

# JDC's Global Strategy 2018

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# Introduction

JDC's mission has been constant for 103 years: saving Jewish lives and building Jewish life. While this mission is eternal, the way we pursue it constantly changes. As needs and opportunities change, we adjust our mix of programs, scaling up in some countries, while scaling back in others. Indeed, this flexibility is fundamental to our mission. As the “global 911” for needy individuals and communities, we have to go where we are most needed.

This document surveys JDC's global strategy for 2018. Nearly two-thirds of our 2018 global budget is devoted to two general categories of programs: first, caring for elderly Jews in the former Soviet Union (FSU), who are the poorest Jews in the world; and second, improving the lives of Israel's neediest citizens. While the mission is the same in both places – helping vulnerable people – JDC pursues it very differently. In the FSU, JDC *substitutes* for government services (since there is essentially no government safety net); in Israel, by contrast, JDC *improves* government services (by designing and piloting innovative care models).

In addition to caring for needy people, JDC also builds sustainable Jewish communities across the globe. We engage Jews who are disconnected from their tradition, bringing them back to the Jewish people. JDC also strengthens local communities. We train leaders, nurture vibrant local institutions, and partner with them to offer innovative programming. Through this work, JDC is reawakening Jewish life in places where it was dormant for decades.

Our care and community development missions complement and reinforce each other. For example, by strengthening local communities, JDC empowers them to bear more of the burden of providing care.

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I am grateful for the thoughtful input of JDC's regional directors, planning staff, Global Program Committee, and Cabinet.

**David M. Schizer**  
CEO

# I. Executive Summary

## A. Applying Three Core Principles

To ensure that JDC pursues our mission as effectively as possible, our planning process applies three core principles: First, to target the right problems, we should prioritize important issues at the core of our mission. Second, our responses to these problems should be as impactful and cost-effective as possible. Third, and relatedly, we should prioritize problems that other organizations cannot (or do not) address as effectively.

## B. Saving Jewish Lives

The heart of our mission is to save Jewish lives. Across the globe, JDC helps Jews who are in need or in danger, addressing both short-term emergencies and long-term needs. Since crises can happen anywhere, we must be prepared to respond wherever we are needed. In determining priorities, JDC's two basic criteria are need and impact. Our welfare programs focus on clients who are especially vulnerable, and prioritize initiatives that make the most difference in their lives.

Because elderly Jews in Ukraine, Russia, and other countries in the FSU are the poorest Jews in the world, JDC spends nearly one-third of our global budget on welfare for them. In doing so, we are mindful not only of their poverty, but also of the fact that governments and other NGOs in the FSU provide very little support for them. This incredibly needy population is an urgent priority for JDC, and we appreciate the life-saving support of our partners, including the Claims Conference, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Jewish Federations of North America, World Jewish Relief, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and the Maurice and Vivienne Wohl Charitable Foundation.

In Israel, our focus also is on needy populations, and we spend almost a third of our global budget on welfare programs there. But the rationale for this work is different. Unlike in the FSU, vulnerable Israelis can rely on a government safety net. JDC's role is to *improve* this safety net. Our focus is on helping needy Israelis help themselves. To do so, we partner with the government, running pilots to develop innovations in social services. These pilots offer unique leverage and impact, which other NGOs

cannot offer. On average, the government funds 66% of a pilot's cost. If it succeeds, a pilot transforms service delivery throughout the country.

In the rest of the world, while we stand ready to rescue Jews in emergencies, our programs providing (nonemergency) care are much more limited. In Central and Eastern Europe, we dispense Claims Conference funds to local communities for care for Holocaust survivors (though we play a more active role in this care in Hungary). In limited circumstances, JDC also provides care to Jews who are not Holocaust survivors in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but these programs are narrowly targeted. In Western Europe, we generally do not run welfare programs, relying instead on government safety nets and well-organized local Jewish communities to do so.

But in Western Europe, terrorism and rising anti-Semitism have become increasingly serious threats to Jewish communities. In response, much of our work in Western Europe focuses on these threats.

## C. Building Jewish Life

In addition to saving Jewish lives, JDC also is committed to building Jewish life. This community development mission has two goals: first, engaging Jews who have become disconnected from their tradition; and, second, building sustainable communities by nurturing and partnering with vibrant local institutions. Progress in our community development mission obviously helps our care mission, as local communities develop a greater capacity to provide care.

While our community development agenda is global in scope, JDC prioritizes communities with unrealized potential. On one hand, communities have to be *vibrant* enough to justify the investment (e.g., with a minimum number of Jewish young people). On the other hand, communities have to be *undeveloped* enough to need assistance.

As a result, we prioritize Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the FSU. These places once were thriving centers of Jewish learning, culture, and observance. There is a significant population of Jews in these places, but Jewish communal life there was devastated by both Nazism and communism.

JDC also makes community development investments in other places, tailoring these initiatives to local needs. In Israel, for example, JDC nurtures nonprofits,

develops innovative government institutions, and trains leaders for nonprofits and government. In North America, by contrast, our focus is on outreach to disengaged Jews in their 20s and 30s. Many in this generation are committed to international humanitarian work, so JDC's Entwine program engages them with service opportunities across the globe, placing them both in Jewish communities and in JDC's disaster response and international development programs.

As with care, we seek to advance our community development goals efficiently and cost-effectively, prioritizing the most impactful initiatives. While our community development strategy is tailored to local conditions, it has five features that apply virtually everywhere. First, JDC is inclusive and pluralistic. We do not endorse a particular denomination of Judaism. Second, we use a life cycle approach, offering programs for people at different stages in life. Third, youth engagement is a key priority, since young people are essential to a community's future. Fourth, leadership training also is quite important, since communities cannot be self-sufficient without capable leadership. Fifth, volunteerism is also a priority, as a strategy not only to deliver services cost-effectively, but also to engage volunteers.

JDC focuses not only on *what* has to be done, but also on *who* does it. In deciding how to allocate scarce resources, we account for what other international nonprofits are already doing. For example, although we operate youth camps in Central and Eastern Europe, we do not do so in the FSU, since the Jewish Agency operates youth camps there. JDC also is strategic in dividing labor with local communities. Since our fundamental goal is to help communities become independent, we prefer to partner with them, instead of implementing programs on our own. But since communities are at different stages of development, the division of labor varies, depending on local conditions.

## II. Applying Three Core Principles

To ensure that we are nimble and creative in responding to new challenges, JDC introduced zero-based budgeting for the 2018 planning process. The fact that JDC ran a program before does not mean we should necessarily do so again. Instead, we should take a fresh look every year, making sure that our programs address the right problems as effectively as possible.

Of course, aspects of our strategy require several years to accomplish, and thus benefit from multi-year planning. Yet even multi-year strategies should be reviewed annually, so progress is monitored and course corrections are considered.

Our fundamental goal is to maximize social return, using our scarce resources to advance our mission as effectively as we can. To do so, we need to make as much progress as possible in tackling problems that are central to our mission, and are not being addressed adequately by others. Therefore, to decide which initiatives to pursue, we apply three core principles:

### A. How important is the problem?

First, the problems we target should be at the core of JDC's mission, and should offer us the opportunity to make the greatest difference. We should prioritize needs that are both acute and addressable. In providing care, our focus should be on clients who are especially needy, and thus benefit the most from our assistance. In strengthening Jewish communities, JDC should prioritize communities that both need our help and can use it effectively.

### B. How effective is our response?

Second, in addition to targeting the right problems, JDC needs to pick the right responses, prioritizing ones that are most effective. Our goal is to maximize the impact of every dollar we spend. To do so, we should use “best in class” program design, drawing on our global expertise. We should make data-informed decisions by testing the effectiveness of programs. Since we often work with a local community or another partner, we should think carefully about the most effective division of labor. Where possible, we also should leverage our efforts with matching dollars.



## **C. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

Third, an initiative is more likely to succeed if we have a comparative advantage in advancing it. Are other organizations engaged in similar efforts, so there is less need for JDC to address the issue? Compared with other organizations, is JDC more likely to succeed?

