INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FOUNDATION

Country Study Series

An Overview of Children and Youth in Israel: Policies, Programs and Philanthropy

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Commissioned by: The International Youth Foundation

International Youth Foundation

Founded in 1990, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) is an independent, international, nongovernmental organization dedicated to improving the conditions and prospects for children and youth. Working in partnership with national and regional foundations, IYF and its partners work to identify, strengthen, and expand existing programs that have proven effective in meeting young people's needs.

Those programs identified and supported by IYF and its partners are preventive in nature and promote the confidence, character, competence, and "connectedness" of young people to their family, peers, and community. Such programs address urgent global problems such as drug and alcohol use, violence, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, and low motivation. They do so through providing support and services in such areas as vocational training, health education, recreation, tolerance, environmental awareness, and the development of leadership, resolution and decision-making skills. In addition to supporting existing p[...] IYF also works to increase global awareness of children and youth iss[...] strengthen the organizational skills of youth program leaders, and incr[...] international philanthropy in support of children and youth. Those fun[...] by IYF are used on a matching basis to create challenges and incentives fo[...] to support the activities of IYF's partner foundations.

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- *Immigrant Absorption*
- *Disability*
- *Center for Children and Youth*

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Contents

Preface and Acknowledgments

This report was prepared at the request of the International Youth Foundation (IYF), an independent, international non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the conditions and prospects of children aged 5-20. Central to the IYF's strategy is the creation of a global network of independent, indigenous, grant-giving foundations with a common focus on children and youth. Since its founding in 1990, IYF has established partnerships in Australia, Ecuador, Germany, Ireland, the Philippines, Poland, Slovakia, South Africa and Thailand.

This report was prepared in order to introduce the IYF's board and professional leadership to the situation of children and young people in Israel. In this report, we have tried to outline some of the problems and challenges faced by Israel's children and youth and to describe briefly some of the ways in which their needs are being addressed by the service system. As a result of this report, roundtable meetings, and extensive consultation with children and youth experts in Israel, IYF's Board of Directors has approved continued work in the country. A Steering Committee of local leadership has been formed to explore options for the creation of a new, independent foundation for children and young people in Israel.

In preparing this overview, we have encountered areas in which reliable data and analyses of some of the issues affecting the well-being of children and young people are available, and others in which this is not the case. Due to this inconsistency in the available information, we may not have achieved as uniform and balanced a presentation among the areas as we would have liked.

We have tried to reflect a broad range of opinion by incorporating into the report information gathered from experts from various fields involved in child well-being. Nevertheless, we alone are responsible for the report's content and conclusions.

Finally, there are several issues and populations which are not fully described in this report. For example, the report does not describe disabled children as this in and of itself would require a special report. In addition, a number of broader societal issues involving children and youth in Israel, such as the possible influences of peace on children and youth or children's position within the family, are not addressed within this framework.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the many people who made the completion of this report possible. First, we would like to thank the experts and professionals in Israel who contributed their time and expertise. We would especially like to thank several individuals who read the full report and generously shared their comments with us. We thank Yitzhak Kadman and Asher Ben-Arie of the National Council for the Child; Chana Katz of JDC-Israel; and Ami Bergman, also of JDC-Israel. Our thanks are also extended to our colleagues at the JDC-Brookdale Institute, particularly to Gila Noam, Shmuel Be'er, Eileen Kaplan and Galia Efrat; to Jona Rosenfeld, our senior advisor, for his insightful comments and support; and to Jack Habib, Director of the JDC-Brookdale Institute and of its Center for Children and Youth, for his contribution and support in making the completion of this report possible. We would also like to thank all the participants in the "round table meeting" at JDC-Brookdale Institute in November, 1995. The discussion at the meeting and the comments of these experts significantly enhanced this report.

Last, but not least, we would like to thank the leadership of the International Youth Foundation with whom we worked closely in the preparation of this report: Rick Little, Chief Executive Officer; Don Mohanlal, Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer; Maggi Alexander, Manager, New Country Partnerships and Jacob Schimmel, Advisor to IYF.

JDC-Brookdale Institute
October, 1996

I. Background

A. General Information

1. Population

At the end of 1994, Israel had a population of 5,471,500 persons. Within the total population, 4,441,100 (81%) were Jews and 1,030,400 (19%) were non-Jews, the majority of these Moslem Arabs (Central Bureau of Statistics 1995a). Israel is a small country stretching over an area of 21,946 square kilometers. Israel's population density is among the highest in the Western world, 242 people per square kilometer (compared to 143 in Europe) (Israel Foreign Ministry, 1994). The majority of the population is concentrated in the narrow strip along the Mediterranean Sea, in which more than 60% of the population lives. The population density in this area is several times higher than the national average. The Israeli Jewish population is largely urban; only approximately 10% of this population lives in rural areas, principally in two types of cooperative agricultural settlements, kibbutzim and moshavim. A large part of the Arab population lives in rural areas and small towns.

Israel is a relatively young society. At the end of 1994, it had a population of 2.02 million children (ages 0-17) accounting for 35.1% of the total population (32.4% of the Jewish population and 46.5% of the non-Jewish population); 25% of all the children in Israel are non-Jews (Central Bureau of Statistics 1995a). Many of the children in Israel live in large families, with four children or more; in 1993, this group comprised 17.7% of all Israeli households with children up to the age of 17. Among Jewish families, 12.8% had more than four children. Among Arab families, this proportion reached 41.2% (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1994a). Relative to other Western countries, only a small proportion of Israeli children (6.3%) live in single-parent families (Ben-Arie, 1995).

2. Government

Israel is a democratic state with a parliamentary, multi-party system. The government's legislative branch is the Knesset, which has 120 members; the executive branch is headed by the Prime Minister; and the judicial branch has the authority to supervise the legal system throughout the various localities. Parliamentary elections are held every four years. Israel's government also includes a President, whose role is largely ceremonial. The local governments in Israel are elected every five years and operate as independent local authorities that provide local services such as water, sanitation, education and social welfare services. There has been a continuing process of transfer of responsibilities and decentralization to these local authorities.

[1] It should be noted that all data contained within this document, unless otherwise noted, refer to citizens of the State of Israel. This includes the Jewish and Arab populations within Israel's pre- 1967 border, as well as the Jewish Population in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

3. Economy

Israel is a developed, industrialized country with a small, technologically advanced agricultural sector (fewer than 4% of the work force) and a growing service sector. The 1995 GDP per capita income is $15,100, slightly higher than that of Spain, but well below that of more developed countries such as Switzerland, which has a GDP per capita income of $44,600 and the U.S., whose comparable income is $27,100. Israel's economy has grown rapidly in recent years (Bank HaPoalim, 1995).

The armed conflict with the neighboring Arab countries and large scale immigration (see below) have posed heavy burdens on the Israeli economy, creating the need for loans and extensive foreign support.

As in many Western countries, unemployment and inflation are major economic concerns. Though unemployment rates in Israel are lower than in many European countries, they have increased significantly over the last 15 years. Due to a government economic initiative to cut inflation, unemployment increased during the 1980s from a rate of approximately 4%-5% in the early part of the decade to 8.9% in 1989. Shortly thereafter, increased immigration from the former Soviet Union (FSU), led unemployment to increase still further, reaching a peak of 11.5% in 1992. By 1994, when immigration had slowed, the unemployment rate had dropped back down to 7.8%. Unemployment rates are higher among women (10.0%), new immigrants (13.2%) and in peripheral development areas (11.0%) (Central Bureau of Statistics 1994b); Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, 1995).

B. Major Social Influences

Several major underlying factors have played and continue to play a critical role in shaping Israeli society. These include: immigration and social and cultural diversity among the Jewish population; the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process; and Israel's Arab population. In addition, a range of social trends discussed in this section has also had significant effects.

1. Immigration and Social and Cultural Diversity Among the Jewish Population

The catastrophic effects of the Holocaust on the Jewish people as a whole and on many of the early immigrants to the newly formed state significantly influenced the state's political ethos. This ethos has affected numerous areas of Israeli policy, including immigration. Encouraging and enabling Jewish immigration to Israel is a fundamental element of the Zionist thought that serves as a basis for Israeli law and policy. The Hebrew term for Jewish immigration to Israel, "aliya" or ascent, symbolizes the significance placed on this process. Israel's "Law of Return" enables any Jew from anywhere in the world to become a full citizen when he or she arrives in the country. Since the establishment of the state in 1948, Israel's population has increased more than sixfold, largely as a result of the immigration of Jews that arrived from all over the world, bringing with them a range of cultures and customs. When the state was established in 1948, the Jewish population was 650,000. Over the next ten years, Israel absorbed 325,000 European concentration camp survivors and nearly half a million Jewish refugees from Moslem countries (Israel Foreign Ministry, 1994). Large segments of the Israeli population underwent traumatic upheavals in their life histories as individuals and families and came to Israel with only the clothes on their backs.

The absorption of an enormous number of immigrants without economic resources from different cultures was a significant economic burden on the newly established state, particularly in light of the state's limited resources at the time. As a result, many lived in tent cities and temporary housing for a number of years; compulsory elementary education was first adopted only in 1956 and even then with barely sufficient teachers and facilities.

After the massive waves of immigration to Israel in the 1950s, significant immigration continued in the 1970s and the late 1980s. The most recent wave of mass immigration began at the end of 1989 and brought 668,000 more people to Israel through June 1995, increasing the state's population by another 15% over a period of six and a half years. The vast majority of these recent immigrants, approximately 575,000 or 86%, came from the former Soviet Union (FSU). Another 30,000 immigrants arrived from Ethiopia (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1989-1994; 1995a). Many of the Ethiopian immigrants lived as farmers within villages in the mountains of Ethiopia with very little exposure to education or literacy. They have been transported into a radically different society. This group of Ethiopians, combined with the 15,000 that arrived in the early 1980s, is small in numerical terms, but the cultural uniqueness, limited educational background and limited economic resources of these immigrants pose unique challenges in achieving social and economic integration. The absorption of such a large number of immigrants presents many challenges to the state, with many broad social consequences (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and National Insurance Institute, 1995).

Immigration has also contributed to the unique cultural diversity among Israel's Jewish population. Israel's Jewish population is a mix of people that have been nurtured in almost all the world's great cultures and regions. As a result, the theme of ethnic diversity and inter-group equity within the Jewish population has been a major issue throughout Israel's history. This has been complicated by the fact that there were significant differences in educational backgrounds and family size between the two largest groups of immigrants in the 1940s and 1950s: the immigrants from Asia and Africa had lower levels of education and larger families than those from European countries. As a result of the way in which Israeli society at that time coped with housing, employment and social integration, the former group had a more difficult time adjusting to the new society and achieving social and economic success. For example, residential segregation contributed to prolonging the differences between the two population groups. The immigrants from Asia and Africa were first settled in refugee camps, then in old inner-city areas, low-cost housing estates and peripheral development areas with insufficient infrastructure. The ones who were less successful found it difficult to move into better housing or into more central areas. These immigrants also had a difficult time competing economically and educationally with the immigrants from Europe. Though the distinctions between the two groups have been reduced, Jews of Asian and African origin are still over-represented among the lower socio-economic strata. Thus, there is a high correlation between country of origin, place of residence and socio-economic status. This has been a major source of social tension that has at times threatened social integration (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and National Insurance Institute, 1995).

There have also been major shifts in Israel's approach to social integration. In the early years of the state the Asian-African immigrants were encouraged to abandon their cultural and even religious traditions in favor of a new, evolving "Israeli" culture. The immigrants from Europe and America were more prepared educationally, socially and culturally to adapt to this culture than those from Asia and Africa. Over the years, Israel has developed a much more pluralistic approach and the importance of preserving different cultural traditions for the immigrants themselves as well as for Israel as a society is now recognized and reflected in government policies and resource allocation.

Another way of categorizing Israel's Jewish population is according to the degree of religious observance. It is possible to identify three principal groups. The first is ultra- Orthodox

Jews who observe religious laws very strictly. They generally have a distinct manner of dress, live in separate neighborhoods, and operate their own separate educational system. The second group comprises religious Zionists who also strictly observe religious laws but are integrated in all areas of the general society. The remaining group, non-observant secular Jews, comprise the majority of the population, however, many among this group observe some religious customs. Relations among these various religious groups and competing images of Israel as a society is another major social issue.

2. The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Peace Process

Israel has been in a state of military conflict with its neighboring Arab countries ever since its Declaration of Independence in 1948. Since that time, there have been five wars and several other periods of active conflict. This continuing state of conflict poses economic and social challenges to Israeli society.

The state of conflict, with its attendant security needs, has required a national expenditure on defense which commands a significant proportion of the state's budget. This has led to a continuing debate over priorities between military and civilian expenditures.

Universal mandatory military service enlistment is a unique aspect of Israeli society born of the continuous security needs. Military enlistment symbolizes the end of childhood. Following the completion of high school, prior to the start of employment or university studies, young men aged 18-21 and young women aged 18-20 are required to enlist in the army. Women do not serve in combat roles. Men continue to do reserve duty, usually for approximately 30 days per year, until ages 45-50. Thus, most Jewish children's fathers are away from home for at least one month every year. In addition, of course, the continued conflict leads to casualties and fatalities; more than 18,000 soldiers have fallen since Israel's establishment, leaving siblings or young children of their own behind. In such a small country, such losses have a profound effect on the national consciousness.

Military service represents a significant rite of passage in Israeli society and is viewed favorably by society at large. Youngsters compete to join more elite units. Failure to serve can have long-term implications for employment opportunities and thus earning power.

There are a number of groups who do not participate in military service. Within the Jewish population, ultra-Orthodox youngsters are exempt while they are studying in religious institutions which may lead to permanent exemption. Also exempt are people who are disabled or have behavioral, emotional or adjustment problems. Some religious young women perform an alternative national service, rather than serve in the army. Married women are also exempted. Druze, Circassians and Bedouins serve in the military along with Jews, although their service is not compulsory. The majority of Israeli Arabs, however, do not perform military service. This and the fact that the Arab minority are identified with the Arab countries with which there is a state of war has profoundly influenced the situation of Israel's Arab citizens.

The currently unfolding peace process in the Middle East holds the promise of putting an end to the continuing conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The first peace agreement was signed with Egypt in 1979. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War reshaped the political order in the Middle East and led to a renewal of peace negotiations beginning with the Madrid Conference, which took place in October 1991. In September 1993, a breakthrough occurred in the relations between Israel and the Palestinians with the endorsement of the Oslo Agreement. A peace accord between Israel and Jordan was signed in October 1994. Negotiations for peace are currently underway with Syria and Lebanon.

The peace process brings with it opportunities for social development and economic growth, and holds the promise of achieving more equality and improving the relationships between the Jews and the Arabs in Israel. It also provides the background for addressing some of the major

problems and gaps in service provision in the Arab sector. At the same time, the peace process may also serve to intensify some of the issues that confront Israeli society. The state of conflict has sustained a strong sense of social solidarity within the Jewish population which has served as a buffer against conflicts and tension among the diverse cultural and religious groups within this population. It is possible that with the achievement of peace, social tensions among groups of different origins and socioeconomic standing and among the secular and religious will intensify.

3. Israel's Arab Population

Approximately 1,030,400 Israeli citizens (19% of the population) are non-Jews. Of this non-Jewish minority, approximately 76% are Moslem Arabs. Approximately 10% of Israel's Moslem Arabs are Bedouins. In the past, these Bedouins were nomads. Today they live in permanent towns and settlements largely in the south of the country and are beginning to integrate into the general employment structure. The second largest minority is Arab Christians. They comprise 15% of the minority population and live largely in urban communities. Another important group is the Druze population, numbering some 92,000 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995a). The Arab population lives, for the most part, in separate cities and villages, although there are some mixed towns.

Although Israel was established as a Jewish state, its Declaration of Independence in 1948 called for the "complete equal rights for all citizens regardless of sex, religion and race." From a legal perspective, the minorities are full citizens and have state rights. They participate in elections, are represented in the Knesset, and are entitled to all the services that the state provides its citizens. At the same time, the continuing conflict between Israel and its neighboring Arab states, the social and cultural differences between Jews and Arabs, and the fact that the Arabs are exempted from military service have led to continued tensions between the minority Arab and majority Jewish populations. The development of social and municipal services in the Arab sector has lagged behind, in part influenced by differences in the allocation of government resources. This has delayed the achievement of social and economic equality between Jews and Arabs. Although more recently Israeli governments have taken notable steps to accelerate the social and economic advancement of Israeli Arabs, it is clear that there is still a long road ahead.

4. Trends and Future Directions in Israeli Society

Today, family structure in Israel is relatively strong, fertility rates are high, divorce rates are relatively low and the number of teenage pregnancies is negligible. The proportion of children in single-parent families in the general population is 6.3% (Ben-Arie, 1995). The small proportion of single-parent families and teenage births is also noteworthy because it highlights that most children confronting problems such as neglect, abuse or achieving minimal educational levels live in intact families. In addition, there appear to be relatively low rates of social deviance, violence and substance abuse, both among youth and among the general population. Despite these apparent social strengths, there are a number of social forces at play that may be contributing to an exacerbation of Israel's social problems in general and the problems of children and youth in particular. We shall briefly describe these some of these factors.

An important issue is the high rate of poverty among children in Israel. The rates of child poverty have risen significantly in Israel since the 1970's. Poverty is not only a problem in and of itself but is a major factor influencing educational achievement and social deviance. It is also very difficult to achieve equality of opportunity against the background of large gaps in economic circumstances among children. Along with the increase of poverty in Israeli society, there has also been an increasing gap between rich and poor.

