GREENBOOK

A Guide to Intelligent Giving

March 2019



YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK IN ISRAEL

Author : Itamar Yakir Editor: Ariel Adiram

Translation: Tami Shamir and Maya Kasir, Legal Transliteration Ltd.

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* This guide does not provide a complete overview and does not cover everything that is happening in the field of young adults at risk in Israel. It is, however, an honest attempt to show the importance of this field, the climate in which it is working and to provide a wide and diverse range of examples of interventions that are attempting to bring about meaningful change for young adults at risk in Israel. The following pages are filled with examples of exemplary actions, but there are many more that have been left out.

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Over the last several decades, and even more so since the beginning of the current millennium, an understanding has evolved that the transition from childhood to adulthood is not instantaneous, and that the ongoing process of integration into society has in fact created a unique, new age group of young adults who are taking their first steps in adult life.

These young adults, who legally come of age at 18, but in reality reach full maturity and integration in their late 30s, are required to cope with the new realities of a fast-changing world. They need to acquire higher education, choose a profession, find housing solutions, raise independent financing, nurture their physical and mental health and integrate into new social-capital groups. They marry and become parents at a much older age, stay in their parents' homes later and the time which they dedicate to professional training and personal experiences prior to their full integration into adult life has significantly increased.

The new young adults are required to make dozens of crucial decisions within a relatively short period of time and face profound and fast paced changes in the economy, culture, demography and society worldwide. They are the first to cope with the far-reaching technological changes and are required to already adjust themselves to the world of the future, rendering their decisions more impactful on the course of their life as a whole and on their quality of life as well as that of the people around them. Any mistake at any juncture during young adulthood may take its toll and adversely affect a young adult's life for many years to come, while any good decision has the potential to significantly improve his/her situation and place him/her on a positive path.

Over the past several decades, most developed countries have paid special attention and made significant investments in supporting and guiding young adults into adulthood, based on the understanding that successfully integrating young adults and providing them with the necessary tools will secure a healthier and more prosperous society.

For young adults at risk, the period of transition from childhood to adult life involves countless risks and major challenges. Like others in their age group, young adults at risk are required to integrate, navigate and shape their lives in a new and unfamiliar world, but the common challenges are heightened in their case, and the unique risks intensify tenfold.

Young adults at risk often lack the close familial and social connections that can consult, mentor, guide and help them in making both personal and professional decisions. Furthermore, in most cases, young adults at risk lack the financial support that is necessary in order to attain an education or provide for sustenance while they study, and in addition, many of them cannot live with their families.

The group of young families at risk is also forced to face another unique challenge deriving from the fact that the responsibility of most of the state's official settings which support them during their teen years, in terms of authority and resources, come to an end when they reach the age of 18. However, an individual who is defined as 'at risk' during his teen years, does not cease to be at risk upon reaching the age of 18, but most of the settings which care for him are neither authorized nor able to provide him the support that he will need in the next stages of his life. Therefore, in many cases, the positive processes and outcomes that official settings may have achieved among youth at risk do not mature and are not exhausted if the responses and treatments do not continue for a number of additional years.

It is noteworthy that in many aspects, young adulthood has a critical impact on one's future life. Therefore, assistance, guidance and professional treatment for young adults at risk is to some extent the last opportunity to make a profound impact on the course of their entire lives, through a relatively focused and time-limited intervention.

Over the last twenty years, a considerable number of NPOs were established in Israel, who care for and treat young adults at risk. Some of these NPOs first addressed children and youth at risk, and later expanded to include young adults, while others were specifically established following the identification of a need to address the issues of young adults at risk. In addition, various projects and initiatives were launched through cooperation between NPOs, among themselves or with the government and philanthropic foundations.

In 2017, the government initiated the Yated program — the National Program for Young Men and Women at Risk. Launching this program, alongside the growing scope and diversity of NPO activities, mark the current era as a period of a strategic and professional growth in activity for young adults at risk.

This guide was written in order to reflect and offer a comprehensive account of the field of young adults at risk in Israel. The guide consists of three parts:

Background – a presentation of the main concepts in this field.





A deep dive into the world of young adults at risk in Israel, with a more detailed presentation of the challenges they face.

A detailed review of selected examples of NPO activities and various projects available for young adults at risk in Israel.

The last part of this Guide specifies the main challenges, trends and characteristics which require comprehensive responses and further expansion, and which may be of great significance for those who seek to join the or initiate work in this field at this time.

The growing and expanding activity in the field of young adults at risk, the quick professionalization it is undergoing, the successful and innovative cooperation between the state and the third sector and the ability to make a significant impact on the lives of young adults at this crucial juncture and direct them towards an optimal future — presents the state, funders and the third sector with a large number of opportunities for intervention and substantial contribution in this area. The high level of competence, the comprehensive mapping and the mutual respect between the state and the third sector constitute a promising starting point, and the substantive challenges faced by those who are active in this field present a rare opportunity to invest in an area of huge significance for the future of Israeli society.



9 **How to read this guide**

The Greenbook may be read either from cover to cover or as a collection of independent chapters. We recommend starting with Part A, which provides a detailed presentation of the main concepts in this field. Throughout, we offer links and citations to background information and further research. Because these resources are linked directly in the digital versions of this book, you may find that reading the digital version offers a more versatile experience than the print version. Reference to particular organizations and institutions does not imply endorsement. There are far too many, and the landscape is too fluid, to allow us to identify particular organizations, programs or individuals in any comprehensive way. Rather, we hope that funders will use the information contained here to engage more deeply with the field and explore opportunities for funding in areas that reflect their interests and values. In order to stimulate productive conversations among funders, see the chapter at the end of the Greenbook entitled, Ways to Use this Greenbook with Other Funders.





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Foreword

The first part of the guide before you will lay out the general background to a discussion of the issues of the lives of young adults at risk. It will define this term, review the scope of the phenomenon, list the main risks and challenges faced by young adults at risk. It will present the criteria whereby between twelve and twenty percent of young Israelis aged 18–25 are defined as young adults at risk.

This part is made up of three main sections: a section pertaining to the group of young adults in general, while emphasizing the unique characteristics of young people in Israel; a section pertaining to the "risks" young adults at risk face and briefly presenting the welfare system in Israel and the main social challenges with which it copes; and lastly, a section presenting the group of young adults at risk in Israel. A more in-depth and detailed review of the lives of young adults at risk is presented in the second part of this guidebook.



5 Guiding Questions

1

How and why have young adults aged 18–25 become a separate group, that is defined and treated separately from teens and from adults in society?



How to identify, locate and classify the various groups of young adults who may be defined 'at risk' in Israel?

2

Why is it important to dedicate efforts and resources specifically for treatment and risk prevention among the group defined as young adults at risk?

<u>3</u>

What are the unique challenges and risks young adults in Israel are required to deal with?

5

What is the nature of the relationship and the communication between young adults at risk and the entities responsible to support and aid them?

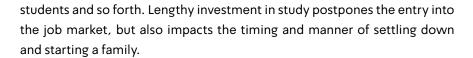
The creation of this new group over the past decades

Over the last several decades, special attention is paid by most developed countries to the group of "Young Adults". This group is currently perceived as a unique group which should be addressed and understood separately from adults, but also separately from teens. The distinctive definition of this age group stems from a number of in-depth social, demographic, economic and cultural processes which were identified by researchers in the fields of psychology, sociology and other areas of social sciences.1

In an attempt to point out the principal essence of this period in life, it was given various names, including "emerging adulthood"and "young adulthood".2 The research insights reinforced the recognition that in many ways, this is, indeed, a "new" and distinct period in life, which should be viewed and treated separately from other age groups. This recognition is now common amongst numerous entities in many sectors including academics, professional functions, politicians, teachers and educators, marketing and culture people, therapists and many others.

The creation of this "young adults" group relates in part to earlier adolescence, and also to the later entry into "adulthood" experienced by many. Early adolescence originates, inter alia, from the changes in the nutrition and health of the general population in recent decades, but it may also be connected to, or at least accelerated by, additional economic and cultural processes. The later entry into adulthood is caused by a number of factors, primarily the following three:

(1) Education and vocational training. In comparison to the past, a higher percentage of the younger population is engaged in higher education or professional training. People are spending more time in school (college and university), and those who previously took certification studies are now undergraduate students, past undergraduates are currently graduate



- (2) Independence. Housing prices and the cost of living in large cities have reduced the practicality of splitting households by moving out, thus extending the stay of many young people in their parents' homes.3
- (3) Lifestyle changes. Material changes which occurred in the perceptions and preferences of many young people with regard to their desired lifestyle - and ostensibly also regardless of the above mentioned material-economic factors.

The late entry into adulthood is expressed in several manners - some of which are causes while others are effects, with many of them being possibly both.4 The most evident are, as mentioned, a later entry into the job market and the increase in the average age of marriage and parenthood. In addition, the percentage of young adults living in the same household as their parents has increased. This process originates in both economic constraints (later entry into the job market; housing costs in the cities etc.) and the adoption of a new life style, which dedicates longer periods to personal realization, exploration and various experiences prior to undertaking long-term commitments.



^{1/} See, for example, Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. American psychologist, 55(5), 469.

^{2/} While the term "young adulthood" emphasizes the progressive nature of this period, "young adulthood" emphasizes the division of adulthood into several sub-periods. Both expressions reflect different rather than contradicting aspects of this period.

^{3/} In certain locations the changes in the price level actually resulted in an earlier age of formalizing couples' relationships (cohabitation) for the exact same feasibility reasons but also in a concurrent delay or postponement of child bearing.

^{4/} Some of these processes, which were described as the sources for the formation of the period of young adulthood are in fact reflections and projections thereof. While the distinction between causes and effects is important, for the purpose of discussion it suffices to draw attention to the various manifestations of the phenomenon in general. In any event, the various factors inter-relate to each other. For example: investment in the acquisition of skills and education is probably partly responsible for the delay in the age of marriage, i.e. the postponement of marriage, or at least the postponement of child bearing - enables the focus on education. On the other hand, postponement of parenthood supports the formation of a unique young adults' life style and the creation of new socialcultural standards of self-searching and the dedication of time and resources to searching, exploring and entertainment. These, in turn, may result in further delay in the entry into education, or also parenthood, and so forth. In this context, basic insights of different theoretical approaches may be considered: on the one hand, material theories which found most of the explanation on changes in technology and economy in general; other theories emphasize changes to the cultural foundations and the spirit of the times.

In terms of these processes, Israel is no exception. For example, between the late 1960s and the beginning of the current decade (2011) the rate of young singles aged 25–29 increased from 20% to more than 50%. In other words, if half a century ago only one in every five young Israelis in this age group was single, today this status is attributed to one in every two (see Chart 1). A similar change is recorded in the older group aged 30–34, with the ratio of singles having increased from 8% to 24%.

5/ This phenomenon is also common in other developed countries. See, for example: Taylor, P., Fry, R., & Oates, R. (2014). The rising cost of not going to college. *Pew Research Center*

Fry, R. (2010). The reversal of the college marriage gap. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Indeed, some of the change is not functional but is rather on the declarative-ceremonial level, since today, more than in the past, couples live together before formalizing their couples' relationship or birthing children, while being considered, from most formal and legal aspects, as singles. Nevertheless, analyses that took into account this possibility as well indicate that the ratio of this group in Israel in recent years does not significantly change the general picture, as it is still relatively small and mostly precedes, rather than replaces, marriage.

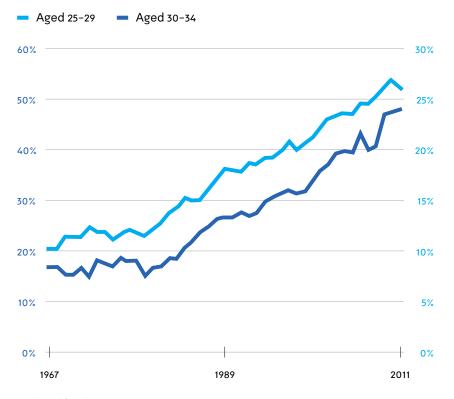
Raz-Yurovich, L. (2010). Men's and women's economic activity and first marriage: Jews in Israel, 1987-1995. *Demographic Research*, *22*, 933-964.

Balush-Kleinman, V. and Charlene, S. (1999): Cohabitation among young adults in Israel, *Society and Welfare*, 19 (4), 461-484.

Fuchs, H. (2015): The socio-economic situation of youngsters in Israel, in: Weiss, A. and Chernihovsky, D. (editors): *The 2015 Israel Status Report*, Jerusalem: The Taub Center.



Chart 1
Single young adults in Israel*



*Male and female Source: Author's processing of Central Bureau of Statistics data, manpower surveys

While the rise in the average age of marriage and the overall number of singles does not fully reflect the change in the age of formalizing couples' relationships (since during this period the connection between long-term relationships and marriage has somewhat weakened), the change in the age of parenthood is more unequivocal. In most functional and economic aspects, this change is more dramatic than the transition from bachelorhood to marriage or cohabitation. Indeed, over a period of some 30 years, between the mid-1980s and the middle of the current decade (2016), the average age of mothers having their first child has increased by almost four years among Jewish women. Such changes occurred notwithstanding the parallel increase in the share in the general population of orthodox and religious-Zionist women, who are characterized by younger age at marriage and motherhood as compared to other Jewish women, and even though during this period women of Russian descent moved closer to the aforementioned patterns of secular Jewish women.

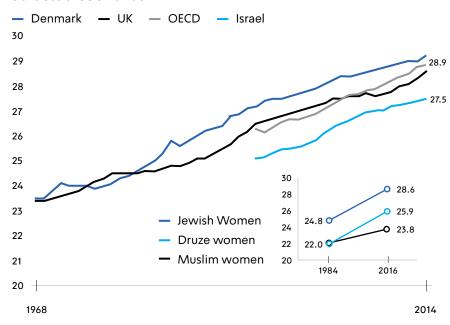
^{6/} Chalichal, I. (2017), Fertility among Jewish Women in Israel according to their Level of Religiousity in the years 1979-2014, paperwork series, no. 101, the Central Bureau of Statistics.



Among Muslim women the changes were more moderate, however Druze women experienced similar and even slightly more dramatic changes, as compared to the changes experienced by Jewish women (see Chart 3).

Chart 2

Mothers' average age when having first child in Israel and selected countries



Source: OECD, Central Bureau of Statistics

In parallel to the changes in the age of marriage and parenthood, and apparently also as a consequence thereof, the **rate of young adults living with their parents** has increased. As of 2014, 83% of individuals aged 18-24 in Israel were living with their parents, 13% were living with their families, including non-married intimate partnerships, and only 4% were living on their own or with roommates. In respect to the next age group, 25-30 year olds, an increase was recorded in the percentage of individuals living with their parents. As of 2011, approximately 27% of individuals aged 25-30 were living with their parents (more than 40% among 25 years old and less than 20% at age 30) and this figure increased by 5-10 percent between 1995-2011. This phenomenon may increase in Israel, as it did in quite a number of European countries — not just those which experienced severe economic crises over



the past decade. In the EU, some 36% of young adults aged 18-34 are living with their parents (Eurostat).

The employment rate in the younger age group has decreased over recent decades in most developed countries. This phenomenon presented itself significantly in some countries, and relatively mildly in Israel. Between 1995–2011 there was a decrease of three percent in the 18–22 age group, and one percent in the 23–26 age group. It is important to note in this context, that over the years, the younger population is more vulnerable during economic crises and the unemployment rate among young people is therefore higher during such times. This phenomenon has been documented in several countries, and is also evident in Israel. (see Chart 5).

Young Adults in society – their place and significance

Changes deriving from both material economic phenomena and cultural and spiritual trends have therefore resulted in a significant change in the lifestyle of the new young adult population. Concurrently, young people's expectations have also changed - of themselves as well as of others, together with individuals' expectations of society and vice versa. Historically, young people also had, and still have, a special significance for society in a more general sense. This significance is related to their place in society, and therefore derives not only from the characteristics of young people themselves but also from the condition and characteristics of society in general over certain periods of time. This significance was considerable prior to the above-mentioned changes and the enhanced attention that is paid to this age group in research and policy – but these changes may have caused it to become clearer and deeper. This significance is expressed in various ways, of which three major expressions will be noted: the social ethos, the groundbreaking and dominant role in implementing changes in society and the level of scarcity which is connected to the societal age structure.

Social ethos

The end of one's teenage years marks the beginning of several transitions; from potential to actual, from promise to realization, from the hoped-for future to the real present time. Although young children embody "society's future" and in that sense they are the "big promise", however this promise is quite removed from the present. Young adults however are the early

9/ Fuchs, ibid.



^{7/} Central Bureau of Statistics: *The Face of Israeli Society: Israel's Future Generation — Children and Youth 24 and Under.* Jerusalem, 2016.

^{8/} Fuchs, ibid.

realization of the promise. This is not merely a poetic description of an economic or cultural process which could presumably be described in a more direct and technical way, it rather pertains to the expectations and hopes which family and society as a whole place on young adults and the many opportunities and risks that may materialize during the (long) period of transition from youth to adulthood.

In this context, consider for example, the ambiance and profound meaning surrounding rite of passage ceremonies that are connected with weddings and marriage, leaving home or the village, in pre-modern societies. These practices still echo in the societies of our times - upon leaving home for college (in the U.S.), graduation ceremonies and the move from the core family to capital and other large cities or to other countries (e.g. the immigration of young people from Eastern to Western Europe). In Israel, this is reflected in unique practices connected to military service. Contrarily, in comparison to pre-modern societies, it has become evident in recent decades that the physical and geographical inter-generational separation is mitigated, or has at least become more gradual – due to the changes in means of transportation and communication, among other. Therefore, the connection between young adults and their parents is based not only on preference or need, but also on the background of the actual possibility and feasibility of its preservation and maintenance over time. This fact will become increasingly relevant as we delve into the discussion of young adults at risk.

From an economic and technological perspective, young adults as a group, are very significant since usually, they are the first to implement technological changes and innovations — for example, in manufacturing and consumption, transportation and housing. The pace of technological changes in the 20th and 21st centuries powerfully demonstrated this fact. Another example of this is the formation and establishment of new professions which is almost always among the younger population.

Furthermore, the development and creation of new technology is oftentimes visibly led by young people. Finally, young people are frequently the age group through which new technology is integrated into society, e.g. the use of a new product or practice. In all likelihood this happens because young people are more flexible and quicker to adapt (they are also more capable and responsible than teenagers and children). Moreover, it happens because their need or desire for alternatives is much stronger, either because of lack of means or since they are not yet used to or fixated

2 I

on patterns of consumption and behavior. For example, in the beginning of the 21st century, youth were the first to experiment with new means of communication, transportation, tourism and employment; such as: smartphones, social media, electric scooters and bicycles, shared working spaces and various products and services which have been offered in recent years in the framework of cooperative economics such as the short-term lease of apartments and using cooperative transportation services.