In considering this question, we are mindful of JDC's institutional strengths, including our long-standing relationships with hundreds of Jewish communities throughout the world, our close working relationship with the Government of Israel, our global network of talented and committed professionals, our ability to apply expertise developed in one part of the world to analogous problems in another, our textured knowledge of Jewish communities across the globe, our ability to convene, and our reputation for integrity.

# III. Saving Jewish Lives

The heart of JDC's mission is to save Jewish lives. Across the globe, we provide urgently needed assistance to Jews who are in need or in danger. Since wars, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and economic crises can happen anywhere, we go wherever we are needed. JDC's two main criteria are need and impact, so we focus on Jews who are most vulnerable, and prioritize initiatives that make the most difference in their lives.

As a result, nearly two-thirds of JDC's global budget is allocated to two critically important types of welfare initiatives: first, care for elderly Jews in Russia, Ukraine, and the rest of the FSU; and, second, care for Israel's most vulnerable populations. JDC's welfare initiatives in the rest of the world are more limited. In 2018, we are increasing our focus on the threat of terrorism in Western Europe, though this initiative is a modest fraction of the global budget.

## A. Care in the FSU

### 1. How important is the problem?

The FSU has approximately one million Jews. Approximately one-quarter of them are elderly. On January 1, 2017, we were serving 110,000 elderly clients.

These clients are the poorest Jews in the world. They live on meager government pensions, which are as low as two dollars per day. Aside from these pensions, their countries have essentially no safety net for elderly citizens.

The poverty they face today is the latest in a series of hardships this generation has faced. Nearly half are Holocaust survivors, who endured unimaginable horrors and experienced unendurable losses during their formative years. Because ten million Soviet soldiers were killed in World War II, many grew up without fathers, and many are women who never married.

They spent most of their adult lives under a communist regime that discriminated relentlessly against Jews and dismantled Jewish communal institutions. While many still enjoyed professional success – for instance, as engineers and scientists in the Soviet missile program in eastern Ukraine – they could not earn (or save) much money.

While FSU elderly generally rely on their children for care, many elderly Jews are alone, since so many of their children, nieces, and nephews left the FSU. One million Jews went to Israel, and hundreds of thousands emigrated to Western Europe and the United States. It is hard to imagine a cohort of Jews who are more deserving of life-saving support.

This challenge will be with us for some time. Over the next two decades, there will still be tens of thousands of needy elderly Jews in the FSU, as the next generation ages. Unless the region's economy changes significantly – a scenario that seems unlikely at the moment – many elderly will be extremely poor, and will require food, medicine, and homecare to survive.

Even so, there are three reasons why the aggregate need – although still significant – will not be as acute as it is today. First, many Jews left the FSU three decades ago, so the number of Jewish elderly should decline from its current level. Second, this cohort will spend a significant portion of their working lives in the post-Soviet era; as a result, they will have more opportunity to accumulate assets, although economic conditions in the former Soviet Union are still quite challenging. Third, as local Jewish communities become better organized and young people become more committed to communal needs, local communities will bear a larger share of these burdens.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

In 2018, we will spend over \$100 million on food, medicine, winter relief, socialization, and home care for 100,000 elderly Jewish clients in the FSU. The impact of this support is incalculable. It is no exaggeration to say that thousands would die without it.

While the sums *in the aggregate* are large, the cost of this life-saving support *for each client* is astonishingly low. For example, we spend twenty-one dollars per month (on average) to provide food and medicine to a client who is not a Nazi victim. We pay only four dollars (on average) to provide an hour of home care. As a result, we spend only \$180 per month to provide a client who is not a Nazi victim with food, medicine and home care, which amounts to less than \$2,200 per year. (We are able to spend more on Nazi victims, since we have dedicated funding for them from the Claims Conference.)

Ideally, we would spend even more on FSU elderly. Fortunately, the German Government has agreed to increase the budget for both home care and material

support for Nazi victims worldwide. Because we have documented significant unmet needs among our Nazi Victim clients in the FSU, we expect a larger grant from the Claims Conference than in 2017. At the same time, we will lose a different source of Holocaust reparations in 2018: the Swiss Banks settlement. JDC received the last payment (of approximately nine million dollars) in 2017.

In addition to the loss of Swiss Banks funding, we face four other challenges. First, most of our funding is in dollars, but we spend this money in other currencies, which have strengthened against the dollar. Since many of our clients are in Russia, and the program's senior managers are in Israel, the strengthening of the ruble and shekel in recent months has raised our costs.

Second, inflation in wages and other costs has also increased our expenses significantly. For instance, for clients who are not Nazi victims, the cost of providing care in 2018 will be \$1.5 million more than in 2016: \$750,000 from less favorable exchange rates and \$750,000 from inflation.

Third, raising money for our non-Nazi victim program is challenging, since many potential funders do not know of the dire circumstances of these clients. A key priority for JDC is to raise awareness in order to generate new sources of funding. This is especially important, since some traditional funders of this program have reduced their funding. In response, JDC is launching a campaign to raise additional funds for this life-saving work.

Fourth, and relatedly, we also face an important long-term challenge. Approximately 75% of the budget for FSU elder care comes from Holocaust reparations money, but this funding will decline significantly in the coming decade as our Nazi victim clients pass away. We will have less need for this revenue when we no longer have these clients on our aid roles, but we will still have large numbers of clients who are not Nazi victims. Therefore, a key challenge remains: maintaining our infrastructure. Currently, reparations money funds approximately half the cost of our infrastructure, including the social welfare (or *Hesed*) centers where we provide care, the supervisors who train and manage our home care workers, the auditors who ensure the program's fiscal integrity, etc.

In 2018, we will lose approximately \$1 million for infrastructure from the Swiss Banks Settlement. Over the coming decade, we expect to lose another \$6 million annually of infrastructure funding from the Claims Conference. Without this revenue, we will have to pare back this infrastructure and find new funding sources for the lighter

footprint we maintain in order to maintain care for thousands of clients who are not Nazi victims.

In response, in addition to raising as much money as possible, as emphasized above, JDC also needs to ensure that every dollar we spend on our FSU program is used as efficiently as possible in order to maximize the number of lives we save. As a result, our FSU program has been undergoing a comprehensive planning process, which has involved rigorous analysis internally, as well as extensive consultation with partners. As we adapt to changing realities in the field, our goal is to continue to provide this life-saving support in the most cost-effective way possible. To accomplish this, we are focusing on five goals:

- First, we are cutting costs. In recent years, for example, we have reduced program management costs by approximately \$3.5 million annually (including \$500,000 as part of the 2018 planning cycle). In the coming years, we will generate more savings by consolidating a significant number of *Hesed* Centers and identifying other efficiencies.
- Second, we are allocating care more rigorously. For example, in providing home care to non-Nazi victims, we will prioritize clients who have the most severe physical conditions and do not have other access to care (e.g., from family).
- Third, we are developing new care models that have a lighter infrastructure, providing some supervisory and back office functions remotely.
- Fourth, we are looking for alternative sources of revenue to support our infrastructure. In St. Petersburg, for example, the largest social welfare center has a government contract to care for FSU elderly who are not Jewish. We are partnering with UJA-Federation of NY in a study to explore other alternatives as well.
- Fifth, as discussed below, we are working to enhance the capacity of local communities to provide care, so they bear a greater share of this burden over time.

In short, the need to care for elderly Jews in the FSU is urgent, and providing this care is more difficult than ever. Therefore, it is crucial to develop more cost-effective ways to provide care, and JDC is investing a great deal of institutional energy to do so.

Without this care, thousands of elderly Jews would die. Since lives are at stake,

the need for incremental funding is most acute for FSU elderly. As a result, caring for them is our highest fundraising priority. For the same reason, JDC is redirecting money from other FSU programs, as well as from programs in other regions, to ensure that JDC continues to provide basic care to the neediest Jews in the world.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

JDC has been caring for FSU elderly for over 25 years. As the Claims Conference's sole care provider in the FSU, JDC has developed deep expertise and has built an infrastructure to provide cost-effective and high quality care. This expertise and infrastructure give JDC unique advantages in caring both for Nazi victims and for elderly who are not Nazi victims. While JDC has important partners in providing this care – the Claims Conference, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, the Jewish Federations of North America, World Jewish Relief, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the Maurice and Vivienne Wohl Charitable Foundation, and others – no other international NGO has a comparable ability to discharge this important responsibility.