Within Israeli society, an underclass is beginning to develop as a third generation of children is growing up within severely disadvantaged families. These are, for the most part, families who arrived in Israel during the period of massive immigration in the 1950s, and who

failed to integrate successfully into Israeli society. This failure set in motion a process of further deterioration from generation to generation. This group is subjected to poverty and disadvantage and disproportionately engages in deviant social behavior. Beyond their material disadvantage, a culture of poverty is developing among them.

In addition to its growing underclass, Israeli society is undergoing social changes that are common to other Western countries including high unemployment rates, rising divorce rates and increasing rates of substance abuse. Though less widespread in Israel today than in other societies, these problems are much more common than they were in past decades. Each of these factors influences the extent and nature of social problems.

Drug and alcohol abuse are also less common among adults and young people than in other Western countries. However, these problems have become more common among young people as more and more teenagers drink and use "light" drugs as part of a socially accepted lifestyle. The problem has manifested itself in recent years and has increasingly attracted public attention. It is also important to note, that drug and alcohol abuse are more common among children and young people who are in other ways not integrated into society, such as high school dropouts. Moreover, recent research has revealed that drug and alcohol abuse are now frequently a problem among families with children subjected to neglect or abuse (Dolev and Rivkin, forthcoming). Also, violence, while less prominent than in some other Western countries, appears to be increasing and has been highlighted by a number of cases of youth violence widely reported in the Israeli press. To develop a better understanding of this phenomenon and ways to prevent its spread, the Knesset has established a special committee on youth violence assisted by a committee of experts.

The Arab population is influenced by the factors influencing Israeli society as a whole. However, at the same time it represents a society in transition as a result of the rapid changes in social norms and values that are occurring. The social changes taking place within the Arab population represent another factor. They will obviously affect the well-being of children in this sector, and also have a very important effect on the overall rates of social deviance and social strength in Israeli society.

Another group in transition is the large number of immigrants who have come to Israel in recent years. The immigration has posed significant social challenges since there are several at-risk groups among the immigrant population. These include the elderly, disabled, and single-parent families. These also include groups such as the Ethiopians and some of the immigrants from Southern Russia, who came with limited educational backgrounds. The success or failure of the social absorption of these immigrants will have an impact on overall social trends in Israel.

Finally, the social trends in Israel will be influenced by the peace process. There is much hope that the peace process will open up new opportunities: opportunities to achieve greater equality among the Jewish and the Arab populations and opportunities to provide more resources for addressing the pressing social needs. However, this process is also raising expectations among the Arab population and among other disadvantaged groups in Israel for more immediate solutions to their problems. If these expectations are not met, there may be significant disappointment that could exacerbate social processes and tensions. In addition, it is possible that with time, universal mandatory military service will no longer be required once peace has been achieved. Since universal military service has served as an important equalizing force in Israeli society, the way in which such a change may be implemented could have a significant effect on youth in different socio-economic groups.

Taking all these factors into consideration, Israel may be at another important crossroads in its social development. Can it maintain the social strengths it has achieved as a society or even move ahead in the years to come to reduce deprivation, inequality and social deviance? Or will it experience a decline in the strength of its social fabric? The answers to these

questions will have direct consequences for the well-being and quality of life of Israel's children and youth and for all cultural, national and religious groups within Israel. How can improved social intervention influence the answer that the future will bring? In this report, we will look more closely at the Israeli social context and policy as it relates to the well being of children and young people.

II. Major Issues Facing Children and Young People in Israel

Two major ideologies influenced the foundation of the state of Israel: Zionism and Socialism. The infrastructure of the state and its major policies reflect these two ideologies. Zionism created the basis for the emphasis on immigrant absorption and integration of immigrants in society through major government systems (such as education). The Socialist ethic was the foundation for egalitarian values that led to the development of an advanced welfare state. While these ideologies played a significant role in the development of services for all segments of the population, in the early years reeducating and integrating children into the new society was perceived as one of the major vehicles for realizing these ideologies. This led to the creation of a network of services for children, which exists today.

Despite this, actual investment in children in Israel has gone through a series of ups and downs, with periods of rapid service development followed by periods of relative stagnation and faltering investment. Following the publication of the first major studies on poverty and child poverty in Israel in the early 1970s and the establishment of a national commission to examine this issue (Roter and Shamai, 1971; Habib, 1974; Prime Minister's Commission on Children and Youth in Poverty, 1973), there was rapid development of services for children. These included: implementation of a system of children's allowances; rapid development of government regulated and subsidized day care and preschool frameworks; reform of the educational system to include an increase in the number of years of free and compulsory education and the development of a wide range of educational enrichment programs for various ages. However, this rapid development slackened during the 1980s, a period of runaway inflation and economic stagnation, leaving many issues and service areas unattended or inadequately addressed. Poverty among children declined dramatically during the 1970s, only to increase sharply and surpass its former levels in the 1980s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, issues related to children and their well being such as child poverty, child abuse and neglect, and education once again became prominent, regaining the interest of the public and policy makers. Thus, we are currently witnessing a renewed interest in developing services and programs that will more adequately cater to children's needs.

In this report, we focus on five issues that seem to be of particular importance in influencing the well being of children and youth: poverty among children; child abuse and neglect; children not achieving minimal educational levels; delinquency and marginality among youth; and children in Israel's periphery and in disadvantaged neighborhoods. All of these problems limit the ability of children and young people to participate fully and integrate successfully into society and to realize their full potential as adults. In addition, there are certain groups of children and youth that are at higher risk of exhibiting these problems and among whom these problems are more prevalent. We highlight two groups: Arab children and immigrant children.

In this chapter, we will discuss each of these five issues and, when possible, provide information on their prevalence among subgroups of children and youth.

A. Poverty

Poverty in general, and among children in particular, is increasingly being recognized as a social problem that must be dealt with on a broad societal basis. Annual statistics published by the National Insurance Institute (NII) indicate that the proportion of Israeli citizens living in poverty is increasing. Since the 1970s Israel has adopted a relative definition of poverty that reflects the extent of deprivation and inequality. The poverty line is defined at 50% of the median net income and is adjusted to family size. While the proportion of children in poverty was reduced dramatically following the implementation of children's allowances in the mid 1970s, it has increased steadily since. Approximately 10% of Israeli children were living in poverty in the mid 1970s; this proportion increased to 18.6% in 1989. In the 1990's the percentage of children in poverty went above 20% (Achdut, 1991 and 1995). In 1994 (the last year for which data are available), 18% of Israeli families had incomes below the defined poverty level, accounting for 23% of Israeli children (Ben-Arie, 1995). A recent international comparative study of poverty rates in 18 developed countries, using a relative definition of poverty, found that Israel, along with Ireland, had the second highest proportion of children in poverty after the United States (Luxembourg Income Study, 1994-95).

Poverty is more prevalent among new immigrants than veteran Israelis, though the extent of poverty among them is decreasing rapidly. In 1994, 24.3% of new immigrants and 29.5% of immigrant children had incomes below the poverty level, down from 30% of the immigrant families and 33% of their children in 1992. Families with four or more children are also disproportionately poor; 39% of families of this size fall into this category (Achdut, 1991 and 1995).

Poverty is also more prevalent among the Arab population in Israel. Due to the methodology of the survey that serves as a basis for the NII calculations, the data relating to the non-Jewish sector is incomplete, and the prevalence of poverty among this population may be higher than reported. According to the NII data (1995), approximately 35% of the families and 44% of the children in the non-Jewish sector live below the poverty level. Moreover, among this population social insurance programs are least effective at preventing and alleviating poverty, largely because these families tend to begin with incomes farther below the poverty line than Jewish families (Achdut, 1991 and 1995).

The effectiveness of social insurance mechanisms in reducing the extent of poverty has been consistent throughout the 1990s (Achdut, 1991 and 1995). Approximately 38% of poor families with children who were living below the poverty line were removed from poverty as a result of these mechanisms; on the other hand, the majority of such families are still below the poverty level even with government assistance. Most of those families who have been removed from poverty continue to have significant economic difficulties and require additional services. It is noteworthy that in 1994 the government implemented a new program for the prevention of poverty that included substantial increases in benefits paid under various social insurance programs. Moreover, one of the important developments is the change in the child allowance benefits structure, which will particularly benefit the Arab population.

Though there is ample information on the extent of poverty and its distribution among different population groups, little information is available about the consequences of poverty and its impact on the well-being of children and young people. Therefore, we do not have information on the extent to which poor children are denied access to social activities and experiences that are otherwise available to Israeli children or on the rates of deviance among poor children. It is evident, however, that poverty does have implications for numerous aspects of the well-being of children and families and serves as a background for other problems. Problems such as child abuse and neglect, under-achievement and failure to achieve minimal educational levels, dropping out of school and engaging in marginal activities are more prevalent among the poor.

B. Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect have only recently been identified publicly as significant social issues in Israel. Two major voluntary organizations, ELI and the National Council for the Child, helped to raise public awareness of these problems. Public interest and policy-makers' awareness of these problems were stimulated by extensive exposure of several severe cases of abuse and neglect. The publicity reached its peak in 1989. At that time Moran, a three year old from Tiberias, died due to brutal abuse by her uncle. This tragedy led to the passage of the Law for the Protection of the Helpless (Amendment 26 to the Penal Code) in November of that year. This legislation, which is essentially a mandated reporting statute similar to those in the U.S., recognized child maltreatment as a separate criminal offense for the first time. Following the new legislation and extensive publicity about it, the numbers of children reported to the child protection system (see chapter on welfare services) increased dramatically, resulting in increases in the identified number of children subjected to abuse and neglect who require social service intervention. In some local authorities the number of reports was claimed to have tripled between 1990 and 1992. According to estimates provided by the head of the child protection services in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, approximately 14,000 children were in the care of child protection officers in 1994 compared with 4,000 in 1989 (Wiesel, 1990). Due to the lack of systematic data, our understanding of trends in this area is limited. This highlights the need for improved data collection and management information systems dealing with child protection. To deal with this need, efforts are currently underway to introduce a new information system for child protection officers.

Recent research concerning children in care of the child protective services in four of Israel's larger cities (Dolev and Rivkin, forthcoming) indicates that the majority of the children known to these services are victims of neglect (in approximately 60% of the cases, severe physical neglect) rather than physical or sexual abuse (approximately 20% of the children). However, the data indicate that these children and their families most often suffer from other extreme forms of disadvantage and social malfunctioning and are not receiving services sufficient to meet their needs. Single-parent families (approximately 30%), families in which the head of the household is unemployed (approximately 25%), and families with four children or more are highly over-represented within the child protective caseload. More than half of the children known to these services live in households in which at least one of the parents has serious problems with social functioning (substance abuse, mental illness or retardation, or criminal activities). As for the children themselves, a large proportion are underachievers, lag two or more years behind their age level in Hebrew and math, and also suffer social and emotional adjustment problems.

Children in the care of the child protection system are believed to represent only a small proportion of the children subjected to or at risk of neglect or abuse. Only very limited information is available to indicate the prevalence of this phenomenon. More than 40,000 children receive services from the Service for Children and Youth of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for problems associated with child neglect, child abuse or inadequate parental care. Many more children live in families that are in the care of local welfare offices, and are living in conditions that may put them at risk of abuse and neglect. The number of children and families living in poverty indicate another group at potential risk of abuse and neglect. (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1993). Research efforts currently underway at the JDC-Brookdale Institute in two local authorities aim at providing a valid estimate of the size of this at-risk population (Ben-Rabi, Yoel and Dolev, 1996).

A preliminary study concerning children aged 0-3 in Haifa provides some evidence that some forms of inadequate child care, particularly neglect, are more common among the Arab population. The study indicated that while the proportion of children detected by nurses at Family Health Centers as being "at risk" or subjected to parental maltreatment was approximately 3% in

the general population, it reached 7% among the city's Arab children in these age groups. The same study did not indicate over-representation of children at risk among new immigrants (Ben-Rabi, Yoel and Dolev, 1996).

C. Children Not Achieving Minimal Educational Levels

Another issue of serious concern is the failure of many children, predominantly from deprived families, to achieve minimal educational levels in the school system due to difficulties associated with learning or with social and emotional adjustment. These young people fail to benefit sufficiently from the education provided in the school system, do not reach expected academic achievement and are therefore denied equal opportunities as adults.

The public and policy-makers have recently begun to focus increased attention on this issue, which has not always received the attention provided to children and youngsters who have actually dropped out of school or who are involved in marginal activities such as delinquency or substance abuse. However, it is presumed that failure to integrate into the school system, as well as underachievement and behavioral problems that inhibit learning, all contribute to dropping out. These problems begin at a much earlier age and are far more common than dropping out itself. As in many other areas, the extent of this problem is unknown. However, the relatively large number of children in special classes for weak students and the substantial proportion of children who continue their education in lower level alternative vocational frameworks (see Education section) indicate that there are many children for whom education should be improved. The proportion of students who are confronted with problems of underachievement and failure to integrate successfully into the educational system is higher in peripheral areas, disadvantaged neighborhoods and in the Arab sector. There is also growing evidence that these problems are more pronounced among some immigrant children and youth (see Immigrant children section). Though most attention has been given to underachievers and weaker students in high schools, there is now more interest in developing effective interventions for children at earlier ages.

D. Marginal Youth

Despite the relatively high rates of school attendance, failure to successfully adjust to the school system may result in young people dropping out of the normative system. Some of these young people enroll in alternative frameworks, which generally provide low level vocational training (see Education section). Others do not participate in any educational or vocational framework and remain "detached" (the Hebrew term used for these young people), running the risk of engaging in marginal activities such as delinquency, violence or substance abuse.

In general, high school dropouts are characterized by poor school achievement, behavioral problems, and difficulties in school adjustment. Some information has been collected about these youth through a computerized information system developed by JDC-Israel with JDC-Brookdale and implemented at eight innovative programs around the country for dropouts from the regular school system and youngsters at high risk of dropping out (see "Mifne" and "The New Educational Environment"). Though each of the programs caters to a unique group, there is much in common among the populations. Data for 1993-1994 from 241 participants, mainly aged 14-16, reveals that most of the youngsters come from large families with four children or more. The proportion of single-parent families is far higher than in the general population, and many of the families either suffer from chronic problems (economic difficulties, parental disability, delinquency, addictions,

violence or severe relational problems). The main reasons for the youngsters leaving school include low academic achievement, low motivation, discipline problems and frequent truancy. Only a small number of the youngsters surveyed previously participated in a special education framework or had been tested for learning disabilities. Thus, dropping out is related not only to the youths' characteristics and disadvantaged backgrounds, but also to school resources and degree of willingness to cope with difficult behavior and poor achievement (Unpublished data, JDC-Israel and JDC-Brookdale, 1995.)

Young people who engage in violence, delinquent behavior or substance abuse comprise another group warranting attention. Though delinquency and substance abuse are probably less common in Israel than in some other Western countries, there are indications that these problems may be becoming more prevalent. Reports of violence and substance abuse among youth have grown, as reflected in data collected by the Youth Probation Service and the National Police (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Central Social Work Library of the Israel Women's League, 1994). However, apart from reported cases, there has been no systematic, empirical analysis of these trends to substantiate these reports. A special survey has been conducted in Israel of adolescent at-risk behavior as part of a cross-national World Health Organization study. However, the results are not as yet available (Harel, forthcoming). Finally, homelessness among youth has also emerged as an issue of concern in Israel. While this problem does not appear to be too widespread, it is of sufficient significance to have led to the development of special programs for this population.

E. Children in Israel's Periphery and in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods

There are second and third generation Israelis whose parents and grandparents came to Israel from neighboring Moslem countries in the 1950s and 1960s and were settled in government-established "development areas". These areas were established both to achieve the policy goal of inhabiting the relatively large and unpopulated areas in the periphery of the country and as a means of rapidly providing relatively cheap permanent residence for the large number of immigrants.

A number of problems, particularly economic and educational problems, are more prevalent in development areas, many of which are also located in peripheral areas. Many professionals we interviewed identified the greater disadvantage of young people living in the periphery as a major issue influencing the well-being of children in Israel and requiring social action. This relative disadvantage is influenced both by the composition of the population in these areas and by the quality and variety of the services provided to these populations.

The placement of new immigrants in development areas beginning in the 1950s diminished the opportunities for many to attain full economic and social integration. In many cases, the new settlements lacked the infrastructure required to provide even basic employment opportunities, as well as health and educational services to the newcomers. Moreover, since residence in the populated central areas of the country, especially in the big cities, was widely preferred among most immigrants, those who were placed and remained in the development areas tended to be those who were less equipped to find housing and employment on their own and required more social intervention to enhance their integration. Many were poor and had large families. As a result, many development areas lagged behind economically and did not gain from the rapid economic growth experienced in Israel's central regions.

There have been in the past and there are at present many government initiatives focused on the more disadvantaged areas (Project Renewal in cooperation with the Jewish Agency, the Ministry of Education's 30-community program, the Prime Minister's Office Program for

Priority Areas, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs program for communities with high unemployment, and others). Nevertheless, government support for these areas has not generally led to sustained economic and social development. Despite many government initiatives to promote investment in peripheral areas, employment and economic development continue to be a problem. As a result, disadvantage persists and hinders the development of adequate social and educational services. Development areas have problems attracting high quality professionals in the areas of social welfare and education. Local resources required to build innovative and comprehensive social and educational programs are limited, despite more generous government allocations, hindering realization of equal opportunities.

