

# Social Welfare Committee Think Tank: Envisioning the Future of Jewish Social Welfare in Europe 2012-2025

A Report

June 2012



# **Social Welfare Committee Think Tank: Envisioning the Future of Jewish Social Welfare in Europe 2012-2025 "From Social Welfare to Community Building"**

A Report

June 2012



**Authors**

Marta Saracyn, Intern Assistant (JDC-ICCD)

Marcelo Dimentstein, Operations Director (JDC-ICCD)

Mario Izcovich, Director of Pan-European Programmes, (JDC)

**Editing**

Lisa Agneessens

**JDC International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD), Oxford**

Chairwoman: Ruth Zilkha

President: Alberto Senderey

Operations Director: Marcelo Dimentstein

Company Secretary: Pablo Weinstein

**Board Members**

Jodi Schwartz                      Steven Schwager

Eugene Philips                    William Recant

Andres Spokoiny                Nathan Sandler

Mario Izcovich                  Marguerite Zauberman

Michel Calef

**European Council of Jewish Communities**

President: Evan Z. Lazar

Vice-President: Marguerite Zauberman

Vice-President: Alexander Oscar

Board Secretary: Simone F. Mortara

Treasurer: Nestor Trumper

Director of Programmes: Mariano Schlimovich

**Board Members**

Evgenia Lvova

Benjamin Albalas

Luciana Friedman

Faina Kuklianky

Gabrielle Rosenstein

Aleksandar Necak

**Copyright© JDC-ICCD, 2012**

All Rights Reserved© No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from the publisher.

# Table of Contents

page

4	Executive Summary
7	Social Welfare Committee Think Tank: Envisioning the Future of Social Welfare 2012-2025
7	From Social Welfare to Community Building
9	The Social Welfare Programs on Nazi Victims by 2025
10	Population Ageing
13	Jewish Social Welfare in Face of the Current Economic Crisis
13	Jewish Social Welfare in European Societies: building bridges with the local/regional/national authorities and with other minorities
15	Conclusions and Future Actions
16	APPENDIX: Questionnaires

## Executive Summary

The Jewish Social Welfare Committee Think Tank held on 26-28 February 2012 in Yarnton Manor, Oxford gathered key professionals in Jewish Social Welfare from across Europe. The event was designed as a platform to share, discuss and project the future of Jewish welfare services in the decades to come. During the three days, participants assessed the current situation of Jewish social welfare in their countries, discussed common challenges and problems, shared best practices and experiences, and imagined possible scenarios for the future of Jewish social welfare for the next 15 years.

The think tank was organized by the JDC International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) in cooperation with the European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC). Participants included representatives from Jewish Care (UK), Norwood (UK), FSJU (France), OSE (France), JMW (Netherlands), as well as representatives from the Jewish social welfare organizations from Latvia, Croatia, Hungary and Poland.

### From Social Welfare to Community Building

**Participants expressed a profound need to revise the predominant perception of social welfare as a conventional service provided to "clients", who are regarded as "passive" recipients throughout the process of assistance.**

Promoting participation was identified as a way of changing clients' common idea of expecting financial benefits as the only means of support. Although some participants expressed concerns related to the lack of "volunteer culture" and deficiency in funds and methods for training voluntary workforce (mainly from East Europe), these were pointed out as the basics for promoting clients' participation and community development.

Furthermore, social welfare programs could serve to reach out to unaffiliated Jews. **The common perception is that social welfare could be oriented towards community building objectives.**

### The Social Welfare Programs for Nazi Victims by 2025

**By the year 2025 a critical drop is expected in the number of Nazi victims. However, the number of social welfare clients in all of the countries is believed to become subject to substantial growth, due to the natural ageing process of the post-war baby boom generation.**

In this regard, the financial factor will become the biggest challenge for organizations receiving most of their funding specifically to be used for the needs of Nazi victims, but not for those born in the post-war period—the "second generation".

Concerning this issue, participants considered building a common European agenda that includes a request to the Claims Conference to expand assistance to the second generation of Nazi victims as they also have to struggle with war repercussions.

