



The Initiative for Applied Education Research
The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Background materials

Inequality and Education:

Workshop on the relation between rising economic inequality
and educational attainment and achievement

December 10, 2013
Inbal hotel, Jerusalem

Staff coordinator: Oded Busharian

Un-revised translation from Hebrew

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities was established by law in 1961. Its membership currently comprised of 94 top Israeli scientists and scholars.

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Law declares that the Academy's principal objectives and tasks are to: assemble, under its umbrella, the finest Israeli scientists; foster and promote scientific activity; advise the government on research activities and scientific planning of national importance; maintain ties with similar institutions abroad; represent Israeli science at international institutes and conferences; and, publish articles that can further science.

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities views the development and advancement of basic scientific research as a goal of national importance. The Academy's aim is to cultivate and promote basic research and scientific activity in Israel. So as to foster development of an infrastructure for successful basic scientific research, the Academy sets high standards in the humanities, the natural sciences and technology, encourages excellence in the field of scientific creativity and thinking, and initiates activities that will articulate the achievements of science in Israel.

The Initiative for Applied Education Research (the Initiative) places up-to-date, scientific, critically-appraised knowledge and information at the disposal of decision-makers in the field of education. Such information is crucial for the intelligent formulation of policy and optimal planning of interventions to improve achievements in the sphere of education in Israel.

The Initiative's vision: Research knowledge is an essential component in planning public policy or large-scale interventions. In the planning stages, critically-appraised research knowledge supports the formulation of policy that has a better chance of success and later, it is more apt to promote rational public discourse. The Initiative puts this vision into practice in the field of education.

The Initiative's modi operandi: The Initiative addresses issues raised by decision-makers and consults with senior Ministry of Education officials and other stakeholders. The Initiative's steering committee, appointed by the president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, is charged with creating a work plan and is responsible for implementing the peer-review processes of the reports it produces.

The Initiative operates through expert committees and by convening joint learning sessions held for researchers, education professionals and decision-makers. It publishes reports of its work and makes them readily available to the public. Those serving on its expert committees do so without remuneration.

History of the Initiative: The Initiative was established in late 2003 as a joint venture of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Ministry of Education, and Yad Hanadiv (the Rothschild Foundation). The Initiative has been operating as a unit of the Israel Academy since the beginning of 2010.

In the summer of 2010, the Israeli Knesset amended the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Law, regulating the Academy's advisory role vis-à-vis government ministries seeking its consulting services. The Initiative directs the consulting activities on education-related issues which the Israel Academy provides to the government and various authorities.

Background to the project

The social reality of economic inequality is a given in all countries. Its scope varies from country to country and from time to time. Reducing this type of inequality in general, or at least increasing the chances of those born into low socio-economic strata to achieve social mobility and integration into higher socio-economic strata are perceived as worthy goals in societies where equality is a fundamental value. In recent years, in light of growing income disparities within countries, there is growing concern that income disparity is not only a result of educational gaps but is also a contributor to these gaps.

A joint initiative of the [Spencer](#) and [Russell Sage](#) foundations has focused on a range of issues in the context of inequality and education in the United States. Findings were reported in the recently published volume entitled [Whither Opportunity: Rising Inequality, Schools and Children's Life Chances](#), a collection of research papers that explores reasons for growing economic inequality, its effects on educational opportunity, and the relative advantages of various policy remedies.

With this study as inspiration, the Initiative is interested in learning about this situation in the Israeli context for the purpose of developing an evidence-based framework for policymakers, aimed at enriching our understanding of the relationships between socio-economic inequality, educational opportunity and achievement outcomes, and how they are distributed. A key goal is to stimulate public and professional discourse and provide an evidentiary foundation for the development of policy options. A steering committee comprised of researchers from the fields of social welfare, education, sociology and economics will guide the activity.

About the workshop

A Workshop for Israeli experts and invited guests will launch the activity. The key presenters from abroad are Prof. [Richard J. Murnane](#), one of the editors of and a major contributor to the *Whither Opportunity* volume; and Prof. [Michael S. McPherson](#), the president of the Spencer Foundation, which initiated and funded the *Whither* project. Among the invitees are Israeli researchers and policymakers, who will familiarize themselves with the findings from the U.S. and deliberate on the situation in Israel.

The first session of the meeting will be dedicated to present the *Whither Opportunity* project and the research it is based upon, as well as its main findings, the steps taken to influence policy makers, and its effects so far. The second session will consist of a conceptual introduction to the subject of inequality in Israel. In the third session a number of studies that address inequality and education (and inequality *in* education) in Israel will be presented. Finally, in the fourth session, keeping in mind the plans for the next step of the project, we will discuss the existing data about the Israeli case (in comparison with the impressive database the volume is based on), and the potential and limitations of applying the basic *whither* framework to the Israeli context.

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Meeting Agenda

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| 8:30-9:00 | Coffee and pastries to welcome workshop participants |
| 9:00-9:10 | Welcome and opening remarks – Prof. Menahem Yaari , chairman of the steering committee of the Initiative for Applied Education Research |
| First session: <i>Whither Opportunity? – The research, the book and the data</i> | |
| Chair: Prof. Michael J. Feuer, George Washington University and president of the National Academy of Education, U.S. | |
| 9:10-10:05 | Whither Opportunity? Sources of data, collaboration in writing the book, and main findings Prof. Richard J. Murnane , Harvard University |
| 10:05-10:55 | How "Whither Opportunity" developed: Overview of the work of Russell Sage and Spencer Foundations Prof. Michael S. McPherson , the Spencer Foundation |
| 10:55-11:20 | Discussion |
| 11:20 | Coffee break |
| Second session: <i>Trends in economic and social inequality in Israel – review and discussion</i> | |
| Chair: Prof. Noah Lewin-Epstein, head of the steering team | |
| 11:35-11:50 | Opening: The problem of inequality and the lack of class mobility Prof. Noah Lewin-Epstein , Tel Aviv University |
| 11:50-12:20 | Inequality and economics, in Israel and in general Prof. Yossi Zeira , Hebrew University of Jerusalem |
| 12:20 | Lunch |
| Third session: <i>Research on socio-economic inequality and educational opportunity in Israel</i> | |
| Chair: Prof. Yosef Shavit, member of the steering team | |
| 13:05-13:35 | Review: Disparities between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds over the years Dr. Hagit Glickman , National Authority for Measurement & Assessment in Education (RAMA) |
| 13:35-14:00 | On inequality in education between the Jewish and Arab sectors Dr. Ayman Agbaria , University of Haifa |
| 14:00-14:25 | Allocation of resources for education in Israel: Public and private sources Noam Zussman and Shay Tzur , Bank of Israel – Research department |
| 14:25-14:50 | The impact of changes in recent decades on access to higher education Dr. Yariv Feniger , Ben-Gurion University of the Negev |
| 14:50-15:20 | Discussion |
| 15:20 | Coffee break |
| Fourth session: <i>Socio-economic inequality and class mobility in Israel: Existing and missing data</i> | |
| Chair: Prof. Moshe Justman, member of the team of experts | |
| 15:35-16:05 | Possibilities for analyzing the connection between socio-economic inequality and educational achievements at the aggregative level and individual level Dr. Dimitri Romanov , Central Bureau of Statistics |
| 16:05-16:30 | On National Insurance Institute data and the ability to link data on the education system to data on poverty and welfare payments Dr. Daniel Gottlieb , National Insurance Institute |
| 16:30-16:45 | Challenges in differential budgeting in the Ministry of Education Dudi Mizrahi , Division director, Economics and Budgeting Administration, MOE |
| 16:45 | Discussion |
| 17:10-17:30 | Summary and thoughts about next steps Prof. Michael J. Feuer , George Washington University, U.S |

