Proposal Paper: Developing a National Policy to Foster Adult Learning in Israel

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Introduction

This policy paper entitled Promoting Adult Learning in Israeli Society is presented to increase Israel's chances of successful coping with the 21st century challenges that define Israel's social situation and to influence its chance to prosper today and in the future.

The issues and challenges on the national agenda– competing in the global world, restoring growth and development, poverty reduction, socio-financial inequality minimization and solidarity enhancement– were defined and analyzed by professionals and public figures in many different documents. The conclusion that is consistently reached emphasizes the necessity of ongoing study throughout the adult years, in order to fill voids and remain updated.

Despite the increasing interest in ongoing learning and the importance of learning in Jewish tradition, research indicates that only 36% of adults in Israel are engaged in structured learning. This percentage is much lower than in other countries. For example, 45% of adults in Latvia participate in formal learning programs. 50% of US adults study and the percentage of studying adults in Sweden is almost double the percentage in Israel - estimated at 66%!

Learning habits vary significantly among segments of Israeli society. There is a consistent pattern: people belonging to sectors that could benefit most from adult education are the ones who are the least likely to study. This is particularly true of low-income families, the uneducated and the Arab population.

Adult learning is not high among Israel's national priorities. The Israel Ministry of Education's Division of Adult Education, responsible for most of the government funding in this area, suffered budget cuts of almost 50% over the past three years.

Based on analysis of world-wide trends and reviews of methods
implemented by developed countries, this document recommends developing an Israeli lifelong learning policy. This policy will be based on the ideal of Fostering Adult Learning in Israeli Society, and will focus on expanding the infrastructure for developing Israel's human, social, cultural and economic capital.

This policy strives to make Israel a learning community, allowing all of its members, without exception, to advance and learn throughout their lives in order to improve their quality of life and to promote Israel's achievements in the global era.

To this end, an inclusive national policy is needed to define and connect individual and community needs, abilities and desires. This policy will promote public awareness; develop a learning culture that is reflected in all areas of life, make education accessible to all parts of the population, increase its availability and make it an integral part of the lives of individuals, families, communities and organizations.

This document presents a list of priorities and plans of action to achieve this important goal.

**Why is lifelong learning necessary?**

**General**

The 21st century presents the State of Israel with three significant challenges. Israel's ability to overcome these challenges will determine the survival of the state, society and individual:

**The need to adapt to a changing technological environment.** Individuals must be able to adapt to an environment that affects them on different levels - their careers, income levels, methods of communication and ability to choose wisely from the ever-growing abundance of options.

**Protecting Israel's comparative advantage** – its human capital. With its lack of natural resources, Israel's main advantage in its human capital. This capital is at risk, as indicated by deteriorating school grades.
on the one hand, and the lack of updated education later in life, on the other.

**Enhancing social cohesion.** Cohesion of Israeli society is at risk today as a result of two negative economic trends: the magnitude of poverty and increasing inequality. Research shows that the risk of poverty increases as levels of education decline.

The obvious conclusion is that if school and/or university education was once a sufficient solution for the individual, the society and the state, there is now an ever-increasing need for continued lifelong learning – both formal and informal. This learning style develops skills needed to adapt to a changing environment; it is a method of supplementing and remedying formal education and a tool for minimizing economic inequality.

The challenges and conclusion will now be presented in detail.

**Challenges**

**Life in the 21st century – adapting to a changing environment**

The technological world has undergone immense changes in the past few decades, resulting in unprecedented changes to the economy, social structure, employment patterns, inter-personal relationships and the behavior of those exposed to these changes.

Operating every-day technology, from operating home electronic equipment to communication with the outside world, requires constant acquisition of new skills. These skills include activating computerized technology; orientation and navigation skills to access information, organize it and estimate its value and familiarity with interactive means of communication.

Another skill that must be developed is critical observation – a necessity for choosing wisely from the abundance of options that
overwhelms the individual in the technological age.

Technology has also completely changed the world of employment: there is a clear tendency towards multiple business specialties alongside a shrinking life expectancy of each profession. The ability to maintain and develop a career is based on the ability to always remain updated. An analysis done by the Bank of Israel showed that these processes have had a significant influence on the Israeli market over the past years and are the main cause of dropping employment rates among men, especially the less educated ones. The Interdisciplinary Center for Technology Analysis and Forecasting (ICTAF) predicts that the uneducated population will have difficulty finding work in the future.

