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Hesed Evaluation Study: Jewish Identity, Community Orientation and Voluntarism

Report Number 5: Findings from an In-depth Study of Hesed Directors and Jewish Community Representatives

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This report is the fifth in a series of publications that present findings from an evaluation study of Hesed Community Welfare Centers in the former Soviet Union. It addresses the perspective of Hesed Center directors and Jewish community representatives on Hesed's role in the Jewish community, its relationships with community representatives and cooperation with local organizations (both Jewish and non-Jewish), the unmet needs of the local Jewish population, and Hesed's response to these needs. In addition, it addresses the perspective of Hesed Center directors on the work of Hesed's volunteers.

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Related Publications

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Abstract

This report is the fifth in a series that presents findings from an evaluation study of Hesed Community Welfare Centers in the former Soviet Union. The study was initiated by the JDC-FSU Department and conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute in cooperation with the William Rosenwald Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers in St. Petersburg, Russia.

After nine years of experience and development, the JDC-FSU Department decided to conduct an evaluation study of the Hesed Centers, using a comparative case study approach. The evaluation focused on the following:

- ♦ Hesed Centers as a lever for Jewish renewal and for renewal of the Jewish community
- ♦ The link between Hesed Centers and municipal services, other Jewish community organizations and key community figures
- ♦ The volunteers and their work at Hesed
- ♦ The welfare services provided by Hesed
- ♦ Training for Hesed's employees and volunteers.

The study addresses these issues from the perspectives of various groups: Hesed's directors, employees, volunteers, home-care workers and clients, as well as Jewish community representatives. This report provides the perspective of Hesed's directors (first chapter of the findings), and of the Jewish community representatives (second chapter of the findings), regarding these issues. The data were gathered through in-depth face-to-face interviews conducted with the directors of the eight Hesed Centers that participated in the study, and with 74 Jewish community representatives in the eight cities.

Findings from the Study of the Hesed Directors

Background of the Hesed Directors

Half of the Hesed directors were women. Four of the directors were between the ages of 50 and 55, two were under age 45, and the remaining two were over age 60. All of the directors were highly educated and had a Master's Degree or higher, primarily in the sciences or engineering.

The Directors' Perspectives of the Impact and Role of Hesed in the Jewish Community

We examined the directors' perspectives of Hesed's role in the Jewish community by asking them about its impact on the Jewish identity of its employees, volunteers and clients, as well as on Jewish community renewal.

Hesed's Impact on the Jewish Identity of its Employees, Volunteers and Clients

All of the directors reported that Hesed has made a significant contribution to strengthening the Jewish identity of its clients, volunteers and employees. From their perspective, Hesed has had an impact on the Jewish identity of these people in two ways: by strengthening their sense of

belonging to the Jewish people and increasing their knowledge of Jewish concepts, traditions, history, and so forth.

Almost all of the directors noted that the level of Hesed's impact on clients, volunteers and employees varies.

Employees: The employees were perceived as the group whose Jewish identity is strengthened the most, in both ways. Their activity – providing Hesed services – strengthens their sense of responsibility and belonging to the Jewish people, and their participation in ongoing training on Jewish issues strengthens the cognitive component of their Jewish identity.

Volunteers: By helping other Jews, the volunteers experience a sense of Jewish solidarity and mutual support. These feelings are strengthened because most of the volunteers are also clients, receiving support from Hesed because they are Jews. In addition, they participate in Jewish events sponsored by Hesed, which increases their knowledge of Jewish traditions. However, in general, the cognitive component of the volunteers' Jewish identity is less influenced than that of the employees, as the volunteers undergo less training on Jewish issues.

Clients: Receiving welfare aid and participating in Hesed's Jewish holiday celebrations strengthens the clients' sense of affiliation with the Jewish people. However, Hesed has limited impact on their knowledge of Jewish concepts, practices and issues, compared to that of the employees and volunteers. Although most of the clients receive such items as a Chanukah menorah or Jewish calendar, or written information about Jewish customs as part of their food packages, only some are able to attend Hesed's cultural-educational programs that include discussions of Jewish issues.

Hesed's Broader Impact and Role in the Jewish Community

Almost all of the directors reported that Hesed has an impact on Jewish life in their city by providing a sense of belonging to the Jewish people and a feeling of solidarity. Most of the directors reported that their Hesed Center has organized different activities for the broader Jewish population, the most frequently mentioned activity being communal Jewish holiday celebrations. The directors also emphasized that Hesed is well organized and has the necessary human and financial resources to be a lever for Jewish community renewal.

Hesed's Relationship with Jewish Community Representatives

All Hesed Centers maintain contact with key figures in the Jewish community (e.g., the heads of local educational or cultural organizations, religious leaders and business people; hereinafter, Jewish community representatives). Therefore, we asked the Hesed directors about the reasons for this contact, and about involvement in Hesed by Jewish community representatives.

Reasons for Contact between Hesed and Jewish Community Representatives

Most of the directors reported that contact with Jewish community representatives is important for Hesed, because it is through them that Hesed can learn about the needs of the community. In addition, Jewish community representatives serve as a channel for ties and cooperation with the local Jewish population. The directors thought that community representatives are interested in

maintaining contact with Hesed because Hesed contributes to the community's welfare, and because their involvement in Hesed enhances their own image in the community.

The Nature of the Community Representatives' Involvement in Hesed

Almost all of the directors reported that Jewish community representatives serve as members of their Hesed's board of directors, emphasizing that this is advantageous to Hesed. In addition, they usually participate in Hesed's communal Jewish holiday celebrations and cultural activities.

Hesed's Cooperation with Local Jewish Organizations

In order to learn about Hesed's cooperation with other Jewish organizations, we asked the directors about the type of organizations with which they cooperate, about overlap between Hesed and other Jewish organizations, and about their views of Hesed's future contact with other Jewish organizations.

Cooperation with Local Jewish Organizations

According to the directors, Hesed cooperates with a wide spectrum of Jewish organizations, primarily local Jewish community centers, Chabad or other Orthodox synagogues, various centers of Jewish culture, Hillel student organizations and Jewish schools. Some reported that their Hesed also cooperates with the local Progressive Movement synagogue and the Russian Jewish Congress.

Overlap with Other Jewish Organizations

Almost all of the directors reported that additional Jewish organizations in their city provide food packages, meals and medications. While some of the directors see this overlap as an advantage – it enables a person to receive more material support – others see it as a disadvantage, mainly because they perceive these organizations as not employing “professional criteria” when distributing aid, and because overlapping creates unnecessary expenditures.

Perspectives on the Future

Most of the directors reported that they would like to broaden their cooperation with all local Jewish organizations, so as to improve the welfare of the Jewish population, have the ability to consult with these Jewish organizations, and share experience. Some reported they would like to maintain the relationships with other Jewish organizations as they are.

Hesed's Cooperation with Non-Jewish Organizations

All of the Hesed directors reported that they maintain contact with their municipality, especially its department of social services. The main feature of this contact is that department employees come to Hesed to improve their own level of professionalism. In addition, most of the directors reported maintaining contact with the municipal department of health, and with local medical clinics or hospitals.

Perceptions of the Network of Institutes for Communal and Welfare Workers

Since its establishment in St. Petersburg in 1994, the William Rosenwald Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers has spawned a network of regional Institutes. As the network fills a special function for Hesed Centers, it was important to expand discussion of the directors' perspectives of its role, and of Hesed's cooperation with it.

General Perceptions

All of the directors reported maintaining a special relationship with the network. They ascribed a great deal of importance to the network because of the training it supplies to Hesed employees and expressed satisfaction with its functioning.

Perceptions of the Network's Other Activities

The directors of small Hesed Centers, which are located relatively far from a regional Institute, have less contact with the network and so are less familiar with its non-training activities. The directors of large Hesed Centers, which are located in a city that has a regional Institute, have closer contact with the network. Some of these directors suggested establishing a research department in the regional Institute, which would study social issues of relevance to the region; they also suggested expanding the network's services to the entire Jewish population, and requiring payment for these services.

Volunteers and Their Work

One of the major goals of Hesed is to strengthen voluntarism within and for the community. Today, a considerable proportion of Hesed's activities are based on the work of volunteers. Therefore, we examined the directors' perception of the work of volunteers, including recruitment, placement and training. We also examined their perceptions of the relationships between employees and volunteers, volunteer turnover, the motivation to volunteer at Hesed, and incentives for volunteers.

Recruiting and Training Volunteers

Although most of the Hesed Centers have a sufficient number of volunteers, all of the directors reported ongoing recruitment efforts in order to create a pool of volunteers who are young and have special professional skills. Hesed recruits potential volunteers from among participants in its cultural activities, and from among its clients' relatives and friends.

Most of the directors described a process of selecting new volunteers that included an interview and trial work period. The role of the person responsible for selecting volunteers and monitoring their work differs at each Hesed Center; most are provided with special training for this role.

Almost all of the directors reported that their volunteers receive professional training, mainly consisting of seminars conducted once or twice a year by the regional Institute, and instruction given by Hesed employees at the beginning of the volunteer's work. Half of the directors reported that the volunteers are satisfied with their training; the rest did not answer the question. Some emphasized that volunteers primarily require training in social work, psychology and Judaism. Most of the directors considered volunteer training to be a form of compensation or "reward."

The Work of Volunteers at Hesed

Most of the directors reported a good working relationship between the employees and volunteers at their Hesed Center. However, they also reported occasional difficulties, mainly due to an employee's distrust of a volunteer or a volunteer's feeling that an employee does not respect him. Most of the directors indicated that clients respect the volunteers, appreciate their help, and are satisfied with their work. The directors' responses indicate the significance that they themselves attribute to the work of the volunteers; most cited the positive atmosphere that volunteers bring to Hesed, the warmth they add to Hesed's activities, and their contribution to Hesed's public image.

Five of the eight directors defined the volunteer staff at their Hesed Center as relatively stable; the remaining directors reported turnover among the volunteers despite a stable core group. The main reasons they cited for volunteer turnover were poor health and volunteer dissatisfaction with the way their work is organized or with the lack of challenge in their tasks.

Motivation to Volunteer at Hesed

Almost all of the directors reported that the volunteers at Hesed are highly motivated. From their perspective, the main reasons for volunteering at Hesed are to remain active, be with other people, become affiliated with the Jewish community, use their abilities, and receive material benefits.

All of the directors reported having to constantly provide encouragement to the volunteers. Some reported that they offer "moral support" in the form of birthday celebrations, or tickets to the theater or a concert. Others reported that they send volunteers on trips out of town or to seminars outside the Hesed Center. Almost all of the directors cited the necessity of increasing the material compensation provided to volunteers, many of whom are in economic distress. In addition, they emphasized the need for a special budget for these incentives.

Unmet Needs of the Jewish Population

The Hesed directors were asked about the current unmet needs of the Jewish population in their city, and whether Hesed can meet these needs.

Most reported that the Jewish population in their city has unmet needs, primarily citing old age homes, medical services, home-care and Jewish burial services. They also cited unmet needs related to the welfare and economic status of single-parent families, middle-aged people who are unemployed, and children who require health care.

According to the directors, Hesed has sufficient professionally skilled human resources, yet in order to meet some of the current unmet needs of the Jewish population its budget should be increased.

Findings from the Study of the Jewish Community Representatives

Background of the Jewish Community Representatives

The majority (72%) of the Jewish community representatives were men. Twenty-six percent of the community representatives were 26-45 years old, 29% were 46-55, 22% were 56-65, and 23% were

66-81. All of the community representatives had a higher education (i.e., Master's Degree or higher). Half (49%) worked for or led a Jewish cultural or educational organization, 16% were religious leaders, 12% represented an organization of war veterans or victims of the Nazis, and 5% were business people; the remaining 18% worked in another field in the Jewish community. Forty percent of the Jewish community representatives served on their local Hesed's board of directors.

Perceptions of Hesed's Relationships with Local Jewish Organizations

Relationships between Hesed and the Representatives or Their Organization

All of the Jewish community representatives reported being aware of Hesed's activities in their city. The vast majority (93%) reported that they or their organization interacts with Hesed. Most (78%) of the community representatives described their or their organization's relationship with Hesed in terms of cooperation, joint programs or mutual support.

The nature of the relationships with Hesed vary according to the work of the Jewish community representative or his organization: Those community representatives citing work with children reported that children participate in events at Hesed and, in certain instances, Hesed clients participate in activities the community representatives or their organizations conduct for children; community representatives associated with the Hillel campus organization reported very close cooperation with Hesed in the form of volunteer work at Hesed by students; those associated with war veteran or Holocaust survivor groups, or other organizations lacking their own sources of funding, reported participation in Hesed activities by members, as well as the receipt of financial or organizational assistance from Hesed; business people and religious leaders reported that they support Hesed financially or with manpower.

