



EuroMed Youth III Programme



STUDIES ON YOUTH POLICIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES

ISRAEL



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The third phase of the **Euromed Youth Programme*** (Euro-Med Youth III), funded by the European Commission (DG EuropeAid) and launched in October 2005, is a regional Programme set up within the framework of the third chapter of the Barcelona Process '*Partnership on Social, Cultural and Human Affairs*'. The overall objectives of the Euro-Med Youth Programme are to promote intercultural dialogue among young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region, motivate active citizenship as well as to contribute to the development of youth policy.

The overall aim of the studies undertaken in **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey** on Youth Policies, was to be a reference tool which would give all stakeholders in the field of youth, as well as youth project organisers, an overview of the situation of young people and of provisions available for them in the 10 partner countries. The objectives were to identify whether there was a Youth Policy, legislation or any other national strategy addressing the needs of youth and what kind of provision was made through non-formal education and youth work in the relevant partner countries.

Research for the studies was carried out by 7 experts and involved gathering of information, during a 5-month period, on basis of available written materials and resources, and as a result of missions to the studied countries to interview relevant youth authorities, organisations and young people individually or through focus groups.

The outcomes of the studies, each produced in a report format following a common structure for all the ten studies, give an enlightening overview of the definition and situation of youth in the Mediterranean partner countries. The studies focused on young people's rights and entitlements as active citizens, such as opportunities to vote, get elected and contribute to the decision-making process; the challenges faced by youth such as unemployment, immigration, housing, marriage, generational and cultural conflict, young women's place in society; young people's reactions in response to such challenges and description of provision for leisure-time activities and non-formal education through governmental and/or non-governmental youth institutions and organisations.

A reading of all the studies shows that a national youth policy is not yet fully implemented in any of the partner countries. However, each of them has a number of national directives, legislations, policies and/or strategies to address youth issues, usually at cross-sector level, even if youth are not, in some cases, recognised as a priority. The definition of youth varies from country to country, sometimes even within the same country depending on the responsible national authority. Non-formal education has no, or limited, place in most of the studied countries, formal education being the main priority of national authorities. The Euromed Youth Programme is assessed positively and considered to be an essential tool for the promotion of youth work and non-formal education.

Each report, published individually, provides a factual background on youth issues on basis of information collated by the relevant researchers. In addition, one document bringing together the executive summaries from each of the ten studies has been also produced to highlight an overview on the situation of youth within the Mediterranean region.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no official definition of youth in Israel, however the definition most commonly used refers to the age bracket of 13 to 18 years. While the starting age is sometimes settled slightly lower in various definitions, the end age of 18 is fixed as the age of conscription into the military for both girls and boys. Some youth organisations however see young people leaving the army at 22 or 23 years as still in the need of youth services and therefore extend the age span of youth for their own definition. With a median age of 28.8 years, a 16.1% of the total population in the age bracket between 15 and 24, and 44.1% under the age of 24, the youth factor is quite decisive in Israel. The formal education system is well developed with high enrolment rates for all three sectors. However, the enrolment ratio is lower for certain ethnic groups (Ethiopian and Arab Israelis). Youth unemployment is not low (18.5% in 2001), and poses an even graver problem for certain segments of society, e.g. Ethiopian new immigrants, but is not seen as a major problem by most actors.

The living conditions of young people in Israel are massively influenced by their ethnic, religious and social origin as also by their habitat. The majority of the young population is highly influenced by globalised youth culture, showing similar patterns of reaction to modern media. Leisure time is preferably spent with friends at shopping malls, reading and watching television, not much different than a majority of young people in Western European countries. The huge role the compulsory military service plays for a large percentage of the Jewish youth population in different aspects has been noted by almost all actors interviewed. The problematic security situation has a high influence on young people, often leading to a more risk-prone behaviour.

Israel offers a well-developed infrastructure for the participation of young people in decision-making. Youth and students' councils operate throughout the country in all sectors of society at local, regional and national levels. From a very young age youth are encouraged to take part in these structures. However, their actual influence on political processes was disputed by the actors interviewed. This was partly due to the fact that at least the youth councils do not have a mandate to tackle political topics other than those directly related to youth. Another reason was that the councils mainly do lobbying work for their concerns but only have limited decision-making power. Still, there are certain standing agreements and also partly legal regulations in existence that guarantee that youth are consulted at a local level and partly also at national level. Certain aspects of civil education are taught at school and volunteering is seen as a value that is deeply connected with the creation of the state of Israel. For this reason certain hours of voluntary service are also compulsory in grade ten.

There is no national youth policy in Israel. Recent governments have taken attempts to create such a policy, but due to frequently changing administrations, overlapping responsibilities of government bodies and other political reasons those attempts did not succeed so far. Eight different ministries, and also partly the prime minister's office, are concerned with youth issues. A coordinating body does not exist until now, but for certain cross-cutting topics committees have been formed to for-

ulate sector strategies. The current administration promotes two different youth strategies, one of them is 'Youth at the Centre', the other the 'Youth Law'. The first is an approach mainly for sharing best practices in the youth field through empowering youth work at the municipality level. This more decentralised approach tries to answer to the very diverse field of actors and programmes existing in Israel. The Youth Law is pushing for a legal regulation in the field of youth. It has been widely discussed over the last years and undergone several changes since then. While youth organisations have emphasized that the law should establish a coordinating body in youth policies, the Ministry of Education in charge is trying to pass a version through the parliament that would mainly establish youth departments in all municipalities. The Ministry of Education, which commands its own 'Youth and Non-Formal Education-Department', has received about 9-10% of the overall government budget in 2008 and dedicated around 11% of this to the department mentioned above. Several actors complained that only youth at risk was a priority budget wise.

Israel is home to a wide variety of youth organisations. The most important of them are the youth movements, which are mass organisations present all over the country. Many of them were founded before the existence of the state. There are currently 14 of these movements financed through the government, and most of them are somehow connected to a political party or other kinds of political organisations. An exception from this is the scout movement. These movements are aligned in a national umbrella organisation. Apart from the youth movements, most of the towns, city quarters and villages have their own community centres. While most of these centres do not exclusively cater for young people, they also offer services for youth. Community centres are privately organised but most receive support from the state and/or the municipalities. The majority of these centres is organised in an umbrella organisation. NGOs have started to play a bigger role in youth service providing in recent years. However state services continue to be the more important players in the field. Most of the organisations offer possibilities for young people to become active but not many are actually youth-led themselves.

The majority of the actors interviewed saw the Euromed Youth Programme in a positive light. Especially the chance to meet youth from Arab countries was noted positively. Due to the fact that Israel maintains very strong relations with the U.S. and Western European countries like Germany for international youth work, the Euromed Youth Programme does not take an outstanding role. The Euromed Youth Unit (EMYU) did not take a special role in the development of youth policies but did offer study visits in this matter to relevant actors.

There are no notably developed regional support mechanisms. Other support for youth organisations comes mainly from the private sector and from a very strong relation with philanthropic foundations inside and outside Israel. Most of them are connected to the international Jewish community. Those organisations provide the different parts of youth in Israel with money and other services, often tied to certain political or religious stances. NGOs have the chance to raise money from these institutions, sometimes also for activities critical of the official government policies.

The Ministry of Education has taken measures to improve the situation in the youth field. While there is no national youth policy, sector strategies try to substitute for such a unified approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives

The report presented hereafter deals with the subject of youth and youth policy in Israel. A special focus is put on the topic of youth participation, investigating in more depth the measures that are taken at a policy level and at an organisational level to allow young people to take part in decision-making processes concerning their cultural, political and social environment.

The research team focused on answering the following guiding questions:

- Is there any youth policy or strategy?
- Who are its actors and by what regulations is it implemented?
- Does the policy meet the actual needs of youth?

Supporting young people in creating the environments they consider fit to fulfil their needs is one of the major aims of any policy or action designed for young people (European Youth Forum 1998). For this reason the research team put an emphasis on investigating how the policies already in effect and their actors work on the goal of enabling young people to actively participate in local matters socially, economically and politically.

