

# Creating Community Resilience to Improve the Well-being of Children and Youth and their Families in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods in Israel

## Evaluation of the Better Together (BT) Program Summary Report



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# Better Together – background to its development

- In Israel, one out of six children is defined as at risk, and one out of three lives in poverty in poverty. These rates are especially high in neighborhoods that are severely disadvantaged socio-economically.
- In 2006, the Ashalim non-profit initiated the Better Together program to improve the wellbeing of children and their families living in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- The program's strategy of change falls into overall community initiatives. These focus on a circumscribed geographical area (locality/neighborhood) where the program serves as a platform to recruit resources from state, municipal, public and private agencies, and to promote various intervention activities according to neighborhood needs.
- At the end of 2015, Better Together phased out of 27 neighborhoods in 16 localities; today it is actively involved in implementing the program in 17 neighborhoods in 14 cities countrywide.

2006

2016

3 cities



27 cities

4 Neighborhoods



44 Neighborhoods

5,048 participants  
in program activity\*\*



49,083 participants  
in program activity\*

In the decade of  
activity, the scope of  
program activity  
broadened tenfold

\* The data are based on the reports of the administrative database begun in 2011. The data are updated to December 2011, for the 3 early cities.

\*\* The data are based on the reports of the administrative database. The data are updated to March 2014, for the neighborhoods reported, 29 neighborhoods in 23 cities.

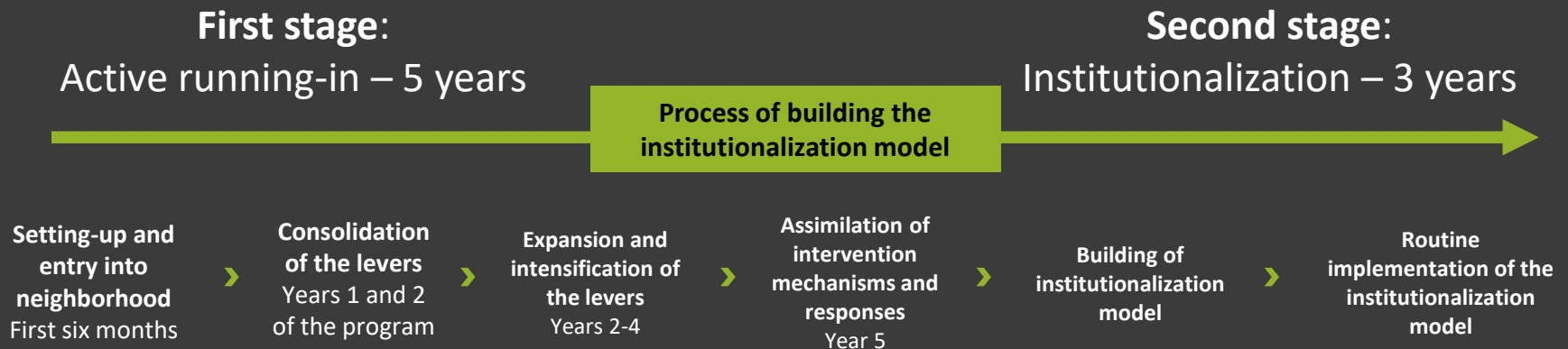
# Better Together (BT) – Program Model

- The program intervention in the neighborhood is conducted through the mobilization of community activists along with service providers, reliance on existing human and social capital, fundraising and an overall view of the variety of needs and suitable responses. The various interventions are planned to create a continuum of services (education, social and health) and activities throughout the day, creating synergy among them.
- The program activities in the neighborhood are managed and led by a neighborhood coordinator. The interventions are conducted through three key levers that spearhead change in the neighborhood – the organizational lever, the response lever, and the community lever (this will be explained in greater detail below).

## The program is implemented in two main timeframes:

1. **Active running-in period:** Five years in which the program is implemented in the neighborhood in full, including an expanded budget from JDC-Ashalim, the local authority, and other partners.
2. **Assimilation, institutionalization and ongoing professional support:** A further 3 years that define the way in which the program is assimilated as a work practice in the local authority and will continue and be expanded. At this stage, Ashalim's involvement declines and remains at the level of assistance and support.

## Implementation model:\*



\*From the assimilation document *Better Together, Principles of Work, Institutionalization and Assimilation*. JDC-Ashalim (Hebrew)

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# Evaluation Study

Since 2011, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute has been following the program with an evaluation study designed to examine its success and provide feedback for ongoing improvement



# Study Goals

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To evaluate implementation of the program in order to provide feedback for ongoing improvement



To evaluate the success of the program as the basis for decision-making and planning further dissemination

## Study objectives

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### **Neighborhood characteristics**

To examine the characteristics of the neighborhood and its residents



### **Program implementation**

To examine implementation of the program and monitor developments in the levers for change



### **Changes among the residents and neighborhoods**

To examine the changes among the residents and neighborhoods (regarding the community surroundings, involvement of residents in neighborhood life, and status of children and youth)



### **Contribution of the program to the neighborhood and residents**

To examine the contribution of the program as perceived by the residents and professionals



# Neighborhoods in the Study

The data in the study are presented for 19 of the program neighborhoods.

For the purposes of the study, the neighborhoods were classified according to the number of years that the program had been implemented at the start of the study.^



Basic information was collected about all the neighborhoods, with more in-depth information collected about some of them (see sources of information, below).

^In some of the localities, the program was implemented in more than one neighborhood (total of 32 neighborhoods); for the purposes of the study, they were counted as a single neighborhood.

\* At the time of the second phase of data collection, the program was no longer being actively implemented in three neighborhoods

\*\* Assimilation: Three-year period after completion of 5 years of full activity of the program in the neighborhood, which define the way in which the program will be assimilated and expanded in the work routine of the authority. At this stage, Ashalim's involvement declines and remains at the level of professional support.

# Sources of Information

1



## **Survey of parents and youth**

Conducted in 6 neighborhoods in two phases:  
2012: 620 parents and 184 adolescents  
2015: 490 parents and 156 adolescents

2



## **In-depth interviews with administrative staff and professionals in the field**

Conducted in 12 neighborhoods  
in 2012, 2014 and 2015  
Altogether 85 interviews

3



## **Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) data**

1. Administrative data: 16 neighborhoods, every year from 2010 to 2014
2. Social Survey national average (2012, 2014, and 2015)

4



## **BT's administrative database**

19 neighborhoods,  
every year from 2011 to 2015



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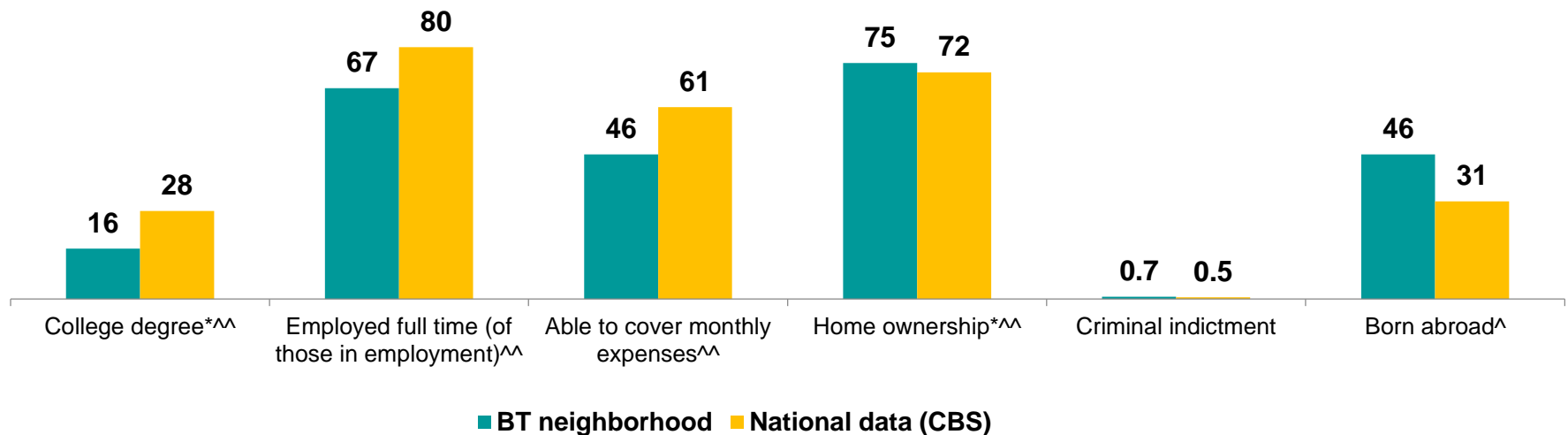
# Study Findings



# Study Neighborhoods

BT's target population: Residents of neighborhoods in low socio-economic clusters who contend with poverty, crime and neglect. The residents' characteristics were compared with those of the overall population of Israel based on data from the CBS and surveys of residents conducted in two phases in 2011/12 and 2014/15. (It is important to note that the program did not seek to change these characteristics.)

