



# Youth work and inclusion in Israel



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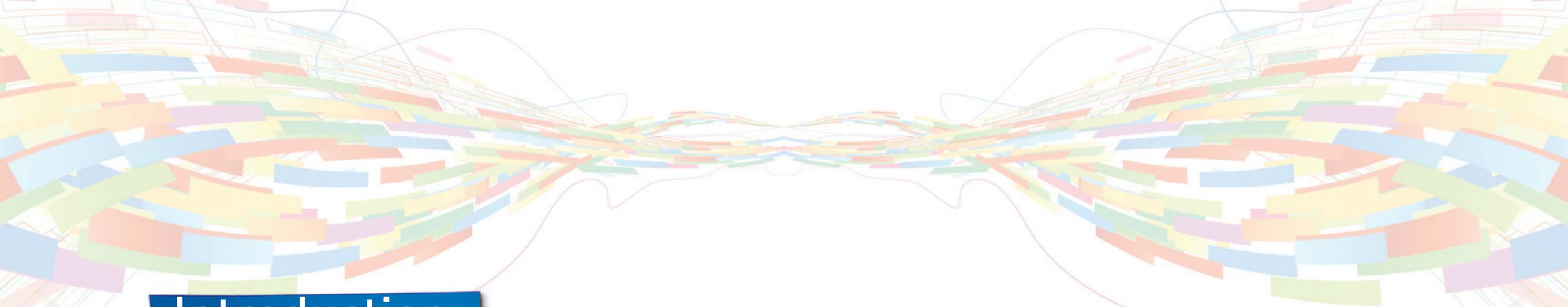
## Executive Summary



The following report will look at youth work and inclusion in Israel. For this, groups in need of inclusion will be identified based on publications from the expert field and be completed by information gathered in interviews and experiences during a study visit to various locations in Israel that took place from September 29 – October 9 2013.

The study visit was organized by the Israeli Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the EuroMed Youth Unit (EMYU) Israel, SALTO EuroMed, Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit for the EuroMed Youth Programme IV (RCBS) and the participation of SALTO Inclusion. Thirty-one youth workers as well as representatives from National Agencies of the EU Youth in Action Program from twelve EU member states took advantage of this visit to learn more about youth work and inclusion in Israel during a wide-ranging agenda of visits and meetings.

After identifying groups in need of inclusion, this report will examine youth work in Israel, giving special attention to the different actors in this field. The current provision of youth work for the previously identified groups will then be observed, based on real-life examples encountered during the study visit.



# Introduction

The following report will give an overview of youth work in Israel, with particular emphasis on inclusion. This overview starts out with a short introduction to certain aspects of Israeli society that seemed both remarkable and essential for this report. In addition, groups in Israeli society that find themselves outside mainstream society will be identified. The term 'mainstream society' will be used throughout the report to describe the majority of people in Israel with relatively good access to resources, (economic, educational) and will also include social factors. The term will contrast with the previously identified groups that find themselves more on the margins of society and generally with less access to these resources. The lifestyle, aims, concerns and

trends for young people in Israel will also be briefly examined. The observation of youth work in Israel offers a perspective on strategies and developments in the area in Israel, and will also serve as a framework for the analysis of inclusion work aimed at young people in the groups identified as being on the margins of Israeli society. This analysis will give both an overview of the situation inside the country and an insight into youth work in "real life".



*Mosque in Yafo, an old Arab city, now has joined Tel Aviv in Tel Aviv-Yafo.*



*View on the Tel Aviv beaches, from the harbor of Yafo.*



## Objectives

Inclusion in society is a complex and often-debated topic. It's complexity stems from the numerous concepts and theories included and connected to inclusion debates, such as in- and exclusion and power distribution, minority and majority, or labelling. An equally if differently complex topic is that of youth work, which while inheriting influences from different sciences, remains subject to external factors for its implementation. Thus, manifold aspects need to be taken into account to sufficiently observe youth work and inclusion in Israel. However, given the limitations and focus of this report, objectives will be confined to:

1. The identification of different groups in Israeli society and the identification of groups on the margins of mainstream society.
2. The observation of young people's lives in Israel.
3. The description of youth work in Israel, looking at actors, strategies and target groups.
4. The analysis of youth work and inclusion in the field, taking into account best practice examples relevant to the previously identified groups in need of inclusion into mainstream society.

For the purposes of this study, inclusion is defined as the procedures implemented to increase access to participation in society, education and general access to resources for young people with fewer opportunities.

## Methodology

This report will combine different types of information. The extensive base of expert knowledge on the situation in Israel from

a variety of publications will be collated to form a coherent picture of youth work and inclusion in Israel, insofar as that is possible.

This desk review will be complemented by information gathered during a study visit, hosted by the Ministry of Education in Israel, introducing various organisations and initiatives as well as access to information from municipal institutions. Experiences from this study visit also offer the possibility of including in-field work in this report.

In addition, interviews conducted via email, Skype and in person with different actors in the field of youth work in Israel have been added to provide additional knowledge to the context of this report.

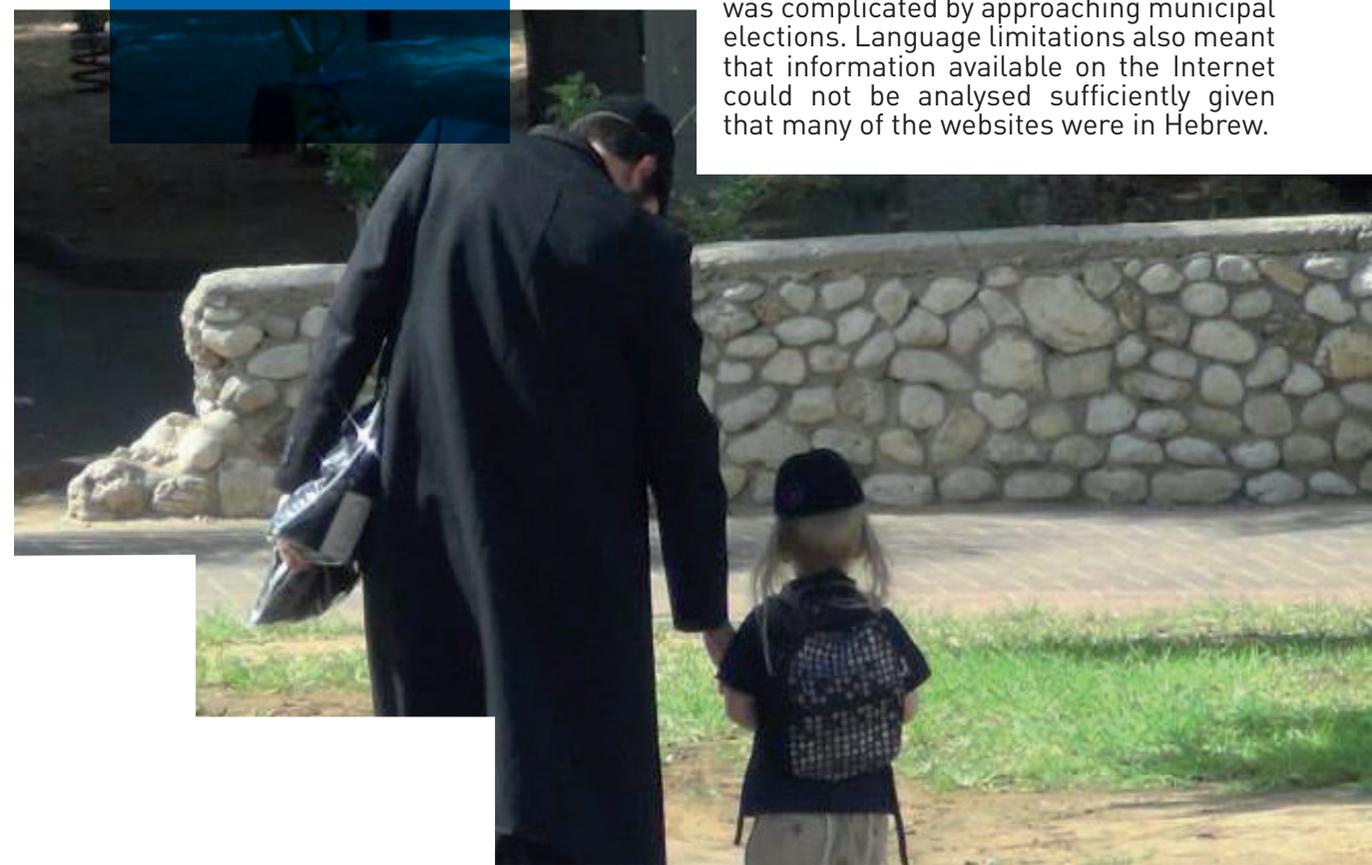
## Challenges of the study

This report offers an introduction to the field of youth work and inclusion, but cannot claim to be exhaustive, given its limited volume and the relatively small number of organisations and initiatives visited. The field of youth research itself represented another challenge. Although the topic of youth work is present in everyday life in most societies in one form or another, youth research is a relatively young field having only started about half a century ago, unlike other sciences that date back to ancient Greece. While the attitude towards youth has generally changed in research, the current focus still mainly observes youth from the angle of youth problems or education, and less from the angle of youth cultures, trends, movements, ideas and the life patterns favoured by young people (Helve, 2011). In addition, while there has

been much research on the situation in Israel, only a small part of that research has focused on youth and even less on youth work. Retrieving information on the situation is complex in itself for various reasons.

There is a great range of opinions and perspectives in Israeli society, and this is also true for youth, youth work and inclusion. Sometimes, information had to be retrieved by reading between the lines and hearing what was not said. Meeting state officials was complicated by approaching municipal elections. Language limitations also meant that information available on the Internet could not be analysed sufficiently given that many of the websites were in Hebrew.

Young visitors of the Jerusalem Suburb Community Center



## Life and inclusion in Israel

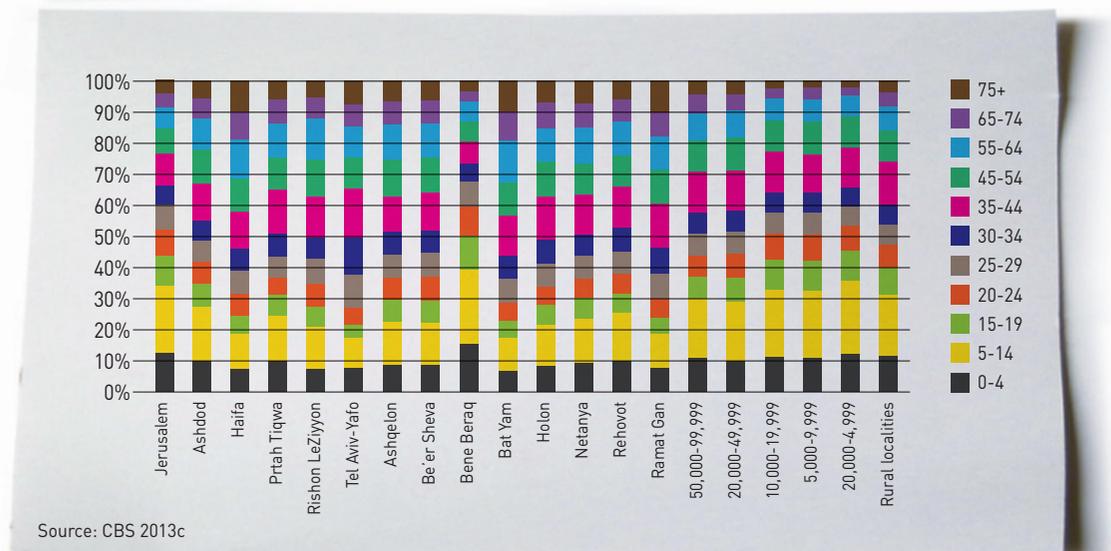
Israel is one of the most complex countries in the world in terms of history, religion, politics and ideologies, citizens, its education system, language, and much more.

It is also one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with a 2012 population<sup>1</sup> of 7,910,500 for an area of

only 20,770 km<sup>2</sup> (CBS, 2013c; CIA World Factbook, 2013).

The Israeli population is quite young, with a median age ranging from 22 to 35 years, including quite a large group of children and young people (CBS, 2013c; see Figure 1),<sup>3</sup> although an ageing trend in Israeli's society has also been observed in recent years.

### Distribution of Israeli society per age group and locality, in per cent



<sup>1</sup> Population size is based on the de jure population and consists of permanent residents with and without Israeli citizenship (including those who had been out of the country for less than one year at the time of the estimate) (CBS, 2013b). This report uses data on the Israeli population from 2012, even if the OECD published more recent figures in 2013, given that the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics covered information in its census that was not covered by the OECD (such as the degree of religiosity, which was also

measured for different localities). Additional informative statistical information on Israel can be found at: [www.nationmaster.com/index.php](http://www.nationmaster.com/index.php) or here: <http://www.iea.nl/>.