In this respect, it should be taken into account that some of the phenomena and characteristics which are currently related to the lives of young people may, with time, depart from this group as they come to characterize society as a whole. In other words, such phenomena and characteristics may appear with time as characterizing a generation and an era and not necessarily the younger age group.

Scarcity

In the developed countries, in which the birth rate is declining while life expectancy is rising, the relative proportion of young people in society is lower than it was, and accordingly their significance allegedly increases. This is embodied, in the "dependency ratio", i.e. the ratio between the 'dependent' population (0-18 and over 65) and the working age population. Young people, according to various definitions, constitute between one quarter and one third of the working age population in developed countries. Consequently, the higher the dependency ratio (more dependents, less workers), so the relative importance of young people increases. In Israel, fertility rates are still relatively high compared with most developed countries, but on the other hand life expectancy is also guite high. The dependency ratio in Israel today is relatively high (many dependents) on an international scale, but it is considerably influenced by the number of children in the populations, whereas in most developed countries it mostly reflects the number of elders. The proportion of young people aged 20-34 in Israel is very similar to the proportion of this age group in many European countries (see Chart X below), however the fact that the proportion of the older section of the working age group (ages 35-64) is particularly small in Israel in comparison with these countries indicates that the relative importance of young people is ostensibly greater, since their relative ratio in the work age is higher: 39% as compared to 32% and 34% in Northern European countries and in Eastern European countries, respectively.





Whether being the first to experience the main implications of such in-depth changes, or being the generators thereof, young people are very important for society in general. This relative importance rises in times of many changes. As previously mentioned, such changes should not necessarily be attributed to young people only, and may relate to the entire era and/or generation; however, young adults are the first to powerfully encounter them. This is probably why leading research institutes in Europe and in the U.S. have, in recent years, assigned a very central place to the analysis of the younger generation and the attempt to characterize the inter-generational differences — in respect to both material and economic aspects, such as the changes in the employment market and aspects regarding their views on cultural and political issues.

All three components — ethos, technology and scarcity — influence each other: the scarcer young people are in a given period (e.g. following wars or in light of inter-generational changes in fertility rates), the more intense certain aspects of the social ethos relating to them become: more hopes for change are pinned on them and society is more occupied with them. Alternatively, these hopes, or the importance attributed to them, intensify when young adults are more "needed" for the lead and implementation of technological changes or for the purpose of achieving other social goals (such as military service). In general: the issue of young adults should be considered according to their societal position and in consideration of society's condition in a more general way, even prior to reviewing the unique characteristics of young people as such.

Chart 3
Dependency ratio: population size under 15 years and over 65 years for every 100 people aged 15-64

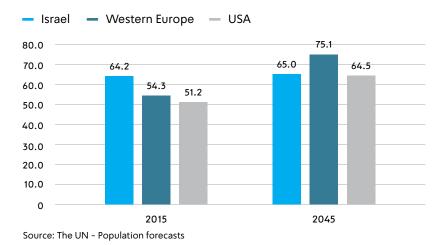
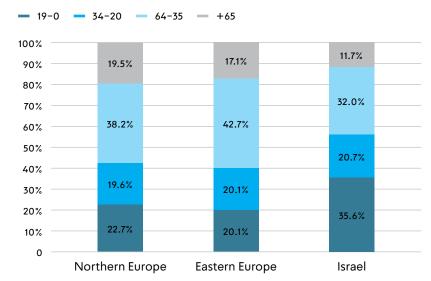




Chart 4

Age distribution in Israel and selected regions, 2017*



*Weighted average; "Eastern Europe" — Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. Source: authors' analysis of World Bank data

The above-mentioned changes — whether contemplated as causes or as consequences — brought about several implications in a number of fields and intensified some of the unique features of the place of young adults in society. The delay in the age of marriage and parenthood further increased the congruence between the periods of building a family and starting a career. At the same time, the long-term trend of women moving up the educational and professional ladder has continued. The result of this has been the compression of more commitments and aspirations into a narrower time frame, with growing pressure within households in view of the attempt to cultivate two careers while trying to raise a family at the same time. This pressure may decline with the decrease in the number of children or the cultivation of more equal parenting, among other things. A glimpse of this — at least in terms of the number of children — can be seen in the developed countries over the last decades:

The average number of children per woman in OECD countries declined from 3.25 to 1.75, within half a century (from 1960 to the beginning of the current decade). Moreover, the pressure on (or competition for) household resources over the life cycle has also increased due to the rise in life expectancy, i.e. the ability of the older generation to support the younger generation, whether economically, financially or otherwise, has decreased in view of the need to provide for a longer period following retirement.

The unique case of young adults in Israel

In Israel, the set of constraints in which young adults operate are more pressing, and different in structure, in comparison with most other developed countries, due to several unique features of the Israel, state and society alike:

- (1) Military and civil service leads to a significant delay in the beginning of studies and entry into the job market. On the other hand, those who do not participate in military service lose some of the direct and indirect advantages that may derive from it; such as nurturing social connections and sometimes gaining experience in professions and roles that are of value for future professional life by requiring, for example, the assumption of responsibility, acquiring organizational and management skills, team work and so forth.
- (2) The preferred as well as the actual number of children per family in Israeli society is still relatively high as compared with other Western countries, while the period of job training and higher education is not shorter and the number of work hours among men and women alike (i.e. among businesses and various entities in the economy) is commonly higher than in most of the developed world. Against this background, the tendency of young couples to be assisted by their parents is very common in comparison to other countries. That is to say, even if the family model in Israel was not particularly strong due to a number of historical, cultural and geographical reasons (traditional society, Aliya and immigration, the Holocaust, a small country); it would have developed its strength if only for the most basic above—mentioned social economic characteristics.

- (3) Employment opportunities are concentrated around the central metropolitan area ("Hamerkaz" / Gush Dan). The dominance of the "center" area as compared with other areas in Israel is very significant.
- (4) A high share of young adults belong to conservative traditional societies, some of which are in the process of profound changes. The importance of this feature is triple:
- 1. Families in these societies are larger than those in the rest of the population, which narrows the scope of resources available for parental support, even for the same income level (on the other hand, support by siblings and cousins is more available).
- 2. In the Muslim and Druze societies, and to a lesser extent also in the Orthodox Jewish society, reliance on and support by the parents is connected to living in geographical proximity.
- 3. Arabs, mostly Muslim and Bedouins in the South (particularly women) and orthodox Jews (particularly men) are late in joining the Israeli job market, and only began to do so over the last 10–15 years. Such late joining leads, among other things, to many employees from these sectors, including young employees, entering the job market with a low level of training and skills, and with little to no employment experience, and consequently often assuming relatively low-paying positions.

Who is considered "young"?

When exactly does young adulthood begin, and when does it end? There is general agreement — academically and practically, that age 18 marks the beginning of this period. The decision to set this age as the beginning of "young adulthood" is not necessarily related to emotional maturity, which is not fully compatible with this cutoff point, but rather relates to the legal and official transition into adulthood, as expressed, for example, by the right to vote and the change of status from minor to adult with respect to criminal liability (in this context, age 12 is also a transition point regarding liability). Furthermore, this age is a landmark in terms of affinity to State structures and the status vis-à-vis coercive powers. For example, the removal of a child





^{10/} Israeli families' preferred number of children, as well as the actual number of children, among Jews and Arabs alike, remains relatively high in comparison to the populations of Western countries.

under 18 from his parents' home by the State, under circumstances of risk or danger, is very different from the removal of an adult from a household after the age of 18.11

In contrast, the age marking the end of this period - loosely defined as young adulthood - is much more fluid. With respect to young adults at risk, this fluidity relates to the diversification of the variety of the phenomena and types of challenges - which increases as individuals age. For example, while some young people are able to cope with the challenges facing them already at age 24, others may reach this point and stand on solid ground only at 28. In addition, it also derives from the variety of frameworks and organizations that operate in the field of young adults. These organizations can be distinguished from one another not only by their therapeutic approach and the age defined by them as the end of this period, but also by the resources available to them. Limited resources dictate the replacement of "the ideal" by "the optimal", and a definition of a maximum age in relation. In other words, many programs and organizations face a trade-off between the defined age range for support and therapy, and the number of young people they can serve. Nevertheless, some ages are more acceptable than others. In many contexts young adulthood ends at 25, while in certain contexts it is extended to 28, 30 and even 35. In general, different contexts prescribe different numbers, but some of these justifications pertain to an issue of substance ("the end of a period") while others relate more to limited resources.

^{11/} It is noteworthy already at this point, that the consent regarding the age which forms the beginning of the period does not derogate from the fact that some of the processes which are relevant for the treatment and support of young people and their empowerment over time should be initiated at earlier ages. This issue will be discussed below.

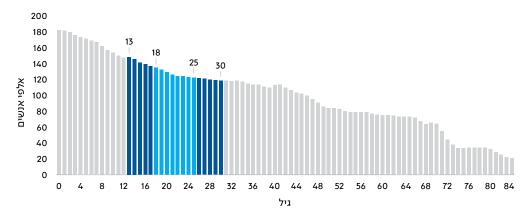


As of 2017, there were approximately one million young people aged 18–25 in Israel, constituting almost 12% of the population. That year, there were some 600,000 young Israelis aged 26–30, constituting approximately 7% of the population. By 2030 it is predicted there will be approximately 1.3 million young people aged 18–25 in Israel, in addition to approximately 710,000 aged 26–30. The proportion of these age groups in the general population will be roughly the same as today. However, despite the mostly unchanged proportion, it is noteworthy that in terms of absolute size — these groups will grow considerably in the coming years. This fact is of significance for the governmental and civil systems and organizations, whose preparedness relates not only to relative proportion in the population but also to absolute size of their target demographics. This point will be elaborated upon in parts B and C of this guide,

Chart 5

The number of individuals in each age group in Israel (in thousands), 2017 average*

pertaining specifically to young adults at risk in Israel.



^{*} Excluding individuals aged +85, who constitute 1.4% of the population

Research and writing

Over the last decade in Israel, there has been a significant increase in research, writing and publications pertaining to young adults in general and young adults at risk in particular. Publications include conceptual and empirical description of the phenomenon, analysis of young adult populations in Israel and internationally as well as the trends it is characterized by, and a



review of the existing frameworks and the developments thereof. This guide presents many of the figures and insights which these publications offer, with references and links to the various resources provided at the end. Some publications worth mentioning are: the publications written for the Planning and Research Department of the Ministry of Welfare by Katan (2009) and by Reuven and Turgeman (2015). The researchers of the Brookdale Institute made numerous contributions in this field in recent years, including: Kahan-Stravchinski (2017), Kahan-Stravchinski et al. (2016), Naon et al. (2014); as did the Taub Center: Fuchs (2015; 2017). Additional reviews were carried out by the Research and Information Center of the Knesset: Rabinowitz (2017) and by "Midot" (NPO): Rudich-Kohen and Label-Landa (2013) and Rudich-Cohen and Tamar-Shceferman (2015). Most, if not all, of the aforementioned articles and reports refer to the young adults population in general as well as to young adults at risk. In most cases, the young adults at risk population is referred to directly and specifically, and in certain studies the reference is

12/ Katan, I. (2009). "Youngsters in Israel – Problems, Needs and Services – Current Situation and Proposals for the Future", the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services. Senior Department for Research, Planning and Training.

implied through the characterization of the group of young people.¹²

National Policy for the Promotion of Young People in Israel

Zeira, A., Benbenisty, R. and Refaeli, T. (2012): Vulnerable Youth in Transition to Adulthood Processes: Needs, Services and Policy. Concluding study report.

Rudich-Kohen, A. and Label-Landa, S. (2013) "Young and Restless", Sector report on organizations working with and for Israeli young adults aged 18-35", Midot organization. Rudich-Cohen, A. and Shceferman, K.T. (2015) Orthodox Youth and Arab Youth, Review of Youth Issues in the Arab and Orthodox Sectors in Israel 2015, Midot organization.

Rabinowitz, M. (2017): Review of Services for Young People over 18 who are Lacking a Family Support Network. Jerusalem: the Knesset, the Research and Information Center. Kahan-Stravchinski, P. (2017). Israeli Adolescents and Youth not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET): Features, Needs and Policy. Jerusalem: Meyers-Joint-Brookdale Institute. Naon, D.; Kahan-Stravchinski, P., Vasen-Sikroon, L; Hadar, Y.; Konstantinov, V. (2014). NEET Youngsters in Israel: Integration in Employment — Resources, Obstructions and Needs. Jerusalem: Meyers-Joint-Brookdale Institute.

Kahan-Stravchinski, P., Vasen-Sikroon, L; Naon, D.; Hadar, Y.; Konstantinov, V. (2014). Employed Youngsters in Israel, having 12 school years and under: Integration in Employment – Resources, Obstructions and Needs. Jerusalem: Meyers-Joint-Brookdale Institute

Kahan-Stravchinski, P., Amiel, S.; Konstantinov, V. (2016). Where Israeli Youngsters Stand, Key Areas of Life. Jerusalem: Meyers-Joint-Brookdale Institute.

Fuchs, Hadas (2015): The socio-economic situation of youngsters in Israel, in: Weiss, A. and Chernihovsky, D. (editors): *The 2015 Israel Status Report*, Jerusalem: The Taub Center.

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In addition, many academic articles were published in the last decade by Israeli researchers pertaining to the Israeli experience in this field, but also in comparative contexts. These will be referred to, as needed, in Part B.



The welfare state and the Israeli welfare system

The modern welfare state — almost all developed countries constitute or maintain some type of a welfare state — operates in many areas of its citizens' lives. The three major areas of the welfare state, at least in terms of their budgetary weight, are: health, education and welfare. While the nature and goals of the first two areas are largely similar across different countries, the third area is more diverse, and includes many sub-areas. Accordingly, it has several names and is under the responsibility of different agencies: "welfare", "social protection" or "social affairs" are some examples. In several countries, such as Germany and Ireland, the welfare sector is affiliated with the Ministry of Labor, while in others like Britain for example it is connected to the ministry of health.

Developed countries vary considerably in terms of the scope of resources they dedicate to welfare purposes and the basket of the services and allowances available; they vary just as much in the techniques and methods through which they operate their systems. Nevertheless, historically they developed along a similar path and have a lot in common; this is evident when their conduct is compared to the conduct of states in the early 20th century.¹³

The welfare system operates through two main channels: services and allowances. Both are intended to provide a response to different life circumstances and stages. Life circumstances include, among others, unemployment or disability; life stages are, for example, birth and old age. Some allowances, like children and old age allowances, are given to all, or nearly all of the population along the cycle of life. Other allowances do not reach the entire population, but every person is entitled to them according to needs and circumstances, e.g. in times of compromised functioning as a result of a car accident or work accident. In contrast, a large portion of welfare **services** — as opposed to health and education services and unlike many allowances — are focused exclusively on certain, clearly defined,

13/ A large part of the means and mechanisms of the welfare systems in modern countries have existed for between 50-70 years, and some have existed for a few decades only. This fact is important as a reminder that some of the systems and services are still in formation and adjustment in response to demographic and economic changes that occurred during the second half of the 20th century.

parts of the population. These groups are defined mostly on the basis of life circumstances (for example prisoners in rehabilitation processes) and less on the basis of life stages. This division in itself, as basic and generalizing as it may be — can serve to explain the gradual development of services, in our case those intended to aid young adults at risk; that include, as shall be described below, a very wide range of populations, needs and responses, as well as entities and organizations.

The existence of the welfare system, as well as the arguments regarding its nature and size, are based on a number of reasons and justifications. Justifications are made along the lines of two general directions: the first includes justifications deriving from perceptions of solidarity, commitment and responsibility for others. There are also more utilitarian justifications which emphasize the importance of preventing negative social developments in the future through investments made in the present. Another common distinction is between two motivations; one based on redistribution and one driven by an insurance consideration. This pair of concepts overlap, although not wholly, with the previous pair of justifications. Redistribution, as well as the insurance-based motivation, existed in certain forms also in pre-modern societies and communities. However, the development of the modern state in these directions was associated with and accelerated by the increase in population, urbanization, aging, wide-range and lengthy wars, the development of modern medicine (which led to an increase in life expectancy and also enabled life with a variety of disabilities), the development of the democratic system and the consequent evolving expectations, as well as other factors. The impact of these influences resulted, over time, in an absolute and relative increase in the scope of resources used for welfare purposes, and in wider and better welfare coverage in terms of the populations and the situations it addresses.

At the same time, developed countries are still distinguished from one another in the amount of resources that they dedicate to welfare purposes, as well as in the extent to which they enable — or even rely on the existence of — a continued parallel or supplementary familial or communal welfare system. This distinction is also relevant to young adults at risk in Israel, since as shall be explained below, a large number of entities and organizations coming from all social and economic sectors is involved in the lives of these young people.





All three sectors — governmental, private and third — are active in the Israeli welfare arena. The relations between the sectors' activities are quite diverse, and have changed throughout the years, such that the work method that was established in some areas can significantly differ from the method formed in others. For example, a years—long practice is that many of the high schools in Israel are managed by NPOs, while most of the funding comes directly from the State and local municipality, and most of the study materials are dictated and supervised by the State.

The activity of NPOs in the various areas of the welfare system are significantly distinguished from one another in terms of the division of work and sometimes also in terms of the division of the responsibility between the government and the civil society. Some NPOs have formed, by their mere establishment, a new field of activity. In some instances, the State became involved in the field only at a later stage — after it was developed and even deeply established by the civil society. Such entry of the State was sometimes through funding of the NPO — by way of either buying services or providing support — or through direct operation. Some NPOs were established alongside existing State activity, and others were established in order to transfer a certain service from the State to the hands of the private sector.

Some of the goals, or at least the techniques, of the welfare state — whether the government itself or civil organizations — are risk mitigation, removal from risks, and as a second stage the alleviation and minimization of the negative results that may, sometimes inevitably, derive from the materialization of the risks. Removal from risks and risk mitigation are valuable from the perspective of re-distribution, as well as that of insurance motivation.

Finally, it is re-emphasized that the welfare state, or the welfare system in Israel, comprises three main components: education, health and welfare. This fundamental fact is also important in the contemplation of issues pertaining to young adults at risk. Each component is largely handled by a designated ministry, accompanied by parallel activity of a large number of organizations and NPOs. Each area treats different age groups, and each is governed by a large number of statutory provisions and other criteria laying down conditions for entitlement to a certain allowance or service.