**Selected characteristics of neighborhood residents in 2011/12  
compared with the overall population of Israel (Percent)**



**The data show that residents in the program neighborhoods are poorer, have a lower level of education, and are more exposed to crime. These data remained constant over time, thus indicating that the changes in the program neighborhoods were not due to changes in the composition of the population.**

\*Age 20+  
^ CBS administrative data on all neighborhood residents vs. total population of Israel (2010 year end)  
^^ Data of survey of sample participants vs. data from the Social Survey of total population (2012)

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# Levers for Change



# Leverage of Change

Neighborhood interventions entail three main levers to lead change:



**Organizational lever:**

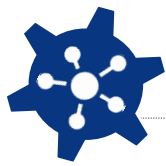
Creating interdisciplinary infrastructure for the integration of different staff professionals to advance neighborhood children and youth

**Community lever:**

Constructing infrastructure of active residents and volunteers to take responsibility for neighborhood children

**Response lever:**

Development, consolidation and expansion of scope and range of responses for neighborhood children and youth, suited to their needs



# Implementation of the Organizational Lever

Creating an infrastructure of professional committees made up of residents and multidisciplinary professionals

During the active running-in period, the committees worked regularly in all the localities



**Neighborhood coordinator:**

*"In the early years, the committee worked by the book, in every area and with all the partners. After we had already developed all the services and programs and everyone knew his/her place and responsibilities, and everything was assimilated, it was felt there was no further need for them, people didn't understand the need for them ... and [there was] absolute burnout. The organizational structure did not maintain continuity at the same intensity over the years, it was according to the need."*

Senior officials in the local authority heading the program and giving it organizational and professional backing



**Municipal leader:**

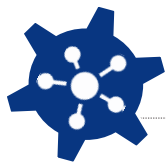
*"The committees comprised representatives of all the professionals, the community center, and education and social services. That was the triangle. The 'apices' were another important thing – the director of education, the director of social services and the director of the community center. When there's cooperation at the top, there's a trickle-down effect. When ego doesn't come into it, there's a trickle-down effect. That's another thing that makes the program successful."*

The residents played an active part on the committees and contributed to the decision-making



**Neighborhood coordinator:**

*"The committees work in five areas. [On the committees are ...] residents, with whom we examine the needs. Our job, as BT staff, is to translate what they say into action. For example, in the social and community area, it's creating neighborhood pride and tradition."*



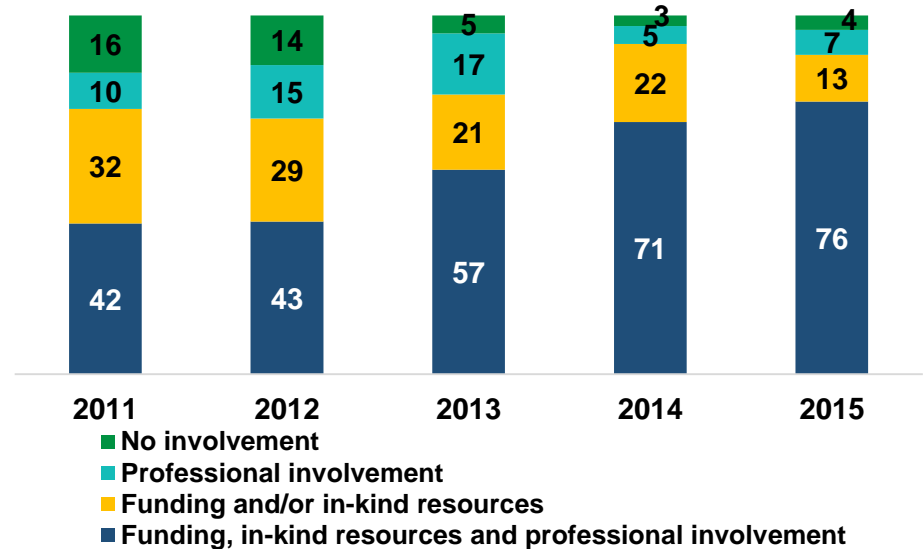
# Implementation - Organizational Lever

## Creating partnerships with local organizations

**Increase in the proportion of collaborative projects** – the proportion of projects in which there is cooperation between the program, the local authority, and other organizations in and outside of the neighborhood is high and increases the longer the program is implemented in the neighborhood.

**An increase in the number of projects in which there are three kinds of cooperation – funding, in-kind resources, and professional involvement.** The in-depth interviews with the neighborhood coordinators and officials at the local authority show that great efforts are required to mobilize local organizations into partnerships, particularly when this includes professional involvement as well as co-funding.

Involvement of the local authority and other partners in BT projects (data from the BT administrative database – percent)

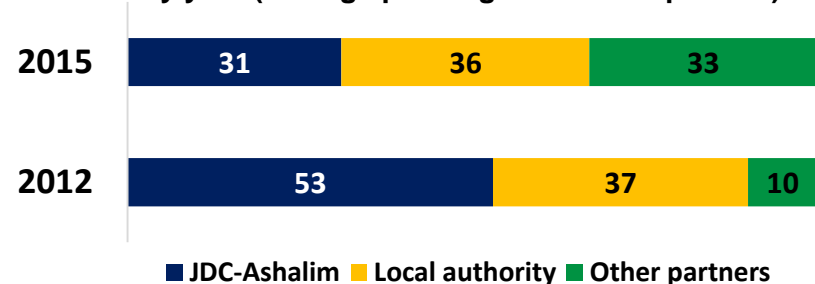


## Introducing new resources into the neighborhood

**Extent of funding for the program** - The average program budget per neighborhood increases the longer the program has been active there. The average budget per neighborhood in 2015 was twice the amount for the same neighborhood in 2012.

**Sources of funding for the program** - The data show that the longer the program has been running in the neighborhood, the greater the relative share of the budget from the local authority and other partners.

Distribution of funding sources in BT neighborhoods, by year (average per neighborhood – percent)







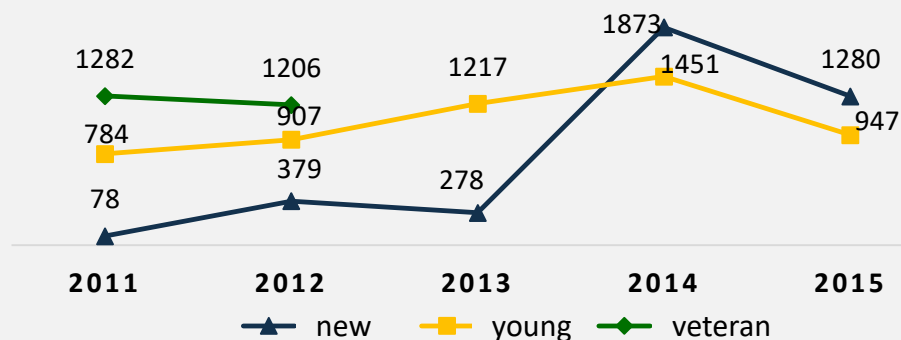
# Implementation – Response Lever

## Scope of Implementation, Program and Participants

From 2011-14, the number of both the ongoing projects and the participants increased; in 2015 there was a decrease from 2014.

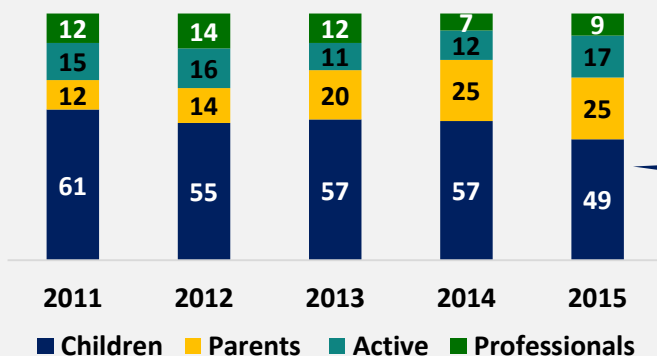
Program managers and operators explained the decrease thus: in 2015, the program entered the assimilation stage in many neighborhoods and, at the same time, it focused its involvement on projects responding most to the needs of neighborhood residents.

Average number per neighborhood of participants in ongoing projects of program involvement (by neighborhood seniority cluster)

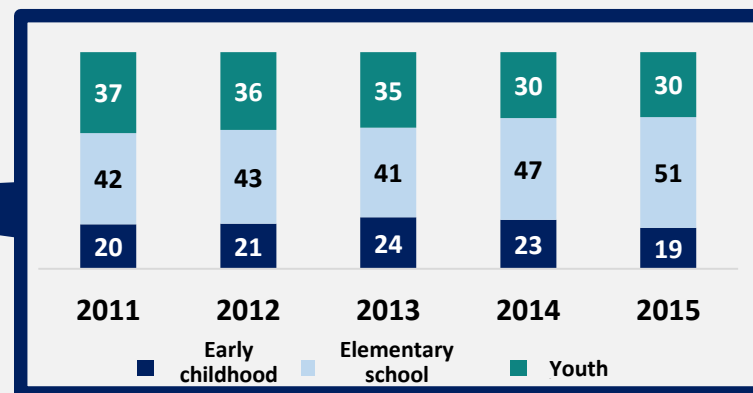


Most participants in ongoing projects are children and youth, mainly of elementary-school age

Distribution of participants in ongoing projects, by population and reporting period (%)



Distribution of participants in responses for children, by age group and reporting period (%)





# Implementation – Community Lever

Groups of activists and volunteers were formed in all the neighborhoods

*"We currently have almost 180 residents we call activists, 35 of whom we know as the neighborhood leadership because they are not involved in any one particular project, but have a broader overall view of the neighborhood."*

**Neighborhood coordinator**

The neighborhood residents have become significant partners in planning and implementing interventions

*"[During the early stages of the program in the neighborhood], we formed a community theater group with the residents. In the first year, it went excellently and we performed as well. And it continued. In the third year, we felt that it was enough, that's it. But two-and-a-half months ago, one of the young women who was in the group came to us and said the girls want to do theater, but ... They want to do it on their own. We told them there was no problem. We'd give them the place and they could do it."*

**Community worker**

The neighborhood residents have become significant partners in the professional committees and are involved in decision-making

*"I think that when you bring together parents of children with special needs and they speak the same language ... it's a multicultural group ... with a common distress... some of the results are there already. With their help, it was possible to introduce the Krembo Wings project [for children with and without disabilities] and start working. That's the result, that's the success of Better Together, of the BT group."*

**City leader**

In the program, the residents were equipped with tools they could use to work independently to improve life in the neighborhood

*"I'm now in a situation where I'm not told what to do. I'm in a situation where I initiate, I act, and I'm there for the community, and I'm there to do things. Now I can let myself [do them]. What does that mean? From the point of view of confidence, of knowledge. Now I can take a program and do it from start to finish."*

**Activist**



# Challenges Implementing the Community Lever

## Difficulty increasing the number of activists and volunteers

BT emphasizes the neighborhood worker's place as a key element in connecting with the residents and encouraging them to take an active role in implementing the program.