It has also been claimed that Israel has developed a dual economy. On one hand, it boasts a modern economy, a wealth of knowledge, uses advanced technology and is highly productive, while on the other hand, is comprised of traditional production fields and services which have not adapted to the new-world circumstances and therefore suffer low productivity and minimal growth.

The conclusion repeatedly reached by researchers is that survival in the global era of ever-changing technology requires continuous learning. This should not be restricted to employment-oriented subjects

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1 Alvin Toffler, 1990, Powershift, Bantam Books
2 Flug, Karnit, 2004, Poverty and Employment Policies: What has changed (and what still has to be done)? Jerusalem, Bank of Israel, Research Department, (Hebrew Only)
3 The Interdisciplinary Center for Technology Analysis and Forecasting, 2003. Significant trends in education and learning in an era of changing employment structures in the economy to promote employment for all. Tel-Aviv, Tel-Aviv University, page 26, (Hebrew Only)
but should focus on more general topics as well. Information will then become more accessible, enabling better data processing and selection, more efficient categorization and better operational decision-making. Non-cognitive training should also be offered to develop basic skills such as effective communication and knowledge management; personal skills such as developing the ability to adapt to changing situations or encouraging innovation; and social skills such as interpersonal communication and the ability to work as part of a team.

*Israel's comparative advantage – preserving human capital*

Israel lacks natural resources that can be used as sources of growth. Since its establishment, the State of Israel has depended on its main resource and its comparative advantage over other countries – its human capital, defined as the combined knowledge, skills, abilities and characteristics that enable people to achieve personal, social and economic wellbeing. This capital is what strengthens the foundations of Israel's existence.

Human capital is developed and acquired through study and education: formal education for children and adults provided in different types of school settings; adult education programs offered by a variety of institutions which focus on knowledge acquisition and updating existing skills; professional training and different types of enrichment programs (including academic ones).

There has been growing awareness over the past years of the need for ongoing education as a basis for human capital preservation, as proven by several points:

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1. The contribution of childhood education has diminished. There is proof that the contribution and status of childhood education is declining. The education system is geared mostly towards graduating with a diploma and does not provide adequate solutions for the 50% of the students who are unable to pass their matriculation exams, or cannot get high enough grades to make them eligible for academic studies. It has been claimed that "today's students are tomorrow unemployed". This situation is a real, immediate threat to all areas of life. The strategic plan entitled "Israel, 2028" written by a public commission headed by Eli Hurvitz and David Brodet, claimed that continuing education deterioration can lead to elimination of Israel's comparative advantage.

2. Decline in the significance of childhood education. Today it is clear that knowledge acquisition in childhood does not guarantee that skills required by adults will be easily obtained, unless they continue to study throughout their lives.

3. Strengthening adult education directly contributes to strengthening childhood education. Research shows that children of families with ingrained educational values, even if they are poor, will find their way to academic studies. Children from families that do not value or promote education will remain behind both academically and

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7 Such as PISA scores – a measure introduced by the OECD which tests students over age 15 in 50 different countries on science, reading skills and mathematics; in 2006, the last time this measure was used, Israel's scores were among the ten lowest of all countries tested; http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

8 The Interdisciplinary Center for Technology Analysis and Forecasting, 2003. Significant trends in education and learning in an era of changing employment structures in the economy to promote employment for all. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, page 17 (Hebrew Only)

financially. It has also been shown that there is a direct correlation between parents' education and their children's chances of passing their matriculation exams and being accepted to college (see tables in appendix 1). The result is that multi-generation exclusion of certain socio-economic groups can perpetuate for many years is self-perpetuating.

What we have shown so far indicates the need to change our approach: the state must invest in education over the course of its citizens' entire lifespan and not stop after they graduate or drop out of school. This approach is the only way to preserve the comparative advantage of Israel's human capital.

**Social Empowerment**

Socio-economic inequality has become more severe, causing Israel's social strength and unity to weaken over the past years. Two prominent issues were described in detail in a political-economic document presented to the Prime Minister\(^\text{10}\).

1. **Severe and ongoing poverty.** According to the authors, this situation does not only reflect poorly on the state of Israel but also threatens its economy's continued growth. They estimate that poverty will cause a third of the young employees who join the workforce in the next 5-10 years to lack basic education and suffer health problems. They will lack the skills needed to meet their full productive potential.

