



**Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute**  
Center for Research on Disabilities and  
the Employment of Special Populations

**Ministry of Social Affairs and Services**  
Service for the Wellbeing of  
the Individual and the Family  
Research, Planning and Training Division

# Employment for Empowerment (Ta'asuka le-Revaha) – Evaluation Study

## *Executive Summary*

Judith King ♦ Yael Hadar ♦ Abrham Wolde-Tsadick

The study was initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services  
and funded with its assistance

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## 1. Background

Employment for Empowerment is a program for families that seeks to promote the integration into the workforce of non-employed people registered with the social service department as well as the advancement of under-employed persons, in order to reduce their dependence on the department. It also endeavors to provide the families with tools to help them manage their household budget. The program was initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services (MOSAS). Be-Atzmi ("On My Own"), a nonprofit organization, won the tender to implement a pilot in ten localities throughout Israel in 2011-2012. Recognizing the importance of developing community infrastructures for the economic and social empowerment of social service clients, the Ted Arison Family Foundation later joined the program. The program was designed for families with children under 18 who were registered with the social service departments, single parents and couples of prime working ages (25-45) in which at least one spouse had not been employed for more than six months. The program was originally designed to last a year. The current study is an evaluation of the program.

MOSAS has been planning to reform the social service departments for several years, and some of the key objectives of the reform are being implemented through Employment for Empowerment: 1. Emphasis on occupational rehabilitation as a key strategy for working with disadvantaged families and those living in poverty; 2. Appointing a family social worker (FSW) as a case manager to coordinate the work of social workers specializing in various areas, such as the employment social worker (ESW), who is responsible for the employment intervention program at the level of the individual and the family; 3. Promoting programs designed to achieve measurable outcomes for the client, such as job placement and an increase in family income.

## 2. Intervention Model

With the consent of the family, the FSW and the ESW serving as the program coordinator,<sup>1</sup> one of the spouses is designated as the main participant in the program, and most of the program inputs are for him/her. However, since the basic assumption of the program is that the non-participating spouse both affects and is affected by the employment process of the main participant, the program model includes work with the spouse as well (though in practice, this component was not actually implemented). The intervention model includes an individual support process, group workshops, a custom-made package of work-support services, and the development of a support network in the community.

### *2.1 Individual Support Process*

The process consists mainly of providing individual support for the main participant through the ESW. The meetings focus on subjects such as: Defining employment goals and building a personalized plan to achieve them in the immediate and long term; developing the participant's job-seeking skills; strengthening employment self-efficacy; and helping the participant cope with specific issues during the job search. The individual support process includes therapeutic elements (assistance

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<sup>1</sup> In the report, the local program coordinators are referred to as employment social workers (ESWs).



in employment crisis situations), coaching (setting goals and building a clear work plan to achieve them) and counseling (providing information and professional advice about employment).

## ***2.2 Group Workshops***

The original model included three core workshops on the following: 1. Household budget management, facilitated by specialists from the Paamonim; 2. Job-seeking skills; 3. Defining an employment goal, facilitated by specialists from Be-Atzmi. In the course of implementation, two more workshops were added: a basic computer skills workshop, and a practical workshop for participants who had defined an employment goal but did not know how to achieve it.

## ***2.3 Individual Assistance for Participants as Required***

- ◆ Families contending with complex household budget issues are offered an individual mentor from Paamonim as part of the service package.
- ◆ Participants who have not managed to set themselves an employment goal by the end of the workshop (up to 10% of the participants in each locality) are directed to receive an individual vocational assessment by an occupational psychologist.
- ◆ At the end of the workshops, participants who are not yet ready to integrate into the job market but have set out a feasible employment track (up to 30% of the participants in each locality) are offered individual employment coaching.

## ***2.4 Individualized Service Package***

Each family is allocated a budget (on average, NIS 10,000) for the purchase of work-support services that are not provided through the social service departments or government agencies. The package includes vocational training and other courses to improve human capital (e.g., advanced computer skills, English and Hebrew instruction), childcare arrangements during the workshops and at the start of employment, transportation, and purchase of equipment for work. The families are required to make co-payments of at least 10% of the cost of the services.

## ***2.5 Support in the Community***

The program model attaches great importance to developing a supportive network in the community to help the families integrate into the workforce. This is done, inter alia, by identifying professional and lay leaders who can help to find job offers in the community and promote job opportunities, thereby creating a group of employers willing to engage in assisting participants, connecting the participants with work-support social networks, recruiting volunteers and getting the participants organized in self-help groups that focus on subjects such as contending with difficulties getting to work, etc.

# **3. The Evaluation Study**

In 2010, MOSAS commissioned the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute to evaluate the program. The study examined the implementation of the program in its first (pilot) year and the outcomes for the participants at the end of the first year and again, one year later.



The main goals of the study were:

1. To examine the implementation of the model in the participating localities, to assess the difficulties that came up during implementation, and to identify the problem-solving strategies developed during implementation and the changes introduced during the pilot in order to meet the challenges
2. To study the characteristics of the ESW role, which is developing in the course of the work and is not yet included in the social workers' training
3. To ascertain which services and what kind of assistance the participants received in the framework of the program
4. To examine the outcomes for the participants regarding employment and household budget management and to assess the impact of the program on achieving the employment outcomes
5. To examine the extent to which the employment status outcomes observed at the end of the program, i.e., after a year, were maintained after 2 years and whether working participants had advanced in their jobs
6. To see whether participants who were not employed at the end of the first year were employed at the end of the second year
7. To assess the cost-benefit of the program to the economy at the end of the first year and after two years.

Due to budgetary constraints, implementation was examined in only five localities: Karmiel, Nazareth, Bene Beraq, Rosh Ha-Ayin, and the Merhavim regional council. These localities were selected by the program's national advisory committee in an effort to represent a variety of populations and geographical areas – the northern periphery, the Arab population, the ultra-Orthodox population, the center of the country and the rural southern periphery.

The evaluation was based on various sources of information and study instruments:

1. **Telephone interviews with all the program participants in all 10 localities at 3 points in time:**  $t_0$ , soon after joining the program;  $t_1$ , about a year later; and  $t_2$  after another year. Two program cycles were implemented with a gap of about 6 months between them and the interviews were conducted accordingly at all 3 points in time. The interviews at  $t_0$  for the first cycle were conducted in May and June 2011; for the second cycle, they were carried out in January and February 2012.
2. **Interviews with a control group:** In order not merely to measure the outcomes for the participants, but also to assess the impact of the program on these outcomes, we compared the participants with a control group. The control group included families registered with the local social services in other localities whose characteristics were similar to those of the program sites, and whom the local social workers considered potentially suitable for the program. The names and phone numbers of members of the control group were given to the study team after they had given their consent to participate in a short confidential interview. Members of the control group were interviewed only once, around 5-9 months after their details had been obtained.

3. **Analysis of administrative data:** Be-Atzmi supplied administrative data, which were analyzed as part of the evaluation. The data included information on the services provided to each of the participants in their service package.
4. **In-depth interviews with program directors and staff in the field:** We interviewed program directors and the ESWs in the 5 localities selected for examination of implementation, directors of the social service departments in those municipalities, and the team counselors (TCs) who advised the program coordinators on behalf of the social service departments. From April to August 2012, 17 in-depth interviews were conducted, each lasting 1-3 hours.
5. **"Question of the month":** In the early months of implementation, the ESWs were e-mailed a "question of the month" focusing on a different aspect of implementation each time. The objective was to obtain fresh, raw data about their experience of the initial stages and key issues, such as joining the social service departments and recruiting participants.
6. **Observations:** We observed meetings of the national steering and advisory committees and some of the meetings of the local committees. The study team also reviewed minutes of the meetings.