### Neighborhood coordinator:

*"The community worker is the direct link to the families. She is there, physically, at the community council. She is on hand, they come to her. Her role is very significant in recruiting activists. Social ties are formed, ties that are even personal, and then they [residents] start to come and benefit from the relationship. And then they start to look around and see their surroundings and start to give something back."*

## Maintaining a permanent group of active residents over time

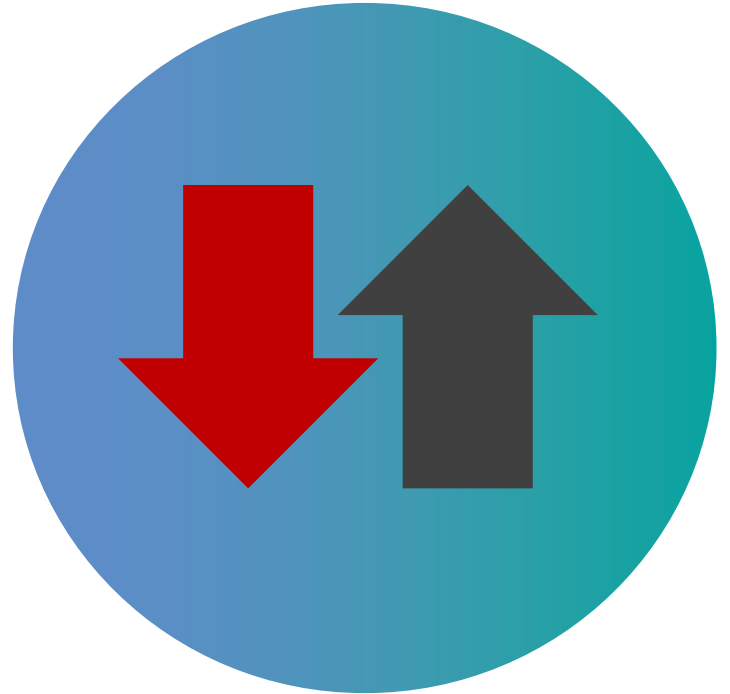
The main strategy for maintaining a permanent group of activists is to provide special enrichment and experiential activities for the activists only, in acknowledgement of their contribution, which gives them a sense of commitment and increases their sense of efficacy and initiative. The activities included trips, workshops and lectures.

### Neighborhood coordinator:

*"The first group of activists were given a lot of training sessions, which they really liked ... workshops, lectures. We were always attentive to their needs and what they wanted, so they were motivated to come. The program empowered them a lot, enabled them, gave them much more infrastructures for volunteering, and also rewarded them."*

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## Changes among the Residents and Neighborhoods



# Program Objectives



Residents feel a sense of personal safety

Neighborhood is suitable for raising children

Neighborhood is well tended and safe

Residents are capable of coping with challenges

Residents are involved in community life

A community that provides social support

Children live in safety without exposure to risk situations

Children are involved in community life

Children receive social support





**Community  
space**

**Residents  
feel a sense  
of personal  
safety**

**Neighborhood  
is suitable a  
for raising  
children**

**Neighborhood  
is well tended  
and safe**







# Community Space

## Activities to enhance the community space

Improved Appearance	Improved Personal Safety	Making the Neighborhood Suitable for Raising Children	Training for Residents
<p><b>Caring for public space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Clean-ups:</b> Residents created and cared for community gardens</li><li>✓ <b>Community gardening:</b> Residents participated in enhancing the appearance of the neighborhood and created community gardens</li><li>✓ <b>Activity with the local authority to repair physical eyesores</b></li><li>✓ <b>Activities in the physical-community model:</b> Building a community park, amphitheater, sports fields and playgrounds (described in detail below)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Parent patrols – usually consisting of parents and students, residents of the city, who volunteer to patrol recreational areas frequented by youth. Their presence helps to reduce risk behaviors, they are there for the adolescents, and can respond to needs arising in the field</li><li>✓ Activity with the urban policing hotline: Collating residents' complaints and inquiries and ongoing work with the city police to reduce criminal incidents in the neighborhood</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Opening afternoon activity centers (BT House, youth clubs)</li><li>✓ Expanding and diversifying the services and activities for children and youth and their families</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Providing the active residents with training and tools to help them work independently to enhance the community space</li></ul>



### Community worker:

*"From a neighborhood where people throw garbage out of the window, you [now] see people who assume responsibility. The institution took responsibility because we were a group, a force. The residents made their voice heard, shouted at the municipality, and then the municipality took it to heart. There is hardly any more vandalism in our neighborhood."*



# Physical-Community Model

In 2014, the program directors conceptualized the program work model known as the physical-community model.

The model is based on the interaction concept, which describes the interface between the different areas of life that make up the well-being of an individual and his/her family, such as education, health, employment, housing, etc.

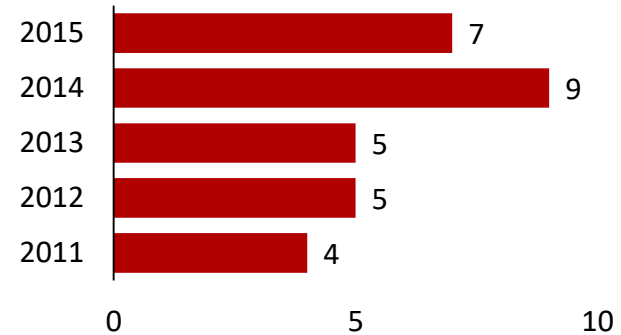
The model works on the assumption that in order to enable meaningful processes of change within disadvantaged populations living in poverty and exclusion, it is necessary to address all the factors together including housing and physical infrastructures. The process of making the physical dimension accessible is expected to constitute a catalyst for social involvement, building trust, reducing barriers, and a foundation for new hope that change is possible.

Community involvement in the physical dimension will yield activists and leadership that integrate well into the leadership groups, which, as noted, constitutes the foundation for their well-being as individuals, as a family and as a community

Examples of community-physical activity during the years of program activity include: building parks and an amphitheater, renovating buildings, renovating sports fields and playgrounds, etc.

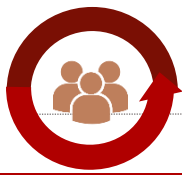
Over the years of program activity, the percentage of activities in the community-physical sphere out of the total projects\* increased from 4% in 2011 (6 out of 161 projects) to 9% in 2014 (27 out of 300 projects) and decreased to 7% in 2015 (14 out of 189 projects).

## Community-development activities through physical upgrading of the appearance of the neighborhood, as a percentage of total projects



\*In neighborhoods that reported in BT's administrative database

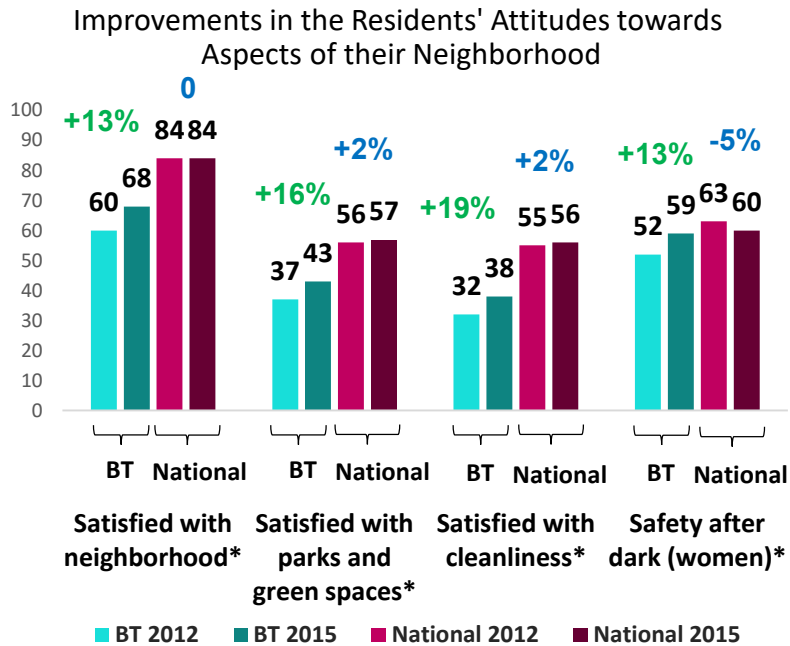




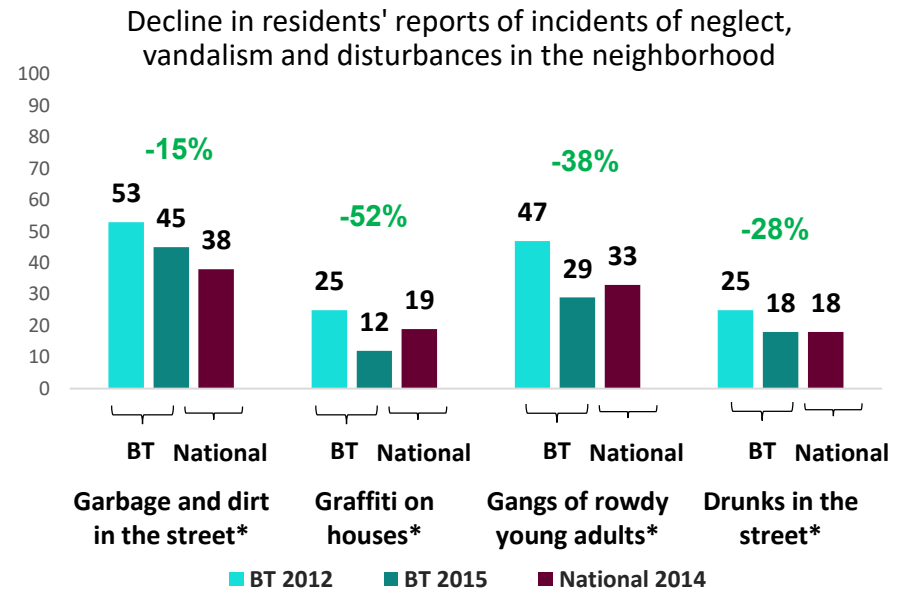
# Outcomes – Improvement of the Community Space

## Residents' attitudes towards the appearance of the neighborhood and their personal safety – 2012-2015

(Residents' survey and CBS Social Survey, in Percent and Percentage of Change^)



More residents are satisfied with different aspects of the neighborhood (cleanliness, public areas, etc.)  
There is an increase in the percentage of those reporting that they feel safe to walk alone in the dark, particularly among women and teenage girls and a reduction in the gaps in these measures between them and the total population.



- ✓ There is a decline in the rate of residents reporting disturbances in the neighborhood. Fewer residents report signs of vandalism and neglect.
- ✓ However, there was no decline in the percentage of residents reporting harm to property or person.