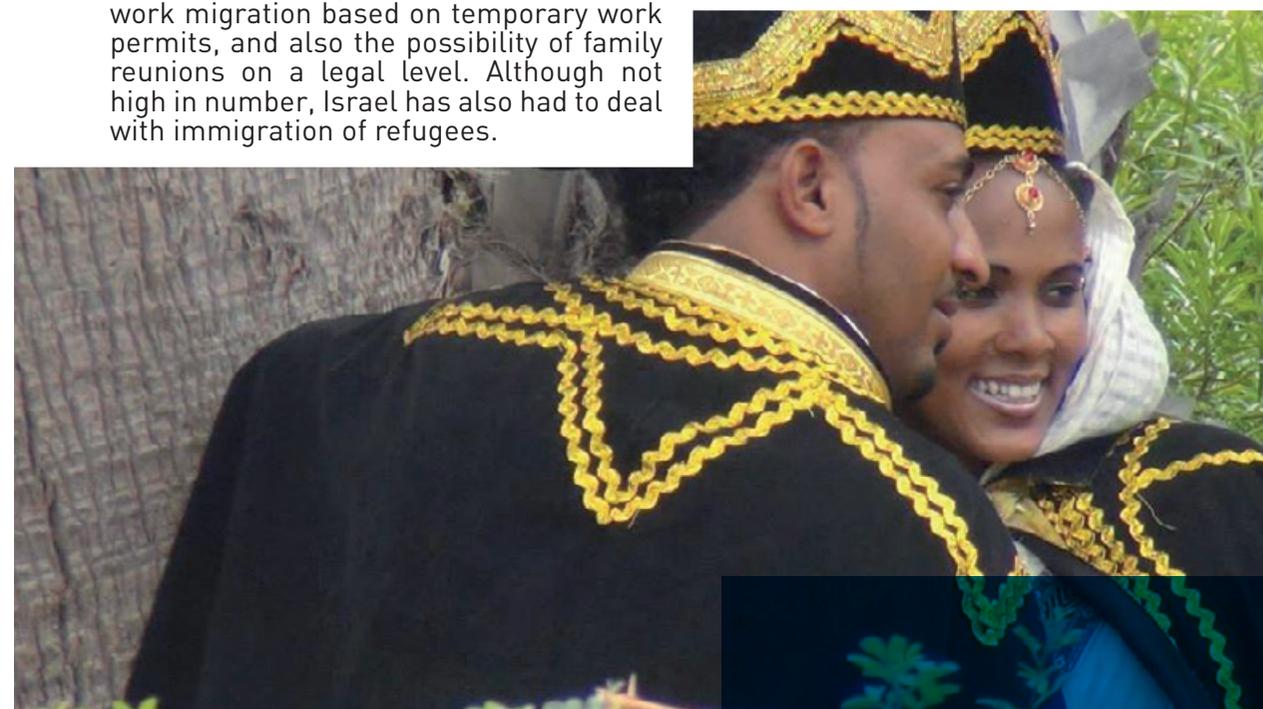
<sup>2</sup> There are about 355 Israeli civilian sites including about 145 small outpost communities in the West Bank, 41 sites in the Golan Heights, and 32 in East Jerusalem (CIA World Factbook, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> The median age refers to the average population.

The Israeli population is very diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion. Israel has seen the immigration of 3,108,760 people between 1948 and 2012 from all over the world, with the biggest waves coming from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s and more recently from Ethiopia (CBS, 2012; Jewish Virtual Library, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Many migrants make use of the Law of Return, which entitles every Jewish person to Israeli citizenship. In addition, there is work migration based on temporary work permits, and also the possibility of family reunions on a legal level. Although not high in number, Israel has also had to deal with immigration of refugees.

background, years of Israeli citizenship, economic and educational background, as well as religiosity. This diversity is reflected in most Israeli cities, but varies widely, as can be seen from the level of religiosity in the three biggest cities shown in the diagram at page 10.

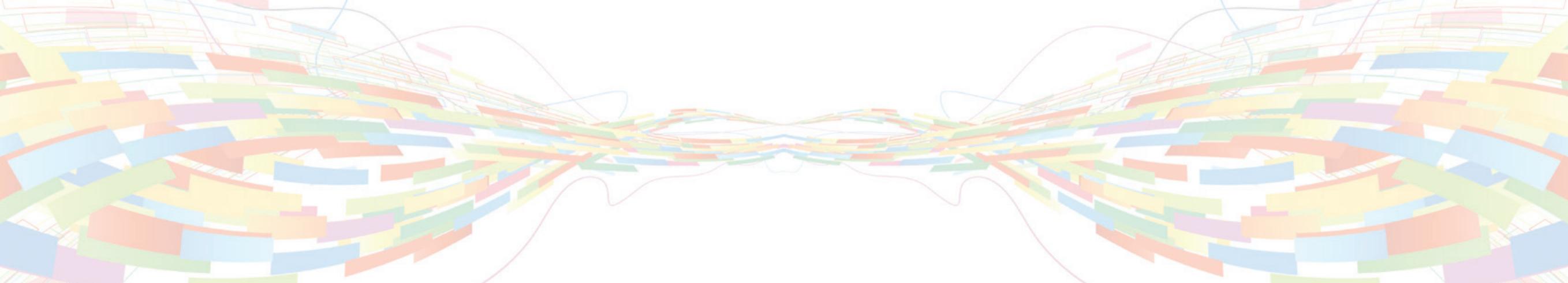
A differentiation is made between *Ashkenazi*, *Sephardic* and *Mizrahi Jews*, all of which distinguish Jewish people based on their



Wedding of a Jewish couple in Yafu, dressed in Ethiopian typical wedding clothing.

Due to the Law of Return, Israel is the only country in the world with a Jewish majority of 77 per cent (CBS, 2013c). This majority is highly heterogeneous, and society itself sub-divides this group, based on ethnic

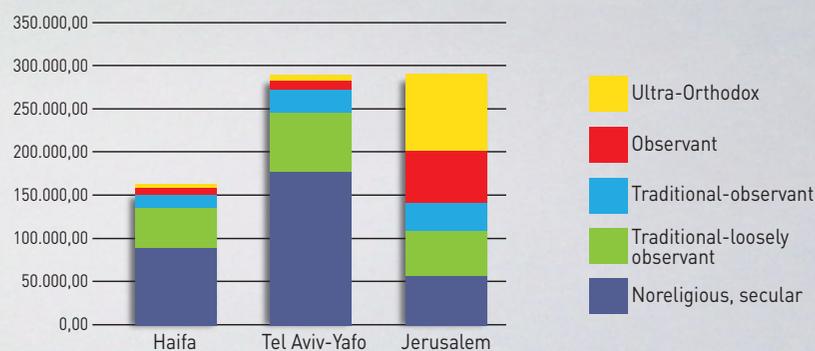
<sup>4</sup> The number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union stood at 1,223,723 people in 2012, while over a period of years, up to 91,375 people have immigrated to Israel from Ethiopia. Immigration from Ethiopia has been relatively constant in recent decades (CBS, 2012; Jewish Virtual Library, 2013).



origins (Chapin-Metz, 1988). The term *Olim* is used to describe the “new arrivals”, currently Jews from the wave of Ethiopian migration, and before them, Jews from Russia, who have all added even more diversity to the colourful Jewry of Israel. In addition, there are the *Haredi* or *Hasidim*, who represent the ultra-orthodox section of the Jewish population (Katz, 2013). Political orientation in terms of Zionist affiliation has either been neglected, thoroughly followed or, as is the case now, newly discovered, with for example the group composing the Jewish National Religious representing a powerful force with a political and religious agenda in Israeli society and providing a great number of the settlers in areas such as Hebron, Ofra, Efrat and elsewhere (cf. Bar’el, 2013; Fishman, 2004).

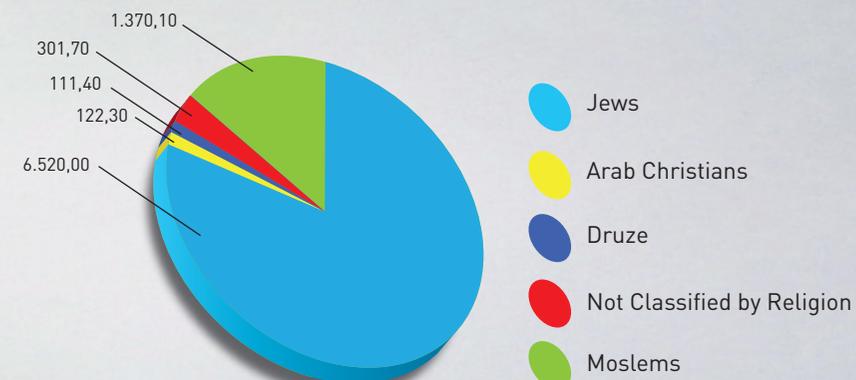
The second largest population group in Israel is often collectively referred to as Arabs. However, this category is often covering different religions (Christians and Muslims, Bedouins and Druze, etc). While often used to describe a minority that makes up a relatively high percentage of the Israeli population, its size varies depending on the definition used. This study will base its definition on religion, thus making it the second largest religious group present in Israel. Muslims in Israeli society represent 16.26 per cent of the population in 2012, followed by significantly lower numbers of Arab Christians and Druze (see the diagram below).

**Jewish people of age 20 and up in cities by religiosity**



Source: CBS 2013c

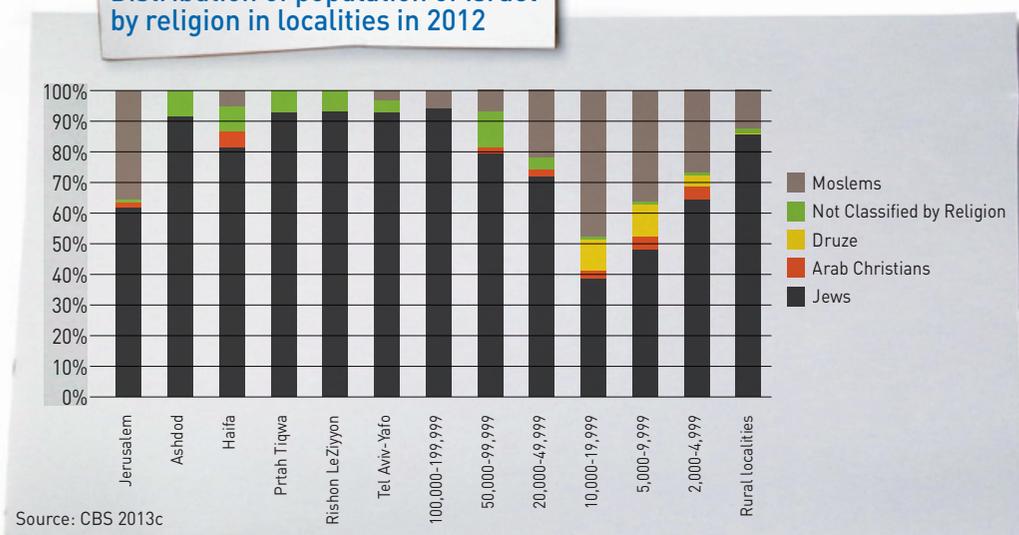
**Distribution of religions in Israel in 2012 in thousands**



Source: CBS 2013cc

Bedouins are considered part of the Arab minority. They are often Sunnites and the number of Bedouins actually living in Israel is not clearly established. In 2010, 201,000 Bedouins were counted as living in the Southern District of Israel, up from 75,000 a decade earlier. The number of Muslims includes *Circassian* and some *Alewites* in the Golan Heights, and *Circassian* Sunnites in Galilee. Christians in Israel also form a very diverse group. In addition, there are other religions, such as the *Ba'hai*. This diversification is sometimes reflected in localities, though not always. The histogram below shows what the impact can be in terms of the composition of a city or rural area. As can be seen, the percentage of Muslims living in major cities varies significantly, with some cities having no Muslim inhabitants at all. The picture changes at once again at rural level. In more basic terms, however, it is more of an 'either/or' situation, with many rural localities being home to either Jewish people or people of Islamic religion.

Distribution of population of Israel by religion in localities in 2012



Note: the number given for Muslims corresponds to that for cities with populations of between 50,000 and 199,999 and has been divided in half to fit the other listings.

Economically, Israel's situation is generally comparable to other OECD member countries, albeit economically worse (OECD, 2013), with the number of poor people in Israel increasing in recent years (Haaretz, 2013), Israel holds up in terms of education, with high literacy rates, as well as a relatively high percentage of State GDP being spent on education<sup>5</sup>. The conflict with Israel's neighbours has now moved into everyday life. The idea of an ever-present threat is widely known and incorporated into daily routines. The eight wars Israel has been involved in since its establishment in 1948 have led to a discourse of normalisation of war, employing different strategies to change the perception of war in society (Gavriely-Nuri, 2013). This situation, along with the events linked to the founding of the Israeli state, have led to a security culture, with questions of national security being seen as more important than other topics related to society (cf. Rebenstorf, 2009).

## Inclusion in Israel

Israeli citizenship is based on very strong narratives, such as the *Aliyah*<sup>6</sup>, and on the identity of the Jewish nation (Weinblum & Iglesias, 2013; Smooha, 2013). The issue of identity is closely linked to reduced access to resources for non-Jewish Israelis. Although there are a number of legal texts defining the rights of citizens, covering issues such as protection from discrimination or the rights of people with special needs<sup>7</sup>, in reality individuals as well as legal procedures and structures limit access to resources for certain groups in the Israeli population. The Coalition against Racism in Israel (CRI) published a report in 2013 showing that racist incidents doubled between 2008 and 2012. Among the incidences of racism reported were incitements to racism by elected leaders of society or other public figures, restrictions to Arab political leadership, discrimination based on religion, incidents in business life and legislation, in private life, by the Security Forces and so on. Groups identified as having been victims of discrimination were Arabs, refugees and migrant workers, *Mishrazi*, Russian speakers, Ethiopians, *Haredi*, and homosexuals (CRI, 2013).

When Israel applied for membership, the OECD also identified the Arab population as well as the *Haredi* population in Israel as excluded groups and made recommendations for improvement. Since then, different programmes have been developed to reduce exclusion in Israel and while the OECD claims to have observed a slight reduction in inequality as a result of a new tax benefit system, the Alternative Information Center (AIC) reports that Israel is the poorest OECD country with a growing number of poor

people (AIC, 2013; OECD, 2011, 2013b)<sup>8</sup>. Economic disparities are also clearly visible on the following map, showing the socio-economic levels of Israel municipalities: communities and municipalities with the highest SES concentration are the Central Area, Tel Aviv-Yafo and the South of Israel (CBS, 2013c, MJB, January 2012)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.nationmaster.com/red/country/is-israel/edu-education&all=1>.

