Hitchadshut Yehudit in Israel:
An Analysis of the field

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1 For convenience purposes we use hereafter the term Jewish Renewal, although it does not necessarily describe the field. The term is much debated, and it also has unique connotations in the North American context, which is different from that of the Israeli Jewish society.

2 The present document presents the main quantitative findings as well as a summary of the theoretical section of the full report. The theoretical section is available at http://www.midot.org.il/Sites/midot/content/File/hitchadshut_yehudit/hamsaga_file_04.pdf.
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1. Executive Summary

_Hitchadshut Yehudit_ ("Jewish Renewal") in Israel is a growing and fascinating field. In the public domain one may find hundreds of organizations, large and small, local and regional, thriving to respond to Israeli Jews' need for attachment and for renewing their interest in Judaism—not necessarily in its religious form and sense—and reclaiming their sovereignty over what was part of their identity.

This report is the first-ever attempt at a panoramic study of the phenomenon of Jewish Renewal in Israel. Its goal is to map the relevant knowledge that exists in the field and the agents active in it, so as to accurately reflect the current situation in this domain. The activities conducted to produce the report included a comprehensive survey of the literature on the topic, dozens of interviews with experts and others involved in the field, a mapping of hundreds of relevant organizations and initiatives and a study of the trends indicated by their replies to an online questionnaire we sent them, and a discussion group with representative of 35 prominent organizations.

In Chapter 4 of this report we propose a definition of the term “Jewish Renewal in Israel.” We believe that this term is the most appropriate designation for the phenomenon surveyed here, despite the many alternatives proposed by various parties. Chapter 5 deals with the boundaries of the field and various approaches to defining them. In this report we have opted for the broadest approach and followed it when stipulating parameters that can be used to identify organizations that are involved in Jewish Renewal in Israel. Chapter 6 examines the historical development of the field and takes note of its complexity in an attempt to estimate its scale today. Chapter 7 maps the various players in the field—the State, donors, philanthropic foundations, and social-action organizations—and focuses on the relevant characteristics of the many organizations active in it: their goals, activities, and budgets, number of employees, and so on. Chapter 8 addresses two key questions that are related to the effectiveness of the organizations’ work: how they define success, and what activities and projects they view as their major achievements. The chapter also offers a list of possible indicators that can be used to measure success, on the level of the individual participant as well as of the realization of the organization’s goals among the population at large. The ninth and last chapter presents key recommendations for those active in the field, based on the extensive research that went into the report.

Because of the broad canvass, in the present document we elected to focus on a presentation of the essence of the theoretical section of the report, along with the quantitative data collected as part of the process. The theoretical section has been posted in full on the Midot website at [http://www.midot.org.il/Sites/midot/content/File/hitchadshut_yehudit/hamsaga_file_04.pdf](http://www.midot.org.il/Sites/midot/content/File/hitchadshut_yehudit/hamsaga_file_04.pdf), and can be downloaded for free.
2. Introduction

Jewish identity, which was the foundation for the creation of the Jewish State and its continued existence, has become one of the main causes of a grave fissure in Israeli society—the religious-secular divide. This is one of the paradoxes underlying the State of Israel. One result of this split is that many Jews who live in Israel feel that Judaism has been expropriated from them and assigned exclusively to the religious.

Since the founding of the State, warning voices have been heard in Israeli society, to the effect that a large segment of the Jews in Israel have a weak bond to Judaism or feel disconnected and increasing alienated from it. There are many reasons for this, including the success of the secular Zionist revolution and the manner in which the relations between the religion and the State have evolved in this country. Practical Zionism wanted to develop and create a new national identity ex nihilo, by building a bridge to the biblical past that skipped over the fertile centuries of the Jewish tradition that coalesced in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora. What is more, the Zionist movement scornfully dismissed the Diaspora Jew and aspired to create a “new Jew” whose entire being—appearance, physical traits, occupations, skills, and even culture—would be the antithesis of the Diaspora Jew’s. As a result, Israeli culture, which began to crystallize even before independence, endeavored to obliterate important elements of their identity from the hearts of many.

Over the years, the religious institutions in Israel, which are supposed to provide religious services that suit the needs of the public, have become a heavy-handed agent that is involved in key junctures of the personal lives of every Israeli. This development was backed by legislation influenced by political forces. Thus, despite the fascinating debate about the nature of Israel—is it a Jewish state or the state of the Jews?—the Orthodox interpretation strongly impacts many elements of the lives of Jews in Israel, such as marriage, public transportation, and kashrut. This situation has led many Jews who see themselves as secular to identify Judaism with Orthodoxy. Consequently, the secular have distanced themselves from Judaism and cast off all responsibility for or interest in its survival—even in their own particular mode. This means that Jews who live in Israel and are not observant have begun to develop revulsion for everything associated with the Jewish religion and find it difficult to express their Jewish identity outside the Orthodox framework.

