Lifelong Learning: Right and Benefit, Duty and Responsibility

Rina Cohen

Preface: Forming a Policy of a Crucial Subject

The purpose of this article is to present the issue of 'lifelong learning' to public discussion, from the aspects of right and duty and the benefit and the responsibility; and to promote progression towards a national policy in this field. In the early 21st century, in the era of information and knowledge, the all encompassing definition of 'lifelong learning' seems to be a central motif in the micro level of the lives of the individual and the citizens, and in the macro level of the existence of the state and society.

The UNESCO report on education in the dawn of the 21st century, states that 'the concept of lifelong learning seems to be one of the key elements to the 21st century…it provides solutions for the challenges set by the rapidly changing world' (Delrs, p.21). On the basis of this concept, the report states that 'the committee is adamant in its position that education is a public product that must be accessible to all (p.27). On this matter, the committee points out that the role of the public authorities is that: 'they must set policy guidelines…they are the ones who must outline the path, mold the foundations of the system, propel its main resources towards this aim, and adjust the system to the current reality…all the choices in any of the cases will be done on the basis of equal

Rina Cohen is the former head of the Parents' Division in SHEFI (Educational Psychology Services), the Ministry of Education. She was also the chairwoman of the 'Israel: A Learning Society- Suggestions for a National Policy' think tank.
opportunity'. It is safe to say that the vital condition for the existence of 'lifelong learning' is a national policy that guides it and allows it to exist. This is the main focus of the article.

Lifelong learning is the most up-to-date, all encompassing, and all inclusive term for the overall forms of learning, from four main aspects:

- **Generalization-** It includes all learners- children, adults and the elderly.
- **Implementation-** Learning during and throughout one's entire life.
- **Variety-** Contains all the contents and subjects existing in all of humanity's vast learnable and teachable pool of knowledge and wisdom.
- **Responsibility-** This term contains the concepts of the rights, the duties, and the commitments of the state, the socio-economic systems, the communities, the families and the individual with regards to learning.

It might therefore be said that lifelong learning is a term encompassing all the issues of education and learning, and all the forms and methods of learning for all learners, with no restriction and conditions.

Lifelong learning is not just an action tool, but it a world view. 'Education should now be perceived as a new approach to problems. As part of this approach, education constitutes both an element of development and one of its crucial goals, and does not serve merely as one of the many tools of achieving it' (Delors, p.65). As such, 'lifelong learning' defines learning as a central means for personal, economic, social and cultural development. It is recognized as crucial to coping with life's missions in the current reality, and is perceived as enabling people to control their destiny, to contribute to society and to prepare for the challenges of the future. 'Learning is meant to enable people to become aware of themselves and their environment and to fulfill a social role at work and in the community as a whole. Awareness, the practical
knowledge, the knowledge of how to coexist with other people and life skills, are the four elements connected with each other and with the reality of life (p.83). The initial idea of lifelong learning is the solution for 'relying on one's-self'- The new and important demand of a rapidly changing society.

This perception views learning as the basic and crucial essence of the existence and conduct of individuals, societies and states. In a democratic society, such a central and all encompassing position of lifelong learning is essential and relevant to each person, citizen, society and state; and it raises questions from the field of rights and duties, and the field of benefit and responsibility. These questions deal with the relations between citizen and state from two central aspects: law and justice; economy and benefit.

The gap between the perception of the vitality of lifelong learning for life in the current reality on one hand, and the very minimal actual existence of it in the Israeli society on the other, indicates the existence of a social and economic problem, which is fundamental and critical for society as a whole and for the citizen in it. In order to cope with a critical and fundamental problem in the individual and social spheres, a national policy is required, as stated in the committee's document; to set priorities, outline the path, and guide the methods of operation and the allocation of resources. Such policy still doesn't exist in the State of Israel.

To promote a national policy on the issue of lifelong learning, the Adult Education Association and the Ministry of Education's Division of Adult Education have come together to form a 'proposition for a national policy of lifelong learning- a document for discussion'. The purpose of the document was to promote the vision of 'Israel as a learning society' and the discussion on this important issue. In an open, multicultural, democratic society, public discussion is a main means of putting things on the national agenda and promoting civic-democratic development.
Therefore, a public discussion is required on the issue of the status, the process of operation, and the means of implementation of lifelong learning. The aim of this article is to add another layer to the presentation of the issue of lifelong learning; to emphasize the need for a national policy in order to implement the issue within the national, social and personal agenda; and to promote a national discussion on this very important issue.