2. **Growing inequality.** The level of inequality in Israel as measured by the Gini coefficient is one of the highest of all OECD countries. This inequality threatens social cohesion and all that is derived from it – from increasing criminal activity to the lack of motivation to join

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\(^{10}\) Israeli National Economic Council, 2007. Israel's socio-economic agenda. Jerusalem, Prime Minister's Office
security forces. The authors report that many empirical studies have shown that growing inequality can be attributed first and foremost to the unequal distribution of knowledge, education and employment skills.

This means that poverty and inequality are directly linked to education. Lack of education is a fundamental cause of unemployment\(^\text{11}\) and salary levels are derived from education levels\(^\text{12}\). Growth in Israel is education-oriented, meaning that when the economy prospers, the educated prosper as well, while the relative state of the uneducated declines\(^\text{13}\).


\(^{13}\) Reut Institute, 2007. Economic Resilience Index for Evaluating Poverty in Israel
Britain, as an example

In 1998, the government published the Green Paper which described a new policy called The Learning Age. Some of the following rules and regulations derived from this document were:

- In the current era, preparing infrastructure for learning and education throughout the course of life is crucial to developing human insight and vision.
- Each citizen must have the right to create and to learn. People should be the highest priority and they should be able to study in the framework of their choice.
- The state must remove barriers in the path of lifelong study by creating accessible study programs that are available all week long and throughout the year, all meeting the highest standards required of education and training.
- Education should be encouraged by offering subsidized adult programs, subsidizing programs for children while their parents are in school and creating a personal account for each citizen in which citizens and the government invests in order to form a financial basis for lifelong education.
- Partnerships should be formed between governments and employers to create educational programs for employees' benefit.
- Opportunities should be created to study within the community, defined by communal and family needs.
Authors of the Israel 2028 strategic plan claim\textsuperscript{14} that perpetuating educational gaps and the widespread tendency to remain outside the workforce will deepen and increase poverty, leading to social polarization and increasing the financial burden on the large middle class. This may cause citizens whose contribution is crucial to the economy's growth and to the state's social strength, to immigrate to other countries.

We must not forget that education plays a key role in strengthening and developing social capital. The state must provide opportunities for all of its citizens to expand and complete their education. The philosopher John Dewey wrote that social capital is comprised of the personal capital of each individual which is seemingly amassed at the center of the humanity. Each individual can take what he needs from the accumulated contributions. Humanity's great task is to increase human wealth as much as possible through education and learning for all people, of all ages.

\textit{Conclusions}

The key to Israel's success and that of its society and citizens is significant and methodical investment in continuous education. Israel must not stop investing when its citizens graduate from school but rather continue throughout their lives. The initial investment should be devoted to populations that are usually excluded from the workforce and aim to give all people the opportunity to acquire the skills and tools that best serve their aspirations and needs. This investment must also help the state provide emerging employment needs.

\textsuperscript{14} Public commission directed by Eli Hurvitz and David Brodet, 2008. \textit{Israel 2028 - Vision & Strategy for Economy and Society in a Global World}, page 14
Adult Education in Israel - Is a Policy Needed?

Policy and Budgeting

In Jewish tradition, adult education has always been considered a continuous process of the highest importance\textsuperscript{15}. This principle is implemented with different methods and in different settings\textsuperscript{16}. The roots of contemporary adult educational activity in Israel are attributed to Berl Katznelson of the second Aliyah in the early 20th century. Katznelson considered the renewal of the Hebrew language and culture to be the greatest achievement of modern Hebrew culture. Learning how to read and write the Hebrew language became a national priority, resulting in the establishment of adult education programs at different periods of time and by names that changed over the years, including the "ignorance elimination"\textsuperscript{17} project of the 1960s and 1970s and "literacy acquisition" as it is known today.

