



Israel's Environmental Movement:

Trends, Needs and Potential

June, 2011, Submitted to: The JMG Foundation

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Israel's Environmental Movement: Trends, Needs and Potential

Part 1: Introduction

Israel's environmental community is among the country's most experienced social movements. The movement enjoys a history that spans some sixty years, with the veteran *Society for Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI)* enjoying a status as the largest Israeli nongovernment organization (NGO) by the end of the 1950s. During the past two decades the number of active organizations and green civil society initiatives has rapidly grown, creating a diverse national network which is actively involved in seeking environmental protection, nature preservation and sustainable development.

Environmentalism can be considered among the country's most effective social movements with literally hundreds of successful campaigns that have left natural areas intact, reduced pollution emissions and transformed government policies to become more pro-environmental. This efficacy is the result of talented and conscientious activists, the generous technical laws regarding legal standing in the courts that allow for substantial citizen involvement, effective educational programs, science/policy studies and an increasingly galvanizing local media. It often simply involves tapping the public's awareness and commitment. Thousands of individuals have contributed to the environmental movement's collective success. Resourceful Israeli environmental groups continue to galvanize the Israeli public, reaching out to ethnic groups and people from all walks of life who strive to protect their natural resources and environment.

Notwithstanding an impressive litany of achievements, Israel's environmental movement cannot rest on its laurels. As the country's population continues to burgeon and the economy becomes more privatized, the nature of the national environmental challenges has changed. Continued success remains as critical as ever. And most of Israel's environmental indicators continue to show disturbing and negative trends:

- Groundwater contamination from numerous sources continues, with hundreds of wells decommissioned due to high pollution concentrations;
- The Dead Sea is rapidly disappearing as a result of unsustainable water management policies;
- Epidemiological studies increasingly reveal cancer clusters in urban areas with air pollution particularly acute in cities such as Haifa;
- Experts estimate that only 30% of Israel's unique coral reef in Eilat remains intact;
- Environmental conditions in Israel's Arab communities are far worse than the national average. Sewage infrastructure in particular remains a problem with some 500,000 Israelis, mostly Arab, living without waste treatment infrastructure.

- Exposure to endocrine disruptors appears to be responsible for the 40% drop in male sperm count (and motility) and the increasingly early onset of puberty among Israeli girls.
- Despite national master plans designed to preserve them, the steady degradation of the country's open spaces continues, with the narrow ecological corridors in the center of the country showing special vulnerability to development and sprawl.
- Given present trends, Israel's per capita greenhouse gas emissions, already at high European levels are expected to double to 142 MtCO₂e by 2030.

Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection remains among the most poorly funded and staffed of Israel's government agencies. It cannot succeed on its own. The role that civil society plays in protecting the environment has always been great, and in recent years, its influence has probably reached a peak. Almost from the country's very first days, Israel's environmental NGOs were engaged in a struggle to preserve the country's natural resources, protect its environment and ensure that development was as sustainable as possible. The number of successes is far too great to document in a report of this nature. But the parks and reserves established, species saved, environmental laws and regulations promulgated, hazards enjoined and heightened public awareness— are a testimony to dynamic and effective community of individuals and organizations.

Recognizing the importance of supporting public involvement, several international and Israeli foundations established environmental programs, most notably a consortium of philanthropies operating as the “Green Environmental Fund”. Several other foundations along with individual philanthropists generously support the nongovernment sector's environmental work. In order to ensure that the limited available resources continue to be utilized optimally, and that philanthropic strategies remain effective, updated information is critical. Indeed, recent international evaluations of environmental activities have offered a variety of insights based on a comprehensive picture of which organizations are doing what. (Williams and Cracknell, 2010)

To that end, in the mid-1990s, the CRB Foundation commissioned the first comprehensive study about Israel's environmental movement (Bar-David and Tal, 1996). Based on dozens of interviews, it mapped the active green NGOs in Israel at the time and identified their priority areas of work, recommending programs and investment targets to maximize environmental improvement. In 2001, Orr Karassin, then Director of *Life and Environment* the umbrella group for environmental organizations in Israel, published results of a survey in which the members of the umbrella group answered a detailed questionnaire about their activities and modus operandi.

Since then a decade has elapsed and Israel's environment as well as its environmental community continue to evolve. Intuitively, activists and funders have an impressionist sense of transitions occurring within the environmental community and those areas where needs have changed. A systematic assessment is required to offer reliable and empirically grounded answers to fundamental questions:

- Which environmental organizations are active today?
- Which issues are on their agenda?
- Which issues are not on their agendas – and why?
- What are their organizational characteristics and how do they operate?
- What strategies and tactics do they choose in pursuing their objectives?
- How might they become more effective?

In response to this situation, the *JMG Foundation* commissioned a study of Israel's environmental movement. This document constitutes the final report from this research endeavor providing new data based on an ambitious national survey and fieldwork. It was conducted by a research team at the Institute for Desert Environmental Research based at Ben Gurion University – an interdisciplinary research center with a strong graduate school program in environmental studies. The study was also overseen from its inception by an advisory committee of experts. The present report was reviewed in a notice and comment process by numerous organizations and experts.

The study was divided into two general stages:

Stage 1: Field research and data generation conducted between July and December, 2010 offers a snapshot of Israel's environmental community. A national survey was designed and conducted among some 98 environmental organizations. Over thirty leading experts and environmental leaders also participated in in-depth, semi-structured, interviews. The results of the questionnaires and a synthesis of the expert consultation were compiled in an interim report. It was presented for comments at hearings attended by representatives of environmental groups and reviewed by the study's *advisory committee*. This *final* report, reflects many comments and suggestions that were received in this process about Israel's environmental movement - its activities, priorities, capacity and perspectives, along with recommendations for strategic involvement in Israel's environmental movement.

Stage 2: The second stage took an additional six months and included a detailed analytical/statistical evaluation. It also allowed for the creation of a dynamic database that contains extensive information about the 98 participating organization. The English and Hebrew data base can now service and inform the broader environmental community in Israel and abroad. The second stage was therefore designed to provide accessible information to the philanthropic community about Israel's environmental activities and donor opportunities. Deliverables include in-depth data analysis of the survey results, a web-based "catalogue" of environmental organizations and their work and this final report on the research findings with recommendations to the JMG Foundation.

The study of Israel's environmental community reveals a movement that remains deeply committed to environmental progress and which has become more sophisticated over the years. It enjoys excellent internal organization, with remarkable cooperation and collegiality between highly diverse, active organizations. Most importantly, its actual achievements are numerous and impressive. Interventions are frequently successful and many of the country's natural resources remain intact as a result. Israel's air, water and land are cleaner and people are healthier due to the dedicated work of Israel's environmental community. National awareness is at an all time high.

But there is considerable room for improvement: The environmental movement in Israel suffers from inconsistent and often inadequate funding, absence of professional capacity and skill-sets, lack of strategic, long-term planning and only relatively modest financial support from the Israeli public. Key environmental challenges frequently are not addressed. As funders seek to maximize the return on their investment and as the Israeli public seeks to find out "who's who" and what matters among the myriad (and sometimes bewildering number of) environmental initiatives, this systematic assessment can contribute to more coordinated, strategic and effective decision making.

The report opens with a review of past studies in the field locally and relevant research. It then describes the methodology utilized to generate the data and information presented. The major findings of the study are then presented based on a range of descriptive statistical methods and graphs, offering an analysis of the present condition of Israel's environmental movement. The final section contains recommendations for involvement and support of non-governmental environmental activism and educational work.

Israel's Environmental Movement: Trends, Needs and Potential

Part 2: Literature Review

By most indicators, Israel's environmental movement is the largest social movement in Israel's civil society (Tal, 2006). During the past two decades it has undergone a process of significant evolution and expansion. The transition not only includes new organizations but also new modes of operation, new objectives and new approaches. There have been numerous studies and research initiatives which sought to characterize different aspects of Israel's environmental movement and identify prevailing trends and attitudes. The following section offers a brief review of some of the essential associated literature, most of which remains only in Hebrew form.

In 1996, a study mapping the active environmental organizations was prepared for the CRB Foundation (Bar-David and Tal, 1996). Relying on questionnaires and interviews with environmental leaders, some 43 of the 80 identified green organizations participated in the survey. The study found that most of the active organizations were young (established less than ten years earlier) with half operating as local organizations, typically created to respond to a specific environmental problem. Despite the large number of new organizations, the researchers identified a generally negative trend in many Israel's environmental indicators as a manifestation of low collective effectiveness. Notwithstanding numerous impressive achievements by individual organizations and the extraordinary levels of commitment displayed by numerous volunteers, the researchers were critical of the movement's overall performance levels. The study cited inadequate professional capabilities, chronic shortage in financial resources – especially for local activism – dependence on government funding that sometimes limited actions and a lack of stamina among small, local organizations, who often failed in reaching their stated goals.

Israel's environmental movement in the mid - 1990s was deemed as lacking a long-term strategic orientation and planning processes. In the years before the Freedom of Information Law - 1998, access to environmental data in general, and in real-time in particular, was deemed as a systemic problem that often posed an obstacle to success. several factors for the foundation to consider in prioritizing support, including impact on *public health, ecology and aesthetics, irreversibility, environmental justice factors and ability to engage the public*. Ultimately, the following issues were prioritized for involvement:

- Loss of open spaces
- Water pollution,
- Air pollution, especially from mobile sources.

The study also recommended several factors for the foundation to consider prioritizing support for green initiatives including: potential for success, ability to garner additional funding in the future, ability to attract media and setting valuable precedents for the future. Several strategic dilemmas were identified and recommendations made regarding philanthropic orientation. (supporting initiatives that engaged the public rather than decision makers; preference for activism over research; etc. regional cooperation between groups in Israel rather than national coordination).

In response to the study's findings, the SHELI Fund for local environmental activism was established in 1997, and it continues to provide "small grant" assistance to local organizations. Several foundations joined to form the "Green Environmental Fund" which for over a decade has been based at the CRB Foundation's Jerusalem offices.

In 2000, an additional survey was prepared by Orr Karassin, who served then as Director of *Life and Environment*, the umbrella organization for Israel's environmental groups (Karassin, 2001). The survey's objective was to assess the activities of the organizations and their modus operandi, Some 51 organizations responded from the 100 estimated existing organizations that were polled. The findings were optimistic with regards to the state of the environmental movement which at the time found itself in a period of rapid growth. (The report mentioned the recent expansion of *Life and Environment* from 24 groups in 1995 to 70 organizations five years later, with a board of 24.) The research cited several new organizations, the level of professionalism that was perceived as improving and an enhanced environmental awareness among the Israeli public.

The vast majority of green organizations in the year 2000 were young, and had only been established since 1990. Very few of the groups operated without any budget at all, even as most organizations were considered to be "poor" in terms of available financial resources. Most of the organizations reported that their budgets primarily came from membership fees, with foundations in Israel as the second most significant source of funding and international foundations, the third most common source of financial support. The study did not quantify the relative magnitude of each funding source so it is likely that at that time, membership fees did not bring environmental NGOs the greatest amount of revenues in absolute terms. Organizations were categorized according to their origins: For instance groups that were established to address a local problem, groups addressing national issues as well as several organizations that at the time were pursuing transboundary environmental cooperation with NGOs and activists in Arab countries.

The majority of campaigns by local organizations focused on preservation of open spaces. Transportation issues were the subject of a growing level of concern and involvement. Among the many topics that were identified as largely "unaddressed" by Israeli organizations a decade ago were noise pollution, recycling (with the exception of *Adam Teva V'din*), renewable energy and climate change mitigation.

Several trends among Israeli environmental groups were identified in the 2001 survey that mirrored international dynamics of the period. Among these were:

- the swelling of grassroots organizations across communities in Israel;
- increased professionalism, particularly through the contribution of *Adam Teva V'din* and *SPNI*;
- coalitions between environmental organizations based on geographic location or common objectives;
- cooperation with experts in academia and universities;
- growing demand for representation of environmental groups in government committee decision making; and
- Increased "politization" of environmental issues, primarily in the local sphere, with the first nascent, local green parties achieving modest electoral success.

Other international trends, which were *less* reflected among Israel's environmental organizations at the time included:

- Cooperation with industry;
- Cooperation with international environmental organizations; and
- Intensive involvement in enforcement actions;

Since the 2001 Karassin study, a decade has transpired and no systematic assessment of Israel's environmental organizations has been conducted. But considerable research and analyses of specific issues and topics associated with Israel's environmental movement were prepared, even as most of these have not been formally published.

Gotler (2005) in a masters thesis at Haifa University, looked at the nature of grassroots environmental activities in Israel and their relative contribution to national environmental efforts. Grassroots environmentalism was defined as informal activities that had hitherto gone undocumented. The study was based on organizations that sought support from the SHELI fund between 1997-2001. The SHELI fund provides modest financing to local environmental activist projects and campaigns at a level which does not exceed 20,000 shekels (4,000 pounds sterling). The study asked whether Israel's environmental movement operated as a new social movement in the tradition of Western social movements that emerged as part of the political activism in the 1960s and '70s. Characteristics of such movements include "direct non-violent actions", civil disobedience, etc.

