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Editor's Note

"He who Considerth the Poor" – Dramatic Change Needed in Our Approach to Excluded Populations

This issue addresses a problem that from many perspectives could be regarded as one of the most serious dilemmas facing Israeli society, perhaps even more urgent than Israel's immediate security concerns: how to include populations in the country's economic life which for cultural, political and other reasons, make only a limited contribution to the economy. The main populations in question here are the ultra-orthodox Jews (haredim), especially males, and the Arab and Bedouin sectors, with an emphasis on women. Another, related, problem raised here is that of workplace inclusion for those who would once have been considered "elderly" – people who are past the customary working age but whose skills and abilities are potentially of great value to the economy.

The fact that these significant population segments are only partially integrated into the Israeli labor force constitutes a tremendous loss with grave consequences: the majority sector loses a work cadre that, with appropriate instruction and training, could benefit the economy and raise Israel's GDP and per capita income. If required steps are not taken, the "minorities", who are unemployed or who work in unsuitable or low-wage jobs, will remain on the fringes of society, with a low standard of living and a sense of alienation and marginalization. Every sector suffering discrimination or exclusion has its own problems and specific reasons for being alienated. Until a few years ago (and to some degree even today), the haredi sector championed adherence to a lifestyle that prioritized "Torah study" and entrenchment behind a wall of insularity. The extravagant benefits, grants and allowances that Israeli governments had showered upon them during the preceding decades reinforced these self-limiting tendencies. The Arab sector, for its part, suffers discrimination
with regard to financial resources and the development of employment centers, transportation networks and municipal infrastructures. For a variety of reasons, scholastic achievement in the Arab sector is lower than in the Jewish sector, while Arab society's conservative religious-cultural outlook limits women's participation in the labor force. Regarding the third population with which we are concerned in this issue – people over the customary working age – the primary barrier to their inclusion in the workplace is outmoded perceptions of older people's ability to function.

In this issue we discuss the main tool with the capacity to remedy the socioeconomic problem of exclusion: educational development at all levels and across all types and spheres of learning. After two general articles, by Rena Laor and Gila Schwartz-Shahar, on basic programs for workplace inclusion, the issue proceeds to focus on the haredi population. Bezalel Cohen addresses the major dilemmas associated with the entrance of the haredi sector into the Israeli labor force, military service and other social structures: should one adopt an approach of strict segregation, or strive for co-existence while maintaining the haredi-religious identity? Shirley Marom writes about the near-obligatory "channel" for haredi labor force entry: military service with an element of occupational training. Asaf Malhi gives an expert and nuanced overview of the process of raising academic standards that is currently taking place in haredi society. Maayan Shahaf is a creative educational entrepreneur who has developed an array of proposals, some of which have already been implemented, for easing the entry of haredi men and women into higher education by means of preparatory programs (mechinot) and specially-designed frameworks for completing matriculation exams. The haredi population's potential and talent for learning are huge; should these qualities be channeled into productive professional activity, it could raise both the Israeli economy and society to new heights. Attention is also devoted to the special status and outlook of working haredi women as compared to non-working and non-haredi working women (Liat Kulik).
No less compelling are the articles that deal with training programs oriented toward the haredi sector; study frameworks that represent no less than a revolution in this sector's mentality. Roi Canaan writes about a framework for training teachers and education personnel of a kind previously unknown, while Y.R. Sharabani writes about a haredi school of the arts. Meir Pialkoff reviewed for us an interesting book on our main focus of interest: the haredi middle class.

The issue of Arab sector exclusion is discussed here mainly from the perspective of fostering Hebrew language skills, a highly decisive factor in workplace inclusion (Shirley Marom and Sarah Golan). On the topic of the "new elderly," those people in their sixties, seventies and beyond who are generally in good, or reasonable, health and capable of contributing to the economy as salaried or volunteer workers, we present here an informative, in-depth study by Zev Golan, whose calculations show that the Israeli economy could grow significantly if it drew on the currently for the most part untapped resource of older workers.

Zvika Amir and Haim Portnoy are the OECD's Global Adult Skills Survey Project's emissaries 'to Israel. This survey evaluates the degree to which the participating countries' education systems are teaching the literacy, numeracy and computer skills that today's world requires. Amir and Portnoy find that in the United States and the developed countries of southern Europe what is being taught in the schools is far from relevant to the needs of current economic life. By contrast, the Japanese, Koreans and Scandinavians are doing much better at teaching and learning.

The present issue also offers a glimpse of the new approaches being developed by Israel's Association of Community Centers to serve people with various kinds of disabilities (Sharon Green and Uri Marcus).

Here's to enjoyable reading!

The Editor
Inclusion in Regular Education, Academization, and Nurturing Hebrew-Language Skills to Promote Excluded Populations' Integration in the Workplace - Overview
Integration and Career Advancement in the Workplace: What has been done? What needs to be done?

Rina Laor

Employment in Israel: the Main Problems and Attempts at Resolutions

There is an especially large number of people in Israel who do not participate in the work force, or do so only partially. At the start of the millennium it was estimated that some 750,000 citizens were not even seeking work, therefore they were not counted among the unemployed who were registered as job seekers by government employment services.¹ This number was composed mainly of the haredi (ultra-orthodox Jews) and Arab populations, more specifically, haredi men and Arab women. Other populations were also not included in this figure, such as individuals with disabilities who were either not employed at all, or employed in positions unsuited to their skills. Many young people were not employed in permanent positions or in full-time jobs that guarantee continued career development. New immigrants were largely not employed in positions that could adequately support their families.

¹ Hacohen, Roni, Work Program 2012-2014, JDC-TEVET.

Rina Laor is the Knowledgebase Manager of JDC-TEVET. TEVET is a partnership between the Israeli government and JDC-Israel, created with the intention of developing pilot programs to help men and women join the workforce and support themselves with dignity.
The number of unemployed people in Israel was high in comparison to other Western countries. This was a worrying trend, as over the last decades there has been a decline in the employment of men (and an increase in the employment of women, attributed to their higher education).

In 1970 the employment rate of men in the prime employment age range (35-54 years) was 90%, whereas by 2010 this had dropped to 82%. Lower participation in the work force harms economic growth and labor productivity. There is also a close correlation between non-participation in the work force and poverty, with growing socio-economic gaps. In other words, there is a correlation between non-participation in the work force and inequality.

Since then, there has been an improvement in this trend, and currently the rate of participation of men in the work force in the main employment age range (25-64 years) is 78.7%, which is higher than the OECD average. This difference is attributed to the change in measuring methods and the increase in education. Having said that, the level of participation of the aforementioned population groups – haredi men, Arab women and people with disabilities – remains low.

These trends were taking place elsewhere, as well, causing many countries to adopt pro-active policies to promote employment. Among them, Israel also took various steps to increase employment, such as decreasing-unemployment stipends at the start of the millennium and the 2003 Arrangements Law. In 2004 the government began a “Welfare-to-Work” experiment, known as the Wisconsin Program. The program,

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3 Bank of Israel 2012 report, the chapter on the job market.
4 Active Labor Market Policy - ALMPs

Integration and Career Advancement in the Workplace: What has been done? What needs to be done?
officially called *Orot L'Ta'asuka* and *MeHalev* (Lights to Employment, and the Hebrew acronym of ‘Welfare to Secure Work’), was aimed at people on welfare. However, the government's plan to extend the welfare-to-work pilot to the whole country was not approved by the Israeli Parliament, and the program was closed in 2010. This occurred despite OECD recommendations to significantly improve the way the programs were structured and implemented without closing them.

In 2005 it was decided to establish TEVET in order to develop effective models for voluntary participation in the work force of populations excluded from the job market, thus enabling them to support themselves with dignity.

**Israel Joins the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and Consequences**

The decision to seek membership in the OECD required Israel to submit a report to the Organization's council two years after joining in 2010, attesting to Israel's advancements in the areas of employment and social policy. The organization provided Israel with 16 recommendations on employment and social policy.

Another stage in the development of the employment policy was the decision to appoint a director for Israel's employment policy division, which operated within the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. Additionally, quantative policy goals were set for future years until 2020. These actions were recommended by the 2010 Eckstein Committee and were anchored in a government decision.

The social protests in the summer of 2011 influenced government policy, and resulted, in part, in the establishment of the Trachtenberg Committee. This committee's 2011 report recommended allocating funds specifically for Arab and haredi employment. The unemployment and
poverty rates in these populations were very high, a situation with social repercussions that go beyond economics.

Stemming from the above, and from a government decision regarding economic development in the Arab sector, the government carried out a series of decisions that established 21 employment centers in the Arab, Druze and Circassian sectors during 2010-2011. The allocated budget was some 200 million NIS, spread out over five years. These centers were to provide a basket of services including: vocational guidance, help in integration into the job market, developing relationships with employers, and matching jobs with participants’ needs and personalities. The program was based on the experience of TEVET and its partners in developing infrastructure for similar programs, especially in the Arab sector.

In response to the OECD’s request, Israel presented a detailed report in 2012. The report lists the policy steps taken in response to the 16 recommendations on employment and social policy issued by the Organization before Israel joined (OECD, 2010).

The government has taken many steps to encourage employment, and progress has been made, as confirmed by increased participation in the work force by haredi men and Arab women. Yet the scope of actions taken is small relative to the magnitude of the task at hand. For example, the case load of a government employment services professional is very high by international standards, stemming from the ratio of job seekers assigned to each worker. In addition, the services can offer vocational training only to a very small number of people.

For these reasons, a clear, efficient and consistent policy regarding the job market and social strategy is required. This should encompass many components, including: investment in education, vocational training on a regional level, encouraging employment among minority groups, continuing to increase enforcement of minimum wage and
appropriate work conditions, increasing incentives for workers, reducing the number of permits for foreign workers, and above all – developing a national employment strategy. Investment in such a strategy will require further public investment, yet the potential returns, in terms of improving economic צמיחה growth and social cohesion forecasts, are great.\(^5\)

**Employment and Inequality**

The employment problem in Israel is especially severe, and a direct correlation has been found between non-integration into the work force, poverty and inequality. Households with no workers have a 40% poverty rate. Households with one worker have a 25.9% poverty rate. The incidence of poverty in households with two workers is only 4.6%, yet this rate has been constantly increasing since 2003, when it stood at 2.6%. If we were to examine families defined as poor, we would find that in 10.2% of them both parents work. This fact may refute the claim that employment prevents poverty. It should, however, be noted that the tendency to work in part-time and unrewarding positions, typical of TEVET target populations, is a major cause of poverty.\(^6\)

Israel demonstrates an increasing tendency towards inequality. In the 1980s the poverty rate was 13%, whereas today this number has grown to 20%. The wage curve is asymmetrical, as a third of all wage-earners take home minimum wages. Poverty and low employment rates are concentrated in the haredi and Arab sectors, and both these populations are growing steadily. Among immigrants from Ethiopia, both parents have high employment rates, yet their wages are low.

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\(^5\) Survey following Israel's joining the OECD, latest developments, advancement in the job market and social policy in Israel, October 25-26, 2012.

\(^6\) Bank of Israel Report for 2012 (the data refers to 2011).
Employment and Education

There is a close correlation between education and employment, especially in the modern market, with its increasing demand for skilled and educated labor, and a concurrent decrease in demand for uneducated and unskilled labor. The percentage of employed individuals varies tremendously according to education level, which is one explanation for the increasing employment of women. Moreover, the older the worker, the greater his chances are of retaining his job if he has a high level of education. Having said that, the relationship between education and employment must be examined, taking into account the compatibility between education and the needs of the modern job market. Higher education in itself does not guarantee integration into the work force. There are also barriers linked to the cultural backgrounds of various populations, both in terms of access to education and integration into, and advancement within, the job market.

In addition, there will never be a situation in which all workers are highly educated. As those lacking a higher education will find it more and more difficult to integrate into the work force, new ways must be found to enable them to support themselves with dignity.

Employment and Career Advancement

The number of low wage earners in Israel requires investing thought in the process of, and opportunities for, career advancement in the job market during the years of employment. Otherwise, integrating additional populations into the work force, who cannot advance and break out of poverty, will only increase the number of impoverished workers. This may ultimately be the employment policy’s undoing. Such a situation will lead to the conclusion that employment is not a lever for breaking out of...
poverty, and additionally, people may stop believing that integrating into the work force offers possibilities for career advancement.

Research on social mobility indicates that the lower economic percentiles are not moving up the income ranks and essentially remain fixed in place. Approximately one-third of those employed make close to minimum wage; this is twice the rate in other Western countries. Poverty rates among the haredi and Arab populations are high, despite the growing number of those in these sectors who are employed. This is the result of low pay and high fertility rates that together lead to a growing number of poor among those employed in Israel in 2011.7 The situation is especially grave for young people, many of whom are employed in jobs with no advancement opportunities. It turns out that throughout the world, despite the proven success of many programs focusing on employment integration, most career advancement programs have not succeeded.8 World knowledge on the topic is still not sufficiently established, and as few programs focus on job advancement, information is still lacking regarding effective strategies.

**TEVET Operational Methods**

**Populations and Successes**

As stated above, the government of Israel established TEVET in 2005 in partnership with JDC-Israel. This partnership was promoted by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor to help men and women integrate into the work force and support themselves with dignity.

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8 Zohar, Gal and Mashiach, Rona – perseverance and advancement in employment programs: models and experience from around the world, survey of literature. JDC-TEVET, 2010.
TEVET focuses on five target populations: marginalized young people – aged 22-34, who do not work or study; immigrants – especially from Ethiopia, the Caucasus and Bukhara; and Arabs – including the Bedouin and Druze – with special focus on women; the haredi sector – women and men seeking employment to support themselves while retaining their religious lifestyle; and people with disabilities who can be integrated into various employment settings, from individually-tailored work settings to the open job market. There are also work programs aimed at developing municipal infrastructures and infrastructures in rural areas to integrate peripheral populations into the work force. Additionally, there are programs for vocational training, job counseling, and work projects initiated by regional councils and municipalities to integrate peripheral populations into the workforce.

Employment integration programs are characterized by a holistic approach. This encourages employment among target populations by providing varied solutions across the employment spectrum. These range from positions for unskilled workers to helping academics find work in their fields of expertise.

The programs differ in their levels of intensity and their structures, but a personal guidance component is dominant in the majority. Most of the effort is directed towards developing the participants' Employability. To this end, TEVET has developed a unique knowledgebase and the profession of “employment enablers.” These individuals provide personal and group guidance, and also develop relations with potential employers and connections within the community. Over time the researched programs that have been proven to be successful - based upon various types of research - have been integrated into the budgets and programs of Ministry of Social Affairs or the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, but not necessarily at the same time; some were embedded after three years, some after five years.
Over 140,000 individuals have participated in various TEVET programs. However, the goal is not to reach all populations excluded by the job market, but to develop and evaluate innovative models in an incubator environment. The most effective programs will then be deployed by government decision. This is how TEVET differs from other organizations in Israel's employment field, some of which are connected to TEVET and the government as program operators. TEVET program graduates have a relatively high job placement rate of 60% on average, reaching 90% for participants in the most intensive programs.

**Knowledge bases and Counseling Professionals**

TEVET's vision is to enable populations excluded from the job market to break out of poverty through employment. This requires developing new knowledge bases and professionalizing the management of existing knowledge. The data gathered in our research is especially valuable because it is derived from new employment models. For this reason, training of professionals, specifically "employment enabling" counselors and project managers, and the insights they provide, are of paramount importance.

The population target for our training includes at least four categories: (1) TEVET professionals, including those in charge of programs deployed in government offices, (2) government offices and organizational partners, (3) employers, and (4) academics. Specializing in promoting workers from entry level positions on through career planning requires adding professional manpower.

**Working with Employers and Employment diversity**

Relationships must be developed with leading and influential businesses, as well as diverse local employers, in order to integrate
excluded populations into the job market. Dialogue with employers promotes understanding the benefits of providing long-term employment. TEVET has developed an arsenal of strategies and activities focused on employers. This is important since the Israeli market’s major employers require culturally sensitive tools and training to select a diversity of workers. The Forum for Diversity in Employment was established precisely for this purpose. It is a three-sector consortium composed of government representatives, civil society and big business organizations. The Forum works to help explain the benefits of integrating and promoting diverse populations in the job market to all involved parties. The Forum distributes up-to-date, practical information from Israel and the world to potential partners and thus presents Israel as a country that advocates diversity in hiring.

**From Integration to Job Advancement**

TEVET’s basic tenet has been the promotion of “employment first.” This means integrating individuals into the job market as quickly as possible with relatively little emphasis on preparatory vocational and educational training. The reason for this was TEVET’s strategic decision to serve as a counter-weight to long-term training programs that ultimately do not result in appropriate job placement. Successful integration in the work setting and practical work experience are critical for acquiring the skills necessary for developing employment capabilities. TEVET’s original main emphasis was not on advancement in the work setting, but now, gaining insight into this topic and developing tools to facilitate this process is our main challenge.

TEVET has established a number of indices to measure employment conditions, including financial and professional components, as well as

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9  Hacohen, Roni, Work Plan 2012-2013, JDC-TEVET.
criteria to assess subjective job satisfaction. Job mobility and career advancement are measured on data garnered and analyzed from TEVET's database.

TEVET has improved its ability to identify participants who have the capacity for job mobility and career advancement, including when there is a need to modify its approach to meet specific populations' cultural attitudes. For example, immigrants from Ethiopia tend to be reluctant to risk existing job security for possible future advancement; TEVET learned to take in consideration the extent to which job-related anxieties are cultural, and if the program can be adjusted accordingly. Haredi women are not motivated by terminology such as "job promotion" or "career development," so we changed to use more culturally acceptable terminology, such as "progressive track." In addition, for this target population it is necessary to alleviate concerns regarding combining family and work.

Population sectors with low participation in the job market often do not benefit from having family and close friends as role models. Therefore, they are unaware of how to communicate with employers and unfamiliar with organizational culture in the workplace. They must be provided with this knowledge, especially when they seek to advance in their work. To this end TEVET is developing cadres of volunteer mentors to work together with the professional counselors and help these individual advance their careers. Effort has also been invested in constructing career ladders in various fields, so that workers can set their sights on the horizon and envision opportunities for promotion and advancement.

In summary, the government of Israel and the partnership embodied by TEVET have made significant strides in integrating marginalized populations into the job market. Today's challenge is to prevent the increase of the working poor. This challenge requires inter-
ministerial cooperation to create vocational guidance services and make employment-supporting tools accessible, especially to these target populations. This is also necessary for fostering life-long learning. In addition, the government must set goals for job advancement as part of its employment policy discourse.
"Towards Employment": Integrating Different Population Groups in the Workforce by means of Employment Programs conducted by the IACC: Principles and Action

Gila Schwartz-Shahar

For Whom is our Program Intended?

The Israel Association of Community Centers (IACC), by means of the network of community centers located throughout Israel, has worked for about two decades to integrate and advance different population groups in the workforce.

This activity has been taking place via two main channels:

1. Local activity in community centers implemented through development of a variety of community-based partnerships.

2. Activity in the context of national projects that take place in partnerships with, and are financed by, external entities, such as: government ministries, chiefly the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, local authorities, and organizations such as Tevet, JDC Israel, the National Insurance Institute, and others.
The nation-wide locations of the community centers enable the IACC to carry out extensive activity in communities of differing types: large cities, urban neighborhoods, towns, kibbutzim, moshavim, community settlements and villages populated by Israel's ethnic minorities. The employment programs are carried out primarily in Israel's geographical and socioeconomic periphery, in communities with particularly high unemployment rates.

The tens of thousands of men and women who have participated over the years in the employment programs run by the IACC and local community centers represent all population groups in Israel, and as stated above are in the most part residents of Israel's geographical and social periphery: native-born Israelis and new immigrants, the young and old, secular, religious and haredi (ultra-orthodox Jews). Much activity also takes place among Arab and Bedouin populations. What is common to all the population groups participating in the employment programs is that their rates of participation in the workforce is lower than average.

Several groups are included in the term 'population groups whose rate of participation in the employment market is low':

- **Groups that are in a state of intercultural transition**, such as new immigrants, mainly from Ethiopia, Bukhara and the Caucasus Mountains region, but may also include those from other parts of the world;

- **Groups that interface with intercultural boundaries**, such as haredi Jews or non-Jews: Arabs, Druze, Bedouin;

- **Groups whose members have special characteristics**, such as: single parents, the chronically unemployed, people over the age of 50 who do not work, and people with special needs, physical, mental, cognitive or social.

- **Groups composed of those who have dropped out of the workforce** because of macro-economic processes in the country,
such as: members of kibbutzim and moshavim who have been forced by crises and changes in agriculture to undergo a significant employment change. Regarding kibbutz members, in addition to the crises in agriculture, the process of kibbutz privatization has caused a dramatic change in their attitude to work, i.e., from work according to the kibbutz work manager's instructions to paid employment.

Each of the above groups is characterized on the one hand by strengths, and on the other hand by cultural, community and other obstacles that require special consideration and cultural sensitivity on the part of those who deal with the task of preparing them for employment and then integration in work. Integrating people from these groups into the world of employment is a social and cultural challenge requiring special organization, both on the part of the workers absorbed into the workplace and on the part of the employers.

For instance: people over the age of 50 are more available for work. Usually their children have already grown up, most of them no longer are required to serve in the military reserves, and they have amassed much work experience. On the other hand, many employers are reluctant to employ older workers, for different reasons, e.g., concerns about missing work for health reasons, a decline in functioning, and other age-related concerns. Changing attitudes among employers is, therefore, an important step in getting older people back to work. An additional step is related to the correct way to write résumés and to prepare the older person for job interviews; in both of these issues, emphasis should be placed on experience, availability for work, and so on.

Another example can be seen in everything related to employing haredim. The employment culture in the haredi world in recent years has been undergoing a genuine revolution, expressed in the increasing numbers of haredi young men who participate in military and civilian national service and the increasing number of haredi women and, to
a lesser extent, men, entering the labor market. Success in the field of haredi employment requires activity on two levels: among the employers and among the haredi community itself. Employers who hire haredi men and women are required to make changes and adapt to the workers they take on, and the workers themselves have to overcome many cultural, community and even family-related obstacles on their way to integration in work.

**The Community Employment Concept**

Work in the field of employment and adult education in the community is based on the “community employment” concept. Developing employment in the community means raising the level of employment for individuals in any specific community so as to afford them a higher position within Israeli society, while creating an ongoing community commitment built on a series of paradigms: changing community priorities, establishing mechanisms and frameworks that support employment, and generally addressing community-economic development. This approach has a number of implications:

- **It sees the person within his or her social environment.**
- According to this approach, the issue of employment is the concern of the entire community, and therefore each community needs to develop the means and tools appropriate for its own residents in order to achieve optimal utilization of employment potential.
- This concept also identifies and recognizes the influence of community obstacles to employment, for example, a lack of community structures and systems that support employment.
- The community-employment concept sees the community as a resource and a source of strength that can provide solutions for how to increase the employment potential, as opposed to other
models that focus only on personal obstacles and individual actions. We believe that if we seek solutions only at the level of the individual (training, education, etc.), without relating to community obstacles and community solutions (mechanisms that support employment, childcare for children of working women, etc.), we are reducing the number of solutions available to jobseekers. The solutions relating to employment are wide and varied. The approach we rely upon is the “resources approach” according to which many resources and significant sources strength can be found in every community that can be recruited for resolving problems of employment.

The community helps remove obstacles such as prejudices, negative social attitudes towards work, absence of complementary services, general lack of practical support, and can encourage integration of different population groups into the workforce.

Through community employment efforts, unemployed populations enjoy a boost to their self-confidence that makes their integration into work easier. This approach embodies the following concepts:

• Our quality of life as individuals, families and as communities depends greatly on the ability of all the people living in the community to earn a living.

• The community has a responsibility for the individual's livelihood and for developing the human capital of the community.

• The subject of community development cannot be separated from the issue of developing employment in the locality and the region.

• The strength of every community relies to a great degree on the employment situation of its individual members.

• An individual's employment status interacts with and has a mutual influence on all the other aspects of their life: livelihood, family, education, health, education and leisure. All these are spheres that are essentially handled by the community.
The employment and unemployment situation in the locality and the community influence issues of welfare, crime, health, etc. and are influenced by them at the same time.

**Employment in the Local Authority**

It is hoped that local authorities will relate to employment as one of the spheres for which they are responsible, exactly like education, welfare, sanitation and other matters, and that they will allocate adequate budgets to this area. The local authority also gains from the growth in the number of people employed as then the number of taxpayers grows (even if they pay tax at a reduced level), and the family unit is empowered in terms of its community standing, financial status and mobility in society. Strengthening employment within the local authority necessarily leads to improvement in other areas under the responsibility of the local authority, such as reducing the number of people needing assistance from welfare and health services, decreasing crime rates, and increasing the level of education.

In every employment program operated by the IACC great emphasis is placed on working with cultural and social sensitivity, and maximal matching of each activity to the participating population groups.

The project descriptions follow in brief:

I. **“Woman of Valor” Program (Eshet Chayil)**

This program was developed by the JDC in the 1990s for Ethiopian women. Over time the target population has widened and JDC-Tevet

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1 The article relates to the activity of the IACC until the end of 2012. In the meantime there have been changes in some of the programs and in the organizations that operate them.
has modified the model to become culturally appropriate for various populations, e.g., people from Bukhara and the Caucasus Mountains, Israeli women from the social peripheries, and Arab women. Since then the program has been transferred to the government, and is now led by the Ministry of Welfare and is conducted by the IACC which won the tender.

**Woman of Valor** is a flagship program in the field of women's employment. Its is unique in that it deals with developing employment among a population of women who are in a state of intercultural transition and hence face obstacles that prevent them from becoming integrated in the workforce or, alternatively, from becoming integrated in employment that will advance them.

The term "intercultural transition" refers to the transition from a traditional culture characterized by a patriarchal family structure in which clear gender roles are allocated to men and women, to life in a modern, Western society, where traditional roles and tasks are much more flexible.

The **Woman of Valor** program aims to help achieve optimal integration of women going through intercultural transition, while maintaining respect for their culture's way of life. As this program is conducted by professionals and invests a great of personal work with each participant, it has assisted many women to become employed, and at the same time has a positive influence on their other spheres of life.

This program was conducted by the IACC from August 2010 until 2013, and today is there are more than 30 active groups. Next year it will be expanded to operate in more than 60 groups.
II. Complementary Education that Supports Employment

This program is intended to enable unemployed men and women, and single parents, to complete their high school education, financed by and with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, the Division for Adult Education, and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor.

Following the awarding of a tender issued by the Ministry of Education's Adult Education Division in 2008, the IACC has been conducting programs for complementary education that supports employment for varied populations throughout Israel: immigrants from Ethiopia, veteran Israelis and Arab women.

The participants, who have partial high school education, study for a high school diploma. Participants whose education is even less study in a track to complete elementary education or to 10th grade level.
The aim of the program is employment, i.e., to enable people who complete a high school diploma to participate in advanced professional training courses offered by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, or to open the path to higher education for them. For others, the goal is raising their level of education they to offer them a better chance of finding more skilled work and being promoted in their workplaces.

III. Ma'avarim – Community Employment Centers

This is a program for developing employment in Israel that was created in response to real needs—local needs for welfare services and local community centers. The program has been conducted by the IACC in Sha'ar HaNegev since 2000, and nationwide since 2006. JDC-Tevet financed the program's development and its increased scope in cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services- The Community Work program and regional authorities. Starting at the end of 2011, the program was conducted together with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor and JDC-Tevet. Ma'avarim is a community program for the promotion and development of employment in the rural sector throughout the country: in kibbutzim, moshavim, community settlements, Arab villages and Bedouin settlements. The program's overarching aims are to increase the earning potential of the individual and the community, to strengthen and stabilize communities by looking after the ability to earn a living, and to formulate and establish operating frameworks that are stable in the long term.

The Program's Basic Values

- Employment is the responsibility of the local authorities with the support of government ministries;
Integration and Career Advancement in the Workplace: What has been done? What needs to be done?

- Mutual commitment – local and central government;
- Professionalism;
- Providing a variety of services to the individual;
- Developing a variety of community intervention programs;
- Active recruitment of participants for the various employment programs

The program is a sustainable organizational framework for promoting employment, pooling resources and creating a stable infrastructure. It sees strengthening and consolidating the community as an important aim, and serves to improve the ability of community members to earn a living.

The Ma'avarim program takes place in regional employment centers that operate in a partnership with local authorities and national governmental bodies. It is based on strengthening employers' commitment to the residents of the region, and perceives of employers as an integral part of the collective effort to promote gainful and remunerative employment in the region. The Ma'avarim centers' guiding concept is to provide a variety of employment solutions and continually adapt them to the unique and changing needs of the rural sector, while mediating between the world of employment and jobseekers.

The Activity of the Arab Unit of the Ma'avarim Program

In view of Arab society's low rate of participation in the labor market, an Arab unit was established within the Ma'avarim program to develop programs for finding jobs for populations which are not integrated into the labor market, and to advance poor workers who are under-employed and underpaid, with the aim of extricating them from the cycle of poverty and hardship. Since 2008 two Ma'avarim centers, Ma'avarim Ba'Emek and Western Galilee Ma'avarim, have
conducted an array of services for rural Arab populations within their regional councils. The unit is responsible for providing, developing, and adapting the services offered to local needs and employment possibilities.

IV. Youth Build Israel

This is an employment, training and supplementary education program intended for young people at-risk who have a low level of education, and who do not study nor work.

The partners in the program are: the National Insurance Institute-Special Projects Fund; the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services – the Service for Adolescents and Young People; the Ministry of Education; the YouthBuild Israel organization; the Ministry for Development of the Negev and the Galilee; the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor – the Division for Professional Training; the Ministry of Housing, the Glencore Foundation and others.

The YouthBuild program began in the USA in 1978. In 2010 the program began to operate in Israel, as well. It consists of:

- Five components in the employment/economic sphere: (1) completing education to a level of twelve years' study and providing basic skills for learning a vocation; (2) theoretical and practical vocational training; (3) providing business entrepreneurship tools; (4) personal mentoring; (5) work placement.

- Three components in the social/community sphere: (1) cultivating civil involvement; (2) building concrete assets in the community; (3) leadership development.
V. **Riyan – Employment Centers in Bedouin Settlements of the Negev (Israel's southern region)**

This is a government program carried out in partnership with JDC Israel. In 2009 the IACC won the tender to establish a regional employment center and local centers in the Bedouin settlements in the Negev. At the beginning of 2013 the program was taken over and run directly by JDC Israel.

**Description of the Program**

The aim of the Riyan program is to integrate and advance Bedouin society in the Negev in the world of employment. The program's overarching aim is to integrate the Bedouin population into the labor market by handling all aspects of the issue of employment. The program is conducted as a partnership between the Israel Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor and JDC-Tevet. Other main partners are the Association for Encouraging and Promoting Community Centers in Israel and the community centers in the various settlements, the local authorities, the Ministry for Development of the Negev and the Galilee, and the Prime Minister's Office. The program aims to:

- Increase the number of Bedouin employed in salaried work and in independent businesses.
- Strengthen the employment capability of Bedouin to become integrated in the workworld.
- Enhance the earning potential of the Bedouin sector.
- Improve the ability of the families and the settlements to handle the employment issues of family members/residents.
- Increase the supply of salaried work for the Bedouin population.
Spheres of Activity in the Riyan Center

To create comprehensive change in area of employment in Bedouin society, there is a need for overall intervention at the level of the individual, the community, the region and also among employers. The Riyan Center makes it possible to contend with the existing obstacles, position the issue of employment on the public agenda, and foster a change in participants' awareness of issues and opportunities.

The Riyan Centers offer varied, comprehensive services in the field of employment, including:

- **Placement** in jobs according to the individual's inclinations and the needs of the labor market.
- **Personal employment coaching** intended to advance individuals towards employment that suits their abilities.
- **Career development** services: Assessing interests and abilities, preparatory workshops for the world of employment, improving basic Hebrew for the workplace, computer skills, personal coaching, completing education, etc.
- **Vocational training**: Various training programs for desirable high-tech vocations.
- Creating regional and local partnerships to promote relevant changes at the level of the individual, the community and the **employers**.
- Building a system of connections with local and regional employers to advance the employment of Bedouin.
- Initiating and managing **special employment programs**, and supporting the promotion of local and regional economic development programs.
- Developing local communities and creating **community networks** that support employment.
A Network of Networks

The Sharing Network in the Bedouin Settlement of Hura: A Unique Reference to the Structure of the Bedouin community

In the Bedouin settlement of Hura in the south of Israel, a unique community social network model has been developed: the sharing network. The members of the network are people in key roles in the settlement, who were elected to the different community units within the settlement according to their tribe and clan representation. These representatives serve as liaisons between the center and the entire population of the settlement, and are full partners in the work and the process of employment change.

From the experience that has accumulated in the Riyan Center (formerly, Ma′avarim) in Hura in recent years, it seems that the gap between the supply of positions in the job market and the demand on the part of people who are unemployed in the Bedouin population is vast, and there is a need to fill jobs as quickly as possible in order not to miss opportunities.

In order to reach every individual in the settlement and create significant change in the employment situation at the settlement level, the center has chosen to act by creating a “sharing network” model, and it has proven to be very effective. The sharing network is based on the principle of involving the population throughout the entire employment process, and harnessing it to create “solidarity-based employment” to foster support between the individual and the community.

The sharing network is built in a way that represents all relevant community units with the aim of reaching all segments of the population. The process of sharing resources begins from the first stages of the activity in the locality.
VI. Local Authorities Promoting Employment, Education and Community

This is a program for developing community infrastructures in the field of employment in the development towns of Israel's peripheries. Here we have developed an innovative model for developing the field of employment in the local authority that facilitates economic development, while it addresses the needs of various weak populations that are outside the world of work.

The 'Localities Promoting Employment, Education and Community' program began to operate in 2005 (then under the appellation of "The Employment Administration in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor"), in partnership with JDC Israel, focusing on setting up a municipal forum and pooling community resources on the subject of employment in a number of localities.

When Tevet was established in 2006, it undertook the process of developing a model to operate within the local authorities, the aim of which was to centralize responsibility for employment at the local level. This was to be led by the local authority in partnership with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor; the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services; the Ministry of Housing – Project Renewal Division; the Office of the Prime Minister; and the IACC, as the organization implementing the program on a national level.

The Ministry continued to run it by means of the IACC. As of 2014 the program was run by the government Employment Service.

The program's main areas of activity:

a. Establishing a municipal infrastructure that develops the employment.

b. Providing employment services for the population of jobseekers in the locality.
c. fostering community involvement in order to promote employment and create solidarity-based employment.

The Local Authorities Model
In accordance with the Local Authorities’ “Promoting Employment, Education and Community in the City” initiative the three components of the model are manpower, activity and infrastructure. As there are differences between the local authorities, the model is customized in accordance with geographic size, population, and local collaborations. The manpower component is the core of the program, as the professional staff carries out most of the activity in the program (as described below), both on an individual group level.

Partners

• **Partners on the national level:** The Ministries of Industry, Trade and Labor, Welfare and Social Services, Housing – the Project Renewal Division, the Office of the Prime Minister, - the Authority for Economic Development of the Arab Sector, Tevet, and the IACC as the organization conducting the program.

• **Partners on the local level:** The national partners, the local authorities and the community centers as the organizations running the program, the Authority for Development of the Negev and the Galilee and other local organizations.

As part of the efforts to integrate haredi women in employment and entrepreneurship, a special training program in dressmaking and textiles has recently opened. The initiative was introduced to address the need for remunerative activity that is appropriate for the unique lifestyle of women in the city’s haredi community.

The training program includes business entrepreneurship and empowerment and the aim is to provide women with a vocation that has an employment future. The course, taught by MATI - The Western Galilee Business Development Center, takes place in the city of Akko, and teaches the basics of dressmaking, sizing, design, and running a home business.

Thirteen haredi women aged 25–50 who want to acquire vocational training or increase their income are participating in the program. This program, and several others that promote employment, are part of the Local Authorities Promoting Employment annual work plan that emphasizes bringing populations not integrated in the labor market closer to the world of work.
Conclusion – Facing the Future!

The field of employment and employment-supporting education in the IACC continues to grow and develop. More and more community centers see this as a relevant and essential service for individuals and the communities in which they are located, and conduct programs for different and varied target populations. IACC deploys employment and relevant community infrastructures in different locations according to models that have been proved successful.
An understanding of the relationship between education and employment is increasing among people working in this field, and the staff of the Department of Employment and Employment-Supporting Education is currently working on extending and implementing the “Employment is My Business” model, and developing programs for other populations, such as preparing teenagers and young adults for the work world and adult life.

Government and local partners are rallying and joining in these endeavors, thereby enabling a significant increase in activities. We hope that the field will grow and develop to encourage new opportunities that will lead to more and more employment solutions for the individual and the community.
Inclusion of Haredi Jews in Israeli General Education and the Israeli Workforce
The Ultra-orthodox Community in Israel: Between Integration and Segregation

Betzalel Cohen

Over the past few years the ultra-orthodox (haredi) population in Israel has experienced many changes in lifestyle, challenging it with many new issues. One of the main questions accompanying these changes is the extent of the haredi sector’s integration into general Israeli society in all aspects of life. In this article I will present two different and conflicting trends that can be seen in the various responses to these changes.

Growing Closer or Growing Apart?

In recent years we have witnessed significant changes in Israel's haredi society: in job market participation, in enlisting for army and national volunteer service, and in enrollment in vocational and academic studies. Some of these processes—the decisive ones—are influenced by economic factors, and others by political, social, technological ones.

Haredi society has expanded relative to the rest of society as a result of natural increase, and this has raised many questions regarding

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the image and future of the state of Israel in terms of politics, security, economy and the nature of its society.

Historically speaking, it seems that since the establishment of the state until recently, it is possible to point clearly to an active process of isolation and segregation of haredi society (by its choice) from general Israeli society. This is expressed in all areas of life: places of residence, education, media (newspapers, radio, internet sites), and more. Therefore, the expectation was that the changes of the past few years in haredi society’s employment, enlistment and education patterns would bring about a greater involvement in Israeli society and greater closeness between the haredi community and general Israeli society. In this article I will examine whether this has indeed transpired. To this end I will bring examples from the fields of housing, employment, IDF enlistment and vocational/academic studies.

**Housing**

In the past, most of the haredi population lived in proximity to national-religious and secular populations, especially in the cities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Petah Tikva and Bnei Brak. However, over time, separate haredi neighborhoods were established, followed by new all-haredi cities. National-religious and secular residents left some neighborhoods, turning them into haredi enclaves, and haredi residents left neighborhoods with secular majorities. Today almost all of the haredi population lives in distinctly haredi concentrations. In mixed neighborhoods, tensions and disagreements often surround various issues such as driving on Shabbat, installing an *eruv* (ritual enclosure), allocating buildings for synagogues and schools, control of community councils, and the like.

Despite the above-noted processes of change in haredi society, there seems to be no change in the trend towards geographic segregation. The dominant trend in housing is the establishment of separate neighborhoods
and towns for each sector, and it seems that none of the parties is interested in living in integrated housing. Should haredi residents seek to live in a mixed neighborhood, or secular and religious Zionists wish to live in a haredi neighborhood, this act will likely be interpreted as part of a plan to take over and alter the existing character of the neighborhood or town.

In complete opposition to the above-described situation, are the activities of Adraba and Netiot, two organizations that for the past several years have been encouraging the establishment of communities of orthodox Zionists and newly religious haredi populations. These organizations apparently prefer to establish communities in mixed neighborhoods and towns. Two such communities have been established, one in Haifa and one in Ma'alot, and it seems that they have managed to integrate well into their surroundings.

**Employment**

During the past decade the Israeli government, in partnership with public and philanthropic organizations, has initiated programs to encourage employment in the haredi sector. These are intended to create jobs and encourage employers to hire haredi workers, and concomitantly to train haredi personnel for required professions and employment fields. This initiative has significantly increased employment rates within the haredi community, among both women and men.

One of the most successful programs was carried out in the haredi town of Upper Modi'in and has since become a model for other places. A center was established that employs thousands of haredi women in various fields: computer programming, call centers, document scanning, preparing legal briefs, and more. The center strictly enforces a religious work environment, e.g., separation between men and women, no work on in-between holiday days (e.g., during the festivals of Sukkot and
Passover), allowing workers to leave early for Chanukah candle lighting, strictly kosher food in vending machines, and the like. This model shows how raising employment levels can exist in parallel to the continued trend towards segregation.

On the other hand, many young haredi people who graduated from vocational and/or academic studies have found jobs in the general job market, in either the private or public sector, despite initial challenges in being accepted into an integrated workplace and the need for a period of adaptation.

It can therefore be seen that there are differing approaches towards integration of the haredi sector into the general job market among those involved in increasing employment. The core issue is whether it is preferable to retain segregation between the haredi and other sectors, or to integrate them in employment. At this point it seems most sensible to state that both approaches are correct, since it is not really possible to create enough separate jobs for all haredi people seeking to enter the job market. On the other hand, if we do not find separate solutions for those haredi people who prefer them, we will not be able to maximize the full potential of this workforce.

**Enlistment in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)**

As part of the steps taken to increase the enlistment rate of young haredi men into the IDF, the military has set up two designated tracks. One is Netzach Yehuda, better known as the Nacha"l Haredi, and the other is the Shachar track (Hebrew acronym of "haredi integration"). These differing tracks demonstrate the two approaches described above.