Before the establishment of the State of Israel, adult education programs were held in different settings, with pre-determined goals and for limited periods of time. These programs were improved on after the state was established and were operated by different government offices and public organizations, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, Social Services, Ministry of Absorption, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, universities and colleges, the State Comptroller, Ministry of Public Diplomacy, the Association

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{15} Kirmayer, Paul and Koren, Magi, 1999, Social Commitment to Adult Education, Jerusalem, Ministry of Education. [Hebrew]
\item\textsuperscript{16} Tokatli, Rachel, 2004. Lifelong Learning, Jerusalem, Ministry of Education. [Hebrew]
\item\textsuperscript{17} Mandel Institute, 2006. Proposed outline for Ministry of Education's policy for Life Long Learning – position paper, page 16. [Hebrew]
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
for the Promotion of Education, Labor Unions, local municipalities, the Kibbutz Movement, IDF, community centers, NGOs and museums.

Despite the growing value attributed to continuous study in different parts of the world over the past years, the topic seems to be declining in importance among Israel's priorities. The Division of Adult Education in the Israel Ministry of Education is largely responsible for adult learning. The Division that initiates and funds government educational activities has seen its budget shrink significantly over the last few years. In 2005, the Division's budget was 161 million shekels, in 2006 it was reduced to 146 million shekels, in 2007 to 125 million shekels and in 2008 the allocated budget was only 87 million shekels. Over the course of three years, almost half of the adult education budget was cut.

**Learning in Israel**

The Israel Ministry of Education and the Central Bureau of Statistics report that between 2006-2007 no more than half a million Israelis participated in government-organized study programs (funded by the Ministries of Education, Industry, Trade and Labor as well as in-service training, universities and seminars) totaling only ten percent of Israel's adult population.

The Israel Adult Education Association ordered a MarketWatch survey to evaluate the situation today and to include people in the survey who learn in non-government funded frameworks. The survey, in which 903 participants representing the Israeli population aged 18 and above were

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20 Information taken from Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and Tokatli's report; in case of contradictory data, CBS results were used.
questioned, found that 36% of Israeli adults take part in learning programs, including academic programs, skill training, courses and lectures on general topics and study groups with friends.

This rate is much lower than the average rates in Europe and the United States, which are typically 44%-66% (see chart 1 below)

![Chart 1: Percentage of Adults in Learning Programs - An International Comparison](chart.png)

In other words, it is the culture that has traditionally valued study that shows a very low percentage of those involved in study today: both compared to other countries and compared to ideal 100% involvement.

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21 The precise question was: Over the past three months, did you participate in sessions in one of the following settings, which met for 12 hours or more, from which you acquired knowledge? 1) professional or in-service training; 2) academic courses; 3) an activity, course or lecture series on either health, culture, family or knowledge; 4) other group learning activities; 5) a group of friends who learn a specific topic together such as traditional or religious studies; 6) I did not attend any such activity. The question was asked as part of series of Omnibus surveys run in February, 2009: Omnibus in the general population including 502 participants aged 18 and over who are a representative sample of Israel's adult Jewish population; Omnibus in the Arab population including 401 participants aged 18 and over who are a representative sample of the adult Arab population; the total results for Israel are based on the sum of findings in both populations while taking their size into account.
Percentage of participants in study programs

Studies show that existing adult education programs in Israel are not accessible to all, are insufficiently varied and often do not cater to the communities they are supposed to serve. An analysis done by Planning and Budgeting committee, for instance, showed that significantly fewer residents of peripheral regions and Arab citizens take part in the higher education system than residents of cities in central Israel. The report proved, though, that focused activity can help advance these citizens, for example opening pre-academic preparatory programs and changing the geographical distribution of educational institutes.

The study done by MarketWatch reinforces these findings: weaker sectors of the population, people who are less educated, those who have lower incomes and Arab citizens, show lower participation rates in learning programs (see chart 2 below).

![Chart 2: Percentage of Adults in Learning Programs - By Sectors](chart2.png)

Source: Israel + MarketWatch Survey, 2009

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22 Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), report number 31/32 for 2004-2005
In order words, the weaker populations, who could benefit from continued education more than others, are those that participate in educational programs less frequently, thus retaining their lower place in society.

Conclusion

Our assumption is that there are two main reasons for the low number of Israeli students: lack of awareness amongst the general population and decision makers and lack of significant government funding, legislation and incentives.

As a result, the next chapter will present guidelines for promoting a policy to encourage Israelis to study. These guidelines are based on the "lifelong learning" approach, creating a comprehensive foundation of formal lifelong study within all populations, from the strongest to the weakest.

This policy does not suggest a single magical solution to the challenges that the Israeli economy and society are faced with. Implementing this policy is a fundamental basis for efficiently and successfully applying the many possible ways to address the challenges facing Israeli society.