Most (84%) of the Jewish community representatives reported no problems in their interaction with Hesed. Eleven percent of the community representatives cited occasional problems, mainly relating to a perceived lack of willingness by Hesed to cooperate – which might reflect a sense of competition between Hesed and some local Jewish organizations.

Twenty percent of the community representatives reported that they would like to maintain their or their organization's current relationship with Hesed; 52% said they would like to broaden the relationship. The majority (60%) reported that Hesed should establish contact with additional Jewish community representatives, mainly business people, for additional funding.

Relationships between Hesed and Other Local Jewish Organizations

The vast majority (95%) of the Jewish community representatives said they believe Hesed interacts with local Jewish organizations other than their own. About half (54%) of the community representatives reported that in interacting with these organizations, Hesed has an impact on them, mainly due to the example it sets with its well-organized work, the resulting partnerships and coordinated activities, and, on occasion, an organization's financial dependency on Hesed. Twenty-five percent of the community representatives reported problems in Hesed's relationships with other local Jewish organizations, relating mainly to what they perceived to be Hesed's unwillingness to

cooperate, and its efforts to impose its will on other organizations. Eight percent of the community representatives reported that there is no contact or cooperation by Hesed with the local Jewish Agency office or the local Israeli cultural center.

The majority of the Jewish community representatives (62%) said Hesed should expand its relationships with local Jewish organizations. In particular, they cited the importance of expanding Hesed's relationships with organizations that serve Jewish youth, which would increase inter-generational ties, promote Jewish continuity and help develop young Jewish leadership.

Perceptions of Hesed's Impact on Jewish Identity and Jewish Community Renewal

Hesed's Activities and Their Impact on Jewish Identity

Forty-one percent of the Jewish community representatives reported that Hesed strengthens the Jewish identity of its elderly clients, while 43% said this impact goes beyond its elderly clients and reaches the wider Jewish population as well. The community representatives reporting that Hesed strengthens the Jewish identity of both its clients and the general Jewish population said it does so in the following ways: It helps people re-discover their Jewish roots, increases their sense of self-respect and even security as Jews, and provides the community with a message of Jewish solidarity.

The Hesed activities cited most often by the community representatives as having an impact not only on Hesed clients, but also on the general Jewish population, were: Jewish holiday celebrations, Kabbalat Shabbat (a ceremony on Friday evening that includes prayer, the blessing over wine, Sabbath songs and a festive meal), lectures on Jewish history and tradition, and concerts of Jewish music. Few (3%) of the community representatives emphasized the importance of the fact that Hesed – as a non-religious organization – provides such activities.

Hesed's Role in the Process of Jewish Community Renewal

The community representatives' perception of Hesed's place in the Jewish community varied: Half (49%) considered Hesed to be solely a welfare component of the Jewish community structure, 17% defined Hesed as being a major component of the Jewish community structure without specifying the type of component, and 22% viewed Hesed as being the center of the Jewish community. All of the community representatives described Hesed as being a strong, well-organized and financially sound organization that dominates Jewish community life. More than half (56%) said Hesed has sufficient resources to serve as a lever for Jewish community renewal.

The community representatives' views varied regarding the role Hesed should play in the process of Jewish community renewal and can be grouped into three general categories: First, Hesed should lead the process of Jewish community renewal, as it has sufficient professional staff and financial resources to do so; second, Hesed is a social welfare-oriented organization and should limit itself to such activities, leaving Jewish community renewal to other Jewish organizations that have been designated for this purpose; third, Hesed's role in the process of Jewish community renewal should depend on the size of the Jewish community - in addition to providing social welfare services, Hesed Centers in cities with a small Jewish community should also play a central role in the process

of Jewish community renewal, while in cities with a large Jewish community, Hesed Centers should focus solely on the provision of social welfare services.

Unmet Needs and Expanding Hesed's Activities in the Future

The vast majority (85%) of the Jewish community representatives reported a wide range of unmet needs among the local Jewish population: old age homes (40%); programs for the unemployed and the middle-aged population (21%); Jewish burial services (16%); Jewish cultural institutions (13%); Jewish education, e.g., Jewish schools and kindergartens, and Jewish vocational schools (8%); Jewish-oriented information and communication channels (8%); religious services (6%); and medical services (3%).

Some community representatives reported that the community suffers from budgetary limitations (23%) and a lack of human resources (10%), both of which contribute to the aforementioned unmet needs. The community representatives thought Hesed should be more flexible and ready to address the needs of those who are currently ineligible for its assistance (i.e., the unemployed and people with serious medical problems, especially disabled children and youth).

Conclusions

- ♦ The responses of the Hesed directors and Jewish community representatives indicate that Hesed has significant impact on the Jewish identity of its employees, volunteers and clients, and on that of the broader local Jewish population.
- ♦ Although the attitudes of the Hesed directors and Jewish community representatives are not uniform regarding whether Hesed should play a leading role in Jewish community renewal, almost all of them emphasized Hesed's impact on Jewish life in their city.
- ♦ The responses of the directors and community representatives reflect the importance of Hesed's contacts with the latter. The directors saw these contacts as being important because, according to them, the representatives serve as a channel for cooperation with the broader Jewish population, and through them Hesed can learn more about its needs. On the other hand, the Jewish community representatives saw Hesed as being a partner and a source of support for the activities of their organization.
- ♦ The responses of the directors and community representatives indicate that Hesed maintains contact with local Jewish organizations. However, most stated that they would like to broaden this contact. The directors also reported that Hesed maintains contact with some non-Jewish organizations.
- ♦ The directors had a positive view of the role of volunteers at Hesed. Although they reported relative stability among the volunteer staff, they also cited a need for additional volunteers, preferably younger ones. They reported providing incentives to volunteers, which they described as being important to the stability of the volunteer staff. However, they also thought the incentives could be enhanced (materially, in particular). Although their responses were not uniform, the directors cited a number of areas in which additional training is needed in order to increase the effectiveness of the volunteers.
- ♦ The directors and community representatives reported that the Jewish population in their city has unmet needs, primarily for welfare services, and identified the needy populations as being the elderly, as well as single-parent families, the middle-aged unemployed, and children. All of the directors reported that they lack the budget necessary for meeting these populations' needs,

while some of the Jewish community representatives reported a lack of community budget and others reported a lack of human resources in the community.

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1. Introduction

This report presents findings from an evaluation study of Hesed Community Welfare Centers in the former Soviet Union. The study was initiated by the JDC-FSU Department, and was conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute in cooperation with the William Rosenwald Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers in St. Petersburg, Russia.

1.1 Background of Hesed

When the AJJDC re-entered the former Soviet Union at the end of the communist era, it found an aging Jewish population with severe economic and health problems. Municipal, state and Jewish services for the elderly were inadequate, and effective intervention was not forthcoming from the state or local agencies.

In an effort to respond to needs while facilitating the development of viable Jewish communities, the Hesed model was developed as a multi-faceted outreach service network. Hesed Centers provide assistance and basic welfare and social services to the elderly, disabled and other needy groups in the Jewish population in the former Soviet Union. With emphasis on a concentrated package of integrated, essential services, Hesed responds to its clients' most pressing needs, promotes the effective use of limited resources, and supports the dignity of the individual.

The first Hesed Center was established in 1993 in St. Petersburg by Dr. Amos Avgar of the AJJDC. Since then, approximately 170 Hesed Centers have been established throughout the former Soviet Union; together they serve over 250,000 clients in cities and the periphery.

Hesed Centers offer a host of complementary services that address multi-dimensional needs: nutrition (food packages, meals in communal dining rooms or delivered to the homebound, fresh food packages); health (medical consultations, medicine); self-care and mobility (home-care, the loan of rehabilitation equipment, home repairs); and social services ("Warm Home," day centers, libraries, clubs and cultural programs). Special needs are addressed through winter relief; the "Hesedmobile," which reaches clients in the periphery; and activities for the visually and hearing impaired.

1.2 Hesed's Guiding Principles

As conceived by Dr. Avgar, the model operates according to three basic principles: Jewish values, community orientation and voluntarism. Hesed serves to reinforce Jewish communities by networking among local Jewish structures, using them as levers to promote social welfare and strengthen communal ties. It re-establishes the connection to Jewish traditions by incorporating

Jewish values into all services. Over time, Hesed has developed to become the focus of Jewish life, particularly in mid-sized cities.¹

Clearly, limited funding and the pressing needs of older people make the elderly Hesed's primary target population. Nevertheless, from the beginning, Hesed's approach has been community-wide. Hesed was designed to integrate various local organizations and services, and to strengthen voluntarism within and for the community. Today, a considerable proportion of Hesed's activities are based on voluntarism. Hesed views all members of the community, including its clients, as resources, and mobilizes them to the fullest possible extent as volunteers.²

In addition to community and voluntarism, Yiddishkeit (Jewish values and traditions) is the third principle on which the Hesed model is based. As part of the JDC's overall goal of "returning" Jews to the Jewish people, Hesed services and activities place a great deal of emphasis on Jewish heritage, culture and traditions. The goal of the Hesed model is not only to provide material needs, but also to respond to the population's often-unarticulated need for a community and a return to Jewish traditions. As a result, one can find many elements of Yiddishkeit in Hesed Center programs and activities; indeed, Yiddishkeit permeates the centers' environment in many ways.³

The direct aim of the JDC is thus not only to provide welfare services in the former Soviet Union, but also to assist in the development of strong, viable Jewish communities capable of providing the gamut of services, including care for the needy. For this reason, each Hesed Center is run by local professionals and a board of directors composed of Jewish community representatives and business people. Prior to Hesed, the idea of a board of directors did not exist in the former Soviet Union. Those who established Hesed thus also aimed to establish a local decision-making structure that would increase, in a democratic fashion, the community's responsibility to its members.⁴

In order to increase the effectiveness of Hesed's boards of directors, the Welfare Department of the JDC provides training seminars for their members. The JDC is also committed to the continued training and strengthening of Hesed's volunteers, professionals and lay leaders. Most training is provided by the William Rosenwald Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers, which was established in 1994 in St. Petersburg and has since expanded into a network of nine regional Institutes throughout the former Soviet Union.⁵

¹ Avgar and Avraham, 2001.

² Avgar and Avraham, 2001.

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

2. Study Goals and Methodology

2.1 The Goals of the Survey

After nearly a decade of experience, the Hesed network has proven to be an effective response to the urgent needs of Jews in the former Soviet Union, acting as a resource and model for local Jewish welfare organizations.⁶ Over the years, an internal evaluation has been conducted on an ongoing basis in order to improve the provision of welfare services. However, it is equally important to assess whether Hesed's guiding principles remain as integral to the process as they were at the outset.

Just as *hesed* is a concept deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, the manner in which a service is provided by the Hesed Centers is no less important than the service itself.⁷ With this in mind, the JDC-FSU Department decided to conduct an evaluation study of the Hesed Centers, using a comparative case study approach and focusing on the following aspects:

- ♦ Hesed Centers as a lever for Jewish renewal and renewal of the Jewish community
- ♦ The linkage of Hesed Centers to municipal services, other Jewish community organizations, and key community figures
- ♦ The volunteers and their work at Hesed
- ♦ Welfare services provided by Hesed
- ♦ Training for Hesed's employees and volunteers.

2.2 Methodology and Data Collection

The study was conducted at eight Hesed Centers in three republics: Russia – St. Petersburg and Nizhnii Novgorod; Ukraine – Kiev, Odessa, Vinnitsa and Dnepropetrovsk; and Belarus – Minsk and Vitebsk.

The data were gathered from six source groups: Hesed clients, Hesed volunteers, Hesed home-care workers, Hesed employees, Hesed Center directors, and Jewish community representatives. Each source group supplied data regarding at least some of the aforementioned issues; the idea was to gather information from a number of perspectives, and thus receive as broad a picture of Hesed Centers as possible.

The source groups were sampled in various ways. The clients, volunteers and home-care workers were randomly sampled from the files of Hesed's database at the eight centers in March 2001.⁸ All Hesed employees were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire. A face-to-face interview was conducted with each of the eight Hesed Center directors, and with Jewish community representatives from each of the eight cities.

⁶ Kol-Fogelson, 2002.

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ For more details see: Zalberg, Katz and Youssim, 2003.