Abstracts of Presentations

Whither Opportunity? Sources of data, collaboration in writing the book, and main findings

Prof. Richard J. Murnane

During the last three decades, the gap between the incomes of rich and poor families in the United States has grown enormously. Of particular importance to the nation's future, the gaps between the educational attainments of children from the nation's rich and poor families have also grown markedly during this period. Explaining the forces that have translated growing gaps in family incomes into growing gaps in educational outcomes provides the focus for the volume, *Whither Opportunity?*

Differences in family life contribute to the growing gaps in educational outcomes between children growing up in high-income and low-income families. First, of course, is the growing gap between the financial resources parents can devote to their children's development. In the early 1970s, top income quintile parents spent approximately \$2700 more per year (expressed in 2008 dollars) than bottom income quintile parents on goods and services aimed at enriching the experiences of their children. In 2005-06, the corresponding inflation-adjusted difference in enrichment expenditures was \$7500. Spending differences are largest for enrichment activities such as music lessons, travel, and summer camps. Differential access to such activities may explain the gaps in background knowledge between children from high-income families and those from low-income families that are so predictive of reading skills in the middle and high school years (Snow 2002).

A second mechanism is time. High-income parents spend more time in literacy activities with their children than low-income parents. Most disparate is time spent in "novel" places – other than at home, school, or in the care of another parent or a day care provider. Between birth and age six, children from high-income families spend an average of 1,300 more hours in novel contexts than children from low-income families. Finally, economic insecurity and concerns about safety take a toll on the mental health of low-income parents, especially those living in high-crime neighborhoods. Depression and other forms of psychological distress profoundly affect parents' interactions with their children.

Differences in income, in time, and in stress all contribute to differences in school readiness. When children are in kindergarten, those from top income quintile families have much higher reading achievement than those from bottom income quintile families, and are more engaged in school, exhibit fewer behavioral problems, and have better mental health.

Increased residential segregation by income has resulted in an increase in the segregation of children from low-income families into schools not attended by children from more affluent families. A consequence is that, children from low-income families are much more likely to have classmates with low achievement and behavior problems than are children from more affluent families. At least two kinds of peer effects hinder the effectiveness of schools serving high concentrations of low-income children. First, children with behavior problems reduce the achievement of their classmates. Second, urban families living in poverty move frequently and as a result of school sorting by socioeconomic status, children from poor families are especially likely to attend schools with relatively high rates of new students arriving during the school year. Children attending elementary schools with considerable student mobility make less progress in mathematics than do children attending schools with a low level of student mobility. Moreover,

the negative effects apply to students who themselves are residentially stable as well as to those who are not. The likely mechanism is the disruption of instruction caused by the entry of new students into a class.

Teacher quality is another major factor contributing to the weak academic performance of students in high-poverty schools. Schools serving high concentrations of poor, non-white, and low-achieving students find it difficult to attract and retain skilled teachers. The net result is that the nation's most economically disadvantaged children are much less likely than children from affluent families to be taught by skilled teachers. Moreover, the high rate at which teachers leave high poverty schools reduces the payoff to investments in improving teachers' skills and also hinders the coordination of instruction among teachers that characterizes effective schools.

In summary, as the incomes of affluent and poor American families have diverged over the past three decades, so too have the educational outcomes of the children in these families. Test score differences between rich and poor children are much larger now than thirty years ago, as are differences in rates of college attendance and college graduation. This pattern jeopardizes upward socioeconomic mobility, which historically has provided much of the glue that has kept the country together.

How "Whither Opportunity" developed: overview of the work of Russell Sage and Spencer Foundations

Prof. Michael S. McPherson

In early 2006, the two foundations identified the relationship between material inequality and inequality in educational opportunity and results as a key topic

- An unpopular topic in American public life at that time
 - o Economy booming, inequality not seen as urgent
 - o Most Americans believed US income mobility was very high
- We judged the issues to be important and sought help to plan a major study

What was needed was not a single big new study, but rather

- Careful attention to the evidence available on a range of topics related to both economic and educational inequality
- Teams to survey, refine, and extend the state of knowledge and the state of policy discussion

Important goal: don't simply ask whether income inequality influenced educational opportunity, but HOW that relationship worked

- In particular, distinguish between those effects of inequality that were *mediated* by schooling and those through other channels
- E.g., contrast the effect on early learning of growing up in an impoverished home with the effect on learning in elementary school of attending an inner city school with large classes and mostly novice teachers

Set of papers we commissioned yielded some very valuable findings and provided a rich background for thinking about the phenomena and potential policy responses

- Documented the remarkable growth in income inequality
- And the large and growing achievement gaps by income in education at all levels

- Advanced understanding of the educational roadblocks created by inequalities in home environment, neighborhoods, labor markets, etc
- Identified barriers to improving schooling posed by operating in low income areas

Impact of the publication has been substantial

- Writing was accessible, evidence and documentation was strong
- Findings treated with great respect in the scholarly community
- Considerable coverage in the popular press
 - o Occasioned partly by the recession and shift in political climate
 - o Dawning realization among reporters that much of what they believed about inequality of opportunity and social mobility was wrong