## 4. Study Findings: Evaluation of Implementation of the Program

### 4.1 Real Time Developments in the Program – Changes to the Model in the Course of Implementation

#### 1. Flexibility and Changes to Acceptance Criteria

Due to the difficulty of recruiting participants and the number of participants who dropped out after intake, along with the wish to define more precisely the profile of participants with a good chance of success, in September 2011, five months after the start of the program, it was decided to revise the acceptance criteria for the next group of participants.

The main changes were as follows:

- ◆ The families no longer needed to already be registered with social services, but they did have to register ("open a file") in order to join the program.
- ◆ The requirement for 8-12 years of schooling was modified to "at least 8 years of schooling" – in other words, people with 13 or more years of schooling could also join the program.
- ◆ The requirement that the participant has been unemployed or underemployed for at least six months was changed to "currently unemployed or underemployed."
- ◆ The requirement for both spouses to participate in the program was cancelled. Non-participation by husbands did not disqualify their wives.
- ◆ It was decided not to admit families in acute crisis or those contending with multiple problems (more than 3 problems in addition to unemployment). The rationale was that the program in its current format is not suitable for such families, since they require more intensive work and a greater investment of resources.

## 2. Difficulties Recruiting Participants and Changes Introduced in Response

- ◆ *Difficulty identifying suitable candidates among social service clients, particularly in small localities*
  - Solution: For families not registered with social services recruitment was done through other employment programs, word of mouth, etc. After being recruited these candidates were required to register with the services as a condition for participation. Seventeen percent of the participants were not known to the service. In order to overcome the possible stigma of the program's association with the "welfare department," flyers and explanatory discussions with the candidates were provided "on behalf of the social service department" and it was explained to the candidates that this was one of the roles of the department, in addition to its traditional functions.
- ◆ *Difficulty recruiting men as the main participants*
  - Many men were resistant to participating because they did not want to attend process-based workshops, especially since they were made up almost entirely of women.
  - Solutions: 1. The ESWs worked individually with men who did not want to participate in the workshops or felt uncomfortable in groups where the majority of participants were women; 2. A small number of men in the program were referred to workshops provided specifically for men through a different employment program. Following the pilot, Be-Atzmi developed a special model for men.
- ◆ *Insufficient cooperation from the department social workers in identifying suitable potential candidates*
  - Solutions: 1. The head of the social service department identified a group of social workers with a positive attitude towards the program and enlisted them to identify candidates and to promote the program among their colleagues; 2. The department was closed for a week in order to review the files and identify suitable candidates.

## 3. Two Groups per Year instead of One

It was decided to start the workshops with less than half the planned number of participants, for fear that extending the recruitment period would cause suitable candidates to drop out before the program had started, and to conduct the program again for an additional group six months later. It later became evident that in any case it would not have been possible to conduct the intensive work component of the program for the original target of 50 participants concurrently with just one ESW. Splitting the program into two consecutive groups made it possible for the new group to join at a time when the work with the first group was less demanding and thus more manageable for the ESW.

## 4. Discontinuation of Work with Both Spouses

The original model of the program included periodic meetings between the ESW and both spouses to address domestic issues affecting the employment process. These meetings were not held, mainly because the spouses of the main participants were not interested. Intervention with both spouses only took place when the family was on the verge of a crisis.

## **5. Additional Practical Workshop**

This workshop was added when the program directors realized that defining employment goals and imparting job-hunting skills was not enough to spur the participants into taking practical steps towards finding work. The additional workshop was intended only for those who had defined a stable employment goal but did not know how to achieve it. It focused on work with attainable objectives and did not replace the coaching.

## **6. Additional Course – Familiarization with Computers and Basic Computer Skills**

The course was taught by Appleseeds Academy at a subsidized rate as a community service provided by Microsoft (which owns the academy). Be-Atzmi funded the rental of the computer classrooms and paid the teachers.

## **7. Extended Participation**

When it became clear that one year would not be enough for families with multiple problems to complete the process of integrating into the workforce, MOSAS agreed to extend the period of participation by a maximum of six months for up to half of the participants who needed the extra time and could benefit from an extension to the program. During the extension period, some participants completed their studies and were given assistance finding a job, some began to study, and others were given employment coaching. All those who remained in employment continued in the care of the ESW, but the service was less intensive and more instrumental than it had been in the first year.

## **8. Adjustments made to the Model to Meet the Needs of the Participants at the Local Level**

- ◆ Change in the order of the workshops
- ◆ Exemption from workshops for participants who joined the program at a more advanced starting point with regard to employment, e.g., exemption from the employment goal workshop for participants who joined the program with a defined employment goal
- ◆ Additional empowerment workshop – a preparatory workshop for the program for women whose lifestyles had not prepared them at all for going out to work and leaving the home and children behind
- ◆ Job-seeking support for participants before completing the core workshops, on the understanding of their need for income.

## **9. Establishing Support Frameworks in the Community**

This component was hardly implemented, mainly because the program staff did not include a community worker and even if some of the local program coordinators had a background in community work, they did not have time for the community component. The only aspects that were implemented were: Mapping of employers in the community with whom to establish cooperation, and training of the coordinators and subsequently the participants in building an individual work-support network. After the pilot stage, a few successful initiatives were developed: Partnership with

a high-tech company in which managers volunteered as mentors for the program participants and graduates; formation of a support team for the participants during the job-seeking process and the first few months at work; activities geared towards employment with members of the participants' families - including visits to places of work - to familiarize them with what the participant was going through. The outline reform for the social service departments includes the addition of community workers in the regional departments; when this change occurs, the community workers will be able to advance the community component of the program.

#### ***4.2 Role of the Employment Social Worker (ESW) as it is Developing in the Program***

The role of the ESW is a new one, for which there is no formal training yet; it is developing in the course of implementation of a number of employment programs for clients of the social service departments. We attempted to learn how the role was developing in the framework of Employment for Empowerment along the following parameters: requirements, the training, what the role entails, the positioning of the ESW in the social service departments, and her relationship with other employment programs and external agencies.

##### **1. Requirements for the Position**

MOSAS stipulates that the ESWs have to be social workers. Be-Atzmi added the following criteria: Ability to be outcome/task-oriented and, concurrently to work in a process-based, individual, community and system-based manner; be creative and energetic; willing to work flexible hours, including afternoons; mobility (essential for those employed in the regional council); and Arabic-speaking (for those in Arab localities). The heads of the social service departments participated in the selection of the ESWs.

The program directors reported that it was difficult to recruit suitable coordinators for several reasons: the combination of requirements; the fact that social workers do not perceive this as a social work job since it does not have "therapist" status; the modest salary offered; and the fact that the employer is a nonprofit organization. The coordinators selected for the position varied widely in their professional experience in social work and, specifically, employment.

##### **2. Training for the Position**

The ESWs went through three intensive days of training before starting their job, in addition to which periodic in-service training was subsequently provided at varying intervals. The ESWs were also given individual and group counseling by the program director on a regional basis. In addition to the formal counseling, the ESWs consulted with one another informally by e-mail and telephone and shared information and tools they had found useful.