Basic training in Netzach Yehuda takes place in a completely separated area (with canvas fencing all around) on a major army base, with no contact with any other soldiers, especially female military
personnel. The haredi soldiers are provided food under a very strict level of kosher supervision, engage in regular religious study classes, prayers, proper observance of the Sabbath and holidays. The soldiers in this track are highly trained combatants, who are then deployed into units that protect the Jordan Valley, and their third year of service is dedicated to study.

The Shachar tracks are designed to integrate young haredi men into the IDF’s technical and technological units. At the start of their military service the soldiers acquire a profession in which they work throughout their time in the IDF. After training these soldiers are then integrated into various army bases where certain guidelines are observed, such as an immediate work circle of men only, regular religious study classes, strict kosher food, and crucially, they live at home and commute to the base daily.

We see that in one model, haredi soldiers become part of the fighting troops while remaining in segregated units, while in the other model haredi soldiers work in a semi-segregated team but within the general military environment. It is important to note that Netzach Yehuda is intended for unmarried men age 18 and older, while the Shachar track is aimed at married men aged 22 and up. It seems that the haredi world is more cautious and protective towards unmarried men in terms of contact with mainstream military personnel, which includes women and secular soldiers at all levels.

**Vocational and Academic Studies**

Among the steps taken to increase the rate of employment among the haredi sector are many activities aimed at encouraging both men and women to join vocational training programs and enroll in academic institutions. This population sector expresses an overwhelming
preference for separate programs designed to accommodate their needs and religious requirements, be it separate vocational training programs, separate academic institutes or separate haredi branches of colleges. The percentage of haredi students enrolled in general academic or training institutions is currently very low, although it is growing.

Creating separate professional and vocational frameworks for haredi students may adversely affect the quality of study at times. Specifically, it leads to a limited range of vocational and study courses. This, in turn, impacts employment options, especially for positions requiring advanced degrees that are not taught at haredi colleges.

"Being in a Diaspora Among Jews" or "Being Part of All of Israel"

The picture that emerges from the above indicates that there are two conflicting trends within the processes of change that the haredi sector is experiencing. The first is the desire to preserve segregation in the workplace, in the IDF and in higher education. The second is the desire to integrate into the general population in those very same places.

The first trend stems from the approach that describes the haredi situation within the state of Israel as "being in a diaspora among Jews". According to this approach, those observing the Torah and all its commandments must separate themselves as much as possible from the surrounding population in order to preserve their religious identity and beliefs. The second trend derives from the view that the people of Israel are one entity that includes those who observe the commandments and those who don't, and that these differences do not preclude mutual responsibility, as Judaism teaches that all Jews are brothers. This outlook also justifies living together, despite wide differences and disagreements in worldview.
Those in favor of segregation claim that without these barriers many may become somewhat negligent of religious observance. In contrast, those supporting integration see total segregation as an extreme approach that runs the risk of causing a serious rift in Israeli society. They fear it will also increase polarization and hostility towards the haredi sector by mainstream Israeli society. These differences in opinion have occupied internal haredi public discourse over the past few years, as can be discerned in the polemic regarding the “New Haredi”. It seems that resolution of this issue is largely dependent on the ability of those who integrate to retain their identity while remaining fully committed to the haredi population's basic values and lifestyle, despite the lack of segregation.

**Melting Pot versus Multiculturalism**

The two conflicting trends mentioned here do not depend solely on the inner processes of the haredi world. They are also influenced to a great extent by the prevailing atmosphere in the general public. Ben Gurion's (Israel's first Prime Minister) concept of statehood and the melting pot were a real and tangible threat to the continued existence of the haredi lifestyle. Haredi Judaism had no interest in melting into secular, Western-oriented, Zionist society, and indeed, their cultural segregation and entrenchment has succeeded beyond belief, creating a sub-society numbering about one million.

The multicultural approach has replaced the melting pot concept and significantly reduced the haredi community's existential anxiety. This attitude recognizes the right of the haredi sector to maintain its unique culture, while at the same time it encourages their integration into all areas of employment, studies, military and volunteer service. This is what allows a haredi person to feel comfortable in a completely secular environment at work, in the IDF or in academic studies.
We are now at the point where Israeli society is being put to the test. Does Israeli society honestly wish to include the haredi sector while enabling them to preserve their cultural identity? Or is this only lip-service, concealing a wish to change haredi beliefs and life style?

**Conclusion**

I believe that for our future here in the Land of Israel and the state of Israel we must find the way to a full, communal life together, not just one in which we live alongside each another. This, to my understanding, is the only way we can survive as one Jewish people living together in their own state. For this reason we must become better acquainted, despite the vast differences between us. The changes taking place in haredi society today seem to me necessary and positive. Yet the most important task faced by all is to make sure that these processes do not include a slide into secularism, as this would leave no alternative but to renew haredi segregation. Our joint fate must have a shared purpose for the future of us all in this country.
A Multicultural Approach to Adult Learning: The Critical Path towards Integrating the Ultra-orthodox Population in Employment

*Rina Cohen Sutzkever*

**Introduction**

Integrating adult citizens into the workforce has become a central issue on the economic and social agenda in Israel in recent years, as in the rest of the world, for two reasons:

- It is widely understood that employment and work rescue families from the cycle of poverty.
- There is a desire and need to compete in the global labor market, and therefore, to meet the standards of developed countries in terms of the percentage of employed adults.

Public discourse in Israel identifies two populations which are not integrated in the labor market as expected: the ultra-orthodox (*haredi*) population – with an emphasis on the men, and the Arab population – with emphasis on Arab women. The strategies for contending with these two populations are as fundamentally distinctive as the cultural-social

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differences between them. This article is concerned with the issue of integrating men from the haredi population into the labor market. The issue of Arab women requires comprehensive, in-depth treatment, and a separate article should be dedicated to it.

This article focuses primarily on the main issue germane to integrating haredi populations in employment, i.e., the strategic question – how?

**The Background Underlying the Issue – The Model of Zebulun And Issachar**

The issue under discussion is rooted in ancient Jewish culture, in thousands of years of Jewish history, as well as in the new history of Israel and its emerging society.

The haredi population has built itself, with the state's support, into a society of scholars. The paradigm for the model of the "learning society" and its relationship with the general society is what is called "The Zebulun and Issachar model". The earliest sources to describe the Zebulun-Issachar relationship are in commentaries and homiletics that derived from Jacob's and Moses' blessings of the tribes of Israel. Jacob's blessing says, "Zebulun shall dwell by the seashore and he shall be a haven for ships... Issachar is as a strong-boned ass, crouching down between the sheepfolds... He bent his shoulder to the burden" (Gen. 49:13–14). Moses' blessing says, "Rejoice, O Zebulun, on your journeys, and Issachar, in your tents" (Deut. 33:18).

This model is described marvelously in S. Y. Agnon's story, "Issachar and Zebulun":

>*When Issachar came to receive his portion of the Garden of Eden, his book was examined and written in it was, 'Issachar studied the Torah*
for two days.’ Issachar was astounded. He said: ‘How is it possible that I, who all my life did not leave the tent of the Torah, and shouldered the burden of study, have only two days of Torah?’ They said to him: ‘Issachar, in the world you came from, how did you earn a living?’ He said to them: ‘I had a brother named Zebulun, and he made me his partner. He dwelled by the seashore, sailed in ships, earned money from commerce and fed me, and I sat and studied Torah. They said to him: ‘If so, your Torah belongs to Zebulun, for if Zebulun had not dealt in commerce you would not have studied Torah, and you have already had your reward in your lifetime…

(S. Y. Agnon, 1959, p. 35)

For generations the Zebulun-Issachar model operated, to varying extents, in Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora. More recently, it appears that this model has lost its validity; large segments of the general public disagree with it and raise questions about equality, social justice and mutual responsibility as they are understood in the spirit of the times and the general culture. Moreover, in our era, which is colloquially called the “Age of Knowledge,” the culture of lifelong learning has intensified. A UNESCO report on the subject entitled “Learning: The Treasure Within” emphasizes that lifelong learning is, on the one hand, a key to life, and on the other hand, the right of every individual in a democratic society (UNESCO report, 1996), and that the changes and developments [in adult learning] require continual updating. Therefore, many opportunities for learning are offered to adults and study frameworks suited to their needs, interests and abilities exist. Indeed, many adults are in the process of studying for a variety of different reasons and for different purposes; there are those who seek to acquire an academic degree, a profession or a second career, with social activists and even volunteers studying alongside those working for their livelihoods. Learning, in different formats and to different extents,
is part of the lifestyles and routines of many mature adults. In terms of adult learning, haredi society no longer has a monopoly, but it has remained committed to a way of life of learning throughout the entire day, which derives from the haredi interpretation of the verse, "You shall study it day and night" (Josh. 1:8), i.e., the precept to study the Torah full-time, which does not leave time for any other occupation.

In view of these changes, there are calls demanding for a re-examination of the relative participation of the differing segments of society in bearing the brunt of societal burdens, contributing to reducing social distress and increasing social wellbeing and growth competition for the whole of society. A significant part of these demands are directed towards the haredi sector, which conducts a markedly different lifestyle from that of the wider population. This is expressed by investing most of its time and energy in Torah study and holding this as the religious and social ideal, and consequently, there is no sharing of the economic burden and a trend towards isolationism and seclusion. Putting this ideal to practice also brings poverty and deprivation to the members of the haredi community, both adults and children, and this affects all of society.

However, there is a wide social consensus that the haredi population is an important, high quality part of Israeli society, and its contribution is essential to addressing fundamental societal issues and building a flourishing society. The main demand is for the haredi learning population to become integrated in the workforce. The aim of such integration is complex: To reduce poverty and dependence upon government stipends at the family level, and to increase productivity and the ability to compete at the national level.
**Analyzing the issue of integration: premises and programs**

In order to address the issue of integrating the haredi population in work, a number of bodies involved with influencing the design of national policy have undertaken to create position papers that include an in-depth analysis of the situation, indicate objectives and propose multidisciplinary plans of action.

The National Economics Council in the Prime Minister's Office released the frame of reference and fundamental premises upon which the different position papers were based (Jerusalem, 2009):

- The existence of a flourishing, independent haredi community is an essential to the Jewish character of Israel, and therefore, action should be taken to preserve and reinforce its foundations, and to avoid any move that may disturb these foundations.
- The poverty and growing dependency of the haredi community on stipends and donations weakens the community and affects its resilience, and therefore action should be taken to strengthen this community's independence and economic stability, primarily through encouraging employment.
- Encouraging employment within the haredi community is a major step in the effort to prevent the economic gaps from worsening and poverty in Israel from increasing.
- The haredi population is characterized by its well-honed learning skills, and its thorough and accountable attitude, all of which infuse it with great economic potential. Assistance in achieving integration in remunerative to realize this potential will contribute not only to the haredi population itself, but will also contribute significantly to the economic prosperity of the entire state of Israel.

To continue to address this issue on the basis of these fundamental premises, two significant elements must be defined and identified as they
relate to the following questions:

a. Who is a “haredi”? What is the delineating definition of this target population?

b. What are the obstacles to integrating haredim in the job market?

An answer to these two questions will constitute the basis for identifying and formulating the operational strategy needed to develop the relevant “how to.”

**Who is a haredi?**

Answering this question is not at all simple. We will begin by understanding the concept “haredi.” The primary meaning of [the word] haredi is one who is in awe of the word of God. The conventional definition of the concept “haredi” derives from a subjective perception of commitment to Jewish halakha [law] as this has been developed and expounded by rabbinic authorities in Jewish tradition. Identification of a population as haredi is based on an accretion of behaviors and adherence to a way of life defined as a "Torah way of life," which includes specific kinds of educational institutions, places of residence, and community affiliations.

**Obstacles to integration in work**

The professional literature maintains that the factors affecting employment choices are derived from the individual's world-views, from the variety of available possibilities and from the relative feasibility of each possibility (Integrating the Haredi Sector in Employment, Levine, 2009). For the haredi population "obstacles related to world-views" have great, indeed critical, weight in decisions that its members make regarding this subject.

The distinguishing characteristics of the haredi population's world-view are:
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a. Scrupulous observation of the religious precepts and traditions;
b. Apprehension regarding exposure to secular society and its worldview;
c. Reliance upon the opinions of Torah sages;
d. Attributing importance to "yeshiva student" status;
e. An aspiration to have a large number of children;
f. A frugal and modest way of life as a value and an ideal.

The emphasis placed upon religious observance and avoidance of exposure to secular society, together with the other aforementioned characteristics, create a complex and challenging obstacle to be contended with in order to integrate the haredi population into the work force.

To the above one must add obstacles intrinsic to the world of economics and employment:

• Low economic incentives to go out to work – a husband's employment in most haredi families will bring in only a relatively low income, and in turn is likely to cause the loss of various forms of government support and an increase in the family's expenses. Added to this is the difficulty in paying for training and acquisition of a profession.

• Lacks in human capital for employment– A haredi man usually lacks basic employment capital, particularly in his poor knowledge of English, mathematics, familiarity with computer use, as well as "soft skills" such as experience in looking for work, self-marketing, and the ability to pass the necessary employment aptitude tests.

• Avoidance of military service – A significant portion of haredi men study fulltime in yeshiva a status designated as 'Torato aumanuto': his Torah study is his profession], which precludes holding a permanent job unless one previously completed military service.

• The world of employment offers the haredi population limited job opportunities.
This unique combination of obstacles, which derives from both the population’s characteristics and from the world of work, create an issue that is complex to deal with. The challenge of contending with this increases further in the face of the aspiration to protect the haredi community and cause no harm to its special features.

**Coping mechanisms**

Against this background, the big question is: *What is the appropriate strategy for addressing the complex challenge of integrating the haredi population in employment?*

To find the appropriate strategy we will look for the milestones by which it can be identified. Today's popular “positive psychology” is based upon research and professional expertise, which it uses to seek the strengths of the subject of inquiry, and use these qualities to cope with challenges and achieve the desired outcomes.

**The powers and strengths of the members of the haredi community**

The haredi community has unique characteristics. Outstanding among them are learning ability and a high level of study skills as well as a strong sense of community, which serves both as a source of support and control.

An external look at the community usually identifies these characteristics, but does not necessarily associate them with qualities of strength; indeed, at times it sees them as antithetical. Usually these characteristics, when measured by standards of modern Western culture, are perceived as anachronistic and not in pace with the modern dynamics of individualism and practical use of advanced, pioneering technologies. Therefore, these traits are perceived as reinforcing isolationism and obstructing integration.
The challenge is to recognize these characteristics and put their strengths to practical use as a means of promoting integration in employment in an open society while preserving, as stated, the distinctiveness of the haredi community.

The need to break down barriers, while remaining cognizant of the community's attributes and strengths, points to learning study as a critical means towards integration in work. The question is what type of learning can grapple with such a complex challenge. This article's recommendation is to examine the relevancy of adult learning to the matter at hand.

**Adult learning**

In an open and changing society in the age of the information revolution, continuous learning is perceived as necessary. It is essential for survival, to keep up-to-date with accumulated human knowledge, to develop functional, intellectual, emotional, ethical, communication, and social abilities, and to perform in new situations. Continuous learning is a central characteristic of adult learning.

Adult learning has unique models that distinguish between it and children's learning. At the base of all models are a number of principles (Tokatli, 2004):

a. The responsibility of the learners themselves to define the aim of their studies.

b. Reflection, i.e., thinking about the information learned and comparing it to existing knowledge.

c. Active engagement which enrich the experience, and utilizes it as a resource for learning.

d. Learning how to study according to personal learning styles.

e. Adaptation to the learner's needs, abilities, desires and way of life.
The In adult learning a significant factor is added to the above principles: relevance and a clear fulfillment of goals. Adult learners expect that their learning will be relevant to the context of their actual lives, to their aims and experience, and areas of interest with which they are involved. They expect that learning will assist them in assessing defined goals and meet their needs and wishes.

**Adult learning in the context of integration in employment**

Learning has always been a central route towards integration in work. Learning in a work context was generally focused in three frameworks that indicated the study aims and processes: training, ongoing professional development, and career change (Tokatli, 1999).

By *training* is meant the acquisition of a profession for a future job. Professional training prepares the individual for work and makes him qualified for the function he will fulfill. The main motive for joining a training program is the ambition to work in a useful, interesting and needed profession from which one can earn a living.

*Ongoing professional development* means adding, updating, expanding and enhancing studies, coping with complex problems, creating innovations and changes (Tokatli, 1998).

*Career change* refers to changing a job position specialization, or even a profession itself, which necessitates investing in new learning. In the age of changes, a change in specialization every few years has become a major characteristic of the world of employment, and one who is able to contend with career changes is regarded as having a high ability for renewed study.

It would appear that what is of initial relevance to our subject is primarily a training framework to acquire a profession and then, later on, it may be possible to make use of the other two frameworks. However,
to achieve integration in work more is needed. Because of cultural disparities and the lack of soft skills in the world of work, and out of the desire to maintain the distinctiveness of the haredi community, there is a need for a training model that concomitantly makes space for, and takes into consideration both its strengths and boundaries.

**The proposed model - the adult Learning Star**

Based upon the principles of adult learning and the strengths of the members of the haredi community, a model of action is proposed that places the haredi learner in the center and takes him into consideration.

The model is diagrammed in the shape of a star formed by two triangles. Specifically, three points of one triangle are labeled as the Needs, Abilities and Desires points, while those of the superimposed triangle represent the elements of proposed learning plan: Content, Method and Framework.

**The adult learning star**
The learning star draws attention to the elements of the learning module for haredi adult students whom the learning plan must address. The needs of the students, their abilities, and their desires arise from the characteristics of the haredi community. In brief, we will say that learning must take place while preserving their religious way of life and enabling the preservation of the haredi way of life. The task is to integrate learning in preparation for work within the haredi daily schedule, and not require it be changed. Accordingly, this learning needs to make intelligent use of the high learning skills of haredi students, and take their wants regarding learning methods and frameworks into account, as "...a person can only learn that which his heart desires" (Tractate Avoda Zara 19a). A sensitive attitude to the subject of community cohesion, i.e., learning typically] takes place within a community framework, may even contribute to its presence and preclude students from dropping out during the course of study. Attention, consideration, and listening will help bring the haredi students closer to learning that will advance their integration in work. Study of this kind is also proof that additional activities can be incorporated into the haredi schedule – and this is one of the main objectives of integration into work.

One of the important roles of a system for adult learning is to provide support that encourages perseverance in studies based on the understanding that the student's achievements are first of all measured in relation to himself and his aims.

**Adult learning is based on the following principles:**

- **Trust** – Trust is the foundation of adult learning. It refers to the student's trust in himself and in his abilities to persevere in the learning process and succeed, and his trust that the instructor and the learning system seek his success and will enable him to achieve it. Trust is also required from the instructor –in his own ability as a
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teacher who is capable of engendering edifying learning processes, and trust that the student yearns to learn and has the needed learning abilities to carry out the task. Learning that takes place according to the learning star model is learning that builds trust. The feeling of the student that he is in the center, and that his needs, abilities and wishes are important and given due consideration, builds trust in the teacher and the learning system (Seidman, 2007).

- **Providing opportunity** – Adult learning must offer opportunities for relevant study adapted to the adult learner. Providing a suitable opportunity produces successes and builds the student's trust in himself. The expertise of the field of lifelong learning and adult learning, which places the student in the center and focuses upon him, instills excitement and hope.

- **Support** – Adult learners need support during the learning process. Adults have a multitude of tasks and undertakings and are subject to the pressures of life. In order to persevere and overcome life's stresses and demands, it is vital that they are provided with support to reinforce their learning in the face of many delaying and hindering factors. A significant part of this support may come from the learning community itself. Haredi students are used to community activity and they know how to provide and receive support out of a recognition of the value and power of a community.

These principles are of great import in promoting learning that enables integration in employment. From the outset, as a result of the cultural dissimilarity in lifestyle and the sense of being a closed, separate community, the underpinnings of trust between the haredi community and the rest of society are unstable. Building relationships of trust through adult learning will help in integration in employment and also in bringing the differing sectors of society closer.
Adult learning at its best

Learning in general, and adult learning in particular, is based on those who generate it – the educators. Adult learning as an indispensable means of integrating the haredi community in the workforce presents a great challenge within the field of training people to be teachers of adults. At present no teacher training institutions have a program for preparing educators to teach adults. Almost all teachers who work within the limited number of frameworks for adult learning were trained to teach children and youth within the formal education system. Some have participated in minimal continuing education to be able to adapt their teaching skills to teaching adults.

Both the Learning Star model and the principles listed above require training of teachers of adults who will be able to lead the adult learning processes that are vital for all sectors of society to enable it successfully grapple with Israel's societal and economic challenges in the 21st century and provide all citizens with quality of life.

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Military Training for the Ultra-Orthodox Population and its Contribution to Integration and Promotion in Employment

Shirley Marom

The joint Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and JDC-TEVET Shachar program enables ultra-orthodox (haredi) men to enlist in the military. While serving they acquire a profession they can pursue in civilian life. This article surveys the program’s characteristics and the advantages of integrating the haredi sector into the work force. It includes interviews conducted with program graduates, some of whom remained in the army and others who now work as civilians, and their conclusions regarding the program’s contribution to their professional track. Other issues raised by the program are mentioned, and should be addressed.

Foreword

"To the program's credit, it can be said that if the IDF was once a barrier to employment – whoever did not serve could not get a job – today it is a major employment enabler. These are the rules of the game: if a haredi individual wants to get ahead in the job market, he needs to adapt, and in the long run this will have a positive impact on haredi society".

(M., an Air Force officer, graduate of the Shachar program)

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The haredi sector in Israel is characterized by a low employment rate in comparison with the general population. This holds true especially for haredi men. The situation engenders poverty on the one hand, and wastes potential manpower on the other. The Shachar program (Hebrew acronym for “haredi integration”) seeks to provide a solution to this problem, while simultaneously addressing two other issues: the haredi sector's lack of participation in carrying the burden of Israel's defense – at a time when the IDF warns of difficulty in recruiting sufficient personnel – and mutual hostility and polarization between the haredi sector and the general population.

The Shachar program is the result of a partnership between the IDF and TEVET, the employment initiative of the Israeli government and JDC-Israel. The program enables young haredi men aged 22-28, for whom military service is compulsory, to narrow educational gaps and acquire a profession. Through the program they gain employment experience and skills while fulfilling their required military service in a framework adapted to the utmost to the haredi lifestyle. The soldiers also receive the monthly stipend allocated to every married soldier by law, enabling them to support their families. In this way young haredi men are given the opportunity to successfully integrate into the work force as they complete their military service equipped with knowledge and experience relevant to the job market.

This program has generated much interest in the haredi community in particular, and in the Israeli public, in general. Many people now consider it the correct way to integrate the haredi sector into the IDF while maintaining their way of life, and view this as a highly successful track for haredi men to join the work force. This article will survey the characteristics of the program; present the opinions of the program's graduates and participants regarding its contribution to their integration into the work force; and raise important issues that have ensued from it.
**The Shachar program – general information and data**

The program was initiated in 2007. It was established with the aim of serving the interests of both the army and the haredi population; the IDF was short on professional technicians and the number of young haredi men who wanted to join the work force had increased. The difficulty was that the haredi men were required to close large gaps in secular education and acquire additional life skills at a relatively advanced age, when most of them had families to support. The idea was raised of combining the needs of both parties and turning military service around: IDF service would serve as an employment program instead of an employment barrier for haredi men for whom religious study was the main occupation.

The *Shachar* program integrates the civic duty of army service with vocational training, providing professional experience with immediate financial support. The support stems from National Insurance Institute regulations that provide Family Payments to families whose main support is a soldier in active service. The project partners are the IDF and JDC-TEVET, as well as the Ministry of the Economy’s vocational guidance department, the Manufacturers Association, and the IDF’s Human Resources department, Planning Unit and Personnel Administration.

Through *Shachar*, young haredi men serve in most IDF branches and units: Blue *Shachar* – Air Force; Sea *Shachar* – Navy; Teleprocessing *Shachar* – Teleprocessing Unit; Green Wisdom – Intelligence Unit; Orange *Shachar* – Home Front Command; *Shachar* HR – Ground Services and Manpower Directorate; *Shachar* TLU – Technology and Logistics Unit. The Israeli Police has also opened a special haredi track as part of *Shacham* (Hebrew acronym for Haredi Integration in the Police).

Another goal of the program, other than actual IDF conscription, is to expand the graduates’ employment horizon. The program includes locating and recruiting candidates; screening through employment
analysis; appropriate placements in various IDF units; courses to reduce gaps in education; service in the technical units in a variety of practical professions; service conditions suited to the haredi lifestyle; preparatory courses and workshops before discharge; and finally – guiding, counseling and helping graduates with continued studies and the job market.

**General data**
The first program to open was Blue Shachar, begun in 2007 when the Air Force drafted 40 young haredi men. By the end of 2009 some 400 haredi soldiers had enlisted in Shachar, from all ethnic groups and subsects in the haredi world. In 2010 the scope of enlistment increased significantly; over 500 new soldiers were serving in a variety of IDF units.
- By the end of 2012 the number of active soldiers had reached 1,500. A total of almost 2,700 men had completed Shachar programs.
- Currently the Shachar programs have over 25 officers and 161 career soldiers.
- The Medical Corps will soon open to Shachar soldiers. The long-term plan includes a track for paramedics with a Bachelor’s degree and an option for outstanding students to continue to medical school.
- Approximately half of all Shachar soldiers serve in the Air Force. Research conducted by the Air Force shows that of all populations serving, Shachar soldiers have the highest level of motivation to become officers and career soldiers – about 60%.

**Placement data**
By 2009 some of the first recruits were being discharged. By February 2013 over 1,100 men had completed active service. Of these:
- Some 85% are employed, among them career soldiers and those employed in the largest firms in the job market: Iscar, Bank Hapo'alam, Teva, Electra and various hi-tech companies.
• Some 15% are not employed. Some are students and some had only just been discharged at the time this data was compiled (February 2013).

• Students comprised some 30% of the program graduates.

Results of the Schachar program evaluation research

The evaluation research conducted by the Ministry of the Economy’s Economic Planning Administration was recently published (Malachi, 2013). This research examined the Shachar program tracks’ contribution to the integration of haredi graduates in the job market and in professional and academic studies. The research was conducted between May 2011 and February 2012, and was carried out through structured evaluation questionnaires. It encompassed some 170 graduates of the first two recruitment rounds in this track, who served in the IDF from 2007 – 2009.

Research shows that after completing their army service, the employment rate among graduates had doubled: 70% of Shachar graduates participating in the research were employed following their army service, as opposed to less than half of them prior to serving. Additionally, most Shachar graduates (60%) replied that they would recommend or highly recommend that other young haredi men enlist to the various IDF Shachar tracks.

In parallel, the Economic Planning Administration conducted research among employers of haredi men. Research results showed a high level of satisfaction from Shachar graduates. According to employer reports, Shachar graduates had the advantage of ‘soft’ employment skills acquired during IDF service that other haredi employees lacked, and these helped them integrate successfully in various jobs. Among the skills mentioned were: ability to work in a team, meet deadlines and
schedules, a high level of analysis and ability to work with computers. Research shows that a substantial number of employers consider army service a significant advantage, preferring those who served in the IDF to those who did not.

Research data also points to the prime motivation for enlisting in Shachar, which is its usefulness – the option of acquiring employment skills and formal training that will help graduates integrate into the job market on completing army service. The data ‘indicates to a great degree the success of Shachar tracks in everything pertaining to the employment of haredi graduates. It is important to bear in mind that haredi men’s military service in these tracks is intended to serve social and economic goals. It seems that military and civilian support services do provide graduates with options for successful integration in the job market’ (p. 33).

Experiences of program participants

The IDF considers the program a success: high and low ranking officers are decidedly satisfied with the level of performance of Shachar soldiers, and this feeling is mutual. In the words of Nissan Shmuel Friedman, a graduate of the Shachar teleprocessing track:

"Everything about the track I was in changed my life, and not for the worse. The service and the course gave me the tools to find a respectable job in the civilian world: during my service I spent time every day with people I was not used to being around, and the course itself gave me a profession. The officers’ course adds a lot on a managerial and ideological level”.

We will now present excerpts from the conclusions of some Shachar graduates. Their experiences portray the nature of the program and its contribution to integrating the haredi sector into the job force.
Eliyahu Glantzberg was one of 25 soldiers who comprised the first group of the Shachar program, serving in Ofek, the Air Force computer unit. He was the first to complete his IDF service and find a job in his field, and has since been employed for two and a half years. Glantzberg says he always knew he wanted to work, and thought that military service could help him personally, and also provide him with employment later on. He joined the program with no prior computer knowledge, took a software testing course and served for two years before opting to extend his service.

Glantzberg shared that during that time, haredi soldiers would only put on their uniforms before entering the base, because “haredi soldiers” were not something people in his community were used to. He and his classmates were the pioneers, and no one knew if there would be a demand for them in the job market. He says the job search following his service was not easy: first, because Shachar graduates did not have the same knowledge-base as other job applicants; and second, because secular work places do not always know how to relate to haredi job applicants.

Program graduates underwent a two-day workshop given by JDC-TEVET to prepare them for the reality of job searching: how to interview, how to write a CV, how to describe themselves briefly and how to sign a contract. They were also provided with personal guidance. Glantzberg found a job through the JDC six months after completing his IDF service as a software tester for Bank Hapo‘alim. He transferred to outsourcing later on, and is currently working as director of testing in Qualitest, a continuation of his previous position. He views his current career as a direct outcome of the Shachar program: it is where he received training, and as a result of his military service and the options it opened,
he now has a respectable job. He credits the skills he acquired through the program with his rapid progress at work.

M. is an officer in the Air Force's Ofek unit. He was also in the first group of recruits to the Shachar program. During the program's initial stage he helped recruit additional people to form a group which enlisted for service in computer units. He served as a programmer in the Ofek unit for four years before attending an officers' training course. The decision to attend officers' training was made after he joined a delegation of Shachar soldiers to Poland. Far from the identity dilemma of "haredi" vs. "secular", this trip was able to generate his sense of unity with the other soldiers. He then requested to serve in a significant position in the IDF so he could be influential, both in Shachar and at the professional level. Indeed, this is why he preferred to stay in the IDF rather than work in an equivalent position in the civilian world. He tells of feeling the joy of creation within the military, of being able to harness other people and to "make things happen."

M. joined the Shachar program because he wanted to enter the job market. He says that although the haredi world prefers Torah study, he believes that whoever chooses to stop studying must accept their responsibility as civilians and serve like everyone else. M. considers army service to be of value in itself, and there is no question in his mind that it is invaluable for integrating into the job market later on. He views army service as an excellent preparation for the civilian market: it provides technological experience and teaches proper behavior. Shachar program graduates join the job market much better prepared, and are of greater value to the Israeli economy.

In M.'s opinion, the Shachar program created something new, and consequently the IDF agreed to change its approach. The Air Force
was the forerunner, paving the way for other military Command Forces. Today there is a great deal of awareness of the needs of haredi soldiers and much investment in this subject, with a great deal of thought going into the advancement of this sector. The military understands how to provide solutions that allow the soldiers to retain their haredi identity within the military framework. In effect, the program provides a complete solution for haredi men who would like to go to work: if a haredi man is debating his direction in life and considering to go out to work, the program will provide tools allowing him to support himself after military service.

M. describes the process he went through in Shachar as “incredible" and something that was of great help to his own family. He remembers how when he and his friends enlisted and first put on their uniforms in the army’s intake and screening base, they burst out laughing, because they couldn't believe it was true. When he returned home in uniform, his daughter ran to hide behind his wife because she was used to seeing only black and white clothes! Although it is a long and complicated process, this reality is slowly becoming the norm. He claims that today there is nothing to prevent a haredi man from enlisting in the army and retaining his religious identity while serving as a soldier or engineer. He feels that within haredi society there is a need for the Shachar program and that it has great potential. Program graduates are IDF emissaries in the haredi community, empowering individualnew recruits and graduates to face the community and say, I’ve changed. All that is left is for the secular and haredi populations to internalize this change and accept each other.

M. describes haredi society's main fear as the concern that the program's real aim is not to integrate them into society, but to transform them; this compels them to adhere to a typical haredi lifestyle. He sees this worry as the source of the tension between haredi and secular society. For this reason another significant benefit of the Shachar program is that it reduces polarity by forging relationships between haredi and secular...
individuals and in this way changing prejudicial assumptions. He claims that Shachar soldiers are not trying to “prove” anything. They only want to integrate into Israeli society. Through the program all soldiers gain an in-depth understanding of both secular and haredi people, there develops a desire for dialogue, and barriers to communication are removed. M. says that during everyday conversations he has had with secular people, he has heard it said more than once “if only all haredi people were like you.”

M. tries to promote the program in the haredi sector. He would like to integrate haredi academics into the army, so that they, too would benefit from military experience. The IDF also initiates higher education programs for both regular and career soldiers. He says that most of the haredim who enlisted together with him have integrated into the workforce, and some are even partners in start-up companies, now that high-level Shachar graduates are completing their army service. M. hopes that this will create a social network that later on will help graduates integrate into the workforce through the ”bring a friend“ system.

Nissan Shmuel Friedman enlisted in the beginning of 2009 in the Shachar teleprocessing track. He served in the navy’s teleprocessing unit for a year, and after completing officers’ training was appointed head of the software testing team. Since completing his IDF service he has worked at Puzzle, which provides the navy with testing services. Friedman says that initially he had planned to join a national service course, but it was cancelled. It was then suggested that he join a programming and software testing course just opening through Shachar. He received brief training in English and math before entering the course.

According to him, the Shachar program is the best and most worthwhile option for haredi men who have decided to discontinue
religious studies, because it is a kind of hothouse: during army service the soldiers are given time to pray, provided with Kosher food on a Mehadrin level, there is a relaxed dress code, and they complete their service with a respectable profession. Friedman says he aspires to advance professionally and dreams of working in a place where there are others like him ideologically and religiously. He hopes that the Shachar program will develop in that direction in the next few years.

Avraham Hofrichter joined Sea Shachar (the navy) in 2009, serving for two years before deciding to sign on as a career soldier. Today he is an electronics engineer and in parallel is studying electrical engineering to enhance his abilities and prepare himself for civilian life. He believes military life matured him and equipped him to face situations that require decision making and management. IDF service provided him with professional and social tools related to inter-personal communication which he did not previously have the opportunity to learn, as they require experience and practice.

Hofrichter recalls that prior to joining the Shachar program he had believed that military service and employment are not burdens, but existential needs. During IDF service he decided to sign on for continued time because he liked the environment where he served, and the specific division and team he worked in. He says that the Shachar program continued to support participants offering workshops in which they were introduced to various employment options. He believes the Shachar program is suited to anyone who would like to go out to work. In his opinion, if someone aspires to work in the civilian world, this is a great jump start; and seeing that most men in Israel serve in the army, there is no reason not to serve.
Shlomo Blutnik joined the Shachar program four and a half years ago, and now serves in the navy. Previously, he had been in the job market and worked in a warehouse, but he only because he had no other options. He wanted to do something more significant. He decided to join the Shachar program after hearing about it from a friend. He understood that military service could open doors, and enable him to acquire a profession he could work in civilian life, as well.

Blutnik decided to become a career soldier because he enjoyed his position, and the conditions where he works allow him to retain his haredi lifestyle (for example, male-only immediate officers). He feels that there is great consideration of the haredi soldier's needs, and accommodations are conducted in good spirit. He adds that as a haredi individual, military service is a way for him to communicate with secular society: when he enlisted he met a secular man who wondered how he could serve in the IDF if he was haredi. During the ensuing conversation this man said he was familiar with the haredi sector only through the media, as "stone throwers". Blutnik, on the other hand, confessed that he had always thought of secular people as drunks and drug addicts. The social connections facilitated by joint military service between different sectors of Israeli society, and the subsequent understanding and willingness to listen generated between haredi and secular individuals, gives the program added value.

Blutnik says that his haredi friends, who also completed military service through the program, entered civilian life with experience and knowledge. In his opinion, the haredi sector suffers from lack of knowledge about the job market. After serving in the IDF, demobilized soldiers know they have rights as employees and to demand them from employers. They know what pay is acceptable, and other important facts
about employment. Program graduates realize their value in the job market and are able to support themselves respectably. Also, a common occurrence in the navy is to "‘bring a friend,’" and when more than one brother in a family does IDF service, is the best proof of the program’s success.

Chaim Dikman, an Air Force officer, says he had no prior knowledge of the military and that he had planned to do national civilian volunteer service. After attending an informative meeting regarding the Shachar program he came to the conclusion that it would be the right thing for him: a meaningful service combined with a professional spring board. He persuaded a friend to join him and they enlisted in the beginning of 2008. Unlike other combat soldiers who were afraid to return to their neighborhoods in uniform, he says he didn’t hide the fact that he was a soldier, indeed he was proud of it, and he never experienced discrimination. He began as a software tester in the Air Force, and today serves in his third position as an officer, responsible for 20 Shachar soldiers who also work as software testers. He says that during the officers’ training course he felt he was really meeting with the "‘other half,” i.e., the general population of Israel, and this made honest communication between different people possible.

In parallel with his career military service, Dikman began studying for a degree in computer science at the Dan Academic Center after completing preparatory course on full scholarship provided by a fund that provides scholarships for haredi soldiers. Dikman says that the gaps in knowledge between secular and haredi soldiers, particularly in English and math, create difficulties, and he feels haredi soldiers should try to reduce these gaps on their own.
Dikman takes part in informative and enlistment meetings about the Shachar program. During the five years of its existence the guidelines have become very structured and clear, and every haredi man who would like to enlist knows whom to turn to. Initially, things weren't easy for either the IDF nor potential haredi recruits, but the military – and especially the Air Force – took many steps to enable optimal integration of haredi soldiers. There are two types of individuals who enlist in the program: those who serve their allotted term of military service and then enter the civilian world, and those who feel connected to the IDF and choose to become career soldiers. In his experience, the doors to employment open for a haredi man who can say he served in an IDF computer unit, and hence most graduates succeed in finding jobs in civilian life.

**Issues that need to be taken into account:**

- **Knowledge gaps** – haredi soldiers are confronted with large knowledge gaps between themselves and secular soldiers, mainly in math and English. In the first group of Shachar little time was devoted to these subjects, but now basic courses are offered in both math and English. All those interviewed for this article agree that a course only a few weeks long cannot bridge the gap of several years of study, and the missing knowledge must be made up in order to work in hi-tech in civilian life. During military service some haredi soldiers attend evening classes and try to combine higher education with IDF training. In this way, the army provides training and experience and the studies provide a diploma. Those interviewed said this was harder to do during regular service, but for career military personnel, and afterwards in civilian life, there are many study options in different colleges.

- **Program graduates unable to find work** – although the vast majority of Shachar graduates manage to integrate into the job
market, those interviewed stated that the Israeli job market still needs to learn not to fear opening doors to haredi employees. In addition, the interviewees mentioned that program graduates need “one on one” job interview simulations, as group learning is not always effective in this case.

• **Combining work and home** – the IDF is not markedly different from any other work place, but haredi soldiers are not used to a long work day and to being away from home for such long hours. There is also the financial difficulty: almost all Shachar participants are married and need to support a family. Those interviewed said that the non-commissioned officers in charge of soldiers’ welfare are kept busy dealing with haredi soldiers. It’s also more difficult for these soldiers to take officer training courses and be away from home for six months stretches.

• **The army as a barrier** – Shachar program marketing focuses more on employment and less on ideology. The program’s intention is not to validate the ideology behind military service but to focus more on the financial benefits in order to reach a wider audience. The target audience is the “mainstream” of all the diverse segments of haredi society, even those who previously felt intimidated by the IDF. Shachar soldiers are affiliated with the more moderate parts of haredi society, typified by greater open-mindedness (they studied in more liberal yeshivas, grew up in more liberal homes). Having said that, as mentioned by some of those interviewed for the article, even those who viewed the military only as a work place when they enlisted, now view their work there as service. But they all agree that the main motivation to enlist to Shachar is employment: those joining the program are not interested in changing their points of view or radically changing their lifestyle, they want to make a living. This is what lies at the root of the program’s success: “matching” the
concept of IDF service with the "business" advantage and the chance to utilize military service to acquire a profession.

• **Leaving the yeshiva** – currently some of the haredi population view the *Shachar* program as a threat to yeshiva students. The vision is for the program to be sufficiently acceptable in haredi society so that IDF service could be an option for individuals who in any case would leave the yeshiva. The question is where to draw the line: who is defined as someone who will not continue in yeshiva? If this point is clarified, haredi society will not feel threatened by the thought that all haredi men are expected to enlist. This is a process occurring in various academic institutions attended by a growing number of haredi men as part of the change transpiring in the haredi world, which opening up to both military service and higher education. Those interviewed emphasized that the purpose of the *Shachar* program was not to encourage students to leave yeshivas, but to offer an alternative to those who had already left.

• **A delicate balance** – all those interviewed for this article noted that a positive change is taking place in haredi society. This includes increased openness to academic studies, military service and joining the work force. Still, the process of change requires time, just as the *Shachar* program started out small and is slowly gaining momentum. The program's strength lies in being low-key. During the past few months the topic of “equally bearing the burden” of military service has been in the headlines, and to some extent has slowed the program's momentum. Those interviewed expressed concern that if a decision from high-level policy-makers forces the issue it will cause damage. They claim that haredi society is aware of the changes it must make and, indeed, the process is underway, but it must be done quietly and without coercion; media attention is disrupting the delicate balance achieved so far. This is very harmful
to enlistment rates, to haredi soldiers, and to the population in general, as haredi society now feels threatened, and this may only encourage haredi rabbis to decide not to approve of IDF service. "When people ask me about joining the Shachar program, I try to advise each one according to his personal situation. I think the program is great, and most people have been successful through it—they have good jobs and are making above minimum wage—so altogether this is a success story. At the end of the day, if there are haredi men currently serving in the IDF or who have graduated from the Shachar program, it isn't because of politicians, but because of people in the JDC and IDF who decided to bring this program to fruition at all costs": they had a vision and they found the funds, first the Air Force and then in other units, and everybody benefits.

