka) to the professionalization of the public administration in addressing the needs of Israeli society as a whole and with particular attention to the disadvantaged and peripheral populations.

We are very pleased that the spirit of the program, its methods, and the approaches and values it promoted are continuing within the context of the National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management. The Academy was established by graduates of this program (Civil Service Commissioner Moshe Dayan and Ron Tzur – director of the implementation of the civil service reform).

The establishment of the Academy is an exciting step, embodying the vision of the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka), to strengthen the government's capability in the development of its human-capital. It will make it possible to significantly expand the program and integrate it with additional elements of career management in public service.

We, at the Institute, are passing the baton with a sense of pride and excitement, yet also with a touch of sadness as we part from a program that we loved and that was part of our professional identity. Anyone involved in the development and management of the program over the years knows that there was never a dull moment, and is aware that they took part in a fascinating challenge and mission.

We would like to wish all the members of the Civil Service Commission much success in their uniquely important national task. Their success is our success!

Inbar Almagor and Merav Horev Malul,

Program Directors of cohorts 20-22

On behalf of all the program directors over the years

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of the 28-year implementation of an inter-ministerial program for senior personnel in the civil service. The program functioned as a partnership between the Civil Service Commission and the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka).

The program strove to enrich the knowledge of participants, deepen their systemic perspective, strengthen their managerial and leadership skills, and promote professional ties among them. The overarching goal was to enhance the capacity to develop and implement national programs and policies so as to better address significant national challenges.

Over the years, some 500 senior civil servants, at the level of deputy director-generals and division directors participated. For many years, it was the only comprehensive inter-ministerial program of its kind. An ethos built up around it and it was held in high esteem.

The program came to an end with the decision of the Civil Service Commission to establish the National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management as part of a broader reform of the civil service. The program's activities are to be implemented through the Academy, which was opened in 2016.

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute was asked to conduct a broad review of the program over its 28 years. The findings are presented here.

2. Study Design

The main topics examined in the study were the stages of the development of the program over time; its perceived contribution to the professional development of its graduates; and its perceived contribution to designing the National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management.

The data were collected from November 2015 to January 2016 using several integrated methods. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were held with nine key figures from the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka) and from the Civil Service Commission who had been involved in the development of the program over time. In addition, an on-line questionnaire was sent out to 141 graduates of the last five cohorts, with a response rate of 67% (95 graduates). Finally, documents from the many years of the program were collected and analyzed, including selected evaluation reports that were carried out over the years.

3. Findings

Program Development over the Years

The program developed in stages as summarized in table A. In each period the goals were designed according to an analysis of the characteristics and needs of the civil service at the time. This analysis also informed the design of the syllabus and teaching methods. An ongoing learning process contributed to significant and positive change in the program. The table traces the development along five dimensions that emphasize the change in the content focus, teaching methods, intensity, prestige of the program and in the sponsors and funding.

Throughout the years, there was collaboration between the Civil Service Commission and the JDC-Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance (Elka). However, the program was not guided by a clear set of guidelines or overriding concept that emerged from the government partners.

Table A: Program Development over Different Periods, by Selected Dimensions

<div>Periods</div> <div>Dimensions</div>	Establishment 1987-1996	Consolidation 1998-2000	Redesign 2000-2011	Continuously updating 2012-2015
<div>Emphases & Orientation</div> <div>From conceptual knowledge and management skills to systemic leadership and cooperation</div>	Conceptual Knowledge & Management Skills		Growing Emphasis on Leading Systemic Change and Developing Cooperation	
	<div><div></div><div>▶ Conveying of conceptual knowledge related to public management and policy</div><div>▶ Conveying basic management skills</div></div>		Greater emphasis on translating knowledge into changes in practice	
			<div>Focus on Systemic Leadership</div> <div><div>▶ Strengthening the ability to lead systemic change</div><div>▶ Projects focus on intra-ministerial change</div></div>	<div>Focus on Cooperation</div> <div><div>▶ Strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation and collaboration</div><div>▶ Inter-ministerial group project</div></div>
<div>Methods</div> <div>Growing use of varied, experiential and interactive methods</div>	Formal Instruction	More Experiential and Interactive Methods		
	<div><div></div><div>Mainly frontal classes and workshops</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>▶ Adding a study tour abroad</div><div>▶ More active involvement of participants</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div>More learning in small groups, peer learning and discussion of current events</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>▶ Project focused working groups</div><div>▶ More field trips</div></div></div>
<div>Extent & Intensity</div> <div>decreasing extent & intensity</div>	Broad Extent & Intensity	Ongoing Reduction of Extent & Intensity		
	<div><div>600 hours</div><div>6 days/month</div></div>	<div><div>400 hours</div><div>3 days/once every 3 weeks</div></div>		<div><div>300 hours</div><div>2 days/once every 3 weeks</div></div>
<div>Prestige and Attractiveness</div> <div>Rising Prestige and Attractiveness</div>	Limited Prestige and Attractiveness	Positioning & Developing "a Brand"	Maintaining of "a Prestigious Brand"	
	<div><div></div><div><div>▶ Limited demand and attendance</div><div>▶ Lower-ranking participants</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>▶ Careful screening & selection</div><div>▶ Study tour abroad</div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>▶ Maintaining a seal of quality</div><div>▶ Branding as a leadership program</div></div></div>	
<div>Funding</div> <div>Transition to Joint Funding and sponsorship</div>	One Main Funder	Three Funders and Sponsors		
	<div><div></div><div>JDC Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance Touching Lives, Transforming Communities</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Civil Service Commission</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Government Ministries</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>JDC Israel Institute for Leadership and Governance Touching Lives, Transforming Communities</div></div>