Keys to our success (in my view)

- Patience: almost four years from inception to completion
- Extremely capable and demanding project leaders: Becky Blank, Dick Murnane, and Greg Duncan
- Learned that we could leverage the attention and effort of very strong academics with relatively small amounts of money
 - o As long as the subject mattered to them
 - o And as long as they would be in the company of colleagues they deeply respected
- Leveraged the group of talented researchers as advisors to one another through two large and carefully planned meetings as their work developed

An economic look at inequality: In general and in Israel
Prof. Josef Zeira

Inequality is one of the big questions in economics. What makes some people rich and others poor? What determines the extent of inequality in a society? Does economic policy have an impact on inequality? What are the repercussions of inequality on the economy? On growth? On business cycles? Economic research delves extensively into these topics and though we are very far from a complete understanding, we have a few answers.

First, the inequality within states is relatively smaller than the inequality between states. That is, most of the global disparity is between the developed countries and the developing countries, and not within each country itself. The explanations for the international disparity, which is continuing to widen, are only partial: education, institutions, geography, and more.

Second, inequality is caused by two primary markets: One is the labor market, where wages are determined and the division between capital and labor is defined. The disparities between workers are also determined in the labor market and largely reflect the disparities in education among the workers. The gaps in education originate in the capital market, which is supposed to finance investment in education. This market is not perfect and thus does not properly finance the investment in education, especially for those who come from a relatively poor family. Public education is an attempt to overcome this failure of the capital market.

Third, what are the effects of inequality? Inequality means that more wealth is concentrated in the hands of a smaller group, and therefore most families have less means to improve the education of their children. This leads to a decline in education and human capital and, consequently, hampers economic growth. Another effect of inequality on growth is via low wages. If there is a

high degree of inequality, this is indicative of low wages in many sectors. As a result, there will be lower incentive in these sectors to adopt technologies that replace workers with machines. A good example of this phenomenon can be seen in Israel, in the construction sector. There was a nice increase in productivity up until 1970 in this sector. Then the Palestinians entered the sector and the rise in productivity came to a halt. Inequality also means that the demand for private consumption is lower due to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a relatively small group, and this weakens the economy's ability to weather economic cycles.

Fourth, inequality is also caused by economic policy. This is particularly true if the economic policy acts to erode public education and weaken labor unions, and lowers wages in similar ways. This is evident in the negative correlation between the size of the public sector and the index of inequality. In the State of Israel, inequality is on the rise and the Gini index of disposable income has already reached a high level of 0.38. One of the main reasons for this is that aggregate wages have remained unchanged since 1999, while GDP per worker (and per capita) continues to climb at a handsome rate. The reasons for this are related to several phenomena of the labor market: foreign workers, the wider use of subcontracted workers, the weakening of the Histadrut labor federation and collective bargaining agreements, and so on. This is also related to the erosion of public services – education, health and housing in particular. This erosion, at a rate of nearly 5% of GDP, can explain nearly half of the increase in the Gini index of inequality.

Disparities in achievement between pupils of different socio-economic background:

The situation over the years

Hagit Glickman

Inequality in education poses a moral and social problem that must be addressed and solutions for this problem need to be searched for. Studies conducted in Israel and in the world indicate that the social, economic and cultural background of pupils has a significant impact on their different levels of educational achievement. The education achievements of many of the pupils who grow up in poor families do not reflect their full academic potential. In Israel, despite the fact that the education system has recognized the importance of equality in education and has defined this issue as one of its central goals, the disparities in achievement are still very high.

In this lecture, we will present a multi-year review of the disparities in the achievements of pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds in various age groups, as reflected in the data from national tests – Meitzav and matriculation exams – as well as data from the PISA international study. We will present a very broad picture that includes three stages of education: elementary, middle school and high school.

In the elementary and middle schools, we will discuss the disparities based on data from the Meitzav exams during the years 2007-2013. The Meitzav tests are national exams designed to check how well the pupils are meeting the requirements expected of them according to the Israeli curriculum. Second graders are tested on their native language (Hebrew or Arabic), and pupils in fifth and eighth grade are tested on mathematics, English, science and their native language.

The disparities at the high school level will be presented based on data from the international PISA study of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2009 and 2012. The PISA study tests literacy – that is, the pupils' ability to apply knowledge and skills, to analyze, draw conclusions, interpret and solve problems in a range of everyday situations. The research was conducted among 15-year-olds (primarily 10th graders) and three

main areas of literacy were examined: reading in the pupil's native language, mathematics and science. To round out the picture on the high schools, we will present data from the Israeli matriculation exams conducted in 2012, with a focus on mathematics.

The data will be analyzed in regard to three central questions: (1) Have changes occurred in the achievement gap over the years? (2) Do the disparities widen as the pupils grow older? (3) Are the disparities in achievements between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds wide in comparison to the disparities in other countries?

Allocating Resources for Education in Israel between the Private and the Public: 'Shadow Education' in the Arab Society

Dr. Ayman Agbaria

My lecture will review the disparities in investments in Arab education in Israel from public and private sources, based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education. I will focus my remarks on the phenomenon of "shadow education" in the Arab society in Israel and emphasize the significance and repercussions of the expansion of centers specializing in private tutoring, outside of the formal school framework, paid for by the parents. Specifically, I will present insights from qualitative research on private learning centers in Nazareth. The research was conducted during the past year in collaboration with my master's degree student, Ms. Du'a Khatib. I will identify the factors that led to the growth of private learning centers in Nazareth and will characterize the relations between the two systems: the formal school system and the array of "shadow education."

Allocating governmental and private resources for elementary education

Noam Zussman and Shay Tzur

There is significant inequality in education in Israel, and it is one of the factors behind the polarization in income distribution. While the scope of national spending on schools stands at about NIS 35 billion, there is little information on the resources available to schools, especially from non-government sources. Moreover, the policy of affirmative action in resource allocation has not been extensively analyzed.