It must be said that there has been an educational discussion on the issue of lifelong learning for over two decades, and those participating in it are mainly professionals from the field, most of whom professionals from the field of education and learning. Therefore, it hardly transcends the boundaries of the field of education and doesn't reach the wider public; giving it a very small chance of succeeding to arouse any public interest and awareness, without which the desired change cannot occur.

To promote public discussion and place the issue on the educational agenda (and later even on the national agenda), several basic documents have been written and formulized over the last few decades; some of which deal directly with the importance, significance and responsibility for the implementation of lifelong learning, while others touch upon it indirectly. The framework of the discussion focuses on propositions for the promotion of the Israeli society in a reality of globalization, economic competition, privatization and the need for national stability. To expand the discussion and anchor it within significant foundations of society, I will present in this article the main point of the national policy proposal, focusing on the aspect of rights and duties, and on the economic- beneficiary aspect in relation to lifelong learning. The aim is to shed light on both aspects and to present statements from these fields regarding the vitality and profitability of lifelong learning. This way, professionals from the field of education and learning would be able to integrate into this discussion professionals from the field of
human rights, law and justice, as well as professionals from the field of economics and occupation; thus promoting together the vision of 'Israel as a learning society'.

**The Need for Lifelong Learning - An Israeli Aspect**

In the 21st century, the state of Israel and its citizens are facing four significant challenges:

A. **Adjusting and Keeping Up** - There is a constant need to adjust to the ever-changing technological environment. This means, adjustment to an environment that affects the individual on many levels, including his occupation, his level of income, and his social status. This adjustment requires making an educated choice out of the ever-growing supply in order to maintain a worthy standard of living.

B. **Developing the Human Capital** required for preserving the relative advantage of the State of Israel. The advantage of Israel, which is not blessed with an abundance of natural resources, is its human capital. The future of the state and society depends on the quality of this capital; which in itself is challenged by deterioration in scholastic achievements, failure to keep up, and a 'brain drain'.

C. **Social Unity.** The Israeli social unity is currently challenged by two negative economic phenomena: a very high poverty rate and expending inequality. Studies have proven that entrance into the cycle of poverty and the income level are mainly affected by the level of education. In addition, there are also the increasingly high gaps in the socio-economic equality, which pose a threat to the stability and strength of the state.

D. **Maintaining the State’s Jewish-Democratic Identity.**

Multiculturalism on the one hand, and cultural globalization on the other hand, as well as processes of Jewish and Arab nationality; require constant referral to questions of identity and culture. These
issues are frequently on the public agenda, and they raised a need and a thirst for knowledge on such subjects as Jewish culture and tradition, as well as the Arabic tradition among minority populations. Dealing with these issues appears to be vital among all populations, for the sake of maintaining both the uniqueness and the unity, which together serve as the socio-cultural glue of this society.

An examination of the products of the education system, even if we disregard its weaknesses in the face of the challenges that the society and the state are confronted with, leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the formal learning method conducted by the education system is no longer sufficient. There is an ever-growing significance of continuous lifelong learning. Such learning promotes constant adjustment to the changing environment, while still maintaining and forming personal and social identity. This is a means of developing human capital, and it serves as a tool for minimizing socio-economic gaps and coping with social and environmental threats.

The key therefore, to the success of Israel, its society and its citizens, lays in a substantial and systematic investment in ongoing learning; an investment that doesn't end with the end of school, but continuous for the rest of a person's life. The intended investment would grand every person the opportunity to gain abilities and tools that suit their ambitions and life circumstances, and to remain constantly updated. At the same time, it would also aid in the state's attempts to fulfill the evolving needs for employment. This way, it would enable the state to cope with the challenges of the competitive economic world; and develop personal and cultural strength, and national stability.

**The 'Lifelong Learning' Reality in Israel**

Despite the growing significance internationally attributed in recent years to lifelong learning and education, in Israel there are still many evidences
of the gradually decreasing status of this issue on the national agenda. The state budgets meant for adult education have decreased over the last five years by over 50%, a fact which had a clear repercussion on the number of people attending programs for adult learning and education. A survey commissioned by the 'Israel: A Learning Society' think tank, indicated that the rate of Israeli adults in the cycle of education is 36%, including adults who are in the midst of their academic studies, vocational training; as well as adults attending general courses and lectures, and group studies. To fully understand this data, a comparison was conducted between these findings and common rates in Europe and the US, and it has been found that the rate of adult learners in those regions is between 44% and 66%. Furthermore, various studies indicate that the educational frameworks for adult education in Israel are not accessible to all, not versatile enough, and in many cases don't provide sufficient solutions to the needs of the populations within which they operate. It has also been indicated that the rate of participation in the education circles are particularly low among the weakest populations, i.e. the least educated populations, the populations with the lowest incomes, and in large parts of the Arab sector. Meaning that, the populations that are in greater need of learning than others, are the ones suffering from the lowest rates, and thus perpetuating their low status.