The research found great heterogeneity amongst Israel's grassroots environmental activism, although relatively low levels of involvement in the communities most severely affected by environmental hazards. For instance, the study described Arab involvement as relatively low, with only 15% of the *Sheli Fund* requests, relative to their constituting 19% of Israel's citizens. (Given their relatively lower socio-economic status, one could argue that this level of involvement was actually impressively high.) The number of cooperative "Arab-Jewish" ventures was classified as marginal as were general initiatives involving coalitions. The study also found a precipitous rise in activities during the 1990s – a period during the parallel emergence of new green Israeli NGOs. Roughly half of the activities involved formerly registered non-profit organizations (*amutot*) with the remainder a motley collection of neighborhood activists, informal groups of friends, etc. The nature of the activities conducted was deemed "conventional" in nature, with the geographic periphery of Israel largely unrepresented.

The study reckoned that relative to environmental movements in Europe, the U.S. and Australia, Israel's environmental movement was a moderate one. Its members tend to use conventional tactics in accepted institutional frameworks, with a focus on low-risk / high prospects campaigns at the local level, rather than seeking fundamental social transformation. The researcher concluded that the collective impact of grass-roots activism, contributed little to the creation of a new Israeli social movement.

One particularly interesting case-study about Israel's environmental movement was authored by Meizlish (2005) for the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, documenting the protest against the paving of the Trans-Israel Highway (Highway 6). While there had been legal actions against the highway before 1996, the study considered the formal public protest that took place from 1997-2002, arguably the most high-profile "radical" ecological campaign yet occurring in Israel. The campaign was highly publicized and involved extensive cooperation between organizations as well as myriad activities and tactics. The campaign itself was unsuccessful and the highway was ultimately paved. Yet, numerous lessons were deduced from the detailed description of the players, their motivations and activities.

Several inadequacies in the activities of Israel's environmental movements were identified in the study. First was the late commencement of the campaign – after the highway had already been approved by the National Planning Council and withstood a legal appeal in Israel's Supreme Court. The lack of a coordinating body led to inefficiency and occasional disarray. Moreover, there was no long-term strategy or detailed workplan which informed the protesting individuals and groups and the many spontaneous initiatives were frequently poorly timed and ineffectual. The protests were characterized as frequently unprofessional and the level of inter-organizational cooperation unsatisfactory. Meizlish also highlighted the problematic nature of a campaign where many of its organizers did not believe in the likelihood of their ultimate success.

At the same time, several achievements are thought to have emerged from the Trans-Israel highway campaign. The subject of public transportation received considerable national attention and eventually government funding. Environmental issues became more common in the mainstream media and among the general public. New organizations were formed or strengthened and a trend of improved professionalization can be identified. New forms of coalitions were formed (e.g., between environmentalists and disabled activists

or Arab communities). Several of today's NGO environmental leaders in Israel "came of age" during the campaign. Recently, Professor Dan Rabinowitz and Itay Vardi (2010) published a book about the Highway 6 experience, although it focused more on issues and implications associated with the privatization of infrastructure, and less on the specific tactical lessons that emerged for Israel's environmental movement.

An interesting analysis that framed environmental conflicts in Israel was prepared by Haifa University professors, Deborah Shmueli and Michal Ben Gal (2005). She studied the decision making process of different interest groups and the constituencies that they represented. Questionnaires completed by representatives of different interest groups indicated that most of the groups see themselves as representing a larger public – and the debate is actually over the definition of what constitutes the "public interest". Green organizations perceive themselves as representing the environment and the broader national public. Local municipalities perceive themselves as representing their local citizens and national government institutions. One major distinction is that environmentalists see themselves as representing the interests of future generations. The practical expression of the conflict is the demands of environmental groups to expand the level and scope of public participation in the associated decision making.

The doctoral dissertation of Yona Sosner (2009) offered a very detailed and fascinating look at the campaign to preserve the Pre-Har "Gazelle" Valley in Jerusalem. The campaign was largely initiated during the 1990s by community activists in the near-by low-income Katamon neighborhood in Jerusalem. The "Katamonim" has long been a hotbed for activism, but traditionally with an emphasis on social justice and empowerment of its Sephardic residents. The study considered the ability of the established environmental organizations to cooperate in a campaign with Sephardic neighborhood activists who had less developed environmental expertise and orientation.

Ostensibly, the cooperation led to a successful campaign and ultimately the valley was saved from residential development. Sosner considered whether this partnership can be expanded. The research traces the link between the environmental campaign and the identity of the neighborhood. This allowed for effective protesting by the residents, but later, relatively disappointing involvement in the actual planning process for the valley. As the environmental community seeks to belie its "elitist" Ashkenazi image, the research highlights the potential and limitations of an expanded environmental coalition and partnerships between social and environmental activists.

Another interesting study that assessed the broader agenda of the environmental movement was a masters thesis that explored the ostensible silence of environmental organizations around the construction of the security fence between Israel and the West Bank (Sadeh 2007) The fence (actually in many places a misnomer – as it is a separation wall) was widely considered to be an ecological barrier that fragmented habitats and which might prove disastrous to the area's wildlife. The fence also threatened to negatively affect the lives of many people as well, especially Palestinian communities. The study examined the potential environmental justice arguments that might have been raised, and considered why there was relatively little response to this perceived environmental threat.

The most common explanation was a fear of politicization, followed by the NGOs' concern about potential loss of popularity. Other explanations included the feeling that the issue was already addressed by other social movements, priorities within organizations, structural problems and dependency on government agencies. The study concluded that the environmental movement is in the midst of an identity development process that may ultimately lead to greater intervention on behalf of environmental justice. Yet, when a serious security interest emerged, challenging it on environmental grounds was considered too controversial for significant protest.

In short, Israel's environmental movement has become a sufficiently influential presence to warrant considerable academic assessment. The present study offers a snapshot of the movement as it faces the new challenges of 2011 and beyond.

Israel's Environmental Movement: Trends, Needs and Potential

Part 3: Methods

Stage 1:

The initial phase of the study involved preparation of the national survey. During the summer months of 2010, a list of participating organizations was compiled. All organizations listed as environmental NGOs with the national Registrar of Associations (Rasham HaAmutot) were collected along with other organizations or initiatives which have been identified as environmentally active. The initial list assembled was distributed to activists / experts in the field. Particular attention and assistance was provided by *Life and Environment*, the umbrella organization for Israel's environmental community. It helped to identify numerous environmental groups and meaningful initiatives, and serves as a central and invaluable partner in this study.

The roster of environmental organization was completed at the end of August 2010, even as it remains dynamic and continued to expand as new initiatives and organizational names appeared. It is worth noting that upon examination and discussion with contact people, several of the organizations, which had in the past been vigorous and effectual, proved to no longer be active in any meaningful way. There is unquestionably attrition amongst environmental groups, particularly at the local level.

The following is a list of previously active environmental organizations which were identified as "defunct":

- Econet Israel
- The Israeli Association of Environmental Architects Association
- The Green Wheel
- The Committee to Preserve and Develop Petah Tikva
- The Committee for Public Transportation
- The Committee for Ein Ganim/ Kiryat Motzkin Neighborhood
- Free Zichron for Environmental Quality
- Havatzelet for Environmental Quality
- Living Waters for the Galilee
- The Association for Environmental Education in Tivon
- The Association for Hebron Gardens in Petah Tikva
- The Greens Association
- Green in the Galilee Association

The second phase of stage one was a literature review that perused earlier publications about environmental activism in Israel. The previous survey instruments and results were examined. Past relevant research was located (frequently in the form of unpublished graduate theses) and summarized. Results were summarized and are presented in Part 2 of this report.

The third phase was preparation of a *survey instrument* to collect information directly from environmental organizations about their work and opinions. Due to the variety of opinions received and number of suggested revisions proposed by the advisory committee, this phase took somewhat longer than had been initially anticipated. The initial draft of the questionnaire was prepared by the research team in consultation with JMG Foundation staff members Jon Cracknell and Harriet Williams based on their extensive experience in previous studies internationally (Williams and Cracknell, 2010). The questionnaire also included several questions that appeared in the 1996 and 2001 surveys, in order to allow for more precise tracking of historic changes and trends.

The draft questionnaire was forwarded to the project's advisory committee members. The advisory committee is comprised of organizational leaders, experts and representatives of foundations that support environmental work. It remains engaged during the project's implementation. Table 1 offers a list of its members. The committee convened for an initial meeting in August 2010 and offered extensive suggestions for revisions. Valuable comments were also received from members who were unable to attend.

The extensive modifications and additions resulting from the meeting required a reconvening of the committee in September to review the improved and expanded version of the survey instrument. Prior to the meeting, several pilot runs of the second draft questionnaire were completed by environmental groups to assess its clarity, efficacy and duration. Here again, the survey underwent considerable revision in response to the advisory committee's suggestions.

Table 1 – Environmental Movement Mapping Project: Advisory Committee Members

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|---|
| Naor Yerushalmi, Director, Life and Environment |
| Liora Amitai, Director, Citizens for the Galilee |
| Ran Levy, Yad Hanadiv Foundation |
| Sigal Yaniv, Director, the Green Environment Foundation |
| Keren Halperin-Museri, Staff Attorney, Adam Teva V'din |
| Dr. Arie Rotem, Principal, TRI Rotem Research, the Interdisciplinary College |
| Itay Greenspan, Candidate Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania |
| Dr. Eilon Schwartz, Director, Heschel Center (former chair, Life and Environment) |

The instrument was then reworked for technical improvements in question design to eliminate bias, duplication, etc. This was done in intensive consultation and working meetings with Dr. Arie Rotem, among Israel's leading pollsters and academic experts on survey design and implementation. After a final draft of the survey was approved, via email, by the advisory committee, the questionnaire was converted to a web-based format in order to allow for a more efficient, interactive version to be posted. Access to the questionnaire was possible via direct link to the *TRI Rotem Research* site or via web-site of *Life and Environment*. Achieving internet access required a lengthy period of de-bugging in order to ensure that participating individuals could fill in sections of the survey, and save their answers via the web.

The final questionnaire is comprehensive, and by professional standards is quite long. The survey contains 68 questions, which are divided into 39 web-pages or 15 chapters. Typically, it takes between one and two hours to complete, although this depends on the pace of the responding individual and the institutional complexity of the environmental group reporting.

Respondents and Response rates:

After the completion of the Jewish holiday season (September 2010), the survey was posted on the web and emails sent to all organizations identified in Phase 1. Response rate initially proved sluggish and considerable follow-up was required to both encourage completion and on occasion to fill-in an organization's questionnaire via the telephone. Eventually, some 98 organizations responded to the questionnaire although some did not complete all of the questions. Organizations which filled in basic information about the organizational characteristics were classified as respondents (N=98). A list of these organizations is provided in Table 2.

Table 2 – Selected Survey Respondents: National and Local Organizations

| | |
|---|--|
| Life and Environment | The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel |
| Galilee Society for Health Research and Service | Adam Teva V'din - the Israel Union for Environmental Defense |
| Green Course | Citizens for the Environment in the Galilee |
| The Heschel Center for Environmental Thinking and Leadership | ACHLA - Environment for Sharon Residents |
| Association for Quality of Environment and Life in Petach Tikva | Ecoocean |
| Ecoweek | Ecocinema |
| The Israeli Permaculture Organization | Eretz Carmel |
| A Land without Cigarette Butts | Green Beer Sheva |
| Bustan | Bimkom- Planners for Planning rights |
| Save Adullam | IFLA - Israeli Association of Landscape Architects |
| Israel Society for Ecology and Environmental Quality Sciences | The Association of Environmental Justice in Israel |
| The Committee to Save Palmahim Beach | The Committee to Save the Krayot Beaches |
| Citizens for Haneviim St. | The Green Movement of Haifa |
| ILGBC - Israel Green Building Council | Malraz, Council for the Prevention of Noise and Air Pollution |
| The Council for a Beautiful Israel | Council for Sustainable Development Kfar Saba |
| International Birding and Research Center in Eilat | The Neighborhood Sustainability Center |
| The Green Triangle | Hasviva - the Israeli Union for Preserving the Environment |
| The Israel Green Building Association | The Association to Save the Sasgon Valley |
| The Association for Sustainable Economy | AQLEN - The Association for Quality of Environment and Life |
| The Association for Preserving the Wonders of Nature and Landscape in Kiryat Shmona | Green Forum – SPNI |
| Israeli Forum for Ecological Art | Israel Energy Forum |
| Environmental Forum Midreshet Ben Gurion | The Ashdod Committee for the Conservation of the Environment |
| The Cellular Antenna Forum | Hapardes - The Association for Development of the South Tel Aviv Community |
| The Coalition for Public Health | Green Cell – Acre |
| The Committee of Activists -- Elad | Vertigo Dance Company |
| Adam-Yam (Human - Sea) | Ein-Shemer Ecological Greenhouse |
| Haredim for the Environment | Teva Naki (Clean Nature) |
| Jewish Nature | EcoPeace /Friends of the Earth Middle East |
| Green Now | Yesh Meayin - Eco-Educational Farm |

