

" THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE "

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL

Summary Report to

The Jewish Education Committee

The Jewish Agency for Israel

Submitted by Annette Hochstein

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1. INTRODUCTION

As many as 400 different Israel educational programs are in operation today. They include educational tours, year-long university and yeshiva programs, high school semesters and work programs on kibbutzim.

The Jewish Agency's Jewish Education Committee began its work with the assumption that Israel programs have a substantial impact on their participants. They therefore commissioned the 'Israel Experience' study project, to answer two basic questions:

1. Is there potential for significantly increasing the numbers of Diaspora Jews taking part in educational programs in Israel?
2. Can the impact of Israel programs be increased -- and if so, how?

After completing the study, collecting, analyzing and evaluating the data, it is our feeling that both these questions can be answered in the affirmative:

YES, there is potential for a substantial increase in the numbers of people who come to Israel on educational programs. We found that although participation is, in fact, greater than previously assumed, there is much potential for growth. We believe we have identified new target populations. We know who they are -- and, more than that, they have told us what they want.

And YES, as we shall indicate, the impact of Israel programs can be significantly increased. We found that while the Israel educational experience is generally perceived as successful, there is room for improvement.

We have found it useful to summarize our findings for this report in the following categories:

- * The Method: How we Worked
- * Is there potential for increasing participation in educational programs in Israel?
- * Who are the potential participants?
- * Who participates today -- and in which programs?
- * What programs or frameworks would attract potential participants?
- * What are major obstacles to participation?
- * Can existing programs meet potential demand?
- * Can the educational impact of programs be increased?

In two final sections, we deal with:

- * Policy issues
- * Conclusions

2. THE METHOD: HOW WE WORKED

As we embarked on this study project we discovered that there was almost no resource material available about educational programs in Israel.

While those involved in organizing and implementing programs are often very knowledgeable about an area of education or their specific program, there was no systematic or comprehensive body of knowledge or information about Israel educational programs. There were, for all practical purposes, almost no evaluations of:

- + the impact of programs on participants
- + the efficiency of programs
- + the marketing of programs

It was therefore important for our study to gather the necessary information and to analyze it in a way that would shed light on our two basic questions. We did this by:

- a) Creating a data-base of existing Israel programs -- their content, participants, funding, recruitment, and factors working for or against their growth.
- b) Studying the populations who come on existing programs, to understand who they are, how they decide to join programs, and what (short-term) impact is made on them by the program
- c) Preparing a market study to discover who are the potential participants.

- d) Surveying young people who come to Israel outside of educational program frameworks.
- e) Analyzing existing programs -- their resources, curricula, personnel and budgets.

We made a number of on-site visits during the summer of 1985, observed staff recruitment and training sessions, and assembled a library of publications, to serve as documentation for our work.

We conducted extensive interviews with lay leaders, educators and administrators, and consulted with numerous experts in the field.

What I am privileged to present to you today is an executive summary of our findings to date. It is based on a set of technical reports including:

- A report on the survey of programs
- A report on participants in short-term programs (that on long-term programs is to come shortly)
- A report of the market study in the U.S. and Canada
- A report on accommodations
- A report on personnel
- A report on site-visits
- A series of technical reports including budget analyses and funding data.

It is for the Committee to decide how best to make available the several volumes of materials that include, in addition to the results listed above:

- A computerized data base of programs for 1985
- A monograph describing the various methodologies in the social sciences and education that were chosen to gather, analyze and interpret the data.

Clearly, such an effort completed in so short a period had to involve talented and dedicated people.

Throughout, the project team has been encouraged and sustained by the deep interest and commitment of the Chairman of the Israel Experience Sub-Committee ROBERT LOUP, its Co-Chairman Rabbi RICHARD HIRSCH, and by Jewish Education Committee Chairman, MORTON MANDEL. Their belief in the power of accurate information and their vision of the scope and importance of this study assured us of the necessary time and tools.

The project's consultants -- Professor MICHAEL INBAR and Professor EFRAIM YA'AR for methodology, Dr. SHMUEL SHYE for the program survey, and Professor STEVEN M. COHEN who conducted the marketing and participant studies -- were the most gifted and dedicated of colleagues. Their contribution is inestimable.

HAIM ZOHAR, Secretary General of the WZO, has given us invaluable help in gathering vital information about people, institutions and methods of recruitment.

My own staff worked with total concentration and commitment. Their dedication was central to this endeavor.

Dozens of program directors and educators helped make this study possible by their willingness to share their data and their time. The openness and generosity of the WZO's Youth and Hechalutz Department, in this regard, merits special thanks.

Professor SEYMOUR FOX, Senior Consultant to the Jewish Education Committee, has at every stage insisted on the most rigorous of academic standards for this project. His creativity and insights have contributed some of its most significant ideas, and his expertise in all matters pertaining to Jewish education has been of invaluable assistance. It has been a true privilege working with him.

3. IS THERE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION
IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL?

The answer appears to be yes. Many more people can be recruited to Israel education programs.

The major growth area -- and one of the major findings of the Israel Experience study -- is that large numbers of people who have never been to Israel want to come, and want to come on educational visits. Again and again, our market study data show that Israel is attractive to Diaspora Jews who have never visited the State, and who are not generally reached by Israel program recruitment.

The interest of this group, however, lies chiefly in types of program other than those currently offered.

Another, more limited growth area was also identified. This is in expanding the reach of existing programs.

