



## **The Contribution of Educational Programs on the Experience of Soviet Jewry in the Holocaust to Selected Groups in Israel and in the FSU**

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The study was funded by the Genesis Philanthropy Group,  
the European Jewish Fund and Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

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## Executive Summary

### 1. Introduction

As part of the Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG) initiative to strengthen Jewish identity among Russian-speakers in Israel and different groups in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), a comprehensive educational project on the subject of Soviet Jewry during the Holocaust was initiated and financed by this fund and the European Jewish Fund (EJF). The assumption was that the Russian-speaking population is not familiar with the history of Soviet Jewry in the Holocaust and that exposure to this information is important for preserving Jewish heritage and enhancing the connection to the Jewish world. The educational project was implemented by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority and during 2010-2011 comprised about 30 different programs addressing various groups in Israel and in the FSU (such as seminar for high-school teachers from Israel and from the FSU, seminars for high-school students at Yad Vashem, mobile workshops at schools, and a course for young leaders in Jewish communities from the FSU).

### 2. The Goals and Design of the Evaluation Studies

As part of the project's implementation, the GPG commissioned an evaluation study of the following eight programs implemented in 2010-11:

- a) **Programs for High-School Students in Haifa** – Educational Seminars for 11<sup>th</sup>-graders, Mobile Workshops for 9<sup>th</sup>-graders, and a Visual Documentation Program for 10<sup>th</sup>-graders
- b) **Programs for High-School Teachers in Haifa** School Level Course for teachers in two schools in the city and a; Citywide Course for teachers in the field of humanities.
- c) **Programs for Selected Groups Residing in the FSU** – a Young Jewish Leadership Program; a program for Non-Jewish Teaching Staff and an E-Learning Course for the General Public

All the evaluation studies had two major goals:

- 1) To examine the participants' assessments of program contributions on two levels:
  - Cognitive level – the acquisition of knowledge on the on the experience of the Soviet Jewry in the Holocaust
  - Emotional level – the impact of the programs on their perceptions and attitudes to the Jewish world and the Holocaust
- 2) To provide information on the satisfaction of participants with the program and its implementation.

In all the studies, data were collected from the participants using a self-administered questionnaire distributed at the final session of each program.

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of these eight programs, by the three major groups of participants: high-school students, teachers and selected groups residing in the FSU. In addition it includes some comparative analysis of the programs.

### 3. Evaluation of Programs for High-School Students in Haifa

The three programs for high-school students in Haifa included in the study were: an Educational Seminar for 11<sup>th</sup>-graders, a Mobile Workshop for 9<sup>th</sup>-graders, and Visual Documentation for 10<sup>th</sup>-graders. The programs were implemented at two schools in Haifa – Ironi Alef and Bosmat, and varied in target population, duration and structure. Data were collected from a sample of 98 participants of Educational Seminars, 105 participants of the Mobile Workshops, and all the participants (16) of Visual Documentation.

#### *Characteristics of Participants*

- ◆ About two-thirds (63%) were from Russian-speaking families.
- ◆ Half (55%) reported having relatives who went through the Holocaust.
- ◆ Half (49%) reported having visited Yad Vashem prior to the program.

#### *Contributions of the Programs at the Cognitive and Emotional Levels*

- ◆ *Contribution at the Cognitive Level* – Overall, half the participants attributed a high contribution to the programs regarding all three aspects of the acquisition of knowledge on the Holocaust in the FSU. This rate was greater among participants of Visual Documentation (79%) than of Educational Seminars (51%) and of Mobile Workshops (44%).
- ◆ *Contribution at the Emotional Level* – Overall, 59% of the participants attributed a high contribution regarding all three aspects of impact on attitudes to the Jewish world. This rate was greater among participants of Educational Seminars (71%) than of Visual Documentation (59%) and of Mobile Workshops (46%).

#### *Satisfaction with the Program*

- ◆ The overall score given to the program on a 10-point scale showed that 58% rated the program as 9 or 10. No significant differences were found by program.

### 4. Evaluation of Programs for High-School Teachers in Haifa

The two programs for teachers in Haifa included in the study were: the School-Level Course and the Citywide Course. In addition to the main goal of all programs, the programs for teachers were aimed at imparting methods for teaching the subject of the Holocaust in the FSU. The programs were implemented for different target populations, but were similar in structure and content. Data were collected from 56 participants of the School-Level Course (a 64% response rate) and 16 participants (an 81% response rate) in the Citywide Course.