Participants also agreed on the need of introducing principles of preventive care (to limit as much as possible the need for support), life-long learning processes, and assisting and

helping clients to apply for sources of individual funding available at local, regional, national, and European levels.

## Population Ageing

The think tank discussions were supplemented with a series of lectures on population ageing and its impact on social welfare, by Dr George Leeson, co-director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing (University of Oxford). **The lectures focused on the impact of the dramatic decline in the mortality rate combined with an increase in life expectancy at birth, resulting in a sharp increase of the elderly population.**

Dr Leeson's presentations stressed the need for social welfare organizations to recognize that the number of social welfare clients will consistently increase with time as the consequence of the extended longevity of the older generations, who over the years have become substantial contributors to families support, yet whose own needs tend to be neglected.

Additionally, these sessions introduced strategies to cope with an ageing world, focusing on the adjustment to the demographic changes and addressing arising issues that impact long lived societies struggling with poverty, public health care and long term care systems, as well as financial and pension systems.

## Jewish Social Welfare in Face of the Current Economic Crisis

Participants reported that their organizations are suffering on the one hand from severe government funding cuts and on the other, from a downfall of revenues coming from the community's membership fees. **As a result different programs and facilities have been discontinued and some organizations are being forced to implement cuts in their employees' salaries.**

A latent leadership crisis in the Jewish communities has been brought to light by the current economic crisis: lack of strategy and vision, uninformed decision-making processes, and lack of transparency and democracy. These elements seem to prevail in most of the cases analysed by the professionals.

However, implementing efficient use of resources, flexible financial strategies, and a Jewish welfare network of mutual learning and practices sharing were seen as possible methods to rectify the current crisis.

## Jewish Social Welfare in European Societies: building bridges with the local/regional/national authorities and with other minorities

The most significant issues mentioned in regard to the improvement of cooperation with administrations were: tensions due to the reluctance of authorities to fund services perceived as too particularistic, difficulty in raising particular topics of Jewish community interest in the public discourse, and cases of anti-Semitism.

**Despite arising difficulties, Jewish communities and welfare services in particular should**

**promote and explore models for openness by engaging in social justice causes, and providing relief to others in need, etc.** Following the notion of openness, an opportunity exists for social welfare development to push the borders of Jewish communal activities and interests towards the possibility of cooperating with other minorities.

Another initiative agreed upon, was to lobby at the European level to raise awareness of the needs of the elderly within the political discourse.

Finally, participants analysed the case of the integration of people with mental and learning disabilities into the general society. Special focus was given to the new model seeking empowerment of individuals through providing active support, labour market embedment, and independency. In-depth discussions covered both opportunities and obstacles which may arise over the course of introducing this model, coming from tension between promoting independence at the expense of control as well as resistance from family members and clients themselves accustomed to the traditional model of support within this group.

## Conclusions and Future Actions

- Addressing the issue of forthcoming changes, participants expressed the urgency for community executives and lay leaders to be aware of them, and the need to create strategies aimed at adapting current programs as well as working models (together with staff training patterns) to a future transition.
- Repeatedly stressed was the necessity for an international cooperation both in terms of exchanging experience and working models, as well as the need to establish a pan-European Jewish social welfare coalition, in order to deal with different organizations (European Union, Claims Conference, etc.).
- The most important policy for future actions, in terms of activity programs, was recognized as opening social welfare for different groups of clients, offering the most inclusive programs and as a result bringing together community members of all generations, denominations and abilities.

## Social Welfare Committee Think Tank: Envisioning the Future of Social Welfare 2012-2025

The Jewish Social Welfare Committee Think Tank held on 26-28 February 2012 in Yarnton Manor, Oxford gathered key professionals in Jewish Social Welfare from across Europe. The event was designed as a platform to share, discuss and project the future of Jewish welfare services in the decades to come. During the three days, participants assessed the current situation of Jewish Social Welfare in their countries, discussed common challenges and problems, shared best practices and experiences, and imagined possible scenarios for the future of social welfare for the next 15 years.

The think tank was organized by the JDC International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) in cooperation with the European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC).