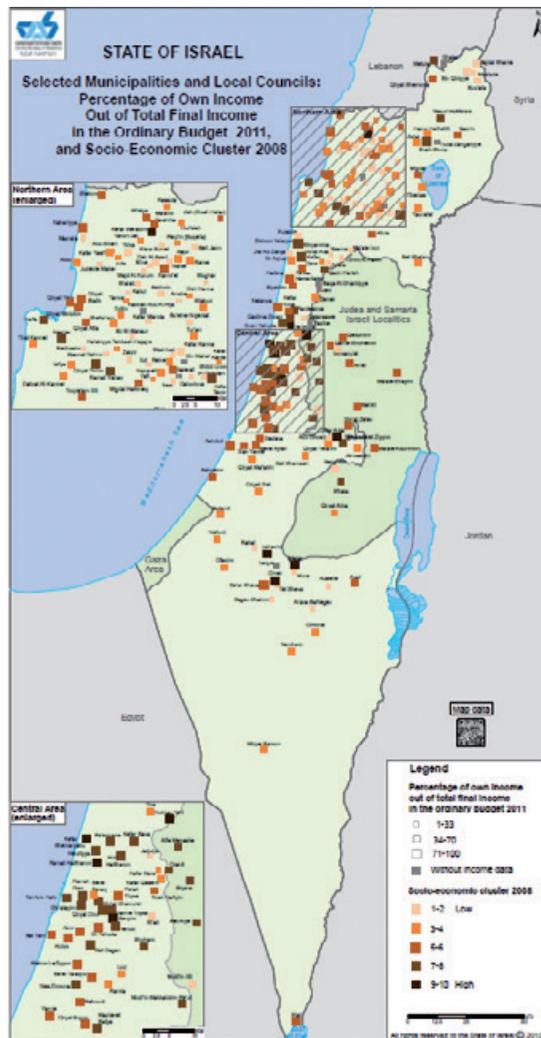
<sup>6</sup> The narrative of *Aliyah*: after the war, as part of the Zionist programme, leaving Germany and other countries to go to Israel became a priority for many Jewish people, especially young Jews. *Aliyah* describes the immigration process of Jewish people into Palestine and the term is still used today when Jewish people talk about going to Israel (Patt, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Such as the Equal Rights For Israel For People With Disabilities Law, 5758-1998, that guarantees the equality of people with special needs, the right to make decisions over one's own life, as well as the right to the provision of services, based on general public needs, but that can be adapted to fit the requesting person's needs. This law also contains an anti-discrimination section, especially designed for the labour market (DREDF, 2013). Another example is the Students' Rights Law from 2000, prohibiting discrimination based on ethnic, socio-economic or political background (Ministry of Education 2009). Note that religion is not explicitly mentioned.

<sup>8</sup> Israel joined the OECD in 2010 and was subjected to an analysis beforehand, in which serious inequalities were identified, such as the low level of inclusion of Arabs and *Haredi* people in the labour market (OECD, 2013). For more information on poverty in Israel, visit: [http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/\\_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/Facts\\_and\\_Figures2013--Poverty\\_in\\_Israel.pdf](http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/Facts_and_Figures2013--Poverty_in_Israel.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Note that the labels used to designate the areas of the West Bank do not comply with international norms. It is also interesting to first observe localities divided into Jewish and Arab localities and then by economic situation.

## Selected municipalities and local councils by socio-economic cluster



Source: CBS, 2013c

Concerning the situation of people with special needs in Israel, there have been several requests in recent years for increased efforts to include people with special needs

in Israeli society. Papers and articles have called for more attention to specific areas, such as the inclusion of students in Higher Education or the accessibility of public buildings (cf. Jerusalem Post, 2011; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011).

Given this description of inclusion in Israel, groups identified as lacking access to resources fall within the framework of this report: Arab people living in Israel<sup>10</sup>, refugees and migrant workers, *Olim* and *Mishrazi* which applies to both the more recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and those from Ethiopia, along with Haredi, as well as people with low economic backgrounds, and who will be specifically observed in the context of youth on the periphery later in this report<sup>11</sup>. The category of “homosexuals” as used earlier will be broadened to include more differentiations, and thus will be described from here on in the context of gender identity and sexual orientation related topics, people involved in this field will be titled members of the LGBTQ community or similar<sup>12</sup>. During the study visit, it became obvious that youth at risk get considerable attention in Israeli public discourse, and youth work, and thus they will be added to the list of groups when observing youth work and inclusion in Israel (see below). Some of the groups illustrating the complexity of Israeli society that will be observed more closely are:

<sup>10</sup> Note that this expression will be used, and where possible defined in the context of use. The previously stated comment about the undifferentiated use of the category “Arab” still applies. However, it is sometimes not possible to know exactly who is included in this category, which means that in some cases it might not be clear if this category refers to Arabs under the heading of Palestinian, Muslim, Christian, and Bedouin and so on. This highlights one of the manifold and unfortunate ambiguities of life and discourse in Israel.

<sup>11</sup> “Periphery” is an expression used in Israel to describe different conditions of life. It can refer to a regional location, meaning not living in a city but in a rural area (the Negev, for example) but can also refer to socio-economically disadvantaged homes.

<sup>12</sup> LGBTQ is.

## Arabs

The economic situation for Arabs in Israel is difficult; they generally have a poorer socio-economic background than the majority in the country, as well as a lower education level. Economically profitable institutions, such as industrial parks, are for the most part owned by Israeli Jews (Hammack, 2011; Professor at Ben Gurion University, 2013). In 2011, 54 per cent of Arab families lived in poverty, compared with 14 per cent of Jewish families (MJB, 2013).

Legal status is complicated for Arab Israelis as well, since their Israeli citizenship is based on their presence on Israeli territory in 1948 and is therefore subject to a different legal framework. In addition, there is the permanent residency status for the Arabs living in East Jerusalem that they received after annexation by Israel (Hammack, 2011; Louër, 2013). Following the 2003 legal changes, Arab Israelis can no longer extend their citizenship to their Palestinian partners after marriage, thus preventing family reunions in Israel (Louër, 2013). Life for Arabs in Israel can be very different depending on where they live. Jerusalem, for example, is an exceptional city not only in its importance for great religions, but also because it is split into two parts, with East Jerusalem being predominantly Arab and West Jerusalem predominantly Jewish. Parts of East Jerusalem were cut off from the rest of the municipality through the erection of a security fence in 2005/2006, thus creating some neighbourhoods with a lower socio-economic background than that of other Arab Israelis (*Kfar ‘Aqb*, for example). Both infrastructure and security issues have been gravely neglected here<sup>13</sup>. Drug dealing is widespread and easy,

since the police are conspicuous by their absence. The neighbourhood is populated by Muslim Arabs, many of whom have a socio-economic background that is considerably lower than Arabs in the rest of Israel. Haifa is also a shared city, but while there are still differences and unequal access to resources between Jews and Arabs, some kind of co-existence in the form of shared neighbourhoods can be found (Beit HaGefen, 2013).

Bedouins, who are frequently incorporated into the category of “Arabs”, have even less access to resources than the aforementioned groups. Following a government plan to re-settle Bedouin families, 118,000 Bedouins live in 7 registered villages that are provided with public infrastructure, state services and education by the government, while another 75,000 lived in unrecognized localities with little infrastructure and few state services (Manor-Binyamini, 2007). Even when resources are provided in registered localities, the quality of such services is generally poor and the difference between Arab/Bedouin and Jewish villages is clearly visible (roads, garbage collection, etc). Some of the registered localities have been given community centres and sport facilities. However, the infrastructure is very different in unregistered localities, as is contact with public institutions (CC Beer Sheva, 2013). Recently, unregistered localities were even demolished<sup>14</sup>. The economic situation of Bedouins is worse

<sup>13</sup> Since the annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel in 1967, all East Jerusalem, including the inhabitants of *Kfar ‘Aqb*, have been eligible for municipal support, although the annexation is not internationally recognised. This is another of the many disputed and ambiguous aspects of Israel and its politics, especially in the context of responsibilities for citizens in East Jerusalem and those further behind the security fence.

<sup>14</sup> For more information, read: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/rage-protests-bedouin-eviction-plan-201311306106771519.html>.

than for other Arabs and employment rates for Bedouin men and women are much lower than those recorded for other Arabs and Jewish Israelis<sup>15</sup>.

The situation of Bedouins and Arabs in the North of Israel is considered to be better than that of Arabs and Bedouins living in the South. Education is better and teachers from the North sometimes come south to teach in Bedouin villages (CC Beer Sheva, 2013).

Druze has a special but complicated status in Israel: they are sometimes classified as Arab, sometimes not. Arab and Druze schools have had a separate curriculum since 1977 (Lang, 2013). Despite being (Sunni) Muslim, they are obliged to do military service, just as the Jewish majority is.

While they still experience discrimination, service in the military makes them eligible for certain state services, which is beneficial to their situation for the most part (Louër, 2013; Lang, 2013)<sup>16</sup>.

## Refugees and migrant workers

At the end of 2011, work migration in Israel accounted for up to 75,000 legal foreign workers and an estimated 15,000 illegal workers, plus about 95,000 individuals overstaying their tourist visas and assumed to have entered the labour force. While some migrant workers are probably “only” targets of racist language, the roughly 55,000 refugees or illegal immigrants from different African countries have to live with a mostly hostile climate in Israel. Despite having signed the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>17</sup>, Israel has not developed an asylum policy and has no systematically applied procedures to recognise and assign refugee status and process asylum applications from illegal immigrants and refugees. Even worse, arriving refugees or immigrants are arrested and kept in detention centres until their status has been determined. Once released, they receive no resources, shelter, or support. The African Refugee Development Center (ARDC) reports that they are not granted work permits, making them predisposed to exploitation and ignorant of the legal obligations their employers have towards them (ibid, 2013)<sup>18</sup>.

■ <sup>17</sup> The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees defines who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. For more, see: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html>.

■ <sup>18</sup> For more information on bills approved by the Knesset concerning the status of refugees in Israel, see: <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/politics/israeli-society/7476-first-reading-of-the-prevention-of-infiltration-bill-approved-by-knesset>.

## Olim and Mishrazi

Jewish people from the Middle East and North Africa earn considerably lower incomes, have less access to education and less representation in politics than *Ashkenazi* or *Sephardi* Jews (Kaplan, 2005). In addition, *Olim* face discrimination and racism in society, as well as having to deal with the language barrier. After arrival in Is the family structure often changes, especially for Ethiopian Jews, with women going out to earn the family income instead of the men. As the younger family members are generally quicker to learn the language, they often become the interfaces with the outside world,

further disturbing the family’s internal power structure. Many families also have to deal with the other well-documented difficulties of migrants in addition to such intergenerational conflicts (FHESC, 2013). However, once they have been granted Israeli citizenship, they are often become the interfaces with the outside world, further distributing the family’s internal power structure. Many families also have to deal with the other well-documented difficulties of migrants in addition to such intergenerational conflicts (FHESC, 2013). However, once they have been granted Israeli citizenship, they are legally eligible for state support.

## AMEN

Amen was started by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (hereafter JDC) in cooperation with Israeli municipalities. One of the aims was to increase the number of young volunteers and employ assessment and monitoring of already available NGO work. Based on existing youth work, AMEN offers professional training to NGO workers to improve their soft skills and enhance the networking activities of the monitored NGOs. People who wanted to work at this level of AMEN have to be involved in youth education and youth work in Israel. AMEN was attempting to change the approach of adults towards volunteering youth and increase the participation of young people in decision-making processes. This also was the condition for cooperating with municipalities, thus ensuring young people cooperated with the majority of the roughly forty localities in Israel. In addition, AMEN offers structural support and consulting to those wanting to set up new activities at local level, reaching out to all parts of society in Israel (as is the case for OFIE, for example, [see text box: OFIE]). JDC has so far invested about \$ 4.5 Mio, which it obtained mostly from donations from the private American Jewish community. AMEN ended the critical phase in 2013 and was ready to be taken over by the Ministry of Education (JDC, 2013).

■ <sup>15</sup> Again, giving numbers is quite difficult, as Bedouins living in unrecognized localities were not included in the national survey data (MBJ, March 2012).

■ <sup>16</sup> When talking about Druze in Israel, it is important to differentiate between the Druze in Galilee and the Druze in the Golan Heights. They have very different histories and thus develop a different relationship with the state of Israel. For more, see Lang (2013).

## Haredi

*Haredi* often keep within their communities, living according to their religious rules, with the men spending most of their days studying the Torah and not doing regular work. They employ a very conservative, hetero-normative pattern to their concept of the world and are very sensitive to deviations from their own norms inside their community, which is one reason they do not integrate into regular labour market. As a result, the *Haredi* population often belongs to lower SES or educational background categories (OECD, 2013). Even in the more liberal communities, efforts are made to keep working women inside the community, for example through employment as teachers in their own kindergartens. If this is not possible, jobs outside the community must comply with many requirements and with *Haredi* virtues (Yeshiva of Ohel Avraham, 2013). *Haredi* see volunteering as a social duty and their population group has the highest number of volunteers in Israel. Nevertheless, for those who want to work with *Haredi*, it is often necessary to find a "*Haredi* mediator," someone from the religious group to facilitate communication with the *Haredi* community. This is the case for projects within the framework of AMEN (see text box: AMEN), for example, and *Haredi* mediators facilitate work with *Haredi* volunteers (JDC, 2013).

## Gender identity and sexual orientation

Israel prides itself on tolerance towards and legal recognition of same-sex marriage, adoption and an open attitude towards gender flexibility. However, while there have been gay pride marches on an annual basis in different cities in Israel, there is no legal framework dealing with discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation and the social climate can be very hostile, depending on where the individual lives. In recent years, there have been several reported cases of serious assaults on people from the LGBTQ community, some fatal, some requiring hospitalisation of the victim, most of them leaving the victims with at the very least emotional scars. As illustrated by the CRI report, racist encounters are experienced and in some cases initiated by elected representatives in public life (Ibid, 2013)<sup>19</sup>.

## People with special needs

About one million Israeli inhabitants, representing a quarter of the active population, are classified as people with special needs, based on at least one criterion. Many people with special needs report feelings of loneliness more frequently than the rest of the population. In addition, more people with special needs express the desire to work than have been actually integrated into the workforce. The numbers for people with special needs are much higher among Arab

<sup>19</sup> For more, read: [http://www.pdcnet.org/radphilrev/content/radphilrev\\_2013\\_0016\\_0002\\_0443\\_0457](http://www.pdcnet.org/radphilrev/content/radphilrev_2013_0016_0002_0443_0457).

Israelis and in the Ethiopian population than for the Jewish population in Israel (cf. MJB, October 2012). The legal structure in Israel provides for people with special needs, with legal texts setting out labour laws for people in this category. The National Service framework encourages Israeli youth volunteers to work in various social institutions after school, as well as the so-called teacher soldiers who often provide support for people with special needs (NFET, 2013). While the end goal is to integrate people with special needs into society, the structures required to do so are not available (Manor-Binyamini, 2007; MJB, October 2012). There also needs to be a shift in perspective inside society. While the Israeli state offers an extensive system of welfare services to people with special needs and their families, the approach more often than not is seen as patronizing (Feldman, 2009).