Table 2 – Selected Survey Respondents: National and Local Organizations (cont.)

| | |
|--|--|
| Israel for Bikes - the Association for Cycling Transportation | Green and Blue |
| LOTEM, Integrated Nature Studies | Link to the Environment |
| A Breath of Air | Samson Riders Bike Club |
| IMMRAC | Open Landscape Institute |
| Arava Institute for Environmental Studies | Movement for Israeli Urbanism (MIU) |
| The Heschel Center for Environmental Thinking and Leadership. | Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information |
| Settling with the Environment | Sustainable Negev |
| Naga - The Association for Environmental Protection of Sakhnin | The Center for a Healthy Environment in the Arava |
| Sviva Israel | Halevav Association |
| Society for the Conservation of The Red Sea Environment | The Green Movement Association |
| Alamal Hatikva Association | The Sayarut Association (“Green Horizons”) |
| The Keshet Association | Amakim Vemerhavim |
| Kurkar Hills Forum | Carmel Public Forum |
| Tzel Hatamar (The Date's Shade) | Zalul |
| Arad-Judean Desert Group | Sustainable Jerusalem Coalition |
| Kayak4all Zebulun | Jewish National Fund -Keren Kayemeth L'Israel |
| Green Rahat | Ramot Favors Environment |
| Israel Healthy Cities Network | Shomera for A Better Environment |
| Shomrei Hagan | Tevel B'Tzedek (“The Earth – in Justice”) |
| Arad Against Phosphate Mine in Sdeh Barir | Transport Today and Tomorrow |
| Eco and Sustainable Tourism Israel | |

The fourth phase of the research involved interviews with some thirty individuals who had been identified as environmental leaders – past and present, opinion makers, commentators or thoughtful individuals with valuable insights about Israel’s environmental community. Interviewees included high profile, present and past leaders of Israel’s environmental movement, government and industry officials, academicians with expertise about Israel’s environmental movement and a past Minister of the Environment. Interviews were semi-structured and usually lasted one to two hours. Basic questions were adapted to the emerging conversation and the particular expertise or experience of the interviewees. The interviews were taped and later transcribed. Interviewees were given the choice of opting for anonymity and on occasion the recorder was turned off so that comments could be made “off the record”. Table 3 contains a list of all individuals who were interviewed in the fourth stage of the research.

Table 3 – Individuals Interviewed During the Study

| |
|---|
| Azaria Alon, Founder, Society for Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) |
| Ahmed Amrani, Rahat Mayor’s Office, Founder of “Green Rahat” |
| Gideon Betzalel, Chair, “Blue and Green” |
| Amit Bracha, Esq. Director, Adam Teva V’din, Israel Union for Environmental Defense |
| Avi Dabush, Coordinator of Environment and Society, SHATIL |
| Professor Tamar Dayan, Tel Aviv University, Outgoing Chair, SPNI |
| Shmuel Gelbhart, Chair, The Greens of Haifa |
| Dr. Basel Ghattas, Tevel Program, Past Director, Galilee Society |

Table 3 – Individuals Interviewed During the Study (cont.)

| |
|---|
| Bilha Givon, Director, Sustainable Negev |
| Keren Halperin-Museri, Esq. Staff Attorney, Adam Teva V'din, Israel Union for Environmental Defense |
| Dr. Micky Haran, Past Director, Israel Ministry of Environmental Defense |
| Tzipi Itzik, Esq. Past director, Adam Teva V'din |
| Dr. Dov Khenin, Chairman Knesset Sub-Committee on Environment and Health |
| Aviv Lavie, Environmental Journalist, Ma'ariv, Channel 2, Galei Tzahal |
| Ran Levy, the Yad HaNadiv Foundation |
| Anat Moseinco, Director of Environmental Responsibility, Maala |
| Ronit Piso, Director, the Coalition for Public Health |
| Nir Papay, Director of the Environment and Nature Preservation Branch, SPNI |
| Orli Ronen, Deputy Director, the Heschel Center |
| Yoav Sagi, Head of the Deshe Institute, and past director and chair, SPNI |
| Yossi Sarid, Past Minister of Environment, Past Minister of Education |
| Alona Shefer Caro, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Environment, past director Life and Environment |
| Dr. Eilon Schwartz, Director, Heschel Center for Environmental Thinking and Leadership |
| Naomi Tsur, Deputy Mayor, Jerusalem, Past Chair, Sustainable Jerusalem |
| Dr. Martin Weyl, Director, The Beracha Foundation |
| Gil Yaacov, Director, Green Course. |
| Sigal Yaniv, Director, the Fund for a Green Environment |
| Naor Yerushalmi, Director, Life and Environment, NGO Umbrella Group |
| Yossi Ziv, Past Director, Ramat Hovav Regional Council |
| Dr. Hussein Tarabeih |
| Rachel Liel, Director of the New Israel Fund, Past Director of Shatil, |
| Tsafir Rinat, Environmental Correspondent, Haaretz newspaper. |
| Prof. Dan Rabinowitz, Tel Aviv University, Greenpeace International Board |

During the months prior to December 2010 an interim report was prepared based on the survey results. The *interim report* was forwarded to *Life and Environment*, the umbrella organization for Israeli environmental NGOs, with over 100 affiliated associations. Subsequently, the report was disseminated to all participating environmental organizations, the philanthropic community and experts. During January and February 2011 it was presented at hearings that were held in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Beer Sheva and Shfaram (Galilee). Some 35 representatives of environmental organizations and foundations participated and provided feedback to the interim report.

With the completion of all data collection, statistical analysis was conducted on the basis of responses from the questionnaires, the interim findings updated. At the same time an internet site was programmed and survey results distilled and uploaded into an, open accessible data base in Hebrew and English. The present final report contains a summary of the primary findings of the research, with a presentation of the results through graphs and tables, relying largely on descriptive statistics. After presenting the key findings, it then offers recommendations regarding the necessary steps for strengthening Israel's environmental movement in the coming years.

The conclusions and the recommendations are suggested by the research team by integrating the results of different stages of the research including the literature review, the in-depth interviews, and the feedback from the hearings across Israel as well as the quantitative results of the survey itself. The web-site containing the responses of the survey was prepared during this period and posted and the report was presented in the Knesset when it celebrated the international day of the environment on June 21, 2011.

Israel's Environmental Movement: Trends, Needs and Potential

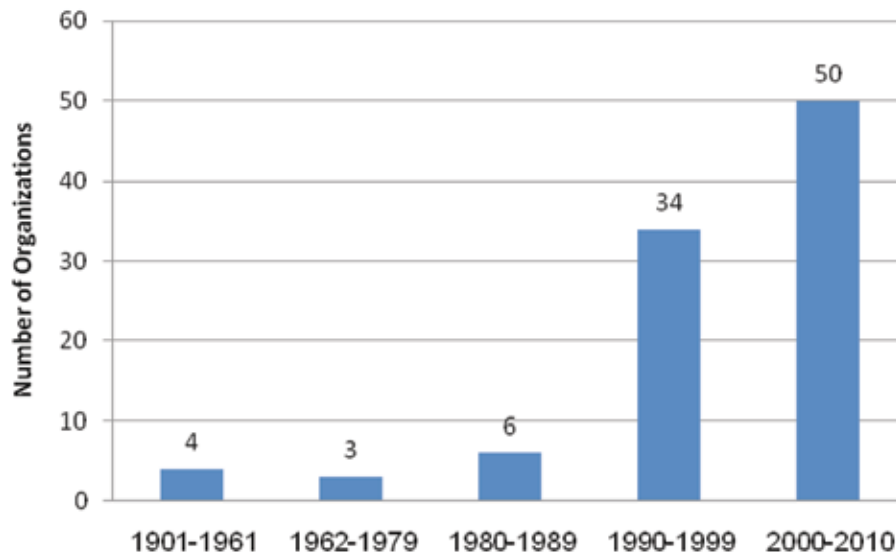
Part 4: Findings

1. Israel's Environmental Movement: Identifying Characteristics

Organizational Age and Duration: Israel's environmental movement remains a dynamic community with new initiatives and organizations continually sprouting and adding to a diverse mosaic. While presumably many NGOs that addressed environmental issues established between 1948-1990 “came and went”, the common perception of a surge in environmentalism and organizations beginning in the 1990s is confirmed by the study.

Figure 1 indicates that prior to the 1990s there were only a minimal number of environmental organizations operating throughout the country. Indeed, in 1990, *Life and Environment* the green umbrella group had less than 25 members, most of which were organizations whose primary objectives had little to do with the environment (e.g., *Rotary*, *the Hadassah Medical Organization*, etc.). Since that time, growth appears to be steady. Today, *Life and Environment* boasts over 100 affiliated organizations. While intuitively, several experts interviewed expressed a sense that the 1990s represented a peak in the environmental movement's development – with a steady decline in the decade to follow – Figure 1 suggests that the opposite may be true. Karassin's 2001 study clearly recorded the growth in new NGOs. That trend continues. Over 50% of Israeli environmental groups active today were established during the past decade.

Figure 1 – Year Organization Established (n = 97)



Most environmental groups in Israel have received official recognition of their independent legal status. Accordingly, a majority of responding organizations are registered in the Ministry of Interior as public organizations or “Amutah” (82%). Almost all of these also enjoy formal not-for-profit and tax-exempt status with tax authorities.

It is generally thought that most Israeli environmental organizations are born out of a response to a particular crisis. For example, local environmental mythology posits that the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel was created in order to combat the impending draining of the Huleh Lake. In fact, the massive land reclamation of these wetlands had long since been approved and begun by the time the organization had its initial meeting at the Oranim College in 1954. Rather, its two founders, Azaria Alon and Amotz Zahavi explain that it was the *failure* to effectively save the Huleh that convinced them that a systematic, proactive institutional initiative was necessary.

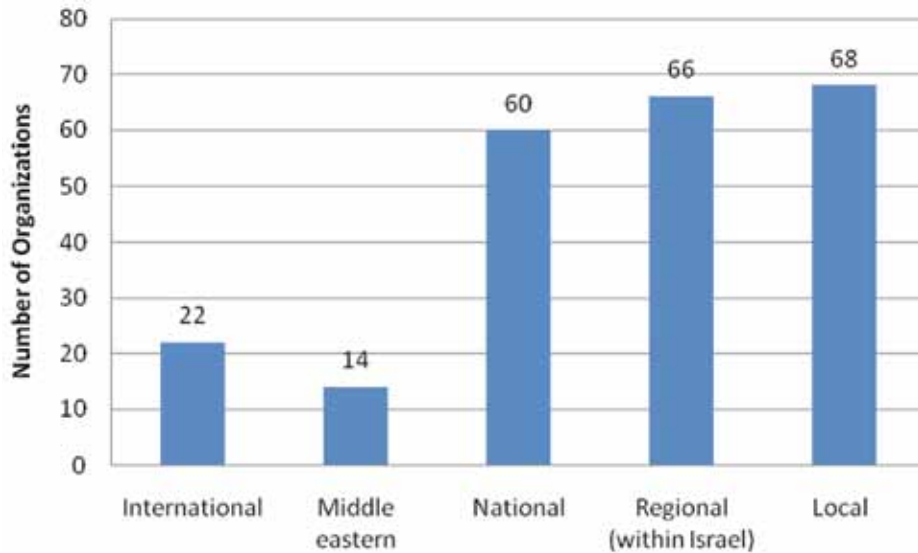
These dynamics are reflected among Israel’s environmental community today as well. Organizations were asked to characterize circumstances surrounding their establishment. Some 45% of the organizations described them as “reactive” – a response to a specific problem. A corresponding majority of 55% perceive the founding of their organization as proactive in nature, essentially a collective effort to promote a particular issue or create an institutional platform for environmental activities. Regarding the associated human element, anthropologist Margaret Mead’s adage with regards to civil society appears to be universal: *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* Respondents confirmed that 95% of Israel’s environmental organizations ascribe their organization’s establishment to the efforts of a single individual or group of individuals.

The fact that there are only 50% more “local” environmental groups operating in Israel than groups with a “national” orientation might initially be considered surprising. Surely there should be only a few national organizations and dozens of grassroots initiatives. Yet, the broad, macro perspective of a full 40% of responding organizations is a reflection of the country’s modest dimensions and the well recognized dynamic that in Israel – the “micro” is often tantamount to the “macro”. Hence the steady disappearance of Eilat’s coral reef is a national problem just as Jerusalem NGO’s effort to prevent the expansion of the city westward into the historic Judean hills became a national issue.