### 3. Job Description

- ◆ One-on-one work with the participants, including working through the contents of the workshops, devising a personalized program, and assisting the participants to apply the skills learned in the workshops – e.g., job-search on the Internet and writing a c.v.
- ◆ Working with the participants as a group, mainly in the form of taking responsibility for ensuring they attend the workshops. The ESWs attended all the workshops but did not generally facilitate them.
- ◆ Administrative-organizational work, e.g., arranging the venue for group meetings, preparing materials for the workshops, organizing meetings with the locality steering committee, and documenting every meeting with the participants on the log sheet.

### 4. Position of the ESWs in the Social Service Departments

In most cases, the ESWs were placed in units connected with employment, e.g., the professional training unit, which is part of the community work department, or the Project Renewal staff, two of whose employees are familiar with the subject of integration into employment.

The most intensive relationship in the department is with the FSWs. During the program, this relationship was expressed with regular updates and consultations about specific families. The relationship between the ESWs and FSWs is likely to be complicated for the following reasons: 1. Different approaches and professional differences of opinions. As one respondent noted, FSWs tend to be "very motherly, inclusive, embracing," while the ESWs require the participants "to be focused, to perform assignments, to make decisions"; 2. The program may increase the workload of the FSWs since the ESWs meet with the participants more than the FSWs during the program, and may often discover problems that the FSWs had not been aware of and that need attention. On the other hand, the ESWs play a "listening" role and sometimes help solve problems that are not related to employment. Interviews with participants reveal that more than half of the participants in the care of an FSW made fewer visits to the social service departments following their participation in the program and the involvement of the ESW. In some of the localities, the ESWs and FSWs reached agreement on the division of work and responsibilities.

The ESWs meet regularly with the TCs responsible for them in the social service department for periodic updates and advice and guidance as necessary. The young ESWs with little experience reported that this advice and guidance contributed to their developing the right approach to the role and improved their functioning in the department and with the participants. The interviews reveal that the heads of the social service departments accepted that professionally the ESWs were answerable to the program director at Be-Atzmi and there were no reports of conflict between him and the TCs. The ESWs cooperated with the rest of the department staff, including the training and educational guidance coordinator (in Nazareth), the employment coordinator in the community work department (Rosh HaAyin), and the volunteerism unit in the social service division (Karmiel).



## 5. Relationship between the ESWs and Relevant External Agencies and Other Employment Programs

- ◆ State Employment Service: Some of the ESWs reported good cooperation with the service, reflected, for example, in referrals to the program of particularly weak jobseekers with whom the service is not equipped to deal.
- ◆ Professional training institutes: All the ESWs were in contact with the professional training institutes in the locality for the purpose of approving the enrollment of participants in courses with funding from the service package. In contrast, very few participants took advantage of the tools provided by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor.<sup>2</sup> According to the program directors, the reason was that the participants did not meet the eligibility requirements and were unable to cope with the bureaucracy involved.
- ◆ Other agencies: A few ESWs were in contact with MATI (Small Business Development Centers) and referred participants wishing to open their own business to them. Others took advantage of philanthropic foundations, for example to purchase work equipment for the participants. One ESW referred some participants to a vocational testing and guidance institute and another was in touch with the umbrella organization of volunteer organizations in the locality.
- ◆ Other employment programs: Most of the interviews revealed that the programs cooperated with one another and pooled resources. For example, in one of the localities where there is a human capital center, program participants were referred to the center for assistance finding work and to study computers and English (participants in that locality did not participate in the Appleseeds workshop through the program). The ESWs were helped by the center's employer-relations coordinator.

### 4.3 Main Changes in the Program since the Study

As planned, after the pilot year the program was expanded to ten additional localities and a number of changes were introduced based on experiences from the pilot, and with the assistance of additional sources of funding:

- ◆ Additional positions: With the help of a donation from the Arison Foundation, Be-Atzmi introduced two new positions serving all of the organization's programs: An Employer-relations coordinator responsible for developing contacts and identifying jobs with large employers (e.g., Strauss) and manpower companies (e.g., ORS and Tigbur) with branches throughout the country; and a training coordinator responsible for in-service training for the staff of all the programs. In addition, the position of regional coordinator – a management/training middle management position – was created for Employment for Empowerment.
- ◆ Change in the methods of the Paamonim workshop and its place in the program

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<sup>2</sup> When work on this study began, the name of the ministry in question was the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. However, in 2013, the name was changed to the Ministry of Economy. All references to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor refer to this ministry.



- ◆ Development of a work model suitable for men based on group coaching methods, development of special employment-focused workshops (ODT – Out Door Training) and placement in work at an early stage of the program
- ◆ Development of a work model suitable for small/rural Arab localities in partnership with the small business agency at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor and local branches of MATI and the localities

#### **4.4 Main Strengths of the Implementation**

- a. **Establishing two main program goals:** Integration into employment and ability to manage the household budget, which complement and reinforce each other in the process of lifting the family out of poverty
- b. **Character of the program model:** The model combines a variety of tools, each of which makes a unique contribution: One-on-one work (individual support) with the ESW, group workshops, individual vocational testing, employment coaching, family mentor for management of the household budget, and a generous service package. The participants' reactions, when asked to assess the project, show the benefit they gained from the first two, which were given to everyone: The individual support strengthened their self-confidence, motivated them to make changes in their lives and helped them to define goals. The workshops gave them knowledge about the labor market, imparted useful skills for seeking work and managing their household budget correctly and even enabled them to establish social relationships and get social support. Among other things, the service package enabled them to learn a skill without needing to overcome bureaucratic barriers.
- c. **A clear and structured work model that was at the same time flexible and dynamic:** The structured model helped the ESWs - almost none of whom had had experience in the field of employment - learn and accomplish their role. Allowing the program to be flexible and able to respond both to difficulties and to opportunities as they arose in the course of implementation provided a response to local needs and helped improve the program.
- d. **Careful selection of the program staff** – from the directors to the regional coordinators and the ESWs – produced a professional, dedicated and united team.
- e. **Training of the ESWs and ongoing guidance:** Given the lack of experience of most of the ESWs in the field of employment, the training and guidance were very important. The intensive training at the start prepared them for their new role; the ongoing guidance at various intervals and in various formats (individual and group) during the period enriched them professionally and helped them to cope with the problems arising in the course of implementation. The informal consultations among the ESWs helped to solve problems, disseminate work tools with the participants, and provided emotional support and reinforcement.

## 4.5 Issues for Consideration

### a. Criteria for Selecting Localities to Participate

**Number of social service clients:** One of the criteria used initially was a sufficient number of social service applicants from whom to select suitable candidates for the program. Since the intention is to implement the program in the locality for several years, it is essential to have a large enough pool of clients every year. In small localities, it is generally difficult to meet this condition and the program becomes at risk either of closure after a year or two, or of admitting participants who do not really belong to the target population. A possible solution is to implement a regional model, as is the case with the Merhavim regional council, although this approach is problematic given the need to provide transportation to the workshops.

**Existence or absence of other employment programs in the locality:** The question is whether it is more appropriate or worthwhile to implement the program in localities without any existing employment programs or those in which one or more already function. Though logical candidates for an employment program, the first option requires long and hard groundwork to of gaining the support and involvement of the mayor, the social service department and other agencies. This support is easier to gain in localities that already have an employment infrastructure. However, implementation of several employment programs in the same locality could lead to competition among them for participants, or the "recycling" of participants – i.e., the same people participating in several similar programs because they all have the same target populations. In practice, the study found that Employment for Empowerment cooperated with other employment programs in the localities examined. In some cases, they conducted a joint screening process, in which the candidates were channeled toward the most suitable program. The services provided by the various programs complemented one another, and the professional staff worked together on the local steering committees.