In order to identify the Jewish community representatives, we surveyed the Hesed director and JDC representative in each city for the names of those they perceived to be the 10 most important figures in the Jewish community. The names cited by both the Hesed director and the JDC representative were compiled into a general list, with additional names that had been cited by either one being added at random until the general list totaled 10 individuals. All 10 were then contacted by telephone and invited to participate in a face-to-face interview. Overall, 74 of the 80 community representatives (93%) were interviewed (10 from St. Petersburg, nine from Vitebsk, seven from Odessa, nine from Nizhnii Novgorod, nine from Minsk, 10 from Kiev, 10 from Dnepropetrovsk, and 10 from Vinnitsa). The interviews were conducted by Russian-speaking researchers from the William Rosenwald Institute and the JDC-Brookdale Institute.

The questionnaires for each of these source groups were developed by the staff of the JDC-Brookdale Institute, together with the staff of the William Rosenwald Institute, with input from a number of experts in Jewish communal surveys and survey instruments. All data were gathered between October and December 2001.

This report relates solely to the responses of the Hesed Center directors and Jewish community representatives. It addresses their perspectives of Hesed's role in the Jewish community, its relationships with Jewish community representatives and cooperation with local organizations (both Jewish and non-Jewish), the unmet needs of the local Jewish population, and Hesed's response to these needs. In addition, it addresses the perspective of the Hesed Center directors on the work of Hesed's volunteers.

3. Perspectives of the Hesed Directors

This chapter relates solely to the responses of the Hesed directors. It addresses their views of Hesed's role in the process of Jewish community renewal; its relationship with Jewish community representatives; and its relationship with Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in the city, and with the network of Institutes for Communal and Welfare Workers. In addition, it relates to their views of Hesed volunteers and their work, and of the unmet needs of their city's Jewish population.

3.1 The Directors' Background

We examined the directors' socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, education, profession and length in time in their position. The findings revealed the following:

- ♦ There were equal numbers of men and women among the Hesed directors.
- ♦ Two of the directors were under age 45, four were between the ages of 50 and 55, and two were above age 60.
- ♦ All of the directors were highly educated and had a Master's Degree or higher.

- ♦ Half of the directors had a background in science or engineering, two had been trained as physicians, and two had a background in the humanities.
- ♦ Half of the directors had been working in the current position for more than eight years; others had been working for between five and seven years.

3.2 The Directors' Perspectives of Hesed's Role in the Jewish Community

One of the study's goals was to evaluate Hesed Centers as a lever for Jewish renewal and for the renewal of the Jewish community. The study addressed this issue by examining the nature of Hesed's impact on the Jewish identity of its clients, volunteers and employees, as well as its role in the process of Jewish community renewal.⁹ In this chapter, we examine this issue from the Hesed directors' perspective.

Hesed's Impact on the Jewish Identity of its Employees, Volunteers and Clients

In order to examine the directors' perspective regarding the first issue, we asked them whether Hesed had an impact on the Jewish identity of its clients, volunteers and employees; which "Jewish elements" had been integrated into Hesed's activities for these three groups; and, if any Jewish elements had been integrated into the activities, whether the members of these groups were satisfied with them.

All of the directors reported that Hesed had made a significant contribution to strengthening the Jewish identity of its clients, volunteers and employees. All of the directors reported that Hesed programs incorporated Jewish cultural activities, such as the celebration of Jewish holidays, "Kabbalat Shabbat" (a ceremony on Friday evening that includes prayer, the blessing over wine, Sabbath songs and a festive meal), and lectures or seminars on Jewish traditions. These activities contribute to increasing the Jewish identity of these three groups.

Almost all of the directors addressed two dimensions of Hesed's impact on the Jewish identity of employees, volunteers and clients:

1. The emotional dimension, i.e., Hesed affects the sense of responsibility toward the Jewish people, feelings of mutual support and Jewish solidarity, and the sense of belonging to the Jewish people.
2. The cognitive dimension, i.e., Hesed affects familiarity with Jewish issues and concepts, and knowledge of Jewish customs, traditions and history.

Almost all of the directors noted that, regarding both dimensions, Hesed had differing levels of influence on clients, volunteers and employees:

- ♦ According to the directors, the Jewish identity most strengthened by Hesed, in both dimensions, was that of the employees. When Hesed employees provide material help to clients or organize

⁹ From this point until Chapter 6, the analyses are based on the responses of only seven directors, as one director responded to only some of the questions.

cultural activities for them, it strengthens their sense of responsibility and belonging to the Jewish people. As one director said, *"Most of those who come to work at Hesed internalize a sense of belonging."* In addition, almost all of the directors noted that Hesed employees participate in ongoing training (lectures and seminars) concerning Jewish customs and traditions, which naturally helps strengthen their Jewish identity in the cognitive dimension: *"Our employees study at the Institute of Judaica" and "Regular seminars develop their Jewish consciousness and awareness of Jewish history. It is very important for us because the employees must pass this knowledge on to volunteers and clients."*

- ◆ According to the directors, the volunteers at most Hesed Centers are also Hesed clients – that is, in addition to helping others as volunteers, they also receive material aid from Hesed and participate in its cultural activities. This dual status has a unique effect on both dimensions. First, by helping Jewish people, the volunteers gain a feeling of Jewish solidarity, mutual support, and responsibility toward other Jews. According to one director, *"By working at Hesed, they attain a sense of Jewish solidarity."* These feelings are also strengthened by their being clients, and by their receiving support and help because they are Jews. Second, since the volunteers are more mobile than other clients, they participate in almost all of Hesed's Jewish events and thereby learn about Jewish traditions. Naturally, this helps reinforce the cognitive dimension of their Jewish identity. However, at only three of the Hesed Centers do volunteers, like employees, participate in seminars on Jewish issues, although they do so less frequently than employees: *"We conducted a seminar for the volunteers on Jewish holidays last fall."* Therefore, the cognitive dimension of the volunteers' Jewish identity is influenced less than that of the employees, although more than that of other clients.
- ◆ The directors reported that the clients' receipt of welfare aid from Hesed strengthens their Jewish identity because it makes them feel part of the Jewish community and the Jewish people: *"In order to influence the clients' sense of Jewish identity and belonging, we always emphasize that the support they receive is from a Jewish source."* In addition, some clients participate in Hesed's Jewish holiday celebrations, which are thought to have a significant impact on Jewish identity: *"In organizing each activity, we explain to clients its Jewish content."* Holiday celebrations enable them to come in contact with other Jews and enlarge their Jewish social circle, thereby increasing their sense of belonging to the Jewish people. Hesed's Jewish holiday celebrations also help reinforce familiarity with Jewish traditions (i.e., they have a cognitive impact). However, as noted, not all clients can participate in these events, primarily due to health problems; those who cannot participate are affected less in this way. The directors further reported that Hesed has limited impact on the clients' knowledge of Jewish concepts, traditions and history, relative to that of those in the other groups. While almost all of the clients receive such items as menorahs, a Jewish calendar, and written information about Jewish holidays as part of the food packages they receive, only a limited number are able to attend lectures or other cultural-educational programs that address Jewish history and traditions.

All of the directors reported that, in their opinion, the employees, volunteers and clients are satisfied with the Jewish elements of Hesed's activities.

Hesed's Role in the Process of Jewish Community Renewal

In addition to the impact that Hesed has on its employees, volunteers and clients, it also contributes to Jewish community renewal. In order to learn about the directors' perceptions of Hesed's role in Jewish community renewal, we asked them whether Hesed Centers organize activities for other groups in the local Jewish population (other than employees, clients and volunteers) and, if so, how the activities affect the Jewish population. We also asked whether Hesed has enough resources to be a lever for the renewal of the local Jewish community and, if not, what should be done.

Six of the directors reported that their Hesed Center organizes activities for the broader Jewish population, primarily communal Jewish holiday celebrations. These activities are usually organized by Hesed in cooperation with other Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish cultural center, synagogues and Hillel, and are usually held in a large, prestigious hall for the entire local Jewish population. Such activities have a strong impact on the Jewish population. As one director commented, "[They] give a 'push' to Jewish life in the city."

The directors also cited other activities that Hesed offers the entire Jewish population, including free matza distribution, a women's club, and lessons given at the local Jewish day school by senior Hesed staff regarding the meaning of *hesed* and charity in Jewish tradition. The directors reported that the impact of these activities is reflected in the new volunteers who come to Hesed, and in the new participants in Jewish community center programs.

The directors reported that through these and other activities, Hesed has an impact on local Jewish life. This gives the Jewish population a feeling of solidarity, as indicated by comments such as, "*Hesed is an island of Jewish life in the city*" and "*At Hesed, Jews feel like they are part of a family.*"

Most of the directors seemed to view Hesed as a lever for Jewish community renewal. However, a few thought that Hesed lacked certain features that are necessary for the process of Jewish renewal. As one noted, "*Hesed would have to change the content of its activities and deal more with Jewish history, the history of Russian Jews, and Judaism [in order to better serve the process of Jewish renewal].*"

Other Hesed directors disagreed, pointing out that Hesed is a welfare organization, and because of this it should leave Jewish renewal to non-welfare organizations. They reported that the aim of Jewish community renewal is to turn people into active participants in this process rather than passive clients (consumers), which they are in Hesed. One director offered the following argument: "*Hesed should not be a main factor in community renewal, because the community should not be associated in people's consciousness only with a place that provides material aid. This has the wrong impact on the community's development.*" Another added, "*Hesed has no right to expect someone to become more Jewish because he's been given a food package. The structures and organizations designated for community development should be those that engage in renewal of the Jewish community.*"

3.3 The Directors' Perceptions of Hesed's Relationship with Jewish Community Representatives

In order to understand the directors' perspectives on the relationship between Hesed Centers and Jewish community representatives, we asked them which community representatives maintain ties with Hesed; whether contact with community representatives is important to Hesed and, if so, why; why community representatives desire contact with Hesed; how community representatives are involved in Hesed and whether this involvement is sufficient; and what the main difficulties are that the directors encounter in their Center's relationship with community representatives.

The directors reported that the representatives who maintain contact with Hesed are, in the main, the heads of local Jewish organizations (such as the Jewish cultural center and Jewish community center), principals of Jewish day schools, synagogue leaders or businessmen.

All but one of the directors reported that contact and cooperation with community representatives is important for Hesed. Two reported that, in general, community representatives "*could be useful*" and that "*one more head is good [i.e., as a source of ideas]*". Some of the directors reported that through contacts with community representatives, Hesed can learn more about the community's specific needs and "*be open to the community.*" These directors thought that community representatives are a channel toward cooperation with the local Jewish population, which is very important for Hesed, and compared the relationship between Hesed and the Jewish community to that between a part and the whole. As one director noted, "*We [at Hesed] are an element of the community, and we want to work to meet the community's needs and get its support.*"

One director, who did not see the importance of involvement in Hesed by Jewish community representatives, apparently wished to either keep Hesed an independent organization and prevent it from becoming dependent on community representatives, or prevent community representatives from "invading" Hesed. He explained his position by saying, "*Each organization should be managed from within – not from the outside.*"

Some directors reported that contact with community representatives is an important channel for reaching the entire Jewish population and learning about its needs; they surmised that community representatives are equally interested in contact with Hesed because "*they understand that welfare is an integral part of the community*" or because "*Hesed helps the community.*"

Other directors reported that the relationship between Hesed and Jewish community representatives is based on the personal interests of the representatives, claiming their main motive is to improve their own image in the eyes of the community. One commented, "*We [Hesed] give them an opportunity to be active*"; another said, "*They 'look better' when their activity relates to [our] welfare program.*"

The nature of the community representatives' involvement in Hesed varies, depending on the size of the city and, accordingly, the size of the Hesed Center. According to the directors, when the Hesed

Center is smaller, the community representatives usually do little more than show up for its cultural activities or communal Jewish holiday celebrations, although, according to one director, they also provide important information about the Jewish community. When the Hesed Center is larger and serves a large population, the community representatives also tend to play an active role in implementing its various programs as board members, members of social and other committees, lecturers or volunteers.

All but two of the directors reported that community representatives were members of their Hesed's board. The directors perceived membership on the board by community representatives as advantageous for Hesed, as it helps Hesed learn about the Jewish population's needs and problems. As one director noted, *"Thanks to their participation, we have become more aware of the problems of various groups in the local Jewish population."* Moreover, their involvement helps Hesed with public relations, as reflected in the words of another director: *"They help us explain the role of Hesed to other organizations."*

All of the directors reported that their relationships with community representatives are sufficient. None cited a need to maintain contact with additional representatives. However, almost all emphasized the need for financial support from local sponsors. The directors of the two smaller Hesed Centers were an exception, reporting not only that they had no local sponsors, but also that they did not need them.