Thus the prevailing outlook in the public and social discourse about Jewishness in Israel has become dichotomous, with the secular on one side and the religious on the other. In the last two decades, this dichotomous discourse has begun to change to some extent, at least among certain circles. Between its two extremes one can now find a broad range of identities and self-definitions. Israeli Jews—even those who are not observant—want to elucidate their Jewish identity and give it meaning. They do this without ignoring Jewish tradition and what it has produced over the centuries, but at the same time they renew it and add content of their own.

In this report, we study the phenomenon of Jewish Renewal, and especially the organizations active in this domain, from a somewhat remote vantage point. That is, we do not look deeply at the organizations and their activities, but map them and classify their modes of activity in a way that can benefit various interested parties: decision-makers, social investors, executives, activists, volunteers, and the clients served by these organizations.

We set ourselves the following goals:
1. To create a common language for use by all those involved in the field
2. To produce new knowledge about the field and organize the existing knowledge in an intelligent fashion
3. To map the field, to sort, profile, and classify the parties engaged in it, and to paint the most faithful picture of the field that we can
4. To identify and profile the target audiences of the field
5. To study the impact of the activities of the players in the field
6. To illuminate various successful models and strategies that are employed in the field
7. To propose common indicators of success and metrics of impact
8. To propose a macro-level overview of the field and identify challenges, opportunities, prospects, and risks for its continued flourishing in the future
9. To create a basis on which those active in the field can make decisions, a basis for future research, and a platform for modifying consciousness

In this study, these goals were achieved with varying degrees of success.

3. Method and Tools

The work process comprised two main stages. In the first stage, we tried to gain an initial familiarity with the field by means of deep study, mapping, and collecting, processing, and analyzing data. As part of this stage, we examined the professional literature on the field and conducted interviews with 47 experts. In addition, we identified 530 organizations based on information available to Midot, a search of the Internet, and a public call for information.

In the second stage, we relied on two main tools: (1) an online questionnaire distributed to the directors of all the organizations we identified—189 organizations (36%) responded to the questionnaire; (2) a discussion group with representatives of 35 organizations, in order to try to draw up a list of indicators of success for the entire field, at the level of both the individual participant and the public as a whole. The information and data collected by these tools were then processed; their analysis constitutes the core of the present report.

4. The Field: Its Name and Significance

The series of interviews we held with experts and practitioners in various knowledge and content worlds uncovered a great diversity of alternative names for the field: Jewish Identity, Judaism as Culture, Jewish Peoplehood, Jewish Renaissance, Jewish Revival, Renewing Judaism, Jewishness in renewal, Humanistic Judaism, Liberal Pluralistic Judaism, Contemporary Israeli Judaism, sovereign Judaism, Chalonit (playing with the words secular and window) Jewishness, Jewish self-realization. However, some of these terms are too general and describe a phenomenon broader than the one we wish to address; others, though quite specific, are identified with a particular stream or trend. Some of them define the renewal phenomenon with great precision, but, because they are not well known to the public or in the literature, might not be understood in the sense we are interested in. The interviews pointed to “Hithadshut Yehudit ("Jewish Renewal") in Israel” as the most widespread and thus most useful designation for the phenomenon studied here. Drawing on our information sources and a study of the field, we arrived at the following definition for Jewish Renewal in Israel:

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3 In order to identify organizations we selected a broad definition, because of the lack of any clear demarcation and precise definitions. Consequently, we may have included organizations that some experts do not necessarily accept as part of the field of Jewish Renewal.
Jewish Renewal in Israel comprises diverse initiatives by individuals and organizations, both formal and informal, in both the secular and nonsecular space, that pursue several goals: (1) recognizing, studying, and clarifying the parameters of the Jewish identity held by Jews in Israel and of their Hebrew, Jewish, and Israeli culture; (2) making Judaism—including its cultural, social, scholarly, ritual, and community facets—accessible to the public at large; (3) making it possible for those who engage in these activities to reclaim their Jewishness—that is, to take responsibility for how they interpret it and to instill its content with new meaning, without ignoring its past and without a commitment to halakhah.