## Life of young people in Israel

Naturally, the situation of youth in Israel is reflected in the situations described above. But who exactly is youth? Youth as a concept is itself quite young, emerging during the industrialisation period in Western Europe. The exact age described by the concept of youth is flexible and subject to different definitions even by people working with or about youth. Some definitions focus more on life situations than age, seeing youth as transitional phase, embodying the potential for social change (Brakel, Hartl, & Jaschinski, 2008; Helve, 2011). Definitions of youth also vary between nations, UN entities, or research institutions. The definition applied by the

Youth and Society Administration (hereafter YSA) and the Ministry of Education (hereafter MoE) in Israel includes people aged twelve to eighteen years, this also being the age-range for which youth work is developed. Military service is obligatory for the majority of Israeli youth (see below), starts at the age of eighteen and lasts three years for men and two years for women. This marks the end of youth as defined by government and the beginning of the category known as youngsters or young adults in Israeli youth work, which covers the age range from eighteen to thirty-five (see also text box: Centres for young adults). While different types of activities are offered to them, they are not considered to be part of youth work (NFET, 2013). These two definitions for youth/young people and young adults/youngsters will be used throughout this report, unless otherwise stated. The category of young adults/youngsters may also be used on occasion, as there are some projects, activities and situations that do not solely concern youth but also young adults.

Most young people in Israel share the concerns of young people all over the world: as is typical for their age, they spend a lot of time with friends, on social networks, are concerned about falling in and out of love. They are interested in environmental issues, their families, their future (NFET, 2013). They also indulge in risk behaviour, and troublingly higher risk behaviour in the more disadvantaged youth groups of society, which explains the importance given to prevention in youth work in Israel<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> For a quick insight, visit: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcap.12059/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>, and <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22497848>, as well as <http://www.jpost.com/Health-and-Science/Study-Israeli-youth-more-negative-than-other-teens>.

However, different backgrounds add specific aspects to their concerns: for example, for young people in East Jerusalem, and more specifically behind the security barrier, there is a notable lack of spaces for young people to meet and talk about topics that are important to them (JSCC, 2013). Some of these aspects will be examined in greater detail later in this document.

## Education

Education accounts to a large extent for the opportunities available to young people in their future lives. But not only the future is determined by education, since school time itself plays a significant role in the development of children and young people. The values inherent in mainstream society are taught in school, by teachers and classmates alike (cf. Spindler, 1973). The education system for elementary and high schools can be roughly separated into state and non-state schools<sup>21</sup>.

Non-state schools have to be self-sufficient, except for *Haredi* schools, which, despite the fact that they do not follow the national curriculum and often teach subjects in Yiddish, nevertheless receive some financial support from both government and municipalities (EMYU, 2013). State schools themselves are divided, based on the Compulsory Education law, which leaves room for "... adjusting the provisions of the law to fit the compulsory education needs of non-Jewish students" (MoE, 2009). Thus, Arab students attend Arab-speaking schools but learn Hebrew from the first grade, in addition to studying the Bible and

Jewish history. However, given the lack of communication between the groups, Hebrew is not extensively spoken and since Arabic is not part of the curriculum in Jewish schools, Israeli society is also divided by language.

Access to high schools can be difficult, as will be seen later, as well as access to universities. There are ways around the system, such as availing of an agreement with the Kingdom of Jordan to accept students from Israel, as it is difficult to study Medicine as an Arab in Israel (TAEQ, 2013). Druze and Circassians are represented by their own government units in matters of education (see in paragraph "Arabs"). All of these schools teach the national curriculum and Arab schools have been monitored on the correct implementation of the curriculum (AJCC, 2013). There is a legal clause that allows for a cut in funding as a sanction for mentioning the 1948 expulsion (Spiegel, 2013)<sup>22</sup>. Inequalities in access can be seen in this area in the form of shortages in Arab-speaking schools or (in some cases) the total absence of schools (cf. Afana, Lietz, & Tobin, 2013; see paragraph "Arabs" below).

Once again, the situation in East Jerusalem is different. Unlike the rest of the country, Arab schools in East Jerusalem follow the curriculum set by the Palestinian Authority. This means that Jewish and Arab students

<sup>21</sup> Note again that this description does not claim to be exhaustive: it is only meant to give an impression of the situation in Israel. There is considerable literature available on the Israeli educational system.

<sup>22</sup> Arab and Jewish Israelis share the same memories of 1948, but with significant differences. While 15th May is Independence Day for the state of Israel and consequently a reason to celebrate, the Arab population commemorates the day after as the day of the *Nakba*, meaning 'great catastrophe', commemorating the loss of their homes for those who had to leave Israel both before and after the declaration of its independence.

in Jerusalem end their school lives in different languages and with different exams (the *Bagrut* for Jewish students and the *Tawjihi* for Arab students) (Hammack, 2011). However, Arab speaking schools in East Jerusalem have recently switched to the Israeli curriculum<sup>23</sup>.

Big classes and overcrowded public schools, as well as very expensive private schools, consolidate the factors leading to a high number of school dropouts and the low participation in higher education. One of these factors is the low economic status of many families in East Jerusalem, which means they need the financial support of their young people to provide for the family (JSCC, 2013). The JSCC neighbourhood (see below), only has expensive private high schools, with the result that many children leave school after 9<sup>th</sup> grade (end of Junior high school). To go to a public high school would mean having to pass the checkpoint on a daily basis and being confronted with a completely new environment. Children and young people are further alienated by their poverty, which is considerable even when compared with other Arabs in Israel (JSCC, 2013).

The provision of infrastructure for the areas of East Jerusalem that are not separated by the security barrier diverts funding from West Jerusalem, including the funds set aside for schools. This needs to be kept in mind when looking at school dropout rates for Arab students, which stand at 14 per cent for Arab Israeli students compared to 10 per cent for Jewish students at the age of 17 (MJB, October 2013). Dropping out of school at this age means that they lack the schooling to be eligible for vocational training. For Bedouins, the situation is often even more disadvantageous, given that while education for Bedouin people

is available in the registered localities, the quality is generally very low, and that in unregistered localities there are no resources at all (CC Beer Sheva, 2013).

Efforts to include and integrate Arab and Bedouin children into Jewish speaking schools have been reported and are apparently on the increase (EMYU, 2013). However, discriminatory acts against Arab and Bedouin youth inside schools have also been extensively reported. For youth and children with special needs, school is often the one normalising framework in their life. The general approach is to include children and youth with special needs into daily routines as far as possible. However, since the necessary structures and staff are often not available for the average child, the situation is even more critical for a young person with special needs coming from a Bedouin family. Often basic utilities such as electricity are unavailable, hindering the inclusion of a child or youth with special needs (Manor-Binyamini, 2007). Young people and children concerned with gender identity often experience difficult times during their school lives. A school climate survey conducted by the non-governmental organisation International Gay Youth (hereafter IGY, see paragraph "Gender identity and sexual orientation") in 2008 in collaboration with Tel Aviv University, found 57 per cent of LGBTQ persons experienced abuse resulting from their sexual orientation while in school (IGY, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> For more, read: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-hamas-enraged-by-introduction-of-israeli-curriculum/>.

## Youth identity

Identity is one of the most complex topics in Israel (Beit HaGefen, 2013). Not only being young and finding one's own personality, but especially positioning oneself in relation to one's background and the people around one, as in the question of being an Arab or a Palestinian Israeli, the identification with being Jewish, with all the different shades this word has in Israeli society (Hammack, 2011) but also, how to be an Ethiopian Jew in Israel, how to keep one's former culture from the Soviet Union, and still feel at home. The adult perspective on youth finds different expressions, but shares the same core issues. While some gave young people the tag "generation y", others said that both Arab and Jewish youth has found its voice. Both sides described youth as having good and bad personality traits, questioning much and not wanting to take on imposed expectations, but also as being the generation that is more interested in volunteering than any generation before. They adopt a critical approach to tradition and constructs of respect and adapt life and its speed and flexibility to their needs as far as possible (JDC, JSCC, 2013). Some described them as inspired by globalisation (TAEQ, 2013).

## Military service

The military service in the *Tzahal*, the Israeli army, is a major event for all young people in Israel. Jewish Israelis are eligible for compulsory military service as soon as they reach the age of 18. Boys are drafted for a minimum of three years and girls for a minimum of two. The Ministry of Education as well as the Israeli Defence Force (hereafter IDF) and other organisations start preparing young people for military service long before they turn 18. This, however, is only the case for Jewish Israelis, Druze (see above, paragraph "Arabs") and some Bedouins, some of whom are integrated into the IDF's Minority Unit (Caspi, Saroff, Suleimani, & Klein, 2008; Lang, 2013).

Those who have to serve in the *Tzahal* are often concerned about the type of position they get. Service in the *Tzahal* is a period in the life of an Israeli Jew that has a huge influence on his/her future, with a good position offering chances to construct a strong social network for professional life after military service. Druze soldiers self-reportedly experience equality while in uniform, making it the time when most Druze-Jewish friendships emerge. And while Druze are excluded from some specific weaponry and units, service in the *Tzahal* still gives them access to financial instruments and credits they would not otherwise be able to obtain (Hajjar, 2009, in Lang, 2013). This divide between the Jewish majority and (most) non-Jews extends to access to the labour-market, which is often (indirectly) reserved for people having fulfilled their military obligations (Louër, 2013).

Arab Israelis are not obliged to do military service and ultra-Orthodox Jews are exempted on request. Ultra-Orthodox Jews, however, receive support not accessible to Arab Israelis because of their religious background. Arabs can opt to do military service, but few do so. The positions offered to them are generally very low in hierarchy and they are more often than not treated with mistrust by other soldiers (Beit HaGefen, 2013).

It should be stressed that military service in Israel represents much more than merely serving in the army. Some soldiers receive only one year's training in weaponry, and then they are trained to work with youth. These are the so-called teacher soldiers (identified by a green beret), who work assisting people with special needs, preparing young people for military service in school classes or community centres, or preparing youth at risk for their military service in special boot camps (*Tzahal*, 2013; NFET, 2013).

Once a soldier has completed his/her military service, he/she is eligible for support from the Israeli state that is denied to those who have not served. A 2003 legislative proposal went as far as suggesting the withdrawal of welfare payments for families from whom no member had completed military service (Louër, 2013), which would have affected *Haredi* as well as Arab citizens in Israel. Military service can therefore be identified as one of the great perpetuators of inequality in Israel to such an extent that several groups with restricted access to resources continue to work towards being obliged to serve in the Israeli Defence Force -

IDF - (refugee children, for example, who, even if born inside Israel, are not eligible for the draft, or Christian Arabs, who have recently formed initiatives to demand obligatory service in the IDF) (ARDC, 2013; EMYU, 2013).

It goes without saying that there are people opposed to serving in the army, and who avoid the draft by choosing either the religious option, which is the case for some Druze men, or by seeking legal assistance from organisations such as New Profile (Lang, 2013)<sup>24</sup>. National community service as a possible alternative has been under discussion for a couple of years, but no concrete steps have been taken yet. Participation in national community service remains voluntary and some Israeli youth do it before starting their military service. However, it does not make the person eligible for social benefits in the same way as *Tzahal* service does, nor does it offer the additional benefits (JSCC, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> For more, see: [http://www.newprofile.org/english/about\\_en](http://www.newprofile.org/english/about_en).

## Youth unemployment

Youth unemployment in Israel in 2011 for the 15 to 24 year age-group stood at 11.8 per cent for males and 11.3 per cent for females (CIA World Factbook, 2013). However, there are significant differences between unemployment rates for Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs including Bedouins, as well as male and female in this context. For mainstream youth about to finish school unemployment is rarely an aspect of immediate concern, since, the next step is generally military service, but it becomes a serious problem at the ages of 20 or 21. Youth employment often leads to youth or young adults moving to other cities, often Tel Aviv. Once there, however, as in many other cities, they come up against the issue of very expensive housing due to the inflation of housing prices. In Israel, about 80 per cent of the population owns their apartment and it is quite common also for young people to buy a flat (YOFI, 2013). Issues such as access to the labour market or university or to finding a place to live are addressed in the relatively new centres for young adults (see text box: Centres for young adults). For youth in East Jerusalem, youth unemployment is an even greater issue, especially for those who live behind the security fence. Post-secondary education is also a low priority due to the economic situation of many families in East Jerusalem (JSCC, 2013).

## Youth work in Israel

Youth and young adults are important for Israeli society, and ministries and municipalities recognise a clear responsibility towards young people. Jewish youth has played a prominent role in the foundation of the Israeli state, for example, and also in the kibbutzim of the Zionist youth movements (cf. Patt, 2009)<sup>25</sup>. However, much of the work formerly carried out by the state has been privatised in the past decade, which is also the case for youth work. A considerable part of youth work has been taken over by NGOs, with municipalities and ministries supporting or funding their projects (OFIE, 2013). For example, the responsibility for the community centres in Beer Sheva had been assigned to a company, which now deals with the recruitment of staff, the development of annual plans, the construction of facilities and more on behalf of the municipality of Beer Sheva (CC Beer Sheva, 2013). However, the main actors in youth work continue to carry out their missions as described below. Being a youth worker in Israel can take different forms. There are university degrees with youth work as a specialisation in teacher training degrees, as well as a Master of Arts in youth work and community and society organisation (the EuroMed Youth Unit Israel, 2013). This professional background can have an impact on employability depending on where the person wishes to work (for example, to

<sup>25</sup> Youth from the settlements, or the so-called 'hilltop youth' are not included in this report.

work for the Jerusalem municipality, youth workers must have a university degree). Inside the community and youth centres in Tel Aviv, the concept of the peer educator is privileged as a complement to academic staff. This means that young people who have attended activities in the youth centre can receive training and go on to work in these youth centres. As is the case in many other countries, non-formal education offers possibilities to enter the youth work field professionally. Youth workers thus educated can be found in great numbers in the field of non-formal education and also in NGOs that cooperate with municipalities (in Jerusalem, for example).

## The Israeli state and youth work

While there is no unifying youth policy at national level, eleven different ministries and the prime minister's office (to a limited degree) are involved in youth issues, in addition to local authority bodies such as municipalities (NFET, 2013; Lahav, 2008)<sup>26</sup>. Youth as well as young adults are catered for (see text box: Centres for young adults). The YSA was set up in 1991 and is a sub-segment (currently the largest) of the Ministry of Education. While its main responsibilities lie in the field of non-formal education, they also extend to formal education, due to the close links between the two forms of education in the Israeli education system. Starting two years ago, the curriculum for Israel's public schools now obliges every student aged 16 years to complete 60 hours of voluntary work.