$p < .05$  \*

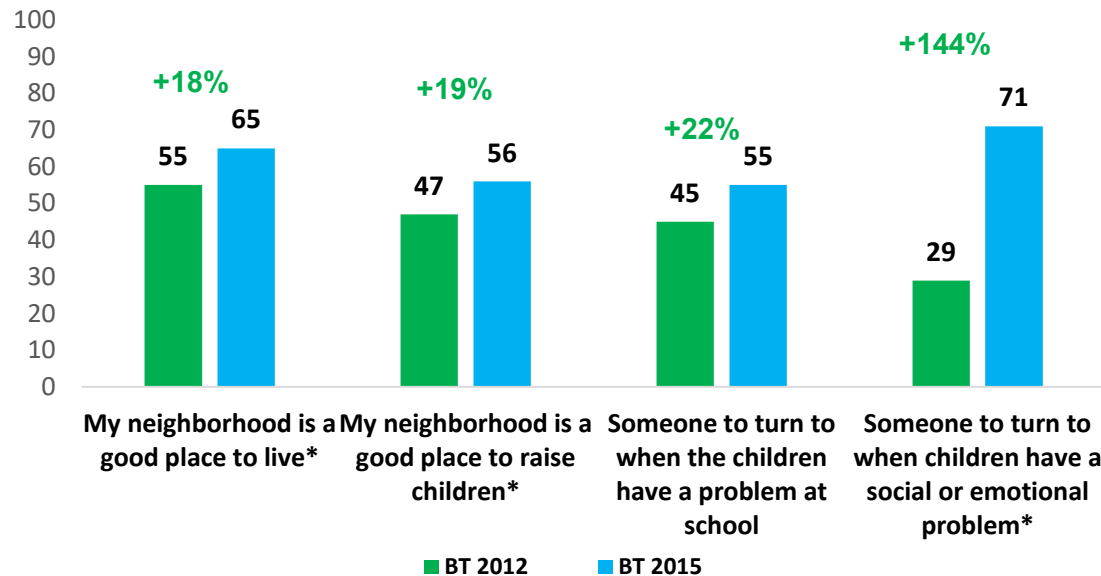
Color legend for percentage change: ■ Positive change (significant) ■ Negative change (significant) ■ No significant change (increase or decrease, but not significant)

^Percentage of change: The percentage in 2015 less the percentage in 2012, divided by the percentage in 2012.



# Outcomes – Improvement of the Community Space

## Improvement in residents' attitudes towards the neighborhood as a suitable place to raise children (Residents' survey 2012-2015, in Percent and Percentage of Change)



$p < .05$  \*

- ✓ Between 2012 and 2015, there was a significant increase in the percentage of residents who reported that their neighborhood was a good place to live and a good place to raise children. For example, the rate of residents who thought that the neighborhood was a good place to live increased by 18%.
- ✓ The rate of residents who reported there was someone to go to for help when the children had problems at school or a social or emotional problem also increased significantly.



### Activist:

*"Today there's the community worker, so she's responsible for everything in the neighborhood. And really, the neighborhood is clean now and there are no junkies, and there's the night patrol, and they check ... We put together people, many of whom had neighbors who didn't want to tidy up, and whoever came along threw [garbage] out of the window. Once, everyone used to argue, the police were here every other day. Now there's no more of that. People are happy. They talk to each other, say good morning, good afternoon. We also made a park, the grass looks good, so everyone finds something and sits with the children. It's super to see [what] the neighborhood was like 5 years ago and what it's like today."*



# Interim summary – Improving public spaces

## Neighborhood is a good place to raise children



- More residents report that the neighborhood is a good place to raise children (increase of 13% in satisfaction with residential area)

- More residents report that the neighborhood is a good place to raise children (increase of 19%), and that there is whom to turn to if problems with children arise (increase of 144%)

- Fewer residents report incidents of vandalism and neglect (e.g., decrease of 52% in reports of graffiti)

- More residents report satisfaction with various neighborhood aspects (e.g., increase of 16% in satisfaction with parks)

- The gap between the study's neighborhoods and the general population narrowed on most measures (e.g., the rate of residents satisfied with their residential area rose by 13% vs. no change)

## Satisfaction with neighborhood appearance



## Sense of personal safety



- Decrease in rate of residents reporting disorderly behavior (e.g., a decrease of 38% in reports of noisy youth gangs)

- Increase in rate reporting that they feel safe walking in the neighborhood after dark, especially women and girls – the rate of women in the study feeling safe rose by 13% vs. a decrease of 5% in the general population





## Residents' Involvement in the Community

Residents are  
capable of  
coping with  
challenges

Residents are  
involved in  
community  
life

A community  
that provides  
social support







# Residents' Involvement

## Program activities to strengthen residents' involvement



**Community worker in a veteran neighborhood (assimilation stage):** "I'm still working with the activists at all sorts of crossroads. If I want to clean the neighborhood, and if I want to organize parties, they are my partners in all of it. For every matter, for every idea, for whatever comes up. So, could I say it's like Switzerland? No. But to get as far as we've got, we've come a long way from where we used to be."

### Inclusion of residents in the professional committees



**Official in the local authority:**  
*"Now the residents have the majority and it's they who head the committees. There are professionals but they are there as members of the committee, not as its leaders, which is really meaningful. I think that that's the main thing, that the residents head the committees."*

### Courses for activists and leadership development

This includes activities designed to produce a community infrastructure that works in partnership and independently to promote the well-being of the residents and children, e.g.:

- ✓ Training volunteers and activists
- ✓ Developing leadership among adult residents and youth
- ✓ Creating opportunities for residents to plan and volunteer in program activities
- ✓ Empowerment groups for residents

**The percentage of projects in this area out of all ongoing projects was 15% in 2011, compared with 19% in 2015**

### Community-building projects

This includes activities designed for all neighborhood residents with the goal of developing a sense of community and strengthening community resilience, such as:

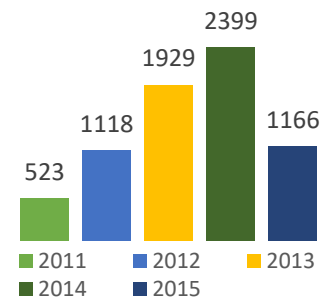
- ✓ **Community gardens**
- ✓ **Social-community activities** based on a particular theme and activities conducted in a framework of the **school as a community anchor model**

**The percentage of projects in this area out of all ongoing projects was 11% in 2011 and rose to 27% in 2015**

### "Peak" community events

"Peak" events are community events for the festivals or shared social events for the residents. The aim is to raise awareness of the program and encourage residents to be involved in neighborhood life

**Average number of participants in peak community events, by year**





# School as a Community Anchor

The model, which was developed between 2012 and 2014 works on the assumption that the school brings together all the relevant services offered to children and their families in the neighborhood. The reasons are that it is a physical environment considered safe by the residents, it has an existing infrastructure for activity, and it has the potential for exposure to a broad section of the population. The assumption is that activities conducted under the umbrella of the school produce greater commitment from the residents than those conducted elsewhere.

Examples of activities through the model include: health promotion, creative community, and therapeutic theater, which are conducted after school hours.

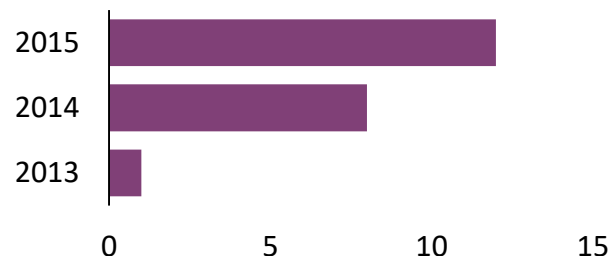


## BT regional director:

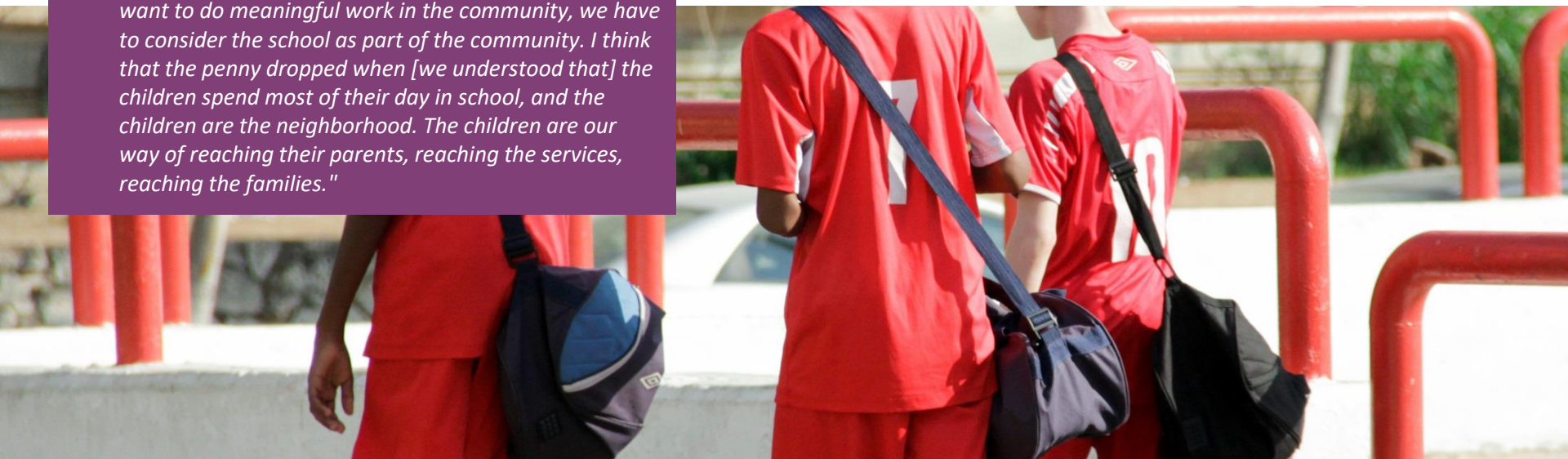
*"If I look at the main milestones of BT's work, the meaningful change was when we realized that if we want to do meaningful work in the community, we have to consider the school as part of the community. I think that the penny dropped when [we understood that] the children spend most of their day in school, and the children are the neighborhood. The children are our way of reaching their parents, reaching the services, reaching the families."*

During the years of program activity, the percentage of activities through the School as a Community Anchor model out of all the program projects\* increased from 1% in 2013 (3 out of 293 projects) to 12% in 2015 (22 out of 189 projects).