5. A Proposed Demarcation of the Borders of the Field

This report deals with the organized phenomenon of Jewish Renewal in Israel only. Hence we did not examine similar phenomena in Jewish communities outside the country or investigate phenomena that predate the birth of the state. Nor does the report deal with the unorganized aspects Jewish Renewal, that is, with what takes place in the private sphere or domain. Instead, it focuses on the organized (although not always formally organized) players in this field: the State and its arms, funders, registered organizations, projects, and communities/congregations. The report concentrates on profiling the field, including mainly the NPOs and voluntary associations that try to provide Jewish Renewal solutions for Jews in Israel.

The scholarly literature on Jewish Renewal and the experts with whom we spoke propose various approaches and interpretations for understanding and characterizing the phenomenon. Some are restrictive and tend to draw clear boundaries; others are conditional approaches that set certain conditions for their expression. Finally, there are inclusive approaches that expand the boundaries of the phenomenon and do not exclude certain manifestations of it.

In this report, we have chosen to rely on an approach that includes all organizations that see themselves as working in or affiliated with the field. To validate this self-evaluation we applied nine parameters and characteristics that we drew up with the help of experts. It is clear that there is a large consensus among the organizations that responded to the questionnaire with regard to the items listed on it. This may be a sign of a certain problem with these parameters, in that they fail to distinguish among the different organizations and do not contribute to a more precise definition of the field.

The parameters and characteristics defined for Jewish Renewal organizations are as follows:

1. An organization that offers programs and services that deal with Israeli culture and Judaism, with the goal of exerting a positive influence on Israeli society and improving the lives of Israelis
2. An organization that is involved in clarifying individuals’ Jewish-Israeli identity and encourages individuals to assert their sovereignty over the assets of their Jewish-Israeli culture and the way in which they live, interpret, and express their Jewishness
3. An organization that endeavors to provide Israeli society with rich cultural offerings as well as diverse approaches to and modes of Jewish life
4. An organization that works in association with the State of Israel and recognizes the principles of democracy

Yoffe and Arad define the “secular space” as the sociological space in which those Jews in Israel who, for various and diverse reasons, do not accept the Halakhah and the religious precepts as elements defining their Jewish identity or as binding on their lifestyle, live and work (Yoffe and Arad, 2003). By this definition, the “nonsecular” space is just the opposite.
5. An organization that encourages the creation of new works of Jewish, Hebrew, and Israeli culture, based on the age-old tradition
6. An organization that offers a rich and diverse content world of Jewish and Israeli texts
7. An organization that welcomes persons with different Jewish identities, or with different backgrounds and outlooks about Judaism, to take part in its activities
8. An organizations that offers its clients Jewish texts, symbols, ceremonies, art and literature, and customs that are relevant and lined to their lives in the present
9. An organization that amplifies its clients’ sense of belonging to the Jewish people all over the world and strengthens their bond with it

6. The Social Issue: Jewish Renewal in Israel

6.1 Historic Milestones
The few sources in the literature that deal with this field and its development tend to agree that Jewish Renewal in Israel is of recent origin. According to these sources, its seeds were planted in pre-State period and began sprouting in the early 1970s. There was a new impetus in the 1990s, especially after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the perplexity that followed it. It as described as reaching maturity in the twenty-first century; some see it as a genuine social movement. This trend is strongly reflected in the organizations’ responses to our questionnaire, as will be seen below.

As is evident from Figure 1, a look at the increase in the number of organizations involved in Jewish Renewal over the years reveals a growth trend, with new organizations joining the circle in every year and decade. What is more, we found a correlation (but not necessarily a causal relationship) between the Six Day War and the Rabin assassination and the expansion of activity in this domain. The growth rate in the two years after the Six Day War was much higher than that in the 1970s. Similarly, whereas the first decline in the growth rate of new organizations was evident in the early 1990s, this was followed by renewed momentum in the years after the 1995 assassination. The trend continues today, and with greater force.

Figure 1: New Organizations in the Field, by Decade (based on the organizations’ reports) (N=171)
6.2 The Scope of the Phenomenon in Israel: Characteristics

The development of the field in recent decades has been accompanied by a debate about the profile and number of those taking part. Even though several studies have been conducted in the last decade, there does not seem to be an up-to-date profile of those involved in the various activities and of those who do not take part. Some of the experts we interviewed maintained that the total number of persons who engage in various Jewish Renewal activities is substantially lower than the estimates provided by some of the organizations, which run from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands. This range is extremely large, and several explanations were proposed for the variation in the estimates. According to the experts we consulted, the imprecision stems from the fact that many of these individuals take part in multiple programs, producing a sizeable overlap among the participants in different programs.