The following professionals participated:

- David Benichou (Fonds Social Juif Unifié, France)
- Daniel Casson (Jewish Care, United Kingdom)
- Avi Feifer (JDC)
- Inna Eizensharf (Social Welfare Services, Latvia)
- Anna Hermanovic (Social Welfare Services, Croatia)
- David Harris (Norwood, United Kingdom)
- Mira Karajz (Social Welfare Services, Hungary)
- Esther Rozenkier (OSE, France)
- Ewa Spaczyńska (Social Welfare Services, Poland)
- Hans Vuijsje (Joods Maatschappelijk Werk, Netherlands)

Think Tank organizers and facilitators:

- Mario Izcovich (JDC Director for Pan-European Programs)
- Marcelo Dimentstein (Operations Director JDC-ICCD)
- Mariano Schlimovich (Director of programs of the ECJC)
- Marta Saracyn (Intern Assistant JDC-ICCD)

The following is a detailed report of each session.

### From Social Welfare to Community Building

The first plenary session aimed at answering the following question: how can social welfare organizations promote the development of Jewish communities? The main idea discussed was changing the nature of social welfare activities from direct service facilitating community building in the areas where it may naturally occur. In other words, can social welfare programs serve for community building, going beyond the fact of being just service providers? Daniel Casson (Jewish Care, UK) opened the session presenting some experiences that helped to outline the question.



One of the recent projects of Jewish Care is the arrangement of Independent Living apartments, where in the complex of 45 apartments people are offered partnership and support during the process of building their own (sovereign) community. Another area emphasised in Jewish Care activity is volunteer and befriending services, fostering a warm and supportive environment, where the whole community can come together and contribute. A further focal point, mentioned in the presentation, is creating a compassionate community, especially in the field of end of life services. The main goal of equipping people to make a difference to themselves and take control over the last part of their lives is supplemented by bringing generations together to interact with each other and thus creating a sense of continuity and purpose in the community. Underlying fundamental values brought up examples of Jewish Care's projects such as the concept of mutuality, based on listening to clients and involving them in the actions with the spirit of the new, community oriented model of social welfare.

Participants considered whether their organizations could meet similar aims, what policies would they have to implement and what obstacles they would have to struggle with in order to pursue defined goals.

One of the issues analysed by the participants was the profound need to revise the predominant perception of social welfare as a conventional service provided to "clients", who are regarded as "passive" recipients throughout the process of assistance. In this respect, it was considered that in order to introduce new practices based on the active involvement of the clients, it is essential to overcome a prevailing stigma present both in the community as well as in those who receive assistance regarding social welfare. Thus, a change in the perception was commonly agreed upon as a first and much needed goal. Promoting participation will also imply changing clients' common idea to expect financial benefits as the only means of support.

In this second aspect, major concerns were raised by the representatives of Eastern European organizations, as they perceive their countries as suffering from a lack of "volunteer culture", in addition to deficiency in funds for and established methods of training the voluntary workforce.

Obtaining funds for these new types of initiatives could represent a real challenge, as local or national governments are extremely reluctant to support programs aimed at strengthening minority groups within the social fabric. The cases of France and Netherlands were brought up as examples. There,

as a consequence of the fear of increasing ethnic-religious tensions, state policies consciously avoid favouring particular ethnic religious groups.

However, governments' reluctance towards financial support for exclusively Jewish initiatives

*There's a profound need to revise the predominant perception of social welfare as a conventional service provided to "clients", who are regarded as "passive" recipients throughout the process of assistance.*

*The common perception is that social welfare could be oriented towards community building objectives.*

could be overcome by opening organized programs for non-Jewish clients, following the example given by the French OSE—running a Jewish hospital open to and welcoming non-Jewish patients, which offers medical services financed by the French government as a part of the public healthcare system.

From another perspective, it was discussed to which degree social welfare programs can serve to reach out to unaffiliated Jews who, while not affiliated to any Jewish institution they would be however willing to engage in meaningful programs carried out within a Jewish framework. In the welfare field there is certainly some potential. Programs aimed at interacting with other minorities in specific areas of welfare or making trips to visit communities in need (like J'OSE does in India) could be appealing especially for young people. The common perception is that social welfare could be oriented towards community building objectives.