**Percentage of activities implemented through the School as a Community Anchor model, as a percentage of all projects (percent)**



\*In neighborhoods that reported to the BT administrative database

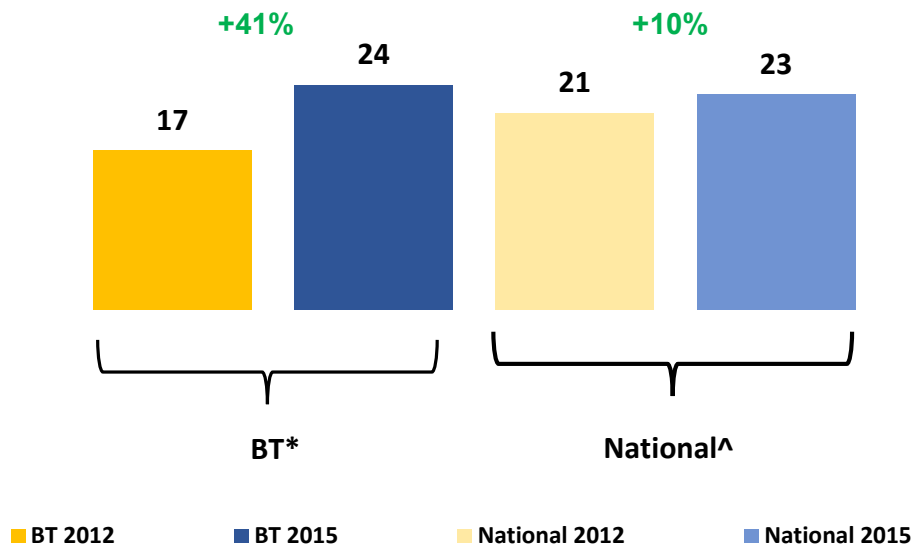




# Outcomes – Residents' Involvement

## Increase in the percentage of residents who volunteer and are involved in community life

Volunteer rate\*\* – 2012-2015 (Residents' survey and CBS Social Survey, percent and percentage of change)



The percentage of respondents who volunteered in BT neighborhoods in the previous year increased by 41% from 2012 to 2015, compared to the national average which increased by only 10%. In 2015, the rate of volunteers was similar to the percentage in the general population.

In addition, the percentage of families in BT neighborhoods in which at least one parent volunteered in the previous year increased from 23% to 32%.

\* $P < .05$

\*\* Participated in volunteer activity in the preceding 12 months

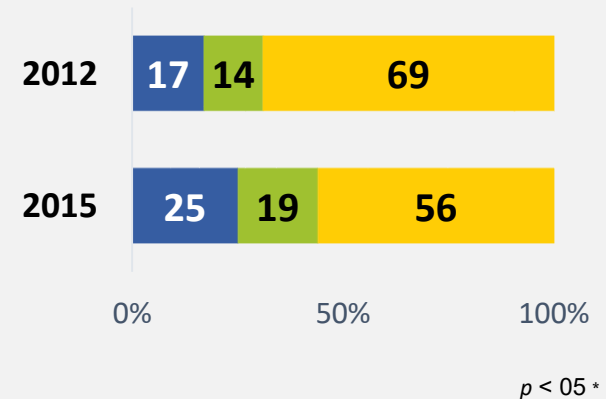
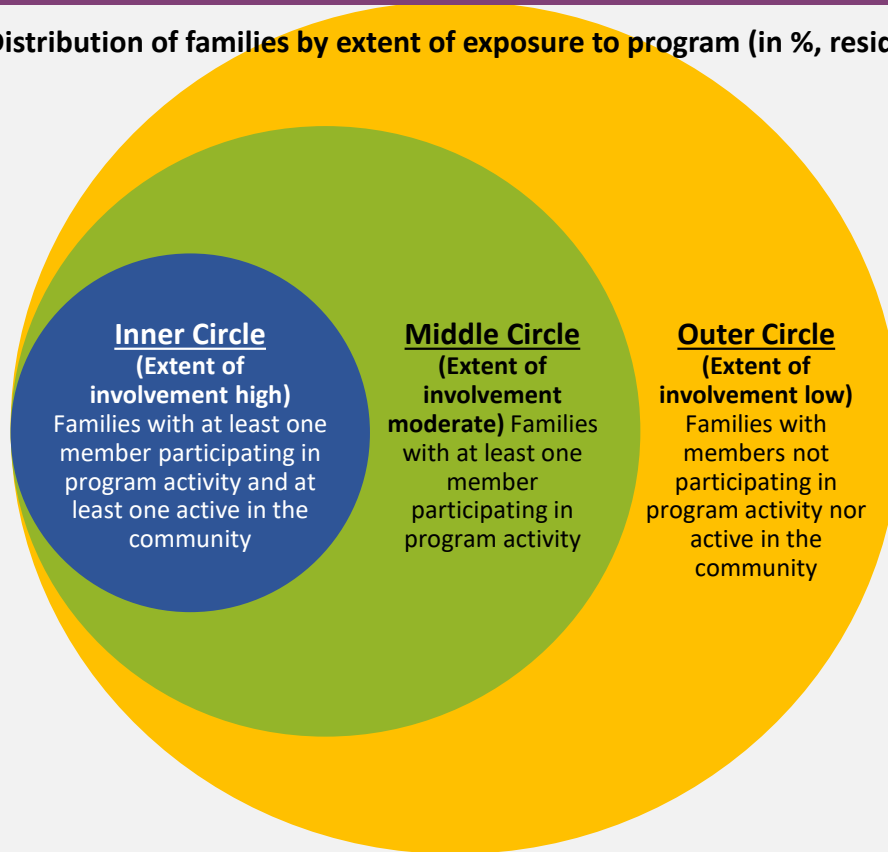
^ National average in the Jewish population



# Residents' Involvement – Circles of Exposure to Program

**Increase in rate of residents participating in program activities and active in the community**

**Distribution of families by extent of exposure to program (in %, residents' surveys, 2012-15)**



2012

The findings of the first survey show that a higher level of involvement in community life is related to more positive attitudes and experiences in the neighborhood

2012-2015

Program operators strive to expand the circle of residents involved in community life by including them in professional committees and response planning, and activating them further

2015

The findings of the second survey show a significant increase in the rate of families and youth in the inner circles



# Residents' Involvement – Social Capital

Social capital is a key concept that reflects the level of community efficacy and is an indication of the well-being of the individual and the community.<sup>^</sup>

The higher these measures, the greater the chance that the same group of people are operating as a community that works to improve the status of its members.



## Social cohesion

Measure that reflects patterns of social interaction and values such as familiarity and mutual trust<sup>^^</sup>



## Collective efficacy

Measure reflecting the group members' belief in the ability or efficacy of the group to act or achieve a shared goal <sup>^^^</sup>



## Informal social control

Measure that reflects the imposition of sanctions on individuals in a group by means of punishment for disrupting the existing social order, based on social norms accepted by the group members <sup>~</sup>



## Social interaction

Measure that expresses the strength and frequency of interaction among residents and the level of reciprocity in the relationship<sup>~~</sup>

<sup>^</sup> Putnam, 2000; Portes, 1998; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Pavin and Lev-Ari, 2003 (Hebrew)

<sup>^^</sup> Carpiano, 2006

<sup>^^^</sup> Carroll, Rosson, & Zhou, 2005; Carpiano, 2006

<sup>~</sup> Gilbert, 2008; Harpham, 2008

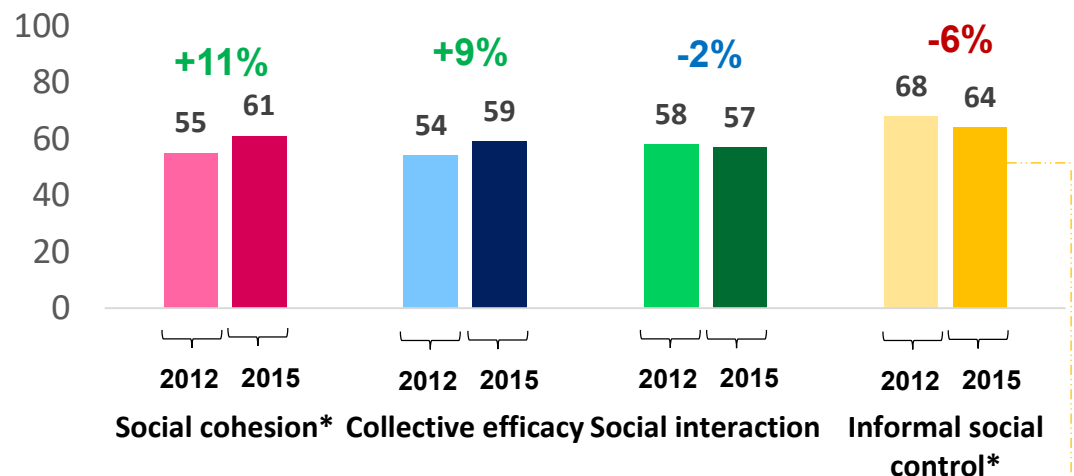
<sup>~~</sup> Dudwick, et al., 2006; Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1990



# Measures of Social Capital

Improvement in some of the measures of social capital^ among neighborhood residents – 2012-2015

(Residents' survey, average percentage and percentage of change)



Social cohesion\* Collective efficacy Social interaction Informal social control\*

$p < .05$  \*

Program directors explain the decline in social control by the conjecture that after the program has been running in the neighborhood for a number of years, the residents feel there is an organization looking after the neighborhood and along with the decline in public disturbances and vandalism and the increase in social cohesion, this leads to reduction in the need for this kind of social control.



Significant increase in social cohesion (shared norms, reciprocity, and a sense of trust among members of the group) from 55% in 2012 to 61% in 2015 and a certain increase in collective efficacy (residents' belief that they can work together to enhance their well-being) from 54% to 59%.



Decrease in social control, e.g., a decline in the percentage of adults who would reprimand neighborhood kids for behaving in a negative manner.

^Every one of the four measures that make up the concept of social capital (social cohesion, collective efficacy, social interaction and informal social control) is made up of several items. The score for each measure is calculated as an average percentage of the positive responses to each of the times (a positive response is defined as agreement with one of the two highest scores on a 4- or 5-point scale).