Over time, it is important for local communities in the FSU to take over more of this responsibility. This is an important goal for JDC, as discussed below. But for now, local communities generally do not have the capacity to provide this care. In caring for elderly Jews in the FSU, therefore, JDC plays an indispensable role.

JDC also provides care to another needy population in the FSU: Jewish children with physical, psychological, and intellectual disabilities. In 2018, the budget will be \$1.6 million, which is much smaller than our program for FSU elderly. We have reduced the size of our Children's Initiative (CI) in recent years, prioritizing the neediest cases. Obviously, care for children is extremely important, since changing the lives of children can have positive effects for the rest of their lives.

Although we are proud of CI's impact on needy Jewish children, JDC focuses more on elder care for two reasons. First, relatively modest amounts of money (e.g., \$21 per month for food and medicine) are more likely to have a transformative impact on elderly than on children at risk. For the latter, larger and costlier interventions often are needed to make a real difference, such as better educational opportunities and a different home environment. Second, needy FSU children and their families are more likely than FSU elderly to receive support from other nonprofits (e.g., Chabad, Adayin Lo, and Tikvah), and also are better positioned to take advantage of other opportunities that are less feasible for FSU elderly (e.g., *aliya*).

## B. Innovative Social Services for Israel's Vulnerable Populations

After the FSU, our second largest investment in care is in Israel. While Israel has experienced a remarkable economic boom in recent decades, this economic miracle has not reached all of Israel's citizens. Therefore, JDC's work in Israel focuses on the most vulnerable populations: Israelis who are chronically unemployed, elderly, children at risk, or people living with disabilities.

Although the overall goal in Israel is the same as in the FSU – helping vulnerable people – the approach is quite different, as noted above. Unlike the FSU, Israel is a wealthy country with a government safety net. So instead of providing social services on our own, as we do in the FSU, JDC partners with the government to make its social services more effective.

This model provides extraordinary leverage, ensuring that modest financial investments have disproportionate impact, changing the way the Israeli government serves vulnerable populations. It is not an exaggeration to say that, with a very limited budget, JDC is able to change the lives of thousands of Israelis and, in some ways, to transform Israeli society.

### 1. How important is the problem?

Although Israel is a prosperous country, 20% of Israelis live in poverty, and income inequality there is the second widest in the OECD. Unless effective steps are taken to help Israelis at the bottom of the economic ladder, this problem will get worse, since important communities with low-incomes – the *Haredim* (ultra-Orthodox) and Israeli Arabs – have high birth rates. In fact, half of the children in first grade in Israel are from these communities. For Israel's economic miracle to be sustainable over the long term, these and other communities at the margins of Israeli society need to join the economic mainstream.

Most of JDC's work in Israel focuses on helping these poor Israelis to help themselves. As Maimonides said, "The highest degree of charity—above which there is no higher—is he who strengthens the hand of his poor fellow Jew and gives him a gift or [an interest-free] loan or enters into a business partnership with the poor person."

## **a. Unemployed**

In this spirit, a powerful way to aid vulnerable Israelis is to help them find jobs. This step assists not only the unemployed Israelis themselves, but also their children (who are less likely to be at risk) and their parents (who are less likely to need support from the government). The need for this aid is urgent, since 750,000 Israelis are not in the work force. In addition, 25% of workers are in low wage jobs, compared with only 15% on average in the OECD.

Our TEVET partnership with the Israeli government is making significant strides in bringing ultra-Orthodox Israelis and Israeli Arabs into the workforce. For instance, since TEVET began this work 12 years ago, 42,000 ultra-Orthodox men have entered the workforce; nearly half of them (17,000) are JDC clients. TEVET also focuses on advancing the prospects of those who already are in the work force. JDC will spend \$24.9 million on TEVET in 2018.

## **b. Elderly**

JDC also focuses on Israel's growing population of elderly. The number of elderly adults is expected to double in the next 15 years to 15% of the population. The number of Israelis between 65 and 75 – the so-called “young elderly” – will increase by 66% in the next five years, and only 1/3 of them will have pensions from their jobs.

This demographic shift will put significant pressure on the Israeli government budget, unless these “young elderly” stay in the work force longer and plan more effectively for their retirement. In the spirit of Maimonides, everyone will be better off if this generation is able to remain more independent and self-sufficient. As a result, the primary focus of our ESHEL partnership with the government is to keep elderly workers in the work force longer and to counsel them about financial literacy and retirement planning. JDC will spend \$14.1 million on ESHEL in 2018.

## **c. Children at Risk**

JDC also focuses on the other end of the demographic spectrum, where worrisome trends have to be reversed. For example, 15% of Israeli high school students are at risk of dropping out. Problems are concentrated among poor Israelis, and run in families. Only 25% of high school students from the lowest socio-economic cohort are eligible for higher education (compared with 75%



overall). Among students whose mothers were not eligible for higher education, only 64.5% of Jews and 53% of Arabs are eligible (compared with 91% of students whose mothers were eligible).

In the spirit of Maimonides, helping young people overcome these challenges enables them to be more self-sufficient for the rest of their lives. While ASHALIM originally focused on children in elementary and middle school, we have made significant progress there. Our new focus, therefore, is on the years before and after: preparing children from at-risk populations for first grade, and helping them after they complete high school. A third key strategy is to focus not just on the child, but also on the family, on the theory that healthy and well-functioning families are more likely to produce healthy and well-functioning children. JDC will spend \$33.6 million on ASHALIM in 2018.

#### **d. Disabilities**

JDC also helps another important cohort – Israelis with disabilities – to live more independent lives. Nearly 800,000 Israelis have a disability, representing 25% of the work force. They experience higher rates of poverty and lower rates of employment. Only 18% have higher education degrees. Israel also relies heavily on residential facilities to care for disabled Israelis: 10,000 Israelis live in these facilities, compared with 29,000 in the United States, even though the U.S. population is over 30 times larger.

In response, JDC's ISRAEL UNLIMITED initiative helps disabled Israelis live independently. For example, we provide apartments renovated to accommodate their needs, as well as a network of social workers to assist them. JDC also helps them enter the work force. JDC will spend \$5.3 million on ISRAEL UNLIMITED in 2018, in a partnership with the Government of Israel and the Ruderman Family Foundation.

#### **e. Important Issues JDC Is Not Addressing**

As a way to test whether JDC is targeting the right problems, we included in our planning process the task of identifying significant issues in Israel that we are *not* addressing. Several clearly are not appropriate for JDC, and are being addressed by other NGOs. For example, environmental challenges are not within our mission. Likewise, the housing crisis in Israel is severe, but JDC does not have expertise about potential responses, such as regulatory changes to encourage

building or the construction of low-income housing.

Since other issues on this list are closer to our mission, we are exploring ways to focus more on them. For example, improving the education of ultra-Orthodox Israelis and Israeli Arabs has obvious synergies with our efforts to bring them into the workforce. In addition, Israel's lack of social cohesion, which President Rivlin has highlighted in warning about growing tensions among the nation's "four tribes," is an issue we already address indirectly. For example, helping members of two of these tribes (the ultra-Orthodox and Israeli Arabs) to enter the workforce creates opportunities for Israelis of diverse background to interact with each other, which allows them to develop greater mutual understanding. Given the importance of this issue, JDC also is exploring other ways to enhance social cohesion.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

In addressing these important problems, JDC uses a unique business model, which maximizes our impact. Our role in Israel is to promote innovation. We run experiments to identify more promising ways to deliver social services. We analyze data from these pilots to assess their impact, often relying on the expertise of Myers-JDC-Brookdale (MJB), which is one of JDC's two affiliated research institutes (along with the Taub Center). If these experiments succeed, the Israeli government takes over the program and scales it up, implementing it throughout the nation.

Nurturing "start-ups" is an especially impactful model for JDC for five reasons. First, we take maximum advantage of our professionals' creativity and commitment. Their mission is not to run existing programs, but to launch and test new ones.

Second, JDC's donors enjoy exceptional leverage. For each dollar our donors invest to pilot a new program, the Government of Israel invests two dollars (on average). Once the pilot proves successful, and the Government of Israel takes over the program, our donors no longer provide any funding.

