



ISRAEL

**TRENDS, PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES
IN STRENGTHENING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION**

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this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the
European Union, 2014.

ISBN: 978-92-9157-617-3
doi:10.2816/21529

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Printed in Italy

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AUTHORS

Prof. Gad Yair

Associate Professor and Reader, Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Director, NCJW Research Center for Innovation in Education
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Email: gad.yair@mail.huji.ac.il

Mr Keith Goldstein

Researcher and PhD candidate
NCJW Research Centre for Innovation in Education
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
E-mail: keith.goldstein@mail.huji.ac.il

Mr Nir Rotem

Researcher
NCJW Research Centre for Innovation in Education
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
E-mail: nir.rotem@mail.huji.ac.il

Final report of the ETF project 'Mapping of VET educational policies and practices for social inclusion and social cohesion' (contract CON/12/ETF/0012).
A project implemented with the support of LSE Enterprise.

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ETF or the EU institutions.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
1. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICY PROCESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL	9
1.1 Situational analysis: methodology for research	9
1.2 Vocational education under the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour	10
1.3 The policy process and the policy debate	12
2. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION AT LOCAL LEVEL	17
2.1 Methodology	17
2.2 Situational analysis (in the case study areas)	18
2.3 Participatory action research process and findings	22
2.4 Comparative analysis of social inclusion and social cohesion practices	30
3. ACTION PROPOSALS FOR SCHOOLS	31
4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	33
4.1 Recommendations for policy makers	33
4.2 Recommendations for the Apprenticeship Law	34
4.3 Recommendations for government-affiliated institutions	34
4.4 Recommendations for NGOs and donors	35
CONCLUSIONS	37
APPENDICES	39
Appendix 1: Details of the statistical analysis	39
Appendix 2: Discussion of interviews with local level informants	39

ACRONYMS	53
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REFERENCES	55
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research focuses on three vocational education and training (VET) schools of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour (MOITL). Each school serves a different sector within the ethnic and religious communities of Israel. We interviewed eight national policy makers and 17 local educators, alongside other experts affiliated with VET schools. We also performed a quantitative survey of 30 teachers and 395 students in our case-study schools. Our mixed-methods analysis looked at differences between the schools at various levels (students, educators and policy makers). The results clearly show that VET in Israel is viewed as a mechanism for dealing with social exclusion. VET students are primarily dropouts from mainstream academic education and students with learning disabilities, most of whom come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and have a poor capacity for general academic studies. Although the schools are unable to provide students with sufficient resources, they are successful at turning students around from educational failure. A number of policies are suggested at the national level to promote coordination between the MOITL and the Ministry of Education (MoE), in addition to reforms of the Apprenticeship Law and obligatory collaboration with industries.

The practice of a dual system incorporating apprenticeships is highly beneficial for VET students. New policies should be implemented to ensure that students receive apprenticeships. The dual system provides opportunities for students who lack a background of educational success, giving them the social capital to develop their own skills. The Government needs to make it easier for vocational students to access a range of resources including textbooks, better qualified teachers, counsellors, classroom equipment, career services and job placements. VET students often have economic difficulties and are not able to pursue work in their area of specialisation. VET is seen as a means to improve the economic status of lower socio-economic communities but such communities will be unable to fulfil their potential if they are not given sufficient resources.

Our findings show the added value of providing weaker students with VET education and school-sponsored paid apprenticeships. Placing students into the labour market provides real working experience and an opportunity to interact with role models. This socialisation process is extremely valuable for turning dropouts into productive students. Perhaps one of the most telling signs that the system works can be seen in the students' high ratings of happiness at school and their positive response in terms of liking the courses.

Interviews with national policy makers identified four main themes for VET improvement: coordination between government organisations; course and

programme development; social inclusion of the Haredi (ultra-orthodox) community; and social inclusion of the Arab community.

Our participatory action research plan used interviews with educators and questionnaires designed for students and teachers to map four VET issues: selection and streaming; dropouts; patterns of education; and transitions from education to work.

The student questionnaire examined the five elements of choice, experience, motivation, school evaluation, and expectations.

We used a three-phase process to analyse the results, looking first at the educator-level data, followed by the student-level data and, finally, comparing responses given at the national, educator and student levels. Our research compared the data both horizontally (between schools) and vertically (between different levels of status of respondent).

The issue of social inclusion is by necessity defined in a pluralistic manner in Israel. Students are often segregated within ethno-religious communities. Given the diversity of communities, social inclusion for VET students is determined not only by their inclusion in the labour force, but also in mainstream society and a diverse labour market. All of the schools report that they accept many students with learning disabilities and behavioural issues who require special services in terms of smaller class sizes and personal counselling. They stress that the students' problems are often due to wider problems within their families and the fact that they feel stigmatised for being relegated to a VET school.

The lack of qualified VET teachers is an issue that comes through strongly from all angles. Furthermore, the lack of resource exchange with the MoE and the constraints of the national and local bureaucracies mean schools must develop independent methods of procuring teaching resources. The economic environment has long been hostile to VET students and graduates and schools find it extremely difficult to provide the apprenticeships and career services they need. All of the schools would like to see a higher social status for vocational degrees and they all discuss the importance of building networks with local and national industries, NGOs and local government. They call for national policy makers to ensure the availability of greater funding to expand VET and provide extra services.

The student analysis indicates that older students, males and poorer respondents are more critical of the VET system, as are Arab students. The Haredi community is the least critical, which may be related to a degree of social desirability bias related to the intrinsic culture of solidarity between students and educators in this sector.

Overall, we discovered that the practical experience component of VET schools was appreciated by the students. We did not find significant differences in terms of how much they feel they learn from their courses, whether they feel what they learn will help in a future job or any of the other variables related to practical experience. Most of the students have a favourable opinion about VET and found their school to offer practical experience. We discovered a positive correlation between the perception of teachers and students as more welcoming and friendly and the happiness of students. The students in all schools are motivated to do well.

Arab and Haredi students feel more discriminated against in the labour market, Haredi students because of their religion and Arab students because of their nationality. While relative perceptions of discrimination by these groups, especially Arabs, were higher, the students indicated low perceptions of discrimination overall. The Arab students and teachers strongly expressed a feeling of exclusion from the labour market. Students also gave low ratings for their school buildings and teachers' subject knowledge, but these results were not statistically different by school. Furthermore, students have similar expectations that they will be offered help in finding a job from services (the school, a career centre or an employment agency) and from people (family, friends and teachers). Students in all

schools have similar expectations of the help they will receive from people, but details of their expectations from various services did differ by school.

In the closing chapter, we propose a number of policy measures for schools, NGOs and government policy makers. We stress the need to bring in high-level professionals as visiting teachers and the importance of national and local actors in ensuring training and compliance. We also discuss potential policies to create sponsored apprenticeships for all students. Some schools reported the use of volunteer training tasks in lieu of apprenticeships, and this does appear to be an effective way of offering students some work experience. Ties between the school and the local municipality should be strengthened, allowing more apprenticeship jobs to be provided in civic institutions. NGO cooperation should focus on professional development for VET teachers and vocational experts, and labour rights and labour market preparation workshops alongside career services for students and graduates. Schools should focus on increasing their involvement with the community, both in terms of employers and parents. At the government level, new schools should be built within industrial parks where students could find work. The status of VET diplomas should be improved by the implementation of industry standards relating to the acceptance of VET qualifications and decent levels of pay for VET graduates.

INTRODUCTION

The following study was conducted at three schools run by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour (MOITL). Four percent of Israeli secondary students attend MOITL schools. The majority of those schools combine learning with an apprenticeship programme that allows students to work in a company, providing them with labour-related skills. MOITL students are usually dropouts from Ministry of Education (MoE) schools who come to the MOITL system with learning disabilities and deficiencies in economic and social capital.

The present study provides policy makers with an objective birds-eye view of how students, teachers and administrators perceive deficiencies in the VET system, while offering some simple solutions to implement that will rectify the primordial bias of VET to create social mobility and inclusion for marginalised subgroups.

At the national level, the key emphasis should be placed on improving vocational education services and aligning them with labour market needs. It should also stress the Government's moral responsibility to rectify the deprivation and social exclusion encountered by various minorities. MOITL students come from a range of diverse ethnic and religious minorities but they often share similar experiences in terms of the special educational needs that brought them there.

The current situation of the MOITL system is therefore somewhat paradoxical: for while some degree of social inclusion is offered by this last-ditch opportunity for school failures and dropouts, this very element is also perpetuated by the low prestige and poor chances of upward mobility provided by the schools.

Understanding vocational education in Israel requires some background history on the Israeli infrastructure. Israel is composed of diverse groups of marginal minorities separated by social clefs along ethnic, religious, geographical and gender lines. These gaps exist both within and between religious groups, and the traditional sociological defining lines are intersected by numerous subcultures. The Jews in Israel are primarily ethnically divided into two groups, known as Ashkenazim (Jews of European origin) and Mizrahim (Jews of Middle Eastern origin). Divisions between these two groups have manifested themselves in a trend toward vocational education for Mizrahim, who are settled in economically weaker peripheral regions (development towns), and a trend toward general education for the largely more affluent Ashkenazi population. VET education was originally a successful means of creating social mobility for Mizrahim. Between 1972 and 1983, Mizrahim were the only population that earned higher wages as a result of VET schooling (Neuman and Ziderman, 2003). In recent years, educational parity between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim has declined (Ayalon and Shavit, 2004;

Haberfeld, 2009; and Smooha, 2002). Despite these inequalities, however, the difference in the proportion of Mizrahim and Ashkenazim in technological or vocational versus general educational programmes remains statistically insignificant (each group had a total of 34% students enrolled in technical or vocational tracks in 2010 (Goldstein, 2012a)).

Other Jewish ethnic groups have also entered Israel in recent waves of immigration, two of which are particularly significant: those from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. There are currently 116,100 people of Ethiopian descent living in Israel, 77,400 of whom were born in Ethiopia (Ethiopian National Project website) and most of whom were uneducated before arriving in Israel. This means that they are illiterate in their native language (Stavans et al., 2009) and they are currently at the bottom of the Israeli-Jewish ethnicities in terms of socio-economic status. The Ethiopians are outnumbered by immigrants from the former Soviet Union who numbered around 805,200 between 1990 and 2001 with further influxes since, but this population also struggled to adapt to the new language and culture despite their often high levels of education (Golan-Cook and Olshtain, 2011).

The ethnic divide is clearly one element, but there are also religious divisions in the Jewish-Israeli society. The MoE runs four distinct types of schools: government, government-religious, Arab and Haredi (ultra-orthodox). Haredi students attend special rabbinical training schools providing an almost entirely religious education that does not offer many of the standard core courses found in government schools. These schools are single-sex institutions, known as a *Yeshiva* for boys and *Ulpana* for girls. Their relationship with the MoE is very loose and most MoE statistics include no information from these schools. This means that the Haredi schools are effectively socially excluded from mainstream society. Government-religious schools, on the other hand, offer a diverse range of standard courses with an added emphasis on religious education. These schools follow the standard MoE core courses that lead to matriculation but they offer far less in the way of technological courses than their secular counterparts (only 5% of government-religious students were in vocational or technological tracks in 2010 (Goldstein, 2012a)). Finally, the majority of Israeli students attend government schools run on a secular basis. Since the early 1990s, the percentage of students in government and government-religious schools has been declining, while the percentage of students in Haredi schools has increased (MoE Matriculation Data Set, 2010). Although differences in educational attainment were not observed between government and government-religious schools, Haredi schools are often criticised for not providing training that will enable their students to join the workforce.

Even more extreme than the differences in attainment between subgroups of Jews, are the differences between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Overall, Arab students start out with far fewer of the resources that would secure them success in school (Hemmings, 2010). On average, they live in far poorer communities and their parents have lower levels of education, inculcating fewer expectations and aspirations as a result (Yair et al., 2003). Most Arab students attend separate Arabic-language schools and they account for only 27% of all public school students (Svirsky and Mor-Sommerfeld, 2012). Different ethnic and religious subgroups exist within the Arab population. An analysis of data on matriculation eligibility from the Ministry of Education for 2010 showed that among the various Arab subgroups Bedouins were the lowest achieving population, followed by other Arabs and Druze; Arab Christians, especially boys and men, have the highest attainment; and Muslim girls and women have higher attainment than their male peers.

This research document aims to gather the opinions of administrators, educators and students and to juxtapose

those opinions with the previous literature and national indicators from Israel in order to map policies to improve VET. We examine the opinions of a national advisory board composed of administrators from MOITL and affiliated chains of schools (AMAL and ORT), external NGOs and the MoE. Both the MoE and the MOITL were invited to take part in the research, but only the MOITL agreed. As a result, our methodology was amended to explore solely VET education and not technical vocational education and training (TVET). Following the focus group meeting of the national advisory board, three schools were chosen for the case studies on the basis that the school administration would cooperate with the research and that they would have a large enough student body to be representative of the diverse communities of Israeli society. We examined the previous academic literature and policy papers on the subject and extracted national level indicators from the MoE, the MOITL, the Central Bureau of Statistics and other reliable sources. Local advisory boards were created to examine each MOITL school and participatory action research was conducted with adults and youth affiliated with the MOITL system.

1. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICY PROCESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1.1 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH

The primary national advisory board was made up of three high-ranking representatives from the MOITL. An initial meeting with this board was held on 24 October 2012, in which we discussed the main objectives of the research, details of the participating schools and the need to conduct interviews with policy makers at the national level and with the key figures who have professional ties with the MOITL within each local community. The current regulations led us to forego interviews with students, distributing anonymous questionnaires to them instead. Unfortunately, the military conflict in December disrupted the study, restricting our survey to one sole focus research group at the national level. Additional meetings were planned and later cancelled, but we were able to expand the national advisory research through one-on-one interviews. Section 2.3.1 of this report features information gained primarily from a series of eight interviews with national level representatives including six representatives of the MOITL. We also interviewed two representatives of NGOs affiliated with vocational education: the administrator of vocational training for the 'Working and Studying Youth' group and the manager of the 'Other Course' NGO. Finally, we were able to interview one MoE representative from the science and technology management office.

Our interviewees will remain anonymous throughout the report with their words given verbatim within single quotes. All of the comments used in this document come from our interviews with the four institutions: one at national level and three at local level. In the second chapter we examine the opinions of local education staff.

1.1.1 THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Israel has both Arab and Jewish citizens but its education system is almost completely divided along the lines of these two nationalities with some other underlying ethnic divisions. At the secondary level in 2012: 1,417 schools were defined as Jewish, 247 were Arab, 43 were Bedouin and 27 were Druze. High school students in Israel may be streamed into several schooling types: general, vocational, technological, agricultural and other. General education system

students are often further streamed at high school age on the basis of their abilities, enrolling in credit study programmes for each subject (between 3-lowest and 5-highest), which determine the level of their studies. Some MoE schools offer special programmes, such as the Mabar Programme, for students with remedial needs. Another 257 schools were categorised as special education schools in 2012. Jewish schools are often run on a religious basis, with 860 schools classed as secular or government, 302 government-religious and 572 Haredi (ultra-orthodox) in 2012. Current policy encourages a growing ethos against the creation of social exclusion in schools on the basis of a student's stream of studies. Hence, MoE schools are not supposed to separate students other than on the basis of different languages of instruction or special learning or religious needs, meaning that the schools should be serving students from various different streams. Despite the policy, however, a number of schools fail to achieve this aim. In fact, in 2010, of the 839 schools not categorised as special education or Haredi for grade 12 students, 265 took only general students, 143 had only technological or vocational students and 432 had both (MoE Matriculation Data Set, 2010).

The Israeli public education system is governed by two ministries and the MoE oversaw approximately 1,664 schools and the MOITL approximately 70 in the 2012/13 school year. An analysis of MoE data for 2010 indicated that 4,031 classes were technological, 7,595 were general and 43 were multi-track. MOITL schools exclusively serve vocational stream students and while they also cover some of the general studies curriculum, they often do this with less than the minimum three-credit-worth of hours taught in MoE schools.

The MoE system is highly centralised and requires students to complete a high school matriculation examination known as the *Bagrut* which is needed for most forms of post-secondary education. The mandatory high school subjects taught in government and government-religious schools are: Bible study, maths, English, literature, history, Hebrew and citizenship. MoE students will generally earn high levels of credits, while students in VET often amass fewer credits and do not go on to matriculation.

A student must obtain a Bagrut in all the required courses in order to pursue university studies. The structure of VET, with its focus on human resource development or direct transition into the labour market, means that VET students are often unable to move on to post-secondary education. The over-reliance on the

Bagrut-style education has been a growing bone of contention among teachers who feel these standardised curricula do not support the needs of either teachers or students. Attempts by the MoE and various schools to improve the status of technological schools are often equated with increasing the percentage of students eligible for matriculation degrees, undermining the role of VET as an alternative specialised stream of education.

1.1.2 A HISTORY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AND VET

The first Jewish vocational schools were operated by the Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour (ORT) in Russia in 1880 and this entity went on to establish a first wave of 19 vocational schools in Israel in 1949. In 1948/49, 20% of the Israeli students received VET (CBS, 2012). VET continued to expand under the auspices of ORT and the general education system, primarily in response to the large numbers of high school dropouts (Sharon, 1987), but also as part of the drive to provide social inclusion for Mizrahim and other immigrants. VET allowed those immigrants unable to compete in the academic streams to develop skills that would enhance their social mobility while providing the market with a skilled labour force. While this system sought to provide immigrants with the opportunity to learn vocational skills, it also led to social exclusion, either inadvertently or not.

In 1953, the responsibility for vocational schools was transferred to the MOITL, originally for financial reasons (Vurgan and Nathan, 2008), and the Apprenticeship Law and the Youth Labour Law of 1953 permitted secondary students in the MOITL to participate in apprenticeships in the labour force (Ashkenazy and Ballas, 2010) while the MoE schools prohibited such a practice for their students. The system was again altered in 1961, when the MoE was given control over the majority of VET schools, and the MOITL was left supervising only a small number of schools. The concept of multi-stream schools, a single school for both VET and general education, was imported from the United Kingdom in the 1960s and the concept of segregating VET students into their own schools was seen as divisive. While the policy pushed for social integration, at least among Jews, the VET-only schools continued to encourage social exclusion. Concerns also arose that students were being streamed into specific types of education at too young an age in a way that limited their future opportunities, and the Reform Law of 1969 effectively raised the starting age for vocational schooling by creating an upper secondary education system with VET from grade 10.

In the 1970s, the term 'VET' was replaced with the term 'technical vocational education and training' (TVET) within the MoE, with the primary aim of incorporating courses of study for advanced students into the more technical TVET curriculum and thereby reducing the stigma associated with vocational education. TVET was originally delivered in four separate streams, but these were merged in the 1990s and 2000s. TVET enrolment peaked in the 1979/80 school year, when it served 53% of all high school students, before undergoing a

dramatic decline. By 2009/10, enrolment had decreased to 32%, its lowest point since 1959/60. The decline may have been chiefly due to financial issues, as the TVET budget was cut by 23% between 2003 and 2007, but the State was also never able to remove the historical stigma of VET as a second-rate option. Student selection for standard high school programmes continues to be biased according to the demographic characteristics of students, rather than being entirely merit-based, with boys, men and students from the lower socio-economic ranks (and hence certain ethnic groups) more often relegated to VET and other lower-ranking school pathways (Resh, 1998).

1.2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION UNDER THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, TRADE AND LABOUR

While the MoE is seeking to improve the status of TVET, the MOITL is left with the more daunting task of providing VET for MoE school dropouts. A 'dropout' is defined as any school-aged youth who has left school before completion. Estimates made by the authors on the basis of MoE, Central Bureau of Statistics and MOITL data from 2010 (which differ slightly) suggest that approximately 7% of Israeli students will drop out of MoE schools and that approximately 60% of those students will be reintegrated into MOITL schools. In 2010, approximately 30,000 school age youth (approximately 40% of dropouts) were not enrolled in a school (28,176 according to MoE figures). Under the Free Compulsory Education Law of 1979, all youth must attend school until the age of 18, but in practice, a large number of underage students choose not to attend school. The MOITL school inclusion efforts have focused mainly on reintegrating dropouts from other schools.