4. WHO ARE THE POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS?

The North American Jewish population can be roughly divided into three equal segments as regards visits to Israel (see Fig. 1):

- * Those who have visited Israel, or are making arrangements to do so.
(All those who take part in existing Israel programs are within this segment.)
- * Those who have no interest at all.
- * The intermediate group, who have never been to Israel but are interested in doing so one day. They have either inquired about trips to Israel, believe they may visit in the future, or have at least given the matter some serious thought.

Our market study in the United States and Canada clearly shows that as many as a third of all North American Jews, who have never been to Israel, are interested in such a visit. The study reveals that large numbers of them could be attracted to educational programs in Israel.

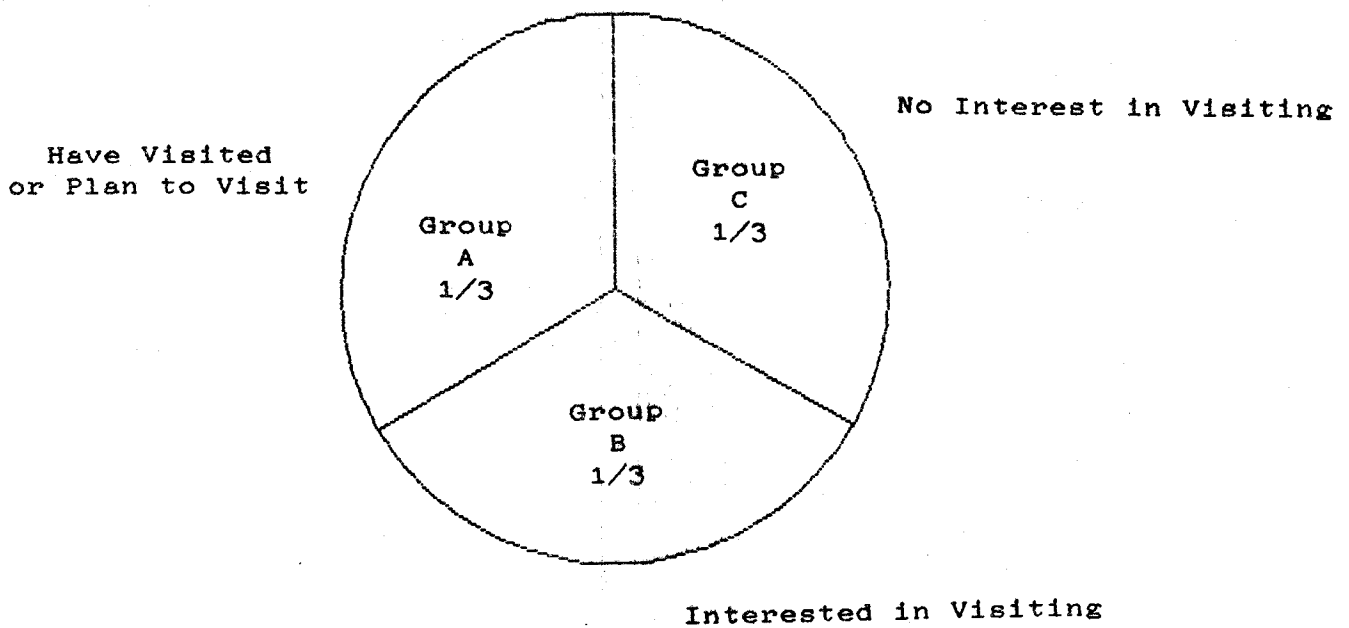
As we studied these data, we decided to focus much of our analysis on this third group, which clearly appears to have the greatest potential. It could include hundreds of thousands of people, and therefore we decided to analyze this group in greater depth. We created four categories:

- + 13- to 17-year-olds
- + 18- to 24-year-olds
- + single 25- to 50-year-olds
- + married 25- to 50-year-olds

FIGURE 1

Interest of American Jews in Visiting Israel

(Rounded Percentages)



Interest of American Jews in Visiting Israel falls into three roughly equal sections

GROUP B -- THOSE INTERESTED IN VISITING ISRAEL -- ARE SUGGESTED AS A MAJOR TARGET POPULATION

We found that each of these categories differs markedly from North American Jews who have already visited Israel or have made the decision to visit, as well as from that segment who have no interest in Israel programs (see Fig. 2).

They tend to lie midway between the Israel visitors and the totally disinterested, as regard various aspects of Jewish involvement. For example:

- + Close to 80 percent have had some form of part-time Jewish education. Very few have had Jewish day-school education.
- + Around 40 percent rate their ritual observance as 'moderate.'
- + Their religious affiliation is equally divided among Conservative or Reform Judaism, and being "just Jewish" (about 30 percent in each category).
- + Most rank 'low' on Zionist commitment.
- + Some 27 percent are unaffiliated with any Jewish communal organization; 41 percent are affiliated to one such organization; and the remainder to more than one.

The picture we have drawn from the data is of a population characterized by moderate links to Jewish religious and communal life at home, and with some interest in Israel. Because they have weak commitments to Zionism, we should, however, question whether conventional appeals to visit Israel are likely to be effective. New methods to address them should be considered and developed.