In addition to the larger concentrations of disadvantaged populations in the peripheral areas, there are also many similar towns and neighborhoods in the central parts of the country, where immigrants were settled in inferior crowded housing complexes. These towns and neighborhoods have characteristics similar to those of the development areas in spite of the greater accessibility of employment opportunities and services. It is difficult to identify clearly evidence of the disadvantage in these central towns and neighborhoods, since information is confounded by statistics pertaining to more prosperous populations in the same cities or regions.

F. Populations Facing Special Challenges

There are certain populations of children and youth which face special challenges to their development and successful integration into Israeli society. These challenges affect their ability to benefit from a wide range of services and frequently require special attention in service planning and delivery. Chief among these groups are Arab children and youth, and those in the immigrant population.

1. Arab Children and Youth

As will be described throughout this document, many social, health and educational problems found in Israeli society are more severe in the Arab population. The Arab sector in Israel experiences higher rates of poverty and more crowded housing conditions. In addition, more Arab youngsters drop out of school and fewer achieve matriculation. Even as this population experiences a variety of social problems to a greater degree, it generally has access to less adequate and less extensive services to deal with these problems effectively. It is therefore critical that Israel focus more intensively on the problems within the Arab sector, in order to promote more equal opportunities for youngsters in the Arab sector and prevent further social deterioration.

2. Immigrant Children and Youth

Immigrant children and youth, largely from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, also face unique challenges in Israeli society. The trauma of moving to a new country along with the need to adapt to a new language and culture can cause many problems for youngsters, particularly in integrating successfully into the educational system. These problems take different forms and expressions among those from the FSU and those from Ethiopia due to the significant differences in the societies from which they came, and therefore require different programs and solutions. Among FSU immigrants, high dropout rates and rates of deviant behavior have raised serious concerns. These problems have emerged among the immigrant population as a whole and are even more severe in certain sub-groups, particularly immigrants from certain areas of southern Russia, such as the Caucasus mountain region. The Ethiopian population faces unique problems due to the large gap between the educational systems in Ethiopia and in Israel.

Various special forms of assistance are available and special programs have been developed for immigrant youth. However, these have not fully succeeded in preventing the development of significant problems or closing the gaps. Israel is currently facing the challenge of developing appropriate programs for each of these special immigrant populations and disseminating them broadly, to ensure that this first generation of immigrants will integrate successfully into Israeli society and that its problems will not lead to the development of new long-term marginal populations within Israeli society.

III. Policies and Services for Children and Young People

A. Overview

During the 47 years since its establishment, Israel has gradually emerged as a welfare state. During this period, Israel has succeeded in building a comprehensive system of social protection which encompasses social insurance and income support programs. A nationwide system of personal social services has been developed. At the same time, within the universal health and education systems, programs have been developed specifically to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups.

Social insurance is administered through the National Insurance Institute (NII) according to the National Insurance Law (1953). In 1992 NII benefits amounted to 8% of GNP and covered all major contingencies of income loss, including unemployment, disability and maternity (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1995). Child allowances are paid to every family according to the number of children. The NII is also responsible for provision of income maintenance benefits (Income Support Law 1980) which guarantee a minimum subsistence income to all citizens.

Expenditures on national health care comprised 7.7% of GNP in 1992 (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1995). Nearly all Israeli citizens, both Jewish and Arab, were covered by national health insurance even before the enactment of a new National Health Insurance Law in January 1995. Most health services are provided by four major voluntary sick funds and are regulated by the Ministry of Health. The system allows free choice of sick fund. Health services are funded through earmarked taxes paid by citizens and employers, and by Government supplementation. The Ministry of Health provides universal preventive well baby care.

National expenditures on education comprise 8.5% of GNP (1992) (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1995). Israel has free and compulsory education for children aged 5-15. The vast majority of the population is educated in the free, government-supervised, public school system and only a small proportion (which is larger among the Arab population and certain religious Jewish groups) attend private schools that operate outside the system. The educational structure recognizes national and religious differences and maintains separate systems for Jews and Arabs as well as separate secular, religious and ultra-orthodox school systems.

For the majority of Israeli children, education begins before age five and continues after age 15. Approximately 95% of Jewish Israeli children attend publicly subsidized and supervised nursery schools from the age of three. The rate of participation of three-year-olds in these frameworks is much lower in the Arab sector, estimated at 44% (Ben-Arie, 1995). More than 91% of youngsters aged 15-17 attend schools (see Education section). Again these rates are lower among Arabs.

Personal social services are provided through a network of neighborhood-based social welfare offices staffed by university-trained, professional social workers. These are directly operated by the municipalities though most of the financing comes from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. These offices provide a "one-stop" approach for individuals with a variety of needs including single-parent families, multi-problem families, abused and neglected children and disadvantaged youth. Other personal social services are provided by social welfare personnel employed within the education and health systems and by voluntary and non-governmental organizations, whose role has been expanding in recent years.

The employment service operated within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs serves as a point of access to training programs and operates special units for young people. Subsidized housing loans are available for all Israeli families. Larger loans are available for new immigrants and young couples from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

In addition, the military provides special programs for disadvantaged young people who are enlisted. Local authorities play an important part in the provision of many services that are regulated by the Ministries.

Before reviewing the major policy directions and issues in each of the governmental branches, it is important to note that the large number of ministries, departments and local authorities involved in determining and implementing child policy often leads to extensive coordination problems among the various services, at both the policy and case levels. Many of the people we interviewed noted that the lack of coordination among services and the lack of a comprehensive policy on children's issues are major causes of inadequate service provision. Problems include: lack of coordination among educational, welfare and health services, both on the national and on the local level; lack of coordination between the local level, responsible for implementing policy, and the national level, which has regulatory and professional supervisory functions; and overlapping and duplication of responsibilities and lack of coordination among different departments and units within the same ministry.

B. National Insurance Institute

The National Insurance Institute (NII) is responsible for all social security programs. NII benefits amounted to 8% of GNP in 1993 and were projected to amount to 8.3% in 1994 (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1995). This represents a growth in the proportion of GNP devoted to insurance benefits, from 6.75% in 1980.

NII benefits cover almost all major contingencies of income loss including old age, unemployment, disability and maternity. Children's allowances are paid, regardless of income, according to the number of children up to age 18 in the family. (This formulation is also used as the basis for calculating families' income taxes.) In 1994, 795,000 families received children's allowances. Children's allowances comprised 21.3% of the benefits paid by the NII and approximately 1.7% of GNP (Achdut, 1995).

Children's allowances are paid on the basis of "credit points" allotted to each child in the family. The more children in a family, the higher the number of "credit points" received both due to the larger number of children and due to the greater number of "credit points" allotted to each child from the third child, onward. One of the major issues concerning children's allowances is their failure over the years to maintain their purchasing power, thus decreasing their effectiveness in providing a minimum income to families with children, especially large families. According to NII data, the value of a credit point in 1975 was 4.4% of the average wage, while its value in 1994 was 2.9% of the average wage. The 1994 average monthly wage was $1,282 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995a). Similarly, the allowance provided for a family with four children amounted to 27.4% of the average wage in 1975, compared to 23.2% in 1994 (Achdut, 1995).

Another issue associated with children's allowances is the inequality in the benefits paid for Jewish children and Arab children. "Credit points" provided to the fourth and subsequent children are higher for families in which at least one of the members served in the military. Since most of the Arab population is exempt from military service, the benefits paid to this population have been lower. In January 1994, the government began a four-year program to equalize benefits paid to families whose members have not served in the military so that all families in Israel will receive benefits in accordance with family size alone (Achdut, 1994).

Income support benefits are paid to families and individuals who do not reach the minimum income level according to the Income Support Law legislated in 1980 and administered by the NII. There are two major groups included among these individuals and families: senior citizens, whose sole source of income is the NII old-age flat-rate benefit; and families and individuals whose income does not reach the minimum level and who are not covered by other income maintenance programs. Eligibility for income support benefits is determined by income and by proof of inability to integrate into the labor market. Income support benefits paid to families or individuals included in the second group comprised 5.2% of the NII expenditure on benefits in 1994. These benefits were paid to approximately 70,000 families and individuals, 49% of whom were families with children (25% single-parent families, 24% two-parent families).

C. Health Services

1. Overview

Israel spends 7.7% of its GNP on health services (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1994a). Overall responsibility for all health services lies with the Ministry of Health.

Before the implementation of the National Health Insurance Law, in January 1995, approximately 97% of Israel's population were covered by health insurance (Rosen, 1994). Insurance and health care was provided by four major sick funds and was financed by personal contributions, employer contributions, and government subsidies. The Ministry of Health regulated the care, provided some of the hospital services and services in the areas of preventive care, mental health and long-term care. The sick funds represent a special form of health service agency established before the State of Israel and similar to health maintenance organizations in the United States. Kupat Holim Clalit, Israel's oldest and largest sick fund, was established in 1920 by the Histadrut (General Federation of Labor). Three additional sick funds were established over time. The sick funds provide a full range of health services. While Kupat Holim Clalit operates its own hospitals, clinics and family health centers, the smaller sick funds often contract with private physicians for primary care and generally purchase hospital services from government hospitals, Kupat Holim Clalit and other agencies.

In 1990, following a continuing and worsening crisis in the Israeli health care system, a specially appointed commission submitted its recommendations for health system reform to the government. Its recommendations included: the passage of a national health insurance law; decentralization of the hospital system; and a reorganization of the Ministry of Health. A recently implemented National Health Insurance Law provides for universal coverage, whereby all residents of the state are automatically covered; defines a mandated service package to which all residents are entitled; encourages pluralism and competition among the sick funds that function as managed care organizations, providing the legally mandated service package in return for an annual capitation payment by the government for each member; and allows for freedom of patient choice among the competing funds, which are prohibited from denying membership to anyone on the basis of age, health status or place of employment. In addition, the new law requires the sick funds over time to assume responsibility for certain services previously provided or funded by the government in the areas of geriatrics, mental health, and prevention, including the family health centers.

The implementation of the new health law has also altered the role played by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry will be divesting itself of its service provision functions and is currently being reorganized to improve its ability to set policy, plan and regulate the quality of health services.

2. Children's Services and Policy Issues

Health problems of children and youth in Israel are similar to those prevailing in the Western world. With advances in medical knowledge and technology and changes in life style and health-related practices, life expectancy for newborn infants has increased steadily over the years. In 1994, Israel's infant mortality rate was 7.5 per 1000 live births, 5.7 for Jews and 11.3 for non-Jews. The absolute difference in these rates has declined significantly since the early 1970s, when the state's overall infant mortality rate was 21.9 per 1000, 18.6 for Jews and 32.1 for non-Jews (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995b).

Specialized medical care for children includes a centrally located Children's Hospital and designated children's wings in a number of general hospitals, preventive services and specialized mental health services, child abuse teams in general hospitals and special outpatient child abuse units.

In Israel, children's preventive care is generally provided through separate administrative, financial, and delivery systems. As prevention of illness and of developmental problems is a major concern, efforts have been directed toward establishing a number of preventive services including family health centers and school-based public health services.

Family health centers, which focus on the well-being of women during pregnancy and of children from birth to age five, offer prenatal examinations, vaccinations, early detection of mental and physical handicaps, abuse and neglect, and health education and counseling. Parents pay a nominal fee every six months for well-child care including immunization. Parents unable to pay are referred to social workers for financial counseling and/or financial assistance if needed. The Centers are community based and have a community approach. Most nurses become acquainted with the families during pregnancy and early development of all children. Thus the clinics are considered by the families a source of support and have almost full coverage of the population. It is estimated that 95% of all families of child-bearing age visit the mother-and-child care centers from pregnancy and during the child's first two years. The rate of utilization of this service drops sharply after children reach age two and a half. (Unpublished data, Ministry of Health, Department of Public Health)

When developmental problems are suspected or detected by the primary care physician or the nurse at the family health center, children are often referred to the local Child Development Center. There are 26 such centers in Israel. Some are affiliated with the sick funds or the Ministry of Health and a few are connected to general-care hospitals. The centers deal with early diagnosis, counseling and treatment for children up to age five who may be suffering from developmental or functional disabilities. The centers provide diagnostic and paramedical services with emphasis on a multi-disciplinary team approach. Some centers also provide support services and guidance for parents. Children requiring treatment after the age of five are usually referred to a special educational facility or other medical framework.

In elementary schools, preventive health services provided by specially trained public health nurses are funded largely by the Ministry of Health. A number of municipalities have supported the service by funding 30% of its cost and in a few districts services have been funded by Kupat Holim Clalit. Services in the schools include health education through discussions and lectures on topics such as nutrition, personal hygiene, and puberty-related issues. Also included are immunizations and periodic hearing and vision tests. Two years ago, the responsibility for providing these services was transferred to non-profit and private organizations, resulting in a decline in service levels in some local authorities.

Municipalities are responsible for preventive health services in high schools. Services provided are mainly educational in nature with emphases on preventing drug and alcohol abuse as well as communicable diseases including AIDS, and on issues of safety. While health services in elementary schools are regulated through guidelines established by the Ministry of Health, guidelines for nurses working in high schools are only currently being formulated by a specially

appointed committee. With the implementation of the National Health Insurance Law, responsibility for all school-based services provided by public health nurses will be turned over to the sick funds after a three-year transition period.

In addition to school-based services, preventive services are provided to adolescents through a number of specialized services funded by the Ministry of Health in conjunction with social service agencies and the Kupat Holim Clalit sick fund. These specialized centers focus on sex education, including medical check-ups, and treatment of adolescent problems such as acne, weight problems etc. Unfortunately, the existing services are still limited in number and scope and do not adequately cover the growing needs of this age group.

Public mental health services including diagnostic testing, counseling and psychotherapy, and parental guidance are provided by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinics. Inpatient treatment is provided in special children or adolescent mental health wards by specially trained personnel. The outpatient clinics, serving particular catchment areas, are generally free of charge or charge only nominal fees. Despite this, some of the experts we consulted pointed to severe gaps between available mental health services and community needs. In addition, a major subject of controversy is that these clinics serve mainly middle class families and do not reach the truly needy or disadvantaged. This is largely because they do not reach out to more difficult populations including less cooperative families and multi-problem families. To change this situation, the Ministry of Health recently established a mental health center for children and youth in Beersheva to serve the southern region of the country. The center is specifically committed to reaching more disadvantaged families and dealing with such problems as child abuse and family violence.

D. Welfare Services

1. Overview

Israel's personal social services, including services for children and youth, are provided under general welfare legislation that mandates the local authorities to provide welfare services to individuals and families in need (Welfare Services Law, 1958). The law does not indicate which particular services should be provided, the criteria for service provision nor the extent or sources of funding for these services. These are articulated in regulations issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which also has the responsibility for professional supervision and regulation of these services. The services provided, the criteria for their provision and the allocation of funding often change based on political and social interests (Doron, 1994). This fact is reflected in the fluctuations in the government's expenditure on personal social services as a percentage of GNP and in the level of the social service expenditure throughout the years (Katan, 1993).

The Welfare Services Law places most of the responsibility for service provision on the local authorities while policy is formulated on the national level. The State's budget for operating welfare services is supposed to be based on a fixed formula through which the State pays 75% and the localities pay 25%. In reality, the local authorities generally provide more than 25% of the costs, supplementing the services approved by the Ministry. In 1993 the average government participation comprised approximately two-thirds of the expenditure on social services. However, the proportion of state funding varies widely. In some of the poorer local authorities, the state participation is close to 75%, while in others it may be below 50% (Katan, 1993). Thus, the extent to which the local authorities can provide services that meet the local needs depends upon the financial resources that the authorities are able or willing to allocate to the provision of the services beyond those allocated on the national level. Naturally, local authorities with more ample resources can provide more extensive services and operate more independently than poorer authorities, which remain more exclusively under the control of the Ministry.

Even as the local authorities take on increasing funding responsibilities, the national government continues to hold full responsibility for setting policy. The local authorities are required to implement that policy with limited discretion as to the distribution of funds among different social services and allocation of personnel for the various services. Those local authorities with sufficient resources have increasingly turned to voluntary organizations to provide services in a more flexible way.

Most personal social services are provided through an extensive system of social service offices that operate on a local neighborhood basis. These offices are staffed with professional social workers who are the major providers of direct counseling services. The local authorities are also responsible for the development and regulation of other programs and services such as home help for families or after school frameworks.

Some of the services that are under the responsibility of the Ministry are provided by staff employed directly by the Ministry at the national level. These include most out of home services, probation services and adoption services.

2. Major Services for Children and Youth

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is responsible for meeting the needs of three major populations of children and youth: children living in poverty, children who are victims of abuse or neglect, and young people who engage in socially deviant behavior. The direct governmental expenditure on personal social services for children and youth comprises approximately 20% of the total allocation to personal social services, compared to approximately 5% allocated to the elderly and 12% to the mentally retarded. Though personal social services for children and youth still comprise the largest item of government expenditure on personal social services, a recent study indicates that the proportion of government funding allocated to these services decreased throughout the 1980s (Katan, 1993). In the 1990s, the proportion of government allocation to services for children and youth increased again. However, it has not yet reached the proportion of state expenditure that it comprised in 1980.