The directors made only minimal, general comments about conflicts or problems in their relationship with community representatives. A few reported occasional difficulties but did not elaborate, adding only that the problems are usually resolved. Apparently, the directors preferred not to discuss this issue in detail during the interview. In general, all of the directors reported that they are satisfied with their relationships with the community representatives.

3.4 The Directors' Perceptions of Hesed's Cooperation with Local Jewish and Non-Jewish Organizations

Hesed's Cooperation with Local Jewish Organizations

In order to learn about Hesed's cooperation with other Jewish organizations in the city, we asked the directors to name the local Jewish organizations with which their Hesed Center maintained a relationship, and to describe the nature of the relationship. We also asked about problems in the relationship. In addition, we asked whether there was any overlap between Hesed's activities and those of other Jewish organizations, and if so, whether this was acceptable to them.

According to the directors' responses, Hesed Centers maintain contact with a broad spectrum of Jewish organizations. The lists of Jewish organizations they provided were similar. Almost all of the directors reported cooperating with more than one of the following organizations:

- ♦ The local Jewish community center – for example, Hesed clients in Minsk are involved in the activities of the woman’s club of the city’s Jewish community center, and in Kiev, they participate in a cultural-educational program of the "Kinor" Jewish community center.
- ♦ Chabad or another Orthodox synagogue – for example, a considerable number of Hesed clients attend a synagogue, or a synagogue provides a rabbi for prayer services at Hesed (in all but one city); the synagogue participates in a food program by either providing Hesed clients with Sabbath meals or providing a venue for Sabbath meals (in all but one city).
- ♦ Various Jewish cultural centers – for example, Hesed volunteers maintain the records of the city’s Jewish cemetery for the local Jewish cultural center (in Vitebsk); Hesed volunteers participate in lessons on Jewish history and culture at the center (in Odessa); and the Jewish library provides books and organizes exhibitions for clients of the “Hesedmobile” and “Warm Home” programs (Odessa).
- ♦ Jewish universities – for example, Hesed employees and clients attend lectures given at the local Jewish university (in Kiev, Odessa and Vitebsk).
- ♦ The Hillel student organization and Jewish schools.

Some directors reported contact with the Progressive Movement synagogue, which provides Hesed with lectures on Jewish traditions (in Kiev); joint programs with the Russian Jewish Congress (in St. Petersburg); and participation by Hesed employees and clients in large solidarity meetings organized by the Russian Jewish Congress (in Nizhnii Novgorod). Contact and/or cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) were rarely mentioned.

Almost all of the directors reported that other Jewish organizations in their city provide food packages, meals and medications. However, they differed in their perceptions of this overlap. For example, some reported that people in their city, including Hesed clients, can receive food packages or meals from the synagogue; they see this overlap as an advantage, as it enables a person to receive more food assistance. As one director noted, *“The more [food packages] a person gets – the better.”* Other directors saw this overlap as a disadvantage, mainly because the other organizations do not employ professional criteria when providing welfare assistance. They also thought that the overlap creates unnecessary expenditures. The following are some comments to this effect: *“The Central Synagogue distributed aid packages unprofessionally [without criteria, in a disorderly fashion], and people complained”*; *“JAFI distributed food packages and medicines without criteria – it is wrong to do this, given budgetary restrictions”*; and *“The Center of Jewish Culture opened a club program [that Hesed already has], which means that money was spent twice for the same people.”*

It is interesting to note that the director who reported no overlap among the services in his city explained that this is the *“result of the long-term coordination between Hesed and local Jewish organizations.”*

None of the directors cited problems in their relationships with other local Jewish organizations. Most reported they would like to broaden their cooperation with the organizations in order *“to improve the welfare of the Jewish population”*; *“to consult other Jewish organizations”*; and *“to*

share their experience." In addition, one director cited the importance of broadening contact with the Jewish school and Jewish youth organizations so as *"to preserve traditions and maintain the ties of the elderly to the younger generation and to the community in general."* However, some of the directors reported that there is no need to change their relationship with other local Jewish organizations.

Hesed's Cooperation with Local Non-Jewish Organizations

The list of non-Jewish organizations with which Hesed Centers maintain contact is relatively short.

All of the Hesed directors reported they maintain contact with the local municipality, especially its department of social services. The main feature of this relationship has employees of the department coming to the Hesed Center to raise their level of professionalism – that is, to learn how to serve the public - and consult with Hesed employees on professional issues.

Almost all Hesed Centers maintain contact with the municipal department of health, or with local medical clinics or hospitals. This enables them to recruit (non-Jewish) physicians and nurses to volunteer on behalf of Hesed clients, and to give clients a free or subsidized hospital stay.

Three of the directors reported that they maintain contact with public organizations that serve vulnerable populations. They cited at least one of the following – the Society of Pensioners, the Society of War Veterans, and the Union of Victims of the Nazis – as having Jewish members who are also clients of Hesed, and said that by helping these members and organizing various activities for them, Hesed supports the organizations themselves.

Without going into detail, a few directors reported contact with other non-Jewish organizations; these included an association of scientists and engineers, a theater company, a philharmonic orchestra, and an umbrella organization for local minority populations.

The Network of Institutes for Communal and Welfare Workers

As the network of Institutes for Communal and Welfare Workers fills a special function for Hesed Centers, it was important to study the directors' perceptions and recommendations regarding its functioning and cooperation with Hesed.

All of the directors reported having a special relationship with the network. They ascribed to the network a great deal of importance, as it trains Hesed employees and volunteers. Their reports indicate they are satisfied with its functioning. In addition, some of the directors reported maintaining contact with the network regarding non-training matters. It seems the degree of such contact depends on the Hesed Center's size and location.

According to the directors, the staff of smaller Hesed Centers, which are located relatively far from a regional Institute, are less familiar with the activities of the network and have limited contact with it. The directors of these Hesed Centers reported sending their employees to training courses,

seminars and conferences at the regional Institute or, in rare instances, to another, more distant Institute. However, for areas other than training, these directors did not have a definite opinion about activities organized by the network, or about ways to improve them.

The directors of the larger Hesed Centers, which are located in cities with a regional Institute, reported closer contact with the network. They also knew more about the regional Institute's other activities and services, and had ideas about how to expand the activities of both the regional Institute and the network as a whole. For example, they suggested establishing a research department at the regional Institute that could study the local socio-economic situation; charging a fee for the network's services; and strengthening cooperation between the regional Institute and other local Jewish organizations.

3.5 The Directors' Perceptions of the Volunteers' Work at Hesed

Another of the study's goals was to evaluate the volunteers at Hesed and the work they do. The survey addressed this by examining voluntarism from the perspective of the volunteers themselves, the clients (those who receive the services of the volunteers), the employees who supervise volunteers or otherwise come in contact with them, and the Hesed directors. The volunteers and their work at Hesed were studied by examining the volunteers' background; Hesed's need for volunteers; the recruitment process and professional training for volunteers; relations between employees and volunteers; the motivation of and incentives for volunteers; and volunteer turnover. In this section, we examine these issues from the perspective of the Hesed directors.

The Volunteers' Background

According to the directors, the Hesed Centers participating in the study differed in size and, accordingly, in the number of volunteers and programs. The largest Center, in St. Petersburg, had 900 volunteers working in 17 programs, and the smallest, in Vitebsk, had 44 volunteers in 12 programs.

All but one of the eight Hesed directors (in this chapter, the findings again refer to all eight of the directors who were interviewed) reported their volunteers are retirees over the age of 55, and that most of them are also Hesed clients. Three of the directors reported that their Center also has a number of relatively young volunteers, including students from the Hillel student organization and physicians. Only one director (in Vinnitsa) reported that most of the volunteers are relatively young and are not Hesed clients.

While the Hesed Centers differed in how they utilized the services of volunteers, it is possible to identify similarities. According to the directors' reports, the programs with the largest number of

volunteer work hours are the Moked¹⁰ (in Kiev, Odessa, Vitebsk and Vinnitsa); the Club program (in Dnepropetrovsk, Minsk, Odessa and Vitebsk); the Home-care program (in Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk and Nizhnii Novgorod); and the Food program (in Minsk, Vitebsk and Nizhnii Novgorod). At the largest Hesed Center (St. Petersburg), the volunteer work hours are the same for each of the programs.

Hesed's Need for Volunteers

In order to learn about Hesed's need for volunteers, we asked the Hesed directors whether they believe their Center needs more and/or younger volunteers.

Almost all of the directors reported having a sufficient number of volunteers to implement their activities. A need for more volunteers was cited only by the director from St. Petersburg – whose Center, as noted, is the largest – and the director of the smallest Center, in Vitebsk.

Although most of the directors reported having a sufficient number of volunteers, all reported ongoing efforts to recruit new and, preferably, young volunteers. The directors offered two main reasons as an explanation. First, in order to maintain its diverse programs, each Hesed Center needs different types of volunteers. For some programs, it is sufficient if the volunteer is sociable, patient, and wants to help the needy; for other programs, the volunteer must be physically strong (e.g., "Hesedmobile") or have special professional skills (e.g., the Medical program). Second, most of those currently volunteering are neither young nor healthy, and the directors must think about the future pool of volunteers.

Six of the directors cited a number of programs in which the volunteers' work is most important. These programs vary slightly from one Hesed Center to another. All of the directors cited the Club program as being one in which the volunteers' work is important. The directors of three of the four Centers in Ukraine emphasized the importance of the volunteers' work in the Moked program. The directors also said the volunteers' work is important in the following programs: Home-care, Medical Equipment, "Hesedmobile," Medical and Food.

Recruitment and Placement of Volunteers

The directors' responses reveal that the methods of recruiting volunteers are somewhat similar among the Hesed Centers. These include seeking potential volunteers among participants in its cultural activities, and among the relatives, friends and neighbors of Hesed clients. In addition, the

¹⁰ The following are the names of the programs and their content, as provided by the Hesed Centers: **Moked** offers the repair of small household appliances, the services of a tailor, and the like; the **Club** program provides Hesed clients with opportunities for social interaction; the "**Hesedmobile**" brings needed services directly to Jews living in peripheral areas that are hard to reach; the **Home-care** program provides physical and emotional support for homebound and bedridden Hesed clients; the **Medical Equipment** program is a rehabilitation equipment lending service; the **Medical** program offers medical consultation and the distribution of medications; and the **Food** program distributes food packages to clients' home.

directors of the Hesed Centers in large cities (St. Petersburg, Minsk, Kiev and Odessa) said they use the local media and links with other Jewish organizations to spread word of the need for volunteers.

Almost all of the directors said they use a selection process to choose new volunteers, and that it includes an interview and trial period. However, only three defined the criteria for accepting someone as a volunteer at Hesed: a desire to help; initiative and sociability; patience and kindness; basic intelligence; good communication skills; and a sense of responsibility.

There was variance among each of the directors' reports regarding the person who is responsible for selecting the volunteers and monitoring their work. The following are the principal patterns of volunteer selection, placement and monitoring: (1) The head of the department of volunteers is responsible for selection and placement, while the directors of specific programs oversee the volunteers' work; (2) program directors or, at small Centers, a single program director seeks volunteers who might be appropriate for the program; (3) volunteer "councils" select and place the volunteers, and oversee their work; and (4) a volunteer chosen to be in charge of the other volunteers shares responsibility with the Hesed director.

Almost all of the directors reported that those responsible for selecting the volunteers and monitoring their work receive special training for the task from the network of Institutes for Communal and Welfare Workers, or from the Hesed Center itself.

The reports of the directors indicate that volunteers are placed in almost all Hesed programs and departments, and that the roles they are given do not involve finance and are not physically difficult. The directors said the activities related to the distribution of food or aid packages, work on Hesed's premises – in the Club or Moked – and work that involves contact with many people are the most attractive to volunteers. All of the Hesed directors reported that volunteers visit homebound clients but are not substitutes for home-care workers.

Training for Volunteers

The directors were asked to indicate whether the volunteers at their Hesed Center had undergone professional training and, if so, through what organization. They were also asked to assess the efficiency of the training, and to cite unmet training needs.

Almost all of the Hesed directors (except for the director of the Center in Vinnitsa) reported that their volunteers receive some professional training at least once a year. The most common forms of training are seminars conducted once or twice a year by the regional Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers, and instruction given by Hesed employees to volunteers before they begin working.