## The Social Welfare Programs on Nazi Victims by 2025

One of the major concerns raised during the think tank was the critical drop in the number of the Holocaust survivor population by the year 2025. This shift in the communities' demography was analysed in light of two of its primary aspects—specificity of the programs offered by the Jewish social welfare organizations, as well as its influence on overall organizational funding.

It was considered that these issues could have a different impact in each country. Whereas Eastern European countries and the Netherlands receive most of their funding for programs addressed to Nazi victims and will therefore feel the impact, France's and the UK's welfare program would not necessarily be jeopardized by this change. The dwindling population of Nazi victims and the subsequent diminution of resources provide a great challenge to the Jewish communal welfare services, considering that all welfare organizations maintain programs and services for a group of clients much broader than the above-mentioned.

What is more, the number of social welfare clients in all of the countries is believed to become subject to substantial growth, considering the ageing process of the post-war baby boom generation. In the next decades "baby boomers" coming of age are expected to join the social welfare programs directed to the elderly, not only replacing, but also outnumbering Nazi victims.

The vital issue discussed in regard to this prognosis was the financial factor, which becomes the biggest challenge for the organizations that, as was mentioned, receive most of their funding specifically to be used for the needs of Nazi victims, but not for the people born in the post-war period, the so called "second generation."

In this respect, and drawing on the concept of "second generation," participants considered building a common European agenda that includes a request to the Claims Conference to expand assistance to the second generation of Nazi victims since they also have to struggle with war repercussions. Other sources of alternative funding could be charity fundraising,

*The dwindling population of Nazi victims and the subsequent diminution of resources provide a great challenge to the Jewish communal welfare services.*

and funds and subsidies coming from the European Union as possible sources of financial support.

In addition to the financial aspect of this issue, participants agreed to introducing principles of preventive care (so as to limit as much as possible the need for support), life-long learning processes, and assisting and helping clients to apply for sources of individual funding available at local, regional, national, and European levels.

Further emphasis was put also on the need to push for democratic processes inside the organizations, opening them in order to attract new donors and volunteers with organizational transparency.

## Population Ageing

*The Social Welfare Think Tank had as their invited guest Dr George Leeson, co-director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing (University of Oxford). Dr Leeson is a sociologist, demographer and mathematician specialized in global ageing and in Europe's changing population.<sup>1</sup> He delivered a series of lectures focused on population ageing and the impact on social welfare. In view of the importance of this topic, excerpts of his presentation are presented below.*

For years, the dramatic decline in the mortality rate combined with increase in life expectancy at birth went largely unnoticed, but resulted in a sharp increase of the elderly population. When this population ageing process was acknowledged by governments and health authorities in

*The sharp increase of the elderly population will demand a modification of the way we think about social welfare.*

the 1980s, this was perceived in the public and academic discourse as a problem. The attitude towards it changed in the following decades, being perceived as a challenge in 1990s and as an opportunity in 2000s.

A crucial aspect when understanding the complexity of an ageing population is to acknowledge not only the existence of longer

life spans on a global scale, but also the decline in the fertility rate. In other words, people live longer, but they also have fewer children. A useful method to illustrate this demographic change is by showing it through population pyramids. If, in the 1900s the pyramid borrowed its shape from the triangle (considered the "classic" population pyramid), by 2100 the global population pyramid will resemble that of skyscrapers. The peculiar metamorphosis of population diagram forms is a direct result from the severe decline in both fertility and mortality rates. Whereas at the beginning of the 20th century people were having many children, but also with every age the population was decreasing due to the mortality rate, at the turn of the 21st century the number of people born will be much lower, however they will live longer healthier lives into their old age, with some individuals living up to the age of over 120 (represented by the skyscraper "antenna level").

This dramatic change, based on low fertility rates and a continuous growth of life expectancy, will demand a modification of the way we think about population and social welfare.