"Torah should always be learned diligently, so you will be able to fulfill its commands. When you arise from your learning reflect carefully on what you have studied, in order to see what in it that you can be put into practice" (Nachmanides, Letter to his son) [...] the easiest and noblest way is not to be crushing others, but to be improving yourselves. (Plato, Apology)

Guidelines for Promoting Study in Israeli Society

Vision

Israeli society will be a learning one, allowing all of its citizens, with no exceptions, to advance and study throughout their lives, for their own personal development and to improve their quality of life. This will also help promote Israel's achievements in the global era.

Rationale

Learning is a natural human right: The questions that we must ask are not how to define the right to learn and who has the right to learn, but rather what a person can become and what does that person want to be. The answer to these questions lies in education. Learning is a natural human tendency. Humans naturally accumulate knowledge and create information. Knowledge accumulation and creation is exactly the process of learning.

The essence of learning: Learning is the personal process of acquiring ownership of knowledge which will be used to advance and actualize a person's human potential in areas such as awareness, emotion, technology and behavior.

The importance of learning: Learning can refine and enhance a person's life. It broadens horizons, eases restraining boundaries and increases feelings of self-fulfillment. The more people study, the more control they have over their future and their fate. Education enables people to take responsibility for their lives and for other members of society.

Learning duration: Study and education are fundamental characteristics of human life. People constantly learn from their own experiences and the experiences of others throughout their entire lives. They give meaning to these experiences; use them to form their own
insights and develop abilities and skills which will help them overcome life's challenges. These processes occur throughout people's lives.

**The learning process:** Learning is an ongoing process. It occurs in different forms and settings – formal and institutionalized or casual and informal.

**Responsibility for learning:** Understanding the importance of knowledge ownership is crucial, as it is the key to coping with the tasks that our individual lives and today's society demand of us. It is a source of inspiration for an approach that demands human rights. It is the basis for respecting cultural pluralism and encouraging integrative multi-cultural activity. This awareness presents a personal challenge alongside national social challenges. The state must utilize all of the systems at its disposal to confront these challenges, take responsibility and lead a comprehensive, integrated initiative to encourage people to incorporate study into their everyday lives and promote a learning society.

**Guidelines**

Lifelong Learning is an approach based on research and facts which show that in the 21st century, progress and advancement are not possible without learning. It is crucial to coping with new challenges presented by a changing environment – both for the individual and society. The European Commission defines learning as an umbrella which includes all of the "all-purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence".

This approach is becoming widely popular in Western countries. The importance attributed to learning has been stated by international researchers. European Commission. 2000. Life Long Learning Memorandum. Brussels: European Commission.
committees such as the EU’s Lisbon Treaty\textsuperscript{25}. It is anchored in the UNESCO Declaration of 1997\textsuperscript{26}, among others and in the UN-defined Literacy Decade of 2003-2012: Literacy – Education for all.

Lifelong learning is based on values of morality, democracy and the individual's rights to the equal opportunity to develop and advance in life, the right for socio-economic mobility and improved quality of life. These are the rights of every human – regardless of nationality, religion, race, gender, age, marital status or financial state - and all people are entitled to act upon these rights at the time and under the circumstances that best serve their needs.

Lifelong learning is based on the following values:

- Objective. The goal of lifelong learning is for all individuals to realize their potential throughout their lives, with an emphasis on

\begin{quote}
\textbf{UNESCO Declaration - 1997}

\textit{Recognition of the right to education and the right to learn throughout life is more than ever a necessity; it is the right to read and write, the right to question and analyze, the right to have access to resources, and to develop and practice individual and collective skills and competences.}

(Full declaration quoted in appendix 2)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{UN Charter - 2001}

\textit{Urging Member States, in close partnership with international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to promote the right to education for all and to create conditions for all for learning throughout life.}

(Full declaration quoted in appendix 3)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25} 2000

\textsuperscript{26} Declaration made before the Fifth International Conference for Adult Education, Hamburg, 1997
successfully navigating changing situations. On a personal level, realizing potential is translated into feelings of self-capability which guarantees independence and the ability to act. This is also of great socio-economic importance: when people realize their potential, they feel more connected to society and are more willing to become involved and to contribute as their dependency on society's support lessens.