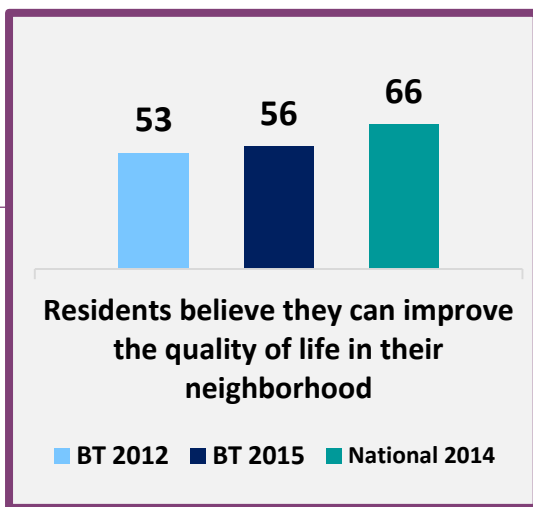
# Measures of Social Capital

Despite the improvement in collective efficacy and social cohesion, the outcomes for neighborhood residents are lower than the national average

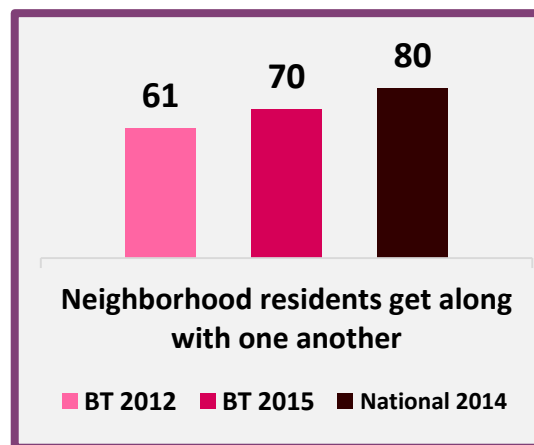
(Residents' survey and CBS Social Survey, average percent)

In 2014, and only that year, the CBS Social Survey included two questions representing two of the social capital measures – social cohesion and collective efficacy. A comparison of the equivalent responses from the 2015 residents' survey and the 2014 CBS Social Survey shows that despite the improvement among the residents, the data for BT populations are still lower than for the total population.

Item from the collective efficacy measure



Item from the social cohesion measure



$p < .05^*$

Strengthening the sense of efficacy among activist residents (from an in-depth interview)



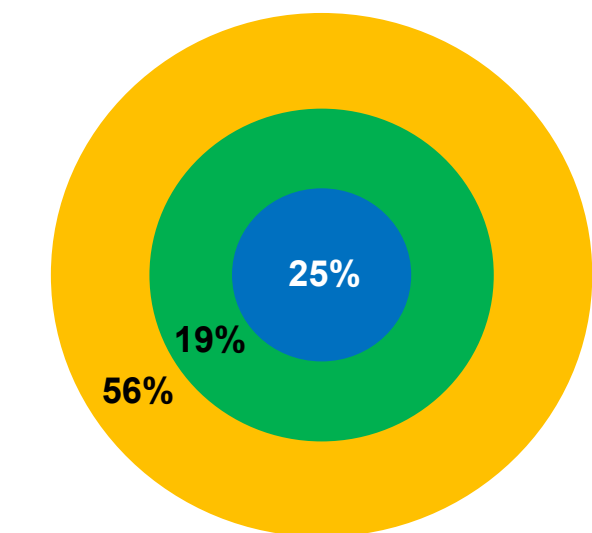
Activist:

*"It creates a situation in which people from low socio-economic strata believe that they can act and improve their quality of life and that not everything comes from above. And even little daily acts can considerably improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, for themselves, for their children too, and those around them."*



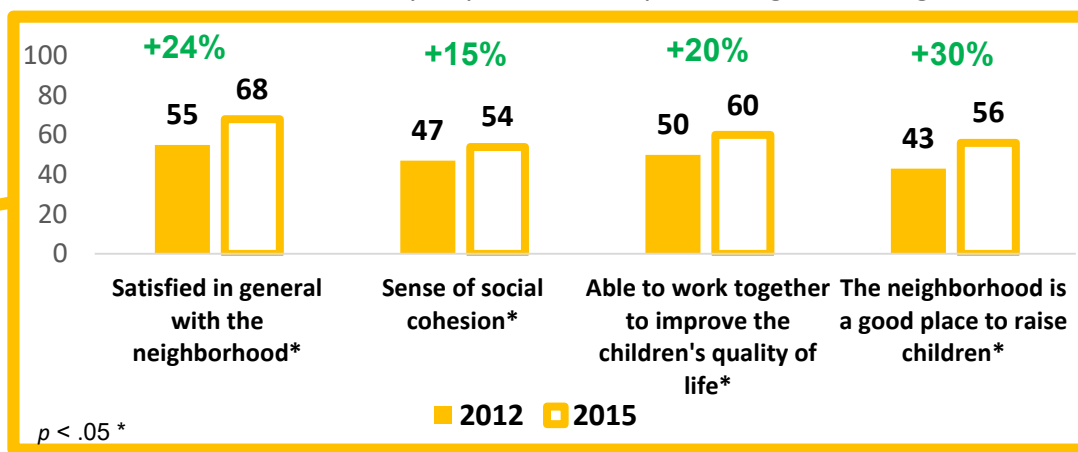
# Improvement in the Attitudes of Uninvolved Residents (the outer circle) – 2012-2015

In keeping with the program's theory of change, there was improvement in the various outcome measures among neighborhood residents who were not active in the community and did not participate in BT activities



- Inner circle – Contribute and participate
- Middle circle – Participate only
- Outer circle – Not involved

Attitudes of residents who are not involved  
(residents' survey in percent and percentage of change)



2012

2015

The attitudes of the residents towards the neighborhood, measures of social capital, and perceived extent of change were more positive among the involved residents (inner and middle circles) than among the others (outer circle)

In 2012, the program had still not been implemented for long enough and therefore most of the change was among residents who were active in the community

The percentages in the 3 circles were similar: There was considerable improvement among the residents in the outer circle, but there was no significant change among those in the inner circle

In 2015, the program had been implemented for long enough and deliberate efforts had been made to get residents who had not been exposed to the program and were not involved in community life more involved



# Interim Summary – Residents' Involvement in Neighborhood Life

## Increase in the percentage of residents involved in community life



- Increase of 41% in the percentage of adult residents who volunteer and are active in community life
- The percentage of adult volunteers in 2015 is similar to the national average (24% vs. 23%, respectively)

- Improvement of 11% in the sense of social cohesion
- Improvement of 9% in the percentage of residents who feel that they can work together to improve neighborhood life (collective efficacy)



## Social capital measures

## Circles of exposure to the program



- Increase in the percentage of families in the inner circle (participate in program activities and active in the community) from 17% in 2012 to 25% in 2015
- Improvement in the attitude of residents who are not active in the community or do not participate in program activities, e.g., an increase of 30% reporting that the neighborhood is a good place to raise children



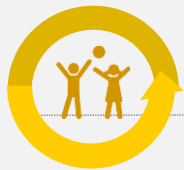
**Children  
and youth**

**Children live in  
safety without  
exposure to  
risk situations**

**Children are  
involved in  
community  
life**

**Children  
receive  
social  
support**





# Children and Youth

## Program activities to improve the status of children and youth



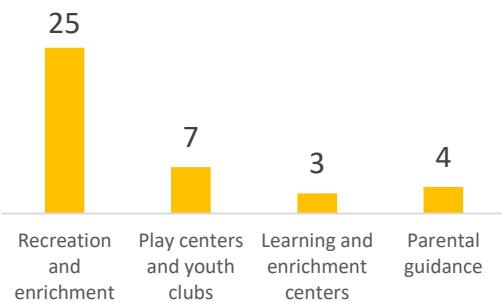
### Official at the local authority

*"You bring together parents of children with special needs and they speak the same language ... it's a group connected by a common distress. With their help, it was possible to introduce the Krembo Wings project [for children with and without disabilities] and start working. That's the success of the Better Together. And now they have set an appointment with the director general to enrich the activities for those same children."*

### Activities for children, youth and parents

- ✓ Creating youth groups and youth leadership
- ✓ Enrichment and recreational activities
- ✓ Activities through the School as a Community Anchor
- ✓ Play centers and youth clubs
- ✓ Parental guidance

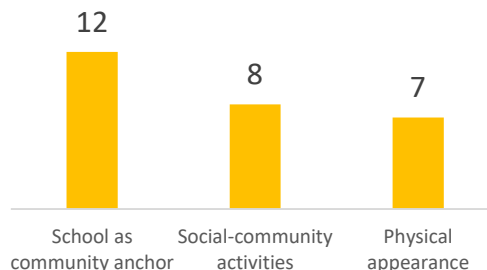
Percentage of activities for children and youth as a percentage of all projects in 2015 (%)\*



### Community activities

- ✓ Improving the neighborhood's physical appearance, parks, gardens and sports equipment
- ✓ Professional committees

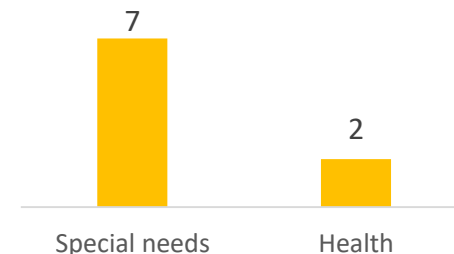
Percentage of community activities as a percentage of all projects in 2015 (%)\*



### Special Needs and Health

- ✓ Special activities for parents and children
- ✓ Joint forums for parents, groups of activists

Percentage of Activities in the Areas of Special Needs and Health as a Percentage of all Projects in 2015 (%)\*





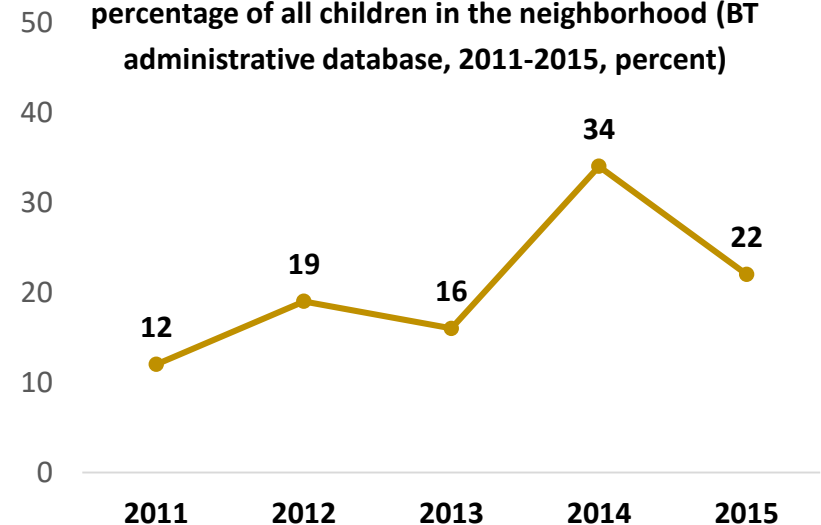
# Outcomes – Children and Youth

## Increased participation of children in interventions and enrichment activities (youth survey and BT administrative database)

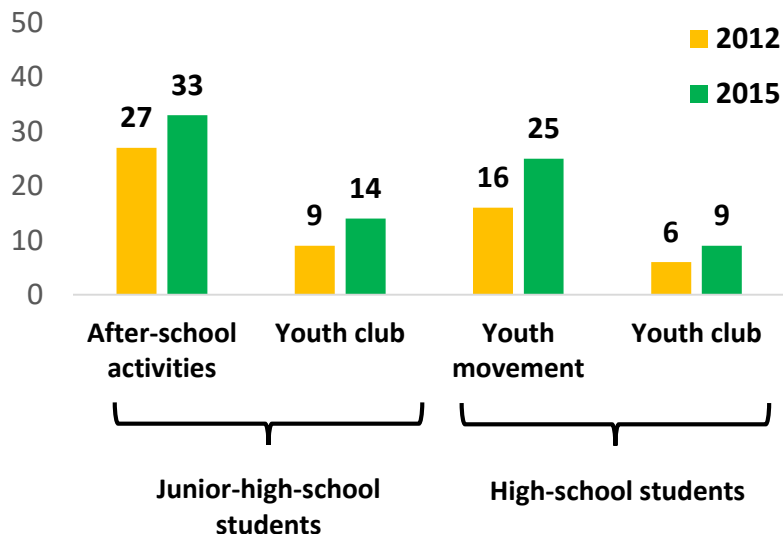
Increase in the percentage of children participating in long-term projects out of all children in the neighborhood.