<sup>1</sup> For Dr. Leeson's full bio, see: <http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/people/george-leeson>

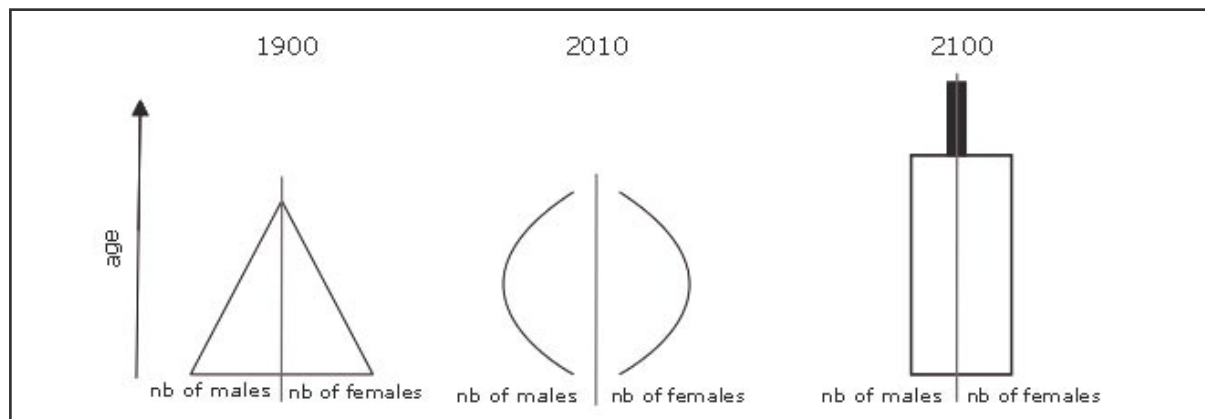


Figure 1. Population pyramids over time

It has been proven that living an active and socially advantaged life can provide individuals with longer life expectancy. Even socially disadvantaged individuals living in an environment where good social services are provided can expect higher chances of having a longer life.

Another vital element which must be taken into account when thinking about the future of the European population, is the fact that global demographic growth will be led by the Asian population to such an extent that around year 2100, the European population will constitute only 7% of the world's population.

*This radical life extension, caused also by medical and technological developments, will originate the development of a new social group – the centenarians.*

Increased life expectancy (both male and female)

combined with fertility rates below the replacement level influence the overall age of the European population. For instance, it is considered that by the year 2000 European society became a "mature society", that is, the number of people aged 60+ is higher than the number of people aged 0-14. This situation also causes the dependency ratio to increase (number of people aged 65 or higher in relation to number of people between 15 and 64). The dependency ratio is currently fluctuating between 40% and 60% in different European countries.

This radical life extension, caused also by medical and technological developments, will originate the development of a new social group—the centenarians (individuals living for over 100 years), and in a further perspective, the "supercentenarians" will exist as well.

The family models are impacted as well by the longevity, the better health conditions provided by technology and a decrease in the fertility rate. First of all, post-modern families leave behind the "tree family model" composed of a firm core of parents and broad branches of their offspring for that of the "bean pole family model" with the complex of smaller individual groupings stemming from multiple centres. The "bean pole family model" is an indicator of social change, whereby individuals belong to several family surroundings (taking into account multiple numbers of marriages). Additionally, the processes of dissolution, transition and reconstitution of the family forms result in the paradox of families growing in spite of the decreasing number of children, due to the life extension of the older generations.

An important factor to bear in mind in the context of family transformation is the fact that

since the introduction of the welfare state, care for the older generations has been pushed out from the private family area to the external organizational sphere. Therefore, it is crucial for social welfare organizations to realise that the number of social welfare clients will be constantly increasing with time as the consequence of the extended longevity of older generations.

According to the Global Ageing Survey (GLAS) conducted by Oxford University in 24

***Around year 2100, the European population will constitute only 7% of the world's population.***

countries among 44,000 people aged 40-80<sup>2</sup>, care and support models within the family transitioned to the extent that older generations became significant contributors both in terms of practical help and financial

support. Therefore, it emerges the need for recognition of the older generations contribution towards families but also of the specific needs of people aged 60+.

Another aspect of the relationship between the older generations and families relevant for further consideration is its reciprocity. Not only people aged 60+ are major contributors in families' prosperity, but also most of the GLAS' respondents believe that the family, not the state, should be the first setting to turn to when they need care.