Although almost all of the allowances are managed by the National Insurance Institute, some allowances are within the expertise and responsibility of the

Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health – as well as some other ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Defense). More importantly, the areas of correspondence between the three systems are not negligible. For example, issues of mental health are officially as well as practically (regulatory as well as operatively) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, but are also relevant to the Ministry of Welfare. Caring for the elderly is another area which requires coordinated action of both systems. Similarly, issues of young adults at risk - in different contexts and risk levels - are divided between the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education. This division is expressed in different types of boarding schools, often serving different target populations: some boarding schools are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare, while others are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education; alongside services provided by the Ministry of Welfare to students of both. Furthermore, vast populations receive services or treatment from entities of both systems. This understanding is reflected and is implemented in the National program "360" for children and young adults at risk and through "Yated - the National Program for Young Men and Women at Risk", that will be presented in Part C.

Distresses, risks and chances

Alongside the characterization and identification of "distresses", a central concept in the Israeli discourse is that of "risk". Risks and distresses are not interchangeable, since they describe a different chronological and metaphysical status or phase: distress is the actual materialization of risk, and risk is the potential for distressed situations, or the likelihood and possibility to encounter them. It is no coincidence – and this is highly significant to the discussion about young adults at risk – that while families are often referred to as "in distress", teenagers and youth are mostly described as "at risk". Using the term "at risk" implies potential more than an actual situation, and therefore it somewhat reflects the assumption – or hope – that something can still be done to reduce the risk and move away from the actual realization or occurrence of distress. Moreover, the use of this term also reflects the assumption and hope that the problem discussed and handled derives less from the person himself and more from his situation and circumstances. In other words, things can be turned around, thus helping people move their lives forward, something can be done to prevent the risk from materializing, or to reduce the probability of such occurrence.¹⁴ This is perhaps the reason for the use of the term "young adults in at-risk situations", which further highlights the distinction between the individual, who has a potential for development and success, and the situations surrounding him, which may be positive or negative, and have an impact and a transformative effect, to a lesser or greater extent, on his life.



A shift is evident in recent years from using terms that are passive, sometimes labeling, and closed in terms of the horizon to which they point — to active terms that hold an open horizon and potential for change. ¹⁵ Even more significantly, we have seen a shift to work and interventions 'at eye level', emphasizing the importance of sharing and participation between therapists and clients, between supporters and supported. This shift goes beyond marketing and image, and reflects a mostly positive change in the perception of the bodies engaged in this field: NPO workers, academics and government officers. It reflects a change in the way in which these functions wish to address the population with which they work, and how they represent its interests before the rest of society.

Medicine is another discipline in which the gap between people in authority positions and their patients is being revisited. In medicine this derives, among other things, from the fact that patients arriving at hospitals are more educated and aware and demand to be better informed and understand the process of their treatment and recovery, in particular in comparison to the past. However, the shift to active terminology and doctors sharing information with patients has several additional positive effects: it is more ethical and humane (a hospitalized person is not an object) and more effective (research has shown that providing information, certainty and a personal, matter-of-fact attitude can generate a sense of safety and calmness, and therefore contribute to improved chances to heal).¹⁶

This trend is also evident in the current language used by the welfare and social services, and in the common perceptions and attitudes among professionals in the fields of education, training and therapy. Similarly, using the term "social services" probably reflects an ambition to reach out to a wider population in an attempt to improve their quality of life or reduce the risks they face, while striving to minimize labeling by negative images.¹⁷

The building blocks of social challenges in Israel

To conclude this section and for the purpose of our discussion, it is important to note some of the building blocks comprising the main social challenges in Israel. A large portion of these blocks are events, phenomena and processes which should be considered while reviewing the situation of various populations that the State aims to strengthen, including young adults at risk. Such phenomena are sometimes recurring motifs or cross-sections of social reality. Others are founding events in Israeli history of the 20th and 21st centuries. These "building blocks" are discussed in detail in research, journalism and the common public discourse. Nevertheless, revisiting them is important since they hold some of the keys to understanding the present situation and the future potential for change and rectification, in particular when it comes to issues relating to young adults at risk.

(a) Immigrant integration. One of the largest social challenges Israel has faced since its establishment (and perhaps also one of its greatest strengths) is the integration of large waves of immigration from different backgrounds throughout the years. Holocaust survivors in the 1940s and 50s, the large North African immigration in the 1950s and 60s and considerable immigration waves from the USSR and Ethiopia in the 1990s were the large masses, but throughout its entire existence Israel had continuously integrated immigrants from different countries.

Immigrant integration is such a basic component of life in Israel and such a prominent feature in the history of Zionism, that it is easy to forget or overlook the tremendous effect of the arrival of such large numbers of people on a young country within very short periods of time. In addition, most immigrants in most periods came to Israel due to turbulence and unrest in their countries of origin, and did not bring money or other tangible assets with them. In fact, this is one of the most important features of these immigration waves: the vast majority of immigrants found themselves upon their arrival, in an inferior position, at least materially, to the absorbing population. A vast majority of immigrants throughout the decades disembarked ships and airplanes with no asset but their talent and skills. Most immigrants had to invest considerable time and resources to adapt to the new country, primarily to its language but also to internalizing the local



^{14/} In European countries the term "poverty risk" is very common, referring to a segment of the population which income level positions just above the poverty threshold. The policy in these countries pertains to the characterization of this population as being at high risk to descend into poverty, and as deserving of efforts and resources aimed at removing it from such risk.

^{15/} See, for example: Berkowitz, A., Kromer-Nevo, M. and Komem, M. (2013) The Body of Research Knowledge in Israel on Teenage Girls in Distress Situations: Historical Review from a Feminist Perspective. Society and Welfare, 33 (1), 7-39.

^{16/} Zisman-Ilani, Y.; Roeh, D.; Karnieli-Miller, A. (2015): Involving Patients in Decision-Making. A Historical Perspective and Thinking about the Future, Quality in Medicine (3). 9-12.

^{17/} This tendency is perhaps related to the fact that the transition between these situations may be more common than in the past (or perhaps it is just the awareness of this option that has expanded).

cultural and social codes. During the adaptation period, individuals, families and communities had always been more vulnerable. In other words, almost any incident during this period had a harsher impact than it would have had, had it happened in the country of origin. This is true of sickness, death of a family member or of one of the breadwinners of the household, but also of less serious events such as lack of social integration of children in schools. Struggles pertaining to language and orientation, combined with external circumstances such as economic crisis, could have a devastating effect on individuals and families: even relatively minor events could have a long-term impact on individuals and families if they occurred soon after they immigrated to Israel.

The arrival of masses of immigrants and their material and emotional deficiency were accompanied by a third factor: the integration methods. In some cases, integration was successful, in others, much less, as a result of mistakes, negligence or imposing a price on immigrants which at the time seemed reasonable but in retrospect turned out to be exorbitant (e.g. geographical dispersion of the immigrant populations with the aim of protecting the borders). This reality resulted in societal weak spots and the creation or intensification of social risks and challenges in Israel.

The integration of immigrants in Israel is generally similar to the reality faced by many immigrants to other countries throughout history, but the Israeli case is distinguished by the ratio of immigrants (Olim) which since the first years of the State was, and to a great extent still is, one of the highest among the developed countries. For all these reasons, the history and life circumstances of many young adults at risk is intertwined with immigration, whether they are first or second–generation immigrants. Indeed, the ratio of new immigrants among young adults at risk significantly exceeds their proportion in the general population.

(b) Tradition and secularization. Over the past few decades, the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel have been undergoing in-depth and gradual processes of change, which are expressed in respect to religion, tradition, family and community. These processes are generated or enhanced by a wide variety of events and trends such as immigration and asylum-seeking, exposure to Western secular culture and higher levels of education, urbanization and a declining birth rate. Although some of these processes were and still are also relevant to societies in other countries, Israel is distinguished by the fact that a high portion of its population still views religion and tradition — and therefore also family and community — as major components that shape social and personal life.

While some of these features establish social strengths (community, family), others also intensify challenges. For example, they may heighten intergenerational gaps, increase individuals' dependency on their communities and indirectly influence the level of adaptation and the potential of individual integration in education and in the job market. With regard to orthodox or ex-orthodox young adults at risk, it is noted that for many of them, questions pertaining to the religious life and their position vis-à-vis the religious community and the nuclear family substantially impact the shaping and formation of life during these years, and therefore also the coping with challenges and risks.

(c) Center and periphery. The integration of immigrants, its successes as well as its failures, and the deep significance of religious, conservative and traditional communities, are uniquely demonstrated through a geographic lens: specifically, across the 'center — periphery' line. Generally speaking, the periphery in Israel is more Arab and more conservative, while the center is more Jewish and liberal. The orthodox population, which is the most conservative sector among Jews in Israel is concentrated around the metropolitan areas in the heart of Israel (Beitar Illit and Jerusalem; Modi'in Illit, Bnei Brak and Elad). The Arab populations are generally concentrated in the periphery of Israel (North and South). In terms of social mobility, location is crucial in terms of opportunities for education, training and employment, but also, and equally important, in terms of exposure to different social risks.

The above are just three main issues to be considered, together with other issues which are relevant to the discussion, such as:

- (d) the situation of the economy and the job market, which can be quite volatile at times and have a significant effect on one's starting point in life (this ties in closely to the 'center vs periphery' discussion.
- (e) the effectiveness of governmental policy and the public sector, which can hugely effect how some groups in the population fare again, relating to issues of social mobility and opportunities.
- (f) the power and level of involvement of the civil society.
- **(g) luck and coincidence factors.** That is to say, we cannot control everything, circumstances and risks are always part on one's fate.

The above-mentioned areas include some of the building blocks of the social challenges in Israel, and are also relevant to the issues of young adults at risk and the nature of the risks which they face. The impact of some of these





challenges may decline and weaken over time — if, for example, the near future will not bring such significant waves of immigration to Israel. Other challenges may heighten and become more acute, if policy is not changed and if no new and sufficiently sophisticated responses are provided to the existing challenges.

These are some of the processes and events at the background of the formation of various social risks. In the following section, we will address the issue of young adults at risk directly.



Young adults at risk in Israel

This section offers a general, mostly technical, review of the population defined as young adults at risk in Israel.

The double challenge for young adults at risk

Young adults at risk face a double challenge. Like all other young adults, they too are influenced by in-depth and long-term structural changes which render the early years of adult life complex and complicated, to say the least. However, young adults at risk further face a series of circumstances and risks that particularly intensify their difficulty in finding their way in adult life, navigating and shaping their lives during this period.

The regular challenges worsen and the unique risks may be intensified — precisely because young adults at risk, from the outset, lack access to various means and entities that provide other young people solutions for and ways to cope with such challenges — whether continuous or non-recurring.

The main difficulties and challenges faced by young people in the first quarter of the 21st century include, as previously mentioned, the need to invest a longer period of time in training and in acquiring skills and education, since the job market is more volatile and in some countries also more competitive, for both educated and non-educated individuals. In many countries, housing prices and the cost of living are higher in the central cities (i.e. the need to acquire education as well as the cost of housing in the relevant locations may raise the price of entry tickets to the arena of employment opportunities). In addition, young adults taking their first steps in the "journey" to adulthood are, on average, more isolated than

18/ In the stronger countries, competition is more intense, and therefore the entry price is high (investment is required in training and skills); in weaker countries the job market is more stagnant, due to the protection of long-time employees, and therefore skills and a higher education may not suffice. In the case of Israel, there are examples for both tendencies, depending mostly on economic sector. Some sectors employ super-educated employees, very competitive sectors which require particularly high-quality human capital, while there are also highly protected sectors into which entry may require having the right connections. Another layer includes non-rewarding economic sectors in which there is high supply of employees, both domestic and foreign, and which offer a low salary level.



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they were in the past, since the formation and establishment of long-term relationships which provide support, confidence and friendship only occurs at a later stage.

Young adults at risk in Israel are in an inferior position on all of the above parameters. First, they lack the close surrounding that will advise, mentor, guide and assist them in making decisions. Second, they lack the financial resource required to acquire an education or to sustain them during their studies. Third, many of them cannot live with their families, and are therefore required to find housing solutions already at a young age (upon graduation from boarding school, during military service or immediately thereafter). Fourth, often they are positioned outside of the relevant social circles, which again denies them opportunities for consultation, comfort, encouragement and group affiliation within which they can operate and find employment or other opportunities that can derive from belonging to more affluent circles.

However, an accurate definition should first be provided for the term "young adults at risk". Who are the individuals and groups contained in this definition/identity?

Definitions, figures, and the identification of young adults at risk

The difficulty of defining the borders and parameters around the group of young adults at risk is one of the prominent characteristics of the practice (therapeutic and professional), as well as the research, in this field. Moreover, even with a better and clearer definition of the group's borders — as agreed by many of the functions involved in this area – young adults at risk include an extremely vast range of sub-groups. Occasionally, attempts are being made to re-define the wide common denominator of these groups, which would usually include some of the primary challenges that were described above, first and foremost the lack of supportive circles, lack of income and finance coupled with the lack of housing. Alongside these features – whose prevalence varies among the subgroups – the various subgroups of young adults at risk are distinguished by several unique characteristics, primarily the risk factors. Risk factors range from low income, to detachment from the biological family to the grimmest personal history including exposure to harsh violence, sexual abuse or early juvenile delinquency. Within the diversity of human responses and resilience to similar situations, young people are also distinguished by other characteristics related to their mental

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and emotional surrounding, and therefore by their potential for growth, resilience and societal integration. In this respect, every young man or woman and each case is indeed unique and complex, and therefore the differences between groups can be described only in general terms, as will be presented in Part B of this guide.

Several ways, through which the group of young adults at risk can be identified and defined are noteworthy. While the outcomes of some of these identification methods may be congruent, other methods identify rather distinguished groups. The different methods are actually answering different questions. One direction is the personal, familial and socio-demographic background of every individual during childhood and adolescence, a background that renders that individual to be vulnerable to potential risk at more advanced ages. Another direction is the mapping of the position of individual young people in the job market and in terms of education and training. A third direction relates more to recent, unique, psycho-social circumstances that created a distinctive present-time situation saturated with risks, challenges and distresses (such as deteriorating to using hard drugs). A fourth, more technical direction, is follow-up on those who had contact with the welfare systems as teens or who spent time, in childhood, adolescence or even thereafter, in welfare settings - without inquiry of individual circumstances.19

The main way to try and estimate the size of the relevant groups include the following stages: (a) finding the *percentage* of a certain phenomenon in the relevant group by looking at all information regarding any specific year (b) multiplying this percentage by the size of the relevant year or years — based on the assumption that the probability of a certain social phenomenon will be similar among these years and that furthermore, among adjacent years it does not depend on the specific year of birth (unless one year was affected by a global war while the other was not, e.g. baby-boomers); (c) an attempt to estimate the degree of overlap between the various definitions and accordingly offer a proposed range with respect to the size of the relevant group.

Finally, it is important to note that the discussion of the size of the young adults at risk group, or any one of the sub-groups thereof, should address all young people who (a) **belong to this category** (b) of the **relevant ages** (c) at





^{19/} The designers of the Yated program used similar methods. They considered a variety of characteristics – in socio-economic areas and in contexts of reporting personal situations, with varied degree of overlapping, which can at best be assumed, considering the fact that the figures normally come from different sources.

the same given moment.²⁰ This option should be distinguished from other options which take into account populations that will enter this age group or which have already outgrown it and are characterized by risk features, or individuals which are expected to enter certain situations or settings in the future, and even more so populations that passed through one service framework in a given year, leave it, and then re-appeared in another setting or were otherwise recorded in the same year (this identification depends on particularly high-quality data that is mostly confidential).

(a) Institute graduates. The first identification method is presumably the most obvious and direct one. The idea is to identify those who were children and teenagers at risk and were treated, or at least recognized as such, by the welfare systems — whether in the framework of boarding schools operated by the Ministry of Welfare or the Ministry of Education, or through other therapeutic institutes or private NPOs. This subgroup has been thoroughly researched over the years, in an attempt to characterize the routes of treatment and educational frameworks which proved as most effective long-term in the improvement of the well-being and empowerment of this group.

In comparison to other identification methods, it can be assumed that most individuals in this group are very likely to also belong to the group of young adults at risk. The opposite is obviously not true, i.e. many individuals in the group of young adults at risk were not known to the welfare systems at younger ages. The rate of teenagers aged 12-17 who receive services from the Ministry of Welfare or who pass through its institutes, as of 2016, ranges between 3-4% of the year. This means that even if all individuals in this group will later belong to the group of young adults at risk, they will total, based on 2016 figures, 30,000 - 40,000 young people, i.e. between 4,000 and 5,000 young adults on average in each year.

20/ Some individuals may, throughout the year, enter or exit the definition or setting. One example is individuals who turned 18 during the year, offset by those who turned 26. The result is that if the years are similar in size, and the common phenomena as respectively similar, there is no reason for a gap in the counting. Likewise, some individuals entered one therapeutic institute or another, offset by those who exited the same. If the size and ratio of the groups are similar, the counting should provide a stable impression; however, some individuals, as aforesaid, have transferred and were recorded in a number of settings and programs.

Many of the functions that were interviewed in the process of the writing of this guide emphasized that, although this group faces multiple significant challenges and struggles, it has one quintessential advantage — it is known to the systems, unlike individuals belonging to other subgroups, that are likely negligible in terms of size — whose identification is more complicated and complex and only arrives at a later age.

Indeed, if all teenagers aged 12–17 who were recorded in the social services departments are deemed as being at risk or having a specific need, their rate in any given year amounts to 17–18% of the general population. It can be assumed that within the gap between the 3–4% well known to the system and the 17–18% more generally known to the social services departments, there are additional subgroups.

The identification, or at least definition, of these additional approximately 14%, even if such identification is not on an individual level, can be done in one of the following methods:

(b) Education, employment and vocational.

Another method to identify individuals at risk or vulnerable to risk, which was used, for example, by researchers in the Brookdale Institute, is through the portrayal of young adults in the job market and the educational arena.²¹ The basic assumption embodied in this approach is that individuals who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are, in several aspects, at a higher risk level in comparison to the general population. The risk is extended due to the consequential potential for financial deficiency and lack of income, but also since for some people, the absence of any framework may present, in and of itself, a potential for risk, when combined with additional factors such as an unstable family setting.

When seeking to learn from NEET young adults about the broader population of young adults at risk in the Israeli context, several sub-groups should be excluded from the conversation. For example, individuals serving in the military or national service should clearly be excluded. Although here too, the exclusion is partial since some young adults at risk who are serving in the military/national service, remain clearly "at risk", and need external support in order to complete their service and develop their lives after completion of service when they begin their civilian life. In addition, a considerable portion of young people — especially from medium and high-income groups in society — spend some time in post-military, traveling and self-searching prior to engaging in higher education or entering the job market. This





group too is generally irrelevant to young adults at risk. Finally, and this is as relevant in Israel as it is in other countries, NEET youth should not include those who are at the threshold of education or employment, e.g. waiting for the commencement of the academic year or the beginning of a position recently attained or those who are on temporary leave from their job.