When asked about their geographic focus of operations, 53% of the groups described themselves as having either a national or a regional constituency, with only 40% of respondents defining themselves as “local”. (Figure 2 shows that only 5% of the organizations defined their orientation as international, and even fewer

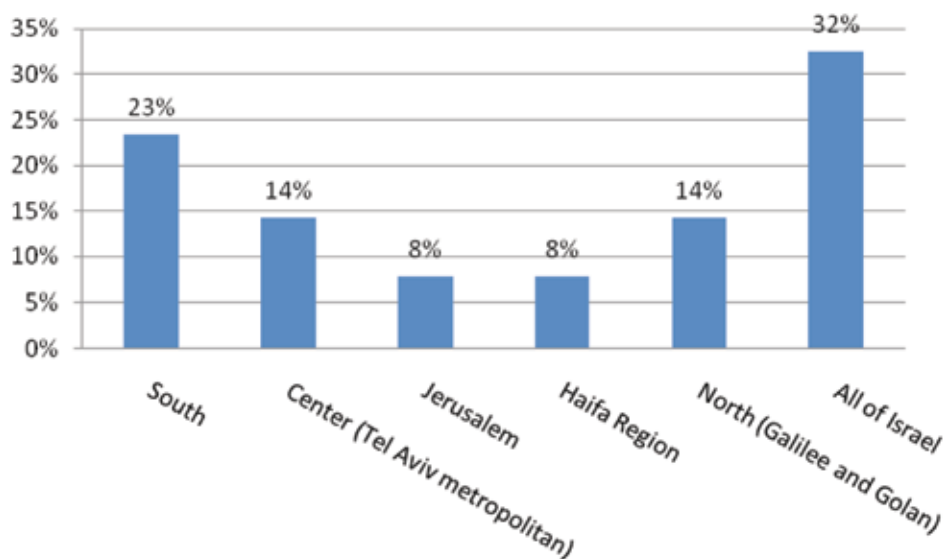
organizations, such as *Friends of the Earth Middle East*, the *Galilee Society*, and the *Arava Institute* still have a regional, Middle Eastern agenda).

Figure 2 – Geographic Focus of Operation (n=83)



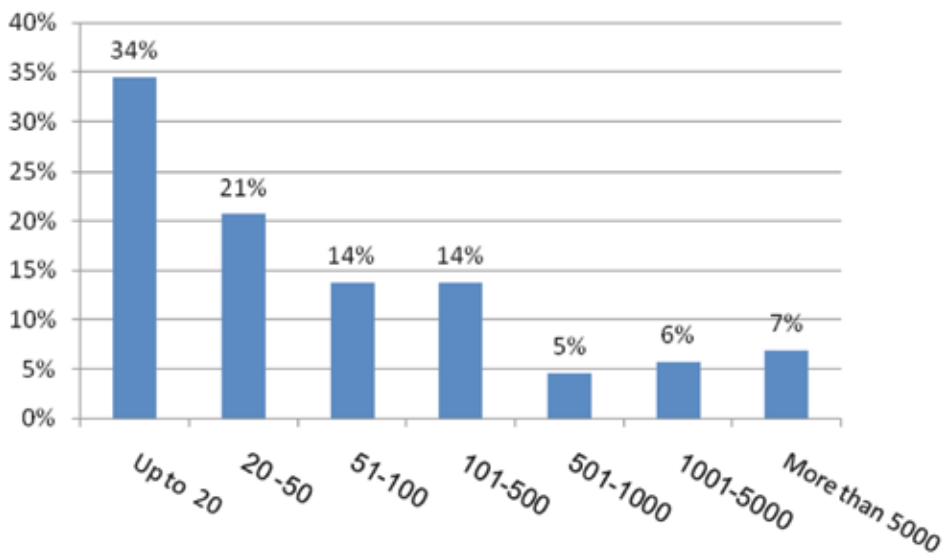
Environmental organizations today are dispersed throughout the country (see figure 3). The Galilee has always been considered a “hotbed” of environmental activism (Benstein, 2004). But according to results reflecting the end of 2010, the south of Israel is now home to a surprisingly high number of active groups (22% of the organizations surveyed). The relatively low number of organizations who identified themselves as operating primarily in the center of the country might be explained by the large fraction of responding organizations that operate at the national level, most of whom are headquartered in the center of Israel and Tel Aviv in particular. In any case, precise office location and geographic area of operation are not always perfectly correlated.

Figure 3 – Geographical Location of Environmental NGOs (n=83)



If we are to characterize them according to active members, it would seem that most of the environmental organizations in Israel are small. Only seven percent report 5,000 activists or more, while another six percent have between 1,000 and 5,000 affiliates. More than half of the green NGOs in Israel report membership of 50 or less. Figure 4 presents the distribution in this context.

Figure 4 – Division of Organization according to Number of Active Affiliates (n=87)



2. Operational Orientation

Israel's environmental movement has undergone a specialization process with many new organizational initiatives filling particular niches. For example, during the 1990s, two organizations were active in addressing the issue of sustainable transportation issues. At present, *Transportation Today and Tomorrow* remains active and is joined by *Israel For Bicycles*, which coordinates the growing national network of cyclists and cycling advocates. Even so, there are many people who believe that a far greater level of involvement is needed by environmental advocates on the transportation issue. Energy and climate change mitigation as mentioned were hardly spoken of a decade ago. Today national organizations all have initiatives in the area and some 27 representatives of the Israeli NGO community travelled to Copenhagen to take part in the 15th Conference of the Parties at the UN Framework Convention Climate Change. One impressive recent institutional development in the NGO community is the establishment of the Israel Energy Forum headed by former student leader Yael Cohen Paran. The forum has established an ongoing dialogue with the Israel Electric Company and the Ministry of Infrastructure as it pursues its agenda of a sustainable energy policy for Israel.

The ability of a few organizations to maintain working relationships with environmentalists and NGOs in Arab countries is remarkable, given the generally toxic political atmosphere prevailing between Israel and its neighbors during the past decade. *Friends of the Earth Middle East*, for example, has succeeded in creating cooperative activist initiatives to save water resources and create a Jordan River "Peace Park". Just a small sample of the new generation of other specialty green organizations includes groups that focus on public health and environment, ecological economics, environmental planning, grey water, community gardens and organic agriculture. This of course does not include a whole pack of animal rights organizations, which are not part of the present study.

Despite the diversity, there are several topics which are addressed by myriad environmental organizations. Table 4 and Figure 5 offer contrasting aggregation of the survey results about the substantive orientation of environmental groups. Table 4 suggests that subjects such as environmental planning, open space preservation, public health, nature preservation/ biodiversity, sustainability, participatory democracy are particularly popular areas of work shared by numerous groups. Air pollution, hazardous substances are less popular. At the same time, it appears that there are topics such as desertification, overpopulation, erosion and

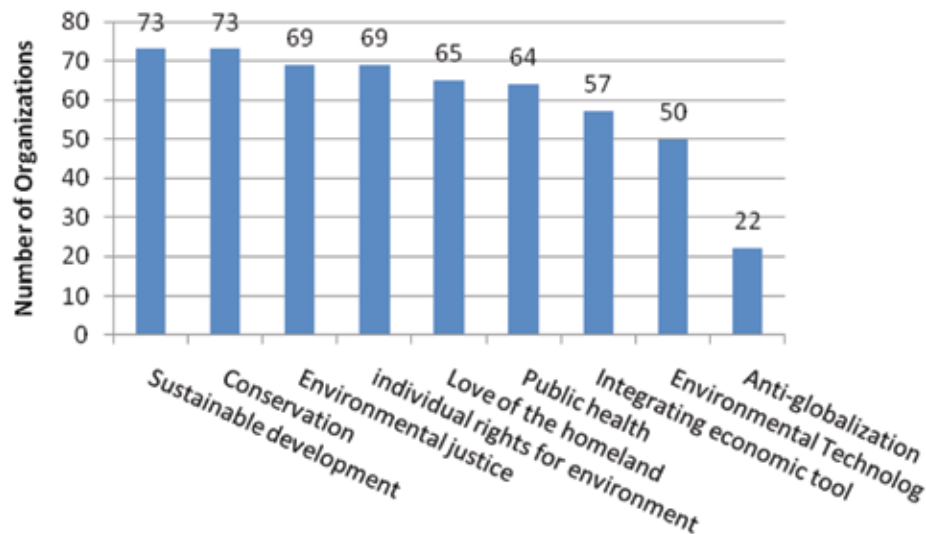
free trade which remain virtually unaddressed by Israel's environment movement, even as there is recognition that some of them should be. For example, 55% of respondents felt that environmental groups need to confront Israel's demographic/population dynamics. In interviews, other areas, such as biodiversity or the negative environmental consequences of factory farms were singled out as unaddressed.

Table 4 – Most and Least Popular Areas of Environmental Activity

| > 20% of organizations report activities | < 5% of organizations report activities |
|--|---|
| Sustainability (46) | Desertification (3) |
| Environmental Planning (44) | Overpopulation (3) |
| Participatory Democracy (36) | Erosion (3) |
| Open Spaces (34) | Fair Trade (2) |
| Nature Preservation/Biodiversity (34) | |
| Environmental Justice (29) | |
| Urban Sustainability (29) | |
| Air Quality (24) | |
| Hazardous Materials (22) | |

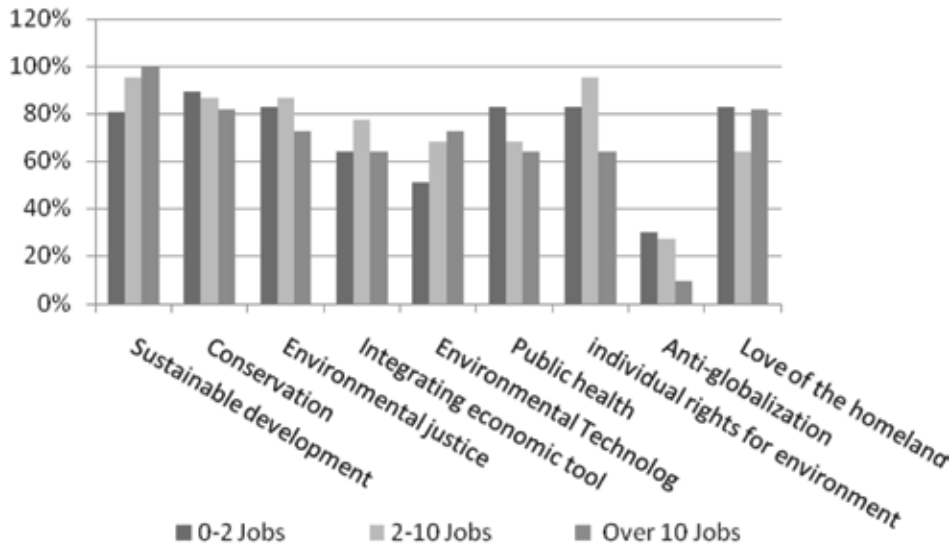
The following graphs depict an “ideological map” of Israel's environmental movement. While there is great variety in degree and in nuances, ultimately the orientation appears to be generally homogeneous with much more uniting NGO ideological perspectives than dividing them.

Figure 5 – Number of Organizations Who Expressed Identification with an Environmental Issue to a Great Extent (4 and greater out of 5) (n=80)



In light of the divisions and occasional tensions between large national and smaller “grass roots” organizations abroad regarding tactical and substantive matters, it is valuable to assess whether any conspicuous disparities exist in the outlooks of different sized organizations in Israel. As figure 6 indicates, in fact, with the exception of antipathy to “globalization trends” (smaller organizations appear far more passionate in their objections than do national organizations) it would seem that no meaningful differences in perspectives are discernible.

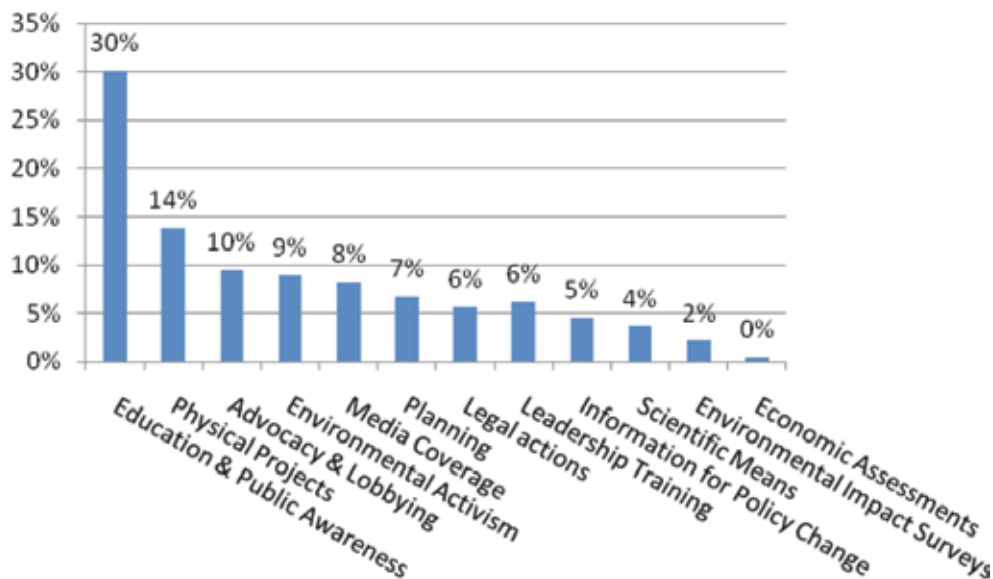
Figure 6 - Number of Organization according to size - who Expressed Identification with Issues to a Great Extent (4 and greater out of 5) (n=80)



Alongside substantive organizational priorities are operational orientations. What kinds of things do environmental organizations do in order attain their substantive objectives? Figure 7 shows that there are several areas which appear common to all organizations: with education, physical projects and advocacy leading the way. The high percentage of groups whose work includes implementing “physical projects” is an unanticipated finding of the study. This might reflect the growing recognition that people, and especially children learn by doing. Place based “adopt-a-site” initiatives have become popular in Israel as have community gardens. They can provide a wonderful vehicle for establishing an organic connection between Israelis and the land in an increasingly urban reality.