Furthermore, the presented Survey has also shown that European generations see themselves as healthy, having a good quality of life, and being in control of their lives. Remarkably, indexes of good quality of life and control over it differ between age groups increasing with age. Furthermore, gathered data has indicated a change in the social perception of later stages of life—whereas 30 years ago people described their experience as the "trauma of retirement", nowadays they declare they are looking forward to it.

Additionally, key issues to bear in mind, especially from the social welfare perspective are possible outcomes of the fact that despite growing longevity individuals still want to retire at the same age. Providing suitable structures for the pensioners will become a challenge due to the different needs of the growing age range of social welfare clients.

In the wake of the immense change in the global demographic pattern, welfare systems will have to develop and implement programs and policies of adjustment to the circumstances as the ageing world emerges. The Oxford Institute of Ageing in cooperation with the World Economic Forum and the World Demographic Forum composed a list of seven strategies for an ageing world that includes:

- Adapting financial and pension systems to the demographic changes
- Promoting productivity—understood beyond the economic terms, based on the transition from entitlement to empowerment achieved by educating people and facilitating contribution
- Supplying medicine to public healthcare and long term care, especially in less developed regions, where long term care has not yet been introduced as part of the care system
- Providing life-long learning
- Sustaining families and communities as the smallest, most powerfully linked units that could trigger getting out of poverty
- Facilitating mobility of healthcare, pension and skills
- Addressing interactions with the environment

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/research/global/glas>

## Jewish Social Welfare in Face of the Current Economic Crisis

A session was devoted to evaluate the situation of the Jewish social welfare programs in times of global economic crisis. The crisis impacts on three different aspects: at a financial level, giving way to the emergence of a new group of people in need within the communities, and at a leadership level.

Regarding the financial impact of the crisis, participants reported that their organizations are currently suffering on the one hand from a severe reduction in the funds provided by local and national governments and on the other, from a downfall of revenues coming from community's membership fees. This has dramatic repercussions both in Eastern and Western Europe as different programs and facilities have to be discontinued. In addition to this, some organizations are being forced to implement cuts in their employees' salaries.

The economic downturn is the main cause for the emergence of a new group of clients with very specific needs. Many Jewish organizations call this group "temporary poor". Originally stemming from middle classes, the "temporary poor" became suddenly unemployed, with almost no back-up savings left for everyday expenses, and, what is more, having to face huge mortgage debts incurred in previous years (when

nothing seemed to announce the forthcoming crisis). The demoralizing effects of this new and unexpected situation are observed in the Jewish communities by the fact that this group of people abandon the activities and their attendance to events.

Last but not least, participants agreed that the crisis unveiled a latent leadership crisis in the Jewish communities: lack of strategy and vision, uninformed decision-making processes, and lack of transparency and democracy seem to prevail in most of the cases analysed by the professionals.

How can the crisis serve as an opportunity? Three elements were mentioned: efficiency, flexibility and mutual learning. First of all, the crisis is a great opportunity to render the services more efficient in a broad sense: from better allocation of resources to the need of empowering welfare clients through employment training. The crisis can also help to achieve flexible, yet balanced, financial strategies, in order to avoid the mismanagement of limited funds. Finally, all participants emphasized the need to develop ways to foster a network of mutual learning and the sharing of best practices and experiences across Jewish Europe.

*The economic crisis unveiled a latent leadership crisis in the Jewish communities: lack of strategy and vision, uninformed decision-making processes and lack of transparency and democracy.*

## Jewish Social Welfare in European Societies: building bridges with the local/regional/national authorities and with other minorities

Jewish welfare services do not operate in a vacuum: they are often part of a wider society and are shaped by the same tensions, conflicts, and dilemmas as the rest of the population. During the think tank various issues related with this theme were discussed in-depth.

When assessing the possible roads to improve cooperation between our organizations and different levels of administrations, it was agreed that sometimes this could be a complex task. As it was already mentioned above, tensions sometimes arise when authorities show themselves reluctant to fund services or activities they perceive as too particularistic. This is the case in the Netherlands and France, where authorities have demonstrated at best an attitude of mistrust and at worst direct hostility.

In Latvia, there is a feeling of uneasiness with the perceived difficulty to raise particular topics in the public discourse (e.g. the case of restitution, where the project of the restitution act did not even pass to the level where it would be discussed in parliament). The situation is worse

*The Jewish experience in Social Welfare can clearly serve as a model for other minorities and organizations.*

in Hungary, where there is a rising problem of anti-Semitism.