Third, once a pilot succeeds in this way, the program becomes national in scope. Not only does a modest-sized program become a very large one, but key areas of policy can change significantly. In other words, with a relatively modest investment of seed money, our donors can transform the way social services are delivered across the country.

Fourth, the whole point of this approach is to figure out what works, and what does

not. We collect data and conduct rigorous tests to ensure that we actually are achieving what we set out to achieve. By definition, therefore, we focus our scarce staff time and resources on initiatives that offer significant payoffs.

Fifth, JDC also involves other nonprofits in these pilots, and thus enhances the intellectual capital of the nonprofit sector in Israel. JDC essentially functions as the architect and general contractor, designing the program and ensuring that it is implemented properly. But instead of running the program ourselves, we involve other nonprofits for day-to-day operations. When the experiment is completed, our nonprofit partners have already developed expertise in running it, which helps smooth the transition when JDC hands the program over to the government.

Although this model has significant advantages, it poses four challenges as well. One is to maintain the program's quality when it is scaled up and spun off. To ensure that this is the case, JDC is experimenting with playing a continuing supervisory role in some cases, even after the government has taken over the program.

A second challenge is to make sure that we continue to focus on innovating, and are not devoting too much institutional energy to running programs that are ready to be spun off. We use the acronym "DNA" to describe our approach, since our involvement with a pilot has three stages: 1) design; 2) nurture; and 3) accelerate. At the moment, we believe we have too many programs at a later stage, and not enough in early stages, so an important goal for 2018 is to change this mix.

Third, we need to ensure that our professionals have cutting-edge expertise, and that we have a continuous stream of promising ideas to pilot. Our new JDC Campus for Learning and Development helps us cultivate expertise in-house, while our innovation hub in Lod enhances the flow of innovative ideas at JDC. Like our Mozaik Hub for grassroots innovation in Budapest, the Lod Hub provides space, mentoring, and limited financial support for independent social entrepreneurs. In addition to the ideas we develop "in house" at JDC, we will screen ideas developed at the Hub to look for promising initiatives to pilot in Israel.

Finally, our commitment to work in Israel, and to match funds provided by the Government of Israel, leaves us exposed to fluctuations in the shekel, as well as to inflation in the Israeli labor market. The weakening of the dollar against the shekel has reduced our purchasing power in Israel (since we raise most of our philanthropic support in dollars). Likewise, a large increase in the pay of Israeli government officials is also putting pressure on our budget, since the pay of our employees in Israel

partially tracks the pay of government officials.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

JDC occupies a unique position in Israel. Because we have been delivering social services in Israel for 103 years, we are a trusted partner that works with parties across the political spectrum. In recognition of our unique status, the Government of Israel exempts JDC from bureaucratic requirements that generally apply to collaborations with nonprofits.

Yet although we are unique, we are not alone. Other nonprofits also do important work in Israel. In deciding what projects we should undertake, we are careful to consider what others are doing. If other organizations are working on an issue, we are less likely to do so. If we still get involved, we are likely to do so by partnering with them. This way, we are able to focus our precious resources on problems that others are either less able or less likely to address.

## **C. Care Outside of the FSU and Israel**

In addition to providing care in the FSU and Israel, JDC provides care in other places as well. We stand ready to go wherever the need is greatest. In principle, JDC takes responsibility for needy Jews everywhere, but in practice we focus on places where needs are most urgent and our impact is greatest. As a result, compared with our welfare programs in the FSU and Israel, our care programs in the rest of the world in 2018 will be much smaller in scale and scope.

### **1. How important is the problem?**

A tragic example of a community in dire need is Venezuela. Severe economic mismanagement paired with low oil prices has triggered rampant inflation, a deep economic crisis, and a breakdown of law and order. Food shortages are acute. According to a recent study, 75% of the population has experienced significant weight loss (an average of 19 pounds). The Jewish community has witnessed hostility to Israel, as well as significant emigration. The community has contracted from 20,000 to approximately 5,500, and the remaining Jews are disproportionately older. Since Venezuela does not produce medicine domestically, and imports generally are unavailable because the currency is in free fall, the challenges for elderly in Venezuela are especially stark. As a result, JDC has to ensure that these needs are met.

Fortunately, in most other places, poor Jews are able to access care without JDC's assistance. They can rely on government safety nets or well-organized Jewish communities (or both). For these reasons, JDC does not provide care in Western Europe.

JDC plays a greater role in North Africa, India, and Eastern Europe. For example, we support welfare programs in Morocco, Tunisia, and India. In Hungary, JDC provides care in essentially the same way we provide it in the FSU, but in the rest of Eastern Europe our footprint is lighter. Since local communities are well organized, JDC gives them grants – funded mostly by the Claims Conference – and relies on the communities to provide care.

Yet just as JDC is focusing on the end of Claims Conference funding in the FSU, we also are focusing on this issue in Eastern Europe. Local communities currently rely on Claims Conference funding to subsidize infrastructure, which also is used to care for non-Nazi victims. When Claims Conference funding ends, local communities will need either new funding sources or a leaner infrastructure to provide this care.

This challenge is quite serious, but fortunately it is not as serious as the challenge in the FSU for four reasons. First, the economies generally are somewhat healthier. Second, and relatedly, government safety nets are somewhat more generous. Third, the local Jewish communities generally are better organized, since the communist regimes there were not as relentless in dismantling Jewish institutions. Fourth, the communities are smaller than in the FSU, so the scale of the problem is not as great.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

Given the grave crisis in Venezuela, the assistance JDC provides there has significant impact. JDC has a longstanding relationship with the local Jewish community in Venezuela, and is working closely with them to ensure that their basic needs are met. We provided extra support in 2017, and will nearly double this amount in 2018.

In Eastern Europe, we intend to maintain our relatively light footprint in providing care, even as we help local communities navigate the end of Claims Conference funding in the coming years. Since local communities are better organized in Eastern Europe than in the FSU, JDC's main response to this challenge will be to assist them in planning to address it. Encouraging these communities to deal with the problem on their own obviously is a more sustainable solution than planning to take on the financial obligation ourselves. We may provide limited support during

the transition, if we have the budgetary capacity to do so. If funding is available, we would focus on communities that did not benefit from property restitution, and on clients who are not eligible for government pensions.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

JDC's close and longstanding relationships with local Jewish communities throughout the world is the key reason why we are well positioned to counsel and assist local communities in providing care. In general, we believe local communities are the right institutions to discharge this responsibility. But we stand ready to help, calibrating the level and type of assistance to the conditions on the ground. Obviously, the urgent situation in Venezuela requires a different type of support than the long term financial issue for Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, so the role we play is different. But our mission and our longstanding ties to local communities position us to play an important role in addressing these problems.

## **D. Security and Resilience in Europe**

### **1. How important is the problem?**

JDC saves Jewish lives not only by caring for needy clients, but also by rescuing Jews who are in danger. We stand ready to evacuate them on short notice from countries where their position has become tenuous. For many years, JDC also has partnered with communities to counter terrorism and anti-Semitism. The terror threat has become more acute in recent months, especially in Western Europe, with attacks in France, Denmark, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain, and other places, targeting both Jews and the general population.

In response, JDC is focusing on three aspects of this challenge. First, terrorist attacks obviously are extremely traumatic. It is difficult for communities to rebound from these blows, and to thrive under the shadow of future potential attacks. Second, Jewish communities need effective security infrastructure and protocols buildings. Third, community members should be trained to identify threats, so they can help keep themselves and others safe.

### **2. How effective is our response?**

In response to terrorism, JDC is engaged in a three-pronged effort. First, our main contribution in recent years has been our Jewish Community Resilience program,

which helps communities respond to emergencies. JDC brings community representatives together (e.g., school principals and JCC directors) for shared learning, training, and planning. JDC also hosts an annual conference on resilience, empowering over 100 community leaders to share ideas and develop networks for coordination and cooperation. In addition to these pan-European efforts, JDC also is piloting intensive local initiatives in three places (Leeds, Athens, and Rome). JDC works with these communities to evaluate existing initiatives and to develop new ones, including contingency plans, emergency preparedness, management protocols, crisis communications, and the like.