### b. Preparation of Social Service Department Staff for the Introduction of the Program

During the pilot, we found that the social workers in the social service departments did little to help identify potential families for the program. The explanation given was that they had not been sufficiently exposed to the subject of employment in their studies and work, did not view it as a rehabilitative track, and did not think it was their job to deal with it. Most had not been prepared for the introduction of the program into the department other than receiving formal information about the program. It seems that in-depth preparation of the FSWs, in which they will gain an understanding of the rehabilitative potential of employment programs and clarification of their role in the program are prerequisite for the success of the program and its assimilation in the social service departments.

### c. Duration of the Program (Overall vs. Net)

In voluntary programs, including Employment for Empowerment, the process of preparing the social service departments for the program, recruiting the participants, and sometimes also hiring the professional staff and training them tends to take longer than planned. When a program –

including recruitment of participants - is designed to last a year lags in the preparation process can often leave no more than 8 months for the actual work with the participants. Such a short time of actual operations makes the achieving of goals set out by the program directors nearly impossible.

#### **d. Accepting Participants who do not Belong to the Target Population Defined by the Program**

In instances where there is difficulty recruiting participants from the target population in the allotted recruitment period, program directors often avoid postponing the start of the program beyond a certain limit -which can lead suitable candidates who have already been admitted to drop out - and instead accept participants who do not belong to the original target population. The program directors' desire to prove that their program is successful may lead to creaming, thereby deviating from the program goals. Employment for Empowerment registered people not known to social services, thus recruiting participants from outside of the target population defined in the tender. An examination of the characteristics of the participants who did not have an FSW (17% of the participants) found that there was no distinct difference between them and the participants who did have one, with regard to their level of education and health limitations affecting their ability to work. However, they were a stronger group when it came to other resources for employment (percentage of those with a profession, distance from the labor market) and displayed lower risk of mental-emotional and domestic problems, such as financial worries, housing difficulties, parenting difficulties, etc. Even if it is argued that there is no creaming, the model is based on joint care of ESWs and FSWs – in other words, participants without an FSW lack the second element. Both these participants themselves and the overloaded FSWs are likely to oppose the idea of simply adding them to the caseload of the FSWs in order to get around this problem. Another solution must therefore be found.

#### **e. Difficulty Recruiting Men to Employment Programs**

The vast majority of participants in most employment programs are women. In JDC's Tevet Employment Initiative, for example, in programs other than those for people with disabilities, 60% to 76% of participants are women.<sup>3</sup> In the Employment for Empowerment pilot, 90% of the participants were women. The usual models evidently do not attract men and therefore the challenge for all employment programs is to develop a suitable model for men. Be-Atzmi has developed such a model, which is now being implemented as a pilot.

#### **f. Dropout Rate**

Ten percent of the candidates who passed the intake stage and were accepted to the program dropped out before the program started, resulting in the need to recruit new participants and (a further) postponement of the program. Twelve percent of the participants who started the workshops dropped out during implementation. Approximately 25% of them had begun to work or study – these can be considered "positive" dropouts. Around 50% of those who dropped out during implementation left the program for reasons connected to the implementation process – e.g.,

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<sup>3</sup> Strategic planning report by Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2008 (unpublished).

difficulty attending due to transport problems, childcare arrangements, inconvenient schedule, lack of interest or relevance to the participants. Thought should be given to ways of reducing dropout.

### **g. Creating Supportive Frameworks in the Community in the Absence of a Community Worker**

In the models of employment programs based on the active involvement of the local authority, e.g., Localities Promoting Employment, Maavarim (Transitions) and Employment for Empowerment, the emphasis is on creating employment-supportive community frameworks. The working assumption is that the community has social capital in the form of volunteer organizations, other community organizations (such as community centers) and various social networks that can help program participants find work. Mandler and King (2012)<sup>4</sup> note several possible examples of community components: Using residents with connections to help find jobs for non-employed residents; using volunteers to support unemployed people through the job-seeking process and in the early stages of employment in their new place of work; setting up a forum of employers who would give priority to employing local residents; and using community center facilities for workshops and courses. The Employment for Empowerment model includes the self-help organization of participants within the community, e.g., to cope with difficulties getting to work, and connecting them to volunteer roles in the community. With a few exceptions, however, the community element was not actually implemented in either of these programs. The researchers believe the main reason to be that the program staff did not include a community social worker.

## **5. Study Findings: Evaluation of the Program Outcomes for the Participants**

### **5.1 Characteristics of the Participants at the Start of the Program**

#### **1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

- ◆ 82% of the participants were Jewish; the rest were Arab or Bedouin women.
- ◆ 90% of them were women, of whom 47% were single mothers.
- ◆ 46% of the participants were aged 30-39; 38% were 40 and older.
- ◆ On average, the participants had 2.8 children under age 18. Forty-nine percent had one or two children and 26% had four or more children.
- ◆ 56% of the participants had at least one child under age 5.

#### **2. Human Capital Resources**

- ◆ 83% of the participants had 12 years of schooling, but only 23% had a matriculation certificate; 9% had a post-secondary certificate.
- ◆ 62% reported that they had a profession and 72% had practical experience of work in their own or a similar profession.

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<sup>4</sup> Mandler, D. and King, J. 2012. *"Localities Promoting Employment, Education and Community": An Evaluation of a Model to Promote Employment in Urban Localities*. RR-618-12. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem (Hebrew).

- ◆ 55% of the participants reported their ability to work on a computer was "very good" (25%) or "good" (30%); 61% were conversant with the Internet, and 57% knew how to send and receive e-mail.

### 3. Health Status

- ◆ 90% reported "good" or "very good" health status, but 27% reported at least one health-related limitation on their ability to work, for health, mainly with regard to the type of work.
- ◆ 43% were identified by the GHQ questionnaire to be at risk for mental-emotional problems.<sup>5</sup>

### 4. Barriers Limiting Participants' Ability to Go Out to Work

- ◆ **Small children:** It is commonly argued that small children constitute a barrier for women wishing to go out to work (and an incentive for men to do so). It is also argued that single mothers have greater difficulty than married mothers, since they do not have a partner with whom to share the burden of caring for the children. It is our argument that the barrier is in fact the lack of institutional childcare arrangements rather than the fact of having children. In other words, mothers whose small children are in a childcare framework are less affected by having small children at home.
- ◆ 38% of the participants in the program had at least one child under the age of 3; 17% had at least one 3- or 4-year-old (the age when compulsory education begins); 51% had at least one child aged 5-9.
- ◆ The lack of childcare arrangements did not constitute a barrier for 53% of all female participants, including women who were not employed – either they had an arrangement for every child between the ages of 0 and 9, or they did not have children in that age group.
- ◆ Single mothers were in a better position than married women. Sixty-five percent of them (including those not employed) had no problem with childcare arrangements (compared with 45% of married women).
- ◆ **Family member with a disability:** 14% of the participants reported that there was a child or other relative living with them who had a disability or chronic illness and was in need of special care. About half these cases had an institutional arrangement, such as a care framework or a caregiver provided by the National Insurance Institute (NII).