Military service is compulsory for most citizens. The MOITL offers two stages of VET at pre and post-military service. Both stages offer programmes of study in a specific industry such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering or carpentry. Programmes are also available for students with physical and mental disabilities. Other programmes specialise in educating immigrants who may or may not have prior high school education. The MOITL also offers home schooling options for the unemployed and other individuals seeking to improve their education.

A number of external public and private institutions have formed advisory councils to improve the VET situation in Israel, including the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the Manufacturers' Association of Israel (MAI). These councils have expressed concerns over the shortage of young people with the skills needed for positions in engineering and other relevant fields (Natanzon and Levi, 2010). The MOITL has sought to improve its apprenticeship programme through collaboration with local businesses. Such approaches have traditionally

been available in the sector and vocational schools throughout the world receive support from sponsors such as private factories and industries trying to minimise training costs and increase profits (Benavot, 1983, p. 64), and apprentice programmes have often helped students to make money while also gaining their school certificates.

MOITL schools come in three different forms (Eisenberg 2006): (i) industrial schools combining studies and practical training with entities such as the IDF or a company; (ii) apprenticeship schools focused on engaging students with part-time work outside of school; and (iii) workshops and courses for school-age dropouts.

1.2.1 THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Israeli government has expanded almost continuously since the creation of the State of Israel, resulting in an overly bureaucratic state. The first Israeli government (first Knesset) had 12 ministers, with the number growing to 19 ministers by 1977 (ninth Knesset), 26 ministers in 1984 (11th Knesset) and a record 36 ministers by 2009 (18th Knesset). The level of miscommunication between the ministers and their affiliated staff has been extensively criticised and entities such as the MOITL currently operate with a burdensome hierarchy of administrators similar to that of other government ministries. The vocational schools come under the supervision of the Department of Youth Training, which is in turn under the supervision of (from the bottom up) the Section of Vocational Training, the Division of Manpower Development, the Division of Employment and Human Capital, the Vice Chairman and Employment Commissioner, the Chairman and the elected Government Minister. As a result of the political process, the minister and high-level staff of each government ministry are replaced every few years and the focus and policies of the institution change depending on the party affiliation of the person in this post.

1.2.2 THE LABOUR MARKET SITUATION

The labour market in Israel has experienced almost continuous growth since the foundation of the country. Numerous government policies promote the development of Israel's high-tech sector and investment in scientific research and development has traditionally been very strong (OECD, 2010). The labour market has been very innovative at creating training and employment opportunities for the large number of immigrants arriving from a variety of countries, but Israel continues to have high levels of unemployment (21.2% for those aged 25 to 54 in 2011, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics). This number includes people out of work for longer than a year, individuals responsible for housekeeping duties, students, pensioners and others. Arab and Haredi communities have higher unemployment rates than the other groups, primarily because of the culture of their community. Arab women

often stay at home to care for their children meaning that only 21% of Arab women work (IDI, 2011), while Haredi men often dedicate themselves to lifelong religious study, with only about 40% entering employment (Bank of Israel, 2011).

Follow-up research on VET alumni shows they have poorer cognitive skills and earn less (Zusman and Tzor, 2010). However, the same research also shows that VET may reduce early school leaving and that VET students have similar employment rates to other students, which is a major accomplishment. Vocational training is plainly a valuable means by which to improve the economic situation of lower socio-economic communities. Attempts have been made at policy level to provide subsidies for businesses offering apprenticeships and work opportunities to vocational students, but our interviewees stated that 'contacts with businesses should be strengthened (and) factories should partner with schools in developing the apprenticeship stream in the form of a formal commitment with incentives'. The same respondents recommend that policies should make structured training mandatory for factories 'within a decade'. The MOITL is in contact with various industries and is in a position to shape educational programmes around industry needs. It is currently partnering with industries and the Manufacturers' Association of Israel to open new schools geared towards certain industries, such as affiliates of the Israel Military Industries (IAI).

Specific populations, such as the Haredi and recent immigrants, are especially susceptible to dependency on government funding (Hemmings, 2010). The MOITL has established programmes for adults, such as the Mehalev (from Welfare to Work) Programme and aims to develop programmes to support school-age children too, hence reducing the burden of welfare assistance. However, the MOITL policy initiatives for these marginalised populations may be unable to overcome the strongly established social forces. For instance, the Haredi community reluctance to join the labour force has long been established as a reaction to processes of modernity, such as emancipation, enlightenment, nationalism and the laicisation of society (Katz, 1963, in Spiegel, 2011). The orthodox conscience is based on traditionalism, continuity and stability, where paid work is viewed strictly as a means of obtaining the earthly necessities for survival. Religious study is one of the founding ideals of Judaism which forms the basis of an educational approach that, in practice, means an ongoing process of religious studies for boys from their early childhood until well into old age. The opening up of general Israeli society to Western culture has only reinforced trends of radicalisation within the orthodox sector (Spiegel, 2011), binding the Haredi community more tightly to conservative traditions.

The concept of 'work' has also been redefined and reinterpreted with the passage of time as, historically, the majority of Jews worked for an income with only a small minority exempt for the purposes of religious studies. The post-Holocaust era strengthened both their removal from the world of work and their belief

in the ideal of religious studies. Later reinterpretation of the texts has meant that religious Jews have lowered their expectations of making a livelihood, idealizing the concept of poverty. Culture clashes with the broader secular society that dominates the work force have combined with these views to increase the estrangement of the orthodox population from the world of work (Stadler, 2001 and 2003, in Hakak, 2004).

This brief overview of the background situation makes it patently clear that a Haredi VET school will be unique as an institution, standing in complete opposition to the mainstream orthodox ideal of religious studies and disdain toward the world of work. The vast majority of Haredi VET students attend the school simply because they have learning disabilities that make religious studies near impossible for them. The low socio-economic status of their families may also contribute toward their enrolment in this type of school. Haredi VET schools are therefore essentially a refuge for dropout teens from the ultra-Orthodox sector.

On the other end of the social exclusion continuum sit a number of Arab populations including Bedouin, Muslim citizens, Muslim non-citizens, Druze, Christians and Arab women in general. Arab workers are highly segregated both in terms of their fields of occupation and the locations in which they live and find work. As a result, Israel functions with at least two main labour markets, one Arab and one Jewish, with additional layers of segregation within each of these markets. Arabs often try to find jobs in the Jewish-dominated market, as resources are far more plentiful here, but they encounter discrimination in terms of both the jobs they can get and the wages they are paid (Margalioth, 2004, pp. 846-7). The disparate employment scenario between Arab and non-Arab populations is apparent nation-wide, as Arabs work predominantly in trades with low social prestige. According to Habib et al. (2010, p. 28), 'the average monthly income of an Arab worker is ILS 5,400 (about USD 1,450), compared to ILS 7,900 (about USD 2,125) for a Jewish worker and the average hourly wage of an Arab worker is ILS 31.5, compared to ILS 45.2 for a Jewish worker'. Arab populations also have lower employment rates than most of their Jewish counterparts. This effect has been traced to differences in human capital, geographical location and cultural trends. For example, the Arab population often lacks native Hebrew language proficiency and the restrictions on Arab women limit their ability to take on roles that extend beyond the home, further reducing the earning power of their communities. As a result of recent trends, traditional vocational trades have been replaced with high-tech equivalents that require a higher level of training. The intifada uprisings over the past two decades, have led many employers to end any preference for Arabs and migrant workers from the occupied territories (Judea, Samaria and Gaza) shutting them out almost entirely from the labour force. A diverse labour force of workers on temporary visas brought in primarily from Eastern Asia now competes with the lower-educated Arab workers for jobs in manual labour (Habib et al., 2010, p. 3). Discrimination against Arabs exists in numerous forms, some more subtle

than others, and education is not always viewed as a realistic means of improving status amongst the Arab communities given the general exclusion of Arabs from the labour market.

1.3 THE POLICY PROCESS AND THE POLICY DEBATE

In interviews with national figures, we identified four main focus areas for government policy processes relating to VET: (i) coordination between government organisations; (ii) course and programme development; (iii) inclusion of the Haredi (ultra-orthodox) community in vocational education; and (iv) inclusion of the Arab community in vocational education.

We have broken down each of these issues into specific policy discussion points.

1.3.1 COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

We identified three main forms of coordination:

- with the Knesset (parliament) as a whole;
- between the MOITL and the MoE;
- with other State institutions – the IDF (the military), universities, etc.

While coordination within the MOITL and between the MOITL and external organisations was highly praised, coordination between government organisations was seen as an area with room for improvement. The administrative policies of the MoE and the MOITL are organised almost entirely separately. A number of committees have been set up to improve maths and science education, including the Priess Committee and the Harari Commission. Extensive research since has showed little effect. A number of complications have impeded progress, including barriers raised by schools and teacher unions (Eisenberg, 2006). The Harari Committee in particular had very little success in implementing policy changes (Karmi, 2004) and one of our respondents supporting this view, stated: 'In the case of a joint project, we meet and work together but don't always collaborate to achieve the desired results. The State does not always have an overall vision of what it wants to accomplish. Government departments are riddled with too much bureaucracy. Additionally, there is a constant turnover of ministers every few years'.

Respondents also pointed to the lack of a comprehensive agenda for vocational schools and stated that there was little overview of the wider plans, including issues such as the budget, vision and appropriate legislation. The country was perceived to be lacking a long-term perspective on where it needs to or is going to be in another 10 years and there is a lack of collaboration capable of creating such a vision at government level: 'Israel does not have a round table,

meaning that it lacks a real forum encompassing the State, industry and workers, because each actor has a different vision of what Israel will look like in 10 years. Each one imagines a different solution and there is no uniformity or cooperation (between the sectors)'.

Another official highlighted the ideal of an egalitarian society, where vocational professions would be endowed with equal stature and income: 'The foundation starts with believing that society can be equal and from this we can [proceed] to work together.' His sentiments were echoed by another respondent: '[The country] needs to develop a combination of programmes that change the world of work itself, such that the working classes will make a decent living and therefore will attest that there are equal rights in society.'

Rather than pinning the blame on the schools, the comments made by our respondents mostly pointed the responsibility upwards at the Knesset and the other government agencies they feel have failed to institute an appropriate framework to ensure that companies provide apprenticeships to vocational students. Finding apprenticeship opportunities in factories is a difficult process and MOITL officials want the government to follow the European model of promoting social partnerships between schools and industries along the lines of the Meister Programme in Germany, which is cited as an ideal example of the integration of vocational education and the business sector.

Similar complaints were also levelled at the MoE, with one respondent saying: 'The vision and strategy is that both offices will be working together and share a common perception about the Israeli market as a whole, something which doesn't exist today.' The two organisations are often perceived to be competing rather than cooperating with one another, even though representatives from both organisations recognise that cooperation would be extremely beneficial to students. According to one MOITL official, budgeting policy means that few students are actually referred from MoE to MOITL schools. In fact, as MoE schools are funded on the basis of enrolment numbers, they risk losing funding if they redirect their students elsewhere, meaning that, in essence, the schools are 'holding the children hostage'. An identical quote also appeared in the State Comptroller's report (2010) where the lack of cooperation between the two offices was described as severely dysfunctional. This document also advised the Government to reconsider its 1989 decision to move the youth training department from the MOITL to the MoE. School systems on external contract arrangements, such as AMAL and ORT, often negotiate between the MoE and the MOITL, as they operate schools within both frameworks. Schools, by communicating separately with the MoE and the MOITL, are the mediums for collaboration, as the MoE and the MOITL have little interaction.

Another government agency with a vested interest in VET is the IDF. Since military enlistment immediately after secondary school is mandatory for most citizens, male and female, with the exclusion of Arabs and

ultra-orthodox Jews, preparation for the army is a major theme in school. One respondent made a strong argument for VET, stating that 'individuals who participate in IDF professional training that uses the vocation they learned in school will experience both social and professional advantages (when moving into the workforce)'. At the same time, the IDF has a high demand for VET graduates in the army as their vocational skills represent a benefit (Tsadok, 2009). The MOITL works closely with the IDF to encourage VET students into technical programmes in the army and our respondents stated that individuals: 'who work in their vocation in the army can integrate better into the job market'. The final government-related entity that could potentially play a role in VET involvement is the university sector. National policy makers spoke of the need to coordinate vocational training efforts with the seven national universities of Israel. This could be approached in two ways, either by incorporating vocational topics into teacher training programmes or by offering vocational training students the opportunity to become teachers. At the moment VET administrators are unhappy with progress on this score.

1.3.2 COURSE AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Our interviewees agreed that the current VET system has room for improvement, with six key methods of development identified: (i) curriculum development; (ii) creating higher-ranking VET programmes; (iii) increased financing for VET programmes; (iv) developing more concrete apprenticeship programmes; (v) creating alternatives to matriculation and occupational prestige for VET; and (vi) reforming VET in keeping with the needs of modern youth and the labour market.

Curriculum development

Curriculum development is undertaken in cooperation with members of the Department of Pedagogy who are considered to be experts on content. It is achieved by monitoring the conduct of institutions and students led by the MOITL research department and by working with the Department of Examinations. All aspects of the regulations are inspected including input from experts on VET content from the field of pedagogical and professional training. The inspection unit goes into schools throughout the nation and develops courses according to market needs. Our respondents reported that: 'Computers and car mechanics are two new courses that were developed in recent years due to demand [based on labour needs]'. The unit makes its decisions on which areas to develop on the basis of statistics received from the Industry Union, the Central Bureau of Statistics and the IDF as well as analysis of market needs. The experts work with the principal of each school to develop a list of appropriate courses. Together they determine which courses are in the highest demand (car mechanics, management, etc.) and try to avoid offering low-demand courses. One interviewee stated: 'The government should look into

the vocations that are demanded in Israel. Today there is no data set or anything similar that can be used to set up the teaching content of courses of study.' Consequently, current decisions are being made merely on the basis of personal preference, dependent upon a local examination of the various needs.

Creating higher-ranking VET programmes

The literature indicates that higher-ranking VET programmes for able students are definitely lacking in the MOITL. Vocational frameworks have been designed only for the weakest students. Our respondents stressed that the workshops can be upgraded and adapted to higher levels but 'progress on VET for high-ranking students is being stopped by inter-office politics and the culture of low expectations for vocational education – there are almost no parents who want their child to go to a vocational school; [they will only go] if there is no other choice'.

This problem of attracting students and family support does not exist, however, in the arena of high-tech education conducted within the MoE TVET programmes, as there is a growing value and high-level prestige associated with the high tech market. Despite the favourable attitudes, however, VET schools do not provide a level of training sufficient for a career in information technology, computer programming and other high tech fields.

Increased funding for VET programmes

VET students often have special needs related to their status as dropouts and more financial resources are needed to pay for the smaller class sizes, psychological counselling and social services. Also, as many vocational fields require specialist laboratories or workshops, additional money is needed to provide schools with the equipment needed for training.

Developing more concrete apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship programmes were highlighted as an important part of the VET system. Business entrepreneurship programmes target youth engaged in apprenticeships, provide them with the necessary education and direct their experience in the working world. Our respondents stated that the interaction of students with a mentor in the workplace creates a scenario of 'students who want to be like [their mentors]' in a way that leads to the adoption of correct working behaviours and strategies. Another issue that arose during discussion of the apprenticeship programmes was how to prevent the exploitation of interns and profiteering. There is a risk that the poor employment conditions mean that students in certain apprenticeship programmes may not be receiving the job skills they need. Exploitation was especially feared in dealing with the integration of Haredi students given their disconnection from the working world and one interviewee said: 'The MOITL can potentially connect the Haredi to the working world, but which working

world will it connect them to? Would it just expose them to exploitation or possibly a world of low-end work opportunities?'

Creating alternatives to matriculation and increasing the value of VET

Many officials pointed out the importance of VET students gaining general knowledge alongside their vocational content. However, these officials highlighted that it was learning, not matriculation, that was the main goal. They were broadly critical of the academic orientation of the MoE, suggesting that this approach sidelines many students. This attitude was expressed repeatedly: 'Less than 50% finish with matriculation, so realistically it is not suitable for everyone.' Other comments included: 'Not every student needs to get involved in academia', and 'society cannot be based on this goal of receiving a high school diploma. It does not guarantee success [...] What is the point of having a factory worker who has a high school diploma?' The MOITL respondents were even more critical of the matriculation system: 'Despite this, almost every student prepares themselves for academia [...] and this creates frustration.'

At the same time, the MOITL respondents report great pride in the graduation certificates that they offer: 'About 65% are eligible for [graduation] certificates – a higher number than the eligible graduates in the Ministry of Education,' even though these certificates do not confer a high status to these students. They are, in fact, not particularly useful in terms of pursuing continued studies or entering the workforce, as the market does not consider these graduates to be on a par with matriculated students.

Reforming VET in accordance with the needs of modern youth and the labour market

While VET does show signs of success, it also has its share of frustrations in that: 'many grandiose programmes are developed but end up failing'. One reason cited for this is that some courses are no longer 'applicable to market needs', meaning that the MOITL should ideally remove some of the outdated vocations that are no longer applicable.

Another reason for the lack of progress in some schools is the heavy load of students requiring extra support for learning as well as assistance with moral, psychological, economic, motivational, behavioural and other needs. One of our respondents said that 'schools [with weak support systems] lead to students expressing frustration and animosity towards society' while MOITL schools are able to supply extra support and attention for these students, providing them with a course of study better fitted to their needs. However, the reduced range of education level encountered in MOITL schools may create a 'hanging out in the schoolyard effect' where low-ranking students reinforce increasingly low levels of expectation. This contrasts with the attitudes encountered in MoE schools, where the ethos encompasses students at different levels of learning.

1.3.3 INCLUSION OF THE HAREDI COMMUNITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Four of the eight interviewees mentioned the issue of inclusion for the Haredi (ultra-orthodox) community. Those who spoke about the Haredi community were often directly involved in programmes for this community. VET for the Haredi is a very new concept as: 'Five years ago, a group of Rabbis approached [us] regarding a group of Haredi youth who dropped out of [...] Yeshivas [but] very few take part in vocational education.'

There are currently about 10-20 schools with Haredi students (in both the MOITL and the MoE) with a total of about 1,000 pupils operating on a vision of 'Torah and Work [...] combining religious studies together with core subjects and vocational or technological training'. However, VET carries a heavy stigma for the Haredi community, 'bring[ing] shame on their families [such that] removing those students from their communities and placing them into boarding schools is perceived as a plausible solution by their families'. All four Haredi VET schools operated by the MOITL have a section for boarders and there is also one mixed school which operates as a General school offering a few classes for Haredi students.

We highlight three policy considerations for this point: (i) working alongside faith-based education; (ii) creating integration in the labour market; and (iii) creating schools.

Working alongside faith-based education

The Haredi world does not easily permit VET to make any inroads as the community is extremely suspicious of the secular world. The Yeshiva and Ulpana play a very strong function in the community and they are very reluctant to give up on students. They receive funding similar to the other State schools, but they have far greater liberty to function independently so as to permit faith-based education. However, not all of the Haredi students can succeed in the Yeshivas and for this group it is: 'important to provide a profession, as faith teachings are not suitable for all of them'. If they do leave the Yeshiva, however, they then enter a world where they will lack the competitive skills acquired by other students of their age, as they do not have the same background in the core subjects studied by most other students. Haredi VET must therefore 'take into account their need for religious studies and also supplementary core subjects (mainly maths and English) due to their low level upon entrance into the MOITL system'. The courses offered must still adhere to the levels of faith-based education that will make them acceptable to the community and ensure their support. VET schools very much need the cooperation of the Rabbis who are the central figures in faith-based education and who serve an important role in the community. Experience has shown that it is very difficult to get their cooperation and many in the VET would be happy simply for the rabbis to keep quiet about VET rather than demonizing the sector given that many of their students: 'face social hardship [...] because of their difficulties with [...] religious studies'.