An analysis of the allocation of resources to elementary schools during the years 2001-2009 – based on information collected annually by the Ministry of Education in a large sample of official schools ("the standard audit") – yields the following insights:

- The number of hours of instruction per classroom (about 55) was stable during the period studied, contrary to the common perception that the scope of resources has eroded.
- There are significant disparities in the number of hours per classroom between different segments of the education system. The ranking, in descending order, is: state-religious, state-Hebrew (much lower), Bedouin and Arab; the disparities widen in hours per pupil due to the crowded classrooms in the non-Jewish education system.
- Following the Ministry of Education's transition to a system of allocating hours of instruction per pupil according to a uniform formula ("the Shoshani Report," 2003), there has been a substantial increase in the number of hours (the standard) in the non-Jewish education system, but it is still much lower than in the Hebrew education system.

- The weaker the pupils' socio-economic background, the more standard hours they received; and since the implementation of the report, the policy of affirmative action has expanded.
- Non-standard Ministry of Education hours comprised about 7% of total hours, and hours from *non-government sources* (localities, NGOs and parents) comprised about 10%, while the non-Jewish education system included a very low number of these hours.
- However, the non-standard hours and the hours from other sources have greatly widened the disparities in total hours available to schools, to the detriment of the non-Jewish education system and, in particular, to the benefit of the state-religious education system. Over the years, the effect of these hours offset a significant part of the increase in standard hours in the non-Jewish education system.

Ethno-Religious Differences in Israeli Higher Education: Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions
Dr. Yariv Feniger

The worldwide expansion and diversification of higher education systems has sparked growing interest in the stratification of students according to higher education institution and field of study. This paper focuses on Israel, where higher education has experienced significant expansion and diversification during the last two decades. Using generalized ordered logistic regression models, the study analyzes vertical and horizontal ethno-religious inequality. Findings indicate that Ashkenazim, the privileged Jewish group, remain the most advantaged regarding enrollment in higher education, but their advantage over other Jewish veteran groups is mainly due to areas of specialization in high school and achievement on the tests that serve as admission criteria to the higher education institutions. Among the enrollees, controlling for high school history reveals that the Jewish disadvantaged groups, Mizrachim and new immigrants, have higher odds than Ashkenazim of enrolling in lucrative programs. Muslim, Druze and Christian Arabs are disadvantaged regarding both the vertical (access) and horizontal (fields of study) dimensions, regardless of high school history and previous achievements.

Possibilities for analyzing the connection between socio-economic inequality and educational achievement at the aggregate and individual levels
Dr. Dimitri Romanov

In his lecture, the chief scientist of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) will present a range of data that can be used to study the connection between socio-economic status and learning achievements at all levels of education. This includes administrative data drawn from government ministries, as well as data from the many surveys the CBS conducts on an ongoing and periodic basis. He will also present frameworks available to researchers for conducting studies at the aggregate level and at the level of micro data.

On National Insurance Institute data and the ability to link data on the education system to data on poverty and welfare payments

Dr. Daniel Gottlieb

In this lecture, the deputy director-general for research and planning at the National Insurance Institute (NII) will describe the information infrastructure developed at the NII's Research and Planning Administration in recent years. The infrastructure includes administrative files on the entire population in Israel. This information flows to the NII as the entity that pays allowances and collects insurance fees. Recently, this database has also been enriched with information from studies conducted at the NII's new research room. These studies are performed in an environment of strict protection for personal information. The lecture will also include examples of applications that have been implemented, based on this infrastructure.

Challenges in differential budgeting in the Ministry of Education

Dudi Mizrahi

In Israel there are three main sources of investment in education: The Ministry of Education, municipalities and parents. The strong municipalities and wealthy parents can afford to spend more on their children's education. It's a fact. Hence, in order to narrow socio-economic gaps through education, the government must take an active role and implement differential budgeting. The Ministry of Education took major steps towards differential budgeting in the last few years and is currently examining several alternative routes in order to deepen this process dramatically.

Bio Sketches¹

Speakers and session chairs (by order of the program):

Menahem Yaari

President (emeritus), the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Professor emeritus of economics, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Association, and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences. Recipient of the Israel Prize in Economics (1987), the Rothschild Prize in the Social Sciences (1994), and the EMET Prize laureate, Social Sciences (Economics) (2012)

Chair of the Initiative's Steering Committee

Michael J. Feuer

Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University, a position he assumed September 1, 2010. For the previous 17 years he held several positions at the National Research Council of the National Academies, most recently as the executive director of the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Prior to joining the NRC Feuer was senior analyst and project director at the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment. He received a BA in English literature from Queens College of the City University of New York, an MA in public management from the Wharton School, and the PhD in public policy analysis from the University of Pennsylvania. Feuer has lived in Israel and France, studied at the Hebrew University and the Sorbonne, and was on the faculty of Drexel University from 1981-1986. He has published in numerous academic journals and has had reviews, articles, and poems in newspapers and magazines in Washington, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and New York. Michael's most recent book is *Moderating the Debate: Rationality and the Promise of American Education*, published by Harvard Education Press in 2006. He is the president of the National Academy of Education, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a fellow of the American Educational Research Association. Michael lives in Washington with his wife, Regine B. Feuer. The Feuers have two grown children.

Richard Murnane

Economist and the Thompson Professor of Education and Society at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. In 2011, Murnane and his colleague, John Willett, published the book *Methods Matter: Improving Causal Inference in Educational and Social Science Research* (Oxford U. Press). In recent years he has pursued two lines of research: With MIT professors Frank Levy and David Autor, he has examined how computer-based technological change has affected skill demands in the United States' economy, and the effectiveness of educational policies in responding to changing skill demands. Murnane and Levy have written two books on this topic. The second line of research examines the respects in which the growth in family income inequality in the U.S. has affected educational opportunities for children from low-income families and the effectiveness of alternative strategies for improving life chances for these children. Murnane coedited (with Greg Duncan) the 2011 volume, *Whither Opportunity: Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances* (Russell Sage). Harvard Education Press will publish Duncan and Murnane's own book

¹ Some of the bio sketches presented were retrieved from open sources on the internet

on this topic, *Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education*, in January 2014

Michael S. McPherson

President of the Spencer Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation in 2003 he served as President of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota for seven years. A nationally known economist whose expertise focuses on the interplay between education and economics, McPherson spent the 22 years prior to his Macalester presidency as professor of economics, chairman of the Economics Department, and dean of faculty at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. He holds a B.A. in Mathematics, an M.A. in Economics, and a Ph.D. in Economics, all from the University of Chicago.