1.2. Methodology

The findings of this study are based on the relevant material on the subject, collected and compiled from local and international organisations and scholars in the field of youth research. To add to this information the authors have interviewed different actors from the field of youth policy during the months of May and June 2008. In total 16 interviews were conducted with representatives from a number of ministries, youth NGOs, international organisations, municipalities, research institutes, the Euromed Youth Unit (EMYU) and the Students and National Youth Council (Moetzet Ha-Talmidim ve Ha-Noar - NYC). Also two focus group discussions were held with 34 young people from Kfar Sava and Yaffo, aged between 14 and 19.

1.3. Challenges of the study

Some aspects of the situation of Israeli youth have indeed been very thoroughly researched, and a lot of written material is available on these subjects. Statistical data on youth is easily accessible. One complication in the use of this statistical data lies in the conflicting opinions on the definition of the borders of the state of Israel. This has made it difficult to precisely define certain aspects with regard to the number of youth living in Israel. As Israel's population is much more diverse than this

is the case for most other countries of the region, it has proved to be quite challenging to draw a comprehensive picture of the situation of young people, and at the same time not to neglect its diversity. Furthermore, there can be large differences in the definition of Israeli youth, depending firstly on the attention paid to the minorities, and secondly on categorisations concerning ethnic and religious belongings.

2. SITUATION OF YOUTH

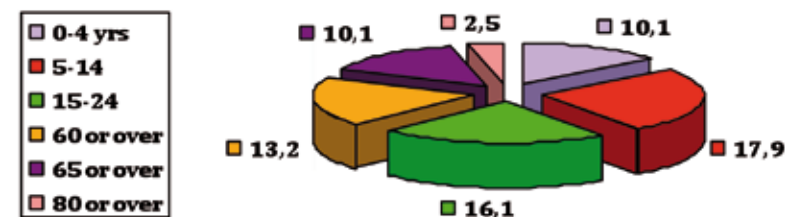
2.1. Definition of youth

The concept of youth, distinguished from childhood and adulthood alike, has emerged during the time of industrialisation in Western Europe. While before this point youth and adult life were closely interconnected within the house, industrialisation transferred the location of work away from the house for the majority of adults and thus separated the two spheres. Today youth as a category describes a time-limited, transitional complementation of social roles, a cultural intermediate zone between defined roles (childhood and adulthood), and a period of liminality (Dar 1990). It marks the time when individuals become economically, biologically, and psychologically independent from their guardians. The end of youth is therefore logically marked by the point when full independency has been reached and the young person is able to reproduce society not only in biological but also in economic terms (Hurrelmann 2004).

Although Israel can be regarded as a country displaying developments similar to Western European countries with respect to many characteristics, this concept applies only in parts to the Israeli youth. According to the Ministry of Education (Misrad HaChinuch - MoE), there is no official definition of youth in Israel, but when the topic is discussed the term employed often refers to young people of 13 to 18 years. After the military service – which is fulfilled after finishing high school at the age of 18 - these youngsters are not considered to be youths anymore (Interview with MoE). One of the interviewed researchers mentioned that in his research he treats people between 9 and 24 as youth⁽¹⁾, but most of the interviewees, in fact, defined youth as the age between 13 and 18 years, because this period ends with entering the military service (Interviews with International Exchange Office; Tel Aviv Municipality). However after the service many young people, who are then considered as adults by the Israeli society, are not economically independent from their families. Many live with their parents during their studies (Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University). And for many young people of the Arab part of the Israeli society, independence from the parents is (most of the time) only achieved through marriage, which allows young people to establish their own household.

Due to all these reasons the research team has applied the following approach: when mentioning youth in general, the MoE's definition which refers to young people in the age bracket between 13 and 18 years, and when referring to international statistics or documents, the UN age definition of 15 to 24 are applied.

Table 2.1 : Israeli population 2005, distribution by age in %
(Own compilation from UN 2006) :



2.2. General statistics: Demography, young people's rights and conditions

To speak about Israeli youth in general is a nearly impossible task. Due to the country's heterogeneous society consisting of Jews from over 100 countries, Arab Israelis⁽²⁾, Bedouins, Druzes and working migrants from highly diverse origin, such as the Philippines, Ghana, Romania and Columbia, youth find themselves between various points of reference, which makes it challenging to give one congruent picture of youth in Israel (Cohen-Sal 2000). Even the Jewish religious community is divided into two types: firstly the group of mainstream religious Judaism, which 80% of the religious Jews belong to, and whose schools are under the supervision of the MoE; secondly the ultra-orthodox community, which is highly secluded. Young people from ultra-orthodox families generally go to private schools and are strongly protected and controlled by their parents and the community (Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University).

A poll from 2006 states that 2.2 million people living in Israel are under the age of 18⁽³⁾. The median age is 28.8 years (UN 2006). The youth literacy rate in 2003 was 99.6% (World Bank 2004) and the primary, secondary and tertiary school enrolment in 2006 mounted up to 89.6% (UNDP 2007/2008). The level of educational enrolment differs decisively depending on the ethnic origin and/or the grade of religious obedience. This applies particularly to the tertiary sector (cp. table 2.2. and 2.3.). For immigrant youth in Israel, language knowledge is a great barrier when reaching out to education. Currently, especially the so-called "new immigrants" (Olim) from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union are often victims of racism and suffer from various problems such as their limited knowledge of the Hebrew language (Titzmann 2005), living in temporary residences, poverty, high school drop-out rates (62% of Ethiopian Jewish youth between 14 and 17 years and 20-40% of youth from the former Soviet Union at the age of 17 do not attend school), and risk behaviour (Dolev et al. 2001).

(1) In this definition the researcher distinguishes between five different phases youth go through: puberty from 9 to 12 years, mid-adolescence between 12 and 15, adolescence between 15 and 18, military service time from 18 to 21 and the youth period after the army from 21-24 (Interview with BIU). The latter corresponds with concepts of post-adolescence as developed in youth research in recent years (Hegasy 2004). In addition, some NGOs also work with young people after their military service and see these as youth (Interview with IFCC).

(2) The term is used to describe the Palestinian population with Israeli citizenship.

(3) The total population in Israel in 2006 amounted to 6.8 million inhabitants (UNDP 2007/2008).

Arab youth between 15 and 19 years are the largest youth minority group in the country (around 22.39% of Israeli youth in 2004). The family environment, which is even more influential in this group as conservative values play a larger role (Sherer/Karnieli-Miller 2007), is currently subject to fundamental changes mostly due to being exposed to Western and Israeli culture. Most Arab Israeli families live in the north of Israel (Galilee); there is also a Bedouin population group in the south (Negev). The average number of children per family is 3.04.

The Military service in Israel poses an important component in a citizen's life. Having or having not served the Military can greatly influence social as well as career chances later on. Difficulties in finding employment may arise, if the Military service has not been completed. This is a critical factor especially for groups of citizens being excluded from the Military service, which is the case for the Arab population group –except the Druze, for whom the service is also obligatory, and the Bedouins, who may serve on a voluntary basis. Otherwise, Military service is compulsory for men and women in Israel. Young people are obliged to start the service (men three years, women two years) after finishing high school, which is usually at the age of 18. Some youth also do one year of civil service, which does not replace the military service, before entering the army. Exceptions can be made for orthodox male youth who attend a Yeshiva (Thora School), girls who object due to religious beliefs, and young people who have to cope with mental or physical health disorders.

There is no civil service in the country, which could be performed alternatively. However, there is current debate about a compulsory civil service for the Arab population group. Ministry officials stated the search for an adequate job after finishing military service and/or university to be a topic of high importance among young people. Instead, youth unemployment was not seen as an issue of great concern (Interviews with MoE, Israel Federation of Community Centres [HaFederatzia Halsraelit le Merkasim Kehilatiim – IFCC], various). In 2001 the unemployment rate of young people between 15 and 24 years was 18.5% (World Bank 2004). The experiential differences in the daily life of young Israelis relate to many factors. Inequalities arise from different socio-economic situations but also, as in the case of Arab-Israeli youth, from inequalities in terms of access to social infrastructure and in some cases also depending on the geographic habitat (city or village, north or south)⁽⁴⁾.