• Equality and accessibility. Establishing learning programs in the student's geographical proximity; allowing easy access to high-quality information and providing guidance and counseling to choose the best learning options for all ages.

• The philosophy of learning. Learning is an all-inclusive process based on knowledge acquisition, skill development, gaining experience and producing new content. This approach covers a wide range of study methods: formal and informal study, teacher-directed learning, student-directed learning, peer study and group study. All of the above are combined with skills acquired through everyday experiences and the ability to create new tools suited to the individual's needs and aspirations, while emphasizing dialog-based learning methods alternated with use of the knowledge that is inspired by the outside environment.

• The student above all. All of the content and the learning frameworks must be suited to the students' needs, abilities and desires. Therefore, the content, approaches and methods will be very must be varied. They must include functional content focused on improving professional skills and also on acquiring life skills such as parenting, health and consumerism.

• Standardization, research and compensation. An organized, agreed-upon system of standardization, appraisal indexes and compensation will guarantee that the program meets its goals.
Goals and Objectives

Strategic Objectives

The main objective is to establish a national policy that provides a learning environment which will help 21st century Israel become an educated and learning society, one that uses its local resources and develops new ones to remove obstacles in the path of study. This policy will enrich learning and education and focus the process lifelong creativity to improve Israel's citizens' quality of life as part of an ongoing attempt to promote personal growth.

To achieve these goals it is necessary to:

• Place lifelong learning and education, and developing human capital at the top of the list of national priorities and strive to implement these values;
• Promote government commitment, institutional legislation, professional standardization and budgeting that encourages lifelong learning;
• Ensure that education is available and accessible to all citizens, regardless of age, gender, race, nationality, language, financial state, abilities and limitations.

Operative Goals

Required activities in order of their priority:
1. Develop life skills in a changing environment
2. Learn how to navigate the workforce and career advancement possibilities
3. Reduce socio-economic and educational inequality
4. Strengthen populations with special needs
5. Develop and increase civil involvement
6. Strengthen the family unit and community solidarity
7. Encourage productive use of leisure time
The goals in detail:

1. **Develop life skills in a changing environment.** The modern era has brought on dramatic changes to people's life-patterns, the greatest change being the formation of a knowledgeable society. We must constantly adjust to social and technological changes. An obvious example is computerization and the internet which influence many aspects of our lives: employment, society, leisure, health. The proposed policy makes education available and accessible to all of Israel's citizens, providing basic tools and skills necessary for thought and action, for critical consumerism and for communication and creation abilities which will help them adapt to these frequent changes, while constantly improving their quality of life.

2. **Learn how to navigate the workforce and career advancement possibilities.** The workforce has undergone significant changes, including the types and scopes of employment options, the increase in the number of years that people are employed, continuously changing job descriptions and the methods used to do the job. In Israel, there is a correlation between education and income, and minimal formal education prevents people from entering certain professions and/or limits their promotion opportunities. The proposed policy requires examining the needs of the business world, both current and future, in different regions and different cities in order to plan and increase the supply of general and professional training programs which meet the market's demand and help employees and employers cope with these ongoing changes.

3. **Reduce socio-economic and educational inequality.** Israeli society suffers from significant financial and educational gaps between different populations. Alongside the wealthy whose income is estimated at hundreds of thousands of shekels per month, 35% of employed women earn less than minimum wage. In addition, despite
having the highest ratio of doctorate degree holders to inhabitants, there are still 250,000 illiterate people in Israel and 800,000 with minimal education. Changing these statistics is impossible without government intervention. The proposed policy is expected to provide infrastructure for those who need it to acquire education and training (a basic education program), specifically women and ethnic minorities. This program will define the curriculum and provide the means needed to make it accessible. This will make it possible for those who are motivated, to change their socio-economic situation and indirectly improve the level of their children's education.

4. **Strengthen populations with special needs.** Populations with special needs, such as new and veteran immigrants, work migrants, the elderly, physically disabled, prisoners, drug abusers and mentally handicapped – all suffer a lack of access to education, employment and income. Society rejects them and pushes them to the sidelines. The proposed policy must promote detailed plans for each and every population according to its needs and encourage these people to join study programs to strengthen their own confidence in their power and abilities and steer them from the sidelines to more central roles in society.

