



## MAKOM working papers on Israel engagement policy

# ▶ High School Israel Experience Programs A Policy-Oriented Analysis of the Field

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Version released, November 2009

Tishrei 5769

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Israel of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is dynamic, complex, and constantly evolving, just as Jewish identity is dynamic, complex, and constantly evolving. In these fluid times, MAKOM's mission is to empower Jewish educators, rabbis, arts and community leaders to develop deep, sophisticated, and honest Israel programming through both hugging and wrestling.

At MAKOM we strive for disciplined imagination as we nurture people and develop content to face the multi-dimensional challenge of Israel engagement for our times.

MAKOM is a think-practice tank working to significantly advance the field of Israel engagement through consultations, training, content development and research.

Our intention is that **The MAKOM Working Papers on Israel Engagement Policy** will become a resource for mapping, envisioning, and suggesting directions for the development of Israel's foundational role in Jewish life.

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## Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of the institutional and communal frameworks that enable the Israel Experience to take place. It focuses on the significant institutional and community-level changes that have occurred in the field of youth trips to Israel since the 1980's, changes that challenge many underlying ideological and educational assumptions that inform the content and goals of the Israel Experience. The change processes have led to a major realignment at the level of the institutional and organizational stakeholders that enable the Israel Experience to occur. The extent of the changes is such that major stakeholders in the field are currently trying to understand the implications for their work.

Given the extensive changes taking place in the Israel Experience field, JAFI commissioned this research report with a focus on programs aimed at high school youth in the United States. The following questions guide the research:

- ▶ What is the impact of the above-described changes on the high school market?
- ▶ How do core processes having to do with fundraising, marketing, and program development play out? How do these processes interact with the nature of the sending organizations and program organizers involved, and with the motivations of high school students and their parents to participate in the Israel Experience?
- ▶ Is the high school age segment of the market "falling between the cracks," and is there a need for a broader organizing framework? If so, what might such an organizing framework look like and what role might an organization like JAFI play?
- ▶ At a general level, what is the impact of changes taking place in the larger relationship between American and Israeli Jewry on the manner in which the Israel

experience is organized? More specifically, how does the high school travel program intertwine with larger Israel engagement strategies currently playing out in the American Jewish world?

With these questions in mind, this report provides a conceptual framework and basic data for the purpose of strategic decision-making. The goal is to help the reader make sense of the field of Israel travel for high school youth and to lay out the core issues which any attempt to engage with the field should consider.

After providing an overview of the data collection, the report is divided into three parts:

1. Numbers of participants and organizations
2. Organization of the Israel Experience field
  - a. Overarching frameworks
  - b. Organizing frameworks
  - c. Sending frameworks
3. Summary and Policy Recommendations

### Numbers of participants and organizations

There were an estimated 10,000<sup>1</sup> participants on Israel high school program from the United States in 2008, representing an approximate total of \$62,700,000 spent on direct program costs by participants. Most programs have suffered a 10% to 20% decline in participation numbers in 2009 attributed to the weakening American economy.

### Organization of the Israel Experience field

The report emphasizes the lack of an overarching framework for Israel Experience programs serving the high school market. The

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<sup>1</sup> LAPID, the coalition of high school programs, estimates that there are an additional 5000 high school Israel program participants outside of the United States.

closest equivalent to a framework capable of acting as a catalyst, both for numbers of participants and quality of programming, are a select few Federations doing impressive local community development using Israel as a resource. United Jewish Communities (UJC), the national umbrella for local Federations and independent communities, also has the potential to serve as a national framework. However, UJC's recent role in the area of high school travel programs was to serve as coordinator of the scholarship list which tracks grants and saving programs at local Federations. UJC's current focus on the Israel Experience is primarily through Birthright and MASA, collecting funds from local Federations towards an annual contribution of \$12,000,000.

Among those interviewed for the project, there was widespread sentiment that the lack of an overarching framework hurts the broader effort to bring high school students to Israel. There is a shared belief in the need for a North American center for high school programs.

The analysis of organizing frameworks points strongly to the importance of affiliation in the field of high school programs. A majority of trip organizers and providers are either associated with a youth movement or work with day schools, congregations, or summer camps associated with a national youth movement or another type of national framework. High school program participants are far more likely than their average American Jewish peers to be highly involved in the Jewish community. Participants and their parents are also more likely to choose a program for its association with their youth movement, school, camp, or congregation than for the content of the program.

The impact of the "affiliation factor" on program innovation is that programs do not appear to need to provide innovative programs to attract

participants; they just need to keep them happy, making minimal changes to respond to strong trends such as the desire for meetings with Israeli youth. While some programs employ professional recruiters, most work through movement institutions or organizations affiliated with a national movement. The most important marketing venues are networks of alumni and school, camp, and congregational professionals who recommend the programs, further reinforcing the affiliation factor.

The analysis of sending frameworks further reinforces the importance of the affiliation factor for understanding core processes in the field of high school Israel Experience programs.

At the level of individual families, major issues such as consideration of cost and loss of Birthright eligibility are not significant factors for those families with high levels of involvement in Jewish life. These families view the high school Israel trip as a priority and will make the necessary sacrifices for it to happen. The major concern is whether core Jewish families have access to the grants, scholarships, and savings programs that make the trip affordable.

The affiliation factor is further amplified when considering the role of sending organizations in the Israel trip. When an organization, such as a day school, camp, or synagogue, decides to sponsor a trip, it "locks in" its constituency. Families who do not want to send a child on the trip need to "opt out." This framework changes the dynamic by which the program organizer needs to market and develop the Israel program. The organization, rather than the individual, becomes the client. Sophisticated sending organizations will make substantial demands on their Israel program providers, which is likely to be the greatest current source of program innovation in the field.

A key component is the buy-in that the sending organization needs to attain from their

constituents. Once the trip is launched, and if it is successful, then a culture of support for the Israel trip will develop in the organization. The development of a supportive Israel culture is more likely to occur if the school's leadership develops a larger vision of the benefits of Israel engagement and the trip and succeeds in communicating those benefits to their constituents. Many organizations do not reach a high level of sophistication in terms of their Israel engagement agenda, which in turn impacts the ability to maintain enthusiasm and support for the trip over the long term.

### Policy recommendations

The question for policy makers is how to maximize the benefits of the Israel Experience, utilizing what is already a very large investment by the American Jewish community.

#### A system-wide perspective

The recommendations in this report flow from a proposed model that views the Israel Experience as a coherent field. The flow chart on page 13 shows how the three major Israel Experience frameworks - high school programs, Birthright, and MASA - currently work in tandem to provide two major benefits to American Jewry, by:

1. Reaching out to unaffiliated Jews and pulling them into Jewish community.
2. Deepening the engagement of affiliated/involved Jews with their local organizations and community.

High school programs primarily pull from Jewish families who are affiliated and involved in Jewish community. Birthright's primary contribution is its ability to reach non-affiliated young adult Jews. Both produce alumni who are likely to return to Israel for additional educational opportunities as the result of their Israel experience program. MASA reports that both high school programs and Birthright serve as

feeders into long-term Israel programs, which are the major Israel Experience platforms for young adult Jews to intensify their involvement in the Jewish world and their connection to Israel.

#### Encouraging a spiral effect - The potential role of MASA

The overall goal of JAFI or another organizing framework should be to encourage a spiral effect. With more participation in short-term programs in high school or Birthright leading to increased numbers of those returning on longer programs. To realize the spiral effect, we must take a system-wide perspective to see the distinction between Israel Experience venues that reach affiliated and non-affiliated populations, with the overall goal being to encourage greater involvement in Jewish community at all levels. From this perspective, MASA's decision to focus exclusively on long-term post-high school programs seems arbitrary. Given Birthright's strong focus on the ten-day travel experience, there is no other framework with the organizing capacity and financial framework of MASA that is capable of connecting the three sectors of the Israel Experience field. Indeed, as MASA completes its sixth year, it has tentatively started to play this overarching role by offering marketing and logistical support to some high school programs. The obvious duplication and waste of resources currently occurring in the field, in areas such as marketing and logistics, is an ideal place for an overarching organization to step in and coordinate a larger effort.

#### The potential role of Lapid

An alternative to MASA taking on a more ambitious and system-wide strategy is for Lapid, the coalition of 17 high school programs, to expand beyond its current focus on lobbying MASA and the government of Israel for money, and instead, to play a similar role to Birthright or

MASA. This would include taking an active role in marketing and recruitment, program development, research and resource development.

#### The role of an overarching organization

The unique niche of high school programs is that they utilize a "bottom-up" funding infrastructure. Whereas MASA and Birthright depend on mega-donors or the government of Israel for funding, high school programs are driven by families paying out-of-pocket or working to access savings plans or scholarships and local sending organizations that raise money to subsidize the trips. The report details how federations, day schools, and congregations that prioritize Israel travel are able to raise impressive financial resources and develop the necessary organizational capacities to make high-school Israel travel widely accessible.

In the area of resources development, the role of an overarching organization for high school travel is threefold:

1. To help active and involved individuals access existing resources;
2. To help program organizers and sending organizations with resource-development strategies; and
3. To encourage federations, foundations, and local organizations to actively develop resources for Israel travel.

In the areas of marketing and program development, there is a need for offering consultation to existing Israel Experience organizers and providers who wish to raise the sophistication of their operation. Active collaboration between an overarching organizing framework, Federations (which in some cases are already playing the roles of program organizers), and programming frameworks will likely produce major benefits.

In conclusion, this report indicates that the future lies in the active development of the bottom-up funding infrastructure in which the high school Israel Experience field has excelled. The systematic development of local donors, local and national organizers, and program providers will produce major benefits for the larger field of the Israel Experience, and ultimately, to the larger field of Israel engagement and community development for American Jewry.

# High School Israel Experience Programs

A Policy-Oriented Analysis of the  
Field

## Background

Youth travel from Diaspora countries to Israel began one year after the founding of the State of Israel in 1949, with 45 participants on a program organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel. By 2006, the field had grown to 23,834 participants arriving on programs sponsored by Birthright Israel and an estimated additional 11,428 participants on other Israel experience programs<sup>2</sup> run by a large variety of organizations. The field, often referred to as "the Israel Experience," includes youth trips that range from one week to one year for participants as young as 8th grade to post-college graduates. Trip organizers cover the entire ideological spectrum of Diaspora Jewish life.

The following quote from the late Shlomo Gravetz, former head of the Youth and *HeChalutz* (Pioneer) Department of the World Zionist Organization, provides a sense of the basic goals of the Israel Experience, variations of which are found from one program organizer to the next.

*In the age of free choice of identity, one meaningful tool, perhaps the most meaningful, for linking the individual Jew with the collective Jewish fate is the bond with the Land of Israel, the State of Israel and Israel society. The Israel Experience is an educational tool, a hands-on experience, aimed first*

<sup>2</sup> Cohen, E.H. 2008. *Youth Tourism to Israel: Educational Experiences of the Diaspora*. Channel View Publications. pp. 28.

*and foremost at bringing individuals closer to the historic heritage, which has Israel as its centre, and in this way to tie them to Judaism, to Israel and to Zionism. The minimum that the program must achieve is the involvement of the young people in the community in which they live.*<sup>3</sup>

In the statement by Gravetz, the following elements appear:

- ▶ Jewish belonging as a choice made by individuals.
- ▶ The Israel trip as important resource or "educational tool" for helping young Jews in the formative stages of their lives connect to the Jewish People and Judaism by way of the Israel Experience.
- ▶ Increased personal involvement of the participant with Israel.
- ▶ Increased involvement of the participant with Jewish life in their home community.

To date, research has focused on one of these four points. For example, a prominent theme in recent literature is that in the first decades of the state, the goals of the Israel trip were often viewed through the lens of "Israel as the center of Jewish life." Trip organizers often had an explicit expectation that participants would make *aliyah* as a result of the trip.<sup>4</sup> A rich literature describes the changes that have since occurred in the field, with the increasing emphasis on educational enrichment for individual participants, with Israel as a resource for that experience.<sup>5</sup> Part of the overall shift also

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Shlomo Gravetz, conducted by Erik Cohen in 1996, cited in Cohen, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> While this report does not deepen this discussion, our research does confirm to the overall trend. For example, among the 32 interviews conducted with policy makers and Israel Experience experts, only one interviewee explicitly mentioned *aliyah* as a goal for their Israel experience trip.

<sup>5</sup> Prominent publications in the field include:

includes changing educational methodologies, such as an increasing use of *mifgashim* (intercultural encounters) between Diaspora and Israeli youth, with thought given to the benefit of the *mifgash* for the Israeli participants as well.<sup>6</sup>

This report does not focus on the educational content and impact of the Israel Experience trips. Rather, this report provides an analysis of the institutional and communal frameworks that enable the Israel Experience to take place. To the best of our knowledge, no systematic analysis of the institutional dimension of the Israel Experience has been conducted in the past.

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- Chazan, Barry. 1994. *The Israel Trip: A New Form of Jewish Education. Youth Trips to Israel: Rationale and Realization*. New York: CRB Foundation and The Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center at JESNA.
  - Chazan, Barry (ed.). 2002. *The Israel Experience: Studies in Jewish Identity and Youth Culture* (pp. 5-20). Jerusalem: Studio Kavgraph.
  - Cohen, Erik, op. cit.
  - Cohen, Steven. M., & Wall, Susan. 1994. *Excellence in Youth Trips to Israel. Youth Trips to Israel: Rationale and Realization*. New York: CRB Foundation and The Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center at JESNA.
  - Kelner, Shaul. 2002. *Almost Pilgrims: Authenticity, Identity and the Extra-Ordinary on a Jewish Tour of Israel*. City University of New York (doctoral dissertation).
  - Mittelberg, David. 1999. *The Israel Connection and American Jews*. London: Praeger Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example:

- Kopelowitz, Ezra. 2003. "Between Mifgash and Shlichut: Paradigms in Contemporary Zionist Education and the Question of the Ideological Relationship between Israel and the Diaspora." Jerusalem: Department of Jewish Zionist Education, The Jewish Agency for Israel.
- Wolf, Minna. F. 2007. *Negotiating the Boundary: Exploring Identities during Israel Experience Mifgashim*. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (doctoral dissertation).

This report focuses on the significant institutional and community level changes occurring in the field of youth trips to Israel since the 1980's, changes that have challenged many underlying ideological and educational assumptions that inform the content and goals of the Israel Experience. The change processes, many of which began in the 1980's, have led in the past ten years to a major realignment at the level of the institutional and organizational stakeholders that enable the Israel Experience to occur. The extent of the changes are such that major stakeholders in the field are currently scrambling to understand the implications for their work.