Integrating into the labour market

One of the main issues in Israel is the inclusion of Haredi communities in the labour market, as highlighted by the Mehalev welfare-to-work programme (Hemmings, 2010). As one of our respondents said: 'Exclusion of Haredim from the labour market is a modern phenomenon in Israel that did not exist in the Diaspora.' There is a growing sense that it is necessary for the Haredi community to integrate to some extent in order to provide for itself, but this means a tough task for the Government in trying to integrate a community that fears integration. The community is particularly opposed to integration via recruitment to the IDF and the issue is extremely controversial due to the nature of military tasks. Other forms of integration, such as working in factories alongside seculars, may also impose conditions not considered suited to the student's moral code. This self-exclusion from the army appears to lead to social exclusion later. The upshot of these exclusionary practices is that they cannot easily be accepted for work. Our respondents stated that it is 'difficult to find apprenticeships for the Haredi students and as a result [...] we are] training in house [within the school training facilities]'.

NGOs often help with VET by referring students and providing assistance for matriculation exams and other services.

Creating schools

All VET schools have difficulties in finding competent professionals trained as teachers and this was conveyed to us as being the biggest difficulty for Haredi schools: 'in order to work in a Haredi school [you] need to be Haredi [...] and it is very difficult to find Haredi teachers who are trained to teach science and technology'. Furthermore, the students referred to the Haredi VET schools often have special needs and it needs to develop suitable programmes: 'Many of the Haredi students in the MOITL have learning difficulties.' While attempts are made to provide psychological and other social services, funding can be an issue.

1.3.4 INCLUSION OF THE ARAB COMMUNITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Five of the eight interviewees mentioned the Arab population. VET is taught either in Hebrew or Arabic depending on the school, thus maintaining certain religious-ethnic homogeneities. Many of the respondents discussed the Bedouin population, who usually have a lower social status, and there was some mention of the Druze, who are a distinct population, most of whom have a closer affinity to Israeli institutions. The Christian population was rarely mentioned, although it made up the majority in one of the schools participating in our research. Finally, most mention of the Arab population dealt with the Sunni Muslim majority. There was some discussion of the issue of integrating Jews and Arabs in

VET schools, but this is not being seriously considered as a means of integration, given that the VET school populations already represent a community with a large special needs weighting.

VET is viewed as a means for reducing discrimination. Respondents discussed VET as a means to promote 'an egalitarian society (through) a combination of programmes that aim to change the world of work itself, such that the working classes will make a decent living and will therefore testify that there are equal rights in society'. Interviewees called for a more egalitarian society and suggested that VET serves as a tool for social inclusion by integrating the Arab community into the labour force. They proposed measures such as increased pay for vocational professions in order benefit Arab populations as they have higher rates of occupation in the vocational fields. While VET schools are segregated by language of study, as are all Israeli schools, the VET administrators welcomed them as a means of promoting Arab integration in the labour force: 'Anyone who wants to learn is invited, we don't denigrate any minority or sector, everyone is invited to learn. There isn't a sectarian perspective, anyone who wants to be included will be received with blessings and this is according to the needs of the employers. We will be happy to include any population group, provided it is willing to integrate according to the needs of the employers.'

However, our respondents also recognised that the standards must be adapted to suit each minority and MOITL officials stated that their ministry was equipped with superior abilities to design a wider variety of programmes for such a purpose.

Many of the same problems faced by the Haredi community also apply to the Arab community. They face similar issues in finding appropriately experienced teachers, which appears to be universal across all sectors. They also have similar difficulty in the labour market, as both groups often feel excluded or exclude themselves by living in separate communities. The largest contrast between these two communities comes in the participation rates, as the Arab sector accounts disproportionately for about 40% of MOITL students, while making up only about 20% of the general population. One reason given for this overrepresentation is the apparent higher valuation of VET in Arab society: 'Unlike the majority of society who see VET training in a negative perspective, the Arab sector sees VET training very positively and the demand is high. For teenagers in the Arab sector, ironically, vocational awareness is much higher than in other sectors.'

This contrasts heavily with the level of family support offered to VET students in Haredi and other Jewish families, 'indicat[ing] that among this [Arab] sector there is a realisation that a child needs a profession first'.

2. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION AT LOCAL LEVEL

2.1 METHODOLOGY

The local level research was divided into three phases: teacher questionnaires, educator questionnaires and student questionnaires. We present the results of our analysis on each of these parts of the research separately. We then combine the results, examining both the differences between schools at the student and educator level and comparing the different levels of analysis (students, local educators and national policy makers). We will refer to the schools as the 'Arab' school, the 'Haredi' school and the 'General' school throughout the document.

Teacher questionnaires

The teacher surveys were distributed on a series of occasions during school visits. We encountered difficulties in receiving feedback from a large number of teachers in all of the schools, due in part to the small size of the staff and the fact that many teachers were asked to fill out the survey in their free time, rather than during a set session. A total of 30 teachers completed a teacher survey across the three schools: three from the Haredi school, seven from the Arab school and 20 from the General school. The small sample size led us to the decision not to analyse the differences between mean responses from each school, analysing the teacher survey instead in terms of standard deviation and global mean and examining points of agreement and difference among teachers across all the schools.

Educator interviews

More revealing than the teacher questionnaires were the interviews conducted with school educators. We conducted a total of 17 local level interviews between November 2012 and February 2013, speaking to teachers and other staff at various levels, such as secretaries and principals. At the General school, we interviewed the principal, two employment coordinators, the grade 11 coordinator and the cooperation with industry coordinator. We also conducted two focus groups. At the Arab school we interviewed the principal, two psychological advisors, a secretary, an educational advisor and a community

worker. At the Haredi school we interviewed the principal, three classroom educators, the administrator of Haredi education and the public relations administrator. All interviews were conducted in Hebrew and translated into English.

Student questionnaires

The student questionnaires were distributed between December 2012 and January 2013. These questionnaires were translated into Hebrew and Arabic. Our research team travelled to each school and distributed the survey to the classes directly whenever possible. On some occasions, the school staff distributed the surveys to classes of students not available at the time and we collected them at a later date. Our research team and the school staff went to great lengths to encourage full participation. We explained our role and the purpose of the research to the students and we supported students who had problems, helping them to fill out the survey. Many of the students required help, either due to lack of motivation or actual learning disabilities. Missing data was an issue, as respondents appear to have avoided answering several questions that they did not consider relevant to them. This issue was especially apparent in questions about plans for the future and paid work where certain students did not participate due to lack of motivation, while others only completed partial surveys. For more information see Appendix 1 – Details of the statistical analysis.

2.1.2 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN A MICROCOSMIC SYSTEM

Our research team sought to make our research as dynamic as possible by establishing a network of ideas in which one idea leads to the next and where each case study would be open to the uniqueness of the very different communities represented. We also left our qualitative research flexible in order to conform with the unique culture encountered, adapting the research questions to each community. At times, our sessions served as an outlet for staff grievances over extra working hours and, at other times, for example when discussing collaboration with the MoE, we became aware of clear political motivations in the responses.

2.2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (IN THE CASE STUDY AREAS)

Many institutions and organisations interact with MOITL schools at a local level, over 20 of which were mentioned in the interviews, including numerous employers who provide apprenticeships to the students in the private and corporate, service-oriented and factory-oriented sectors. There are close links with local and national governments, as the principals work hand in hand with the city hall, the police and various national administrative offices, such as the Ministry of Welfare and the MOITL. Unions were also often discussed, including the Histadrut (the Labour union), the Trade Union, the Industry Union and the Manufacturers' Association of Israel. Some partnerships also exist between vocational schools and trade unions. Some schools operate in an integrated way with factories and the MOITL officials we spoke to were all keen on expanding projects with such social partners. Certain NGOs were discussed on repeated occasions including the Working and Studying Youth and the Macro Institute in particular. The Working and Studying Youth group organises evening classes and brings counsellors into vocational schools, while the Macro Institute holds conferences with vocational education experts to promote effective national VET policies. The IDF was only mentioned in Jewish schools, as they are the only ones subject to the enlistment requirements, although Haredi collaboration with the IDF is limited.

2.2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE SCHOOLS

ORT Adivi (the 'General' school)

The school is situated in Ashkelon; a medium-sized city with a population of just over 100,000. The school serves a mixture of immigrants from different backgrounds, with nearly a quarter of the population made up of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Many of the students are second-generation immigrants. Immigrant inclusion in Israeli society constitutes a major challenge and goal for the education system and we sought to explore the issue of social mobility for recent immigrants. Our sample included 9% of students born abroad, approximately 41% with one or both parents born abroad and about 20% coming from the former Soviet Union. The school was established in 1962 and currently has about 70 teachers and 540 students enrolled in grades 10 to 12. The school is defined as an industrial school and the subjects currently available are autotronics (mechatronics), machinery, electronics, hair design, accounting, cooking, and office administration. Grades 11 and 12 work two or three days per week and attend school for the rest of the week. Our respondents stated that many of the students 'come with socio-economic difficulties' and had dropped out from their previous schools (about 70%), causing a scenario where students are 'lacking self-confidence'. Many have a history of welfare, single-parent families ('40% of our students are with a single parent') and criminality issues.

The Yeshiva of Kfar Zetim (the 'Haredi' school)

It is a unique Jewish religious institution, combining vocational training with the study of religion, located in the village of Kfar Zetim. It offers a variety of vocational choices (electronics, carpentry, computers and networks) and also serves as a boarding school with a dormitory for some students. The students are involved in the ongoing maintenance of the school, assisting with construction, gardening and livestock-raising, which our respondents say has helped them to form a closer bond with the institution. This school presents a unique example of a place where VET meets religious education. The novel approach of the Kfar Zetim Yeshiva in resolving the perceived conflict between labour market needs and religious doctrine made it a particularly desirable case study as it would allow exploration of how these two worlds can mutually coexist. The students here come from a community that is also an immigrant society originally from a mixture of different groups defined by our respondents as: 'Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Misnagdim, Chassidic and others'. Their communities live in various places around the country, 'but most come from the cities'. The students found their way to the school as 'they were not suitable for Haredi education and the nature of religious studies' and because of the school's desire 'to help disadvantaged youth'. The school is small, with approximately 90 students, and is relatively new, having been established in 2000 but placed under the MOITL supervision in 2010. While secondary schools are free of charge in Israel, the cost of boarding is not usually covered by the State. Some students are exempt under government youth welfare rules, but the remainder should officially pay fees of ILS 1,350 a month (approximately USD 350) for the boarding costs, although actual collection process takes into account the parents' ability to pay. A student will not be rejected from the school because of an issue with fees. The current daily vocational school is funded by the ministry, although the respondents state that they 'have no funding for construction, [erecting] buildings ourselves'. Funding is raised from the fees, welfare contributions for a small number of students and partial budget coverage from the MOITL (i.e. various costs not related to the school itself) and donations. Our respondent described the situation in the following terms: 'In order to be balanced and without construction costs we raise donations of about half a million shekels.'

AMAL Nazareth (the 'Arab' school)

The school is located in a town traditionally home to a majority Christian population, that has changed since 1948 to a current balance of approximately two-thirds Muslim and one-third Christian and the student body is mixed between Arabs of Christian and Muslim descent. The city became a hotspot for religious tension between Christian and Muslim in the period leading up to the year 2000 (the 'mosque of dispute' event) and also witnessed violent disturbances in October 2000. The school was first founded in 1968 and it was used to produce vocational trainers under the auspices of the Apprenticeship Act. It initially took students who would work for five days and attend school for just one day

each week under the management of the the Working and Studying Youth organisation. In 1976, the school came under the administration of the AMAL network and it ceased to be a school for trainers.

At present, there are about 45 teachers and 450 students across grades 9 to 12. Students from grades 9 and 10 attend classes every day, while the older students have three days of study and three days of work. According to our respondents: 'Grade 11 students learn in the first half of the week and work the other half, while grade 12 students are learning in the second half of the week and working in the first half'. The school receives students from Nazareth and the surrounding villages. The subjects currently offered are PC maintenance, cookery, car mechanics, autotronics (mechatronics), and refrigeration and air conditioning. The school theoretically serves both sexes, but no girls actually attended in practice in the last two years, partly because another school in the region caters for girls and provides competition, and partly because although 'there is some interest [from girls] the parents do not allow them [to attend]'.

2.2.2 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (RESULTS OF THE TEACHER SURVEY)

The small number of responses to teacher questionnaires led us to examine the standard deviation (SD) and global mean, rather than pursuing comparison of the results by school. It is important to bear in mind that responses from the General school

make up two-thirds of the sample, while the Haredi school represents only one-tenth. As a matter of fact, our research oversampled from the Haredi and Arab minorities, and hence the results of the teacher survey are more closely representative of the actual distribution of the population in society. Most of the results were based on responses given on a five-point scale, but a number of bivariate ('yes' or 'no') questions were also asked. As most of the questions fell into one of these two categories, we also analysed the questions on the basis of the type of scale.

In the 'yes or no' questions, we found that there was a unanimous 'yes' on the issues of equal opportunities in admission for female students and on school providing work experience for students from poor families and for students from other ethnic minorities (see **TABLE 2.1**). Furthermore, the teachers were in near unanimous agreement (just one teacher saying 'no') on: equal opportunities in admission for students from poor families; equal opportunities in admission for students from other ethnic minorities; school providing work experience for students with special needs; equal opportunities in admission for students from other ethnic minorities; and school providing career guidance opportunities to students.

Interestingly, the teachers were only unanimous in 'yes' responses, never in the 'no' responses. However, all such questions were phrased with a positive response bias and we found that the teachers throughout the survey were generally less critical than they were positive about school performance.

TABLE 2.1 YES/NO EDUCATOR QUESTIONS WITH LITTLE OR NO VARIANCE

	Yes (%)	Standard deviation
There are equal opportunities in admission for female students	100	0.00
The school provides work experience for students from poor families	100	0.00
The school provides work experience for students from other ethnic minorities	100	0.00
There are equal opportunities in admission for students from poor families	97	0.19
The school provides work experience for students with special needs	97	0.19
There are equal opportunities in admission for students from other ethnic minorities	96	0.19
The school provides career guidance opportunities to students	96	0.19

Those questions where there was teacher disagreement (see **TABLE 2.2**) revealed a number of negative opinions were held by many teachers about their schools. This teacher disagreement can be analysed both in terms of the number who said 'no' and the variance of responses, but the results can appear misleading where a large number of respondents gave no answer for the question. For example, the question asking if the teachers 'do not believe that their schools attract students from ethnic minorities' had an apparently strong response (SD = 0.50, yes = 38%) but the standard deviation is not lower simply because so many teachers left this question blank. A lot of teachers apparently didn't feel comfortable answering the question, and so there were probably a higher rate of negative responses than there should have been. This is not surprising, considering that each of the schools represents a somewhat segregated community to begin with. Nonetheless, this becomes a matter of concern when we consider the context of each school, where more action is needed to include marginal ethnic groups within their communities, such as: Ethiopians in the case of the General school; Mizrahim in the case of the Haredi school; and Druze in the case of the Arab school. Furthermore, the ethnic minority question could also be interpreted in terms of the integration of Jews and Arabs, a strategy that is almost completely absent. We also found similar disagreements on how well the schools attract students in various categories such as less privileged social backgrounds (SD = 0.51, yes = 44%); students with disabilities (SD = 0.51, yes = 46%); boys more than girls (SD = 0.51, yes = 46%); and students from poor families (SD = 0.51, yes = 52%). When examining the issue of attracting different genders, we found that only the Arab and Haredi schools answered 'no' and no clear differences were found

by school to the remainder of the questions. It seems that teachers might have mixed opinions about what constitutes a disability, poverty or privilege.

In the Likert 1-5 scale questions (**TABLES 2.3** and **2.4**), we expected the questions teachers agreed about to have a high mean and those they disagreed about to have a low mean; a hypothesis that held as a general mathematical trend in regards to the variables with lowest variance. Teachers across all schools agreed with high assessments for: the school maintaining vocational enrolments; student respect for the school; the rating of consultation with parents; the school providing a welcoming environment for all students; and the school recognizing and valuing student achievements. Once again, we noticed that teachers tended to agree on the positive aspects of the school. Positive agreement was also relatively high for: the adequacy of equipment; adequacy of buildings; dealing with learning difficulties by making teacher time available; and linking the vocational curriculum to local labour market needs. However, the one variable that defeated this rule of positive agreement was job placement for students from ethnic minorities and other social groups (SD = 0.83, mean = 0.84). As was previously seen, there was also disagreement on how well the school attracts students from other ethnic groups, but there was no disagreement about whether the school provides equal opportunities for such students. It appears that integration is somewhat lacking in the schools, despite claims by various levels of officials that there is no ethnic bias. The teachers, furthermore, noticed that while the school will cater to minorities in theory, they actually lack the infrastructure to provide extra support.

TABLE 2.2 YES/NO EDUCATOR QUESTIONS WITH HIGH VARIANCE

	Mean (%)	Standard deviation
The school seeks to attract students showing an interest in a particular profession	75	0.44
The school has no preferences	72	0.46
Computers are used to aid teaching in your classroom	62	0.50
The school seeks to attract students from ethnic minorities	38	0.50
The school seeks to attract students from a less privileged social background	44	0.51
The school seeks to attract students with disabilities	46	0.51
The school seeks to attract boys more than girls	46	0.51
The school seeks to attract students from poor families	52	0.51

TABLE 2.3 FIVE-POINT LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONS WITH LOW VARIANCE

	Mean	Standard deviation
How well school maintains vocational enrolments	4.30	0.67
Students' respect for the school	4.31	0.71
Rating of consultation with parents	4.00	0.76
The school provides a welcoming environment for all students	4.31	0.76
The school recognises and values students' achievements	4.14	0.79
Adequacy of equipment	3.93	0.80
Job placement for students from ethnic minorities and other social groups	2.54	0.83
Adequacy of buildings	3.69	0.85
The school deals with learning difficulties by making teacher time available	3.72	0.88
How well the school links the vocational curriculum to local labour market needs	4.17	0.89

TABLE 2.4 FIVE-POINT LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONS WITH HIGH VARIANCE

	Mean	Standard deviation
Problem behaviour: bullying	2.75	1.00
Job placement for disabled students	2.08	1.02
The school offers disabled students additional teaching support	3.42	1.03
Problem behaviour: student discipline	3.38	1.05
Problem behaviour: student absenteeism	3.41	1.05
The school promotes social inclusion by providing extracurricular activities	3.86	1.06
The school promotes social inclusion through support for disabled students	3.93	1.09
Problem behaviour: student motivation	3.45	1.09
The school promotes social inclusion through support for disadvantaged students	4.14	1.09
The school deals with learning difficulties through additional teaching support	3.69	1.14
The school promotes social inclusion through special community open days in the school	3.43	1.29

In the questions with high variance, we found that the majority of such questions showed a tendency to regress towards the mean. Bullying is a problem that many respondents claimed does not exist and one respondent from the Haredi school even wrote an open response to the question on the questionnaire: 'There is no bullying, there is good solid discipline.' However, it may be an overstatement to say that bullying never takes place, as shouting and pushing were witnessed during our visits to the schools. The disagreement about the extent of bullying between the teachers is perhaps indicative of the two main methods for dealing with it: ignoring or confronting it; and the comment from the Haredi school teacher indicates that this school may be doing a better job of confronting bullying. Another worrisome finding was the poor outcome on job placement for disabled students. While there was a somewhat high level of missing data and slight disagreement, the teachers overall believe that such a type of placement does not exist. On the other hand, they give a higher assessment of what the school offers disabled students in terms of additional teaching support, although the global average for this variable is only slightly above the midpoint. The teachers disagreed most on: the provision of support for students with learning difficulties; promoting social inclusion through school community open days; and promoting social inclusion through support for disadvantaged students. While results for each of these questions were positive overall, some of the teachers did not agree. The issue of problem behaviours amongst students (discipline, absenteeism and motivation) were also a source of disagreement.

2.3 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS AND FINDINGS

The participatory action research findings will be discussed in two separate method-based sections: (i) results of the interviews with local informants; and (ii) results of the student questionnaires.