Some of those involved in the field believe that the participants do not represent secular and traditional Jewish society in Israel, with all its diversity. Some refer to them as an advance force or vanguard, jumping into the Sea of Reeds like Nahshon the son of Aminadav and drawing the rest of the people after him; other describe the target group as a minority whose members can permit themselves luxuries of this sort as a response to their social and spiritual needs. Even if we accept the last assertion, some of the experts hold that this elitist minority exerts an increasing influence that, though it may be too soon to estimate precisely, reflects an inevitable process in Israeli society. This is because a society cannot continue to lead a superficial life that is not linked to tradition as a source of inspiration on the one hand, and to unique creative processes, on the other.

We asked the experts whom we consulted whether, in their opinion, the demand for the various activities is evidence of a natural and authentic need, or whether it may reflect only an artificial consumer product, the fruit of marketing efforts supported by overseas philanthropy and representing the agenda of interested parties who do not live in Israel. Most of those interviewed agreed that the demand for the organizations’ programs is authentic and genuine. Were it artificial, they say, and driven by the supply sponsored by foundations centered abroad, the demand would long since have died down. The main motivation for taking part in various programs, we learned, originates in the identity adversity, a sense of alienation and incompleteness that stems from a lack of an appropriate solution to individuals’ search for their identity.

Our attempt to estimate the number of those who take part in various Jewish Renewal programs by means of the online survey proved unsuccessful. There seems to be a real difficulty in producing such a headcount, for a number of reasons: (1) Most of the organizations do not maintain regular documentation of those who take part in their activities. (2) The attendance estimates for large and one-time events are often imprecise. (3) Some organizations report the total number of those who take part in all their activities and do not distinguish Jewish Renewal programs from others. (4) Some organizations count a single individual’s participation in multiple sessions of the same activity as multiple participants. (5) Some clients engage in programs run by multiple organizations and are counted more than once. And perhaps (6) all of these reasons are valid.

A look at the age data indicates that most of the participants are young. Almost 40% of them are 25 or younger, and more than half of these are under 18. More than half of all participants are no older than 35. Another 7% of participants are past 65—retirement age. This imbalance seems to derive from the fact that a significant fraction of the participants counted here are in fact a captive audience, who take part in these activities on an involuntary basis as part of the formal educations system.
7. A Map of the Field and its Players

7.1 Social Investors

7.1.1 The Role of the State and its Investments in the Field

The State plays a significant role in funding social services and educational services. With regard to Jewish Renewal, too, the State plays a major role. According to several of those we interviewed, however, the State’s investment policy is a source of bias and inequality. The State is seen as under an obligation to guarantee religious services as well as spiritual, educational, and cultural services to all citizens, in keeping with their choice, and on equal footing.

Our attempts to probe more deeply and obtain a better understanding of State funding did not produce a clear and unambiguous picture. The figures that appear in the State Budget (for 2011), as posted on the website of the Accountant General, are not clear enough to provide a full picture. For example, NIS 16,539,000 was allocated for education for democracy and Judaism, including the “Zionism, Judaism, and Democracy” program of the Ministry of Education’s Shenhar-Krelnitzer Headquarter for Civic Education; NIS 4,094,000 was allotted to Jewish culture; NIS 57,259,000 was allocated to Torah and Jewish cultural courses that are not part of the formal education system; and NIS 11,652,000 was allocated to colleges for Jewish studies and for Land of Israel studies. These figures are incomplete and must stated with reservations, because it is impossible to know what percentage of these amounts ultimately reached Jewish Renewal organizations, as they are defined here. It is also possible that some of these sums are not necessarily related to Jewish Renewal activity. By way of comparison, in the 2012 budget, the Education Ministry’s support for Torah institutions, meaning yeshivas and kollels, came to NIS 1,042,186,000 (0.26% of the State budget), more than 13 times larger than the resources the state invest in Jewish Renewal.

Additional attempts to obtain precise and up-to-date information from relevant officials in government ministries were largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, we may infer from a number of interviews we conducted with various person who are familiar with the issue that the State has taken a number of ad hoc measures in recent years to enable it to make allocations to various organizations active in the field, including secular organizations that deal with Jewish identity. Still, most of the experts believe that there are significant disparities today between the budgets for Orthodox organizations and the subventions to non-Orthodox organizations.