Table 2.2 : % Eligibility to take matriculation exams by type of schools in Israel :

	Eligible	Not Eligible
General	65.4	34.6
Religious	65.7	34.3
Ultra-orthodox	56.7	43.3

(4) As mentioned before, in this report youth in Israel refers to youth inside the national territory of Israel. But to complete the picture, one of the interviewees stated that only 3-6% of youth actually live in settlements and that some of them also study in schools inside Israel. But it is often difficult to receive research data about these young people. (Interview with BIU)

2.3. Youth culture and trends

In 1994 a comparative study on youth stated that 19% of children and youth in Israel were not happy at all with their life, the highest rate of all countries participating in the study (Dolev et al. 2001) and only 82% of Israeli youth were optimistic about their future. One may note that Jewish youth are much more optimistic than young people from the Arab minority: this mirrors the socio-economic inequalities (Ya'ar et al. 2004). Some youth in the focus group discussions stated that family, friends and also being part of an active community was very important to them. They strongly felt the need to live in a safer and more community-oriented world and, especially Arab youth, expressed their wish for more supportive community structures around them (Focus group discussions with Israeli Youth Award and Yaffo Community Centre). National identity and the strong identification with the state of Israel is an important factor for Jewish Israeli youth. They often feel responsible for their home country and many of them look forward to serve their country for at least two or three years in the armed forces (Interview with the Focus Group in Yaffo Community Centre).

The military service can be seen as the most determining factor in the life of most Israeli youth. As military service is compulsory, it marks not only the border between youth and adulthood but also determines large parts of youth identity prior, during and after service (Interviews with Bar Ilan University, MoE, various). This does not or only partly apply to the Arab sector. During this period of their lives they often recognize and accept the predominant values of the Israeli society and achieve more autonomy by distancing themselves from their parents and families. Most of the interviewees said, military service transformed the young people into full members of society (Interviews with Bar Ilan University, MoE, various). By some this period is seen as a kind of “initiation rite” (Hazan 2001). The interviewed youth and adults alike stressed that the military service offered a chance to give the country something back in return. Military service is not always regarded only as a positive aspect of being part of the Israeli community but most of the youth feel excited about this time (Lieblich 1990). To be able to serve in prestigious units, many young people enlist in pre-military training programmes to obtain the necessary skills. Also several youth organisations and the Israel Defence Forces (Tzwa HaHagana LelIsrael - IDF) offer special preparation programmes funded through governmental sources. After the service young Israelis often leave the country for several months to travel abroad. But there are also other voices that characterize the army as a “black hole” and put forward that many youth are not mentally prepared by their environment for entering the army. After all they must then face the psychologically and physiologically very challenging task of being part of the active combat forces (Interviews with IFCC and British Council). Because Israeli society widely regards the military service as a unifying experience, those who refuse to enlist often encounter strong disapproval and harsh legal sanctions. Additionally, young ‘refusers’ take the risk of encountering complications on their further career path (Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University).

Expressing their opinion is often a very big issue for Israeli youth. The level of young people's social and political interest and commitment in Israel is remarkably high (Enosh/Katz 2004). It was frequently stated in the interviews that, due to the unstable political and security situation,

almost all young people do have a political point of view. The awareness of issues concerning the communities is high, and many adolescents, in consequence, are active in youth movements, community service, and international exchanges (Interviews with British Council and International Exchange Office). Especially after the assassination of the former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, the so-called "generation of candles" – young people gathering, mourning, praying and lighting candles at night – became very famous. This played a major role in the changing perception of young people concerning their role as political actors and as a group that was desperate and had to be protected by adults (Hazan 2001). In one of the focus group discussions the young people declared that they felt they were the only ones really capable of changing things which are important to them (Interview with Focus Group). But there are also young people who do not have the capacities⁽⁵⁾ or who are not willing anymore to volunteer in the community and are tired of the political situation and thus do not engage in political activities either (Interview with British Council). Also, in terms of values the young generation is turning away from collectivity to more individualistic qualities. This development is strongly influenced by Israel's shift from a society influenced by democratic-socialistic to more democratic-capitalistic values (Interview with British Council, various; Hazan 2001).

Israel and Israeli youth are often described as strongly influenced by Western European and US-American culture (Interviews with IFCC, Municipality of Tel Aviv). This can partly be seen by examining the ways young Israelis spend their free time, which are largely similar to patterns found in Western European youth culture. Watching TV, playing computer, reading and going to the shopping mall to meet friends range among the most popular ways to spend leisure time (Dolev et al. 2001). But one representative of a youth NGO mentioned that children and youth in Israel grow up faster than they do in other countries due to economic problems and the security situation. The effect of this situation is – as the interviewees assumed - that they often live life in the fast lane, and risk behaviour becomes more common (Interview with National Council of the Child (HaMoatza HaLeumit Leshlom HaYeled - NCC).

2.4. Young people's needs and challenges

The problems Israeli youth face often vary depending on their cultural and/or religious background. The following problems concern almost all young Israelis, and were mentioned by adolescents themselves and other interviewees:

- Poverty is a very big issue for young people in Israel, especially those from new immigrant and Arab families. In 2007, 35.9% of children in Israel have lived under the poverty line.
- The precarious security situation and the confrontation with violence and traumatic experiences are also important issues that need to be dealt with by society. Many parents' inclination to be overprotective because they want safety for their children can additionally put youngsters under stress.

- The relatively high risk behaviour of Israeli youth was often mentioned as an outcome of the unstable security situation. Living life in the fast lane as if there was no tomorrow often leads to a rising level of drug - especially alcohol - abuse (19% of boys at the age of 11 years drink alcohol at least once a week) and an increased readiness to resort to violence. In 1998 more than 50% of students from grade 6 to 11 were involved in school bullying at least once during the school year.
- The small choice of recreational activities is one of the factors that were mentioned especially by Arab adolescents as something they would like to change. Hanging around in the streets was named as a common activity for boys.

Integrating immigrant youth into society has been a concern of youth work in Israel for many years. Also immigrant youth are confronted with specific problems of integration (Dolev et al. 2001): in some cases there is an educational gap between them and other youth, they are often discriminated against, and most of them have a poor economic background (Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University). By contrast, youth growing up in so-called Kibbutzim⁽⁶⁾ often have not encountered these kinds of inequalities, as most of their families share the same ethnical background (originally from Eastern and Central Europe) and are also economically equal through even distribution and, consequently, a similar living standard (Rosner 1990). But today many of these communities face economic difficulties, and especially young people leave the Kibbutz in order to live in the city where they face the same problems as other youth in Israel.

There is a great gap between Arab and Jewish Israelis regarding issues of national identity, religion, language, cultural customs and military service which also and foremost affects youth (Ibid.). Arab Israeli youth also have higher dropout rates from schools (18.9% in 9th grade compared to 6.1% among Jewish students in 1999-2001). In all age groups enrolment rates are lower than in the Jewish sector, especially in the years of pre-school education (Dolev et al. 2001), and they receive less sufficient community-based service according to their needs (Interview with Brookdale). Especially Bedouin youth suffer from their housing situation, as many of them live in not officially acknowledged villages without connection to an overall infrastructure.

(5) There are a lot of young people who have to financially support their families and do not have the time to additionally volunteer in their community. (Interview with British Council)

(6) Kibbutzim are a form of collective communities based originally on socialistic-Zionistic values. In recent years such formerly popular forms of living together have become more and more less favoured especially by younger Israelis.

3. STRUCTURAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE ASPECTS OF YOUTH POLICY

3.1 Provisions

In Israel, there exists no formal constitution but basic laws dealing with relevant legal issues. As there is no standardized definition of youth in the country, most legal regulations in effect relate rather to children or minors in general than specifically to youth. Israeli law establishes the age to obtain legal capacity at 18 years. Therefore several regulations are tied to this age, such as: the compulsory military service, the compulsory education, the right to purchase alcohol and the right to vote (on community level this right is already granted at the age of 17). The right to be a candidate for the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, is obtained at the age of 21. A number of actors consider the fact that the non-official definition of youth treats people over the age of 18 as adults as creating a severe service gap for those young people leaving the army at the age of 21 or 22, who then are not fully psychologically and/or economically independent (Interview with MoE, IFCC, various). Other parts of the daily life of children and youth are also legally regulated: Young people are allowed to work at the age of 15 or after the completion of the compulsory education, also in exceptional cases at a younger age. Cases of this nature are generally subject to the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs⁽⁸⁾. According to the Penal Law of 1977 the civil and criminal liability of youth/children starts at the age of 12. Before reaching this age delinquent acts will mostly lead to a transfer into the care of the child protection services. Criminally liable minors (between the age of twelve and eighteen) are treated differently than adults⁽⁹⁾. Marriage is allowed at the age of 17 or 16 in case of pregnancy or other special circumstances, which will be permitted through the Family Court⁽¹⁰⁾.

3.2. Institutional approach to the youth sector

According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), there is no official definition of youth in Israel, but talking about youth often considers young people between the ages of 13 to 18 years. At the age of 18 and by starting the military service, young people are considered as adults (Interview with MoE). The government structure concerned with youth is not centralized in one distinctive ministry. Several ministries are concerned with youth issues, among them the MoE, which with its department for youth and non-formal education comes closest to what could be described as a proper youth portfolio. Beside the MoE, eight other ministries are involved in youth issues, namely the ministries for Welfare, Higher Education/Research-Sport-Culture, Health, Internal Security, Defence, Absorption-Immigration, Justice and Housing. Also the prime minister's office works in the youth field from time to time but has no youth department with a defined scope of responsibilities of its own; instead it is engaged in youth issues which are taken up by the prime minister personally. The strategy for youth at risk from 2005 is an example of such a case, in which the prime minister

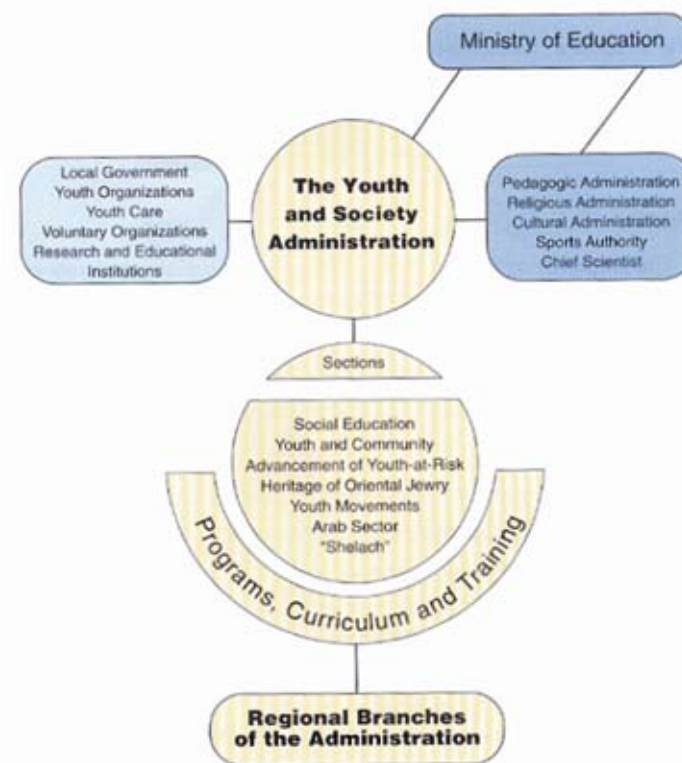
initiated a cross-ministerial committee (Schmitt Committee) to draft a unified governmental approach. There are similar strategies⁽¹¹⁾ for different fields, which concern young people exclusively or young people as a part of the target group. The responsibilities of these ministries inevitably overlap each other in parts and may also contradict each other in some details (MoE).

Inside the MoE, the department of 'Youth and non-formal education' is responsible for all youth-related activities and programmes which are held in the afternoon i.e. after school. Non-formal education is defined here by content, methodology, framework and target group.

The content tackled in this kind of education must be in line with the ministry's defined objective as being valuable for the orientation of young people in society. The content must not be included in formal education's curricula and must aim at active participation.

The methodology employed is to be experimental and experience-oriented and encourage young people to develop democratic qualities. The role of the educator should be open and non-indoctrinating.

3.1.: The structure of the youth and society administration (MoE)



(7) Formerly compulsory education only lasted till the age of 16, but a recently passed law extended the age and will come into effect in 2009 (Interview with MoE).

(8) <http://www.right-to-education.org/content/age/israel.html>; 21.09.2008.

(9) <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/israel.html#Juvenile%20Justice>; 21.09.2008.

(10) <http://www.right-to-education.org/content/age/israel.html>; 21.09.2008.

(11) Examples are strategies on drug abuse, violence, new immigrants etc.

The non-formal education programmes should aim at three distinctive groups:

1. Students, educational personnel and teachers in secondary schools (grades 7-12);
2. Youth and educational staff in community settings offering voluntary activities, such as youth centres, community centres and youth movements; and
3. Detached youth who neither belong to nor are active in any formal or informal educational framework" (Ibid.). As these activities take place in the afternoon, they are normally not compulsory. Those taking place at school however are. But students do not need to complete tests or other forms of examinations and do not receive grades (MoE).

A special 'Youth and society administration' has been set up with the goal to "prepare youth to be involved in community life and function as responsible citizens in Israeli society" (MoE). While the administration functions as a centralized unit of the MoE, the decisions on which programmes should be implemented are made at a local level (Ibid.).

Table 3.1. shows the structure of the administration and its different sections dedicated to various sectors of Israeli society - Arab sector, Sephardic heritage etc.-and different youth work fields -youth at risk, community work, social education, youth movements, youth councils, outdoor education (Shelach).

The MoE has received an annual budget of about 27.000.000.000 NIS (about 5.064.374.370 €) in 2008, which equals about 9-10% of annual government spending. The majority of these funds are spent on the formal education system and especially (more than 70%) on the salary of teachers. Estimations on the amount transferred to the non-formal youth sector are hard to calculate reliably. Ministry officials gave estimations of around 300.000.000 NIS going to the youth sector from the side of the central government. This does not include contributions made by the municipalities and similar corporations and does not, or only partly, integrate payments made to bodies or organizations which also, but not exclusively, cater for youth like the community centres (see Chapter 4). Several interview partners complained about a lack of funds for the youth sector and here especially for the "regular" youth work (Interview with Tel Aviv Municipality, IFCC etc.). The majority of the funding is believed to go to the 'Youth at Risk' section leaving only a small percentage of governmental funding for the other sections (Ibid.).

As the ministries dealing with youth are many and governments change frequently, the task of establishing one unified guiding youth policy at a national level is complicated (Lahav). Several attempts in this direction have been made by recent and the current administration, but only with limited success. Such attempts were followed by several recommendations made by non-governmental and governmental bodies⁽¹²⁾ since the establishment of the state in 1948 to establish a coordinating body for youth services, the latest brought forward by the state controller in the year 2000 (Ibid.). Many of the interviewed organizations support the creation of a coordinating body, although not necessarily in the form of a Ministry of Youth. The idea was usually accompanied by

the hope for a higher dedicated budget for youth issues. It was hoped that such a general plus in the youth budget would benefit the "regular" youth work and would ease the actual over-concentration on youth at risk (Interview with IFCC, Municipality of Tel Aviv etc.).