The total number of children participating in long-term projects as a percentage of the children in all the neighborhoods together increased over the first four reporting periods from 12% to 34% and decreased to 22% in 2015.

Children participating in long-term projects as a percentage of all children in the neighborhood (BT administrative database, 2011-2015, percent)



Percentage of youth participating in informal enrichment activities (youth survey 2012-2015, percent)



Increase in the percentage of participants in enrichment activities:

- Junior-high-school students – participate more in after-school activities
- High-school students – participate more in youth movements

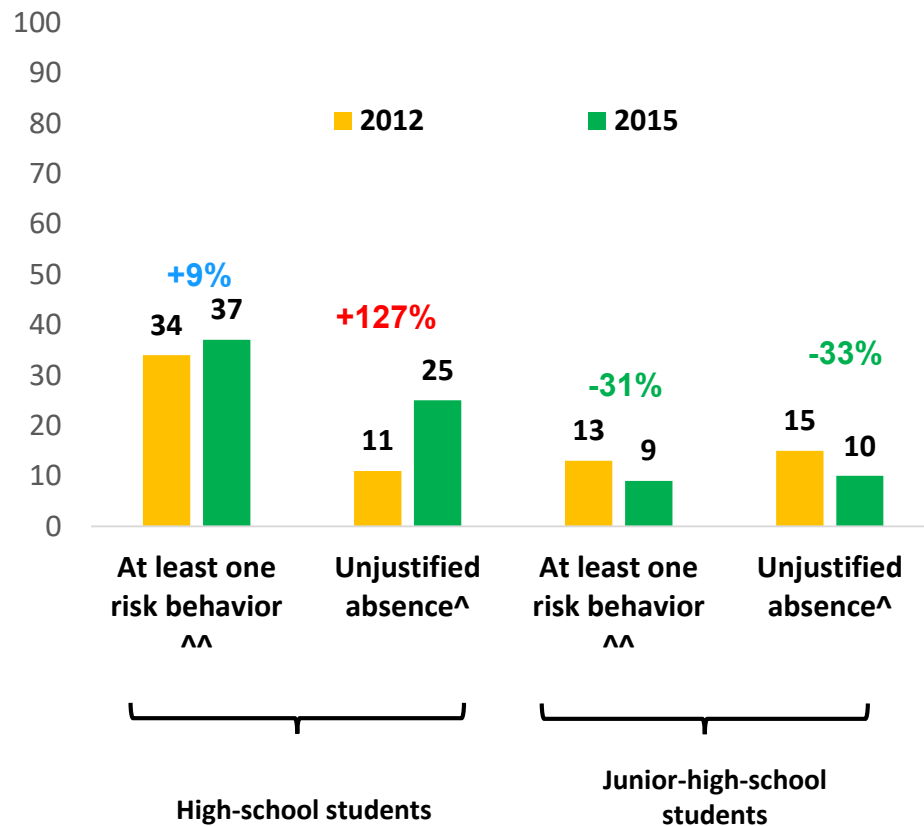




# Outcomes – Children and Youth

## Exposure to risk situations – Improvement among junior-high-school students, deterioration among high-school students

(Youth survey, 2012-2015, in percent and percentage of change)



There was improvement among junior-high-school students regarding risk behavior and school absenteeism



There was deterioration among high-school students regarding school absenteeism



Activist:

"BT gave me and the children of this neighborhood a lot. [In the past there was] no place to play, or to go to, only the streets. The streets harbored danger for children, but BT gave them a place that has computers, games; they go on walks, they learn a lot. They also teach Hebrew and they teach music and provide help with schoolwork. They now have a place to go to when in the past there was none, always at home, and I wouldn't let them leave the house because of the danger on the street."

^Absent for 3 or more days in the previous month, not due to illness

^^Smoking cigarettes, tobacco or water pipes, drinking alcohol once a week or getting drunk

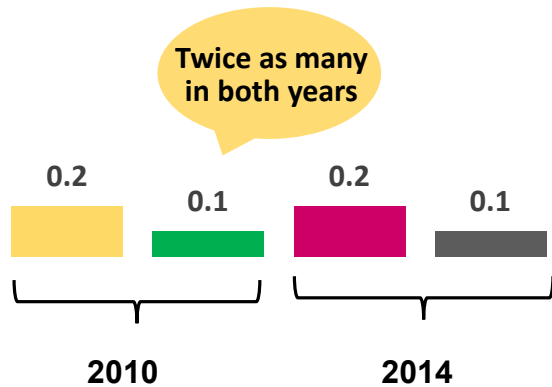
\* $p < .05$



# Outcomes – Children and Youth

**Delinquency and risk of school dropout among children and youth in BT neighborhoods compared with all children and youth in Israel (CBS data, percent)**

Minors charged with criminal offenses<sup>^</sup>

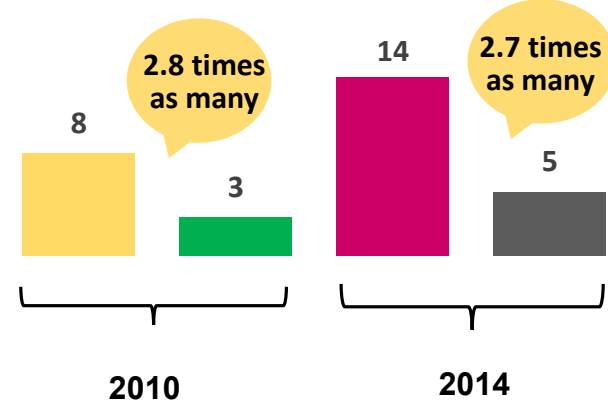


■ BT 2010 ■ National 2010 ■ BT 2014 ■ National 2014

## Charged with criminal offenses

- No decrease in rate of delinquent incidents committed by minors living in the neighborhood; it remained twice as high as in the general population

Children treated by attendance officers<sup>^^</sup>



■ BT 2010 ■ National 2010 ■ BT 2014 ■ National 2014

## Treated by attendance officers

- Increase in the rate of children treated by attendance officers among both BT students and the general population
- The rate of students treated by attendance officers was higher among BT neighborhood students but the gap between them and the general population remained similar for both years:
  - ✓ Program directors explained the findings by increased awareness among residents of the possibility of receiving assistance from social and enforcement services in the neighborhood, and by greater willingness to seek help from them.
  - ✓ Concomitantly, efforts were made at the Ministry of Education to increase the extent of recording by attendance officers, which may be the reason for the rise in the rate of students treated.

\*  $p < .05$

<sup>^</sup> The percentage among the 0-19 age group

<sup>^^</sup> The percentage among the 5-14 age group



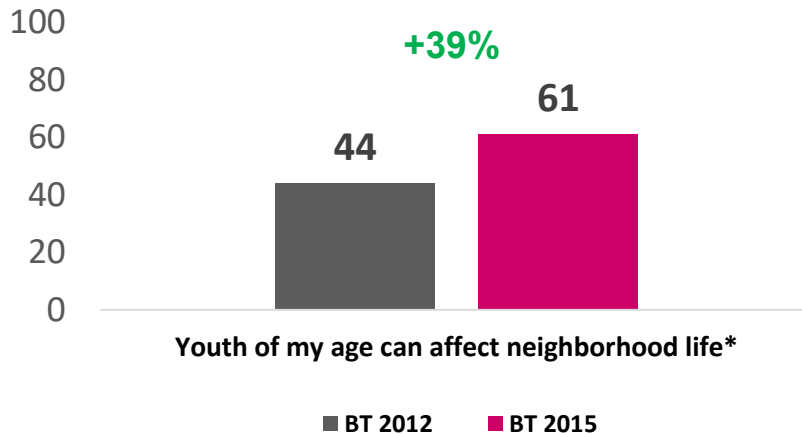


# Outcomes – Children and Youth

## Improvement in youth involvement in the community and social support

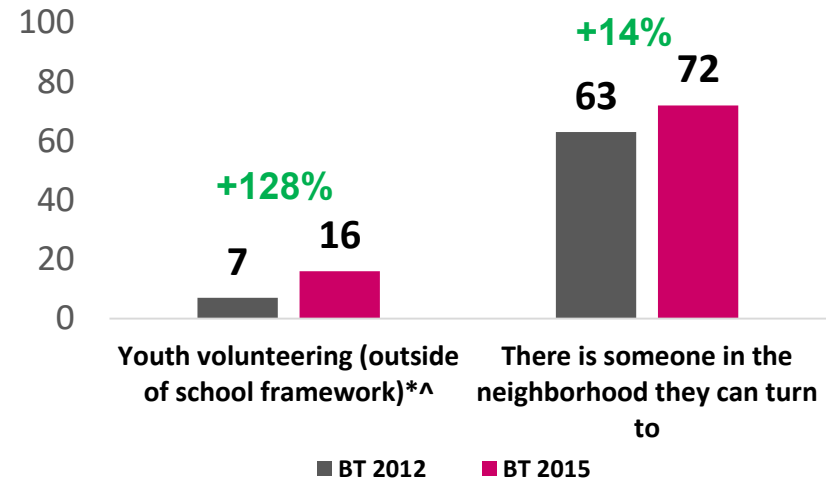
(Youth survey, 2012-15)