Two major divisions in the Ministry provide services for children and youth. The Division for Personal and Social Services is responsible for working with parents and children in disadvantaged families. This Division includes the Service for Children and Youth, the Service for the Welfare of the Individual and the Family, the Service for the Child and it also includes departments which serve other populations, such as the elderly. The Division for Correctional Services and Services for Youth in Distress serves youth who fail to integrate into normative frameworks through the Youth Probation Service, the Youth Rehabilitation Service (See Alternative educational programs in the Education section), and the Service for Women and Girls. The relatively large number of units and divisions involved in service provision sometimes results in overlapping of services and problems of coordination.

a. The Division for Personal and Social Services

As noted, three services operate within the Division for Personal and Social Services, providing services to children who are at risk or are disadvantaged. Local welfare offices address the needs of poor and disadvantaged families under the supervision of the Service for the Welfare of the Individual and the Family, working with families as a whole while addressing the needs of the children in those families. Workers at these offices have, at minimum, bachelor's degrees in social work and are responsible for coordinating all the services under the supervision of the Division for Personal and Social Services. Since financial support, once provided by these offices, is now paid through the National Insurance programs, the social workers in the local welfare offices provide counseling, advocacy and referrals and can only in a limited way provide direct financial services including assistance in purchasing basic household equipment (35,000 families received

such help in 1995), temporary assistance in housing expenses (140,000 received assistance in 1995), home help to families who have difficulties managing their households (4,500 families received this assistance), and assistance with placing children in day care, particularly while the mother is looking for work in compliance with the family's rehabilitation plan. In 1995, the Service for the Welfare of the Individual and the Family served a total of 180,000 families, not including the elderly.

In research conducted by Sharlin and colleagues (1992) that examined the needs of families under the care of this service, it was found that in addition to other social service needs, the majority of families had problems both between the parents and relating to the care of their children. As a result of these findings, the authors recommended the development of services dedicated to dealing with these problems by working directly with young families with children to prevent future problems for the children. Partly in response to this research, the Service for the Welfare of the Individual and the Family has also been involved in developing specialized programs for poor and disadvantaged families. Most of these programs are targeted toward young multi-problem families with at least one child under the age of six. They emphasize both the acquisition of basic life skills (such as managing the family budget, looking for employment, consolidating debts etc.) and improving family relationships and parental functioning. A variety of such programs are operated through local welfare offices, though for the most part the programs are limited to just a few locations and the number of families served is generally small. One such program is Yachdav, a three-year program to improve the personal and parenting skills of mothers of children whose normal development is at risk. In 1995, there were Yachdav groups operating in 33 locations nationwide, comprising 630 families and 1,800 children (unpublished data, Service for the Welfare of the Individual and the Family, 1995). The Service also operates for families with specific problems, such as families with disabled children, single-parent households with adolescents, etc.; approximately 45 such groups operate each year. In addition to the programs mentioned above, the Service is responsible for the implementation of several recent laws relating to families including the Law to Prevent Domestic Violence and the Law to Protect the Helpless.

The Service also intervenes in cases of custody disputes, marital problems and family violence. A national network of family violence centers has been established to work with families in which violence occurs. In 1995, 15 such centers were operating; four more will be opened in 1996. The Service also operates 74 family counseling stations serving 9,500 families per year including 35,000 children, providing services to help improve parenting skills and solve marital problems (Unpublished data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Service for the Family and Individual.) As part of their responsibilities, these centers provide training to the local welfare office staff in dealing with such problems. To deal with child custody issues, specially appointed Family Welfare Officers are responsible for reviewing cases and making recommendations to the court on child custody. These offices serve approximately 10,000 families annually. The Service operates a number of centers where parents and children can meet for cases in which the court has determined that one of the parents should not live at or visit the home. The Service also operates 38 centers for single-parent families, providing them with counseling and support; 7,500 families received services in these centers in 1995.

The Service for the Child is responsible for placing children in adoptive families (children born to unwed mothers or children who were removed from their homes by law). The service is exclusively responsible for both placing the children and choosing appropriate adoptive parents. In 1992, the Service served approximately 400 children and placed more than 200 in adoptive homes. The Service also served nearly 300 young unwed mothers through residential programs and counseling services. The service also operates two transitional facilities for children before adoption and one hostel for pregnant girls (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1993).

The Service for Children and Youth is the major service responsible for provision of services to children and youth who are victims of abuse or neglect or are otherwise at risk. Child

welfare services are provided both within the community (mostly by the previously described social workers in the local welfare offices) and in residential programs. Services in the community include: counseling for families and children by social workers; day care subsidies for children at risk of abuse and neglect; after school settings for children; and special community-based programs aimed at improving parental functioning and reducing neglect and abuse through promoting better parenting and family relationships. The Service for Children and Youth also provides child protection services through the local welfare offices. Specially designated Child Protection Officers are legally authorized to investigate reported cases of abuse and neglect, appear in court and apply for protective orders for children at risk.

In general, the counseling is provided to the parents and not directly to the child. Counseling by a Child Protection Officer is provided when the family social worker feels that there is a need for more authoritative intervention.

There is no regularly updated information on children in care in the social welfare system. In 1989, 39,000 children were served by the Service for Children and Youth (Wiesel, 1990). It is noteworthy that the number of children known to the municipal social service agencies at the time was much larger. The services provided to these children under the supervision of the Service for Children and Youth are presented in the table below:

Service	% of children
Counseling by SW/CPO only	41
Day care settings	25
After-school frameworks	10
Out of home settings	22
Special programs	2

Source: Wiesel, 1990

A quarter of the children known to the Service for Children and Youth are placed in day care centers. These centers are utilized predominantly by working mothers and apart from a few multipurpose day care centers that have been recently established, they seldom have special services designed for the needs of children at risk and their families. For older children, after school frameworks provide a few more hours away from home, as well as hot meals, recreational services and some therapeutic services. Ten percent of the children in the care of the Service were placed in these frameworks in 1989. During the past two years, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, has launched a nationwide effort to expand the number of available after-school frameworks.

Recently a number of experimental programs have been developed under the auspices of The Service for Children and Youth to treat children and parents within the community. These programs are aimed at improving parenting skills, preventing further abuse and improving parent-child relationships. One example of such a program is the Orion program, which was originally developed in the Netherlands and uses video cameras to work with vulnerable families with young children and help to improve their interactive skills. In the Home Start program, called "Haken" or "The Nest", which is based on a program in the UK, volunteers visit troubled families with young children at least weekly, providing both emotional support and practical advice for dealing with particular family problems. Only a small proportion of the children served by the Service for Children and Youth (2%) participate in community-based intervention programs such as these. Following legislation that mandated reporting of abuse and neglect (Law for the Protection of the Helpless) and the sharp rise in the number of reported cases, a network of emergency centers has been established by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in cooperation with JDC-Israel and other voluntary organizations. These centers provide residential short-term services

for up to three months and longer-term outpatient services for complex cases referred by social workers in the field.

Out of home services include placement in residential facilities and in foster care. In 1995, approximately 7,700 children were living in residential homes and 1,700 were living with foster families (unpublished data from Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Service for Children and Youth, February 1995). These comprise approximately one-quarter of the children in the care of the Service for Children and Youth. In 1991, out of home placements accounted for approximately three-quarters of the Service's budget (Wiesel, 1992). Though out of home placement is generally voluntary (i.e. not the result of a court order), placements of children outside the home must first be authorized by a local decision committee, which includes personal social service workers and other professionals such as mother and child health clinic nurses, doctors, teachers and psychologists. Recently, the Ministry has begun a program to expand the functions of these committees to enable them to play more dominant role in decisions for all types of interventions while also serving a case management function for children and their families.

Most out of home placements are in residential facilities rather than in foster homes. During the late 1980s, great public concern was expressed as to the quality of care in these facilities. This continues to be an issue and the Service for Children and Youth is investing substantial effort in upgrading residential care and designing models that will adequately provide for the needs of diverse populations of children.

In recent years, the Ministry has accelerated the development of a number of new residential care models. Community-based residential homes and group homes, which are in the children's own communities and encourage parental participation in decisions relating to the child, have been established in collaboration with JDC-Israel and other voluntary organizations. Family residential homes, operated in private homes and administered by married couples who live with the children, are also being developed as are family units in larger residential settings. In addition, some residential programs are operating "external programs" in which the children participate in the residential program during the day but return to their own homes at night. Another change has been the development of special frameworks for more mentally disturbed children who have been transferred from institutions for the mentally ill to more suitable frameworks.

In addition to the development of new models, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is currently developing standards and practices to improve the quality of care in residential facilities. A committee of experts, convened under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and JDC-Israel, recently completed new standards of care for residential facilities, after a two-year process. The committee utilized an in-depth study of a sample of residential institutions (Dolev and Barnea, 1996). In addition, in collaboration with ELKA and the JDC-Brookdale Institute, the Ministry is now in the process of introducing an advanced regulatory system for all types of residential facilities, including facilities for children and youth at risk. This system uses monitoring instruments developed specifically for each type of facility and enables the surveyors to measure each facility's compliance with appropriate performance standards on a continuing basis (Fleishman et al., 1994).

b. The Division for Correctional Services and Services for Youth in Distress

The Division for Correctional Services and Services for Youth in Distress specializes in services for marginal youth populations. This division operates through five major services and units that cater to different needs of these populations.

Although juvenile crime and adolescent substance abuse are less severe problems in Israel than in some other Western countries, these phenomena are growing and have become cause for concern, as more and more teenagers drink and use "light" drugs as part of a socially accepted lifestyle. A survey conducted by the Authority for the Prevention of Drug Abuse found that of youngsters aged 12-18 surveyed in 1993, 1.7% admitted to having used some sort of illegal

drug in the last week, 2.9% within the last month, and 4.9% within the last year. In the same survey, 16% of those surveyed admitted to using alcohol within the previous week, 34% within the previous month, and 55% within the previous year (Rahav and Teichman, 1993; Ben-Arie, 1994). Since these data are self-reported, it is possible that they reflect under-reporting. It is important to note that although drug and alcohol abuse are not considered highly prevalent among the general population of young people, they are more common among children and young people who are in other ways not integrated into society such as high school dropouts.

There are two separate Youth Services, one for boys and one for girls, that provide rehabilitative treatment for young people (aged 13-22) who have dropped out or are in the process of dropping out of educational frameworks and have displayed other symptoms of behavioral problems. The Services try to bring about changes in behavior and in the ability to integrate into the community through therapeutic groups, vocational training and educational enrichment. The Services also operate youth clubs and runaway shelters. In 1994, the Service for Women and Girls reached approximately 6,700 girls. The Service also operates, in conjunction with volunteer organizations, services for battered women and rape crisis centers. The Service for Youth and Young Adults works with approximately 7,800 boys and young men annually. (Unpublished data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1995).

The Service for Youth Rehabilitation and the Service for Vocational Training provide educational and rehabilitative services for youth who have not been integrated successfully into regular educational frameworks through alternative schools, *miftanim*, (see Education section) which combine work and studies. In 1993 approximately 2000 youth attended 34 *miftanim* (Cohen and Givon, 1995).

Services for delinquents are provided through the Juvenile Probation Service and the Youth Protection Authority. The placement of these services within the social service structure, and not within the police department, reflects the emphasis on social work, rather than on enforcement. The Probation Service's major responsibility is to serve minors aged 12-18 who are suspected or accused of committing a criminal offense. Workers provide pre-trial reports on youth, their behavior, health and mental health status as well as their rehabilitation potential. They also provide post-trial recommendations on sentencing and appropriate services for particular delinquent youth, and are responsible for supervising probation when determined by the court. Two other roles of the Probation Service are to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect not involving families, work with Child Protection Offices as needed, and investigate crimes involving children (under age 14) either as victims or witnesses.

In 1993, the Service received referrals of 15,000 minors, of whom 2,000 were victims or witnesses under the age of 14 and the remaining 13,000 were referred for delinquent behavior. Of these 13,000, 5,500 went to juvenile court and 680 were given probation services (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Central Social Work Library of the Israel Women's League, 1994).

The Youth Protection Authority operates rehabilitative residential settings for delinquent youth and for severely troubled youth, serving about 1,300 youth each year. The Authority operates 37 facilities, including locked detention, boarding schools, transitional facilities for youth transferring from boarding schools to community settings such as apartments and hostels, and a diagnostic center. The authority is currently cooperating with JDC-Israel in establishing a comprehensive continuum of care in which the locked detention unit, residential rehabilitative units and transitional units will operate within the same facility and in direct connection to community hostels. In response to what is perceived to be a growing problem of homelessness among youth, the Authority has also opened new facilities for homeless youth in cooperation with Elem, a voluntary organization for alienated youth (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1993; unpublished data from Youth Protection Authority, 1995).

Israel's National Police operates special youth units that investigate and interrogate offending minors (under age 18), locate minors in distress and refer them to social service agencies.

Together with other agencies, they also work to prevent crime in this age group. Among the special projects that the police operate or in which they participate are projects to prevent drug abuse and to reduce violence in schools and other settings. The youth units' basic approach in dealing with first offenders is to avoid long-term stigmatization and, in collaboration with the social service agencies, help the minor avoid entering a criminal lifestyle (Geva, 1995).

3. Major Issues in Personal Social Services for Young People

Several major issues concerning the personal social services for children and youth emerge from the above overview. Organizationally, the system for serving children and families is complex and the roles of different divisions and services frequently overlap. As a result, different services and units may be engaged in uncoordinated efforts to develop services for similar target populations. The organizational complexity also leads to inadequate coverage of certain population groups of children and youth and to lack of comprehensive provision of services to meet the diverse needs of different family members: parents, young children and adolescents.

Child welfare services in Israel are generally child-centered, rather than family- centered. The child-centered nature of the services is reflected in the heavy reliance on out of home care and in the limited scope of community services. Though most child welfare professionals and policy-makers state that community intervention is preferred to out of home placement in most cases and that children should be treated within the context of their families, services in the community are scarce and do not adequately meet the needs of the children and their families. There is only limited reliable information on the patterns of service provision and utilization. However, a recent, comprehensive study of children and families within the child protection system indicates that most families do not receive adequate services to meet their needs. In many cases this results in consideration of out of home placement for the children (Dolev and Rivkin, forthcoming).

Despite efforts by the different divisions to develop and implement more comprehensive family-centered intervention programs both in the community and in residential facilities, the extent of such programs remains limited. Though many programs have been initiated, they are generally small and serve only a small fraction of the children and families. In part, this may be a result of the organizational complexity and the lack of a comprehensive approach in service provision, which hinders development of programs requiring coordination among the different units. Other factors contributing to this situation may be the lack of professionals with skills required for practicing such interventions among the child and family social workers and also a lack of financial resources. It is also important to note that most community-based programs and services tend to be targeted at families with young children (under the age of 6). After school frameworks are by and large the only service available for elementary school-aged children. In addition to current efforts to expand these services, there are also efforts to introduce programs that will serve parents together with their children.

Despite the heavy reliance on residential facilities as a means of intervention and despite the efforts to improve the quality of care in these facilities, several issues regarding the quality of residential care remain. Educational achievement of the children in residential care is generally low, and it is unclear to what extent adequate intervention is provided in this area (Dolev and Barnea, 1996). Children removed from their homes tend to stay in care for many years and seldom return to live with their parents. Though children in care often go home for weekends and vacations, parents do not receive services while their children are in placement that would enable them to improve their parenting skills in preparation for their children's return. In addition, the residential settings tend to be large and are situated in remote locations, providing little opportunity to experience community life.

Child protection is another important issue within the framework of personal social services for children and youth. As in the United States and other Western nations, public interest

in this issue has increased dramatically over the past decade, leading to new legislation which mandates the reporting of children suspected of being victims of abuse or neglect (Law for the Protection of the Helpless, 1989). This legislation has led to an increase in child abuse and neglect reporting without a matching increase in the resources allocated for intervention and rehabilitation. As a result, many professionals and policy makers are concerned that the system is becoming increasingly engaged in investigation, leaving little time for remedial intervention that may support the families and help to decrease the extent of abuse and neglect.

Lack of comprehensive and systematic information may also be a barrier to developing and implementing community services on the local level. Little information is available on the extent and nature of the needs of families and children, and on the effectiveness of services. There have been some recent attempts to collect systematic information and to accompany new service development with evaluation. However, these attempts are limited. As a result, policy-making, service development and resource allocation are often conducted on the basis of educated guesses or in response to public pressure. A notable exception is the comprehensive information system already in place in several areas of the Youth Probation Service.

To overcome some of these problems, JDC-Israel and JDC-Brookdale are cooperating with local authorities and representatives of various services provided to children at risk in two local authorities (Haifa and Beersheva) in a comprehensive local planning effort. Within the framework of this program, planning committees, including representatives of all the services that serve children at risk, meet regularly to plan services for children in the local authority. Systematic information concerning the services provided and the needs of the population on the local level are collected and provided to the committees as an integral part of the planning process. Bringing together all the organizations involved in providing services to this population also enhances efforts to achieve increased coordination among them.

E. Education

1. Overview

The guidelines for Israel's educational system were established at the end of the 19th century, approximately fifty years before the state gained independence. In 1994, expenditures on education accounted for 8.6% of GNP, up from 6.4% in 1990 (Ministry of Education, 1994b). Education in Israel is free of charge for all children aged 5 to 18 and compulsory by law for children through age 15. However, for most children education begins before age 5, as the majority of three and four-year-olds attend publicly supervised and subsidized kindergartens. For most Israeli youth, education extends beyond age 15; the vast majority of 16 and 17-year-olds continue to attend an educational framework.