Some of the directors reported that the volunteers receive some type of general training. Others emphasized the link between training and the volunteer's assigned tasks; this was especially true for volunteers in the Home-care, Moked and Club programs, and for physicians who volunteer. While

the volunteers, in general, receive training at the regional Institute, the physicians receive professional training at conferences in a large city such as Kiev, Minsk, or St. Petersburg.

According to half of the directors, the volunteers appear to be satisfied with the training they receive; the other half did not answer this question.

The directors had diverse opinions about the necessity of training volunteers and about their training needs. For example, the director from Vitebsk emphasized that volunteers require basic knowledge in gerontology, which should be provided by professionals. The director from Dnepropetrovsk cited the need for informal seminars for volunteer training. The director from Kiev reported that his volunteers attend two seminars a year and receive instruction from Hesed employees; however, he also emphasized that the volunteers require additional training in social work, psychology and Judaism. The director from Odessa said all volunteers at his Hesed attend seminars both there and at the regional Institute, and do not require additional training. The director from Vinnitsa reported that his volunteers do not receive professional training and do not need it.

Relationships between Employees and Volunteers

Most of the directors reported that their employees and volunteers have a good working relationship, and that the employees appear to be satisfied with the volunteers' work. Nevertheless, specific difficulties sometimes arise between an employee and a volunteer. Directors noted the following, from the employee's perspective:

- ♦ An employee may perceive that a volunteer is vying for control
- ♦ An employee may not trust a volunteer
- ♦ A volunteer may not be willing to take responsibility or, conversely, may overestimate his ability to perform a certain task.

From the volunteer's perspective, they said a volunteer might complain that he does not get respect from employees or that they don't give him enough work. One of the directors also commented that some difficulties might arise because an employee cannot compensate a volunteer for his work.

At the Hesed Centers whose directors reported occasional difficulties in employee-volunteer relationships, an "individual approach" is taken in each case to overcome the conflict. This includes conversations, changing the program in which volunteer works, changing the volunteer's task, etc.

Only one director reported that the employees at his Center receive formal instruction on how to work with volunteers. Another director said that before the employees at his Center interact with volunteers, they are provided with guidance during informal conversations.

None of the Hesed directors reported any type of special activity that might prepare the volunteers to interact or work with, or under, employees.

Motivation to Volunteer at Hesed

In order to examine the directors' perspective on the motivation of the volunteers, we asked them to assess the level of the motivation, and to consider what is behind it.

Almost all of the directors said the volunteers are highly motivated. As one commented, "*A volunteer without motivation is not a volunteer.*" As for what lies behind the motivation to volunteer at Hesed, they cited a number of factors, including those that are personal, "Jewish," social and material in nature.

According to the Hesed directors, the most significant reason for volunteering at Hesed is to remain active, because they want "*to be active,*" "*to do something,*" and "*to feel that people need you.*" Another major reason is related to social life: Volunteering at Hesed enables the volunteers "*to avoid being alone*" and "*to be in contact with other people.*"

Some volunteers are motivated by a desire to follow Jewish traditions and become affiliated with the Jewish community. The directors emphasized that volunteers want to help "*because they believe that helping is an expression of 'Jewishness'.*" They added that people volunteer at Hesed because of a "*desire to be in a Jewish environment*" and a "*need for Yiddishkeit.*"

The directors also cited professional factors. For example, volunteering enables a person to use his abilities and skills, and to see his work through to completion. In addition, they cited material benefits, as well as "*wanting to do something for which [the volunteers] would be appreciated.*"

Incentives for Volunteers

We examined the Hesed directors' perspective regarding volunteer incentives by asking how they encourage or reward volunteers, whether the current incentives are sufficient, and, if they said that additional incentives should be provided, what they should entail.

The directors agreed that there is a constant need to encourage volunteers, and each Hesed Center finds a way to reward or compensate its volunteers. Some of the directors reported offering "moral support" in the form of birthday celebrations for volunteers, or providing them with tickets to the theater or a concert. Other directors reported sending volunteers on trips or to seminars organized outside the Hesed Center.

Almost all of the directors cited the need for increasing material compensation for volunteers, many of whom suffer from economic distress. Nevertheless, their attitudes toward material compensation varied. Some proposed compensating volunteers with medications or food packages; others proposed organizing recreational activities that the volunteers could not usually afford.

All of the directors emphasized the need for a special budget to compensate volunteers. As Hesed Centers generally seek middle-aged volunteers who must still work to support their family under

poor economic circumstances, the issue of volunteer compensation and a special budget for this purpose is essential to the directors.

It is interesting to note that most of the directors viewed volunteer training as compensation or a "reward."

Turnover among Volunteers

Five of the eight directors defined the volunteer staff at their Hesed Center as being relatively stable – that is, they did not report volunteer turnover. The remaining directors reported that while there is volunteer turnover, there nevertheless is a stable core group of volunteers that does not change.

We further examined the directors' perspective on turnover among volunteers by presenting them with a list of factors that might cause someone to cease volunteering at Hesed. They were asked to rank these factors on a scale of 1 ("Has no effect") to 4 ("Has a great effect"). The list included factors relating to personal, professional and psychological problems; a lack of knowledge or training; and dissatisfaction with the content or conditions of volunteer work.

The directors' responses indicate that the main reasons volunteers leave their work at Hesed are age and poor health. Another reason concerns the content and conditions of volunteer work: Some volunteers are dissatisfied because they feel their work is not properly organized, the tasks they are given are too simple, or the work they are asked to do does not meet their expectations.

All of the directors reported that Hesed Centers maintain contact with volunteers who cannot continue working because of their age or health. Such people are given the title of "honorary volunteer," and are invited to all of the Center's cultural activities. One director reported that his Hesed Center offers a special program called "veteran volunteers." Another said his Hesed Center tries to find easier work for such volunteers, while yet another director reported that his Hesed continues to help "retired" volunteers by giving them food packages.

General Evaluation of the Volunteers' Work

In order to obtain a broad assessment of the work that volunteers do at Hesed, we asked the Hesed directors about client satisfaction with volunteers, as well as their own satisfaction with volunteers.

Five of the eight directors reported being aware of the levels of client satisfaction with volunteers: Three conducted surveys of clients, and two sought client feedback during informal meetings or conversations. A director who was unaware of client satisfaction with volunteers thought that clients should not be asked about the volunteers' work. The directors who were aware of client satisfaction with volunteers indicated that most clients respect the volunteers, appreciate their help, and are satisfied with their work. A director who was unaware of client satisfaction with volunteers believed that client dissatisfaction in this area stems from the fact that clients are "*never completely satisfied.*"

The directors' responses indicate the significance that they themselves attribute to the work of the volunteers. "*Hesed exists because of volunteers*," said one, while another said, "*Ethically, we are all indebted to them*." Most of the directors cited the importance of volunteers. According to one, the volunteers contribute to the positive environment at Hesed and, although some lack special training, add warmth and enrich Hesed activities: "*Volunteers create a special, warm atmosphere*"; according to another, they contribute to Hesed's positive image: "*An organization supported by voluntarism is perceived by others as being noble-minded*." The directors also said they look favorably upon the volunteers' work because voluntarism is one of the basic principles of the Hesed philosophy.

3.6 The Directors' Perceptions of the Unmet Needs of the Jewish Population

In order to understand the directors'¹¹ perspective on the Jewish population's needs, we asked them whether the Jewish population has unmet needs and, if so, what they are; why these needs are not being met; what should be done to improve the situation; and which of these needs Hesed might meet.

Those directors who reported that the local Jewish population has unmet needs said the primary area of need is that of welfare services. Four of the directors noted that the elderly have unmet needs, including the need for an old age home (in Vitebsk and St. Petersburg), medical services, home-care, and Jewish burial services (in Kiev and Nizhnii Novgorod).

Other unmet needs reported by directors were the welfare and economic needs of single-parent families, the middle-aged poor population, and the unemployed (mainly in Belarus and Ukraine). The latter two groups frequently overlap. In addition, a need was noted for health care and other programs for children (in Vitebsk and Nizhnii Novgorod).

The director of the relatively small and recently established Hesed Center in Nizhnii Novgorod was the only one to state that the local Jewish population also has needs unrelated to welfare: a need for information about Israel and for subsidized trips to Israel.

The directors explained that the current unmet needs of the Jewish population are the result of the poor economic situation in their countries, as well as the low budgets of Hesed Centers.

According to the directors, Hesed could meet at least some of the needs they cited, especially those of the middle-aged population who are poor and unemployed, by organizing retraining courses for trades or professions relevant to the local labor market "*in exchange for a minimal or token payment*," or by supplying them with material aid (e.g., food and clothing).

¹¹ From this point until the end of the report, the analyses are again based on the responses of only seven directors, as one director responded only to some of the questions.

The directors thought that fundraising was the most important activity for meeting these needs in the future. The following were typical comments: *“Hesed is interested in helping more/other needy groups in the Jewish population, but today it can not even meet the needs of the eligible population because of a lack of money”; “Hesed could help the unemployed, but today we are limited to working only with those eligible according to Claims Conference criteria. Non-designated funding could change the situation.”*

4. Perspectives of the Jewish Community Representatives

This chapter relates solely to the responses of the Jewish community representatives regarding their perspective on Hesed’s relationship with other local Jewish organizations, its impact on Jewish identity, and its role in Jewish community renewal. In addition, the report addresses their perceptions of the unmet needs of the local Jewish population, and their views on expanding Hesed’s activities in the future.

4.1 The Jewish Community Representatives' Background

In this chapter we address a number of dimensions regarding the background of the Jewish community representatives. We relate to their socio-demographic characteristics, their role in the Jewish community, and their organizations.

Socio-demographic Characteristics

The findings presented in Table 1 show that a majority (72%) of the Jewish community representatives were men. The range in their ages was wide: 26% were 26-45 years old, 29% were 46-55, 22% were 56-65, and 23% were 66 or older. All of the representatives had a high level of education (i.e., Master's Degree or higher). Fifty percent were from Ukraine, 26% were from Russia, and 24% were from Belarus. Sixty-two percent of the representatives represented the five Jewish communities with a "large" Hesed Center (5,000-30,000 clients); the remaining 38% represented three Jewish communities with a "small" Hesed Center (1,500-2,500 clients).

Table 1: Background Characteristics of the Jewish Community Representatives (in percentage)

	%
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	72
Female	28
<i>Age group</i>	
26-45	26
46-55	29
56-65	22
66+	23
<i>Country</i>	
Russia	26
Ukraine	50
Belarus	24
<i>Size of the City's Hesed Center</i>	
Large	62
Small	38

Roles in the Jewish Community

The Jewish community representatives' reports indicate they filled various roles in the Jewish community. Some led or worked at a local Jewish educational or cultural organization, e.g., a Jewish cultural center, an institution focusing on Jewish history or heritage, a Hillel chapter for university students, a Jewish community center or a Jewish school (49%). Others were religious leaders from various streams of Judaism, ranging from Chabad to Progressive (16%). Still others represented organizations of war veterans or victims of the Nazis (12%). There were also business people (5%), as well as other key community figures, including a journalist, a representative of the Maccabi sport federation, a Hesed volunteer group leader, JDC employees, and the directors of two regional Institutes for Communal and Welfare Workers (18%).

The Jewish community representatives also varied by their organization's dependence on JDC support. Thirty-eight percent reported that their organization was established and continues to function due to JDC support. Twenty percent of the community representatives reported dependence specifically on Hesed. Forty-two percent of the representatives reported being independent of the JDC altogether.

Forty percent of the Jewish community representatives reported being a member of the local Hesed's board of directors. The rates by city were: Dnepropetrovsk and Vitebsk (56% each), Kiev (50%), Odessa (43%), Minsk (33%), St. Petersburg and Vinnitsa (30% each), and Nizhnii Novgorod (12%).

4.2 The Jewish Community Representatives' Perceptions of Hesed's Cooperation with Local Jewish Organizations

In order to learn about the nature and extent of Hesed's relationships with local Jewish organizations, we asked the Jewish community representatives whether Hesed interacts with their organization or other local Jewish organizations. If so, they were asked to indicate the type of relationship. They were also asked whether Hesed has an impact on the organization, and whether there have been problems in the relationship. In addition, they were asked about their perceptions of the future of the relationships, whether Hesed should maintain contact with additional organizations, and, if so, what type of contact.

The Relationship between Hesed and the Jewish Community Representatives' Organizations *Type of Relationship with Hesed*

All of the Jewish community representatives reported being aware of Hesed's activities in their city. The vast majority (93%) reported that they or their organization interacts with Hesed; the remaining community representatives – those representing ORT or Jewish academic institutions – reported having no direct contact with Hesed. Thirty-eight percent of the representatives who said they or their organization interacts with Hesed reported that they, personally, volunteer or had volunteered at Hesed.