Contribution of the Program to Participants from the Perspective of Time

The graduates report that the program had a considerable impact on their work, for most of the measures that were examined. The respondents were asked to assess the contribution of the program to various dimensions. We indicated the percentage that reported a very great or great contribution to their work:

- ◆ **Knowledge** - 80%-95%, particularly the knowledge gained of socio-economic issues in Israel and of public systems around the world.
- ◆ **Perceptions** - 90%-98%, particularly the perceptions related to the benefits of inter-ministerial collaboration.
- ◆ **Applied knowledge and skills** - 65%-85%, particularly the ability to create and manage collaborations. The lowest contribution cited was for strengthening the ability to manage complex systems.
- ◆ **Sense of self-efficacy** - Particularly for their ability to influence their immediate work environment (75%). The perceived contribution to influencing the broader system was lower (47%).
- ◆ **Positive changes in their work** - 50%-85%, particularly for working relations and cooperation with other ministries; the lowest – for leading changes in the broader system. They reported a wide range of changes in their modes of operation, from style of management and work processes to large-scale organizational changes.
- ◆ **Professional connections among graduates** - The program contributed greatly to creating professional connections among graduates, practically all of which were maintained beyond graduation. In many cases, the contact was for purposes of consultation. More than a quarter of the respondents were able to provide at least one example of a joint topic or project that they promoted together with other program graduates.
- ◆ **Personal promotions** - 32% of the graduates were promoted after their participation, and almost 50% of the older cohorts. About a third of the respondents who reported promotion felt that it was due to their participation in the program.

National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management

As noted, the implementation of the program for the senior staff came to an end with the decision of the state to establish the National Academy.

The in-depth interviews with key figures pointed to the significant contribution of the program to the design of the Academy in a number of ways. The planning committee of the Academy did a thorough review of the experience of the Institute and integrated it directly to their own planning. Moreover, several of the key figures in the establishment of the Academy have also been participants in the program of the Institute and brought their personal experiences directly into the process. As noted by the director of the implementation of the civil service reform who also serves as the head of the steering committee for the establishment of the Academy, Ron Tzur:

"In writing this [document on the establishment of the academy] I borrowed numerous personal insights that I had gained from my personal involvement with the Elka program [...] I had the benefit of a good experience and on this basis I was able to know what I want to keep and what I want to improve on."

The study identifies the similarities between the program and the plans for the Academy in terms of goals, target population, content areas, and methods. At the same time, it points to a number of important changes in emphasis and in methods, such as greater focus on innovation and civil service values. It was emphasized that the Academy will have the additional advantage of addressing leadership development in the context of the overall efforts to reform and structure management practices in the civil service and of the overall concept of human-capital management in public service that was developed to guide the Academy.

4. Summary and Discussion

For many years, the program for the senior staff played a unique role as the only inter-ministerial program to comprehensively and systematically address the development of senior staff in public service. For most participants, it was the only training and development program for management or leadership in which they participated. Moreover, of those that did participate in other programs, only a minority attended an inter-ministerial program, which allowed for mutual learning from the unique experience of a range of ministries and directly promoted contact among them. Over the years there was a process of ongoing learning and more and more interactive and experiential learning methods were developed.