2.3.1 INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL LEVEL INFORMANTS

The four themes extracted from the 17 local level interviews in accordance with the research tasks were selection and streaming, dropouts, patterns of education, and transition to work.

Selection and streaming

We identified three main issues brought up by the local advisory boards within the subject of selection and streaming: (i) placement into specific vocational fields; (ii) understanding of the student's background and helping them with problems; and (iii) provision of special services.

Dropouts

Dropouts are a tricky subject when discussing MOITL schools, not least because the term 'VET dropouts' is a tautological oxymoron as all VET students attend MOITL schools and all MOITL students can be classified as 'dropouts' as they have previously dropped out of MoE controlled schools. As a result, the discussion of 'dropouts' was forced to deal with both the reactive and proactive definitions of the word. In the terms of the reactive definition, the school is integrating dropouts, motivating them and helping them get back on track with their studies. In terms of the proactive definitions, the school is dealing with individuals who are trying to drop out and indulge in delinquent behaviour.

Patterns of education, apprenticeship systems and social inclusion

We identified two main concepts in the category of patterns of education for social inclusion: (i) helping students with apprenticeships; and (ii) providing learning resources (teachers, tools and courses).

Transition from education to work

Graduating from a VET school does not carry the guarantee of a job as it might in many European countries where the student may be able to continue working in the company that offered an apprenticeship. On the other hand, most students in Israel must go into the army and this prevents direct transition from school into the labour market. Furthermore, VET schools have a poor reputation in the market, such that many companies would prefer a student with a matriculation certificate, even if that student has no experience in the labour market. We identified two main themes within the category of transitions to the work place: (i) enabling transitions; and (ii) providing opportunities.

For a detailed discussion of the local level findings see Appendix 2, section A.2.1 – Key themes.

2.3.2 DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FROM THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

The student survey provided us with many insights into group differences in perceptions of VET. As discussed in the methodology, while we only displayed results that were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, we also discuss other results that were not statistically significant when these appear relevant to the topic. All dependent variables were based on five-point Likert scales, unless otherwise noted, which were treated as continuous variables. Cross tabulations were analysed through the Pearson correlation of T-tests and F-ratios.

Discussion of the student responses covers five major themes: choice, experience, motivation, school evaluation, and expectations.

Choice

Two elements of choice were explored: choosing to attend VET education in general and choosing to attend the specific school currently attended. According to our interviews, VET students do not have many other choices when electing to attend VET or their specific school. However, we were surprised to find some significant differences in these choices. Within the context of each student's individual situation, they report having chosen VET and their specific school for a number of reasons: they were not enjoying their previous school; they could not compete at their previous school; they wanted to re-enter the education system after dropping out; and other reasons. In this situation, however, their statement of reasons for their choice can be viewed as a reflective process by which the students interpret the reasons why they ended up in VET and their current school rather than any proactive decision on their part to pursue their current course of study. We explored various reasons for choosing VET and discovered that obtaining a prestigious profession (4.36), earning more money in the future (4.52), and increasing the chances of getting a job (4.39), all ranked very highly, but showed no group-based differences (since all of the schools and subgroups of students (gender, religion, age, etc.) gave high rankings for this question, there were no differences between the groups).

We assumed students attend VET in order to learn a useful trade, and hence the skills to support their career, and our hypothesis was that students who come from communities that favour vocational occupations would be more likely to choose VET. In other words, we expected that students at the Arab school would feel it was more important to choose VET for career development, while Haredi students would feel it was less so. Surprisingly, however, our findings indicated the opposite. The Haredi students gave the highest ratings for VET providing skills that would support their career (4.53), while the Arab students gave the lowest ratings (3.71). The General school also gave career support lower importance (3.96). One possible reason for these differences may be that the Arab population have become frustrated with their opportunities for success, while the General population feels they would be supporting their careers better by studying in the regular education system.

We further hypothesised that these group differences would be linked to the socio-economic status of the student, i.e. that students of unemployed parents would realise the importance of VET for providing career skills. The difference in importance for this variable, though, was not significantly related to any combination of whether either, both, or neither parent was employed.

We also considered that the educational experience of the parents might influence these differences. While university studies for either parent were not significant, the student gave greater importance to VET for career skills where the mother had attended some form of

higher education (either university or another form of higher education, in 36% of respondents).

We next looked at whether family expectations were driving the students to opt for VET. Here, similarly, we expected students from the Arab school to place greater importance on this issue, as our interviews showed that Arab families were more supportive than their Jewish counterparts. This hypothesis proved correct. Arab students gave higher importance to family expectations (3.80) than Haredi students (3.02) and General students (2.61); a finding that was of high statistical significance ($p < .01$). The fact that Haredi students placed higher importance upon family expectations than General students may be related to the fact that these specific students feel they are being given special consideration as Yeshiva study was no longer an option for them and the VET provision gives them the opportunity to remain within some form of Haredi community environment rather than being left hanging around on the streets. Conversely, the General students appear to have chosen the school as the best decision for them personally, even though their families would have preferred them to choose another course of study. This lower importance placed on family expectations in both of the Jewish schools appears to reflect the low status of vocational education in Jewish culture compared with the high status in Arab culture. This complies fully with the view given in the educators' comments.

We also considered whether socio-economic status had an effect on family influence. We found that students whose father is unemployed (see **TABLE 2.5**) placed less importance on family expectations (2.61), while students whose mother is unemployed placed more importance on the factor (3.58). Family expectations were lower where both parents work (2.75) and higher where neither parent works (3.30). This reversal of family expectations is extremely interesting and may indicate that families with an unemployed father have higher expectations of the student attending a better school. However, it may also indicate that such families have lower expectations of the student attending school at all and higher expectations that they will drop out and work to help support the home. It is important to note that 3% of the students reported that they did not live with their families, and 16% of those living with relations stated they lived only with their mother and 3% only with their father. We focused on students who don't live with their father and examined the results further; they remained highly significant. Students whose father is unemployed placed less importance on family expectations (3.16), while students whose mother is unemployed placed more importance on this (3.65). Family expectations were lower where both parents work (2.86), while they were higher where neither parent works (3.35). There was some concern over use of categories relating to living with parents, as the status given by Haredi students living in the boarding school was unclear because many of these students did not report living away from their parents.

TABLE 2.5 REASON FOR PREFERRING VOCATIONAL SCHOOL TO OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL

	Learn skills to support my career	Family expectations
Father unemployed		2.61
Mother unemployed		3.58
Haredi school	4.53	3.02
General school	3.96	2.61
Arab school	3.71	3.80
Total	3.94	3.16

Analysis of the students' reasons for choosing their school was largely exploratory. No presumptions were made as to why the students chose each school, but we did assume that students from a higher socio-economic status would be less likely to choose the school for positive reasons.

On examining the data, reasons such as the distance from the school (2.82) were relatively low in importance, while future employment opportunities (4.17) and opportunities for future study (3.85) were more important. No significant group differences were expected as so many students had stated a belief that the school would help them toward their future employment. However, the actual results reflected that differences based on the reputation of the school were related to socio-economic status. The Haredi students gave the greatest importance to the reputation of the school (3.44) and liking the courses (4.26). The Arab students gave a similar ranking to the Haredi ones on the reputation of the school (3.25), but they gave the least importance to liking the courses (3.56). The students in the General school were least likely to choose the school due to its reputation (2.71) and had slightly better than average results on liking the courses (3.89).

The Arab students appear to choose the school because their families want them to do so, but they do not necessarily especially enjoy the course of study, giving a pattern similar to the results shown in their reasons for choosing VET.

The Haredi students appear to show a desirability bias also apparent in many of the other variables that indicate praise for the school in the survey. This appears to be related to the cultural traits of this community where support for institutions is favoured.

We attempted to examine the results according to socio-economic status, but did not discover any significant results, except in regards to whether the father has studied at university (see **TABLE 2.6**). Only 22% of the students indicated that their father had a university education and these students gave the lowest ranking of any group on choosing the school due to its reputation (2.45). This appears to show that an educated father will have higher expectations about the level of education attained by his child and is less likely to accept a VET school education or the school his child is attending.

TABLE 2.6 REASON FOR CHOOSING THIS VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

	Reputation of school	Liked courses
Father has university education	2.45	
Haredi school	3.44	4.26
General school	2.71	3.89
Arab school	3.25	3.56
Total	3.04	3.82

Experience

Experience is based on four components: practical, psychological, training and extra-curricular.

For the practical component, we looked at the sense of achievement (how much they felt they learned from courses and whether this would help them find a job) as well as how many hours per week they worked in an outside company. We did not find any significant differences in these responses by school or any other variable (3.78). The lack of any clear explanatory element was strange, considering that there was a decent range of responses (SD = 1.05).

Only 10% of respondents said they learned nothing or little and differences in the level of enthusiasm among the remaining students may be related to personal differences not apparent from the sociological cross tabulations.

Finally, the rating of students' practical experience is based on whether what they believe what they learn will help in a future job. The content of our interviews led us to expected dramatic differences in the three schools, but in the event these differences were not significant. Students tended to have a favourable opinion about the utility of their studies (4.02).

For the psychological component, we examined whether students enjoyed school, whether teachers made them feel welcome and whether teachers and students were friendly. We did not find significant differences in whether the teachers made them feel welcome (77% said 'yes'). However, we did find that the students were less friendly in the Arab school (3.42), compared to the General and Haredi schools (3.95 and 3.98, respectively) and that the teachers were most friendly in the Haredi school (4.51) compared to the General and Arab schools (3.56 and 3.50, respectively).

The variable for happiness (see **TABLE 2.7**) was based on a 10-point scale and had a more normal distribution (mean = 6.60, SD = 2.92). Around 35% of students are less than happy with school (rating it 5 or less), with the Haredi school students the happiest (7.83) and the Arab school the least happy (6.05). Perhaps we can infer that family expectations of attendance contradict student aspirations, having a negative effect on happiness. This could mean that the parents are less supportive in the Haredi school but the students know they have done what was right for them, while the parents were more supportive in the Arab school but the choice of this type of education did not make the students happy. Again, we suspect the Haredi students are also happier as a result of cultural differences that give them more favourable opinions of their school.

The training component gave us some unexpected results on the number of hours worked in outside companies. This was an open question offering a range of hours from 0 to 40. We were most surprised to find that 42% of grade 10 students said that they are working in outside companies, in contrast to 78% of those in grades 11 and 12. While it was not surprising to find the older students working more, it was surprising to see grade 10 students working at all. Under the Apprenticeship Act, these students are not supposed to work in outside companies as part of their course, whereby we can only infer that these students are discussing work in the private sector not sanctioned by the MOITL. It should also be noted that the Haredi students are not included in these results as their school is geographically isolated and has no outside companies available for apprenticeships.

As we had expected, male students work more hours than their female peers (7.82 hours and 5.19 hours, respectively). A total 16% of our sample is female, but outside the General school, which is 35% female, there is only one female respondent from the Arab school in our sample. We found that older students, males and the Haredi School participate more in paid work. The latter result appearing anomalous as this school has reported having no factories or employers available. However, the interviews did mention occasional paid carpentry commissions for students.

Finally, the factor of extra-curricular activities showed great variability on the basis of school and a number of demographic factors. Younger students, males and the Haredi school participated more in sports; another surprising factor as orthodox culture is not usually sports affiliated. Apparently, the school setting in an isolated rural location provides students with more time and space for sports practice. The outdoor access element may also explain why the Arab school had higher sports participation than the General school, even though we would normally expect a less religious Jewish school to have more sports.

The Haredi School also does more voluntary work than the others which initially appears strange as there seem to be few places for them to do voluntary work in their isolated environment. However, voluntary work is considered *mitzvah* (a good deed) in orthodox culture and we may well be seeing desirability bias again. There may be differences in the definition of what qualifies as 'voluntary work' in each school, or students may be discussing volunteer opportunities both inside the school campus and in their home lives. More in-depth research should be conducted to examine the volunteer activities of each community and how these volunteer activities can be incorporated into vocational training.

TABLE 2.7 EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL

	How happy do you feel in school?	Hours per week in outside company	Paid work	Voluntary work	Sports
16 or under			0.40	0.33	0.69
Over 16			0.54	0.22	0.49
Male		7.82	0.47	0.32	0.69
Female		5.19	0.29	0.20	0.35
Haredi school	7.83		0.67	0.41	0.76
General school	6.66		0.45	0.20	0.56
Arab school	6.05		0.34	0.36	0.66
Total	6.60	7.15	0.40	0.33	0.63

Motivation

We looked at motivation in terms of the students’ drive to do well in school and of the prejudices they perceive that may restrain their expectations (see **TABLE 2.8**).

The questions relating to drive asked whether they do well for their own personal sake, for their family or for their future job prospects and the results gave very little variance in the averages for the three variables (4.37, 4.40 and 4.48, respectively) showing that students claim to do well for all three reasons.

Most of the students place very high importance on doing well and there were no significant differences between the schools. In a population of students who struggled in school it is rather surprising to find that so many express the importance of doing well and this

element may be indicative of the fact that large numbers of students here are thought to have learning disabilities. The outcomes could reflect the fact that many of the students want to do well for others but are frustrated as they are unable to do so, wishing that they could do better. The strong positive outcome may also be a matter of desirability bias among all VET students, as it is probably hard to admit to not caring about doing well when faced with a direct question.

While inter-school differences were insignificant, we did find significant differences in terms of how well the students do for themselves personally depending on gender and course of study: while females have a significantly higher personal motivation (4.65), we found that students enrolled in the electrician course had lower motivations for doing well for themselves personally (4.12). For the latter group, we surmised that

TABLE 2.8 SCHOOL MOTIVATION

	Importance of doing well in school for you personally	Discrimination by...					
		Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	Religion	Qualifications	School
Male	4.31						
Female	4.65						
Electricians	4.12						
Haredi school		1.13	1.35		1.82	1.84	1.55
General school		1.38	1.69		1.54	2.48	2.35
Arab school		1.97	2.33		2.57	2.95	2.72
Total	4.37	1.58	1.84	1.43	1.94	2.52	2.34

perhaps this profession was not an area that expressly interested them, but in which they engaged for the sake of their family and the pragmatic goal of finding a job. Indeed, considering that many of the students come from families of lower socio-economic status, we would expect that more would feel that they are pursuing a vocation for the pragmatic goals of securing a future job and not due to personal interest.

When considering prejudice, we wanted to know if students feel that they are discriminated against for any reason and whether this may be having a negative effect on their expectations of achievement. We looked at whether they felt their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, qualifications, or choice of school might lead them to feel unwelcome in the labour force. We then looked at group differences and attempted to plot any correlation between feelings of discrimination and low motivation. We found that students overall gave very low ratings on expecting to meet negative discrimination. However, they were more likely to feel any discrimination would be due to their qualifications (2.52) or the school attended (2.34).

We also found very few differences in response related to demographics. Females (1.39) and students who have both parents working (1.66) were significantly less likely to believe that they are discriminated against because of their religion. However, these were basically the only significant correlations and they both appear to be related to the fact that almost all of the females and most of the students with both parents working attend the General school.

When comparing the schools, we found very significant differences between them for all forms of discrimination except disability. Arab students were more likely to feel discriminated against in every possible way while Haredi students were least likely to feel discriminated against, except in regards to their religion.

School ratings

School ratings were based on three key components: quality, social environment and facilities.

For the quality of the school, we looked at the ratings for teaching methods and teacher subject knowledge, while the social environment was assessed in terms of the friendliness of other students and teachers, and the facilities were measured in terms of the quality of school buildings and classroom equipment (see **TABLE 2.9**).

No significant differences were found in terms of the teachers' subject knowledge and school buildings although students did not rate either of these variables extremely highly (3.25 and 3.79, respectively), where the higher rating for the buildings section means that they believe that improvements are needed. Rather

surprisingly, we did not find any significant differences based on either school or demographic indicators.

Finding qualified teachers has been highlighted as a significant problem by national and local advisory boards, so it seems that this problem is common to all schools. Peculiarly, the Haredi school did not express disappointment with the quality of the buildings even though their school is lacking in buildings and they have to construct any extra rooms they need themselves. The Arab local advisory board indicated that building expansion was a problem that limited their school. The General school is a very comfortable establishment and we did not expect to see a lower rating on buildings here. However, data from the General school stated more strongly that improvements were needed in school buildings than in the other two schools (3.32 compared to 3.18 for the other two schools), although this difference was not statistically significant.

Statistically significant results were seen in ratings for teaching methods, with the Haredi school giving the highest rating for teaching methods at 3.84 against a low of 3.26 for the General school. Furthermore, we found that the younger students (those aged 16 or under) gave higher ratings. When we analysed the results based on grade 10 or younger (4% of the students were in grade 9) against grades 11 and 12, the results were still significant but less so (3.56 and 3.25, $p = 0.02$). This finding may be related to the fact that many older dropouts were enrolled in grade 10 and they appear to be more critical of the teaching methods than their younger classmates.

We also found very significant differences in ratings of the friendliness of other students by school. Arab students have lower opinions about the friendliness of other students (3.42 versus 3.98 in the Haredi school and 3.95 in the General school). While we were not really expecting differences in terms of school environment, it appears from the figures that the Arab school is more geared towards practical than social goals.

Finally, as already discussed in relation to the buildings, the difference in facility ratings surprised us the most. The students in the Haredi school were least likely to believe that improvements were needed in equipment (2.81 versus 3.50 in the General school and 3.55 in the Arab school). This is ironic considering that the Haredi school is currently involved in many building projects and is lacking in many resources, while the General and Arab schools are more established. The best explanation we can find for this is that solidarity and association with the school is expected to be higher under the orthodox code, while more critical attitudes are present in the other schools. We also found significant differences here again for the group of electrician students, who see less need for improvements in classroom equipment.

TABLE 2.9 SCHOOL RATINGS

	How do you rate your school?			Improvements needed in
	Teaching methods	Friendliness of other students	Friendliness of teachers	Classroom equipment
Electricians				2.90
16 or under	3.56			
Over 16	3.17			
Haredi school	3.84	3.98	4.51	2.81
General school	3.26	3.95	3.56	3.50
Arab school	3.47	3.42	3.50	3.55
Total	3.43	3.76	3.70	3.41

Expectations

We looked at both what the students expect to achieve and who they expect to help them in reaching those expectations. Students' achievement expectations were based on both work expectations and study or other expectations. The questionnaire asked students to indicate whether they plan to look for paid work when they complete school and, if not, what they intend to do. Our results show that 88% said they do plan to search for a job, but 36% of these also indicated that they have other plans after graduation. Only 1% of the sample said they do not plan to look for a job or have any other plans, while 47% indicated that they do have other plans. We believe the level of response would surely have been higher had the question been asked differently, and those students who ignored the directions to give multiple responses were in fact correct to do so, as even students who plan to study or look after family will also probably have to work. This fact is especially true among the population that we are examining as they are assumed to have a lower socio-economic status than other youth.

The rate of students intending to look for work was very high and we did not find significant differences by demographic group or school. Some significant differences were found though among students planning to pursue further education, look after their family and go into a family business.

Universities having a higher prestige than private colleges, we hypothesized that university attendance expectations would be a significant predictor. However, we did not find significant differences based on whether the student plans to attend university, but we did find significant differences based on whether the student plans to go to university or college. Students in the Haredi school have much lower expectations of pursuing further education (33% answered 'yes', compared to 57% for the General school and 61% for the Arab school – see **TABLE 2.10**). Interestingly, we found that

69% of those who have only a mother that works and 68% of those where neither parent works plan to attend further education, while only 56% of those whose father works and 52% of those with both parents working plan to attend. This finding is the reverse of what we expected and it may be related to parental expectations for the child to go out to work instead of going to college.

On the issues of looking after a family, all of the females who answered the question indicated that this was their plan. In fact 95% of females said they plan to look for a job, compared to 87% of males, while 59% of females also stated that they plan to look after their family. In contrast, 42% of males answered the question asking whether they planned to look after their family and 85% of these indicated that they would do so against only 15% who would not. This shows that taking care of the family is an important value among the populations studied. We expected the Arab school to place the highest value on looking after family, but surprisingly the General school came out higher (95% compared to 83%). The Haredi school gave the lowest value for this question (67%), but only three respondents answered the question.