The assumption is that the low rate of learners in Israel stems mainly from central malfunctions: lack of awareness from the general population and from the decision makers; and lack of legislation, substantial funding, and incentives. Some claim that there are two additional factors: exclusion of certain populations, and minimization and damage to the learning and development abilities of those emitted from the education system (Adler and Sever, 1998). We argue that in this reality, individual rights are damaged, particularly the basic right of a democratic society-
equal opportunity. The economic gaps expand in the fields of economy and occupation, and Israel is currently at the top of the world scale of inequality in developed countries. Some state that this, in the long run, hinders Israel's competitive ability in the global alignment (Ben-David, 2008).

**The Rights of the Individual and Society in the Field of Education and Learning**

Lifelong learning is based on the values of morality, democracy and the rights of the individual for equality in the realization of opportunities for development, socio-economic mobility, and an improved quality of life. The adult education philosophy states that lifelong learning is a right granted to every person, and that every person is entitled to practice that right in the time suitable for him and his life circumstances. The concept of human rights is an ever developing one in a democratic society, and it contains three categories of rights:

A. Human rights in the basic and elementary sense of the term- These are rights granted to every person and they include the right for life, dignity and equality. They are perceived as natural rights, seen as every person is granted them by virtue of being born.

B. Civil Rights- These are rights granted to every citizen in a democratic state. They include the right to elect and be elected politically, and the right for political criticism. They are also perceived as part of the natural rights. But in actuality, the state has the right to deprive certain people of these rights for specific and defined reasons.

C. Social Right- Alongside human and civil rights, the concept of social rights has also evolved in the sphere of democratic thinking. Social rights are not defined as natural rights and they differ from state to state. They refer to the various aspect of a person's well-being. They exist to ensure the individual's basic living needs are met by the
society in which he lives, and to enable him to take advantage of the opportunities presented to him by life.

It is common to divide the social rights into five categories: social security, education, health, housing, and workers' rights. This is an undefined unit that is dynamic and evolving by nature. The progression of human knowledge and its applicable repercussions on a person's welfare may lead to the reorganization of other rights as well.

Social rights are examined according to the end result. That is, according to the existence of a system responsible for the actual implementation and realization of the specific right. For example, the right to an education is being realized by the existence and operation of an education system that is available and approachable for all, according to the demands of the law.

The right to an education is mentioned in the declaration for all people in the UN Human Rights declaration of 1948, and in the 1966 International Treaty for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Its purpose is to ensure accessibility to education for every person. And for that, the countries are called upon to regulate the right of every child in the state to receive an education, so that they could acquire knowledge, information and skills; and so that they could fulfill their future needs and become independent adults.

The right to an education also contains two references to adults: Regarding the right to learn reading and writing, meaning that every person has the right to learn to read and write. And also regarding the right for a higher education that is opened for all on the basis of achievements.

**The Right to an Education According to the 'Lifelong Learning' Approach**

The right to an education refers mainly to children and is expressed by the existing education laws. The common perception is that the accumulated
human knowledge must be instilled in children since it would prepare them for life. The assumption is that in most cases, the adults have already acquired that knowledge and they have 'completed their education and knowledge acquisition'.

The right to an education, which is a basic right in a democratic state, is the foundation and infrastructure for all the acts of education and learning. The main claim of 'lifelong learning' is that the necessary continuation of the recognition of the right to education is recognizing the right to learn, acquire new knowledge, and keep up with significant issues that affect the quality of life and the ability to cope with its challenges. Seen as in the age of knowledge and wisdom, knowledge is renewed every moment, the right to an education is valid for everyone-for the duration of their entire lives.

Basic education, which includes mastering the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, is perceived as essential for conduct and for coping with the tasks of modern life, and it is therefore referred to as a 'passport to life' (Delors, 2001). The knowledge, the abilities and the skills necessary to conduct a proper lifestyle nowadays have been defined as Literacy. The term 'literacy' formally contained the ability to read and write, to understand a written and spoken phrase, and to solve simple mathematic problems. As time went by, the recognition that literacy studies must be perceived as a process beginning with alphabetizing, and continues onto crossing the point of no return (from which one cannot retreat back to illiteracy), has increased.