### 5. Additional Problems Facing the Participants

- ◆ According to reports by the ESWs, the participants had a variety of problems in addition to employment, the most common ones being financial, mainly heavy debts (40%), health, and domestic problems, mainly difficulty with parental functioning (34%).

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<sup>5</sup> Goldberg, D. P. & Hillier, V. F. 1979. "A Scaled Version of the General Health Questionnaire". *Psychological Medicine*, 9 (1), 139-145.

## 6. Employment Record

- ◆ Most of the program participants were not far from the labor market; 36% were employed when they joined the program (they joined in an attempt to improve the quality of their jobs); 46% were not employed at that time, but had worked at some point during the 5 previous years; 9% had worked at some time more than 5 years prior to joining the program. Only 9% of the participants had never worked in Israel.
- ◆ 64% of the participants who had been employed during the 5 years prior to joining the program had worked in stable jobs only – i.e., the same place for at least 3 consecutive months. Twenty-three percent had worked only in temporary jobs. For the remainder, the pattern had been a combination of stable and temporary jobs.

### *5.2 Outputs: Services Received from the Program Service Package*

All the participants took part in three core workshops: household budget management; setting an employment goal; and job-seeking skills. The participants also worked one-on-one with their ESW on subjects relating to the contents of the workshop and other matters. A practical workshop and a workshop on basic computer skills were also provided to participants who needed them. In addition, all participants were able to choose items from an individual service package, subject to the agreement of the ESW and approval of the regional supervisor.

- ◆ 66% of the participants received at least one service likely to improve their employment resources
- ◆ 50% of the participants were given a course funded by the budget of the service package: Vocational training, English, driving, or basic training in business studies. The driving lessons were intended mainly for residents of the periphery to improve access to potential workplaces outside of their own localities.
- ◆ 19% received coaching; and 8% were given assessments (chiefly vocational testing, as well as a few cases of didactic testing and ADD assessment).
- ◆ 12% received subsidies to purchase work clothes and equipment.
- ◆ 31% received at least one form of assistance with childcare arrangements – 22% received financial assistance with babysitting to enable them to participate in the workshops (which were held in the afternoons to enable the participants to work or look for work in the mornings); 13% received longer-term childcare arrangements, such as daycare or afternoon enrichment programs.

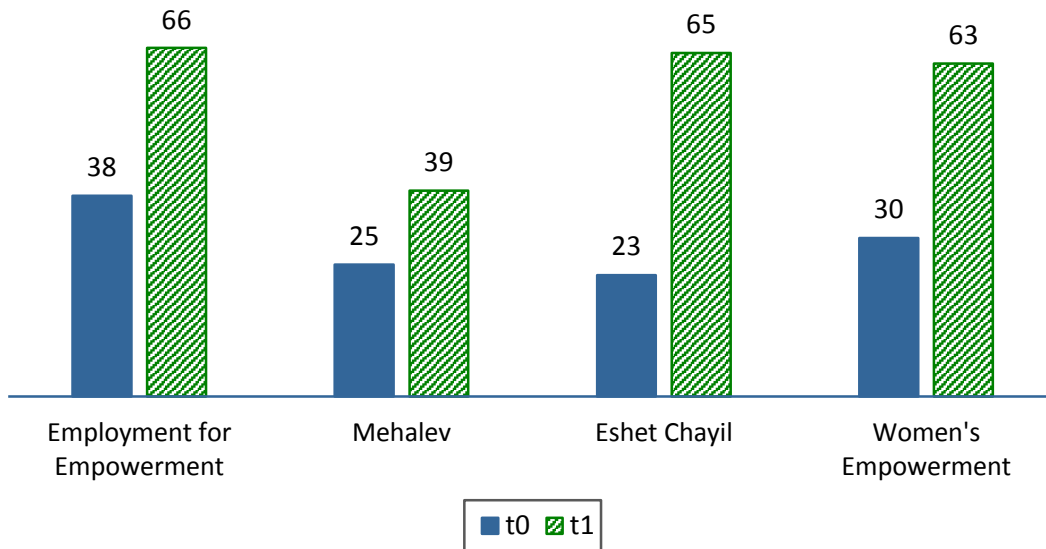
### *5.3 Employment Outcomes: Follow-Up a Year after Joining the Program*

The outcomes analysis relates to the 311 participants about whom we have data at  $t_0$  (when they joined the program) and  $t_1$  (a year later). Those who dropped out of the program (47 participants who discontinued their participation before they had completed the first three workshops) and the non-respondents (41 participants, most of whom could not be located) were not included in the analysis.



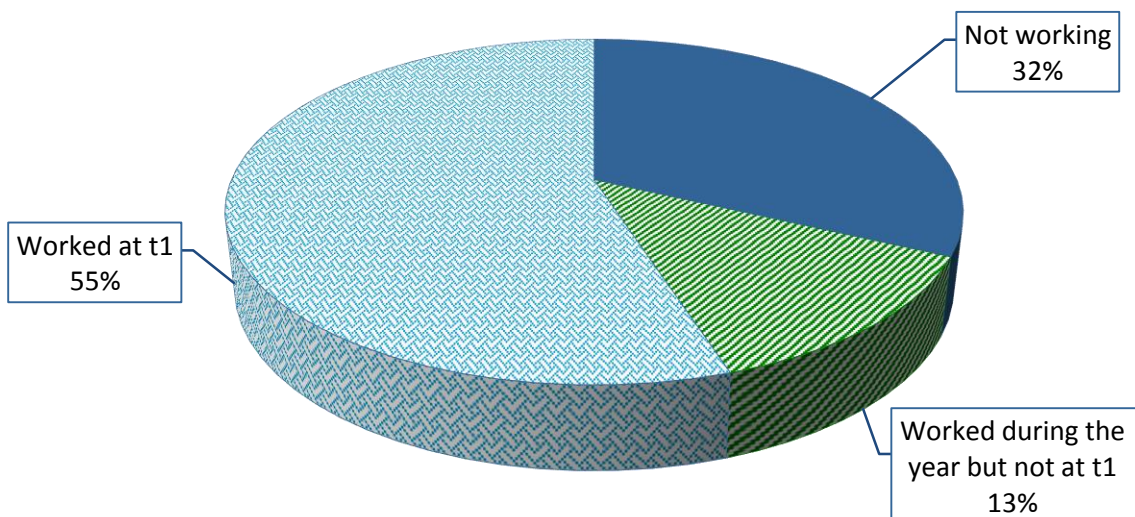
- ◆ **Increase in the percentage of employed participants between  $t_0$  and  $t_1$ :** The percentage of employed participants increased from 38% at the start of the program to 66% a year later, i.e., an increase of 28 percentage points. See also comparative data in other programs in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Increase in the Percentage of Employed Participants**



- ◆ **The percentage of employed participants at  $t_1$  among those who were not employed at the start of the program  $t_0$ :** 61% (190) of all the participants were not working at the start of the program; 55% of these 190 were employed a year later ( $t_1$ ).