According to these definitions, NEET youth in Israel make up between 8-18% of the young adults population (70-160 thousand people). The lower end of the scale (8%) is comprised of young people who are not studying or employed but are also not looking for a job, while the upper end (18%) pertains to all young people who neither study nor work. In comparison to other developed countries, members of the OECD, the ratio of young Israelis who are not working or studying is not irregular, and in fact is even slightly lower than average. However, it is noted that the rate of unemployment among young people in Israel is relatively low in comparison with most developed countries. Therefore, the majority of NEET young adults are not participating in the job market. The rate of non-participators in the job market is higher in Israel than in other developed countries.²²

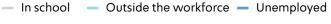
^{22/} Individuals outside of the job market are distinct from unemployed by the fact that the latter seek but do not find a job, while the former do not seek, based on either discouragement or inability to work.



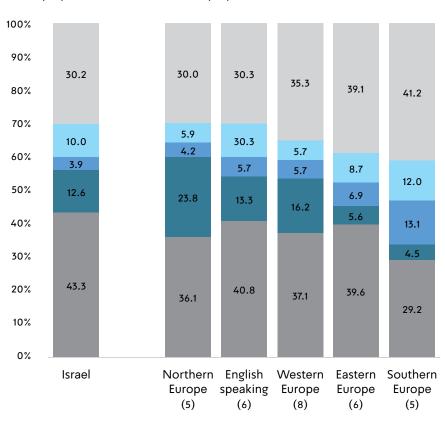
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Chart 6

Young adult population distribution by employment and educational status, in Israel and 30 OECD member countries*



Employed and in school
 Employed



*Simple average within each group of countries Source: Author's analysis of: OECD, Society at a glance 2016, figure 1.4

A basic division that can be made based on the rate of NEET young adults, is a division according to the level of education. Evidently, the rate of NEET individuals among low-educated young people in Israel is relatively high in comparison to other developed countries — in Northern Europe and in English-speaking countries (in Western European countries the rates are within the range between English-speaking countries and Northern-European countries). This finding can be interpreted in one of the following ways: either the level of education is more dominant in determining the integration and success in the job market in Israel, compared with other countries (market demand for employees); or the population of low-educated Israelis differ (in their proportion and composition) from the same population in other countries. The second interpretation is consistent with Israel being one of the most highly educated countries in the OECD (market



supply of employees); and with the fact that unemployment is lower in Israel than in other countries.

(c) Young adults treated by or in contact with Ministry of Welfare.

Another method to estimate the size of this group in the population is to rely on the data of the Ministry of Welfare pertaining directly to the group of young adults at risk. This group includes all those who are directly served by the Ministry's institutes or those who are cared for by NPOs whose activity is partly or mostly funded by the Ministry. The scope of this group (ages 18–25) was approximately 15,000 people in 2016.

(d) Young adults at risk who have no contact with governmental or civil functions

This group includes two sub-groups: young adults at risk who have no contact with the Ministry of Welfare or with NPOs, and young adults at risk with whom there is some partial, loose contact (in particular those with whom NPOs maintain contact but are unknown to the Ministry of Welfare). It is very hard to estimate the size of these groups, it can only be assumed that they "hide" among the wider groups and divisions, from which they occasionally emerge when NPOs or various governmental functions (police, social workers) encounter their members or proactively identify them. Some researchers argue that this group comprise several hundred in their relevant age group, while others claim that it may reach several thousands, including individuals who enter risk situations, but exit them over time. Therefore, there may be different assumptions regarding the numbers and rates of young adults at risk whom are "under the radar" of the government and NPOs alike. For example, if we take individuals treated by the Adolescents and Youth Services of the Ministry of Welfare as a reference point, several scenarios can be considered: e.g. the scenario whereby the rate of persons treated by this service reaches one half, one third or one quarter of the full size of the group. In the first case the real size of the population will be 30,000 (some 3% of all young people in the relevant age group) whereas in the latter this group will reach 60,000 (approximately 6% of the relevant years).

The operation model document of the national program for young adults at risk, "Yated" (see below), refers to 200,000 young people facing various risk situations in Israel. The "Working Together" program considers approximately 113,000 young people at risk in 2014 (equivalent to some 119,000 in 2016).

Table 1 below presents a summary of the various methods to identify and estimate the size of the group of young adults at risk in Israel. The upper part of the table refers to estimates that were proposed in recent years for

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the entire group of young adults at risk or cross-sections that are strongly related thereto. For example, group A takes into account that the ratio of young adults at risk among all teenagers aged 12–17 remains 100% and unchanged also in the ages of 18–25. In other words, under this assumption, either no person is added or detracted from the group as it shifts to the next age bracket, or those added to the group are set-off against those who are detracted therefrom. The percentage at the top of the table pertain to a wide definition which therefore includes a rather heterogenic group, whose members are at least at risk, and at rather varying levels of risk. The lower part of the table includes various sub-groups which belong to the group of young adults at risk, at a high or 100% probability (by definition).

At this point, several considerations are offered regarding the congruence between populations. For example, if we assume that a large majority of young people facing extreme risk situations and treated by the Ministry of Welfare are NEET, congruence between Group I and Group D (or E) will near 100%, i.e. the small group is included in the large one.

To conclude, the size of the group of young adults at risk aged 18-25 in Israel probably ranges between 120,000-200,000 thousand young men and women, i.e. 12-20% of all young adults in this age group. A general estimation of the scope of the main groups included in this population is presented in Table 1 below.





Table 1

Size and ratio of young adults at risk in Israel (2016, or last available year)

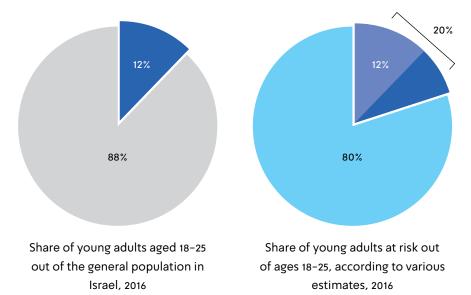
	Identification method	Age group ratio	Average size per single year (thousands)	Group size at ages 18-25 (thousands)	Source		
Assessments, estimations and indications regarding the size of the entire group							
А	Registered at the social services departments, ages 12–17 defined as at risk or having a defined destitution	17-18%	21-23	169-181	Ministry of Welfare: 2016 Social Services Review; Central Bureau of Statistics: Israel Statistics: 2017 Statistics Yearbook		
В	Young adults at risk, various groups – "Yated" estimation	20%	25	199	"Yated" Program: Operations Model (March 2018)		
С	Young adults at risk, various groups – "Working Together" estimation	12%	15	119	"Working Together" Initiative, 2013		
D	Gross NEET	18.6%	20	163	Kahan-Stravchinski, 2017		
E	NEET in Israel according to OECD figures	16.5%	18	145	Figures are reported by the Israeli authorities but the methodology and calculation methods are unique to the organization		
Size and ratio of prominent sub-groups within the young adults at risk group							
F	Young adults with less than 12 years of schooling	12.6%	16	126	"Yated" Program: Operations Model (March 2018)		
G	NEET young adults not searching for jobs	8%	10	70	Kahan-Stravchinski, 2017		



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Charts 7-8

The share of young adults in the general population, the share of young adults at risk out of the overall young adults' population



Therefore, there are three sub-groups, distinguished from one another by their size and the level of risk and distress by which they are characterized. The borders between these groups are not entirely rigid, and in addition some of the features of the larger group are also shared by the two smaller groups. Accordingly, the size of each group can be discussed in terms of a spectrum. All cases refer to young people aged 18–25.

The first group includes between several hundred and several thousand individuals who are in severe and extreme distress (sometimes referred to as: "the edge of the spectrum"). These young adults participated in or have been exposed to the use of hard drugs, delinquency, prostitution, violence, extreme behavioral problems or a history of mental health. Individuals in this group were in boarding schools of the Ministry of Welfare, including also rehabilitation and post-hospitalization boarding schools, and are currently treated by the Adolescents and Youth Services, the Youth Custodian Authority ("Hassut HaNo'ar") of the Ministry of Welfare and the probation service; and by NPOs such as "Elem".

The second group includes between several thousand and tens of thousands of young adults, facing an actual risk or struggling with a recurring or recent distress. This group is characterized by growing up outside of a family home or disconnecting from the family and community at a later age (LGBT youth,

or formerly religious youth), by relatively high rates of school dropout, and by attending boarding schools supervised by either the Ministry of Welfare or the Ministry of Education, or other out-of-home settings such as adoption or foster homes.

The third, larger group encompasses tens of thousands to over one hundred thousand young people, and it includes young adults who suffer from inferior starting conditions, lack of opportunities and deficiency in material and other resources. This group is characterized more by its peripheral location, a higher rate of new immigrants, Arabs and orthodox Jews.

The significance of the differences between the characteristics of the various groups is that they also differ in their relative distance from the general population; by the type and level of their needs; and particularly by what they need in order to avoid risk and develop an independent and successful life. The first group requires vast resources, intensive long-term therapy and close support by various legal, welfare and health bodies. In contrast, the support required by the second group can be mostly provided by one central body, in particular at the transition points from one framework or stage in life to another. The third group includes young adults whom would mostly need focused support in one or just a few fields, over a limited period of time, which if properly provided will pave the road to their relatively fast and full integration into society.



This first part of the guide was dedicated to a presentation of the phenomena and concepts at the background of the discussion on young adults at risk in Israel. The goal of this chapter was to facilitate the understanding of this domain, including several new developments alongside historical factors. Therefore, this chapter first presented the in-depth changes occurring in the lives of all young people in Israel, in general, with some reference to generalglobal processes as well as processes that are unique to Israel. Young people now constitute, in most developed countries, a unique group which the government, the private sector and the third sector treat separately from the group of adolescents but also from the adult population. This was followed by a brief presentation of the Israeli welfare system - including both governmental and civil channels – which is the primary sphere of action for the development of the field of young adults at risk. To conclude, a general description was presented, of the group of young adults at risk, together with estimates of its size and a proposal to divide this group into several major sub-groups. Having laid the general background, the second part of this guide will be dedicated to a more detailed and concrete description of the main challenges faced by young adults at risk in Israel.











Foreword

The aim of this part is to offer a more in-depth and detailed description of the world of young adults at risk in Israel, the dangers they face, the support offered to them, and in particular the responses that have been successfully shaped over the past decade, and further responses that are in initial stages.

The information brought forward in this part are based on a series of interviews with various entities and individuals who are active in this field: funders, non-profit organizations, government officials and researchers who have been active in the field for many years and are familiar with it from various angles. In addition, this part presents key findings from the research in this field.

As previously stated, the population defined as young adults at risk is made up of several subgroups that differ from one another in terms of the needs, abilities and challenges facing their members. Despite the difference between the subgroups, it is possible to identify several elements that amount to a broad common ground for all of the members of the group and recurring motifs in the unique stories. These motifs may appear with varying intensity and frequency in each one of the groups, yet they distinguish this group of young people from other young people.¹

1/ Thus, for example, the difference between those who live entirely without a family or who do not maintain any kind of contact with their family and those who grew up in a family that, under the circumstances, found it difficult to assist them materially. While the latter group consists of individuals who maintain normative, proper and continuous relationships with their families, derive support and warmth from them, valuable emotional and psychological support, while this is completely unavailable to the former group. Therefore, it is possible that the latter only or mainly needs material assistance and practical advice for a limited period, whereas the former need in addition, the most basic and profound support, in order to compensate for the fundamental deficiency in a preliminary close and benign relationship.



Over the years, repeated attempts have been made, for various purposes, to map the various sub groups and the problems and challenges they face. Since this mapping has already been done well by others, the description provided in this part is mainly aimed at general and common features characterizing the various groups of young adults at risk. It seeks to point out the recurring motifs and common denominators of these groups, which distinguish the population of young adults at risk, in comparison with their age group. At the same time, reference shall be made to more specific examples to demonstrate the uniqueness of the various groups.

It is important to reiterate that the group discussed in this guide, and specifically in this part, is the group of young adults at risk—as broadly addressed in part A. It is important to separate this group from the general population of young adults, whose issues have received heightened attention in recent years in Israel as in other developed countries. However, it is also important to separate it from the population of youth at risk. For many, in various professional areas and certainly also among the general public, this distinction is still not recognized enough. Although some of the population of youth at risk grows up to become included in the population of young adults at risk, and although some of the solutions proposed to improve the well-being of young adults



2/ See Section 1.5 of Part B of the guide.



at risk include the early start of a service or process (before the age of 18), it is important to highlight the difference between youth and young adults at risk. First and foremost, there is a difference in the needs and challenges of each group, although some needs and challenges are shared by both. In addition, there is a difference in terms of the institutes that support them and advance their interests. However, the most important and substantial difference is the ability and authority of the various institutes to care for youth or young adults.

It is also important to note that the focus of this part of the guide is on present reality, i.e., a description of the phenomena and trends, the problems and challenges. However, it also includes basic reference to what ought to be. In other words, alongside a general description of the solutions implemented today, additional ideas for expanding and improving such solutions are mentioned — as they emerge from literature and interviews based on which, the guide was written.

The third part of the guide, will provide a more detailed and concrete description of future and desirable solutions and activities, while referring to examples of various projects and NPOs.



All the right reasons

The common characteristics of most young adults at risk justify and highlight the need for support and effort on the part of the State, the civil society, and the various communities in order to support young people and secure their future.

First and foremost, circumstances justify supporting the biological family in exercising its responsibility towards its young members, or even substituting the family temporarily or continuously against the background of its non-existence or since it is incapable of maintaining a good and stable relationship with the children. Such justification is relevant in general, and it is especially significant when children and teens are concerned. However, and this is where the second part of the justification comes —

Most of the state's official institutes end their role in supporting at risk populations, in terms of authority and resources, at the age of 18. Therefore, in many cases, the positive processes and good results that these official institutes might have created with this population will not mature and come to fruition, if the response and treatment will not continue for several more years. In such a way, the inputs invested in the cultivation of teens in early years, and the potential created by virtue of such investment, may vanish (for a recent change in the government response in this area, see Part C, P. 85: 'Yated Program').

Another important appraisal is that between the young population and the adult population at risk, as this further justifies and highlights the need for early intervention. When it comes to young adults at risk, the chance of bringing about a positive change is higher, for four main reasons:

- 1. Young adults have not yet reached the main intersections of their lives, such as studies and acquiring skills, acquiring a profession and entering into the job market, establishing relationships and a family. Therefore, they are more likely to undergo personal processes of change, accumulation of knowledge, development of confidence and positive self-esteem, etc.
- 2. Young adults have a distinct advantage simply by being young: the personality at these ages, as well as cognitive and mental abilities, are still





more flexible and can be shaped and developed in various directions. The processes of self-searching and formation of identity, involving crucial decisions for the future, which take place at this age, provide further opportunity in this respect.

3. Even if compared to other young adults their age, young adults at risk have more constraints and challenges, compared to the adult population, young adults at risk still face fewer constraints, such as: raising many children, caring for older parents or other financial and personal commitments. This fact allows them relatively greater freedom and flexibility in shaping their lives.

4. In terms of effectiveness, this period of young adulthood is relatively short; investment during this short period can have a dramatic effect for decades ahead — unlike with the adult population in difficult or stressful situations which requires support from the relevant institutes, for a lengthy, possibly indefinite number of years.

Finally, it is worth restating and emphasizing: the very argument that investing in children today in order to reduce a negative phenomenon in the future (for example, poverty, delinquency) is not a new argument. What is special about the framework of thinking about young adults at risk is uniquely characterized by the fact that in many ways this is almost the last chance to deeply affect the course of a lifetime through a relatively focused and time-limited intervention.

At later ages, during adult life, an attempt to change and correct, support, and assist is often more complex, more difficult, and more expensive considering the increasing number of commitments and constraints created during those years.

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Family comes first

"Noam [a fictitious name] did not know his father, and his mother died of cancer when he was in elementary school. He had no extended family in Israel, or maybe none at all. He came to us from boarding school at the age of 17 and a half with two plastic bags in which he kept clothes and some personal belongings. And that is basically all that he had in the world".

Despite all of the changes that have occurred throughout the twentieth century in its structure, size and function, family has been and continues to be a basic characteristic of human existence. The family is essential for the Individual's proper and positive development — from birth, throughout childhood and adolescence until adulthood, but also later on. It is important during adult life too, for both material and social reasons. Family constitutes a significant part of the social ties that a person sustains, during all periods of life — or it is directly and indirectly responsible for their existence.

The necessity of the family is so profound and basic that for most human beings in most places and times, the mere fact of its existence, the dependence thereon, and the link thereto were almost taken for granted and most people cannot imagine their lives without it. It begins with the individual's relationship with his parents, or at least with a single parent; however, in the course of life, the place occupied by other family members gradually grows: siblings, then spouses, and finally children and other offspring. Sometimes, additional members of the extended family, uncles and aunts or grandparents, may take part in the raising of the baby, child, and adult. Their role varies among cultures, times and places, but especially depending on the circumstances and considering the availability of parents.

Since the importance of the family is so basic and fundamental, it is important to recall from where this importance derives. From the moment of birth, the family, and mainly the parents, are the ones that directly provide the individual with the most basic and material needs: food and shelter. Together with these, the family provides the mental and emotional base on which mental and emotional stability and even the mere humanity of the individual develops. From birth, people receive from their parents' warmth, contact, a sense of closeness, and these create within them the sense of safety and the foundations of existential security. The great necessity of these resources has been studied, analyzed and verified thoroughly in the





psychological, medical, sociological and educational research. Many studies have even emphasized how much the emotional and physical support given to babies and children already from the early months of their life, is crucial for the course of life.³

In the transition from infancy to childhood and adolescence, the parents' role expands into the area of education and cultivation of their children's' behavior. But at the same time, the child's mental well-being, and in fact also the foundations of his material existence, are still dependent first and foremost on them. Parents educate their children by way of example and by providing ones first and most significant role models. In addition, they can support the child's growth and development by providing feedback on behavior, setting boundaries, and more generally in building the child's moral worldview by exposing him/her to various systems of concepts and values: good and bad, permissible and forbidden, harmful and useful and so forth.

During the adolescent years, parents can also advise, or refer their child to someone who can advise them. At the very least, they can provide basic support and security for physical, psychological, and cognitive changes he or she are going through.

In the transition from adolescence to young adulthood, the role of the parents and what they can contribute to the individual, changes but remains very dramatic. During this period, the ability to give advice and the possibility of making acquaintances with others who can provide advice and assistance in getting to know the world, is even more crucial. But no less than that there is also the need for material support during the transition to adulthood, a period which includes a large number of events, such as entering higher education, the employment market, establishing spousal relationships and starting a family.