Increase in rate of high-school students who feel that they can affect neighborhood life (percent and percentage of change)



More high-school students feel that they can affect neighborhood life. No difference was found among junior-high-school students

Increase in rate of youth reporting that they volunteer\*\* and have whom to turn to in times of trouble (percent and percentage of change)



- ✓ More youth report that they volunteer outside of the school framework (the increase is more prominent among junior-high-school students than high-school students)
- ✓ More youth feel that there is someone in the neighborhood that they can turn to if they have a problem

\* p<.05

\*\* Regularly involved in community volunteer activities outside of the school framework

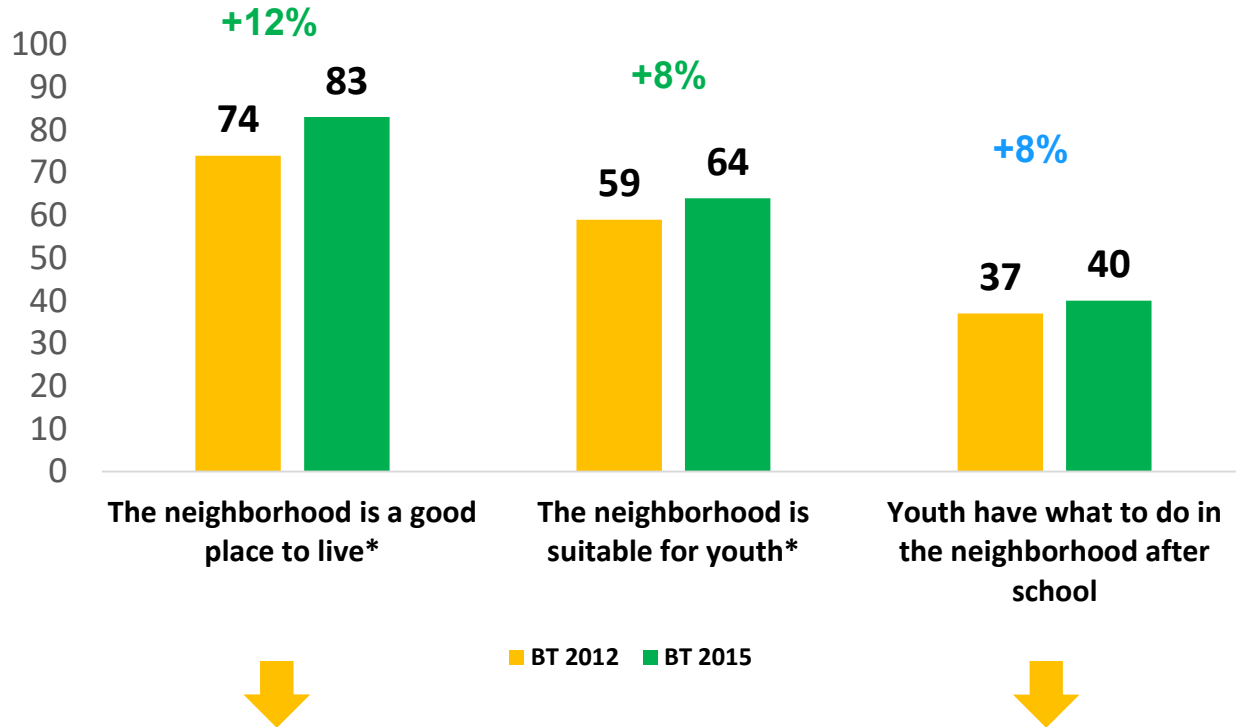
^ The increase is more significant among junior-high-school students and girls



# Outcomes – Children and Youth

## Improvement in attitudes towards the neighborhood among youth

(Youth survey, 2012-2015, in percent and percentage of change)



Improvement in the attitudes towards the neighborhood, among both junior-high-school and high-school students

There was no significant change in the rate of youth who think that there is what to do in the neighborhood in the afternoon, although it is higher among junior-high-school students than high-school students:

- Junior-high: from 45% to 48%
- High school: from 29% to 34%



# Interim Summary – Children and Youth

## Increase in rate of children participating in enrichment activities



- Increase in rate of junior-high-school students participating in afterschool activities (from 27% to 33%) and high-school students participating in youth movements (from 9% to 14%)
- Increase in rate of children participating in projects in which BT is involved until 2014 (from 12% to 34%), and a decrease in 2015 (22%)

## Satisfaction with life in the neighborhood



- Increase of 12% in rate of youth satisfied with life in the neighborhood
- No meaningful change in rate of youth reporting that there is what to do in the neighborhood (increase of 8%)

- Increase of 128% in rate of youth volunteering outside of school framework
- Increase of 14% in rate of youth feeling that there is someone in the neighborhood whom they can turn to if they have a problem
- Increase of 39% in rate of high-school students who feel that they can affect neighborhood life



## Reinforcing involvement and social support

- Decrease of 31% in risk behavior among junior-high-school students
- Improvement in absenteeism rate among junior-high-school students (decrease of 33%) and deterioration among high-school students (increase of 128%)



## Risk behaviors

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# Factors Contributing to the Success of the Program



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## A senior figure in the local authority

- ✓ Leads the program in the neighborhood
- ✓ Acts as a change agent assimilating the program in the local authority

*"When the mayor heads the program – this is a positive message for the entire municipal administration, for all the office holders. It's taken from the army – the place where the commander is or the area in which he is, is apparently the most important sector at the moment. The place of the mayor sends a message. It is enough that you are there and the whole system synchronizes according to what you defined as important [for the program]. If you say that it is important [but] are never there, they will understand that is lip service."*

**Mayor**



## Charismatic neighborhood coordinator

- ✓ Creates contact with the residents and the officials in the local authority
- ✓ Propels processes of change in the neighborhood

*"The program's success also depends on the personnel leading it. I say, first of all, human relations, you manage to communicate and create contacts with everyone. In the end, everything stands or falls on human relations, there's no way around it."*

**Director of municipal social service department**



## Involving active residents in program activities

- ✓ Active residents act as change agents for the program in the neighborhood
- ✓ They encourage all neighborhood residents to attend events and activities

*"A group [of activists] came up from the club took with them an amplifier and fed in some songs and went out to do the debka and dance in the park. They started singing and dancing debka and all the families participated, clapped hands. It was nice."*

*The truth is, it's wow. I didn't plan it. I see that the program is already assimilated. They created it, they wanted to do it, they planned it, they thought [of everything], they did it all by themselves."*

**Neighborhood coordinator**



## A physical center in the heart of the neighborhood, Better Together House

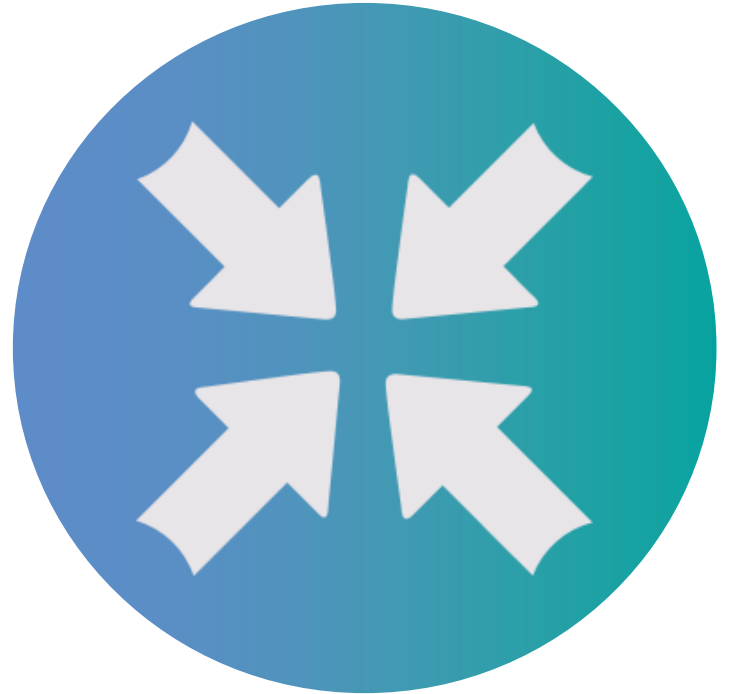
- ✓ Provides responses to the needs of the residents and activities for the children
- ✓ Serves as a meeting place and a resource to find solutions to residents' problems

*"I am at a central location. I go out, see people, talk with them. Contact with the residents is very important to me. It is important to show them that here – there is a home, a place, someone who will listen to you. Someone who will be there for you."*

**Neighborhood worker**

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## **Conclusion – Changes and Challenges**





# Summary – Resident and Neighborhood Changes



## The program managed to consolidate the workings of the levers of change

- ✓ Consolidation of the organizational structure
- ✓ Expansion of the number of responses and increased rate of their consumption
- ✓ Establishment of infrastructure of active residents working independently for the community



There was improvement in the residents' perception that the neighborhood was suitable for raising children (19%), and a greater sense that there was someone to turn to if there were problems with children (144+%)



The sense of personal safety rose as did satisfaction with the neighborhood (13%), and the gap from the general population narrowed



More residents, both adults and youth, are involved in the community (41+% and 128+%, respectively volunteer), and there is a palpable sense of their potential impact on neighborhood life (9% and 39%, respectively)



There are fewer reports by residents of vandalism and disorderly behavior, e.g., reports about noisy young gangs dropped by 38%



In keeping with the program's theory of change, the various outcome measures also improved among neighborhood residents who had not been involved in the community and had not participated in program activity (15%-30% on the various measures)



School absenteeism and risk behavior among middle-school students decreased (-33% and -31%, respectively)

# Summary - Challenges



**In 2015, at the last investigation, the number of responses of program involvement and the number of participant residents decreased**

**Despite improvement, resident attitudes to their neighborhood are still less positive than among the general population (10 to 15 percentage points on various measures)**

**The rate of responses for youth and rate of participants was relatively lower than for other age groups**

→ The elementary-school age group showed the highest rate of participation (some 50%)

→ High school youth less than middle-school youth felt that the neighborhood offered them activities (34% vs. 48%, respectively, in 2015)

**The program did not provide a response for populations at the extreme of the risk continuum**

→ The rate of high school students reported for risk behavior did not decrease (34% and 37%)

→ The rate of delinquent incidents committed by neighborhood residents (adults and minors) did not decrease, remaining twice as high as for the general population (according to the Central Bureau of Statistics)

# Sources and Credits

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