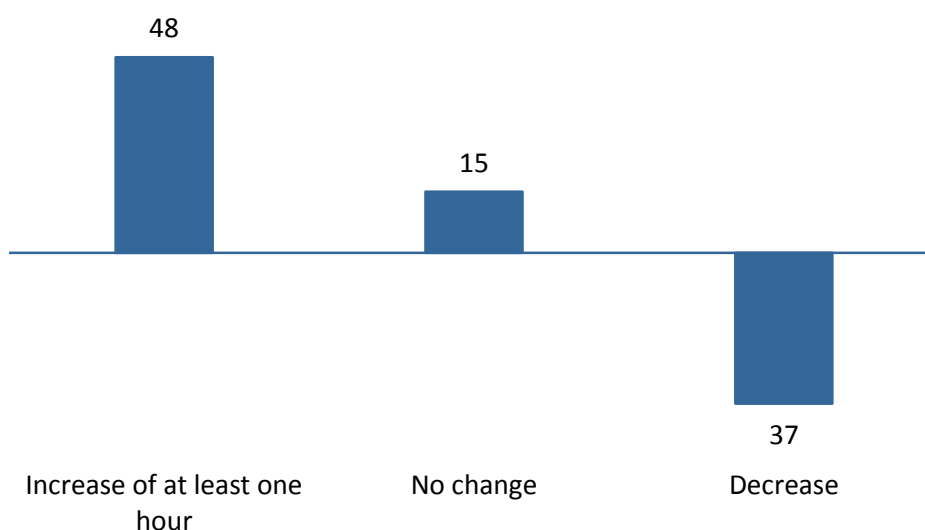
**Figure 2: Percentage of Participants Not Employed at  $t_0$  who Worked during the Year**





- ◆ ***The percentage of participants not employed at the start of the program and not employed at  $t_1$  but who had worked for at least one full week after joining the program:*** 13% of the participants who were not employed at  $t_0$  were not employed at the time of interview ( $t_1$ ), but had worked during the program. In other words, ***68% of the participants who were not employed at the start of the program found work at some point during the course of the program.***
- ◆ ***Increase in the number of working hours among participants who were employed at the start of the program ( $t_0$ ) and a year later ( $t_1$ ) those who remained in employment:*** 99 of the participants were working at the start of the program and at the time of interview a year later. Forty-eight percent of them had increased their number of weekly hours – by an average of 11 hours. For 15% there was no change in the number of hours; 37% had reduced their weekly working hours by an average of 9 hours.

**Figure 3: Maintained, Increased or Decreased Number of Weekly Hours of Respondents Working at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$**



- ◆ ***Impact of the program on changes in employment among the participants – starting work for "new employees" and increase in the number of hours among those who remained in employment:***
  - In order to examine the impact of the program, we looked for a similar group of social service clients who were not participating in the program to serve as a control group. We therefore contacted the social service departments in localities that were not participating and were similar in character to the participating localities with regard to aspects such as socioeconomic cluster, population size, district, percentage of working women, percentage of income support recipients, and percentage of wage-earners earning less than the minimum wage. The social workers in those departments were

asked to identify families who met the criteria for participation in the program: Families (couples or single parents) with children up to age 18, with motivation to change their lives, potential participating parent between 25 and 50, with at least 8 years of education, and not employed or underemployed. Since only a small number of men participated in the program and we were unable to obtain a control group for the Arab and Bedouin participants, it was decided to form a control group of Jewish women only. The group included 72 women.

- The interviews with the women in the control group collected data on a range of socioeconomic and employment characteristics. In comparing these characteristics, we found those of the women in the control group to be similar to those of the Jewish women participating in the program. We conducted an identical analysis of the change in employment status between two points in time for both groups.
- ◆ The comparison with the control group indicates that the program had a substantial impact and improved the participants' employment status by 29 percentage points more than that of the women in the control group.
- ◆ ***Quality of employment of the "new employees" (those not employed at  $t_0$  and employed at  $t_1$ ):***
  - 64% were employed part-time.
  - The largest group (43%) of the newly employed were employed in sales and services; 28% found clerical work; and 12% were employed in unskilled jobs.
  - 63% were earning wages between minimum wage (NIS 22.04) and 125% of the minimum wage; 28% were earning more.
  - 80% were satisfied with their work (34% "very satisfied" and 46% "satisfied") and 55% had a strong sense of employment security (i.e., did not fear losing their job in the coming year). However, only 45% saw it as desirable in the long-term.
- ◆ ***Improvement among those who remained in employment (participants working both at  $t_0$  and  $t_1$ ):*** Some of the participants who were working at the start of the program and a year later had improved their jobs: Although only 20% had advanced with regard to the type of work they were doing, 60% were earning more money, albeit not dramatically. In contrast, half of those who remained in employment did not want to stay in their jobs in the long-term.
- ◆ ***Interim outcomes:*** Actively looking for work and studying could be considered an interim outcome on the way to integration into employment for non-employed people. With regard to employed participants, it is possible to consider them as activities geared to upgrade employment:
  - 40% of those who were not employed at  $t_1$  were looking for work and 25% were not looking for work, but were studying.
  - 33% of those employed at  $t_1$  were looking for a different job and 22% were studying.

◆ *Self-Efficacy:*

- A high level of self-efficacy impacts on the way individuals manage various aspects of their lives, including employment. Improved self-efficacy was, therefore, one of the goals set by the program. A statistically significant improvement was found among all the participants in two out of the three dimensions of self-efficacy: Self-confidence and belief in the ability to take initiatives. In other words, after a year in the program, the participants' belief in their self-worth had increased and so had their motivation to tackle their problems and not give up.
- The improvement in self-efficacy could be an interim outcome leading to integration into employment. Among those who were not employed at  $t_0$  and were employed at  $t_1$ , there was a statistically significant improvement in initiative while in the group that was not employed at  $t_1$ , there was no improvement. It may be assumed that there is an association between belief in personal initiative and integration into employment. However, other than this finding, no other association was found between self-efficacy and integration into employment.

#### *5.4 Outcomes – Household Budget Management*

One of the program goals was to improve the participants' ability to manage the household budget. This, together with integration into employment, should help to extract the families from poverty. The task was assigned to Paamonim, a nonprofit organization specializing in this field. In the evaluation, we examined whether there had been changes among the participants at two levels: 1. Financial awareness; 2. Financial management. The questionnaire was based on the contents of the workshops.

- ◆ Only 14% of the participants improved their financial awareness as a result of the program. The reason apparently is that most of them already had a high level of awareness before they participated in the Paamonim workshop.
- ◆ With regard to financial management, the improvement rate was higher – 23%. However, 30% of the participants did not manage their budget correctly before the program and were still unable to manage it one year later. It is possible that the effect of the exercises during the workshop became weaker over time.

#### *5.5 Change in Financial Status after a Year*

Another goal of the program was to increase the participants' income through going out to work. Due to a sizeable number of missing values in the reports on the families' incomes from various sources, we were unable to examine the change in the families' income after a year, and were therefore forced merely to compare sources of income. The most salient finding was the increase in the percentage of participants earning income from work and the decline in the percentage of those receiving benefits from the NII.

- ◆ The percentage of participants earning income from work increased by 28 percentage points, from 38% to 66%.

- ◆ The percentage of participants receiving income support or income supplement among all the participants declined from 17% to 15%.
- ◆ Among those not working when they joined the program and not working a year later, the percentage of those receiving benefits increased by 6 percentage points (from 22% to 28%). In contrast, among those placed in work and who remained in work one year later, the percentage of those receiving benefits declined by 9 percentage points (from 22% to 13%).
- ◆ The percentage among all the participants of those receiving unemployment benefits also dropped.