There are nation-wide programs such as "City without Violence" or the "National Program for Children and Youth at Risk."<sup>27</sup> Such programs are sometimes developed at ministerial level and then implemented in cooperation with selected NGOs working in the field. Also, programs at national level can be initiated by one of the many philanthropic organisations and implemented in cooperation with NGOs that receive municipal and/or ministerial backing, which is the case for AMEN (see text box: AMEN).

## Centres for young adults

The centres for young adults are designed to assist young people in Israel aged between 18 and 35. The initial centres were designed to cater for Olim in Israel and were set up by the JDC. Today there are forty such centres throughout Israel. Different governmental offices, ministries and other organisations such as the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Defense offer information and support on higher education, starting a business, buying a flat, or community involvement in these centres, with the aim of understanding and answering the needs of young adults.

<sup>26</sup> Government institutions involved here include the already mentioned Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministries of Education, Culture and Sports, Labour, Welfare, Health, Internal Security (and the police), the Ministry of Defence (including the military), Immigration, Housing, as well as the Ministry of Justice (Lahav 2008).

<sup>27</sup> For more on the National Program for Children and Youth at Risk, visit: [brookdale.jdc.org.il/?CategoryID=192&ArticleID=246](http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/?CategoryID=192&ArticleID=246), on the program "City without Violence" visit: <http://mops.gov.il/English/CrimePreventionENG/CWV/Pages/CityWithoutViolence.aspx>.

## Municipalities and youth work

Municipalities in Israel play an important role. While the country is broken down into regions, municipalities are responsible for “their” cities and for the surrounding smaller localities. An area of responsibility for the state of Israel is not designated by district, but rather locality focused, which has led to complications, as seen above in the case of the Bedouin areas in the Negev. Most towns, city quarters and villages in Israel have community centres that are at least in part funded by their respective municipalities. Community centres do not solely serve young people, but at least they provide a space for youth activities. Most of these centres are organised through an umbrella organisation, namely the Israeli Federation of Community Centers (IFCC). Activities in the majority of centres are coordinated and developed by non-governmental actors, but many of these NGOs receive support from ministries and/or municipalities, and indeed see it as a municipal responsibility to provide such support (JOH 2013, Mahapach-Taghir, 2013). In the same way, municipalities see it as their responsibility to provide for young people, as in the case of the Jerusalem municipality (the Jerusalem municipality, 2013). However, the understanding of who is covered by this responsibility can vary for the different actors in youth work and approaches can differ.

In the municipality of Jerusalem, the Youth Advancement Department attends to the needs of Haredi as well as to those

of Arab youth, in cooperation with many third sector actors, such as the Jerusalem Foundation<sup>28</sup> (Municipality in Jerusalem, 2013).

The situation in Tel Aviv-Yafo is a good illustration of the diversity of approaches to youth work on behalf of municipalities in Israel. Representatives of the municipality in Tel Aviv-Yafo described their approach towards youth as having changed. Youth is no longer seen as a danger, and while there are children who are more complicated than others, the state of being a young person is seen as fluid<sup>29</sup>. In the past, young people tended to drop going to the community centres, which led to the idea that youth centres should not just organise activities, they should also respond to the interests and needs of the young people using them, which is why youth centres were allocated their own buildings in Tel Aviv-Yafo (the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 2013).

Inside these centres, staff work with the concept of youth guides. These are young people who have used the youth centre, then participated in a training course and are now members of the staff. In contrast to youth workers in the municipality of Jerusalem who must have a university certificate, voluntary workers can work without such a degree (the municipality of Jerusalem, 2013). Youth centres in Tel Aviv-Yafo are used by different organisations, NGOs from different backgrounds, but also political

■ <sup>28</sup> For more information, see <http://www.jerusalemfoundation.org/>

■ <sup>29</sup> It should be noted, however, that in addition to the differences in attitude towards youth in the different cities in Israel, there are economic factors to take into account: Jerusalem, for example, is also one of the poorest cities, while Tel Aviv-Yafo economically finds itself on the wealthier side (see the map on page 14).

organisations and youth movements. The aim is to bring youth organisations together, while keeping the youth centre flexible and able to adapt to the life of the young people using it. Parents are also involved. They receive training on alcohol and drug abuse and their consequences, as well as information about the dangers of the Internet for youth (the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 2013).

In addition, municipalities often cooperate with the educational division of the IDF, and provide opportunities for leadership training for youth. Ideally, leadership training is given to the young people denied access to other opportunities for developing leadership skills (Representative from YOFI, 2013).

Youth participation and volunteering are both central elements for youth work for the Israeli state, as demonstrated by the encouragement of participation in the National Student Councils, leadership training courses with young leaders being educated in specific training centres (the Jerusalem Muni, 2013), or a multitude of youth movements, as well as the obligation to do voluntary service during school years. The actual power of young people is, however, more complex to determine. While some see the power as available, and just not seized by youth to the full extent (NFET, 2013; NSYC 2008), critics understand the definition of participation in this context as a process of securing children’s well-being but rarely truly taking their opinions into account (Brookdale, 2008). One priority focus of youth work is to prevent young people from becoming youth at risk by integrating them into society and engaging them in activities.

## Non-governmental organisations

The importance and number of NGOs in the field of youth work has grown in recent years, in part because young people no longer wanted to wait for organisations to support them, as a OFIE (one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013) put it. However, since there is no monitoring of the activities of NGOs in this field, it is not always possible to ensure good work is being done (OFIE, 2013)<sup>30</sup>. Governmental institutions are working on monitoring activities and many NGOs already cooperate with municipalities and ministries, although they are not obliged to do so (NFET, 2013). Often NGOs start their work, at times with the support of structural advisors such as AMEN (see paragraph “The Israeli state and youth work”), and then approach the municipality or ministries for support. The amount of support received, however, greatly depends on the locality and the nature of the activity<sup>31</sup>.

■ <sup>30</sup> Not to be mistaken, there is an organization called NGO Monitor: <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/index.php>. However, information retrieved from this website should be handled with care.

■ <sup>31</sup> An interesting read on the situation of NGOs in Israel is, for example, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/israeli-ngos-brace-for-restrictions-on-foreign-funding-1.395787>, retrieved 03.12.2013.

## Other actors in youth work

Youth movements play a very important role in Israeli youth work and have been active since the beginning of the Israeli state. There are many youth movements, some of which are affiliated with political parties, religious groups, or concentrate on specific interest groups (a Druze youth movement or an Arab youth movement, for example). However, even if such groups are all catering for different groups in Israeli society, they rarely mix (Municipality in Jerusalem, 2013, Brakel et al., 2008).

Great weight needs to be allocated to the great number and wide variety of philanthropic organisations and foundations. Much of the funding comes from Jewish communities outside Israel, as well as international organisations, but also from governments, funding different directions of youth work in Israel. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), often simply called “Joint”, for example, has a decade-long experience of working in Israel: cooperation started before the founding of the state and JDC has since become an established partner for Israeli governmental institutions and municipalities (see paragraph “The Israeli state and youth work”). A few years ago JDC started the project AMEN to promote volunteering among young people (see text box: AMEN)<sup>32</sup>. There are numerous foundations donating to Israeli youth work (the New Israel Fund -NIF- being one example among many)<sup>33</sup>. In addition, knowledge or research institutions offer funding and structural support, as does

the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (OFIE, 2013). Cultural institutions also contribute to the field of youth work (see text box: Israel Museum, Jerusalem). However, donor organisations can have their own agendas that do not necessarily comply with Human Rights rules or other ethical considerations.

## Youth work and inclusion in Israel

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are serious discrepancies in access to resources between the majority of Jewish people and non-Jewish people, but also *Olim* or *Haredi*. The view of Israel as being a so-called “cultural mosaic” gives citizens on the one hand the opportunity to preserve their own language, if it is not Hebrew, to foster traditions not known or typical to mainstream Jewish society, the *Ashkenazi* or the *Sephardic*. It encourages self-empowerment and self-pride, and thus does not show the pressure to conform to the mainstream that had been policy in previous years (FHESC, 2013). On the other hand, the risk in such a diversity-welcoming approach is that gaps are not closed, and in some cases grow even wider. Given this situation, making inclusion a priority would seem a given. The following section looks at inclusion work for the groups identified in the chapter “Inclusion in Israel” and will show a very diverse picture for youth work and inclusion in Israel.

<sup>32</sup> For more, visit: <http://www.iataskforce.org/programs/jdc-israel-amen-%E2%80%93-volunteer-youth-city>.

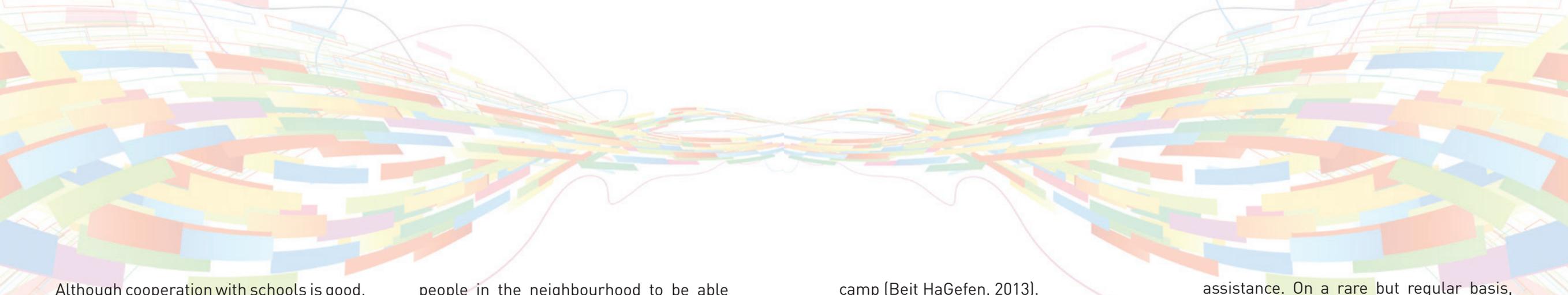
<sup>33</sup> For more information, visit: <http://nif.org/>.

## Arabs

As already described, the life of people belonging to the so-called Arab minority can be very different in Israel depending on where they live. In addition, the situation also very much depends on the internal political situation as well as support from outside Israel. International donors offer funding for activities that do not easily receive support from the Israeli government. However, fund-raising is restricted, as these organisations are not allowed to accept money from countries such as Qatar or Saudi Arabia, reported representatives from the Jerusalem Suburb Community Center (JSCC) and the Towns Association for the Environment Quality (TAEQ) (Ibid, 2013). Philanthropic institutions supporting dialogue activities and organisations working with Arab youth do exist, but access to funding is limited. Sport however would appear to be a good option to bring different youth groups together, Mifalot, an NGO using the platform of the Hapoel Tel Aviv Football Club for its activities, is a good example, using football to bring Arab and Jewish Israelis together on neutral ground. There are only two Arab-Jewish centres in all of Israel, the Arab-Jewish Community Center (AJCC) in Tel Aviv-Yafo, and the Arab and Jewish Cultural Center in Haifa, Beit HaGefen. Both use different approaches, however. The outreach to youth in Tel Aviv-Yafo relies heavily on cooperation with schools, which is relatively easy, since schools use AJCC facilities and because 90 per cent of the school principals are from Yafo (AJCC, 2013).

### The Jerusalem Suburb Community Center (JSCC)

The founding of the JSCC was initiated in 2007 by an Israeli Jew, who had served in the IDF (Israeli Defence Force) for more than a decade, and who demanded the necessary support for this centre from the municipality of Jerusalem (JSCC, 2013). All the staff in the centre are Arab, if possible from the neighbourhood itself. Basic rules were set up by the director when founding the centre: to not discuss the political situation in the country, to not bring work in the centre to a standstill and to discuss every issue with teachers or inside the centre with him personally and not with the staff. Activities are offered to a wide range of people, age and gender. The centre plans activities based on the wishes of the visitors whenever feasible. Groups vary, there are women groups taking language courses, driving lessons, aerobic classes, groups that just offer a space to talk about issues concerning them, as well as activities for mothers with children with special needs. Youth can receive vocational training, non-formal education, language classes, or homework support. In addition, there are leisure activities, including summer camps. The offer for children is along the same lines. The JSCC also offers six kindergarten groups for working women.



Although cooperation with schools is good, the outreach to Ethiopian and Russian Jewish groups is very limited. At Beit HaGefen (2013) a similar state of affairs is described. However, in this region, school support depends more on the political climate in Israel, as well as the support of the principal to encourage students. Jewish youth in Haifa is not very easily motivated to participate in shared activities with Arab youth. Class differences still exist in Haifa between Arab and Jewish Israelis, along with the negative perception of the quality of activities that are free. The Arab-Jewish cultural centers differ only slightly in the aims of the organisations. The Beit HaGefen focuses on the exchange of knowledge about Jewish and Arab culture and the empowerment of the Arab participants, using art projects and cultural festivals to do so, as well as sports activities, all in mixed groups.

This includes leadership training together with Jewish youth, but also providing Arab youth with the opportunity to visit galleries or theatres, become active in art, learn to play chess and have access to a library with books in Arabic (the only library out of total of 4 in Haifa to have such books) (Beit HaGefen, 2013). Leadership training is important for the AJCC (Arab-Jewish Community Center) as well, and together with the YSA (Youth and Society Administration), they offer a four-year youth leadership program that leads to a certified counsellor diploma. Young people between 16 and 18 are offered a two-year youth leadership program, as well as a club to keep them off the streets on Fridays.

Activities for youth were only initiated in 2012, but the importance of educating

people in the neighbourhood to be able to change society was well-stated. Leadership education here is implemented with a long-term view (ibid. 2013). The AJCC receives funding from foundations, as well as the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality to cover all its structural expenses. Private donations can be used directly for activities in the centre (AJCC, 2013). Beit HaGefen receives about 60 per cent of its funding from the municipality of Haifa. The representatives' vision of political change through their actions is not overly optimistic, since they feel they are only reaching small sections. However, young people in these centres are given a chance to become active in society and start developing activities for younger people, such as, for example a combined summer

camp (Beit HaGefen, 2013).