In today's culture of knowledge, literacy in a democratic society is perceived as a basic condition for the function of an enlightened society. Literacy, according to this approach, is the means to realize personal abilities, nurture the self-image, and empower one's ability to affect and govern the changing reality.
In this regard, the term 'functional literacy' has also been formed with particular emphasis on functional and behavioral abilities in basic life tasks. The term includes the knowledge and skills, which allow the individual to function within all systems of life. In the broad term, the concept of literacy includes the knowledge and ability to cope with changes and distresses; and to acquire a profession and general knowledge for the improvement of our function as citizens, family members and workers. It must be stated that it is fundamentally necessary for people to acquire the knowledge and skills that would help them conduct themselves within the systems of life and to control their destiny. This type of learning contributes to personal development, social mobility and economic progress; and improves the individual's function in the different facets of his life: as a family member, a parent, a work and a member of a community. Therefore, such learning is every person's basic right.

At an international conference that took place in Brazil, in December 2009, it was once again declared that: 'Adult education is recognized as a vital aspect of the right to an education. We must plan a new and urgent direction of operation, to allow all young people and adults to realize that right' (The global report on the issue of adult education and learning, 2010). Hence, lifelong learning provides, as a world view and a means of operation, a possibility for the individual to realize his basic right to: an education, protection, freedom and liberty, significance, and having an effect and control over his destiny.

The Economic-Beneficial Aspect

Adult learning, as part of the broader concept of 'lifelong learning', also has an economic-beneficial aspect both on the level of the individual and of the state. Studies and researches conducted in Israel and abroad, clearly indicate that economic gaps derive mainly from gaps in education. Adult education level has dominant effects on two generations: the
adult generation and the younger generation. Adults with low levels of education and training earn minimum wages and have almost no way of mobility in terms of education. It is also known that the parents' level of education is the most influential variable on the children's chances of completing their Bagrut exams. Knowing this, lead the EU to declare 'lifelong learning' as a key element, in the hopes of making Europe the world's most competitive region in terms of education. As of the year 2000, the EU has been implementing this concept by operating the program 'The Lisbon Strategy' for the socio-economic development of Europe; an initiative that has also received reinforcement at the sixth world conference of the topic of adult education and learning: 'We are convinced of the vital role that lifelong learning plays in the treatment of global and educational issues and challenges… adult education and learning is an activity necessary for the achievement of justice and integration; for the decrease of poverty; and for the construction of sustainable societies that are based on justice, tolerance and knowledge (Harnessing the strength and potential of adult education and learning for a sustainable future, 2009).

The Reut Institute presents us with the Danish model of coping with this competitive market, and makes use of the term Flexicurity, which is a combination of Flexibility and Security. In the center of Flexicurity is the nurturing of the human capital, i.e. nurturing the workers as a resource for competing in the global arena. The model consists of four elements: a flexible job market, lifelong learning, a policy encouraging employment among weak populations, and an employment-oriented welfare system. According to this approach, lifelong learning is an entirety of training methods adjusted to the needs of the changing job market and the needs of the adult worker. This mechanism views training the human capital in the job market as dynamic and ongoing process throughout the worker's entire life, and it includes:
A wide range of trainings - Lifelong learning is aimed at various types and levels of employment; beginning with simple jobs that require basic skills and ending with academic professions that require advanced skills.

Longitudinal and in-depth training - Types of training, meant to instill in the learners both multi-functional tools and training for a specific profession.

Formal and informal training - Lifelong learning recognizes various types of training: elementary and high-school studies, academic studies, vocational studies and acquired experience. This is meant to enable the worker to expend his training at any stage of his life.

Training in a variety of arenas - Trainings can be conducted and funded by a variety of authorities, and take place within deferent frameworks.

The implementation of flexicurity is based on creating an established dialogue around a shared cause. The shared cause, for which all the parties joined forces, is investment in human capital as a competitive resource. That is, investing in lifelong learning for economic-beneficial purposes.

The Mendel Institute 2006 position document states that the main goal of lifelong learning in the field of economics and occupation is instilling the tools and skills necessary to cope with the world of employment and economic development in the changing reality. The issue of economics and occupation with an affinity to lifelong learning revolves, in the opinion of the writers of the document, around three main questions:

Where is the Israeli job market headed to, which professions decrease and which emerge?