Our findings indicate that although the State is not ignoring its central role in the field of Jewish education and the development of Jewish identity and is in fact trying to influence them, its involvement is beset by a lack of continuity or by a policy affected by political forces. Here we should note the recent initiative to introduce Jewish culture as a classroom subject. This was the pet project of the former education minister, Gideon Sa’ar, who sponsored the addition of a new subject, Jewish Culture and Heritage, to the standard curriculum. In 2010/11, it became a required subject in the State education system in grades 6 through 8 (starting in 2012/13, for grades 5 through 8), backed by a major budgetary commitment—the addition of two weekly hours to the classroom schedule. The subject is meant to make it possible for pupils to deal with questions of identity and to enhance their sense of belonging to the Jewish people, the State, and Jewish culture. In addition, in the wake of the coalition agreements signed between Likud Beiteinu, Yesh Atid, and HaBayit HaYehudi after the recent elections, two new Jewish identity administrations are being set up.
7.1.2 Philanthropists and Foundations

The funders of Jewish Renewal include a number of private donors and even a few corporations, but there is no prominent individual who makes a regular investment or corporation that makes an extremely large contribution. In general, then, we can say that private philanthropists and corporations do not exert significant influence in this field.

The foundations play at least as significant a role as the State, but their support is marginal, on a relative basis. A survey commissioned by AVI CHAI Israel identified sixteen leading foundations active in the field and provided a partial picture of the philanthropic aspect of this domain. Eleven of these foundations invest more than $28 million annually in various Jewish Renewal organizations and programs (note, however, that the survey was conducted before the economic crisis of 2008–2009). Not all foundations were included in the survey, so it stands to reason that the total philanthropic funding of the field is somewhat larger. Otherwise, it is hard to explain the aggregate total based on self-reporting, that is, the total expenditures of the 189 organizations that returned our questionnaire: NIS 350,487,128. One of the conspicuous characteristics of the map of social investors in the field is the absence of Israelis (the Nadav Foundation is an outlier in this respect).5 It seems that most Israelis—foundations, magnates, and private donors—have little or no interest in the growth of the field; hence the organizations must rely on foreign foundations for support.

7.2 A Classification of the Organizations

For this report, we conducted a survey to identify and locate organizations that satisfy the definition of an organization involved in Jewish Renewal, based on the parameters we set, and which can be classified in several ways. We found 530 organizations of various types that suit the definition. In order to map the field and learn about the organizations, we distributed an online questionnaire to the hundreds of organizations we located. Of them, 189 replied to most items in the questionnaire.

We tried to determine the most common area of activity in which the organizations engage. Analysis of the organizations’ replies to our questions shows that the most common area is study programs, which are run by 116 of the organizations (N=188, 36%). The least frequent are lobbying and spirituality (18 organizations each). These findings do not change significantly in a separate analysis of the 80 largest organizations, those with an annual budget of at least one million sheqels. The most conspicuous field is voluntary enrichment programs that aim at conveying knowledge or an enriching social setting. It is remarkable to discover that education, both formal and informal, is not the leading domain. Beyond this, the meager investment in lobbying is not surprising, because it requires special skills, a willingness to dirty one’s hands in politics, and great patience while waiting for results, which may never be achieved at all or be hard to claim credit for. This is true of lobbying with regard to other areas of educational and social activity, as well.

5 Here, an “Israeli investor” means a private individual who is an Israeli citizen and whose financial resources are derived from Israel, or a corporation or foundation with offices in Israel and whose funds come from Israel. Thus AVI CHAI Israel is not considered to be an Israeli investor, even though it has offices in Israel, because its funds originate abroad.
Next, we inquired whether there are any links among the different fields of activity, meaning that organizations choose to work in two or more fields at the same time and thus create clusters of activity areas. We found many such links between pairs of activities that are run by the same organization:

**Figure 2a: Pairs of Activities conducted by Jewish Renewal organizations (N=188)**

For example, 67% of the organizations run both lifecycle programs and spirituality programs. Other conspicuous pairs of activity categories are learning and culture (59.1% of the organizations), learning and leadership (55.9%), lifecycle and culture (54%), informal education and bridging (51.1%), informal education and study programs (50.9%), informal

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6 The total exceeds 100% because respondents were allowed to mark more than one answer. In addition, 28.2% of the respondents added verbal details of their choice in the category “Other.” Scrutiny of these answers did not identify any new field of activity that was not proposed in the predefined categories.

7 The total exceeds 100%, because respondents were allowed to mark more than one answer.
education and culture (50.5%), Jewish justice and spirituality (50.5%), and the media and study programs (50.4%).

The statistical links of clusters of three or more areas that are run by the same organization were weaker. Nevertheless, we could still discern clusters of areas of interrelated activities, as seen in the next figure.