Almost all children attend "public" schools that are regulated by the Ministry of Education and funded by the Ministry and local authorities. Most elementary schools, as well as a large proportion of secondary schools, are operated by local authorities. Some secondary schools are operated by voluntary organizations, but remain part of the governmental education system. Thus, entirely private educational schools that operate outside this system are a rarity. However, such schools that do exist are more common in the Arab sector and among certain Jewish sub-populations such as the ultra-Orthodox.

The public educational system is organized in two main sectors that are essentially administered as separate systems: Jewish (which serves 83% of all students) and non-Jewish (Arab, Druze, etc.) (which serves 17% of all students), each with its own curriculum and institutions (Ministry of Education, 1994b). The structure of the institutions and content of the studies in the non-Jewish sector are analogous to those in the Jewish sector, with the necessary modifications to reflect the different language and culture of these populations.

The Jewish educational sector has different streams within it -- secular, religious and independent (usually ultra-Orthodox) -- each of which has separate schools. Primary schools in both the secular and religious sectors operate on a neighborhood basis and thus generally have relatively homogeneous populations.

The separation of educational institutions by Arab and Jewish sectors and level of religious observance has enabled each sector to maintain its language and cultural uniqueness, and limits the possibility of cultural tensions among students within the schools themselves. However, since there is a strong correlation between religious observance and low socio-economic status in the Jewish sector, as well as lower socio-economic status in general in the Arab sector, such separation may exacerbate disparities in educational attainment levels, and perpetuate the social distance among these groups. In the religious sector, better students disproportionately choose to attend boarding schools, which also undermines the level of the education in neighborhood schools.

The school system is composed of kindergartens, elementary schools (grades 1-6), middle schools (grades 7-9) and high schools (grades 10-12). This structure was implemented as part of a reform of the system beginning in the early 1970s. However, the reform was never fully implemented and in some localities, primary school continues through the 8th grade and high school begins in the 9th grade.

The Israeli educational system is characterized by relatively large classes and relatively short hours. While the same educational program is provided to all children in elementary schools and in middle schools, Israeli high schools include a diversity of different academic and vocational educational tracks. Some secondary schools are dedicated to only one of these tracks (academic or vocational), while others are comprehensive schools, which provide both types of programs to different students within the same school. Alongside the secondary school system regulated by the Ministry of Education there are alternative vocational frameworks, the majority of which are supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, aimed at providing vocational training and occupational skills to young people (ages 15-17) who have dropped out of the regular system due to behavioral problems or under-achievement.

Youngsters who have completed high school can take matriculation exams and gain a matriculation certificate. Matriculation exams are given to students in all academic tracks and in the higher level vocational tracks within the regular system. They are generally not taken by students in the lower level vocational tracks nor by participants in the alternative vocational and occupational frameworks. A full matriculation certificate is necessary in order to enter universities and most other institutions providing higher education such as teacher seminars or technological schools. However, other high school certificates are available for students who have not completed the matriculation. These include certificates for completing 10 and 12 years of high school and a variety of occupational certificates designed to be recognized by employers.

2. Educational Indicators

a. Adult levels of education

The number of students in Israel's educational system, from kindergarten through higher education, nearly doubled in the last 25 years, increasing from 823,000 in 1969-70 to 1,636,00 in 1993-94. In 1969-70, 28% of the population of Israel were students; by 1993-94, this rose to 31%. The proportion of Israel's Jewish adult population that has completed high school has also almost doubled, while the proportion of the adult population with four years of education or less has been cut nearly in half (see table below). In 1975, 36% of the Arab population had four years or less of education, compared to 12% of the Jewish population with that level of education. There have been comparable gains in the Arab population even though 1992 data still show a far greater proportion of Arab adults with four years or less of education (18% compared to 6% of the Jewish population).

Table 1

Adult Population with Low and High Levels of Education in Israel, 1975 and 1992 (in percentages)

	0-4 years of education		13 years of education or more	
	1975	1992	1975	1992
Jewish	11.9	6.2	17.7	31.2
Arab	35.8	18.1	4.5	10.0

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. Facts and Figures About Education and Culture, 1994b. pp. 94-95.

There also continue to be differences among different Jewish ethnic groups in the educational levels achieved, despite improvements in this area as well. In 1991, half the population born in Israel whose fathers had immigrated from Europe or America had gone on to higher education, substantially higher than the group born in Israel whose fathers had immigrated from Asia-Africa (18%), or the group born in Israel whose fathers were also born in Israel (30.5%) (Ministry of Education, 1994b). These statistics demonstrate a continued need to invest substantial resources to achieve the goal of increased social equality for the entire population.

b. School attendance

School attendance rates for both Jewish and Arab children aged 5 to 13 are nearly 100%. Prior to age five and after age 13, however, there are significant differences among the two populations. Approximately 95% of all Jewish children also receive pre-school education. School attendance rates for Jewish youth ages 14-17 (who are enrolled in school) are also quite high (see table below). The rate of non-attendance increases with age: in 1991-92, 9% of the 16-year-olds and 16% of the 17-year-olds among the Jewish population were not attending high schools under Ministry of Education auspices. Some of these youngsters were enrolled in alternative vocational frameworks or work/study programs (for example, Ministry of Labor vocational schools, discussed later in this chapter), while others were not participating in an educational framework at all. Unfortunately, data on the extent of school non-attendance are not complete.

In contrast to the situation in the Jewish sector, only 44% of Arab 3 year olds receive a pre-school education. As we can see in the table below, there is a large gap in attendance rates between Jewish and Arab youngsters. More than 35% of Arab youth aged 14-17 do not attend school, compared to less than 9% of Jewish youth. The drop-out rates are higher among Moslem and Druze youth than among Christians (Ben-Arie, 1994). This phenomenon may be partially explained by family problems or by characteristics of the educational frameworks available to the Arab population. In addition, the Arab youngsters who drop out of the regular educational frameworks may represent a somewhat less marginal population than dropouts within the Jewish population. Some of the boys leave academic studies in response to societal norms and economic pressure which favor more practical studies and early earning capacity. For some of the girls, traditional values in the family favor staying at home once they have reached adolescence.

Table 2

Attendance Rates of 14-17-Year-Olds (Ministry of Education Schools)

Population	Attendance 1969-1970	Attendance 1991-1992
Jewish	66.8%	91.8%
Arab	29.4%	64.4%

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. Facts and Figures About Education and Culture, 1994b, p.82

At the same time, the improvement in attendance rates over the last 25 years has been dramatic. The gap in attendance rates between Arabs and Jews has been narrowing, due to the rapid increase in attendance among Arab youngsters. It is also interesting to note the differences in attendance rates among the various segments of the Arab population. The attendance rate among Moslems, for example, increased from 23.4% in 1969-70 to 68.4% in 1992-93. Attendance rates among the Druze increased from 20.9 to 67% over the same period. Among Christians, the increase has been somewhat more moderate, as they started from a higher level: their attendance increased from 55 to 83.6% (Ben-Arie, 1994).

The recent State Comptroller's Report criticized the Ministry of Education for lacking timely reliable data on drop-out rates (State Comptroller's Office, 1995). Such data could make a valuable contribution in targeting populations at risk.

The improvement in attendance described above, while a positive step, does not on its own reflect an improvement in the quality of education. In fact, some argue that the focus on attendance as an end in itself has been at the expense of the development of effective efforts to improve the standards and substance of the educational program in the schools.

c. Matriculation certification

Access to higher education is determined by a student's success in the matriculation examinations. In 1993, 71.9% of Israel's 17-year-olds attended twelfth grade. Of the total age group, 56.3% took the matriculation exams; 32.5% of the total age group passed these exams and were therefore eligible to receive matriculation certification (Ministry of Education, 1994b). The Ministry of Education has established as one of its major objectives to increase the proportion of youngsters successfully completing matriculation (see section on Special Programs). Some high school graduates take supplementary exams to improve their marks or to complete their matriculation at a later date, usually after completing Army service. It is important to note that data from 1990 show that the proportion of youngsters eligible for matriculation certificates from European-American backgrounds was 60% higher then the proportion of those from Asian-African backgrounds (Kop, 1994).

Data about the Arab sector show lower success rates in matriculation exams. Among all Arab 17-year-olds, 32.3% took matriculation exams in 1991. Only 15.7% of the Arab youth in this age group passed the exams, significantly less than the 33% of the Jewish 17-year-olds (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1994a). While approximately 65% of the Jewish students who took the tests were successful, only approximately 48% of the Arab students taking the matriculation exams obtained certification (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1994a).

3. Special Services and Programs

Over the years, the Israeli educational system has initiated various services and programs designed to help children with special needs and particular difficulties to better adjust to the school system and benefit from the education provided. In the following pages we will briefly survey some of the more prominent of these services and programs.

a. Special education

The aim of Israel's approach to special education is to enable disabled students to function to the best of their abilities and achieve maximum integration into the social and vocational life of the community. In 1990, there were 62,000 physically, mentally or learning disabled children as well as children with behavioral disorders who had been placed either in the regular education system or in special settings according to their educational ability and the severity of their disabilities (Ministry of Education, Division of Special Education, 1991). Within the regular school system children may be placed in special education classes or in regular classes with supplementary tutoring. The policy in recent years prefers "mainstreaming" in the regular school system as much as possible. However, with the exception of hearing and visually impaired children, this policy has not yet been implemented on a broad basis.

Eligibility of children for special education programs and facilities, which are free of charge for youngsters aged 3-21, is determined by a committee appointed by the Minister of Education. The Special Education Law, legislated in 1988 but not yet fully implemented, is designed to ensure an individual study plan for each child and the provision of para-medical services within the educational frameworks. Responsibility for educational programs for disabled children is shared by health care personnel, psychologists, social workers and special education professionals, as well as by community support groups.

b. Support services and special programs

The education system offers supportive services for children and youth who have problems adjusting to a school environment. These services are offered by a large number of units and divisions within the Ministry of Education and in the local authorities. Educational counselors operate in middle and high schools and in some elementary schools. Counselors provide guidance to pupils with academic, behavioral or emotional problems. The pupils are frequently referred by their teachers but there are some self- referrals and referrals by parents. For students who do not attend school regularly as required by law, truant officers from the Ministry of Education's Regular Visitation Service conduct mandated visits and follow-up. In addition to working directly with the children and their families, these officers may also make referrals to other services as needed.

Students with more severe problems are usually referred to other psychological services either within or outside the educational system. Educational psychological services provide assessment and limited personal intervention to children who are referred by the schools. School psychologists advise teachers on how to address the children's problems within the classroom. Both school psychologists and school counselors often carry heavy caseloads that do not allow for intensive intervention. A recent survey conducted in the psychological services in two cities in Israel indicates that in only 25% of the cases do children referred to the services receive actual treatment as opposed to assessment only or counseling for the teachers involved (Ben-Rabi et al., forthcoming). In addition, social work services are also available in some schools, usually provided by the municipal welfare services to children with difficult family and environmental problems.

A relatively small number of children from multi-problem families attend afternoon programs, some of which are operated by the Division for Educational Welfare in the Ministry of Education and some of which are operated by the social services. In the past two years, the

Ministries of Education and Labor and Social Affairs have jointly undertaken an expansion of these frameworks.

The local Youth Advancement Services of the Ministry of Education provide a wide range of services for youth who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out, with a special focus on recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union. These include: identifying youth at risk; counseling and working with youth in the communities; running drop-in centers for youngsters seeking assistance; and, more recently, developing preventive programs in schools.

Many disadvantaged children are at risk of either not meeting the minimum educational requirements necessary for their future integration into society or of dropping out of school before the twelfth grade. Many of these children express their frustration through disruptive behavior within and outside the schools. Israel has developed some programs outside school frameworks as well as within them to address these problems.

The Ministry of Education's Division for Educational Welfare sponsors special remedial ("hechven") classes and youth centers beginning in the ninth grade. These classes benefit from special budgets that permit smaller classes so that underachievers can receive special attention. Current estimates indicate that there are 25,000 youngsters in these frameworks (Unpublished data from the Ministry of Education, 1995).

In addition, the Ministry of Education offers a number of innovative programs to help weaker students maximize their abilities and especially their chances of completing matriculation certificates. For example, the "Grade 13" program is for students who complete 12th grade and are still lacking most of the subjects required to receive a matriculation certificate. Pre-academic programs provide a second chance for demobilized soldiers to complete their matriculation certificates and improve their chances of being accepted into higher education institutions. The Ministry has made funds available to school districts to provide special initiatives at the discretion of the local schools. However, the schools are not mandated to provide specific programs, and none is available universally.

The Ministry of Education's Youth Advancement Service has developed "HILA", a program designed to provide remedial education on virtually a one-to-one basis to enable students to complete their elementary school education; 2,500 students currently participate in this program at 60 locations. Other services for youth who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out include counseling by Youth Advancement Service workers at the local level, municipal centers, and work/study programs developed by the Ministry of Labor in collaboration with the Israel Defense Forces (Passow, 1995).

The "New Educational Environment" is an innovative program developed by JDC-Israel aimed at drop-out prevention and helping marginal and extremely weak students improve their educational achievements and functioning. This comprehensive program has been implemented in a variety of educational frameworks throughout Israel, including municipal high schools, intermediate schools and residential settings as well as vocational schools. The program is designed to change teachers' attitudes and practices as well as the organization of the educational environment. Initial findings from an ongoing evaluation study by JDC-Brookdale have shown positive results in student achievements and school attitudes (Cohen, 1996.)

c. Alternative educational programs

Many of the youngsters who drop out of the regular school system transfer to alternative frameworks, which are administered separately from the special education system described above. These alternative frameworks offer educational programs that emphasize basic skills together with vocational training. Though the level of education provided varies among the different frameworks, it is generally on a relatively low level and the students are not expected to achieve matriculation certification. There are 80 vocational schools, attended by approximately 16,000 youngsters,

located throughout the country; these schools are supervised by the Ministry of Labor (State Comptroller's Office, 1995). These schools offer vocational studies combined with work experience in areas such as auto mechanics, electricity, carpentry, printing, hairdressing, and industrial sewing, particularly to youngsters aged 16 and over. These work-study programs stress adjustment to the work setting and training in critical vocational skills. Students are paid for their work and certification is offered to eligible graduates.

The Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Centers (Miftanim), are alternative schools operated by the Service for Youth Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and local authorities. These centers offer a program of basic studies, vocational training, and work activity for youngsters who cannot continue in the regular school system because of serious adjustment difficulties. The program places special emphasis on acquiring social skills, offers therapeutic support and provides the opportunity to produce real products in vocational training workshops. There are 34 Miftanim dispersed around the country, serving approximately 2000 youngsters (unpublished data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs). An in-depth evaluation of the service countrywide is currently being conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute (Cohen and Givon, 1995).

Mifne is an innovative educational program for youngsters who have dropped out of school, developed by JDC-Israel in collaboration with the Ministries of Labor and Education. The program is short-term (one year), after which youngsters are reintegrated into normative learning and work-study settings. The principal characteristics of Mifne are its multi-dimensional program, teamwork approach, individualized learning programs and use of innovative learning material including advanced computer technology. The Mifne program for Jewish youth in Jerusalem, which is concluding its seventh year, serves more than 60 youth annually. Two Mifne programs in the Arab sector serve approximately 100 youngsters annually (unpublished data from JDC-Israel).

Another special program for weaker students is Manof, a residential program developed by the Hebrew University School of Education and designed for dropouts, delinquents, and underachievers who have been identified as having the potential to succeed in school and achieve matriculation. This intensive program prepares the students to reach this goal.

d. Gifted students

In addition to targeting services toward weaker populations, Israel's educational system also focuses its attention on students who are particularly gifted. Important programs in this area include: placement of talented children from low socio-economic backgrounds in residential schools with high educational standards; the new Israel Arts and Science Academy, a residential high school serving 182 students gifted in the arts, science and mathematics from 70 different communities; the AMUTA School of Physics and Mathematics in Jerusalem; and Negev 180 Regional Center for Excellence, which uses regional cooperation to raise the educational level for talented children in this peripheral region (Passow, 1995).

e. Boarding schools

Israel began using boarding schools to educate its youth even before the establishment of the State. Youth Aliya, (Youth Immigration) was founded as a branch of the Jewish Agency in 1933 to rescue Jewish youth from Nazi Germany. Many teenagers were brought to the country before World War II and educated at Youth Aliya boarding schools. They were followed after the war by others, most of whom were Holocaust survivors. Since for the most part these youngsters arrived without their parents, the boarding schools were an effective way both to care for them and to absorb them into Israeli culture. Boarding schools became accepted as a viable and valued element of the Israeli educational system.

Today Youth Aliya villages and other residential settings are attended by new immigrants, as well as thousands of disadvantaged Israeli youth. In addition, most of the better students among Jewish religious teenagers attend boarding schools. A number of boarding schools provide gifted children from disadvantaged peripheral localities with the opportunity to obtain a high level of education. In all, approximately 10% of the school population aged 13-18 (about 38,000 youngsters) attend approximately 250 boarding schools, two-thirds of them in religious frameworks (Ministry of Education, 1994b).

In addition, there are a number of younger children who are placed out of the home by the welfare services or the Ministry of Education, mostly because of severe family problems, severe behavioral problems of the child at school or severe gaps in educational achievements. For many of these children, the boarding school system serves as a viable alternative to other forms of placement such as foster care. In the 6-14 age group, there are approximately 8,000 children in approximately 85 institutions, comprising approximately 1% of this age group (see Chapter on Welfare Services) (unpublished data from Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Service for Children and Youth).