Second, JDC has joined Pillar, a partnership with four other organizations to enhance the security of Jewish schools, kindergartens, and community centers in Europe. Pillar conducts security audits to determine what upgrades in infrastructure and personnel should be prioritized to protect children, teachers, and community members. JDC's close and longstanding ties with European communities, as well as our relationships with security experts (e.g., in Israel), are important assets in this effort.

Third, JDC also is planning a pilot in 2018 to train individuals to identify threats more effectively. While better security at communal buildings is important, individuals spend only a fraction of their time in these buildings. More often, they are at home, at work, in stores, or on the street. In Israel, New York, and some other places in the United States, citizens routinely notice unattended packages, as well as suspicious vehicles and individuals, but Jews in Western Europe are less attuned to these threats. In response, JDC is developing educational materials and arranging presentations. JDC is partnering with international experts, as well as the security arm of local communities, to offer this training. JDC will encourage local Jewish communities to offer this training also to non-Jewish residents of their communities. A collateral benefit, then, will be closer ties with non-Jewish neighbors.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

In assuming these responsibilities, JDC has been rigorous in undertaking only initiatives that fit within our mission, draw on our strengths, and do not duplicate the efforts of others. For example, one funder asked us to develop an intelligence gathering operation in Europe, which would identify threats and coordinate a response. JDC declined this opportunity because we lack the relevant expertise and are concerned that this responsibility is not compatible with our other work.

In contrast, our resilience work flows directly from our close ties with local communities. Indeed, resilience became a priority for JDC because terrorism and

anti-Semitism are among the most important concerns of Jewish communities in Western Europe. As emphasized further below, a key element of JDC's mission is to empower local communities to pursue their own priorities.

JDC's participation in Pillar also fits our mission and is coordinated with other nonprofits. Indeed, JDC joined Pillar at the invitation of the other members, who already were informally tapping JDC's expertise about local communities and our ties to local leaders. Moreover, the synergies run both ways. For JDC, it is more efficient to join an existing initiative that already is conducting high quality security audits, instead of launching our own.

Training community members to identify threats essentially is an extension of our resilience work. In pursuing this goal, JDC is partnering with local communities and international experts.



## IV. Building Jewish Life

In addition to saving Jewish lives, JDC also is committed to building Jewish life. There are synergies between this community development mission and our care mission. On one hand, vulnerable Jews are more likely to receive care – and JDC has less need to provide it – when local institutions have the capacity to provide this support. On the other hand, caring for a community’s neediest members is a compelling justification for communal institutions.

We aim to advance our community development agenda as efficiently as possible. After offering general observations about our community development strategy, this Section surveys our 2018 plans for different regions, as well as our strategy for Entwine and for our disaster relief and development programs.

### A. Overview of JDC’s Community Development Strategy

#### 1. How important is the problem?

Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the FSU once housed thriving Jewish communities. But tragically, the Holocaust and decades of communist rule devastated Jewish life there.

In the FSU, the communist government discouraged organized religion and discriminated relentlessly against Jews for seven decades. As a result, many Jews did not acquire even basic knowledge of Jewish culture and rituals, and did not openly identify as Jews. It was common for parents to wait many years before telling children they were Jewish.

In Eastern Europe, communist regimes were not quite as hostile to organized religion and to Jews individually. They also did not last as long, since they were established in 1945, instead of 1917. But although Jewish life had not deteriorated quite as much in Eastern Europe, as it had in the FSU, conditions were still extremely challenging when JDC began community development efforts there decades ago. A high community development priority for JDC is to revive these Jewish communities, and also to strengthen others that are facing challenges (e.g., in Asia, Africa, and Latin America).

While the context in Israel is different, there is a need to nurture nonprofits, to develop innovative government institutions, and to train leaders for nonprofits and

government. JDC's Institute for Leadership and Governance (ELKA) is committed to these goals.

In North America, many Jews in their 20s and 30s, who should be the next generation of Jewish leaders, are not interested in Jewish issues, connected to Jewish institutions, or religiously observant. While JDC generally does not run programs in North America, our Entwine program is an exception. It offers opportunities for this cohort of Jews to volunteer abroad to work in JDC programs. These opportunities, which also are open to Jews from other countries (such as the UK and Israel), build community at home through service abroad.

JDC also strengthens Jewish communities by offering them the opportunity to help needy people of other faiths through a Jewish lens. While most of our programs serve Jewish (and Israeli Arab) clients, JDC also provides disaster relief as well as other types of care for clients who are not Jewish or Israeli. These global response and innovative development (GRID) programs, which often draw on Israeli expertise, have a profound impact on our clients. Putting Jewish values into action in this way also inspires and energizes Jewish communities, and strengthens the ties between vulnerable populations across the globe, on one hand, and Jewish communities and Israel, on the other.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

### **a. Two Principal Objectives**

To build sustainable Jewish communities, JDC pursues two main goals, as noted above. First, we engage Jews who feel no connection to Judaism or to Jewish communal life. The goal is to bring them back to the Jewish people.

Second, in addition to reaching out to individuals, JDC also strives to strengthen communities. We want Jewish communities to be efficient, transparent, representative, and (eventually) self-reliant. The goal is to nourish communal institutions and train leaders, so Jewish life can thrive as communities become more sustainable over time.

Obviously, there is a synergy between these two goals. Communities cannot thrive without individual members, and individuals are more likely to become engaged if communal institutions are vibrant.

## **b. Elements of JDC's Strategy**

In pursuing these goals, we tailor our approach to the specific circumstances of each community. But although there are local variations, our strategy has a number of common features everywhere.

First, JDC is inclusive and pluralistic. We do not endorse a specific type of religious practice. Although our community-building programs are intended for Jews, we generally defer to local communities to offer their own definition of who is Jewish, while encouraging them to use an inclusive definition.

Second, in seeking to reconnect Jews to their heritage and to engage them in communal life, we use a life cycle approach. There should be programs for people at different stages in life, including children, teenagers, college students, recent graduates, families, and elderly.

Third, we have a menu of services that we believe a well-organized community should offer, including Jewish learning, leadership, volunteerism, care, and (in some cases) resilience and security. If the community is not able to provide these services on their own, we try to help. For example, because effective lay and professional leadership is so important, leadership development is a high priority for JDC. In 2018, JDC is launching a new cross-regional program, the Kaplan Leadership Initiative, to train Jewish professional leaders across the globe. Likewise, another JDC priority is to build community through service. This strategy has been quite effective in North America through Entwine service trips. The strategy also is important in the FSU, where networks of volunteers help to care for elderly and provide other services in their communities.

Fourth, at the same time, there are categories of services that we generally do not provide. For example, we do not fund heritage sites (e.g., monuments or cemeteries) or religious life (e.g., salaries of rabbis and cantors), and our support for formal Jewish education is quite limited. Instead, we rely on other organizations to provide this sort of support.

Fifth, we obviously want to prioritize initiatives that succeed and are cost effective. To assess the impact of specific programs, JDC will invest more in collecting and evaluating data in 2018. These evaluations will focus on our community development mission, since the impact of this work is more subtle. After all, when we deliver food and medicine to needy elderly people, the social return from this investment is clear and the result is easy to quantify. But when we

send Jewish children to summer camp or Jewish adults to leadership training, we need more information over a longer time period to know whether the experience strengthens their connection to Judaism and the Jewish community.

Finally, since we cannot invest in Jewish communities everywhere, we apply two main criteria in deciding where to invest scarce resources. First, does the community have enough potential to justify the investment? For instance, are there enough young Jews to sustain a vibrant community in the future? Second, can the community accomplish its objectives without JDC? If a community is already thriving or has access to other expertise and support, JDC's scarce resources should go to other communities.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

Indeed, we focus not only on *what* has to be done, but also on *who* does it. We take on community development initiatives only if they are within our mission and we have a comparative advantage in implementing them.

In deciding how to allocate our scarce resources, we account for what other organizations are already doing. If another international NGO already is addressing an issue, there is less need for us to do so. For example, as noted above, we have operated youth camps in Central and Eastern Europe for many years. But we do not do so in the FSU – where we focus instead on family retreats – since the Jewish Agency operates youth camps there.