McPherson, who is co-author and editor of several books, including *College Access: Opportunity or Privilege?*, *Keeping College Affordable* and *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*; was founding co-editor of the journal *Economics and Philosophy*. He has served as a trustee of the College Board, the American Council on Education, and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. McPherson has been a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study and a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Noah Lewin-Epstein (Steering team chairman)

Professor of Sociology at Tel-Aviv University and past Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. He is past president of the Israeli Sociological Society and at present he serves as secretary of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). His areas of interest include social inequality, migration and ethnic stratification, and comparative survey research. Recent publications addressed such issues as migration and wealth inequality, public attitudes toward the welfare state, the incorporation of Arab citizens of Israel in the labor market, and the work-family nexus. His research has been published in a variety of journals including *American Journal of Sociology*, *International Migration Review*, *European Sociological Review*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, and *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.

Prof. Lewin-Epstein received the PhD from the University of Chicago in 1982.

Chairperson of the steering team for the project.

Joseph Zeira

Professor of Economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at LUISS Guido Carli in Rome. After obtaining the PhD in Economics at Hebrew University in 1984, he has been fellow at Harvard University (1984-1985) and MIT (1985). He has been visiting professor at Brown University (1990), Harvard University (1991) and University of Crete (2007). He is research fellow of CEPR and associate editor of *Journal of Economic Growth, Macroeconomic Dynamics and Research in Economics*. His main research fields are Macroeconomic Theory, Investment and Growth, Macroeconomics and Information, Income Distribution, The Israeli Economy.

Yossi Shavit

Professor of sociology at Tel Aviv University, and holds the Zalman and Sima Weinberg chair in Social Stratification and Inequality. He also serves as the president of the Israeli Sociology Society, heads the Education Policy Program at the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel and is a member of the Sociological Research Association. He was previously a professor at the European University Institute, located in Florence. His main areas of research and teaching are educational stratification processes, education policy, and occupational stratification, Jewish-

Arab relations in Israel, marriage markets and research methods.

Professor Shavit holds a PhD degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (U.S.), 1983

Member of the steering team for the project.

Hagit Glickman

Acting general-director of the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (RAMA), and the director of Research and Development Division. In recent years she involves in a large variety of research projects in the area of education; including designing and analyzing large scale assessments and surveys, cross sectional studies and longitudinal studies, evaluation of educational programs, and developing applied statistical and psychometric methodologies. She has a Ph.D. in Statistic from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (since 2000).

Ayman Agbaria

Lecturer in the department of leadership and policy in education at the University of Haifa. He has two master's degrees, one in international development and social change from Clark University, and the other in criminology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He also holds a dual doctoral degree in educational theory and policy and in international and comparative education from Pennsylvania State University. Ayman has held senior positions at the Israel Association of Community Centers, the Shatil organization of the New Israel Fund and at Beit Berl College. He also served as a senior consultant to the Follow up Committee on Arab Education and as a member of the Ministry of Education's civics studies committee. He is also a co-founding member of Dirasat, The Arab Center for Law and Policy. Ayman specializes in education amongst ethnic and religious minorities and researches policy and pedagogy for civics education, Islamic education and teacher training.

Noam Zussman

Economist, Research Department, Bank of Israel

Shay Tzur

Economist, Research Department, Bank of Israel

Yariv Feniger

Lecturer in the Department of Education at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and is a fellow in the Education Policy Program at the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. He earned his PhD in sociology and anthropology from Tel-Aviv University. Dr. Feniger's areas of interest include social and educational inequality, minority education, gender and education, current developments in educational policies and the effects of national and international measurements of achievement on learning, instruction and education administration. His current research focuses on social inequality in access to higher education in Israel and on the influence of the Meytzav tests on elementary schools. Dr. Feniger is the co-editor of an upcoming volume with Dr. Nissim Mizrahi and Prof. Yossi Yonah entitled "The Politics of Difference in Israeli Education: A View from Below."

Moshe Justman

Professor in the Department of Economics, Ben-Gurion University and former dean of its Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. His main areas of research are the political economy of education, equality of opportunity of and access to education, structure of the education system and its sources of funding and, measurement in the field of education. He has also extensively researched topics in industrial-technology policy and issues of regional development. Senior

Fellow in the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute since 2007 and coordinator of activities on Civil Society at the Institute since 2012.

Prof. Justman earned his Ph.D. in business economics from Harvard University in 1982. He was a member of the Initiative's Steering Committee and chaired the Initiative committee 'studying revision of education indicators in Israel'

Member of the steering team for the project.

Dmitry Romanov

Dr. Romanov has held the position of Chief Scientist at the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) since 2005. He is responsible for the statistics related to the education system, education and the teaching force, the social survey, the longitudinal survey, the PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies), and for methodology development and socio-economic research at the CBS. He also serves as a scientific editor of the "Face of Israel Report." Prior to joining the CBS, Dr. Romanov worked at the Bank of Israel as an economist in the Research Department and was also with the Ministry of Finance in the State Revenue Administration. His areas of research activity are labor economics, education economics, public economics and survey methodology.

Dr. Romanov holds a PhD degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, received in 2002.

Daniel Gottlieb

Joined the National Insurance Institute in 2008 as deputy director-general of Research and Planning. He previously was with the Bank of Israel and the International Monetary Fund. In his most recent position at the Bank of Israel, Dr. Gottlieb served as senior economic advisor to three bank governors - Jacob Frenkel, David Klein and Stanley Fischer. Dr. Gottlieb began working at the Bank of Israel as a young economist in the Economics Unit of the Foreign Exchange Department and then served as senior researcher in the Bank's Research Department. During his career, he has researched topics such as monetary policy, inflation, balance of payments, public debt, optimal official foreign exchange reserves, sovereign risk, liberalization of foreign exchange, macro-economic policy and public policy. Since 2000, his work has focused upon socio-economic policy, in particular on issues of poverty and the labor market. From 1986 to 1988, Dr. Gottlieb worked as an economist for the International Monetary Fund. During the years Dr. Gottlieb has been teaching economic policy and in recent years socio-economic policy, mainly at the Ben-Gurion University and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Dudi Mizrahi

Director of the budgeting department in the Israeli Ministry of Education. In his former role in the MOE he was an advisor to Mr. Shimshon Shoshani, the ministry's director general. Before arriving at the MOE Mizrahi served as a project manager at the Foreign Investment Promotion Center in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, and an analyst for the wage and labor department at the finance ministry.