Two attempts are currently on the agenda in the field of a national youth strategy approach, though both in different stages of implementation. One of them is the 'Youth law'. This law draft was initiated about five years ago and until today has been redrafted a number of times. The most important idea of the law would be to guarantee a special budget dedicated to those youth issues defined in the law. So far, it would be the only law within the field of youth and non-formal education. This version would also include a paragraph stipulating the right of non-formal education and, consequently, the governmental obligation to finance it. As so far no governmental consensus has been reached concerning this law, the MoE is currently advocating a slimmer version giving each municipality the right of a youth unit which would then be financed by the government. The law has already passed one of the necessary readings in the Knesset.

The second strategy advocated by the MoE is 'Youth at the Centre' (Ha-Noar Be-Merkaz Ha-Inyanim). The MoE has decided to push forward with this approach following the attempt to map all ongoing youth work efforts in the country. The idea of the strategy is to connect both a centralized strategy and the possibility for local actors to keep on what one Ministry representative described as "sewing their own suit" (Interview with MoE). The strategy aims at learning from best practices in the field and disseminating them countrywide. To reach this aim the strategy is based on three pillars:

- Roundtables in the municipalities: These tables should ideally be chaired by the mayors, accompanied by experts from the MoE and youth representatives. They are meant to put the topic of youth on the priority list of the municipalities as well as to involve all relevant actors from the youth field.
- Qualification programmes for those active in youth work: The MoE has gathered various actors of youth work who are to offer qualifying measures to upgrade the youth work already in existence.
- Funding: About 10-15.000.000 NIS are allocated annually to all the municipalities which passed certain criteria⁽¹³⁾ and which complete a needs assessment following the roundtables. The amount of the money allocated to a municipality would then depend on the needs found.

Those municipalities that lack sufficient qualified personnel of their own are supported by third-party contractors to complete the process.

Some of the organizations interviewed expressed the fear that this programme might not survive the next elections, if a different administration took over the MoE (IFCC, Tel Aviv Municipality).

It is not clear whether the approach taken by the MoE is the most feasible one, taking into regard that there are strong centrifugal political powers in the country which would object to a centralized

⁽¹²⁾ Those were: the Prime Minister's committee for children and youths in distress (1973), Dery Report – by the ministers' committee for welfare and social matters (1979), the Adler Committee – the committee for checking alternative education – special care for youths and adolescents (1980) and the Kobersky Committee (1993) (Lahav).

⁽¹³⁾ Those criteria are the number of youth in the municipality, the number of immigrant youth and the existence of a youth unit in the municipality's administration.

youth policy; nor is it clear whether it is the most adapted one, considering the diversity of the youth in the different segments of society. While policy with regard to youth and education is still highly centralised in Israel (Interview with MoE), 'Youth at the centre' is in line with a greater decentralization in this field that has taken place in recent years⁽¹⁴⁾.

3.3. Non-formal education and youth work

Youth participation in Israel is generally well-established (Enoch/Katz 2004) both in terms of structures for, and of interest in, participation. About 20-25% of all Israeli youth are part of a youth movement and the same number of young people is involved in some kind of community work (Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University). This is not surprising, considering the part youth engagement has played for the establishment of the state of Israel in the various Zionist movements and also later on. However, it can be witnessed that there is a distinctive differentiation between social and community voluntarism and political activism. While the first is regarded as of a social value and a way of "giving back" to the state (Focus group at Israel Youth Award) - which for a lot of people culminates in the military service (Ibid., Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University, Municipality of Tel Aviv, various) - frustration with politics in general, and especially with the established parties, is growing (Interview with EMYU, Ya'ar et al. 2004). A longitudinal study among Israeli youth found that the highest interest of youth lies in social politics including gender, peace and environment policies (Katz/ Enoch 2004). Self-efficiency was anticipated by many adolescents interviewed as being quite high, but was decidedly lower with youth from lower social background and the Arab sector (Focus groups with Israeli Youth Award and Yaffo Youth Centre).

Youth participation, especially citizenship education, is part of the formal education curriculum. From first grade to seventh grade civil education is included in the curricula of all school subjects, while in later school years specific topics like 'volunteering' and 'citizenship' are discussed. The tenth grade also includes compulsory hours of community service which the pupils must serve. To a certain extent pupils can also influence the selection of topics to be discussed, given that they deal with the school social life and not with politics.

Israel has a wide system of youth and student councils that possess quite some influence in the political arena. The way these councils operate is described as several cogwheels working together: Youth councils exist at local, regional, and national level. The regional council represents the local councils and the national council holds 45 representatives from all regional councils. The youth councils are supposed to represent the opinions and interests of young people in the municipalities, towards the different ministries, especially the MoE, and towards the Education Committee of the Knesset. There are seven councils; while six of them are connected to regions, the seventh represents the Arab youth in Israel as a whole. The national council is headed by a chairman and a secretary, both elected for one year. The youth representatives in all councils have an adult youth worker or other counsellor from the local or national level to support them in their activities. The councils usually do not command their own budget but rely on specific project bud-

gets allocated by various donors, mainly through the respective supporting body. The elections for the councils are carried out in a chain system starting at class level. No nationwide elections are held. Various agreements exist with the respective governing bodies (schools, municipalities, the Knesset) that allow the youth councils to lobby for their causes. Two laws are currently conducting these councils: the law of students' right that determines that in each school, in the case of expulsion of a pupil, a committee must be established that includes a member of the youth council; the other is the 'Law on the order of the municipalities'. It does not explicitly name the council, but stipulates that on the committee on education, established through this law, a member of the youth council must be present. While the youth council does not possess a mandate that would cover general politics, the university students' councils are allowed to tackle such topics.

Various interview partners remarked that while good structures for youth participation were given, the obligation of the government to really take young peoples' opinions into account varied (Interviews with British Council, Brookdale). Also it was concluded by the same interviewees that the accessibility of these structures varied crucially with the social status of a young person. Other factors like the ability to communicate in good Hebrew were also named as possible obstacles to participation (Ibid.). Youth movements and NGOs are partly supported by the government through financial and infrastructural support. But this takes place only partially and many organisations receive support from the private sector (MoE).

(14) From 1995 to 2007, the percentage of the MoE's budget transferred to local authorities rose from 22.3% to 28.6%.

4. THE YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS AND NGOs DEALING WITH YOUTH

Various forms of youth associations or organisations can be found in Israel. The country's youth movements hold a quite prominent position in this area. They have acquired some historical weight, having existed in Israel since the founding of the state, and well before. In fact, in the pre-state phase of Israel, youth movements fulfilled an educative function in society, promoting the values of a collectivist society and thus supporting the creation of the State of Israel (Adler/Peres 1970). Surely, the effects that time and the transformation of Israel's society into a mass society governed by a complex institutionalized state apparatus have had on the aims and contents of youth movements in this country, offer a wide and interesting field for historical research. However, at this point attention will be given to the importance of youth movements in the Israeli society of today. In the landscape of youth organisations the youth movements play a special role. They are mass movements with at least 1,000 members each, but most of them are much bigger. Most of them having been founded prior to the establishment of Israel, they were crucial in the building of the modern state on the foundations of the Zionist ideology. Almost always are they affiliated with a political group such as the major Israeli parties, the labour union or religious Jewish streams. An exception is the scout movement, which is explicitly not political partisan. There is also a Druze youth movement especially for this segment of the Arab Israeli population. Today 14 youth movements are funded by the MoE with an annual 70.000.000 NIS (2008). The amount of funding supplied by the government depends on the project but is also related to the number of members of a youth movement. More often infrastructural support is given, e.g. in form of meeting facilities or transport.