The changes include:

- ▶ In the past decade, the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI)<sup>7</sup>, which served as the hub of the Israel Experience world since the founding of the State withdrew from playing a leadership role in the field of high school and short-term youth programs in Israel.
- ▶ In 1999, JAFI created a business-oriented subsidiary charged with running short-term Israel programs called "Israel Experience Educational Tourism Services Ltd."<sup>8</sup> For a number of years afterwards, JAFI continued to serve as a resource for educational planning and funding of Israel Experience trips, a function it no longer fulfills. JAFI does continue to have some contact with the world of short-term programming through Partnership 2000, a means by which some short-term youth programs are organized. JAFI also has a hand in virtual (Internet) meetings between high school youth in Israel and the Diaspora, a useful forum for engaging in educational encounters with one another.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.jewishagency.org>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.israelexperience.org.il>

- ▶ The launch of Taglit–Birthright Israel in December 1999. Birthright has since become a major hub for Israel Experience activity.<sup>9</sup> Birthright sponsors a free ten-day peer educational program for Diaspora youth. It has succeeded in significantly raising the number of participants and the reach of Israel Experience programs to less affiliated Jews. In the 2007/8 academic year, 34,451 participants came to Israel on Birthright.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ The launch of MASA. In June 2003, a committee from the government of Israel and JAFI met to explore new ways to reach young Jews from around the world, reinforce their Jewish identity, and strengthen their connection to Israel and local Jewish community. In November 2003, "MASA - The Project for Long Term Programs in Israel" was approved by the governmental committee, and the Jewish Agency received the task of detailing the program to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Sallai Meridor (then-chairman of JAFI) in January 2004, when it was approved for implementation.<sup>11</sup> MASA functions as an umbrella framework under the joint ownership of JAFI and the government of Israel, which encourages participation in long-term programs (five months or more) for young Jews between the ages of 18 and 30. These programs are run by a wide variety of organizations that operate independently of MASA.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.birthrightisrael.com>; For research see: Saxe, L., & Chazan, B. 2008. *Ten Days Of Birthright Israel: A Journey In Young Adult Identity*. Waltham: Brandeis University Press. Also see the website of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at <http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/>.

<sup>10</sup> Saxe, L. Phillips, B. Wright, G. Boxer, M. Hecht, S. Sasson, T. 2008. *Taglit - Birthright Israel Evaluation: 2007-2008 North American Cohorts*. Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.masaisrael.org/Masa/English/About+MASA/Our+Mission/>

The cumulative result of these change processes is that the former role played by JAFI as a single major address for all matters having to do with youth travel to Israel no longer exists. While Birthright and MASA now dominate the Israel Experience field, there is no formal collaboration between these entities and the rest of the field, leaving high school programs with no overarching organizing framework.

There is also a perception by major stakeholders in the field that several other concurrent processes are having a dramatic impact on the Israel Experience field, including:

- ▶ A perception that Federations in the United States are less actively interested in Israel Experience programs. The drop in interest is as a result of: 1) The sharp drop in participation among non-Orthodox populations which occurred during the height of the second (Al-Aksa) Intifada in 2002; and, 2) a long term decline of financial resources available to Federations, which has been exacerbated by the current financial crisis in the United States.
- ▶ Declining membership in non-Orthodox denominational youth movements, which are among the primary recruiting and organizing frameworks of the Israel Experience.
- ▶ Increasing numbers of non-Orthodox day schools. Recent research shows that 70% of the non-Orthodox day schools are sponsoring Israel trips.<sup>12</sup> The result is a new major institutional force with unique needs and expectations.
- ▶ The rise of private non-profit organizations and for-profit companies which run Israel Experience programs, working directly with schools, synagogues, and other sending

<sup>12</sup> Pomson, A. Deitcher, H. Muszkat Barkan, M. April 2009. *Israel education in North American Day Schools: A systems analysis and some strategies for change*, Report Submitted to the Avi Chai Foundation. p. 8.

organizations. Many of these organizations and companies depend on work from Birthright for a large percentage of their income.

- ▶ The disbanding of the North American Alliance for Jewish Youth (NAA), which worked since its creation in 1996 to promote excellence in informal Jewish education and to provide informal educators (including senior professionals involved in the Israel Experience) with opportunities to enhance professional skills.<sup>13</sup> The NAA's primary activity was an annual conference on Informal Jewish and Zionist Education. In 2006, JEXNET (the Network for Experiential Jewish Youth Education) replaced the NAA as a network committed to supporting professionals and volunteers in the field.<sup>14</sup> However, in 2007, JEXNET closed its doors, leaving the field with no overarching professional organization.
- ▶ The fluctuating dollar exchange rate in 2007/8 and the weakening economy in general has made financial planning a challenge for many organizations in the field, leading to layoffs in a number of organizations. Many trip organizers report a 10% to 20% drop in 2009 participants due to the American economy.
- ▶ The creation of Lapid in 2008, a coalition of 17 high school programs that banded together with the goal of representing their interests in an organized fashion.<sup>15</sup> Currently, Lapid's work is limited to lobbying MASA and the Government of Israel for greater financial resources for high school programs.

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<sup>13</sup> From NAA conference site in 2004.  
<http://www.naajewishyouth.org/new-conf.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.jexnet.org/about.php>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.lapidisrael.org/>

## Research Questions

Given the extensive changes taking place in the Israel Experience field, JAFI commissioned this research report with a focus on programs aimed at high school youth in the United States.

The following questions guide the research:

- ▶ What is the impact of the above-described changes on the high school market?
- ▶ How do core processes having to do with fundraising, marketing, and program development play out? How do these processes interact with the nature of the sending organizations and program organizers involved, and with the motivations of high school students, with the backing of their parents, to participate in the Israel Experience?
- ▶ Is the high school age segment of the market "falling between the cracks," and is there a need for a broader organizing framework? If so, what might such an organizing framework look like, and what role might an organization like JAFI play?
- ▶ At a general level, how do the changes taking place in the larger relationship between American and Israeli Jewry impact the manner in which the Israel experience is organized? More specifically, how does the high school travel program intertwine with larger Israel engagement strategies currently playing out in the American Jewish world?

With these questions in mind, this report provides a conceptual framework and basic data for the purpose of strategic decision-making. The goal is to help the reader make sense of the field of Israel travel for high school youth and lay out core issues which any attempt to engage with the field should consider.

## Overview of data collection

### Interviews with experts in the field

A total of 33 telephone and face-to-face interviews and informational meetings were conducted with 36 policy makers, Jewish community professionals, congregational rabbis, heads of school, senior leaders in youth and camp movements, and Israel program directors (see Appendix 1).

The goal of the national-level interviews was to gain in-depth understanding of policy orientations, organizational strategies, strategic visions, and understandings of the Israel Experience for high school youth. The commonality among interviewees was their expertise in the area of Israel travel for North American middle and high school youth..

### Interviews with participants and parents

A total of 31 telephone interviews with 2008 Israel experience participants (here called goers) and their parents were conducted between December 2008 and January 2009. At the request of JAFI, all interviewees came from one of three cities —Boston, Chicago and San Francisco—with the majority in Boston and Chicago.

In order to gain an initial understanding of non-goers and their motivations, an additional 10 interviews were conducted in early 2009 with youth and parents of youth who considered but did not participate (here called non-goers) in an Israel experience program in 2008. Appendix 2 outlines the breakdown of goer and non-goer interviews.

### Surveys of participants and parents

Two Internet-based surveys were conducted between December and January 2009:

1. A survey of 2008 participants in eight school, camp, and youth movement programs (referred to as the “alumni survey” in the document).
2. A survey of parents whose child participated in one of eight school, camp or youth movement program in 2008 (referred to as the “parent survey” in the document).

All participants surveyed took part in a program run by Lapid member organizations. Lapid provided assistance in reaching the organizations and sponsored the survey. A total of 891 participants and 991 parents completed the survey, a response rate of 33% and 27% respectively. Details are provided in Appendix 3.

### Survey of program organizers

Thirty organizations that organize Israel Experience programs in Israel were contacted to complete an Internet survey.<sup>16</sup> The survey focused on issues that the organizations regard as important for the Israel Experience field. The survey also asked the organizations to report on numbers of participants in their programs. Thirteen organizations completed the survey (see Appendix 4). Numbers were also provided by additional organizations through informal contacts. In total, participation numbers were given from 20 organizations (see next section).

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<sup>16</sup> This covers both program organizers and providers, a distinction discussed below in the organizing framework section of this report.

## Basic numbers

### Numbers attending high-school-age Israel travel programs during 2008

2008 participation numbers were gained from 20 program organizers who represent almost all of the major organizing venues for Israel travel. An overview is provided in the opposite column of this page. Confirmed numbers amount to a total of 8858 participants on high school programs in 2008. Given the three organizations missing from the table and leaving room for some missed programs, we estimate a total of 10,000 participants in 2008.

Based on conversations, most programs have suffered a 10 to 20% decline in participation numbers in 2009 attributed the weakening American economy.

### Estimated economy of Israel travel programs

In order to gain a sense of the total economy of high school travel programs, we multiplied the estimated number of participants by the estimated average cost of participation in a program.

- Thirty-three percent (33%) participated in academic programs that cost between \$7,000 and \$12,000, with an estimated average of \$9,000.
- Sixty-six percent (66%) participated in touring programs that cost between \$2,000 and \$9,000 dollars, with an estimated average of \$5,000.

Based on these very rough estimates, a total of \$62,700,000 is spent annually on direct program costs by participants in Israel experience programs for high school youth from North America.

Program	Business Model	Content	Number of participants in 2008
AMHSI Core High School program	Independent. Non profit.	Academic	220
AMHSI Day School programs	Provider for mostly Community (RAVSAK) Day schools	Academic	800
BBYO Summer programs	Movement	Touring	400 <sup>17</sup>
Bnei Akiva Summer programs	Movement – Orthodox	Touring	450
Bronfman Youth Fellowships	Independent. Non profit.	Mixed	28
Chetz Ve Keshet (Israel Scouts)	Run through Israel Scouts movement	Touring	N/A
Haveselet Hashomer Hatzair	Movement	Touring	354
Israel Experience	Provider to congregations and schools. Independent for profit.	Touring	1540
JCCA	Movement	Touring	150
NCSY	Movement – Orthodox	Touring	N/A
Nesiya	Independent non profit.	Mixed	106
NFTY Summer	Movement – Reform	Touring	652
NFTY EIE Summer	Movement – Reform	Academic	30
NFTY EIE High School	Movement – Reform	Academic	147
Oranim	Independent for profit	Touring	N/A
Ramah Seminar (Summer)	Movement - Conservative	Touring	374
Ramah - TRY High School	Movement – Conservative	Academic	54
Ramah - Day School programs	Movement – Conservative	Touring	1200
Sephardic Educational Center	Independent non profit	Touring	100
Shorashim	Independent non profit	Touring	62
USY Pilgrimage	Movement – Conservative	Touring	400
USY High School programs	Movement – Conservative	Touring	200
Young Judaea Year Course	Movement	Academic	560
Young Judaea summer program	Movement	Touring	1031
<b>Total reported</b>			<b>8858</b>
<b>Estimate including programs missed by research</b>			<b>10000<sup>18</sup></b>

<sup>17</sup> Estimate based on numbers provided on BBYO website.

<sup>18</sup> LAPID estimates that there are an additional 5000 high school Israel program participants outside of the United States.

## Changes in the relationship between the American Jewish community and Israel that impact the Israel Experience

The Israel Experience is one part of a multi-faceted relationship between Diaspora Jewry and Israel. Since the 1980's, the relationship between Israel and American Jewry has undergone substantial change, shaking up many of the established institutional relationships that govern the field. The change is described by Theodore Sasson in terms of a decline of a "mass mobilization" paradigm and the rise of a new paradigm which he coins "direct engagement."<sup>19</sup>

Sasson argues:

*The mass mobilization paradigm typified the relationship between American Jews and Israel during the period extending between the early 1950s and the late 1980s....The main tasks of Jewish organizations in relation to Israel were fundraising and political advocacy. Fundraising was organized primarily through the federations as part of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA). Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, most funds collected annually—hundreds of millions of dollars—which were divided between the United Israel Appeal, for use in Israel, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, for needy Jews elsewhere in the world, especially the Soviet Union. The funds allocated to the United Israel Appeal were turned over to the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI).*

*...In sum, during the "mass mobilization" phase, the relationship of American Jewry to Israel was largely*

<sup>19</sup> Sasson, T. Article submitted for publication. "Mass Mobilization to Direct Engagement: American Jews' Changing Relationship to Israel." Draft of manuscript dated April 1, 2009. Also see, Kopelowitz, E. 2005. "Organizing the Israeli-Diaspora Relationship While Moving from Classic Zionism to Something Else: Conclusions from the 2005 Meetings of the Bridge Builders Forum." Department of Education, The Jewish Agency for Israel.

*centralized, top-down, consensus-oriented, mediated and idealized. American Jews were mobilized by core organizations (UJA, AJC), to donate money to quasi-governmental bodies in Israel (JAFI, Jewish National Fund), and to provide political support for the policies of the government of Israel (i.e., via AIPAC, Conference of Presidents). Travel and immigration were handled largely by the main denominational movements in the United States and the quasi-governmental Jewish Agency for Israel. The mass mobilization of donations and political support encouraged the idealization of Israel but not a direct relationship based on first-hand knowledge or experience.*

In the mass mobilization paradigm, youth tours to Israel were run mostly by the youth movements of the major American Jewish denominations (NFTY for Reform; USY and Ramah for Conservative; NCSY and Bnei Akiva for Orthodox; and the independent Young Judaea movement, which is affiliated with Hadassah). In Israel, the activities of the youth tour groups were often coordinated by educators from the Jewish Agency, which had a special division dedicated to Diaspora youth travel programs. The number of youth tour participants varied over the years, roughly between 4,000-9,000 participants annually in the 1970's and 1980's.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1990s, Shlomo Gravetz, then director of what is now the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency, responded to pressures from philanthropists and the broader field and put into motion a process that led to the decentralization of the field of Youth Travel.

Outcomes included the creation in 1999 of the JAFI subsidiary "Israel Experience Educational Tourism Services Ltd.," charged with the running of short-term Israel programs. Israel Experience Ltd. competes in the open market with other Israel providers.

<sup>20</sup> Cohen, E. *ibid.*, p. 28.

In 1999, Taglit-Birthright Israel was launched, revolutionizing the Israel Experience both in terms of numbers of participants and in terms of the institutional nexus that supports Israel Experience trips. Today, Birthright serves as a marketing agent, funder, and coordinating framework for ten-day educational peer trips operated by 23 independent for-profit and non-profit organizations that receive per-traveler payments.<sup>21</sup> Birthright has developed guidelines for the tours and requires visits to certain sites and attention to particular themes, which amount to 40 hours of the total ten-day trip.