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During this period of young life, the importance of the family is highlighted in another aspect. As young adults apply, for the first time, what they have learned in childhood by way of example, feedback, or learning through imitation; this relates to models of relationships, models of parenting, financial management and coping with the challenges and problems of adulthood. In this context, models of financial conduct and planning, orientation in the labor market and the conduct vis-à-vis bureaucracy are expressed, as well as methods of coping with failures and disappointment, and processes of improvement and problem solving.

In addition to all of the above, during this period, the family is still essential also due to what it can continue to provide, where possible: comfort, warmth, encouragement and support.

For many young adults at risk, all of these important elements provided by the family are no more than a rumor. Many of them — and this is indeed an element many of them share — are characterized by having no family, no contact with their family, or no regular and ordinary contact therewith. In fact, for many of these young adults, the risk they face is closely related to the condition of the family and the nature of the relationship with them. For some, the condition of the family is the risk factor. For example, in the case of orphans, or in the case of victims of severe violence within the family, or in the event that one of their parents is in prison or in a medical institute for long periods of time.

For other young adults at risk, the family situation, the unstable relationship therewith, or the lack thereof, are a direct consequence of the risk or a risk characteristic, as in the case of juvenile delinquency or in the event of sexual abuse within the family, on the part of the young adult or against him. Another example is the state of young adults who leave the ultra-orthodox religious community, some of whom experience a cutting off and even a complete severance of relations with their families due to their leaving the community. Temporary or ongoing cutting off sometimes occurs in the case of LGBTQ young adults around the period of their coming out. In other cases, the same link between the risk and the family situation and the relationship with the family also indicates the nature and extent of the resources – economic, mental and emotional – provided or not provided to the young adult by his family in earlier periods of his life (for example models of maturity, spousal relationships and parenthood); and no less, the limited to non-existence of resources that the family is capable of providing him/ her during the period of young adulthood.





^{3/} Competing directions seem to lie, prima facie, in the breakthroughs of the genetic research. However, it still seems that the power of psycho-social theories is quite strong. See for example:

Maccoby, E. E. (2000). Parenting and its effects on children: On reading and misreading behavior genetics. *Annual review of psychology*, *51*(1), 1-27.

McAdams, T. A., Rijsdijk, F. V., Narusyte, J., Ganiban, J. M., Reiss, D., Spotts, E.,... & Eley, T. C. (2017). Associations between the parent–child relationship and adolescent self worth: a genetically informed study of twin parents and their adolescent children. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 58(1), 46-54.

"We tried to map the needs and areas that concern young adults at risk. I was not entirely surprised by the areas and needs that kept resurfacing, of which I was more or less aware, but I was surprised by the intensity. I did not imagine the intensity. People who grew up in very difficult families, in problematic relationships, told me that what they want most of all is the relationship with their parents. No matter what happened, and how bad or difficult it was, in the end, that's what people want... people want their mother".

Another significantly sizeable group within this population are young immigrants, specifically young adults who immigrated alone to Israel, in their 20's or teens. These young people, even if they maintain a positive and functional family relationship, are usually without close family in Israel to support them financially and emotionally. Initially they pay a considerable price for adjustment and orientation, but later on, even when they have been in Israel for several years, they take their first steps at entering adult life and the shrines of Israeliness (mainly the army) alone.

"There are many things that seem trivial to us, and when they do not exist in the lives of young adults, it is a harsh void. Take for example, the end of basic training or officer training ceremony in the army, when everyone's families arrive. No one comes for our young adults, and in our organizations, we try to fill that void. We are the ones who come to the ceremony. It's not the same as the family, but it's extremely meaningful".

Regardless of the link between the family and the risk factor, many young adults at risk have no assistance or support from their family during this period of the beginning of adult life. The family will almost always not be able to offer them financial support, and in many cases not even social and mental support.

One can say that two key elements — either one or both — are common to almost all of the groups belonging to the population of young adults at risk: a problematic or lack of family connection and unstable economic condition (to the point of existence in extreme poverty).

However, the economic situation in turn is largely related to the situation of the family, i.e. its ability or inability to provide economic support or assistance, even if only for a period of several months or a few years. It follows that the family's place and connection therewith emerge as the deciding factor with respect to the situation of many young adults at risk,

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regarding the characterization of the depth and complexity of the challenge facing them and regarding the resources they possess in order to overcome the challenge. This question acutely arises in the transitions in the lives of young adults.

"Even in ordinary families, what we call normative, a young person can have doubts and find it difficult to make decisions and so on. In these families too, things are not always smooth sailing between parents and children, but when there is money, even if not very much, things somehow work out in the end. When there is no money and also no family connection, it is much more complicated. That is when the problems begin".



It is customary to view the period of young adulthood as a "transitional period", but the reason for this is not only the fact that this period is a transition between adolescence and adult life, but also because it itself includes multiple transitions between situations and settings. The family and specifically the parents may, and usually do, play a crucial role in making these transitions as smooth and successful as possible. But what happens when there is no family in the picture? How are these transitions handled well?

In truth, in many cases these transitions are not handled well and they form real vulnerable points for young adults at risk.

Two transitions stand out as particularly sensitive for many young adults at risk: leaving boarding school and discharge from the military.

Leaving boarding school

In the case of boarding school students, leaving the boarding school is a key moment. Even for those who the period in the boarding school was beneficial, as it removed them from dramatic risk factors and significantly improved their well-being and functioning, they find themselves at this point, in a very sensitive situation. In some cases, they are unable to renew contact with their family. In other cases, renewing contact is done hesitantly and with great caution and even if the connection is renewed, it will usually not include economic support. For many boarding school graduates, gradual rehabilitation and re-nurturing of the family relations will be considered as an accomplishment and an important component in the shaping of independent life later on.

The situation of boarding school graduates in Israel around the transition period has been extensively studied in the past decade in the context of several qualitative and quantitative studies. It is worth noting several key insights from this research which are relevant to the discussion:

- Although the situation of young adults who are graduates of (welfare) boarding schools in Israel is not as bad as in other countries, they do fall behind other young adults in Israel in the fields of education and employment. They also have a higher rate of involvement in criminal activity.

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- When the expectations and future outlook of boarding school graduates were examined, it was found that young adults are relatively self-confident in areas such as health and inter-personal and romantic relationships, but are concerned with respect to areas of employment, education and housing.
- Several studies reiterated the fact that those among the boarding school graduates who maintain a certain relationship with their families are more successful economically, report a more stable life and a higher mental wellbeing. Those who were in contact with their parents (and especially with their mother) and with friends also had more positive expectations for the future.⁴

The vital importance of family, and therefore also of the possibility to renew and restore family connections, has begun receiving a wider expression in various activities and programs launched in recent years by NPOs, that operate within the field of young adults at risk (See part C, P. 98 – Fair chance for the children).

Part of the consequences of living in a boarding school without family support are unexpected for people who are not involved with youth and young adults at risk. For example, contrary to the belief that living in a boarding school without (regular) connection to the biological family may actually lead, due to the circumstances, to the development of exceptional independence among the teens, the situation is quite the opposite for many boarding school graduates. There are those who live in boarding school — even if it is one that was especially kind to them — who actually weakened and delayed their attaining independence.





^{4/} See for example:

Sulimani-Aidan, Y., Benbenishty, R., Dinisman, T., & Zeira, A. (2013). Care leavers in Israel: What contributes to better adjustment to life after care?. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 39(5), 704-718.

Sulimani-Aidan, Y., & Benbenishty, R. (2011). Future expectations of adolescents in residential care in Israel. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(7), 1134-1141.

Dinisman, T., Zeira, A., Sulimani-Aidan, Y., & Benbenishty, R. (2013). The subjective well-being of young adults aging out of care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35*(10), 1705-1711.

In other words, precisely because the boarding school took care of their daily life and needs in an organized manner, the graduates emerge lacking experience in adult and independent life, and they begin this experience later compared to other young people, and without sufficient examples, models and support. This weak point was identified by several NPOs, such as the "Lamerhav", which began to operate in 2001, and Yeladim — Fair Chance for Children who established in 2005 the Gesher La'Atzmaut (Bridge to independence) program (For details see Part C).

In addition, many agree that initial experience in employment during the period of the end of high school is particularly valuable since it provides a gradual entry into and experience under reasonable conditions in a major avenue of adult life. An example of interventions at these ages (teens) and in young ages, can be seen in the activity of the Dualis Fund which engages in structured integration of teens and young adults at risk in the employment world.

The period around discharge from military service (IDF)

Another significant point in time identified by researchers, NPO professionals, therapists and care givers as a sensitive period is the period of discharge from military service. Notably, this is *also* identified as a point of inherent opportunity.

The general assumption is that those young adults who completed their military service, as a group, are positioned relatively well compared to others who did not serve at all or who were unable to complete their service. This is because there is a high chance that during military service they underwent positive processes and developments, such as character building, acquiring friends from various places (outside of their immediate and often negative environments), entering wider and more varied social circles, acquiring general and specific skills (some with professional value in the job market) and exposure to other worlds of content and lifestyles – through coping with challenges and dealing with situations in which young people receive broad responsibility compared to other young people in the world (such as combat situations, commander/officer training and service and complicated logistical operations that carry tremendous responsibility and require the utmost care).

In addition, discharged soldiers are entitled to a series of benefits and special 'rights' that can provide a good financial and "organizational" platform

for the following years. This platform includes tools such as scholarships, programs and services, provided directly by the State, but also tools provided by foundations and NPOs that have established contacts with these young adults during the period of service (for example: lone soldiers) or will do so thereafter.

Even today, with all the changes Israel has undergone, it is customary to refer to the military service as the "entry ticket into Israeli society" due to all of these reasons, but also because society, and in particular employers, tend to place importance on completing one's service.

Beyond the general advantages that those serving in the army might enjoy, young adults from particularly difficult economic and social backgrounds who serve in the military, may benefit from belonging to several educational institutes that operate within the IDF, which are high in manpower inputs and professional knowledge. One example of this can be seen in the activities of "The Center for Advancement of Special Populations (Makam)". A study published in 2016, compared the situation of approximately 20,000 young adults (half of them men) who enlisted in the IDF as part of the Makam program, to a population with similar starting circumstances who did not serve in the IDF. The state of the first group was found to be better in terms of employment rate, income generated, the probability of establishing a family, and maintaining family stability.⁵ In addition, IDF graduates are known to the official systems and sometimes also to some of the NPOs, or at least these can be reached by both entities relatively easily.

However, alongside these advantages, the transition out of the IDF, as in the case of leaving boarding school, contains one particularly prominent weak point: the threat that the positive processes and development that the young adults might have gone through while in the IDF may be abruptly cut before they have ripened and before they have produced the full results.

This potential fault is seemingly common to the entire population of young adults at risk, but it is unique to the IDF graduates' group in that they face questions and crossroads of entering into adulthood in a delay (between two to four years) as compared to those who did not serve in the IDF.



^{5/} Fischman et al., 2016: The Center for Advancement of Special Populations (Makam) Integration into Military Service and Civilian Life Follow-Up Study of All Makam Recruits From 1993-2010.

For still other sub-groups in this population, the army is not even an option. For example, those young adults at risk from the Arab sector and the ultra-orthodox religious sector, and some of those who left the religious community at a later age or in a particularly difficult situation which reduces the chances of enlisting to the IDF. Against this background, there were those who identified the inherent potential in promoting civil service among young adults at risk and for that purpose exactly, which led to the establishment of the "Opportunity Fund". The "Opportunity Fund" works to promote civil service among young people with disabilities, young adults at risk as well as those from other disadvantaged population groups in Israel (See Part 3, P. 93: Opportunity Fund).

The last transition period that involves several challenges is the **transition** from a period of studies and/or vocational training (whether or not they are financially backed) to being employed. With respect to young adults who move through a relatively conventional route that includes army service and higher education or professional training, such point of time may be even more dramatic since it marks the end of the period of being in or assisted by the institutes and NPO's — along with the leap into the ocean of an independent and demanding adult life.

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Maintaining continuity as the key to success

For many young adults at risk, the aforementioned transition periods form weak points or fault lines along which it is easy to waver, but at the same time they are also periods that present an opportunity for a positive change later on, since during these times important decisions regarding the future are made. For those reasons, these are also the points of time during which the positive influence of good interventions can be the strongest and most effective.

The risk inherent to the transitional periods stems, to a large extent, from the sharp interruption of the social, educational or therapeutic institute and from the fact that for many young people this interruption is sudden and they are not properly prepared for it.

For those who complete a period at a boarding school or the period of military service, this is a transition from an organized and totally immersive institution, that operates according to well-known and organized arrangements to the unsupported chaos of independent life. For those who have not completed their stay in these institutes, the transitions may be even more difficult, as they might reach the gates of adult life with fewer and even poorer tools.

One of the keys to success lies therefore in creating continuity of support that enables smooth transitions between institutes and gives young adults at risk a sense of security and stability and minimizes feelings of detachment and loneliness. This is also the goal that various organizations and entities which are active in the field, strive to strengthen in various ways. This significant need was first identified by "Lamerhav" in 2001 and is now common practice among many NPO's in this field. The main aim of all of the entities attempting to create continuity is that upon the end of one phase (boarding school, military service, academic studies or other) the individual will know what the next stepping stone he can use or participate in is — this includes NPO support programs, housing assistance, mentoring etc.). In other words: to ensure that in as many cases as possible, each young adult at risk who is unable to resume a good relationship with his family, will have one clear setting that supports him. Also for those young adults at risk





who do maintain some kind of connection with their family, a continuous transition between support systems can have a dramatic impact.

The ultimate purpose of these activities and interventions is to create a sense of stability, security and continuity in life, and to reduce loneliness, uncertainty and feelings of helplessness. This continuity is achieved by reinforcing two dimensions: continuity in the response address (i.e. the organization/entity providing the support) and continuity in the responses and resources. The former is somewhat the key to the latter, but they are worth mentioning separately.

The initial goal is to ensure the existence of continuous support for the young adults at risk between settings and stations in life — through the existence of a permanent and stable response to address difficulties and problems. An "address" that can provide support, advice, and sometimes also guidance or referral to other advising and supporting entities. In practice, such "addresses" can be professional staff in various NPOs and organizations, but also volunteers who serve as mentors who provide support over time and at a varying degrees of intensity. The field of volunteers, tutors and mentors has grown and expanded in recent years and has been identified by some of the major organizations as having strong potential for creating positive change in the field (for more information re these types of interventions see C, P. 107 – Prominent challenges and growing trends).

The continuity in the response is also made up of continuity in solutions and resources. This type of continuity is intended to prevent "falls", which may result from a specific shortage or neglect of an area that requires attention or treatment. Ensuring this continuity may increase the individual's possibility to realize his/her potential — for example by elevating the burden of everyday needs on personal, educational and professional development while transitioning between settings.

The creation of continuity depends on two issues: funding and orientation. In the first case, the main problem is a specific or ongoing difficulty in financing a key need that is a condition for development, such as: acquiring higher education, funding psychological treatment). In the other case, the problem is to navigate the sea of possibilities, and the difficulty in identifying the most useful and relevant options, choosing from among them and realizing the choice; examples of this are: choosing a field of study or finding the right scholarship, that the individual has a good chance of being found eligible to receive it (this requires knowledge of the various options and the ability to choose between them).

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Further to those continuities whose purpose is to prevent falling and to create stability, and given that this continuity has been achieved fundamentally, continuity may also be associated with one's ability to "draw the picture of one's future". Such "drawing" may include the cultivation of aspirations, the formulation of goals and objectives, and the focus and industriousness to realize them — by the young adults at risk themselves or by the entities that take care of them and accompany them. The reason for this connection is dual:

(a) On a practical level, from the point of view of NPOs, funders and activists in the field, if they succeeded in bridging the abyss, reducing loneliness and uncertainty, there is no reason to stop at this point and there is reason to cultivate and develop aspirations towards a future that is positive and productive and work towards ways to achieve this.

(b) In principle, cultivating plans and aspirations for the future, both in the personal-mental-emotional contexts and in the practical, achievement-oriented, professional and educational contexts, allows for the establishment and consolidation of that same continuity, in that it motivates the young adults at risk themselves as well as those who accompany them toward the definition, promotion and realization of clearly defined goals.

The challenge that many have described as key to the continuity issue, beyond the practical, educational and functional processes, is the aspiration to bring about a change in the personality and the mental and emotional level of young adults at risk. Such a change means building (or rebuilding) a sense of ability, belief in one's personal strength and developing sturdiness and resilience, and the belief of the individuals in their abilities and strength. If such a change occurs, it can constitute an indication for the existence of a successful sequence, and in addition it can increase the possibility and ability to maintain good continuity.

Finally, it seems that the most important continuity relates to the perception of life as a whole including its various stops and challenges; and to the need that one person, or as few alternating people as possible, 'see' the young adult at risk throughout his/her life, at all the various stations and struggles which he/she goes through.

"In my opinion, the most significant and dramatic thing ultimately in that long-term support - which is indeed difficult measure - is the need for emotional and mental support and maintenance; coupled with gradual but consistent growth in these dimensions".





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From the experience of those involved in the field, three main keys to achieve good continuity for young adults at risk emerge:

- (1) Attaching great weight to professionalism and specialty areas, so that at each stage and at each intersection, young adults at risk will be able to receive the most relevant support and advice.
- (2) **Cooperation and communication** between the various organizations that support youth and young adults at risk along the way, and specifically the transfer of information, but also the preservation of the aspirations and goals of the individuals themselves.
- (3) **Early start**. In other words, preparing the young adults at risk for the transition to the next stage early enough during their time in the current setting.

The main challenges, solutions and needs of **young adults at risk**



ha challange

The challenge:

a supportive and protective residence upon turning 18

The solution:

apartments owned and sponsored by the State

Additional needs:

expansion of services in the apartments and solving specific cases such as periphery and distinct populations, as well as providing living stipends for those who are able and interested in living independently



Employment

The challenge:

guidance and advice upon entry into the job market

The solution:

counselling and work vis-à-vis employers and young adults at risk alike

Additional needs:

assistance in career development,
beyond casual/temporary
employment



Personal life and creating a 'future picture'

The challenge:

maintaining positive relationships and creating future aspirations

The solution:

long term counselling and mentoring

Additional needs:

supporting one's personal development, attention to mental health and creating positive role models



Higher education **4 &** vocational training

The challenge:

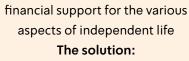
completing matriculation exams ("bagrut"), choosing a field and an academic institution, financing

The solution:

scholarships, mentoring and counselling

Additional needs:

diversification of professions chosen by young adults at risk



Financing

day-to-day life

The challenge:

living stipends or flexible scholarships

Additional needs:

defining clear needs and designating budgets



The main challenges and the required resources

But what exactly are the resources required in the case of young adults at risk? This question goes back to the main challenges described in detail earlier in this guide, and will be briefly mentioned below.