Mr. Mizrahi holds a Master's Degree (MBA) in Business Administration from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Meeting participants and steering team members (by alphabetical order):

Audrey Addi-Raccah

Senior lecturer in the Educational Administration, Policy and Leadership program at Tel Aviv University; serves as the program head. Her areas of research include social inequality and the sociology of teaching, and educational administration. In her research, Dr. Addi-Raccah pays special attention to issues of inequality in education systems, the feminization of administration, on the work of principals and more recently, on the relationship between the school and the surrounding environment and community.

Dr. Addi-Raccah holds a PhD degree in sociology from Tel Aviv University, received in 1997. Member of the Initiative's Committee on School and Family: Teacher-Parent Relations in a Changing Environment

Dorit Aram

Associate professor in the Department of School Counseling and Special Education in the School of Education at Tel Aviv University; from 2008-2011, she was head of the Special Education program and also served as co-chair of the Israel Association for Language and Literacy. In the coming academic year, she will head the department's Educational Counseling program. Prof. Aram is a member of the board of both the Israel Association for Language and Literacy and the World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP). She studies the nature of parent and kindergarten teachers' interaction with children during conversation, reading a book and writing, and is examining its impact on emergent literacy and the social-emotional development of normally developing children as well as those with special needs and children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Prof. Aram holds a Ph.D. degree in education from Tel Aviv University, received in 1998. Member of the Initiative's Committee on An Education System for All and for Each and Every One

Abraham Arcavi

Professor of science education at the Weizmann Institute Department of Science Education, which he headed from 2001 to 2005. His research focuses on teaching and learning high school mathematics.. His post-doctoral work was carried out at the University of California, Berkeley. Prof. Arcavi earned his Ph.D. in mathematics education from the Weizmann Institute in 1986. Chairman of the Initiative's Committee on An Education System for All and for Each and Every One

Shirley Babad

Head of education Field at the Budget Department, Ministry of Finance. Formerly she served as a teaching assistant at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

She holds a master's degree in economics from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Sandy Baum

An independent higher education policy analyst and consultant and a Senior Fellow at the George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development and Professor Emerita of Economics at Skidmore College, Dr. Baum earned her B.A. in sociology at Bryn Mawr College, where she is currently a member of the Board of Trustees, and her Ph.D. in economics at Columbia University. She has written and spoken extensively on issues relating to college access, college pricing, student aid policy, student debt, affordability, and other aspects of higher education finance.

Dr. Baum is a Senior Associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, Affiliated Consultant for HCM Strategists, and consultant to the College Board, where has co-authored the annual publications Trends in Student Aid and Trends in College Pricing since 2002. She also co-

authors [Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society](#). She chaired the College Board's Rethinking Student Aid study group, which issued comprehensive proposals for reform of the federal student aid system in 2008, and the Rethinking Pell Grants study group, which issued recommendations in April 2013. She chaired a Brookings Institution study group that issued its report, Beyond Need and Merit: Strengthening State Grant Programs in May 2012.

Yifat Ben-David Kolikant

Senior lecturer in the School of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She did her post-doctoral work at Northwestern University from 2004-2005. In 2009, she was a visiting professor at Stanford University. Dr. Ben-David Kolikant's research focuses on examining the tripartite relationship of students, school learning and technology in the information era. Mainly, her research revolves around two inter-related questions: (1) How does students' knowledge of subjects outside of school impact on their school learning? And, (2) what pedagogies are suited to the information age and the needs of students and what role does technology play?

Dr. Ben-David Kolikant holds a Ph.D. degree in science teaching from the Weizmann Institute of Science, received in 2002

Member of the Initiative's Committee on an Education System for All and for Each and Every One

Rami Benbenishty

Professor in the School of Social Work at Bar-Ilan University where he heads the research team on Children and Youth at Risk. He is involved in projects which monitor schools' climate at the school, district and state levels. His main research interests are child welfare, school climate, decision-making, and the effective use of information. Prof. Benbenishty earned his Ph.D. in social work and psychology from the University of Michigan in 1981.

Was a member of the Initiative Guidelines for 'Revising the System of Education Indicators in Israel' Committee, and chair of the expert team on 'Therapeutic Interventions for Children with Behavioral Problems and Difficulties'. Member of the Steering team for the project

Avner De-Shalit

Born in 1957, Prof. De-Shalit received a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Humanities from Hebrew University and a PhD in Political Science from Oxford University (1990). His research focuses on the environment, political disadvantage and social justice. Prof. De-Shalit served as head of the Political Science Department at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and as a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Environment, Ethics and Society. Together with Prof. Nathan Zussman and Prof. Danny Attas, he founded the interdisciplinary program: Philosophy, Economics and Political Science (PEP) at Hebrew University. He served as dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from 2008-2012. Prof. De-Shalit received the Rector's Prize for Research in 2007 and the Rothschild Prize for 2013-2014. Prof. De-Shalit was one of the founders of the New Movement, which joined Meretz. From 2007-2009, he led the team that submitted the "Green Vision for Israel" document to the Ministry of Finance. The document offers recommendations for environmental policy in various fields. In 2009, Prof. De-Shalit released a disc ("Intimate") that includes lyrics and tunes composed during the past decades, performed by Maayan Hirschbein.

Gal Fisher

Education program Director, Yad Hanadiv. Gal established the R&D Division at The Branco Weiss Institute, and has vast experience in teacher training and bringing about school change. Prior to joining Yad Hanadiv, Gal spent five years as Director of Research and Development at Avney Rosha – The Israel Institute for School Leadership. He holds an MA in Cultural Studies and Hermeneutics from Bar-Ilan University and is a graduate of the Mandel Institute Programme in Educational Leadership.

Josh Glazer

Dr. Glazer earned his Ph.D. in Education from the University of Michigan. His research interests are in the areas of school improvement, education policy, school networks, and educational professionalism. Prior to joining GW/GSEHD, Dr. Glazer spent five years at the Rothschild Foundation, in Israel, where he was Program Officer and then Director of the education department. He and his colleagues at the foundation led a major initiative to improve teaching and learning in the area of middle-school literacy, and supported various other programs directed at improving instruction in Israeli schools. While at the University of Michigan, Dr. Glazer participated in the Study of Instructional Improvement, a six-year study that examined the design, implementation, and effects of three leading comprehensive school improvement programs. "Improvement by Design," the book that reports on the findings from this study, is expected to be published in late 2012 by the University of Chicago Press. Dr. Glazer has published articles on educational professionalism, comprehensive school reform, and on the design and function of school improvement networks.