One of the most extreme situations is found in the Jerusalem Suburb Community Center in *Kafr 'Aqb*, the East Jerusalem neighbourhood mentioned earlier (see text box: Jerusalem Suburb Community Center). Youth activities take place in gender-separated sessions and include visits to theatre shows, sport activities, drama courses or non-formal education and educational activities, such as language courses or homework

assistance. On a rare but regular basis, young people are taken on trips in Israel<sup>34</sup>.

The aim of these activities is to develop a non-political youth movement and to support young people interested in becoming community leaders, enabling them to act on both their own and their communities' behalf. As many young people leave school very early (see paragraph "Education"), the centre also offers some vocational training (JSCC, 2013).



*Part of the playground Mahapach-Tahrir tries to offer to children in Florentine, Tel Aviv. In the back the bomb shelter mentioned.*

*Two art works from young artists, the result of a cooperation project of Jewish and Arab Israelis in Beit HaGefen, Haifa.*



<sup>34</sup> When using the term 'Israel' in this context, the JSCC meant the part of the country on the other side of the security fence.

The centre cooperates with schools and parents in the neighbourhood and reaches out to young people through Facebook. Young people attend activities in great numbers, as there is not much on offer in terms of leisure activities in this area. Activities are repeated regularly, until every young person signed up has had the chance to participate (JSCC, 2013). They try to offer activities for free or for minimal amounts of money. Activities like swimming courses are far too expensive to provide. The municipality of Jerusalem supports the centre with resources or through activities that are already organised and paid for. They also receive some financial support from the Peace and Sport organisation in Monaco (JSCC, 2013). Bedouin youth in the Negev have access to community centres depending on where they live. As mentioned above, some of the registered localities have been provided with community centres and offer youth activities whenever possible.

For Druze youth, the situation is different. As mentioned in paragraph "Arabs", Druze are sometimes classified as "Arab", sometimes not. Druze and *Circassians* have had their own units in the Ministry of Education for over forty years. Druze form communities and as a group are generally in a better situation than Arab, Bedouin and other non-Jewish inhabitants. Youth work is supported by international donors, such as the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), and focuses on work inside the Druze communities, such as, for example, the establishment of a Druze youth movement<sup>35</sup>. There are also organisations working on issues related to military service (see for example the organisation New Profile, mentioned in paragraph "Military service")<sup>36</sup>.

### Fellowship House Ethiopian Spiritual Centre (FHESC)

This centre is a combined community centre and synagogue for the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel. It opened in June 2013 with the support of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews Canada. The director sees this centre as a tool for empowerment for Ethiopian Jews in Israel. It offers educational activities, in form of language and computer courses and support in job search. In the synagogue, they can follow their own ways of praying, use their own language and keep their rituals for weddings and funerals. Funding is project-related and additional money is received from handicraft production and the Ethiopian community. In Jerusalem, this centre is located beside a municipality-funded community centre and they often work together. A second centre has been opened in Netanya.

<sup>35</sup> For more, see: <http://www.beytenu.org/mk-amar-setting-an-example-for-druze-and-jewish-youth/>.

<sup>36</sup> For more information on Druze education, visit: <http://www.peopleil.org/DetailsEn.aspx?itemID=7674>.

### Refugees and migrant workers

Of all the initiatives visited, only Mahapach-Taghir stated that they work with refugees (2013). While many of the other youth organisations are open to everyone, their explicit outreach does not target refugee youth. Activities concerning refugees, for example from the ARDC (African Refugee Development Center), cannot be described as youth work per se, but more as activities to try and secure a permanent status in Israel, to prevent people to become victims of deportation or violence and to provide food and shelter. In 2009, a project involving young asylum seekers used films to raise awareness about their everyday life with apparent success<sup>37</sup>. Furthermore, scout movements, such as the *Tzofim*, the Israel scouts consider work with refugee children and youth their responsibility. In addition, the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo is trying to set up a youth centre inside a school. Bialik-Rogozin, one of the first full-time schools in Israel and located in the South of Tel Aviv-Yafo, has gained some fame in recent years, even receiving an award for its concept. This school offers a space for learning to every child all day, thus trying to reduce the discrepancies caused by different socio-economic statuses. Classes in this school are composed of children from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including refugee children and young people. The city of Tel Aviv apparently recognises the rights of the children of those new incomers, who are seeking places in school and trying to provide security for their children in the city (ARDC, 2013). As is often the case, the situation of refugee children very

much depends on the political climate in Israel. While the previous government celebrated the achievements of the Bialik-Rogozin school, the current one is more critical (Haaretz, August 2012). Even if Tel Aviv-Yafo offers some activities, the state of Israel has not yet decided how to deal with the situation of young refugees in Israel (Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 2013).

### Olim and Mishrazi

There are different strategies when working with one's own culture. The first community centre in Israel for the Ethiopian Jewish community only opened recently (see text box: Fellowship House Ethiopian Spiritual Center-FHESC). It doubles as a synagogue for the Ethiopian Jewish community in living in Jerusalem. This centre is meant to empower the community, to offer a home in a foreign country and thus strengthen their position in Israel. For the founder of the centre it was essential that people could maintain their culture and history within the walls of the centre, become stronger through this re-established connection, and thus be able to negotiate with Israeli mainstream-society on a more equal basis (FHESC, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> For more, see: <http://israel21c.org/social-action-2/israels-darfur-refugees-turn-to-film-to-find-expression/>.

Activities for youth cover arts and crafts, sports, and language courses. Some courses are given to both parents and their children, such as computer courses. One goal is to bring second generation youth closer to their parents and their parents' culture. Another is to guide young people through the process of finding their own identity and their place in society. Activities for young people as well as grown-ups are planned on request. The empowerment of the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel is a definite priority. There is no cooperation between the FHESC and other so-called minority groups (FHESC, 2013).

Again, the situation of *Olim* and *Mishrazi* differs depending on where they live: in Ashdod, *Olim* youth from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds take part in activities in the same centre.

There is, however, an Ethiopian coordinator for the Ethiopian community (YOFI, 2013). This again contrasts with Beit HaGefen or the AJCC (see paragraph "Arabs"). It has been reported there that *Olim* youth do not participate in activities offered by the Jewish and Arab-Israeli cultural centres, preferring to stay in small groups based on ethnicity. This type of distance among groups of *Olim* youth has also been observed in Tel Aviv-Yafo, where action will now be taken to bring the groups of Arab Israeli and Ethiopian Jews together in very low-level activities (Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 2013). The Ethiopian Jewish community has received increasing attention in recent years from philanthropic foundations and international Jewish communities (supporting the work of an NGO catering explicitly to the needs of Ethiopian youth in Israel, for example, or aiming at empowerment and inclusion in mainstream society)<sup>38</sup>. Descendants of Yemenite, Moroccan, and Tunisian Jewish immigrants are considered to be integrated<sup>39</sup>.

## Haredi

In the city of Ashdod, 25 per cent of the population is ultra-orthodox. They are very active in voting and some, but not all, of them cooperate with the municipality on school and infrastructure provision issues. The Torah school visited offered Torah lessons as afternoon and after-school activities, as well as during school holidays, to orthodox boys and girls. Holidays for ultra-orthodox children are gender-separated, as are the Torah lessons, the summer camps and day trips these schools offer. Costs for holiday activities are partly covered by the municipality, typically the morning sessions. Afternoon activities have to be funded through donations from private individuals. According to the Rabbi in Ashdod, the Torah school tries to help families when possible by, for example, feeding students during Torah school sessions, thus reducing the costs of living for many families (Yeshiva of Ohel Avraham, 2013). In Israel, there is only one public youth centre for orthodox youth in Jolon, a small city in the district of Tel Aviv-Yafo. *Haredi* youth do not attend Tel Aviv-Yafo youth centres (Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 2013). However, there are ways of integrating *Haredi* youth into the mainstream and making them more approachable, as for example through the training of a *Haredi* official by the AMEN network - see text box: AMEN - (JDC, 2013).

## Gender identity and sexual orientation

The empowerment of people finding themselves outside the dichotomous identities of heterosexual males and females takes place in different settings<sup>40</sup>. The Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance (hereafter Jerusalem Open House - JOH) has been working in the field of LGBTQ (Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning) in Jerusalem for eleven years at the time of reporting. They have grown to become a vast structure with their own youth and young adult "subsection". However, their work still often encounters obstacles. Life in Jerusalem, the holy city, is described as very complicated for LGBTQ people, who have to deal with the constructed contradiction of their religiosity and their identity on a daily basis. As a result, the approach adopted by JOH towards coming out is a different one. In JOH people accept that some visitors or members of the LGBTQ community will never be able to come out, as it would not be tolerated by the community they live in. This fact is carefully taken into consideration when choosing an office building, which must always have a dentist or lawyer's

<sup>38</sup> The Ethiopian National Project is a partnership project set up by US, Israel, and Ethiopian-community organisations. For more, visit: <http://www.enp.org.il/en/index.php>.

<sup>39</sup> For more subtle differences, read: <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/berghahn/isr/2013/00000028/00000002/art00008?toKen=00551f929135420595cb6c46720297d763477703a7b607a737b433b2b6d3f6a4b4b6e6e42576b642738bb>.

<sup>40</sup> Empowerment of girls and women was the theme of at least one of the activities on offer in the centres, generally in the form of empowerment of women, not necessarily but possibly young adults, to enable them to access the labour market (FHESC), to give them a voice in the choice of activities for their children (Mahapach-Taghir), or just to give them the space to talk about issues concerning them (JSCC) (Ibid., 2013).



Momentum, a band that was set up as an initiative of the community center in Ashdod. It consists of young Israeli Jews with both Russian and Ethiopian background

office, to provide a cover-up. It also needs to be easily accessible from all sides of Jerusalem, including from East Jerusalem Arabs or from the old city for *Haredi* people.

Many of their activities concentrate on providing a safe space, the possibility to talk to people familiar with the topics as well as the living conditions for Jerusalemite LGBTQ persons. Significant funding has so far been received from the USA, but none from the municipality of Jerusalem. The municipality has, indeed, denied the JOH its support for several years, leading to a long-running lawsuit. Even after the court ruling against it, the municipality has continued to refuse to support the JOH, culminating in what was apparently a bizarre call to murder from officials in the city hall in Jerusalem<sup>41</sup>. In such a hostile environment, work with youth has to be well-thought out and discreet. The JOH tries to raise awareness in schools, enabling them to indirectly approach young people. Finding schools ready to cooperate, however, is very difficult, with certain types of schools readier to cooperate than others. Once in the school, people from the JOH speak to classes about sexual orientation and gender-identity<sup>42</sup>. The JOH looks for a teacher with an open-minded attitude in every school, willing to cooperate with them. The teacher's office will then be marked with a symbol that is easy to recognise for a child seeking advice or support. The JOH also offers a support framework for teachers, who sometimes see that a child is having a difficult time but cannot understand why. The JOH raises awareness and helps with communication in such cases.



*The decoration of the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance (JOH). Working with subtle messages through symbols.*

■ <sup>41</sup> For more, read <http://www.joh.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/JOH-Annual-Report-20121.pdf>, page 6, retrieved on 29.10.2013.

■ <sup>42</sup> Note that sex education is not included in the public school curriculum, (JOH 2013).

Once having managed to get to the JOH, a young person can attend group meetings led by professional youth counsellors, thus finding a space to discuss topics relevant to this important transformative phase in their lives within a secure setting. There are groups for various age-groups, for example under 15, as well as for young adults, defined here as 18 to 23 years of age. The general focus is on dialogue within the safe framework of the group and between different age-groups. In addition, JOH offers leadership training to members of the LGBTQ community, with a view to changing society by active and competent citizens. However, JOH visitors represent a broad political spectrum and conflicts based on racism and power differences have occurred (JOH, 2013).

Life is different in Tel Aviv for members of the LGBTQ community. In 2005, a community centre was set up for the LGBTQ community, including a youth club offered by the NGO International Gay Youth (IGY). Seeing IGY and their open way of operating would appear to confirm that Tel Aviv-Yafo is the metropolis in Israel. IGY operates nation-wide, but not in Jerusalem, and receives funding from the Ministry of Education, municipalities and the National Insurance Agency to cover 30 per cent of their costs. The rest of the funding comes from private donors, companies and foundations outside Israel. To create a strong LGBTQ community of young adults in Israel, and thus integrate this community into mainstream society, IGY offers young people a web-platform and a school program that has been acknowledged by the MoE and is part of the school Civic Studies matriculation grade (NIR), as well as a neighbourhood program. Their Social IGY-groups are

spread over the country, have weekly sessions and give young people from age 14 and young adults up to 24 years the possibility to talk to people with the same background and interests. These groups include religious groups, giving a safe space to youth and young adults from orthodox backgrounds, support groups for transgenders, as well as IGY Plus, which helps young adults with HIV. Both IGY and JOH offer leadership training (IGY, 2013).

## Youth with special needs

Programs for youth with special needs are offered by most of the institutions visited as part of their regular activity schedule. This mirrors the basic position in Israel, which is to include people with special needs in society. The nature of these programs and support mechanisms differs, however. The JSCC (see text box: Jerusalem Suburb Community Center) offers afternoon activities for children with special needs and their mothers once a week. The regular school day and transport are covered by official institutions, but there are no additional possibilities of spending the afternoon outside the house (the JSCC, 2013). The Arab-Jewish Community Center -AJCC (see paragraph "Arabs") also offers programs for youth with special needs, but more of a welfare nature inside schools in the neighbourhood, in addition to cultivating relationships with social and philanthropic bodies working

in and outside Jaffa (AJCC, 2013). Mifalot (through the medium of soccer) offers two programs for the inclusion of children and youth with special needs, to give them an opportunity to improve their social competencies, cognitive and other skills. One of these programs consists of regular soccer training adapted to young people with special needs, including tournaments with other groups. The second project brings together normative youth and youth with special needs within the framework of soccer training. The list of Mifalot funders is long, and combines government institutions as well as private donors and foundations. It seems that soccer is an easy activity to get money for (Mifalot, 2013). There are also Israeli organisations working at national level. Yated, for example, is an organization for parents with children with Down Syndrome that engages in youth work quite extensively, offering support groups for parents and siblings of children with Down syndrome and guidance for choices of educational measures, Big Brother and Big Sister programs, music programs, computer classes, social weekends for young adults, as well as summer camps for children and young adults with Down syndrome. There is also Bizchut, an umbrella organization for mainly family organisations fighting for the rights of people with special needs in Israel, but they do not concentrate on youth work (Bizchut, 2013; Netzkraft, 2013). The aforementioned *Tzofim* scouts pride themselves on being the first and only youth movement in Israel actively integrating young people with special physical as well as developmental needs (Tzofim, 2013).