Finally, we found significant differences in plans to work in the family business. None of the Haredi students indicated they plan to work in the family business, but only the same three respondents answered this question. As expected, the Arab school had the highest score (56%), indicative of Arab culture in Israel where families often own businesses and provide work for family members.

We feel it is important to include one final finding that did not form part of the standardised research assignment as student plans to enlist in the military gave some unexpected results. Army enlistment is a major issue in Israeli society and Haredi students do not normally enlist. Military service makes consideration of other plans for the future extremely problematic, as

TABLE 2.10 PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

	Go to further education	Look after family	Go to family business
Male		0.85	
Female		1	
Father unemployed	0.69		0.31
Haredi school	0.33	0.67	0
General school	0.57	0.95	0.42
Arab school	0.61	0.83	0.56
Total	0.59	0.89	0.48

respondents must often wait for two to three years before they can make other plans.

This question was presented separately from the section on plans to work and was therefore not influenced by the data missing from the prior section on work plans.

Arabs are not expected to enlist in the army, so the Arab school was not provided with questions about army enlistment. Furthermore, we didn't find any significant demographic difference. What surprised us was the lack of significant findings, as Haredi students have far lower participation rates in the army than secular students. Despite this, we found extremely high expectations for those in the Haredi school to enlist, with 88% of respondents in both the orthodox and the General school planning to join the army.

Besides examining the specific plans of individual students, we also wanted to know more about who they expect will help them to reach those expectations. We did not find any significant differences in terms of expected help from family (3.86), friends (3.23) or

teachers (2.85), although it is telling that the students expect the most from their family and least from their teachers. We did, however, find significant differences (see **TABLE 2.11**) in their expectations of help from the school (3.09), the career centre in the school (2.93) and the public employment agencies (3.07). While the amount of help students expect to get from each agency did not differ very much (results were almost exactly at the middle score for each of the three), there were very significant results for each type of agency on the basis of school, gender and parental employment. The Arab school had lower expectations of help from the school (2.65 against 3.49 for the Haredi school and 3.28 for the General School), help from the career centre in the school (2.59 against 3.25 for the Haredi school and 3.12 for the General school) and help from the public employment agency (2.66 against 2.96 for the Haredi school and 3.41 for the General school). This appears to be indicative of lower expectations of being able to find work among the Arab population, a question that was not specifically asked in the questionnaire although the issue was highlighted by the local advisory board. It was not clear which career centre was being referred

TABLE 2.11 TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

	School	Career centre in school	Public employment agency
Male		2.84	2.94
Female		3.34	3.64
Both parents work			3.52
Mother unemployed	2.91		2.87
Haredi school	3.49	3.25	2.96
General school	3.28	3.12	3.41
Arab school	2.65	2.59	2.66
Total	3.09	2.93	3.07

to by the Haredi students and they may, in fact, have been referring to one of the NGOs that work with the school. In contrast, we noticed that the General students showed the highest actual use of the public employment agency, possibly due to their location in an urban environment, thus enabling such an option. We also found significant gender-based differences in perceptions of the usefulness of the public employment agency, with females believing they were more likely to receive help (3.64 to 2.94). Similarly, students with both parents working had much higher expectations of getting help from a public employment agency. This may be due to their realistic interpretation of the increasing number of non-salaried positions being made available. While such posts are not the preferred form of work, they are much easier to get. The family situation may also play an important part as 59% of the General school students have both parents working versus only 11% of their Arab and 45% of their Haredi peers.

2.4 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION PRACTICES

Despite the cultural differences that effectively separate these three populations from one another

in modern Israeli society, VET students in Israel are benefitting from social inclusion within their respective cultures and communities. We examined three VET schools representing three distinct cultural groups, looking beyond the question of how educational factors influence social cohesion, to see how cultural factors impact on the issue. While the Arab school is isolated by national sentiment and ethnolinguistic cultural forces and the Haredi School was founded on the basis of deliberate exclusion, the General school exhibits patterns of social inclusion aimed at bringing students back into mainstream society. However, a closer look at this issue clearly shows that social inclusion for all three communities is a pluralistic concept limited to inclusion only within the boundaries of the primordial culture. We have produced a brief reflection on the similarities and differences in the three schools in regards to the policy issues summarised above. We have approached this via a three phase process, looking at educator level data, followed by the student level data and a final round comparing our educator and student data with the national levels.

For a more detailed discussion of the school comparison at different levels see Appendix 2, sections A.2.2 – Comparison at the educator level; A.2.3 – Comparison at the student level; and A.2.4 – Comparison between national, student, and educator perspectives.

3. ACTION PROPOSALS FOR SCHOOLS

While we can sympathise with the educators' opinions that VET schools should not be an experimenting ground for ethnic or religious integration, the schools should be doing more to include the marginal ethnic groups within their communities. At the same time, the schools should be careful to not create a scenario in which certain minority communities are relegated to VET, simply because they lack the language proficiency or financial resources needed to pursue general academic studies. The General school briefly discussed the issue of former Soviet Union's students with language difficulties attending the school, but this situation has largely been resolved as this community has established longer tenure in the country. However, Arab and Ethiopian students are often placed in VET schools as a result of their marginal status in society and VET education unwittingly plays a role in preventing these communities from progressing to high-prestige occupations.

The Arab school should try to provide a more welcoming environment and more career services. However, we cannot compare this school objectively with others of the same type as insufficient indicators are available to show whether the students would feel less welcome or would receive better career services in any other Arab schools.

The Haredi school appears to do a great job of providing a welcoming environment, but the institution requires more resources for developing vocational skills and mechanisms to enable students to obtain work experience and make the transition to the labour market. Once again, we lack the information needed to make a comparison with other Yeshivas. The school is inevitably limited by its location and religious requirements, but should explore more ways of involving its students and graduates in businesses, perhaps by arranging extended intensive apprenticeship programmes at Haredi-controlled businesses where students could train within a company. If this solution is not considered suitable, the school could seek the help of the Government, NGOs and Haredi entrepreneurs in creating more in-house trades and improving the marketability of its current enterprises.

The Arab and General schools could also develop similar in-house apprenticeships, always considering that the goals of the programmes are clearly focused on providing training for the students and not on raising a profit to cover school costs. Sponsoring good quality apprenticeships for students is a difficult task and resources are bound to be insufficient. Some schools indicated that they currently offer volunteer training tasks which appear to be a useful way to supplement the students with hands on learning when apprenticeships are not available.

The students need to earn money in order both to keep them motivated and to help those in economic difficulties or from families where students may be encouraged to drop out in order to take a higher paying position with more hours. There is a problem in finding jobs for all of the students, both in terms of apprenticeships and for VET graduates. We encourage schools to actively promote networking with local businesses and government as the school should be able to open up apprenticeship jobs in civic institutions by strengthening ties with the local municipality. One example of good practice on this front was seen in the General school, where an advertisement was published around the city for all to see, thanking all the employers who offered student assistantships for the school. Schools might also attempt to recruit more vocational experts from local businesses to provide workshops for students in a form similar to those we saw demonstrated in the hair design and cookery courses. The incorporation of vocational experts from companies will help schools to reduce the burden caused by the lack of available vocational teachers. Professional development activities to train vocational business experts could be coordinated at the local level, although this need must also be identified at the national level.

In relation to all of the points above, we encourage schools to widen the network of NGOs working with the school and to strengthen their ties with current NGO partners. Such cooperation should focus on professional development for VET teachers and vocational experts, labour rights, labour market preparation workshops and career services for students and graduates.

All of the schools have a large number of at-risk and special needs students who are not getting all the individual attention they need. The schools should endeavour to bring in volunteers to work with the students until sufficient resources are made available for additional counsellors and other educators. The General school uses volunteers very well with senior citizens supporting reading in the library and hairdressing courses, providing a good example of a creative way in which schools can develop training exercises and provide students with individualized instruction. The educators frequently complained that communication with parents and networking with local businesses were lacking. However, we also found poor indications of school action in the community, with only a mediocre rating and great variance on how the teachers rated their schools on the promotion of social inclusion through special community open days in the school. More community events in the school would surely increase parental involvement and the number of employers interested in working with the school.

Finally, we would like to end our action proposal for schools with a consideration of how the VET schools represent Israeli culture, for better and for worse, and to remind schools of the embedded benefits and deficiencies.

Each of the schools uses culture as a tool to deal with problems, but they also create problems by relying on culture and the traditions of behaviour that it dictates. In more specific terms, we strongly encourage schools to improve the professionalism of class instruction. One particularly troublesome aspect of Israeli culture identified by one of our co-authors in his book *The Code of Israeliness* (Yair, 2011) is the overarching ethos that encourages teachers (and all authority figures) to create a human or personalised and egalitarian relationship with students (or soldiers, employees, etc.) rather than a professional relationship demanding subservience. As a result, teachers in VET schools and all Israeli schools in general, face the very difficult task of creating discipline in a culture where individual values run extremely high. Israel is an informal country with very few rules of etiquette conditioned by hierarchy. As a result, students will speak loudly out of turn in class without raising their hands, they may call the teacher by a first name or a nickname, show up late to class and engage in disruptive behaviour in plain sight of the school administrators. The plus side of this attitude is that the teacher is often motivated to develop a personal relationship with students, which facilitates student collaboration where they view the teacher as a person and not as a monotonous authority figure. On balance, this informal culture is ingrained in society and it benefits discipline and the flow of lessons, although it also mitigates against the amount of serious learning accomplished in class. The teacher chooses to have a good relationship with the students rather than losing the students' respect by forcing them to complete assignments and work efficiently in class. The teacher provides the student with a relaxed informal environment to study, with limited disciplinary action and course requirements, and the student behaves better. As was seen in the quantitative analysis of student surveys: students who think their teacher is friendly or welcoming, has good teaching methods and is knowledgeable, have better impressions of the school as a whole, they do more homework, choose the school for favourable reasons and have higher expectations that their teacher will help them when it comes to finding a job. In fact, just about every performance variable in the student survey had a significant positive correlation with the students' impressions of the teacher.

We identified that teachers have a very positive influence on their students and that almost every variable in our study had a significant correlation with teacher qualities, although this did not appear to correlate with the further finding that students with better grades and those with the expectation of going to college or

university did not give teachers a higher rating. Given that so many seemingly unrelated variables, including even such elements as getting to school by bicycle, had a significant correlation with teacher ratings, we would also have expected to find that the more serious students (i.e. those who get good grades and want to attend post-secondary school) would give their teachers higher ratings. Oddly, our findings showed an insignificant relationship between high achievement and aspirations and the positive evaluation of teacher quality. We feel it is important for us to report and highlight this finding here, so that the schools will be aware of the fact that normatively better students do not rate teachers more highly on friendliness, knowledge, methods, or being welcoming. In spite of this apparent anomaly, almost everything else about the school has a strong correlation with the teacher ratings, raising the following questions:

- Are the teachers giving more attention to the weaker students in class?
- Are the students with higher marks and aspirations upset about their placement in a VET school, when they feel that they are capable of more?
- Are these students simply providing us with a more objective perception of what is going on in class?
- Are teachers providing a more comfortable environment in the class so that students will make life easier for the teacher to get on with the teaching?

The latter phenomenon may simply be indicative of Israeli culture and this was originally observed at the university level where professors make less demands on their students in order to become popular and our findings indicate that a similar procedure may be happening in secondary school. Perhaps those students who succeed better and have higher aspirations do not have the same amount of respect for their teachers because they realise the class is not being run in a manner sufficiently efficient to enable them to fulfil their goals. Here, we come up against the dilemma of teachers who must cater for an often disruptive group while maintaining a professional environment. The teacher is faced with a situation where creating too serious an environment may alienate all of the students, while providing less serious teaching, with fewer assignments and more relaxed discipline, may make the learning a great deal less efficient.

Just such a phenomenon was observed in the school visits undertaken as part of this research and also in further research conducted at Israeli schools. We do not wish to imply that it is undesirable for teachers to have casual individual relationships with students (in fact, in this specific population, it is an important factor in helping these students to continue their studies) but we feel strongly that schools should be aware of the trade-off that takes place between teacher popularity and quality of course instruction.

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned in the chapter on methodology, many of our respondents came to the interviews with a prepared agenda. They were aware that we would be writing a policy paper and many of them attempted, either directly or indirectly, to convey to us the policies they felt essential. We have gone to great lengths in this chapter to avoid simply repeating the policies offered by the respondents, preferring to analyse our data independently and to make calculated assessments. However, a thorough analysis of previous literature, national indicators and our participatory action research led us to the conclusion that, in all likelihood, every policy decision we could possibly derive will have been presented before in some form. The points that we present as suggestions should be analysed both separately and in tandem.

In formulating our policy considerations, we examined the data across the levels of research, both horizontally (by school) and vertically (by status of the respondents). Policy recommendations for the local community are included in the action plan for schools already discussed in Chapter 3. Policy recommendations for the national community (policy makers, the Apprenticeship Law, government-affiliated institutions, NGOs and donors) are made in the present chapter. Our findings indicate that VET presents meaningful value for weaker students, but many bureaucratic abnormalities hamper the improvement of VET and the social inclusion of VET students.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

At the time of writing, profound changes are taking place in government regulations. As a result of coalition agreement decision # 4088 of the 19th Knesset, the name and responsibilities of the MOITL are being amended and early childhood education is being returned to the MoE. Given the current climate of change, we encourage policy makers also to consider the concurrent incorporation of VET within the MoE as the current fragmentation of the MOITL and the MoE does nothing to benefit the sector.

Our evidence from the field and details from the literature clearly show financial problems stemming from the MOITL closed budget approach, the lack of additional funding for high-risk and vulnerable students with special needs and the procurement of school buildings and vocational training equipment. The State Comptroller's report of 2010 mentioned that the Government had already decided to integrate MOITL schools into the MoE in 1989, but this action was never completed. We also perceive a need for integration of the MOITL Department of Youth Training with the MoE. We found

that communication between the ministries remains poor, resulting in a competitive atmosphere where the ministries do not support one another.

The lack of cooperation between the departments harms VET students, many of whom are vulnerable and in need of extra psychological, social and economic services, making them pawns in a political battle between the ministries. The ongoing feud between the entities adds obstacles between the students and access to these services, meaning that students with disabilities lose benefits when they transfer into the MOITL system. The Government must reconsider how it allocates funding to schools, for while the MoE is currently awarded funding dependent on student enrolment figures, the MOITL is simply awarded a set budget to cover all of its students regardless of the number. The current scenario encourages overcrowding in MOITL schools, reduces the number of student places in VET at the beginning of each year and limits the ability of schools to take in further dropouts throughout the academic year. Future funding for all schools in the MOITL and the MoE should be assessed retroactively based on both the number of students who dropped out and the number of dropouts accepted during the course of the year. The dual goal of these measures must be to reduce the number of dropouts and to bring out-of-school dropouts back into the system. As many VET students come from poor socio-economic backgrounds or have special needs, this policy would allow VET schools to expand their services to those students who need them most.

The idea of incorporating high-level VET students was commented on by numerous educators both at the national and local level. We recommend a pilot study where lower-ranking VET students should study at the same school alongside higher-ranking VET students. The lower-ranking students would study low-tech content and the higher-ranking students would study high-tech content, but all students would take apprenticeships in the attached company. A pilot scheme such as this would be likely to encounter some difficulties in the social encounters between the students, but it might also provide a positive experience in the interaction between students. This effect was referred to by one of our national advisory board members as the 'school yard effect'. It would also serve to improve the reputation of the school.

Traditional VET students might gain a less stigmatised impression of themselves, improving their opinion of the school they study at, and teachers might gain more job satisfaction by being able to interact at various skill levels. Furthermore, this type of approach would allow a greater variety of courses to be incorporated into each school, allowing the students to pursue greater upward mobility in their course selection, dependent upon their individual choices and capabilities.

Greater student inclusion in VET could also be encouraged via incorporation of the ‘study plant model’ (Lotan, 2013) where schools are developed alongside factories, but unless there is government support to open such schools, the input from other organisations will be limited.

New policies are needed before the MoE can run VET in its schools, allowing TVET and VET to remain separate in concept but not divided by school. The current situation creates the social segregation of VET students, whereas consolidation will create social cohesion.

It is important for any attempt to integrate VET into the MoE to retain the MOITL Department of Youth Training which has developed a very successful VET programme for weaker students. An interim measure should be introduced to promote closer cooperation, perhaps beginning with the exchange of representatives between the two departments for set periods of time. Closer ties between the MoE and the MOITL will allow strengthening of the legislation requiring employers to take on students for apprenticeships and will ensure educational reforms that seek to benefit all Israeli students, including VET students.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE APPRENTICESHIP LAW

At Knesset level, we believe that the Apprenticeship Law should be modified to allow more students who are currently classified as TVET to become VET students, and to increase cooperation with employers to make this possible. Movement in this direction will begin with greater cooperation between the ministries, making more room for structural and financing flexibility. Government policy should also look at ways of promoting higher incomes for vocational professions in a way that would also facilitate a more egalitarian society. The Government could create an obligatory programme under which companies are required to provide a number of apprenticeships related to their resources. This type of obligatory programme expanded across all industries would allow the MOITL to ensure that all vocational students are given paid training positions and that the vocations on offer remain in line with the needs of the labour market. The MOITL is also responsible for employment services for the general public and we question whether more can be done within this ministry to provide additional services for finding sponsored jobs for VET students.

The Government could also provide subsidies for businesses that provide apprenticeships and work opportunities for vocational graduates. Factories should partner with schools in developing an apprenticeship stream that consists of a formal commitment and a range of incentives. An obligatory apprenticeship policy would also shift the burden of finding apprenticeship placements away from the schools, placing the onus on businesses to find assistants through proactive

relationships with local VET schools. Integration of MOITL Youth Services with the MoE should not prevent VET from using MOITL services and networks with industries. If VET and TVET are to be maintained as separate entities, then we recommend that more schools be built within the industrial parks where the students would also work. As stated by Lotan (2013), this ‘study plant model’ would ensure social inclusion through apprenticeships. The current collaboration between VET, the gas industry and the Manufacturers’ Association of Israel is beneficial, but greater collaboration with all industries is needed, not just with the willing few. Joint efforts involving the wider labour market would serve to expand the range of courses currently offered in VET. The MOITL and the MoE should also ensure that the training offered to students is focused on modern courses that enable students to operate appropriately in a dynamic labour market.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT-AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

There should be closer cooperation between VET schools and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), universities and other adult training institutions. The IDF could expand the number of positions offered to students with a VET diploma. Communication channels are already established between the IDF and the schools, but programmes that consider the Haredi community are mostly in the very initial stages, requiring attention and resources to ensure that they succeed.

Analysis of interviews with the national advisory board on coordination between government organisations and the universities indicated that the authorities misunderstand the task of universities as academic research centres. We suggest the development of nationally sponsored vocation-specific training centres where instruction is delivered by university professors and vocational experts. In order to promote social inclusion, these programmes could be opened within the universities, but should be open both to students with VET diplomas but no high school matriculation qualification in addition to university-level education students who wish to expand their horizons into VET training. These centres should therefore aim to incorporate vocational topics into established teacher training programmes and a teacher-training programme for vocational graduates. Companies should be encouraged to provide scholarships and part-time professional development opportunities for vocational workers in such university programmes.

The economic situation of many VET students compel them to pursue work in fields other than those in which they studied, because the extra training needed to follow through with their vocation was beyond their means. Vocational training has long been seen as a means by which to improve the economic situation of the lower

socio-economic communities, but, unless they are given sufficient resources to become well-trained experts in their vocation, they will continuously be relegated to low-paying positions with few opportunities to improve their vocational skills and salaries. Students who were unable to succeed in traditional education environments have high rates of success in private colleges that operate second-chance academic preparatory programmes (Ayalon et al., 1992). As is highlighted in our interviews with school officials, VET graduates often require further training before they are able to work in the vocations that they have studied. The Government therefore needs to make it easier for vocational students to pursue affordable training in colleges once they leave school.