FIGURE 2

PROFILE OF AMERICAN JEWS, ACCORDING TO THEIR INTEREST IN VISITING ISRAEL

All figures are percentages

	Not Interested in Visiting Israel %	Interested (by ages)				TOTAL INTERESTED	Have been to Israel
		13-17 years	18-24 years	Single 25-50 years	Married 25-50 years		
<u>Jewish Education</u>							
None	23%	19%	16%	10%	22%	18%	6%
Part-Time	74	76	75	86	76	79	67
Yeshiva/High School	3	5	9	4	3	5	26
<u>Ritual Observance</u>							
Low	47	21	26	37	30	29	16
Moderate	41	36	48	45	33	39	33
High	11	43	26	18	37	32	51
<u>Denomination</u>							
Orthodox*	1	3	6	-	9	6	24
Conservative	23	44	30	31	31	33	36
Reform	29	25	27	40	35	33	24
Just Jewish	47	28	37	29	25	29	16
<u>Organizational Affiliation</u>							
None	47	19	28		28	27	14
1 institution	35	45	47		38	41	32
2 institutions	12	28	17		20	21	30
3 institutions	5	8	8		14	12	25
<u>Zionist Identification</u>							
Low	86	69	50	41	42	48	11
Moderate	13	24	37	39	42	38	34
High	1	8	13	20	15	15	56
<u>Family or Friends Have Been to Israel</u>							
None	60	44	33	41	43	41	14
One	25	33	32	28	26	29	16
Two or more	15	23	35	31	32	31	71
<u>Have Family or Friends in Israel</u>							
	27	33	38	37	37	-	68
<u>Understand Hebrew</u>							
	1	3	0	1	1	-	19

* Underrepresented in our sample.

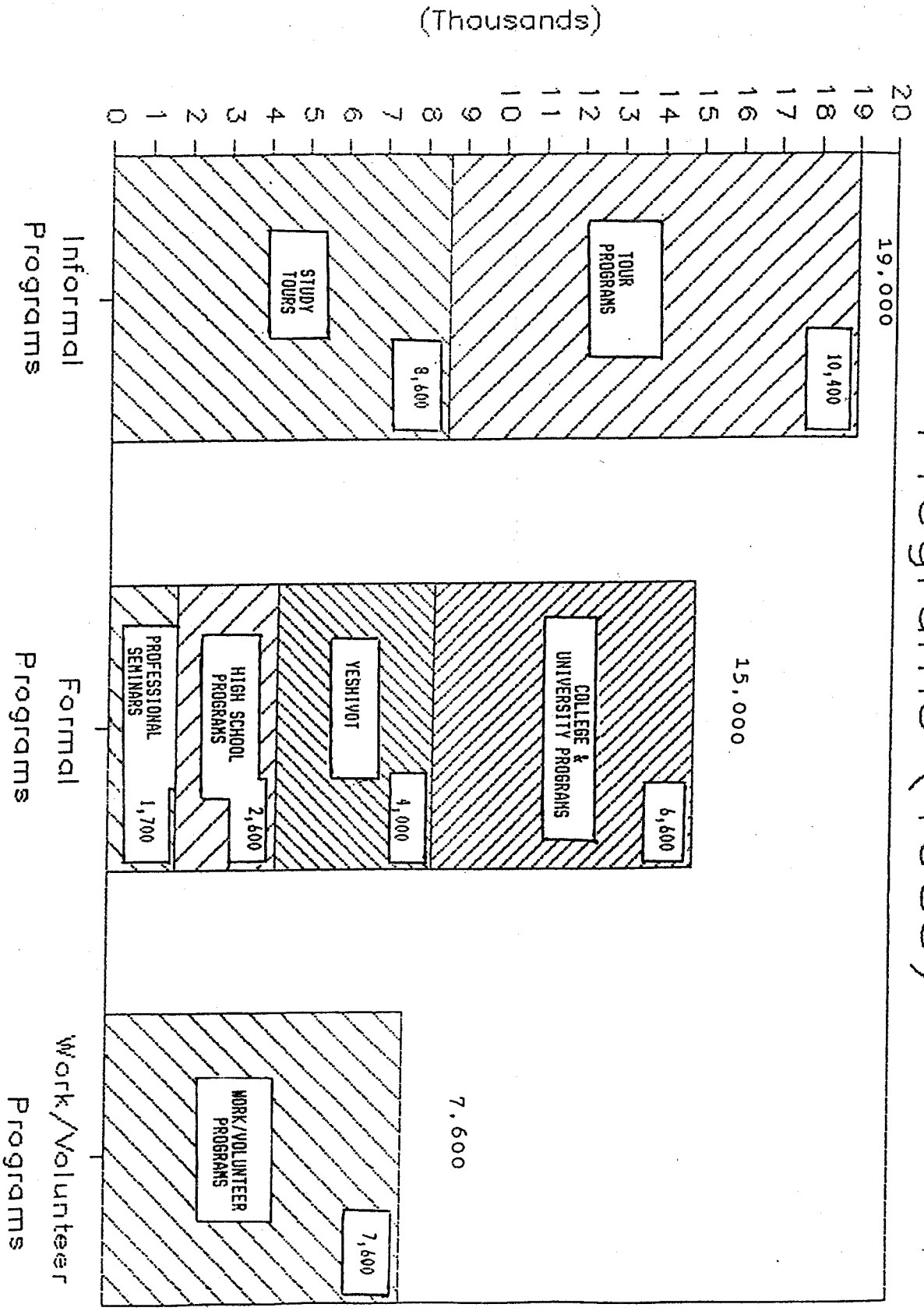
Again and again, the "interested" group falls midway between the Israel visitors and the "disinterested" in these dimensions of Jewish identity.