Nevertheless, going beyond these all too real difficulties, participants agreed that Jewish communities in general and welfare services in particular should promote and explore models for openness, such as engaging in social justice causes, and providing relief to those in need,

among others. After decades of providing on-going services, Jewish social welfare organizations developed a unique expertise. The Jewish experience can clearly serve as a model for other minorities and organizations.

Thus, a potentially dynamic field can be developed if social welfare professionals manage to "push the borders" of Jewish communal activities and interests. For example, cooperating with other ethnic-religious minorities such as Muslims, in order to transfer "Jewish" expertise in developing cultural-specific welfare programs are things that are not so far away as possibilities for further explorations. It has been mentioned that many private Jewish donors today, concerned by the conflict in the Middle East and looking for ways to enable Jewish-Muslim dialogue, are pushing in that direction. Furthermore, these types of non-sectarian activities are proving to be very appealing to young Jews looking for a meaningful engagement in society within a Jewish framework.

True, some pointed out the gap that could potentially exist between these projects and the Jewish leadership of the establishment, often (but not always) having "inward-looking" inclinations and pursuing a more "defensive" agenda. It was widely recognized, however, that community professionals have the responsibility to create a proactive approach at the internal organizational level in order to improve communication with the lay leadership, modernize certain paradigms, and press for more transparent and democratic practices. All this, while recognizing the increasing importance that non-traditional Jewish spaces are having, allowing all kinds of alternative (and less structured) approaches to Judaism.

Another initiative which participants agreed upon was to lobby at the European level to raise awareness of the needs of the elderly. However, it was stressed that the angle of the campaign would not necessarily have to emphasize the Jewish aspect, but rather focus on the needs of the older generations as such, since their needs tend to be neglected in political discourse.

The above discussion was complemented by a session devoted to analysing the role of social welfare services in integrating people with mental and learning disabilities. David Harris

(Norwood, UK) presented the programs his institution runs in this field. Norwood's model of integration seeks to empower individuals with disabilities in order to achieve a self-sufficient and independent life-style. Especially remarkable are the employment programs, whereby individuals are encouraged to perform different for-profit activities as a way to develop job-related responsibilities and engage in long-term obligations. "Social enterprises" were created in order to frame these activities. One of the main goals, as it was stressed by David Harris, is to move from a paradigm centred in passive assistance towards one focused on a "guiding through process" aimed at achieving the highest possible level of integration. Obstacles which surface with this model were also underlined: the permanent tension between promoting independence at the expense of control; resistance of family members accustomed to the other model, and the uneasy role of the social worker. Many participants recognized the lack of vision or strategy in their organizations towards people suffering from mental or learning disabilities.

## Conclusions and Future Actions

A final session was devoted to exchanging final remarks and defining future actions. Participants agreed that the think tank was an excellent opportunity to analyse in-depth the current condition of Jewish social welfare. Only after doing so is it possible to build suitable strategies and plan future actions. A critical issue mentioned in this respect was creating awareness among community executives and lay leaders for the upcoming changes, as well as the need to elaborate strategies aimed at adapting current programs to a future transition.

Another important issue was to put more emphasis on cooperation between organizations. A first step could be exchanging experiences and working models. Attendees coming from

*An important issue is to put more emphasis on cooperation between organizations. A first step could be exchanging experiences and working models.*

Eastern European countries indicated their wish to use and adapt to their own circumstances, the social welfare models already established and working in Western countries. Additionally, Eastern European participants (Croatia, Poland, Hungary) expressed their intent to cooperate with each other in creating a solid and clear vision, as well as structural strategies for their organizations. Moreover, the repeatedly stressed

necessity for an international cooperation was also related to the need to establish a solid unified pan-European Jewish social welfare coalition.

The following step to be taken at the organizational level which was mentioned was training for social welfare workers in order to prepare staff for the changing environment, taking into account all of the shift consequences.

Within the activity level of Jewish social welfare it was agreed upon that the most important policy for future actions should be extensive integration programmes. Integration in this context referred to opening social welfare for different groups of clients, offering the most inclusive programs and as a result bringing together community members of all generations, denominations, and abilities.