Labour unions, such as the Histadrut and the Manufacturers' Association of Israel were often mentioned in our interviews due to their relationship with the MOITL in developing VET programmes and one respondent said: 'we recommend that further panels are developed between the Government and these unions to build a bridge to span the gap between the Government and employers'. These panels should discuss and move forward on curriculum development concentrating initially on the three areas of: textbooks, qualifications and apprenticeship training.

The issue of textbooks is a case in point as many schools complained about non-existent or outdated reference materials. While production of a textbook in Hebrew or Arabic on a rare course, such as motorcycle mechanics, may not be regarded as a profitable venture for private industries, it is important that the students undertaking such courses receive a quality textbook capable of facilitating their learning. The Government should ensure that panels of professionals and funding are made available for the publication of these textbooks and that the schools receive them at a subsidised price.

On the qualifications front, we found that many schools were dismayed at the lack of value attached to vocational diplomas. The Government and employers should work together to build up the status of VET graduates by developing clearer standards. Discussion of such standards often centres on the issue of testing, but we question whether vocational courses designed for students who excel in kinaesthetic and tactile learning can be tested through traditional exams. A motorcycle mechanic surely requires testing that involves checking hand dexterity and not just memorisation skills.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NGOs AND DONORS

We were able to interview only two NGO representatives in our research and the policy recommendations given here should therefore be considered as starting points on the basis of inferences from our research and not as a critique of the great work being undertaken by NGOs.

An extensive number of NGOs were cited by national advisory board members, but only a few such organisations were mentioned by schools and it appears that each school develops a relationship with a few specific NGOs. This method of agency development is very effective as the school and the NGO develop a repertoire of projects that enables collaboration and project development. It appears that many of the NGOs are involved exclusively with specific schools or that their projects focus on a specific issue. We encourage NGOs to broaden their network to cover schools located in peripheral areas and with minority populations. Many NGOs have a Jewish agenda and we question whether NGO involvement in the Arab schools is sufficient. Furthermore, many NGOs have a secular agenda and they are hence excluded from collaboration with the Haredi sector.

NGOs often focus on a single policy issue, for example: the Authority for War on Drugs and Alcohol promotes prevention programmes and the Appleseeds Academy promotes technological development. We question whether NGOs have the capacity to develop multi-issue projects and promote greater collaboration between themselves.

One of the main findings from our research was that many VET students are unable to go on to work in the vocation that they have studied. The main reason given for this is that the students require additional training beyond grade 12 and many of the students have neither the money nor persistence to pursue future studies. Scholarships for VET students are available through entities such as the Friendship Fund, the Rashi Foundation, the Gross Foundation and the Kemach Foundation. We suggest that NGOs like these should collaborate with businesses to sponsor continued studies for VET students in technical training colleges. These programmes could incorporate a work-study component providing VET students with subsidised part-time labour that enables them to pursue advanced studies alongside work.

CONCLUSIONS

We found that MOITL schools are doing an incredible job at reforming some of the most challenging students. VET students are usually dropouts or students with learning disabilities, who frequently come with a history of failure and school aversion. Our survey indicated above average student assessments of happiness and liking school. Considering the tough nature of some of the background stories we heard from these students, this alone is a testament to the outstanding work undertaken by the schools.

Regardless of this fact, Israel must improve VET to levels consistent with other OECD countries. Incorporating more students into TVET courses will not be sufficient to meet the demands of the labour market or students unsuited to such courses who require an apprenticeship in order to focus their learning. Furthermore, Israel must improve the social inclusion of VET students by both increasing the status of VET diplomas and integrating VET students into a wider range of companies and schools. The 'study plant' model should be further established to integrate the schools with businesses. Schools established on this basis will increase the efficiency of VET training by providing all students with apprenticeships and closer association with working professionals who can serve as both mentors and

educational advisors for curriculum development. More scholarships should be provided in order to enable VET students to access work-study opportunities beyond grade 12.

There is also added value in combining weak students with industry. This experience provides many of the students who face economic difficulties with a way to make money and stay in school. The students swiftly understand that their studies improve their chances in the labour market, creating the motivation to remain in school. Furthermore, the socialisation that takes place as a result of participation in the labour force helps to settle students with a history of academic failure and disruptive behaviour. Contact with a personal tutor in a real work environment provides students with good role model and, although the apprenticeship approach may not always succeed on all fronts, the experience overall appears to be extremely valuable in turning dropouts into serious students. The Israeli economy has a profound need for both this type of vocational education graduates and technological education graduates, and their educational development and social inclusion should therefore be given a far higher priority in future planning of the education and training system.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DETAILS OF THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The teacher survey contains such a limited number of responses that statistical analyses were difficult. While the individual populations of teachers within each school were not representative, the sample more closely represents the actual larger population. We also did not apply weighting to correct the sampling bias, as, in the case of the Haredi School, this would have created a situation in which each of their three respondents had the equivalent weighting of 6.67 respondents from the General school. More is said about the teacher surveys in Section 2.2.

In contrast, a sufficient sample was obtained for the student surveys, permitting more complex analyses. In the regression analyses, only significant correlations are displayed, and these are expressed using Pearson's chi-square test. We display only those results with a probability of less than 0.05, which we determined as the boundary of significance although we have reserved the right to occasionally discuss the insignificant variables when relevant. The reader can infer that all of the insignificant results fell close to the mean.

Before going into the results in greater detail, we would like to comment on a few quantitative issues that emerged in the course of the analysis and which should be considered while reading the document. The number of students in the Haredi school ($n = 56$) was lower than that of the General school ($n = 175$) and the Arab school ($n = 162$). We also noticed that the education level of parents rarely appeared significant as a result of several problems with the data collected for the variable, given that many students chose more than one answer, some were confused about the educational level of their parents and some appeared to have been subject to misinformation.

When looking at the highest level of education listed we found almost no correlations where mother's and father's education was considered separately or in cases where both parents attended university. However, we did find slightly more significant results when we looked at whether either parent had attended university; if one parent – either mother or father – went to university, it can have a significant effect on the child's aspirations. It should be noted that a previous representative national survey of high school students (Goldstein, 2009) also showed that students exaggerated their parents' level of education, entering an average number of PhDs of almost twice the national level according to census data.

We also needed to alter the coding for some of the other variables in order to better interpret variance between

students. For example, as there were a number of types of course tracks, it was difficult to get significant results from any one of these singly. Only the electrician and autotronics (mechatronics) categories had high levels of representation (19% and 18% respectively), so we decided that it would be more suitable to divide the courses into the three major groupings of manual, commercial and office-based. We also noticed that the sets of variables showed little variance among respondents and for many of the sections the respondents marked the same level in response to all questions. Indeed this is often a problem in surveys where a group of similar questions are presented together with a similar scale, especially among school age respondents.

APPENDIX 2: DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL LEVEL INFORMANTS

A.2.1 KEY THEMES

Four themes relating to the research tasks were analysed in the 17 local level interviews: (i) selection and streaming; (ii) dropouts; (iii) patterns of education; and (iv) transition from education to work.

SELECTION AND STREAMING

We identified three main issues that were brought up within the subject of selection and streaming by the local advisory boards: (i) placement into specific vocational fields; (ii) understanding of the students' background and helping them with problems; and (iii) providing special services.

As this section of the appendices is heavily dependent upon opinions cited by the interviewees we have included the quotes anonymously, retaining reference to the school in parentheses after the quote (GS = General school respondent, AS = Arab school respondent, HS = Haredi school respondent). All of the interviews were conducted in Hebrew and translated into English.

Placement into specific vocational fields

Schools most often place students into a course on the basis of their grades in an entrance exam but they will also consider students' personal preferences: 'We make sure that their entrance exam shows that they have decent math skills to work in this field. On the other hand we don't turn students away because they didn't pass. We sometimes can do a return exam, re-exams.' (GS)

The entrance exams serve as a guide for the school, but there do not appear to be barriers preventing a student from attempting a certain field, if that is what he or she really wants to do: 'There is an entrance examination and an interview with students before entering school. In the interview we ask what classes he prefers, then according to his grades and exam, we try to decide [in which course to place him]. There are a few cases [in which] the school convinces students that they should not choose a [vocational field] course because they won't succeed and they offer another course. Sometimes there are students who insist and then they allow them to experience the first two weeks.' (AS)

More streaming and selection can serve to raise the school image and its goal of attracting strong students: 'I think there is a need for better compliance tests before placement [streaming] into vocational courses. It's okay not to accept every student – so as to create a situation in which students will be better suited for the [vocational] courses and for the school.' (AS)

As elsewhere, there is the matter of supply and demand when it comes to the different courses available for students, where it is frequently the newer courses that have a higher demand: 'There is a connection between the courses that are in higher demand and the courses that are more difficult to get.' (AS)

In order to stream students, it is necessary for the school to have some idea of the students' abilities, which requires an understanding not just of the student's aptitude or motivation, but also prior knowledge: 'Regarding achievements – some of them are very much lacking academically, some have difficulty reading and writing. They are not necessarily with learning disabilities, but they simply failed academically. In most cases [these problems] are accompanied by other [problems] of very low socio-economic status and behavioural problems.' (AS)

The schools also mentioned specific problems in creating a selection and streaming process that would raise the bar on achievement. For the Arab sector this problem is complicated by social exclusion from State institutions: 'It is very difficult to tell students to come to vocational education, because it is less prestigious, it is less enabling. In contrast to this there are [the appealing] industrial schools. There is a problem that the Jewish sector has industrial schools, with the army, etc. All of these options are not open to the Arab sector.' (AS)

The student profile and the placement methods for specific courses are very similar for the General school and the Arab school. In regards to the Haredi school, selection was not as much of an issue as the school is still very small and there are only three vocations to choose from. Grade 9 students experience all three and at the beginning of grade 10 they choose which one they want, with staff advice based on their abilities: '[We] do not have the ability to offer too many courses. [We are] trying to meet the needs of boys. In the first year they have a choice, learn all the trends and then see what works for everyone, which means students can

experiment and choose. Tenth grade students start the in-depth study of the chosen course.' (HS)

Understanding the students' background and helping them with problems

When a student enters the school there is a counselling meeting in which the school tries to gain a broader understanding of the student. They will often consider family background, socio-economic status and learning difficulties. This helps the school to understand the special case of every student and receive better cooperation: 'When they realise that the vocations that we are trying to give them will help them with these problems, they usually will open up with us about the direction that they want to take.' (GS)

As the Haredi school is a boarding school where many students have a background of specific needs, there is close supervision of student progress and behaviour: 'An educator is very involved in everything that students do, he receives a report on their progress and also their behaviour and professional training departments and, when necessary, he is invited to personal conversations. [This involves] trying to understand where the difficulties are, if you can help and also work to instil discipline if necessary.' (HS)

When there are problems, the schools work in coordination with the Welfare Office at the local municipality and the best results are achieved when the school and welfare authority maintain good working relations from a holistic perspective: 'The Welfare office knows us. And they come to us without worries, because they know who to talk to about the student. If they escape from the house, don't arrive at work, they come to us [...], they trust us and they know that we can find solutions for problems, or they can find solutions for us. We have a good relationship with the Welfare.' (GS)

Incorporating students with criminal problems is one of the hardest issues to overcome. The good name of the school helps the students as the school fights to help them when in need: 'When the child comes to the court and he [the judge] hears that the child goes to this school, it works. The legal document that shows his progress at our school moves us forward [to the benefit of the students].' (GS)

The schools do their best to sort out problems with the parents, which isn't always easy: 'Parents are often one of the problems that we deal with – either their parents are not available to come [to appointments with the school] or they do not even know what their children are learning. A very small percentage of the parents come and are interested. The school initiates the contact with the parents, not the other way around, and the response is very low. There are parents who do not want contact with the school.' (AS)

Providing special services

Many of the students need extra help, either of a psychological nature or because of learning disabilities.

This is not surprising when considering the majority of them are dropouts from other schools. The schools try to help with treatment, provide flexibility regarding the exams and small classes, but they still face difficulties: 'If the child needs special psychological treatment, or whatever, we try to get those services for the child.' (GS)

While the school is always there to give us much extra attention to the student as possible, the administrators do not feel that this is the only task of the school: 'The purpose of the place is not only to help those with learning difficulties, but to offer an alternative to the normal religious education. The knowledge that students learn translates into engagement for the future. They will be able to work and be more attractive for employers, and [we] explain this to students. Students understood the concept and, despite the difficulties in finishing their training, persisted and learned.' (HS)

Furthermore, schools face financial difficulties in providing the necessary extra care that these students need: 'This school is not funded as a school for students with learning disabilities, but the students here need a lot of help. These problems are not just with writing and reading, but they are also with understanding. We also have regular Israeli children who can barely read. When we are trying to teach 20 plus students and many of them have learning disabilities and trying to deal with all these problems, we really need two teachers.' (GS)

As the Arab school indicated, their teachers have to deal with additional issues beyond instruction: 'The teachers, instead of teaching, struggle with two problems: They need to maintain discipline and to teach, and the students are also problematic and from a very low background.' (AS)

Sometimes the task that the school completes in dealing with children with many problems can be overwhelming: 'The students come from a very difficult population, there are problems in their homes, problems of large families, the economic situation is difficult, there are very difficult parents, [and] parents who do not know how to educate their children. Sometimes fathers work so much they cannot see the children [and] the mothers need to handle their children by themselves. There is also a connection to the previous school. There are also problems of learning disabilities, the lack of fit in the regular schools – which do not fit the regular [school] systems.' (AS)

DROPOUTS

Dropouts are a tricky subject when discussing MOITL schools. Indeed, the term 'VET dropouts' is a tautological oxymoron, as all VET students attend MOITL schools and all MOITL students are classified as dropouts because they previously dropped out of MoE institutions. As a result, the discussion of dropouts was dealt with according to both the reactive and proactive definitions of the word. In reactive terms, the school is integrating dropouts, motivating them and helping them get back on track with their studies. In proactive terms, the school is dealing with students who are trying to drop out and indulge in delinquent behaviours.

Reactive definitions

The schools are forced to deal with students who are leaving MoE institutions or Yeshivas. The simple fact that the MOITL school is there mainly for dropouts causes a lot of social stigma: 'They have friends in these other schools they came from. They are there. I am here. What does this say about me?' (GS)

The students have been on a downward path for much of their school career and it is difficult to get them on track: 'For core subjects [students] always have a problem because they come with 10 years of failures. Some also come illiterate.' (AS)

The Haredi school deals with a lot of youth who choose between the street and their school: 'In many cases, there was a sense that parents simply 'cast off' the students to the school.' (HS)

The Haredi students suffer from immense social pressure for dropping out of religious studies and it is believed that the community needs to open up to allowing students to pursue alternatives if they must, rather than making them drop out completely from society: 'It is very important for parents to listen to the needs and unique character of their children, to allow more freedom, whether it is military service or learning different [subjects from] traditional orthodox teachings. The understanding is not for everyone and they allow a different option for those who do not like to sit and learn at the Yeshiva. [He] thinks those who can sit and learn all day then should be involved in the Torah. However, [according to him,] about 80% of the Haredi public is not suited to this [Yeshiva life] and other work options should be open to them. He sees a sense of change in the Haredi community – says that most of his family personally, a Haredi family, is out working.' (HS)

The main cause of dropouts are learning difficulties and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), combined with problems at home. Regarding this latter issue, the youth who fail in the Yeshiva face growing estrangement from their parents, as these children fail to follow the ideal of religious study: 'In some cases, this translates into dropping out and may deteriorate [into youth who] roam the streets and similar situations. Some have problems at home, divorced parents, parents who lack good parenting skills and more. Many times children arrive in a very serious condition. They need someone to listen to them as opposed to telling them what to do. This society is closed and there is always a sense of "What will the neighbours think?" This has created a lot of misunderstandings between parents and children, and children spend more and more time on the street and are cut off from their parents.' (HS)

A great deal of criticism was raised against making VET into a purely 'last ditch' educational stream: 'The fact that vocational learning is intended [only] for dropouts is problematic. The children would not understand; they have not succeeded before, so how can you teach them vocational programmes that require a high level of mathematics. The vocational learning paradox is

that there are professional demands for a high level of schooling but most students come with many difficulties. Because we are taking students who have no other choice, we are accepting the weak ones, and there is no possibility to improve the state of the economy. The underlying concept is that vocational education can strengthen industry and then the whole economy. This is the failure.' (AS)

These students, many of whom have a high level of problems, continue to be faced with the rigidity of the school system in terms of obligatory classes and timetables – often the very elements that brought them into the MOITL system in the first place – and the educators express the fear that VET was not rectifying this problem: 'And then we are forcing all of this material on a student who already has problems with requirements. They have to keep up with these hours. If you got rid of just one hour, it would solve so many of the problems that we have.' (GS)

Proactive definitions

Although each of the schools reported that dropouts from the VET school were not a major problem, all three raised the issue. It seems that the dropout rates from MOITL schools are relatively low, which is perhaps not surprising as this is the last resort for most of the students. It seems that the few who do drop out are those who find it extremely difficult to cope. The school itself attempts to be as involved as possible with any personal difficulties in order to assist the students and try to make it easier for them: 'They dropped out because it was difficult, because they got lost in a big class. There aren't many, but we try to fight for every child.' (GS)

While the Arab school indicated that it has less of a problem with dropouts who come to the school from the surrounding areas, it does have a problem with the students received more locally: 'We are committed to taking students from Nazareth and the current situation is that most students arrive without a choice, they are school dropouts from the Ministry of Education (State schools), or schools direct them to us to find a better solution.' (AS)

Financial difficulties at home also account for many of the dropouts in the Arab schools: 'Almost everyone who drops out does so in order to work to help support the family. That is to say, sometimes good students drop out, but they do it because of financial difficulties. A very large percentage of the youth are defined as coming from poor families and they have a desire to bring income home. [The student] understands [his] needs, he identifies, knows that it is important to stay and to study, but sometimes it's a real problem, he needs to eat, he needs to help at home.' (AS)

In the case of the Haredi school, dropouts are considered to be rare due to the high levels of staff support and the sense that there is nowhere else to go. The few students who do drop out are divided into two main groups: the upwardly mobile and those who fall

out of the system completely: 'Some students moved to regular Yeshivas following the new sense of confidence they received. The few who dropped out are those who didn't succeed in dealing with the boundaries the school imposes.' (HS)

Preventing dropout frequently requires an understanding of the student's family situation, as they are often complicated individuals with difficult family backgrounds: 'There was a student who came here and she wanted to drop out. I opened the ID card and I saw that all of her siblings have a different family name. 40% of our students are with a single parent. From the moment that I saw that, I changed my mentality to make sure that this student would stay here.' (GS)

Besides just leaving the VET school, the school is also trying to prevent students from leaving VET apprenticeships and their field of study. Some students find it difficult to maintain the inner-discipline required for a working life and they repeatedly leave their apprenticeship jobs for any number of reasons including being unable to wake up on time or failing to cope with difficulties in the workplace. The school itself tries to solve any issues and find an alternative apprenticeship if needed as part of a broader effort to prevent the student from leaving the VET school, VET apprenticeships and their field of study: 'If there are problems, we are here to help. It is our job to make sure that they are ready. Many students come and say that they aren't ready. There are students who are extremely afraid of the work. They always blame the other party, they never blame themselves, [they think] it is never their fault. You have to convince them or the business to continue the cooperation.' (GS)

The General school was the most candid about discussing dropouts, which they attributed at times to delinquent behaviour by students: 'There are many reasons, some psychological, where they are not getting used to it. There are students who take drugs and have no motivation. These kids don't have a vision of the future. I tell them another three years, otherwise how are you going to improve, but they don't see that far ahead. It is like an eternity. It doesn't always work.' (GS)

Another problem the General school identified is those students who drop out intermittently or try to reintegrate in the middle of the year. This sometimes happens because of difficulties in the students' lives, but they really need to adhere to a fixed study course that includes all the subjects needed for the diploma and real-life work if they are to obtain funding and curricular cohesion. It is very difficult for schools to integrate students in the middle of the year or to deal with students who come and go: 'There are children who are in and out every few months. They just stop coming. They wanted to do it, but then they discover that it is difficult for them and they stop coming. These are problems where the MOITL doesn't help the principal. There are students who drop out, but the MOITL doesn't allow the principal to include more students. The inclusion of students in the middle of the year is very difficult.' (GS)

One way the General School indicated that it deals with dropouts is in helping these students to receive emotional support: '[The] MOITL did give us some extra psychologists, which can really help with dropouts. A lot of students have problems psychologically and this can really help.' (GS)

Besides students dropping out because of family reasons, the Arab school also identified that students drop out less when they are streamed into a more serious course of study. The school feels that putting them on track for matriculation raises the students' expectations: 'I see improvement in the percentage of students who access the final exam at the end of the 12th grade. It also affects dropout rates and achievement, [this] percentage of eligibility.' (AS) In other words, just keeping the students eligible for matriculation opportunities appears to keep them enrolled in school.