## ***5.6 Participants' Evaluation of the Program***

### **1. Relationship with the ESW**

- ◆ The participants had a strong relationship with the ESWs: Around 40% met them privately or spoke with them by phone at least once a week and 25% were in touch once every two weeks.
- ◆ In the participants' opinion, the main assistance from their ESW was the emotional support during the job-seeking process, in which they were likely to have many disappointments, and in helping them to understand what jobs were suitable for them and what they had to do to get them. This finding is in keeping with the job description of the ESW. The instrumental assistance with employment, such as finding work and making contact with employers, was not defined as part of the ESW's role, but nevertheless was singled out by the participants.
- ◆ Almost all the participants agreed that the ESWs treated them with respect, were attentive to them and understood their difficulties.
- ◆ During the program, the ESWs were evidently to some extent a substitute for the FSWs for a considerable number of the participants. Fifty-seven percent of those who had been in the care of an FSW reported that since joining the program, they were less frequently in contact with the FSW. It is possible that the workload of the FSWs was reduced as a result of the program.

### **2. Contribution of the Program to Participants**

- ◆ More than 80% of participants reported that the program had assisted them (most that it had assisted them to a great extent) with the following: increased motivation to work; job-seeking skills; provision of information about employment; provision of professional skills and information. It was slightly less helpful in improving their ability to manage the household budget.
- ◆ In general, 67% of the participants were satisfied with the program to a very great extent and a further 25% to a great extent. Ninety-six percent would recommend the program to people in similar situations.
- ◆ The participants also noted changes in themselves: Increased self-esteem, discovering their own abilities, strengthening self-confidence etc.

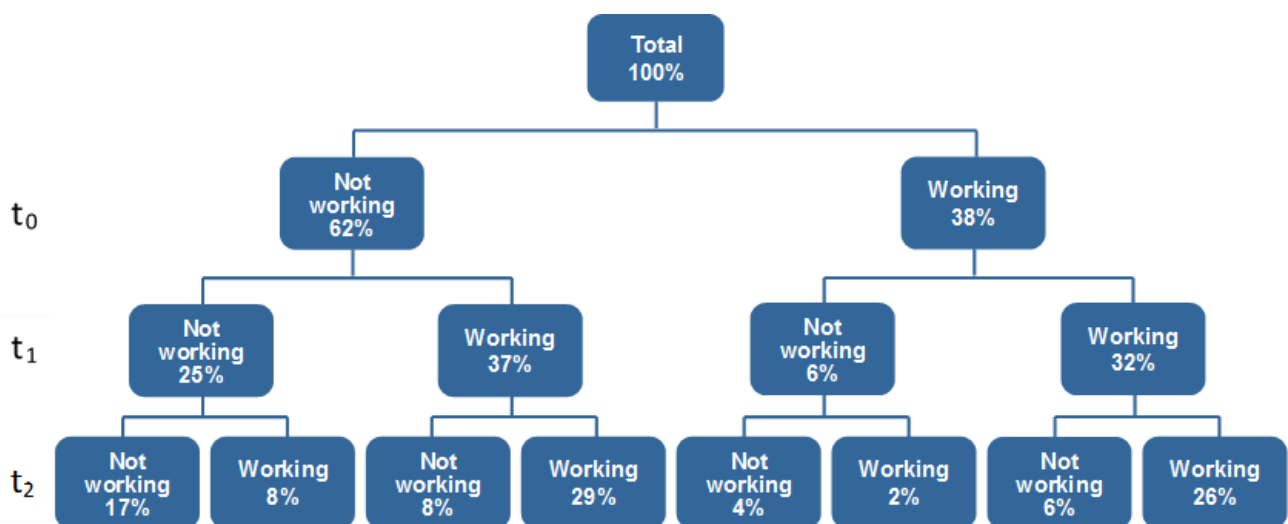
## ***5.7 Employment Outcomes: Follow-up Two Years after Joining Program***

Through the follow-up, we sought to examine two important questions about evaluating employment programs: 1. To what extent were the employment outcomes observed at the end of

the program (i.e., after one year) maintained or even improved after a second year? 2. Did the participants who had not achieved the expected outcome (employment) after one year, manage to achieve it after a second year?

- ◆ Altogether, 65% of the participants were employed after 2 years.
- ◆ 80% of the participants who were employed at the end of the first year (55% of all the participants) remained in employment after 2 years; 69% of these were in the same job.
- ◆ A considerable proportion of those who remained in work had improved their status in various ways: 23% had increased their number of weekly hours; 30% had been promoted to more skilled work; 32% reported that their wages had increased; 19% reported that in their current position they had greater responsibility for other workers (i.e., they had been given managerial positions); and 45% had greater responsibility for equipment or budgets.
- ◆ Of the 40% who were not employed at  $t_1$ , but were looking for work, 34% were employed at the end of the second year.
- ◆ In contrast, 21% of the participants were not working after one year and still not working after two years (see Figure 4).
- ◆ Job retention: 68% of those employed when they joined the program ( $t_0$ ) remained in work after one year and after two years (see Figure 4).
- ◆ Placement and job retention: 47% of those not working when they joined the program ( $t_0$ ) were employed after one year and after two years (see Figure 4).
- ◆ Unsuccessful outcomes: 27% of those not working when they joined the program ( $t_0$ ) remained without employment after one year and after two years (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Employment Status at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$  of Respondents at  $t_2$  (Percent, N=253)\***



\*All percentages are of the total number of participants interviewed at  $t_2$ .

- ◆ 18% of the participants who had received income support or child maintenance (alimony) from the NII (5% of all respondents) stopped receiving the benefits between  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ . On the other hand, 5% of those who were not receiving benefits at the end of the first year (4% of all respondents) had become beneficiaries by the end of the second year.
- ◆ 55% of the participants registered with the social service department before they joined the program did not contact the department during the 6 months prior to  $t_2$ . This finding can be seen as the continuation of the process of reduced dependence on the social services observed at  $t_1$ .

### 5.8 Cost-Benefit Analysis for the Economy

The study included a preliminary cost-benefit analysis, balancing the contribution to the Israeli economy by having the participants work against the cost of implementing the program. The benefit estimates were based on the study findings, but where data were unavailable, the calculations were based on assumptions. The cost-benefit analysis revealed that at the end of the first year, on average the benefit to the economy per participant was NIS 9,700 lower than the overall cost. At the end of the second year, the accumulated benefit was NIS 3,700 greater than the average cost per participant. In cost-benefit terms, in the first year, the benefit was 40% of the cost, but after two years, it exceeded the cost by 1.2. In other words, from the perspective of the economy there is a return on investment in a relatively short period.

## 6. Conclusions and Programmatic Directions

### 6.1 Implementation

- ◆ **Clear model, allowing for adjustments:** A clear model with a defined work plan is valuable both for the program implementers in the field and for the participants. However, it is also important for the model to be flexible and able to adapt to external circumstances, the needs of the participants that arise during implementation and/or conclusions resulting from long-term monitoring of the implementation process. For instance, Employment for Empowerment made several changes in the timing and structure of the Paamonim workshop in order to achieve the best outcomes in strengthening the awareness of the participants and improving their ability to manage the household budget.
- ◆ **Development of a new model:** It may not be enough for the model to be flexible, in which case perhaps a new model should be developed to meet the needs of participant subgroups. When it was found that the partial adjustments for men were insufficient, a new model was developed for them. The model has been tested in a few groups since the pilot, but is still in the development stages. Other employment programs are invited to develop models for working with men and to contribute their accumulated experience.
- ◆ **Employer-contact coordinators:** While the training in the job-hunting skills is thorough and extensive, it may not be enough for weak populations. It is recommended that the program staff include a job developer or employer-contact coordinator who can provide concrete job offers to participants who are unable to find work on their own.