(Eliyahu Glantzberg, first class of Shachar graduates)

Summary

The Shachar program aims to enable young haredi men to acquire a profession and work experience through IDF service while maintaining their religious orientation, thus creating a lever for integration into the civilian work force. Service conditions and the work environment are adapted to religious needs and norms acceptable to haredi society. According to IDF guidelines the haredi soldiers are entitled to family payments from the beginning, allowing the men to focus on vocational training and work. It's important to note that the Shachar tracks are not free of the difficulties that arise from the complexity of integrating haredi men into the IDF. But when program participants air problems, the counseling team of the JDC and the IDF invests effort into finding appropriate solutions.

The placement rate of Shachar graduates in the job market currently stands at 85%. Many continue on to higher education and training to
advance themselves professionally. The premise underlying the program is that helping haredi men integrate successfully into the job market will help Israel's economic development. In addition, the interaction between soldiers and officers from the general population and Shachar soldiers brings about a true closeness and dialogue between sectors that would not normally interact with each other. Program graduates learn how to conduct themselves in secular society, to which most employers today belong. The hope is that in the future there will develop a social network of haredi workers who could then become employers of additional haredi workers.

*My vision is simple: that whoever leaves the ‘Kollel’ or the yeshiva for any reason, will go through the IDF on the way to the job market, whether it's for a year and four months or for two years. The military is preparing for this seriously. Whoever is seriously interested, should enlist and do his share. The vast majority of haredi men will benefit and come out with a profession and work experience; there is no doubt that this will have a positive effect on the state's economy, as well."

*(Chaim Dikman, Air Force officer, Shachar program graduate)*

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The Pre-Academic Program for Ultra-Orthodox Men

Maayan Shahaf and Yehuda Morgenstern

At this point in time the state of Israel is seeking to fund the processes that will foster integration of the haredi populace into the job market.

Israel's developed economy is in need of this brainpower in the market's most-needed professions. However, the unique characteristics of haredi students thwart their entrance into these high-demand fields, so that most train for other degrees, such as law and business administration. The mission of the haredi preparatory program is to offset these difficulties, to actualize the full potential imbued within haredi students, and to serve as their launching pad into high-demand professions truly needed by the Israeli economy.

The Point of Departure – Major Discrepancies

Pre-academic programs have existed in Israel since the 1960s for the purpose of making the higher education system accessible to young people whose matriculation certificate is inadequate for college

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acceptance. The objective is to enable them to become optimally integrated in the labor market.

Most of the students in Israel's pre-academic programs enroll in order to acquire entrance to academic studies. They do not need significant preparation, but attend these programs to improve their matriculation exam grades. Most have a reasonable command of English because they live in a modern, Western country and English is an integral part of their environment. Apart from the basic English they studied in school, their command of the language was acquired through media, culture and technology that are based on English. Therefore, the environment's influence was in essence a preparatory course itself.

All graduates of the state-religious and state general education system (including the Arab sector) learn mathematics at least at a basic level, and most also at a higher level. It is important to realize that children who dropped out of school at an early stage, mainly in the Arab education system, are not the same young people who wish to acquire academic education. As most of the students in pre-academic programs already have a firm math foundation, the main focus with regard to mathematics in this framework is to make quick progress sufficient for completing 3–5 matriculation study units, all students according to their abilities and the requirements of the institutions in which they plan to study. In addition, some of the students in these programs have already completed at least one college entrance exam, and they all have the necessary command of computer skills.

By comparison, haredi students arrive at pre-academic preparatory programs without a basic knowledge of English, and ost literally need to begin at the level of the alphabet, witha minority knowing a few words. Similar to the situation in English, young haredi students also enter the programs with a significant gap in mathematics relative to their peers. Arithmetic studies in the haredi education system end in 6th or 7th
grade; most of the students do not learn beyond learning fractions and percentages. Additionally, some of the graduates of the haredi education system have great difficulty expressing themselves in writing even in Hebrew, their mother tongue.

Due to the issues noted above, “regular” pre-academic students and young haredi students who enroll in these programs are actually two completely different populations with separate requirements and needs, even before taking into consideration the disparate social and religious issues (to be addressed below) which reflect the vast distance between the haredi and secular academic worlds.

Therefore, it is clear that the preparation required for typical secular students is vastly different from that required for their haredi counterparts. In contrast to the general population, haredi students need significant preparation and intensive work at a basic level to close the gaps. This is slow and difficult work that requires a great of effort both on the part of the students and the institutions. Thus, the very fact that the existing haredi programs are based on the model of seculars program is problematic.

Assuming that differences in the level of education are manifest in the labor market in terms of wage gaps and job quality, it is obvious that haredi students need to "catch up" before even beginning to study for a bachelor's degree. For this they must be given an equal opportunity to acquire an education that maximizes their potential. The haredi community can, and indeed must, supply the doctors, engineers, economists and psychologists of the next generation. Genuine and proper integration of haredim into Israeli society will come only when haredi academics become assimilated into the labor market as equals.
The optimal pre-academic program

"The haredi population: This population has unique characteristics. People who come from this society lack the minimal background in general studies (men); have a wide scholastic background but without formal recognition (women); a high percentage of the students are married and are parents; they generally have a very low socioeconomic background; there is a need for separate infrastructures for men and women. Consequently, special attention is required, for this population, different from that provided to the general population although, at present these populations are erroneously treated as similar. It is necessary to recognize the need for a differential program for this sector, to create a system adapted from an administrative and scholastic point of view adapted to the haredi student, and to define a special support framework. As soon as the necessary adaptations are made for this population, their integration will increase."

(Recommendations of Public Committee for Examining the Operation of Pre-Academic Preparatory Programs, Specific Recommendations, Section 20f. Known as the Ariav Committee),

The Ariav Committee's report recognized the need to establish a special pre-academic program for the haredi population, including a suitable supportive framework that would operate on haredi campuses. We will discuss this report and following, we will examine an appropriate design for a comprehensive haredi pre-academic program, including a supportive framework adapted to the needs and difficulties of these students.

The aim of the model proposed herein is to provide a solution to each of the problems that arise from integrating haredi students in the academic world. In order to upgrade the academic level of the program while concomitantly reducing the drop-out rate, and to raise the level of difficulty in the program and at the same time increase the number
of haredi students, the correct balance must be maintained between the program's components.

Therefore, our recommendation is to first conduct a pilot program. This will facilitate close observation, development and adaptation of the model in real time, and only afterwards implement it in full. In addition, we recommend that the program's graduation certificate will serve as recognition of an academic level acceptable for entrance to all academic institutions. An full academic preparatory program will facilitate directing students towards the academic programs most suited to each and can encourage healthy competition between the various haredi pre-academic programs.

Program Components

• Study Tracks

The haredi pre-academic program, like all other such programs, raises a complex question – what is the best way to combine the principle of specialization and that of homogeneity. On the one hand, there is a need for specialized study tracks (depending upon the choice of future studies) as, for example, there is no reason for a future lawyer to study mathematics at the level required of a future economist. On the other hand, educational experts are in agreement that in a situation that mandates closing large educational gaps in a single year, having a homogenous educational level within each class is necessary for success. It is clear that the presence of two students with very different levels in English and mathematics in the same class will preclude both from realizing their potential.

The optimal way to combine these two principles is by tracking. Each student will be placed in a track appropriate to his educational level and follow a path best suited to the degree he needs. A student
who seeks to study computer science will be placed in the top-level math track, while an individual who wants to study law will not be required to contend with the highest math level. Of course, the choice of academic degree must be matched to the achievements in the pre-academic program.

Because tracking is not economical it can only be partially implemented. When the number of haredi students in these programs is small relative to the number of general students in pre-academic programs, and since segregation between men and women is required in the former, opening a number of tracks infers a significant increase in costs.

Therefore, there is a pressing need to neutralize the economic factor by providing incentives to institutions that pre-commit to opening several tracks for men and women in English and mathematics. One potential solution is implementing a “per class” budget line into the haredi pre-academic program budget model. Thus, it will be financially viable for a given institution to open two-three tracks for each subject, even if there are only ten students in each track.

In our estimation, tracking is critically important for coping with the challenge in realizing students’ potential and correctly matching students to future academic degrees.

- **English studies**

In the first year of degree studies the students will already need to know English, since compulsory reading material even in most introductory courses is not translated into Hebrew. Further on in academic studies students will encounter extensive study materials and academic articles in English. At the end of their studies, a mastery of English will be a requirement on their résumé for many jobs, especially for the most desirable ones. Therefore, there is an
unquestionable need to achieve a high, extensive level of English rapidly, already at the pre-academic stage.

English studies in the pre-academic program must begin with an exam in the first session to determine initial levels. The class should then be divided into at least two groups, based upon the test results, as homogenous groupings are imperative for genuine progress in language studies.

In spite of many attempts in the various institutions, all have failed to successfully teach English to haredi students in both the pre-academic program and in degree programs. Neither the pre-academic course for engineers nor the Technion's pre-academic program have brought haredi students up to a par with their secular peers in English. The explanation for this phenomenon is that these institutions simply do not have the right tools for teaching basic English.

*The only organizations that have succeeded in this seemingly impossible task of teaching English to haredi students are outside the academic world* – the private language schools. It is only these private entities that possess the know-how to bring adults from the level of the ABCs to the level required in academia. They are experienced in accurate, ongoing assessment of students' status, and advancing each from his initial level in tune with his individual pace of progress. Hence, It seems that these private frameworks possess the tools required for the task. It should be possible to utilizee their capabilities on campus under strict academic supervision by the educational institution. All that is required is that these English teachers meet the standards established by the Council for Higher Education for teachers in pre-academic programs, and will be subject to the pre-academic program's academic director who authorize and closely supervise execution of the curriculum. The private school
will employ the teachers and work on contract with the pre-academic programs as drawn up by the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC). All classes will be held on campus. It is also important to note that the costs incurred in this arrangement are not necessarily higher than direct employment of teachers.

Once this basic stage [in learning English] is achieved, most of the remaining work to be done consists of independent reading and increasing vocabulary. Years of independent study in a yeshiva setting give haredi students a clear advantage in this type of learning. Hence, concentrating effort at this pivotal point is likely to lead to greatly improved performance. It is critical to institute a weekly reading assignment that will constitute a significant part of the overall grade, and to consider a requirement to submit a report in English on these readings during the third semester; the difficulty and length of the texts will be matched to the students' level. In addition, there is a need for an extensive English library that will include appropriate haredi reading materials, as well as academic texts at different levels. In the third semester teaching professional English in specialized classes is recommended, each student according to his degree subject.

All those dealing with this issue should remember that gaps between haredi and secular students in English will ultimately be reflected in their payslips. Mastery of English is one of the essential skills required in the current Israeli job market, and it becomes more important from year to year. It is the responsibility of the authorities working in this area to find a solution to this problematic situation before gaps in language turn into gaps in wages and a glass ceiling.

• **Math studies**

Mathematical abilities typically determine the traditional division between degree courses in the exact sciences (computer sciences,
information systems, economics, etc.), and other degree programs. Students of exact sciences encounter differential and integral calculus course already in the first semester, and continue in math-based courses through their final year.

However, students of psychology and social work are also required to take courses in statistics and probability. or Therefore, it behooves every college student to realize his individual maximum in math; and the mathematical foundation with which haredi students enter the pre-academic program is inadequate. The difficulty in overcoming this wide gap in one year of quick-paced, intensive study is one of the main factors in students dropping out.

In view of all the above, it is imperative to correctly manage the pre-academic preparatory course core and its ancillary framework. For example, a placement exam to determine academic levels should be administered to all students within two weeks from the beginning of the, and not be postponed to the end of the first semester. This assessment is not to be linked in any way with the entrance exam for pre-academic preparatory programs (the Meimad Exam).

After the placement exam students should be referred to two to three tracks based on their knowledge level. This is especially important in math, because the optimal means of ensuring rapid progress with full comprehension requires a homogenous class.

A regular weekly quiz will help maintain regular attendance and maximum investment both in the classroom and in homework assignments throughout the course. Additionally, weekly homework will enable students to move between the tracks. However, the primary purpose of the weekly quiz is to enable the faculty to keep apprised of the students' progress (or lack thereof). This is critical information, because, given the intensive pace of study in these frameworks, if a student falls behind in the material by even one
week this can significantly increase the probability of his dropping out.

Apart from regular classes, ongoing supplementary study sessions are proposed to be available at fixed hours during the week during which the students study, work on assignments and prepare for exams independently, while a teaching assistant is available to them. This system exists in most colleges and universities in science labs and in a number of private study institutions. Moreover, this method is ubiquitous within yeshivot, where it is called "sho'el u-meshiv" [ask and respond] and haredi students have been used to it since the age of 13. Supplementary study hours are not limited to math (see further details on this subject in the section on Ancillary Academic support).

According to experts, an intensive year consisting of three semesters, in which mathematics is studied three to four times a week, six to eight hours weekly for a total of forty weeks of study, will enable all students to achieve the required academic knowledge level. Along with increasing the overall academic level additional supportive tools from the proposed ancillary framework should be utilized to assure low drop-out rates and maximize haredi students' potential.

- **Academic writing**

Teachers report that haredi students typically demonstrate difficulty in academic writing. The reason for this is that haredi students have never been required to engage in this kind of writing and composition during their studies in yeshiva. Indeed, there are haredim whose language of study is primarily Yiddish, although all religious texts are Hebrew (or Aramiac).

Generally, it can be said that haredim have many deficiencies in writing academic Hebrew. Therefore they need to learn this skill
from the onset so they can progress to the level of written expression required from other students in Israel.

Academic writing assistance must also begin with a placement exam, but instead of specific study tracks, students who need help in writing will be given extra lessons as needed. The aim is that by end of the pre-academic program all students will be able to write a short paper in an orderly, clear and coherent manner.

- **Computer skills**

The presence of computers in the haredi sector has risen significantly in recent years. Consequently, nearly all haredi students who reach the academic world know how to operate a computer and are experienced in surfing the Internet. Hence it is worth noting that a haredi individual who decides to study should not have a religious objection to computer use. It is the responsibility of the pre-academic program to present the computer as a work tool in the academic world and in the labor market.

The main topic in the computer skills should be Microsoft Office applications, specifically writing papers in WORD, setting up formulas and calculations, charts, etc., in Excel, and designing presentations in PowerPoint. There is no doubt that the study material in the course will serve the students in the coming years in the academic world and beyond. Apart from this, the course can include more specialized skills in the third semester, such as exposure to the various information systems that are used in degree studies.

**A Preparatory Workshop for Academic Studies – A potential solution to the need for counseling and guidance**

One of the main reasons haredi students drop out of academic studies is that they come to the academic world without relevant information about
the long road ahead of them. Most make a decision to study and just show up to register, with the only information they have based on rumors and recommendations by acquaintances or relatives. Much has been written about the need for counseling and guidance for haredi students, but because of concern that counseling may backfire and deter some students (because being told what a serious commitment is involved may be intimidating), no instrument has yet been developed to provide a solution to this issue.

A possible option may be to conduct a two-day preparation for academic studies workshop (a, before the program commences), in which potential students will be presented with all the relevant information they need, to include the program's prerequisites and components), detailed information about scholarships, minimal acceptance requirements for academic degrees (e.g., pre-academic courses and a standardized college entrance exam). Information should also be presented about the different degrees offered in higher education, including specific academic and departmental requirements for each, an overview of the core subjects studied in each major, with a variety of syllabi available for perusal. The goal for this workshop is for future students to become familiar with the spectrum of requirements for a degree in higher education. It is then vital they understand what this offers them in the job market. This can be done by presenting job opportunities and the average pay scales for holders of various academic degrees.

It is recommended that the second day of the workshop include a session on the subject of learning skills. It is important to remember that haredi students are used to a completely different style of learning from that customary in the academic world. Among other things, they need to be taught how to follow the material in class and take notes, the importance of reviewing the material on one's own, how to study at home, the correct way to prepare for an exam, etc.
The aim of the workshop is not to serve any specific academic institution, but to present all the crucial information about higher education to potential students in a completely objective manner, so that they will know what they are going to have to cope with over the next four years. Therefore, according to our understanding, it should be the responsibility of the Committee for Planning and Budgets in the Ministry of Education (henceforth referred to as the regulator) to produce a booklet that includes all the objective information to be distributed to prospective students, as well as to plan and facilitate a preparatory workshop.

**Ancillary Services**

An alternative solution, albeit more complex, is the model of a fixed budget for counseling and guidance. In this model, each haredi student who registers in an academic institution will be required to undergo a process of counseling and guidance by a recognized one of the counseling and guidance organizations. Receipt of a scholarship/participation in the pre-academic program will be contingent upon meeting this condition. The organizations [providing counseling services] must be independent and completely separate from the academic institutions. Hence, the structure and content of the counseling will be determined in advance by the regulator and it is its responsibility to reconcile the cash benefit of a decreased drop-out rate as a result of counseling with the incurred expenses, and to budget the counseling organizations accordingly.

**The Support Framework**

The Ariav Committee's report discussed in detail the issue of the necessary support framework required for the haredi population:
The Committee recommends that every pre-academic program will be required to operate a counseling and guidance infrastructure for those studying in the program. Today a support framework such as this is provided for Ethiopian students attending the pre-academic programs. Another subject that has been proved to be critical among these populations is creating a personal connection between the pre-academic program and the student. For this purpose, in the context of the budgeting model that will be prepared, the need for a support framework of guidance, direction and assistance for those attending the programs will be taken into account and budgeted accordingly.

(Recommendations of the Public Committee for Examining the Operation of Pre-Academic Preparatory Programs, Specific Recommendations, Section 18.)

The proposed Support Framework is composed of three tiers: financial, academic and personal. Each tier serves to leverage realization of the haredi students' inherent potential. In the first stage, the Support Framework will reduce the drop-out rate, as reasons for dropping tend to be related to a lack of appropriate support. In the second stage, the success of the project will a function of reducing the barrier of fear that stands in the way of haredim who wish to acquire an education, but fear its “secular” influence. We believe that the success of the Support Framework will be the most powerful catalyst for integrating haredi students in higher education.

The types of Support Frameworks recommended are described in detail below.

Ancillary Academic Support

Most students in Israel do not seek academic support. Those that do so only utilize a small percentage of what they are entitled to. As in this
case academic support is extremely important, it should not be optional but an integral part of the curriculum.

Academic support will add prestige to haredi pre-academic programs and will increase the incentives to acquire an education. Reactions to the existing academic support are very positive. It reduces the number of drop outs and mobilizes students to invest the necessary effort.

As stated, reviewing classroom material at home is very important, but the fact that haredi students have families makes this task difficult, if not impossible. Because of this, instituting regular supplementary study time for academic support must be a compulsory part of the curriculum, framework, to which fixed hours should be included once or twice a week, during which the students will review material, prepare homework, and study for exams in any subject. A TA will be available for individual help whenever the study time is scheduled.

The aim of this regular study session is not just to solve the problem difficulty studying at home, but as this model is similar to that in the yeshiva world (see Math studies), it will aide in overcoming the difficulties in transitioning to frontal classroom teaching after years of individually based study. We estimate that implementing regular study sessions will significantly increase the students' own efforts and thereby improve their academic outcomes.

To reduce the drop-out rate there is a great need for continual individual counseling. For this purpose there should be a weekly assessment conducted by the academic director together with the academic staff and the counseling staff. An individual progress report on each student will be presented and updated at each weekly assessment. To make the process more efficient, a short progress report format can be created. Implementing this procedure will result in more time being dedicated to the students with difficulties who are at the highest risk of dropping out.
In accordance with information from the above progress reports, it will be the responsibility of the academic director to assure that special tutoring is provided for students with difficulties. These lessons will be spread out over the entire pre-academic program year at the discretion of the academic director.

Therefore it seems possible to raise the academic level of the program and concomitantly maintain low drop-out rates. The secret is to keep track of each student on an individual and regular basis, and to respond quickly and appropriately to those who have difficulties.

**Individual Support Services**

For the haredi student, the transition to the academic world involves personal hurdles that are completely different from those experienced by the secular student or modern religious (non-haredi) student. The Ariav Committee's report recognized the need for a personal connection with the pre-academic program in handling these difficulties:

*Another subject that has been proved to be critical among these populations is creating a personal connection between the pre-academic program and the students... The model will include the presence of a person in each pre-academic program whose job is to make personal contact with the students, and offer individual guidance.*

*(Specific Recommendations, Section 18)*

Personal contact between haredi students and representatives of the program is very significant. The representative lends a listening ear in times of trouble, support when students feel a desire to leave, and can provide support if they do not receive it at home. The motivation instilled in the students encourages them to invest more effort, and so they achievements are increased and at the same time as dropping out is reduced.
The social coordinator will fill the role of personal representative, and at least one coordinator is needed in each pre-academic program. It is anticipated that this coordinator will continue with relationships formed during the pre-academic program will support the students throughout their degree studies, unofficially. The coordinator will supervise the mentors, and will not necessarily be haredi.

In order that the coordinator fulfills his role properly, there has to be an optimal ratio between the number of students and the coordinator. Criteria for the job of social coordinator must be defined as having counseling experience and the ability to form positive interpersonal relationships. Also records must be kept of students' contacts with the coordinator and periodical evaluations be made of the student's situation, including documentation of the reasons for dropping out of the course, when this occurs.

However, the coordinator alone cannot provide for the level of personal support needed. Therefore, there is a need for more personal support from someone who is intimately familiar with the difficulties and needs of haredi sector. Haredi graduates of pre-academic programs now in degree studies contended with these challenges until recently, and are thus in a unique position to support students in this program.

Personal mentoring will benefit all sides. Haredi bachelor's degree students will serve as mentors for pre-academic program students and will receive a scholarship. Each mentor will work with three to five students, and every pre-academic student will be assigned to a mentor. On the social level, the benefits to both sides are obvious. In terms of academic achievement, personal mentoring will motivate and increase students' commitment, and keep them focused on the subjects in which they have difficulties, and hence tend to allocate less time to, in contrast to what might be expected. Personal mentoring will rectify this.

The social coordinators and personal mentors are the people on the
ground who can provide the needed support services. On the one hand, their role is to keep close tabs to ensure that students invest in and are committed to their studies. On the other hand, they will work to inspire students with self-confidence and to remain committed to the values they came with. Only thus will the students progress from an academic and an ethical point of view.

To ensure that the Support Framework operates as planned, there has to be feedback each semester from students. This will be managed by the social coordinator who will document the program, reach conclusions and make recommendations to be presented to the academic and the mentoring staff in a special meeting once each semester.

**The Economic Support Framework**

*As the main obstacle facing the candidates for study in the pre-academic program is an economic one, raising the subsistence grant given to those attending pre-academic programs who come from these populations is proposed... Ways to enable economic support to be given to the students in pre-academic programs from among these populations should be examined, in accordance with criteria suited to the characteristics of each population.*

*(Specific Recommendations, Section 20a)*

The Economic Support Framework has two purposes: to reduce the economic obstacle faced by haredi students, and no less important, to provide appropriate incentives so students realize their individual potential. The two aims are interconnected, and in practice, the impact of economic incentives is effective because of the existence of economic obstacles.

Therefore, we recommend awarding various semester-long achievement scholarships in each pre-academic program as part of
the Economic Support Framework. k. Achievements scholarships are appropriate for the pre-academic program because they allow the student to experience almost immediate gratification for the effort he invests, and assure him four months free for study. Naturally, pre-academic students awarded scholarships will continue to the degree programs that the PBC [=Planning and Budgeting Committee,] wishes to promote.

In addition, to reinforce the Individual Support Services, personal mentoring scholarships should be awarded to haredi bachelor's degree students who mentor pre-academic students (as described l in Individual Support Services section.)

To direct the other students. those not receiving scholarships, to degree subjects needed by the Israeli economy another solution is required, i.e., conditional subsistence grants. Loans will be given to haredi students in pre-academic programs and degree courses determined by the PBC. They will be given on a monthly basis to students who meet their academic commitments to be paid back at the end of the period of studies. Return payment schedules will be determined as a fixed percentage of graduates' income, a mechanism without the negative implications of a fixed repayment plan. A large part of the interest and linkage should be subsidized (as is customary with student loans) for setting optimal repayment timetables and conditions.

**Conclusion**

In our opinion, judicious use of economic incentives will serve the aims of all relevant actors. There is no doubt that the existence of a proper Economic Support Network will significantly increase the number of haredi students, and at the same time will encourage them to fully realize their individual potential.

We are convinced that the extra investment in haredi students will pay for itself quickly. Increasing the number of haredi students, honing
their abilities and enabling them to realize their inherent individual potential, while reducing the drop-out rate, will lead to their integration in the labor market as equals in jobs that the Israeli economy needs.

Nevertheless, to ensure that this not remain a distant dream, the responsible authorities need assume the additional costs involved in implementing a mandatory Ancillary Support Framework in the new budgetary model that is taking shape at this time.

Acknowledgements

This article is partly based on a Neaman Institute report, which I wrote together with Y. Morgenstern and which was published in 2012 (English-Math-Computer Studies Report, Samuel Neaman Institute):


The author wishes to thank the members of the Project for Integrating Haredim in the Neaman Institute, headed by Dr Reuven Gal, who contributed above all to the genesis of this report. I would also like to thank Yehuda Morgenstern who worked tirelessly to develop and clarify the issues that arose in preparing the report.
"From Skullcap to Mortarboard":
Academic Studies in Ultra-Orthodox Society

Asaf Malhi

The ultra-orthodox (haredi) sector is an important element within the human mosaic that makes up contemporary Israeli society. This sector consists of many communities, streams, and factions, each with characteristics that make each unique and distinct from the general populace. For demographic and economic reasons, profound social changes are taking place today in the haredi population that are expressed, among others things, in the field of higher education. This article reviews the factors underlying the integration of haredim in higher education, and also the challenges and the achievements of haredi graduates in the labor market. In addition, the article provides a glimpse at new national programs for greater integration of haredim in leading academic institutions in order to increase their contribution to Israel's economy and society.

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**Introduction**

For more than a decade profound changes have been evident in the attitude of differing communities within the haredi sector to the world of work and the question of participation in higher education and vocational study frameworks.

These changes are occurring for several reasons, and complement each other: the vast demographic growth of this sector together with changes in Israeli government welfare policy have increased the economic and social distress in the haredi community (Ben Moshe, 2010). Because of this, traditional community jobs—which were common in the past—no longer provide employment for haredi men and women. Higher education is becoming a legitimate, normative path for haredi young adults who wish to become part of the modern labor market in Israel. However, due to the special social-cultural nature of the haredi population, there are presently a number of economic, social and other obstacles that still make it difficult for some of this sector to study in higher education frameworks (Cohen, 2005).

The purpose of this article is to examine the contribution of academic studies to the integration of haredim in the labor market, as well as the obstacles facing haredi men and women who want to enroll in the various study frameworks.

**Social Background – a Survey of the Existing Situation**

There is an intense argument among those researching haredi society regarding the extent of the change in this society's attitude towards vocational and higher education. At the beginning of the process, some time around the end of the 1990s, there was a feeling that the haredi public was facing a historical, social and economic turning-point (Loupo, 2003); a turning point after which, so it seemed then, many
thousands of haredi men and women would participate in academic study and consequently find work in high-level jobs. On the other hand, other researchers pointed out that the demographic growth in the haredi population and the significant rise in the sector's percentile of the general population were likely, relatively speaking, to reduce the significance of any isolated change that might take place in the future in the academic and vocational directions (Ben David, 2009). However, it seems that the growing number of the haredi population applying for academic studies, as well as the widening availability of fields of study and institutions, are evidence that an essential change has begun in the attitude of young haredi adults towards academic and vocational training.

Despite the change, on the whole most haredim apply to institutions that are suited to the ultra-orthodox way of life. These institutions significantly limit the fields of study available to this population. This is testimony that despite the wish to become part of the workforce and the academic world in Israel, most members of the haredi community adhere to the social isolation that has characterized this sector for hundreds of years (Friedman, 1991). Other studies show that more than 90% of haredi students attend institutions suited to the haredi way of life, in which there is segregation between men and women (Malhi, 2012). The current choice of trend in the fields of study also reflects the mainly pragmatic, instrumental attitude of most haredi students towards the world of higher education, which does not imply an ethical change in the importance they attach to religious studies as compared with any other field of study. That is to say, they turn to academic studies mainly due to economic necessity and the need for a livelihood, not out of any kind of intellectual curiosity. However, it is clear that many more than in the past haredi young adults understand that without vocational training or higher education.
education their chances of successfully becoming part of the Israeli labor market will remain low. Therefore the number of haredim who study in higher education is growing significantly.

It is important to note that until a few years ago, it was not at all clear to what extent haredi men and women were interested in higher education, or what the main obstacles were that they had to contend with. Various studies have proven that there are large groups of haredim who wish to take part in vocational or higher education, but face a range of obstacles and difficulties (Malhi, Cohen and Kaufman, 2008; Cohen, 2005). Among the obstacles identified in the above noted 2008 study were significant gaps in knowledge, lack of reliable information about the different study tracks, and a lack of social and economic support in choosing to enter higher education.

In recent years haredi rabbinical authorities have demonstrated a more positive attitude towards general studies, and acquiring a profession has gained a modicum of social acceptance in the haredi world. However, this acceptance is generally obscured from decision-makers and the secular public. This is a limited retroactive acceptance — once the decision to study in higher education has been made — and by and large such consent is neither full nor complete. Presumably the haredi leadership, which is currently undergoing an intense upheaval, still lacks the necessary decisiveness and courage to give legitimacy and open approval to haredi men who study in vocational or higher education for purposes of earning a living, as an integral part of their path of training. In most cases the decisions and consent are given on an individual basis to married or single yeshiva students regarding their religious study or professional future. A short time after marriage, many yeshiva students become aware that they will be unable to continue in the path of Torah study in the long term, because of their inability to earn a living and the lack of Torah-oriented jobs within the haredi community. This fact
causes many to turn to the academic or vocational track in order to find work. They then discover that many obstacles face them, requiring special arrangements for this sector.

The education of haredi women is different from that of the men and secular subjects are not unfamiliar to them. These studies are an integral part of the girls' and women's curriculum in haredi society, and therefore ultra-orthodox women are better able to fit into higher academic studies than most haredi men. At its fringes, haredi society also maintains a few yeshiva high schools that combine Torah and secular studies and today these schools have hundreds of graduates. However, studies of this kind among "the society of scholars" (Friedman, 1991) have not yet become commonplace, and they are not regarded as a normative path of study, particularly not among haredi men attending the "small" (high school age) or "great" (adult) yeshivot.

The educational values of the haredi public are based on the concept that nothing is superior to Torah study and meticulous observance of religious precepts. Earning a living and acquiring a profession, including higher education, are perceived as a necessary evil, and they are secondary in the haredi world's hierarchy of values. This ethos has taken root deeply, mainly among members of the "Lithuanian" communities, which constitute the cultural-social elite of the entire haredi society, and have greatly influenced the instilling of these values in hassidic communities and Sefardi-haredi society as well. This world-view has an impact on the decision-making processes of all haredi young people and their choices of academic and vocational tracks. However, it seems that the change taking place in haredi society regarding higher education, as described by Loupo (2004), has begun to gather momentum in recent years, and is reflected in the absolute number of individuals who choose academic studies and vocational training, and in the variety of professions and study institutions that are adapted to this population.
The trend of participation of men and women from the different haredi communities in academic studies is one of the important indicators of deep changes that have taken place in the past two decades, including the development of modern haredi households. "Modern haredim" is a fairly new phenomenon that has not yet found a distinct community or political expression, but what characterizes it is that concomitant with acquiring an academic profession, developing a career and acquiring Western consumer and leisure habits, these young haredi adults preserve "classic" haredi characteristics that help this sub-group maintain its identity and affiliation with the haredi camp (Sicherman and Cahaner, 2012).

According to data from the Council for Higher Education (CHE), in the 2011–12 academic year there were about 5,970 haredi students (of whom about 42% were men) in a variety of institutions, compared to only 800 haredi students in 2007. The supporters of the current processes of haredi participation in the academic world find reasons for cautious optimism regarding this population's participation in higher education; in their assessment, this is evidence of a significant change in direction among different haredi communities. In contrast, various researchers and economists maintain that the current rate of haredi integration in higher education is not keeping up with this population's demographic growth rate, and that most of the haredi students are women. Moreover, these researchers maintain that there is an inherent problem in that most haredi students study a very limited number of academic fields. According to a study by the Research and Economics Administration in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, about 70% of haredi students study one of the following three subjects: law, business administration, or education and

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3 The Haredi sector's rate of growth is 4.5% annually compared to a growth of 1.6% among the secular-traditional Jewish population (Ben-Moshe, 2010).
teaching (Malhi, 2013). Nevertheless, despite the pessimistic estimates, the data show that the growth in the number of haredi students in academic institutions is linear, as is the increase in the variety of subjects they study. This trend reinforces an optimistic view of the future of haredi students in the academic world and in higher education institutions. We estimate that this trend will increase in the coming years.

At present it is important to note that despite the massive and varied aid that various foundations give to haredi students (men and women), there are still considerable gaps in knowledge and attitudes between haredim and non-haredim and some of the former (men in particular), do not manage to bridge them. These gaps are related to, among other things, the learning methods practiced in the haredi yeshivot. These methods revere study and discussion in pairs (hevruta learning), and they form and consolidate the haredi man's identity and education. This form of study does not fit in with the methods practiced in academic or vocational study systems, as it does not include the requirement for formal examinations and concrete achievements (Hakak, 2004). There is also no doubt that the absence of English studies in the haredi education system, both at the elementary school level (Talmud Torah) and in the yeshivot, is a significant obstacle for men who want to study in academic frameworks in which knowledge of English is a critical tool for study.

On the other hand, the study methods in the haredi sector give an advantage to yeshiva students and haredi men who persevere in religious studies, and these may help them in the course of their studies. Qualities such as studiousness, thoroughness, deferring gratification, and perseverance are "soft" skills which enable some yeshiva students to succeed in the exhausting academic study track. The religious-fundamentalist dedication and devotion involved in intensive religious study enables many haredi yeshiva students to develop the qualities of commitment and meticulous attention to details, which can help in higher
education (Stadler, 2001). However, there are insufficient empirical studies and quantitative findings to confirm the above hypotheses regarding the advantage, or disadvantage, of extended religious study in coping with the academic world.

In any case, there are many obstacles hindering haredi students along the path of successful integration in the world of employment in Israel. These are related mainly to the haredi education system where secular studies are marginal (especially for men), as well as obstacles related to moral support and social legitimacy for higher education and becoming integrated into the Israeli economy. At the same time, there are many characteristics and tools available for the haredi community that may help those interested in doing so to join the world of employment. These characteristics are related to the culture of serious, intensive learning, a high study ethic, and intensive investment by students in achieving objectives. It is important to remember that the haredi population is, by and large, very highly educated (from the point of view of the average number of years of study), and literate, and therefore the nature of the obstacles facing it in integrating in academic institutions is different from those that might be found among other weak populations.4

Main obstacles

Economic Obstacles and Difficulties

Given that the primary reason for going to work is the economic difficulty of the yeshiva student (who is usually a father), in many cases he is unable to pay the cost of his vocational studies. Even if someone can

4 The average number of years studied by a Haredi man is 16.5, compared to 14 years on average for a secular-traditional man (Special analysis by the Research and Economics Administration for a social survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010)
help finance tuition, he will have difficulty persisting because he lacks a
source of livelihood during this period, as during his studies he loses the
minimal subsistence grant he received in the Kollel (yeshiva for married
men). Thus, paradoxically, economic difficulty, instead of being a reason
to work, becomes an obstacle that precludes it. Today there are many
foundations and resources that provide haredi women (mainly) and also
men with a partial or full scholarship for higher education (see detailed
information below). However, despite the extensive economic support
received by a considerable number of haredi students, the economic
obstacle still remains a very significant problem for those who wish to
study in higher education. Haredi students are usually older than their
secular counterparts, they are married and have families during the
period of their studies, and therefore financial difficulty is a significant
barrier. More than 85% of haredi students are married with an average of
3.5 children. About 60% say that the greatest difficulty they face while
attending school is the economic difficulty, despite the fact that they
receive economic aid from various foundations during this period.

Knowledge and Information Obstacles
As stated, the haredi education and socialization systems for haredi
women, and for haredi men in particular, do not prepare them for general
studies – certainly not for academic studies. Satisfying the entrance
conditions set by the academic institutions is an almost impossible task
for most haredi yeshiva graduates who lack a matriculation certificate and
basic knowledge of English, mathematics, and other general subjects. The
pre-academic programs intended for the haredi population do not meet
the requirements of all academic institutions in Israel, but rather only
those of the institution in which they operate. Moreover, the existing pre-
academic programs also have difficulty teaching the knowledge required.
The nature of academic study is in its essence different from Torah study.
The obligation to write papers and take academic examinations is foreign to the haredi student, and makes it very difficult for yeshiva graduates to integrate and succeed in the world of higher education in Israel. These difficulties are expressed primarily in the exact sciences and in the fields of engineering, which consequentially incur a particularly high drop-out rate.

As well as the knowledge gaps and barriers between the yeshiva and the academic worlds, haredi students lack information when they begin academic studies and choose a field of study. Nevertheless, there is some improvement in the information channels that are intended for haredi students when they choose an academic track. Today, there are information pamphlets about the various educational institutions and study tracks, as well as additional information that can be found on the Internet or obtained from the supporting foundations and institutions that provide academic counseling and guidance. Furthermore, in 2009 the Haredi Students' Union was established and helps by offering counseling, information and guidance for this population. Yet, because of the characteristics of most of the haredi students, their "social capital" is characterized by closed social networks and little trust of general society. Hence, they still tend to rely to a great degree on informal information about employment opportunities deriving from a particular study track, and this "grapevine" may adversely affect their chances of finding work in future.

Social-Cultural Obstacles
Despite the fact that most of haredi students say they received support from their spouses and members of their community when they applied to higher education, various social-cultural gaps between the general population and the haredi community are significant impediments to higher and academic education. Academic studies are still generally
opposed within the haredi community, as they are perceived as a threat to the haredi world-view and way of life. They are connected with the Hebrew word *Haskala* (referring to the Enlightenment Movement), which symbolizes the modernization and secularization that caused Jews to abandon religion and the religious way of life in past centuries. They fear that the scientific method that propones empirical examination of reality and attributes great weight to research and science may contest the perceptions that underlie the haredi world-view and harm the students’ religious practices and beliefs. Content that completely contradicts the haredi world-view is sometimes taught in various academic courses, content which according to Jewish *halakhic* law is forbidden to read or listen to. This opposition relates less to applied fields such as economics, computers, business administration and law – fields that many haredim have entered – but there is always a vague anxiety about blurring boundaries between the different spheres.

In addition to these potential moral obstacles and the problem of course content, academic study can be seen as a genuine threat to the status of the Torah scholar in the haredi community. The rise in the number of people with advanced academic degrees in this community may give them a high social status in the community, and this may contradict the exclusive prestige that currently is accorded to Torah scholars.

**Obstacles in the Number of Study Institutions**
Because of logistic obstacles, i.e., at the beginning of the 21st century there were only three academic institutions adapted to the haredi way of life and these offered only a small number of study tracks, designated academic institutions for the haredi population came into being in the last decade. These do not always insist on a high level of study and research and the study tracks they offer are limited, relative to leading academic institutions. Supposedly, the study tracks in these frameworks are a tight
match with the demands of the labor market, and therefore there is a real risk of flooding the labor market with haredi academics in already saturated fields, such as law and business administration. This situation may lead to failure and frustration among haredi graduates who have invested many years and a great sum of money to acquire an academic degree that does not guarantee their place in the general labor market. This is not the situation at the moment, but if the present option of study fields in the haredi sector continues, there is a reasonable chance that this will be the result.\(^5\)

**Existing Study Tracks**

A survey of existing hurdles is incomplete without an initial classification of the institutions in which haredi students study today. This typology will help us to understand the complexity of the distribution of academic study tracks intended for this sector. The institutions are divided into several main categories, according to the extent to which they are suited to the needs of haredim, and also according to their organizational division. In the 2011–12 academic year there were four different types of academic institutions in which haredi men and women were enrolled (Cohen and Malkhi, 2011).

- **Haredi branches of private colleges:** These are designated study frameworks adapted to the haredi public. They operate within private colleges intended for the general public, and award an academic degree recognized by the Council for Higher Education (CHE). These branches operate in the following institutions: the Lander Institute, the Safed Academic College, the Ono Academic

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\(^5\) A study by Kaufman and Marciano (2013) shows that 88% of law and business administration graduates find work in the fields they studied, but their search for work is longer and more difficult than that of their secular counterparts who graduated from the same institution and field of study.
College, and the Ashkelon Academic College. It is estimated that in 2011 a total of 1,745 haredi men and 1,040 women attended these colleges. The Lander Institute and the Ono Academic College are not financed by the CHE, and they teach primarily law and business administration.