While some respondents from the Arab school indicated an urge to increase the enrolment of higher level students, there was also recognition that the school stands behind its current students and struggles to fight dropouts: 'There are debates with [the] MOITL to bring in students with high achievement levels, but, at the school, we think that it is necessary to provide services for the current students – the dropouts, because if we do not take care of them then who will care for them?' (AS)

PATTERNS OF EDUCATION, APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

We identified two main concepts in terms of patterns of education for social inclusion: (i) helping students with apprenticeships; and (ii) providing learning resources (teachers, tools and courses).

Helping students with apprenticeships

Each of the schools has unique ways of finding apprenticeships for its students and helping them integrate their vocational studies with their work experience. The General school has a community worker in charge of finding internship places for the students. The school knows the students need a lot of preparation when it comes to entering the work environment and supports them with producing a CV and accompanying the student to the workplace for the first day, running workshops about the transition to work together with NGOs and former graduates: 'No student ever goes the first day alone. If a student needs us to stay longer in the work, then we will stay. There are a number of models on the values of work and money. They give the students a workshop. It works very well with the students. They have never been in a job interview and they didn't know what to do. We invite all of the students, with the cooperation of the Working and Studying Youth. We take a lot of our former graduates and we bring them.' (GS)

The Haredi school performs all of its training in-house, using its own workshops to create jobs for the students. The fact that the Haredi school is located in a remote rural area makes it impossible to create apprenticeships

at outside companies. Furthermore, it is difficult to find employers to provide apprenticeships for the ultra-orthodox community and there is also a difficulty in getting the ultra-orthodox community to accept apprenticeships with employers who are not ultra-orthodox. It is not clear whether parents would welcome the idea of their children going out to work in a secular environment while they are under school authority: 'It is much more difficult for them as Haredim to go to the factory and ask to be integrated, because the factory does not provide a suitable working environment for them as ultra-orthodox. A private Haredi person can choose for himself whether he is willing to go to work in a workplace that is not religious, but we, as a Yeshiva, cannot create such a combination if it does not meet the requirements that maintain orthodoxy. In other words [we] are thinking of creating a combination of student work, but it has not happened in practice.' (HS)

The Arab school, on the other hand, must deal with economic difficulties and high unemployment rates in the Arab sector, which has grave effects on the ability of the school to arrange apprenticeships: 'There is a problem in finding jobs for apprentices when there is 70% unemployment.' (AS)

The school has community workers who are very active and make the most of the tools available, but there are less jobs here, making it hard to find placements for all the students: 'There is a reservoir of potential employers [...]. Workshops and forums of employers [have been] established in the school, such as the Studying and Working Youth. There are meetings with representatives of the educational system [...]. These tools work, but to a limited level – since if you [as a company] don't have [jobs], you cannot give [jobs]. When business owners do not have the ability to hire, they will not hire. Economic difficulties affect the children, the parents and the workplace. There is a problem of finding employment because of the overall unemployment rate in the Arab sector. There are many students and few employment opportunities.' (AS)

Furthermore, the Arab school mentioned the difficulty of getting official apprenticeships when the labour market is filled with employers who work in the black economy. This makes it harder to find local businesses willing to take on students in an internship: 'The Arab business sector tends to evade taxes and this affects their desire to hire employees. By law, they must not employ a child without a coupon [permission]. [The State] is not ready to send children to jobs that are not legal – they view this as slavery. There is a problem in the labour market as small businesses find it difficult to absorb youth and pay with pay slips. So the relationship is more with larger companies, authorised garages.' (AS)

Despite differences in the macro-level forces affecting each of the schools' apprenticeship programmes, there are also common issues faced by all of the schools, such as the quality of the apprenticeship that ensures the job provides the student with an education that will help progress his or her career: 'It needs to also be good training, not just a waste of time with cleaning jobs and the like, but where they will specialise.' (AS)

Also, the school must ensure that it is sending a competent student into any company, in order not to harm the reputation of VET students and ruin future opportunities for collaboration: 'When the student arrives at the factory they have an advisor. Before they start working, they get training. For the entire year they have a trainer, no matter where they work. They aren't capable of working without this trainer. A student has the ability to work alone, but at the age of 10th grade they aren't ready.' (GS)

An important aspect of the apprenticeship is the socialisation aspect and mentoring by an adult: 'There is no factory that would put a 16 year-old alone in front of a machine. There is the machine and there is the trainer who instructs.' (GS)

In addition to mentoring, the school community worker keeps a close record of the students' progress in the workplace: 'We make phone calls to the employer, make sure that [the student] is coming on time. I keep a list of who we need to find a job [for]. It is important that we show both sides that we are keeping track of them. The student sees that we are watching how they are working.' (GS)

Inevitably, it is impossible to find apprenticeships for all students and the school must develop alternatives, such as programmes within the school or volunteer activities: 'There is a mentoring project that is done every year, this way they find a framework to do activities. It has its own budget. The goal is to provide a framework for those students who did not manage to find employment.' (AS)

Sometimes there are not enough apprenticeships available for all of the students and then the school tries to be creative in producing programmes to enable the students to get the training they need in-house: 'We are examining whether there is an ability to expand the vocation of commercial carpentry.' (HS)

The school uses this vocation to provide apprenticeships to students. In order for these alternative training programmes to work, the school must develop more effective programmes for apprenticeships involving the community: 'I send the hair design students to the senior citizens' home. They cut their hair, give them manicures, etc. They talk with them. Once a month we go there. We go to an ORT programme with Holocaust survivors. We try to bring the Holocaust survivors back to school. Since they were thrown out of their schools [by the Nazis], we are bringing them back.' (GS)

Alternative apprenticeship programmes aim to increase contact with other people from out of school and in so doing, positively affect their socialisation into mainstream society: 'The issue of volunteer work is very big. Getting students to come to read [with handicapped students and senior citizens] in the library. I work with handicapped people who are very intelligent but have difficulties walking or other physical problems.' (GS)

The schools aim to get the students to volunteer in these activities, which serve as a means to both provide vocational training and to develop moral responsibility.

However, there are problems with getting young people who are already less privileged to become outgoing volunteers: 'There is no connection with the community, volunteering comes after the fulfilment of basic needs, when there is the ability to give. They are missing a lot of steps to be able to get to the point where they can think about improving the community and society. It is also a very self-centred age. The school has initiated projects of community involvement, but in my opinion it is not voluntary, because it is a school initiative, not due to the students and there are many objections among students.' (AS)

Furthermore, it is difficult getting the students to engage in apprenticeships when they are trying to invest in school. VET students who have aspirations to invest in their studies or to complete matriculation may feel too pressed to also take on an apprenticeship: 'In the 11th and 12th grades they work three to four days a week. There is a problem. Every year we add hours of studying, on the other hand the ministry says the model must be a model of the student who works and studies. But it has become difficult to do both – because of the workload.' (AS)

The students may not feel that the apprenticeship is worth it for them and therefore they may choose an unsponsored employment: 'The employers pay them the minimum wage and limit the number of hours they can work.' (AS) The difficulty of having the students pursue outside labour is that they may end up working more hours, the jobs may not provide them with a career path and, as a result, they may end up leaving school.

Providing learning resources (teachers, tools and courses)

VET, as opposed to traditional academic courses, requires a number of resources that may be difficult to find. We have already mentioned the problem of teacher procurement, which was cited by respondents at the national level and in all three schools: 'Our problem is getting teachers for vocational skills. What do I do? We have a teacher who wants to retire, I have to tell him that he has to come back, what can we do without him? I expect that unless we have a revolution and if [the] MOITL doesn't take this into their hands, then we will be in a very difficult situation where there are no teachers. There is no institution training teachers to be vocational teachers. There aren't the people. This is an existential difficulty.' (GS)

Schools mentioned this need to train new teachers and to give vocational professionals the opportunity to access teacher training. This would prepare them to come into the school and teach, providing staff that are better able to provide for the students in the workplace: 'The level of the workshops in my opinion is not suited to market conditions, not because they do not have the tools [they are equipped with appropriate equipment], but because the teachers are already adults. We need to train new teachers, who are suited to [teaching for] the existing conditions of the labour market and the technologies required.' (AS)

In order to deal with this lack of teachers, the school must often be creative in bringing in individuals from the community to work with the students. For example, at the General school, the students are volunteering with the elderly and the physically handicapped, and they are also being instructed by them: 'They don't have mental disabilities and they volunteer to help our students.' (GS).

In addition to teachers, the schools also need the equipment to build in-school laboratories and workshops for students. Some of the courses require more expensive equipment and the school must consider how to acquire this within their limited budgets: 'I would like to get a new CNC machine and the machines are very expensive. If I would buy this, it would be too much. So we look for second hand goods and we bought one for 50,000 shekels, and it isn't simple. There is a huge gap between what we see here and what we have in the real world.' (GS)

Schools often feel that they are not given the funding they need for sufficient expansion in terms of laboratories, workshops and the inclusion of more students. They often see a problem in the division of resources by the administration that prevents them from acquiring the tools they need: 'The mayor said that if [the school] was under the management of the Ministry of Education we would already be receiving more funding and would be able to expand the school. That is to say, that this is a major problem – we do not have enough space. In essence though, we do not feel we lack MOITL support because we are an Arab school.' (AS)

While equipment is very important for vocational students, they also need textbooks. Often textbooks in Hebrew and Arabic are simply not available in a given field. At other times, the textbooks available do not cover the correct content: 'There isn't anything that is ready. We have to prepare them. We have to print them. We also prepare these workbooks and materials for other schools. We give the students the books at a minimal cost. If they can't afford these books, because there are students who are pressed, we donate them.' (GS).

As a result of the problems in procuring classroom materials, many VET educators find that they have the additional responsibility of preparing special books for the school. They often mentioned how they would summarise the books used in other schools, adapting them to the level of the current students: 'At the regular Arab high school they study from five different books. We collected the materials necessary for our students and made these into a special book, in order to save the financial cost of buying books. We do this in Arabic, Hebrew and mathematics. We also simplified the materials for weaker students. We give them the materials at a level that they can understand. It is the same text, but in a simplified form, so they can learn the same material [even though] they have different levels of understanding.' (AS)

This need to provide teachers and materials is also related to the need to adapt courses to market and student demands. Sometimes the teachers, equipment, space

or textbooks are not available, but at other times the problem is merely a matter that can be overcome with sufficient administrative abilities to interpret the demands and reform the system: 'There is a problem of adjusting the courses to market demand and also in providing the level of readiness to enter the work force.' (AS)

The vocational schools were formed to provide skills to young people so that they could easily enter the labour market, but also because many students were not interested in the subjects being taught in the General school system: '[We were] looking for ways to engage the children. Once youngsters get bored it is much more difficult to teach them, to deal with them. In addition it allows [us] to increase the sense of competence in these children, most of whom have experienced many failures in the past. [We] show children that they can cultivate self-confidence.' (HS)

The schools are always trying to find innovative ways to engage students who previously weren't engaged in school. This means that the school cannot always focus on market demands. Sometimes, they have to focus on personal development rather than transition into the labour market: 'The main goal of the school now is to restore the children, rebuild them personally. If possible to assist and provide training so that [the experience] is positive.' (HS)

Since the MOITL system caters for many troubled young people, we found that all of the schools highlighted the importance of moral education, teaching the students important life values such as responsibility and caring for others: 'We try to give the student a lot of values, we invest a great deal, that he will learn, that he will progress [...] meetings between Arabs and Jews, etc. It's a good social framework, strengthening the child, trying to teach the value of profession, reinforcing instruction, one on one.' (AS)

While the national advisory board was especially concerned with fitting the schools better to the labour market, the schools highlighted that they do not look solely at market needs, preferring to adhere to certain ideals that dictate the curriculum. At the heart of this perspective lies the philosophical concept that the market alone should not dictate VET policy, but that VET policy should also dictate the market to some extent. As a result, we found schools were of the opinion that they are reforming the system and rectifying injustices in the marketplace by training a new generation in skills with a supply-side economics methodology. This aspect was especially apparent in the Arab school: 'In my opinion – we teach the subjects regardless of what is happening outside [...] We have vocational courses and costs. Every time you open something new, [you] try to see if there is a demand and then continue. I want this to change, but I do not think we have enough resources, enough capacity. I am frustrated about the major economic problems of the world, here in Israel and in the Arab sector.' (AS)

The national advisory board, all of whom were Jewish, reported Arab inclusion being a positive experience,

but we heard different reactions from the Arab school. In their opinion there is a problem with national expectations that Arabs should be directed towards vocational education as this implies that they are not suited for high level jobs: 'Vocational education for the Arab sector in general needs to be treated at the roots. We have always maintained that the Arab sector does not want to learn a vocation.' (AS)

In contrast to the Arab scenario, we found the Haredi school experience lay at the opposite end of the spectrum, with the expectation that these children will not be involved in vocational education. This sector therefore faces the need to create a stronger basis in vocational education, such that the entire society will become more open to vocational labour: 'Children will grow up and it is very difficult for a boy who grows up in Haredi society to go to work if he has never learned how. So the study of vocations is important, even if [the student] will work in something different, knowing he can learn will take him to first base. Students finish with a sense of accomplishment and success, with a real diploma and are better prepared for the future.' (HS)

The most important resource that all of the schools sought to provide was optimism, as each of the schools is dealing with a population able to do better but lacking the experience of success they need to realise that success is possible.

TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO WORK

Graduating from a VET school does not guarantee a job as it would in many European countries where the student can continue working in the company where the apprenticeship took place. On the other hand, most Israeli students must perform compulsory military service and this disrupts the direct transition from school to the labour market. Furthermore, the schools lack a strong reputation in the market, such that many companies would prefer a student with a matriculation certificate, even if that student has no experience in the labour market. We identified two main themes for the transitions to the work place: enabling transitions and providing opportunities.

Enabling transitions

The apprenticeship programmes offered by these schools are perhaps the most direct form of creating transition to work, because they bring the students into a professional environment where they can learn about the responsibilities of employment. One of the main goals of the internship is to show the importance of work. Taking students from a lower socio-economic background and exposing them to a working life seems to improve their later integration into the labour market: 'A lot of them come from poor families and they see work as something that can help them. The student makes 1,000 shekels; he can work with older people who train him. This is a huge advantage of working in industry. There is no student in any other school [who can say this.]' (GS)

Realizing that the market will look more favourably on a student with a matriculation certificate at the end of the day, the schools also attempt to create matriculation opportunities for the students. This was especially apparent in the discussions with the Arab school, where a small but still significant number of students are pursuing matriculation. The teachers try to identify students with potential and open this track for them. This track is seen as a means for upward mobility and is relevant only to small numbers of students: 'The studies for the Bagrut are perceived as giving motivation to good students. They do not go out with only an occupation, but rather they can complete the Bagrut and they can be like students from regular schools. They are proud of this and love the fact that they do the Bagrut and it gives them motivation to succeed. It allows upward mobility to those who study the partial Bagrut. If they succeed and find motivation, it allows them to prepare for full matriculation. It is important to note that those who progress [like this] are a minority.' (AS)

On the other hand, the General School was extremely proud of its vocational diplomas. They pointed to the mismatch between the MoE expectations for students to complete matriculation exams and the low numbers who actually succeed at this. On the other hand, the school praised the vocational diplomas administered by the MOITL and the system of providing a final certificate even for those students who do not succeed in the exam. They questioned the logic of MoE students finishing school without a document: 'We might not give them a vocational degree, but not to give them a final certificate?' (GS).

The vocational diploma itself is viewed as important and worth a great deal of money in the private market, although, at the same time, these are known to be worthless without any real-world experience: 'You get a degree like this, but in order for it to be worth anything, you need experience [...] these degrees are worth a great deal of money. These courses would be [worth a great deal of money] in the private market.' (GS)

The schools try to make the students aware of how valuable their education is and will be, getting them to take their studies more seriously than those students in the mainstream educational tracks who truly do not learn career skills in school.

As far as the Haredi sector is concerned, a change in the mentality of both students and the community is needed before such transitions will be properly supported. While ultra-orthodox society is slowly changing towards the promotion of entrance to the world of work, the school itself tries to make the link with this world and to develop an image of a model orthodox citizen who works: 'A person will rise in the morning, pray as an orthodox Jew does and then go to work.' (HS)

While the local and national boards indicated that some changes are taking place in Haredi society, they were also cautious about implying any real changes within our lifetimes. The Haredi society is built upon the concept of exclusion: '[I] also think the Haredi society is more

extreme in terms of its self-preservation. Therefore, you cannot, for example, set up a framework for training ultra-orthodox Jews in a place of employment situated in the middle of Tel Aviv. The ultra-orthodox will take one look and rush back into the Haredi world.' (HS)

The support of the rabbis is needed to make any changes or exceptions and these religious leaders are dedicated to resisting change in order to preserve the values and customs of the community: 'The relationship is complex: Officially rabbis say 'no' to developing any alternative frameworks and especially frameworks that promote integration in society at large – each framework that isn't a Yeshiva is seen as being one move closer to secularism. On the other hand, no orthodox framework opens without the informal approval of the rabbis, who must provide recommendations. [As a result] there is action, but it is all done under the table.' (HS)

The army is perhaps just as important as school in enabling future transitions except in the Arab school, for Arab enlistment into the army is rare outside the Druze population. At most Jewish schools, army representatives visit the school to encourage recruitment while they also advertise and direct students to vocational service instead of combat service in vocational schools. In the General school about 80% go into the army, a high number considering that most students fall into the low socio-economic background bracket that usually tends to reduce recruitment. The army is actively engaged in conversations with the General school about course development and the enlistment of its students: 'There are people [from the IDF] who call and say that we have two autotronics [mechatronics] classes and they have a large need for people in this field in the army. A kid in an academic programme doesn't have this knowledge and he must study for six months to be ready. Our kid has two years of experience already and this is a major advantage. The student will get encouragement to serve this role [in the army].' (GS).