4. Informal Education

Both within and outside the schools, informal education plays an important role in Israel. The goals of informal educational programs are to impart positive values, promote social skills and prepare youngsters for adult lives, as well as to provide cultural enrichment and supplementary academic assistance. Within the formal educational system, most classes typically spend an hour a week at "social lessons", devoted to discussions with the home-room teachers on social issues of interest directly affecting the class, or public issues affecting society as a whole. The Administration for Youth and Society in the Ministry of Education has developed a number of structured programs for teachers to use in dealing with complex issues such as intergroup relations and communication and the changes required by peace.

Youth movements have traditionally been an important part of the experience of many young Israelis. They began in Europe, before the birth of the State, primarily as a channel for bringing young immigrants to the country. There are twelve youth movements in Israel, many of which are affiliated with political parties. All promote values of personal responsibility and larger societal involvement while emphasizing their own ideological viewpoints. These movements provide participants with a wide variety of informal educational and recreational activities (Ministry of Education, 1995a). Youth movements provide youngsters with a sense of belonging and a feeling that they are valuable to society as a whole. These movements have served as a mechanism for social mobility and interaction.

The predominance of the youth movements has declined in recent years. They remain, however, the largest framework for informal education, with over 200,000 members at present. According to a survey by the CBS, 23% of Jewish high school students and 25% of Arab high school students participated in some youth movement activity in 1991 (Ministry of Education, 1994b). (Because the proportion of Jewish youngsters attending high school is far greater than the proportion of Arab students at this age, it is likely that a greater proportion of all Jewish youngsters of high school age are involved in these movements compared to the proportion of Arab youngsters of this age).

Israel has a comprehensive system of over 150 community centers (Matnasim), in localities throughout the country with a special focus on lower income cities and neighborhoods. Most community centers are operated through the Israeli Association of Community Centers. They enable residents of all ages - and especially children and youth - to participate in a variety of recreational activities and clubs. Data from a CBS survey of ninth through twelfth grade students in 1991 indicated that 21% of the Jewish students and 25% of the Arab students participated in

some community center activity (Ministry of Education, 1994b). (Here again, the caveat regarding the relative proportions of Jewish and Arab youngsters in school applies.) In addition, there are 250 "community schools", 70 of them in the Arab sector, which function as community centers during after-schools hours. An estimated one million persons - children, youth and adults - participated in community center and school activities in 1991-92 (Ministry of Education, 1994b). Finally, many schools provide their students with the opportunity to take part in extracurricular activities and clubs. Virtually all activities of community centers, community schools, and the schools require some payment, though they may be subsidized and discounts may be given to special groups (e.g. large families, single-parent families, etc.)

The Ministry of Education and the local authorities also support programs for leadership development of youngsters. One program provides specially-selected youth with leadership training so that they can then run clubs for other youngsters. Another program sponsors student-elected school councils, the representatives of which participate in municipal youth councils and a national youth council.

5. Selected Issues in Education

Because public education is viewed as a tool to achieve social equality among disparate ethnic populations, it is perhaps not surprising that the issues of greatest controversy involving the educational system relate to the system's success or failure in reaching this goal. Some of these issues include the development of a "gray" education system and the tracking of high school students into academic and vocational tracks.

Public education is, by and large, free of charge. Students are required, however, to purchase books and materials. Parents are also requested, though not required, to contribute toward some of the administrative costs of the school. In addition, and perhaps more important, many parents feel that the standard school week and its activities are not sufficient; they feel that for their children to participate successfully in society and best realize their potential, they require a better basic education as well as additional enrichment activities. This has led to the development of "gray" education: parents in some schools pay a supplemental amount to their children's schools for various educational and recreational programs, as well as to reduce class size, add classroom hours in basic subjects and enrich basic resources. This situation reinforces social inequality among the population in subgroups, as families in poorer neighborhoods are unable to provide their children with the same level of support. The private sector has also expanded considerably over the last several years, and a wide variety of after-school enrichment classes can be attended for payment in the large cities. However, these private services are less developed in peripheral areas, and children from low-income families are largely unable to take advantage of these for-payment services.

One much-discussed strategy to remedy this situation is to lengthen the school day, particularly for children in underprivileged areas. The longer day is viewed as a mechanism both to provide educational enhancements to children needing them, including children of immigrants, and to free working parents from concerns over extended child care. In response to a long-term debate that has been carried on over this issue, Israel has begun implementing a longer school day, albeit gradually. The change was begun in an experimental fashion in 1990 in a limited number of towns and neighborhoods. By 1993, the long school day had been implemented in development towns and settlements along Israel's northern border, in underprivileged localities and neighborhoods in which there is a high percentage (over 35%) of disadvantaged children, and in schools with a high percentage (over 20%) of immigrants. There are a total of 785 schools in which the long school day applies to all classes. There are many who feel that this is not a cost-effective approach to improving educational achievement. Although the intention of the Ministry of Education is to implement the long school day gradually throughout Israel, during the past year this implementation has been put on hold (Ministry of Education, 1994b).

Israeli educational ideology has promoted cultural and socioeconomic heterogeneity in schools as a vehicle for achieving broader social integration and mobility. One of the main reasons for establishing intermediate schools (grades 7-9) as part of the Israeli educational system was to enable children from different neighborhoods and various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to attend school together. The intermediate schools are able to accomplish this because they are larger and have larger catchment areas than primary schools have. This focus on social integration has, however, often created conflict with those who favor grouping children according to their ability as a matter of educational philosophy. Grouping students by ability level has been an issue of major concern that is currently handled in a variety of ways. In the primary schools, there is typically ability grouping for key subjects. In intermediate schools, heterogeneous classes are mandated by law, with some important exceptions for key subjects.

In the high schools, youngsters are placed in general academic or technological tracks. This tracking is an issue of some controversy. Of the student population in high schools, 57% are currently studying in the general track while 43% are registered in the technological track. The track in which a youngster is placed can have great importance for his or her future. There is great variety in the level of technological studies offered, ranging from some schools which provide sophisticated technological courses that prepare students for matriculation exams and university studies, to others whose studies provide only low-level vocational courses. The technological tracks are considered important in providing the army and economy with workers trained in technological-scientific skills. However, some students who have successfully completed vocational courses may not have attained truly marketable skills. In addition, children are usually referred to technological studies because of relatively low school achievement. This means that they may be unable to achieve the technological certificate, and, in fact, data from 1992 showed that only 30.4% of the Jewish youngsters taking these exams (and only 10.4% of the Arab youngsters) were eligible for technological certificates (Ben-Arie, 1994).

Students in the technological track may also take the matriculation examinations that are required for entry into institutions of higher education in Israel, and therefore highly significant for social mobility. However, data show that a far greater proportion of twelfth grade students in the general academic track take the matriculation examinations than do students in the technological track.

Because so many students fail to achieve matriculation certificates, many experts in education are discussing the possibility of enabling students to achieve certification for lower levels of educational achievements. This is quite controversial, as educators and the public alike fear that institutionalizing the provision of lower-level certificates will lower the overall level of educational achievements for the student population and will hinder the schools' current efforts toward helping more students achieve certification.

Major issues that are closely intertwined involve the system's efforts to improve the educational attainment of the more disadvantaged children, including youngsters living in peripheral, low-income communities. Disparities are caused by less qualified teaching staff, poorer municipal funding and lower educational and vocational levels of the adult population. One program developed to address this population is the 30 Communities program, which assists communities to improve their education systems (Ministry of Education, 1994b). Other major concerns are to prevent high school students from dropping out of school and to return youngsters who have dropped out of school to an educational framework. High school dropouts have been a major and growing concern in Israeli policy and have been the subject of special Knesset committees and initiatives.

As has been described, the government recently enhanced its commitment to address this issue, and the Ministry of Education is providing extra funds both to develop a new reporting system and to provide incentives to schools who successfully prevent dropping out. A number

of innovative programs have been developed under the auspices of the Ministry of Education's Division of Education and Welfare and Social and Youth Administration. However, there is little information available on the effectiveness of these programs. It is also important to note that most of these programs do not address the needs of children within the primary school system and that the extent to which such programs are implemented in the Arab sector, despite the greater needs, is very limited. Moreover, it may be that the emphasis on high attendance levels has been at the expense of the quality of the education provided, as schools strive to keep the youngsters in school, while not necessarily addressing their individual educational needs.

Another contention voiced by some academics and professionals is that significant improvement in the quality of the education of Israeli youngsters requires a different type of change than that provided by the programs and interventions being developed. Rather, overall reform in the approach to education is demanded: especially, with regard to the way schools are organized, the roles teachers play, relations with students, the selection of curricula, the perception of teaching, and the roles given parents.

An additional major issue in the educational system is the need to integrate large numbers of recent immigrants from Ethiopia and the Former Soviet Union into Israel's educational system. This issue is described in greater detail below.

F. Immigrant Children

1. Overview

Immigration surged dramatically in recent years. Since 1990, more than 600,000 immigrants have swelled Israel's population by some ten percent. While most immigrants came from the former Soviet Union, Israel has absorbed a unique group of some 35,000 from Ethiopia as well as some immigrants from other, mainly Eastern European, countries. Between January 1990 and December 1994, 63,887 children up to the age of 18 arrived in the country, representing 27% of all immigrants. Among these, 17,000 children are of Ethiopian background, constituting 53% of the immigrants from this country.

2. Major Issues Facing Immigrant Children and Youth

The immigration process, characterized by an abrupt and acute transition from familiar to unfamiliar social and cultural norms, exposes immigrants to many potentially stressful situations. The language barrier, failure to understand accepted behavioral norms and the breakdown of traditional support systems, in addition to changes in occupational and economic status, can all generate tensions, anxieties and conflicts.

Children and adolescents often face great difficulties: contending with demands that originate in the immigration process while struggling with the internal processes of maturation and the formation of a stable identity, serve to increase their vulnerability. Thus, while there are insufficient data on the numbers of immigrant youth and their families who are in distress or "at risk", it is nevertheless clear that this population faces significant problems.

Some immigrant groups have been identified as being particularly at risk. In 1994, approximately 18.8% of immigrant families in Israel were headed by a single parent, compared to 8.7% of Israeli families as a whole (Zionit and Ben-Arie, 1995). Many of the children living in single-parent families face economic hardship. Indeed, half of the heads of single-parent families, in a survey of this population among immigrants from the former Soviet Union, reported that their incomes were not sufficient to cover most of their daily basic needs, and that their standard of living had declined sharply relative to that which they had enjoyed prior to immigration (Naveh, 1994).

In general, poverty is a major risk factor among immigrant families with children,especially shortly after their arrival in the country and in comparison to the general population (Naveh, 1994). This problem is most severe among the Ethiopian immigrant population. Among that population, a survey of families in three communities indicated that only a small percentage of families (3% in Afula, 11% in Netanya, and 6% in Kiryat Gat) reported that their income was sufficient to meet their basic needs (Benita, et al. 1994). Nevertheless, it is important to note that, as immigrants' time in the country has increased, the incidence of poverty among immigrant children has declined sharply, from 42.9% in 1991 to 23.5% in 1993, a figure close to that of the general population (Zionit and Ben-Arie, 1995).

Another population of interest comprises some 7,000 children from the former Soviet Union, mostly between the ages of 15-17, who came to Israel unaccompanied by an adult. They were brought to Israel by the Jewish Agency's Youth Aliya and are now educated in Youth Aliya residential facilities.

3. Absorbing Immigrant Children and Youth: Coping with the Challenge

The integration of immigrant children into the school system poses a significant challenge both to the schools involved, and to the children and their families. In this regard, the two main groups of new immigrants, those from the FSU and Ethiopia, encounter substantially different problems.

The general population of immigrants from the FSU is characterized by extremely high levels of education and occupations relative to the general population in Israel. For this group of immigrant children and youth, the major difficulties are found among adolescents, usually in the two last years of high school. Although among students taking matriculation exams, these immigrants appear to have higher success rates than among the general population, dropout rates are high and academic achievement levels are not as high as expected considering their family backgrounds and parents' education. A study was conducted in 1994 of immigrant teenagers from the former Soviet Union living in two communities, Carmiel and Sderot. It found that in Carmiel, 11% of the 15-17-year-olds who had arrived in Israel since 1989 had dropped out of school. Among 17-year-olds, the proportion of dropouts reached 21% (Noam et al., forthcoming). In Sderot, these figures were more than twice as high: 24% of 15-17-year-old youngsters from the former Soviet Union had dropped out of school and 47% of 17-year-olds only. Among immigrants from the Caucasus mountain region, one of the least developed and least modernized areas of the former Soviet Union, 35% of 15-17-year-olds had dropped out of school. Though the school system does provide some supplementary assistance and a limited number of programs to promote social integration, many of the pupils who need help do not receive it or do not receive the amount of help they need (Lithwick and Noam, 1995). In addition, most of the assistance is extended during the first two years after immigration, although service needs continue well beyond this period. Moreover, the lack of social integration of some critical groups of immigrant youth, such as those from the Caucasus mountain region, is also a major concern.

Still another problem that has attracted public attention is that delinquency rates among youth who have immigrated from the FSU are similar to those in the veteran Israeli population. This also runs contrary to expectations based on the higher levels of education among this population and may indicate the need for more intensive intervention (Zionit and Ben-Arie, 1995). There has also been concern about the tendency, particularly among Russian immigrant youth, to remain relatively isolated from their Israeli-born peers.

The successful integration of the Ethiopian population into Israeli society presents a unique challenge. The most significant issue involves bridging the cultural and educational differences between the newcomers and the veteran Israeli children. Most Ethiopian children have had limited educational experience and most of their parents are illiterate in their own language as well as in Hebrew. This results in severe problems of under-achievement among these children.

Several additional factors intensify the problems experienced by the Ethiopian children. Firstly, these children have usually changed schools several times because their families have moved between several temporary housing locations. Children from the most recent wave of immigration that arrived in 1991 are only currently being resettled in permanent housing. In addition, Ethiopian immigrants tend to be concentrated in a small number of communities, many of which are situated in peripheral areas. Since most Ethiopians are observant Jews, and choose to educate their children in national religious schools, Ethiopians comprise a large proportion of the population in many of the schools (at least 15% and sometimes up to 70%). This makes the task of providing adequate assistance even more difficult. Moreover the national religious school system generally serves a larger proportion of disadvantaged children and has fewer professional resources.

To help overcome these problems, Ethiopian children are entitled to greater assistance of various kinds than children in other immigrant groups. Ethiopian children attend special classes within the regular elementary schools at minimum expense for their first year in the school system and sometimes longer. These classes are smaller and are aimed at accelerating the process of closing the gaps, so that they can be integrated into the regular classes. Nevertheless, there have been questions raised concerning both the effectiveness of these special absorption classes and the appropriateness of separating the children from their peers even for a limited period of time. After children complete these special classes, they are integrated into the regular classes, where they continue to receive special support. The Ministry of Education provides each school with special resources based on the number of Ethiopian pupils enrolled. Despite these efforts data indicate that most school teachers in the integrated classes have not been provided with sufficient training in preparation for absorbing the immigrants and that there is a severe lack of educational programs that are adapted to this population's specific difficulties and needs. Moreover, despite the lack of academic support at home, most Ethiopian children do not attend after-school frameworks in which they can receive additional educational assistance. It has also been reported that schools do not adequately invest in creating a dialogue with the pupils' parents (Lifshitz and Noam, 1994).

A recent survey among schools that absorbed large proportions of Ethiopian children indicates that the main problems in absorbing the Ethiopian children are academic. Moreover, due to their own lack of education, many of the parents cannot help their children with their school work. Despite the marked cultural differences between the Ethiopians and the non-immigrant population, social integration has not been reported as a major problem (Lifshitz and Noam, 1994).

Recently, special educational programs are being developed to deal more effectively with the needs of Ethiopian elementary school students. One example of these programs is "Shiluvim" operated in collaboration with JDC-Israel. These programs hold considerable promise and are currently being evaluated.

Until recently, virtually all Ethiopian adolescents attended Youth Aliya boarding schools. This was considered the best way in which to provide them with the education and socialization that would enable them to integrate into society. This practice has led to a major debate, because the boarding schools which the Ethiopians attended generally offered lower level vocational education and served, in addition to Ethiopians, the more disadvantaged among the veteran Israeli youth. Protests from the Ethiopian community and from professionals have brought about a change and now more Ethiopian youngsters are staying in their communities. As more and more adolescents stay in the community and attend the regular educational system, there will be a need to develop supportive services to enhance their integration and level of achievement.

There are also special programs in place to enable the most gifted Ethiopian students to attend the best boarding schools in the country sponsored by JDC-Israel and the Association for the Enhancement of Education. In another special program, Ethiopian students attend special courses in local colleges and technical schools to prepare them for matriculation examinations and enable them to go on to college. In addition, there are several college preparatory classes operated by all the major universities.

G. Children and Youth in the Arab Sector

1. Overview

In 1994, 1,030,400 of Israel's citizens were non-Jews, comprising 19% of its total population. Although defined collectively as Arab citizens of Israel, they include a number of different, primarily Arabic-speaking, groups. One of the distinct characteristics of the Arab population of Israel is its large proportion of children. Children aged 0-17 comprise 46.5% of the Arab population, compared to 32.4% of the Jewish population. Arab children comprise one quarter of the children living in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995b).