The result is that Birthright has granted program organizers the ability to develop within a common organizing framework, one which both supplies resources and enables entrepreneurship in terms of program content and recruiting participants. Most organizational heads serving the Birthright framework are themselves either former employees of the Jewish Agency or graduates and staff of the youth movement programs.

Today, the Jewish Agency remains a major player in the field of long-term programs (5-12 months). MASA, a subsidiary of JAFI and the government of Israel, acts (among other things) as a marketing framework and clearinghouse for 100 organizations in Israel that offer 160 long-term programs. MASA provides grants to participants to help subsidize the cost of the trips and also works to seed new programs. Despite substantial differences, MASA, like Birthright, is an "enabling framework," in that it provides an organizational framework that aims to increase numbers of participants and provide resources, while at the same time enabling independence and rewarding initiative on the part of independent program organizers.

<sup>21</sup> Listed on the Birthright website at: [http://www.birtherightisrael.com/site/PageServer?pagename=trip\\_natolist](http://www.birtherightisrael.com/site/PageServer?pagename=trip_natolist)

### The current structure of the field

The result of the withdrawal of the Jewish Agency from short-term programs and the rise of Birthright and MASA has led to a major restructuring of the field, with many Israel-based program providers working directly with organizations and individuals in North America who wish to participate in an educational travel program in Israel.

The flow chart on the next page provides an overview of the field of high-school-age youth travel to Israel. The field is organized around three types of institutional frameworks:

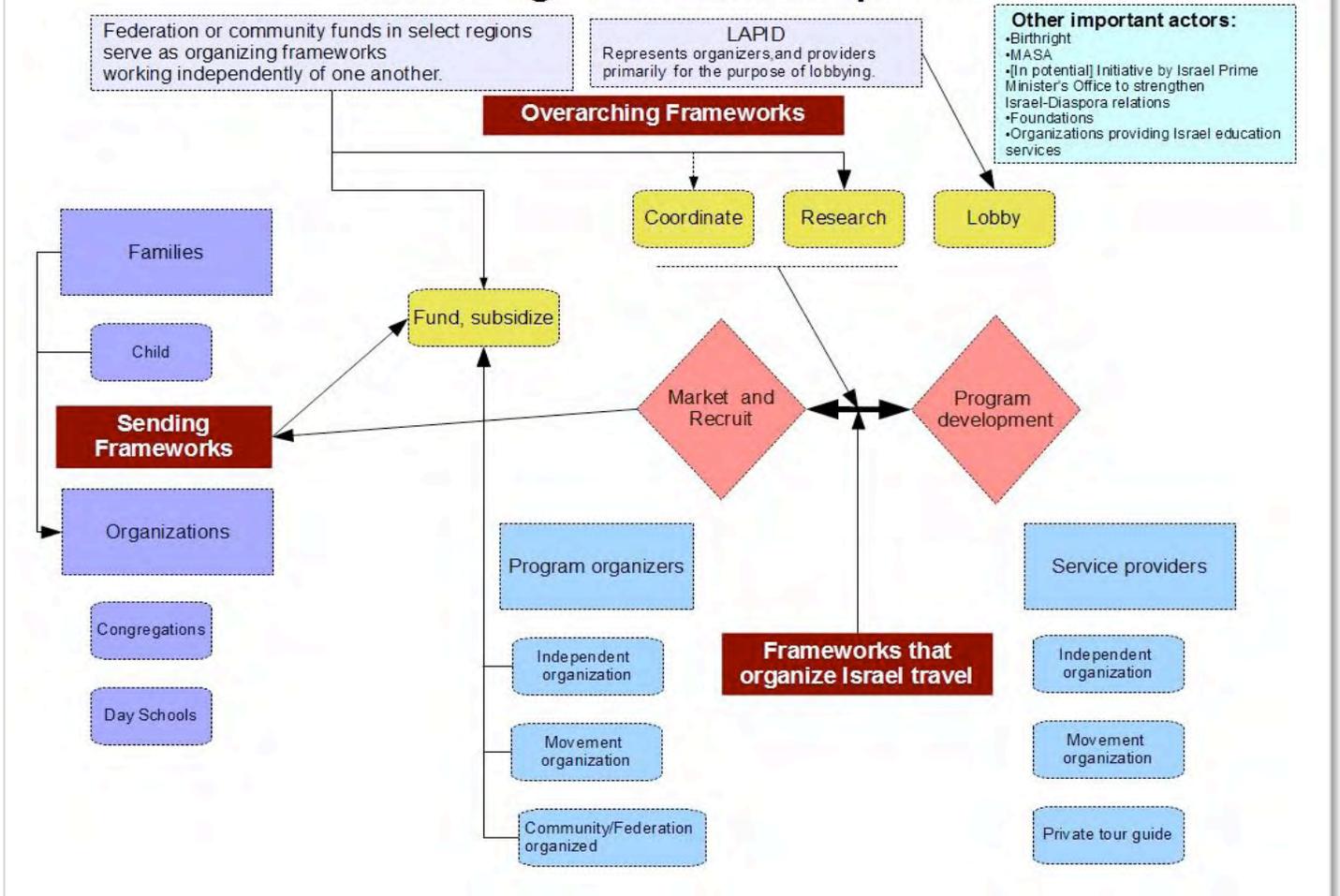
1. Overarching organizing frameworks,
2. Programming frameworks which organize the trips in Israel, and
3. Sending frameworks.

### Overarching frameworks

The flow chart shows the absence of a single organizing framework in the field of high school programs. The impact of Birthright and MASA is felt on the wider field for reasons discussed above and expanded on below. In particular, many organizations that run high school trips also work within the Birthright and MASA frameworks. However, Birthright is not directly involved with high school programs. Only this year has MASA tentatively begun to formulate a relationship with the semester and yearlong academic high school programs, primarily by way of funding in the area of marketing and logistics.<sup>22</sup> We will expand on the potential that MASA might play in the high school field in the final section of this report.

<sup>22</sup> MASA's current position is that it will not offer grants to participants in high school programs as it wants to focus on encouraging post-high school trips.

## Field of High School Israel Experience



There are a number of organizing frameworks that do have a direct and substantial impact on the high school travel programs.

Lapid, a coalition of 17 high school programs founded in 2008, is the only overarching framework that focuses exclusively on the Israel Experience for high school youth. Lapid is still in an early stage of its development and has to date focused on lobbying MASA and the government of Israel for financial resources. Lapid is also beginning to branch out into some early marketing and educational efforts. In July 2009, the organization sponsored a "mega-event" in Israel for all high school participants on programs in Israel.

From the perspective of participants in Israel programs, the most significant overarching

frameworks are currently provided by Federations and foundations that view "Israel engagement" in general, and Israel education in high school in particular, as an important part of the infrastructure of Jewish communal life. In addition, there are an increasingly large number of foundations and new or existing organizations coming on the scene to offer consulting and programming services to Federations, schools, congregations, and community centers in areas that often touch on Israel travel for high school students, sometimes labeled as Israel advocacy, education, or engagement.

The following is an overview of key overarching frameworks that impact the Israel Experience for high school students.

## Case Study: Tel Aviv - Los Angeles Partnership\*

The work done by the Los Angeles Federation provides insights into the extent to which high school travel programs can integrate into a broader Israel engagement and broader community development strategy.

The Los Angeles Federation supports a school twinning program between 18 L.A. and 18 Tel Aviv schools as part of the Jewish Agency-sponsored Partnership 2000 program. The partnership framework focuses on creating networking relationships between Jews in Los Angeles and Tel Aviv in sectors as diverse as health and human service, environment, film and television, choreography, opera, the visual arts, and business. The school twinning program starts in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. One of the participating schools is a public high school, the rest are Jewish day schools.

### Goals

The twinning program is based on a home hospitality model and the development of direct relationships between young Jews in Los Angeles and Tel Aviv. There is less emphasis on exposure to the history of Israel through the "traditional" bus tour, although several central tourist sites, such as Masada and the Kotel, are covered during the program. The organizer of the program states:

*My daughter went on a youth movement program. It was a life-changing experience, but she didn't meet one Israeli and did not have to speak Hebrew once. The target of that program was to connect to Israel and not necessarily to the people of Israel. Our target is interaction with people.*

### Organization of the Travel Program

While focused exclusively on Los Angeles, the manner in which the L.A. Federation runs its Partnership program is structurally similar to Birthright and MASA. Like Birthright and MASA the Los Angeles Federation does not run the programs; rather, the Federation provides an enabling framework, including funding and loose content guidelines for schools to develop, mostly on their own terms, relationships with schools in Israel.

Los Angeles schools send over 300 high school students to Israel annually, with Tel Aviv schools sending a similar number to L.A. The length of the Israel travel part of the twinning program varies from two weeks for younger ages to two months in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Each school decides on how many pupils travel and how many they can host.

Each hosting school is responsible for the itinerary. The Partnership program has its own basic requirements, such as the focus on home hospitality and the requirement that each itinerary focus on a theme. The twin schools choose the theme together.

Each L.A. school has a Partnership coordinator who collaborates with his or her Tel Aviv counterpart to pick trip themes and build program itineraries. Some of the schools also work with consultants to help them structure their program. The staff of the 18 Los Angeles schools who are involved in the twinning program meet locally 6 times a year for the purpose of learning from one another. All the Los Angeles and Tel Aviv coordinators meet once a year for a ten-day program in Tel Aviv, with every third year meeting in Los Angeles.

### Costs

Parents pay for airfare plus a small amount of the remaining cost. The Partnership pays for the program and staff. Each school gets a budget that they manage independently, placing responsibility for the program on the school. The Federation has donors who give directly to Partnership, for which a budget line is built into the Federation's annual budget. Parents may also apply for scholarship funds at the school or Federation.

### Measures of Success

The LA Federation has carried out an evaluation of the twinning program alumni and found that 75% of the participants keep a connection with the friends they made in Israel. The program also contributes to an increase of visits by Los Angeles Jews to Israel and the number of schools participating in the program has dramatically increased. There is also greater awareness of Jewish identity issues in Tel Aviv schools as a result of Partnership.

Overall, Partnership has brought modern Israel to Los Angeles students, especially in the areas of language and culture which students are now much more interested in, because "Israel is much more real."

\*Based on interview with Ahuva Ron, Senior Education Director of International Programs at the Los Angeles Federation.

## Community Frameworks

Community frameworks refer to the work done at Federations or community-oriented foundations to nurture and, at times, actively organize Israel travel programs for local high school youth. Federation or foundation activity in this area either works to subsidize participation in an existing program, or alternatively, to organize a local framework for encouraging Israel engagement in general and Israel travel in particular.

Based on data collected by the United Jewish Communities, 68 Federations in the United States provide grants or scholarships for youth participation in Israel travel programs, and 43 run savings programs, such as "Passport to Israel," to which parents contribute for a number of years with matching or larger sums provided by the Federation and sometimes their local synagogue.<sup>23</sup>

The following are two examples of how the savings programs work:

In Boston, the Passport to Israel program is run through congregations and is based on a \$100-per-year-per-person contribution that starts in third grade and is matched by the person's synagogue and the Federation (Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP)). Half of the Federation's contribution is drawn from endowed funds and half is taken from the annual campaign.

In Chicago, the savings program is SKIP (Send a Kid to Israel Program).<sup>24</sup> Contributions are made for students between 3rd and 9th grade whose families belong to participating congregations. Each year that a student is eligible to participate, a total of \$255 is added to his or her savings account. This money includes

an annual contribution of \$85 from the Federation and a combined contribution of \$170 from the family and participating congregation. The congregation must donate a minimum of \$25 per year. Chicago Federation also runs three other types of savings or Israel travel incentive programs.<sup>25</sup>

Data from the alumni and parent surveys show that approximately 20% of parents and youth who participated on a high school program in 2008 draw on a savings plans to help pay for their Israel trip.

While the savings programs are judged a success, their management and coordination is time-intensive and difficult. Some local communities are continuing their programs (with some of them thriving); however, others have dropped the programs, citing a lack of staff and financial resources.

## Israel as a platform for community development

Only a handful of Federations have programs as extensive as Los Angeles (see case study on previous page), in which Israel engagement is extensively used as a method for community building. Notable examples include:

### Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston

CJP views Israel as one part of a comprehensive strategy for building Jewish community that includes camping, adult education, family education, and other areas. Like the Los Angeles Federation, CJP provides an enabling framework for schools, through the Boston-Haifa Partnership 2000 program,<sup>26</sup> and for congregations to organize their own Israel trips.

<sup>23</sup> Document titled: "Community Israel Experience Scholarships Available for Summer 2008," compiled by the Jewish Peoplehood and Identity Department, UJC.

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.juf.org/israel\\_experience/skip.aspx](http://www.juf.org/israel_experience/skip.aspx)

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.juf.org/israel\\_experience/gift.aspx](http://www.juf.org/israel_experience/gift.aspx)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.cjp.org/page.aspx?id=137544>

### The Jewish Federation of Chicago

The Jewish Federation of Chicago works on a number of fronts, including giving \$100,000 per year in travel grants, a Partnership program with Kiryat Gat, an Israel Advocacy program aimed at high school students, and Shorashim. Shorashim is an independent operator which organizes and runs Israel experience programs and an extensive Israel engagement program aimed at high school youth in day schools and congregations, called Club Israel.<sup>27</sup>

### The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati

The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati runs a program through its Partnership 2000 program with Netanya, including a five-week summer program in Israel for American high school students and bringing Israeli students to Jewish summer camps in the Cincinnati area. In addition, in collaboration with the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, the Federation sponsors what is probably the largest Israel travel grant program in the country.

Since 1995, the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati has handed out over \$50 million in grants from a fund that is currently worth \$70 million. The fund seeks to enable every teen and college student in Cincinnati to travel to Israel at no cost, and to create a culture supporting Israel travel in the Cincinnati community. The Foundation currently allocates \$6,000 per person for high school travel and \$4,500 for college (often matched by MASA). Students who are eligible for Birthright are encouraged to go on Birthright and then make use of the college fund to go to Israel again. The Foundation also funds return trips; for example, it will fund a high school trip and later a college program. Grants are limited to 20 approved trip providers, including the different youth movements and others. The Foundation is

conducting annual research with a longitudinal design in order to understand the impact of the Israel programs.

### Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay (CA)

The Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay runs an Israel Center with the goal of building strong support for Israel in the community through media relations, curricular enhancement, education, and cultural programs, including screenings of Israeli films at the Contra Costa International Jewish Film Festival. The Federation runs a Partnership program with Kiryat Malachi and helps coordinate five community-based programs that send approximately 280 high school participants to Israel each year. For one of the trips, the Federation collaborates with the Board of Jewish Education, for another it offers direct subsidies, and for the other three trips, the Federation and the communal organizations raise funding from local foundations.