• **Independent institutions:** These are independent academic institutions that have operated in the field of academic training for many years, and therefore are recognized, supervised and financed by the CHE. Among the independent institutions that are adapted to the haredi public are the Jerusalem College of Technology (The Lev Academic Center – JCT) and the Michlalah - Jerusalem College in Bayit VaGan (women only). About 1,580 haredi women and 340 haredi men study in these institutions. The courses in JCT focus on state-of-the-art engineering and computer science, information systems, health, and nursing. The Michlalah Jerusalem College in Bayit VaGan is an educational college preparing students for a career in education and education-related endeavors.

• **Haredi extension colleges:** These colleges are a channel through which major academic institutions can enroll haredi students. Such colleges operate via Bar Ilan University, Haifa University and several other academically accredited institutions. In 2002 the CHE, in recognition of the unique social-cultural character and needs of haredi students, permitted the opening of two such extension colleges: The Jerusalem Haredi College, founded by Mrs. Adina Bar-Shalom, and the Haredi College of Bnei Brak (Mivhar). About 1,300 haredi women and 800 men study social sciences, education and educational counseling, social work, computer science and business administration in these two institutions.

• **The Open University:** Studies in this framework are mainly independent and conducted on a number of campuses of the
different branches of the Open University. The directors of the Open University make great efforts to help haredi students succeed in the first stages of study. Some 245 haredi men and around 75 women attend the Open University.

- **General institutions:** There are a few dozen haredi students who have chosen to study in general academic frameworks in various universities and colleges. It is difficult to estimate their exact number, but it appears that there are approximately 75 women and another 150 men.

**Foundations and Aid Programs**

- **The Kemach Foundation:** The Kemach Foundation (a Hebrew acronym that stands for Haredi Professional Advancement) is the most significant entity providing financial aid for haredim who want to begin academic or vocational studies. The Foundation opened at the end of 2007 with the aim of enabling haredi young adults to extricate themselves from the cycle of poverty through study in academic and vocational tracks that would lead to earning a decent living. Thus far, the Foundation has helped more than 3,500 haredi men and women by providing vocational guidance and financial aid in the form of scholarships and living subsidies during the period of their studies.6

The establishment of the Kemach Foundation at the end of 2007 did not occur in a vacuum, rather it was the outcome of changes taking place in haredi society. The founders and initiators of this Foundation, which has increased the extent and quality of its

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activities over the years of its existence, identified the genuine, immediate need of many hundreds of young haredim to break the cycle of poverty and earn a decent income through academic and vocational studies. The Foundation also supports haredi students in the government's "Haredim Le'Atidam" program (see below).

• **Yedidut Toronto:** The Yedidut Toronto Foundation (supported by the Friedberg Charitable Foundation) offers scholarships and subsistence grants to individuals from the haredi population who want to study for academic degrees in Israel's higher education institutions. This initiative aims to address the growing interest in recent years among the haredi population in Israel to enter the labor market in a variety of professions and thus increase their earning power. In 2011 Yedidut Toronto supported some 515 haredi students (men only), mainly in the fields of business administration, the exact sciences, engineering, computer science and psychology.

• **The "Haredim Le'Atidam" program:** This is a government program carried out in partnership with the JDC-Tevet (Employment Drive Project). It supports haredi men only, who study a variety of professions. This project is a consequence of prior policy research by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies which identified the extent of the economic obstacles faced when in higher education. The program has been operating since 2009, and the scope of its support reaches around NIS 28 million. So far, roughly 780 haredi men aged 23 and above have studied in this framework, in a variety of fields. The program also provides employment counseling and guidance during, and after, studies.

• **"Atidim–Halamish":** The Atidim–Halamish program is intended for haredi men who wish to study engineering or computer science at the Technion or in the Jerusalem College of Technology (JCT, The Lev Institute) in Jerusalem. This is a program of limited extent, its
graduates number about 45, and today it provides support to some 260 students. The haredi men's knowledge gaps are particularly wide in technical spheres, hence the drop-out rate is fairly high.

In summary, most of the programs and foundations help by providing scholarships and discounted tuition for the students, and in some cases subsistence grants are also granted, mainly to haredi men who study in the “Haredim Le’Atidam” program in engineering and exact sciences, which is high on the government's preference.

**The Contribution of Academic Studies to Finding Work**

Various studies show that despite the range of difficulties and obstacles described above, academic studies are the best springboard for helping haredim enter the general labor market. Despite the difficulties, both objective and subjective, experienced by graduates in looking for work, most of them eventually find work in the job market in their fields of study.

Today, many in the haredi sector acquire higher education and training in institutions that are adapted to the ultra-orthodox way of life. Naturally, given the significant social-cultural differences between this population and the general employment market, the training does not necessarily help prepare haredim for the “mixed gender” work environment in which he may find himself. At the same time, the haredi employee must adapt himself to the modern world of work in a non-haredi environment. Research findings (Malhi, 2010; Kaufman and Marciano, 2013) demonstrate that the percentage of haredi graduates who find work is between 78% and 90%. More than half of the haredi men and women who acquired an academic degree worked in non-haredi workplaces (that is, a workplace in which most of the workers and managers were not haredi), yet most reported that their haredi way of life had not been
harmed by this work environment. Nonetheless, the process of seeking employment and the social stigmas that the academic graduates encounter after their studies are often perceived as exhausting and frustrating. Sometimes, graduates do not find work as employees, and they therefore turn to entrepreneurship and open an independent business (a widespread phenomenon, mainly among law graduates). Among academic graduates there is also a certain social segregation that results from the social and cultural gaps in workplaces that have had to adapt themselves to haredi workers. For example, the two studies mentioned above also showed significant wage gaps between haredi and non-haredi academics with similar work experience and of a similar age. About half of the haredi academics reported that their pay had only improved slightly following their academic studies (about 46% of these haredi academics had worked before their studies). The reason for the wage gaps is the relatively few hours worked, especially by haredi women, and also because of secular employers' pre-conceived ideas about the abilities and skills of haredi academics, resulting in their earning a wage 35% lower than that of their secular counterparts. There are likely additional reasons for the wage gaps, but this subject is beyond the scope of this paper.

The findings in the research literature and the perceived impression of the mood among haredi activists and public figures all testify to a significant change in the community's attitude towards higher and academic studies as the best path for finding jobs in a variety of fields. The present growth in the number of haredi students, along with the increasing variety of institutions and study tracks suited to the characteristics and the needs of most haredi young people, enable much more convenient integration of haredi men and women into the world of academia than in the last decade. However, the social segregation of haredi academics into separate frameworks and the focus on a limited number of fields of study may make it more difficult for future graduates to find work in Israel’s
general labor market. When they reach the stage of studying in higher education, most haredi students clearly prefer a framework that is adapted to their unique way of life. Therefore, when they begin seeking work, they may face obstacles, as generally this will require the haredi college graduate to contend with a work environment that does not match his way of life. At this point, haredi graduates may have difficulties finding good jobs in professions such as law and business administration, as these fields are saturated, so the demand for employees is low, but these are precisely the fields that many haredi prefer. On the other hand, there are problems on the part of haredi workers who have acquired academic education in colleges and schools that are not among the leading academic institutions in Israel. The disadvantages of these institutions also stems from the fact that they are not affiliated with leading research institutes, and therefore do not always manage to maintain a suitable academic level. In these institutions responsibility for administrative management, which is under the aegis of the heads of the academic training institutes and the colleges, is distinct from academic responsibility, which is in the hands of the universities, and this is a distinction that has a certain impact on the academic level.

**The Current Policy and Possible Solutions for Integrating Haredim in Academic Frameworks**

The above noted structural problems are known to the policy-makers in the CHE and the Ministry of Finance officials responsible for this system. Therefore, CHE directors want to formulate principles of action that would enable maintaining universal academic principles and values, while clearly recognizing the special needs and characteristics of the haredi population, which is particularly heterogeneous. The CHE policy recognizes the need for separate frameworks for haredi men and women in the different stages of study, especially in the pre-academic program.
phase (quite necessary to make up knowledge gaps particularly among the men, who lack basic general information and academic skills). The separate framework is required both because of opposition by some haredi students to studying in mixed classes (both from the point of view of gender and the integration of haredim and non-haredim), and because of the large gaps in the level of knowledge among most of the male haredi population in comparison to their secular counterparts. These gaps are a primary reason for a majority of male haredi students to drop out already in the initial stages of their studies.

The CHE's viewpoint also recognizes the need of haredi women for separate study frameworks. This need is not derived from gaps in knowledge (that while are present, are less wide than among haredi men), but primarily because of difficulty inherent in integrating them socially-culturally in general study frameworks. This is particularly true of single women, but also of married women and mothers who need study frameworks that suit their social distinctiveness and needs. Therefore, because it is understood that the haredi population has special characteristics and needs, and to uphold the principle of equal opportunities, the CHE now encourages separate campuses and academic frameworks for haredi men and women (under the auspices of the leading academic institutions, including the Hebrew University, Bar Ilan University, the Technion, Haifa University, and others, along with enhancement and enrichment of the existing targeted academic programs.

Opening campuses or academic units near research institutions is to be executed according to the following guidelines with the goal of increasing the number of haredi students in the academic world and expanding the available fields of study open to them:

• Assure proximity between the haredi academic center and the main academic center (a radius of 2–3 km only);
• A single academic institution will be granted academic and administrative responsibility for the separate haredi studies framework;
• The quality of teaching in the existing academic institutions will be assured and tie with the leading academic institution will be reinforced;
• The number of haredi students will be increased and an economic incentives will be provided to the institutions so that a variety of study tracks will be offered.

This policy is aimed at encouraging haredi students to study engineering, exact sciences, medicine, and other currently less chosen subjects. To date, these fields are significantly underrepresented among the haredi academic population. The CHE also wishes to reach an objective of about 23,000 haredi students per year, so that the proportion of haredi academics in Israel will be proportional to the relative proportion of the haredim in the overall Israeli population (9%-11%). Part of the CHE policy is based on the assumption that in order to meet these objectives there is a need for guidance and mentoring of haredi students in the exact science and engineering. The special support to be provided to haredi students in academia will include tutoring, teaching of study skills, educational counseling and pedagogic guidance from the beginning stage of the pre-academic program.

It appears that the tendency of haredi men and women to participate in academic studies is more widespread among those haredi young people who have already become part of the labor market. The work experience reinforces this population's need to acquire an academic degree to increase their employment prospects. It therefore appears that it is easier to encourage haredim who have already entered the job market to study in higher education. this makes it important to examine the possibilities of adapting higher education programs and frameworks to haredim who are employed.
Furthermore, there are still serious gaps in information among the haredi population regarding their choice of studies and the specific study track and resultant employment consequences. Therefore, the option of governmental involvement in making full, complete, reliable and up-to-date information accessible to assist haredi young people enter higher education must be weighed. Presumably, the quality of the information about the academic world among the haredi public is not high. The social networks and the social capital of the haredi young people are completely different from those of their secular counterparts, and therefore, it is difficult to estimate to what degree the information that is distributed to the target population in current communication channels does indeed contribute to their successful integration in higher education that is appropriate to their abilities and qualities. Consequently, it is appropriate to plan and to develop additional effective and more suitable methods for transmitting the relevant information and making it accessible to this population. Moreover, in view of the many economic difficulties with which haredi students contend, additional models of economic aid and subsistence grants for some of the haredi students should be evaluated, especially for [those in] demanding fields, such as engineering and the exact sciences.

**Conclusion**

Haredi society in Israel, in its different varieties, has been undergoing intense changes for more than a decade that are reflected in a variety of spheres and areas of life. Entering the academic world is part of a continuous process of widening the circle of the haredi middle class which is integrating into the job market, and to an extent, also into the general leisure and consumer culture of Israeli society (Kaplan and Stadler, 2012; Cahaner and Sicherman, 2012). However, it appears that the integration of haredi young people into the academic world is not
evidence of ideological changes in the haredi ethos or values regarding the centrality and necessity of the Torah world and Torah scholarship. This scholarliness is still a fundamental value among all segments of haredi society, even if many haredim cannot fulfill this ideal.

The gap between the mortarboard and the skullcap is indeed shrinking, but the process itself exposes many gaps and obstacles that need to be addressed and which mandate that government budgets be allocated to assist those young haredi adults who see academia as an effective path into the labor market. The attitude towards academic study in this society remains largely instrumental, even if there are degrees of personal choice regarding the field of study. Only at the margins of this society is there a thirst for knowledge and a broad general education, which is in opposition to the fundamentalist values and social norms regarding education in haredi society. Only time will tell if we are facing a dramatic ethical and ideological change among the haredi middle class who are acquiring academic education, or whether this is a only a necessary stage of unavoidable transition- into the labor market.
A System to Supplement Ultra-Orthodox Education – The Issue of Women

Maayan Shahaf

Many articles have been written about the question of secular studies in the ultra-orthodox (haredi) education system, but there is no prospect of a genuine solution in this area. It is obvious to everyone that the alarming numbers of first grade students today who will finish school at the age of 18 without any real training for adult life in a Western country will have a significant impact on Israel’s future. Mostly, attention is given to men’s studies, as yeshiva studies do not leave any room for secular studies. However the place of women’s studies is absent from the discourse. And although there is less of a problem here, women do not yet have study tracks that will help them realize their potential and they remain part of the statistics of poverty and limited general studies.

This article will discuss a supplementary educational system that we recommend setting up for the benefit of haredi women.

The Current Situation – 'Yes' to High School, 'No' to Matriculation

In eighth grade haredi girls finish elementary school and begin secondary school – which is the equivalent of junior and senior high school. Afterwards, nearly all of them continue from the age of 18 to two additional years in a seminary (13th and 14th grades), most of them for teacher training. Some of the seminaries also offer other tracks. Although
officially only the last two years are part of the seminary, they refer to the entire framework, from eighth grade, as “seminary.”

In high school, secular subjects are taught as well as religious ones. The religious studies consist of Tanakh (Bible) classes (that are taught according to the various traditional commentators), Jewish studies, and Jewish halakhic law. The function of the religious studies is to teach a way of life that is proper, from a haredi viewpoint, in all its aspects – in the personal, family and social spheres.

Despite the importance of religious studies, secular studies take up a considerable part of the time in this framework. Unlike the men's yeshiva, where religious studies are the sole purpose of the framework, the girls' educational framework has a more practical nature and prepares them for the life of a haredi woman – and this also includes work.

Secular studies continue from 8th grade to 12th grade, and include mathematics, English, Hebrew (language, written expression, and grammar), history (Jewish and general), literature, nature and geography. During this period, together with the knowledge learned, the girls also acquire study habits in class and at home, are prepared for exams and, in practice, acquire the ability to take matriculation exams in all subjects. However most of them do not do so. About 4,500 Haredi girls take the Henrietta Szold Institute's exams each year, according to an arrangement that has existed for many years. In the haredi periphery there are indeed frameworks where the students take matriculation exams (the seminaries in Haifa, Rehovot, Netanya, Petah Tikva, and others), but those in the two big cities (Jerusalem and Bnei Brak) and in the all-haredi towns (Betar, Modi'in Illit and Elad) do not.

There are many explanations for the phenomenon, but there is only one real reason that the seminary students do not take the matriculation exams in 11th and 12th grades: the concern – justified from the point of view of the heads of the system – that the girls will “escape” to universities
with the help of the matriculation certificate, instead of continuing in the familiar course of study of 13th–14th grades to receive a teaching diploma.

One can understand the concern. Most of these young women finish 12th grade single, and a college or university in which there are a secular majority, mixed classes and a student atmosphere, is an acute and dangerous transition for young women who until then have met the strict modesty rules of the haredi Beit Ya'akov girls' schools.

**Is There a Reason to Continue this Situation?**

However, this concern should have been a thing of the past. Today, there are many institutions that offer an academic track for haredi students. Mivhar in Bnei Brak and the Haredi College in Jerusalem offer a high level university degree and a diploma identical to that given in the universities. The Jerusalem College of Technology's various branches offer degree courses in engineering as well as a BA program in a haredi framework. In addition, many colleges and universities have launched haredi campuses in recent years: beginning with the Ono Academic College, which is the longest-standing in the field, and ending with Hadassah College, Hebrew University, the Technion, the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, and others – as part of the Trachtenberg Program for establishing haredi study programs under the auspices of the major colleges and universities. More and more academic courses are opening for the haredi population. It is important to note that the young women themselves prefer to attend a haredi school, for many reasons.

Therefore, the concerns about “escaping” to frameworks that are unsuitable for women is misplaced nowadays, and the decision not to take matriculation exams is still in force solely because of inertia and because of the fear of the unknown that is so typical of haredi institutions.
Given that the concern of the heads of the haredi education system is backed up with fears of an economic nature – the inferiority of the seminary education from the point of view of the young women who have already completed matriculation – it does not appear that it is possible to persuade the seminaries to prepare students for matriculation exams. In fact, there is no need to. The view that is emerging in the relationship between the state of Israel and the haredi world has been changing in recent years. As a consequence of social, economic and technological processes that have been taking place in the past decade in haredi society, the course of the haredi younger generation's integration is being determined by this generation itself.

The rabbinical establishment prefers not to delineate a clear line in certain issues, and haredi society has individual free choice (in this case – parents together with the young women). This population has a set of values that limits its choices (the problem of mixed classes of males and females, the problem of women teachers in a men's class). The second limitation is the possibilities available on the ground.

At the moment it appears that the demand for haredi higher education significantly exceeds the supply. A state that wants to encourage schools of this kind must make them accessible and open them to the haredi population. The first step is providing accessibility, opening up the possibility of participating in higher education from a bureaucratic perspective; the second step is opening the school itself.

**A Giant Step by the Ministry of Education**

In March 2012 the Ministry of Education took one of the most significant policy steps in recent years – recognition of the “Szold Diploma.” This step, when announced, made newspaper headlines that day, but did not give rise to public debate. This is, therefore, the opportunity to clarify the significance of this step.
The Szold Diploma (external examinations, or "externals" as the students call them), consists of two external exams in history (Jewish history and general history), external exams in grammar and written expression, one exam in English and one in mathematics. Recognizing the diploma produced two study units in history, two in Hebrew, three in English and two in mathematics.

Before this diploma was recognized, every graduate of a haredi high school who wanted to complete a full matriculation had to retake all the subjects, even though she had studied and been tested in some of them. Because of this, few graduates chose to do this, for obvious reasons. But now, following recognition of this diploma, every high school graduate has 12 years of schooling, the ability to study in class and at home, a broad foundation in all subjects and an additional nine study units and three subjects in which she does not have to take an exam (an additional study unit in mathematics is required as a condition for matriculation). The result is the opportunity to complete matriculation in one year only.

**The Implications upon the Choices Available to Young Women**

But not everything is rosy. Although this policy significantly advances the graduates of haredi seminaries, they are faced with two difficult choices. One possibility is to attempt to complete all the matriculation exams in one year. The high school graduates are required to complete at least one study unit in mathematics, three units in Tanakh, two units in literature or three in Jewish studies, two units in civics, three units in one elective subject, and four or five units in a subject at an advanced level. Some of them also want to take exams at the level of four study units in math and English (relinquishing the points that were recognized in the external exams in these subjects). Several months are required for the more difficult subjects, and matriculation
exams in the Haredi track (Tanakh, Judaism/literature and civics) are given only in the summer. So they have to take all the exams at the same time.

It is clear to everyone that most of the high school graduates will not manage to optimally study all the material alone, will have difficulty spreading their studies over the course of a year, and will certainly have difficulty in passing a number of exams in one or two sessions. Those who succeed in doing so will certainly not achieve the scores for which they have inherent potential, and will have difficulty reaching the grade average required to be accepted by the various haredi academic institutions. For example, the condition of acceptance to the various departments in the Haredi College in Jerusalem is an average matriculation grade above 85, some departments require an average of 90, and some also require four study units in English or mathematics.

This is not a theoretical issue. On October 31, 2012, there was heavy traffic in the Examinations Division's branch office on Kanfei Nesharim Street in Jerusalem – this was the last day to register as an external candidate since the Ministry of Education recognized the external examinations. Many haredi women, mostly aged 18–22, hurry to register and be tested alone in the coming winter and summer exams. They are all sure they will manage to be accepted at the end of this year to one of the haredi colleges. Each has a friend/sister/aunt who once registered for matriculation exams and finished them in two or three months. They know very little about the subjects, the books or the hours of study required. It goes without saying that the parents of most of them cannot afford to pay for private teachers to support the study of the above-mentioned subjects.

In the opinion of various professionals, only a small percentage will meet their objective and manage to achieve the required grade average at the end of this year. A large majority will understand that attempting to complete such a large number of subjects (especially when it includes
four study units in math and English), is almost impossible without the help of teachers.

This brings us to the second possibility. There are innumerable institutes and schools for completing matriculation, from the large, well-known companies and institutes for completing matriculation that are to be found in every big city, to the small single classes that have flourished recently, some of them in cooperation with schools throughout the country. But they all have one thing in common – they have mixed classes. There is no chance that a haredi father would permit his daughter who has just finished seminary (or 14th grade in a seminary) to enter such a class. Those who would agree to this are not regarded as haredi in the eyes of the community. This is not just a question of segregation between men and women, but the absence of haredi teachers (similar to the teachers familiar to the students from school), and the lack of an environment suitable for haredi young women (most of them are still unmarried). All the institutes' classes are situated in secular areas. Apart from this, there are problems of a lack of information regarding the academic abilities that the young women bring with them from the seminary, an inability to provide incentives for them to invest an effort in class and at home, and the inability of the existing programs to offer matriculation-completion courses for the haredi public.

However the most significant incompatibility from the point of view of this public is the price. Matriculation-completion studies of the type mentioned above may reach NIS 20,000. There are hardly any haredi parents who would be able to finance such a cost.

Therefore, despite the giant step taken by the Ministry of Education, the women face two bad alternatives, from their point of view: a mixed class – which they will not attend in any case, or studying alone at home independently, which presumably will not enable them to achieve the longed-for objective.
The Supplementary Step – A Complete Solution for 50% of the Haredi Population

I maintain that there is a third option: It is possible to establish study programs for haredi young women, programs in which all the teachers are haredi, all the women in the class are haredi, and the surroundings are suitable. This means classes located in haredi areas with a haredi matriculation curriculum that takes the abilities of this specific group into account.

This would be a program that can motivate the women to make an effort in class and at home, and knows how to persuade the haredi public of its legitimacy, a fact that will enable a significant part of the 4,500 young women who finish Szold exams each year to register immediately afterwards for matriculation exams. Most important – it will be a program with a "haredi price tag", i.e., one that haredim can afford.

For such a school to become legitimate, and also to preclude the large seminaries from forbidding participation in it (for many reasons, including financial ones), it must not appear as an official Ministry of Education program. Such a program would be perceived as a crude attempt by the Ministry of Education to try to influence haredi education, as in many haredi circles this could be perceived as attempted coercion on the part of the secular establishment. If the seminaries were to revoke legitimacy, no haredi parents would send their daughters to such a school, as the social consequences for them and their families would be severe.

However, it is possible to act in another way, i.e., to act wisely by presenting the project as coming from within the haredi sector itself, operating with its consent and authority where necessary, and serving only the women who need it. When parents who are paying every month for seminary, as well as for a course to complete matriculation ask for help from the Ministry of Education, no one will be able to deny the legitimacy of this act.
This is the only way that the Ministry of Education can carefully, gradually and wisely become involved in the haredi education system. This will pave the way for creating, for the first time, an educational system that can supplement traditional Haredi education.

**Action that has Already Been taken and Needs Expansion and Public Cooperation**

An experiment like this was carried out this year. Twenty-six young haredi women aged 18–22 from all streams of haredi Jewry are studying in a small class in Jerusalem. They arrive in the evening and study math, English, civics and the other matriculation subjects. All the teachers are haredi women with many years’ experience in preparing students for matriculation exams, and so is the principal. The class is in a haredi neighborhood, near a large seminary. The women receive all the necessary tools for success in the exams. High quality teaching, ongoing pedagogic monitoring of each student, and supervision of progress are the basic conditions of the program. In addition, the staff continuously track the students' abilities, difficulties and limitations, so that they can continue to improve the realization of their potential within the existing limitations.

We expect that at the end of this year the students will have full matriculation diplomas with high grade averages, which will enable them to enter suitable academic institutions and realize their inherent potential. This will happen with greater certainty than for young women who register for matriculation exams independently.

Today there are already demands to widen the scope of the program. But the vast difference between a few classes and 4,500 students a year is a function of price and operational ability. Only a large body such as the Ministry of Education is capable of organizing a study project so extensive that it is able to absorb 4,500 students each year. In addition,
involvement by the Ministry of Education will make it possible to lower the cost to the parents to a level that every Haredi person can afford.

Thus, there is a realistic solution for 50% of the general studies problem in the haredi educational system. The solution is not at all complicated, it can be put into operation in the immediate term, and its cost is low relative to other public projects. This solution has been presented to the decision-makers and division heads in the Ministry of Education. If they wish to, they can significantly influence the direction in which Israel is heading in the coming decades.
Attitudes to the World of Work and Employability Strengths among Ultra-Orthodox Working Women

Liat Kulik

The aim of this study was to compare attitudes to the world of work among ultra-orthodox (haredi) women who are in the labor market with the attitudes of haredi women who are not in the labor market. In addition, the study compared haredi women with non-haredi women in parameters of mental and economic welfare and in the manner in which they solve the tension between the home and work. The research findings show that haredi women who are in the labor market are more empowered than haredi women who are not in the labor market. Haredi women also report greater satisfaction with life that non-haredi women; however, they evaluate their economic situation as worse than do non-haredi women. Haredi women tend to reduce the feeling of the conflict between the home and work with a variety of strategies; the outstanding ones are the strategy of "setting priorities" and "delegating authority."

Introduction and Description of the Research Design

The study presented in this article deals with research of some aspects related to the world-view of haredi women regarding the world of work. This examination is carried out by attempting to understand the women's world view in a wide perspective. This relates to motives for going to

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work, reasons for rejecting job offers, means of looking for work and methods used by the women who work to solve the conflict of roles that is created in the attempt to cope with the demands of the home and those of work.

The research sample consisted of 549 women. The various issues dealt with in the study were examined by comparing haredi women who are in the labor market (325) with haredi women who are not in the labor market (224). Examination of the research subjects used a combination of two research methods: a quantitative method, in which most of the research data was gathered, and a qualitative method, in which certain issues related to the research aims were examined in depth. Sampling points in the quantitative study were haredi population concentrations throughout Israel. The quantitative data was gathered in structured questionnaires, which were distributed to the research participants by research assistants from the haredi community. The qualitative research data was gathered in in-depth interviews of a limited sample of working and non-working haredi women.

Examining Research Participants' Feeling of Wellbeing

The general wellbeing and mental health of the research participants was examined both according to their self-evaluation of the various wellbeing parameters in their lives, and according to comparison between them and a group of non-haredi women, who represent women in general Israeli society, and comparison of the haredi women in the study who work with the haredi women who do not work. The parameters examined were assessment of physical health, evaluation of their economic situation, and assessment of their emotional wellbeing (feelings of psychological and political empowerment, vocational resilience, and everyday feelings of pressure).
Generally, the haredi women in the study, both those who do work and those who do not, expressed much greater satisfaction with life than that of non-haredi women, and they evaluated their health situation as better, even though their economic situation was inferior to that of women in general Israeli society who are not haredi. The differences between the haredi women and non-haredi women in all aspects of mental resilience can be ascribed to the different world-views of the two groups of women. The haredi women's world view apparently serves them as a source of strength in coping with life situations. The value-systems that are inherent in Jewish religious belief such as frugality, belief in divine providence, and seeing the positive side of life – all these mean that haredi women have a more positive outlook than non-haredi women, even if their economic situation is worse. This positive world view is expressed not only in the haredi women's high level of satisfaction with life, but also in their evaluation of their health status.

An inferior economic situation is mainly a characteristic of haredi women who do not work. These women evaluated their economic situation as poor more significantly than the women who are in the labor market. In contrast to what was discovered in this parameter of wellbeing, significant differences were not found between haredi women who work and haredi women who do not work in their evaluation of their health and in their evaluation of general satisfaction with life. However, different directions between the groups of women are apparent: haredi women who do not work report a better health situation than the women who work, and the women who work report slightly higher satisfaction with life than the women who do not work. A possible explanation for these different directions is that the inferior economic situation of the women who do not work projects on their satisfaction with life. On the other hand, the pressures experienced by the women who work because of the simultaneous demands of work and home affect their feeling of health. In any case, the differences between the groups of women in
evaluating their health and overall satisfaction with life are slight and are not statistically significant.

Regarding the wellbeing parameters of a psychological nature that were evaluated in this study, differences were found between haredi women who work and haredi women who do not work in empowerment parameter and the vocational resilience. As expected, the women who work feel more psychologically empowered than the others, and are characterized by sensing greater vocational resilience. However, as the nature of this study is only correlational, it is impossible to determine definitely the direction of the link between psychological empowerment, resilience, and the trend to go out to work. That is to say, it is impossible to determine whether the women's presence in the labor market influences their psychological feeling of wellbeing, or whether their psychological wellbeing leads them to succeed in finding work.

In contrast to the differences that were found between the women who work and those who do not in the feeling of psychological empowerment and vocational resilience, differences were not found in the feeling of political empowerment and everyday feelings of pressure. In relation to political empowerment, it can be generally stated that although the women who work are empowered at a personal level and have a sense of vocational resilience, they do not actualize their feeling of empowerment at a community level more than women who do not work, and they do not lead social processes that could lead to the empowerment of other women in their community.

**The Work-Family Relationship**

The findings that concern the work-family relaship relate to the nature of the division of labor in the home between the couple, the time devoted to housework, and the research participants' main sources of support.
Similar to other data processing carried out in the study, in this subject, too, our point of view was one of comparison between women who work and women who do not work.

Regarding the division of labor in the home between the couple, women who do not work devote more time to housework than women who work. Apart from the logic of the fact that women who do not work are at home for most hours of the day, and therefore devote more time to looking after the needs of the family and housework than women who work outside the home, there may be another explanation for this finding. It may be that the difference between the two groups of women in the time they devote to the home is derived from the fact that women who do not work have a larger number of small children who require their care relative to the women who work (this data is based on the research findings). The number of small children can also explain another study finding, which indicates that the women who do not work receive help from their husbands in everything related to looking after the family more than the women who work. From here it can be inferred that the degree to which haredi husbands help in housework does not depend on the women's economic contribution to the livelihood of the home. The opposite is the case: a woman who does not earn a living receives more household help from her husband than a woman who earns a living. In any case, whether the woman earns a living or not, the findings show that the husband is the women's main source of support. Analysis of the women's other sources of support demonstrates that their main sources of support after their husbands are family members, particularly the woman's parents. Support from sources based on less primary relationships, such as social workers or religious authorities, has a low ranking in the women's sources of support. A source of official support – social workers – is in the last place, and is apparently the least preferred by haredi women for any kind of support in times of need.
Strategies for Coping with Home-Work Conflicts

From an overall perspective, the study examined strategies of coping with home-work conflicts among the research participants who are in the labor market. This was done by comparing haredi women's strategies for coping with home-work conflicts with the coping strategies of non-haredi women. The main comparison between the groups focused on some of the central aspects: we asked – do haredi women use coping strategies similar to those of non-haredi women, but with a different intensity?

The study's findings reveal both similarities and differences. In both groups of women, the most common coping strategy in the home sphere is "delegating responsibilities," followed by "setting priorities," and accepting "good enough," followed by being "Superwoman." In the work sphere, in both groups of women the ranking of use of strategies was as follows: "Superwoman", "setting priorities", "delegating responsibilities," and being "good enough."

It is therefore possible to sum up by saying that in both groups of women the "Superwoman" coping strategy is the most common one at work, whereas it is the least used strategy at home. Examination of the ranking of strategies for coping with home-work conflicts shows that both groups of women primarily rely upon the strategies of "delegating responsibilities" and "setting priorities." Along with this similarity between haredi and non-haredi women in the ranking of their use of strategies for coping with the work conflict, as noted, there was found to be a difference between them that was expressed in their use of each one of the strategies separately. This difference was evident in four main coping strategies: "Superwoman at home," "prioritizing at home," "good enough at work," and "prioritizing at work." Haredi women tend to use the "Superwoman at home" and the "prioritizing at home" strategies more than non-haredi women. It was also found that haredi women tend to use the "good enough at work" and the "prioritizing at work" strategies.
more than non-haredi women. If so, it can be claimed that despite the similarity that exists between the groups of women in ranking their use of strategies for coping with the work-home conflicts, haredi women tend more than non-haredi women to invest in the home more than at work, as is reflected in the combination of strategies that distinguish between them and non-haredi women, specifically: "Superwoman at home" and "good enough at work." Moreover, to support these strategies, haredi women also use the strategies of “prioritizing at home” and "prioritizing at work" more than non-haredi women.

These findings are evidence of different styles of coping in the groups of women. Generally, it appears that haredi women use the four strategies with greater intensity than non-haredi women. Among haredi women there is a greater attempt than among non-haredi women to protect family life from the destructive effects of the conflict of roles. Apart from this, it appears that haredi women have internalized use of the prioritizing" coping strategy more than non-haredi women – both at home and at work. Internalizing this strategy could derive from the fact that haredi women care for a relatively large number of children, and consequently the number of tasks for which they are responsible is more than that of non-haredi women. In order to cope effectively with the burden of the tasks they face, haredi women adopt a method of differentiating between various tasks, and determine a hierarchy for executing them, both at home and at work.

The qualitative research findings add to understanding the coping strategies that haredi women who work employ to solve the conflict of roles between home and work. The most notable insight that arose from the qualitative study is the wide variety of both practical and emotional strategies that haredi women use. The main practical strategies are time management, sensible merging of tasks, asking for help from those around them to cope with pressure, and setting clear goals. For accomplishment.
Their primary emotional strategy is adopting a relaxed attitude in the face of the pressures of reality such as: compromise, focusing on the positive and idealizing reality, and making sure they "recharge their batteries" when necessary.

The qualitative study findings also demonstrate that most of the research participants do not reject the idea of work or even a career (that is, work that necessitates investing great effort and involves pursuing professional advancement), on condition that family life will not be harmed as a consequence of this investment in work. The dilemma that is characteristic of women who are not haredi regarding the order of priorities between home and work is not characteristic of the haredi women in the study, most of whom devote time and energy to a career only after the family's needs have been addressed.

**Attitudes toward Work**

Most attitudes relating to the world of work that were examined in this study were discerned both in the group of haredi women who work and in the group of haredi women who do not work. These included potential reasons for rejecting work offered, reasons for working, and the degree of readiness to join the labor market. In addition, the level of intensity in searching for work was assessed only in the group of women who do not work.

Four kinds of potential reasons were identified that could cause women to reject job offers. These questions were posed in both the quantitative study and qualitative study to the women who work and to those who do not; this was because of the general nature of these questions which examined basic attitudes towards factors that would preclude women's working outside the home. The four kinds of reasons were: extrinsic reasons, which refer to the work conditions; intrinsic
reasons, which refer to the content of the work; religious reasons, which refer to work that employs secular people and to work that gives service to secular people; and social reasons, which refer to the incompatibility between the job image and the norms of haredi society.

The main finding is that both among the women who work and the women who do not, there is no one reason that stands out among the others for rejecting job offers. This result indicates that haredi women attach similar importance to all the reasons that were examined in the study: conditions, content, the religious level of colleagues and customers, and the nature of the work. The fact that rejecting work offered does not happen primarily based upon religious considerations, but as a result of varied considerations, as the findings show, is perhaps evidence of changes taking place in the haredi world in the field of women's employment. These changes express a trend towards openness in religious attitudes towards women going out to work.

The comparison between women who work and those who do not in terms of the robustness of their reasons for rejecting job offers reveals that the similarity between them is greater than the differences. The groups of women are differentiated from each other in the robustness of job offer rejections only for one reason – social considerations. Women who do not work tend to reject job offers for social reasons more than women who work. Examination of what comprises social reasons for rejecting work raises issues such as: “The job is perceived by the public as men's work” or “My family would object if I were to start working in this job.” It appears that women who do not work are fussier than women who work in everything related to the social aspect and social image of work, which could reflect negatively upon their family. It may be that attaching great importance to the social aspect of work serves women who do not work as post factum justification for not working. Thus, according to this position, the importance women who do not work attach to the social
aspect of employment derives from their own wish to reduce the sense of dissonance they feel because they are not working.

Regarding going out to work, the reasons that motivate the women are varied and of differing levels of impact. The economic factor is a powerful motivation both for the women who work and those who do not, in deciding whether to go out to work. In both groups of women, the most outstanding reason to go out to work is the desire not to be dependent on others. Other reasons for going to work are connected with the need to support the household and raise their standard of living. Fairly high in their hierarchy of reasons to go to work is the desire to enable their husbands to study Torah “with peace of mind.” Slightly lower in the hierarchy is the desire for personal development. Apart from the above, according to the qualitative research the sense of fulfilling a mission is also a significant motivator for going out to work, albeit less so than the aforementioned reasons. Contribution to the community and to society are reasons that are rated relatively low in the hierarchy of motives for going out to work. Generally, the main reasons noted by the women for going out to work fall into four categories, ranking in descending order as follows: first, to avoid economic dependency on others; second, to support the family and improve its standard of living; third, to enable the husband to study “with peace of mind”; and fourth, self-development, a sense of mission, and to contribute to society.

Apart from exploring the hierarchy of reasons for going out to work, we evaluated the differences between the women who work and those who do not as to what reasons in their view are a significant motivation for working. As this assessment was general and was formulated as a question regarding the women's general attitude to going out to work (even if the woman did not actually work), we asked this question of women who do not work. In this research method we assumed that a question about the potential reasons for going out to work was also
significant for the women who do not work, as it reveals their general attitudes to going out to work, whether they work outside the home or not.

The research findings show only slight differences between the women who work and those who do not in everything concerning their general attitudes in relation to reasons for going out to work: the women who work are motivated more than the women who do not work by the desire not to be economically dependent on others, and they are also motivated by the perception of work as a social mission. On the other hand, women who do not work mention the contribution to the community, and the desire to enable their husbands to study Torah, more than do the women who work. The qualitative research findings add insight into the research participants' reasons for going out to work; as well as economic reasons, the women presented a variety of interest-related reasons. Their views and opinions about work can also be inferred from their descriptions of “what they like about work.” The women enjoyed positive feedback from the fact of their working. The feeling of giving, being creative, and helping the community through work are significant motivations for going out to work. It appears that the open nature of the qualitative question, which provided research participants with the opportunities to express themselves in a more individualized manner than the quantitative study, revealed their views about fulfillment aspects of work and its inherent potential for self-expression.

To complete the picture of the main reasons that motivated these women to go out to work, we asked them what work they would like for their daughters. Analysis of their answers highlighted some outstanding issues, which appear in most of the answers in one way or another. Most of the mothers attribute great importance to their daughters' acquiring education. That is to say, as in the general Israeli society, most haredi women, whether they work or not, see education as a channel to mobility
in the field of work, which can improve their daughters' standard of living. Not only this, the women want their daughters to have work that is enjoyable and contributes to their personal development. Apart from the above, the women attribute importance to work conditions, and would like conditions that will enable their daughters to develop in work, but will not harm their primary and basic commitment to their home and their children.

**Motivation for Joining the Labor Market and the Sense of Vocational Resilience**

The motivation for women entering the labor market that was investigated in this study is the willingness to devote time to traveling to (and from) work. This study indicated that women who do not work are prepared to travel to and from work for nearly one and a half hours, compared to women who do work, who are prepared to travel less than an hour.

Regarding the level of effort they were willing to invest in seeking work, which in this study was an indicator of motivation to participate in the labor market, the most common method of looking for work among haredi women who do not work, is looking for work in the newspapers, followed by looking into vocational training programs. Asking acquaintances, friends or important people in the community about jobs is also prevalent, to a degree. Other methods, such as approaching the employment service, are less popular among the women who were interviewed in the study.

As stated, the vocational resilience parameter is composed of three sub-parameters: the feeling of employment competence, commitment to work, and openness to changes. The basic assumption was that women who score "high" in these qualities will also be more employable and will demonstrate a greater tendency to integrate into the labor market. It was
found that the vocational resilience of the research participants, in all parameters, corresponds negatively to the robustness of the women's tendency to reject job offers for various reasons. Vocational resilience was found to be related to a large number of wellbeing parameters, such as: a feeling of empowerment, satisfaction with life, and self-esteem. Women who work are characterized by greater vocational resilience than those who do not, and this is even more prominent among women who are the main breadwinners in their families. Finally, it was found that the more the women's gender attitudes (attitudes relating to the roles of men and women in the home, at work, and in society) were egalitarian, the higher their vocational resilience, in general. Regarding the group of variants that most explain this phenomenon, it was found that the centrality of work and self-esteem contribute significantly to explaining the three sub-parameters of resilience. The women's gender attitudes also contribute to explaining their vocational resilience in certain parameters. It is therefore possible to make a general claim that women who attribute centrality to work, and have high self-esteem and egalitarian gender attitudes will tend to show greater vocational resilience than others.