About half of this 'interested' group -- perhaps half a million people between the ages of 13 and 50 -- declared themselves willing to spend \$1,000 or more on an Israel visit, in addition to the cost of the flight, for the right kind of program. Though we will be returning to the complex issue of cost later, it is clear that this subgroup within the 'interested' segment merits particular attention.

Existing Israel programs cater, by and large, to a very different Diaspora population.

FIGURE 3

Participants in the Various Types of Programs (1985)



5. WHO PARTICIPATES TODAY -- AND IN WHICH PROGRAMS?

To our surprise, we found that many more people take part in a wider variety of program frameworks than was generally assumed.

We began the study in the belief that 12,000 to 15,000 people came to Israel on educational programs each year -- most of them high schoolers, primarily attending short-term programs.

We found this to be far from the case. Our survey of approximately 85 percent of existing programs shows that some 41,500 participants were involved in Israel programs in 1985. More than half of them are older than 21, and about a third are on long-term programs.

In order to reach these findings, we assembled detailed information about 330 programs from their directors, using a systematic, structured questionnaire, through interviews with trained staff. The data were computerized and analyzed through various statistical procedures to produce a survey of the universe of Israel programs.

The hundreds of programs we examined can be grouped into three main categories (see Figure 3):

- + Informal -- tours and study tours
- + Formal -- professional seminars, high school, yeshiva and higher education programs
- + Work/Volunteer

(Slight differences in numbers in the Figures result from rounding off, and because some questionnaires were returned to us incomplete.)

Programs for teenagers are typically one to two months in duration. Those aimed at college-age participants usually run over six months. Young adult programs (22 to 30 years) are generally either less than a month long or more than six. Those for over-31s are usually less than a month.

Participants in programs belong most often to the more Jewishly active segment of the population. In our survey of participants in programs we found, for example, that:

- + 49 percent had visited Israel before
- + 24 percent have had Jewish day-school or yeshiva schooling
- + 79 percent belonged to a synagogue (or their parents belong)

This profile confirms findings from our market study, which reveals that the less Jewishly active often do not visit Israel or know about programs.

6. WHAT PROGRAMS OR FRAMEWORKS WOULD ATTRACT POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS?

Among the unexpected findings of the study was that there are literally thousands of North Americans who want to tour Israel on programs which offer Jewish and Israeli content. This is true for every age group.

We asked ourselves whether these are people who are interested solely in ordinary tourism. When we analyzed our data more carefully, we learned that a significant number were indeed receptive to learning more about Israel and Judaism during an Israel visit.

The majority of this group, however, is not attracted to existing programs. They are looking for possibilities other than those currently available -- among them, more individualized visits, and visits conducted within a different social framework.

Among the programs that our study indicates will attract this group (see Fig. 6) are:

- + Intensive basic tours of the country that explore Jewish connections with Israel.

- + Family trips -- preferred by both parents and children. We were surprised to discover that not only parents prefer such trips, but so do children of varying ages, as well.

Very few such programs are available today.

- + Individual (non-group) visits, in which visitors can learn about Israel in appropriate settings. These are particularly popular among young adults, in the 18- to 24-year age bracket. They want to come alone or with friends, and take part in educational activities while they are in Israel.

FIGURE 6

TYPES OF ISRAEL PROGRAM THAT WOULD ATTRACT FIRST-TIME NORTH AMERICAN VISITORS INTERESTED IN VISITING ISRAEL

	Basic Tour	Family Trip	Individual Trip	Intensive Tour	Academic High School	Academic Experience University	Sports Tour	Professional Workshop	Professional Experience
Interested	78%	72%	54%	35%	44%	41%	40%	30%	23%
aged 13-17 years	(33%)	(37%)	(18%)	(14%)	(14%)	(12%)	(17%)	(9%)	(6%)
Interested	80%	67%	72%	43%	-	43%	38%	47%	45%
aged 18-24 years	(44%)	(34%)	(41%)	(20%)	-	(21%)	(16%)	(25%)	(22%)
Interested	81%	37%	66%	32%	-	18%	26%	29%	32%
aged 25-50 years singles	(47%)	(21%)	(36%)	(17%)	-	(5%)	(16%)	(15%)	(16%)
Interested	85%	77%	59%	40%	-	15%	11%	24%	18%
aged 25-50 years married	(51%)	(46%)	(37%)	(22%)	-	(9%)	(8%)	(14%)	(8%)

Figures in parentheses indicate those willing to pay \$1,000 and more over flight cost.

BASIC TOURS, FAMILY VISITS AND INDIVIDUAL TRIPS ARE THE MOST POPULAR AMONG "INTERESTED" NORTH AMERICAN JEWS.

Almost all existing Israel education programs cater exclusively to groups.

- + High-level educational or professional enhancement in Israel is sought by a sizeable group. Some are looking for short-term study programs and workshops or longer-term working experiences that are well thought out.

We looked, too, at what this target group would enjoy doing within these program frameworks (Fig. 7).

- + The majority want to see historic, religious and archaeological sites, though they also want significant time for leisure; they want to sunbathe.

- + A substantial number, however, want to study Israeli history, experience religious life in Israel, and meet Israelis and North Americans living in Israel.

That is, people are interested in exploring Israel and Judaism, and learning about their connections with their heritage.