### UJA Federation of New York

The UJA Federation of New York focuses its Israel youth travel grants on high school programs, giving out up to \$500,000 annually. Some of the funds go to direct scholarships for participation on Israel travel programs. Funds are also allocated to enable local high schools to run programs or for professional development of staff involved in the Israel programs. The scholarships are managed in partnership with an approved list of 30 Israel travel programs that make grant requests on behalf of their participants from the New York area.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.clubisrael.org>

## Increasing investment in Israel education in schools

It is important to connect the Israel Experience to the growing interest in Israel education at the high school level among Federations and foundations. There is also a growth of consultants and organizations specializing in Israel-related content, either directly or indirectly connected to high school youth travel.

In a recent report on Israel education in Jewish day schools, the authors counted 40 programs and products (not including curriculum) that are currently offered to schools to enhance the Israel education they provide.<sup>28</sup>

Examples include:

- ▶ A recent \$1,000,000 grant to establish iCenter—an Israel resource center—by the Schusterman Family and Jim Joseph Foundations. The Jim Joseph Foundation also supports an extensive Israel education program for day schools in the Bay Area.
- ▶ The Avi Chai Foundation makes extensive investments in high school Israel education.<sup>29</sup>
- ▶ The Legacy Heritage Israel Engagement Grants aimed at congregations that want to pursue greater Israel engagement.<sup>30</sup>
- ▶ The Jewish Agency's program, MAKOM - The Israel Engagement Network, works with 13 Federations and networks of local organizations in each community to encourage greater and more sophisticated forms of Israel engagement.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> A. Pomson et. al., *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.avi-chai.org/bin/en.jsp?enPage=BlankPage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=Zone&enZone=PJPI>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.legacyheritage.org/IsraelEngagement/>

<sup>31</sup>

<http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Jewish+Education/Strategic+Partnerships/Makom/About+Makom>

## Israel on campus and the role of pre-college education in preparing students to grapple with attacks on Israel

A variation of the larger pattern of Israel education or Israel engagement is "Israel advocacy." The Israel advocacy organizations focus on preparing young high school and college-age Jews to counter anti-Israel sentiment. Their work concentrates on imparting knowledge about Israel and advocacy skills. In the past ten years, the Israel advocacy field has grown tremendously, including the creation of an umbrella organization, Israel on Campus Coalition, which serves as an umbrella organization for 33 member organizations (<http://www.israelcc.org/>). A number of ICC member organizations run programs directed at Jewish day schools and Israel study programs for high-school-age youth. "The David Project"<sup>32</sup> and "Stand With Us"<sup>33</sup> are the largest.

### Section Summary: Is there a need for a single overarching framework?

In this section we learned that there is no single overarching framework for programs serving the high school market. The closest equivalent to an overarching framework, capable of acting as a catalyst both for numbers of participants and quality of programming, are the handful of Federations doing impressive community development work using Israel as a resource for that effort. However, these Federations only serve their local area, with no form of collaboration or resource sharing between them.

United Jewish Communities (UJC), the national umbrella for local Federations and independent communities, has the potential to serve as a national framework. However, for the past six years, UJC's main role in the area of high school travel programs has been to coordinate a

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.davidproject.org/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.standwithus.co.il/>

scholarship list that tracks grants and saving programs at local Federations. Due to budget cuts in 2009, UJC no longer compiles that list. UJC's current focus on the Israel Experience is primarily Birthright and MASA, collecting funds from local federation towards an annual contribution to Birthright of \$12,000,000.

Among those interviewed for the project, there was widespread sentiment that the lack of an overarching framework hurts the broader effort to bring high school students to Israel. Ahuva Ron, Senior Education Director of International Programs at the Los Angeles Federation, feels that there is a real need for a "center that can centralize all the programs to Israel (country-wide) that includes program and content and consulting for the development of itineraries."

In the final section of this report, we will ask how JAFI or another organization might contribute to the development of an overarching framework to catalyze the field, and how that overarching framework might build effectively on the impressive amount of Israel engagement and Israel travel activity currently happening throughout the United States.

## Organizing Frameworks

A young Jew in high school will likely travel to Israel in one of two ways:

1. A family directly engages a tour guide or travels on a commercial program with no explicit educational content.
2. A family decides to invest between \$3,000 and \$12,000 to send their child to Israel on an Israel Experience program.

For those who decide on the latter option, the choice is between an academically-focused program and one that is tour-focused, with both falling under the rubric of experiential education. The program is likely to occur through a local institution, such as a school or congregation, or through a youth or camp movement with which the family is affiliated.

### High school Israel programs are mainly for the affiliated

Of the 22 program frameworks covered by the research (see page 12), 14 are affiliated with national movements and bring in approximately 60% of the total participants. The remaining participants come through high schools and congregations that work directly with independent (non-movement-based) providers in Israel such as the Israel Experience Ltd. or Alexander Muss High School in Israel.

In almost all cases, participants come to Israel either through their youth movements, high schools, or congregations. The affiliated nature of participants is confirmed by the 2008 alumni survey. While 84% of respondents were aware of other Israel travel options, only 36% considered other programs. Overall, the data indicates a strong connection to a particular movement, and to a lesser extent, a particular academic program (many of which are tied to a

movement).<sup>34</sup> Among parents, only 21% considered another program for their children.

In a small number of cases, the choice of program likely turned on the preference for a specialty program, such as those offered by Young Judea, or the desire for an academic high school program that is not affiliated with a national movement.

Beyond their willingness to consider other programs, 2008 Israel Experience participants clearly stand out as highly involved Jews when compared with other Americans their own age.

Only 18% of the alumni surveyed were not enrolled in a high school Jewish education program at the time of their trip. In comparison, 51% of American Jews under 30 years of age have had no formal Jewish education between grades 8 and 12.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to participating in a peer educational program in Israel, which in and of itself sets them apart, 54% had been to Israel before their 2008 program, participating in other short- and long-term programs or on family trips. 74% of day school students had previously traveled to Israel, as had 51% of those in supplementary Hebrew school of 3 days a week or more, 62% of those in 2-day-a-week Hebrew school, and 59% who were not enrolled in Hebrew school prior to participating in their 2008 Israel program. In comparison, the 2001 NJPS national survey of

<sup>34</sup> Among those who did not consider other programs, students on the shortest programs (less than 2 weeks) are least likely to be aware of (i.e., know about) other programs (e.g., March of the Living 43%). Academic program participants are much more aware (AMHSI and NFTY-EIE 68%; TRY 71%), with participants on summer youth and camp movement programs being most knowledgeable of other programs (NFTY-summer 75%; Bnei Avika 84%; YJ-summer 88%; Ramah Seminar 90%).

<sup>35</sup> Given that respondents are in later years of high school, it is likely that many of those who had no formal current education did participate in a Jewish education program in 8th grade. Thus the difference to other American Jews is likely to be even greater.

American Jews shows that only 27% travel to Israel on any form of trip before the age of 18.

### Organizers and Providers

Among the organizing frameworks for Israel experience programs, a distinction exists between "program organizers" and "program providers." *Organizers* recruit participants and run the program. In comparison, *providers* work with an U.S.-based organizer, with the former taking care of trip logistics in Israel and the latter recruiting participants. In most cases, the provider plans the trip itinerary and educational content in loose coordination with the organizer, with instances where the organizer may request a certain theme or program content. Notably, some interviewees cite this as a challenge, seeing the providers as stuck to outdated or standard templates that they are often reluctant to adjust.

The largest provider is the Israel Experience Ltd., which works with a broad range of schools and congregations. Ramah Israel and USY serve as providers for a number of Solomon Schechter day schools and Conservative congregations. AMHSI serves as a provider for a number of RAVSAK community schools.

### Independent operators

The biggest change in the past decade is the increasing activity of independent operators who are not affiliated with a national movement in the United States. These include organizers and providers such as the Israel Experience Ltd., Oranim Tours, the Nesiya Institute, Kivunim, Shorashim, and Israel Experts. With the exception of Israel Experience Ltd, the other independent operators are not major players (in terms of numbers) in the high school program market. The reverse is the case in the post-high school market, where organizers like Oranim Tours have a significant percentage of the market through Birthright.

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## Specialty, Europe, and *Mifgash* programs

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Until recently, the field was neatly divided between academic and touring programs. The former provide high school study in Israel with credits recognized by a participant's home high school. These programs include touring and informal experiential education alongside formal study. The academic programs tend to be longer than the touring programs, ranging from a month to year, with most lasting a semester.

The touring programs are normally informal educational tours of Israel with a focus on historical sites and enjoyable activities.

In recent years many programs, both academic and touring, have added a *mifgash* module, an intercultural encounter with Israeli teenagers. A minority of touring programs, like those sponsored by Shorashim and the LA Federation, have made the *mifgash* a central component that integrates throughout the tour. Many programs also offer a European module, with a focus on Jewish heritage in Eastern Europe or Spain.

A small number of participants come on "niche" or "specialty" programs, a phenomenon that began recently. The Nesiya Institute's Kehilla program offers a combination of outdoor adventure; workshops in the visual, performing and literary arts; community service projects; cultural activities; and creative Jewish study. Young Judea offers specialized summer programs focusing on areas such as volunteer service and environment/outdoor adventure.

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## Program development: Are current program offerings meeting the needs of participants?

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A theme that came up in some of the national interviews is a concern that there is a lack of innovation in high school Israel experience programs.

Despite major changes taking place in the overarching organizing frameworks for Israel programs, the only major change to the programs themselves is the addition of the *mifgash* to the Israel program. The addition of a European module to the larger tour is also relatively new, but beyond its marketing factor, the European module does not seem to substantially impact the Israel portion of the program. In contrast, the *mifgash* is thought to have marketing value and requires substantial changes to the traditional academic or touring program to succeed. While the specialty program also requires a very different emphasis from the traditional focus on historical site, they currently represent only a small percentage of the programs.

A question that arises from the research concerns the extent to which the current market of Israel experience participants is concerned with program content. In other words, is there a need for organizers to innovate?

The 2008 alumni survey shows ambiguity in the importance of program content for inducing a participant to pick one program over another. As we saw above, 64% of alumni and 79% of their parents did not consider a program other than their own. Yet, when asked what factors influenced their choice of program, 68% of alumni cited program content as a "strong reason," while 46% stated that the "organization or program" sponsoring the trip was a "strong reason" for their decision. Eighty percent of parents cited trip content and 69% cited the

sponsoring organization as strong reasons for choosing a program.

Our reading of the data is that in practice, the participants' affiliations with particular organizing frameworks determines the overall character of Israel Experience program offerings and innovation in the field. It is likely that participants and parents who are concerned with content are primarily interested in program content *within* the chosen program. Only after they decide on the program do they concern themselves with the program's content.

The chart below shows that more than 50% of Israel experience alumni would like to see substantially more offerings in three areas: Hebrew, *mifgashim* and experiences of independence. In all three areas, 75% or more report that they did engage in these activities during their program, but wanted more. Relatively small percentages viewed academics, learning about Israel, or hiking as something they needed to have more of, regardless of whether

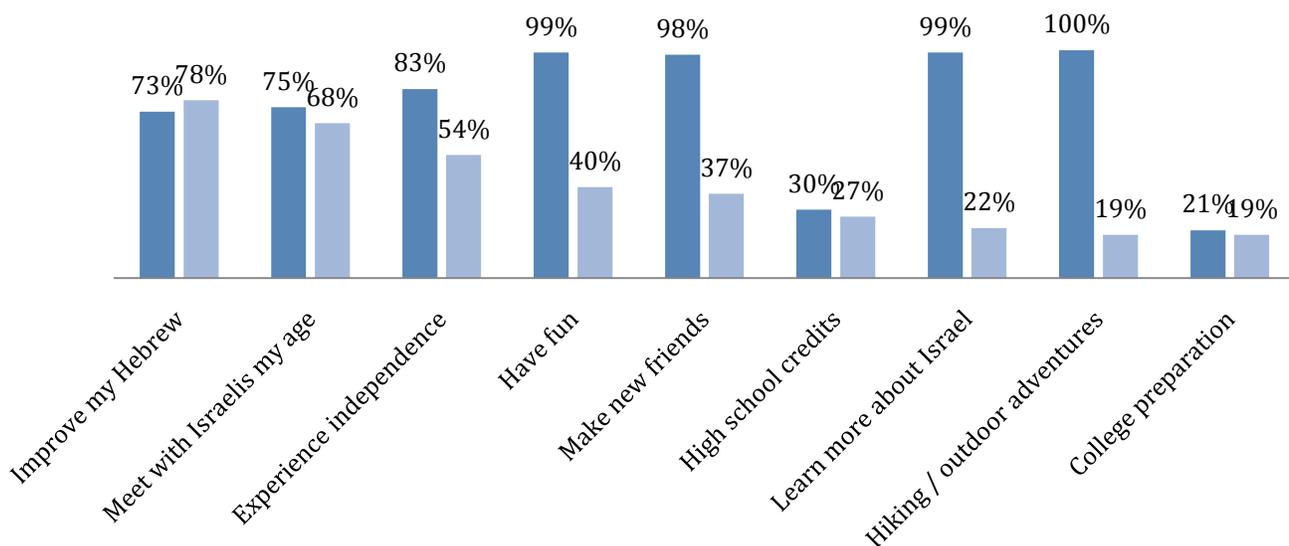
their programs offered the given activity. The only major difference between parents and their children is that parents were twice as likely to want to see more academic options for their children.

In conclusion, it seems that for organizers who are looking to appeal to mainstream populations, (i.e., affiliated families), there is no need to make substantial changes to the current program offerings, other than perhaps to intensify the *mifgash* and Hebrew components and, where feasible, to provide students with a greater sense of independence.

Where there is a need for innovation is among providers who work with sending organizations, particularly day schools. As we discussed above and will expand upon in the sending frameworks section of this paper, there are day schools that develop a very sophisticated set of goals for their Israel programs, and often come away disappointed by the Israel provider's inability to meet their expectations.