**Practical Recommendations and Conclusions**

Most of the women in the study recognize the value of education as a path to employment. As evidence, most want their daughters to acquire a profession that will enable them to earn a good living. Because of this, vocational training tracks for haredi women that are appropriate for their religious character should be expanded and promoted. Today, there are colleges that operate in Israel that provide academic studies for haredi women for therapeutic professions (social work, speech therapy, and so on). Opportunities for these women to train in those institutions should
be expanded, and the study period made easier for them, for example: by providing childcare solutions.

since haredi women, especially those who do not work, see their economic situation as relatively inferior to that of women in non-haredi Israeli society, making things easier for them in everything related to the tuition and encouraging them to acquire an education in professions that are in demand, is recommended. It is possible to accomplish this with subsistence grants, which will enable them to be free to study. In addition, women's employment should be encouraged by provision of remunerative and worthy employment, so that going out to work will be worth the effort, even after paying for childcare and other services used by women who are mothers of large families.

As psychological empowerment and vocational resilience were found to be variants that predict women's ability to integrate into the labor market, there should be an attempt to reinforce these characteristics among haredi women, through intervention at the community and individual level. For example, it is recommended that frameworks for women's empowerment and impacting attitudes towards vocational resilience be opened in haredi community centers. These workshops should be conducted by professional women in the haredi sector to neutralize potential cultural and values gaps between those facilitating the workshops and the participants. In addition, to encourage women to enter the labor market, ancillary support should be provided, such as: teaching women in community centers how to reduce tension between home and work, and teaching them time and budget management skills.

As the women in the study who did not work demonstrated low work-seeking skills, those who wish to integrate into the labor force should be encouraged to seek work by employing using a larger number of methods. It may be that some of the skills necessary for job hunting in today's economy are unfamiliar to them, and therefore, awareness of
these skills should be increased. They can learn how to write résumés, how to behave in job interviews, and how to look for relevant job opportunity information in the community centers. Some of the agencies that deal with fostering women's employment do indeed take steps, but it is apparent that their accessibility to haredi women needs to be increased. Therefore, job-seeking workshops should be opened that are suited to these women's religious character, and in addition to make those being offered in existing frameworks accessible to haredi women.

Researchers in the field of employment today emphasize that the skills needed to enter the labor force are “transferable skills,” also referred to as “soft skills.” These are skills that maintain their value beyond any specific job, and apply to different situations in the world of work, such as: social skills, learning and communication skills, creativity, self-confidence, personal responsibility, and self-discipline. These skills are necessary both for finding work and advancing in the workplace, and can be transferred to a new job. In other words, they enable “survival” in today's dynamic labor market. Nowadays, it is customary to say that the emphasis in coping in the world of work has shifted from job security to employability security. Therefore, the importance of the "soft' skills" component of an individual's employment potential should be emphasized to those responsible for developing curricula in the seminaries in which most haredi girls are educated, and this learning should be extended for as many years as possible. The seminaries should also focus on familiarization with the work world, emphasizing important developments in technology, the business sector, and labor relations. Understanding global processes that are occurring today is essential for absorbing haredi women in the labor force.

Recently much has been said about the changes that are taking place in Haredi society in Israel in everything related to women's employment; Haredi women are increasing their commitment to the world of work,
training for professions that are in demand in the economy, and are exposed to the norms of non-Haredi society because of the fact of their great contact with them in the labor market. These women are agents of change, who bring the views of the world outside the Haredi sector into the community. Nevertheless these changes are a 'double-edged sword,' as on the one hand they can lead to integrating the Haredi community in the general Israeli environment, but on the other hand they could cause tension in relations between the women and the community, and even arouse tension in the marital unit.

Therefore policy-makers and employers should have the sensitivity necessary to help women overcome the cultural gaps between the two worlds, tradition opposite modernity, bring them close to the 'central stream' of Israeli society without causing a breach or a crisis in their world and their environment.
Training Teaching Staff in "Achiya":
Pioneers in an Ultra-orthodox Boys’ School

Roi Canaan*

Achiya is an ultra-orthodox (haredi) teacher training organization. This article surveys its development from its establishment in the 1990s up to the present by examining it with regard to parallel processes that have taken place in Haredi and in non-Haredi society. The special status of the teacher in Haredi society is viewed in light of religious, cultural and employment aspects that are the backdrop for his professional training.

Modest Beginnings

On a stormy winter day in 1994, a group of 24 young men met in a modest building in Bnei Brak. They were pioneers whose goal was to lay new foundations for haredi education. They were among the first to try and apply norms of academic professional training to role of the male teacher-educator (the "melamed"). The melamed's educational role had played an integral part of Jewish life for hundreds of years both in the Diaspora and in Israel. The institution in which those young men studied, Achiya, had been established a year previously to address the needs of learning disabled or developmentally delayed children in the haredi community. This was the first course designed to train expert 'melamdim in the field of special education. The students, Achiya and the course itself, were to develop into an extensive network of training, counseling and care, meeting a need that at up to that time had not been addressed.

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This development was parallel to a period of fascinating social change in haredi society.

In this article I will try to sketch an outline of the growth of Achiya's teacher training center network, and to describe the social processes taking place at the same time in both Haredi society and in non-Haredi society that enabled its development.

**Growth and Development**

In the first years of its existence, the scope of Achiya's operations was limited – a few dozen students were trained in one or two classes. However in 2000, the Ministry of Education recognized Achiya as a teacher training institute, and it began to grow. Four years later, when a degree course in conjunction with Bar Ilan University in educational counseling and in didactic assessment was established, there were already 360 students in 11 classes. The growth continued and by 2012 Achiya had 1,710 students enrolled in 46 classes. These students come from all groups and factions of the haredi public, including Lithuanians, hassidim from different groups and Sephardim (Jews whose origins are in Muslim countries), residents of large haredi towns, people from the periphery of Israel and even representatives of communities abroad. Presently there are 14 educational training centers throughout Israel that are branches of the main center in Bnei Brak.
Organizational development kept in step with the growth in numbers. The course in special education has remained the biggest in the teacher training center. In addition, courses focusing on regular education, educational counseling, developmental aid and early childhood teaching (a course still in its early stages) were initiated. Hopefully, in the near future, training courses will be launched for training counsellors to work
with Haredi at-risk teenagers and for training therapists to handle the emotional needs of the Haredi child and his family.

At the same time educational frameworks such as learning centers, child development units, language kindergartens and rehabilitative centers in Bnei Brak and Elad have been founded and are staffed by graduates of Achiya.

**Training in Achiya**

At the onset of the program, it was not easy to coordinate academic norms with those of the Haredi population. When developing the curriculum, the institute's directors were careful to avoid issues that might hurt the feelings of the haredi students. Male students are taught only by men; courses take place in gender-separated buildings; the only books allowed in the center's library are professional literature; access to computers is according to permitted religious rules. Moreover, the staff also insist on contending with content that is not easy for the haredi students. They have to take courses that pose problems for them; for example, on the subject of the complex status of the special needs child, or about the difficulties of students who drop out of the yeshiva world and become social outcasts.

The profile of students who acquire their training in Achiya is very different from that of regular teacher training colleges. While in the general public teachers are mainly women, Achiya trains men, yeshiva students and *kollel* graduates (married men with families). There is a relatively wider age-gap between them, most aged between 24-50, than is the norm in Israeli society. Another unique characteristic is related to the Achiya students' employment background. In the first years, most of the students were teachers who had taught before they came to Achiya and wanted to improve their teaching skills (and to acquire an official
teaching diploma). Today, too, about 65% of the students have previous teaching background, while about 30% of them are Yeshiva students who have no teaching experience.

**The students’ employment background**
(Students in 2009 academic year)

![Pie chart showing employment background]

While Achiya students with a background in teaching have varying professional experience and newly graduated yeshiva students have none, the lack of pedagogic background is common to both groups. When Achiya was established such experience was not required, and the only condition for acceptance as a teacher was proficiency in *Torah* (Jewish Law). It should be remembered that the study method practiced in the yeshiva is completely different from what is customary in the secular education system or in the academic world. For instance, most students who studied in Achiya had never previously encountered a lesson plan (like many of their fellow-teachers who served as counselors in youth movements or in the army). The difference in teaching methods obviously influenced the character of training in Achiya. In order to bridge the gaps, unique methods were developed for teaching Talmud,
for developing language skills and for using digital means to cope with reading disorders.

**The Wider Context – Currents and Counter-Currents**

Achiya's rapid growth should be examined against the background of changing haredi society. Haredi society is characterized as a 'society of scholars' (in the words of Prof. Menachem Friedman), a society that has devoted itself to Torah study, in which the young men spend most of their time in the yeshiva, the *kollel* [yeshiva for married men] or *beit midrash* [study house] because *Toratam omanutam* [=Torah study is their profession], accordingly participates minimally in the work force; only 30% of haredi men are in the job market.

However, this ratio is gradually changing. Dr Yaakov Lupo has pointed to a change in attitude towards the working world in haredi society. According to him, this change began in 1996, as a result of a deep dialectic process that began due to haredi society becoming increasingly stronger and more institutionalized since the establishment of the State of Israel. This process has a few causes: the *yeshivot* number tens of thousands of students, and it became increasingly clear that not everyone is suitable to be a scholar; many boys began to drop out of yeshiva, and the community, which only respected serious scholars, did not find a place for them. The yeshiva establishment faced criticism, not only from outside but also from the new haredi press. Finally, there was an increasing desire in the haredi community to raise the standard of living (at the same time as similar processes that began

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in secular society), which was especially remarkable given the severe economic situation of haredi society from the middle of the 1990s, and which deteriorated further due to cuts in child allowances during 2003–4. All these factors encouraged the development of new institutions that offered professional academic training for men, such as the Haredi Center for Professional Training and Achiya (which trains teachers and education professionals).

As expected, the change in the attitude to the labor market did not take place without internal opposition. This focused on attacking 'secular studies,' a controversial issue since the time of the Talmud. On the one hand, “Since the day that the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, blessed by He, has nothing in this world but the four cubits of halakha alone” (Talmud Bavli, Berakhot, 8a). On the other hand, “It is good to combine Torah study with a worldly occupation, for the effort involved in both makes one forget sin, and Torah study without an occupation will in the end fail and lead to sin” (Ethics of the Fathers Chapter 2, Mishna 2). In recent generations this division has deepened: in the face of the abandonment of Batei Midrash (study halls) in the period of the Haskala (Enlightenment) movement. In addition, the temptations of the Zionist movement had to be resisted. As a result the Musar (Jewish Ethical) movement came into being along with the restrictive decrees that have put barriers around haredi society in the last generation. Achiya, whose founders only wanted to address the needs of children in distress, found itself, contrary to its original intention, on the firing line. This is a haredi body that is subject to Torah opinion, and its directors did not dream of disobeying their rabbis. At the same time, Achiya operates in cooperation with a recognized academic institution, Bar Ilan University, and with government authorities, instilling in its

3 Ibid., pp. 15–20.

Training teaching staff in "Achiya": Pioneers in the Ultra-Orthodox Boys' School
students methods and approaches that are also based on 'the wisdom of the nations' (based on the words of the sages who said 'If you are told that there is wisdom among the nations, believe it'). Moreover, Achiya operates in one of the most sensitive areas of the haredi world – the government education system.

It is hard for a secular individual, even one accustomed to the world of education, to appreciate the daring necessary for a haredi teacher to attempt to broaden and increase pedagogic knowledge necessary for his teaching. In a world whose purpose is to train scholars, the heder and the "small' and "great" yeshivot (the institutions which are parallel, more or less, to kindergartens and elementary schools, middle school, and high school through college, respectively) have decisive importance. Furthermore, haredi society today is proud of an absence of change, maintaining a tradition that is regarded as being as ancient as the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, and nowhere is that tradition more entrenched than in the heder. The method of learning the alphabet, the use of the Torah as the sole textbook, the practice of studying in pairs are all perceived as cornerstones whose removal would topple the entire educational building. This structure is not only the paved road along which the child marches toward his future, as education is perceived in the secular world, but is a religious precept, an essential component in the relationship between man, the Jewish nation and God.

Achiya operates within this sensitive area. In the 20 years of its activity the institute's staff has initiated innovative methods, training teachers where teachers formerly had had no pedagogic training apart from studying in the kollet; introducing new study methods aimed at students with special needs and in recent years, initiating genuinely innovative programs for developing language skills (in cooperation with JDC Israel – Ashalim), and the program for introducing scientific thought in preschool. Accomplishing all this without breaching religious
limits necessitated great caution and careful maneuvering. Every step was presented to leading rabbis and authorities with an explanation as to why it was necessary, how it would be carried out and why it did not “undermine the foundations of the holy society”, (in the words of a placards), but actually supported them. “We are not revolutionaries!” says Yaakov Albrecht, the first head of Achiya's training center, “We are returning to the style of haredi life that existed in the past.” In this way, the institute's staff has managed, despite some attacks and protests, to remain within the central stream of haredi society until now.

It is notable that caution and remaining in the shadow of the rabbis would not have helped Achiya had the haredi world not also been gradually changing. The haredi Holy of Holies—education—has also begun to change, and there is no better mirror than the image of the teacher to demonstrate this. If in the past, as noted above, nothing was required of the teacher other than knowledge, today it is understood that he must be equipped with other skills, such as educational methods that necessitate study. This perception has been slowly accepted in the haredi world and has infiltrated the ranks of haredi education. First, it became apparent that advancing children in special education required study methods that are not just textual study of the Torah, such as, physical activity and learning through play; then these methods were gradually introduced to children in preschool and the lower grades who are not excellent students. Today, the idea that it is better for teachers of completely typical children to have broad pedagogic knowledge is taking root. It is fascinating to try and imagine what further educational changes haredi society will adopt in future, what changes will remain out of bounds and what innovations originating in Torah-haredi culture will be adopted by general society.
A Gate to the Labor Market

Achiya needed to conduct negotiations no less delicate with the secular world. Representatives of this world – universities, government ministries, local authorities and foundations – did not believe that Achiya's intention was to erode the foundations of society. They recognized, from a relatively early stage, their good intentions of advancing haredi education. But still no small effort was required in order to allay suspicion towards the haredi world, bridge the cultural gap and translate the different languages spoken by the two sides. In the past decade, as the understanding that increased integration of haredim in the labor market is essential for the Israeli economy has been recognized by the “Establishment” and particularly in the Ministries of Finance and Education, the Council for Higher Education and the Planning and Budgeting Committee, so Achiya found increased willingness on the part of the latter organizations for discussion and creating joint projects. From its establishment, Achiya was another mechanism on the way to integration in the labor market. In this context, the target was mainly the various haredi education systems, a vast employment body that is stable even in times of recession, as nearly every new annual intake of haredi children is larger than the previous one. Most Achiya graduates, about 81%, are employed in these systems. Outstanding graduates are today part of the supervisory systems of the 'recognized but unofficial' division of the Ministry of Education, and many other graduates have been absorbed in Achiya's and other intervention arrangements.
Absorption of graduates in the labor market

(Graduates of 2009 academic year – sample-based investigation)

It may very well be that in future the desire to integrate the haredi public, particularly men, in the world of employment, will make it necessary to include core subjects, as well, in the training system. Haredim who acquire these subjects in academic study frameworks, in pre-academic programs or in training centers, will be professional teachers with proven teaching skills. They will advance their students, who study in the recognized but unofficial institutions, and this will also permeate the unrecognized institutions. It is to be hoped that the these students will find it easier in the future to become integrated in a variety of different employment tracks and perhaps even within the academic world itself.
How to 'Make a Likeness':
An Art Institute for the Ultra-Orthodox Public

Y. R. Sharabani

How It All Began

Whenever I speak about the existence of an art institute in the ultra-orthodox (haredi) sector, I am always, but always, met with a raised eyebrow and the question: "Art? In the haredi sector? How is this possible, when it seemingly contradicts the well-known prohibition of "'You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image or any likeness?'" (The Ten Commandments, Exodus 20: 2-17).

If you, too, are asking this question or thinking of it, I will preempt you with an answer: the prohibition on making an image consists of two aspects:

A. "You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image or any likeness."
The intention is that it is forbidden to make anything for the purpose of idolatry

(Maimonides, Laws of Idolatry, Chapter 7, Halakha 9);

B. "You shall not make...an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below "(Exodus 20:4). The sages interpreted this verse as meaning that one must not make a complete image of a human being, and likewise one must not sculpt the sun and moon, nor may one sculpt together the four images engraved on the throne of the Creator of the universe in the description of the chariot in the book of Ezekiel: human, lion, eagle and ox

(Maimonides, Laws of Idolatry, Chapter 7, Halakha 10–11).
Everything else that is not included in these specific prohibitions is permitted according to Jewish law and does not contradict its principles. Now that this matter has been settled and the picture has been clarified, I can begin to tell you how such a school was actually established.

The art school was born as a result of the vision of two women artists in the haredi community: the late Mrs. Rivka Blau and the artist Mrs. Frieda Rein. Through their artistic work and teaching these two women discovered the great potential and thirst for institutionalized art studies among the haredi public. They approached Mr. Itzik Marsha, a creative artist himself, who was head of the Arts Division in the Jerusalem Municipality, and Rabbi Meir Halahmi, then the director of the “Services for Haredi Society and Youth Division” in the Jerusalem municipality, and asked to open a creative arts center for the haredi public.

The request was modest, but at the time it sounded illogical – art and the haredi public? How exactly can they go together?

Fortunately, the request reached far-sighted people of vision who were great believers in the right of everyone to create. The two women's certainty that the need existed within the haredi public removed any doubt in the minds of the municipal decision-makers, and they set out together on a joint journey into unchartered waters with an unknown course of future development.

Swift, Natural Development

Since then, as they say “the rest is history.” In 1992, at the joint initiative of the Arts, Culture and Leisure Administration, the Department for Plastic Arts, and the Torah Culture Division in the Jerusalem Municipality, and in cooperation with the Gross Community Administration, “Oman” [=artist in Hebrew] was established.
As in all stories, in the beginning it was a small and unknown institution, but obstinate enough to grow, break out and bring the tidings of art to the haredi public. The first winds of change began with workshops for children and teens. The children were given the opportunity to create without templates and patterns. They were offered a large, interesting variety of materials, and the experience of creating and the happiness it brought the children provided the impetus to increase the center's unique approach and offer art activities to women, children with special needs, welfare recipients and the elderly.

Over time the number of participants grew, providing overwhelming evidence of great enthusiasm and the powerful thirst for artistic activity existing in the haredi community. Both the visionaries and the people of action were surprised and moved at the public response and the large number of workshop participants. The development of the art center was received completely naturally, and was readily accepted by the population, as it operates according to the haredi public's strict values and is under the guidance of rabbi of the Romema neighborhood. An example of this is the fact that activities are not offered for boys over the age of nine, as the supervising rabbis do not want boys attending any enrichment activities outside the Talmud Torah.

After three years of extensive community activity accompanied by great public enthusiasm, an "artmobile" was introduced. Its function is to take the workshops out of the center and bring art to everyplace possible in the haredi community: schools, community centers, retirement homes, public and private events, summer day camps and Talmud Torahs (religious boys' elementary schools). The artmobile arrived at a great variety of venues and events equipped with an abundance of equipment and educational art kits. The initiative of the artmobile has proven to be a resounding success: it has over 10,000 participants in its various activities annually.
This exciting development gave rise to the idea to train women as arts instructors who would teach children to create, express themselves and develop their imagination through the experience of using a variety of different materials, rather than copying, as was customary in crafts lessons in the haredi sector.

The Special Concept of Oman

The first course for arts instructors began, and with it the seed of the development of the center's professional unit. As noted above, the center was named “Oman” and continued to grow. Oman has become a leader and a significant pathbreaker in the field of art for the haredi public, and gradually a number of professional departments opened in response to public demand. There are now four departments granting a diploma: the departments of plastic arts, photography and digital media, jewelry and ceramic design. These professional departments operate in the framework of an arts institute; studies take place twice a week, about 16 hours weekly, and are spread over two years.

The students' initial meeting with formal art studies is often an intense experience that empowers and leads to changes in many aspects of their lives. For example, if at the beginning of the year the typical student's aim is to paint an oil painting for her living room, or photograph a child on the occasion of his first-hair-cutting ceremony, by the end of the year they realize the significance of arts studies from a deeper, more encompassing viewpoint. The study programs teach students to distinguish the differences between the arts and handicrafts, and to develop their observational skills and individual expressive abilities, their awareness of the environment, and events transpiring around them.

Students in Oman reach their peak in learning and achievement at the end of the second year when they exhibit their works in an annual exhibition. This exhibition is very significant for the students, for whom
this is the first time they display their art work to the general public, and specifically for the haredi public, for whom this is almost their only opportunity to visit an art exhibition that is regarded by them as “kosher” (i.e., rabbinically endorsed).

The works displayed in the exhibition span a wide range and are derived from the students' inner worlds. These are personal interpretations of each artist's social and cultural experiences. In many of the works we find that the Torah, the foundation stone in the world of the religious Jew, serves as a source of inspiration and the underpinning for the idea behind the creative work. There are also works on display that depict daily life and issues that occupy haredi public discourse in the haredi communities.

Only 20 people attended the opening event of the exhibition the first year, and this included exhibitors and staff members! Over the years, as the school has developed and the level of public awareness has expanded, and hence some 500 individuals attended the tenth annual exhibition event.

Figure 1: The source of inspiration for this work is an ancient custom of Chabad Hassidim to give a new bride a spoon, a key and a fish, which allude to the wish that the bride will be blessed with divine abundance in her new life: children, life and food.
Figure 2-3: The source of inspiration for these two work is the never-ending cycle of laundry in the life of the mother of a large family.
Source of the School's Prestige

Thanks to the high level of study, the professional, dedicated teaching staff, and the state-of-the-art technical equipment, Oman has gained a prestigious reputation in the community of professional artists. In 2008 this status led Oman to mount a first-of-its-kind exhibit in cooperation with the Jerusalem Foundation, which ran concurrently with our annual student and graduate exhibition. The name of the special exhibit was "Adam-Ma?" (literally, "Mankind, What is He?"), which is also a play on the Hebrew word "adama", which means earth, soil. This theme was chosen because of its connection to the Sabbatical year and the subsequent return of the Jewish people in Israel to the world of work and corporeality. For this exhibit we collected works from Oman's storeroom each of which reflected to a degree the existential need to relate to the connection of Mankind to his surroundings and of the Jew to his "place." In the students' and graduates' exhibit each displayed works in the medium of her chosen course of study, using a variety of styles and techniques.

Figure 4:
Inside the Adam-ma exhibition, 2008
Artistic Activity in the Community

Together with our professionalization of art studies, Oman has also engaged in impressive development in our community division. Over the past three years the artmobile has been successful in bringing art to schools through the “Designing a Study Environment” project. In this project the artmobile offers a comprehensive approach to planning and setting up environments for art studies, beginning with dialogue with the school's educational staff, through planning the space and its details, preparing design sketches, to final execution of the project.

Apparently, there were days when school principals found it difficult to understand the value of this project. They preferred to keep to the old, familiar, conventional concepts of how to decorate classroom or corridor walls. They would simply telephone a painter or a graphic artist who offered services for a reasonable price, and explain what they wanted and where. Once a money was agreed upon, the order was placed. What part did the students play in this? In the best case, they watched the decorations being assembled, and in the worst case they did not even see the process, because the decorations were hung/painted on the walls of the school while the girls were doing their homework in the afternoons.

"Schools should be decorated with the work produced by the school's students," says the vice principal of Oman and director of the artmobile project. "The arrival of a special artist to a school unites all the students and together with them, she designs walls with content and messages, creating a special, magical feeling of joy of creation. Through this process, the students know that they are part of a work of art that is planned and executed by an artist, and not merely busy themselves with decorations. The beauty of this activity is that it enables everyone to take part at their own pace. Those who are pedantic can do work that requires concentration and accuracy, those who like the feel of paint on their hands..."
can paint as much as they want, and those who need to expend energy can find tasks that suit them. This is a project in which there are no strong or weak students. Everyone does good work, everyone succeeds.”

The changes that have taken place on school walls outshine the old method. From a crack to an opening, to a window and then a door, today it can be said that we are talking about open gates. More and more school principals want to join the project and offer their students the opportunity to create and decorate their study areas.

From the point of view of Oman, the added value of this project is that through designing the educational environment we engender change in the conventional crafts lessons, imbuing them with more artistic content and an emphasis on creative freedom with maximum allowance for each student’s self-expression.

In 2013 there was an additional, impressive, path-breaking achievement with the establishment of an arts academy for the haredi sector, in cooperation with Bezalel: The Jerusalem Academy for Art and Design. The Council for Higher Education (CHE) authorized the opening of two departments: the Department of Plastic Arts and the Department of Architecture. Studies in these departments will award eligible students a Bachelor’s degree.

Awareness of the complexity of this undertaking was very high, and both Oman and the Bezalel Academy saw this as an important challenge and believed that with mutual respect and maximum goodwill, all potential problems could be overcome, whether they were minor or major. We were convinced it would be possible to grant the haredi public the opportunity to study art at a high level, without compromising their values or the Jewish religious law as they interpret it. There was never any intent to change the haredi sector, but rather to provide it with an equal opportunity, and expose it to the world of art in a way that would be acceptable to their worldview, and in lies the secret of this project’s
success. Studies take place at Aman, and at this stage they are for women only. The syllabus and the faculty are adapted to the haredi public.

**An Ending and a New Beginning**

Following the CHE’s recognition of Oman as an academic institution in 2014, it was decided that the school will encompass three divisions:

- Community activities
- Certificate studies
- Academic studies

Our vision for the short and long term is to create a campus for art that will be a center for design and education within the haredi public, while developing broad-based community activities. A campus like this, teeming with activity in the heart of Jerusalem, can set a cultural and arts agenda for the haredi public, both in sphere of professional studies and community programming.
A Personal Reading of a Study about the Emergence of Haredi Middle-Class in Israel

Mayer Fialkoff

A Review of
Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy:
The Emerging Haredi Middle Class in Israel

By Haim Zicherman and Lee Cahaner, The Israel Democracy Institute 2012

Ultra-orthodox Jews, commonly referred to as haredim (plural, haredi singular), are situated at the center of an extended public debate in Israel regarding universal compulsory military service and expanding participation in the labor force. Yet, despite its large and growing population, haredim are little understood by outsiders. The very term “haredi” lacks adequate definition.

Research Findings

In 2012, Dr. Haim Zicherman and Dr. Lee Cahaner, under the aegis of the Israel Democracy Institute, published “Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Emerging Haredi Middle Class in Israel.” Characterized by its authors

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as an exploratory research, the study identifies a social sub-group of a newly emerging haredi middle class that parallels existing social groups in numerous locations in the United States and Western Europe. This middle class consists of young graduates of haredi institutions of Torah learning (yeshivot), who have also attained academic or professional credentials. These people are either self-employed or work in areas such as hi-tech, law and psychology.

The term "haredi" is employed by this study in ways that are measurable and objective, such as modes of dress, types of synagogue attended, voting patterns, educational institutions for one's children, identification with religious groups, and news media one utilizes. The study focuses on the challenges confronting the contemporary modern haredi In Israel.

The Zicherman and Cahaner study identifies two key characteristics of the group of modern haredim, one economic and the other cultural. Economically, their earnings parallel those of the general population defined as middle-class. Culturally, as opposed to "mainstream" haredim, the new haredim maintain an ongoing connection with the general Israeli population and Western culture. The new haredi identifies as a member of the haredi population, but he consumes obviously Western culture, e.g., he is nourished by the general media and uses the internet.

Expressions of modernization evident among haredi women include: pursuing academic studies and careers, learning to drive, engaging in activities that foster self-growth and participating in social entertainment and forms of indulging in pampering, or attending self-improvement workshops.

According to Zicherman and Cahaner, the modern haredi individual blends his religious ideology together with contemporary culture. He adopts a new orientation towards secularism, shifting from the traditional haredi dichotomous view - which sees secularism as a force that seeks to
destroy religious life in a win-lose battle, to an acceptance that components of secularism can be incorporated into the haredi lifestyle and used to its advantage, an ideology of win-win. While questioning whether modern haredim are in fact a sub-group among haredim or rather merely define themselves as haredim for reasons of convenience, the authors identify three characteristics that justify this classification as haredim:

- **Manner of dress in the work place**: New haredim maintain traditional haredi dress: men wear black skull caps and married women wear wigs.
- **Ideology**: The sub-group shares a haredi world view regarding key issues such as the relation between religion and state, leisure time activities, and consumerism.
- **Community**: Modern haredim maintain close ties with the "traditional" haredi community. They live within the haredi public domain and maintain interest in the goings on within the haredi community. In the latest national Israeli elections, the haredi middle class members cast their votes for the traditional haredi political parties, thereby preserving ties to traditional religious leadership.

Zicherman and Cahaner delineate a virtual group that does not exist as a distinct reality. They believe that this sub-group provides a cultural alternative that does not require total marginalizing of secular Israeli society. In their view, the existence and expansion of such a modern alternative will lead to the growth of a more tolerant and open haredi sector, which will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the State and Israeli society, as a whole. In addition, in the view of the researchers, the strengthening of the haredi middle class will strengthen the overall haredi sector by expanding educational frameworks for higher education and vocational training for the sector, thereby improving its members' ability to support themselves. The researchers are uncertain as to how
the more typical haredi population will deal with the newly emerging sub group of modern Haredim.

**Research Methods**

According to the researchers, this study is preliminary and tentative in its attempt to outline the character of the new haredi middle class. “The study was based on a convenience sample [...] determined by practical considerations concerning access to potential subjects”. In other words, those selected for the sample were those willing to cooperate with the researchers. To decrease the sampling bias, the researchers tried to include interviewees of all social sectors: women, men, native-born Israelis, immigrants, the self-employed and salaried, those born into wealthy families and those from poor families.

Twenty seven persons participated in this study: 12 women and 15 men, most between the ages of 30-40, all married, members of families averaging seven members, who lived in religiously heterogeneous cities located in central Israel (along the border between B’nei Brak and Ramat Gan, in Petach Tikvah and in Jerusalem), and also religiously homogeneous urban settlements (Beitar Elite, Ramat Beit Shemesh, and Elad). All interviewees had professional or academic education. Each interview lasted at least an hour and a half, and each interviewee was questioned about a wide variety of subjects, including: children's education, marriage prospects, housing, women's careers, fashion and more. The issues were of obvious importance for those interviewed, and possibly because of their importance, they involve great challenges. Again, this group is “virtual” and does exist as a community in reality.

Acquaintance with the study participants was gained via conversations and semi-structured interviews. And although a sizable portion of the conversations focused on the life-stories of interviewees,
the researchers (via general leading questions), led the conversations to focus on the issues about which they wanted information.

The researchers (i.e., the authors of the book under review), come from opposing ends of the familiarity scale with the study sample. Co-author Dr. Lee Cahaner was totally unfamiliar with the haredi sector and its lifestyle, while Attorney Haim Zicherman lives among them. This research is thus the fruit of a cooperation between an outsider and an intimate member of the sector, and integrates experiences, observations, analysis and differing modes of thought of researchers who listen with "two voices." According to them, this synthesizing of disparate voices contributes to the depth of understanding the issues involved, and concomitantly preserves objectivity.

**Critique of the Research**

The first issue is objectivity, an important value in research. Is objectivity attainable regarding the topic of "the ultra-orthodox"? If it is, what research methodology has optimal ability to achieve this goal? As is well known, equal sharing of the economic burden in society and military draft of yeshiva students, topics that are directly connected to the haredi sector, have become central issues in recent elections, and continue to be dominant in Israel's public discourse. It is difficult to image neutrality within the Israeli reality, unless deep thought is invested into what type of research methodology could assure objectivity.

As the researchers themselves view their individual backgrounds as key to the validity of the study, it is relevant to question the background of a researcher who lives in proximity to the study sample. First, what is the meaning of the expression "living in the vicinity" of the study group. Does this mean living "among", "close to", "near"? Second, what
is the source of this researcher's knowledge of the haredi population? Is it “first-hand”, i.e., did he study in haredi educational frameworks? Was he raised in a haredi family? Does he see himself as belonging to this sector? Is he a former haredi? To the degree that the personal background of the researcher is deemed to be a source of his objectivity and have a balancing impact on the study, these questions are legitimate.

Dr. Cahaner, the study co-researcher, is described as a total stranger to haredi society, and this is presented as an asset, as her observations counter-balance those of Dr. Zicherman. Lack of familiarity with the population being observed, the argument goes, promotes an objectivity that cannot not attained by one familiar with the population. Supposedly, familiarity breeds subjectivity.

This is a possibility. However, to the contrary, ignorance does not necessarily liberate, rather it can blind. Ignorance can prevent the observer from evaluating what he sees and hears, forcing him to depend too heavily on a "knowledgeable" co-researcher. The sociological view of the "outsider" as opposed to the "insider" was presented years ago by Robert K. Merton in his article "The Perspectives of Insiders and Outsiders". Merton suggests the following as an ideal for a researcher: Even when qualifying as an "insider", the researcher must examine the material as if he were an "outsider", i.e., he must employ scientific research methods that are not influenced by position or prior acquaintance. Knowledge need not be shunned; instead, it must be tempered.

I wish, however, to raise a much more basic question concerning objectivity. I suspect that the position of the haredi sector at the heart of heated Israeli public discourse precludes the possibility of examining this population objectively, unless careful consideration is given to this equivocal situation.

The next issue is the definition of the study population. The new haredi middle class is described in this study as living on the seam between the old and new worlds. Its members differ in their essence from “typical” haredim who are seemingly frightened by the modern world. The study describes this latter group in part according to the writings of Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch, a German religious leader and author (1808-1888). It is worth noting that Rabbi Hirsch battled to preserve traditional Judaism against the influences of the Reform movement in Germany. While Rabbi Hirsch believed that there was no inherent contradiction between strict religious observance and involvement in contemporary life, it is not at all sure that middle class haredi Israelis are familiar with his writings, and if not, they would not see themselves as continuing his legacy. Differences between the period in which Rabbi Hirsch lived and the ideological battles he waged and those of the middle class haredi in contemporary Israel are vast. It must be pointed out that Rabbi Hirsch's writings are cited from a pamphlet published in Bnei Brak in 1958, although Rabbi Hirsch's original works were published 70 years earlier. One might question the validity of introducing the eloquent words of Rabbi Hirsch, written well over a century ago, as a rationale for supporting the world view of the haredi middle class in Israel in 2012.

In summarizing haredi ideology, Zicherman and Cahaner refer to the expression that "according to the Torah, all novelty is forbidden." This expression originally referred to the Biblical prohibition against the harvesting and eating "new" grain prior to Passover of that year. In contemporary usage, this expression infers the insular approach within Judaism articulated by Rabbi Moses Sofer (1762-1838), who sought to combat the Enlightenment Movement at the beginning of the 19th century that in his view threatened Hungarian Jewry. (To the credit of the authors, they do cite that in a footnote that this expression regarding
novelty in Torah interpretation derives from the writing of Rabbi Sofer in 1841.)

Another issue arising from the interviews relates to secondary school education for girls. The research describes two types of haredi Beth Jacob schools: one type of school does not offer a matriculation diploma while the other does. Most Beth Jacob schools in Israel do not offer its students matriculation exams. The distinction between the schools is that the schools that offer matriculation enable the girls to acquire professional training in fields such as accounting and computer science. However, the Beth Jacob schools that do not provide matriculation enables students to train in such fields as accounting, architecture, computer programming, visual communications, and others, that are accredited by governmental agencies, including the Israel Governmental Institute for Training in Technology and Science.

A further subject covered in the study was women's concern with fashion, treated by the researchers as a recent phenomenon. In fact, some 25 centuries ago, Ezra the Scribe decreed that peddlers should travel from place to place to peddle women's cosmetics so that they would be attractive to their husbands! Obviously, feminine beauty care is not a 20th century innovation.

**Conclusion**

I see this research as flawed for all the reasons stated above. Moreover, the study contains a more profound, essential flaw. At best, it portrays only a partial portrait of haredi reality, as a critical aspect of this reality was not touched upon in this research. I refer to the internal spiritual world of the haredi individual, and the place and influence this internal world has upon his perspectives on life, and the great meaning that faith and religious practice provides him. The Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana defines “having religion” as follows:
[...] every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy. Its power consists in its special and surprising message and in the bias which that revelation gives to life. The vistas it opens and the mysteries it propounds are another world to live in; and another world to live in – whether we expect ever to pass wholly into it or not – is what we mean by having a religion.²

Santayana, a self-professed agnostic-Catholic, might be unwilling to "pass wholly into" the world of religion, yet he could not fail to recognize the power and meaning of religion for the believer. Our researchers, however, have seriously failed in not recognizing this. In summary, "Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Emerging Haredi Middle Class in Israel" analyzes haredi men and women with academic and professional training and confers upon them a new identity (i.e., middle class, or modern haredim), and even categorizes them as a new "virtual" subgroup. While claiming to be objective, this research appears to espouse a subjective opinion on haredi society that reduces it to dress-codes, locations of residence, and identification with a specific community, while completely ignoring the meaning, power and essence that an inner religious experience has for this sector.

I end with an anecdote. A number of years ago I was on a flight from Israel to the United States. I had the middle seat. On one side sat a secular man in his fifties or sixties, who told me that he held an important position in the Israel Electric Company in Jerusalem. On my other side sat a youth of sixteen or seventeen, a member of the ultra-orthodox Satmar hasidic group. A dialogue between the two developed, and I, de facto, served as mediator. The content of the discussion is irrelevant for our purposes. What was relevant was the closing of the dialogue. After landing and about to part ways, the older man gave me his business card (in case I

needed something from the electric company), and said something akin to the following: what a shame for that youth. He is unaware of the world in which he lives and he has no future. The youth then turned to me and said: "What a shame for that man; he has no idea where he comes from."

Israel is a divided society. Too often, dialogue consists of persons speaking at one another without listening to one another. "Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Emerging Haredi Middle Class in Israel" is yet another example of one group speaking at another, indeed for another, without listening to what the other is actually saying.

**Recommended Bibliography**

The research examines a sub-group with an ideological component, which was not adequately investigated or expressed in the study. Specifically, this study lacks any reference to the religious significance of Torah study for members of the haredi population. An anthropological description for this found in Zbrowski and Herzog: "Life is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl", would have contributed to enriching the study with background.

For a portrait of the Chazon Ish, arguably the key 20th century force in fashioning haredi culture in Israel, the reader is advised to see the writings of Haim Grade, an eminent Yiddish author who was raised in the home of the Chazon Ish.

The Israeli film "Filling the Void" that has gained international acclaim authentically describes the lives of members of a hassidic family in Tel Aviv. The director, Rama Burstein, is a haredi woman raised in a secular Tel Aviv family who studied film before becoming religiously observant and joining the hassidic sect in Tel Aviv that she portrays in her film. Rama sees her life as providing her with the tools to produce the film. "My advantage," she says, "lies in the fact that I know both worlds".
Threats (real or perceived) to the haredi population are not new. More than 200 years ago, leaders of ultra-orthodox Jewry viewed the Enlightenment Movement as existential threats and provided a number of responses. As mentioned earlier, Rabbis Moses Sofer and Samson Rafael Hirsch, mentioned in the research, are two respected references that can be consulted.
Advancing the Israeli-Arab Population's Hebrew Language Skills and Education to Promote Occupational Inclusion
The Importance of Learning Hebrew for Integrating and Promoting the Arab Population in the Israeli Job Market

Shirli Marom

Language is Israeli Arab society's main barrier to employment. This article aims to highlight the necessity of this population's need to fully master the Hebrew language in order to integrate into the workforce and advance in employment. It will survey active employment programs in Arab society which take language into account, and provide recommendations for the actions required to promote this issue.

Foreword: Defining the Problem and its Dimensions

"Investment is required in Arab human capital and in Arab education. The education of Arabs in Israel has a crucial influence on their employment status, in terms of salary, job market participation rate, and unemployment level and in terms of their professions and labor productivity. We recommend significantly increasing the investment in education for the Arab sector (which currently suffers from under investment), at all levels of education, starting from day-care and kindergartens and culminating in higher education... In addition, emphasis should be placed on content that will assist future integration..."

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The Importance of Learning Hebrew for Integrating and Promoting the Arab Population in the Israeli Job Market

into employment, such as bolstering their command of Hebrew and English and acquiring skills mandatory for hi-tech industries”.

(From the main recommendations of the Eli Hurvitz Conference on Integrating Arab Citizens into the Workforce, Nekuda 18, pp. 9-10).

Poor command of Hebrew is one of the main barriers to preventing the Arab population from integrating into the Israeli job market. Although the motivation to go out to work is personal, the barriers are often communal. The language barrier is not a cultural barrier for individuals within the community, but a barrier for the community as a whole, preventing many people in Arab society from going out to work.

Hebrew is a requirement for employment and an important component in successful entry into the job market, as it is necessary for communication in the work place. Insufficient command of Hebrew lowers self-confidence, causing job-seekers in the Arab sector to refrain from applying for certain positions. Most businesses in the Arab sector are family based, so someone who cannot find employment where they live must work in large factories where it is important to know Hebrew. In addition, Arab women without advanced degrees who do not speak Hebrew on a daily basis find it very difficult to find work. This is because call centers and retail chains – the type of work places they tend to end up in – require a command of Hebrew.

Another problem pertains to how Hebrew is taught in Arab society: the Hebrew taught in Arab schools is not colloquial but literary, and does not include everyday speech. The teaching system focuses on grammar more than on dialogue. Also, the level of knowledge required to pass the matriculation test in Hebrew is insufficient for actual mastery of the language and joining the modern work place. A different problem is that in some Arab seminaries and colleges which award bachelor degrees,
classes are conducted in Arabic, meaning that the students will not have mastered Hebrew when they graduate. This is different from studying in Jewish universities and colleges. It is not only a question of not knowing Hebrew, but also a cultural gap expressed in lack of familiarity with Israeli mentality, i.e., the "employers' language" in the general sense includes Jewish-Israeli culture and mentality. This culture often conflicts with Arab culture and values, such as modesty. As people in the Arab sector are exposed to the Jewish population their Hebrew improves, as does their understanding of modes of expression and intonations that are less acceptable in Arab society.