FIGURE 7

PROGRAM CONTENT THAT ATTRACTS FIRST-TIME NORTH AMERICAN VISITORS,
INTERESTED IN VISITING ISRAEL

QUESTION: If you were to visit Israel, how appealing would each of the following activities be?

	13-17 years	18-24 years	Single 25-50 years	Married 25-50 years
Seeing the major sites	74%	87%	85%	89%
Touring archaeological sites	46	60	69	70
Spending time with Israelis	44	54	43	52
Sunbathing	40	59	41	32
Learning Israeli history	30	37	47	44
Spending time with North American Jews who have settled in Israel	35	33	24	38
Experiencing religious life in Israel	31	33	26	31
Studying Judaism	17	14	17	18
Studying Hebrew	14	16	11	12
Talking politics with Israelis	8	14	14	15
Playing your favorite sports	18	13	8	5

Figures are percentages.

AS WELL AS VACATION ACTIVITIES SUCH AS TOURING AND SUNBATHING, A LARGE PROPORTION ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT ISRAEL AND JUDAISM.

INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

These interim conclusions summarize what we have presented to this point -- and particularly the foregoing section. We can note some development possibilities:

If new types of program were to be developed and provided, catering to the interests suggested by the survey, we believe that very significant increases in the numbers of those taking part in Israel programs could be achieved.

If, further, the quality of programs is simultaneously upgraded, and the obstacles to participation removed, increased participation could reach very large numbers.

Because the numbers of people in this 'interested' category are so large, we believe the Committee may want to consider further investigation of this population through a number of pilot programs. The pilot programs would serve as a more complete and valid test of the conclusions, and could serve as a basis for a larger-scale framework, to be more fully developed at a later stage.

Three types of pilot program are suggested.

a) INTENSIVE BASIC TOURS. The development of quality, short-term basic tours of Israel, combining sightseeing, Israel studies (Israeli society, history, Jewish living, and so on) and leisure.

7. WHAT ARE MAJOR OBSTACLES TO PARTICIPATION?

We asked ourselves: What factors inhibit or discourage people from coming to Israel on educational programs? We identified a number of possible obstacles toward visiting Israel. Among these: the cost of programs, fear of terrorism (which is prominent this year), lack of knowledge about programs, negative attitudes of family members to visiting Israel, and the quality of programs provided.

We have singled out three major obstacles, for discussion here:

- a) Lack of knowledge about programs
- b) Cost of programs
- c) Quality of programs

a) Lack of knowledge about programs

We found general agreement that more aggressive marketing of Israel programs is required. Some 65 percent of all program directors believe that more aggressive advertising would almost certainly result in increased registration in their programs. Indeed, with 39 percent of programs operating below current capacity, and over 83 percent claiming that they could expand to accommodate double the number of participants, it is not surprising to find directors concentrating on advertising and recruiting.

Yet marketing of Israel programs is largely ineffective. Large sums of money are spent on various advertising media -- but they are not reaching enough of the target population of interested people. On a per participant basis, many programs spend hundreds of dollars.

The problem may lie less in the amount spent, and more in the way in which it is allocated. Despite the hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in advertising and recruiting, only 28 percent of the 'interested' group in our market study said they "knew of any programs for visitors to Israel other than the regular tours packages."

Close to 60 percent of all respondents said they would be more likely to visit Israel if they knew of a program that was right for them. The age breakdown is as follows:

Fig. 8 Likely to Visit if Knew of Right Program

<u>'Interested'</u>	<u>Percent</u>
13- to 17-year-olds	59%
18- to 24-year-olds	54%
25- to 50-year-olds (singles)	54%
25- to 50-year-olds (married)	58%

Our study shows that the more serious the interest of a potential participant, the harder it becomes to find a suitable program. As high a proportion as 73 percent of those who have decided to visit Israel report that they would be more likely to visit if they knew of the right framework. Current recruitment campaigns apparently do not address this market need in a satisfactory way.

Fig. 9 shows 10 existing recruitment approaches. We analyzed the effectiveness of each, and -- again -- our findings surprised us. Organizational channels, for example, are used by slightly more than half of existing Israel programs, and bring in 70 percent of all participants.

The use of organizational channels and word-of-mouth as the most effective recruitment methods suggests that marketing of Israel programs is primarily geared to those active and involved in Jewish community life.

Of our 'interested' target population, however, only 13 percent had ever received information about Israel programs through organizations. The 'organizational' channel, therefore, appears to be effective only within certain markets, those with strong Jewish affiliations.

Our study unequivocally shows that marketing can be expanded to other population groups. Word-of-mouth is heavily relied on, and suggests that social networks is one route that can be effectively used -- as long as these networks are not limited to the most Jewishly active sectors.

Fig. 9 Current Recruitment Methods: Extent of Their Use

channel	% of programs	% of all participants	*	% of participants in informal programs	% of participants in formal programs	% of participants in work/volunteer programs
Word of mouth	70	73	*	43	40	17
Organizational channels	56	70	*	66	30	3
Brochures	48	54	*	49	46	6
Shlichim	42	54	*	56	21	23
Direct mail	28	40	*	58	23	20
Media ads	19	32	*	59	22	19
Speakers	19	24	*	27	44	29
Special promotional events	13	17	*	49	7	41
Synagogue	14	14	*	91	7	2
Community center	13	13	*	91	6	3

Word-of-mouth and organizational channels are very effective within a limited market. To expand existing markets and reach new ones, however, a professional advisory board could make an important contribution to reviewing present marketing methods, and suggesting ways to improve them.

b) Cost of programs

A second major obstacle to participation in Israel programs is their cost. This issue needs much further in-depth study: on the one hand, our findings indicate significant willingness among the 'interested' population to pay for programs; on the other, cost is shown to be a deterrent factor.

c) Quality of Programs

The level of the quality of programs is a third obstacle to participation. We were pleased to discover that, in general, participants were satisfied with the Israel programs they attended. When we probed deeper, however, we found that there is room for substantially increasing program quality -- especially since poor-quality programs not only affect their participants, but also future recruitment.