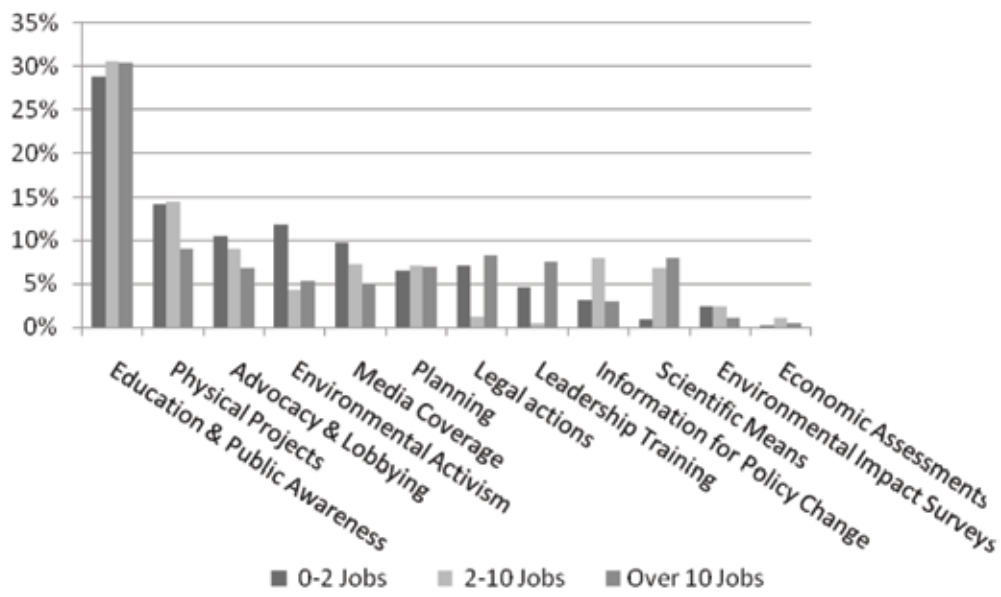
Notwithstanding, it would seem that environmental education constitutes the most common type of operational activity among the active environmental NGOs in Israel. Figure number 7 shows that 30% of the organizations see this as their primary area of work.

Figure 7 – Percent of Organizations Reporting Substantial Work in a Particular Type of Activity



It is well to ask: “is this trend have influenced by the size of an organization?” In other words, perhaps smaller, local organizations have a natural inclination to be involved in environmental education while national groups, who harbor greater capabilities and ambitions, are naturally active in broader spheres. Empirical analysis, however, suggests that the answer to this question is “no”. Figure 8 indicates that the different sized groups are divided more or less evenly across the range of activity types considered. *Education* constitutes the most common form of activity for all types of green Israeli NGOs. At the same time, large national groups do tend to be more engaged than their smaller colleagues in activities that were characterized as “lobbying” and “environmental activism”.

Figure 8 – Percent of Organizations Reporting Substantial Work in a Particular Type of Activity (according to organizational size)



A closer look confirms that there remains only minimal activity in the collection of information, risk assessment and economic analysis amongst the various groups—without any clear effect due to organizational size. Collectively the results suggest that at the bottom of the agenda are activities associated with generation of new information or collection of data to support a campaign or principle. No organization dedicates more than 10% of its resources to research or to scientific monitoring. Only one group invests its resources in risk analysis at all. Economic analyses are simply not part of the modus operandi among environmental organizations in Israel today.

Do environmental organizations have the necessary savvy to influence political decisions? It is worth mentioning that during the course of the public hearings, opinions were expressed suggesting that environmental organizations do not make sufficient efforts to influence the platforms of sundry political parties or to support the candidacy of environmentally committed politicians in primaries, as is often done abroad. There is little doubt that since the 1960s, formal and informal parliamentary activities are common among public interest groups in Israel, with green organizations active at different levels of intensity in lobbying law makers and senior government officials. This is manifested in the many laws proposed by environmental groups, the constant injection of environmental issues into the political discourse through Knesset members and the press along with the presence and steady work of professional lobbyists. A few of the national organizations hire a permanent staff member to interface with Knesset members or influence government agencies.

Nonetheless, the high number of organizations who reported lobbying work exceeded the initial expectations of the research team. There surely is more environmental lobbying today than existed a decade ago. At the same time, in the past few years there has been a slight drop in the actual number of environmental staff lobbyists working in the Knesset. In interviews, some organizations complained that the lobbyists who do represent the environmental movement in the Knesset do not succeed in offering meaningful services to the unrepresented “rank and file” NGOs, apparently because they are simply too busy. It is also worth noting that there are few systematic efforts to influence the positions of mayors and city councils. Lobbying is an area where the comfort level of foundations tends to be very narrow. Yet, it is definitely one of the most critical areas of intervention by civil society. The steady rise in the presence of green political parties, especially at the local, municipal level creates a new dynamic whose implications are still unclear.

Perhaps the most common operational characteristic found amongst today’s environmental organizations in Israel is their ability to cooperate with each other. Two thirds of the groups surveyed (61%) reported that they are engaged in ad hoc or formal cooperative coalitions to promote their substantive objectives. Permanent geographical coalitions among green NGOs began in the late 1990s with the *Sustainable Jerusalem* initiative, that has since been coordinated by the Jerusalem branch of the *Society for Protection of Nature for Israel*. Others would soon follow – as would a plethora of subject-specific organizational coalitions.

Today there are 12 independent organizations that define themselves essentially as “coalitions”. These include: *Green Beer Sheva, the Association for Saving Sassgon Valley, Life and Environment, Zalul, The Coalition for Public Health, The Council for Green Building, The El Amal – HaTikva Association, the Desha Institute, For Adulam, The Network of Healthy Cities, The Green Forum, the SPNI Tel Aviv Community, and the Sustainable Jerusalem Coalition*. But this appears to just the “tip of the iceberg”. In response to a survey question, environmental groups listed some 43 additional existing ad hoc coalitions!

Most recently in the last category: *The Coalition to Combat the Reform in the Planning Law* includes groups with environmental and social agendas working in concert to ensure that the new government-sponsored amendments do not eliminate effective public participation in physical planning. This, of course, is above and beyond the formal membership of roughly 120 organizations to *Life and Environment*, which for thirty-five years has served as an umbrella organization and for fifteen years, an active force for coordinating Israel’s growing green community. Table 5 depicts the magnitude of the coalition phenomenon:

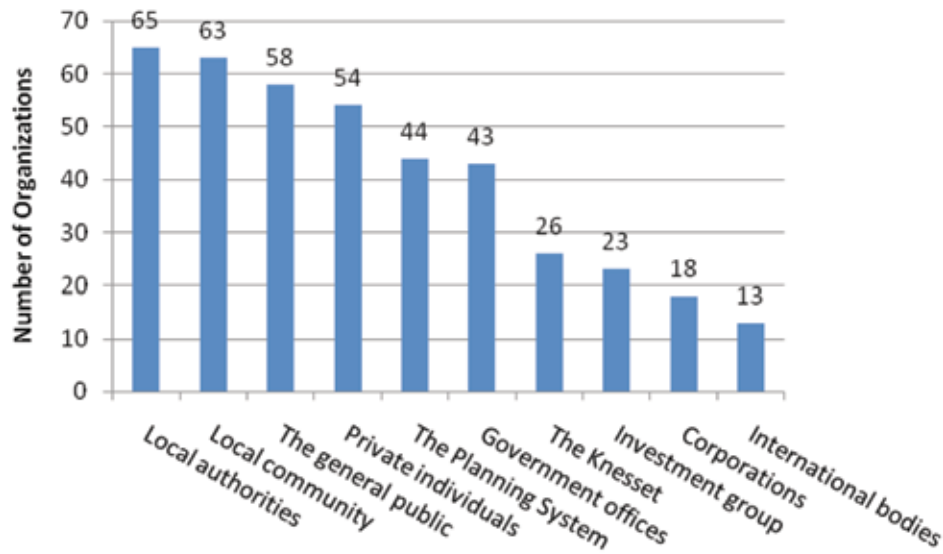
Table 5 – Organizations that are members of coalitions (n=90)

| | Members in 1 coalition | Members in 2 coalitions | Members in 3 coalitions | Members in 4 coalitions | Total Reporting Coalition Membership |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Number of organizations | 24 | 12 | 13 | 6 | 55 |
| Percentage | 27% | 13% | 14% | 7% | 57% |

Israel’s environmental organizations are diverse and not surprisingly, they target a broad range of Israel’s population. There is an organization that focuses on engaging Israel’s growing “ultra-orthodox” populations. Several groups have emerged in Israel’s Arab sector. These join the long-standing unit that focuses on Arab education in the *Society for Protection of Nature in Israel*. Other organizations, like *Citizens for the Galilee Environment* and *Link for the Environment* have been designed to ensure joint Jewish-Arab management.

Figure 9 shows the categories of “target groups” identified by the responding organizations as their intended audience. Respondents were asked to list any and all groups to whom their work was directed. Only about half of Israel’s green NGOs perceive their work as focused on a discrete local population with 74% reporting “the general public” as their target constituency. About a quarter of the organizations focus on influencing the government. Given the high level of work reported in the area of environmental planning, it is surprising that only 56% report targeting Israel’s planning commissions in their work.

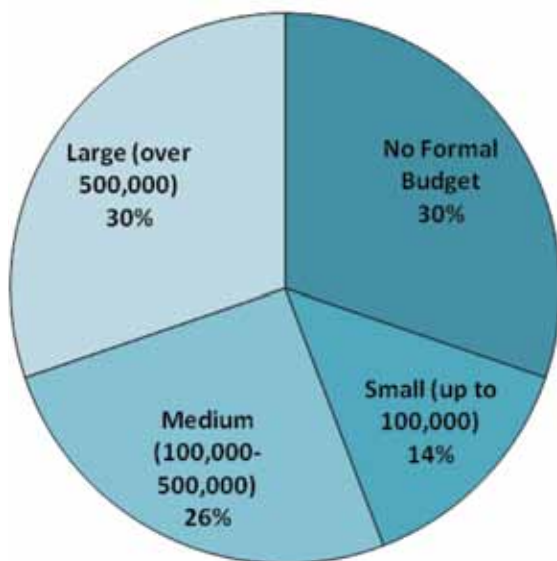
Figure 9 – Number of Green Organizations Targeting Different Audiences



3. Budget and Finances

In past surveys, Israeli environmental organizations have always highlighted economic resources as the greatest obstacle to their effective operation. What financial resources are available to Israeli environmental organizations in 2011? Figure 10 shows an interesting distribution of annual income among Israel’s environmental community. Almost a third of the organizations reported no formal budget at all. Indeed, Israel’s non-profit registry encourages non-budget, “voluntary” organizations by greatly simplifying reporting process for groups that are financially non-active. Yet, on the other end, over half of responding organizations report budgets of over 100,000 NIS – implying sufficient resources for the hiring of at least part-time staff as well as renting offices. While JNF’s prodigious land holdings make it an anomalous “outlier” in any analysis, the large environmental groups report substantial budgets, with a full 10% of respondents (all national groups) reporting budgets that approach the 1 million dollar range.