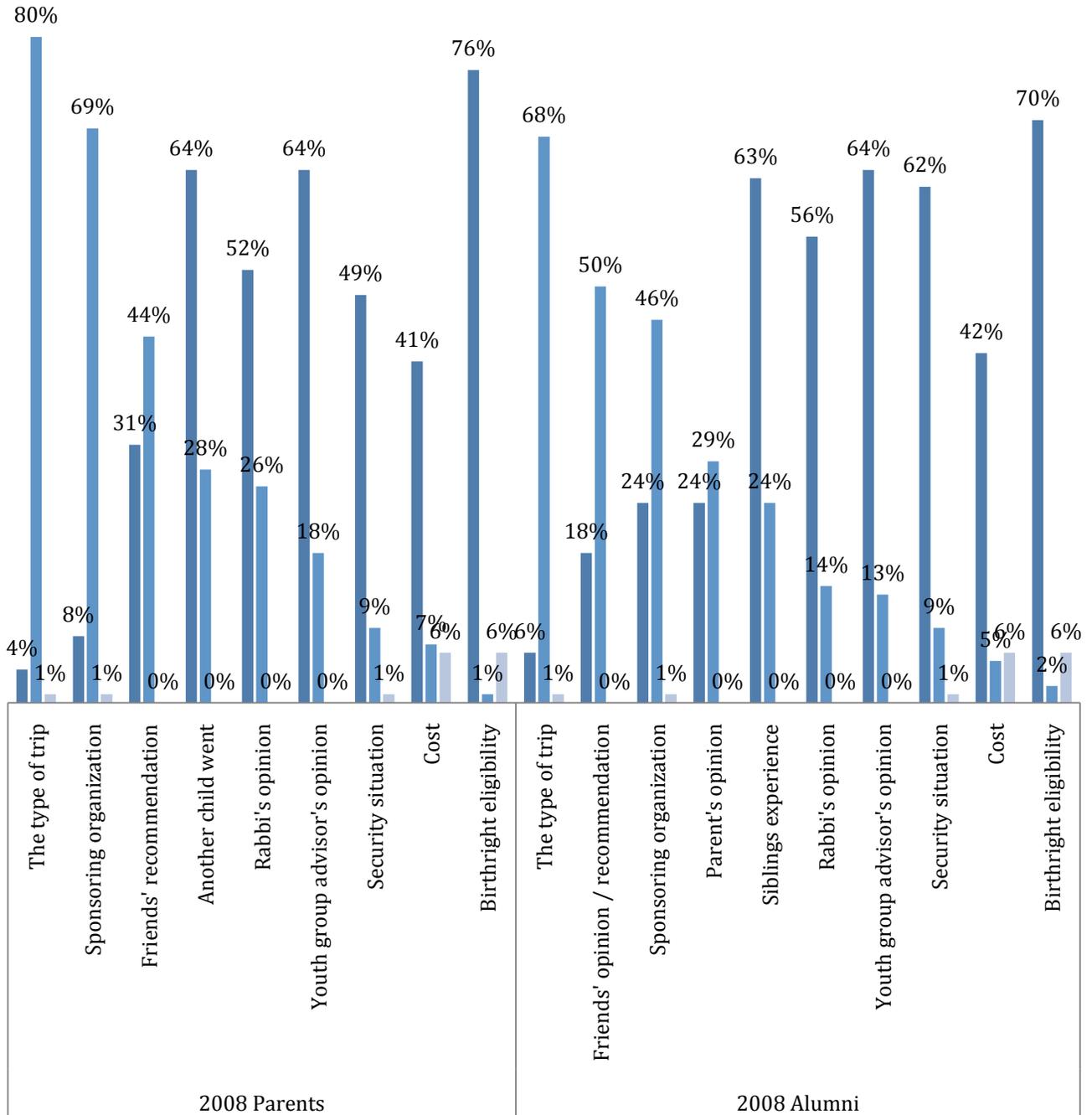
### Preferences regarding program content

■ Did you do this on your program?    ■ Would you have liked to do more?



## Factors impacting a decision to participate in an Israel program

■ Not relevant for us ■ A strong reason to go ■ A strong reason not to go



## Marketing

Whereas program development is about creating attractive options, marketing is the method to raise awareness of those options and attain buy-in from target populations.

Most program organizers actively market their programs. Organizations such as AMHSI and Young Judea have extensive marketing operations with regional recruiters who visit day and public schools and congregations, and attend Israel-related events. The programs affiliated with religious movements have smaller marketing operations. The Israel-based directors visit summer camps and congregations affiliated with their religious movement. They also use the JAFI-trained Israeli emissaries (*shlichim*) to help market Israel programs. Smaller programs place greater reliance on Internet-based advertising and word of mouth. Independent, community-based, and Federation-associated programs (e.g., Shorashim) tend not to market actively, relying on word of mouth and networking processes within their communities.

The 2008 alumni and parent surveys show that marketing programs have impact. Alumni and parents report a high level of awareness of programs other than the one they went on. However, as discussed above, the majority stick with programs run by their schools, congregations, or youth movements. The implications are that the most effective marketing for both the movement-based programs and for the independent organizations is to work through social networks tied to the Jewish community institutions through which target populations affiliate with their movements.

Paul Reichenbach, NFTY director states:

*The most important factor in a participant's decision to come to Israel is their friendship and affinity group. If it is possible to identify these groups, then we have greater recruiting success than with any*

*other tool. Brochures and pamphlets are not useful. Recruitment needs to happen via home visits and help from the congregation. Belonging to the youth movement means that parents who also send their kids to the camps see Israel as part of the larger NFTY process.*

The chart on the previous page supports Reichenbach's assertion. 50% of 2008 participants and 44% of their parents regard a friend's recommendation as a strong reason to go on a trip.

## Section Summary

In summary, the analysis of organizing frameworks points strongly to the importance of affiliation for understanding the field of high school programs. A majority of trip organizers and providers are either associated with a youth movement or work with day schools, congregations, or summer camps that are associated with a national youth movement or another type of national framework.

Participants in high school programs are far more likely than the average American Jew their age to have a high level of involvement in the Jewish community. Participants and their parents are most likely to choose a program for its association with their youth movement, school, camp or congregation, rather than choosing based on the content of the program.

The impact of the "affiliation factor" on program innovation is that programs do not appear to need to innovate in order to attract participants; they just need to "keep them happy," making minimal changes to respond to strong trends such as the desire for meetings with Israeli youth. However, program providers do need to address the needs of then sending organizations that have strong agendas. This aspect is expanded on in the next section of the report.

While some programs do employ professional recruiters, most work through movement

institutions or organizations affiliated with a national movement. The most important marketing venues are networks of alumni and school, camp, or congregational professionals who recommend the programs, which further reinforces the affiliation factor.

### Sending Frameworks

The decision to travel to Israel is made by parents and their child through two primary frameworks.

1. The decision is made independently, as the parents and/or child view the Israel trip as an important or valuable experience that they want to make it happen.
2. The decision is made as part of a school or congregational community. The parents and/or child need to decide whether to opt in and participate in the program.

### Families

Following the discussion in the previous section, we know that parents and their child will usually choose an Israel trip run by an organization with which they affiliate. Within the framework of affiliation, the opinion of friends or siblings who have been on the trip, followed by rabbis and youth movement advisor's opinion help in making the decision (see previous chart).

Given the assumptions with which this research project began, the biggest surprise provided by the survey data is that 2008 participants and their parents do not attach great importance to either the issue of Birthright eligibility or cost in the decision to participate in an Israel experience program. In national-level interviews with some trip organizers and among the JAFI staff who commissioned this project, there is a strong assumption that cost and Birthright are very important factors shaping the field. For this reason, we now zero in on these two topics.

Notably, we are sure that factors of cost and Birthright would come out as much more important factors if a similar survey were done with non-goers. However, among those who do participate, these issues are not central for one overriding reason: *When a family is committed to*

*sending their child to Israel in high school, they will find a way to do so.*

Costs: When it is important to a family they will find a way to pay for it.

Israel Experience programs are expensive, with an average approximate price tag of \$1,000 per week per participant.<sup>36</sup> For families that cannot afford the trip but are committed to sending their child, a range of funding options exists, including travel grants, scholarships, and Israel savings plans.

Data from the 2008 alumni and parent surveys show 42% of the former and 34% of the latter cite cost as "a reason" or "a strong reason" not to go to Israel. However, if only those who cite cost as a "strong reason" not to go are considered, the numbers drop considerably to 6% of participants and 6% of parents (see above chart). Furthermore, 41% of participants and 42% of parents indicate that costs were irrelevant in their decision-making process.

The large difference between those citing cost as "a reason" and "strong reason" not to go is significant. While cost is a concern for a large minority, most are committed to sending their child, so cost will not be as strong a reason as other push and pull factors for (and against) Israel trip participation. That said, finances are a central consideration, but the issue is first and foremost, "how to gain access to necessary resources." While we do not have hard data for non-goers, it is worth investigating whether it is a lack of commitment to participation or other priorities that supersede the Israel trip, thus allowing finances to trump the possibility of spending a summer or semester in Israel during high school.

<sup>36</sup> Program costs are recently exacerbated by factors including the fluctuating exchange rate (dollar to shekel) and the increasing price of fuel. Some youth movement programs also lost subsidized infrastructure from JAFI due to institutional cutbacks.

## The importance of financial assistance

Interviews with parents and high school students who participated in Israel Experience programs in 2008 show that for many families, financial assistance is necessary to enable participation. Some interviewees indicate that savings plans, in which the family, the Federation, and the synagogue contribute a certain amount annually for up to seven years (see above discussion on page 17), are a helpful means for preparing financially for a high school trip. Participants and parents report saving \$2,100 to \$3,000 through programs such as Passport to Israel, SKIP, and Gift for Israel (local names for similar programs). In the survey, 21% of parents indicated that they participated in a Federation-sponsored savings plan.

Additional sources of financial aid in the form of grants and scholarships are provided through national camp or youth movements and through the local Federation in coordination with day schools who run programs. All youth movements and some of the independent organizations offer subsidy money to their participants. Within the day schools themselves, school officials engage in extensive fundraising efforts to subsidize the trip. (This discussion is expanded upon below on page 32.)

In most cases, it is the parents who take responsibility for the financial worry of sending the child to Israel, but in many cases, youth themselves also report making an effort to secure funding. Young people search the Internet, write letters to family friends, and agree to give talks at their synagogue or elsewhere upon their return in order to receive small scholarships towards the trip. In some cases, parents make their children contribute to the trip, perhaps by providing spending money, either out of financial need or because they believe it helps the child "appreciate the trip

more.” Finally, some parents and youth also report receiving help from grandparents.

It is worth noting that many parents and children emphasize the importance of participating in a high school program and their willingness to make sacrifices (such as taking a loan or forgoing an annual family vacation) to make it work. Interestingly, some parents and youth report that while they needed funding help, they felt that other families needed it more so were reluctant to ask for it. Rather, they chose to make sacrifices to make it work. Finally, one young man reported that “I didn’t think I was Jewish enough in terms of youth or temple activities [to qualify].” This begs the question of whether available information enables participants to understand if they are eligible for financial assistance.

*Birthright: not a concern of the affiliated Jew committed to going to Israel in high school*

As with all other topics covered in this report, the impact of Birthright depends on the affiliation of a family and their involvement with Jewish community. Professionals from Orthodox movement programs and non-Orthodox Jewish day schools interviewed for this report feel that their enrollment is unaffected by Birthright Israel. Bnei Akiva feels that Birthright attracts a different population and complements their programs which appeal to the more committed Jew. They also note that youth who attend Orthodox high school programs are unlikely to wait until they are eighteen to go on an Israel program. The same sentiment was expressed by non-Orthodox day schools. One day school (Chicagoland) noted that only one student in four years chose not to participate in their Israel program because of a future Birthright opportunity.

The affiliation effect was echoed among 2008 alumni and their parents. The survey data show

that the majority of alumni and parents did not see losing Birthright eligibility as relevant to the decision-making process to go on an Israel program (70% of youth and 76% of parents said it was irrelevant). About one-quarter said that Birthright eligibility did factor in as a possible reason not to go, despite their choice to participate (26% of youth and 23% of parents); yet only 6% felt loss of Birthright eligibility was a “strong reason” not to go. The reason for the lack of concern with Birthright is the same as in the above discussion on finances. Those committed to going to Israel are unwilling to wait for a short ten-day trip in college.

The interviews round out the picture. 2008 trip alumni and their parents indicate awareness of Birthright, but wanted more than a ten-day tourist experience.

*Birthright was part of the decision...but I wanted something for more than ten days...this was a better way to do it.*

This young woman reports wanting a longer more in-depth experience, with learning about Israel, visiting many sites, meeting Israel and traveling with her camp friends. Another respondent indicates that Birthright was not a big factor.

*I had a few friends pressuring me to do the usual stuff at camp during the summer, saying [we can do] Birthright later, but Birthright was only ten days which is nothing compared to 30 days I spent there.*

One mother reports that she discussed Birthright with her son, but that he made the choice of going during high school.

*He knew that he wouldn’t be eligible for Birthright later, but...it did not weigh heavily on his decision...He thought going now (at the end of his sophomore year) was the right thing to do. That’s when many youth group Israel programs had trip. He also figured he would be working the following*

*summer... There were few years that he could do it in his high school life, this was the right time.*

As we have argued above, young Jews who choose to participate in a high school Israel experience program have often grown up in day schools, camp, and youth movements. For some, the Israel trip is a culmination or progression of their school or movement experience, moving them into roles as youth leaders and camp counselors. Day school students or others who participate in longer programs (3 months or more) are the least likely to even mention Birthright as a viable option.

Many participants in longer academic programs have also previously participated in shorter programs and are thus, in any case, no longer eligible for a Birthright trip.

The few interviews conducted with non-goers indicate that the potential Birthright trip in college makes it easier for some to decide against the high school trip. Yet even among these interviewees, the primary reason for declining participation was not Birthright, but rather financial considerations or social reasons (i.e., they were not happy about attending an academic program with their classmates). It was not clear that had Birthright not been an option, they would have chosen to go to Israel.

#### Impact on the less affiliated

There are indicators that Birthright *does* have a negative impact on the decision to go to Israel in high school for less- or non-affiliated Jews. For this reason, organizations which offer shorter summer trips are more likely to complain about a loss of participants than are those running longer programs or programs for day schools and Orthodox institutions.

All non-Orthodox youth movement representatives who were interviewed feel that Birthright has a negative impact on their numbers. They believe the Birthright effect is even more acute due to the state of the

economy, with the theory being that a free trip is more appealing when a family budget is tight.

While these theories are plausible, there is no concrete data supporting them. Since our research does not include unaffiliated youth or parents, it is logical to conclude that the less involved in Jewish community, the less likely the family is to invest in an expensive high school program and the more likely they are to take advantage of the free trip in college. This discussion is expanded upon in the final section of this report, where we look at data on Birthright's reach into the less or non-affiliated Jewish populations.

However, it is important to note that in many cases, the drop of numbers in the short-term programs run by non-Orthodox youth movements are likely not the direct effect of Birthright. Non-Orthodox youth movement numbers are declining overall, so it is logical that the Israel programs aimed at the general youth movement population (as opposed to the youth movement's student leadership) will also decline. Some attribute the drop in numbers to the larger decline of the liberal denominations; others, to the fact that active non-Orthodox Jews are increasingly going to day schools and less likely to view the youth movement as a primary socialization framework. The latter fact also explains the rising number of participants going to Israel in high school through day school programs.