Two major social changes have taken place within Israeli Arab society within the past two decades that are noteworthy due to their influence on the well-being of children and young people. First, there has been a change in the more traditional roles of different family members as more and more Arab women enter the labor force. This change has accentuated the need for more rapid development of day care frameworks for young children and after-school and recreational frameworks for older children and youth. In addition, the traditional patriarchal and extended family is gradually losing its dominance as the major force in guiding family members on social and familial issues such as choice of spouse and occupation, and losing some of its control over the younger generations. While these processes allow Arab children and young people more freedom of choice and personal development, they also create a generation gap that prevents young people from turning to their elders for consultation and moral support. This creates tensions between the young people and their parents and may exacerbate the difficulties they face and result in problems in social adjustment. This process has even greater implications for women and girls.

As has been expressed throughout this document, there are indications that many of the problems described concerning children and youth are more prevalent among the Israeli Arab population. General indicators of well-being indicate lower levels of welfare among Arab children. In 1994, a larger proportion of Arab households had four children or more (40% compared to 13% among Jewish children) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995b). NII data indicate that poverty rates among Arab children are much higher than average: 44% of Arab children live in families with incomes below the poverty level, proportionally twice the 22% among all Israeli children (Achdut, 1994). These data relate only to households in urban settlements headed by a wage-earner or someone who is unemployed; therefore, the picture they present is partial, and it is probable that the extent of poverty in the Arab sector is even greater. Poverty and disadvantage are also reflected in more crowded housing conditions. In 1993, 14.7% of Arab households with children were living in housing in which three or more persons shared one room, compared to only 1.6% of Jewish households (Ben-Arie, 1995).

Education of Arab children is an area of concern. Only 44% of three-year-olds attended preschool in 1993-94, a sharp contrast with the approximately 95% attendance among the Jewish children in the same age group. Kindergarten and elementary school education, although compulsory by law, have not been enforced in the Arab sector as strongly and effectively as in the Jewish sector. Data from the Ministry of Education indicate that only 64.4% of Arab teenagers (ages 14-17) are in schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, compared to 91.8% of Jewish youngsters in that age range (Ministry of Education, 1994b). Thus the drop-out rate of Arab children, especially at a young age, is a major concern (Al-Haj, 1994). The level of achievements of Arab children is lower than that of Jewish children: About 30% of Arab students are eligible for a certificate of matriculation, compared to 48% of Jewish students. As noted, school attendance is low among the Arabs, hence the proportion of students eligible for a certificate of matriculation among all Arab youth aged 17 is only 16%, compared to 38% among the Jews.

An additional problem is the relatively low attendance in special education frameworks: The percentage of Arab students in special education classes in elementary schools was 1.8% in 1993/4, compared to 2.5% among the Jews. It is not clear whether these differences are a result of a lack of frameworks and classes, or of under-diagnosis.

Educational support services are also inadequate. For example, there is a lack of appropriate social work, guidance and psychological services in the schools.

Service gaps in health are another serious concern, as demonstrated by relatively high rates of infant mortality among the Arab population. The infant mortality rate among Israel's non-Jewish population for 1990-1992 was 14.5 per 1000 live births. This represents a notable decline since 1970-74, when the non-Jewish rate was 32.1, but remains significantly higher than the 1990-92 Jewish rate of 7.6 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1994a). Among the Arab population, and particularly in a number of villages, there is a high prevalence of hereditary disease. This is one of the main reasons for the death of non-Jewish infants: 4.2 per 1,000 live births in 1994, compared to 1.7 among the Jews.

Accidents are the most prevalent cause of death of children and youth, both Jewish and Arab. However, the rate of accidents is higher among Arab than among Jewish children. The number of deaths of Arab children from accidents is twice that of Jewish children. For example, in 1990-1992, the rate of death due to accident was 11.1 per 100,000 children among Jewish boys aged 0-4, compared to 28.1 among Arab boys in the same age group (Ben Arie, 1995). Professionals report that many Arab children spend much of the day without appropriate supervision. This, coupled with poor living conditions, may explain the high incidence of accidents in the Arab population.

Only limited information is available on the prevalence of specific problems such as neglect, delinquency and under-achievement among Arab children and youth. However, many professionals we interviewed expressed concern over the growing rates of such problems within the Arab population. As has already been mentioned, preliminary information collected from nurses in family health centers in Haifa indicates higher rates of neglect among Arab children aged 0-3 than among Jewish children of the same age group (Ben-Rabi,Yoel and Dolev, 1996).

2. Selected Services for Arab Children and Young People

During the years since statehood, the Arab community has not received an adequate share of government support. This has resulted in significant gaps in the services available to Arab children and young people, particularly in light of their growing needs. Over the years, there has been increased recognition of the need to address the service and funding gaps between Arabs and Jews. Recently, both the Israeli Government and the voluntary sector have initiated programs to eliminate these gaps and to meet the needs of the Arab population. In the following pages, we will outline some of these initiatives. However, due to the lack of comprehensive information on Arab children and youth and to the limited number of available analyses of the services provided to this population, this review is not as complete as we would have liked it to be.

The Government, in its basic policy guidelines in 1992, committed itself to reducing social and economic gaps by eliminating within two years the funding gaps between allocations both for Arab and Jewish schools and municipalities and for local social welfare allocations.

As described previously, the compulsory education law, which applies to both Jewish and Arab children, covers pupils from the age of five onward, that is, beginning with kindergarten. Preschool education is not mandated by law and the number of Arab children receiving education services at preschool age until recently has been restricted to relatively few communities. In 1989 only 25% of the Arab 3-year-olds received preschool education, and the vast majority received no formal educational services or care. In recent years preschool education in the Arab sector has been developing rapidly; in 1993-94 approximately 44% of Arab three-year-olds and 71% of Arab

four-year-olds were attending pre-school (Ben-Arie, 1995). However, as had already been described, this is still significantly lower than the participation rate in the Jewish population. One of the reasons for the lack of preschool participation among the Arab population is the lack of formally trained preschool teachers, supervisors and administrators, as well as the lack of appropriate facilities and structured curriculum. Recently, the issue of training and accreditation of preschool teachers in the Arab sector has been the focus of a specially appointed Knesset committee. This committee has submitted its recommendations on improving the situation to the Ministry of Education. In addition, during the last five to ten years, an increasing number of local organizations have been developed to provide such service to the Arab sector.

Arab professionals that we interviewed also emphasized problems concerning thequality of educational programs, the lack of professionals in this field and lack of physical resources, resulting in the provision of less than satisfactory education at all levels to Arab children. There has been some recent progress, however. In 1993-94, the total number of teachers in Arab schools reached 13,000, an increase of 24% since 1989-90. This increase was characterized by a substantial increase in the proportion of academic and senior teachers and a concomitant decline in the proportion of qualified (non-academic) and unqualified personnel. This change is extremely important, since teaching methods traditionally used by Arab teachers have been identified as contributing to the gap in educational attainment between Jewish and Arab pupils (Personal communication with "Sikkuy", 1995). Despite these advances, significant differences remain between the sectors in a number of key educational factors. In 1993-94, for example, average class size in the Arab sector was 31.0, significantly higher than the 27.6 average in the Jewish sector (Ministry of Education, 1994b).

Throughout Israel, support services in schools are provided by social workers,educational psychologists and special education classes. In the Arab sector, these services are limited and meet only a fraction of the need. Thus, although the extent of need for special education frameworks and child rehabilitation services in the Arab sector has not been formally assessed, their absence is clearly problematic (Haidar, 1991). Although the number of positions for educational psychologists has been increased substantially, many remain unfilled due to lack of Arab-speaking professionals.

In the last decade the number of middle and high schools in the Arab sector has almost doubled. In addition, special efforts have been put into improving the standards of both academic and technological high school tracks. Consequently, attendance rates have improved considerably.

Some innovative educational programs for weaker students are currently being introduced into the Arab sector: JDC-Israel has introduced Mifne - a program for dropouts, (see Education section). Dr. Majid Al Haj of the University of Haifa has developed and implemented a comprehensive educational program based on enhancing creativity and freedom of thought among Arab youth. Some additional programs are also being implemented.

Some argue that the absence of informal educational activities, including sports activities, is a major issue in Arab schools. Studies have found a shortage of recreational areas for elementary school children, with streets serving as favorite playgrounds (Haidar, 1991). Funding for extra-curricular activities has until recently been inadequate, and unlike many parents in the Jewish sector, most Arab parents still cannot pay the part of the cost requested of them.

However, interviews with field workers and researchers working in the Arab sector revealed recent significant changes. Foremost among them is the establishment of a network of community centers in Arab communities, providing opportunities for enrichment and leisure activities.

The principal health services for children and youth in the Arab sector are similar to those provided to the Jewish population. A major problem is a lack of trained para-medical and mental health workers who can provide needed services in the communities themselves, eliminating the need to travel to hospitals or clinics in other areas. Starting in 1992 the Ministry of Health took

steps to improve services in hospitals that serve exclusively the Arab sector (the Christian hospitals in Nazareth and Haifa) by substantially increasing funding for equipment purchases and expansion in the number of hospitalization beds. In addition, in 1993, the establishment of five new mental health centers and twenty new family health centers was approved.

The National Insurance Institute recently adopted a program to alleviate poverty. Within the framework of this program, Arab families with four children or more will receive higher children's allowances. In addition, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is in the process of introducing several changes to improve welfare services in the Arab sector. One major effort is the establishment of social service agencies to serve individual towns and villages rather than providing these services through a district office. This change includes allocating additional social workers and service resources to these localities. As part of this effort, professional committees designed to serve a case management function for children subjected to severe abuse and neglect are also being established. In addition, new services for children and youth are being developed in the Arab sector, including an emergency center for children at risk and afterschool programs.

The voluntary sector, too, has begun to play a more substantial role in advocating equality in programs and services for Arab citizens. Over the years, JDC-Israel invested in developing services for the elderly and the disabled. In the 1980s, it initiated educational services for dropouts in the Arab sector and, most recently, JDC is increasing its involvement in services for children at risk in the Arab sector. Some of the programs being developed are geared to educating mothers in child care and household maintenance.

The Equal Access Project developed by Shatil, an organization established by the New Israel Fund and devoted to providing technical assistance to voluntary organizations, identifies issues for advocacy. It is helping to form task forces of Arab public interest organizations and community leaders, focusing on three major areas: early education; parental involvement in schools; and access to special education. Another nonpartisan association that promotes equal opportunities for the Arab citizens is Sikkuy. This association has a large support group of leading Jews and Arabs from across the political spectrum in Israel and abroad, whose common denominator is support of the principles of equality and integration for Arab citizens of Israel. Other significant Arab voluntary organizations include the Acre Women's Association, the Trust of Programs for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education and the Center for Arab Education at the University of Haifa, the Galilee Center for Social Research and the Galilee Association for Health Services Research (see Chapter IV).

Despite the efforts to equalize the services provided to Israeli Arabs, significant gaps remain between the needs of Arab children and youth and the services provided to them. The initiatives already in place can serve as both an opportunity and a starting point for further addressing these gaps.

IV. Role of the Voluntary Sector and Non-Government Organizations

In the years before the establishment of the state of Israel, the voluntary sector had several components. A number of organizations still active today, such as Hadassah, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), were funded by Jewish communities around the world. The Jewish Agency played a significant role in immigrant absorption and related services, and continues to play a critical role both in this area and in development areas. The Histadrut, Israel's major federation of workers, was and has remained a major contributor to the provision of health and social services. In addition, local organizations, many of them associated with political parties or various religious groups, also undertook significant roles in providing services before the state was established.

After independence, Israel began the process of establishing the institutions of a modern welfare state and the government took over responsibility from the voluntary sector for many of the health, education and social welfare programs. Thus, the establishment of the state involved a redefinition of the role of the voluntary sector. It was viewed as a positive part of the process of building a State, working towards assuring more equality of access for different groups, depoliticizing the service system, and reducing service fragmentation. There were certain exceptions to this trend. In the early years, for example, JDC-Israel took on special responsibility for services for elderly, disabled, and chronically ill immigrants. Moreover, over the years, new voluntary organizations gradually developed. Voluntary organizations providing services on a universal, non-political basis began to reshape the balance between the public and private sector.

According to Kramer (1984), there were considerable distinctions between the role of the voluntary sector in Israel and its role in the United States and various Western European countries. "In contrast to the U.S., in Israel the voluntary sector was not viewed as the preferred mode of dealing with social problems; nor was governmental aid perceived as controlling, contaminating or co-opting." However, this attitude has changed over time. More skepticism about the effectiveness of government began to develop along with an increased interest in privatization of services. The major issue has become in whose hands to place this privatization: the voluntary sector or for-profit organizations. In recent years, the government has become more willing to utilize the private sector as a provider of social services and some of the financial disadvantages that had been imposed on this sector were reduced. A more recent Israeli model of non-governmental organization is the NGO that is connected to the local authorities. These organizations can successfully operate services for the local authorities because they are less restricted than the municipal government in hiring employees, contracting for services and fundraising.

Legislative lobbying is somewhat less developed in Israel than in the United States and for the most part the voluntary sector plays a less influential role in it. Recently, however, voluntary organizations have become an increasingly powerful force in both policy-making and service provision.

A. Organizations Dealing With Children and Youth

Many of Israel's voluntary organizations operate in areas related to children and youth, though only a limited number focus exclusively in this area. Women's organizations are extremely active in service provision in several areas of child welfare. There are several such organizations in Israel, the largest being WIZO, Na'amat, and Emuna. These organizations are affiliated with political parties and were initially founded to offer support to the women affiliated with those parties. The political parties continue to use their influence to help secure governmental funding for these organizations' activities. Women's organizations are the major providers of day care for children ages 0-3; they also operate afternoon frameworks, vocational schools, boarding schools, and residential facilities. Women's organizations also operate services for women, some of which are related to the welfare of children such as programs for single mothers and shelters for battered women. More recently, a number of similar organizations have developed in the Arab sector, such as the Acre Women's Association.

One of the most important voluntary organizations working with children and youth is the International Center for the Enhancement of Learning Potential/the Hadassah Wizo Canada Research Institute. This center applies unique diagnostic and rehabilitation approaches to a broad range of disadvantaged children and youth and uses them in a variety of formal and informal educational and social frameworks.

Youth Aliya has pioneered the development of residential frameworks for children and youth in Israel, beginning with the massive number of orphans that began arriving in Israel in the 1940s and 1950s and continuing with other disadvantaged groups and special immigrant groups such as the Ethiopians.

The Histadrut has played a significant role in social programs, particularly for youth, with various networks of vocational programs in schools (Amal, Mishlav) as well as a special youth movement that is particularly committed to Arab and disadvantaged youth.

ORT is Israel's largest voluntary network of schools, with a particular specialization in vocational training programs, providing both highly advanced technological training and programs adapted for disadvantaged groups and dropouts.

The Israel Association for Community Centers is an important example of a major national organization that coordinates and advocates on behalf of a large number of local organizations.

JDC-Israel, which is the Israeli branch of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, began in the 1980s to expand its involvement in planning, developing and disseminating programs for children and youth in both the Jewish and the Arab sectors and is a major force in influencing government programs and policies. The JDC has special programs for children who are subjected to or at risk of abuse or neglect or who live in conditions that may impede their development. It also has innovative programs both to prevent adolescents from dropping out of school and to work with difficult populations who have already dropped out. (Mifne, New Educational Environment, see Education section). In addition, JDC-Israel has been involved for many years in developing informal education frameworks for youth, working in close collaboration with the Community Center Movement. Other JDC divisions are involved in developing programs for immigrant youth, both Russian and Ethiopian.

The National Council for the Child is an organization that operates on a national basis and is involved mainly in lobbying, advocacy, and research on all areas affecting children in Israel. The National Council has been involved in many of the recent changes in the legislation and policy concerning child welfare. It publishes an annual report, *State of the Child in Israel*, in partnership with JDC-Israel. This report includes statistics regarding several major areas of the well-being of children and their daily lives. In addition, the Council has an ombudsman for children and youth who receives 6,000 referrals annually. As a matter of organizational policy, the National Council does not receive government funding.

Other national voluntary organizations were founded either to provide specific services or to operate in a certain area such as services for the disabled, alienated youth, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, gifted children, etc. Most of the organizations of this type provide services and also engage in lobbying and advocacy on behalf of their target populations.

Some of the prominent organizations of this type are: Elem, which serves youth in distress; the Council for the Child in Placement, which provides services and enrichment programs to children in residential facilities; the Israel Association for Child Protection (ELI), which provides services and counseling in cases of child abuse and neglect; Meital, which serves children who have been the victims of sexual abuse; and the Association for the Enhancement of Education, which aims to provide quality education to gifted youngsters from disadvantaged populations. In the Arab sector, voluntary organizations working on a regional or national basis include: the Trust of Programs for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education; Follow-up Committee for Arab Education, primarily an advocacy group; Insann Society for Educational Services, which runs programs such as a mobile community center for villages too small to have one of their own; the Committee for Educational Guidance, a student-based organization advocating equality in higher education; the Center for Arab Education at the University of Haifa; and the Galilee Association for Health Services Research.

Many residential facilities for children in Israel are operated by NGOs that were established solely for the operation of a residential program. Local voluntary and non-governmental organizations operate individual or clusters of educational or other social programs in various cities.