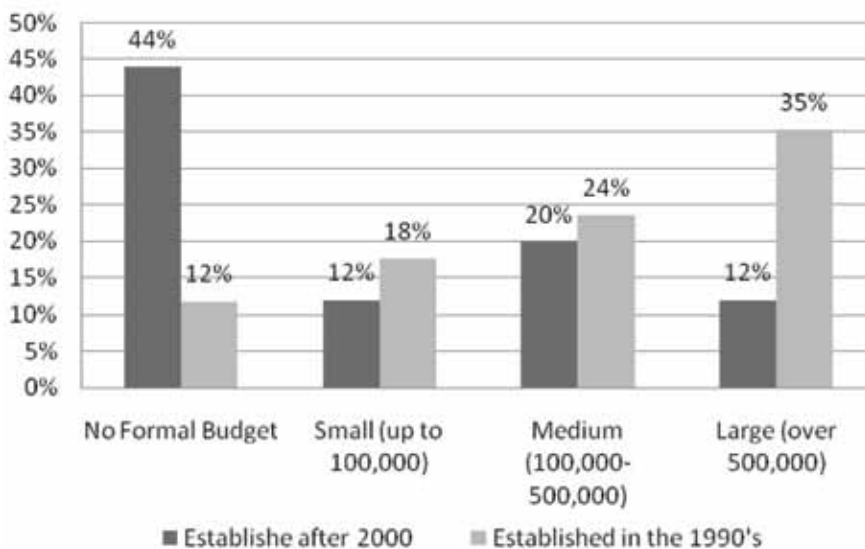
Figure 10 –Annual Income Among Israeli Environmental Groups (in NIS) (n=97)



The next question of interest is “where this money comes from?” The sources of funding for environmental groups are presented in Figure 11. They suggest a continuing of the trend identified in the Karassin survey, conducted a decade ago. Foundation support has come to dominate the budgets of Israeli environmental organizations, with the majority of these funds made available in the form of project-specific grants.

An interesting phenomenon involves the link between the size of an organization’s budget and organizational age. It appears that in Israel’s environmental movement, seniority is manifested in monetary terms. Figure 11 presents the budgets of organizations that have been established during the past decade (2000-2011) in comparison to organizations that were established during the previous decade (1990-1999). Roughly half of the new organizations operate without any formal budget at all, and only a tenth reach the budget category of 500,000 shekels and up. By way of contrast, older organizations show significantly more solid and higher budgetary levels: More than a third surpass an operational budget of 500,000 shekels- some three times as many as the newer generation of green NGOs in Israel.

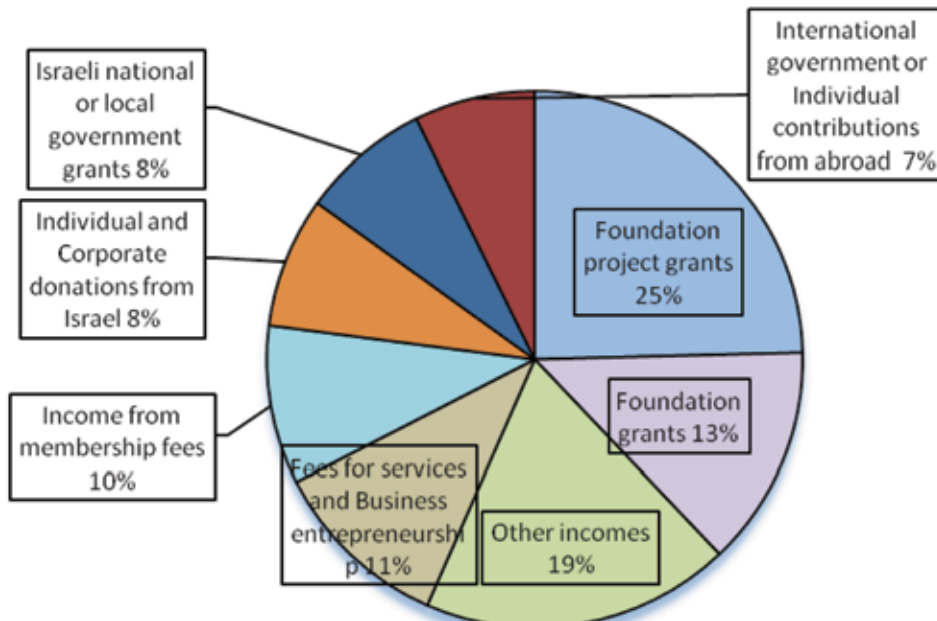
Figure 11 – Comparison of Annual Income (in NIS) Between Groups founded in the 1990s and those after 2000 (n=97)



An explanation of this phenomenon might be found in the fundraising acumen that was developed among older organizations or perhaps even a natural selection process, where the more relevant and effective organizations survived, became stronger and more attractive to donors of different types. Whatever the explanation, it is well to take these findings into account when admiring the impressive proliferation of new environmental groups within the past decade. In other words, even if the majority of environmental groups are a decade old or less – the lion’s share of the human and financial resources for environmental work are directed to organizations that have been in existence *at least* since the 1990s. In short, seniority appears to matter.

Because many of the major international foundations supporting the environment have Israeli offices and representatives, the actual geographic origins of their funds is often unclear to recipients. This makes it difficult for organizations to distinguish between foreign and locally generated foundation support. Yet, the findings unquestionably suggest that Israel’s environmental community has become more dependent during the past decade than it was previously on international support, particularly from Jewish philanthropy. As the vast majority of the foundations cited by respondents distribute money that was not earned by Israeli citizens, it would appear that slightly less than half of the financial resources available to Israeli environmental groups come from foreign sources.

Figure 12 – Sources of Income, Environmental NGOs in Israel (n=76)



One of the important questions in crafting a financial strategy for NGOs and funders alike is the influence organizational size has on an organization's economic profile. In other words: "Are small organizations more dependent on a particular source of funding, making them more vulnerable to changes in that source group's (the foundation community, government funding, etc.) circumstances? Figures 13 -15 present the division of small versus large organizations in the contexts of funding sources.

Figure 13 – Sources of Income, "small NGOs" (0-2 positions) (n=44)

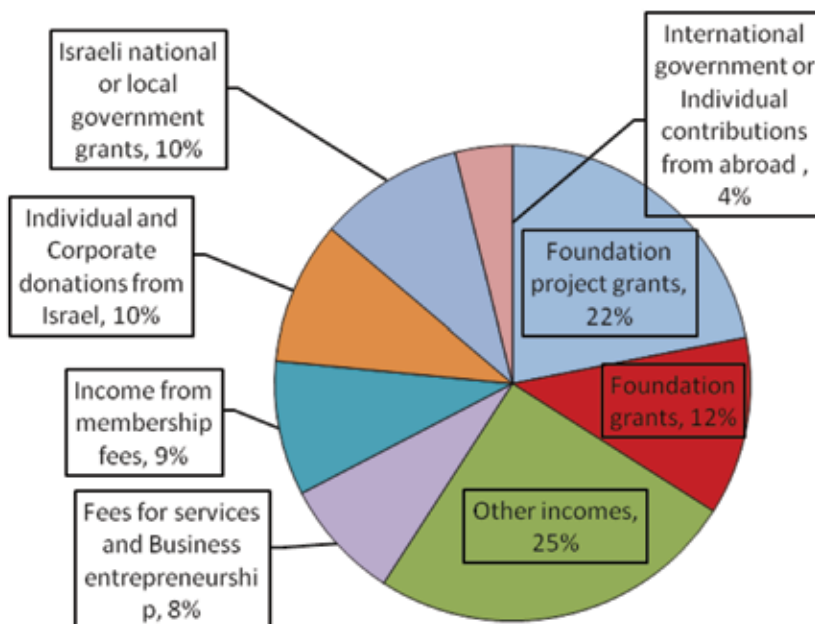


Figure 14 – Sources of Income, “medium NGOs” (2-10 positions) (n=21)

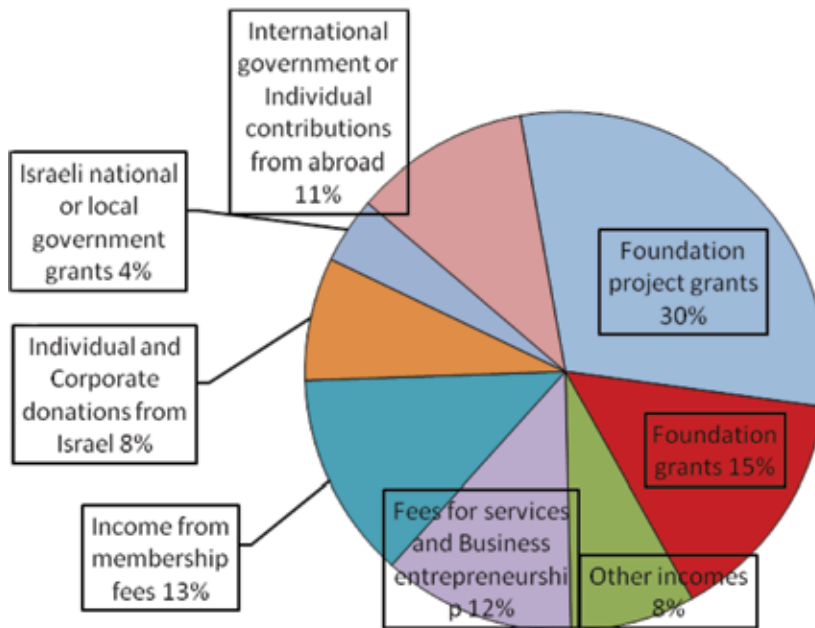
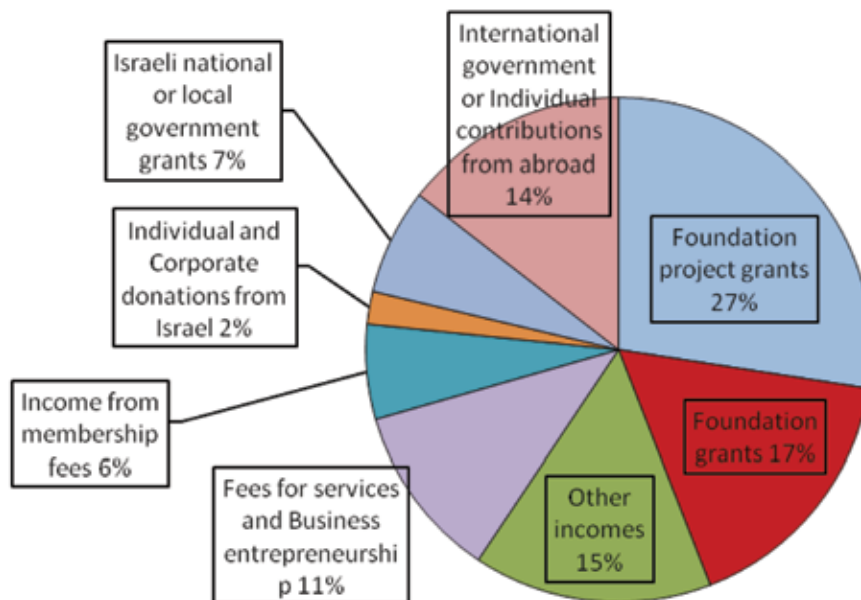


Figure 15 – Sources of Income, “large NGOs” (greater than 10 positions) (n=10)

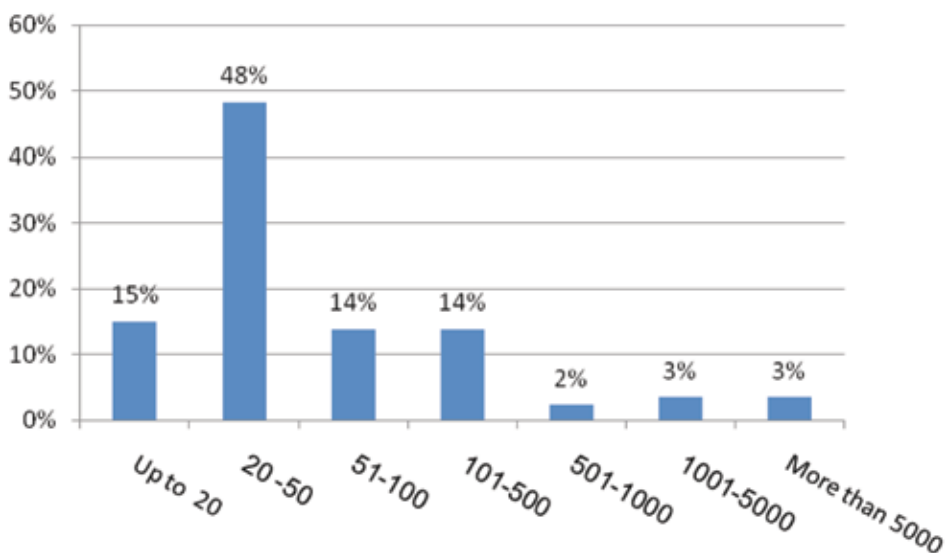


The breakdown of the 50 to 60 percent of locally generated funds is surprising. Israel’s government, in the 1970s and 1980s often provided the lion’s share of the budget for many environmental organizations (e.g., MALRAZ – the Council for Air and Noise Pollution, the Council for a Beautiful Israel and even the SPNI) (Yishai, 1979). Yet, today only 4% of the available funds come from central government sources. Local municipal support reportedly, is 50% higher at 6%, but still low compared to international standards. The general Israeli public – as reflected by large individual donors and membership fees together – only provide 18% of

the average organizational budgets. Local corporate support adds an additional 3% to this level of funding. There are of course, a few Israeli NGOs who will not receive corporate donations on principle. (Greenpeace refuses even foundation support, based on concerns about the “ill-gotten” original origins of the philanthropic money). But on the whole Israel’s business sector appears to be only modestly engaged in supporting the environmental community.