The majority (78%) of the Jewish community representatives who reported interaction with Hesed characterized the relationship in terms of frequent cooperation, joint programs and/or mutual support. Fifteen percent reported infrequent interaction. The character and closeness of the relationship vary according to the type of activity conducted and the population served by the community representative or his organization:

- ♦ Work with children (e.g., a school or kindergarten) – These Jewish community representatives emphasized the importance of the intergenerational links that have characterized their cooperation with Hesed. They reported that they or their organization invite Hesed clients to events they hold, and to speak to the children on various issues, such as their experiences during the Second World War, Jewish traditions, etc. In addition, the children visit Hesed in order to assist the elderly. The children also attend lessons on Hesed's premises. A principal from Ukraine: *“Our children help Hesed clients, and Hesed clients come to school events.”* A kindergarten director from Russia: *“Children organize concerts for Hesed clients and receive lessons on the Hesed premises.”* A schoolteacher from Belarus: *“Children participate in cultural events organized by Hesed.”*
- ♦ Hillel – These Jewish community representatives reported very close ties with Hesed in the form of voluntarism by university students, including home visits and the organization of lectures and Sabbath celebrations for Hesed clients.
- ♦ Association of Ghetto Prisoners and War Veterans Committee – The Jewish community representatives affiliated with these organizations said they often lack their own sources of funding. They also reported active participation in Hesed programs by their members. In addition, they emphasized the financial and organizational assistance their organization receives

from Hesed, the assistance being similar in all of the cities. The following response was typical: *“Hesed provides us with transportation and a venue, and helps us organize different activities.”*

- ♦ Business people and religious leaders – These Jewish community representatives reported less about participation in Hesed programs and more about their support of Hesed, in order to *“strengthen Hesed’s activities.”* The business people cited financial support, while the religious leaders emphasized manpower for certain joint activities.

Problems that Arise in the Relationship

In order to learn about the problems that arise in the relationships with Hesed, the Jewish community representatives were asked whether there had been any problems and, if so, what kind.

The findings presented in Table 2 show that most (84%) of the Jewish community representatives who reported interaction with Hesed said there had been no problems in the relationship; 11% cited some problems, and the remaining 5% did not answer the question. It should be noted that despite the warm atmosphere of the interview, some of the community representatives may have perceived the interviewers as being associated with the JDC and therefore were not entirely candid.

Table 2: Problems Arising in the Relationship with Hesed among the Jewish Community Representatives Reporting Interaction with Hesed, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
No problems	84	58	89	100
Some problems	11	26	8	0
Did not answer	5	16	3	0

The highest percentage of Jewish community representatives who reported problems in their or their organization's relationship with Hesed was among those from Russia (26%), compared to 8% among those from Ukraine and none among those from Belarus.

The problems that were reported relate mainly to a perceived unwillingness by Hesed to cooperate or share its resources, and reflect what appears to be competition. For example, a Jewish community representative from a welfare organization in Russia said: *“Hesed does not give us access to its client database.”* In addition, a representative from a Jewish cultural center in Russia cited redundancy by saying: *“Hesed [unnecessarily] duplicates cultural programs.”*

Perceptions Regarding the Future

The findings presented in Table 3 show that all of the Jewish community representatives who answered the question regarding their perception of future relationships with Hesed (72%) reported that they or their organization would like to maintain or even increase the current level of contact.

Twenty percent reported that they or their organization would like to maintain the current level of contact. The following were typical comments: *“We help each other and we cooperate in harmony in our relationship”* and *“Our partnership is at the right level.”*

Citing various reasons, half (52%) of the Jewish community representatives reported that they would like to broaden their or their organization’s relationship with Hesed. Citing the need for future support from Hesed, a community representative from Odessa said: *“We want to broaden the contacts with Hesed – it has more resources and opportunities.”* Citing the possibility of attracting more people from Hesed to his organization’s activities, a representative from Vinnitsa said: *“There should be more contact with Hesed in order to include more people in our programs.”* Citing the possibility of creating a partnership with Hesed regarding new programs, a representative from St. Petersburg said: *“We want to work more with the community, for example, by opening new programs with Hesed.”* The desire for increased involvement with Hesed was particularly emphasized by the leaders of the Progressive Movement in Ukraine.

The Jewish community representatives involved in work with children and youth cited a need for broader contact with Hesed in order to involve young people in Jewish community life: *“A school has to participate in community life. Broadening contact with Hesed is very useful for children; showing them real life is no less important than teaching them according to the standard school program”* (a representative from Dnepropetrovsk). An additional reason for broadening the relationship with Hesed was communal unity: *“The community organizations should be together”* and *“We want to unite our efforts for better results”* (representatives from Vitebsk); and *“All Jewish organizations should work together and think about the Jewish population – not their own ambitions”* (a representative from Nizhny Novgorod).

By country, the percentage of Jewish community representatives citing the need for broader relationships with Hesed was highest among those from Russia (62%), compared to those from Ukraine (47%) and Belarus (33%).

Table 3: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of the Need for Contact with Hesed, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
Our contact with Hesed should be broader	52	62	47	33
We should maintain our current level of contact with Hesed	20	24	6	28
Did not answer	28	14	47	39

We also wished to learn about the Jewish community representatives' perception of whether Hesed should maintain contact with additional community representatives. As can be seen below in Table 4, the majority (59%) reported that Hesed should have contact with additional community representatives; 30% thought that Hesed already has contact with a sufficient number of community representatives, and 11% did not relate to the issue.

Table 4: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of Hesed's Need for Contact with Additional Jewish Community Representatives, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
Hesed requires contact with additional community representatives	59	63	70	33
Hesed has sufficient contact with community representatives	30	26	22	50
Did not answer	11	11	8	17

The percentage of Jewish community representatives who perceived a need by Hesed for contact with additional community representatives was higher in Ukraine (70%) and Russia (63%) than in Belarus (33%). Among those who perceived a need for additional contact, 58% cited business people for the purpose of augmenting Hesed's budget, while 8% cited contact with physicians and 5% with intellectuals.

Relationships between Hesed and Other Local Jewish Organizations

In order to learn about the Jewish community representatives' perceptions of Hesed's relationships with local Jewish organizations other than their own, they were asked whether Hesed interacts with such organizations and, if so, they were asked to describe the relationships and say whether and how Hesed has an impact on the organizations.

The Jewish Community Representatives' Perceptions of Hesed's Interaction with Other Local Jewish Organizations

As can be seen in Table 5, the vast majority (95%) of the Jewish community representatives thought Hesed interacts with Jewish organizations in the city other than their own; the remaining 5% did not answer the question. Seventy-six percent of the community representatives said it interacts with one to three organizations, while the remaining 19% said it does so with four or more. By country, the highest percentage of representatives who said Hesed interacts with four or more local Jewish organizations other than their own was among those from Ukraine (30%), compared to those from Russia (16%) and Belarus (0%).

Table 5: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of Hesed's Relationships with Local Jewish Organizations Other than Their Own, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
Hesed maintains relationships with local Jewish organizations other than their own	95	100	97	83
<i>Number of organizations with which Hesed maintains relationships:</i>				
1-3 organizations	76	84	67	83
4 or more organizations	19	16	30	0
Hesed has an impact on local Jewish organizations	54	63	43	67
Hesed should broaden its relationships with local Jewish organizations	62	63	70	44

About half (54%) of the Jewish community representatives reported that Hesed has an impact on Jewish organizations other than their own. The rate was higher among the community representatives from Belarus (67%) and Russia (63%), than among those from Ukraine (43%). The representatives reporting that Hesed has an impact on other Jewish organizations cited three major ways in which it does so: First, it serves as a role model, as two representatives from St. Petersburg said: *“Hesed influences other Jewish organizations by setting an example with its well-organized work”* and *“Hesed works according to high standards and serves a model for others.”* Second, it is an economic power, as cited by a community representative from Vinnitsa: *“Hesed is stronger financially and influences the activity of the organizations that depend on it.”* Similarly, a representative from St. Petersburg said, *“Local Jewish organizations prefer to maintain good relations with Hesed, as it is a wealthy organization.”* Third, its impact stems from partnership and cooperation, as cited by a representative from Vitebsk: *“Hesed affects other organizations by participating in their activities.”* A representative from Minsk said, *“Hesed affects other Jewish organizations through joint programs and meetings held for members of both organizations.”*

Thirty-one percent of the Jewish community representatives had no opinion regarding this issue, which we can assume is due to a lack of awareness of Hesed's impact on Jewish organizations other than their own.

According to the findings presented in Table 5, the majority of the Jewish community representatives (62%) said Hesed should expand its relationships with local Jewish organizations, i.e., broaden existing contacts and relationships and create new contacts with additional Jewish organizations. Some of the community representatives were guided by the principle, “The more, the better.” The representatives who provided reasons for broadening these relationships primarily said it would strengthen ties among various organizations in the Jewish community and lead to a higher level of community cohesiveness. As a representative from Vitebsk said, *“Hesed should broaden its contacts with other Jewish organizations because all Jewish community organizations should be linked with one another, unlike today’s situation, where even religious organizations [representing different streams of Judaism] are separate.”* Two representatives from Dnepropetrovsk reacted similarly; one said, *“For better integration of the community, Hesed should increase its relationships with all Jewish organizations,”* while the other said, *“Hesed should broaden its relationships for the sake of better public relations and integration.”*

In addition, the Jewish community representatives said Hesed should expand its relationships with Jewish organizations in the city in order to help coordinate Jewish community activities. They cited four general areas of benefit: reduced program redundancy, increased program quality, additional program exposure to more Jewish people through the use of common resources, and increased organizational enrichment through interaction. A community representative from Nizhnii Novgorod: *“Hesed should broaden its contact with the Jewish cultural center in order to provide the Jewish population with an opportunity to learn more about Jewish tradition and culture.”* Another representative from Nizhnii Novgorod: *“Broadening relationships with other Jewish organizations will help prevent the duplication of programs.”* A representative from Kiev: *“It is*

important to broaden relationships and coordinate the work of the all Jewish organizations.” A representative from Odessa: *“Hesed definitely must broaden its relationships with other Jewish organizations, which will allow all of them to share experiences and bring in new ideas and programs.”*

In particular, the Jewish community representatives noted that Hesed should expand its relationships with organizations that serve Jewish youth, which would increase inter-generational ties, promote Jewish continuity and help develop young Jewish leadership. A community representative from Dnepropetrovsk: *“In order to bring new leaders into the Jewish community, Hesed should increase its contacts with students from Hillel and children.”* Similarly, two representatives from Kiev said, *“Hesed must broaden its contacts with Hillel in order to develop young community leaders”* and *“Hesed should broaden its relationship with the Hillel organizations in order to involve young people in Jewish community services.”* A representative from Minsk added, *“Hesed definitely must broaden its contacts with youth organizations in order to familiarize the youth with contributing to and working for the Jewish community, in this way developing young leaders.”*

The percentage of Jewish community representatives reporting that Hesed should broaden its relationships with other Jewish organizations was higher among the community representatives from Ukraine (70%) and Russia (63%), than among those from Belarus (44%).

Problems that Arise in the Relationships

The findings presented in Table 6 show that 24% of the Jewish community representatives (with similar rates for each of the three countries) reported problems in Hesed's relationships with some local Jewish organizations other than their own. More than half (53%) of the community representatives did not answer the question, and we assume this is because they were unaware of problems or preferred not to relate to them. The country with the highest percentage of representatives who did not answer the question was Ukraine (65%), compared to Belarus (44%) and Russia (39%).

Table 6: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of Problems Arising in the Relationships between Hesed and Local Jewish Organizations Other than Their Own, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
No problems	23	42	11	28
Some problems	24	21	24	28
Did not answer	53	37	65	44

A number of the Jewish community representatives who reported problems in Hesed's relationships with local Jewish organizations other than their own said Hesed overstates its importance in the community and seeks to impose its will on other organizations. As a community representative from Dnepropetrovsk said, *“Hesed is strong because of its resources, but there is a lack of*

communal consciousness among its management. Hesed should not be 'a big brother' in relation to the other Jewish organizations [rather, a partner].” Similarly, a representative from Minsk said, “Very often, Hesed overstates its role and considers itself the center of the community, and problems arise with other community organizations.”