Beyond the knowledge gap there is also the issue of self-confidence. Using the language in practice in the manner accepted in Jewish society requires understanding the Jewish-Israeli population in addition to knowing the language. Examples include speaking in a self-confident manner; expressing a sense of self-worth; initiating speech and not only responding to questions, and in general having the "courage to speak." Some of the women interviewed for this article pointed out that even if Arab women are fluent in Hebrew, they are afraid to speak. Additionally, because Hebrew is a foreign language, people from this population often have difficulty expressing themselves fully and clearly.

Added to these issues is the accent, which can also be an obstacle for Arab job seekers: it may be an impediment in the eyes of employers, trigger prejudices and value judgments and sometimes be a barrier to certain jobs.

This article will survey the various means employed to overcome the language barrier by employment programs geared to the Arab sector. Employment programs developed by TEVET (Hebrew acronym for Impetus for Employment), JDC-Israel's employment initiative, aim to deal with the barriers that stand in the way of integrating the Arab sector into the workforce. This will be followed by recommendations for
further action to promote the issue of Hebrew within Arab society in the context of employment.

**Before I joined the guidance centers I thought there were some employment barriers to integrating Arabs into the Israeli job market, but I always considered Hebrew to be a less significant barrier. Today, after almost a year and a half in this position, I can wholeheartedly say – this is THE barrier. Arab high school graduates can't speak Hebrew. I once thought they had difficulty with it, today I understand that it is an actual lack of knowledge. The Jewish population in Israel isn't rushing to learn Arabic; although it is an official state language, most of the population doesn't understand Arabic. Therefore I see no solution but to include the Hebrew language on the agenda of Arab society.**

[Nibras Taha, Director of the Tira Vocational Guidance Center]

**Command of Hebrew in Arab society – Data**

I am continually surprised by the extent to which the Arab people who live here don't speak Hebrew. I had to learn Hebrew, because I was born in the village of Mazra’a, and I had to speak Hebrew to take the bus, buy clothes, visit the doctor. When I enrolled at university for my bachelor's degree, I understood that in most sectors of Arab society, high school graduates don't speak Hebrew.

_Safa Garb, Division Director of Arab Society and Infrastructure, TEVET_

The following data are from a 2011 social survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics regarding command and use of Hebrew among the Arabic-speaking Israeli population:

- 98% of the Arab population speak Arabic at home, 4% speak Hebrew at home, as well;
- 79% of those employed speak Arabic at work, but only 20% speak only Arabic at work;
79% of those employed speak Hebrew at work, 16% speak only Hebrew at work;

Good command of Hebrew is more typical of those with high incomes than those with low incomes. Among Arabs with relatively low incomes (up to 2,000 NIS gross income per person in household), the percentages of those with a good mastery of spoken Hebrew and the ability to read Hebrew (at the level of "good" or "very good"), is 53% - 55% respectively. Among those with high incomes, the percentage is above 90%.

Command of Hebrew and employment: the employment rate changes according to the level of command of Hebrew. Among those whose command of Hebrew is "very good" in all areas examined – writing, reading, speech and comprehension – 82% are employed. As the command of Hebrew decreases so does the employment rate, especially among those who have difficulty with speech and comprehension. Among those who barely understand or speak Hebrew, or who do not understand or speak it at all, only about 30% are employed. Among those whose command of reading and writing is weak, about half are employed.

Not knowing the language is a major obstacle to integrating Arab women into the Jewish job market. Many women are not required to speak any Hebrew in their daily lives, even though they studied it in school. As a result, they are unable, or fearful of, communicating in Hebrew (Abu-Asba et al, 2011). According to King et al (2009), Arab women exhibit greater ability to read and write Hebrew than speak it. This is because they learn Hebrew in school as a foreign language, but do not practice speaking it. According to researchers, this disadvantage is a barrier only if the aim is to integrate them into employment in Jewish society.

This research examined the effect of several factors on Arab women's participation in the work force. It was found that education has
the most influence on Arab women’s chances of employment. Research shows that 52% of unemployed Arab women cannot speak Hebrew, including 44% of the younger women, who are better educated. Some 50% cannot read or write Hebrew, including some 40% of the younger women. Almagor-Lotan points to the fact that lack of command of Hebrew greatly limits the ability of these women to find work outside of Arab society. In addition to integration into work places in Jewish society, this includes their ability to participate in vocational courses that are not adapted to the Arab population (Almagor-Lotan, 2009).

According to King and Ra’ananan (2011), most unemployed Bedouin men ascribe their difficulty in finding work to the fact that they are unskilled, while Bedouin women are not as disturbed by being unskilled. The women tend to be more concerned that their education and command of Hebrew are insufficient. One of the barriers noted by researchers was the Hebrew language. Among the characteristics typical of job seekers who have difficulty integrating into the work force is lack of command of Hebrew, which is a major obstacle. Additionally, because Bedouin women have fewer computer skills and less command of Hebrew than Bedouin men, they make less use of the internet and newspapers in Hebrew to seek jobs. Therefore, the main obstacle to Bedouin women’s going out to work is their lack of education, lack of diplomas testifying to education and lack of Hebrew.

All those interviewed for this paper were in agreement regarding the Hebrew level of Arab high-school graduates: even students who had completed a 5-unit level matriculation in Hebrew are incapable of holding a conversation in Hebrew. This is because they have little practice in using the language. As one of the interviewees said: “They aren’t having difficulty – they just don’t know the language; they know English better than they do Hebrew.” Communication between Arab youth and Israelis in institutes of higher education is negligible and random, and there
is almost no contact between Jewish and Arab youth in high school. Language is a means of communication, and since they feel that Israeli society is not accessible to young Arabs, this situation is deteriorating. In Bedouin settlements in the South, where the percentage of those eligible for matriculation is the lowest in the country, the situation is even worse.

_Hebrew is a very important topic, because the job market is mostly run by Jewish employers, and Arab employers also want to reach the Jewish consumer market. Although women comprise the main population in employment programs, this is true for men as well. The variant is mostly geographical location: in places where daily contact with Jewish society and businesses is greater, Hebrew language is more in use._

[Umayma Diab, vocational training counselor in the Arab sector]

### The Hebrew Language in Arab Employment Programs – Overview

The directors of Arab sector employment programs noted a few ways of dealing with the above difficulties in response to questions raised in Almagor-Lotan's research (2009). Among these is job training tailored to Arab participants – developing suitable content in Arabic and adapting the content of employment preparation courses to the Arab job market. In parallel, in light of the Arab applicants' difficulty in Hebrew, one training component in the various programs will be a workshop teaching job-oriented Hebrew.

### Job-oriented Hebrew

A job-oriented Hebrew course is intended to enrich the participants' knowledge of Hebrew while emphasizing terms vital to the work place. The basic assumption is that learning a language in an employment context is more relevant to the participants, therefore they will learn it
better; the connection between Hebrew and employment is therefore self-evident. In employment programs, the job-oriented Hebrew course usually takes place over 10 – 12 meetings, each lasting three academic hours (30-36 hours total), and with some 20 participants in each group.

Useful and correct professional Hebrew is taught in the course, including Hebrew employment terms (see Appendix A). The course aims to equip participants with the ability and confidence to use the language as part of the process of becoming familiar with the world of employment, job searching, and integrating into a work setting. The course is based on the belief that vocational Hebrew is vital for entering the Israeli job market. Course subjects include: viewing employment as a value; looking for jobs; appropriate behavior during interviews; body language; matching employer and employee interests; how to be a working mother; how to succeed in a job and get ahead.

The course also serves as a vocational screening tool. During the course the instructors evaluate the participants' abilities, skills and the obstacles they face. This is in order to understand each participant's employment potential, weaknesses and strengths (from a report written by Leena Abu Diba, instructor of courses in vocational Hebrew).

The Idit Program

The Idit program, conducted in Sakhnin from 2008 -2010, combined education with employment. The program aimed to create significant changes in the lives of Arab families in distress living in the periphery, and engender positive social mobility. Specifically, this program was offered to mothers seeking employment, and included a course to complete 12 years of schooling and vocational training, with the latter adapted to the needs of the group and the job market, taking into account the requirements of young mothers who join the work force.
A 50-hour course in vocational Hebrew was provided for participants learning office management and infant education in order to improve their language skills. The aim of the course was to strengthen the women's command of Hebrew, with emphasis on job market content that could assist integration and promotion in the workplace (Hassan-Daher, 2012).

**The Atida Program**

Atida is a program for Arab women who have completed 12 or more years of schooling. The project aspires to promote their integration into the Israeli job market in positions suited to their skills and ambitions, with fair and equitable job conditions. The project includes recruiting women and building a database of suitable employment candidates. The course is intensive and lasts two months (it includes a dynamic workshop, concentrated classes in Hebrew and computer use, and lectures on a variety of employment related topics). The course staff also contact employers and lay the groundwork for job placement. In addition, the course offers graduates individual and group counseling in the job search process and job integration.

Evaluation research was conducted during the first year of the program conducted in Nazareth. It was found that a low level of Hebrew was one of the main barriers to employment faced by the women (Sa'ar, 2011). Umayma Diab, a project instructor, noted that Hebrew was one of the major challenges, as Arabic and English are used more frequently in Nazareth than is Hebrew. As residents receive most services within the city there is no need to speak Hebrew on a daily basis, and it is therefore marginalized. This is a significant challenge for women who seek employment in the Jewish sector.

Initially, the program offered a 40-hour job-oriented Hebrew course. Later on, language instruction began operating on separate levels:
women who passed an entrance exam were ranked according to three levels. There was also a preparatory course for women whose level of Hebrew was very low. The preparatory course, and the course itself, were taught in Hebrew. The weakest group received a total of 100 study hours. In addition to job-oriented Hebrew, Atida also taught direct employment skills in Hebrew, such as writing CVs.

Vocational Guidance Centers in the Arab Sector

The government decided to establish vocational guidance centers for the Arab sector during 2010 – 2012, opening a total of 20 such centers throughout the country. On the individual level, the approach at the center is holistic, and involves taking into account all aspects of the individual’s life with a focus on employment capabilities. Activities include imparting “soft skills”, such as vocational guidance and consulting; preparation for independent job searching; preparation for job interviews and screening workshops; assistance with job integration; supporting and counseling employees to prevent their dropping out and help them towards promotion. Also offered are “hard skills”, such as learning job-oriented English, job-oriented Hebrew, and computer skills and so on.

All vocational centers deal with the issue of language. Training provided to those attending the centers almost always includes Hebrew, stemming from the understanding that a reasonable level of Hebrew is crucial for integrating the Arab sector into the work force. Triple training – Hebrew, computers and soft skills – is usually a basic requirement for all those who register at the centers, regardless of the specific jobs they seek. position. Most of the job seekers applying to the centers are women.

During the first year of its operation, the vocational training center in Tira offered a 40-hour job-oriented Hebrew course focusing on vocabulary relevant for a typical, entry-level, worker. All participants had the same
The Importance of Learning Hebrew for Integrating and Promoting the Arab Population in the Israeli Job Market

level of education, and the course was conducted entirely in Hebrew by a Jewish teacher. Later on, the courses were taught by an Arab teacher. The goal was to teach graduates to write a resume in Hebrew; interview for a job in Hebrew; learn relevant vocabulary. It was decided that a 40-hour course was insufficient, and it was also recommended to adapt the course to specific occupations, i.e., first the place of employment needed to be located and a relevant employee candidate population identified. The next step was to Improve job-oriented Hebrew language skills for this specific work setting.

**Online Courses**

**Open Door Project – from Education to Employment**

The Open Door website (http://opendoor.cet.ac.il) is the result of a collaboration between TEVET and the Jewish Agency's absorption database, the Ministry of Education's Adult Education unit and the Center for Educational Technology (CET). The website is part of TEVET's plan to integrate new immigrants into Israel's work force. It was initially intended for immigrants from Ethiopia who had varying levels of education.

The website aims to teach and strengthen Hebrew, focusing on content from the job market that will help integrate and promote immigrants from Ethiopia in the work place. Through the activities and texts offered on the site, users acquire job search tools; prepare for interviews; encounter various work situations and become familiar with terms common in the Israeli employment market. The work experience, literacy and culture of the immigrants were taken into consideration when developing the site, which was also tailored to their level of language learning.

Assif (2008) says the idea of developing a technology-rich study environment stemmed from the realization that vocational training entails teaching the candidate employee to use technological tools common in
the Israeli work place. An interactive site offers user-friendly familiarity with advanced technology; computer experience and practice; Hebrew practice and the opportunity to learn phrases, customs and norms of employment.

Leena Abu-Diba, a program employment enabler in the Eshet Chayil-Ra’ida program described below, uses the Open Door website during job-oriented Hebrew courses she conducts among the Arab population. She used the site to determine which topics her course should focus on and constructed the course accordingly. She incorporated video clips from the site, despite the difficulties caused by the fact that the site is not in Arabic and was set up for the Ethiopian community. Leena adapted the site content to Arab women, and the discussions of dilemmas from the world of employment are adapted to Arab society.

Five years ago I built a model for teaching job-oriented Hebrew specifically for Eshet Chayil-Ra’ida groups in Arab society, and these were upgraded over time. The goal of the program was to provide the women's group with vocational guidance: we discussed employment in Hebrew with regard to terms, content and so on; used simple and correct Hebrew suited to today's job market; acquired abilities and life skills necessary for integration into employment such as interviewing and writing a CV. The method is based on learning basic, fluent Hebrew, because language is a serious obstacle even for high-school and BA graduates.

[Leena Abu-Diba, employment enabler, Eshet Chayil –Ra’ida program, TEVET]

Eshet Chayil - Ra’ida

Originally this website was part of the Eshet Chayil program developed by JDC to integrate women of the Ethiopian community into the work force and prevent them from dropping out. Since the program components can be adapted to a variety of target populations, TEVET
decided to implement it among men and women in other sectors. The program was adapted for the Arab sector in 2006, where it is called Ra‘ida. Evaluation of the program in the Arab sector identified difficulties in placing participants in employment as a result of four specific categories of characteristics unique to this sector: lack of education, lack of Hebrew, lack of work experience, and difficult health situation (Hassan-Daher and Shtrosberg, 2011).

The ”Together with Employers” Courses

Some employers, especially in fields of media and teleprocessing, place emphasis on the Hebrew language as part of their vocational training process. In Babcom, Ltd. for example, potential candidates attend a preparatory course that includes Hebrew classes (although participants are not guaranteed a job). Many interviewees noted that businesses interested in hiring employees from the Arab sector must realize that the screening, absorption and integration process must be modified slightly for this sector. This is especially true in the case of employers who would like to hire a large number of employees.

The Umm al-Fahm vocational guidance center has partnered with teleprocessing companies which hire operators. According to the center’s director:

"Our recruitment has become more goal-oriented: we hire people who have already shown greater command of the language during the screening process. Additionally, the workplace in itself has become a place to learn language: learning through experience",

Ahmad Mahajna, director of the Umm al-Fahm vocational training center
The Rian Program: a Regional Program to Promote Employment among the Bedouin of the Negev

The primary goal of the Rian program for promoting employment among the Bedouin population of the Negev is to integrate them into the work force by responding to all aspects of the employment challenge. The program's liaison team is composed of Bedouin professionals who are familiar with opportunities, obstacles and requirements in the Israeli employment world. The program focuses on establishing multi-disciplinary employment centers in Bedouin settlements in the Negev where guidance from a regional team of experts is available. So far, regional headquarters have been established, as well as local centers in Hura, Segev-Shalom and Rahat.

The Rian program also partners with a number of employers:

- A customer service center was set up in the Bedouin settlement of Hora, on the ground floor of a mosque, in collaboration with Bezeq, Israel's largest telecommunications group. Mahmoud Al'amoor, director of the regional headquarters, says it was very difficult to find Bedouin women who could answer the phone in Hebrew. This led to the establishment of Hebrew courses in the center and a Bezeq preparatory course in Hebrew.

- A course for automated system operators opened this year in partnership with the ICL Corporation, the Manufacturer's Association and the Ministry of Economy, to provide solutions for the chemical industries. The course was spread over a five-day week and was conducted entirely in Hebrew. Although job-oriented Hebrew courses were mainly attended by women, this course enabled Arab men to attend a group, improve their Hebrew, and ultimately find a job (ICL tests were held at the end of the course). According to Rian program staff, cooperation between employer and program was
excellent: the course provided a solution for both Hebrew and job-oriented language while also involving the employer, who helped determine some of the content. All course participants received stipends.

*Arabs must acquire the confidence to express themselves in Hebrew. Alongside the fear of speaking Hebrew lies the social-political aspect. My wish is for Hebrew to be taught by counselors who are able to identify barriers, such as political barriers, and deal with them.*

*Safa Garb, Division Director of Arab Society and Infrastructure, TEVET*

**Personal Empowerment Courses**

There is a high percentage of unemployed women in many Arab settlements, almost all of whom lack a high-school diploma. It was clear that most of them would like to work, but do not know how to find employment and have never worked outside the home. All the unemployed women reported a difficult financial situation and blamed their unemployment on external factors, such as: lack of permission from the husband; lack of appropriate childcare facilities for when the mother is at work; lack of a high school diploma. The purpose of the empowerment group, which is usually targeted towards women, is to reduce the number of unemployed women in Arab settlements. This is done by actively assisting them to participate in the job force, raising their employment awareness and clarifying the importance of their going out to work in order to help improve their financial situation.

**The Arab Unit in the Ma'avarim Program**

Part of the Ma'avarim program for employment promotion in the rural sector is an Arab unit that specializes in working with the residents of Arab villages that comprise some of the local councils in the North.
Activities are held in two Ma'avarim centers: in the Western Galilee and in the Jezreel Valley. The Arab unit's goals are focused on creating an employment community which includes making available services accessible to the Arab population; encouraging the population to complete their education and persevere over time; making cultural adaptations in job training to suit the population; and strengthening the bond between members. The unit provides long-term guidance specifically tailored to each participant. The guiding principle of “focus on the individual” is to work with a group wherein each member needs a long-term solution, and each has different conflicts and barriers and a different home situation.

As part of the guidance process in the Ma'avarim Arab unit, the employment mentors assess the applicants' level of Hebrew (see appendix B: form for evaluating spoken Hebrew). Part of the mentor's expertise lies in knowing when to speak Arabic to the applicants and when to speak Hebrew.

Siham Ka'abia, an employment mentor in the Jezreel Valley center, opened an empowerment course in Sheikh Danun. The program began with the Hebrew Café project, which had previously been opened in the village (see Hebrew Café on page [15] below for a project description). Needs were mapped on the basis of conversations with the project's female participants, followed by a 14-session empowerment workshop in which 18 women participated. Since many of the women considered their incomplete education a significant barrier to their personal, scholastic and professional development, they also attended a course to complete their education.

Leena Abu-Diba developed a personal empowerment program that incorporates language classes called “Empowering Hebrew”, in which the counselor presents empowerment and skills content to Arab women in Hebrew. Leena reports that women sometimes join job-oriented Hebrew courses at the vocational guidance centers even though they are not yet ready, and for this reason she recommends beginning with personal
empowerment program. Populations receiving welfare subsidies, for example, need empowerment, and can benefit from having the course presented in Hebrew. The program includes acquiring an in-depth understanding of the structure of and information about the current Israeli job market, while developing basic employment-related skills and other basic abilities. The learning process affords the women opportunities for inner reflection and raises each woman's awareness of her own abilities, enabling her to identify relevant personal and vocational competencies and limitations. The course aims to focus on the personal employment vision and turn that vision into a concrete move and an organized plan on the way to achieving their goal. Abu-Diba reports wonderful results: empowered women who speak Hebrew.

On the other hand, Safa Garb says that the conclusion drawn from employment preparation courses for Arabs who applied to the employment center was that most of the courses should be given in Hebrew. The empowerment component of the courses should be in Arabic to enable participants to express themselves easily. Umayma Diab also recommends Arabic as opposed to Hebrew for personal empowerment meetings, as emotional issues come up and it is preferable that the participants feel comfortable speaking.

An attempt was made in the Umm el-Fahm vocational training center to provide personal empowerment content during a Hebrew language course. However, this course was less effective as they were unable to integrate participants into the work force afterwards.

Language related Issues in Employment Programs Intended for the Arab Population
"Sometimes we receive a request from employers to fill a large number of positions but we don't have enough people, not for lack of skills or talent, but simply because of the language limitation."

Ahmad Mahajna, director of the Umm al-Fahm vocational training center
Jewish or Arab Teachers? That's the Question

Umayma Diab feels that language teachers should be native Hebrew speakers. Therefore, the preference in employment programs is for Jewish teachers, because it is best to learn the language from someone for whom it is his mother tongue. Ahmad Mahajna also believes the teachers should be Jewish, but adds that it is best if they understand Arabic. They are then better equipped to help people from weaker populations who have difficulty comprehending Hebrew. However, it is ultimately the students who must make an effort and be motivated to acquire the language.

In contrast, Leena Abu-Diab thinks that Arab counselors have an advantage: "As a teacher I can better understand the participants' weak spots in the course and where the comprehension problems arise, as I myself identify the barriers relating to language and employment in Arab society. Language is also culture, and I can read their culture." Additionally, Arab women participating in a job-oriented Hebrew course with a Jewish teacher are sometimes ashamed to say they did not understand something, to avoid embarrassing the teacher. Ilil Lustig, Employer Relations Liaison for the vocational center, deems it better to provide an opportunity to people from Arab society who are fluent in Hebrew and can teach it, as they can serve as role models.

The issue isn't the amount of hours given in the job-oriented Hebrew course, but a combination of as much training as possible conducted in Hebrew: a preparation for the employment world workshop, a computer course, various soft skills and training by the employer – if all these are carried out in Hebrew, we may see an improvement.

Mahmoud al-Amoor, Director of the Rian program in the South

Women's Groups versus Men's Groups

Young Arab men usually have more exposure to Hebrew than do Arab women. This is especially pronounced in Bedouin society, where women
rarely leave the house because of social conventions, while men go out more and can usually express themselves in Hebrew. Yet those interviewed noted that there is another set of problems in this sector, related to ego and honor. It is difficult for men to display weakness by asking for help. In conservative Arab settlements it is more difficult to arrange mixed courses for men and women. Also, in Arab culture it is difficult to get men to join a group; while women will join an empowerment group, men feel the need for more tangible achievements, and prefer to enroll in a course and finish it with a profession. Additionally, men usually have less motivation for "support groups", stemming from low self-esteem and fear of criticism: if a young man fails a job interview, the criticism from his family is likely to be very harsh, and he will need to be empowered.

**The Effectiveness of Job-Oriented Hebrew Courses**

*We have a serious problem upgrading the level of Hebrew among job seekers. I don't know what we can really change in a period of three months. I also don't know how many of the courses we are offering to promote language acquisition are effective in teaching basic language to be used in the work place. We are aiming for that, but are not very successful. Learning a language should be a long process, especially among people with no prior knowledge.*

*Ahmad Mahajna, director of the Umm al-Fahm vocational training center*

The courses currently available in employment programs for Arabs provide participants with the basics of the Hebrew language and bolster their confidence to attempt to speak it. Due to budget and time constraints they do not make much headway in learning more of the language. If the participants do not have sufficient command of Hebrew to get a job, the course will not make much difference. At most, these courses can help academics who already have a basic knowledge of the language, and who acquire job-oriented Hebrew terms during the course. Even though
the Hebrew course is given as part of the job-training package, language cannot be compared to computer skills, for example. This is why the effectiveness of these courses is in doubt. A language must be spoken, and it is difficult to teach adults in laboratory conditions. If people attend a course for a few hours and then go home and do not make use of the language, then the course has no real value.

The Rian centers in the South have a track called Ishraka (= the first light at daybreak). This program is intended for women who have completed 12 years of schooling and usually have a diploma, but are unable to integrate into the work force. A survey showed that part of the problem lay in language difficulties, yet the 60-hour Hebrew course proved to be ineffective – even those who could speak Hebrew, were unable to hold their own in job interviews. In one case, a very talented candidate with high potential was unable to obtain the screening committee's approval for an engineering studies track because she was embarrassed to answer the committee's questions. At the end of a three-month workshop, which included empowerment and Hebrew lessons, the participant's self-esteem was still low and she was unable to handle the situation. This begs the question – what is the value of language lessons if at the moment of truth the students lack the confidence to speak?

**Recommendations for Further Action**

I'd like to create an understanding among applicants of the cultural differences between Arab and Jewish society: an understanding of the importance of language, an awareness of the codes of the Israeli mentality. Even if the applicant knows Hebrew, she still needs to adapt to Israeli organizational culture. For example – explaining things briefly, not at length. Arab culture must also be understood and frameworks should be found where Hebrew can be practiced, where a person could
try it out, such as in home computer (long distance learning). Thought must be invested in the content and the context in which it is taught, and attention must be paid to how one encounters the language: we must find tracks to practice the language outside of the classrooms.

Safa Garb, Division Director of Arab Society and Infrastructure, TEVET

The following recommendations have been formulated by those interviewed for this article, all of whom are professionals specializing in integrating the Arab population into the work force:

- Adapting the Open Door website to the Arab population: A suggestion was raised to build a site for online learning styled on the Open Door program, with content suited to Arab culture. This will enable people to practice at home, as the job-oriented Hebrew course is in itself insufficient and incapable of helping Arab women to advance to a better position. Cultural sensitivity means, for instance, removing military terms from the program, as well as other elements unacceptable in Arab culture. Teachers of job-oriented Hebrew can utilize the long-distance learning tool, which facilitates listening to the language and practicing, as homework for the participants. The teachers can explain what the participants should focus on, according to the level of each participant.

- Adapting the job-oriented Hebrew course for men: A course that will begin at a more advanced level, combining acquisition of advanced job-related life skills with advice on how to advance on the job.

- Spoken Hebrew workshop for high school students: A course for high school students with the emphasis on writing and verbal skills, also including group discussions and presentations. The purpose is not to learn Hebrew for the matriculation exam, but to be able to conduct a conversation. The students must also understand Jewish Israeli culture and not just fill out worksheets. This requires greater
exposure to Hebrew, and it is preferable that all language classes be conducted in Hebrew. It is also a good idea to create opportunities for encounters between Arab and Jewish youth, for example through joint hikes.

- **Partnerships with employers:** It is recommended to identify employers who support diverse hiring and create partnerships with employers with an agenda, i.e., those who would like to hire Arab personnel. In this way employees could learn professional Hebrew on the job, receive greater language support, and strengthen their self-confidence. Moreover, a database of relevant terms can be established together with the employer and taught to the candidates. Later on, to encourage promotion, courses for Hebrew reading and writing can be offered at the work place, to allow workers to upgrade and expand their basket of skills.

- **Guidance on improving Hebrew:** Participants should be encouraged to be pro-active and take responsibility for improving their lives with a focus on employment. To this end they should read Hebrew newspapers, listen to radio and watch television, particularly programs on finance and home economics, which include many employment terms. This will help them build a vocabulary and learn pronunciation. The internet is also an excellent tool, as are smartphone applications and so forth. The participants need to realize that this is a process that has to be experienced continuously over time. Additionally, Arab employment enablers in the various programs can provide personal examples and hold conversations with applicants in Hebrew. This will demonstrate how to use a language one has not completely mastered, and create a safe and supporting place to practice the language.

- **Hebrew Café:** Hebrew is the main barrier for most applicants, even those with degrees, diplomas and vocational training. Therefore,
following job-oriented Hebrew workshops there is a need to create continuity: volunteer lecturers can be enlisted for a series of Hebrew Café meetings where course graduates can practice Hebrew conversation. Also, the employment programs usually have an Employment Club, a forum for networking and discussing topics from the business world. A job-oriented Hebrew Club can be set up where weekly discussions will be held to discuss articles or issues from the world of employment. At the end of the day, the goal is to encourage perseverance and create opportunities for practice.

- Tutoring and mentoring: The premise is that language must be spoken, so we suggest establishing alternate frameworks to the Hebrew course. One possibility is internet tutoring of Arab job seekers by Jewish students. Another option is mentoring, for example, matching Jewish colleagues with Arab workers in collaboration with the employer.

- Volunteering in Hebrew: Another option was raised in Rian centers in the South – to enroll participants into volunteer programs that will require them to use the language. An employer will not want an employee who is incapable of contributing, but a volunteer framework could use the extra manpower, despite language difficulties. Volunteering in a Hebrew-speaking environment such as in hospitals or animal shelters, for example, could provide an excellent framework for language practice, an opportunity to become acquainted with the modern Israeli employer, and to practice sticking to a schedule. Furthermore, since women in Arab society come from a culture of volunteering, this may also be an opportunity for them to experience a work environment related to their professional fields of interest (for example, a place they would like to work in).

- Temporary work: The paradox is that sometimes women who did not complete high school, but worked in unskilled jobs such as house-
cleaning, can speak Hebrew better than high school graduates. Therefore, a start can be made in attempting to integrate people from Arab society into a steady job with a promotion horizon – which is the main goal of employment programs – by integrating applicants with poor Hebrew into temporary jobs in order to learn and improve their language skills. This process is relatively inexpensive, and following the temporary job the applicant can be upgraded to a better job or to study. This option is especially relevant for young applicants: it creates an interaction between a job and employment while learning a language ‘along the way’. This greatly improves the language level since the language is acquired in a Hebrew speaking environment.

- Cooperating with an authorized language teaching institute: Another recommendation is for the centers to open a course of several months duration focusing on spoken language. Currently classes are held once a week for three hours, encompassing 12 – 15 meetings, and this is not always sufficient (even a 50-hour job-oriented Hebrew course will not solve a problem that has existed for many years). Another option is to outsource and create a partnership with an institution experienced in teaching language, in order to structure a long-term, quality course. This year the Tira vocational center decided to conduct an intensive 120 hour course of spoken Hebrew, focusing on quality – not quantity – meaning more hours for fewer participants. The center formed a partnership with Berlitz, and even though the center is not a learning institute, parts of the course included parts of an educational curriculum for learning Hebrew (see Appendix C). The idea is to create two groups: a join low-middle-level group, and an advanced group. The low-middle level group will move up to the advanced group, and the advanced group will be placed in jobs; for this reason this is an evening course.
During the course of writing this article we discovered that recently the Arab, Druze and Circassian Authority for Economic Development in the Prime Minister's office has allocated a budget of 2 million NIS for Hebrew courses in the Arab sector, through the government employment services. The courses are intended for job seekers registered with the Employment Bureau and they will be run by Sakhnin College. The budget is for 400 and 200 hour courses, and 27 such courses have been approved in 11 towns across the country (according to Tania Leef – Special Event Liaison at the National Insurance Institute (NII) and Majed Masalha, the Government Policy Director in the Arab, Druze and Circassian sector's Authority for Economic Development in the Prime Minister's office).

In my opinion we must promote building an infrastructure that will be perpetuated: not invest in projects on a one-time or temporary basis but invest, for example, in a school for teaching Hebrew, a center that can serve more people over a longer period of time. I believe that this is the correct way of thinking, on an inter-organizational and national level: currently the resources are spread among all the different employment programs, and it will be more efficient to build one center that will serve the whole of the Arab population, or apply to a professional entity who will be responsible for teaching the language.

Ahmad Mahajna, director of the Umm al-Fahm vocational training center

Conclusions

We are Arabs, and what defines us is our mother tongue – Arabic. Yet, if we want to integrate into the Israeli job market and Israeli society in general, we must know Hebrew, because the gap is growing. Even though we insert many Hebrew words into our Arabic, this doesn't lead to command of the language. Personally, I would not like things to change only in the "incubator" of the course: I want people to start watching programs on Jewish television channels, to be part of Israeli existence.
We need to come out of our shell and integrate, emerge from behind the barrier of foreignness, encourage exposure to culture. Real social change is required in order to encourage voting during elections”.

Nibras Taha, director of Tira vocational training center

Hebrew is crucial for integrating Arab job seekers into the work force, because most job offers available through the employment center are from Jewish employers. Employment in Arab society will be very limited if it only takes into account Arab employers; as the majority population is Jewish, the majority of employers are also Jewish. While Arab employees are also part of the Israeli market, most employers require fluent Hebrew. If employees are interested in upgrading their positions and being promoted, they need to also improve their Hebrew reading and writing skills.

Many Arab employment program participants lack basic knowledge of Hebrew, which makes placing them in jobs very difficult. Even after participating in job-oriented Hebrew courses and Hebrew courses adapted to designated work places, Hebrew still poses an obstacle in job interviews. Staff liaisons dealing with this population sometimes find it difficult to counsel the participants, who lack basic training and cannot find appropriate employment near their homes.

The job-oriented Hebrew course is one tool among many: this course bolsters the self-confidence of participants regarding their level of Hebrew and teaches a vocabulary, but this is not enough. Work on the language must continue at other levels, and interaction between Arab and Jewish society must be encouraged.

Hebrew should be regarded as a tool and not a goal in itself, because when seen as a such it does not lead to concrete results. For this reason employers, also, must undergo a conceptual change: they must understand that since Hebrew is a primary obstacle, it must be integrated into all
vocational training in the same way that vocational training is provided for specific fields of employment. Employment programs can contribute by offering incentives and funding, and by providing overall guidance to employers after work hours. Having said that, it is important not to lower requirements in the name of cultural adaptation. A high professional standard should be set and appropriate output should be expected from employees from the Arab sector.

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http://www2.jdc.org.il/category/employment-Arab-community

Open Door site – from Education to Employment:
http://opendoor.cet.ac.il

TEVET site – Tnufa b’Ta’asuka (employment leverage):
http://www.tevet4u.org.il

Other Sources of Information

Study workshop for professional teams of infrastructure programs in Arab society on the topic of “Language and Employment Barriers”, held on May 9, 2012 in the center of the Authority for Promoting Employment, Education and Community in Sakhnin.
Study workshop for professional teams of the Authority for Promoting Employment on the subject of Community, held on June 13, 2011, in the center of the Authority for Promoting Employment, Education and Community in Ma’alot-Tarshikha.

Personal interviews: Nurit Lapidot, Director of Programs, TEVET; Safa Garb, Division Director of Arab Society and Infrastructure, TEVET; Leena Abu-Diba, Employment Enabler, Eshet Chayil program, TEVET; Umayma Diab, Vocational Training Counselor in the Arab sector; Nibras Taha, Director of the Tira vocational training center; Ahmad Mahajna, Director of the Umm al-Fahm vocational training center; Ilil Lustig Goldner, vocational centers’ Employer Relations Liaison; Mahmoud al-Amoor, Director of the Rian program in the South, regional program for promoting employment among the Bedouin population of the Negev, and the program staff; Staff of the Arab unit of Ma’avarim Western Galilee and Ma’avarim in the Jezreel Valley.

Appendices

Appendix A: Lexicon of Employment Terms. Prepared by: Umayma Diab, TEVET

Appendix B: Spoken Hebrew Evaluation Form

Appendix C: Syllabus for Learning Hebrew – Tira Vocational Guidance Center

Knowledge and guidance development – Atida project: Translated to Arabic: Jalal Hassan

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Teaching Hebrew to the Arabic-Speaking Sector in the Adult Education Division:
Changes in Syllabuses to Meet Needs

Sarah Golan

The syllabuses of the Adult Education Division/Education Unit for teaching Hebrew subjects to the Arabic-speaking sector have undergone revision. In the past the syllabuses were based on the assumption that the student was a Hebrew speaker from the outset, and they were derived mainly from the matriculation syllabus. Today the syllabuses for the Arabic-speaking sector are multi-stage and enable Hebrew to be taught from beginning reading and writing to the level of 12 years of study. The aim is to inculcate a command of the spoken and written language and reading comprehension strategies, as well as familiarity with contemporary Hebrew literature. The syllabuses were written with consideration for the students' way of life and social-community background. The trends of personal empowerment, advancing toward

Ms. Sarah Golan writes syllabuses and trains in the fields of language arts and literature in the Education Unit, Adult Education Division, Ministry of Education. In the past she was a teacher of literature, expression and language arts in high school and in adult education and coordinated a project for high school students from English-speaking countries. She is a graduate of the Hebrew Literature and English Literature Departments in the Hebrew University and also studied for a Master’s degree in Communications in the Hebrew Language department in the Hebrew University and studied editing at the Open University.
professional training and integration in employment and in civil life were guidelines in choosing the syllabus content.

**Introduction – Characteristics of the Target Population and What Makes the Program Unique**

For decades the Adult Education Division has been responsible for teaching Hebrew as a second language to the Arabic-speaking population in Israel. The Division's target population includes adults over the age of 18, people lacking education, or with only elementary or partial secondary education. The aim of the Division's activities in this sector is to enable completion of education according to the students' level: from a level of pre-elementary education to the level of 12 years of schooling.

The Arabic-speaking population addressed by the Division is extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion and gender: Bedouin in the South, people from villages, cities and towns in the North and Center, both men and women who are Muslims, Christians or Druze. From a numerical point of view, the extent of the population that the Division deals with has changed over the years.

The allocation of hours for each course is fixed, but recently preparatory hours have been added for some students, due to changes in the needs of this population and because of the establishment of new projects, mostly government ones, which aims to help this population complete their education. Dealing with the Arabic-speaking population involves many-faceted difficulties; some of them characterize the Division's target population generally, and some are specific to this sector.

Adult students encounter problems that young students in school do not. Workers must maneuver between work and family, exams and attending classes. They dropped out of school at an early age because of socio-economic problems or learning disabilities that were not diagnosed
or treated. In many cases, they disconnected from the experience of studying in childhood or in adolescence, and have deficiencies in learning skills, reading comprehension and general knowledge. A personal background of failure in the education system in the past also causes low motivation to study at a relatively advanced age.

For students, and particularly women students, from the Arabic-speaking sector there are also additional difficulties that are specific to this group, including both logistical and social problems. For women, arranging to study is particularly difficult because of the tasks of raising children and looking after the household. For them, studying means they need help from both the immediate and extended family. When women from this sector decide to study it involves breaking down stigmas, as society around them does not always support this move. The act of going out of the home to study without being accompanied clashes with the cultural norms in parts of Arabic-speaking society.

Changes have recently taken place both in Arab society's attitude towards men and women completing education, and also in the state's willingness to allocate resources for this purpose. As a result of these changes, there have been various changes in the Adult Education Division's syllabuses.

**Aims of Teaching Hebrew Subjects to the Arabic-speaking Population**

In this activity educational, pragmatic and ideological aims are combined.

The main objective is to acquire communication skills in the Hebrew language: reading, writing and speaking, with an emphasis on processing text at an appropriate level and in specific genres.

Study in professional courses and subsequent employment mostly involve knowledge of the dominant language – Hebrew. In recent years
the need to train both men and women for employment has grown in the Arabic-speaking sector. In order to become integrated in employment they must study in professional courses in which the entry requirements include basic education of 10 or 12 years schooling, and usually also a command of Hebrew. The aim to advance employment among the Arabic-speaking population and integrate them effectively in the economy has guided the government in allocating resources to this end. Funding comes from various government ministries. The goal that unites these projects with the Adult Education Division's activity is the desire to advance this population and improve their chances of employment success.

Teaching Hebrew is intended to promote integration of this population among the Hebrew-speaking majority. Not only government institutions and authorities, but also the mass media operate mainly in Hebrew. There is an almost daily need to communicate in Hebrew with health services and hospitals, legal and police authorities, training and educational institutions, and many other entities. The language is necessary in everyday conduct and in contact with the Hebrew-speaking population in the street and at work.

Developing reading comprehension skills in Hebrew is intended to help the student to understand texts generally, and academic texts in particular, which will make it easier for them to study heavily language-based subjects in Hebrew (and also in Arabic). This is particularly true for the uneducated population.

The Adult Education Division would also like to give the Arabic-speaking population a taste of Israeli culture through literature, for example, without creating antagonism to the culture that this literature represents.

The Division seeks to instill awareness of the links between Hebrew and Arabic and their mutual influences. This may have potential for bringing people together.
The objectives of Hebrew teaching for adults in the Adult Education Division are related to the aims of the syllabus in schools. Some of the aims for adult learners are identical to those in the syllabuses, but naturally, there are differences because of the gaps in the students' ages and the length of the courses, among other reasons.

Hebrew teaching for the Arabic-speaking population in the Division concentrates first on spoken and written language, and in subsequent stages mainly on written language.

Changes in the syllabuses in the Adult Education Division for teaching Hebrew to Arabic speakers reflect changes in the composition of the student population and the targets that the Division has determined. These changes also express knowledge derived from tracking final exam results, as well as from experience accumulated in the field by supervisors and teachers in the field, initially in the northern region and then in the entire country.

The Education Unit in the Adult Education Division on the one hand tries to adapt itself to the needs and requirements that come from "the grassroots", and on the other hand, it aspires to realize its teaching aims. Despite administrative changes that have taken place over the years, including transferring some executive tasks that were in the hands of the Division to concessionaires (for example, operating study centers and producing practice exam questions), pedagogical responsibility lies with the Division; it leads the way in everything concerning writing syllabuses and exam questions, supervising and training teachers, and organizing professional courses.