*Figure 2b: Clusters of Activities conducted by Jewish Renewal organizations (N=188)*

JEWISH RENEWAL ORGANIZATIONS BY ORGANIZATIONAL PARAMETERS

A. TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

An analysis of the field with regard to organizational parameters shows that there are 154 independent organizations (29%), of which 33 are members of a coalition or network; 19 parent organizations (4%) that run subsidiaries and independent projects; 13 subsidiary / affiliated organizations (2%); 138 communities (26%), mainly local congregations of the Movement for Progressive Judaism (Reform) and the Masorti Movement (Conservative); 137 (26%) community centers that engage in Jewish Renewal activities to various extents; 37 pre-military preparatory academies (7%); and 32 autonomous projects (6%).

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8 Respondents were allowed to mark more than one answer.
9 For more on the definitions used in this section, see Appendix http://www.midot.org.il/Sites/midot/content/File/hithadshut_yehudit/nispahim_file_04.pdf
10 These are organizations that are part of parent organization, work in its spirit and within its general envelope, and have main office–branch relations with the parent organization.
It is important to note that for this report we did not examine the compatibility between organizational ideology and the target populations addressed (for example: does an organization that defines itself as Masorti in fact serve individuals who define themselves the same way). Because the issue of compatibility has various important ramifications, we propose that it be investigated in a follow-up study.

7.3 Other Organizational Parameters

A. Collaboration: An analysis of the answers to the online survey found a relatively large proportion of organizations that are members of networks or coalitions. Although a majority of the organizations (58.3%) do not report this of themselves, the 41.7% that do is an impressive figure (as compared to what is common in other domains) and evidence of a high level of collaboration and cooperation. What is more, if we leave out independent organizations that do not belong to a general stream, all the other organizations (72% of all of those in the field) share resources, knowledge, or information with other organizations in the field, to some extent or another.

B. Budget: For the most part, the organizations that answered the questionnaire do not have large budgets of the scale typical of Third Sector organizations. Although the average expenditure per organization is NIS 3,744,312, the median is only NIS 540,000, because 24.2% of the organizations have a budget of less than NIS 10,000, while another 23.7% have budgets of between 100,000 and one million sheqels. Thus 57% of all the organizations have a budget of less than one million sheqels. A budget of this size does not make it possible to devote resources to developing an organizational infrastructure—human and administrative, physical, and technological—that could produce additional activities and generate new income.
The total aggregate expenditures reported by the 189 organizations that replied to the questionnaire came to NIS 700,186,398. We have to qualify this amount, because some of the organizations reported their total outlays, including those that are not related to Jewish Renewal. (The total expenditures reported by organizations with budgets exceeding one million sheqels were NIS 554,046,800, with an average of NIS 6,925,585.) A study of the segmentation of this amount shows the following sources: NIS 350,487,128 (50%) from donations, most of them by foundations; NIS 218,697,017 (28%) from earned income; and NIS 154,271,310 (22%) from State funds.\footnote{The discrepancy between this number and that we extracted from the Accountant General’s reports stems from two distorting factors. The first is that the data on the Accountant General’s website are far from transparent and are not clear to a reasonable individual. The budget as displayed on the website includes vague items that may or may not be directed in their entirety to Jewish Renewal programs; some programs are concealed under budget items with misleading titles. The second is that the total aggregate investment extracted from the organizational questionnaire does not represent all the organizations in the field.}
We found that the areas of activity with by far the highest rate of support from abroad are lobbying (42.18%), Jewish leadership development (average 41.78%), and lifecycle events (average 31%). It would seem that overseas funders, more than their counterparts in Israel, are aware of the weakness of many of the organizations, which find themselves in a confrontational stance vis-à-vis the State on questions of substance; consequently they are willing to invest in lobbying efforts to change the current situation. Lobbying and leadership development are considered to be levers for increasing an individual organization’s direct influence.

C. **Number of employees:** The next figure presents the size of the staff and volunteer cadres reported by the organizations that replied to the questionnaire. There is a clear upward bias among the large organizations, those with a budget of one million sheqels or more.

**Figure 7: Staff (N=189) and Volunteers (N=164) of Jewish Renewal Organizations**

One-third of the organizations—most of them small congregations—have no paid staff whatsoever; another third have up to four full-time employees. In addition, 27.4% of the organizations do not rely on volunteers at all. Only 23.8% of them use volunteers to a significant extent (between 50 and 2000)—although this does not necessarily reflect the scope of these volunteers’ investment, commitment, and contribution to the organization.