A few (8%) of the Jewish community representatives reported a lack of contact and/or cooperation between Hesed and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) or the local Israeli cultural center. Regarding this issue, some were highly critical of Hesed: *“Hesed's links with JAFI and the Israeli cultural center are weak and unfriendly”; “Hesed has partnership relationships with all except JAFI”; “There should be more interaction between Hesed and JAFI, and between Hesed and the Israel Center, in order to know what the other is doing. All Jewish organizations should be in contact with one another.”*

4.3 The Jewish Community Representatives' Perceptions of Hesed's Impact on Jewish Identity and Jewish Community Renewal

Another goal of the study was to evaluate Hesed Centers as a lever for strengthening Jewish identity and for Jewish community renewal. In this chapter, we examine the views of the Jewish community representatives regarding Hesed's impact on its clients, employees and volunteers; whether this impact extends to the general Jewish population; and, if so, how. In addition, they were asked about their perceptions of Hesed's function in the Jewish community and its ability to play a leading role in Jewish community renewal.

Hesed's Activities and their Impact on Jewish Identity

General Perceptions of Hesed's Impact

All of the Jewish community representatives agreed that Hesed plays a very important role as a social welfare organization supporting the needs of the city's elderly Jewish population. In addition, most of their responses indicated that Hesed also has a considerable impact on the city's general Jewish population.

The findings presented in Table 7 show that high percentages of the community representatives reported that, regarding Jewish identity, Hesed has a major impact on its clients or on the general Jewish population. Forty-one percent of the Jewish community representatives reported that, regarding Jewish identity, Hesed has an impact on its clients (the elderly, the disabled, etc.). A similar percentage (43%) said Hesed's impact goes beyond its clients, reporting that it also affects the general Jewish population; the examples they provided indicate that it affects two major groups among the general Jewish population: individuals who are involved in Jewish organizations that come in contact either with Hesed, its clients or its clients' families, and young people who come in contact with Hesed clients. One of the community representatives from Russia explained: *“Hesed affects elderly clients, and they spread information to the wider population.”* A representative from Ukraine: *“Hesed's role is very important. When grandparents register as Hesed clients, their grandchildren realize they [themselves] are Jewish.”*

Table 7: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of Hesed’s Impact on Jewish Identity (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
Hesed has a major impact on its clients' Jewish identity	41	37	51	22
Hesed has a major impact on its clients' Jewish identity <i>and</i> on that of the city's general Jewish population	43	47	38	50
Hesed has a minor impact on its clients' Jewish identity <i>and</i> on that of the city's general Jewish population, or no impact at all	8	11	3	6
Did not answer	8	5	8	12

A comparison of the three countries shows that the percentage of Jewish community representatives reporting that Hesed has a major impact on the Jewish identity only of its clients was higher in Ukraine (51%) than in Russia (37%) and Belarus (22%). Higher percentages of the community representatives from Russia (47%) and Belarus (50%) believed that Hesed has a major impact on the Jewish identity not only of its clients, but also of the city's general Jewish population, than did the representatives from Ukraine (38%).

Only 8% of the community representatives said Hesed has hardly any impact regarding Jewish identity, while the remaining 8% did not answer.

Hesed's Impact on Various Dimensions of Jewish Identity

Regarding Jewish identity, the Jewish community representatives who reported that Hesed has a major impact on its clients, as well as on the local Jewish population in general, emphasized the following as the main ways Hesed strengthens Jewish identity: It helps in the re-discovery of Jewish roots, provides a sense of security and belonging to the Jewish people, and brings a message of Jewish solidarity.

Some (19%) of the Jewish community representatives reported that Hesed's activities, and even its very existence, change the attitudes of its clients toward their Jewishness. As a community representative from Russia explained, “*The Jewish population in our city is assimilated. Due to Hesed, which came to help them, people re-discover their roots.*” They also reported that Jews in their city are now less hesitant to identify themselves as being Jewish. For example, representatives from Ukraine and Belarus, respectively, said: “*Hesed unites people who have forgotten they are Jewish; many now cease to be afraid,*” and “*With Hesed, the elderly feel something they did not feel for many years – that nowadays it is good and respectable to be Jewish.*”

Twenty-two percent of the Jewish community representatives said Hesed is a sign of Jewish solidarity in their city and the embodiment of Jewish tradition. As a community representative from Russia said, “*Through its activities, Hesed promotes the idea that Jews must stay together and support each other.*” A representative from Belarus: “*Hesed is the only real network of Jewish*

mutual support and solidarity. Most of the people come back to their roots not due to the canteens, but because of the sense of belonging that a Hesed activity provides."

Hesed Activities that are Oriented toward Jewish Identity

The Jewish community representatives' reports indicate a high level of satisfaction with the diversity of Hesed activities oriented toward strengthening Jewish identity. Typical was this comment from a community representative from Ukraine: *"Hesed organizes lectures for the elderly on Jewish culture, which helps them partake of Jewish tradition – Hesed does enough; people do not need more."*

The activities cited as having a major impact not only on Hesed clients but on the general Jewish population were: Jewish holiday celebrations, Kabbalat Shabbat (a ceremony on Friday evening that includes prayer, the blessing over wine, Sabbath songs and a festive meal), lectures on Jewish history and tradition, and concerts of Jewish music. Most of the Jewish community representatives emphasized the significance of these activities. For example, a community representative from Belarus said, *"Holiday celebrations are of great importance for promoting one's Jewishness."* In a similar vein, a representative from Russia said, *"Hesed has a positive effect on the elderly and middle-aged population by organizing Jewish holiday celebrations and Kabbalat Shabbat."*

Some of the Jewish community representatives from Belarus emphasized the importance in the fact that Hesed – a non-religious organization – provides these activities. As one of them said, *"A lot of people came back to their roots due to Hesed activities. Concerning Jewish issues, one advantage...is that for our elderly, it is easier to come to a non-religious organization like Hesed than to a synagogue."* However, a few (8%) of the community representatives expressed doubt about Hesed's impact on Jewish identity, mainly due to what they perceived to be a lack of knowledge about Judaism among its workers, volunteers and board members.

Hesed's Role in the Process of Jewish Community Renewal

Hesed's Role in the Community

All of the Jewish community representatives who answered the question on Hesed's role in the Jewish community (88%) described Hesed as a strong, well-organized and financially sound organization that dominates Jewish community life. Yet their responses reflect views that vary by the size of the Hesed Center, the type of the community representative's organization, and the nature of the organization's link to Hesed.

According to the findings presented in Table 8, half (49%) of the Jewish community representatives – mostly those living in a city with a "large" Hesed Center, as well as religious leaders, business people, and those affiliated with Jewish cultural organizations supported by the JDC – said they consider Hesed to be only a social welfare component of their Jewish community's structure. Without specifying, 17% – mainly those representing Jewish educational organizations – defined Hesed as being "a component" of the Jewish community structure. Twenty-two percent of the community representatives viewed Hesed as being *the* center of Jewish community life; most

worked with war veterans or other organizations that are economically dependent on Hesed, and/or came from cities with a "small" Hesed Center.

Table 8: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of Hesed's Role in the Jewish Community (in percentage)

Representatives think that Hesed is:	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
The center of the Jewish community	22	21	19	28
A welfare component of the Jewish community structure	49	26	51	67
A component (unspecified) of the Jewish community structure	17	48	11	0
Did not answer	12	5	19	5

Hesed's Ability to Play a Leading Role in Jewish Community Renewal

More than half (56%) of the Jewish community representatives said Hesed has sufficient resources to play a leading role in the process of Jewish community renewal; a third (33%) did not think this is so, and 11% did not know. Even though they were not directly asked *whether* Hesed should serve as a lever for Jewish community renewal, their responses indicate three distinct general categories regarding this issue:

1. Hesed should lead the process of Jewish community renewal, as it has sufficient professional staff and financial resources to do so.
2. Hesed is a social welfare organization and should limit itself to such activities, leaving Jewish community renewal to non-social welfare organizations designated for this purpose (a viewpoint found primarily among religious leaders, educators and representatives of Jewish cultural organizations). A Jewish community representative from Belarus: *"Community renewal is not a function of Hesed."* Two community representatives from Ukraine: *"Hesed should deal less with cultural programs and more with welfare. Community renewal is an area that should be addressed by Jewish community centers,"* and *"Hesed fulfills its role, which is social support. Others have their own roles. There is a place for all of us in the community."* A representative from Russia cited an additional reason: *"Hesed cannot be a factor in community renewal because its programs are based on 'client-service relationships.' For community renewal, all of the programs should be based on 'participation and fees.'"*
3. Hesed's role in the process of Jewish community renewal should depend on the size of the Jewish community – beyond providing social welfare services, in cities with a small Jewish community Hesed should also play a central role in the process of Jewish community renewal, while in cities with a large Jewish community, Hesed should focus solely on the provision of social welfare services. A Jewish educator from Ukraine: *"There should be different models for different communities."* Another Jewish community representative from Ukraine: *"In a large city, Hesed deals with welfare services and assists the Jewish community center. In small cities, Hesed is the strongest organization and has to play a central role in the process of community renewal."*

A few of the Jewish community representatives criticized the way Hesed strives for Jewish community renewal. For example, a Jewish community center director from Ukraine was critical of the way Hesed reintroduces people to their Jewishness, saying, “*Mazal Tov clients are not provided with a food package unless they attend a lecture on Yiddishkeit. This leads to a rejection of the idea of fostering Jewishness.*”

4.4 The Jewish Community Representatives' Perceptions of Unmet Needs, and of Expanding Hesed's Activities in the Future

In order to learn about the Jewish community representatives' perspective of the unmet needs of the local Jewish population in general, we asked them whether this population has needs that are not being met by the Jewish organizations in their city and, if so, what they are; why these needs are not being met; what should be done to improve the situation; and which of these needs Hesed might meet in the future.

Current Needs of the Local Jewish Population

As can be seen below in Table 9, the Jewish community representatives reported a wide range of unmet needs among the Jewish population of their city. Eighty-five percent reported at least one unmet need; 32% cited more than one, and 15% did not answer.

The most frequently cited need was **old age homes**: 40% of the Jewish community representatives (except those from Dnepropetrovsk, where an old age home already exists) cited this need. By country, the highest percentage citing this need was in Belarus (50%), compared to 44% in Russia and 31% in Ukraine. In addition, a higher percentage of community representatives from cities with a "small" Hesed Center reported the need for old age homes than did those from cities with a "large" Hesed Center (50% and 33%, respectively).

Twenty-one percent of the Jewish community representatives reported unmet needs among their city's **middle-aged Jews**, emphasizing unemployment and poverty. By country, the highest rate was in Ukraine (34%), followed by Russia (11%) and Belarus (6%). The community representatives characterized the middle-aged population as requiring a special social welfare program (Belarus and Ukraine), and cited a need for vocational training for the unemployed (particularly in Ukraine).

A relatively high percentage of the Jewish community representatives reported a lack of **Jewish burial services**, including poor conditions at Jewish cemeteries (16%). The percentage was higher among the community representatives from cities with a "small" Hesed Center than among those from cities with a "large" Hesed Center (25% and 8%, respectively). The percentage reporting this need varied by country, with the highest rate in Ukraine (21%), compared to 17% in Russia and 6% in Belarus.

Thirteen percent of the Jewish community representatives reported a need for additional **Jewish cultural institutions**. They also cited the need for more cultural and educational programs for a

highly educated population. The percentage reporting these needs was highest in Russia (22%), compared to Belarus (13%) and Ukraine (7%). All of the community representatives who cited these needs lived in cities with a "large" Hesed Center.

Eight percent of the Jewish community representatives reported a need for **Jewish education**, including kindergartens, non-religious schools and vocational schools. By country, the percentages were similar: 11% in Russia, 7% in Ukraine and 6% in Belarus. The community representatives from Russia emphasized a need for secular Jewish schooling for children who, according to Halacha, are not Jewish, while the representatives from Ukraine generally cited a need for Jewish vocational schools.

Eight percent of the Jewish community representatives reported a need for more **Jewish-oriented information**, specifically citing information on Jewish community life and Jewish-oriented mass media and broadcast outlets. All of these community representatives were from Ukraine (14%), where they primarily reported the need for a Jewish newspaper or journal (particularly in Dnepropetrovsk and Odessa), or Belarus (6%), where they primarily cited the need for local Jewish radio or television programs (particularly in Minsk).

A few of the Jewish community representatives reported unmet needs regarding religious services and/or programs (6%). All of these community representatives were from Belarus (11%), where they reported a need for religious services (particularly a synagogue in Minsk), or Ukraine (7%), where they primarily emphasized the absence of a rabbi (in Vinnitsa) and the need for more "*religious programs*," i.e., classes on Jewish philosophy, tradition, etc. (for intellectuals in Kiev).