The structure of most youth movements active in Israel is very well developed. Almost all of them receive support, if not from the Israeli government, then from networks within Israel - quite often in a political sense -, or from an international level (Interview with EMYU). As mentioned above, about 20 to 25% of Israeli youth take the chance of participation within those given frames, especially in the context of leadership and leadership trainings (Interview with a representative of the Bar Ilan University). Relevant activities for young people are provided on a day-to-day basis⁽¹⁵⁾. The scouts are a very popular example for youth movements in Israel (Interview with EMYU). To register as a youth movement, the movement must prove the membership of at least 1,000 young people. While the technicalities for registering as a youth movement with the Israeli government are not very complex, receiving money is more difficult. Currently 14 youth movements receive governmental funding, some of them being in existence since the 1920's. The annual budget provided for the support of youth movements amounts to 70.000.000 NIS (Interview with MoE). The amount of funding supplied by the government depends on the project but is also related to the number of members of a youth movement. More often infrastructural support is given, e.g. in the form of meeting facilities or transport. These 14 youth movements are affiliated to an umbrella

organisation called the 'Council of youth movements in Israel' (Tnuot Noar Baisrael - CYMI). CYMI has been active since 1974 and operates as a non-partisan forum for the movements. It also serves as a coordinating body for certain nation-wide activities. The organisation is headed by a chair person elected by and from the ranks of the secretary generals of the member movements.

Only recently are NGOs gaining more importance in the field of youth work in Israel. For many years it has been a priority of the government to unify all active parties within state institutions. Few NGOs have remained independent, according to the representative of the EMYU only around 20%, and upheld the work they had started before the founding of the Israeli state, but mainly in accordance with state principles and regulations (Interview with Brookdale).

Established in 1980 the National Council of the Child (NCC) is an Israeli non-governmental association acting both as advocacy and research institution and as an organization for youth work. The target group of the NCC are children (i.e. up to the age of 18) from all parts of the society and youth therefore represent a major group in this. Young people are actively involved in all parts of the council including a youth representative on the board of directors. Lobbying for the rights of the child in Israel, this non-partisan organisation is mainly funded from the private and from the charitable sector. One of the projects realised is the establishment of an independent ombudsman for the right of the child. He can be addressed by any person, and the number of inquiries on a certain issue sets the starting point for intervention programmes designed by the council.

While the landscape of organisations of about the last 15 years slowly changes in favour of more NGOs (Interview with MoE), very few of them are youth-based. One will rarely find an NGO being truly youth-led. This, however, is not a consequence of the complicated requirements for the foundation of a NGO. One suggested explanation for this phenomenon was the conscription of young people at the age of 18, a time which is then followed by either travel or studying (Interview with EMYU).

The registration as an officially recognized non-governmental organisation can be relatively easy to achieve by filling in forms at the Ministry of Justice, explaining the goals of the NGO and providing a description of the organisation's activities. Naturally, the activities should be coherent with the goals and not be offensive to the law. It is decidedly more complex to obtain funding from the government. Every ministry has its own budget allocated for NGO activities, and applications for project funding require the presentation of the NGO's financial record, which is required to be in existence for at least two years. In addition to this, the topic of the project needs to be relevant for the addressed ministry. In most cases NGOs rely on financial support from other sources than governmental ones (Interview with EMYU). In this case international philanthropic organisations, often from the international Jewish community as well as donors from the private sector play a substantial role (Interview with Brookdale). This also becomes visible in the activities of many organisations, where exchange with foreign organisations is a very common procedure, with regard to exchange of youth but also of knowledge and experience (Interviews with British Council, Israeli Youth Award etc.).

(15) Youth movements described here are the mass organizations founded either prior to 1948 or after the establishment of the state of Israel.

Most of them are bound to a political wing of a political organization – such as the political parties or the Israeli Labor Union (Histadrut) with exception of the scout movement and the Druze Youth. The youth movements were an essential part of the Zionist idea in building the state of Israel.

(16) As was understood, regulations for activities have not been institutionalized, yet (Interview with Municipality of Tel Aviv). At this moment, the ministries in Israel are working on those regulations e.g. for security measures etc. for activities with youth (Interview with Intexoff).

Community centres offer services to members of local communities. These centres have been established in more or less all towns (including Kibbutzim and Moshavim⁽¹⁷⁾) or city-quarters in Israel. There are now around 180 of those centres (Dolev et al. 2001). While some offer services for all the members of the surrounding community, it is often the case that communities possess several centres dedicated to a special target group, referring to the religious or ethnic background. Many of the community centres are an example of cooperation between ministries, municipalities and NGOs. The Israeli Federation of Community Centres, as one of the main operators of these centres and as an umbrella organisation, cooperates with community centres in the whole country, the MoE, municipalities, as well as international organisations to establish five-year programmes for community centres. They receive their funding from membership fees, municipalities and organisations and foundations working on specific topics relevant for the community centres. Youth work here is part of the agenda of those programmes (Interview with IFCC). But in general the centres employ an inclusive approach targeting the local population of all ages. While there are community centres which cooperate with the non-governmental sector, they generally strongly depend on the municipalities for funding (Interview with Municipality of Tel Aviv).

Organisations as well as community centres mainly offer activities for youth, but do not always represent a platform for youth activism itself. As an example, the annual Beersheba conference, having been established by the National Council for the Child, brings together children, youth and people occupied with subjects concerning them (youth workers, ministry officials etc.) to discuss 12 issues per year, which have been put on the agenda by the young people themselves. About 80 adolescents from all parts of the Israeli society participate each year, preparing and also evaluating the conference. While the conference has no decision-making power, several youth-related topics have been discussed here which were later taken up on the bigger political stage. Although there is a structure allowing active participation of youth, the more established youth organisations and movements as described above are predominant in Israel's society (Interview with EMYU).

5. THE EUROMED YOUTH PROGRAMME

The EMYU did not take part in the development of national youth policies, but the Euromed Youth Programme nevertheless plays a significant role regarding the possibilities for young people in Israel to meet youth from other countries (Interview with IFCC). It is very well known by Israeli organisations working with youth, especially for matters of access to financial resources (Interview with British Council). Many interviewees emphasized the positive aspects of the participation of Israeli youth in projects in Europe, where they can meet people from the neighbouring countries, which is often not possible in Israel or the Arab countries for security reasons (Interviews with the Tel Aviv Municipality, MoE). The Programme also helped to facilitate an encounter among Israeli youth from multicultural and multi-religious backgrounds. One municipality official also put forward the fact that SALTO⁽¹⁸⁾ workshops were commonly used for further qualifications of their own youth workers (Interview with Municipality of Tel Aviv). The Programme underlies the supervision of the Minister of Education, but the direct financial support it receives is limited (Interview with EMYU).

On the other hand some problems exist concerning the use and accessibility of the Programme. Due to the policy of only supporting and financing very few projects, for many organisations it is easier to take part in bilateral projects, e.g. with twin-cities of Israeli municipalities in Europe or the U.S. – with which very strong relations exist in the youth field - in order to receive financial and infrastructural support, especially for projects taking place inside Israel (Interviews with Municipality of Tel Aviv, British Council). The Israeli government generally does not put too much financial effort into international activities (Interview with EMYU). For these reasons and the 2+2 rule in the Programme, the accessibility of the Programme was judged as limited (Interview with MoE).

(17) A community with similarities to a Kibbutz but concentrated on agricultural activity.

(18) SALTO is the acronym for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European Youth Programme (see also www.salto-youth.net).

6. OTHER YOUTH SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Israeli youth work, at least in the context of non-governmental organisations, strongly relies on support from philanthropic organisations, often providing support from outside the country. The New Israel Fund, which was founded in 1979, is exemplary for institutions of this kind (Interview with British Council). Its headquarters are located in the U.S. but in addition to that it is connected at an international level to branches in, for example, Switzerland or Canada.

Furthermore there are strong networks of rich families supporting activities in Israel, many of them being Jewish (Interview with Brookdale). While those families can quite often be important donors from other countries, the private sector inside Israel constitutes another possibility of financing (Interview with NCC, NYC etc.). Youth workers in Israel can also receive financing from their municipalities, if their proposed plans concur with the strategies and priorities of the municipality (Interview with Municipality of Tel Aviv).

The variety of the sources of financial support corresponds to the variety of their influence. Going back to the New Israel Fund, one can see that its support does not only make activities possible in Israel. Since 1979, the New Israel Fund has granted more than \$ 200.000.000 to 800 organisations in Israel. Its agenda follows the aim of supporting grass-roots organisations. Additionally, it provides capacity building and technical assistance to those organisations. Following certain political guidelines, the fund also finances activities critical of mainstream-governmental policies. The New Israel Fund is only one example out of many philanthropic sources open to NGOs for fund-seeking. A wide variety of such foundations exist catering to different parts of the society and to the whole political spectrum.