In the past, the Division's syllabuses for teaching Hebrew subjects to Arabic speakers were based on the assumption that the students had

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1 Described in detail in Hebrew as a Second Language – Syllabus for Students whose Mother Tongue is Arabic, 3rd Grade – 12th Grade (Hebrew).
a basic knowledge of Hebrew (reading and writing, vocabulary and idioms, grammar). They were derived from the Ministry of Education's matriculation examination syllabuses or from the Division's syllabus for Hebrew speakers. The limited list of Hebrew works of literature represented more classic works and Diaspora content (Bialik, Ibn Gevirol, Burla, Fierberg, Shalom Aleichem, Shoffman) than contemporary Hebrew literature.

It appeared that the needs of the students were not being adequately met both from the point of view of learning the Hebrew language, but also from the point of view of becoming acquainted with Hebrew literature. It became necessary to amend and change the syllabuses.

**Hebrew for Arabic Speakers – the Division's Syllabuses from 2013**

Starting in 2012, changes have taken place in the Hebrew syllabuses in the Division: in the new modular structure, new and existing syllabuses were incorporated into a new framework. Syllabuses were prepared in stages based on the students' knowledge level, as determined by a screening exam at the beginning of the course. In order to reach the final examination stage, the student must have a command of the previous stages.

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2 Hebrew syllabus for Arabic speakers at elementary level.
A one-unit Hebrew syllabus for Arabic speakers, compulsory for ten, eleven and twelve tracks. Hebrew for Arabic speakers, composition and literature – an elective unit.
The syllabuses are described in detail on the Adult Education Division website.
### Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>First stage</th>
<th>Second stage</th>
<th>Third stage</th>
<th>Fourth stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Hebrew preparatory program</td>
<td>Elementary education</td>
<td>High school education: 10, 11 and 12 years schooling (Compulsory)</td>
<td>High school education 12 years education (elective)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First stage</th>
<th>Second stage</th>
<th>Third stage</th>
<th>Fourth stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading, writing and speech, vocabulary and idioms according to defined areas of function and speech operations, as a basis for nouns, verbs and prepositions</td>
<td>Reading comprehension, strengthening knowledge of Hebrew</td>
<td>Reading comprehension, strengthening knowledge of Hebrew, developing ability for written expression</td>
<td>Academic expression, Hebrew literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**First Stage**

**The Basis for Hebrew Language Acquisition**

When building and reorganizing the syllabus, a stage was added targeting students who either lacked all knowledge of Hebrew or had only very limited knowledge. The intent is to teach them everyday spoken language, reading and writing, basic vocabulary and grammar and bring them to the level of the second stage.

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3 The content detailed in the table, particularly that of the preparatory program, is partial.
Implementing this stage raised some problems. The number of hours allocated to a Hebrew course for new immigrants (*ulpan*) is much greater than the number of hours that was possible to budget for in the Adult Education Division's framework for the preparatory program, because of financial constraints. It is also to be noted that while the Hebrew courses are being upgraded in the direction of digitization, it is not yet possible to base teaching for the Arabic-speaking sector on practice and study using a computer. In addition most teachers of Hebrew at the preparatory course level are not professional teachers, as are *ulpan* teachers. A major difficulty in this field is adapting textbooks to Arab cultural sensitivity. The reality is that textbooks in language-based subjects, including those explicitly for language teaching, sometimes also have value-based and ideological aims, in addition to didactic aims. Examination of the books designated for the *ulpan*\(^4\) showed that these books were intended to achieve aims beyond simply teaching Hebrew as a language, i.e., they promote socialization and provide the social and historical background of Zionism to Jewish immigrants; introduce personalities in the history of the Jewish nation and the state; increase awareness of places related to recent and distant Jewish history; and seek to create a connection to Jewish-Israeli culture through songs, for example, that reflect the above-mentioned content.

Books for language teaching generally revolve around a plot; some of the texts, while teaching vocabulary and grammar, describe the life of characters who are members of a family or a community, and take place

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\(^4\) Including the Adult Education Division's books such as *Ivrit Mibayit Tov* (*Hebrew from a Good Home*) and *Ivrit shel Zahav* (*Golden Hebrew*) and also books published in the private market, for example: Nili Ganani and Ruthi Shimoni, *Ivrit Me'Bereshit* (*Hebrew from the Beginning*), David Rachgold & Co., 2002. There the introduction says: '...We have attempted as much as possible to bring the students closer to Israel and its culture... personalities, historical events and Israeli atmosphere... and festivals.'
in where the language being taught is the one spoken, i.e., in Hebrew-speaking Israel. *Ulpan* books aim to inform the student about Jewish and Zionist heritage, while learning the language. Moreover, *ulpan* books published by universities generally present the students’ way of life, which is relatively permissive and very different from the lifestyle of a Bedouin woman in the South, for example, and they are usually intended for educated, literate students. This content and the way it is presented were not suitable for the Arabic-speaking population.

Books for teaching Hebrew that are intended for children and teens in schools are not suitable, for psychological and social reasons. A reader for teaching Hebrew has to suit adults and as noted above, there exist serious problems in the content of existing textbooks.

These difficulties were articulated by teachers and instructors who were reticent to use existing books. There was a need to write a reader that would be acceptable to the way of life and content it presents to adult Arabic-speaking students, and there was a need to make it concise, because of the limited number of hours in the preparatory course, while instilling vocabulary and idioms relevant to adults, including basic grammar.

The solution was not found within the Division, because of lack of funding, but through cooperation with a private author from the Arabic-speaking sector who has already written textbooks for teaching Hebrew to children and teens in the past. She volunteered to write a textbook for the preparatory course intended to meet the above-mentioned demands while making use of the Adult Education division’s *ulpan* syllabus.

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6 *The Language Teaching Syllabus (First Ulpan)*, Adult Education Division, Language Teaching Unit, Jerusalem 2000.
Texts in this reader will reflect the life of Arabic-speakers in Israel, taking into account a mixed society which includes Muslims, Christians, Druze and Circassians and their way of life. Content that may offend the population or create conflicts will be removed, without relinquishing the connection of Israeli culture to the Hebrew language. The book will deal with everyday areas of life relevant and essential for the students, as well as relate to the topic of citizenship, which is important for adults.

Second and Third Stages

The requirement for entrance to the second and third stages of study is command of basic Hebrew, acquired in the first stage. These more advanced study stages deal with improving reading comprehension and further improved command of spoken Hebrew.

The detailed syllabuses for these stages, and particularly the two readers that accompany them, were written in the Division for population groups for whom Hebrew is a second and foreign language, uneducated people, including those who also have general knowledge deficiencies and poor/non-existent written literacy in their mother tongue. Writing the syllabuses and the readers was based on information "from the field": feedback was received during the writing of the texts and also during actual use. In addition, care was taken to include content that is suitable for adults and is not a problem from the point of view of way of life, religious or national sentiments of the target student sector.

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7 Introductions, family, bank, post office, finding your way around, health and a visit to the doctor and so on; and citizenship – the right to vote and have an influence, basic vocabulary related to politics such as: prime minister, elections, party, president, Knesset.

8 Bishvil HaDa'at Alef (In the Path of Knowledge, I) JDC-Israel, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Adult Education Division, 2004; Bishvil HaDa'at Bet (In the Path of Knowledge, II) JDC-Israel, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Adult Education Division, 2007.
The aim of these syllabuses is to learn to extract meaning from text: from the level of identifying words and terms, to understanding and deciphering meaning by identifying rhetoric, comprehending metaphor, connotations and implications. For this, a variety of techniques were employed, including identifying the word root and looking it up in the dictionary, and learning to decipher the meaning of unknown words without the teacher's assistance. Students are guided to find the explanation of unknown words and expressions within the text itself through understanding the context, and other methods. Identifying key words based on frequency is done systematically to enable the student to predict the text's content, and also to determine the essential words for understanding the main ideas.

The starting point is the text's structure, both at the level of the sentence and the paragraph, as well as at the level of the overall text. The structure facilitates an encounter between the student and the text elements, including writing conventions and graphic design, the division into paragraphs and sentences, and enables the student to derive meaning through reading comprehension skills. The aim is to enable students to become independent readers of a text at a suitable level, and accordingly allow them to become integrated in study of various heavily language-based subjects.

Independent writing is acquired gradually over these stages, as there is always a gap between the ability to understand a written text and the ability to produce text. For example, many of the questions in the readers are closed questions, with emphasis on understanding instructions and filling in answers. As study progresses the number of open questions increases, with most of them based on the application of a particular skill, such as understanding causality within written text. Independent writing is learned mainly by providing guidance to answering questions.
in writing, using skills acquired in analyzing and deciphering language elements.⁹

**Fourth Stage (Optional)**

The fourth stage is intended only for students whose level is good and who wish to strengthen their command of Hebrew and its literature. This may be possible when there is a teacher available with motivation and desire to promote the subject.

There are two chapters in this stage's syllabus:

- **Chapter One:** Written expression. This involves writing a short academic essay or a formal letter, using the structure and register suited to the genre.

- **Chapter Two:** Literature. The written works selected takes into account the level of language, stylistic difficulty, and length of the work, as well as the values and lifestyle of the population. This sensitivity is derived from our experience with adult Jewish students from the religious sector who sometimes feel a conflict between their views and particular works of Hebrew literature.

  In discussions in the Division in the past, teachers and inspectors from the Arabic-speaking sector sometimes specifically preferred works portraying, for example, Jews in the Diaspora. It may be that they felt it was important to represent the literary canon and the historical background of the Jewish people, or maybe it was a matter of habit.

The choice of works familiar from the matriculation syllabus or from the syllabuses of colleges (and universities) often characterizes the teachers,

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⁹ The final exam is built on these principles, as they are expressed in the syllabuses and the readers. The student is not examined on knowledge of a particular vocabulary or on an area of functioning known in advance, but contends with a new text and is asked to apply the skills acquired during the study process.
who tend to teach materials that they themselves studied or taught. This situation generally left works from former syllabuses in the new ones. However, given the wide choice of potential texts means these specific works of writing do not have to be taught to this population.

It must be noted that the texts in the syllabus are not regarded as being of equal quality in the world of literary discourse. The main criterion used to select texts was that they be appropriate to the students' social and psychological mindset, and reflect problems that are universal and accordingly are also found within Arab-Israeli society, presented through the prism of Israeli society. In this way the students encounter different facets of Israeli society and the varied opinions, rifts and conflicts that also exist in this world: the ultra-orthodox and secular divide, gender disparities, relationships between couples, and the family.

An example of an appropriate, universal, social issue is demonstrated by the story “Atonement” by Israeli writer Etgar Keret. In a one-page story an abused woman tells (in the first person) about the abuse she experienced from her husband on the Day of Atonement (the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur). The story has textual qualities that qualify it as literary study material, but it also is of great social value as it contends with a problem that exists in the Arabic-speaking sector, as well.

In past syllabuses most of the literary works were short stories or poems. Using an excerpt from a novel or a play is generally not desirable, so this caused doubts about the content of the syllabus. Ultimately, the balance was tipped in favor of including them in the syllabus, as it was felt that getting to know different genres and the ways in which drama and modern novels reflect contemporary attitudes or ways of life in Israeli society (sometimes with humor), was of great importance. A further consideration was that a chapter excerpted from a longer work in modern Hebrew is easier to understand than a work written in a high register. Therefore, for example, chapters from Israel Segal's book "My Brother's
Keeper” (religious/secular rifts in society and within the Israeli family), or from Meir Shalev’s book “My Russian Grandmother and her American Vacuum Cleaner” (family life and its whims in a rural community in the 1950s), and also a chapter from the play “Winter Funeral” by Hanoch Levin (to enable reference to theater and contemporary Israeli plays, while dealing with the universal motif of a couple's relationship at the end of its duration, and the place of memories in old age), were included.

The possibility of studying texts according to a division into thematic subjects, rather than based upon the author or genre, was offered in the syllabus. The assumption was that this would make it be possible to present works interesting to the student, combine genres, and even compare approaches to a single subject in a number of works. Examples of subjects are relationships between men and women, study and employment, and the world of creativity – Ars Poetica. Obviously, class teachers can choose their own subjects from among the works in the syllabus. 10

**Conclusion**

The different syllabuses that have developed by the Adult Education Division over the years express the changes that have taken place in Arabic-speaking society in Israel, as well as the educational aims of the Adult Education Division: inculcating skills in written and spoken Hebrew; integrating the Arabic-speaking population without education, or with a mediocre level of education in employment; fostering civil awareness; promoting encounters with Hebrew culture; and contending...
with social dilemmas and values such as women's status, relations between children and parents, tradition and religion.

The syllabuses were written according to varying needs and different levels using a system of learning stages, with the highest stage being completion of secondary education. Some students need to complete elementary education as they lack a background in written language, including reading and writing in their mother tongue. It was found that there was a need for a multilevel combination of syllabuses for teaching Hebrew to those studying in courses at Grade 10, 11 and 12 levels. The Division responded to these needs, including increasing the number of hours allocated for teaching Arabic and Hebrew, as a command of reading, writing and comprehension strategies is thought to be the essential foundation for every course taught at the same time, or in the future.

Various government ministries cooperated with the Adult Education Division.¹¹ This is evidence of increased interest in the needs of the Arabic-speaking sector and willingness to make an effort to help it advance. Everyone agrees that education empowers individuals in the family and in society by advancing their status. Women and men who are more highly educated can help their children with their schoolwork, and thereby advance the whole community. Because of this, there are projects for the general population that are intended also for the Arabic-speaking sector.¹²

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11 For example the Prime Minister's Office – the Trachtenberg Program, a five year plan for advancing the Bedouin population at all levels up to the level of completing 12 years' education.
12 Such as the Ad Halom Project (Parents Learn and Children Succeed). The Adult Education Division in the Ministry of Education and the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation (RAMA) are partners in this, and its aim is to examine the connection between advancing parents' education to a level of 12 years study and their children's achievements as students in the GEMS and Bagrut exams.
From the point of view of the choice of academic content in the Hebrew subjects, listening to the needs of the population was combined with a more focused definition of aims. Over the years a gradual change has taken place in the way syllabuses are built and in their emphases. In the beginning they were derived from the school syllabuses (matriculation), they used high register Hebrew and taught Hebrew literature and the cultural and literary canon of the Jewish majority, including Hebrew (Jewish and Zionist) literature as a compulsory subject. Today, the involvement with Hebrew literature is optional, is designed to enable a glimpse into Israeli society by using a choice of works adapted to the students' level of Hebrew, their needs as adults, and the social background to which they belong. Now the emphasis is on spoken Hebrew and comprehension, with the aim of helping the student become integrated in work and in society and support their personal growth and advancement.
The "New Oldsters" as a Working and Learning Population
The "New Oldsters" as a Working and Learning Population
Senior Citizens: Our Largest Reservoir of Unexploited Resources

Zev Golan

This article is based on a study by Zev Golan and economist Keren Harel-Harari. It identifies a population of approximately 220 thousand senior citizens with unexploited potential for participating in the Israeli labor force. Their integration into the labor market would yield revenues of at least NIS 6.4 billion per year. Golan argues that members of this sector want to work, have proven they are capable of working, yet are forced not to work. As a result, both they and the economy lose.

Introduction

In June 2010 the Commission for Examining Employment Policy in Israel submitted its conclusions to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. The commission identified populations whose participation in the Israeli workforce was insufficiently high, recommending increased
employment rates of: Haredim, Arabs, the handicapped, and young adults aged 20-24, especially in the Arab sector\(^1\).

Israeli public discourse focuses on the employment problems of the ultra-orthodox (*haredim*) and Arabs, or of the general population, without explicitly mentioning the existence of another sector, many of whose members want to work, have proven they are capable of working, and yet – are forced not to work. This is the population of seniors aged 65 and up.

The goal of this study is not to predict how many seniors will work in Israel. It will not predict whether changes will be made in the Retirement Law or the National Insurance Institute's conditioning of payments on lack of employment. Nor will it predict whether changes will come about in the attitudes of employers towards employing seniors or, alternatively, in the attitudes of seniors and how they view the labor market. After all, for thousands of years it has been said that "only fools can prophesy". "Furthermore, the multiplicity of variables in the equation – from future policy changes to the prevailing national economic situation at any given time – makes it impossible to know exactly how many people will return to the labor force in a certain year or another. That said, the goal of this study is to identify the potential reservoir of senior citizens for whom it is possible to return to the labor market under suitable conditions, and point out the potential contribution to the economy of such a return.

In many countries senior citizens are viewed as the "greatest unexploited reservoir of human resources in the economy", a problem

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\(^1\) Zvi Ekstein, Chair of the Committee for Examining Employment Policy: Final report (Jerusalem, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, the National Economic Council and the Bank of Israel, 2010), pages 12-13.  
that is examined in terms of lowered standard of living and GDP. From a national, macroeconomic perspective, all additional work adds net sources to the economy. Non-utilization of the potential of the senior population represents a loss to the state and to private households. Noa Yehezkiel attests to this in her study "Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment":

Donations and subsidies, which characterize seniors as beggars and perpetual recipients of support at the expense of workers, do not constitute a fitting solution. Israel needs to advance reform in the area of the employment of seniors and extricate them from the danger of poverty. Furthermore, one ought to view older workers as part of the solution and not part of the problem.

The economic price of the non-employment of seniors is expressed in overburdened hospitals and kupot holim (health services), increased financial expenses for hours of nursing care, increased health expenses, increased disability allowances and income support. Numerous studies in Israel and around the world prove that when seniors are occupied, their health is affected positively. Activity and undertakings for people at advanced ages directly influence their health, irrespective of their economic situation or education level. Seniors working or volunteering, even for a few hours a week, can contribute greatly to the economy in an amount estimated in the billions of shekels.

The employment of senior citizens holds many advantages, from both a private and whole-economy perspective. In this study, however, we will focus on the economic worth and the monetary value obtained from the work and/or volunteering of these citizens. An analysis of existing findings will enable us to estimate the current overall value

2 Noa Yehezkiel, Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment? (Jerusalem, Koret Foundation, 2007), page 17.
3 Ibid, pages 1 and 17.
of their work and volunteering activity. Furthermore, we will assess the maximum potential that exists in this population and indicate its monetary value. This despite the fact that the entire potential, clearly, would not be realized since that is dependent on the number of senior citizens who opt to join the labor market or philanthropic third sector activity and succeed in doing so.

The first section will examine the potential of employing senior citizens in Israel. We will calculate the monetary value that would accrue if all adults aged 65+—who are in good health and physically able to do so—would join the labor market. In the second section we will estimate the total number of volunteering hours of this population and their contribution to the economy and society. In the third section, we will review the expense side, with an emphasis on health and nursing care expenses of seniors in Israel. Later, for comparison's sake, we will present information on the potential work of seniors in Australia. The final section will present a summary of the study's findings. In the appendix, we present statistical information on the situation of senior citizens in Israel and the world.

Advantages in Employing Senior Citizens

From the Individual's Perspective

Employment at an older age adds to the quality of life of the senior worker. Studies have proven that a working life contributes to the health and personal welfare of this population. Work enables older

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4 One should take into account that these are estimates that approximate the true value of the work of senior citizens and the value of their volunteering. Because it is difficult to precisely calculate the sought-after economic worth, the calculations presented in the study are especially cautious and conservative estimates based on existing findings.
people to exploit their capabilities and experience, prevents idleness and deterioration, and bestows a sense of vitality.

What is more, from an economic aspect, working at an older age supplies an additional income, which facilitates economic stability. The worker, during his\textsuperscript{5} advanced years, aspires to have a standard of life for him and his family that is similar to the life standard they have become accustomed to. Additionally, working at an older age grants a sense of contribution, belonging, and involvement, and enables continuous contact with other workers. Employment positively influences self-fulfillment as well as the fulfillment of the worker's personal abilities.\textsuperscript{6}

**From the Employer's Perspective**

The employment of older workers holds many advantages. Such workers possess experience garnered over many years and occasionally also specific professional expertise that younger workers are unable to supply. A complete world of knowledge is destined to go down the drain if we do not seek to preserve it.

Yoav Ben-Yakar, CEO of Teleclal Group (employer of approximately 800 workers, with seven subsidiaries), vouches for older workers, saying that in most cases, they prove to be the organization's most devoted, stable and faithful workers. In his opinion, they are serious workers who have a mature attitude to their work and appreciate the opportunity given them to wake up in the morning and go to work and contribute. Because they are not obliged to raise children or care for parents, these seniors exhibit flexibility of working hours and occasionally work in part-time jobs or on temporary projects. Additionally, since they are not called to

\textsuperscript{5} The male gender is occasionally used for convenience's sake, but naturally refers to men and women alike.

\textsuperscript{6} Yehezkiel, *Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment?* Page 14; Yakov Teuman, team leader for the Projects Dept. of Teleclal Group, interview with *HaMachberet*, July 8, 2012.
serve reserve army duty, older people are more available for work, as expressed by a low level of absenteeism.\footnote{Yoav Ben-Yakar, CEO Teleclal Group, interview with HaMachberet, July 8, 2012.}

This is also confirmed in the words of Dr. Lea Nass, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and responsible for senior citizen affairs in Israel: "From the employer's standpoint, there are many advantages to employing seniors. Firstly, they have experience that has been gained over many years, with an extensive and cumulative world of knowledge and valuable expertise in their particular fields. Secondly, the older worker is characterized by high work productivity, loyalty, flexibility of working hours and a stable life routine.\footnote{Yossi Chatav, HRus, "The Restless Elderly: not one employer would admit he refuses to hire anyone aged 45 and up," interview with Deputy Minister Lea Nass and MK Lia Shemtov, April 1, 2012. Link to website (updated August 2012).}"

**Statistical Background**

Since 1955, the senior population in Israel has grown by a factor of 8.7; in other words, the growth rate of seniors has been double that of the general population. The senior population has grown not only in terms of absolute numbers, but also in the proportion of seniors in the general population. In 1955, seniors constituted 4.8% of the overall population and double that (about 10%) in the years 1995-2010 (see Graph 1). According to a forecast by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and the Ministry for Senior Citizens, the process of aging will accelerate in coming years and in 2025-2030 the proportion of seniors will reach 13-14%\footnote{Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, The Elderly in Israel – Statistical Abstract 2008, Chapter 1: Demographic attributes of seniors, pages 4-5. Website: http://brookdaleheb.jdc.org.il/_Uploads/PublicationsFiles/69-11-Shnaton-2010-REP-HEB.pdf, August 1, 2012; Central Bureau of Statistics, "World Health Day: Health Indicators for the Elderly", media release, Jerusalem, April 4, 2012.} of the population (see Graph 2 and Graph 3).
Graph 1

Trends in the aging of Israel's population between the years 1960 and 2030


Graph 2

Persons aged 65+, as percentage of the general population, 2008 vs. 2030

Beyond the rise in the relative proportions of persons aged 65 and up, the absolute number of this group is expected to rise more rapidly than for other age groups. According to CBS forecasts, by the end of 2019 the relative portion of persons aged 65+ out of the population will rise by 40%-48%; by the end of 2034, by 99%-124%; and by the end of 2059, by 229%-286%.  

**Macroeconomic Analysis**

**Potential Employment of Senior Citizens**

The percentage of employed individuals out of the population of persons aged 65+ is about 12%, or in absolute numbers, approximately 80,500. Some 5% of all seniors (36,400) do not work due to sickness or disability, while 78.8% (547,600) claim they do not work due to their advanced age or having reached retirement age. The remainder of seniors report not

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10 CBS, "World Health Day".
working for other reasons such as not finding suitable work, embarking on studies, caring for children/the household and more. 11

We will now proceed to survey the potential participation of seniors in the labor market in numerical terms, followed by estimating the monetary value obtained by the employment of older workers, for the economy and for society.

One way of calculating the number of seniors that may be attached to the labor market (we stress: this is the potential number; our assertion does not indicate the number of seniors who would actually join the market), is to calculate the rate of participation in the labor force. According to this approach, one must assume that seniors are no different from the rest of the population in regards to potential participation in the labor force, not to mention the fact that they themselves were part of this statistic until becoming seniors. Based on the participation rate in the labor force, focusing on ages closer to retirement age, one can estimate the potential participation rate of seniors in the labor force as well as the monetary value of such participation.

Percentages of participation in the civilian labor force for age groups between 45 and 64 appear in Table 1. According to CBS data there are more than 700 thousand seniors living in Israel out of which about 317 thousand are men and 417 thousand are women. Calculating participation rate in the labor force according to ages near the retirement age: a participation rate of 71. 6% for men and 63. 1% for women would indicate a total of 427 thousand workers, 226 thousand of them men and 201 thousand women. In other words, if seniors would participate in the labor force at the rate they participated during

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11 Central Bureau of Statistics, Labor Force Survey 2010, (Jerusalem: CBS, 2010), Table 1.3: Population of persons aged 15 and up, according to civil labor force characteristics as well as those not in the civil labor force – according to reason, age and gender, data from 2009.
the years previous to becoming seniors, out of a total of about 730 thousand seniors we would receive approximately 427,000 workers.\footnote{Processed for: CBS, Population Aged 15 and Up – according to religion, family status, gender and age, 2009, Table 2.2.}

**Table 1**

Percentage participation in the civilian labor force according to age and gender, 2012 data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A number higher than this is obtained through a different estimate measuring the desire of seniors to work, i.e., the percentage of individuals expressing willingness to work after retirement age. A survey conducted for the Phoenix Insurance company reveals that almost 70% of Israelis would continue working after legal retirement age if it was up to them.\footnote{Oz and Tamar Almoz, from: People Israel – Your Guide to Israeli Society, "Old age in Israel" – information sheet, the rise in life expectancy and aging in the world population, website (visited Sept. 28, 2012): http://www.peopleil.org/details.aspx?itemID=30285.} For a population of some 730 thousand seniors, 70% represents approximately 510 thousand potential senior workers.

As mentioned, CBS data shows that out of all seniors not part of the civilian labor force, some 547 thousand indicated the reason as being their advanced age or having gone on pension. What stems from this
statistic is that we have a group of almost 550 thousand potential seniors who are able to join the labor market.

From the above estimates, therefore, we can assume that there are between 425 and 550 thousand seniors who can be defined as a potential group for integrating into the civilian labor force. The work that they might engage in and the pay they would receive in exchange for it could be defined as 'lost output of the economy due to the non-employment of seniors aged 65+'.

All the same, in order to obtain a cautious and conservative estimate, we will gauge the group's participants according to another indicator – the health indicator for seniors.

Estimate According to Health Indicators of Seniors

One of the factors influencing participation in the labor force for seniors is health, since it is hard for a person who is not healthy to participate in the labor force. The influence of health has been investigated extensively. Participation of healthy and educated individuals in the labor force is explained by the fact that they have the desire and ability to work.\textsuperscript{14} From CBS data, we can learn about the health situation of seniors aged 65 and up. Using Table 2, we can estimate the number of seniors who are qualified to work from a health aspect.

\textsuperscript{14} Yehezkiel, Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment? Page 12.
Table 2

Self-Assessment of Health Situation among Persons Aged 65 and up – 2010 data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Self-assessment of health situation (in percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>393,100</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and up</td>
<td>310,900</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Processed for: Central Bureau of Statistics, Social Survey 2010 (Jerusalem: CBS, 2010), Table 4: Individuals aged 20 and up according to self-assessment of health situation, health problems, and selected attributes.

Number of Senior Citizens Able to Work

In order to estimate the number of potential employees in the senior population, we will first identify all of the individuals who are able to work. The number of seniors able work from a health standpoint will be calculated according to the following formula:

Multiplying the number of seniors aged 65-74 (393,100) by the proportion of those reporting good or very good health (38.4% + 12.6% = 51%) ➞ 200,500.

Similarly, multiplying the number of seniors aged 75 and up (310,900) by the proportion of those reporting good or very good health (31.6% + 3.8% = 35.4%) ➞ 110,000.

Adding these two figures (200.5 K + 110 K) we obtain the total number of seniors able to work ➞ 310,500.

The difference between the number of seniors actually working (80,500) and the number of those able to work (310,500) constitutes the unexploited potential in the labor force ➞ 230,000 seniors.

We will attempt to estimate the number of men and women in this population. Based on existing findings, out of the 80,500 seniors...
who are employed, approximately 70% are men and 30% women.\textsuperscript{15} Assuming a similar breakdown in the group of 230,000 potential senior workers that we estimated, there will be approximately 161,000 men and 69,000 women in this population. However, the first group has chosen, or has been chosen, to work, while the second group is of a more general character; it is not certain whether we should adopt the existing proportion in the unique group. Thus, it is preferable to adopt the existing proportion between men and women in this overall population group.

We should assume that if more seniors would return to work, the actual proportion would be the proportion between current senior workers and the general population. Today, some 55% of the population aged 65 and up are women and 45% men.\textsuperscript{16} Therefore, out of 230,000 seniors, 126,500 would be women and 103,500 would be men.

Since we wish to determine the number of seniors who would actually go to work, we need to subtract the percentage of seniors who would apparently not succeed in working, even if their health situations are good/very good – Israel does not have full employment, thus we cannot assume full employment for the senior population. The unemployment rate in the entire economy is 5.7% (2011 data). However, the existing unemployment rate among the ages we are focusing on has been estimated at approximately 4.5%, with an unemployment rate of 4.2% for women and 4.7% for men\textsuperscript{17} (see Table 3). Thus, in all, we can

\textsuperscript{15} CBS, Labor Force Survey 2010, Table 1.3.

\textsuperscript{16} For updated data see CBS, Selected Data for International Women's Day, 2012, press release, March 6, 2012, \url{http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template.html?hodaa=201211055}; and for employment data upon which this paper is based on, see CBS, Population Aged 15 and Up – according to religion, family status, gender and age, 2009, Table 2.2.

point to approximately 219,800 seniors – about 121,200 women and 98,600 men – as our “Large Reservoir of Unexploited Human Resources”.

**Estimate of the Potential Economic Value of Employment of Senior Citizens (65+)**

There are various estimates concerning the value of the work of the senior population. In this section we will detail a number of them.

CBS data indicate that the average salary of hired workers aged 65+ is NIS 6,920. Furthermore, there is variance between the male and female population of seniors: Men work at more than triple the rate of women and their salaries are significant higher – an average of NIS 8,757 per month for men, and NIS 3,913 for women.18 (See Table 5).

By multiplying this salary data by the appropriate multipliers (98,600 men x NIS 8,757 x 12 months = NIS 10,361,282,400) + (121,200 women x NIS 3,913 x 12 months = NIS 5,691,067,200) we are able to estimate an annual potential income totaling NIS 16 billion (assuming that all individuals aged 65+ able to work, based on health and unemployment indicators, would indeed work).

**Additional and Different Estimates for Calculation of Salary**

Data on monthly salary paid to seniors aged 65+ can also be found in studies of the National Insurance Institute. According to Jacques Bendelac, director of the department of information and population data management at the National Insurance Institute's Research and Planning Administration:

The distribution of income according to age group shows that average income rises with age. Accordingly the maximum income can be found in the 65-74 age group, in other words retirement aged workers in the labor market. For example, salaried workers aged 65-74 earned more than four times the average salary of the 'up to 24' age group. Income that originates from working over the age of 75 falls by approximately 76% compared with the average income of the 65 to 74 age group. 19

Graph 4
Average monthly salary of wage earners according to age group, 2009.
Average = 100

According to this study, individuals aged 65 to 74 earn considerably more than the average monthly salary of those aged 75. This older group earns a sum close to the average salary of workers up to 24 years of age, which is lower than the average general salary. 20 Currently, the average salary stands at NIS 8,881. 21 According to this estimate, assuming all individuals aged 65+ who are able to work (based on health and unemployment indicators) would do so, the potential annual income would be much higher than the abovementioned estimate, which was based on CBS salary data for senior workers. In order to estimate the wages of seniors, we will be assisted by the study of Noa Yehezkiel 22 who argues that:

Senior workers are satisfied with a relatively low salary level and as age increases, they fill positions at lower wages. A possible explanation for this is that the older workers are educated and possess economic means; so apparently, finances are not the dominant consideration in their continued work.

Accordingly, in order to propose a conservative estimate of the annual value of income (taking Yehezkiel's view into account), we will take an estimate based on minimum wage being paid out to seniors (this despite the fact that in practice, many of them receive a much higher salary).

Conservative Estimate – Minimum Hourly Wage

According to Yehezkiel's study, the salary paid to seniors is relatively low. In order to arrive at a cautious and conservative estimate, we will

20 Ibid.
assign the wage given to these workers at the minimum wage level. The minimum wage we employ is NIS 22.05 per hour.

The average number of weekly work hours for employed individuals aged 65 and up can be obtained from CBS data as well as a study by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Center for Research on Aging, which states that senior citizens over the age of 65 work an average of 30.4 hours a week. (See Table 3).

### Table 3

Average weekly work hours for employed persons aged 55+ and 65+, according to sex and population group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>55+ נשים</th>
<th>55+ גברים</th>
<th>65+ נשים</th>
<th>65+ גברים</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>סתייכ</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מראש</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נרחב</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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23 A cautious estimate, based on the minimum wage, enables an undervaluation of the financial value of the work of civilian seniors in Israel in a given year. In practice this is a sum lower than the true economic value of this work. For a more exact calculation, one must take into account the nature of the work performed by workers, the average salary in that branch (industry, welfare, services, health and others), the seniority of each worker plus additional variables.


A conservative calculation based on an hourly wage of NIS 22.05 reveals that the average weekly salary of a senior citizen is approximately NIS 670 (30.4 hours x NIS 22.05); the monthly salary totals approximately NIS 2,700 and the annual salary NIS 32,600.

Multiplying the annual minimum wage by the number of employed senior citizens (80,500) renders an annual monetary value for the work of persons aged 65 and up. This amount totals NIS 2.6 billion, which represents the 'work output of persons aged 65 who work'.

In order to estimate the lost work output of persons aged 65 and up who are not in the labor force, we will take into account the potential workers that the economy does not take advantage of.

According to the calculation in the previous section, there are approximately 219,800 senior citizens whose health situation is good and who are physically able to work; this when deducting for the unemployment figure of about 103,500 women and 98,600 men. On average, men work 34.4 hours a week while women work an average of 21.9 hours a week (see Table 6). Assuming that these workers will work the average number of hours for these ages at minimum wage (hourly rate of NIS 22.05), the wages when multiplied by the appropriate multipliers

\[ \text{(98,600 x 34.4 x 4 x 12 x 22.05 = NIS 3.6 billion)} + \text{(121,200 x 21.9 x 4 x 12 x 22.05 = NIS 2.8 billion)} = \text{NIS 6.4 billion} \]

This, therefore, is the maximum potential for 'work output to the economy from persons aged 65+'.

The estimated lost monetary value to the economy based on minimum wage – NIS 6.4 billion – is only a minimum sum. An analysis of data from CBS and the National Insurance Institute reveals that the economic benefit from the employment of senior workers aged 65+ (who are not employed and whose health situation is good) is much higher and
is estimated to total approximately NIS 16 billion. Table 7 summarizes the two chief estimates.

The Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies adopts the more conservative and cautious estimate based on minimum wage. This estimate, as seen, asserts that the added annual income to the economy through the employment of potential workers from the senior population would total approximately NIS 6.4 billion. However both of these possibilities we've mentioned suggest the fact that non-employment of potential workers from the senior population aged 65+ signifies a significant economic loss to the economy.

**Increasing Income Through Work and Volunteering**

**Employment**

Benny Landa and Shmuel Even of the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University indicate in their study "The Israeli Economy in the Era of Globalization" that increasing the percentage of employed persons in the economy stands atop the economic 'food chain' and is the key to sustainable prosperity. Employment directly and indirectly generates all of the added value produced in the state, and the main portion of Israel's tax revenues. Therefore it is key to the state's economy and way of life. 27

Landa and Even indicate that high employment rates increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generate tax revenues, and enable increased public expenditure on education, health, welfare services, infrastructures and security. In general, high employment rates enable a high standard of

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life and improved quality of life.  

On the other hand, low employment rates have a reverse effect, i.e., reduced GDP, decreased tax revenues, creation of socioeconomic gaps, and other negative effects such as poverty. Low employment rates and the weakened economy they produce have a negative effect on the state's capacity to invest in other areas. It follows, therefore, that the strength of the state's economy is an existential need as is the employment level of its citizens.

A considerable increase in the rate of persons actually employed out of the total population would bring about an increase in GDP; such a change must be based on increase participation in the labor force.

The main core of workers who can be added to the labor market originates from the ranks of unemployed seniors, or those who do not participate in the labor force, but are fit to work. As previously mentioned, this involves some 219,800 persons.

**Estimating GDP growth**

The GDP is the total market value of net final goods and services produced in the state. Per capita GDP is an important indicator (out of a number of conventional indicators) to enable us to assess a state's economic power.

Israel's population numbers approximately 7.9 million inhabitants and its GDP in 2011 totaled approximately NIS 813 billion. Per capita

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28 Ibid
32 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Up-to-date data on Israel's population* (Jerusalem, CBS, Aug. 2012), [http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MvVal=cw_usr_view_SHTML&ID=629](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MvVal=cw_usr_view_SHTML&ID=629); also: CBS: Table 2 – Gross Domestic Product, Real Income and Earnings (Losses) from Terms of Trade; Table 17: Gross Domestic Product and
GDP totals approximately NIS 103,000, or $26,000.\textsuperscript{33} The joining of numerous seniors to the ranks of the country's workers while creating a massive number of new jobs would generate improvement in Israel's GDP. We estimate the maximum potential rise in GDP that can be attributed to the entire reservoir of potential working seniors (who declare they are in good or very good health) to be approximately 4.5%. This translates into an increase of approximately NIS 4,700 in per capita GDP.\textsuperscript{34} Obviously, employing only a certain percentage of seniors would bring about a lower rise in overall GDP and in per capita GDP. Furthermore, the wages paid to seniors would indirectly contribute even more to GDP thanks to spending from their salaries.

\textsuperscript{33} Based on an average exchange rate of 1 USD = NIS 4.00.
\textsuperscript{34} Calculation of change in GDP: According to CBS data, GDP is estimated at NIS 813 billion and the number of employed persons at 3,352,000 persons. Total GDP divided by the number of employed persons equals NIS 243,000 per worker. According to data from the World Bank, GDP per worker in Israel is $68,122 or approximately NIS 270,000 (using 2010 data, with an exchange rate of four shekels per dollar). In order to arrive at a minimal and cautious estimate, we will base ourselves on the lower GDP per worker statistic of the two—NIS 240,000. The number of additional workers, 219,800, multiplied by the GDP per worker equals approximately NIS 53 billion. This sum when divided by the total population (7.9 million inhabitants) yields the added per capita GDP, NIS 6,668 (approximately 1,667 dollars using an exchange rate of NIS 4 per dollar).

In order to calculate the rise in GDP, we must take into account the percentage job position: Since, according to studies, the average weekly number of hours worked by seniors is 30—we multiply the rise in GDP by the percentage job position. The conclusion is that GDP will increase by NIS 37 billion (total increase of 4.5% in GDP). This sum when divided by the number of inhabitant means a per capita rise of NIS 4,696, which equals 1,174 dollars (based on an exchange rate of NIS 4 per dollar). This calculation is based on the assumption that the extent of volunteering among seniors in Israel is fixed.
Non-Impact on Job Positions of Young Adults

There are some who maintain that integrating retirement age workers in the labor market necessarily impacts job positions of the young adult population. With that, a study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NCPA) examined this phenomenon over the course of years. According to the study, there are a number of job positions that younger adults would lose should retired seniors be employed in them; however, in the long term, there is no impact to the number of job positions for younger adults.\(^35\)

In Germany during the 1970s, when the employment rate of seniors rose by 9%, the employment rate of young adults rose concurrently. When the employment rate of seniors rose in the 1990s, the employment rate of young adults remained stable and intact. According to the study, the trend was similar in France and Britain.\(^36\)

The study examined twelve different countries and found that the employment rates of seniors and young adults operate in the same direction rather than in opposite directions. An overall examination of data from these countries reveals that when there was an increase of approximately 8% in the employment of seniors, the young adult employment rate also rose by about 4-5%, while unemployment in this sector fell by approximately 2-3%.\(^37\)

Up to now we have examined the potential participation of seniors in the labor market, its monetary value, and its contribution to the economy. Now we will proceed to estimate the monetary value obtained from the volunteering of seniors.

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36 Ibid

37 Ibid
Volunteer Activity

There is a significant connection between age and the tendency to volunteer. Young people in Israel volunteer more than seniors. In 2010, 20.7% of young people (20-24 years old) volunteered, as compared with 16.6% of seniors aged 65-74 years, and 12.8% of seniors aged 75+.\(^{38}\) (See Graph 5)

Graph 5
Percentage of persons aged 20 and up who engaged in volunteer activity, 2010

Processed for: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Social Survey 2010* (Jerusalem, 2010), Table 10: Persons aged 20 and up who engaged in volunteering activity, according to attributes of the activity and selected qualities.