## APPENDIX: Questionnaires

During the think tank, the participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding the present condition of the organizations they represent and what, in their judgement, will change over the upcoming decades due to the current economic crisis and demographic changes. A synopsis of the gathered material is presented below.

### The Outlook of the Jewish Welfare Services in 20 Years

Most of the think tank attendees considered that their organizations would eventually have to replace certain programs (especially the ones directed to the Nazi victims) with new initiatives within the next two decades. Some have mentioned however, that this transition might result in changing current organizational missions. For example, most of the present Jewish social welfare programs in the Netherlands are directed towards Nazi victims, therefore closing these programs will force JMW to change the profile of its activity.

### Jewish Social Welfare Offer

All of the organizations represented during the think tank deliver home care to their clients. However, the type of support provided in this field is currently subject to changes, since clients are interested in various kinds of services. Most organizations are cited to increasingly develop and adjust the home care offer, considering the general notion of clients turning down care homes offer in favour of services being given to them at their own accommodations. Likewise, most of the Jewish social welfare organizations provide programs directed to the "second generation" of Nazi victims and, according to the answers given, it is anticipated that the need for second generations programs will grow as this generation comes of age. Due to this fact, some participants expressed concern regarding the shortage of financial resources allocated for these types of programs, as some of the organizations (from Croatia, Hungary, Netherlands and Poland) depend largely on the funding given for the Nazi victim programs that do not cover the second generation.

### Relationship with Local Authorities

All of the think tank attendees marked current relationships with local authorities as problematic or unsatisfying, reporting no cooperation or even governments' reluctance towards Jewish organizations. Only participants from the United Kingdom and Latvia did not express their deep concern with future relationships between their organizations and the authorities—noting the possibility of the development of cooperation or support given by the authorities. Moreover, local or national authorities have been marked as the source of limitations put upon the Jewish social welfare in terms of national guidelines hindering their work.

## Impact of the Economic Crisis

All of the organizations have registered growth in the overall numbers of clients as a result of the current economic crisis. Unexpectedly, the recorded increase in numbers relates not only to the elderly, but also to rising groups of young individuals and families suffering from unemployment.

On the other hand, it has been noted that the economic problems have also influenced the welfare programs offered, since different activities have been closed and smaller local organizations have ceased to exist due to the lack of funding.

Shortage of financial resources was also underlined as the biggest limitation in Jewish social welfare.

## Decrease of the Nazi Victims Population

Apart from the financial difficulties the organizations will have to struggle with as a result of the decrease of the Nazi victims population, the near-disappearance of this group results also in the closing down of programs specifically directed to it. Furthermore, this notion is foreseen as a possible cause of changing organizational missions and vision, together with a shift in the service provided by different organizations.

## Development

The two main areas of welfare service which need to be developed in most of the countries are financial support and employment facilitation. These two areas also relate to the list of the spheres and activities Jewish social welfare professionals who attended the think tank would like to provide for their employees. Training and improvement in fundraising skills combined with commercial adjustment to the changing market were cited as needed for the future development of their organizations.

Additionally, regarding the shortage of human resources, a further field to develop is the training of professional social welfare workers together with volunteer forces. The latter appears as particularly vital, as most of the think tank attendees pointed out volunteer training as a pressing need.

**Video:** For an inside look at the Social Welfare Committee Think Tank, we invite you to watch the official video at: <http://vimeo.com/39468526>



The participants of the Social Welfare Committee Think Tank: Envisioning the Future of Social Welfare 2012-2025 – Yarnton Manor, Oxford

---

The JDC International Center for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) was founded in 2005. It aims to identify, understand and analyze ongoing changes and transformations taking place in Europe and Latin America that impact particularly Jewish Communities.

**Paris**

+33 1 56 59 79 79

**Email**

[contact@jdc-iccd.org](mailto:contact@jdc-iccd.org)

**Oxford**

+44 1 86 55 77 572

**Web**

[www.jdc-iccd.org](http://www.jdc-iccd.org)

**Buenos Aires**

+54 11 48 27 75 53