The graduates report that the program had a considerable impact on their work, for most of the measures that were examined.

They reported that the program contributed to their sense of self-efficacy and to their subsequent careers and functioning in the civil service in a number of ways. They cited a major contribution to developing knowledge and concepts directly relevant to their work. The program also strengthened their applied knowledge and skills, but to a lesser degree.

Over the years, the emphasis was shifted from conceptual knowledge and basic management skills to an emphasis on developing leadership skills related to introducing systemic change, and promoting collaboration. Some respondents even reported organizational change on a considerable scale, which they had led following the program, such as establishing a school for management, quality and excellence or unifying ministry departments.

As regards the program contents examined, the study found an especially high contribution for the aspect of inter-ministerial collaboration and a tighter interface. The high contribution is consistent with the emphasis put by the program on this topic. It finds expression mainly in the graduates' reports of understanding the importance of collaboration, particularly by ministries in the public sector. Another expression they reported was the introduction of a work routine that both promoted and expanded collaboration in practice.

The program contribution to the graduates' ability to collaborate in work with others and to form professional contacts among themselves was one of the key strengths of the program. This contribution, in fact, fully reflected the program's unique inter-ministerial value.

Another important strength of the program was its contribution to developing professional ties within the civil service that were maintained after graduation. More than a quarter of the respondents were able to provide at least one example of a joint topic or project that they had promoted together with other graduates.

In closing, it is important to note that the program did not have at its disposal an overall concept of human-capital management in civil service. As was emphasized by several national committees over the years that examined civil service – no such conception had been developed in Israel. The most recent reform, launched in 2011, was meant, among other things, to address this situation. It is in this framework that the Civil Service Commission established the National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management. The study findings show that the program contributed to the design of the Academy, which, in many senses, is its successor. It was emphasized that the Academy will have the additional advantage of addressing leadership development in the context of the overall efforts to reform and structure management practices in the civil service.

Table of Contents

1. Preface	1
2. Study Design	4
3. Findings	6
3.1 Program Development over the Years	6
3.2 Background Characteristics of Respondents from the Past Five Program Cohorts	13
3.3 Program Contribution to Participants from the Perspective of Time	14
3.4 Support and Assistance to Graduates after Program Completion	26
3.5 The National Academy for Leadership, Governance and Management	28
4. Conclusion	31
Appendices	
Appendix I: Program Directors over the Years	35
Appendix II: List of Study Interviewees	36

List of Tables

Chapter 2: Study Design

Table 1: Study Design: Summary	5
Table 2: Rate of Response to Questionnaire, by Program Cohort	5

Chapter 3: Findings

Table 3: Program Development over the Periods, by Selected Dimensions	7
---	---

List of Figures

Chapter 3: Findings

Figure 1: Distribution of Participants in other Training among Participants Reporting Participation in such Programs	14
Figure 2: Extent to which Knowledge of Various Topics Gained by the Program Participants Contributed to their Work, by their Estimate	16
Figure 3: Extent to which Perceptions Formulated by Participants following the Program as to Different Aspects Impacted their Work, by their Estimate	17
Figure 4: Extent to which the Applied Knowledge and Skills Gained by Participants in the Program Strengthened their Abilities in Various Aspects, by their Estimate	18

Figure 5: Extent to which Participants' Sense of Ability to Impact Various Aspects was Strengthened following the Program, by their Estimate	19
Figure 6: Extent to which Change Occurred in the Practices of the Graduates in Various Aspects, by their Estimate	20
Figure 7: Average Grading on Measures of Knowledge, Perceptions, Applied Knowledge and Skills, Sense of Self-Efficacy, and Changes in Practices	22
Figure 8: Average Grading on Aspects of Cooperation vs. the other Aspects	22
Figure 9: Average Grading on Aspects of Leading Change in Unit/Ministry vs. Leading Change in Broader System	23
Figure 10: Number of Program Colleagues with whom Graduates Maintained Contact after its Completion, by their Estimate	24
Figure 11: Type of Contact Prevalent among Graduates and Colleagues after Program Completion, by their Estimate	24
Figure 12: Rate of Graduates Promoted in Position or in Level, and the Contribution of the Program to their Promotion, by their Estimate	26
Figure 13: Average Grading of Various Options of Support and Assistance, by Extent to which Program Graduates Could Have Been Helped	27
Figure 14: Distribution of Grading of Various Options of Support and Assistance, by Extent to which Program Graduates Could Have Been Helped	27