What are the elements of education necessary to increase the probability of future occupational integration?
How can we help the younger populations continue onto academic studies?

To these questions, we must also add some questions from the field of knowledge maintenance and its update in professions that are abundant with knowledge. Professionals in this field agree that it is vital to maintain continuous learning for the sake of professional updating; career changes and shifts; and the development of the innovative skills that are required nowadays in the world of economics and occupation, for instance: entrepreneurship, use of advanced technology, and mastering the skills of individual and team work. All these require the learning skills of acquiring knowledge and being able to implement it in actuality. It seems as though only lifelong learning is capable of coping with such complex challenges.

**Duties of the Individual and of Society in the Field of Lifelong Learning**

Both of the elements specified above- the element of rights and the economic-beneficial element, pose tasks and complex challenges for those engaging in 'lifelong learning'. The big question is who has the duty and responsibility of fulfilling the tasks, and coping with the challenges of realizing those rights and developing the human capital?

It appears that with regards to the social rights in democracy, there is a sector and system crossing agreement about the need to ensure the right to an education, not only for children but also in terms of lifelong learning. The argument remains on the topic of duty and responsibility. There are various approaches and schools of thought in this matter, and naturally there is no one concept that is agreed upon by all. It is however possible to detect three basic approaches and perception in the matter of duty and responsibility. Two of them have been well known for quite some time and the third is new and has been developed only recently.
A. The State Responsibility Approach

This approach states that it is the state's duty and responsibility to ensure the rights of its citizens and promote the establishment of a qualitative and resilient society. For that purpose, the state must set a framework for a comprehensive policy in the field of learning. This claim relies on the concept that in the newly emerging partnership between the state and the public, which includes private sectors, the role of the state changes. And as such, the state must not only provide service but also serve as a consulting, funding, monitoring and assessing authority. In this framework, government and social partners must take the necessary measures to defend the individual; and to ensure the expression of his educational needs, and the realization of his learning opportunities throughout his entire life.

Another claim is that the state must view the process of establishing an active civil society through lifelong learning, as a crucial stage in the establishment of democracy, the maintenance of equal opportunity, the development of strength, and the national development and stability. There is no doubt that these are central interests for any democratic state. According to this approach, the Mendel Document claims that the state of Israel, as a democratic state, has the responsibility and duty to strive for the establishment of a society that would be founded on a large base of educated citizens; and on the realization of their opportunities for mobility and achievements in the field of economy and society, education and culture, through lifelong learning.

The implementation of democratic values in the field of learning, and the operation of the principal of knowledge alongside the principal of equal opportunity, redefine the role of the state in this field. Therefore, the state must form a policy, which recognizes lifelong learning as a tool for social mobility, personal development, economic competition, and social and national strength.
This approach is based on the perception of the state's responsibility for 'lifelong learning', prevalent in the developed countries. Some states have even taken it upon themselves to form a national policy on the matter, for instance: Australia, Canada, Britain, Finland, Italy, the United States, Estonia and others; each coping in its own way with the legislation, implementation and operation of the issue.

In the UNESCO Lifelong Learning Institute's 2010 global report on 'Adult Education and Learning', 126 out of 154 states mentioned that the issue of adult education is covered, either directly or indirectly, by some government policy. Naturally, there is a large difference in the commentary given to the word 'policy'- beginning with a national constitution, through to administrative teams and the passing of laws, and ending with a medium term development program and ten year programs for education.

The OECD (2003) has formed a proposal for detailing the advantages of a national policy, and has stated six guidance clauses for its development:

1. Forming a comprehensive policy strategy- that would improve opportunities of learning, increase the efficiency of using resources, enhance the efficiency of using resources, improve the quality of the provided learning, and ensure a more organized provided learning.
2. Placing individuals and institutions in the center- by establishing initiatives for participation in adult learning, and creating funding mechanism.
3. Making the learning more appealing by increasing motivation and participation in learning; allowing more flexibility in the providing of learning; providing guidance and instruction; and recognizing previous learning for the purpose of receiving permits and diplomas.
4. Encouraging vocational profession-related training, by organizing
and funding the training; combining the training period with the work period; coping with such obstacles as time shortage and tuition; directing the unemployed to places of employment; treating at-risk groups of workers; and taking into consideration those who lack elementary education and elderly workers.

5. Encouraging financial investments in adult human capital by dividing the responsibility for adult learning funding among all the partners. It is recommended to created funding mechanism for individuals, suppliers, operators, and both sector- oriented and national authorities.