Eli Gottlieb

Director of the Mandel Leadership Institute and vice president of the Mandel Foundation-Israel. He holds degrees in philosophy and developmental psychology from the University of Cambridge and a doctorate in the psychology of education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dr. Gottlieb has served as a visiting professor in cognitive studies in education at the University of Washington, an adjunct lecturer at the school of education at the Hebrew University and a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. His research examines the relations between cognition, identity and education. In September 2011 Dr. Gottlieb featured alongside the CEOs of nine other leading education organizations at number 12 in The Marker magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in Israel.

Noa Hayman

Head of education Field at the Budget Department, Ministry of Finance. In the past she served as research assistant in the bank of Israel. Holds a bachelor's degree in the combined program of philosophy, economics and political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Sarah Kass

Chief Programme Officer, Yad Hanadiv. From 2004 was Director of Strategy and Evaluation for the AVI CHAI Foundation, and has lived in Israel since 2006. Graduated from Yale University summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, and from Oxford University where she was a Rhodes Scholar. In the 1990s, she founded and led one of the first charter public high schools in the United States.

Michael katz

Senior lecturer in psychology and education at the University of Haifa. From 1998 to 2001, Dr. Katz was chairman of the Department of Education and also chaired the M.A. committee in the Department of Psychology and in the Department of Counseling and Human Development. Dr. Katz was an editor of the Studies in Administration and Organization in Education journal and was guest editor of the Studies in Education journal. He is a member of the steering committee of the "Matriculation Exams 2000 – The 22 Schools Project." At chief education officer headquarters (Israel Defense Forces), he heads the research section of the "Rafal's Youth" project. Dr. Katz specializes in statistics and quantitative research and his research addresses theories of measurement, mathematics and logic fundamentals, decision-making models and vague systems. Dr. Katz holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Oxford, received in 1976.

Member of the Initiative's Committee on An Education System for All and for Each and Every One

Mona Khury- Kassabri

Professor in the School of Social Work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; she did her post-doctoral work at the University of Chicago. She was a visiting researcher at the University of Toronto's School of Social Work. Dr. Khoury-Kassabri is a member of the Hebrew University School of Social Work's teaching committee and since 2007 she has been a member of the sub-committee of the Planning and Budgeting Committee to Promote Higher Education in Arab Society. She conducts research in the areas of violence in schools, juvenile delinquency, children's rights, and bullying on the internet.

Dr. Khoury-Kassabri holds a Ph.D. degree in social work from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, received in 2002.

Member of the Initiative's Committee on An Education System for All and for Each and Every One

Ronnie Karsenty

Associate researcher in the Science Teaching Department at the Weizmann Institute of Science. Dr. Karsenty lectures in several frameworks in the area of training teachers of mathematics. At the Davidson Institute of Science Education, she founded the SHLAV Project for advancing secondary school students with low achievements in mathematics and headed the project for a period of eight years. She currently directs a new project in the Department of Science Teaching that involves filming and analyzing math lessons and using them in teacher training. Dr. Karsenty specializes in secondary school students' processes of mathematical thinking, particularly students at risk, in alternative approaches to teaching math to low achievers, in models of support for math teachers' professional development, and in measurement and evaluation of math achievements of secondary school studies. Karsenty holds a Ph.D. degree in mathematics education from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, received in 2002.

Member of the Initiative's Committee on an Education System for All and for Each and Every One

Ruth Klinov

Professor emeritus in the department of Economics, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Previously Prof. Klinov served as a project director of the center for research of social policy in Israel, and as an economist for the World Bank, her research Interests are Labor markets: supply, mobility, migration, wage structure. Economics of education: human capital, supply of educational services.

She holds a PhD in Economics from the Hebrew university, 1964.

Fadia Nasser-Abu Alhija

Professor in the School of Education at Tel Aviv University, where she heads the Program for Research, Measurement and Evaluation Methods. Previously, Prof. Nasser-Abu Alhija was research coordinator for GRE testing at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, NJ. Her research focuses on the methodology of measurement and evaluation of achievement as they relate to gender and culture, evaluation of teachers and teaching and, on the structural validity of testing methods.

Prof. Nasser-Abu Alhija holds a PhD degree in research, evaluation, measurement and statistical methods from the University of Georgia (US), received in 1997.

Member of the Initiative's Steering Committee, and in the past – member of the Initiative's committees on 'measurement and evaluation in education', 'diagnosis, assessment and evaluation in early childhood education', 'knowledge base required for teaching secondary school mathematics' and 'schooling for the 21st century'

Member of the Steering team for the project

Ruth Ottolenghi

Former head of the Secondary Education Division at the Ministry of Education. Ms. Ottolenghi taught mathematics and physics at secondary schools in Jerusalem; served as vice principal of the

Hebrew University High School; established and directed the Sieff and Marks (Six-Year) High School in Jerusalem; under the auspices of the Van Leer Institute, directed a project for Jewish and Arab teachers; worked at the Mandel School for Educational Leadership; and later directed the school. She was the coordinator of the National Taskforce for the Improvement of Education (the Dovrat Commission). Ms. Ottolenghi holds an M.A. degree in educational administration from Boston University (U.S.), received in 1966.

Member of the Initiative's steering Committee, and of Initiative's Committee on An Education System for All and for each and Every One

Limor Rubin

Program Officer, Trump foundation, Limor is a social entrepreneur. Previously, she has served as spokesperson for the Israel Women's Network and initiated a coalition of nonprofit organizations dedicated to promote gender equality in the media. She was the founder of a community-based center for parents of children with disabilities, which has now been expanded to national scale. Until recently, she headed the programs department at Kesher, a non-profit association for families of children with special needs.

In 2011, Limor created a unique community center as part of a partnership between an Israeli town and a Jewish community abroad - a model which has since been adopted by the government. Limor holds an MA in Public Policy from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Yekutiel (Kuti) Sabah

Senior director of the Research, Planning and Training Division of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services. He previously served as head of the Strategic Planning Division of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, director of the Fund for Preventive Action and Research in Health and Hygiene at Work, chief of staff for the reform of the Civil Service Commission, and senior professional advisor to former minister Ora Namir. He holds a master's degree in Education from Hebrew University, with a concentration in Sociology, as well as a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University (Wexner Fellow). Mr. Sabah has published many academic articles, and serves as an adjunct lecturer at the Hebrew University's School of Social Work.