#### *Characteristics of Participants*

- ◆ About a quarter (26%) were from Russian-speaking families.
- ◆ About two-thirds (63%) reported having relatives who went through the Holocaust.
- ◆ A half (50%) reported having taught the subject of the Holocaust in the past two years.
- ◆ About half (55%) reported having participated in professional training on the subject of the Holocaust prior to the current program.
- ◆ Most (83%) reported having visited Yad Vashem prior to the current program.

### ***Contributions of the Programs at the Cognitive and Emotional Levels***

- ◆ *Contribution at the Cognitive Level* – Two-thirds (69%) rated as high the contribution of all five aspects of the acquisition of knowledge on the Holocaust in the FSU. This rate was greater among participants of the Citywide Course (100%) than the School-Level Course (58%).
- ◆ *Contribution at the Emotional Level* – Overall, two-thirds (65%) of the participants rated as high all five aspects related to the emotional level. No differences were found by program.

### ***Satisfaction with the Program***

- ◆ Almost all the participants noted that the program was interesting (98%), relevant (93%), and innovative (86%).
- ◆ All or almost all rated as high the professional level of the program (100%), the composition of the group (100%), and the management of the program (94%).
- ◆ The overall score given to the program on a 10-point scale showed that 76% rated it as 9 or 10. This rate was higher among participants of the Citywide Course (100%) than the School-Level Course (67%).

## **5. Evaluation of Programs for Professionals Residing in the FSU**

The three evaluated programs for professionals residing in the FSU were aimed at different target populations – Jewish Young Leadership, Non-Jewish Educational Staff, and the general public (an E-Learning Course). The programs varied in duration and structure. The Jewish Young Leadership program and the Non-Jewish Educational Staff program were held in Israel.

### ***Characteristics of Participants***

- ◆ The participants of the Jewish Young Leadership program and the Non-Jewish Educational Staff program were relatively young (under the age of 30 – 100% and 61% respectively), compared with participants of the E-Learning Course where the majority (70%) were above the age of 40.
- ◆ All participants of the Non-Jewish Educational Staff program were from Ukraine; in the other two programs, most were from Russia and Ukraine.
- ◆ Almost all participants of the three programs held an academic degree.
- ◆ The majority of participants of the Jewish Young Leadership program and E-Learning Course reported having visited Yad Vashem prior to the program (95% and 64% respectively), compared with a few (6%) of the Non-Jewish Educational Staff program.

### ***Contributions of the Programs at the Cognitive and Emotional Levels***

- ◆ *Contribution at the Cognitive Level* – The rate attributing a high contribution regarding all four aspects of the acquisition of knowledge on the Holocaust in the FSU was greater among participants of the Non-Jewish Educational Staff program (74%) than the Jewish Young Leadership program (58%) and the E-Learning Course (57%).
- ◆ *Contribution at the Emotional Level* – The rate of participants attributing a high contribution to all aspects (six or five) was significantly higher for the Non-Jewish Educational Staff

program (85%) than for the E-Learning Course (55%) and the Jewish Young Leadership program (37%).

### ***Satisfaction with the Program***

- ◆ All or almost all (84%-100%) participants of all three programs noted that the program was relevant, interesting and innovative.
- ◆ In all three programs, all or almost all (74% -100%) participants were satisfied with the professional level of the program, the composition of the group and its management.
- ◆ The overall score given to the program on a 10-point scale showed the percentage of those who rated the program with scores of 9 or 10 was higher among participants of the Non-Jewish Educational Staff program (95%) and the E-Learning Course (77%) than the Jewish Young Leadership program (37%).

## **6. Summary and Final Remarks**

The findings presented in this report provide a comprehensive picture of the major contributions of the eight educational programs on the experience of Soviet Jewry in the Holocaust to various groups in Israel and the FSU.

The findings show that, despite the differences between the programs in structure and target population, most of the participants rated program contributions as high at both the cognitive and emotional levels. On the cognitive level, the programs enabled different target populations to acquire new knowledge on the Holocaust in the FSU and provided new understanding of the particular narrative of Soviet Jewry during the Holocaust. On the emotional level, the programs had an impact on the participants' attitudes to the Jewish world and the Jewish people. It is interesting that the contributions attributed by participants to the program at the cognitive and emotional levels were mostly similar.

The findings of these studies were presented to the GPG representatives and Yad Vashem education staff and provided important input for improving these programs and determining directions for the development of similar educational programs in the future

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