(1) **Housing**: for many years now, the housing issue has been on the agenda of people working with young adults at risk. The challenge begins with boarding school graduates who cannot return to the homes of their parents or other relatives upon graduation from school. Some schools offer graduates accommodation for several months following their last year of school, but usually no more than that. Boarding school graduates are then required to independently find and finance an alternative housing solution. For those serving in the IDF, usually "lone soldiers" status, this problem is postponed by a number of years. However, upon the completion of their service, and also during the interim period between the end of their schooling and the beginning of their service, they must find a roof for themselves. It is important to understand that independent housing requires these young adults at risk to independently finance all their basic needs, including food, clothing, transportation and so forth.

Over the course of the last several years, two important developments occurred in the housing for young adults at risk arena. The first development is the increase in resources allocated directly out of the government budget for the maintenance of apartments for this population. These apartments are designated for different groups of young adults at risk: graduates of boarding schools or foster homes, formerly religious youth and others. Such apartments are available for varying periods of time: some are provided on a short-term/ emergency basis until another, more comprehensive setting is found (for example, turbulent parting from the orthodox community, in response to domestic sexual abuse or severe violence and other such extreme scenarios); most of these apartments however, do provide a more long-term solution (for several years) throughout as well as after the military

6/ As aforesaid, individuals who join the military are relatively better off in terms of being part of a framework that is often tuned to handle their situation. Moreover, lone soldiers are cared for by a wide variety of associations which organize "host families" on weekends and holidays and so forth. Nevertheless, also in these cases, the issue of continuity is a challenge.

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service. (For more information on this model see Part C, P. 98 - Fair Chance for Children) Some of these apartments are still managed by the NPOs that managed or purchased them in the past, but the governmental entry into this field has resulted in significant positive change in terms of budget.

The second noteworthy development is the ripened recognition that these apartments can and should serve, where appropriate, as a platform to promote and provide additional support and services which are relevant to the population of young adults at risk. For example, when a counselor, guide or social worker is appointed for the apartment, and maintains ongoing contact with the residents, assists them problem solving and positive decision making, planning for the future etc.

This has now become common practice, but the various NPOs involved in this field are constantly seeking ways to expand and deepen the quality of the support and services provided to young adults at risk during their stay in these apartments. In particular they aim to adjust, diversify and fine-tune the apartments to the needs of various and diverse populations.⁷

Alongside the successes in the housing field, several issues are yet to be fully resolved. One such issue pertains to specific populations which cannot live in one of the existing apartments due to their specific characteristics. Another issue is apartments that 'opening' and maintaining involves risk, since they may fail to comply with the updated requirements of State tenders (e.g. in terms of occupancy throughout the year) or because their 'opening' is required in peripheral areas where the expected occupancy is low (for more information, see Part C, P. 107 – Prominent challenges and growing trends). This additional risk may deter NPO's and other providers from 'opening' them. Another issue that requires further attention is that of young adults at risk who are not able or not interested in living on one of these apartments, for various reasons, but are able to live independently if such funding was made available to them. A solution for this could be living stipends, or flexible direct financial support. An added advantage of this solution is that it would eliminate the lack shortage in government sponsored apartments.

7/ In the last two years, the government undertook the financing of dozens of apartments for youth, thus providing a fuller and wider response for this issue. Today, each one of the youth apartments which are operated under a tender of the Ministry of Labor and Welfare (the majority of apartments) is accompanies by a paid employee who counsels the young adults.





(2) Education and vocational training: attaining higher education, in the form of a diploma or degree, is a major goal for young adults at risk in order to secure their integration in the job market and in Israeli society.

In this context, several goals are relevant to a large portion of young adults at risk. The first such goal is the completion of high school education. This goal is a critical condition to moving forward for many young adults at risk who lack a matriculation certificate, since the latter is required in order to obtain even basic-level jobs. Formerly orthodox (primarily boys); and many of those who spent their adolescent years in extreme-circumstances (the Youth Custodian Authority, Juvenile Probation Service or therapeutic and rehabilitation institutions) are often among the individuals most in need of supplemental education. It should be noted that some young adults at risk are able to successfully obtain a complete matriculation certificate during their military service.

Another goal, which is shared by an even larger group in the population of young adults at risk, is the acquisition of academic or professional education. This goal involves several direct and indirect challenges. The direct challenges are identification of the suitable institution and program of study, gaining acceptance and lastly, the financing thereof. Choosing and area of studies is not trivial for any young person, but is even more complicated for young adults at risk since their margin for error is much smaller. Financing studies is obviously a challenge, which in most cases requires obtaining a scholarship.

The indirect challenges posed by higher education include: financing life beyond tuition — this issue bars some from beginning their studies or choosing a discipline that requires many hours of study. It has been noted by professionals who work with young adults at risk, that there is a tendency among program graduates to choose educational and therapeutic professions academic fields, and a resistance to programs in the fields of engineering and sciences, this is possibly based on their familiarity with such professions from their surroundings. In response to this trend, "Lamerhav" designed an initiative to expose its participants to a wide and varied spectrum of study areas and professions (see Part C, P. 88: Lamerhav).

(3) **Employment**. Education and vocational training are the first stage, and often a prerequisite condition, for finding a job — which is necessary both as a source of income and as a channel for self-realization and personal development.

Some of the challenges involved job searching are shared by all young people, such as the need to make decisions and choose a professional field,

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the hope to find a job within a short period of time and more generally, the need for orientation in the job market.

Alongside these general challenges, young adults at risk again face several unique challenges. For many of them, the primary disadvantage in job searching is their lack strong social networks that can be utilized consultation, insight and information as well as link to potential positions. The situation is even more complicated for those with multiple difficulties, who struggle with often basic job requirements such as: perseverance, punctuality, stress management and so forth.

"I believe that great emphasis should be placed on providing young adults at risk with the correct and most relevant guidance in respect to employment and education. The critical question here is whether the organization possesses relevant knowledge and skills in this area. At the end of the day, these guys are 22–23 years old. Is the organization assisted by employment counselors, screening tests or similar tools... or is it carried-out through the staff, or is the guidance provided merely at the level of telling the individual 'this is not right for you'".

(4) "Making ends meet" during key periods. Alongside issues pertaining to transitions and specific points in time, such as study completion and job searching, the main challenge of young adulthood in general is, the deficiency in financial resources — which, in fact, intensifies the aforementioned challenges.

This refers to the financing of life on the whole. This goal may seem trivial, but it is often less obtainable than the financing of matriculation, vocational training or academic studies, for which there are conventional, well-defined funding channels, primarily through scholarships. Many entities that are active in this field repeatedly raise this issue as an urgent need which is key to these young adults' success, and indicate that the difficulty to shape a response for this challenge goes hand in hand with the difficulty to define precise needs and earmark budgets or funding for them in a clear and simple manner. This problem is sometimes solved through living stipends that are offered as part of academic scholarships. In other cases, this may be titled "flexible budget" that is granted as part of a wider, more general program.

(5) **Health**. The need to take care of all aspects of daily life (e.g. housing, food, clothing, transportation) is accompanied by additional health related expenses, which can be non-recurring and unexpected (as a result of an accident or other misfortune) or regular and continuous (prescribed medications that are not covered, expensive treatments for conditions etc.).





The main examples in this context are dental and mental health expenses. NPO professionals and other service providers often stress that a dramatic need in the lives of young adults at risk is in these areas. This insight transpired very clearly from the mapping carried-out by the government in advance of the launch of the "Yated" program (see Part C, P. 85: What does the government do?). Dental health is an urgent need for two main reasons: first, since it requires a one-time and often very large expense; the second reason is the significant gap in this area between low-income families and the rest of the population — in particular with respect to those who grew up in the current generation, where dental treatments are not covered by the state. Therapy (conventional)⁸ is another major issue for this population, since many of the individuals who are defined as young adults at risk require such therapy during this period in their lives. This derives from either their background (the risk factors), or the present time (the need to adjust and

(6) **Leeway or margins for error**. One of the challenges shared by many young adults at risk is that of limited leeway.

reasonably function during transition periods, in view of the weaknesses

and deficiencies by which they are characterized).

This basic feature, which is a recurring motif of sorts, as it repeatedly reveals itself in the above-mentioned areas and contexts, derives primarily from financial shortage and is expressed in aspects pertaining to education and vocational training as well as employment, and in particular in cases of simultaneous progress on both routes. Simply put, young adults at risk can afford less changes, indecisiveness, and 'fresh starts' in this period in their lives. Trial an error may be an inherent part of the process, but for young adults who lack the support of family and other strong networks as well as facing issues associated with low income; the need to "get it right the first time" is more intense.

(7) **Social capital**. Another key motif that affects this population is that of social capital, which is identified as a weak point for young adults at risk, but can also serve as an opportunity for empowerment (one with relatively low costs and that can generate significant impact). Social capital is initially important in its emotional and mental contexts – as a source of support and stability; but it is also important in more practical and utilitarian aspects – clever use of social capital and social networks (virtual as well as real)

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can provide information, access to jobs and opportunities in general. Two prominent responses in this respect are the development of alumni and member networks by NPOs and strengthening of the mentoring field.

- (8) Orientation and utilization of rights. Many NPOs, as well as the planning and management team of the government's "Yated" program, recognize the importance of strengthening the orientation of young adults at risk in the sphere of relevant opportunities, including government programs, NPOs and other agencies. The underlying reason is that there are many resources available to young adults at risk, but to be able to benefit from them, they must first be aware of them, and then gain knowledge in respect to the conditions and ways of utilizing such resources
- (9) **The personal challenge**. For many young adults at risk the challenge of personal development, self-esteem, relationship building (spousal and otherwise) as well as other "soft" skills can be quite significant. This is often enhanced by the distress of difficult family relations, many transitions and other extenuating factors. The responses found to be most effective in dealing with this challenge are long-term and continuous support, counselling and mentorship from supportive and invested positive rolemodels.

^{8/} Therapy and services consumed by the general population, such as psycho-dynamic therapy, CBT and so forth. Professional discourse sometimes refers to such sessions as emotional therapy, to distinguish them from more intensive treatment, in particular psychiatric therapy.







Foreword

This final part of the guide provides a 'snapshot' of the field of young adults at risk in Israel vis-à-vis a description of the main NPOs, government entities and other projects currently operating; alongside a description and analysis of the methods by which the NPOs have chosen to shape responses and solutions for the challenges and issues that face this population. The intention is, first and foremost, to offer a thorough review, as much as

This part of the guide serves as a practical and functional review for those funders interested in the field of young adults at risk in Israel and as an invitation to learn for others who may be considering entering this field.

possible, of the range of interventions and responses created and offered by the various entities. This review is not a full scale mapping, and although all prominent organizations and entities working in this field are mentioned within, other may not be. In addition, although many of the NPOs discussed are active in various areas (such as education and employment or housing and education), each one is mentioned in some but not all contexts. This too, is not to be read as a rating, but rather as a constraint on the reader's attention span.

Over the past few years, various NPOs and organizations have concurrently identified similar problems (unrelated to one another) and shaped similar solutions. With time, the familiarity between the various NPOs grew, and as a result strategic thinking on the field as a whole, has improved. The government on its part, has made a leap in recent years, both in the amount of resources it allocates to young adults at risk and in the depth of planning and scope of cooperation with NPOs and civil society organizations. Despite the state's growing share in the field, this part of the guide naturally relates mainly to NPOs and civil society organizations.



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The prominent entities, NPOs and ventures in the field of youth at risk:

Department A for Education of Children and Adolescents at Risk

Youth Protection Authority



Administration for Rural and Boarding School Education and Youth Aliyah

Youth Rehabilitation Service



"JDC-Ashalim"

"Yated" program



The "Working Together" Initiative
Forum of Youth Villages and Boarding Schools



Multi sectoral initiatives

Amit LaDerech

"Beyachad" Foundation

Dualis

ELEM

Fair Chance for Children

Hillel - for formerly religious young adults

Lamerhav

Mentor for Life



National Forum of Organizations for Young Adults At-risk

"Nur" Initiative

Orr Shalom

ОТОТ

SOS Children's Villages in Israel

The Lone Soldier Center

The Opportunity Fund

Zoharim Youth Village – Alumni program



Prominent NPOs, Initiatives and Programs in the third sector (in alphabetical order)



What does the Government do?

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Over the years, and especially in recent years, the Israeli government has operated several units and entities that deal with the field of young people and young adults at risk in particular. The main entities belong to the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services. There are also several units that deal with teens but also provide services to individuals who are above 18 years of age (normally up to the age of 19), usually as a continuation of the treatment provided to those individuals in their teens. These units include, among others, the Youth Protection Authority and the Youth Rehabilitation Service. The main entity of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, that deals with young adults at risk, is the Adolescents and Youth Services. In its early years of activity, the service dealt with populations at the edge of the risk continuum, but since then, the service's areas of responsibility and activity have expanded and diversified. In this context, the service is in close and daily contact with a large number of NPOs — for policy and activity purposes (for the portfolio of programs coordinated by the service, click here — on-line only).

In October 2016, the Government of Israel adopted Resolution Number 2014 for the establishment of the Yated (which means stake in Hebrew) program, the national program for young adults at-risk. The program, which constitutes a historic breakthrough in the area of treatment of young adults at risk in Israel, was launched a year later. The exceptionality and strength of the program are evident in several characteristics. First and foremost, 100 million NIS were allocated for the operation of the program (notably, theses were added to the budget base), a very significant budget in the world of welfare services. Second, the program is led by the Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with JDC Ashalim, but it is an inter-ministerial program in which there are no less than 11 governmental ministries and entities involved. Third, the program is also a cross-sectoral program that includes cooperation between the government and the civil society entities including NPOs and funders, as well as the academic world (a partnership that began with the shaping of the program and continued with civil society representatives receiving significant representation in the various committees that comprise the program). Fourth, the program has research support, and reflects a current approach that relies on research, theoretical and empirical knowledge, and dedication of considerable resources to measurement and evaluation purposes.





The program has a website which includes extensive relevant and detailed professional information, including references to <u>professional literature</u> as well as the <u>program's documents</u>, which appear at a very high level of detail and transparency. Four main areas of life were defined as the focus of the program's activities: (a) The area of education, employment and skills; (b) Physical subsistence, health and safety; (c) Emotional health and wellbeing; (d) Familial and social affiliation.

To some extent or another, the various NPOs operate around these four areas. In addition, their very definition in the program enhanced the discourse in the field around common fundamental goals.

The approach and method of operation of the "Yated" program have dramatic implications for the philanthropic sector and for the NPOs that operate in the field of young adults at risk. First and foremost, it indicates that the government views philanthropy and NPOs as key partners in the various moves for advancing young adults at risk. Furthermore, it suggests that the government seeks to learn from the experience of the various foundations and entities, to take into consideration their preferred approaches and methods of action, and to share the very design of the policy with them. In addition, the fact that the program established a tighter connection between governmental entities, and concurrently a stronger connection between the government and the NPOs, means that the NPOs themselves have an additional platform to strengthen the cooperation and planning among themselves and no less important, an additional, broader and more organized access than in the past, to various governmental entities – both in terms of knowledge and practical matters.

"The concept behind the cooperation in the framework of 'Yated' is that the State alone will not make the change. It can be only done by combining forces. The idea that underlies the work concept of the program is 'collective impact'. We wanted to look from the young person's eyes and understand what he needs. It is less important to him who operates and who exactly will be the one to assist him. The service and right are what is important to him. What characterizes young adults at risk, unlike others, is that until now, there was no single function in charge that brings together the issue of 'young people'. Almost all government ministries are somehow relevant to young people... Among teens for example, it is mainly Education and Welfare. With young adults, it is almost all of them... Everyone sat on the "Yated" Committee and agreed on the expected outcomes of intervention with young adults at risk... they agreed on the point of departure and the destination, and then various processes and interventions are possible... No uniform technique is sought."

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"Department A for Education of Children and Youth at risk" and "The Administration for Rural and Boarding School Education and Youth Aliyah", both part of the Ministry of Education, are among the other entities operating in the field or relevant on the part of the government or in the field between the government and NPOs. Alongside them there is the Forum of Youth Villages and Boarding Schools, which has representatives from all sectors and various professional specialties, and they work together to advance the existing 200 or so boarding schools and youth villages in Israel.

Another major entity that works in the field is <u>IDC-Ashalim</u>, which operates through cooperation between the JDC organization, the Government of Israel and philanthropic partners. Ashalim is a key partner in the shaping, management and evaluation of the Yated program. The organization has also been and still is involved, since 1998, in the development of 250 various programs designated for children, teens and young adults at risk. Ashalim is deeply acquainted with the various governmental entities, NPOs and foundations in Israel, but also with international organizations. As such, it plays a pivotal role in the strategic development, based on current knowledge, of the field of young adults at risk in Israel.



Prominent Initiatives, NPOs and Projects in the Third Sector

Lamerhav

<u>Lamerhav</u>, which means "moving towards the horizon" in Hebrew, was established in 2001 and is among the pioneer entities in the field of young adults at risk in Israel. The NPO's activity focuses on young people without family support and it is based on long-term customized support, emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive social network and integrating young people therein — especially a network of the young adults at risk themselves.

The NPO's activity is based on the assumption that young people without family support lack positive role models of home, spousal relationship, commitment and problem solving, and therefore require the support of someone who will see them as individuals and support them over a significant period of time. Someone who will support them in their deliberations and decision making around their entry into adulthood, and who will also have expectation of them and help them to develop expectations of themselves over and above what they allow themselves. Moreover, someone who will expect of them (and for them to expect of themselves) to succeed and thrive, but also to become people who assume commitment and responsibility visàvis the society in which they live.

Lamerhav emphasizes two main components: *long term mediation and holistic support over the continuum of stages*. Mediation, i.e., assistance in orientation and activity vis-a-vis institutions and systems, such as the IDF, economic and educational institutions, foundations and scholarships.

The long-term support is achieved by virtue of the fact that the NPO's activity is aimed at young adults between the ages of 17 and 25, providing support over the full eight years. The organization meets participants at the end of high school, but also takes in young adults at later stages. The support provided by the organization includes three stages: the end of high school until enlisting into the IDF or national service (Stage A); the service period (Stage B); and the period between the service and the stage of "going out into the world" (Stage C) around the age of 25–26. During the various stages,

1/ 100% of the Lamerhav participants complete their IDF or national service.



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the organization works to advance and support personal development and to provide tools for young adults in various areas of life — based on formulating a personally tailored program for each participant. In particular, as part of the third stage, a long term, future-oriented program is formulated for each one of the young adults at risk, that includes practical and concrete steps for personal, educational and professional development, including completion of matriculation exams, vocational training, obtaining scholarships, finding a professional direction, etc. — alongside the continued emphasis on the importance of internal development: building resilience, strengthening sense of capability and self-confidence, and marking goals and dreams. In addition, Lamerhav also provides financial support to its participants when needed.