## OFIE

An NGO set up by students in Jerusalem within the Hebrew University Social Unit. They look for funding and plan on an annual basis. Funding comes from the Ministry of Education's Board of Higher Education, in addition to international foundations, the Hebrew University, as well as a small contribution from the Jerusalem Municipality. There is, however, always the risk of not receiving sufficient funding to keep the project going. OFIE combines different levels, with a trust relationship being built between a mentor (a voluntary student) and a young person, the return of the youth into the educational and social system, even to study at the university, as well as experience volunteering. So far OFIE has helped 500 young people get back on track with this concept, with a drop-out rate of roughly 10 per cent. OFIE volunteers work with all youth at risk in Jerusalem (Arabs, ultra-orthodox Jews, about half of them being girls) (OFIE, 2013).

## Youth at risk

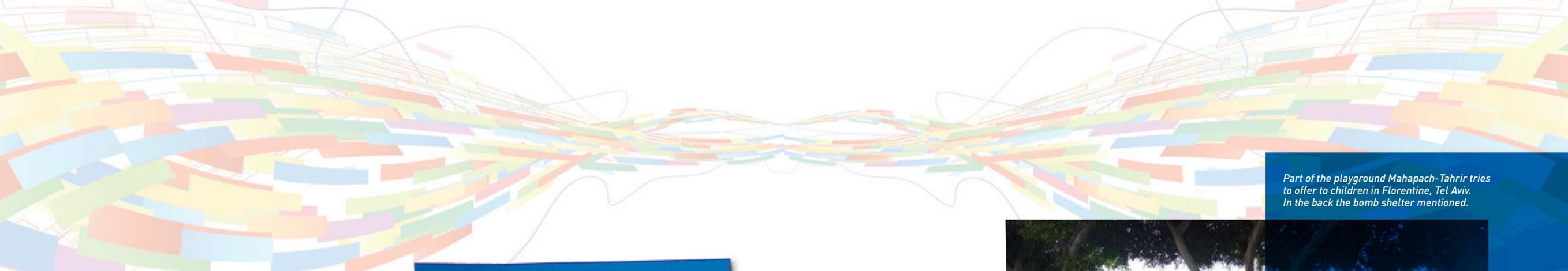
Youth at risk is a field where it quickly becomes very clear what it means to not have centralised initiatives, or at least sufficient monitoring. The official definition for youth at risk is based on four states<sup>43</sup>. In Israel roughly 350,000 youth are identified as youth at risk and 65,000 in Jerusalem alone (OFIE, 2013). The approach to youth at risk varies from direct reintegration to preventive measures. The Ministry of Education has a unit dedicated to youth at risk, and there are public services (for example, the welfare department, as well as several boarding houses). Youth at risk in the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo has in its own department and also its own youth club, offering a space for different organisations and initiatives (Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, 2013). Nevertheless, central government guidelines for practical youth work are missing, leading to very inconsistent coverage by the many NGOs working in this field (OFIE, 2013). Preventive measures in both Tel Aviv-Yafo and Ashdod include parent patrol. This concept aims at establishing relationships between adults and young people through conversation and regular contact. Parents/adults are first given communication training and then a team of parents, accompanied by a social worker, patrols parks and public spaces at night. Another preventive measure focuses on educating parents on the dangers young people face in everyday life (CC Ashdod, 2013; JSCC, 2013; Municipality of Ashdod, 2013). However, when one Rabbi in the Torah school in Ashdod was asked about their approach to youth at risk,

## Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Art has often been found easy to access when trying to establish communication links between different parties. The Israel Museum in Jerusalem offers an interesting initiative along these lines. Believing that tolerance and respect to every person, regardless of their background or age needs to be taught already at age of children, the Ruth Youth Wing offers various programs to children from very different contexts, bringing together groups that are not often given the chance to meet at such an early age, such as secular and religious Jews in the "Yahad" project, or Arab and Jewish youths aged 12 to 16 in the project "Bridging the gap", in place for the past 18 years. Here, Arab and Jewish teachers accompany equal numbered groups of Jewish and Arab children over several meetings. In a pedagogically safe environment, they speak about or draw pictures to illustrate their perceptions of each other, and then work on improving tolerance, respect and understanding. This is also a cooperation project between the museum and the community of Umm-el-Fahem and other communities in the Arab sector. In addition to this, the Ruth Wing offers art classes to children from the periphery. In many of the projects run by the museum, education is not only offered to the children but also to teachers from cooperating schools, thus ensuring a broader effect on the education of future pupils. Funding for projects is diverse. The school-cooperation project is funded by a US-based private foundation, as well as an association of German sponsors for the museum's activities (Ruth Wing, 2013).

he replied that there were none such young people. Their work was intended to prevent young people from staying on the streets all day. One of the frequently

<sup>43</sup> The four states of risk are marked by: 1. Risk factors (poverty, dysfunctional family), 2. Risk indicators (criminality, poor performance in school), 3. Risk behaviours (frequent absence from school, premature sexual relationships, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse) and 4. Risk results (early pregnancy, prostitution, dropping out of school). All of these stages or phenomena can be used to define a child as "youth in risk." (OFIE, 2013).



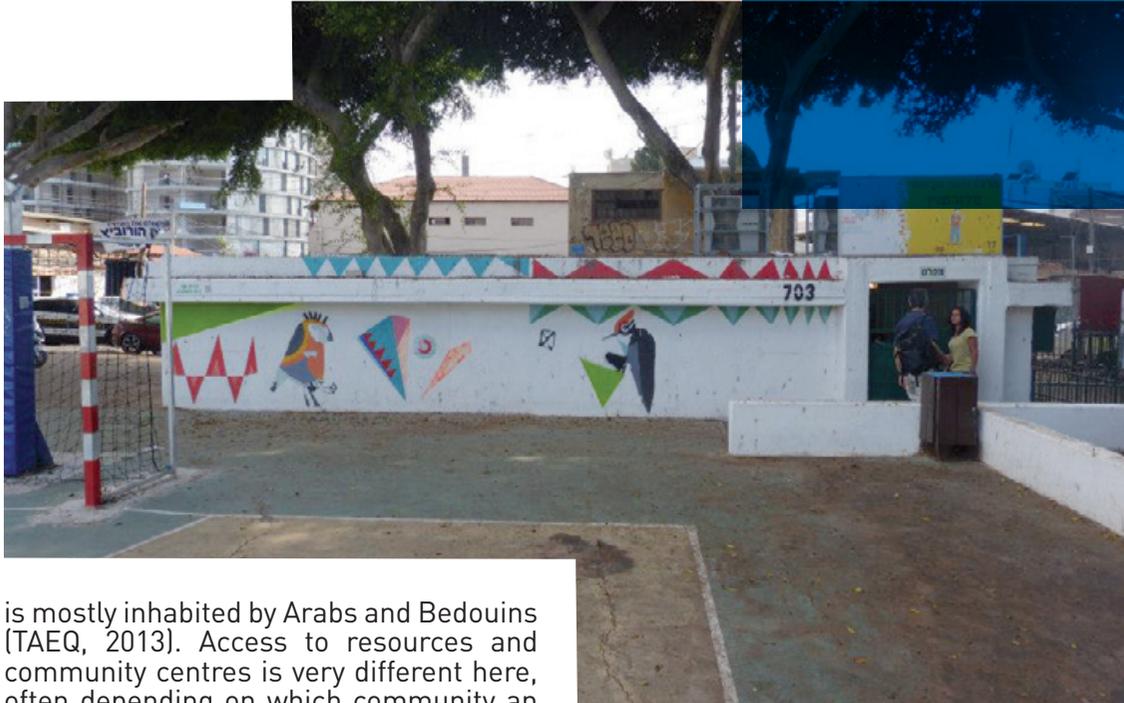
expressed fears about young people is the idea of losing them, either to drugs or unemployment (Yeshiva of Ohel Avraham, 2013).

Many NGOs engage in work with these young people that preventive measures do not reach, OFIE (one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013 - see text box: OFIE) in Jerusalem targets a great number of young people at risk, who are seen as being only one step away from jail, and offers them a three year program to re-integrate society.

In Maor, a dual-diagnosis<sup>44</sup> centre in Ashdod, young people are treated with a view to helping them re-integrate into "normal" life. The most frequently used drugs used by youth are glue and tipp-Ex, which can cause severe long-term damage to the psyche and brain. The youngest person ever treated there was ten years old. The procedure used is that a social or youth worker accompanies the child to the institution and then is there for them throughout the whole "recovery" process, which can take several years. However, due to the lack of monitoring and networking, it is not possible at this stage to establish a standardised good quality approach towards youth at risk. In addition, the lack of monitoring often leads to overlapping in the work of organisations (OFIE, 2013).

## Periphery

Florentine is a relatively poor neighbourhood in Tel Aviv-Yafo, currently experiencing a wave of gentrification. Both Jewish and Arab Israelis live here, both groups belonging to a relatively low socio-economic group. The neighbourhood is changing rapidly, reducing social structures to an extreme extent (there is no primary school in the neighbourhood, for example). Mahapach-Tahrir has been active here for 15 years, as well as in six other communities, working on change in the community. They describe themselves as a political organisation striving for social change and they are open to everyone approaching them. Initially, they had to fight hard to get support from the municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo but they finally were given two rooms, followed one year later by a bomb shelter in the yard. This attitude towards them is changing now and they have been asked to support the process of setting up community centres. The two rooms are used, among other activities for other age groups, as learning facilities for young people in the neighbourhood, for doing homework and engaging in additional educational activities, preparation for exams, as well as computer-courses and also for summer activities and those designed to keep them off the streets. Funding comes mainly from European Foundations (Mahapach-Taghir, 2013). The rural periphery in the South of Israel



Part of the playground Mahapach-Tahrir tries to offer to children in Florentine, Tel Aviv. In the back the bomb shelter mentioned.

is mostly inhabited by Arabs and Bedouins (TAEQ, 2013). Access to resources and community centres is very different here, often depending on which community an individual lives in. Associations active in such settings face different complications, such as a lack of infrastructure, access to the labour market and education, and depending on the target group, a limited number of funding opportunities combined with limited support from government institutions. Activities offered by the centre of the Towns Association for the Environment Quality (TAEQ) in Kfar Bara have to ask participants to pay due to the lack of funding. Children and young people who are unable to pay cannot participate. There is no budget for the integration of street kids (TAEQ, 2013). Nevertheless, some support mechanisms exist. The AJCC (Arab-Jewish Community Center) for example offers disadvantaged families access to support programs, while the Israel Museum (see text box: Israel Museum, Jerusalem) gets children and young from the periphery into the museum to receive art education (AJCC,

2013; Israel Museum, 2013).

The aforementioned community centre of Beer Sheva works on establishing communication, cooperation and friendship between different communities in the Negev. Children, who would not otherwise easily come into contact, meet through shared sport activities. Collective projects are attended by groups of children and young people from Beer Sheva and the surrounding localities. The groups are coached by local teachers, which in turn improve the children's language skills in a familiar surrounding. Visits to the home localities of participating children are also organised (CC Beer Sheva, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Dual diagnosis corresponds to the condition of suffering from a mental illness and a co-morbid substance abuse issue.

## The importance of the international level of youth work

At various times during interviews and presentations, the importance of offering activities at an international level was stressed. International activities offer children and youth the opportunity to act on grounds not connected with the different narratives and conflicts that exist in the home country, making it easier to see the other with sympathetic eyes. In addition, they gain the insight that life in another country can look very different to their own context, changing their perspective. Mifalot (see paragraph "Arabs") is constantly looking for possibilities of creating encounters between young people from Israel, both Jewish and Arab, Jordan and the occupied Palestinian territories. This type of activity, however, is not very well-publicised, as they already have problems with the anti-normalisation movement even if these activities are not intended to bring about political change but are merely about children playing together (Mifalot, 2013). The Beit HaGefen mentioned that leaving Israel was often the only chance for people from the West Bank, the Gaza strip and Israel to meet (ibid. 2013).

## Conclusion

Israeli society is divided into several groups, with a division along the lines of both ethnic and religious backgrounds, socio-economic background, the amount of time lived in Israel, as well as perceptions of those who in other ways do not conform to the normative standards of society. While on the one hand pluralism is welcomed, on the other it is often met with outright rejection. Different backgrounds equal different access to resources, leading to a situation where groups that do not belong to mainstream society find themselves on its margins. Attitudes and actions towards specific groups depend very heavily on the political climate in Israel, but also on specific localities. This climate often influences the support offered by public institutions to different groups. As a result, activities available to young people in Israel differ greatly in nature and number. Depending on the background of the youth group targeted, funding is more or less available, as is structural support or support from society itself. In some cases, target groups extremely lack attention and support, as for example the legally or peripherally most distanced groups in society.

Much work still needs to be done in Israeli society to include inhabitants who up to now have found themselves on the outskirts of society, ranging from awareness

raising to active inclusion work. Efforts have already been made, but great changes are still needed. To facilitate inclusion, both the structural and legal levels need to adapt, and individual needs need to be taken into account to improve the situation of the less included individuals in Israeli society. Many individuals and organisations are already working to create a more equal Israel for all inhabitants and have gone to great lengths to achieve this aim. However, the situation of such individuals and organisations is often very fragile. Funding is often received on an annual basis, and while there are many donors in Israel, many of them have their own agenda. Further, NGOs and youth work lacks a good network in Israel, leaving the field of non-formal education in Israel crowded with NGOs but disorganised and thus only with limited power as actors at national level.

It is prominent for youth work and inclusion in Israel that many of the actors observed in this report focus on empowerment. While state-initiated activities focus mainly on leadership training, inclusion strategies in non-governmental organisations use different approaches. Some groups or initiatives decided to work on empowerment issues before beginning a dialogue with the mainstream community, others have recently begun focussing on the education of leaders to create representatives and actors in society and have more influence on its development, also as a complement or opposition to the young leaders who have been educated in ways that reflect the values of mainstream society. Critical thinking and self-responsible, community-related acting are key

values in this striving for change in society, contrasting but not opposing the traditional concepts of volunteering in fixed structures to give back to society.