The possibilities offered by such sources of financing and support are in strong contrast to the ones provided by the government. While the National Youth Council is strongly supported by the MoE, it depends on the private sector to finance activities critical of government policies (Interview with NYC). Similarly, a representative of a Tel Aviv municipality stated that NGOs would in their activities be quite dependent on the cooperation with municipalities. The municipalities themselves, being capable of supporting activities, receive their budget depending on various criteria, such as the number of inhabitants (Interview with Municipality of Tel Aviv). While they might increase the possibilities for youth to become actively involved in their society, the development of the policy has seemingly so far remained in the hands of the government (Interview with MoE).

Due to the political situation, regional cooperation is not very highly developed, and neither are support mechanisms in this respect.

7. PERCEPTION OF THE ACTORS

For the International Exchange Office the necessity of a youth policy was questionable. With regard to the number of various ministries in Israel working in the field of youth, the process of developing a national youth policy was recognized as a very complex and lengthy one. According to the representative, a specific plan would be needed for every sector. In the International Exchange Office the yearly activity plan is usually accepted. They have so far hardly experienced difficulties in receiving a sufficient budget for their planned activities and programmes. Thus, the development of a national youth policy at this moment does not seem to offer an improvement.

Parts of the MoE on the other hand approved the creation of a youth policy. The representative referred to a non-formal education strategy that came into existence in 1972. Unfortunately the pace of the government changes hindered the progress of the development. One great advantage of a consistent youth policy would be the securing of funding for non-formal education.

Other interview partners in the MoE voiced that now a programme (the youth law) was being conducted, which, according to these representatives offered an improved practicability. In this law the ministry has put the focus on the establishment of a regulation ensuring the infrastructure for formal and non-formal education in every municipality. However, criticism on this law was expressed by another representative of the MoE. According to him, this law lacks a clearer definition of tasks of the persons in charge. This, he stated, has its reason in the difficulty of defining the accountability for funding as well as in the definition of the limits of responsibility.

According to representatives of the municipality of Tel Aviv, the activities in the field of youth work and those for people working with youth lack a stronger connection. They also criticised the gaps between some fields of work. Currently the formal morning activities in the field of education are still separated from the non-formal afternoon activities. In addition to this, there is a separation depending on the topics of work. Activities for Arab Israelis take place separately from the ones for Jewish Israelis; the same is true for activities for the “regular” youth sector and the so-called youth at risk. The representatives clearly wished for one entity taking care of the whole educational subject, as this might also be able to regulate the issue of funding between the different fields of work. In this point they concurred with the interviewee from EMYU, stating the need of a coordinating body regulating the activities, also at parliamentary level.

Interviewees from NGOs expressed a need for better regulations with regard to funding in the areas of regular youth work versus youth at risk, as well. Some representatives also accentuated the great importance of the opinion of youth for the Israeli society, which was being heard through youth representatives in town councils in most of the municipalities.

However, considering the active participation of youth, the representative of the Brookdale Institute stated that although some regulations have been developed to support participation there is still no policy to explicitly handle this topic. Nevertheless, policy-makers start focusing on the topic of involving Israeli youth. According to the Brookdale representative, a great improvement could be achieved by giving more responsibility to the local level and by equally adapting the system of budgeting.

The group of young people situated in a more disadvantaged community criticised the lack of infrastructure for youth as well as the lack of information on opportunities of participation. At the same time they stated that, when opportunities for free non-formal education (in the form of e.g. a leadership-training) were given, most of their peers would only become interested after some of them had already participated in such activities. With regard to active participation in society, they stated that they felt capable to do so. Apart from their friends or families, their closer surrounding, people would not be acknowledging their capabilities. In a community possessing a higher level of economic power, most of the youth stated that they believed in their capability and their responsibility of participating in the society. According to their impression they had access to support at any time they were in need, but still with the restriction of some adults not taking them seriously and not believing in the importance of their opinion or their capability.

8. CONCLUSION

Israel does not have a national youth policy. Despite several attempts to set up such a policy, no agreement has yet been reached on a political level which would allow relevant measures to be taken.

The heterogeneity of Israeli society with regard to its population's ethnic origins, religious affiliation/degree of religious obedience, social status and political orientations, makes a similar diversity of opinions and actors in the field of youth work inevitable. This however complicates the initiation of a unified national youth policy. The MoE has tried to tackle this problem with the flexible, more decentralised strategy 'Youth at the Centre'. While the structure benefits youth work at a local municipality level, it does not envisage the establishment of a central authority dedicated to youth policy. Several ministries therefore deal with issues concerning young people, and coordination between them could be intensified.

Youth as a topic for political action is often reduced to the category of youth at risk. There are voluminous programmes for youth with deviant behaviour in terms of substance abuse or youth delinquency.

For the practical youth work non-formal education remains relatively unimportant in comparison to the formal sector. Although it is difficult to calculate the exact sum, it can be estimated that only 11% of the MoE annual budget went to the non-formal sector. Not included in this figure is the support given to the youth movements.

Those movements remain the most important youth organizations in Israel. They are often, but not always, connected to specific political movements and draw their importance partly from the historic role they have played in the country in the past. By contrast, the establishment of youth NGOs is a phenomenon that has been gaining more and more ground in recent years. The regulations for establishing such an organization are relatively liberal. While most NGOs do not receive governmental funding, their importance for youth work has increased during the last years. Apart from that, partly governmental-funded youth services are provided through the wide networks of the community centres. There is no overall national umbrella organization, but several smaller ones, e.g. for the community centres. The infrastructure catering for young people is well developed especially in the field of youth participation. Several mechanisms allow youth to be highly involved in decision making at a local, a regional and a national level. However, the accessibility of these structures especially for groups apart from the mainstream society (i.e. due to difference in ethnic origin, economic and/or religious background) has been disputed. Furthermore several actors have noted that most of these structures lack the power to engage in political topics beyond the limits of strictly youth-concerned areas, such as education.

In contrast to the poorly developed regional cooperation, the private sector provides strong support mechanisms. This can also be said for foundations, the benefactors mostly originating in the international Jewish community.

The Euromed Youth Programme receives a positive feedback from most actors but remains marginalized due to the small number of projects the EMYU can fund. In general it must be concluded that international youth work is not a priority yet and that because good bilateral youth cooperation exists with the U.S. and several European states the programme faces difficulties. Finding appropriate Mediterranean partner countries to match the 2+2 rule of the programme is a major issue. The MoE has taken measures to improve the situation in the youth field. While there is no national youth policy, sector strategies try to substitute for such a unified approach. It can be concluded that a further coordination among the actors and a rise in the youth-dedicated budget would help the sector to develop further.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Acknowledgements

This report would not have been realised without the support of many people both in Israel and abroad.

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Annex 2: Country profile (part 1)

Full name of the Country	State of Israel (Medinat Israel)
Government Type	Parliamentary democracy
Area	Middle East
Capital City	Jerusalem (internationally not recognized)
Other main cities	Tel Aviv, Haifa
Population	7,112,000
Gender Ratio (F/M)	F: 3,380,000 M: 3,312,000
Ethnic composition	Jewish 76,4% (Israel-born 67,1%, Europe/American-born 22,6%, Africa-born 5,9%, Asia-born 4,2%), non-Jewish 23,6% (mostly Arab)
Age Structure	
0-14	28%
15-24	16,1%
25-30	- No data -
Median age	28,9

Annex 2: Country profile (part 2)

Educational background (F/M ratio)		
Primary	F: 98%	M: 97%
Secondary	F: 89%	M: 88%
Tertiary	F: 67%	M: 49%
Literacy rate	Youth: 99,6%	Adult: 97,1%
Unemployment rate		
	Youth: 27.10%	Adult: 8.3%
Summary of age related regulations and rights		
Compulsory education (up to.....)	18 (21 for those with special needs)	
Compulsory military service	18-20 (female), 18-21 (male)	
Legally employable (from...)	15 or completion of compulsory education	
Marriage without parental consent	17	
Minimum voting age	18	
Minimum age to be elected	21	
Driving licence	16: tractor, motorcycle up to 50 cc 17½: most private vehicles 21: heavy and public vehicles	
Purchase of alcohol and drinkink	18	
Purchase of tobacco products and smoking	—	
Local Currency/ Exchange rate (Euro)	1 € = 5.5065 New Israeli Shekel (NIS)	

Annex 3: List of Abbreviations

CYMI	Council of Youth Movements in Israel
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IFCC	Israel Federation of Community Centres, also Israel Association of Community Centres (IACC)
MoE	Israeli Ministry of Education
NCC	National Council of the Child
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIS	New Israeli Shekel (Israeli currency unit)
NYC	National Youth Council
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Annex 4: Glossary

Arab Israeli : Palestinian population with Israeli citizenship.