The NPO's activity focuses around three "Lamerhav Homes": in Be'er Sheva, Hod Hasharon and Afula, in which most of the activities and meetings take place (serving 600 young adults at risk at any given moment). Each program participant is assisted by a personal counselor (a full-time professional) with whom he meets once a week or once every two weeks and who is available for them seven days a week. Each participant also belongs to a group that meets on a weekly basis (monthly, in the case of those serving in the IDF), conducted by counselors. The groups are composed and operate according to age, program stage or a specific subject matter; such as Grade 12 group, financial planning, relationships and break-ups, theatre and many other topics from the world of young adults at risk.

Joining Lamerhav requires a recruitment and referral process. The identification and screening process for joining Lamerhav usually starts during 11th grade and acceptance to the program is from grade 12 and beyond. The demand on the part of young adults at risk to participate in the NPO's programs now exceeds its ability to accept them all. Referral to the program is also made on the basis of friend and family — program participants or graduates are able to refer potential participants.

Lamerhav's principle approach is based on the following: fitting a 'tailored suit' for each participant – 'seeing' and addressing each individual as they are; the 'strengths principle' – based on the strengths and merits each participant brings with them, and growing and nurturing these strengths; and lastly 'opening a window for dreaming' – by allowing and encouraging participants to dare to dream and aspire to great things, in a way that is not different from their peers, and supporting them in fulfilling such dreams and aspirations. Moreover, there is the intention and expectation that participants should and can become leading individuals with the ability to assume and exercise responsibility for the society in which they live.



The organization also strives to influence the shaping of the field of young adults at risk as a whole and to advance the field organizationally and strategically, by expanding and deepening the cooperation between the various NPOs and between them and the government. In recent years, Lamerhav has been involved in the processes of spreading knowledge and developing wider solutions for young adults at risk and young people without family support in Israel. Among these are the establishment of the National Forum of Organizations for Young Adults At-risk and leading the "Working Together" Initiative (for more information see below, P. 102), which aims to strengthen quality employment among young people in the periphery; and in entering the emerging and evolving areas in the field such as: financial conduct, alumni organizations, developing the area of mentors. Lamerhav is also part of the "Yated" committee.

"Part of the idea is also to teach them to dream, because those who come to us do not know how to dream or are afraid to dream... it is important for us to first of all lay all of the possibilities before them... We make sure to introduce them to the world of higher education and universities: where they can study, what support is offered, what scholarships are available, etc. We are careful not to point them in a specific direction, and try to help our participants think about the whole package: where they will live, study, work...".

Over the years Lamerhav has been joined by many philanthropic partners, who have enabled the recent establishment of an additional course of action which focuses on exposing young adults at risk to a broader range of career choices. The catalyst for this move is the fact that, although the rate of academic studies among Lamerhav graduates is quite high (approximately 80%²), a very high percentage among the students choose to study in less economically rewarding fields.³ By introducing lectures and content around a broader range of study paths and career options, prior to them choosing their area of study and by awarding specific scholarships in these fields, participants have the opportunity to choose not only vocational training and social–work or education studies, but also engineering, medicine, computer science and such.

^{2/} Although only about half of those who come to the NPO hold a matriculation certificate.
3/ Some attribute the choice in these fields of study to the fact that the role models with whom the young people meet within the NPO come from the world of education and social work.



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Hillel – The right to choose (for formerly religious young adults)

<u>Hillel</u> provides a response for young adults from the ultra-orthodox sector who choose to live a secular life ("Formerly religious persons").

In the case of formerly religious persons, there are several inherent challenges, which cause them to be included, even if temporarily, in the category of young adults at risk. These are primarily:

- (a) Difficulties in orientation in the general Israeli society, including unfamiliarity with accepted social and relationships codes, lack of relevant education, and employment skills.
- (b) Termination of the relationship with their families; this phenomenon is true for some of the formerly religious persons, but certainly not for all of them: some of them experience complete severance from their family, some experience a temporary turbulent period in their relations with the family and others continue to maintain regular contact and even live with their families.
- (c) Practical difficulties arising from the previously mentioned difficulties: i.e., lack of financial support against the background of severance from the family and the need to close significant academic and professional gaps.

For many of the young adults who leave the ultra-orthodox sector, the initial period is especially turbulent, and later on, there is a gradual process of adaptation and creation of independent and responsible lives.

Hillel operates several transitional apartments, which allow a stay of between six months and one year; each one includes approximately six young adults at risk. An additional apartment operates as an emergency shelter, providing housing and support for shorter periods of time for young adults at risk whose departure from their families and communities was particularly dramatic (this apartment can take up to 12 individuals at a time). Both types of apartments provide support and guidance by Hillel employees. In addition, Hillel operates three branches, in which social activities and events (such as Shabbat meals) are held for the Hillel community, thus building significant ties between individuals who are at different phases of their journey and utilizing the strength of the peer network.

Hillel also distributes some 200 scholarships annually, totaling around 2 million NIS. These scholarships are granted according to a mechanism that



takes into account the scope and field of studies. The organization also assists in applying and obtaining of other scholarships that are relevant to this population (from external sources).

Hillel also provides its target audience with personal support both through the NPO's employees and through a network of mentors and volunteers — with varying intensity and frequency — who provide support in adjusting to and getting familiar with the general Israeli society. With the help of volunteers and professionals, Hillel provides support in a variety of fields, including: financial and legal advice, academic guidance (supplementary studies and higher education), tutoring and occupational guidance. In order to provide an emotional and mental response, the NPO provides financial support for psychological treatments, and participants are required to pay only a nominal amount.

In recent years, the Hillel's activities have grown significantly, both in terms of the scope and variety of the responses it offers and the scope of the population it serves.

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The Opportunity Fund

Military and civil service are of great importance to young people in Israel. As previously stated, they provide relevant and important experiences in the context of personal and professional development as well as access to diverse social networks. Conversely, a significant number of young adults in Israel do not serve in military or civil service at all. Against this background, several foundations and NPOs joined together to establish the Opportunity Fund, with a goal to promote civil service in Israel, especially among young people with disabilities and among young adults at risk.

Alongside the desire that these young adults be able to enjoy the various benefits and advantages inherent to civil service, is the belief that one of the keys to personal development and social integration of young adults at risk lies in giving them the opportunity and practical possibility to contribute to individuals and other groups in society and to be partners in, and responsible for, promoting their welfare. Thus connection of the possibility of caring for and advancing others and the empowering sense of capability and efficacy, creates value for the individual over longer periods of time.

<u>The opportunity fund</u> works in cooperation with various service NPOs, including NPOs active in the Druze and Arab societies. It also cooperates with the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services and with the National Insurance Institute of Israel.





Alongside NPOs and initiatives established specifically to shape solutions, promote and cultivate the young adults at risk population, there are several NPOs whose traditional target population include children and youth at risk, but which have decided, at a certain point in time, to expand their work to the group of young adults, out of a sense of responsibility and commitment to their alumni or having recognized that the work does not end at the age of 18.

NPOs that operate from childhood and adolescents and continue to work also with young adults at risk have the ability to look long term and start developing solutions relevant to the young adults already at early ages. Conversely, NPOs focused solely on young adults at risk develop a unique specialty and are not in a dilemma regarding the allotment of their resources between the various age groups.

Zoharim Youth Village – Alumni program

The <u>Zoharim youth village</u> alumni program is a prominent example of a case where a setting that was established for young adults at risk was built on the basis and as a continuation of an existing platform that treats at risk youth.

The Zoharim youth village was established in 2012 and is a home for disconnected youth from the ultra-orthodox sector. The village houses approximately 100 boys between the ages of 14 and 18, and the programs implemented therein have achieved impressive success in returning to school, matriculation eligibility and IDF enlistment. Several years after the establishment of the village, it was decided to establish the alumni program, which allows young adults at risk who have completed their studies in the village but are still disconnected from their families, to continue living in the youth village after the age of 18. The continuation program allows residency and financial support both for alumni who integrate into work, as well as for those who return to the village on weekends during the pre-military preparatory program and military service.

The program highlights several principles, of which two prominent principles of action are noteworthy. The first principle is **to create continuity from an early stage**, along with a complementary cognitive process: students in the village already know at the age of 13–14 that if need be, they will have an address to return to. In this context, emphasis is placed on the smooth and natural transition of the pupils around the age of 18, from the tutors in the youth village to the Alumni coordinator. The second principle is **building** a **multi-age community based social network**. This principle is realized

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through alumni days and alumni Shabbats, in which a meeting is held between the minor pupils in the village and the alumni.

The alumni award commendations to students who have invested significant efforts in their activities in the village, share stories about themselves and serve as positive role models. These meetings also enable the alumni themselves to maintain and strengthen the bond between themselves.

ELEM

ELEM was established in 1981 and is one of the longest-standing NPOs in Israel in caring for youth at risk. The NPO specializes in extreme conditions among teenagers who are at great risk and in distress, including those involved in prostitution, homelessness and severe drug abuse. Although ELEM began its work with teens, the expansion to young adults at risk was a natural development, especially considering the fact that a large part of the population with whom the organizations works are not in official institutes and are not known to the social services.

The practice that distinguishes ELEM in this context is the identification of young adults at serious risk, specifically those who are not known to social services. The organization carries out proactive outreach activities in order to identify these young adults at risk in relevant social situations (for example: at festivals or on the streets, in the case of homeless people).

ELEM, like other NPOs that care for and support young adults at risk, makes use of housing as a platform for more in-depth support and treatment (some of the housing solutions are provided by various NPOs), but among ELEM's target audience, more so than with other NPOs, there is special meaning to housing in an emergency framework, which aims to provide an immediate response for young adults at risk in extreme situations such as leaving the circle of prostitution, sexual abuse, or victims of severe violence.

It transpires, from the organizations experience in treating young adults at risk, that there are several unique groups that both the official systems and the NPOs' have difficulty in locating, and even find it difficult to create a suitable response for them after locating them, and therefore they may fall through the cracks. These populations form a special challenge for the social services community.

Noteworthy in this context is the population recognized under the mental rehabilitation basket (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health) which is also characterized by risk, for example, against a background of



delinquency. This population is not a typical target population in terms of the Ministry of Health due to the risk characteristics but conversely, the basket of social services is insufficient due to the need for significant mental care and support.

Another population identified by ELEM as having the potential to fall through the cracks is the population of young mothers aged 17–25, mostly single parents. The fact that in these cases a baby or small child is involved, directs the official systems — understandably — to focus on the best interests of the child (for example, it is customary for such cases to be handled by a family social worker rather than a youth social worker). These young women have almost no solution that combines shelter and support and this reality may push them towards a junction leading in two bad directions: living with a violent partner as a necessity or giving up their child for adoption.

ELEM also recognized that the flexible basket of responses given to the social workers of the Yated program is of great value in coping with a wide range of needs and challenges of young adults at risk, that are difficult to anticipate and define in advance.

The major programs initiated by ELEM over the years for young adults at risk include the "From Protection to Independence", that was operated by the NPO with the full funding from the Ministry of Welfare. The program is designed to provide support and assistance to "youth protection" (hasut ha'noar) alumni who, upon completion of their stay in the out-of-home setting, simultaneously face several significant challenges in the area of housing (finding a home), employment (finding and keeping a job) and integration in civil or military service (acceptance into and completion of the service), while dealing with mental and emotional challenges (receiving emotional support in coping with loneliness, family and social difficulties).

The program's employees personally meet with the young adults at risk on a regular basis and help them integrate into society "the day after" leaving the official institutes. The program is based on adjusting the support to the unique needs of the individual, and its uniqueness is that it begins already at the time of stay in the institute (approximately six months before the end of the stay) and goes on continuously regardless of the place of residence of the young person or his belonging to other programs at the same time. Therefore, even if the individual changes his place of residence or ceases, for example, volunteering in national service, the individual support on the part of the NPO continues. These principles — and the flexibility they lend the program— are valuable considering the fact that in this life period, mobility between regions and settings, is quite high.

An evaluation study⁴ conducted on the activities of the program in 2011-2013 and published in 2014, revealed that it had a positive contribution to integration in military and civic service, as well as integration in employment, and that the young people who took part in the program were highly satisfied with the support and service they were provided with. Since then, the program has developed and expanded and currently serves between 200 and 300 young adults at risk.

Orr Shalom for Children and Youth at risk

Orr Shalom cares for over 1,300 children, adolescents and young people from birth to the age of 27 (approximately one-sixth of people who are in out-of-home arrangements in Israel). The organization operates a variety of programs and settings in a family model, which provide a warm home and comprehensive support that provides a solution for the physical and emotional needs of children and young adults. Among the main settings for caring for children who are out-of-home, Orr Shalom operates the foster care service in the central district, which is responsible for locating, training and supporting foster families as well as 21 family homes⁵ nationwide.

Over the years, Orr Shalom has also identified the need to help young adults cope with life after leaving the organization's therapeutic "haven". Most alumni of the out-of-home settings cannot return to their homes, and those who do, often find themselves in a dysfunctional family that cannot support them. In order to preserve the significant emotional and academic achievements they have achieved in the various settings and to help them transition to independence in the best possible way, in 2013 Orr Shalom established, the alumni program Graduates for Life. This program is a multi-dimensional and multi-system program for cultivating, strengthening and empowering youth and adults in Orr Shalom and its goal is to help them integrate into society after leaving the therapeutic settings. The program includes, among other things, training the parents of the family homes, foster parents and the rest of the staff towards the transition to the period of young adulthood, in order to enable the preservation and nurturing of a supportive relationship also in the future.



^{4/} Levy, D.; Kahan-Strawczynski, P. (2014): "From Protection to Independence", supporting graduates of the Youth Protection Authority Homes Evaluation study. Jerusalem: Brookdale Institute and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services.

^{5/} Approx. 230 children aged 8 to 18 grow up in Orr Shalom's 21 family homes. The family homes are a substitute for large boarding schools and are managed according to a family model within the community. Part of the therapeutic rationale in the family homes is to maintain and nurture the relationship with the biological family.

The Graduates for Life program supports approximately 100 adolescents and approximately 300 young adults at risk, through three main stages. In the first stage, Looking to the Horizon, adolescents aged 16-18 are exposed through various seminars to content associated with acquiring life skills, building a picture of the future and preparing for military or civic service. In the second stage, which is designed for young people who are about to leave the settings and in the first period thereafter, the program coordinators provide intensive support to enable them to carry out significant military or civic service, exhaust their rights vis-à-vis the various authorities, and find suitable housing for themselves – whether as part of the 10 apartments "Orr Shalom" operates (for approximately 60 young adults) or otherwise. In the third stage, upon completion of their service, the program coordinators continue to work with participants while focusing on three areas ("Circles"): the interpersonal circle (social group, community, relationship building etc.), the occupational circle (guidance for studies, employment and career), and the **health circle** (physical and emotional).

The program also provides financial aid by way of subsistence and tuition scholarships, funding for emotional or other treatments, support for significant life events and in times of crisis, and funding for acquiring basic skills such as a driver's license. For most services, participants are required to participate in the funding, a move that creates commitment to the process.

Highlights in the 'Alumni for Life' framework of support are based on the existence of a long-term, customizes support by a professional who specializes in the field, geographically adapted and based on reciprocity and voluntary (i.e. dependent on the young person's wishes and consent). The counselors are professionals who come from a background of social work and the frequency of meetings may range from once a week to once every two months and varies from one young adult to another — between periods and as needed. In addition to the professionals active in this field, there are also volunteers (mentors) who take part, which increases the frequency of support and the amount of young people who are awarded with support.

Yeladim - Fair Chance for Children

<u>Yeladim - Fair Chance for Children</u> was established in 1986 and specializes in working with children and teens aged 8–18, who are in boarding schools and foster families, and with young adults at risk, with most of whom the NPO created contact during childhood or adolescence.

Many of the children, teens and young adults at risk who are cared for by the NPO lack family support, are orphans, or come from families that are struggling with many difficulties and are unable to support them temporarily or continuously. The organizations activities are intended to assist the pupils of the boarding schools and their alumni, and to enable them to develop into self-assured independent adults.

The organization is active in many of the boarding schools under the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare, and also operates a personal guardianship program (of person and property) and the program "Host Families", in which hundreds of Israeli families' host children and teens who stay at the boarding school, on holidays and Shabbats, for several years. The program is intended primarily for children and teens at boarding school ages but it enables and indeed creates a long-term connection between the host families and their 'guests', which tend to continue beyond the scope of the program.

In 2005, the organization established the 'Bridge to Independence' program, which is the flagship program supporting young adults who are Fair Chance for Children alumni. This program, as one of the leading programs in the field, is a holistic program that provides solutions to young adults at risk in the field of housing as well as other areas, including close support by the employees of the NPO, emotional response (including subsidized psychological treatment), support in exercising rights and counseling and guidance in the fields of higher education and employment. The various services and responses are provided to approximately 150 young adults at risk who live in 25 apartments run and owned by the organization. In addition, the organization provides these services to an additional 150 young adults at risk who do not live in the NPO's apartments.

The organization was a pioneer in the field of housing for young adults at risk and over the years developed the model and operation of the young people's apartments that were later adopted by several other NPOs and even recognized by the State, which decided to fund dozens of apartments for young adults at risk which are operated by various NPOs, chiefly by Fair Chance for Children. In addition, the organization's activities are supported by academic measurement and evaluation and in this respect too, the NPO has many years of experience.

One of the goals set by the organization in recent years, is the attempt to gradually and carefully rehabilitate family relations – where possible. This process takes place during the period of stay at the boarding school through the NPO's support, mentoring and guidance (supported by specialized training provided to the boarding school staff), but it also continues in the context of the organizations activities with young adults at risk.



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Fair Chance for Children also grants approximately 110 scholarships a year for academic studies for bachelor and master degrees, completion of matriculation certificate, preparatory programs, psychometric exams and other professional certificates. The organization also works to make other external scholarships accessible to its participants. In 2017, this activity led to access to scholarships in the amount of nearly 1 million NIS. The field of subsistence scholarships has also recently been developed in the NPO.

The organization's 'Friends of' also works to help strengthen young adults at risk in the area of employment and in exploiting social networks to exhaust employment opportunities. In recent years, the organization began operating the "Mentors" program, which is based on matching participants with an adult volunteer (aged 40 and above) and on creating a personal and long-term relationship that can contribute to the young person mentally and emotionally, but also in practical terms.

Dualis

<u>Dualis</u> was established in 2008. The organization specializes in the integration of teens and young adults at risk in employment and is one of the most experienced entities in Israel in this field. The uniqueness of the Dualis model lies in the fact that it directly employs the young people through businesses owned by the organization, in the restaurant, retail and cosmetic industries.