In summation, it is clear that the affiliation effect is important in explaining why Birthright does not have a large impact on high school programs. It is also clear that lack of affiliation works against participation in high school programs and is the place where Birthright plays a strong role for recruiting participants to the Israel trip (see final section of this report). However, it is not clear that Birthright is the reason for the drop in participation of less-affiliated participants in

programs sponsored by youth movements. Additional focused research on non-participants in general, and on non-affiliated youth in particular, is needed to answer this question.

### Birthright's impact on supporting frameworks

While the non-Orthodox youth movements tend to focus on the drop in numbers, which they attribute to Birthright, some other program organizers and Federation representatives provide a more nuanced understanding of Birthright's impact.

On the one hand, Birthright played an important role in keeping Israel programs “on the agenda” during the height of the second intifada, which led to a drastic drop in participation by 2002. Birthright kept Israel travel on the communal agenda for the non-Orthodox world. In addition, the financial intake from Birthright programs made a tremendous financial contribution to many of the Israel travel organizations. On the other hand, due to Birthright's financial weight and the sheer numbers of participants produced by their recruitment strategy, Federations and trip organizers who work in the Israel Experience field are diverting energy for planning and programming away from high school programs.

For example, Shorashim reduced their Israel high school groups from three to two while expanding their work with post-high school programs because of Birthright. This, despite the feeling at Shorashim and in other organizations that high school programs are the best way to inculcate connection to Israel and to “transform lives.” High school programs enable trip organizers to connect to the entire family and to sending institutions, producing alumni who are very likely to return for additional Israel programs in college.

One complex example of Birthright having a negative impact was found at Prozdor Hebrew High School (supplementary school program) in Boston. The Federation (CJP) stopped subsidizing Prozdor's Israel trip due to dissatisfaction with the program's timing so close to Birthright. The \$3,000 ten-day program was geared towards twelfth graders at the end of their senior year. While CJP understands that there is a large group of potential participants at Prozdor, they want these students either to go on existing Israel experience programs earlier in high school, or, alternatively, for Prozdor to revamp the program and gear it towards younger students. Prozdor also reported the number of participants dropping (from twenty-seven to twelve) over a course of a few years, a fact they attribute to participants waiting for the free Birthright trip in college.

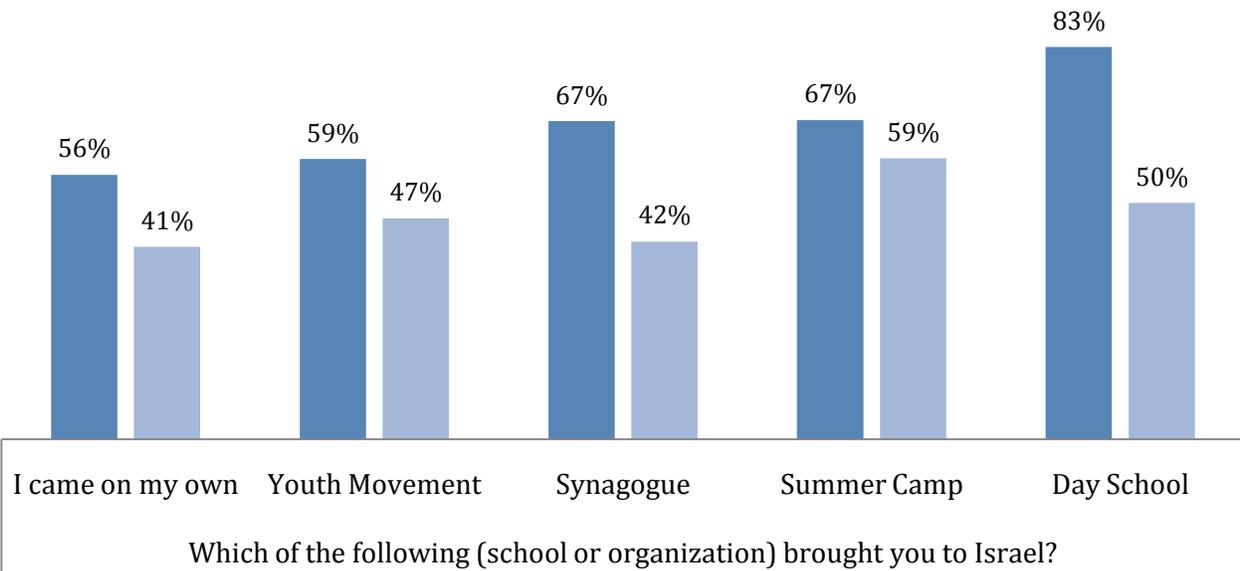
### Community-based institutions

In addition to the family, the decision to go to Israel is also made at the level of local Jewish organizations, such as day schools, congregations, or Federations that sponsor Israel trips for high school youth. When the Israel program is spearheaded by an organization, rather than a family, substantial changes occur in the dynamic of the trip, including:

1. Changes in the decision making process in which a family engages when choosing to send their child.
2. The decision to go to Israel moves up to the level of the sending organization.
3. The nature of expected benefits from the Israel trip expands to include the goals of the sending organization and community.
4. Considerations of the Israel based trip provider shift away from the individual to the dynamic of working with a sending organization.

**Participants coming through day school organized trips are the least likely to consider alternative programs.**

- Did you consider any programs, other than the one you went on?
- Were you aware of other programs?



Changes in the manner a family chooses to send a child

In the case of the day school or congregational trip, when an entire class or peer group is going on the trip, the decision becomes one of opting out, rather than opting in. The result is the amplification of the affiliation effect that has been noted throughout this report.

The chart above shows the impact of sending organizations, detailing five possible ways to travel to Israel.

1. **Day school.** A day school sending a class to Israel
2. **Summer camp.** A group from a summer camp goes on a summer program run by a movement-affiliated organizer that runs such summer programs, such as Bnei Akiva, NFTY, or Ramah Seminar.
3. **Synagogue.** A synagogue sending a group of high-school-age congregants on a movement-affiliated summer program.

4. **Youth Movement.** A group from the local youth movement chapter goes on a summer program through the national movement, such as Young Judaea, NFTY, or USY.
5. **I came on my own.** An individual makes the decision with his/her family and attends the program on their own without a mediating organization.

The Locked-In Effect

The data shows a clear effect due to the type of sending organization. Among 2008 program alumni, those who went by themselves without a sending organization are most likely to have considered another program other than the one they went on. Fifty-six percent (56%) did not consider another program, as opposed to 83% of participants on a day-school-organized program. In other words, the latter are "locked in" to their day school and that school's choice of program provider. Families sending their child to Israel through their day school are less likely to consider alternative Israel travel options, even

though they are as likely as those going through youth movements and synagogues to be aware of other options.

#### What determines the locked-in effect?

Just over 40% of modern Orthodox and nearly 70% of non-Orthodox day schools commission or organize a program in Israel, varying in length from two weeks to three months.<sup>37</sup> These large numbers among non-Orthodox day schools is very significant for the field of high school trips to Israel. Day schools send an entire class (those who opt in), usually with a single Israel program provider that the school selects, hence, the locked-in effect described above. In comparison, the locked-in effect affects other sponsored trips differently, for the following reasons.

1. Like the day schools, summer camps work with one provider, affiliated with their movement. In many cases, the Israel trip replaces an entire summer at camp, acting as a culmination of the camp experience. The goal is normally for the participants to return as counselors to the camp the following year. However, participants can choose not to participate in the camp-sponsored Israel trip and hence skip what otherwise would have been a last year at camp, attending another program or no program at all.
2. Synagogues or youth movement chapters may organize their own congregation trip, normally through the Hebrew high school, which will then produce a similar locked-in effect. However, in many cases, a synagogue or youth movement chapter will not run its own program, but instead they will encourage high school congregants to participate in a movement-sponsored program.

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<sup>37</sup> Pomson, et. al. *ibid.*, p. 8.

For example, at Temple Isaiah, a Reform congregation in Lexington, Massachusetts, when there are enough numbers and support, the synagogue will organize its own high school group. However, the congregation also encourages participation in NFTY summer and the EIE High School in Israel.<sup>38</sup>

#### The decision to go to Israel moves from families to sending organizations

When a sending organization sits between the family and the Israel trip, the question of whether or not to go to Israel is often given by the family over to the sending organization. If the organization endorses the Israel program, as in the locked-in scenario presented above, the family will likely send their child.

To reach the point of an organization, deciding to sponsor an Israel travel program, the leadership needs to cultivate support from key stakeholders, including board members, key figures among the staff, parents, and students. For most day schools and congregations, only the core members of their constituencies view the Israel trip as an obvious need. The leadership needs to actively cultivate support for the program, often engaging in an uphill battle for the first year or two of the program.

While the scale of research conducted for this project does not enable a definitive statement on the manner in which the buy-in process occurs, it is clear that the process in most organizations takes place over two to three years. Once program alumni start recommending the trip to younger students and their families, and the community sees the program's benefits, the task of organizing support for the program is made easier. Thus, when the trip is structured to produce benefits for the participants and the

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<sup>38</sup> CJP provides travel grants and NFTY gives a \$250 gift to each Bar/Bat mitzvah at Temple Isaiah that is given following the congregant's 10th grade year.

### Case Study: Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School K-8, Palo Alto

Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School started an 8th grade program three years ago. The parents only agreed to start the Israel trip as a pilot project under the condition that finances were found to ensure participation of at least 40 of the 48 8th grade students. In addition, the trip was scheduled after graduation, as parents were concerned about the impact on the kids who would not be able to go. This plan was enacted, despite attempts of the Head of School to move the trip to mid-year to enable benefits to the school from the returning students before they complete middle school. In the first 2 years, approximately 40 students went on the trip.

Other incentives to keep the trip at the end of the year are the large number of former Israelis at the school who want their child to stay in Israel after the trip, and a number of families who join their child at the end of trip and continue on as a family vacation.

The cost of the trip is \$3,600 per student, including airfare. Each student's family pays \$1,500, and the school raises the rest. Fundraising includes a large event called *Walk to Jerusalem*, and a significant number of parents give a donation to the trip above their own costs. In the first year, they raised enough money to cover their fundraising needs for the second year as well. The school also receives some funding from their Federation and a from a foundation in the area that supports all 8th grade trips by local schools.

In addition, the school receives money for the broader Israel Engagement program from the Jim Joseph Foundation and draws on the resources of the Israel Center at the East Bay Federation to help develop a twinning program with an Israeli school.

\*From interview with Julie Smith, Head of School, Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School.

broader community, support is also likely to grow from year to year.

Financing the trip is a critical element of obtaining parental buy-in

Finances are a critical part of the decision by a sending organization to sponsor an Israel trip, especially in the case of day schools where the trip is an expense over and above already-high tuition. This is one reason why many organizations move the trip to the summer, as parents who will regardless need to pay for summer programming for their children "may as well put that money into an Israel trip."

The case study on this page illustrates how finances and the buy-in process come together for one Jewish day school in three ways:

I. When there is a strong desire on the part of a sending organization for an Israel trip,

there is also likely to be a substantial fundraising effort to enable the trip to happen (this was the case in all the schools and synagogues interviewed).

2. Part of the fundraising effort includes tapping available Federation and foundation resources.
3. There are also resources available to the school for the purpose of broader Israel engagement (described in overarching framework section above) which, when effectively tapped, can contribute to the development of a pro-Israel culture in the sending organization, which in turn contributes to support for the Israel trip.

The point is that "when there is a will, there is a way." This finding is reinforced in the recent report on Israel Education in day schools. The authors found that when schools were asked,

### Case Study: Chicagoland Jewish High School, Chicago

Chicagoland Jewish High School provides an example of a sending organization which has developed a very sophisticated sense of the benefits for the participant and school community from the Israel trip. The School sponsors a 3-week program during winter vacation organized by USY in Israel. In 2008, a total of 33 out of 39 seniors participated.

The school has several goals for the program:

#### 1. Deepen the learning experience at school while in Israel

The goal of the trip is not to produce an exceptional opportunity for religious or spiritual development. Rather, they try and follow the same practices in Israel as they would in the school in Chicago. The rationale behind the trip is that every Jew should have a deep connection to Israel; the trip is not a spark, but a way of deepening connections. The trip just continues practice.

#### 2. Enable critical engagement

The education program focuses on teaching critical thinking and showing participants how to reach sophisticated conclusions through studying contemporary issues. The goal is to grapple with Israel as a complex and intricate society. A significant amount of time is spent looking at grey areas in Israel (security, politics, social problems, poverty, etc). The educators try and be as dogma-free as possible, allowing participants to come to their own conclusions. "Decisions should be made based on knowledge."

#### 3. Develop partnership program

During the trip, a strong emphasis is placed on meeting Israelis and receiving a variety of perspectives. The trip includes a meeting with students from Kiryat Gat, which is part of the broader development of a partnership with a Kiryat Gat school.

#### 4. Connect to Conservative Movement

A lot of energy is invested in trying to connect to the Conservative movement in Israel. The school wants its students to develop more of an institutional connection to the Conservative movement in Israel.

#### 5. Impact school culture

The Israel trip's alumni should bring the experience back to the school in order to position Israel as a central part of school culture and raise excitement among younger students about their future trip.

\*Interview with Rabbi Elliot Goldberg, Director of Religious Life, Chicagoland Jewish High School

"What are the major challenges in relation to Israel education in your school?", 10% of Orthodox and 32% of non-Orthodox schools cited finances as a major challenge. The authors conclude that the number of non-Orthodox schools citing finances as a concern is higher than for Orthodox schools because the schools'

leaderships find it harder to marshal the support needed to position the Israel trip as central to the schools' educational and organizational culture. Once a critical threshold of support is reached, "finances are no longer a problem," in

the sense that the school's leadership will do the work needed to raise the money.<sup>39</sup>

The nature of expected benefits from the Israel trip expand beyond the participant to include the sending organization and community

For a sending organization to maintain support for the Israel trip, its key stakeholders must be motivated to fundraise. To the extent that key stakeholders are aware of benefits from the Israel trip both for individual participants *and* the larger community, the buy-in process is likely to succeed. However, only a minority of sending organizations are developing sophisticated understandings of the benefits of the Israel trip and structuring their trips accordingly. The most sophisticated resemble the educational program pursued by the Chicagoland High School, as described in the case study on the previous page. Most sending organizations do not reach Chicagoland's level of sophistication, impeding the development of broader support for the trips.