Yael Shalgi

Chief of Organizational Learning and Strategy, Yad Hanadiv. Born in the US. Immigrated to Israel in 1975. Holds a BA in Economics and International Relations and an MA in International Relations from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Served as an IDF Intelligence Officer. Previous positions she held included: Founding Director of Israel Philanthropy Advisors, a non-profit consulting firm; VP, Community Investment, Matan – Your Way to Give; Assistant Director of Israel's umbrella organization of non-profits, and Lecturer in the MA Programme on Non-profit Management at The Hebrew University.

Yael Shapira

Assistant Director of International Relations at the George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD). She is also an alumna of the school, graduating with an M.A. in International Education in 2012 with an academic focus on providing access to education to marginalized populations, specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa. Before returning to GSEHD for her current position, Ms. Shapira spent six months in Ethiopia as a Project Coordinator for the TEN Program of the Jewish Agency for Israel. She then worked for OTZMA, supporting post-college Americans during their nine month fellowship in Israel. Previous to her Master's, Ms. Shapira spent a year participating in a social justice fellowship program that allowed her to work in India and Israel. In India she evaluated an inclusive education program

for children with disabilities in rural areas. In Israel, she managed a program that provides African refugees with access to higher education. Ms. Shapira received her Bachelor's in International Relations from Boston University in 2009. While in university, she studied abroad for a semester in Switzerland and a semester in Niger. Ms. Shapira was born and raised in Jerusalem, Israel.

Varda Shiffer

Research Fellow, the Van-Leer Jerusalem Institute, in the past she was the President of Mandel Foundation, Israel; Founder and director of Mandel Center for Leadership in the Negev; Director of Mandel School (now renamed - Mandel Leadership Institute) in Jerusalem; Chief Scientist of the Civil Service Commission; and head of unit in charge of the audit of the education system, at the State Comptroller's Office. Past Academic positions: Lecturer at Ben-Gurion University in the Negev – School of Management; Editor of *Civil Society and Third Sector in Israel* – a peer reviewed periodical; Senior Associate Member, St. Antony's College, Oxford; Adjunct Lecturer - Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Teaching and research assistant – McGill University, Montreal Member of the “Experts’ Committee” for the Social protest movement; Member of the Advisory Committee on Ethics in Public Organizations – the Israel Institute for Ethics; Member of the Public Committee on Government Policy towards the Third Sector in Israel; Member of International Council and former Chairperson of the Grants Committee of New Israel Fund; Member of Amnesty International Israel section and former Chairperson of the Israel section.

Michal Shinwell,

Senior Economist at the National Economic Council Previously Head of Environment Field at the Budget Department, Ministry of Finance, and an Economic Consultant at a private firm for Economic Consulting (SYS). Holds a B.A in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from the Hebrew University, and an Honors' MBA from Ben Gurion University at the Negev.

Esther Toledano

Senior researcher at the Research and Planning Administration of the National Insurance Institute of Israel. works regularly in the field of research on the following social insurance branches: maternity, children, maintenance (alimony) and unemployment. Mrs. Toledano has also carried out empirical research on work and occupation, in conjunction with various colleagues from the National Insurance Institute, the Bank of Israel, the Central Bureau of Statistics and from leading universities. She has important expertise in managing and analyzing big administrative data sets. She is also an expert in combining and utilizing data from different sources. Esther holds a first degree in Mathematics and Statistics from the Hebrew University as well as a second degree in education.

Yuval Vurgan

Mr. Vurgan serves as head of researchers' team, one of three multi-disciplinary teams, at the [Knesset \(Israeli Parliament\) Research and Information Center](#). Before that he was the center's senior researcher in the Education, Culture and Sports Committee. He holds a Master's degree in Democracy Studies and a Teaching Diploma in Civics.

Ariel Weiss

Chief executive, Yad Hanadiv foundation. Holds a law degree from Georgetown University and a BA from Yale College. Prior to his Aliya to Israel in 1985, served for twelve years in various positions in the US House of Representatives, including as Director of the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. Practiced law in Israel, maintaining associations with the Boston firm of Mintz, Levin, and with Herzog, Fox and Neeman in Tel Aviv. Employed at Yad Hanadiv since 1992; Chief Executive since 1999.

Staff

Oded Busharian, Academic Coordinator

Completed the Bachelor's degree in the combined program of philosophy, economics and political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2007). Holds an MA in political science from the Hebrew University, received in 2011. Thesis topic: A critical examination of the rightist libertarian claim according to which the minimalist state enables the greatest degree of personal freedoms for its inhabitants. He was awarded the Dean's Fellowship and the Rector's Prize for Excellence in Master's studies. He served as a research assistant and teaching assistant in the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University. He formerly served as an analyst and economist for the district marketer of Mifal HaPayis (the Lottery) in the Jerusalem area.

Avital Darmon, Founding Director

Ph.D. in biology (1985) and Teacher's Certificate (1988) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Graduate of Mandel's School of Education Leadership (SEL).

Biology teacher, Jerusalem, Founder and past director of the National Center for Biology Teachers, under the auspices of the Hebrew University and the Ministry of Education.

Past director of the Mandel School for Educational Leadership, Jerusalem.

Served as a member of subject and curriculum committees for the Ministry of Education (Biology, Science and Technology) and on committees focusing on teacher-related issues

Ziva Dekel, Administrative Director

M.A. in Jewish Studies from the Schechter Institute (2007); B.A. in geography and in the Multi-Disciplinary Studies program from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1996).

Previously employed as the human resources manager at the Society for the Advancement of Education, Jerusalem where she was a member of the management team, the proposal-bids submissions team and the steering committee of the education program for empowering female students in schools. She has also worked in the business sector as a human resources manager and a bookkeeper.

At the Initiative, she is responsible for general administration, budget monitoring and human resources.

Naomi Mandel-Levi, Academic Coordinator

Holds an MA degree in political science from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada (2001) and a PhD degree in political science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, received in 2008. She has been involved in curriculum development for groups comprised of members from many cultures and in preparation of teaching materials for political science. She has guided children and youth in various educational settings including the National Council for the Child, the Karev Foundation, and the Ministry of Education's Centers for the Study of Citizenship and Democracy