In addition to considering what other international NGOs are doing, JDC also focuses on the division of labor between us and the local community. Since our fundamental goal is to help communities become independent, deferring to their priorities and relying on them to implement programs has distinct advantages. JDC benefits from the local leaders' textured knowledge of local conditions. This strategy also empowers community leaders, encouraging them to take ownership of the initiative. It also strengthens our relationship with them, enhancing our influence even on initiatives we do not fund.

However, the degree of deference we accord to a local community's priorities, and the extent to which we rely on the community to implement a program on its own, varies for three reasons. First, communities are at different stages of development. As a result, the division of labor between the community and JDC varies in different places. It also changes over time as the local infrastructure becomes better developed.

Second, JDC partners only in initiatives that are consistent with our own priorities. We will bend to accommodate local communities, but only so far. On one hand, if a community wants to launch a program that is our second or third priority, instead of our first, we are likely to defer to them. On the other hand, if local leaders want to do something that is a low priority for us – or, for that matter, something we consider unwise – we do not support it. Rather, our focus is on areas where our priorities overlap.

Third, JDC's comparative advantage is providing expertise, not (just) funding. Therefore, JDC prioritizes partnerships where we play a substantive role. For example, in partnering with PJ Library to provide books with Jewish themes and educational materials to children in the FSU, we bring expertise along with funding – in providing local reach and access, as well as tailoring content to the region.

## **B. Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia**

### **1. How important is the problem?**

Community development is the main focus of JDC's work in Europe, which has a population of approximately 1.5 million Jews. In Central and Eastern Europe, our community development objective is to rebuild Jewish communities that once were models for the rest of the world, but were nearly wiped out by the Holocaust and decades of communist rule.

In Western Europe, our main community development goal is resilience. Jewish life must continue to flourish, as discussed above, even as these communities respond to the twin threats of terrorism and anti-Semitism.

Although Jewish communities in Latin America, North Africa, and Asia are much smaller, we pursue essentially the same goal as in Central and Eastern Europe: engaging Jews in communal life and nurturing vibrant communal institutions.

### **2. How effective is our response?**

A key element of our strategy – especially in Europe – is to engage disconnected Jews and train leaders. For example, in addition to helping local communities in Central and Eastern Europe to launch camps, JDC operates the Szarvas International Jewish Summer Camp in Hungary, which is a partnership with the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. A “jewel in the crown,” Szarvas has been remarkably successful. Over 27

years, it has introduced 20,000 young Jews from Central and Eastern Europe and the FSU to Jewish culture and tradition. Campers range in age from 6 to 19. Before their summer at Szarvas, many did not know they were Jewish or had an attenuated connection to Judaism. But the experience turns them into proud and confident Jews, who go home to teach their parents, grandparents, and friends what they have learned. Indeed, every summer Szarvas mints 1,600 Jewish future leaders and activists from 22 countries. The data shows that Szarvas is a transformative experience, significantly enhancing campers' connection to Judaism.

They often become leaders or founders of local Jewish institutions. Szarvas alums are deeply engaged in other JDC initiatives in Budapest, including the Balint House Jewish Community Center; "Judafest," the annual Jewish street festival, which drew 10,000 attendees this summer; and a grassroots innovation incubator, the "Mozaik Hub," which provides seed funds and mentoring for new and grassroots Jewish organizations. Szarvas' reach extends well beyond Hungary. A high percentage of the current and rising Jewish leaders in Central and Eastern Europe are Szarvas alums.

Szarvas has impact in America as well. Approximately 100 young American Jews participate in Szarvas every summer. They return home inspired by their European colleagues' enthusiasm, and mindful – much more than they were before – of how fortunate American Jews are to have access to so many vibrant Jewish institutions.

Because Szarvas is such an impactful program, we are planning a fundraising campaign to upgrade the camp's physical facilities and security, and to build an endowment for operations. Since a new highway is being built to connect Budapest to the area near Szarvas, it will be more feasible to use the camp for activities during the winter as well.

In addition to summer camps, JDC also has significant impact through leadership development programs, which are a priority in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We invest in the skills, knowledge and experience of both professional and lay leaders. In addition, JDC also develops pan-European networks (such as our Junction program with the Schusterman Foundation for young adults and professionals) and local networks (such as our women's leadership group in Latin America), so leaders can exchange ideas, explore common interests, and launch joint initiatives. Investments in leadership are especially impactful, since capable leadership helps communities serve their members more effectively. As a result, leadership development has been a growth area for JDC in recent years. For example, in 2016 JDC launched Yesod, a pan-European partnership with the

Rothschild and Schusterman Foundations, to train Jewish communal professionals and educators. In 2018, we are launching a global program, the Kaplan Leadership Initiative, which will include significant participation from Europe.

Along with summer camps and leadership training, the third key element of JDC's community development strategy, discussed above, is resilience and security. This is the main focus of our work in Western Europe.

Finally, and most fundamentally, a fourth element of JDC's community development strategy in Europe, North Africa, Asia, and Latin America is to form deep partnerships with local communities. The goal is to empower local leaders to advance their own priorities. This strategy has proved extremely successful, helping communities that were fragile and undeveloped (e.g., at the end of the communist era in Europe or during the financial crisis in Argentina) to become robust and well run today.

This progress allows us now to modify the strategy somewhat in 2018. In Europe, instead of helping to build general communal infrastructure – a goal that has been largely accomplished in many places – JDC will focus on specific programmatic areas that are important both to us and to local communities. In other words, we will partner to advance specific initiatives that are priorities for both JDC and the relevant local community (e.g., the development of grassroots organizations, JCC programming, etc.). In Latin America, the change is more one of geography than of programmatic strategy. Since Jewish communal institutions are thriving in particular places (e.g., Buenos Aires), JDC will focus more on other communities.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

In deciding whether to undertake a specific community development initiative, we are less likely to prioritize it if other international NGO's are engaged in similar work. For example, since others focus on promoting religious life and formal Jewish education, these areas are not priorities for JDC.

In the areas that are priorities for us, our preference is to partner with local communities as much as possible, as noted above. Local leaders have particular knowledge of their community's needs, and also are more likely to "buy in" to a program if they view it as *their* initiative. They also will have a closer relationship with JDC – which enhances our overall influence, even over activities we do not fund – when we are responsive to their priorities. More generally, since our ultimate goal is to make these communities more sustainable and independent, a key part of our strategy is to turn responsibilities over to them. But a challenge in doing so,

emphasized above, is that our priorities and the local communities' priorities are not always perfectly aligned.

For 2018, we are developing a new four-step process to balance our priorities with those of local communities, which we will use in Europe and will extend to other regions over time. First, we have formulated a list of areas that generally are priorities for us (e.g., resilience, summer camps, leadership development, planning for loss of Claims Conference funding), as well as areas that are not (e.g., historical preservation, salaries of cantors and rabbis, etc.). In adopting this approach, we are borrowing from foundations that explicitly state their priorities. We expect to refine this list over time, as we gather more data about impact. Second, the regional director and headquarters are developing general guidelines about how much funding should go to the different categories of initiatives we will support (e.g., x% for leadership development, y% for resilience, etc.). Third, armed with this guidance, country directors will then work with local communities to understand the communities' priorities and to compare them with JDC's target allocations. If the communities' priorities are not fully aligned with JDC's targets, country directors have some discretion to diverge from these targets (in consultation with the regional director). These conversations also offer JDC the opportunity to influence community priorities, for instance, by emphasizing issues that have not been on the community's agenda (e.g., the loss of Claims Conference funding). Fourth, the actual allocations will be reviewed by headquarters, along with explanations for why they diverged from the initial targets.

This new process creates a forum for JDC and community leaders to have strategic and substantive conversations about the community's goals. It allows JDC to defer to local communities, while still advancing JDC's regional priorities. The process ensures that we will be rigorous and explicit about both the *reasons* for diverging from our initial targets and the *magnitude* of these adjustments.