The low level of funding from membership fees is one of this study’s key findings. The simplest explanation for the relatively small number of people associated with environmental organizations, of all sizes, is that most green NGOs are not designed to reach out to the Israeli public for financial support or volunteer involvement. In general, the institution of “membership” is not well developed in the organizational culture of Israeli environmental NGOs. Figure 16 shows that membership in more than 77% of Israeli green organizations is limited to 100 members or less. Only three organizations have membership basis that reach 5,000 and above (*The Keren Kayemeth L’Yisrael – JNF, The Society for Protection of Nature in Israel and Israel for Bicycles*) with three additional organizations having 1,000 to 5,000 members (*Adam Teva v’Din, the Israel Association of Ecology and Environmental Sciences and the “Sayarut” youth movement*).

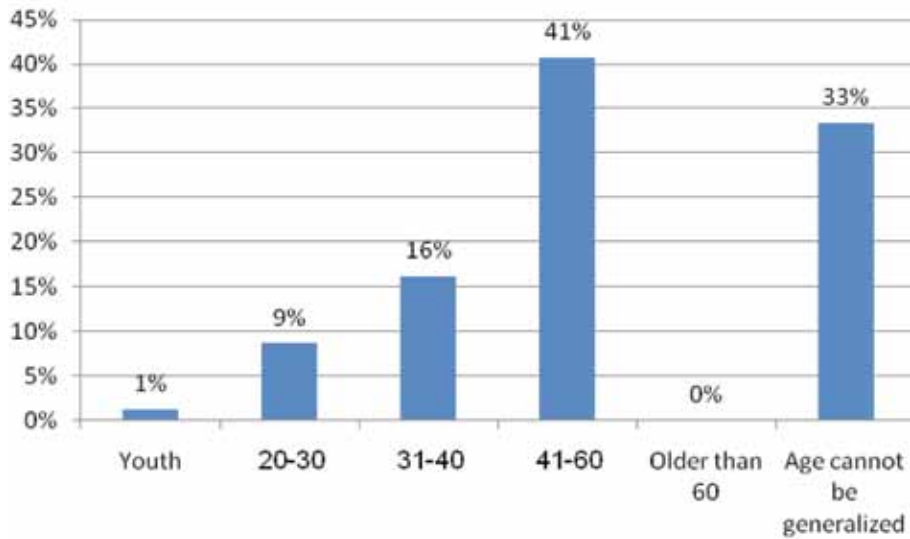
Figure 16 – Breakdown of membership among Israeli Environmental NGOs (n=97)



Ultimately, the self-evident explanation for low domestic level of support for environmental activism in Israel is the fact that most groups do not function as “membership” organizations. Indeed, only a quarter (26%) report income from membership fees at all! If, for example, 2/3s of Israeli organizations began to collect dues from their members, then theoretically, the local public’s “section of the pie”, would more than double – even without raising the present level of membership fees.

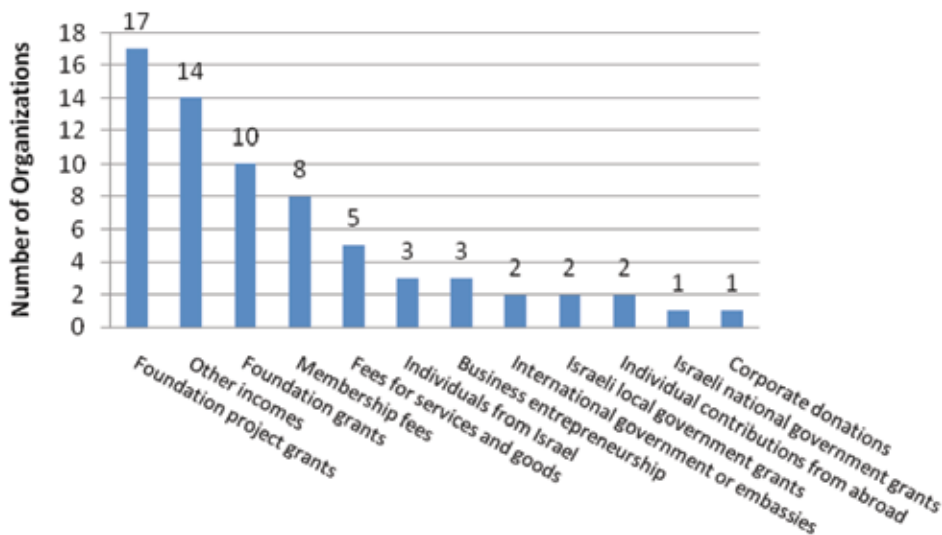
Not only is there no concentrated efforts in Israel’s environmental movement to expand the number of members in organizations, but also volunteers are not mobilized optimally by NGOs. Figure 17 suggests that retirees and youth, who constitute the richest reservoir of volunteers available for environmental organizations, are poorly represented and presumably underutilized in this context by environmental groups.

Figure 17 – Breakdown of Organization Activists by Age



The growing influence of foundation support on organizational budgets creates vulnerability for many organizations which should be the subject of concern in any strategic assessment. Figure 18 shows an alarming high number of organizations – roughly 50% – for whom foundations provide over half of their funding. This cohort includes many of the large national organizations.

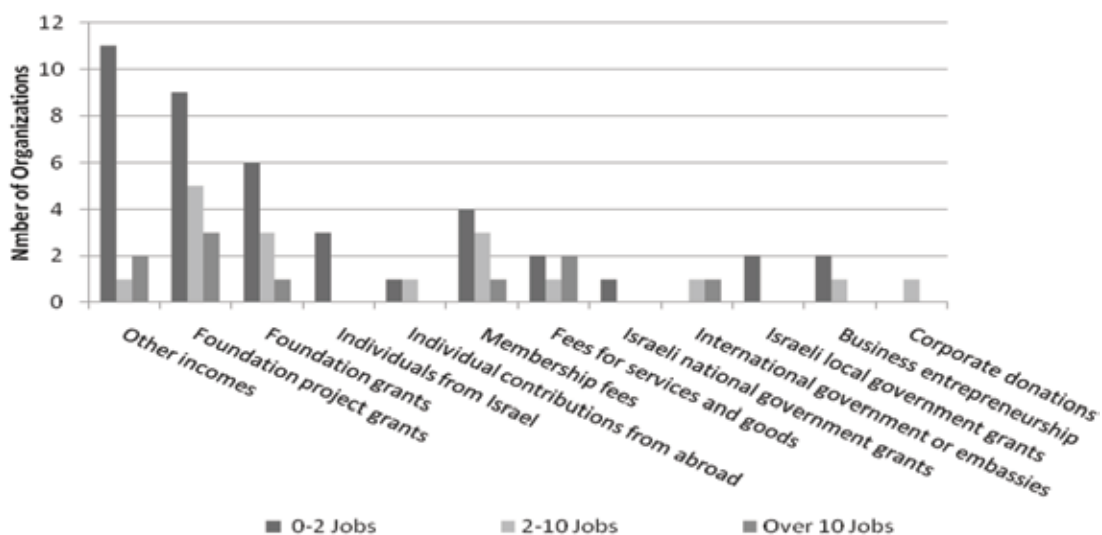
Figure 18 – Organizations for whom 50% of budgets come from a single source



This income portfolio has several problematic implications. The vast majority of foundation support is project based, leaving organizations with relatively modest resources with which to build organizational capacity and pursue independent, proactive activities. (Diversified, small donations do not pose such constraints, but only 6% of the respondents cited membership fees as their major source of income, notwithstanding its attendant benefits for operational flexibility.)

The more compelling problem is the resulting acute vulnerability, due to lack of financial diversity. Figure 18 paints a disconcerting picture of 68 organizations – who make up some 88% of the respondents who answered this question, for whom a single source of funding provides at least 50% of their overall income. The phenomenon reflects an extreme lack of diversity in the fundraising portfolio and an alarming level of vulnerability. For example, 17 organizations (22% of the sample) are dependent on a single *project* as their major source of funding. Only 14% of responding organizations report support from five or more foundations, with 44% of the organizations receiving foundation support from only a single source. In other words, in such cases, cancellation of the single core project grant could compromise these organizations' very survival. Here, as well, the foundations, most of whom are not domestic in origins, constitute the primary source of funding amongst Israeli environmental NGOs – in particular foundation funding for specific projects. The upshot is extreme dependence of organizations on foundations in the short run perspective. As will be discussed later, several international foundations have begun to ratchet down their support for Israel's environment or phase out their environmental programs entirely. As to the category "other sources" – it can be assumed that organizations preferred not to list these sources of income, and it would be inappropriate to assume that here too, the reference is to a single source. Figure 19 presents the same phenomenon with a division according to organizational size.

Figure 19 – Percentage of organizations with 50% of their budgets come from a single source – Breakdown by Organization Size

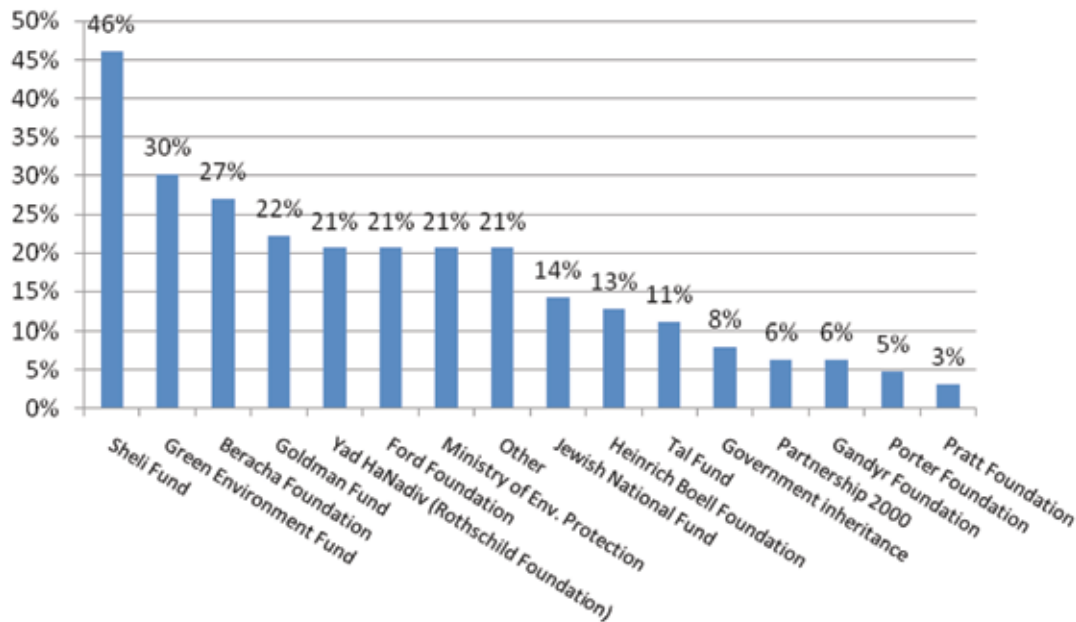


From the analysis it would seem that there is broad homogeneity in the funding sources of all shapes and sizes of green Israeli NGOs. A few specific nuances are worth mentioning although not surprising: Small organizations have a relatively smaller percentage of funding that originates with international donors. It can be assumed that they lack the capacity for filling complex forms, English proficiency and access to media to reach the international philanthropic community. On the other hand, the flip side of this dynamic is a reduced dependence of small organizations on foundations relative to their medium-sized and large colleagues. In this context, the relative portion of budgets arising from membership fees in large organizations is lower than among small and medium-sized organizations, even if the absolute amounts of money collected is much greater. (Relative to large and small groups, medium sized organizations appear to take advantage of the potential of membership fees as a budget source.)

In mapping the foundation presence and influence, the dominant role of the *Green Environment Fund* becomes apparent. This fund is a consortium of foundations that includes the *CRB Foundation*, the *Cummings Foundation*, the *New Israel Fund*, *Sam Febba Charitable Trust* and the *Morningstar Foundation*.

Figure 10 shows the percent of organizations receiving support from a list of foundations. The SHELI Fund, an independent grassroots “small grants” initiative sponsored by the *Green Environmental Fund* supports roughly half of the active organizations in Israel. An additional 30% receive funding from the *Green Environment Fund* itself! Other leading foundations making substantial contributions to environmental groups include the *Goldman Fund*, the *Beracha Fund* and the *Yad HaNadiv* foundation. While their grants are modest, the *Ford Foundation* program has reached about a quarter of responding organizations.