6. Coordinate between the partners by bringing in relevant partners for a joint activity. The coordination will be done among all the sectors, as well as among the various officials, and between the government and non-governmental authorities. The extent of activities and suggestions that have been formed indicate the need for an approach that focuses on the state's responsibility for the issue of 'lifelong learning'. Only the state has the authority and the ability to act upon and operate the necessary extent of thinking, planning and implementation, as was mentioned.

B. The Private Responsibility Approach

In an age of privatization, the prominent approach is the one stating that apart from the most basic rights that are given to citizens in a democratic society, and those which the state is responsible for implementing; everything else is the responsibility of the individual and the citizen as an adult.

Seen as the right to an education is given to every child, then by being a part of the elementary education (which an individual acquires as part of this right), he has the knowledge and the ability to continue developing as an adult according to his own judgment. In this case, the state has fulfilled its obligation to him, and owes nothing beyond
that. Not only that, but in recent years, the state has also expanded its obligation to include its obligation to child education, as part of the Law of Compulsory Education, and it mustn't go beyond that. Indeed, in recent years, as part of the privatization process, the state has decreased its responsibility to include public services alone, transferring them to the business sector and the third sector; thus allowing the free market mechanism to increase its operation. The free market mechanism also operates, as part of this framework, in the field of adult learning, based on supply and demand. And there is indeed a growing supply of learning topics and educational frameworks meant for adult learners. But things are not at all simple. Some populations participate in these processes, and thus leveraging themselves, while others are excluded from these processes for financial reasons, or lack of awareness or accessibility. Considering this reality from the perspective of human rights, raises some complicated questions and contemplations.

C. The Mutual Responsibility Approach
There is a claim stating that the institutionalized processes of privatization occur in light of a new perception of human rights. According to this new perception, these rights do not exist in their own right, but become dependable. This approach suggests perceiving social rights as 'conditioned rights' or 'contractual rights'. Meaning that the individual's ability to be perceived as having this right, is now conditioned by his fulfilling certain duties. The term interwoven into this approach is 'mutuality', meaning that the right to learn for the sake of gaining professional or vocation training is often conditioned by searching for work. That is, it does not exist in its own right as a basic human right, but is conditioned by several actions that the individual must take.

We are therefore witnessing the changes that the approach of maintaining basic rights in a democratic society is currently going
through. In this reality, the central claim of professionals from this field is that 'lifelong learning' is a basic right onto itself, and at the same time it is also the key and the basis for the realization of other civil and social rights. That is because knowing that social rights evolve and change, and finding ways of realizing them, requires continuous learning and ongoing updating. This claim requires public investigation and reinforcement from other additional fields. The claims regarding the social and economic benefits of adult learning have also failed to take their place in the thoughts and perceptions of economist as yet, so the future of the field of adult learning from the aspect of rights and economy is not yet secure.

**Highlights for Summary**

The aim of the article is to open up this important issue of lifelong learning for public discussion, so as to promote productive and contributive activity in this field. The claims made in the field of human rights and in the field of economy and occupation, are presented in order to raise the questions leading to an interdisciplinary address of the issue; questions that may enable professionals from the field of lifelong learning to present their statements and opinions to the public, and to the decision makers and to those determining the policy. This way, their opinions can become incorporated in promoting the vision of 'Israel as a learning society'.

It must be reiterated and stated that in order to fulfill the vision of 'Israel as a learning society' it is essential to develop and operate a national policy that deals with defining the contents and the guiding principles; setting priorities and standards; integrating and coordinating the existing activities; identifying the missing activities; and creating a professional, organizational and economic infrastructure.
The goals of the activity: placing the value of lifelong learning on the public agenda; forming a government obligation; and ensuring the availability and accessibility of learning for all. The guiding principles are the democratic principles of human dignity and equal opportunity for all; as well as the professional principals of placing the learning individual in the center, maintaining a multi-approach to learning, and implementing methods and frameworks based on professional and up-to-date knowledge.

As those who have taken upon themselves the social and professional responsibility, and have invested much activity and thought into it, the lifelong learning professional are welcome to continue on their journey of spearing the vision of 'Israel as a learning society'. They may also add into their 'travel kit', in addition to the professional and educational knowledge, some reference to the issues of human rights and the economic and occupational benefits, as we have learned from world developments and from our own reality. These are the two elements upon which the State of Israel stands, and the challenges it faces in the reality of democracy in a global competitive society.

References

Various reports and position documents from Israel and abroad.