So the army effectively facilitates the social inclusion of these students, providing them with a way to expand their VET experience with practical work in the army, providing opportunities for either the transition to continued army service or a smoother transition to the labour market. As well as facilitating the transition to work through the creation of VET programmes, many in society see the army facilitating the integration of the Haredi community. Army service is officially required for many jobs and is unofficially required for many more. However, the issue of military service is taboo for the ultra-orthodox whose main concern is its effect on their children and the social contact between sexes. The school is caught between the official policy that they must not openly direct students into the army and the realisation that many students may have to serve their time as dropouts from a Yeshiva: 'Realistically [we] worry about the welfare of each student individually, so [we] are trying to listen and help all students. There is a requirement to enlist for those who don't study in a Yeshiva. And, yes, the percentage of those who do enlist is high. But, officially [we] do not direct students [to the

army]. This is a very complicated issue. How do we help each student at a personal level? [We] work alongside the army in order to try to enable the students to get involved in the vocations that they study and in ways that will be acceptable as Haredim.' (HS)

The school does consider one compromise scenario in the development of special situations in which Haredi students can participate in the army and employment positions that comply with the requirements of their traditions. This method, which was mentioned by both the Arab and Haredi schools, can be neatly described as a form of 'inclusion by exclusion'. In the Haredi school, progress has been made in developing contacts that will provide students with a religiously appropriate environment if they choose to enter the army or workforce: '[I am] also in contact with the army in order that they can be ready for military service professions while maintaining an ultra-orthodox character during their service. [We] hold meetings on the subject and the process is still underway.' (HS)

One improvement seen by the school is the new military units that will cater to only Haredi soldiers: 'This year was the first time that we had a large group in the Nahal Haredi [a military group]. As part of the military track they will have a year-long task and the school staff wants to be in contact with them and assist in directing and finding them a job.' (HS)

The school recognises that a student who completes military service will have a better ability to transfer and be well received in the labour market, showing the experience needed to make good progress: 'I think it will be very good, will give graduates job experience, thus when they will be released from the army they will fit even better in the labour market. Most youth who learn with us do not fit the definition of [religious students] and therefore they will have to study in the military. The army needs craftsmen, electricians, builders and more. [I] want to have a combination that will allow orthodox service conditions, the school will send youth for this, so they can advance their professional internship within the army and [as a result] the job market will be better.' (HS)

After discussing their support for military service, the respondents almost unanimously qualified their statements with the fact that the Haredi community, the army, the families and the rabbis do not support enlistment in the army and therefore the official school policy is to not support enlistment: '[We] are also open and think that the army contributes. There is a problem for parents about military service, which is received negatively. They cannot openly declare support for military service because then no Haredi parent will agree to send his son to [us].' (HS)

Providing opportunities

Vocational schools have to do more than just prepare students for work. They must also create real opportunities for graduates to move forward into the working world. Israeli communities are relatively small and, as a result, the students are limited in the number

of jobs that are available when they finish their studies. The General school proudly discussed the fact that they prepare students for entry into working-life and that they directly assist students by connecting them with others from the community: 'The people who are giving our students work are the same people who were our students in the past.' (GS)

All of the schools are developing a community with a system of networking that enables the school to provide real jobs for its students: 'Professional craftsmen will always find employment. Everyone is industrious, they know what work is, they were well educated, and they got creative education for employment. They will have employment opportunities within the Haredi community.' (HS)

The fact that the schools can use contacts to enable real jobs for the students is an amazing benefit, allowing the school to increase its reputation as a place that can really make a difference. The General school is located in a larger city than the other two and the respondents here talked a great deal about the companies and factories that employ their current students and former graduates. They are very proud about the close contacts that they have established, but they also pointed the finger at some specific institutions that would not provide apprenticeships or jobs for their students. Both the Arab and Haredi schools expressed disappointment at not being able to do more for their students. However, we found that the Haredi school often criticises its own society, while the Arab school places the blame on the Jewish society that oppresses it.

The Haredi society reported a great deal of frustration relating to the lack of community support to help students. Many students find it hard to get a job when they graduate because of the general orthodox society attitude to work: 'It hurts that the Haredi society lacks an employment channel [outlet for finding work]. Such a channel was destroyed following the destruction of orthodox communities in the Holocaust, the world of Torah was almost made extinct and in response [the Haredim] devoted all of their energies to rebuilding the Torah world and now we have created a trend – everyone is going in the direction of general academic studies – Torah study. There may be an ideological debate about it, but in practice this is not feasible.' (HS)

The Haredi school also attributed some blame to mainstream secular society for not enabling any form of social inclusion that would allow them to maintain their Haredi identity. Integration into the labour market would ideally require suitable working environments for the ultra-orthodox: 'It's a problem of creating a progressive work environment that is appropriate for the Haredi community – [I] think this is a national issue. All populations want to feel comfortable and ultra-orthodox society is no different in that sense.' (HS)

Representatives from the Arab school became heated about their lack of opportunity to do more for their students, largely as a result of the economic difficulties of the Arab sector. The school invests a lot of effort into

building social frameworks, trying to help the students on a personal level and easing their transition into the labour market. However, the quality of training supplied and the hard economic situation faced by students contribute to an estimated 70% of graduates working in a profession they did not study. This scenario of students being taught a vocation that they are unable to use stirs up strong feelings about being an excluded minority in Israeli society and the labour market: 'From where does the trouble start – being an oppressed minority, with high unemployment, despair among the population? It's not that anyone is promising students hope for the future; there is a sense of helplessness, hopelessness within the system [the State]. We know that a German boy who studies knows that he will go to work in a large company. Here, an Arab student will have nowhere to go [to progress]; what large company will accept him?' (AS)

Unlike the Jewish sector, where there is a large supply of vocational jobs, such jobs are not available in the Arab sector. Furthermore, Arab students are excluded from the Jewish market: 'A normal [school] system does nothing for the [Arab] students, so then they come here [...]. This is a major problem with the Arab sector; there is not a large number of vocational job opportunities – in factories, etc. The situation is not simple, it affects the [students'] motivation, the prestige of the vocational curriculum and this is a major source of failure.' (AS)

Respondents pointed out that changes in the concept of family have occurred in Arab society and the students can no longer get jobs through family contacts. This means that the school is expected to do more: 'Today society has changed – solidarity has disappeared, the extended family is less important, there is more of an emphasis on the nuclear family. All this affects the economic pressure, the willingness to help in finding jobs [...].' (AS)

However, the Arab school did provide a more positive outlook on the continuation of students in the labour market after their experience in the apprenticeship. By getting the student into the working world through the apprenticeship, the school is able to create a scenario in which the student has an opportunity to keep that job: 'In the 11th grade the child leaves for the labour market, this is the first direct encounter between the student and the labour market. There, in the first market, he comes out as a student employee. He wakes up early, wears a uniform, and enters the adult world – where his behaviour should be appropriate for the job because they do not compromise like they do in school. This encounter with the world of work is the most difficult for students. There, they receive the first indicator of whether the student will succeed or not. If we think that the student will not succeed, then we begin to invest more efforts to help them, calls and more. Some students remain in their workplace after the end of the school year.' (AS)

The school was also very candid about discussing the benefits and problems associated with each vocation. Providing apprenticeship opportunities becomes closely tied to the types of job opportunities the community can provide for the student upon graduation: 'Garages

are convenient because they are located in Nazareth. Air Conditioning is based on seasonal employment, which is also difficult because the work is carried out throughout the country. On the barber course, there was a concern that a number of graduates would open barber shops of their own and therefore there was less cooperation.' (AS)

Many of our interviewees spoke of how the socio-economic status of parents can affect the types of employment pursued by students. The Arab school reported that many of the families are insistent on the child starting work immediately, before finishing school; a situation that causes most of the dropouts. The school also mentioned that many students are under so much pressure to earn money that they are unable to pursue any vocation where they might start out earning less, even if they would end up earning more in the long run: 'This awareness develops in two forms – some realise that if they understand the profession, they can 'save' their family and some think that this work will not change anything, so they are going to work in the profession that will bring them money immediately and not necessarily one related to the profession they are studying.' (AS)

The General and Haredi schools also spoke a great deal about problems with the economic conditions of students' families and the current state of the economy in general, both of which make the transition from school to work even more difficult for their students. Many noticed that there is a bit of a contradiction in the Israeli State, whereby school diplomas are more highly valued for vocational fields than the vocational diplomas provided by the MOITL. One policy recommendation apparently supported by all schools is that greater status should be awarded to the MOITL vocational diplomas, while the army and companies should be encouraged to hire students with such diplomas. Furthermore, there need to be more pathways for state-sponsored apprenticeships as many companies are currently unwilling to invest in students who will leave the job to do their military service. Consequently, the State needs to think of ways to enable VET graduates to continue with their apprenticeship positions.

A.2.2 COMPARISON AT THE EDUCATOR LEVEL

We discovered that the General and Arab schools had a similar student selection and streaming process, whereby the student is subjected to exams and interviews before being allowed to join a course. Students are placed into specific vocational fields dependent upon their perceived capacity to pursue the course, the amount of space available and their level of motivation. Both schools emphasised that it was the student motivation that ultimately shaped the decision. The Haredi school has a different approach, where students are able to try all of the limited range of courses on offer. The Haredi students also start vocational training at a younger age, which allows them time to decide where to specialise. All of the schools emphasise that it is extremely important to know the students' backgrounds, as most of them will have a

problem of some sort that affects their ability to succeed in school. Finally, all of the schools recognised that they receive many students with learning disabilities and behavioural issues that require special services such as smaller class sizes and personal counselling.

We found very similar discussions about dropouts from all three schools. The analysis highlighted how the reactive definition of 'dropouts' shows all MOITL schools are dropout centres that collect the dropouts and try to turn them into competent students. All of our respondent schools reported that their students feel there is a stigma in being relegated to a VET school and, similarly, all of the schools reported tough background stories for their students. Some of the students had even ended up on the streets and all of the schools reported that family problems were often the cause of the students' deterioration. Under the proactive definition of 'dropouts', our respondent schools reported they had no serious problem with students dropout, generally leading on to a candid discussion of the reasons why some students do drop out (going to work, family problems, psychological problems, going back to their old school, delinquency, etc.).

The Haredi made least mention of dropouts, and while they stated that a small number of students are unable to cope with the rules imposed, most of their dropouts move back to the Yeshiva once their achievement has improved. All of the schools stated that their dropout rate was restricted by the fact that they are effectively the end-of-the-line and the students' last resort. They also all mentioned the fact that they offer far better facilities for dealing with problematic students than MoE schools and Yeshivas, which is also why these students do not drop out.

We identified two main patterns of education that promote social inclusion in the form of helping students with apprenticeships and providing learning resources. The dual system of schooling with apprenticeships is a feature of VET that distinguishes it from TVET in Israel. The school is deeply involved in ensuring that the student can find an apprenticeship. All of the schools expressed frustration with the government regulations and lack of assistance in helping the students to get sponsored trainee positions. The Haredi community runs its own in-house programmes, primarily for geographical reasons but also due to its religious policy of secular exclusion, while the Arab and General schools actively market their students to the community. While the schools sometimes criticised the community for not doing more to help the students, they also highly praised them for the many wonderful things they did do for the schools, often qualifying any criticism with a discussion of history and the larger forces of culture, the economy and dysfunctional politics. The broader national scenario has made the procurement of learning resources more difficult for all of the schools and the lack of qualified teachers was frequently emphasised from all angles. Furthermore, the schools have been motivated to develop independent methods for the procurement of learning resources as a result of the lack of resource exchange with the MoE, combined with the complexities of the national and local bureaucracies.

While the economic environment has been hostile for VET students and graduates, the schools identified many openings where the situation could be improved. The educators discussed both the potential fields of employment available in the labour market and those fields where students are having difficulty in getting jobs. The reasons they gave for difficulties ranged from abstract discussions of the social forces that create the reproduction of social capital, to concrete examples of scenarios in which a student has tried and failed to get a job in a specific company. Certain industries were discussed as being less accessible for VET students, as was the case with barber shops for the Arab school, secular factories for the Haredi school and universities for the General school. We distinguished the role of the school into two strands: enabling transitions and providing opportunities. The Arab and General schools discussed how their students were motivated to take VET seriously because it provided them with a small income and they understood its future value. The Haredi school emphasised the close relationships that form as a result of its isolated location as a rural boarding school.

Each of the schools has a slightly different outlook on how to provide VET students with the tools necessary for the labour market. The General school promotes vocational degrees as a valuable resource for future employment and all of the schools would like to see greater status given to vocational degrees. The General school also highlighted the importance of communication with the IDF for course development and the provision of future opportunities for its students. The Haredi school cautiously discussed collaboration and tacit support for the IDF as a way to promote transition, but the school emphasised the restrictions on its support for this element. The Arab school discussed the importance of studying for the Bagrut, while recognizing that it is only suitable for a small percentage of its students.

The schools also have different ways of providing job opportunities and each of the schools discussed the importance of building a network with local and national industries. The Haredi school would like to see the development of a Haredi vocational labour market, expanding its community to provide jobs for Haredi VET students. The General school would like to expand its social partners, stressing how it works with former graduates to build a community. The Arab school was very critical of the community, both its own and the larger Jewish community from which it is excluded. All of the schools discussed the importance of NGOs providing services to help VET students and supply career development for adults in vocational fields. Almost all of the educators called for greater leadership from national policy makers in enabling state sponsored apprenticeships and career programmes for VET students.

A.2.3 COMPARISON AT THE STUDENT LEVEL

An overview of the educator responses produced many common opinions. However, variance at the student level was quite high. Our analysis of the student

responses was composed of five major themes: choice, experience, motivation, school evaluation, and expectations.

We will give a brief summary of these themes and compare the schools on each score.

In all of the schools we surveyed, students are rarely responsible for the choice of VET school as they are primarily dropouts from other schools faced with the choice of either attending the VET school or not attending school at all. As a result, the students may have misinterpreted the question on student choice answering instead on why they feel it is important to study VET. We discovered that in all of the schools, overall, the students believe very strongly that VET schooling will increase their chances of finding a more prestigious job and making more money. However, we found that students in the Haredi school believe more strongly that they are attending VET to learn the skills that will support a career, while the Arab students believe they are there more to meet family expectations. Asking the students to give reasons why they specifically chose a VET school may also have been a difficult task, as most students relegated to VET will simply choose the school closest to their home. As a result, it is most likely that the students simply answered why they either like or don't like their current school. The Haredi school was an exception here, as the students came from distant locations and the Arab school also pointed out that a number of students go out of their way to travel in to the school from the surrounding villages. We found that General school students were likely to say that they chose the school on the basis of its reputation, while the Haredi students chose the school because they liked the courses.

We isolated four components of experience by which to distinguish the schools, these being practical, psychological, training and extra-curricular experiences.

No significant difference was found in the practical component of experience by school, one of only a few insignificant factors in the 'by school' analysis. No significant differences were found either in how much students feel they learn from their courses, whether what they learn will help in a future job, or any of the variables related to practical experience. Most of the students in all of the schools have a favourable opinion about VET and the practical aspects of their schools.

Psychologically, all of the students are broadly more happy than unhappy and the Haredi school is the most happy. The reasons why the psychological experience in this school is more positive appear to arise from the strong community feelings that exist in a boarding school. It is also important to consider that the school is not the only instance influencing the psychological experience of these students, as their relative circumstances at home and elsewhere may be dramatically influencing the degree of happiness they feel at the present school.

The training experience component did not give many significant differences by school, because the Haredi

school does not offer work in outside companies. The General school had fewer students in paid work, but this also appears to be related to the larger number of younger students working in the Arab and Haredi schools.

Finally, the extracurricular component showed that the Haredi school participated more in sports and voluntary work. We attributed these differences partly to the rural boarding school aspect of the Haredi school and to the definition of, and importance, placed on volunteering in this community.

The three schools did not differ significantly in terms of motivation and their drive to succeed. Students in all schools are motivated to do well for the sake of their family, themselves and their future job prospects. The student perception of discrimination did, however, differ by school, as Arab students were more likely to feel discriminated against in every possible way, even though the students in each school overall gave a below average score on all forms of discrimination. Haredi students were the least likely to feel discriminated against in everything but their religion, although Arab students still felt they received far more discrimination on this front. Only discrimination on the basis of disability gave no significant difference, possibly because the question was not relevant to most students.

Student ratings of their schools on quality, social environment and facilities differed significantly except on the issues of teachers' subject knowledge and school buildings. We were surprised to not find significant differences as the students did not rate these variables very highly. Students in the Haredi school gave the highest ratings for quality, as expressed by teaching methods, while students in the Arab school gave the lowest rating for social environment, expressed in terms of student and teacher friendliness. Students in the Haredi school found less need for improvements in classroom equipment, which we believe may simply reflect the lower level of criticism tolerated by the culture of the community rather than any objective view of the facilities offered.

Expectations of both what the student expects to achieve and who they expect to help them in their job search were analysed. The first question was problematic, as it provided an either/or option for working and other plans. It appears many students who plan to work also plan to attend future education, take care of their family and/or perhaps work for a family business. The Haredi school has lower expectations of going on to further education and looking after family. We also investigated expectations for army enlistment in the Jewish schools and discovered that the Haredi school had an identical high rate of 88% planning to enlist.

We found that students in all schools have similar expectations from people (family, friends and teachers) whom they expect will help them in their job search, but different expectations from services (the school, a career centre and an employment agency). However,

the students expressed a similar level of expectations from both people and services overall. Students in the Arab school specifically expressed lower expectations for help from services. We noted that this finding may be related to the greater economic distress, exclusion from the labour market and distrust of State institutions in the Arab population.

A.2.4 COMPARISON BETWEEN NATIONAL, STUDENT, AND EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES

After examining the perspectives of VET actors from all levels, we found that the educators' perspectives showed less variance than those of the students. The national advisory board interviews, teacher survey and local advisory board interviews yielded similar responses about policies and impressions of social inclusion. There was an across the board opinion that VET requires greater resources and respect. Blame was attributed quite evenly, although we did observe that less blame was specifically placed on the MOITL or the VET schools and more on student backgrounds, businesses, the MoE, the Knesset, the economy and social forces that are often beyond their control. The national advisory board perceived a valuing of VET in Arab society that did not appear to be reflected at the school level. Returns from the school stressed many of the same problems discussed by the Jewish schools relating to the lack of prestige of VET. The national advisory board and the Arab school agreed on the need for high-level vocational training programmes to integrate a wider variety of students, a point that was less discussed as a policy measure by the Haredi and General schools. MOITL officials and school principals expressed cautious optimism on integrating higher level students, stating some concerns over potential political moves to cede VET schools to the MoE and pragmatic recognition that the Government and society were unlikely to enable them to receive higher level students.

The school administrations overall appeared to side-step the issue of integrating ethnic groups. The Jewish schools claim that such integration is already present and the idea of using VET schools to promote more active integration was generally shunned. Most educators commented how these schools are already populated by students with special needs and that any further cross-cultural contact experiments would be exceedingly likely to cause instability. Our respondents stated that these students already have many problems and that perhaps this is not an appropriate arena for integration activities. The schools claim they are open to student diversity but the teacher survey indicated that schools are usually not seeking to attract ethnic minorities. In the schools' defence, however, while there was disagreement on how well the school attracts students from other ethnic groups, everyone agreed that equal opportunities were offered to such students.

The results of the student surveys provided us with a unique insight into relevant policies that might be inferred but not apparent to the national and local advisory boards. While the majority of findings were

complimentary between levels, we also spotted certain ideas for important policy developments on social inclusion that were not suggested by the national and local advisory boards.

The national advisory board expressed openness to inclusion of the Arab population in VET, but the Arab school expressed a feeling that its students are excluded from the labour market. This feeling of exclusion was also expressed by the Arab students, who had a higher perception of receiving all forms of discrimination. Their feelings of discrimination were not exceptionally high, but the Arab students also had low expectations of how welcoming their school was and how much help they could expect.

Haredi inclusion was cautiously discussed by national and local advisory boards. However, we found that an extraordinarily large number of Haredi students plan to enlist in the army while they are much less interested in pursuing future studies.

Finally, we noticed that the General students had a higher expectation of various instances helping them to find work (the school, career services and employment agencies) and the broad expectations expressed by people within the Haredi and Arab communities highlight how these two communities have developed internal mechanisms of their own to deal with the issue due to their lack of expectations or trust for State institutions.

The national and local advisory boards also indicated that more needs to be done to expand the capacity of institutions to find employment for VET students, although they gave no specific mention of the development of entities for minority groups.

Many other discoveries were made in which age, gender and social class significantly predicted the opinions given by the students and, while these three schools may exist in relative isolation from one another, students from all schools represented a deviant youth subgroup that has common interests and problems.

ACRONYMS

AS	Arab school (respondent)
ETF	European Training Foundation
GS	General school (respondent)
HS	Haredi school (respondent)
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
ILS	New Israeli sheqel
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOITL	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORT	Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour
SD	Standard deviation
TVET	Technical vocational education and training
USD	US dollar
VET	Vocational education and training

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the
European Union

2014 – 58 pp. – 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN: 978-92-9157-617-3
doi:10.2816/21529

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European Training Foundation
Communication Department
Villa Gualino
Viale Settimio Severo 65
I – 10133 Torino

E info@etf.europa.eu
F +39 011 630 2200
T +39 011 630 2222