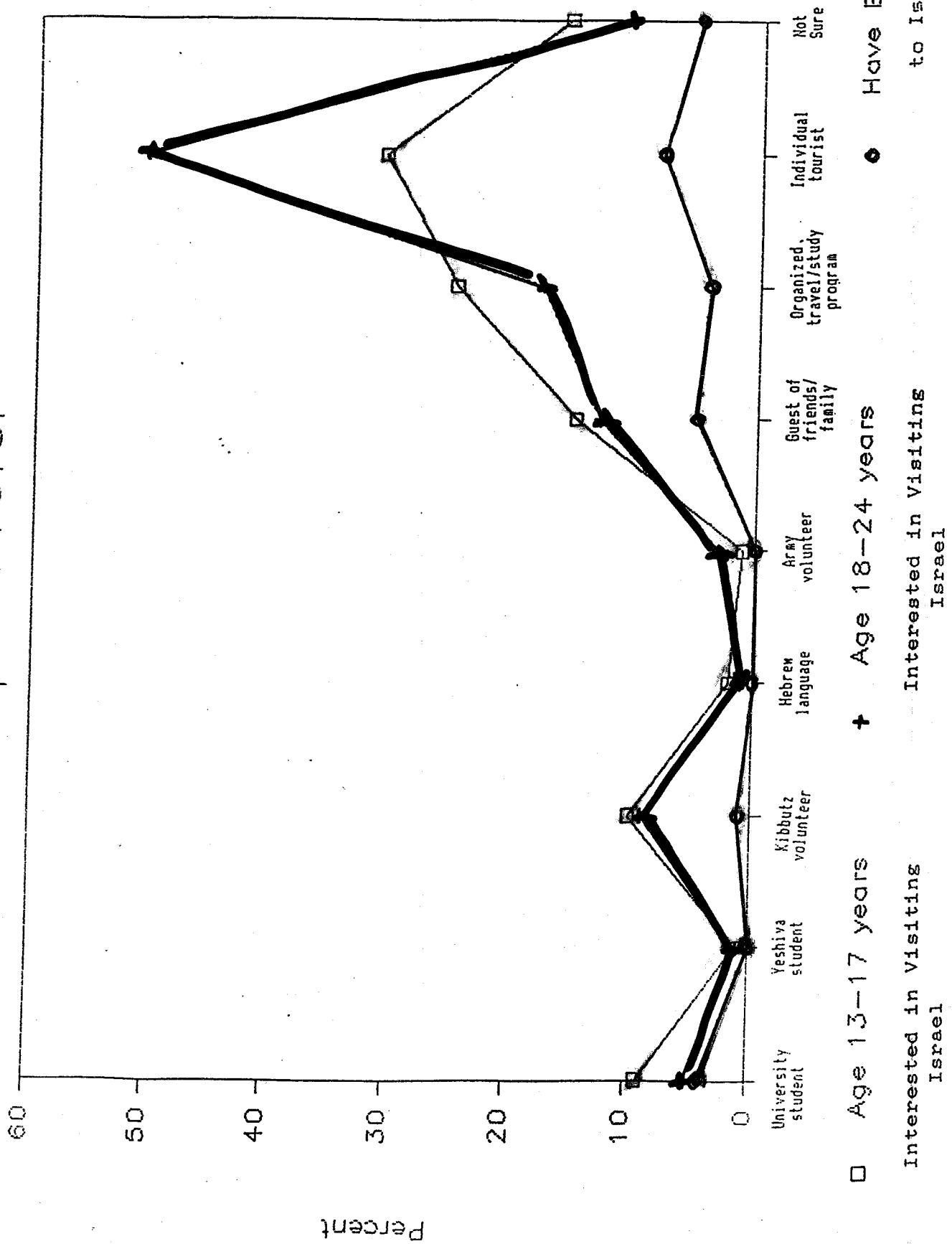
Israel clearly speaks very powerfully and favorably to the young visitor, even through poorer-quality programs. All our data, however -- collected from program directors, participants and our 'interested' population -- show that participants who have been dissatisfied with their Israel program are unwilling to recommend it to friends.

With word-of-mouth as such an effective recruitment tool, it follows that poor-quality programs make a strong negative impact on recruitment.

The issue of program quality is dealt with more fully in section 9. It is worth stating here, however, that the fact that most participants are happy with their 'Israel Experience,' in programs of all quality across the board, may be attributed to Israel itself, and often in spite of the program.

FIGURE 10

Kinds of Israel Program Which Young People Prefer



We also found that existing programs have the resources -- in sites (certainly if it is outside Jerusalem) and personnel -- to accommodate such growth at present levels of operation.

Figure 10 shows that many young people could potentially be attracted to individual travel, rather than to existing group programs. Figure 6 provides further illustration of the same point. We thus conclude that whereas there is a potential for increasing participation in existing types of program, the greatest untapped potential participation requires the development of new and different types of program.

DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

Universities. University programs do not fare too well in word-of-mouth recommendations. Our long-term program study is still incomplete, but our initial findings show there to be a significant drop-out rate, and varying levels of satisfaction among students. Major problem areas are quality, level and type of academic study. A further recurrent complaint is isolation from mainstream campus life.

Our data indicate significant potential demand for university programs, despite existing difficulties in recruitment to such programs.

Kibbutzim. Kibbutzim have long been a significant resource in shaping Israel's image and positively representing many values of modern Israel. Over time, however, the quality of kibbutz programs appears to eroded, leaving both participants and kibbutz members increasingly dissatisfied. Conceivably, many kibbutz programs have not sufficiently evolved with time or changed with the market. Such changes may rebuild a significant role for kibbutzim in Israel programs.

9. CAN THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF PROGRAMS BE INCREASED?

We found clear evidence that the impact of many existing programs can be significantly increased.

As we surveyed the existing programs -- through the participants' survey, the directors' survey, site visits and interviews -- we found that the successful programs had shared features. We could therefore begin to chart a preliminary profile of a 'good' program -- and, naturally, its corollary, a 'bad' program. We discovered there to be startling gaps in quality between good and less-good Israel programs.

We dubbed a program unsuccessful or 'bad' when a large number of its participants were:

- + bored or dissatisfied with it
- + missed the point of the program's lectures, tours or other activities
- + uninspired by their 'Israel Experience' and unlikely to increase Jewish or Israel-related activities at home as a result of their visit
- + unlikely to recommend their program or a visit to Israel to others

We corroborated the declared satisfaction of program participants and impact of programs in interviews with educators and program administrators.

Index of Satisfaction

To test satisfaction with programs, we developed a multi-dimensional 'index of satisfaction' describing the Israel visit, composed of 17 elements -- Sites I Visited, Counselors, Educational Activities, and Costs were four of them.

Satisfaction, we discovered, bore scant relationship to whether respondents were Jewishly involved, committed Zionists, or planning aliyah.

We therefore took their willingness to recommend a program as an important key to measuring satisfaction.

According to this Consumer Satisfaction Index, while two thirds of participants enjoyed their Israel Experience -- only 38 percent were both satisfied and would recommend their program. Their complaints encompassed the quality of staff, organization, accommodations, food and more.

The Satisfaction Index also served to underline the great gap between 'good' and 'bad' programs. Quality of staff is one example: on the less-successful programs, less than half (49 percent) of participants declared themselves satisfied with their counselors; on the better programs, the satisfaction rate was 74 percent.

More telling still is the rate of recommendation: 19 percent of those on 'bad' programs were both happy with their experience and willing to recommend it, as against more than 50 percent on the 'good' programs.

DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

As we saw a picture developing, we focused on a number of areas -- such as personnel, organization, and accountability between providers of services and organizations abroad. We believe that improvement in these areas will do much to increase the impact of some of the programs.

These additional findings, which are documented in our technical reports, are worth noting, because they have special bearing on development possibilities.

a) Personnel

The quality of counselors is, according to all sources, the single most important factor in determining program quality.

There is, however, a shortage of suitable personnel. Many are students or recent IDF graduates, often with little more than a few days' training and unfamiliar with the background and beliefs of their group, or with the goals or plans of the programs they lead.

We believe that upgrading staff can have significant impact on a large number of Israel programs. Among our pilot project suggestions are:

- + an experimental staff training program for Israeli counselors in short-term programs
- + further study of interaction between Israeli counselors and accompanying personnel from the Diaspora
- + further study of the impact of enormous salary differentials between educational staff in various programs (a differential that is, in some cases, 100 percent)

b) Rationalization of Short-Term Tours

Short-term tours provide an important service for which there is an existing -- and even greater potential -- demand. According to our data, however, the best is not being provided, and the potential impact is not always being made. Word-of-mouth is discouraging future participation -- despite the great efforts of an overworked and dedicated staff.

Over half of those considering Israel travel report their primary source of information to be friends who have been to Israel before. The data also show that what their friends tell them depends on the quality of program in which they participated. As indicated earlier, participants on 'good' programs are far more likely to recommend their programs than those in 'bad' programs. Perhaps even more important, however, is the fact that participants on 'bad' programs are also far less likely to recommend Israel travel at all.

An improvement in short-term programs would, we believe, result in time in increases in both participation and impact. A reevaluation, rationalization and reorganization of some of the structures providing these services is strongly recommended. If a reorganization is considered too drastic, we suggest extending and encouraging existing short-term programs that do meet criteria of quality. Promotion of competition between different frameworks running summer programs may produce desirable results.

c) A Professional Advisory Board

We believe a professional advisory board could help all those involved in organizing and running programs to:

- + develop norms for educational quality in various types of program
- + assist in planning and developing effective programs
- + help monitor and evaluate programs

In these ways, an overall qualitative improvement in existing programs could be achieved, as well as standards set for future programs. Such a contribution from Education and Social Sciences experts would be likely to increase participation and maximize program impact.

d) Accountability

We identified a communications gap between those who organize programs in the Diaspora and those who provide them in Israel. For this reason, consumer expectations sometimes go unmet, and credibility is damaged.