## C. FSU

### 1. How important is the problem?

Although the vast majority of JDC's budget in the FSU is for care, community development also is critically important for three reasons. First, since there are estimated to be one million Jews in the FSU, a lot is at stake in engaging this large population. Second, reviving Jewish communities in the FSU is especially challenging, since communism was even more devastating there than in Central



and Eastern Europe. The system was in place longer – starting in 1917, instead of in 1945 – and treated both organized religion and Jews more harshly. Third, community development has an important synergy with our care mission: care for elderly FSU Jews becomes more sustainable if local communities take on more of this burden over time.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

Because discrimination against Jews was widespread in the Soviet Union, and organized religion was disfavored, many FSU Jews did not openly practice their religion or identify as Jews during the communist era. Indeed, it was common not to tell children they were Jewish.

To engage this vast group of unaffiliated Jews, we use a life cycle approach to reach people at different stages of life. For example, our partnership with PJ Library, which offer free Russian-language children’s books with Jewish themes, engages young children and their parents. Family camps and other family programming also reach young children and their parents. Our youth group, Active Jewish Teens, engages young Jews before college, and our work with Hillel recruits college students. Through these and other programs, we reach approximately 50,000 clients each year.

In addition to engaging individuals, our other core goal – which has become increasingly important as we have made progress in engaging individuals – is to strengthen the foundations of communities. Our initial priority was building Jewish community centers. While they remain important, we are more focused now on three other community-building initiatives.

The first is training leaders. Investing in leadership has far-reaching “multiplier” effects, since effective leadership benefits the entire community. The launch of the new Kaplan Leadership Initiative is an important part of our strategy in the FSU (and the rest of the world). It complements and reinforces our other leadership programs in the FSU, such as Metsuda and Knafaim, which have developed promising grass roots initiatives that JDC has scaled up throughout the region.

A second key priority is volunteerism. In addition to providing a cost-effective way to deliver services, volunteer networks offer an even more significant benefit: the volunteers themselves become more committed to care and community development, enhancing the community’s motivation and capacity to pursue these goals independently.

Third, JDC also is especially focused on youth programming, since young people are the future of any community. Relatedly, we are concentrating our scarce community development resources in communities with large populations of young Jews. Although elderly Jews are spread out across the FSU, young Jews generally live in a small number of large cities. In allocating community development resources, JDC has begun prioritizing these communities, since Jewish communities need a minimum population of young Jews to be sustainable.

To refine our FSU community development strategy further, we are convening a working group to review our priorities. We will include a representative from JDC Europe in order to exchange ideas and benefit from a fresh perspective. In addition, we also will consult with experts from outside JDC.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

As emphasized above, we prioritize initiatives that would not happen without JDC. If local communities or other international nonprofits are providing a particular service, there is less need for JDC to do so. While local communities in the FSU are becoming more sophisticated, and grassroots organizations are being formed, local institutions generally are not as robust as in Europe, so there are more gaps to fill.

Some needs are addressed by other organizations, such as Chabad and JAFI, although our approach and focus is somewhat different. Compared with Chabad, JDC uses a more inclusive approach to “who is a Jew,” and our programming is not tied in the same way to traditional religious practices.

In these respects, JAFI is like JDC, but their mission is somewhat different: promoting *aliya* and forging identities that are tied to Israel. In contrast, JDC’s goal is to nurture strong *local* communities, helping them to develop thriving institutions and a broad range of programming. In addition, JDC emphasizes connections to Judaism more than connections to Israel (although the two are related). JDC also strives to avoid overlap with JAFI’s programs. As mentioned above, JDC chooses not to operate youth summer camps in the FSU (even though we do in Europe) because JAFI has taken on this responsibility. In this spirit, JDC and JAFI are currently engaged in a mapping exercise, in which we delineate the programs that each organization operates in particular areas in order to avoid duplication and promote better coordination.

## D. Israel

### 1. How important is the problem?

JDC's efforts to build Jewish life are reinforced by our work in Israel. While our main focus in Israel is to provide care, as discussed above, these welfare initiatives help build Jewish life in two ways.

First, one of the most fundamental elements of Jewish life today is the Jewish state. Helping the Jewish state more fully realize its aspirations – by offering economic opportunity to vulnerable Israelis and strengthening the social safety net – is an important way to build Jewish life.

Second, strengthening Israeli society in these ways – and thus helping Israel to serve as a light unto nations, exemplifying Jewish values – is a cause that can inspire and energize Jews in the rest of the world. Progress toward this goal makes Israel a more compelling beacon to disengaged Jews outside of Israel, while failure can have the opposite effect.

JDC's community development goals are advanced not only by these care initiatives, but also by other work in Israel that more closely resembles our community development efforts in the rest of the world. Specifically, the Institute for Leadership and Governance (ELKA) and MJB each enhance the expertise and efficiency of nonprofits and government agencies, though in somewhat different ways.

One of ELKA's key goals is to enhance the expertise, knowledge, and access of nonprofit leaders. For example, ELKA promotes dialogue between leaders of government and civil society. ELKA also helps to bridge the gap between Israel and the other Jewish communities – an increasingly salient issue – through its “mind the gap” initiative, which educates leaders of Israeli nonprofits about the perspective and priorities of Jews outside of Israel.

ELKA also makes government agencies more effective. For example, ELKA helps the government use digital technology more effectively. Another important priority in 2018, as the Israeli government prepares to make a historic investment in the Arab sector's economic capacity under Resolution 922, is to train mayors of Arab villages to succeed in applying for and using these funds. ELKA also helps different parts of the government work together more successfully. For example, since many municipalities in Israel's periphery are too small to benefit from economies of scale,

ELKA united them in voluntary partnerships, known as clusters, which collaborate in providing specific services.

Likewise, MJB strengthens the Israeli government in two important ways. First, MJB conducts rigorous assessments of government programs, as noted above, including of programs that JDC does not run. Second, MJB also enhances the capacity of government agencies to assess *their own* performance. For example, MJB develops new tools for the government to integrate goal-oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making into day-to-day operations.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

ELKA and MJB are able to have disproportionate impact for two reasons. First, as with JDC's other work in Israel, the government funds a significant portion of their budgets. Second, by making government agencies and nonprofits more effective, ELKA and MJB help everyone who depends on these institutions. For example, when ELKA and MJB enhance the performance of a government agency, a modest expenditure by JDC increases the social return on the agency's entire budget. In effect, ELKA and MJB turbocharge the budgets of their clients.

## **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

As trusted partners of government institutions and nonprofits, ELKA and MJB occupy unique positions in Israel. In addition to their expertise, ability to convene, and reputation as honest brokers, ELKA and MJB also are able to leverage private support with government funds, as noted above. To solidify this funding relationship, JDC is establishing ELKA as a formal partnership with the government, modeled after MJB, TEVET, ASHALIM, ESHEL, and ISRAEL UNLIMITED.

## **E. Entwine**

### **1. How important is the problem?**

Since JDC was created to serve as the international arm of the American Jewish community, our community development work focuses on communities outside of North America. But obviously, there are parallel challenges in the U.S. and Canada.

One of the most important is that many Jews in their 20s and 30s do not feel a strong connection to Judaism, and do not participate in Jewish communal life. The alienation of this cohort is especially significant, since they are in the midst

of making pivotal decisions that can have an enduring impact on their interest in engaging with Judaism later in life (e.g., about their profession, marriage and family). While North America is fortunate to have a rich array of Jewish communal institutions, these institutions will inevitably fade unless Jews in their 20s and 30s become as committed as their parents and grandparents have been.

Like other Jewish institutions, JDC also needs to engage this generation. Obviously, we want to recruit employees, board members, and donors from this age cohort. But our interest in the issue is much broader: just as we are committed to building Jewish life overseas, we also are committed to this mission in North America, as long as we are making a contribution that other organizations cannot make.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

JDC has a unique advantage in reaching Jews in their 20s and 30s: Many are interested in international humanitarian work. Growing up in a global world, this generation of Jews has traveled extensively. Many are idealistic, and express this idealism by focusing on problems that are global, rather than local. For someone with these interests and commitments, JDC's mission resonates. As a result, JDC has a comparative advantage in engaging them. Hopefully, if they become active at JDC, they will become more interested in other Jewish organizations as well. JDC serves as their path into the Jewish communal world.

One of JDC's goals, then, is to build community at home through service abroad. Through Entwine, our main platform to engage Jews in their 20s and 30s, JDC offers service trips, which allow volunteers to participate in JDC's work in communities across the globe, as well as other leadership and engagement opportunities.