Chicagoland's leadership has considered most of the following questions:

- ▶ To what degree does a program have educational goals that go beyond providing the individual with an enjoyable experience in Israel?
- ▶ To what degree has the organization considered:
  - ▶ Benefits for individuals, in terms of:
    - ▶ Diverse areas of knowledge about Israel.
    - ▶ Bringing participants into contact with Israelis and using that contact to encourage a more sophisticated understanding about one's own Jewish belonging (for both the visitors and their Israeli hosts), as

well as the development of networks and ongoing contact between the visitors and Israelis they meet.

- ▶ Enabling participants to discuss key issues about Jewish life and Israel in a manner that they find interesting and meaningful and which will lead to continued pursuit of knowledge and future trips to Israel.
- ▶ Benefits for the sending organization and home community, in terms of the following questions:
  - ▶ Is there an active pre/post-trip program to ensure maximum impact of the trip?
  - ▶ Is there continuity between Jewish educational experiences at home and in Israel?
  - ▶ To what extent does the Israel trip integrate into the wider formal and informal educational program of a school, youth, or camp movement?
  - ▶ To what extent do sending organizations have personnel with the professional capacity to maximize the value of the Israel trip for their institution or community?
  - ▶ To what extent can the home organizer and Israel provider coordinate with one another to ensure continuity of the Israel experience with what precedes and follows the trip?

Few sending organizations currently reach this level of sophistication. In the report on Israel education in day schools, the authors also argue that most schools fail to build successfully on the momentum of the Israel trip.

*When utilized to its fullest capacity, this experience [the Israel trip] can serve as both a culminating focus for processes of Israel education that have been conducted over many years, and as a resource*

<sup>39</sup> Pomson, et. al., *ibid.*, p. 18.

*that enriches the Israel-related aspects of school culture, with returnees bringing back to school knowledge of and enthusiasm for Israel. In most instances, however, schools organize this experience as a passing-out exercise. So as to cause minimum disruption to the rest of the curriculum, it is more or less the last thing students do before they graduate Grade 8 or Grade 12. Invariably, too, because schools lack the resources and know-how, they subcontract the programming of these experiences to specialist providers in Israel who, more often than not, create a program with limited direct connection to the specific elements of Israel education that students encounter over their years in school. What could be (and in a very few instances is) a synthesizing and energizing experience ends up overshadowing and perhaps overwhelming all other aspects of Israel education.<sup>40</sup>*

The final section of this report explores ways in which improvements at the level of the overarching frameworks serving the field might enable sending organizations to derive greater benefit from the large investment they make in their Israel travel programs.

Concerns of the Israel-based trip providers move from a focus on the individual to the dynamic of working with a sending organization.

The sending organization will usually work with an Israel-based program provider to run the trip and build an itinerary. For the Israel program provider, there are a different set of consideration for working with organizations, as opposed to individuals, which impact marketing and program development strategies.

In terms of marketing, the sending organization, rather than the program provider, recruits for the trip and worries about costs. For the Israel provider, the need then is to win over the sending organizations as clients, which in turn

provide a guaranteed number of participants, given the locked-in effect described above.

In terms of program development, some sending organizations with sophisticated goals will make substantial requests regarding the theme and content of the Israel program. The failures of program providers to take seriously the schools' requests often lead to a feeling of frustration. The sophisticated sending organization learns to make demands of the program provider and might insist on the same guide, year after year, to ensure continuity and understanding of their educational needs.

### Section Summary

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The analysis of sending frameworks further reinforces the importance of the "affiliation factor" for understanding core processes in the field of high school Israel Experience programs.

At the level of individual families, major issues, such as consideration of cost and loss of Birthright eligibility, are not significant factors for those families with high levels of involvement in Jewish life. These families view the Israel trip in high school as a high priority and will make the necessary sacrifices to make it happen. The major question is if "core Jewish families" have access to the necessary grants, scholarships, and savings programs that make the trip affordable.

The affiliation factor is amplified when we consider the role of sending organizations in the Israel trip. When an organization decides to sponsor a trip, it "locks in" its constituency. Families who do not want to send a child on the trip need to "opt out." This, in turn, changes the dynamic by which the program organizer needs to market and develop the Israel program. The organization, rather than the individual, becomes the client. Sophisticated sending organizations will make substantial demands on their Israel program providers, which is likely to be the

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<sup>40</sup> Pomson, et. al., *ibid.*, p. 8.

greatest current source of program innovation in the field.

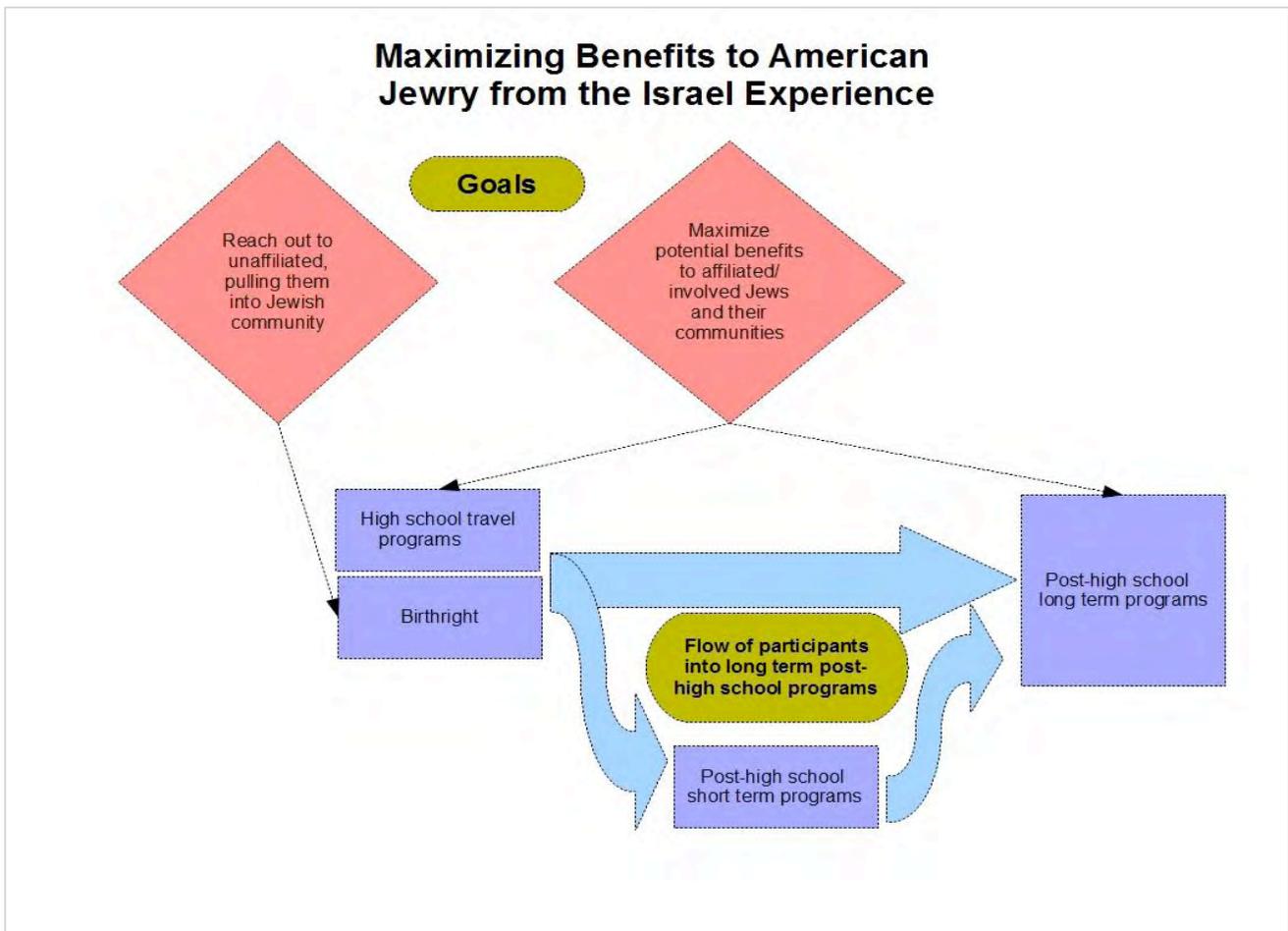
A key process is the buy-in that the sending organization's leadership needs to attain from its constituents. Once the trip is launched, and if it is successful, then a culture of support for the Israel trip can develop in the organization. The development of a supportive Israel culture is more likely to occur if the school's leadership develops a larger vision of the benefits of Israel engagement and the trip and succeeds in communicating those benefits to their constituents. Many organizations do not reach a high level of sophistication in terms of their Israel engagement agenda, which in turn impacts the ability to maintain enthusiasm and support for the trips over the long term.

### Summary & Policy Recommendations

This report provides an analysis of the field of Israel Experience programs for high school youth along three dimensions: 1) the overarching frameworks that enable the Israel experience, 2) the program organizers who run the Israel Experience programs on the ground, and 3) the sending frameworks from where participants on the programs originate.

In terms of overarching frameworks, JAFI is no longer the organizational and resource center for Israel Experience programs, leaving the larger field fragmented into three general sectors:

1. Taglit-Birthright Israel: post-high school, short ten-day program.
2. MASA: post-high school, long-term programs (five months or more).



### 3. Unorganized Sector

- a. All high school programs
- b. Post-high school programs, longer than ten days (Birthright) but shorter than five months (MASA)

Largely due to the weakening of JAFI and the success of Birthright, this three-part organization of the field did not develop from a comprehensive assessment of the manner in which the benefits of Israel youth programs might be best delivered to American Jewry. In this final section, we propose a framework for thinking about the way in which the Israel Experience field could ideally be organized. Our proposal is shown in the flow chart on the previous page. We begin by explaining the flow chart and the manner in which the data collected for this research project supports it. We then suggest policy implications for JAFI or other actors wishing to impact the field.

#### Maximizing benefits to American Jewry from the Israel Experience

***A system-wide and holistic approach to the high school Israel Experience must begin with the larger benefits of Israel engagement to American Jewry and the place of the high school trip within it.***

As we have seen in the case studies above, there are communities and organizations making sophisticated use of Israel engagement and travel for the purpose of community development and the educational enrichment of their constituents. The high school programs are one part of the larger Israel engagement strategy in the United States. The question for policy makers is how to maximize the benefits of the Israel Experience from what is already a very large investment by the American Jewish community.

The flow chart begins with two primary benefits of the Israel Experience to American Jewry. The use of the Israel Experience can be used to:

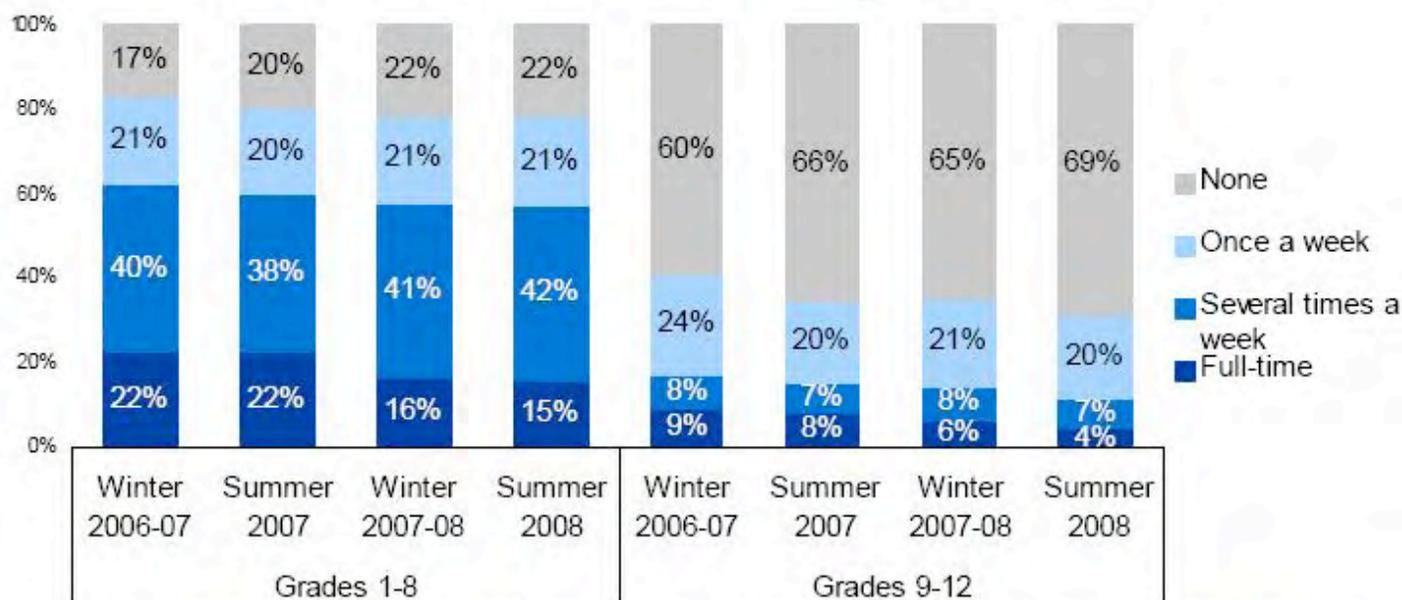
1. Reach out to unaffiliated Jews and pull them into Jewish community, and to
2. Deepen the engagement of affiliated/involved Jews with their local organizations and community.

These two areas of benefits coming out of Israel Experience programs build on the major finding of this report, namely, the high levels of involvement in Jewish communities by participants in high school programs. The organizing and sending frameworks depicting in the flow chart rest on the affiliated/non-affiliated distinction.

The high school Israel Experience market primarily serves the affiliated Jewish community.

- ▶ Families need to invest a large sum of money for the trip; thus, the importance of Israel travel must sit high on their list of priorities.
- ▶ Families who are affiliated with a day school, congregation, summer camp, or youth movement are also more likely know how to access Federation and other resources (such as grants and savings programs) and will utilize those frameworks to subsidize the cost of the trip.
- ▶ The less affiliated are difficult to reach, as they are less accessible through Jewish networks. The few Israel program organizations working with this population need to make an extensive marketing and recruitment effort to reach their target audience.

### Formal Jewish education of Birthright participants\*



\*Cited in Saxe et. al. 2008. "Taglit-Birthright Israel Evaluation: 2007-2008 North American Cohorts." *Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies*, Brandeis University. pg. 13

#### Birthright as a complement to the high school trip

Birthright is the only current organizing framework that is recruiting significant numbers of relatively unaffiliated American youth to the Israel experience. Only 18% of the 2008 Israel program alumni surveyed for this project were not enrolled in a high school Jewish education program at the time of their trip. In comparison, using NJPS as a guide, 51% of American Jews under 30 had no formal Jewish education between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Sixty percent (60%) to 69% of Birthright's 2008 participants have had no formal high school Jewish education whatsoever.