A number of Diaspora organizations have closed the credibility gap by setting up their own infrastructure and running programs independently. Others have established their own facilities in Israel to represent their interests and mediate with local program organizers.

e) Cultural Differences

Our research concerns programs catered to participants from throughout the Diaspora. Our initial concentration was on North America because of the scope of the project and the numbers involved, but at this early stage we also checked our conclusions through a smaller-scale project in France.

We found the cultural differences between Jews from different countries to be significant in program satisfaction. A common criticism, in fact, among non-American participants, was that programs are not addressed to them.

Educators, too, ranked specificity of program as an important criterion of success.

As an example, one might suggest accommodating cultural differences in programs by establishing local centers for participants from given countries. One might, for instance, establish a 'Maison de France,' that would serve as a liaison for French-Israel Experience organizers and visitors, would provide information for group organizers, be a focus for informal activities geared to French visitors, and function as a visitors' center.

Such a center might provide a needed bridge to the communications and credibility gaps in programs. If successful, it could be replicated for other countries.

10. POLICY ISSUES

This report summarizes conclusions based on a mass of data, describing the Israel Experience -- a large and long-time field that has never before been evaluated in-depth. Some of our findings overturn long-held assumptions, with the data clearly indicating that there are directions for development.

A number of major decisions lie ahead. They will form the basis of the project's implementation, and guide its progress. Only when policy is formulated can a constructive plan of action be developed.

Among the policy issues to be decided are:

I. Are there population groups in which the Committee wishes to concentrate its resources?

If so, should precedence be given to specific age groups? To people from certain geographic areas? To the Jewishly active, or to the large group identified as 'interested'? To present and future leaders?

Each choice carries far-reaching planning ramifications. If, for example, high schoolers are selected as a focus, scholarship funding will be an important component, as will organized tour programs.

If the major target is to be the 18- to 24-year-olds, two major development options open:

- * developing individual trips -- perhaps through activity centers and activity packages, as well as cheaper accommodation possibilities
- * developing career and professional program options

II. What is the desired impact of this project?

Priorities in the choices of specific programs and target groups will be dictated by the desired impact of this project. Examples of impacts include:

- * Exposing large numbers of young Jews to Israel, irrespective of the educational intensity of the experience.
- * Bringing young Diaspora Jews to Israel for maximum social contact to counter intermarriage.
- * Making the strongest possible educational impact on relatively few, since strong educational impact requires greater resources used more intensively.

III. What type of endeavor does the Education Committee want to undertake?

- * Promotion of organized educational group programs only?
- * Development of educational modules for individual visitors?
(Creating, for example, a Bible Teaching Center; educational packages; short-term programs open to individuals; developing entirely new programs, such as family camps.)

IV. How are resources to be apportioned among different development areas?

- * Increasing participation in existing programs?
- * Improving the impact of existing programs?
- * Selectively increasing participation in the best of existing programs?
- * Creating new frameworks for new kinds of program?

The decisions of the Jewish Education Committee will guide planners in developing a suitable mix of recommendations.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The survey, analysis and evaluation of educational programs in Israel for Diaspora Jews has produced a number of answers -- and a greater number of possibilities and questions.

As this summary report shows, it has answered the major questions posed, suggesting that:

1. Existing Israel programs can be greatly expanded.
2. There is room to develop new programs catering to new interests.

Further, it has revealed that:

3. There are large potential populations of participants -- in North America, fully one third of the Jewish population -- who have not yet been reached.

Some of the ways of increasing numbers of participants in Israel education programs, and of improving the impact of programs, that merit the Committee's attention are:

* Developing new types of program for new target populations:

-- designing short-term programs for families, with Jewish educational content

-- creating programs for participants aged 18 and older, traveling alone, including accommodation sites, ongoing cultural activities, and educational modules such as short-term trips or courses

-- subsidizing selected programs and/or population groups to test impact of subsidies on participation

-- developing high-level short-term university programs, with rigorous admission requirements, to introduce Israel's finest academic resources to talented participants.

-- reviewing the place of kibbutzim in Israel programs We believe that the kibbutzim have the potential to play a renewed and perhaps different role in Israel programs. They contain the necessary human and physical resources to do so -- as well as continuing to attract the interest of potential participants.

-- establishing 'home' centers in Israel for participants from different countries.

Crucial to all approaches to improving Israel programs is offering of programs with educational content of the highest quality. Personnel is central to achieving this. We suggest, as one example of upgrading personnel:

- * Developing experimental staff-training programs for counselors to short-term programs. Training of this kind will also benefit existing programs.

To guide the entire enterprise, we suggest:

- * The creation of a professional advisory board for programs, to establish program norms, and assist in planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs.

- * Setting up of a professional advisory group to help redirect marketing focuses, and expand marketing outreach to the populations identified as 'interested.'

We are happy to report that those who will undertake implementation of these findings will have at their disposal a large body of information, to help them make informed choices. The information, as noted earlier, includes:

1. A data-base of the content, participants, funding, recruitment and obstacles to existing Israel programs.
2. Profiles of a cross-section of the populations who come on Israel programs.
3. A market study, profiling potential Israel program participants.
4. Profiles of a number of Israel visitors who do not join educational programs.
5. An analysis of the resources, curricula, personnel and budgets of existing Israel programs.
6. Reports on accommodations, personnel, site-visits, budget analyses and funding of existing Israel programs.
7. A computerized data-base of 1985 Israel education programs.

Decisions on future action concerning Israel programs may build on this documentation.