5. **Develop and increase civil involvement.** Civil involvement is an acquired trait based on a history of activism and of establishing Israel as a democratic society. Over the past years, there has been a decline in Israel's citizens' general level of involvement which is expressed, among other things, by the low rate of participation in elections. On the other hand, there are increasing patterns of a new type of involvement based on dependency on civil society, which currently characterizes certain sectors. The proposed policy must provide citizens with the tools needed to improve their knowledge and increase their influence on current events to make them a more
significant part of the public debates and decision making processes that affect their lives.

6. **Strengthen the family unit and community solidarity.** The family unit and community are undergoing many changes. It is clear that there is no alternative to these two fundamental structures, therefore it is crucial to strengthen the family unit, in all of its forms, and empower intra-community relationships, as well as develop family and community steadfastness. This is achieved by instilling knowledge, developing life skills and providing the tools needed to manage family life and to guarantee appropriate, relevant and suited familial and parental functionality.

7. Encourage productive use of leisure time. In Western society, the amount of "free" time at the individual's disposal has grown. This number is expected to continue growing as life expectancy increases and the number of work hours decreases. Recreational activities are not dictated by work, family or community commitments, but are personal choices which aim to achieve different goals. The "productive leisure time" approach believes that it is best for individuals to use their free time for study focused on their own development and enrichment as well as their contribution to society. Today, many groups cannot use their free time for productive purposes due to a lack of supply or lack of resources. The proposed policy must lead a just and equal distribution of recreational options. Additionally, the policy will strengthen and promote the role of adult educators.

1. Define adult education as a specialized area of expertise. Developing a learning society is based on separating formal education from age 3 to 18, from adult learning which is an academic and professional field in itself, known as andragogy, which is becoming increasing popular across the world. This is
a different field of knowledge requiring different activities and
different skills than child education and requires study, expertise
and specialization. Adult educators receive unique training
to plan and implement unique, flexible learning programs for
adult students, suited to adult needs. Adult education in Israel
has not yet received professional and academic recognition;
therefore there are no training programs or significant research
in this field. This situation results in a lack of quality control of
the existing programs and official professional administrators
have no real influence on the quality of the programs that are
offered. The proposed policy must integrate adult education
as a recognized field in academic institutions. A Center for
Adult Education and Learning must be established which will
coordinate all of the information, encourage advertising and
carry out research. It will evaluate and control different projects
and develop international relationships with organizations
responsible for adult education throughout the world.

2. Teaching methods. Dialogue-oriented teaching methods
will be used: they must be equal, symmetric, respectful and
conversational. An equal teacher-student relationship must
be formed. Teachers must not dictate the material, but rather
encourage student creativity and self-expression. These
relationships will be a model of acceptance, tolerance, multi-
cultural existence and respect for others.

**Measures**

The proposed policy's success will be determined by three key measures:
1. Inputs: the total amount of financial investment in funding education
   for adults aged 18 and above, as a percentage of the GNP;
2. Participation: percentage of adults aged 18 and above who participate in learning programs consisting of at least 100 academic hours over the course of a year;

3. Output: rising percentage of adults aged 18 and above who:
   - are literate
   - have basic literacy skills
   - have professional certification and/or an academic degree

These measures will be broken down into detailed sub-groups. In addition, secondary measures will be defined per population.

**Content and Programs**

The policy's content is derived from its goals and must be suited to different audiences. This is certainly true for the content of professional skill training courses which are derived from the changes needs of the market, as well as enrichment and self-development courses which are derived from the audiences' current lifestyles and expectations. In other words, specific audiences will be offered suitable and relevant courses at specific times.

The following section lists the topics that should be the fundamental ones. The list is based on the immediate needs of Israeli society, a society abundant with a variety of cultures, socio-economic gaps and tension, combined with the needs defined by UNESCO and the European Commission. These topics are divided into three different groups.

1. Basic literacy – passport for life. Basic literacy is the individual's ability to understand and utilize written material in everyday life – at work, at home, in school and in the community, to meet aspirations and develop skills and knowledge. The ability to cope with challenges presented by the individual's personal life and by society is completely dependent on his literacy skills. The topics listed below are geared towards the weaker sectors of society and
are called "coping skills". They include:

- Reading, writing and speaking Hebrew
- Basic arithmetic
- Understanding basic economic, political and social terms
- Basic technological skills such as operating a computer, connecting to the internet and using email.