Three percent of the Jewish community representatives reported a need for health services for children. The percentage was highest among those from Belarus (6%), compared to those from Ukraine (3%) and Russia (0%).

Eleven percent of the Jewish community representatives mentioned other unmet needs. Those from Ukraine cited a lack of care for homeless children; a shortage of medical services, including medications (Vinnitsa) and geriatric specialists (Odessa); and a need for community support for either newly released Jewish prisoners (Odessa) or single-parent families (particularly in Kiev). Those from Russia cited the unmet Jewish cultural needs of assimilated Jews (St. Petersburg) and unemployment among young Jews (Nizhnii Novgorod).

Table 9: Jewish Community Representative Perceptions of Unmet Needs of the Local Jewish Population, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
<i>Number of unmet needs:</i>				
At least one	85	95	78	89
More than one	32	32	41	17
<i>Type of unmet need (among those who cited at least one):</i>				
Old-age home	40	44	31	50
Social welfare, work and vocational training of the middle-aged and/or unemployed	21	11	34	6
Jewish burial services	16	17	21	6
Jewish cultural services	13	22	7	13
Jewish education (kindergarten, school, etc.)	8	11	7	6
Jewish mass-media and information	8	0	14	6
Religious services	6	0	7	11
Health services for children	3	0	3	6
Other	11	17	10	6

Meeting the Unmet Needs

Half of the Jewish community representatives (51%) provided reasons as to why the needs they reported remain unmet. As can be seen below in Table 10, community budgetary restraints are one of the main reasons (47% among those who answered). By country, the percentage citing this reason among those who answered was highest by far among the community representatives from Russia (73%), compared to those from Ukraine (45%) and Belarus (14%). Another reason (cited by 18% among those who answered) is a lack of human resources. By country, the percentage was highest among the representatives from Belarus (29%), compared to those from Russia (20%) and Ukraine (9%).

Table 10: Perceived Reasons for the Unmet Needs of the Local Jewish Population among the Jewish Community Representatives who Answered the Question, by Country (in percentage)

	Total	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus
Limited community budget	47	73	45	14
Lack of human resources	18	9	20	29
Dependence on foreign organizations regarding decisionmaking	16	9	10	43
Lack of special programs	13	9	20	14

Sixteen percent of the Jewish community representatives who answered the question reported that some needs cannot be met due to their community's economic dependence on foreign organizations that view these needs differently. By country, the percentage citing this reason was highest among the community representatives from Belarus (43%), compared to those from Ukraine (10%) and

Russia (9%). Thirteen percent of the representatives who answered the question cited a lack of special programs designed to meet these needs; however, this reason could imply a lack of human resources, as well as funds. By country, the percentage citing this reason was highest in Ukraine (20%), followed by Belarus (14%) and Russia (9%). In addition, the representatives from Belarus linked unmet needs regarding Jewish burial services to local laws and/or unsatisfactory ties with the local authorities.

Thirty percent of the Jewish community representatives assumed that some of the needs could be met by expanding Hesed's activities.

The Jewish community representatives, in general, thought that Hesed's future activities should be consistent with the needs of the entire Jewish population. According to this view, Hesed should primarily address unmet social welfare needs. They also thought that Hesed should be more flexible and expand its social welfare services to include those who are not currently eligible, including the middle-aged population, the unemployed, and homeless children. By country, the community representatives had similar views regarding the expansion of Hesed's activities.

The Jewish community representatives who addressed the issue of expanding Hesed's activities thought Hesed should extend its assistance to the middle-aged unemployed; the community representatives from Ukraine (primarily Kiev and Vinnitsa) emphasized the provision of professional training attuned to the needs of the labor market, while those from Belarus emphasized programming. Some representatives from Russia (Nizhnii Novgorod) proposed the provision of vocational training for younger unemployed people, as well as the utilization of relationships with business people in order to find work for these individuals.

The Jewish community representatives also reported that Hesed should expand its social welfare services to include adults and children with serious illnesses or disabilities; those from Belarus emphasized pediatric health, and those from Ukraine emphasized programs for disabled youth.

5. Comparison and Integration of the Perspectives of the Hesed Directors and the Jewish Community Representatives

In order to provide a deeper sense of Hesed's role and activities in the Jewish community, this chapter integrates the findings from the interviews with the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives.

5.1 Hesed's Relationships with Local Organizations and with Jewish Community Representatives

The Nature of the Relationships

The pictures that emerge from the interviews with the two groups regarding Hesed's relationships with other local Jewish organizations are quite similar. They reveal that Hesed cooperates with a wide spectrum of local Jewish organizations, primarily Jewish community centers, religious organizations (particularly Chabad), Jewish cultural centers, Hillel student organizations, Jewish schools, and the Russian Jewish Congress. They also reveal that Hesed maintains contacts with Jewish community representatives who are, in the main, the heads of local Jewish organizations (e.g., cultural center directors, day school principals, religious leaders from various streams of Judaism, and the leaders of groups of war veterans or Nazi victims) or business people. The Jewish community representatives who were interviewed characterized their or their organization's relationship with Hesed as one of cooperation, joint programs and/or mutual support, although some characterized the support as being unidirectional, coming solely from Hesed.

From the Hesed directors' perspective, Hesed's contact and cooperation with Jewish community representatives are important, as they serve as a channel to the local Jewish population through which Hesed can learn about the community's needs. According to the directors, the Jewish community representatives are interested in maintaining contact with Hesed because it improves the community's welfare, and because their involvement in Hesed improves their own image in the community.

The nature of the relationships between Hesed and local Jewish organizations vary according to the type of the organization, as can be seen from the reports of both the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives. Both emphasized the importance of the inter-generational links that have characterized the cooperation between Hesed and organizations working with children and youth. As part of this cooperation, children participate in events at Hesed and students volunteer at Hesed, and, in turn, Hesed clients participate in activities conducted by the youngsters' organization.

Another type of relationship is with local Jewish organizations that lack their own sources of funding; these organizations receive financial or organizational assistance from Hesed, and their members participate in Hesed's activities. Yet another type of relationship involves support for Hesed; the business people reported that they provide Hesed with financial support, and the religious leaders reported that they provide manpower for certain joint activities.

The directors' reports reveal that Hesed also maintains contact with non-Jewish organizations, primarily municipal social service departments and health departments. The main feature of this contact is that social service department employees improve their level of professionalism by learning from the experience of Hesed's welfare workers.

Problems in the Relationships

The Jewish community representatives' reports indicate that some of the organizations have problems interacting with Hesed, mainly concerning a perceived lack of willingness by Hesed to cooperate and efforts to impose its will on other organizations. Their reports also reveal that some of the Hesed Centers have no contact with the local Jewish Agency office or Israeli cultural center. The Hesed directors, on the other hand, made only minimal and generalized comments about problems in the relationships. A few reported occasional difficulties, adding only that the problems were usually resolved. Apparently, the directors preferred not to discuss this issue in detail during the interview.

Both the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives related to a perceived overlap between the activities of Hesed and those of other local Jewish organizations, the directors emphasizing welfare-related programs, the Jewish community representatives focusing more on cultural-educational programs. Most of the Jewish community representatives and some of the directors viewed overlapping programs as being advantageous, saying, in essence, the more, the better. However, others, particularly the directors, saw this as being a disadvantage. One area they cited was food packages, mainly because they thought that some organizations do not employ "professional criteria" when distributing this aid; another was cultural programming, for which the overlaps create unnecessary expenditures.

Perspectives Regarding Future Relationships

Both the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives mentioned the need for Hesed to broaden its cooperation with local Jewish organizations (i.e., broaden existing relationships and create new ones). While the directors explained this need in terms of improving the social welfare of the Jewish population, consulting with other Jewish organizations and sharing experience, the Jewish community representatives related to strengthening inter-organizational ties and increasing the level of community cohesiveness. Some of the Jewish community representatives also cited the need for future support from Hesed for some of the Jewish organizations, as well as the possibility of attracting additional participants from Hesed for their own programs and creating a partnership with Hesed regarding entirely new programs.

While the Jewish community representatives thought Hesed should establish contact with additional Jewish community representatives, the Hesed directors reported that no such need exists. However, both groups emphasized the need for financial support for Hesed from local sponsors.

5.2 Perceptions of the Impact and Role of Hesed in the Jewish Community

Hesed's Impact on Jewish Identity

The Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives reported that, beyond providing a high level of welfare support for its clients, Hesed has also provided them with a sense of solidarity, security and belonging to the Jewish people. The reports of all of the directors and about half of the Jewish community representatives indicate that there has been a similar impact on the broader

Jewish population as well. The Jewish community representatives also emphasized that Hesed is a symbol of Jewish solidarity in their city and embodies a sense of Jewish tradition.

Support for these findings can be found in the responses of Hesed's clients, volunteers and employees¹². Almost half of them reported that they currently agree more with the following statements than they did prior to their involvement in Hesed: They feel "a special responsibility for Jews in need" and that "an unbreakable bond unites Jews all over the world," and feel "part of the Jewish people."

Both the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives reported that the impact of Hesed's activities extends beyond its clients and affects the broader Jewish population, including the clients' children and other relatives. The activity most frequently mentioned in this vein was communal Jewish holiday celebrations. The directors added that activities of this type are usually organized by Hesed in cooperation with other Jewish organizations.

Support for these findings, too, can be found in the responses of Hesed's clients, volunteers and employees, large percentages of whom reported that Hesed activities contribute to their sense of Jewishness to some or a great extent. Their responses indicate that the activities contributing most to their sense of Jewishness are "Jewish and Israeli music and songs" (85%), "concerts, shows, and theatrical performances" (83%), and "celebration of Jewish holidays/festivals, and religious ceremonies and rituals" (81%)¹³.

Hesed's Role in Jewish Community Renewal

Hesed obviously plays a significant role in the renewal of the Jewish community in several ways: by creating a system of mutual assistance, by helping to meet the needs of the Jewish community, and by imbuing the community's activities with further Jewish content. In this way, Hesed provides important opportunities for reinforcing a sense of Jewish renewal among the elderly. There is also inter-generational programming, which can be a part of any system in which the young are a potential resource for the elderly and the elderly are a potential resource for the young.

Beyond these elements, however, there is a question of the broader role that Hesed can play in Jewish community renewal. Both the directors and the Jewish community representatives described Hesed as being a strong, well-organized and financially sound organization that dominates Jewish community life. Yet their reports also indicate several distinct approaches to the role Hesed should play regarding Jewish community renewal.

Most of the Hesed directors and some of the Jewish community representatives viewed Hesed as a lever for Jewish community renewal, saying Hesed should lead the process, as it has sufficient professional staff and financial resources. Others disagreed with this approach, saying Hesed is a

¹² See report #7

¹³ Ibid.

social welfare organization and should limit itself to social welfare activities, leaving Jewish community renewal to non-social welfare organizations specifically designated for this purpose. According to some of the Jewish community representatives who thought this way, in order to achieve Jewish community renewal, people must be active participants in the process rather than passive clients (consumers), as they are in Hesed.

In addition, some of the Jewish community representatives linked Hesed's potential role in the process of Jewish community renewal to the size or type of community. According to this approach, the activities of Hesed Centers in cities with a small Jewish community should include those that are oriented toward Jewish community renewal, while in cities with a large Jewish community, Hesed should focus solely on the provision of social welfare support, while cultural and educational organizations address community renewal.

5.3 The Unmet Needs of the Jewish Population

Both the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives reported unmet needs among the elderly. In particular, they mentioned old age homes and Jewish burial services. They also cited needs among other groups of the Jewish population, such as single-parent families, the middle-aged unemployed, and children, who mainly require health care. In addition, Jewish community representatives mentioned a need for Jewish cultural institutions, Jewish schools and kindergartens, Jewish information and media channels, and religious services.

Support for these findings can be found in the responses of Hesed's clients, volunteers and employees: An especially high percentage (92%) reported that Hesed should expand its social activities to other needy groups in the Jewish population, the target groups cited by the vast majority of these respondents (94%) being children and single-parent families¹⁴.

The reports of both the Hesed directors and the Jewish community representatives reflect the budgetary limitations of both the Jewish community and Hesed. While the former said that, despite this, Hesed has the professional resources and willingness to respond to some of the aforementioned needs, the latter emphasized both budget limitations and a lack of manpower.

¹⁴ Ibid

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