- ◆ ***The role of the ESW in the servicing of the non-employed:*** The ESWs clearly play a valuable role in helping people from disadvantaged populations with multiple problems integrate into employment. The program's contribution to empowerment and its guidance in finding direction in their lives, as reported by the participants, are expected to enhance their ability to cope in different life situations including employment. The challenge is to establish patterns of cooperation between the state agencies responsible for integrating jobseekers into employment (e.g., the State Employment Service), which work according to universal criteria and procedures, and the ESWs who specialize in holistic one-on-one work and have the skills to work with jobseekers with particular barriers, whom the state agencies are not equipped to serve.
- ◆ ***Employment-supportive frameworks in the community:*** Many employment programs have publicly recognized the important contribution of all kinds of community resources – both human resources (friendly employers, volunteers supporting the participants during their job search, etc.) and material resources (e.g., computer facilities at the community centers). The evaluation of Employment for Empowerment has shown that a supportive community network cannot exist without a community social worker on the staff.
- ◆ ***Localities in which to implement employment programs:*** Government and public agencies tend to prefer to implement innovative employment programs in localities that already have the infrastructure for such programs. This might lead to competition among the employment programs over resources and recruitment of participants. However, it could also lead to cooperation among the programs, which would benefit everyone, as was found in this program in Karmiel and the Merhavim regional council. Beyond establishing friendly relations among the program staffs (which may or may not exist), the recommendation is to define and structure areas of cooperation among the programs that would complement one another rather than compete with one another.
- ◆ ***Preserving success:*** There is broad consensus among the implementers of employment programs that in order to ensure long-term success, the participants need to be supported after they have completed the program and in the earlier stages of employment. The current study found that 81% of the participants who were working at the end of the first year had retained their work and were working at the end of the second year; some of them had even upgraded their quality of employment. Forty percent were in touch with their ESWs at least once every 3 months. It may be assumed that continued professional support contributed to their job retention and perhaps to their advancement. The problem is that although everyone recognizes the importance of this continued support, there is generally no budget for it and it is unclear who is responsible for it.
- ◆ ***Duration of the program:*** For administrative and budgetary reasons, many employment programs are implemented for only one year. In the case of Employment for Empowerment, the director general of MOSAS recognized that this might not be enough for participants with multiple problems and approved an extension of up to 6 months for 50% of the participants who were not yet in work. The study findings indicate that 34% of those who were not employed at the end of the first year but were looking for work were employed at the end of the second. This indicates that even if most of the placements occur in the first year of the



program, some participants require more time to complete the process, and the investment in support and a 6-month extension paid off.

- ◆ ***Integration into employment as a means to escape poverty:*** The program goal was to integrate social service clients into employment in order to extricate them from poverty. The study found that 65% of those employed at the end of the first year and 58% of all those employed after 2 years were only working part-time. This finding indicates that most employed participants would still have great difficulty pulling themselves and their families out of poverty. Efforts must be made to find full-time work for the participants, even if most of them are mothers.
- ◆ ***Adapting the program for participants who are under-employed.*** Some of the participants in employment programs have a job at the time of joining the program but they are under-employed, i.e., working part-time and/or in unskilled jobs, and their reason for joining the program is to improve their position. The evaluation study revealed that among the participants, 40% of those employed at the end of two years were already working earlier – when they joined the program and one year later. These participants have a pattern of continued employment: 69% worked during the 3-5 years before joining the program; 67% worked only in continuous employment (at least 3 consecutive months in the same place); after two years, 65% of them retained the same job they had when they joined the program. This raises the question as to whether the program is suitable for them. Apart from the training courses in the service package, the program contents focused mainly on orientation for placement in work for people distant from the labor market; only a small part of the program addressed issues related to the advancement of people with a history of continuous employment. Implementers of employment programs have to decide whether to include people who are already working in order to advance them and, if so, they have to include material and teaching methods that are relevant for that population.

## ***6.2 Measurement of Outcomes and Factors Impacting on Them***

- ◆ ***Children as a barrier to employment of women:*** It is commonly assumed that having small children is a barrier to women - especially single mothers – finding employment. Based on this belief, researchers use variables such as the "number of children under age X," or "age of the youngest child" to measure the barrier when in fact it is not known which factors make the children a barrier. The possible elements contributing to this barrier include: lack of institutional childcare arrangements (e.g., daycare, afterschool programs); insufficient childcare hours provided by the institutions; expense of childcare making it unprofitable for the mother to work; or perhaps the mother's preference to take care of her children herself. The current study focused on examining the impact of lack of childcare arrangements for all children up to age 9 on the mother's employment status. The multivariate analysis did not find a statistically significant negative impact – perhaps because 53% of all female participants (65% of the single mothers) did not have a problem in this area. All their children from 0-9 had full-day childcare arrangements (daycare or home-based child care services for children up to 2; preschools, schools and afterschool programs for those aged 3-9). It is worth continuing to delve deeper into this barrier to employment for mothers of young children. The

information obtained will affect the development of support services for mothers who wish to go out to work.

- ◆ ***Additional barriers to integration into employment:*** Employment studies focus mainly on barriers relating to demographic background (gender, age, ethnicity/race, small children, etc.); insufficient human capital (low education, lack of profession, lack of work experience, etc.); and some consider health restrictions. Since the participants in Employment for Empowerment are social service clients, it was felt appropriate to examine additional problems they were facing that could further hamper their ability to look for work and adjust to places of work. Twenty-three percent of the participants had problems in 3 or 4 areas, the most frequent being: Heavy debts (40%); health and functioning problems of their children (34%); and difficulty with parental functioning (34%). The multivariate analysis found that the impact of the additional problems on employment status – other than health problems of the participants themselves – was not statistically significant; however including them in the model doubled the variance explained by the model. We believe it is important to continue to probe the impact of these kinds of difficulties on the integration into employment of people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The following conclusions are ***not specific*** to the current study, but they do apply to it, which is the reason for their inclusion in our conclusions.

- ◆ ***Measurement of the real outcomes of an employment program:*** It must be remembered that in a significant proportion of the programs, a considerable minority of the participants are employed, perhaps under-employed, when they join the program ( $t_0$ ). Consequently, the correct outcome measure is not the employment rate at the end of the program or after a specified time ( $t_1$ ), but rather the increase in the employment rate between these two points in time. The measure of improvement in the participants' employment status comprises two elements: 1. The percentage of unemployed participants at the time of joining the program who are employed at the end of the program or after a specified time; 2. The increase in the number of weekly hours among those who were working at both the start and end of the program. There may be additional measures, such as the percentage of the participants employed at both points in time who improved their quality of employment.
- ◆ ***Measurement of the impact of the program:*** The current study did not only examine the outcomes, but also sought to assess the impact of the program. In order to attribute the outcomes to the impact of the program, we compared the outcomes achieved in a comparison (control) group. Control groups can be created in various ways (although this may not always be possible). However, when there is no such group, the program outcomes must be presented with caution and it must be stated that while it is assumed that the program has assisted, it is impossible to assess its impact in quantitative terms.

The study findings have been presented to the program steering committee and to the director-general and senior staff at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. In addition, data were presented to the program advisory committee regularly, thereby contributing to the design and improvement of the program.