Civil Education : Way of education teaching children and young people about their rights and duties as citizens and helping them to develop the specific skills and acquiring certain values they need in order to life their civic life. In this respect young people are educated regarding leadership skills and personal responsibility and integrity.

Community Centres : Centres offering different services such as sport activities, art classes etc. for members of local communities; established in almost every town in Israel.

Generation of Candles : Young Israelis who started gathering, mourning, praying and lighting candles at night after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

Histadrut : General Federation of Labourers in the Land of Israel (Hebrew: HaHistadrut HaKlalit shel HaOvdim B'Eretz Israel); Israeli Trade Union Congress; established in 1920 in Haifa.

Kibbutzim (pl.) : Kibbutz (sg.), Form of collective communities based originally on socialistic-Zionistic values.

Knesset : Israeli Parliament; established in 1949 and located in Jerusalem.

Moshavim (pl.) : Moshav (sg.), Communities with similarities to a Kibbutz but concentrating on agricultural activities.

New Israel Fund : A fund set up by Israelis, Europeans and North Americans in order to provide support (financial and infrastructural) to national and local organisations in Israel; objectives: strengthening Israeli democracy, promoting equality, justice and freedom for Israeli citizens.

Non-formal Education : Mostly understood as structured – and often non-obligatory - education outside the formal education system, e.g. in youth clubs, youth movements.

Olim : Term referring to Jews who do the Aliyah (Jewish immigration to Israel starting in 1882).

SALTO : Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European Youth Programme, www.salto-youth.net.

Schmitt Committee : Initiated by the Prime Minister in order to draft a unified governmental approach towards youth at risk.

Sephardim : Jews descending from the Jewish communities in the Iberian Peninsula; defined in contrast to Ashkenazim (Jews with a European background) and Mizrahim (Jews originating from the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa).

Youth : In general a period between childhood and adulthood where young people are still economically, biologically and psychologically dependent on their guardians.

UN definition: between 15 and 24 years of age.

Although there is no official definition of youth (neither by the Israeli MoE nor by the Israeli government), youth in Israel is often defined as young people between the age of 13 and 18 years.

Youth Movements : Mass movements with at least 1.000 members; almost always affiliated with a political group such as a political party (exception: scout movement – it is explicitly not affiliated with any political group or party).

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Annex 6: Additional statistical tables/charts

6.1: Demography

Distribution of population

Total population (in millions)			Annual population growth rate (%)		Urban population(a) (% of total)			Population under age 15 (% of total)		Population aged 65 and older (% of total)	
1975	2005	2015 (b)	1975-2005	2005-2015 (b)	1975	2005	2015 (b)	2005	2015 (b)	2005	2015 (b)
3.4	6.7	7.8	2.3	1.5	86.6	91.6	91.9	27.9	26.2	10.1	11.5

Source: Human Development Report. UNPD 2007

- Notes:
- (a) Data show the ratio of the income or expenditure share of the richest group to that of the poorest. Because of rounding, results may differ from ratios calculated using the income or expenditure shares in columns 2-5.
 - (b) A value of 0 represents absolute equality, and a value of 100 absolute inequality.
 - (c) Data refer to income shares by percentiles of population, ranked by per capita income.

The difference in income

Survey year	HDI rank	MDG - Share of income or expenditure (%)				Inequality measures		
		Poorest 10%	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%	Richest 10%	Richest 10% to poorest 10% (a)	Richest 20% to poorest 20% (a)	Gini index (b)
2001 (c)	23	2.1	5.7	44.9	28.8	13.4	7.9	39.2

Source: Human Development Report. UNPD 2007

- Notes:
- (a) Data show the ratio of the income or expenditure share of the richest group to that of the poorest. Because of rounding, results may differ from ratios calculated using the income or expenditure shares in columns 2-5.
 - (b) A value of 0 represents absolute equality, and a value of 100 absolute inequality.
 - (c) Data refer to income shares by percentiles of population, ranked by per capita income.

6.2: Education

Adult and Youth Literacy Rate (a) in 2002	Youth Literacy Rate (b) in 2003	Male Youth Literacy Rate in 2003	Female Youth Literacy Rate in 2003
95.3	99.6	99.7	99.5

Source: Youth in Numbers: Middle East and North Africa (DRAFT). The World Bank, 2007. http://www.unesco.org/ccivs/New-SiteCCSVI/institutions/jpc-youth/youth-open-forum/Section_for_Youth/Resources_and_tools/Other_documents_on_youth/YIN-MENA.pdf

This table has been slightly adapted to better serve the information needed in this context.

- Notes: (a) The percentage of people ages 15 and above who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement related to their every day life.
 (b) The percentage of people ages 15-24 who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement related to their every day life.

Public expenses on education

Public expenditure on education		Current public expenditure on education by level (a) (% of total current public expenditure on education)							
As a % of GDP		As a % of total government expenditure		Pre-primary and primary		Secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary		Tertiary	
1991	2002-05 (b)	1991	2002-05 (b)	1991	2002-05 (b)	1991	2002-05 (b)	1991	2002-05 (b)
6.5	6.9	11.4	13.7	41	47	31	30	26	17

Source: Human Development Report. UNPD 2007

- Notes: (a) Expenditures by level may not sum to 100 as a result of rounding or the omission of expenditures not allocated by level.
 (b) Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.

6.3: Economy

Youth unemployment (a)

Year	Total Unemployment Rate, Age 15-24	Male Unemployment Rate, Age 15-24	Female Unemployment Rate, Age 15-24	Youth to Adult Unemployment Ratio
2001	18.5	18.6	18.3	2.4

Source: Youth in Numbers: Middle East and North Africa (DRAFT). The World Bank, 2007

- Notes: (a) Definition of unemployment rate from United Nations: "The unemployment rate is the ratio of unemployed persons (numerator) to the economically active population or labor force (denominator), expressed as a percentage. Age-specific unemployment rates relate unemployed persons of a specific age group to the economically active population or labor force of the samerefers to persons older than 24 years.

Economically active population rate (Total) (a)

GDP		GDP per capita				Average annual change in consumer price index (%)			
		Annual growth rate (%)		Highest value during 1975-2005					
US\$ billions 2005	PPP US\$ billions 2005	US\$ 2005	2005 PPP US\$ (a) 2005	1975-2005	1990-2005	2005 PPP US\$ (a)	Year of highest value	1990-2005	2004-2005
123.4	179.1	17,828	25,864	1.8	1.5	25,864	2005	6.6	1.3

Source: Youth in Numbers: Middle East and North Africa (DRAFT). The World Bank, 2007.

- Notes: (a) ILO defines the economically active population as "...all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services during a specified time-reference period...[.]n general, the data on economically active population do not include students, persons occupied solely in domestic duties in their own households, members of collective households, inmates of institutions, retired persons, persons living entirely on their own means, and persons wholly dependent upon others." This table shows the ratio of economically active population to the total population of a specific age group.
 (b) 15-17 age group.
 (c) 18-24 age group.
 (d) 25-34 age group.





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