***From a system-wide perspective, high school and Birthright programs complement one another. Each pulls from distinct target populations, and both produce alumni who are likely to return to Israel for additional educational opportunities as the result of their Israel experience program.***

#### High school programs and Birthright Israel both serve as feeders into other post-high-school programs

MASA reports that both high school programs and Birthright serve as feeders into long-term Israel programs. 56% of participants in post-college MASA programs are Birthright alumni, and 38% have been to Israel within a youth movement framework prior to their MASA program.<sup>41</sup>

The point at which high school and Birthright programs step on one another's toes is when high school programs reach the less affiliated, primarily through short-term programs. This is especially the case when the short-term high school program occurs at the end of senior year, close to Birthright eligibility. However, to the extent that a family does prioritize a high school Israel trip, it appears that Birthright is not a factor. If a family wants to make the Israel trip

<sup>41</sup> Data provided in correspondence between researchers and MASA.

happen, they will participate in savings program and search for grants and scholarships. The critical concern is the ability of a family to access available resources.

As this report shows, there are many sources for financial and organizational help for those with enough involvement in Jewish life to know how to access the information. However, there are certainly families who do not gain access to needed resources and, as a result, do not send their children; in some regions, there are simply no resources to access.

**Two important roles for an overarching organization for high school travel are to enable families to access resources and to encourage Federations, foundations, and local organizations to actively develop resources for Israel travel. At the local level, we have seen that Federations, day schools, and congregations that prioritize Israel travel are able to raise impressive financial resources and develop the necessary organizational capacity to make high school Israel travel widely accessible.**

#### The potential role of an ambitious overarching organization

The overall goal of JAFI or another organizing framework should be to encourage a spiral effect with more participation in short-term programs in order to increase numbers of those returning on longer programs. To realize the spiral effect, a system-wide perspective shows a distinction between Israel experience venues that reach affiliated and non-affiliated populations, with the overall goal being to encourage greater involvement in Jewish community at all levels. From this perspective, MASA's decision to focus exclusively on long-term post-high school programs seems arbitrary. Given Birthright's strong focus on the ten-day travel experience, there is no other framework with the organizing capacity and financial framework of MASA that is

capable of connecting the parts outlined in the flow chart above. Indeed as MASA completes its sixth year, it has tentatively started to play this overarching role by offering marketing and logistical support to some high school programs.

**MASA is well-placed to become the overarching framework for the Israel Experience, where the focus is on Jews who are already involved in Jewish community, in a manner that complements Birthright's ability to reach the less affiliated.**

#### Funding

MASA currently provides grants of \$1,000 and \$4,000 (depending on country of origin), which cover a fraction of the total cost for many long-term programs. As noted, there are currently many alternative funding sources for high school programs (and also post-high school programs) that the motivated and knowledgeable family can access. Program organizers and sending organizations also help families access these resources and expand on them through local fundraising efforts.

**An overarching organization is needed to help the active and involved individuals who want to travel to Israel to find existing resources, and to help program organizers and sending organizations with resource development strategies. In cases where no alternatives exist, MASA can then use its financial resources to provide direct grants and scholarships.**

#### Marketing

Given the expense of Israel experience programs, and the limited impact of small grants provided by MASA for long-term programs, MASA is currently intensifying its focus on marketing. MASA is also currently developing a recruitment program targeting day schools, camps, and public schools with large numbers of Jewish students. These same venues are also

targeted by the high school Israel Experience programs, with representatives of different organizations canvassing the same schools.

***The obvious duplication and waste of resources is an ideal place for an overarching organization to step in and coordinate a larger effort.***

#### Program development

***In the area of program development, there is a need for consultation offered to existing Israel Experience organizers and providers who wish to raise the sophistication of their operation. An overarching organization would ideally serve this purpose, working along the following lines:***

- ▶ Focusing on the spiral
  - ▶ While MASA is doing extensive work to seed alternative programs for post-high-school long-term programs, there is a strong argument to be made, using the Birthright precedent, that short-term, less expensive programs provide more compelling gateways to Israel travel for the less affiliated who are not prepared to make the investment in expensive programs that are currently the norm.
  - ▶ Given the role of affiliation in determining which high school programs a person will choose to attend, it is not clear that heavy investment in innovative programming will pay off for a program provider. The result is that only a handful of alternatives to the traditional touring or academic programs currently exist. If the ultimate goal is to create a spiral in terms of greater numbers participating in high school or post-high-school programs, then innovative and subsidized programs, accompanied by the research to help measure the success and viability of new programs,

are vital. Here too an overarching organization for high school programs can play a role by providing financial support and consulting to encourage program innovation.

- ▶ Expanding benefits
  - ▶ Sending organizations with a sophisticated set of Israel engagement goals, with leadership able to communicate the benefits of Israel travel, are most likely to succeed in developing a culture of support for the Israel trip. A sophisticated consultation strategy provided by an overarching organization will help sending organizations raise their level of sophistication, with benefits felt throughout the system.
  - ▶ When sending organizations do have a sophisticated Israel engagement agenda, they often run into program providers who are unable or unwilling to adapt their Israel programs. Given the importance of sending organizations within the field, especially in the growing non-Orthodox sector, an overarching organization should develop a consulting strategy to enable a greater level of synchronization between sending organizations and program providers.

#### Building on Federation frameworks

According to cited UJC data, there are a total of 68 Federations who are active, at least in the area of grants for Israel travel, and an additional 43 who have active Israel travel savings programs. Some Federations, such as Los Angeles', Boston's, and Cincinnati's, go beyond financial involvement with the Israel Experience, as they undertake impressive efforts to coordinate and organize Israel experience programs for their youth constituents.

However, even in the case of Federations with impressive Israel engagement operations, each is working in isolation from the other.

***In areas such as funding, marketing, and program development, active collaboration with Federations (which in some cases are already playing the role of program organizer) will likely produce major benefits. An overarching organizing framework could play the role of coordinating collaboration efforts and joint resource management strategies.***

#### Expanding Lapid's current mandate

***An alternative to MASA's taking on a more ambitious and system-wide strategy is for Lapid to expand beyond its current focus on lobbying MASA and the government of Israel for money, and instead, to play a similar role as Birthright or MASA. This would include taking an active role in marketing and recruitment, program development, research, and resource development.***

In summation, whether Lapid, MASA, or another organization, the lesson learned from Birthright Israel is that an effective overarching organization is a major benefit to the Israel Experience field. First and foremost, Birthright provides operating income to Israel Experience organizations, which results from a sophisticated marketing and resource development strategy that has effectively raised participation.

However, Birthright represents a top-down strategy that has its limits. To date, a small number of large donors have made it possible to bring large numbers of participants who are 100% subsidized. In 2009, Birthright realized the limits of this strategy, as funding dropped for the first time leading to a sharp drop in participant numbers.

If Birthright represents a top-down funding model, the high school field represents a

bottom-up phenomenon. Our rough estimate is that \$62,700,000 is spent by families and sponsoring organizations on high school Israel programs. This large sum of money is generated through an array of saving programs, federation grants, local fundraising campaigns, and the decision by families to invest large sums of money in their child's connection to Israel.

Our research indicates that the future lies in the active development of the bottom-up funding infrastructure in which the high school Israel experience field has excelled. The systematic development of local donors, local and national organizers, and program providers will produce major benefits for the world of the Israel Experience, and ultimately, for the larger fields of Israel engagement and community development within the American Jewish community.

If such support is generated, it should be channeled to expand the number of participants in high school programs. This will happen by moving beyond the core of affiliated Jews who currently are willing to make the very large financial investment of sending their children to Israel. Based on the research done for this report, an increase in numbers will likely happen by:

- ▶ Making information about saving programs and scholarships more accessible.
- ▶ Expanding options for high school Israel travel, specifically, cheaper and shorter travel options that will appeal to affiliated families who cannot currently afford the high school Israel trip, but want a longer and more intensive Israel Experience for their children than Birthright can provide.
- ▶ Actively experimenting with alternative forms of Israel Experience programming and marketing in order to learn if they can pull in less affiliated populations. This type of

experimentation is only likely to happen with the support of an overarching organization such as MASA, which is willing to offer financial support for program development and for the research necessary to understand the impact of different experiments.

- ▶ Expanding the already-growing role of day schools, camps, and synagogues that send their kids to Israel in high school. This report shows that committed sending organizations are able to raise money and send large numbers to Israel. However, a great deal of work is needed from key members of a community to successfully seed a culture of Israel travel. At this point, there are many success stories whose experience serves as an inspiration and as a resource for how other organizations can be helped to move along the same path.
- ▶ Increasing quality of Israel Experience programming, specifically in the area of pre- and post-trip programming by sending organizations. In many cases, travel to Israel becomes part of an organization's culture when the benefits to the local community are clear. Successful pre- and post-Israel Experience activity enables the Israel trip to serve as a platform for broader forms of community development and educational attainment. No support for such activity currently exists from Israel program providers.

In summation, expansion of the field of high school programs will occur with a combination of increased access to resources, greater programming variety, active experimentation and research, seeding the culture of Israel travel in sending organizations, and improving the quality of the Israel trip in order to impact the communities which send their children.



## Appendix 1: Interviews with Israel Experience Experts

<b>Youth and Camp Movements</b>	
Adam Jenshil	Young Judaea
Dan Deutsch	Young Judaea
J.J. Jonah	United Synagogue Youth (USY)
Jules Gutin	United Synagogue Youth (USY)
Paul Reichenbach	North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY)
Steve Frankel	Bnei Akiva
Joe Friedman	Ramah Israel
<b>Schools</b>	
Dean Goldfein	Contra Costa Jewish Day School (East Bay)
Julie Smith	Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School (Palo Alto)
Elliot Goldberg	Chicagoland Jewish High School (Chicago)
Tzivia Garfinkel	Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School (Chicago)
Marc Baker	Gann Academy (Boston)
Yehuda Potok	Prozdor Hebrew HS (Boston)
Jane Cohen & Nitzan Resnick	South Area Solomon Schechter Day School (Boston)
Lee Buckman	Former Head of School (Detroit)
<b>Federations and Foundations</b>	
Ahuva Ron	The Jewish Federation of Los Angeles Federation
Andrea Fram Plotkin	United Jewish Communities (UJC)
Cheryl Aronson	Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston
Will Cordin	Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston
Connie Hinitz	The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati
Deborah Joselow & Ora Weinberg	UJA – Federation of New York
Hallie Shapiro	Jewish Federation of Metro Chicago (JUF)
Lital Carmel	Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco
Tali Lifshitz	Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay
<b>Congregations</b>	
Howard Jaffe	Rabbi, Temple Isaiah, Lexington, MA
Wes Gardenswartz	Rabbi, Temple Emanuel, Newton, MA
<b>Organizers and Providers</b>	
Eran Applebaum	The Israel Experience Ltd.
Meir Hoyzman	The Israel Experience Ltd.
Peter Geffen	Kivunim
Anne Lanski	Shorashim, Chicago
Chaim Fischgrund & Gideon Shavit	Alexander Muss High School in Israel (AMHSI)
<b>Additional Interviews</b>	
Alan Hoffmann	Director General of the Department for Jewish Zionist Education, Jewish Agency for Israel
Theodore Sasson	Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University

Appendix 2: Interviews Goers, Non-Goers and Parents

**OVERALL BREAKDOWN:**

19 Goers **(G)**  
05 Non-goers **(NG)**  
12 Parents of goers **(PG)**  
05 Parents of non-goers **(PNG)**

**BY CATEGORY: METRO AREA**

**(G)**

11 Boston  
5 Chicago  
3 San Francisco

**(PG)**

5 Boston  
5 Chicago  
2 San Francisco

**(NG)**

3 Boston  
1 Chicago  
1 West Orange, NJ/ Florida (move in senior yr) | 1 Boca Raton, FL

**(PNG)**

2 Boston  
2 California (Los Angeles area)

**PROGRAM**

**(G)**

6 NFTY-EIE  
3AMHSI-semester  
4 NFTY-summer  
2 Young Judeaea-summer  
2 AMHSI-summer  
2 Keshet (Hebrew College-Prozdor)

**(PG)**

4 NFTY-EIE  
  
1 NFTY-summer  
4 Young Judeaea-summer  
2 AMHSI-summer  
1 Ramah Seminar

**(NG)**

3 Gann Academy-semester  
1 Ramah-TRY  
1 USY-Nativ

**(PNG)**

2 Gann Academy-semester  
3 AMHSI-Summer

**GENDER**

**(G)**

13 Female  
6 Male

**(PG)**

10 Female  
2 Male

**(NG)**

4 Female  
1 Male

**(PNG)**

5 Female

**CHILD'S GENDER**

**(PG)**

3 Female  
9 Male

**(PNG)**

3 Female  
2 Male

**CURRENT GRADE LEVEL**

**(G)**

11 11<sup>th</sup> grade

08 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**(NG)**

2 12<sup>th</sup> grade

1 gap year between high school & college

2 freshman year college

**Child's (PG)**

9 11<sup>th</sup> grade

3 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Child's (PNG)**

1 9<sup>th</sup> grade

2 11<sup>th</sup> grade

1 12<sup>th</sup> grade

1 gap year

**PARENT & CHILD INTERVIEWED**

**(PG)**

3 cases

**(PNG)**

1 case

Appendix 3: Surveys of 2008 program participants and their parents

Organization	Number of participants who received the survey	Participant response	Number of parents in contact list	Parent response rate
Alexander Muss High School in Israel	533	160 / 30%	1020	245 / 24%*
Bnei Akiva	340	120 / 35%	340	105 / 31%
March of the Living (Toronto)	220	56 / 25%	350	50 / 14%**
NFTY - EIE High School in Israel	146	78 / 53%	152	85 / 56%
NFTY Summer	643	187 / 29%	647	241 / 37%
Ramah Seminar	326	124 / 38%	409	149 / 36%
TRY (Ramah) High School in Israel	52	25 / 48%	79	38 / 48%
Young Judea	441	121 / 27%	880	78 / 9%* and **
Total	2701	891 completed survey. 33% response rate	3877*	1634.9 completed survey. 26% response rate.*

\*Note that in almost all cases where two parents received the survey, only one parent answered, meaning that response rate per family is much higher.  
 \*\*Survey was sent out at late date with only one reminder for MOL and none for Young Judea.

Appendix 4: Respondents to the survey of program organizers

1. Bnei Akiva of the US and Canada
2. Havaselet Hashomer Hatzair
3. Israel Experience Ltd.
4. Israel Experts - Initiatives in Education Ltd.
5. Jewish Community Centers Association
6. Keshet: The Center for Educational Tourism in Israel
7. NFTY in Israel - URJ
8. NFTY-EIE High School in Israel
9. Ramah Programs in Israel
10. Sephardic Educational Center
11. The Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel
12. United Synagogue Youth
13. Young Judaea Israel Programs