Another priority focus point in youth work in Israel is prevention. Many activities, offered through governmental as well as third-sector parties, aim to involve young people in activities, especially after school or during holidays. Leaving young people to their own devices after school is clearly seen as very dangerous. Activities range from offering a space for conversation to engaging in volunteering activities. Other organisations are busy preventing the worst, working with young people at risk or in strongly disadvantaged areas. Priorities are different, preventing them from focusing on empowerment. Such organisations are in great need of networking with organisations that offer the next link in the chain of inclusion into society.

Interesting is also the growing orientation towards youth's needs and interests. Changes in the perception of youth are taking place, and young people becoming more influential in the decision-making process.

Israel represents an interesting field of work for cooperation at international level. Regardless of which target group is examined, there are certainly already NGOs working in Israel. However, different factors can affect cooperation with NGOs in Israel, as has been highlighted in this report, and different aspects such as the political framework, availability of external funding and support from society need to be considered. Nevertheless, there is a very active field of youth work, with many highly motivated youth workers and young people in it.

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## List of interviews

<b>AJCC</b>	Presentation to the colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with the Director of Arab-Jewish Community Center (AJCC) in Tel Aviv-Yafo and colleagues present, and in addition email interview.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Beit HaGefen</b>	Presentation to group of German future teachers and interview, as well as email interview with program director of Beit HaGefen Arab-Jewish Cultural Center, Haifa.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Brookdale</b>	Personal interview with a researcher at Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Tel Aviv-Yafo.	<b>June 2008</b>
<b>CC Ashdod</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with the community coordinator of Ethiopian community in Ashdod.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>CC Beer Sheva</b>	Personal interview with the director of the company of community centers in Beer Sheva.	<b>November 2013</b>
<b>EMYU</b>	Email interview and presentation to colloquium in Winter 2013 by representative of the EuroMed Youth Unit Israel, Jerusalem.	<b>November 2013</b>
<b>FHESC</b>	Presentation to the colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with the director of the Fellowship House Ethiopian Spiritual Center (FHESC), Jerusalem, and supporters present.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Israel Museum</b>	Presentation of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013 by the director of the Ruth Wing of the Israel Museum.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>JDC</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>JOH</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013 with the director of the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance in Jerusalem.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>JSCC</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013 by the director of the Jerusalem Suburb Community Center in Jerusalem, as well as group interview with manager and social workers, as well as email interviews.	<b>October 2013 November 2013</b>
<b>Mahapach-Taghir</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with youth workers of Mahapach-Taghir present.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Mifalot</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with representatives and trainers of Mifalot present.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Municipality of Jerusalem</b>	Presentation of several members of the municipality to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, as well as email interview.	<b>October 2013 November 2013</b>
<b>Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo</b>	Presentation of several members of the municipality to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, as well as email interviews.	<b>October 2013 November 2013</b>
<b>NFET</b>	Email interviews with non-formal education trainer in Israel and on international level from Jerusalem.	<b>October 2013 November 2013</b>
<b>NSYC</b>	Personal interview with the chairperson of the National Student and Youth Council for 2008.	<b>June 2008</b>
<b>OFIE</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with the director of OFIE, as well as youth workers present, as well as email interview.	<b>October 2013 November 2013</b>
<b>TAEQ</b>	Presentation to the colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013, with the director of Towns Association for the Environment Quality, Kfar Bara, as well as supporters present.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Yeshiva of Ohel Avraham</b>	Presentation of the Torah school "Yeshiva of Ohel Avraham" to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013 by the Rabbi.	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>YOFI</b>	Presentation to colloquium of the Study Visit in October 2013 by a representative of YOFI, as well as email interviews.	<b>October 2013</b>

## List of organisations met during the study visit in October 2013

Name	Location	Focus point	Website (if available)
"Nalaga'at" Center	Tel Aviv-Yafo	People with special needs	<a href="http://www.nalagaat.org.il/">http://www.nalagaat.org.il/</a>
Arab-Jewish Community Center (AJCC)	Tel Aviv-Yafo	Community and youth center	<a href="http://www.ajcc-jaffa.org/">http://www.ajcc-jaffa.org/</a>
Beit Hagefen, Haifa	Haifa	Arab-Jewish cultural center, youth	<a href="http://beit.hagefen.com">http://beit.hagefen.com</a>
Fellowship House Ethiopian Spiritual Center	Jerusalem	Ethiopian Jewish community	no website
Israel Museum, The Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education	Jerusalem	Youth, Arab, Jewish, secular, religious, from the periphery	<a href="http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/page_1193">http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/page_1193</a>
Jerusalem municipality	Jerusalem	Municipality	<a href="http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_main/defaultnew.asp?lng=2">http://www.jerusalem.muni.il/jer_main/defaultnew.asp?lng=2</a>
Jerusalem Open House	Jerusalem	LGBTQ community	<a href="http://joh.org.il/index.php/english">http://joh.org.il/index.php/english</a>
Jerusalem Suburb Community Center	Jerusalem	Community center	<a href="http://www.jbcc.matnasim.org/">http://www.jbcc.matnasim.org/</a>
Joint Distribution Committee	Jerusalem	Diverse	<a href="http://www.jdc.org.il/">http://www.jdc.org.il/</a>
Mahapach-Taghir	Tel Aviv-Yafo	Community and youth center	<a href="http://mahapach-taghir.org/our-communities/florentine">http://mahapach-taghir.org/our-communities/florentine</a>
Maor	Ashdod	Dual diagnosis center, Reintegration of addicts	no website
Mifalot	Tel Aviv-Yafo	Sports and youth development, social integration	<a href="http://mifalot.com/">http://mifalot.com/</a>
Museum for the Heroes of the World War II, from the Russian community	Ashdod	Museum, community center	no website
OFIE	Jerusalem	Youth at risk	<a href="http://www.matanel.org/content/ofie-program-%E2%80%93-hebrew-university-program-underprivileged-">http://www.matanel.org/content/ofie-program-%E2%80%93-hebrew-university-program-underprivileged-</a>
Tzahal	Tel Aviv-Yafo	In the presentation education of youth, preparation for their military service	
Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality	Tel Aviv-Yafo	Municipality	<a href="http://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/eng/Pages/HomePage.aspx">http://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/eng/Pages/HomePage.aspx</a>
Towns Association for the Environment Quality	Kfar Bara	Environmental topics	no website
Yeshiva of Ohel Avraham	Ashdod	Ultra-orthodox independent school, Torah lessons, leisure activities for youth, kindergarten, attention to children with slight special needs	no website
YOFI	National	Youth voluntary service	<a href="http://www.yofi.net/index.php">http://www.yofi.net/index.php</a>

## List of text boxes

### Title of boxes

AMEN

Fellowship House Ethiopian Spiritual Centre (FHESC)

Israel Museum, Jerusalem

OFIE

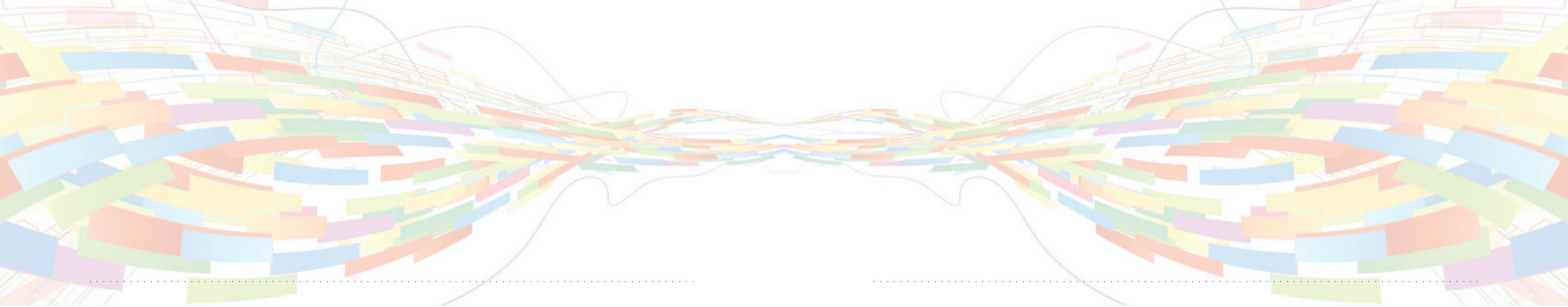
The Jerusalem Suburb Community Center (JSCC)

## Glossary

<b>AIC</b>	Alternative Information Center, Palestinian-Israeli organisation, among other activities providing information on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For more see: <a href="http://www.alternativenews.org/english/">http://www.alternativenews.org/english/</a> .
<b>AJCC</b>	Arab-Jewish Community Center, Tel Aviv-Yafo, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations met during the study visit in October 2013."
<b>Aliyah</b>	The travel of a Jewish person to Israel, "the act of going up," returning to the holy land.
<b>AMEN</b>	AMEN, project launched by the JDC (see below). For more, see text box: AMEN.
<b>ARDC</b>	African Refugee Development Center
<b>Ashkenazi</b>	Ashkenazi derives from the old Hebrew word for Germany, and describes Jewish people from central and eastern Europe, as well as their American descendants. Sephardi stands in old Hebrew for Spain, and is now used for Jewish people from the Mediterranean, Balkan, Aegean, and Middle Eastern regions. They show differences in ritual and language, but accept each others authorities and practice. Mizrahi is a relatively new word for Jewish people from the "Orient," whereas this description is quite unspecific, especially in its homogenizing tendency when used (cf. Metz 1988).
<b>Ba'hai</b>	Monotheistic world-wide religion with around 6 million worshippers.
<b>Circassian</b>	Caucasian people of muslim religion.
<b>CRI</b>	Coalition against Racism in Israel, umbrella organisation of Israeli(-based) NGOs and organisations. For more, see: <a href="http://www.fightracism.org">http://www.fightracism.org</a> .
<b>DREDF</b>	Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, for more, see: <a href="http://dredf.org/">http://dredf.org/</a> .
<b>EMYU</b>	EuroMed Youth Unit
<b>FHESC</b>	Fellowship House Ethiopian Spiritual Center, Jerusalem, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013".
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>Haredi</b>	These categories are at times used synonymously, it is however more so, that Hasidic is a movement within Haredic Judaism, but both are seen to describe ultra-orthodox Jewish people (Katz 2013). Mostly, Haredi live in their own community as much as possible, for example in complete neighbourhoods. In extreme cases, Haredi people do not speak Hebrew, but Yiddish, thus not being able to community with the larger part of Israeli society.
<b>Hasidi</b>	See Haredi
<b>IDF</b>	Israeli Defence Force
<b>IFCC</b>	Israeli Federation of Community Centers, for more see <a href="http://www.iacc-matnasim.org.il/">http://www.iacc-matnasim.org.il/</a> .

<b>IGY</b>	International Gay Youth, Israeli NGO, for more, visit: <a href="http://www.igy.org.il/">http://www.igy.org.il/</a> .
<b>JDC</b>	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a philanthropic organisation. For more see paragraph "Other actors in youth work."
<b>JOH</b>	Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance, Jerusalem, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations met during the study visit in October 2013."
<b>JSCC</b>	Jerusalem Suburb Community Center, Jerusalem, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations met during the study visit in October 2013."
<b>LGBTQ</b>	Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning and relates to topics of sexual orientation, gender identity, and often to the concepts and understandings of life, co-existence, and value-systems represented by these orientations.
<b>Mishrazi</b>	See Ashkenazi
<b>MJB</b>	Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, research institute, for more, see: <a href="http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/">http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/</a> .
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>NFET</b>	Non-formal education trainer in Israel and on international level, Jerusalem. See also "List of interviews."
<b>NSYC</b>	National Student and Youth Council in Israel.
<b>OFIE</b>	OFIE, Jerusalem, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013."
<b>Olim</b>	"New arrivals," phrase for latest immigrants, currently titled like this are Ethiopians.
<b>Sephardi</b>	See Ashkenazi
<b>TAEQ</b>	Towns Association for the Environment Quality, Kfar Bara, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations met during the study visit in October 2013."
<b>Tzahal</b>	The Israeli military
<b>YOFI</b>	YOFI, Ashdod, one of the organisations visited during the study visit in October 2013. Please also see "List of interviews," as well as "List of organisations met during the study visit in October 2013."
<b>YSA</b>	Youth and Society Administration, sub-unit of the Ministry of Education in Israel, see paragraph: The Israeli state and youth work.





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*Sports ground of the AJCC in Tel Aviv-Yafo*

## Youth work and inclusion in Israel



This publication has been edited and financed by the Regional capacity building support unit (RCBS) for Euromed Youth Programme IV dealing with the countries participating in the ENPI South (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia).

The overall objective of RCBS is to support the Euro Mediterranean youth units (EMYUs) in their efforts to ensure an efficient implementation of the Euromed Youth programme and an optimum achievement of results.

Specific objectives are:

- guidance and training activities for EMYUs and project leaders and organisations,
- coordination and synergies between actors and stakeholders (youth in action programme, Euromed platform, etc.),
- visibility and communication.

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## Youth work and inclusion in Israel

Youth work is changing and opening new interesting perspectives for the future. The field of youth work within Meda countries is living strong changes and the role of young people is more and more relevant in the society.

It is the second issue of a collection in several languages called «**Youth Work in...**» composed of publications dedicated to youth work in the European Neighbourhood South countries.

This collection aims to support the cooperation within EuroMed area providing a depth reflection about the nowadays issues and challenges in youth work in the Euro Mediterranean context.

**Youth work and Inclusion in Israel** is the result of the Study Visit, organized with the coordination of RCBS (Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit for the EuroMed Youth Programme IV) held in Israel from the 29th September to the 5th October 2013 that provided the chance to discover for an entire week youth work and the level of social inclusion in Israel with a specific focus on youth.

This publication provides:

- an overview about youth work in Israel;
- an educational and pedagogical background of youth work in Israel;
- the statistics situation about youth in Israel;
- the inclusion strategy and youth work in Israel;
- some examples of youth projects and best practises about inclusion.

Download it for free at: [www.euromedyouth.net](http://www.euromedyouth.net) and <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/>



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