B. The Voluntary Sector as a Whole

Israel has a relatively large number of voluntary organizations that are involved in service provision, experimentation, and innovation. In general, these voluntary organizations can be grouped into two main categories: organizations that provide services and organizations that concentrate on policy and legal advocacy. The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector, established in 1986, is the umbrella organization of voluntary and non-profit organizations in Israel. It has more than 250 member organizations, including almost all of the major voluntary organizations. It serves as the major representative of the sector as a whole in national forums and plays a major role in advocacy and in the promotion of mutual self-help, organizational cooperation and development within the voluntary sector. The voluntary and non-profit sector as a whole is, of course, much larger than the membership of this umbrella organization. In an unpublished 1994 report, *Mapping the Third Sector in Israel*, which was completed for the Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector in Israel, Professor Benjamin Gidron of Ben Gurion University of the Negev, using 1991 income tax return data, found that there were 8,461 non-profit organizations in Israel.

Using the definitions and methodologies used in the Johns Hopkins international comparative study of the third sector, Gidron divided these organizations into 21 fields of activity falling into 12 categories: Culture and Recreation; Education and Research; Health; Welfare; Environment; Housing and Development; Citizens' Groups; Foundations; International; Religion; Workers' Unions and Professional Associations; and Memorial Organizations (Gidron, 1994; Salamon, 1994).

The non-profit sector comprises a substantial portion of the Israeli economy. Prior to the establishment of the state, this sector was largely supported by contributions from abroad (Gidron, et al. 1994). Today, however, these contributions, though still substantial, account for a smaller proportion of all non-profit funding, with government funding providing the largest share (46.9% see table). In 1991, its expenditures equaled more than $7 billion, 11.6% of the Gross

Domestic Product. It employed 171,300 persons which constituted 13.3% of the salaried labor force, and it benefited from approximately 20 million hours of volunteer labor (Gidron, 1994).

The major sources of funding for most organizations in the voluntary/NGO sector are government and local authority contracting. In 1991 almost half of the funding came from these sources (see table 3). Interestingly, the three specific fields of activity within the 12 categories of voluntary organizations identified by Gidron as having the highest annual income -- Primary Health Services and Hospitals; Higher Education; and Elementary, Secondary, Vocational and Other Education -- received among the highest proportions of government funding of those surveyed. To be effective on a long-term basis, it is apparent that an organization must work effectively with the appropriate government agencies. Because the Government (on both the national and the local levels) is one of the major sources of funding for most voluntary organizations, most organizations have extensive contacts with various government agencies and tend to coordinate their policies with those of the Government.

Private fundraising is also a significant source of funding for local organizations. Gidron found that 12.3% of all non-profit income resulted from this activity: 5.6% of funds are raised within Israel and 6.7% of funds abroad. This is a higher proportion of income than in France or Germany. Thus, of all donated funds, 45% are raised within Israel. In certain categories of non-profit organizations, contributions comprise a much more substantial proportion of organizational income. In religious organizations, for example, 28.4% of all income results from contributions (15.9% from within Israel and 12.5% from abroad), with more than the 24.4% provided by the government. Civic and advocacy organizations receive more than half their income from contributions, 18% from Israeli donations and 32.3% from abroad. In contrast, general welfare organizations, including many with substantial children's services receive only 21.5% of their funding from contributions (11.2% within Israel and 10.3% from abroad).

All non-profit organizations can register with the government as "amutot", or associations, which means that they are established for purposes other than earning profits. This status is not particularly favorable regarding taxes, either for donors or for the "amuta" itself. These associations are in fact required to pay additional taxes to those paid by profit-making companies. Various non-profit organizations as well as the umbrella organization, The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector in Israel, are lobbying to change this structure. To gain tax exempt status, an organization must be categorized as a "mossad tzibori", literally translated as public organization. This status is, for the most part, granted to organizations that directly provide services. It does not generally apply to advocacy and broader education-oriented organizations.

As in the United States and Britain, Israel provides tax concessions to donors to non-profit organizations. However, unlike the U.S. and Britain, where tax benefits increase with income, Israel provides tax credit on gifts at a fixed rate, regardless of income. Thus, the overall level of tax advantages are lower, as is the pattern of giving. Recently, tax benefits have been expanded for corporations that make voluntary donations. There are currently lobbying efforts to extend the tax benefits given to individual donors as well. In addition, because Israel's estate taxes after death are not nearly as high as those in the U.S. and England, the role that charitable donations play in limiting the effects of those taxes is not nearly as significant in Israel (Roter, Shamai and Wood, 1985).

More and more emphasis is being placed today in Israel on the development of private philanthropy. There have been several major initiatives. One is the social development program launched by Minister Shetreet, former Minister of Economic Planning, in cooperation with JDC-Israel, which is mobilizing leading members of the business community to promote private philanthropy for designated projects. A second initiative has been launched by the voluntary non-profit sector in cooperation with JDC-Israel, to establish a united campaign in Israel, which would include automatic payroll deductions through major employers. This program is in the advanced planning stages with a special grant from the United Way International. The Jewish

Agency has called for the expansion of the United Jewish Appeal to include the participation of Israelis. Thus, there is a public atmosphere that is conducive to initiatives promoting private philanthropy in Israel.

Table 3

Israel's Voluntary Sector

Type of Organization	Number in Category	Total Income (All Sources) NIS (000)	Income (Government) (%)	Income (Local Authorities)	Associations/ Unions	Total Contributions	Contributions (Abroad)	Contributions (Israel)	Independent Income
Culture and Recreation	1172	1,022,118	24.7	17.3	15.5	15.5	6.7	4.2	36.8
Research and Education	2409	4,909,150	55.5	2.1	4.3	12.6	8.0	4.6	25.5
Health	221	5,146,324	62.9	0.1	2.7	4.4	1.3	3.1	29.9
Welfare	919	1,621,606	36.3	2.5	1.4	21.5	10.3	11.2	38.3
Environment	48	68,090	22.4	0.1	0.0	2.7	1.7	1.1	74.4
Housing and Development	288	266,712	34.4	8.1	31.4	5.9	4.9	1.0	20.3
Citizens' Groups	324	74,108	13.1	5.8	10.0	50.3	32.3	18.0	20.9
Foundations	1123	1,176,052	11.1	2.7	3.7	36.9	24.0	12.9	45.6
International	82	7,983	15.7	0.0	16.9	49.6	41.3	8.2	17.9
Religious	1434	388,309	24.4	4.5	4.3	28.4	12.5	15.9	38.6
Unions and Professional	315	633,491	5.9	0.0	13.7	2.0	0.5	1.5	78.3
Memorial	126	32,365	38.0	5.0	5.2	20.3	2.9	17.4	31.5
TOTAL (%)	——	——	46.9	2.6	5.0	12.3	6.7	5.6	33.2
TOTAL NIS (000)	8461	15,347,003	——	——	——	——	——	——	——

Source: Gidron, Benjamin, Mapping the Third Sector in Israel, 1994

V. Foundations

A number of foundations operate in Israel and allocate some of their resources to support programs for children and young people. However, these foundations are not committed solely to issues concerning the welfare of children. Most have been established by private Jewish donors from abroad and are administered by Israeli executives governed by committees including Israeli and non-Israeli members. Some of the more prominent foundations include the C.R.B. Foundation, which concentrates on educational programs; the Doron Foundation, which focuses on welfare, education, and immigration; the Rashi and Secta Foundations, which deal with a broad range of disadvantaged populations including children and youth and risk; the New Israel Fund, which supports programs focused on rights, empowerment, minorities and related issues; the Yad Hanadiv (Rothschild) Foundation, which plays a major role in education; the Clore Foundation of England, which finances a broad range of programs for children and youth; the Moriah Foundation, which has a particular focus on immigrant groups; the Bader Foundation, which has a special emphasis on immigrants and the disabled; and the Abraham Fund, a new foundation established in the United States which focuses on the Arab sector and provides some funds for children and youth services.

The Bernard Van Leer Foundation is an international foundation that focuses on early childhood. Currently the foundation is involved in educational enrichment programs for young children in disadvantaged sectors, specifically the Arab sector and the Ethiopian population. It is also connected to the Van Leer Institute, which carries out a number of programs for children and youth.

Each of the major municipalities (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beer Sheva) has a foundation that raises funds for the development of municipal services. These foundations provide resources for many urban development projects, among them some projects related to children and youth.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this document we have explored the situation of children and young people in Israel: We have reviewed the major issues and problems confronting this population, the services provided by the government, the dominant policy directions and the activities of the voluntary sector in providing services for children and youth. In this section, we suggest some possible priorities for children and youth in Israel.

The following five priorities emerged as key areas for children and youth in Israel:

- Intervening in a timely way to prevent the emergence and slow the increase of negative social trends among Israel's children and youth.
- Identifying and promoting the dissemination of effective programs for children and youth while helping to channel Israel's public resources in effective directions.
- Encouraging programs that promote inter-organizational coordination and more comprehensive approaches to the problems of children and youth.
- Strengthening the forces that promote private philanthropy in Israel in the service of children and youth.
- Strengthening the role and impact of the voluntary sector as a force for innovation and positive change in Israel.

Timely Intervention

As we have noted, there are powerful forces at work shaping the future of Israeli society, which would appear to be at an important crossroad in its social development, with major implications for the well-being of children and youth.

As described in this report, Israel has a basic social infrastructure that can serve as a springboard for addressing the needs of children and youth in the future. However, the report also reveals many problems and contingencies that are not adequately addressed by the existing system. More disturbing are the indications that the prevalence of some problems that are more widespread in other Western countries, such as substance abuse, violence among youth, and family disintegration, may be increasing.

To ensure the well-being of children now and in the future, Israeli society is confronted not only with the challenge of addressing the existing problems and service gaps, but also with the need to initiate interventions that will effectively reverse the development of these disturbing trends. These needs are even more pronounced in light of the challenges and opportunities resulting from the advancing peace process and from the recent massive immigration from the FSU and Ethiopia. As an organization that focuses on prevention and enhancement of well-being among children and young people, the IYF can play an important role in helping Israel meet these challenges.

Identifying and Disseminating Information and Program Implementation

It is vital to achieve more widespread implementation of innovative programs and approaches throughout the system. There are two major barriers to achieving such implementation. First, in

many cases there is only limited documentation of the effectiveness of the programs and their success in achieving their goals. In addition, program initiators often lack the resources and experience required to implement programs on a broader basis and create the required partnerships with governmental and municipal agencies. IYF, as an organization committed to the implementation and expansion of existing successful programs, could promote efforts to disseminate successful programs for children and young people by fostering processes to identify and evaluate new innovations more systematically; serving as a resource for organizations and agencies in developing the capacities for program planning, evaluation and implementation; sharing the knowledge and experience accumulated through its international activities in identifying, documenting and setting standards for successful programs; providing resources to train professionals to disseminate programs more effectively; developing written Hebrew materials for professionals, parents and children; and promoting the partnership with governmental and municipal agencies.

Promoting More Comprehensive Approaches

As we have noted in the report, the service system addressing the needs of children is complex and the lines of responsibility are not always clearly drawn. Moreover, appropriate approaches to many issues require a coordinated effort which addresses the various aspects of a problem. The IYF can contribute to the development of more coordinated approaches by providing incentives for programs of this kind.

Strengthening Private Philanthropy and the Role of the Voluntary Sector

Israeli philanthropy is also undergoing important changes. The rapid economic growth that Israel has experienced in the last decades has brought relative prosperity to some strata of the population and has created a substantial group of prospective private and corporate donors. In addition, the level of donations from the Jewish communities outside of Israel, which is a traditional and major source of support for philanthropic activities in Israel, has been declining. These two processes have brought about initiatives aimed at expanding and systematizing local philanthropy. As an organization with experience in creating and expanding local philanthropy, IYF can serve as a resource in further developing and launching these initiatives.

Substantive Areas of Intervention

This report highlighted four major problem areas that affect the well-being of children and youth in Israel today:

- child poverty, which is widespread and has been increasing over the last two decades;
- child neglect and abuse, which has recently become a major social concern;
- the large number of children not attaining minimal educational standards;
- marginal and delinquent youth.

Child Poverty

Too little attention has been given to the implications of poverty for the current and future well-being of children. This is reflected in the lack of knowledge about these consequences and in the limited number of programs focused directly on the consequences of poverty for children. Those programs that have been developed have not been widely disseminated.

Child Neglect and Abuse

Though child neglect and abuse as a field has lately received extensive public attention, the major developments in this area have been in the area of child protection and the detection of neglected and abused children. Despite initiatives by the government and by voluntary organizations to develop family-centered services in the community and to introduce a more family-centered approach to residential care, child welfare services continue to rely heavily on out of

home placement and lack family-centered programs. IYF has a unique opportunity to support the further development and wider dissemination of community-based, family-centered services and to introduce family-centered approaches into residential care for neglected and abused children. In light of the extreme lack of services in this area for children aged 7-14, we recommend that IYF specifically emphasize this age group.

Children who Fail to Achieve Minimal Educational Standards

Another issue of serious concern is the failure of many children, predominantly from deprived families, to achieve minimal educational levels in the school system. While funds have been allocated toward the implementation of programs to redress this situation the ability of the schools and local authorities to make educated choices among the different programs is severely inhibited by the lack of empirical evidence pertaining to most of the programs' outcomes and effectiveness. We therefore recommend that IYF play a role in systematically encouraging the introduction of the more effective programs into the educational system by: a) assisting in the process of evaluating and identifying the most effective programs and promoting their systematic introduction into the system; b) helping to adapt some of the programs that are operated in middle schools and secondary schools for implementation in elementary schools, and c) supporting programs devoted to training teachers.

Marginal and Delinquent Youth

Though there is only limited information on the extent of marginal and deviant behaviors among youth in Israel, this is an area of growing concern. It is important to initiate and expand programs related to the prevention of substance abuse and violence. Moreover, there is a need to expand programs which promote more positive behaviors and skills such as coping abilities especially among young people who are at higher risk due to disadvantageous circumstances.

Arab Children and Youth

It is recommended that the IYF take into account the more extensive needs found among Arab children, and make this a priority area. There is a need to expand programs that are particularly adapted to the needs of this population. The government's commitment to equalize access to services in the Arab sector serves as an opportunity for adapting services and programs to benefit this population and implementing them on a broader basis.

Immigrant Children and Youth

In light of the large-scale immigration to Israel and the indications of emerging and apparently intensifying problems in integrating immigrant youth, there is a need to devote special attention to preventing the development of an under-class within segments of this population. This applies, in particular, to certain subgroups from the Former Soviet Union, notably those from certain sections of Southern Russia. The educational needs of Ethiopian children also require special consideration in light of the large gap that has to be overcome and the need to disseminate best-practice techniques to address these needs.

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APPENDIX: Sources of Information on Children and Youth in Israel

Several organizations regularly publish information concerning children and youth in Israel. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) publishes information about the social and demographic characteristics of the children and youth populations, in addition to providing critical data on the educational system. The National Insurance Institute (NII) publishes an annual report of its activities and an analysis of the impact of various programs. Its annual report contains information on poverty, including rates among the various segments of the population. In some years, children's issues are given special attention. The Center for Social Policy Studies publishes an annual report that sometimes includes articles on children's issues.

The National Council for the Child operates a research and public education center which, among its other activities, publishes the most complete statistical report on children in Israel. *The State of the Child in Israel*, a statistical annual, is published in partnership with JDC-Israel. It includes information from various sources concerning most realms of children's lives. The Council also produces a separate special report on immigrant children.

Reliable information on service provision and service recipients is scarce. Various divisions in the major ministries that provide services to children publish reports on their activities, as do some of the local authorities. However, these reports are not published regularly. In addition, because the services lack comprehensive information systems, these data are often not up to date.

Information on the prevalence of most social problems among children is also limited. The research in Israel concerning child welfare and educational problems has not focused on prevalence studies.

There are several institutes that focus on children. The National Council of Jewish Women Research Institute for Innovation in Education under the auspices of the School of Education at the Hebrew University and the Henrietta Szold Institute conduct research on educational issues and programs.

The JDC-Israel's Falk Institute conducts research on issues concerning mental health in various populations, including children. Recently much of their research effort has focused on the absorption of immigrant youth from the FSU. JDC-Israel operates a national information system on services for "children at risk" and disabled children.

Information on children and youth in the Arab sector is even more limited. Sikkuy (which means "Chance"), a Jewish-Arab voluntary organization (see chapter on Voluntary Sector), publishes an annual report concerning issues of equality and integration among Jews and Arabs. This annual report also contains information relating to children and children's services. Shatil, a voluntary organization concerned with education and community development in both the Jewish and Arab sectors, also conducts some research on these issues as do the Adva Research Institute and the Center for Arab Education at the University of Haifa.

JDC-Brookdale's Research Program on Children and Youth in the past focused mainly on disadvantaged populations. In the few years since the program was established, much effort has been devoted to collecting basic information on populations of service recipients, mapping available services and evaluating innovative programs. The Research Program on Immigrant

Absorption at the JDC-Brookdale Institute has conducted extensive research addressing the major issues related to the absorption of children and youth, both from the FSU and Ethiopia. A Research Center for Children and Youth was recently established at JDC-Brookdale. Within the framework of this Center, issues concerning child welfare, child well-being and social services will be addressed using a comprehensive multi-disciplinary approach. The Center will give priority to addressing the needs of disadvantaged children and will devote special attention to Arab children and youth.

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