Entwine offers three types of service opportunities, which appeal to different groups: first, eight- to ten-day trips, which are the best fit for people with full-time jobs; second, four- to six-week trips, which are well tailored to academics and graduate students who can devote a portion of their summer to service; and third, year-long experiences in our JDC Entwine Global Jewish Service Corps, which are an effective vehicle to train Jewish NGO professionals and lay leaders. The trips have an educational component, including discussions of Jewish texts and reflections on the connection between global service and Jewish values.

We commissioned an outside expert to test the effectiveness of Entwine's service and engagement programs. The data shows that Entwine attracts a significant number of unengaged young Jews – 40% were not involved in Jewish life at all –

and that participants subsequently became significantly more involved in Jewish communal life and more connected to Jewish values.

In addition to service opportunities, Entwine has alumni networks and educational events across North America and the United Kingdom, which focus on global Jewish issues. These events advance two goals. First, they ensure that an Entwine trip is not merely a one-time experience, but a first step toward broader engagement with JDC and the Jewish communal world. Second, they engage Jews who are not in a position to join our service trips, allowing Entwine to reach 22,000 people since 2008.

Building on this success, JDC's 2018 goal is to invest more in alumni events and local programming, and to develop a long-term growth plan, which is supported by the Jim Joseph Foundation. We believe that offering service trips and other engagement opportunities to more people will pay dividends for the Jewish community in years to come.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

JDC is unique in its ability to provide this service to the Jewish communal world. Since the key to engaging Entwine participants is international humanitarian work, JDC is well positioned – indeed, unique – in the Jewish world to offer this experience. While other organizations have tried to run service trips, they face a daunting challenge: guaranteeing the quality of the service program. Since other organizations send participants to programs they do not run, they cannot be certain that the service opportunity is well run and meaningful. Obviously, visiting a weak program is counterproductive, since participants are unlikely to try another after a disappointing experience. To mitigate this risk, JDC is able to send Entwine participants to programs *we run*, allowing us to guarantee the quality of the experience.

## **F. Global Response and Innovative Development Work (GRID)**

### **1. How important is the problem?**

Although JDC focuses on aiding Jewish clients and communities, we also are proud to serve non-Jewish clients. As in our other care work, JDC focuses on especially vulnerable populations, and looks for ways to have the maximum impact.

Serving non-Jewish clients advances our mission in three ways. First, and most fundamentally, helping vulnerable populations is an expression of Jewish values. The global Jewish community feels an obligation to assist needy people of all faiths and nationalities, and JDC is proud to play a central role in this effort.

Second, and relatedly, by offering Jews the opportunity to join together to put these ideals into action, JDC engages Jews and strengthens their connection to Jewish communities. They feel pride in the power of their community to act, and are reminded of the profound connection between their moral commitments and their Jewish heritage.

Third, nonsectarian work also strengthens the ties of Jewish communities and Israel to other people in need, giving developing nations a more informed perspective on a people and a nation with whom they may have had little or no contact before. For example, using Israeli expertise to aid hurricane victims or Israeli agricultural technology to increase the yields of African farmers deepens the connection between Israel and the rest of the world.

## **2. How effective is our response?**

In pursuing these goals, GRID has two main programmatic priorities in 2018. The first is disaster response. On behalf of the Jewish Federations of North America, JDC leads the Jewish community's response to natural disasters outside the United States. In doing so, JDC works with local partners and other international NGOs, and sends a response team to help deliver critical aid and develop initiatives to assist with recovery. The magnitude of our intervention depends on a range of factors, including the severity of the crisis, the presence of a local Jewish community that wants to assist in relief and recovery efforts, and the need for JDC's particular expertise, for instance, in food security, disaster risk reduction, livelihood development, health and medical support, and psychosocial programs.

Second, Tikun Olam Ventures (TOV) will use market-based solutions and Israeli AgTech, such as hybrid seeds and drip irrigation technology. TOV's core will be a revolving philanthropic loan fund, which will enable farmers to purchase Israeli AgTech. TOV also will provide business services, agricultural technical support, and enhanced access to markets. This support will significantly increase crop yields, enabling farmers to repay their loans. This capital then will be used for new loans to other farmers. JDC plans to launch a pilot in Ethiopia in 2018, and eventually will broaden the program to other African nations.

In addition to these two priorities, JDC serves non-Jewish clients in other ways as well. For instance JDC helps children in India and provides spinal surgeries in Ethiopia.

### **3. Are we the right organization to address the issue?**

While many charities are committed to assisting needy people of all faiths, fewer focus on needy Jews, especially Jews who live outside of the U.S., Western Europe, and Israel. If JDC chooses not to help these needy Jews, many would go without care they urgently need. Since JDC's role in helping needy Jews is irreplaceable, our commitment to this work has to be unshakeable.

At the same time, JDC's deep expertise in responding to crises and caring for vulnerable populations gives us tools to help other clients as well. In deciding which initiatives for non-Jewish clients to prioritize, JDC uses two criteria. First, as with all our care work, JDC focuses on projects with high impact on needy populations where JDC can offer added value. Second, among projects offering this high social return, JDC prioritizes initiatives that strengthen ties between populations at risk, on one hand, and Jewish communities and Israel, on the other.



## V. Conclusion

Saving Jewish lives and building Jewish life is a critically important mission. Our work transforms the lives of hundreds of thousands of needy people. JDC also works to secure a vibrant Jewish future. We engage Jews and strengthen communal institutions, focusing on places where the spark of Jewish life was nearly extinguished just a few years ago.

Since the world is constantly changing, we need to reassess our priorities and the way we pursue them every year. Our clients and community partners depend on us to address the right problems in the most impactful way.

In the FSU, we know that reparations funding will decline over time as Holocaust survivors pass away. In 2018, Swiss Banks settlement funding expires, and some other revenue sources for elderly welfare are declining as well. In response, we have to use scarce dollars as efficiently and strategically as possible. We are prioritizing the neediest elderly clients, and developing innovative ways to serve them more cost-effectively. In addition, JDC will redouble our fundraising efforts. The need for incremental revenue is greatest for FSU elderly, who are the poorest Jews in the world. They have lived exceedingly difficult lives, and often are alone. To maintain life-saving services for them, we also are redirecting funding from other FSU programs, as well as from other regions.

In Israel, we will continue to develop and test innovative models to deliver social services. Our priority is to help needy Israelis help themselves. This work has extraordinary leverage and impact. The Israeli government funds 66% of the cost of our pilots, and then assumes full responsibility for programs that prove successful.

Another core commitment of JDC is to strengthen Jewish communities. Eastern Europe and the FSU are in the midst of a remarkable reawakening of Jewish life, and many Jewish communities in Latin America and Asia are thriving as well. Our strategy for strengthening communities is easy to describe, but hard to achieve: engaging Jews who are disconnected from their tradition, encouraging volunteerism, and training and partnering with capable community leaders.

Although the funding environment is challenging and conditions on the ground are complex in many places, we are confident in our global strategy and optimistic about the coming year. Across the globe, there is urgent need for our work.

Hundreds of thousands of needy people depend on JDC, and we have strong ties with hundreds of local Jewish communities.

Over a century ago, Ambassador Henry Morgenthau called upon Felix Warburg and Jacob Schiff to aid needy Jews at the outset of World War I. In response to his telegram – “Will you undertake matter?” – they founded the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Our dedicated professionals and lay leaders are proud to follow in their footsteps. We will do whatever we can – indeed, whatever is necessary – to undertake this matter.





## American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC) is the world's leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization. AJJDC works in some 70 countries and in Israel to alleviate hunger and hardship, rescue Jews in danger, create lasting connections to Jewish life, and provide immediate relief and long-term development support for victims of natural and man-made disasters. To learn more, visit [AJJDC.org](https://www.ajjdc.org).

AJJDC receives significant funding support from Jewish Federations across North America through cooperation with JFNA and UIA Canada. Major funding partners also include: the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the Maurice and Vivienne Wohl Charitable Foundation, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, World Jewish Relief (UK), and tens of thousands of generous individual donors and foundations. The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews is a major operational partner.