The organization's model is structured as follows: Following two weeks of practical experience, there is a three-month period of paid initial training. In this period, the treatment of the young adults at risk (participants) is particularly accepting and tolerant, based on the assumption that many of them are adapting to the basic conditions of regular work — such as arriving on time, maintaining order and organization — likely for the first time. During the next stage, further responsibilities and duties are gradually assigned to the participants, until they become fully trained and function as regular employees. After a period of a year or sometimes slightly longer, the program graduates set out on an independent path, and the NPO supports them in finding a regular place of work, and in transition to civic or military service or further studies.

Program participants are employed on average on a half-time basis, and between three and four additional weekly hours are devoted to a therapeutic process led by social workers, who are also responsible for setting personal goals for participants, identifying difficulties and defining the areas in which the employee is required to improve (working in a group, making contact, persistence at work, not being late, etc.). The professional and personal

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process are intertwined, and within a period of less than one year, the young adults at risk integrate as regular employees who demonstrate responsibility and independence.

It is noted that the main employees of the NPO are the professional employees themselves — cooks, chefs, sellers and managers (who undergo significant training and support in order to adapt themselves properly to the stages of the process). Thus, the young adults at risk who enter the program meet primarily with professionals, who are either older than them or of similar age, whom they regard as an authority and later on as colleagues. Although they also meet with therapists and social workers as part of the process, this is only the complementary part of the process. Dualis staff members believe that this fact is a powerful advantage, as the participants do not feel that they are in a therapeutic setting designed for young adults at risk. This mode of action also enhances the feeling that the activity is "for real", and that the success of the business depends on the effort, work and cooperation of the participants themselves. Against this background, the young adults at risk tend to develop and demonstrate more responsibility and seriousness.

The main official entity that refers young adults to Dualis is the welfare offices, but also various NPOs that work with young people do so. The fact that all of the young adults at risk who come to Dualis are known to the social services or to a prominent NPO which is active in the field is also related to the fact that these young people were supported and underwent a certain therapeutic or emotional process, they are aware of their situation and want to find a way to promote themselves and have the "motivation for a change". Dualis considers this characteristic as a main condition for acceptance into the program.

"We feel that our model is successful in terms of treatment, and it has strong results. Therefore, there is demand for it —on the part of businesses, the young adults at risk and on the part of welfare factors... The emphasis is on OJT (on the job training)... and when analyzing why this works for us, it seems that this is because the young adults at risk do not feel that they have come to a workshop or therapeutic process, but to the real thing. To a process where they learn, on the go, something dynamic that interests them. A place where you know that you will be given a second and third chance, and another opportunity to correct, but will also make demands on you and set limits for you, and give you the tools for success".





The 'Working Together' Initiative

The <u>Working Together</u> initiative is a joint project of the Government of Israel and seven philanthropic foundations whose goal is to integrate young people in the periphery into quality employment. The initiative is currently operating a three-year pilot and includes practical objectives such as encouraging training and placement in employment alongside broader goals such as developing tools, creating expertise in the field and shaping best practices.

The initiative is a product of the **tri-sectoral round table** that operated as part of the Prime Minister's Office and dealt with the world of young adults at risk from various angles. The employment team, led by philanthropic partners and representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, formulated the model and the Memorandum of Understanding that underlie the initiative.

The starting point in creating the initiative is that there are many entities that operate in the area of employment, and concurrently many entities operate in the area of young adults and young adults at risk in particular. Against this background, the leaders of the initiative saw that there was reason and a need for creating and strengthening the connections between the organizations in order to facilitate the integration of young adults at risk in the world of employment. The leaders of the initiative believed that connecting or supplementing capabilities and relying on existing settings is preferable to establishing a new entity.

The initiative is led by Lamerhav, which forms the professional entity that represents the foundations involved in the venture, and the NPO that was chosen to operate the initiative is 'Eretz-Ir', that works to strengthen the economic and social resilience of communities in the periphery.⁶ The government funding for the venture is allocated in pursuant to Government Resolution 2025 of September 2014, and the project started operating in October 2017, and approximately 4.5 million NIS a year are invested and committed for a period of three years.

Eretz Ir operates on the one hand vis-à-vis youth entities and organizations such as <u>Youth Centers</u> or NPOs such as <u>ELEM</u> and "<u>Aharai</u>" (follow me), and trains employment counselors in these organizations. Conversely, Eretz-

^{6/} The people responsible for this issue on the part of the government are members of the Employment branch in the Ministry of Economy (currently the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services).



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Ir works vis-à-vis entities in the field of employment, such as 'Riyan', and 'Mafteah'.

The program targets young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 from the southern region of Israel, who are not currently integrated into employment, and who meet two of the four criteria:

[1] Lack of basic skills, [2] Lack family, financial or emotional support, [3] Lack 12 years of schooling, [4] Live in the community in socio-economic cluster 1-6.

The initiative's two main channels of operation are the support channel, which provides an average of 10 support hours pre-placement and eight additional hours thereafter; and the training channel, which includes referral to existing training programs as well as specific training programs created by the initiative itself. Project participants are given scholarships for training including travel. Alongside these, the initiative develops additional tools, including on the job training, and apprenticeships in which a new employee is assigned to a long-time employee in order to learn the job from him from close up. These two tools are widely accepted in the world of employment programs.

The Beyachad Foundation

The starting point of the various programs operated by the <u>Beyachad foundation</u>, which was established in 2015, is that it is possible to combine between shaping a response to the existing shortage in technological professions and the desire to integrate young adults at risk into quality and safe employment. According to this approach, the wide world of technological professions ought to be opened up to young people who are either uninterested or unable, for various reasons, to acquire an academic education. One of the quintessential advantages of learning these subjects is that the training period required is relatively short, compared to the academic track, but also the fact that most of the training is directly and distinctly related to a specific subject and a well-known list of jobs, which is not the case with respect to some academic programs.

The foundation chose to cooperate with several entities, including <u>Atidim</u>, the IDF, the Employment branch of the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, and several colleges. In this context, the foundation initiated the launching of courses for engineers in various fields, including the areas of air-conditioning, construction, electricity and mechanics. In the first stage, between seven to ten courses a year were launched, with 25 participants in each course. The participants receive funding for tuition and subsistence allowances, and



are assigned to employers during the course, thus starting practical work already in the second year of their studies.

An important working hypothesis for the foundation's activity is that the training it offers is of value and importance to young adults at risk, even if the pace of job vacancy and the frequency of transitioning between jobs and occupations shall indeed rise — as some of the forecasts pertaining to the job market in Israel and the world suggest. The two main reasons for that are: 1. Achieving a stable and safe position, even if it is limited to a period of approximately ten years, is in itself very valuable. 2. The training offered by the foundation, and no less, working in these jobs, can reinforce and cultivate generic skills and expertise, from systematic thinking, through operational and logistic expertise to management skills and team work.

The Nur Initiative

The <u>Nur initiative</u> works to promote women and young women at risk in Arab society – aged 16–25. This group is characterized by several weak points, considering that most of them live in the periphery, belong to large families, belong to a society that is experiencing gradual change (and later, with respect to most other sectors) with respect to religion, family, community and the status of women.

The initiative operates on a geographical basis (by town) and aims to reduce risk situations and provide personal reinforcement in several areas, primarily: "Personal and emotional state, education, financial independence, leadership and social involvement". The initiative operates in designated centers that provide workshops, support and training in the aforesaid fields — by way of personal individual work combined with group processes. The initiative is a bi-sectoral one, operated via a partnership of philanthropic entities and government offices.

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Other players

The field of young adults at risk in Israel also involves a considerable number of philanthropic foundations and private donors. They differ from one another in their degree of involvement and in the component of operation alongside funding. In addition, there are, as stated above, a variety of NPOs active in the field, including the following:

- <u>Amit Laderech</u>, <u>Mentor for Life</u> and <u>The Lone Soldier Center</u> NPOs that operate among lone soldiers during and after their service in the army.
- <u>Otot</u> and <u>SOS Children's Villages</u> in Israel, both are long-standing NPOs that care for children and teens at risk and have expanded their field of activity to include also young adults at risk.

National Forum of Organizations for At-risk Young Adults

The National Forum of Organizations for At-risk Young Adults established in 2013, is an umbrella organization, of 24 organizations working with young adults at risk. The establishment of the forum reflects the strategic and organizational leap made in this field and therefore also contributes to its actual reinforcement. The forum works to coordinate the work of the organizations, to share and transfer the knowledge between them, and to represent their common interest, vis-à-vis the Government, in order to promote a long-term policy that is relevant to the field at large.

The forum aims to advance the creation of a society where young adults at risk are able to integrate into the broader community, to live a respectful life and enjoy the same quality of life granted to any member of the population. A society that enables them to reach the services needed and that those services be high quality, accessible and efficient.





Time-line: Major events in the history of caring for young adults at risk in Israel

1978-9	_	Budgeting of "+18" social workers in the neighborhood restoration project
1980	_	Launch of "Raful's boys" program, as part of the IDF Education Corps (Center for the Advancement of Special Populations)
1981		Establishment of "Otot"
1983	_	Establishment of "Elem"
1991	_	Establishment of "Hillel" — NPO for formerly religious young adults
1999	_	Establishment of "Atidaim" Program
2001	_	Establishment of "Lamerhav"
		Establishment of "IGY: Israel Gay Youth"
2004	_	Establishment of the "Gandyr Foundation", which deals,
		inter alia, with the development of ventures and programs
		for young adults at risk
2005	_	Launch of the "Bridge to Independence" program by "Fair
		Chance for Children"
2006	_	Establishment of "Follow me to the top" by "Aharai" – an
		alumni association of the movement
2007	—	Establishment of the "Dualis" Foundation for social
		investments
2010	_	Establishment of the "Shahaf Foundation" to promote
		young social actions communities in Israel
2013	—	Establishment of the "Opportunity Fund" to promote
		civil service
		"Orr Shalom" begins work with young adults
		Prime Minister's Office established a "round-table" on the
		issue of young adults at risk
		Establishment of the National Forum of Organizations for
		At-risk Young Adults
2014	_	Opening of a youth program for alumni of the "Zoharim" youth village
2015	—	Establishment of the "Beyachad" Foundation of the Stella
		and Yoel Carasso Family
2016	—	Launch of "Yated" Program – the national program for
		at-risk young adults
2017	_	Launch of the "Working Together" Initiative

Looking ahead Prominent challenges and growing trends

The recent decades have seen diverse, expansive and increasingly professionalized activity to support young adults at risk in Israel. However, since this field is essentially still new, there are several issues areas which stand out as particularly drawing the interest of, and receiving extra attention from, NPOs and governmental agencies active for the benefit of young adults at risk in Israel.

These are issue areas, where treatment and interventions have only just begun, or have just recently expanded significantly, but that are not yet sufficiently organized and formally established; moreover, some of these areas have been identified by entities involved in this field as having major potential for impact, but have not yet taken practical shape.

These potential issue areas involve different practical practices within the activity of various NPOs on the one hand, while on the other hand — general and strategic moves are concerned, which are relevant to this field as a whole. Some of these practices have already been operative for several years by some NPOs but are still new to others, who are just beginning the implementation thereof.

Such areas and intervention practices may be of great significance for those who are considering philanthropic investment, or expansion thereof, in this field.

Six significant practices/interventions in the practical-concrete context are identified below, and three others are prominent in the strategic-organizational context of the available services, which require a wider and better-organized response.

Practices in the practical and concrete context

1. Building and strengthening networks

The contribution of building and strengthening the connections of young adults at risk amongst themselves, is increasingly emerging as a paramount



tool in building this unique group's strength and resilience. In light of this, several actors in this field have begun to emphasize the importance of strengthening the connections among young adults at risk and build treatment practices based on this new knowledge, both within NPOs and between NPOs and other institutions. Creating peer networks for young adults at risk enable them to receive assistance, share experience, rely on existing knowledge and benefit from personal and professional relationships in order to successfully navigate through this challenging period in their lives.

For some of the entities active in this field, this is a fundamental and built-in component — Lamerhav is one example of the above, and to some extent also the Hillel. In other cases, this process is less organized or obvious, and it is established or enhanced through the activity offered by the NPO's, such as in the case of the seminars operated by Orr Shalom. In both cases, these networks prove to be important platforms, both socially and professionally.

2. Mentoring

The field of mentoring is increasingly developing in recent years, within the framework of the activity of some of the NPOs active in this field. Mentoring was admittedly partially developed against the background of a budgetary need (the need to be assisted by a volunteer community), but realizing the substantive need to present positive role models and broaden the matrix of positive factors which support young adults at risk has led to the promotion and expansion of the mentoring practice in recent years.

Many of the interviewees for this guide agreed that this area holds great promise, they did however note that it requires professionalization and organization.

3. Mending and strengthening connections between young adults and their families

This issue of mending and strengthening connections between young adults and their families has been boosted in recent years in respect of youth at risk, for example in boarding schools. More recently, it has gained recognition as important and relevant for young adults at risk. This trend reflects the rethinking occurring in the field with respect to the possibility to renew or strengthen the connections between young adults and their families. Based on the recognition of the profound importance of such connections and their potential, even in respect to young adults whose relationships with their families were very bad or traumatic.

4. Pre-military preparatory programs (Mechinot)

There are dozens of pre-military preparatory programs of all sorts and kinds in



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Israel. The programs vary in their religious nature (religious, secular or mixed) and the fields of interest they emphasize (academic studies, agricultural work, or volunteering), most of them share the feature of association and engagement with elite groups in Israeli society. The immediate benefits of a pre-military preparatory program (Mechina) are beginning military service with better developed personal maturity (both mentally and cognitively) in comparison with other young adults, and the establishment of social circles and strong social networks; and also thinking about the future and gaining a structured acquaintance with the options available in adult life.

Over the past several years, and particularly in the last two years, several such mechinot programs were established, designed specifically for young adults at risk — five of which are a part of the Yated program. These moves derive from realizing the benefits and relevance of this tool — perhaps even to a greater extent — for the various groups of young adults at risk.

5. Flexible budget and sustenance scholarships

The area of general financial support that is not designated for studies, is repeatedly identified as a key issue that can improve the situation of many young adults at risk in different scenarios. It may further integrate into more conventional channels such as study scholarships and support processes.

6. A leap in the field of employment

Although "everybody is talking about employment" for a number of years now, a leap in the field of occupational diagnosis, guidance, counseling and practical experience, in view of the limited leeway of young adults at risk, has the potential to lead to a significant improvement in the situation of many young adults.



Practices and trends on the strategic-organizational level

1. Coordination and integration between NPOs and organizations

The process of improving and enhancing the coordination between NPOs, organizations and governmental agencies that provide services to young adults at risk is a condition as well as a means for a strategic and organizational leap in the field of young adults at risk in Israel. It includes, among other things, a structured and better-organized handover between different entities who care for the same population and the same individual (vertical coordination). The transfer of knowledge and data, as well as partnered planning between organizations, and in particular the creation of databases and establishment of formal processes of data sharing — at the group level and in respect to a particular young adult (horizontal coordination).

This process is consistent with the existing readiness of NPOs and the government alike with respect to measurement and evaluation, including the evaluation of "softer" variables, measurement of which is more challenging (e.g. a sense of capability) — alongside "harder" and more acceptable measures (presence in school or employment rates). A strategic leap forward depends, among other things, on broader use of the data held by state agencies. Such data is obviously extremely sensitive, however, its meticulous analysis holds the key to in–depth understanding of the needs of young adults at risk, and accordingly — the design of relevant the responses.

2. Promotion of work in the Arab sector

The Arab sector in Israel differs from the Jewish sector not only by some of the needs, their intensity and frequency, but also in the channels of action and the relevant tools being used to treat this population. Many of the interviewees for this guide agreed that there are still challenges and difficulties in the adaptation of services and responses to the Arab sector, despite the growing efforts invested by the government as well as by some of the NPOs in this direction.

3. Professionalization of this field

To further broaden and improve the services for young adults at risk, continuous professionalization of this field is required.

Such professionalization includes cooperation between the government and the various organizations, and between organizations among themselves, alongside continued establishment and expansion of the training and qualification of all entities who work with the young adults at risk population. This concerns, among others, three main groups: (a) Employees of NPOs,

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the government and local municipalities who are directly responsible for work with young adults; (b) Employees in other sectors whose work relates directly or indirectly to the lives of young adults at risk — on the higher levels of policy making (e.g. senior governmental officials) as well as in the field, among various entities who provide service to young adults, including employees in boarding schools who are supervised by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Welfare, who work primarily with youth at risk but can make a significant contribution to their students on the basis of their acquaintance with the perspectives and needs of young adults; (c) NPO volunteers who accompany young adults and assist them although not directly employed by the various NPOs.

At the same time, the broadening of knowledge networks should be constantly promoted, together with the conceptual consolidation of all the practitioners in the field, and the expansion of the professional framework of their work. This move is consistent with the need to enhance the research aspect, and particularly the strengthening of the use of data.

All the areas mentioned above require direct financial resources — for the purpose of expansion, and sometimes the establishment, of areas of activity and projects; at the same time, they also require organizational, planning and managerial resources such as consultation, the sharing of knowledge and best practices between organizations, communities and sectors (government, private and third sector), including learning from the experience of parallel organizations abroad; the ability to grow connections and create valuable cooperation between experts and practitioners from various specialty disciplines, and so forth. In light of this, it is clear that there are several routes available for joining or enhancing philanthropic activity in this field, offering different levels of intensity and involvement. In other words, for some areas and fields of activity, financial support would be relevant, while other areas or projects would also benefit from a deeper level of involvement, including the lending of qualifications, connections, skills and knowledge.





Ways to use this greenbook

Below are ideas for using this book as a text, and as a study tool, to deepen and expand your understanding of funding the field of young adults at risk in Israel.

A philanthropic resource

The Greenbook is specifically written for funders. As you read this book, consider how you can take this philanthropic resource and convert it into action.

- Set up a time to meet with another funder, possibly as a reoccurring 'learning' time. Pick one chapter to learn together. (Take turns reading it, ask each other questions, mark ideas which you want to explore more deeply.) their group discussed, allowing time for questions.
- Book-club style: Invite 10-15 funders to take part in a discussion group. Limiting these meetings to about 15 will allow for a participatory conversation and will encourage everyone to take part. Decide to address 1-2 chapters in the meeting. Ask everyone to read the chosen chapter(s) before the meeting along with the introduction and conclusion. You can also invite a speaker to address your group (e.g., professional at an NPO working in the field).

- Board meetings:

Use this book as a learning tool with your board. Set aside time to discuss one chapter at each meeting, and use the allotted time to discuss the ideas in the chapter and how they connect to your mission and strategy.





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