D. **Location and geographical distribution:** A segmentation of the organizations that answered the questionnaire by the regions in which they are active indicates that the largest numbers of them are located in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area and central Israel, where 27.7% of them work. Nevertheless, countrywide activity is more common: 48.2% of all the organizations work throughout the country. In general, when we study the spheres of activity of the organizations that replied to the questionnaire we find no significant differences between regions. An exception is Jewish leadership development, which is more common among organizations that work in Jerusalem. It seems that the symbolic function of the capital as the center of government exerts major weight in the decision to locate Jewish leadership development programs there.
8. Impact and Social Change

8.1 What Impact do the Organizations Want to Have?

One of the important items on the questionnaire for organizational representatives had to do with their definition of success: “How do you define success for your organization in the field of Jewish Renewal?” An analysis of the answers shows a picture that is not very different from that regarding metrics of success for voluntary organizations in other domains. Only a few organizations offered definitions of success that related to measurable objectives or gave answers that included clear and measurable achievements, from which one could learn about the results of their activity and see it as evidence of an impact on the participants. As we understand it, a clear definition of success, in a way that relates to measurable organizational objectives and refers to the desired change in program participants, in both the short and long terms, is a definition that, above all, can facilitate management decisions by the organization and by potential social investors.

The answers to the question, “What are your organization’s achievements?” paint an interesting picture. A total of 131 organizations replied to this question, and we sorted their answers into five categories. The heading of each category indicates how the organizations describe their achievements.

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12 The total exceeds 100%, because respondents were allowed to mark more than one answer.
Of those who answered the question, 66% see the number of participants, an increase in the geographical spread of their activity, or the activity itself as an achievement. When they are asked to describe their success they relate to organizational metrics of their routine activity and do not mention any particular datum, except for an increase in the number of participants, to support their assertion.

Similarly, 7% of those who responded to the question identified the very establishment of a program and provision of a response to some need as an achievement. They measure their success by the existence of the product they make available and their clients’ use of it.

Of those who answered the question, 13% see the fact that the organization itself has been able to propose a unique action model or has become an authority and key player in the field as their achievement. Recognition by government agencies, and not necessarily financial support, is also frequently cited as an important achievement. Note, however, that in this case the achievement relates to the organization itself and does not (yet) contribute to any change in society or participants’ lives, although there is no doubt that it is an important milestone on the way to the latter.

Only 4% of those answering the question define their success in terms of the graduates of their programs. They view a graduate who has internalized the values that the program seeks to instill and acquired relevant knowledge and appropriate skills, and who puts them into practice by leading a community, ceremony, or study program or by initiating some social action campaign, as an achievement of the first order. Although it is very important to leverage the forces that already exist in the organizations to expand their influence beyond the actual participants in their programs, this view of success suffers from the lack of measurement: as long as the organizations do not conduct systematic follow-up of the number of their graduates who are active in this way and there is no qualitative evaluation of what they are doing, a general statement about active graduates cannot constitute valid testimony of success.

Some 13% of all those who answered the question included clear and measurable achievements in their answers, although only 5% of the respondents phrased their answer in a way that makes it possible to learn the impact of the activity and see it as evidence of an influence on the participants. Here too, the absence of numerical data that would make it possible to estimate the impact on participants and the change effected, as well as the lack of a distinction between outcomes and impacts, is evident.
### 8.2 Proposals for Common Metrics of Success

At the working session we held with representatives of 35 organizations, many relevant metrics that may be usable were proposed. This report offers a series of possible metrics of success for the field, broken down into those that measure the influence of the various activities on participants’ awareness and perception, on their knowledge, and on their behavior. We propose an initial list of such metrics of success, which we expanded after discussions with a focus group and thanks to the contribution of the 35 representatives of the organizations with experience in the field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Metric</th>
<th>Individual: Direct participants</th>
<th>Other interested parties, the public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>The extent of participants’ familiarity with Jewish/Hebrew/Israeli texts and their command of texts in their daily lives</td>
<td>The increase in the opening of educational and advanced-training programs that deal with Judaism and Jewish leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The increase in the number of new clients as a result of legislation or of a change in policy introduced as a result of the organizations’ activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internalization and skills</td>
<td>Participants’ proficiency in finding a link between a text and a current issue in Israeli life</td>
<td>The extent to which programs dealing with Jewish identity are introduced into various educational settings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquisition of skills to teach Jewish texts</td>
<td>The degree of cooperation between the authorities and Jewish Renewal organizations to promote, develop, and institutionalize the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in awareness and emotions</td>
<td>The extent of the change in participants’ self-definition of their Jewish identity</td>
<td>The change in the legitimacy accorded to Jewish pluralism in the public space</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The extent of their freedom to shape their Jewish identity and the practices they follow to suit their perception, and how comfortable they feel about doing so, as reported by program graduates</td>
<td>The extent of infrastructure development by local authorities and the development of alternatives for engaging in pluralistic Jewish culture (learning, experiences, encounters, ceremonies) in formal and informal settings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The extent to which religious services are provided on a community basis and tailored to the model of Judaism chosen by the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>A change in the individual or public situation.</td>
<td>The extent of participants’ sense of belonging to the Jewish people</td>
<td>The degree of fairness in the competition among alternatives and the rate of growth in the number of alternatives for the provision of religious services and spiritual services (equal opportunity in receiving religious services or spiritual leadership in accordance with the residents’ preference and with equal funding by the State)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in behavior</td>
<td>The extent of the increase in the number of active and committed members in local communities, the frequency of their participation, the number of years of membership, and the degree of members’ involvement in community activities</td>
<td>The number of formal collaborations with local authorities to make it possible for all Jews to receive services that suit their individual preference</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The rate of growth in the number of people who adopt diverse models of Judaism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The extent to which a thoughtful, open, and sympathetic dialogue develops between different groups of Jews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Summary and Recommendations