These topics must be taught while strengthening self-confidence and encouraging students to use the skills that they acquire.

2. Advanced Qualifications. Advanced qualifications guarantee that the individual successfully copes with life's complex tasks. To achieve this, cognitive and non-cognitive measures must be used. For example, people must have not only the ability to speak but have crisis management skills as well. The following subjects should be taught to those who already have basic literacy skills:

- Social and communication skills to cope with social situations such as forming relationships, team management and negotiating;
- Family-related skills such as raising children and grandchildren, resolving conflicts and coping with old age in the family;
- Economic and social initiatives such as how to advance at work and how to start a small business;
- Reading, writing and speaking English, as well as Hebrew for Arabs and Arabic for Jews;
- Advanced technological skills such as programming and website design.

3. Moral and nationalist topics. These aim to build and strengthen solidarity between individuals and the ability to identify with society. Unlike the previous lists, these topics are not taught as separate
programs but come up indirectly in all of the above mentioned programs. At the initial stage, promoting multi-cultural values and the ability to accept others is recommended, in order to help Israeli society become a more tolerant one.

**Providing Education**

The learning process should implement the principles of adult education, according to the program's goals:

- **Subjectivity**: The student is the most central and most significant part of the process, which should therefore focus on addressing the student's needs, abilities and desires;
- **The ability and the right to choose**: Adult students choose their preferred learning processes.
- **Relevancy**: individuals study sources, issues and topics that they are interested in and that they deem relevant to the challenges that their lives present.
- **Accessibility and availability**: Learning programs must be accessible and available and must suit the student's resources (location, time, budget).

Based on these principles, the following crucial conditions for adult education have been defined:

1. **Pre-learning services**:
   - Learning ability and level assessment
   - Counseling regarding different learning options and programs
   - Educational guidance throughout the course of the program to maintain learning and support the student.
2. Maintaining a system that initiates and promotes learning:
   • Run local or organizational learning centers
   • Provide a rich variety of content and learning programs
   • Offer a variety of learning programs and styles – frontal, group, distance learning, lectures, discussion groups, symposiums and peer-learning
   • Train guidance staffs specializing in adult education
   • Run learning processes based on dialogue and equality

3. Develop a welcoming, accessible and inviting system:
   • Entitle basic literacy acquisition
   • Subsidize education for all adults
   • Allocate work hours for learning

Appendix 1: Correlation between parents' education and their children's success

National Assessment Test Results, 2004 (fifth grade), per mother's education, according to statistical year 2007 - average grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic - Arab Education</th>
<th>Hebrew - Jewish Education</th>
<th>Years of mother's schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab education</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>Up to 8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>12 – 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>15 – 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>16+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variance range of the mother's years of schooling is the largest, compared to other variables, indicating that the mother's education is the most influential parameter.
National Assessment Test Results, 2004 (eighth grade), based on mother's education, according to statistical year 2007 - average grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic - Arab Education</th>
<th>Hebrew - Jewish Education</th>
<th>Years of mother's schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab education</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>Up to 8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Education</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>12 – 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of mother's schooling</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>15 – 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>16+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variance range of the mother's years of schooling is the largest, compared to other variables, indicating that the mother's education is the most influential parameter.

Percentage of high school graduates who take matriculation exams, are eligible for matriculation certificates and pass university entrance exams – 2005, per parents' education (based on data provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of mother's schooling</th>
<th>Total number of 12th grade students</th>
<th>Percentage of students taking exams</th>
<th>Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate</th>
<th>Met university acceptance requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>3,033</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>34,716</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>15,695</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>13,149</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of father's schooling</td>
<td>Total number of 12th grade students</td>
<td>Percentage of students taking exams</td>
<td>Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate</td>
<td>Met university acceptance requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>3,684</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>30,395</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>12,667</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>16,035</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arab Sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of mother's schooling</th>
<th>Total number of 12th grade students</th>
<th>Percentage of students taking exams</th>
<th>Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate</th>
<th>Met university acceptance requirements</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>4,561</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>5,701</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of father's schooling</th>
<th>Total number of 12th grade students</th>
<th>Percentage of students taking exams</th>
<th>Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate</th>
<th>Met university acceptance requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>9,154</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>6,980</td>
<td>91.05%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>