Additionally, when checking the volunteer rate of persons in both formal or informal frameworks, it was found that young people volunteer

\(^{38}\) CBS, *Social Survey, 2010*, Table 10 – Persons aged 20 and up who engaged in volunteer activity, according to attributes of the activity and selected qualities.
more: volunteering decreases moderately as age increases, with the rate of persons over the age of 55 being the lowest at under 10%. 39

Despite this, seniors who volunteer do so for more hours than younger people: 52.9% of seniors aged 75 years and older volunteer for more than ten hours a week, in comparison with 33.3% of young persons aged 20-24 years. 40

**Extent of Volunteering in Israel**

A study conducted by Ben-Gurion University showed that on average, people volunteered for a single organization for 5.9 years, with a median term of service of three years; in other words, half of the volunteers served for more than three years at the same organization. In addition, volunteers estimated that they contributed an average of 27 hours per month of their time to formal activity in the organization. Some 18.2% of volunteers are "heavy-weight volunteers", i.e., they contribute at least 40 hours a month, equivalent to a one-quarter job position.41

This study also shows that if the average volunteer would volunteer continuously throughout the year on the same scale, he/she would donate a total of 324 hours during the year, more than 40 full workdays. Calculating the annual activity hours of volunteers based on minimum wage infers that each volunteer saves an organization at least NIS 6,464 a year. This is a conservative estimate, for some volunteers provide an


40 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Social Survey* for the years 2006 to 2010, Table 10: Persons aged 20 and up who engaged in volunteering activity,

organization with professional services such as legal advice, which far exceeds the value of minimum wage.\textsuperscript{42}

**Monetary Value of Volunteering**

Various economic estimates have been performed in Israel (and the world) over the years to calculate the overall monetary value of volunteering activity. In 1997 a survey was conducted by Prof. Benjamin Gidron in order to check patterns of contribution and volunteering. According to this survey, the monetary value of volunteering in Israel was an estimated NIS 7.25 billion per year (calculation based on minimum hourly wage and according to prices during the same year).\textsuperscript{43}

In 2001, an economic analysis was performed by the National Council of Volunteering in Israel which revealed that the total monetary value of volunteering hours totaled an estimated NIS 5.1 billion per year.\textsuperscript{44} During that same year in the U. S., a survey was conducted that showed that 44% of all adults over the age of 21 contributed 15.5 billion volunteering hours, the value of which was estimated to be approximately USD 239 billion.\textsuperscript{45}

An additional study was performed in 2004 at York University in Toronto (in association with the University of Connecticut), focusing on volunteers in hospitals. The study was conducted at 31 hospitals in the Toronto area and examined the benefits of employing volunteers versus costs. It demonstrated that the value of the volunteers in relation to expenses involved in employing them stood at a ratio of 1 to 6.84, in

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Calculation based on minimum hourly wage according to prices during the same year. Yossi Zolpan, *Volunteering and its Characteristics* (Jerusalem: Knesset Research and Information Center, Feb. 10, 2004), pages 2-3.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid
other words a 684% return on investment.\textsuperscript{46}

In 2008, as part of a study by the Israel Center for Third Sector Research at Ben-Gurion University, researchers assessed the economic value of volunteering in the Israeli public sector, addressing all volunteering in Israel, both in the third sector and the public sector. The total economic value of volunteering (based on minimum wage) was an estimated NIS 7.5 billion per year (for 33.8 million hours of volunteering).\textsuperscript{47}

**Volunteering Patterns among Persons Aged 65+**

We have mentioned a number of estimates performed over the years to estimate the monetary value of volunteering in Israel and around the world. In this study we shall estimate the value of volunteering for a specific population group – senior citizens over the age of 65.

According to the most up-to-date Social Survey published by the CBS, the percentage of volunteering in the adult population (aged 20+) is 18.1%, for the 65-74 year age group, 16.6%, and among persons aged 75 and up, 12.8%.\textsuperscript{48}

In recent years there has been a rising trend in the volunteering rate of the 65-75 age group. For the 75+ age group there has been a fluctuating trend of volunteer activity over the years. (See Graph 6)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} Processed for CBS, *Social Survey 2010*, Table 10.
\end{itemize}
Some 60% of volunteers aged 65+ declared that they volunteered ten hours or more a month; the remainder declared that they volunteered up to nine hours a week (s/b 'month'?!) or that they volunteered on a onetime/irregular basis, as can be seen in Table 8.

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>65-74</th>
<th>75 and up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>60.44</td>
<td>58.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Processed for publication by the Central Bureau of Statistics, *Social Survey* for the years 2006 to 2010, Table 10: Persons aged 20 and up who engaged in volunteering activity, according to attributes of the activity and selected qualities.
Economic Value of the Volunteering of Pension-aged Israelis

When we add up all of the volunteer hours, we can easily see that the philanthropy of the pension-aged sector in Israel has the potential to become a significant economic force. An analysis of existing findings allows us to estimate the economic value of the volunteering of senior citizens aged 65+. One must bear in mind that the calculations presented in this study are cautious and conservative, and make a minimum estimate of the philanthropic value of the pension age sector.

In all, there are approximately 100,000 volunteers in Israel aged 65 and up. Some 65,000 are aged 65 to 74, and approximately 40,000 aged 75+. These volunteers can be divided into three groups according to the number of monthly hours of volunteering. Group A declares that it has volunteered up to nine hours a week; Group B, 10 hours and more; and Group C, irregular/one-time volunteering.

In order to render a cautious estimate, we calculated one monthly hour of volunteering for those who declared they worked up to nine hours a month, as well as those who declared they volunteered on an irregular/one-time basis. For those who declared they volunteer more than ten hours a month, we calculated their contribution as ten monthly hours. We multiplied our calculation by the number of volunteers aged 65 and up in order to arrive at a minimum valuation of the total monthly hours of volunteering hours. We then prorated this calculation to an annual valuation.

In calculating the monetary value of volunteer work, it is customary to employ the concept of "exchange value", i.e., the wages that would otherwise be paid to a hired person to perform the same work. As the table indicates, the minimum number of hours of volunteers aged 65 and up amounts to 6.8 million hours/per year. In order to make a cautious

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49 CBS, Social Survey 2010, Table 10.
The "New Oldsters" as a Working and Learning Population
Senior Citizens: Our Largest Reservoir of Unexploited Resources

estimate of the financial value of volunteers, we valuate minimal cost based on the exchange value for workers at minimum wage (NIS 22.05 per hour). One can thus approximate the minimum monetary value of volunteering activity of Israeli citizens aged 65 and up to be NIS 151.3 million.

Currently, the Ministry for Senior Citizens in the Prime Minister's Office is seeking to advance a program called "Reaching a Million" the main goal of which is to increase the number of volunteering hours of this population sector. The program's objective is to encourage 50,000 senior citizens to contribute five weekly hours of volunteering activity so that in all, they will contribute one million hours a month, which is twelve million hours a year. We may approximate the monetary value of this program to the economy as follows: twelve million hours a year is equivalent to an annual monetary value of NIS 264.6 million. One should bear in mind that this is a conservative estimate that converts one hour of volunteering to a minimum wage amount.

For discussion purposes only, let's assume that all of the seniors we've defined as potentially joining the labor market (219,800) would volunteer for five hours a week. In such a case they would add a total of 52 million annual hours of volunteering to the economy. Calculating the value of such volunteering based on minimum wage yields a monetary value of approximately NIS 1.2 billion a year contributed by these seniors.

To sum up, the maximum potential monetary value of employing seniors who are in sound health exceeds NIS 6 billion. The maximum potential monetary value of seniors volunteering for five hours a week (rather than working at paid jobs) totals approximately NIS 1.2 billion. According to these studies, the seniors themselves, whether through volunteering or working at a job, would gain considerable improvement in their health and mental situations while the entire country would profit.
Decreasing Expenses

Saving on Health and Nursing Care Expenses

Proof is accumulating to show that people who continue working after retirement age live lives that are longer, healthier and more independent than others who do not continue working. Numerous studies in Israel and around the world prove that the employment of seniors positively affects their health situations.

A study conducted at the University of Valencia in Spain evaluated the influence of the number of years worked on peoples' health. Results showed that the longer individuals worked, the better their perception of their health and their perception of their situation, in general.\textsuperscript{50}

Another study conducted at the University of Tsukuba in Japan focused on health and longevity among older people. The factors found to have a positive influence on health were: employment, social involvement, family relationships and an active lifestyle.\textsuperscript{51}

A study conducted by the University of Michigan jointly with National Taiwan University elaborates the importance of work to the health of seniors. According to this study, as few as 100 annual hours of work is sufficient for the elderly to benefit from the advantages of to health, independence and longevity offered by full-time work. And this would still make it possible to exploit the remaining hours for leisure-time activities. In other words, it is not necessary to hold down a fulltime

\textsuperscript{50} E. Navarro-Pardo, T. Pastor-Vilar, R. Díaz-Dhó-Brodsky, C. Moret-Tatay, A. Vázquez-Martínez, Institutions: Universitat de València, Department of development Psychology, Valencia, Spain; Catedra Energesis de Tecnología Interdisciplinar, Universidad Católica de Valencia, Valencia, Spain, from IFA 11th Global Conference on Ageing, May- June 2012, p. 69, \url{http://vatikim.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/IFA-2012.pdf}

\textsuperscript{51} T. Anme, Institutions: International Community Care and Life-Span Development, Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan, from IFA 11th Global Conference on Ageing, May- June 2012, p. 56.
job or a demanding position in order to enjoy the advantages of sustained work.\textsuperscript{52}

The researchers based themselves on a representative sample of 4,860 US inhabitants who were born before 1924, after adjusting for extraneous effects on life expectancy including age and family situation. The findings showed that if a person worked 100 or more hours in a year, his chances of reporting impaired health decreased by 50\% in the two subsequent years while his chances of dying decreased by 75\%.\textsuperscript{53}

This trend is corroborated by a study performed by Prof. Yochanan Shtasman and colleagues from Hadassah Medical Center at Hebrew University. Their study produces clear results showing that after seven years of consecutive work, workers aged 70 enjoyed better health situations, were more independent, and had higher life expectancy than those who chose not to work. This finding had no correlation with subjects' economic or health situations, education level, and the degree of functioning in years previous to the working period. The study did find a correlation between work at age 70 and health, independence, self-confidence and life span.\textsuperscript{54}

In addition, according to an Israeli study performed by the Institute for Research on the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, employment at an older age adds to quality of life in three domains: personal, health situation, and joy of living. Work enables a person to utilize his or her capabilities and experience, prevents idleness and deterioration (cognitive, emotional etc.) and bestows a sense of vitality.\textsuperscript{55} Noa Yehezkiel points out:

\begin{itemize}
\item[52] Yehezkiel, Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment? Page 14; Dr. Leah Ness, Deputy Minister for Senior Citizens at the Office of the Prime Minister, "Raising Retirement Age – Not for Everyone"
\item[53] Yehezkiel, Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment? Page 15.
\item[54] Ibid, page 14.
\item[55] Ness, "Raising Retirement Age – Not for Everyone" (based on "Work or Retirement: Alternatives on the Changing Kibbutz", by Rosner, Peleg, Glick, Goldenberg and Adar, 2002).\end{itemize}
The contribution to health and longevity that stems from social contact, mental challenges and physical activity...dedicating time to an enjoyable pursuit contributes to mental health. Receiving a salary...is not the dominant factor in improved health and longevity; numerous studies show that even volunteer work yields longevity, self-satisfaction and high morale.\(^\text{56}\)

It follows that in addition to the calculated financial contribution of increased working hours and volunteering hours of seniors to the economy, we may add the benefit of a reduced expense side for health and nursing care expenses. According to CBS data for the year 2010, senior households spent 8.5% of their total expenses on health services; this in contrast with 5% for the general population.\(^\text{57}\)

Life expectancy at birth in Israel continues to rise gradually; in 2009 it reached 81.6 years, some two years longer than the average for OECD countries (79.5 years).\(^\text{58}\) Life expectancy in Israel was 83.5 years for women and 79.7 years for men. "Life expectancy with good health" consists of the number of years a person is expected to live in sound health and without disability; in Israel this statistic totals 72 years for men and 74 years for women.\(^\text{59}\)

In Israel the gap between life expectancy at birth and life expectancy in good health indicates the length of time people are expected to live in a situation of disability; in Israel the number stands at approximately seven years for men and nine years for women. This situation is similar to that in Australia, Italy, Japan, Canada, Sweden, Britain, Holland and Greece.\(^\text{60}\)

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\(^{56}\) Yehezkeli, Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment? Page 14.  
\(^{58}\) CBS, "World Health Day: Health Indicators for the Elderly", page 2.  
\(^{60}\) Ibid, pages 333, 348 (Table 5.9).
Accordingly, as a result of increased life expectancy, there is also a drastic increase in the length of time people are in need of nursing care. Already today, national expenditure on nursing care is estimated at NIS 9.7 billion, approximately 1.3% of GDP. This involves a high monthly expense that persists for years. Private expense for nursing care, without government assistance, is estimated to be between NIS 12,000 and NIS 15,000 per month.\footnote{Ministry of Health, Economics and Insurance department, "Reform in Public Insurance in the Area of Special Care", slide presentation – internal document, March 18, 2012, page 10.}

**Nursing Care Pensions**

According to data for 2011, approximately 18% of seniors in Israel (146,483) were eligible for nursing care pensions. With each rise in age, the number of nursing care pension recipients grew: approximately 20.5% of persons aged 75-79 years received nursing care pensions, 27.5% of persons aged 80-84 years, and about 35% of persons aged 85 and up. State expenditure on nursing care pensions for seniors totals approximately NIS 3.8 billion per year.\footnote{Processed for: Dr. Gilad Natan, Knesset Research and Information Center, Caring for Persons with Special Care Needs (labor force needs and employment policy in the special care branch) (Jerusalem: the Knesset, May 2011), page 5, http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m02854.pdf, Knesset Research and Information Center, Seniors in Israel, page 6.}

As noted above, even 100 hours of work a year are sufficient to benefit from the advantages of sustained work for health, independence and longevity. Furthermore, the chances of reporting impaired health decreased by 50% in the two years following the discontinuation of work.\footnote{Yehezkiel, Does Old Age in Israel Necessitate Unemployment? Page 15.}
In the event more seniors will go to work/volunteer, one must assume that the number of nursing care hours will decrease, with an accompanying rise in the age at which these persons will be in need of nursing care. As we’ve stated, work and volunteering among seniors is profitable to the seniors themselves, as well as to the state and the economy, which profit in billions of shekels.

It is apparent that the integration of senior citizens into the labor force lies within the spectrum of reforms that would be expected to contribute among the highest potential sources of income to the national economy. Employment of seniors has been defined as one of the greatest opportunities for a national economy. According to economic data of the Grattan Institute, such reform within ten years (by 2022) could contribute some 25 billion Australian dollars to the Australian economy, which represents more than one percent of GNP.

**Summary and Conclusions**

As shown in this study, according to an estimate by the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies, non-exploitation of the potential of the senior population results in an annual loss of approximately NIS 6.4 billion or more to the State of Israel. However, this involves more than monetary loss, it also represents a great loss in quality of life for senior citizens aged 65+ who do not engage in work/volunteer activity, which has been clearly shown to considerably improve their health and financial situations. The price to the economy extracted by deficient employment of seniors is expressed in a burden on hospitals and HMOs, with increased expenditure on disability allowances and income support, as well as insurance and nursing care expenses. In Israel there are approximately 219,800 seniors with the potential to integrate into the labor market. These are senior citizens who, despite being in good/
very good health situations, are not employed. This population can be defined as the “economy's reservoir of unexploited human resources”, because seniors have the ability to contribute to the state by increasing the rate of employed persons as well as GDP. They also contribute to their own private households, their health and their families.

Adding these pensioners to the labor market would increase the percentage of employed individuals in Israel, the GDP, and per capita GDP. Even partial employment of adults aged 65+ who are fit to work would add a relative portion of the potential NIS 6.4 billion to the economy (estimate based on a minimum wage valuation for an hour of work). Non-employment of senior citizens who are potential workers constitutes a significant economic loss to the economy.

Additionally, if these seniors would work in part-time positions (100 hours per month), their chances of reporting on impaired health would decrease by 50% in the two years following discontinuation of work. Avoiding this negative health impact alone would result in saving significant sums of money for the economy during those two years.

In addition, the study's findings show that the monetary value of volunteer work currently performed by seniors in Israel exceeds NIS 150 million. Further volunteering by 50,000 seniors for five hours a week would add an annual monetary value of more than NIS 264 million to the economy. If the entire potential group delineated as representing “lost output of the labor force of persons aged 65+219,800) " persons) would volunteer for five hours a week rather than paid work, the added monetary value would exceed NIS 1.2 billion per year. Naturally, even partially taking advantage of this reservoir would result in a the relative addition of this value to the economy.

The Israeli economy draws on meager natural resources with the labor component constituting its added value. In order to bring about improved GDP, Israel must see a dramatic rise in pension-aged seniors'
participation in the labor force and/or volunteering activity. "Cast me not off in the time of old age" is one of several heartrending prayers recited during the High Holy Days. It is a that time when people pray to the Creator asking that when they reach old age, that they enjoy good health and functioning. In Israel today, even if seniors enjoy good health they are destined to be cast off from work, thus reducing their contribution to themselves, their families and the country, at times against their will. Israeli society must not cast off its seniors in their senior years. It must allow and encourage them to continue working and volunteering, producing and contributing, as much as they choose to do so.
Developments in Adult Education
Developments in Adult Education: 
On a Survey of Adult Skills in Israel and Abroad

Zvika Amir and Haim Portnoy

General Background – Need for The Survey

Will what you learned in high school or university be useful to you in the future?

What skills do we need in order to function in the workplace?

Can acquiring new skills help us find jobs in the future?

These questions and many others will be answered by a new survey that is being conducted by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics: the Skills Survey.

The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills is the most comprehensive international survey ever to be conducted on the topic of adult skills (as part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies – PIAAC). The survey assesses the skills of people aged 16 - 65 years in the participating countries. It focuses on key competencies that people need in the information age in order to successfully take part in 21st Century social and economic life. The OECD is the initiator and coordinator of this survey, which encompasses...
over 200,000 respondents from over 30 developed countries, including Israel.

The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is conducting the survey in Israel; the project pilot phase ended in July 2013. Actual administration of the survey is expected to begin in April 2014 and to continue for eight months. The CBS survey team will reach a sample of 6,700 people representing Israel's adult population, and the data they will gather will shed light on the core competencies that characterize this population.

**Skills – Definition**

Along with the rapid rate of technological development that typifies the Western world, including Israel, the skills needed by the individual seeking to participate effectively in modern society and in the labor market are changing. Studies show that the higher a person's skill level, the better able he is to improve his welfare, sense of wellbeing, and health. The survey measures basic competencies: literacy, numeracy and the skills needed to solve problems in the technologically rich environment of the Information Age.

We know that many skills are required in order to perform both everyday and work-related tasks: teamwork skills and competencies; the ability to persuade; the ability to put ideas in written form; to innovate, and much more. Studies show that skill levels in different fields are usually closely linked to three competencies that are regarded as core competencies or basic skills. The OECD chose core competencies as a topic of research because they can be measured using modern assessment instruments that, in some cases, have been employed in developed countries for decades. The assessment results are reflected, among other things, in the economic and social status of the participating countries.
An interesting finding of the studies that have been carried out to date is that the skills needed for specific occupations are similar from country to country. That is, the skills of a taxi driver in Finland resemble those of a taxi driver in Italy or Australia. Accordingly, we can generate a "skills map" of various occupations, compare the results for specific sectors and identify exceptions. Programs exist throughout the world to improve skills in specific occupations (e.g., hay gatherers, gravediggers, food server staff, hotel room attendants, etc.), out of a clear awareness that improving these workers' skills will enhance their productivity, improve their chances for advancement and mobility, increase the benefit to both worker and employer and, thereby, to the society in which a given worker lives and to the economy as a whole.

In countries where the skills assessment sphere is highly developed, i.e., where a decades-long tradition exists of assessment and of utilizing assessment as a meaningful tool for policymaking and for advancing the society and economy, there is a strong consensus that investing in skills enhancement is justified. This being the case, the resources invested in skills enhancement are divided almost equally between the state, the labor organizations and the employers, both public and private.

**Theoretical Background**

"Economic outcomes are not determined by education itself but, rather by the skills learned" is how we think today. We know that the education system is charged with many tasks; one of these is, or should be, training students for the job market. The Skills Survey assesses the education system's role in this sphere while concurrently addressing other training frameworks, among them the home, the army, National Volunteer Service, the "street", extracurricular activities, informal education, and the workplace itself.
An individual's skills may be divided into two categories: structured skills and flexible skills. Structured skills undergo a process of growth throughout the course of a person's life, while flexible skills progress at first, then deteriorate over time. Flexible skills are most directly impacted by study.

In an aging society flexible skills are lost at a faster rate than the rate at which young people acquire new flexible skills through study and training, expressed succinctly by the truism "use it or lose it." There are methods and measures that help slow the rate of skills loss and increase skills acquisition and use. Cross-country mapping along the entire age spectrum paints a picture of the intensity of skills use and acquisition in contrast to the rates at which skills are lost. Informal training usually has a greater impact than formal training, accordingly many countries encourage this kind of training.

When the survey was being planned it was decided to omit several important topics out of a desire to avoid excessive interview length, and due to a number of limitations on conducting measurements (funding and academic manpower). Among the topics not covered were questions of unemployed individuals, assessment of teamwork skills and informal training outside the workplace.

The choice of questions was coordinated in such a way as to enable comparison between PIAAC data and those of earlier surveys on similar topics, e.g. IALS and ALL.¹

The Three Core Competencies Assessed

**Literacy is defined as** "The ability to understand and use information from written texts in a variety of contexts." In Israel this area is assessed

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¹ For more information on these surveys, which are similar in outlook and format to the present Skills Survey, see the OECD website: [http://www.oecd.org/edu/country-studies/adultliteracy.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/country-studies/adultliteracy.htm).
with regard to Hebrew, Arabic or Russian. The questions and texts are presented in familiar formats such as ads/notices, instructions for use, news items, and the like.

- **Numeracy is defined as**: "The ability to use, apply, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas. It is an essential skill in an age when individuals encounter an increasing amount and wide range of quantitative and mathematical information in their daily lives. Numeracy is a skill parallel to reading literacy, and it is important to assess how these competencies interact." Numeracy assessment refers to the ability to execute basic arithmetical operations needed in everyday life. The test subjects are permitted to use calculators (provided by the interviewer).

- **Problem-solving in technologically rich environments is defined as**: “The ability to find and assess information from different sources via computer and to use it to solve problems, e.g. searching for a book in a library, navigating a website or scheduling a meeting.”

**Economic and Social Impact of Low Skills**

Poor literacy affects the ability to read safety instructions (a recognized cause of accidents), work instructions (an important issue in the global market), and instructions for use (of appliances, pharmaceuticals, etc.); to fill out forms for career advancement purposes; to obtain assistance from the authorities.

Poor numeracy, as reflected in the inability to calculate quantities, affects the ability of workers in manufacturing/construction/agriculture to execute their jobs adequately. It lowers the level of service provided by salespeople/food service staff; when manifested as the inability to read maps, it reduces the efficiency of drivers; and poor numeracy adversely affects consumers when they are unable to calculate and compare prices.
A lack of skills for problem-solving in a technologically rich environment impairs the individual's ability to use online social networks, to search for information online, to use programs such as Microsoft Office™ for work and leisure purposes, and even to use the newer cars and electrical appliances that are equipped with various features with a mode of operation similar to that of a computer. And importantly, poor technology skills impedes use of ubiquitous ATMs and other self-service computer applications.

The OECD

The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) defines its mission as follows:

To promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. We work with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We measure productivity and global flows of trade and investment. We analyze and compare data to predict future trends. We set international standards on a wide range of things, from agriculture and tax to the safety of chemicals.

We also look at issues that directly affect everyone's daily life, like how much people pay in taxes and social security, and how much leisure time they can take. We compare how different countries' school systems are readying their young people for modern life, and how different countries' pension systems will look after their citizens in old age.

The OECD became involved in the area of skills measurement two decades ago, when it sponsored surveys on the topic (IALS, ALL) which were conducted in a number of developed countries. The findings of
these surveys and their translation into successful policy led the OECD to undertake the broadest skills survey (the PIAAC) ever conducted in this sphere. The survey adheres to rigorous international standards that facilitate direct comparison of results on a broad range of issues, for different cross-sections and for all participating countries.

**Policymaking**

Many countries which have been conducting similar surveys over long periods of time put the PIAAC findings to a wide array of uses, the most notable being informing government policymaking on issues addressed by the survey. There are countries where special organizations have emerged to advance skills enhancement, in cooperation with labor organizations, employers and individuals, making it possible for all participants in a given country's socioeconomic system to strive to improve their status and employment outlook and to increase their earning potential and that of their peers.

The OECD has focused its recommendations on seven main issues, and calls the attention of member state governments to the relevance of its survey findings to policymaking on these issues.

- **Performance of education and training systems:** In Israel we assess the performance of such systems via the PISA survey – another OECD survey whose purpose is to rate school system effectiveness via tests administered to 15 year olds. In the PIAAC survey we assess the adult population's abilities, as well as the frameworks in which these abilities are acquired, for acquiring the competencies with which we are concerned. These frameworks may include the formal training system, extracurricular activities, the home, street influences, workplace training, and the like.
• **Extent and dimensions of illiteracy and poor literacy skills:** In modern society it is hard to manage with poor or nonexistent literacy skills. Newspapers, television, the forms required for bureaucratic interaction with the authorities, books, teachers' notes to parents, drug labels, appliance owner manuals, product labels and of particular importance in democratic societies, the knowledge sources that enable us to make informed choices: **all of these are text-based.** A person who cannot read or who has difficulty reading is cut off from his environment and may pass some of his difficulties on to his children. Those sectors of the population which are characterized by poor literacy skills also exhibit poor skills in other areas and/or low levels of occupational attainment and participation in society. The ramifications of this kind of disparity can manifest in as much as a seven-year difference in life expectancy between those of lower and higher skill sectors. In most developed countries the share of the adult population characterized by poor literacy skills is approximately 40%. This figure is regarded ubiquitously as particularly troubling, and much effort is being devoted to lowering it. One well-known case is that of Poland, where a large percentage of the population was found to have poor literacy skills and, as a result of a comprehensive and concerted effort, the government was able to bring about improvement at a faster pace than in more developed countries. An idea of the situation in Israel is demonstrated as follows: in the course of a preliminary skills survey in Israel, the CBS survey team encountered quite a few illiterate individuals who represented a broad range of ages, some of whom were alumni of the Israel education system.

• **Gaps between labor markets and education/training:** There is a positive correlation between level and quality of training and level of core competencies, and a correlation between skill level
and employment status/income level. It is to be anticipated that an advanced economic system should be able to train its citizens for those occupations which are important to the country, and for which there is a shortage of qualified workers. Some of the survey findings seem to indicate that the current education/training systems do not prepare people to fulfill the job needed in the country. Information from the study will provide data needed to address this problem and institute education/training programs for relevant and needed professions.

- **Levels of human capital, access to education and intergenerational mobility:** We are witnessing a widespread erosion of investment in human capital, especially among those aged 30+. The state of affairs is such that in some sectors people aged 45+ are considered "old" and are rejected by potential employers in favor of younger people with the same skills. The country's economy clearly loses out when it fails to utilize its older labor force, and the situation unquestionably constitutes a social and cultural problem. The survey findings will aid in detecting problems of this kind and make it possible to address them in a focused manner.

- **Young people's transition from education to work:** OECD experience suggests that this transition is a critical juncture; governments need to devote both attention and resources to ensure that young people can move smoothly from the training stage (in Israel – the army and National Volunteer Service) into employment. The survey findings can be compared to those of other countries, and any failures of the transition process will be identified. Analysis of the findings can lead to impleletrion of policies that address these failings.
• **Identification of at-risk populations:** Many studies have found a direct link between the level of core competencies in a given population, and that population's level of risk. The ability to compare the responses of a population-representative sample to its skill level, in the context of nationwide and international comparison, will make it possible to identify population segments whose attributes place them in the category of “populations at risk.” Against this background, the government will be able to mobilize for immediate action and policy change so as to improve the status of these populations. Because the survey sample is based on census data, the state institutions are capable of identifying and locating such populations with great precision.

• **Links between key cognitive skills and such variables as demographics, educational background, health, etc:** Policies in early childhood education can often impact cognitive skills levels at later stages in life. For example, in Norway, where a great deal is invested into education and skills acquisition for very young children, we find these children functioning on a level of much older children in other countries. In Israel we read in the newspapers about the need for a core curriculum for the ultra-orthodox population as a prerequisite for its participation in the labor market; the Skills Survey will look at competencies versus needs, and make it possible to accurately detect those gaps that can be bridged by means of focused training (and, perhaps, to determine whether a core curriculum is or is not actually needed).

**The Israeli Survey**

The Israeli survey is being conducted by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), in cooperation with the National Authority for
Measurement and Evaluation in Education (known by its Hebrew acronym, RAMA). Other partners in the survey effort are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, the Bank of Israel and the Council for Higher Education of Israel. A steering committee appointed by the Public Council for Statistics, with representation from the academic world, oversees the survey.

The CBS was chosen to coordinate the survey effort in light of its capabilities with surveys on this scale and size, and because its principles of action ensure objectivity, independence and professionalism. However, the survey entails development and work methods that, to some degree, are new even to the CBS. Survey implementation thus involves adherence to work methods dictated by the consortium of partners and the application of methods based on 30 years' cumulative professional experience with adult skills surveys worldwide which are implemented in a uniform manner across the participating countries. This uniformity facilitates cross-country comparison and makes it possible to obtain findings of the highest possible quality.

Of critical importance is the role of RAMA which functions as an independent support unit within Israel's Ministry of Education that conducts nationwide studies in the education system (e.g., the GEMS exams), and is responsible for the administration of international tests, such as PISA. For purposes of the Skills Survey a new structure of cooperation was established between Israeli entities that until now have always operated independently of each other: the CBS and RAMA. In this format each will bring its own strengths to this challenging survey effort. RAMA's many years of experience with international skills testing equip it for the task of adapting the cognitive parameters being measured to Israeli language and culture, and it also has the experience to evaluate and score answers to open questions.
This survey constitutes a major methodological and technological departure for the CBS. The CBS will be working with a technology and with questionnaires that were developed abroad, a combination of personal interview and specific tasks to be performed by adult interviewees.

The survey fieldwork was launched in March 2013 with a preliminary survey conducted in which over 1,900 completed questionnaires were collected. The work will continue throughout 2014, as well. Over the period between April and the end of December 2014, the CBS survey seeking to obtain a total of 6,700 completed questionnaires. The interviewees will be asked to answer a questionnaire containing some 300 questions and, independently, to carry out 200 exercises. The survey period will conclude (during 2015) with the preparation of cross-country and nationwide reports comparing the participating countries’ levels with respect to the skills assessed. The national reports will emphasize the attributes unique to Israel, and will highlight the findings obtained regarding disadvantaged population sectors.

**Questionnaire Structure**

The survey questionnaire is fully computerized; the interviewer reads aloud the questions and answer options, the interviewee selects his/her response from among the presented choices, and the interviewer keys in this reply. For questions with a wide range of possible answers, the interviewee receives auxiliary cards. The questionnaire is organized in sections corresponding to the following topics:

- Education and training
- Employment (work history)
- Skills used at work (not just core skills)
- Use of core skills at work (literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in a technologically rich environment)
• Use of core skills in everyday life – not at work (literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in a technologically rich environment)
• Personal and cultural background (including: parents, level of religious observance, military/national service, volunteering, involvement in the community).

The Testing Process

Once the questionnaire has been completed (a process that generally takes about three quarters of an hour), the stage is reached at which the interviewee himself executes a series of cognitive tasks, in a completely independent fashion. There is no time limit on the problem-solving process, which also usually lasts about three quarters of an hour.

This section of the survey consists of instruments designed to directly measure cognitive skills by means of test items that are representative of typical tasks faced by adults in a variety of real-life situations. In contrast to the first portion of the survey, which consists of background questions that are more or less standard for CBS surveys, in this portion the interviewees respond to items that are scored in terms of “correct” or “incorrect.” The items are divided into sections by topic (literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in a technologically rich environment). The interviewee receives two of these topics at random, and at varying levels of difficulty. All of the tasks are used in everyday life, examples include: comparing prices in a store; understanding directions for the use of a medication; signing up on-line to attend an event; searching for information on the Internet; understanding a simple diagram; measuring the dimensions of a picture; reading a newspaper article; understanding the results of a committee election. The interviewees are permitted to use calculators (provided by the interviewer).
When designing the tests it was taken into consideration that some of the interviewees would be willing, and able, to answer questions presented in electronic format, while some would not. For this reason, all of the test items are offered in paper-based form (“paper and pencil testing”) to those respondents who prefer this method, or to those who could not successfully answer screening questions in an electronic format. In such instances, the test does not include the section on problem-solving in a technologically rich environment, but only the literacy and numeracy sections.

Analysis of the responses to the written questions is performed by RAMA. The final results for each cognitive section, whether computer-based or paper-based, are calculated abroad in a centralized and completely anonymous manner for all survey participants.

**Research and Publication**

The survey findings will facilitate a re-examination of curricula and occupational training programs offered by government ministries, the government higher education system, and the private sector. The aim is to advance the existing human capital and to adapt it to the needs of modern society. Scientists and decision-makers regard this survey as particularly reliable, due to several of its features:

- The survey results are based on detailed data gathered from a representative sample.
- The survey is being conducted in accordance with the rigorous quality-control procedures of the OECD, an organization whose independent status is unanimously recognized.
- There are direct correlations between core competency data and a very wide variety of economic and social variables, such as: income distribution, equality of opportunity, employment status, labor productivity, social involvement, breaking of barriers, and more.
In many countries similar surveys were administered two decades ago and their findings can be compared to those of the present survey; the ability to compare all of the participating countries (over 30 in number) facilitates analysis of processes, changes and trends.

The OECD plans to disseminate the survey findings in several ways:

A series of international reports presenting the major and notable outcomes indicated by the findings, with an emphasis on cross-country comparison with detailed information on all of the technical aspects of quality assurance relating to data gathering and analysis methods.

A series of national reports prepared by the participating countries, with an emphasis on the unique attributes of each specific country.

A detailed database containing all of the survey findings (estimated at 200,000 questionnaires X 300 variables = 60,000,000 discrete data elements), to be made available to researchers. This database will be useful in data analysis and cumulative data processing by means of statistical instruments made available by the OECD.

A web application to enable people to complete the survey and assess their own skills in relation to a selected population.

Research and Publication in Israel

The Israeli Skills Survey steering committee would like to produce additional reports beyond the national report, based on analysis and research by a variety of organizations. The latter will provide a channel for the steering committee to disseminate its findings under the auspices of the OECD. In accordance with OECD policy (as adopted by the steering committee), the conclusion of the survey will be afforded extensive public exposure in the form of seminars, news reports and web-based publications and discussions.
In 2015 we plan to make a file concerning the local survey available to the Israeli academic community for research purposes, and provide an option to compare it with the international survey files. In principle, it will be possible to cross the data with those contained in other databases, as well, but this will entail rigorous privacy checks and, consequently, advance coordination. Those interested in participating in the research and publication process and/or in obtaining additional information may contact the person named at the end of this article.

**Conclusion**

Our society is faced with formidable challenges: reducing gaps between sectors; advancing underprivileged populations; sharing burdens; ensuring equal opportunities for all; breaking glass ceilings in the workplace; coping with a global market; monitoring and maintaining the rate of technological development; transparency-makin...
A Community Center-Based "Social Network" for People with Disabilities and Special Populations

Sharon Green and Uri Marcus

Objectives

The Israel Association of Community Centers aspires to develop a true social network connecting all members of the community by removing walls and barriers between people and providing optimal service to all populations. We view the community center as a home for all local residents, and are committed to providing quality service to each individual in the community. The Israel Association of Community Centers has embraced the cause of including people with disabilities in its own activities and integrating them into the broader community. The Association's philosophy confers on every individual the right to be an active member of the community, with disabilities not constituting a barrier. In order to fulfill this principle, in 1991 the Association established a Department for People with Disabilities and Special Populations for the purpose of advancing, in cooperation with the community centers, the integration of people with disabilities into society and the community. Over 140 community centers around the country, spanning the mainstream Jewish, ultra-Orthodox, and non-Jewish sectors, all

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operating programs for people with disabilities across all channels of integration. These programs include enrichment and self-empowerment programs, activity in the framework of membership groups, support services for families, community-building and empowerment projects, initiatives to increase inclusion in the workplace, and in all areas of community life. The Department is active in 106 community centers; in 65 of these centers it operates two or more programs.

**Cooperative Activities**

We see it as our mission to generate social change and to make community centers more accessible so as to accommodate people with disabilities and their families. We are acting to achieve these goals by nurturing proactive communities and conducting recreational and social programs. The Department works in cooperation with government entities, including the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Ombudsman in the Ministry of Justice, and others. We also cooperate with organizations for people with disabilities, local authorities, and numerous public, voluntary and commercial entities, including the National Insurance Institute and JDC-Israel.

Below is an overview of the various programs we offer in the framework of the Department for People with Disabilities and Special Populations of the Israel Association of Community Centers:
The Accessible Community Program – Empowerment and Awareness

Director: Maysa Khatib-Abd Elhai

Goals and Activities

- Develop community awareness of people with disabilities and to change societal attitudes toward them;
- Empower people with disabilities and include them in the planning, management and implementation of the Accessible Community program;
- Remove barriers faced by people with disabilities by increasing all types of access in the community: physical and social access, access to service and information, access to decision-making, access to employment, and access in times of emergency.
- The program is nationwide in scope and active in 49 localities. Its first circle of activity encompasses 700 activists, and it directly benefits "tens of thousands" i.e., each activist is working to create an inclusive infrastructure for all people with disabilities in their localities.

Working Methods and Impact

- The Accessible Community project offers an array of training and empowerment programs that aim to encourage people with disabilities to be involved and active in their communities, and to take part in community policymaking.
- We promote the inclusion of people with disabilities on municipal committees, in the workplace and in recreational programs, with the aim of encouraging them to utilize community services, to exercise their rights, and to become members of groups and organizations active in their community.
• The program's policy of including individuals with any all form of disability (physical, mental, sensory and communication disabilities) in its activities makes Accessible Community a powerful force within the community, one capable of pooling energies, raising awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, and working for attitude change to advance the rights and improve the quality of life of those who contend with disabilities.

• The program includes information services that are offered in a variety of venues and formats, including: workshops and lectures in schools; conferences for municipality employees; "happenings" for the community at large; study visits to businesses, all led by people who themselves have disabilities. These activities help change attitudes in the community.

• The various activist groups within the Accessible Community program serve as role models for the entire population of people with disabilities, and indeed, for other activist groups. These groups also constitute a social network that provides support and channels for conveying information within the community.

The Amitim Program

Director: Inbar Adler-Ben Dor

Goals and Activities

• To facilitate rehabilitation and recovery for individuals suffering from mental illness between the ages of 18-65. (We are also conducting a pilot program for adolescents aged 12-18 who suffer from mental illness). The program includes participation in community center-based recreational and social activities that are open to the general public. Amitim is conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Health.
Specific program components include:

- Personal guidance by a coordinator.
- A monthly stipend to enable participation in an enrichment course chosen by the participant.
- Participants are eligible for a volunteer to assist them in selecting and attending activities at the community center. The program participants themselves can also volunteer to help others.
- Group activities focused on improving social skills necessary for integration in the community.
- Amitim serves over 1,500 participants from Katzrin in the North to Dimona in the South. It employs 50 coordinators and seven regional facilitators, all of whom are professionals in therapy/rehabilitation of mental illness. Courses and activities are provided throughout the year at community centers, with special programming during summer school vacations.
- Members and staff are also active on the community working to fight stigmatization and prejudice regarding those with mental illness.

The Ma'agalim Program

Director: Liat Golbary

Activites and Goals:

- Ma'agalim is a network of social clubs for adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities. The program provides a leisure-time framework for these people and is vital to dispelling social isolation.
- Program participants take part in a wide variety of activities, courses, trips, special evening events and more, and enjoy interaction with their peer group and with the broader community.
• The program has 450 participants.
• Through the program, the community learns to accept people with developmental/intellectual disability as integral members.

**Mother to Another – Parenting for People with Disabilities**

*Director: Sharon Green*

**Activities and Goals:**
• Individuals with disabilities who themselves have been successful parents serve as volunteer mentors to others with disabilities who are in the early stages of parenthood. The program is conducted in cooperation with JDC-Israel.
• The program has 50 participants – volunteers and those being mentored.
• The program constitutes a circle of support where parents with disabilities can share their concerns and receive feedback.

**The Laron Program**

*Director: Sharon Green*

**Activities and Goals:**
• The Laron program acts to include individuals with disabilities in community-center based leisure activities intended for the community at large (in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services).
• The program has between 250-450 participants (this varies depending upon the annual budget allocated by the government).
• Individuals with disabilities are integrated via this program into leisure and social activities intended for the general public.
This promotes attitude changes among the public, and reduces stigmatization.

**Re'im Program**

Director: Ziv Katz

**Activities and Goals:**

- Re'im is a supportive social-enrichment framework operated by the Israel Association of Community Centers throughout the country. The purpose of the program is to address the needs of adults, teens and children suffering from social isolation due to communication, learning and adjustment difficulties.
- The program has 369 participants.
- The program addresses the needs of thousands of individuals with communication and learning disabilities who find social activity challenging - and are hence isolated, have trouble making friends and joining in community activities. The model developed for the program is oriented toward teaching social and life skills. In this way we significantly improve the participants’ degree of integration in the community and enhance their quality of life.
- Another valuable feature of the Re'im program is the opportunity it provides to people who have never before succeeded in developing social relationships to interact with a peer group and build positive, mutually-rewarding relationships with other group members. The format enables participants to be active and to make a contribution to their community, thereby reinforcing societal resilience overall.
- The framework consists of a regular weekly meeting during the afternoon hours.