In light of the preceding, we would like to offer recommendations that could enhance the field in the coming years. It is important to remember that these recommendations are made cautiously and within the limitations of our study, and should be seen as a basis for discussions among the various interested parties.

A. *Increase the level of knowledge that exists about the field.* The interested parties active in the field work within the limitations of insufficient information and make important decisions in a state of severely inadequate knowledge. The field suffers from a lack of transparency and a paucity of efforts to share information with the public. An example of this is the difficulty in obtaining reliable data about budgets, number of participants, and so on, or the fact that, even after several decades of activity and the publication of a series of surveys and studies, social entrepreneurs, activists, and other interested parties still lack a clear picture of the target audience: Who are its members? How many of them are there? What are their demographics? What services do they need and what do they want to receive? Even our analysis—although it may add some knowledge—is far from sketching a full picture of these matters. This is a challenge for all the interested parties; because the task is too big for any individual organization, it stands to reason that they need to unite forces in order to discover essential knowledge. We recommend continuing the efforts to create a base of theoretical and practical knowledge for the entire field, of a sort that could benefit all relevant parties by presenting all the players and their core activities in optimum fashion and by means of clear parameters.

B. *Promote cooperative ventures in the field.* We learned that the field is full of small organizations, with a relatively large number of networks and coalitions, although most of these are weak and do not commit their members. Collaboration could help organizations that have similar goals achieve them. In many cases, it would be possible to merge infrastructure and economize on costs. For example, joint administrative staffs, marketing channels, and fundraising operations could be set up. There could be cooperation in training workers and volunteers, which would make it possible to direct more resources to the activities themselves. In some cases, an actual merger of organizations with similar goals might be considered.

C. *Hold a joint and serious discussion about the field and its goals.* We learned that even though this is a rich and vibrant domain, with energetic entrepreneurs and a desire to effect genuine social change, there has never been a joint discussion by the various interested parties about its main objectives and ways to achieve them; there are even debates about the appropriate name for the field. Such a discussion could serve all interested parties and create a common language that would serve as a lever for pooling resources. We hope that this report will serve as a breakthrough in this respect.

D. *Invest in networks and coalitions as a way to enhance lobbying efforts.* It seems obvious that lobbying and attempts to change national policy, as well as efforts to use the media to alter public perceptions, would be more successful if many more organizations united forces and worked together persistently in pursuit of a common goal. We recommend that Israeli funders recognize the importance of this activity and help such processes mature, with the goal of altering budgeting models, and that they take part in this themselves. Here there seem to be better prospects for changes in the resource allocation model and for strengthening Jewish Renewal activity. The State invests chiefly in formal education and does not encourage social initiatives that would help strengthen the bond between citizens and their culture, heritage, and state, and reduce their feelings of alienation. To achieve
this, however, a deep study of the relevant State budgets is required, because an understanding of government allocations is a crucial basis for all lobbying activity or social change.

E. *Invest in strengthening the organizations’ infrastructure.* Social investors and the organizations have to invest in physical, technological, and especially organizational and managerial infrastructure, and not only in the activities themselves. A robust infrastructure that supports a results-oriented action model would increase the long-term survival prospects of good programs. There is a need to develop organizations’ knowledge and get them to present objectives in terms of impact and social change, and to provide them with tools that will allow them to determine whether their methods are effective. Similarly, it must be possible for investors to find out whether their investment has produced value and helped promote the desired social change. We have seen signs that the demand may exceed the current supply. We also learned that the organizations often fail to accurately track the scale of participation and their clients’ preferences and do not document these in a way they could learn from. This gap could be reduced by means of an organizational infrastructure that focuses on learning and becoming more familiar with clients’ needs, as well as by making the services more accessible and paying greater attention to the specific needs of potential clients.