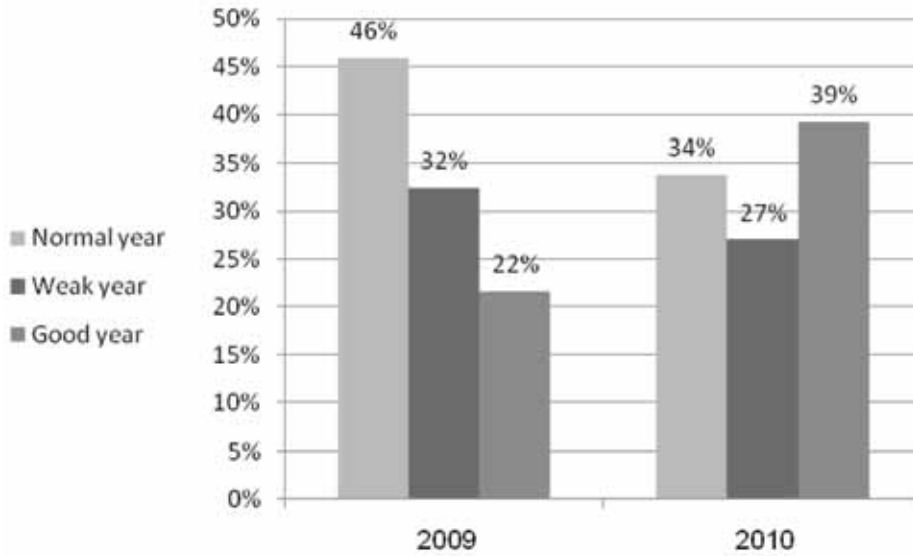
Figure 20 – Percent of Organizations Receiving Specific Foundation Support



Several foundations that in the past supported environmental groups, such as the Abraham Fund, the Pratt Foundation and the Porter Foundation, appear to have either ceased or dramatically reduced support for environmental groups. *The Jewish National Fund (JNF)* has emerged as a philanthropic body, even as it has an active program, with offices in 22 countries, that seeks donations for its own work. At the same time, several foundations that were not listed on the questionnaire were cited by respondents as providing varying levels of support. These include: the Mount Carmel Committee, the Tal Fund, the Jerusalem Fund, the Gandyr Fund, the Gimprich Family Foundation, the British Bounds, the San Francisco Jewish Federation, and the Israel Venture Network (IVN).

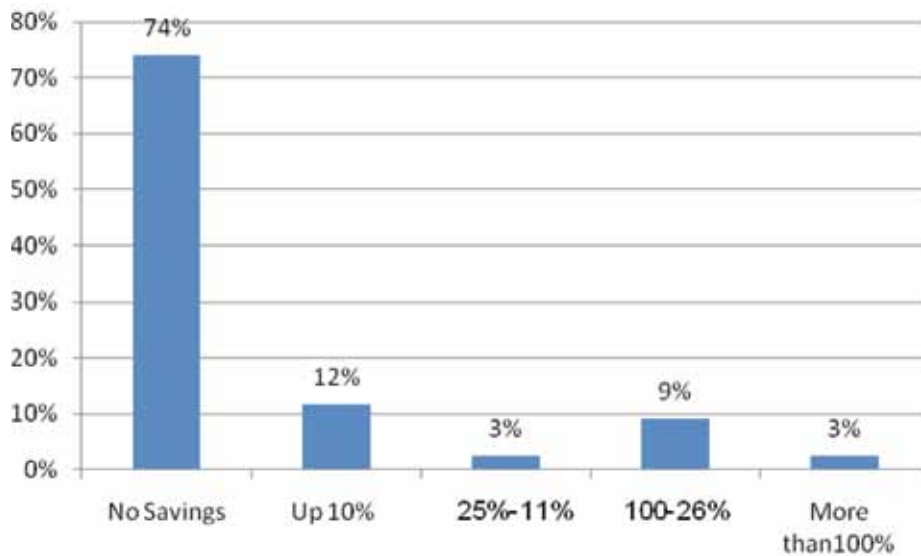
Notwithstanding concerns for the future, the past several years appear to have been a relatively good and stable time for NGO fundraising. While the 2008 financial crisis decimated donors and many non-profit organizations across the Western world, Israel in general, and its civil society in particular, mercifully has remained largely unscathed. Figure 21 summarizes the surveyed organizations’ assessment of recent financial trends, with less than a third reporting a drop from previous income levels in 2009 or in 2010. Indeed, about 40% of Israel’s environmental organizations saw an increase in budgets during 2010.

Figure 21 – Financial Stability Trends During the Past Two Years



Unfortunately, Joseph’s proverbial foresight to prepare for “seven bad years” is not built into present NGO culture and the present, relative prosperity has not been exploited by organizations to ready themselves for a more austere future. Figure 22 reveals that Israeli NGOs are largely without any financial reserves for the future. The JNF, as in all other matters is anomalous in this regard, with billions of shekels in reserve and massive land holdings. Friends of the Earth, Middle East is taking advantage of the cash associated with several unanticipated prizes to begin creating an organizational endowment. But on the whole, over 90% of Israeli environmental organizations have either absolutely no savings or practically no savings to compensate for any future reduction income. Again, this highlights the ongoing financial vulnerability of Israel’s environmental movement.

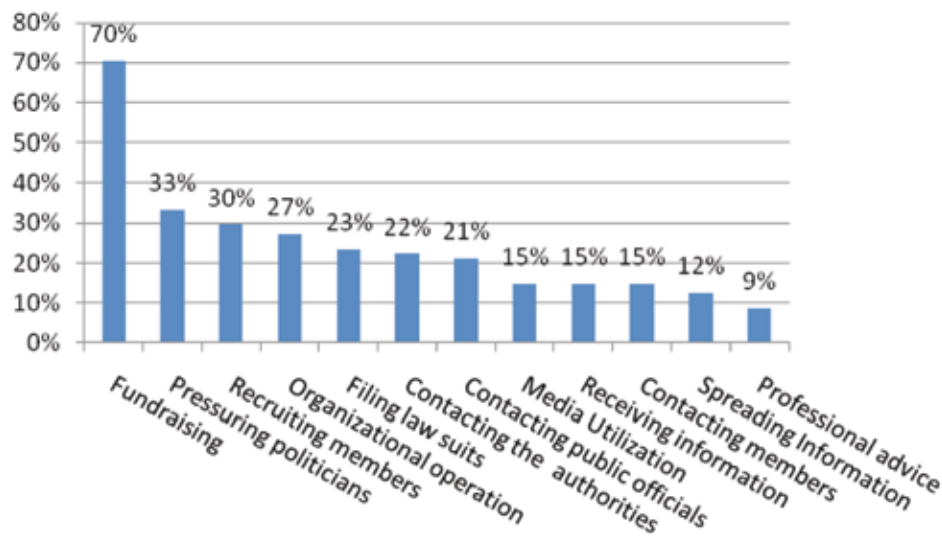
Figure 22 – Level of Savings among Organizations



4. Organizational Challenges and Potential

Like other not-for-profit environmental organizations around the world, running a public interest environmental organization in Israel presents an enormous range of challenges. And naturally, overcoming them requires a broad range of solutions. Hence, diagnosing and ranking the obstacles to success constitutes an important analytical stage in crafting a strategic approach to improved NGO effectiveness. Organizations were asked to rank the relative significance of different difficulties encumbering their present performance. Figure 23 presents the most highly ranked reported obstacles (on a Likert scale of 1-5).

Figure 23 – Difficulties Ranked as “Very Great” (at least 4 of 5) by Green NGOs



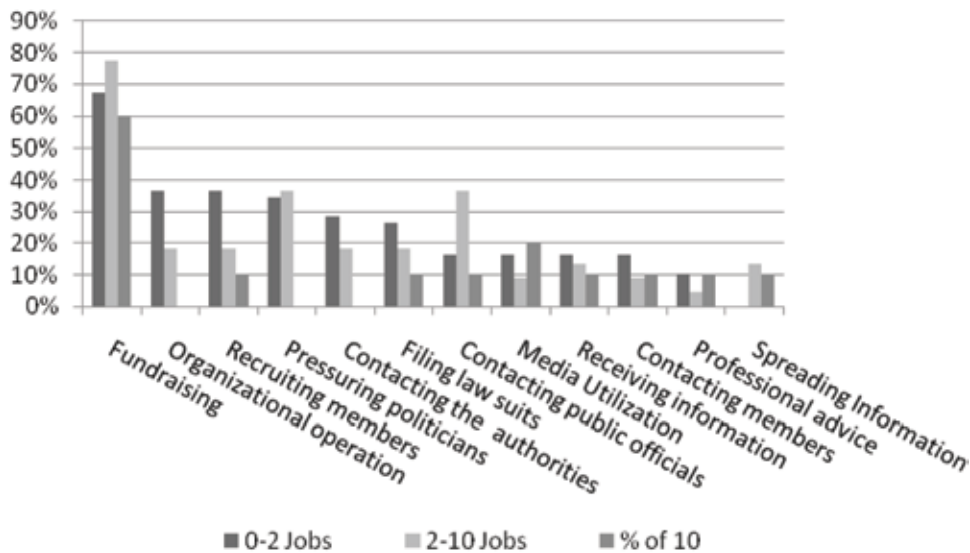
Consistent with surveys of 10 and 15 years ago, “raising funds” by far constitutes the most common difficulty faced by organizations. It can be assumed that this will remain a chronic problem for civil society for the foreseeable future. Difficulties associated with filing legal actions, however, is one which appears to be relatively new. This is supported by the relatively high percentage (13%) of organizations that listed legal activity as part of their modus operandi. The high place given to this “obstacle” is also surprising, given the many “environmental law student clinics” to support public interest legal actions that have opened in at least four universities across the country.

Attaining information was ranked as a major obstacle in the 1996 survey. Since that time, however, Israel enacted the *Freedom of Information Law*, which guarantees the public access to government data, assuming that they do not constitute trade or security secrets. Nevertheless, receiving information remains a major obstacle cited by organizations. This may be because even the government does not have the requisite data or information. Alternatively, it may reflect the slow pace, high costs (there is a mandatory fee set according to effort), and often dissatisfying quality of government responses to data requests. Recruiting members, attracting media attention, influencing political decisions as well as a range of other administrative difficulties were also cited as salient challenges.

Exerting political pressure, is a key area of activity for NGOs who wish to influence policy – and it also received a relatively high ranking as a difficulty faced by organizations. This testifies to the high level of awareness among green organizations about the importance of political connections and the sense that the environmental does not yet enjoy sufficient clout in the political arena. Receiving professional advice is not considered a meaningful obstacle. Organizations receive support to this end. But external consultants are no substitute for ongoing, proactive professional and scientific work.

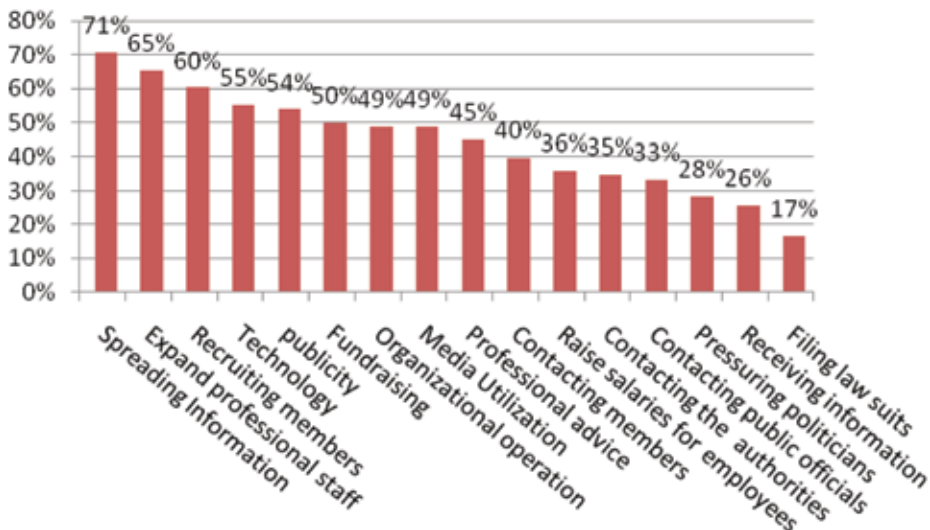
Clearly, the challenges facing an organization depend, to a great extent, on its size and available resources. For example, the establishment of an organizational infrastructure constitutes a more substantial problem for smaller organizations than larger ones. Some may dismiss the challenges facing large as “rich folks’ problems”. Yet, the bigger NGOs have their own suite of serious challenges. For instance, it seems that receiving high visibility media attention constitutes a greater concern for large groups than small.

Figure 24 – Difficulties Ranked as “Very Great” (At least 4 of 5) by Environmental NGOs According to Organization Size



While it is easy to identify problems, prioritizing solutions is often a greater challenge. It would be reasonable to expect a high level of correlations between the difficulties that were ranked highly among organizations and the desire of those organizations to invest in these areas, in the event that additional resources became available to them. In fact, this is not the case. Figure 25 presents those areas where organizations would invest, if they had additional funds. It shows the answers when organizations were asked where they would utilize resources if their budget were to increase (again using “5” or “Very Much” as a highest grade on a Likert scale). Their answers can be seen as a proxy to identifying which problems they prioritize or would address first.

Figure 25– Areas in Which Organizations Would Invest Given Greater Resources



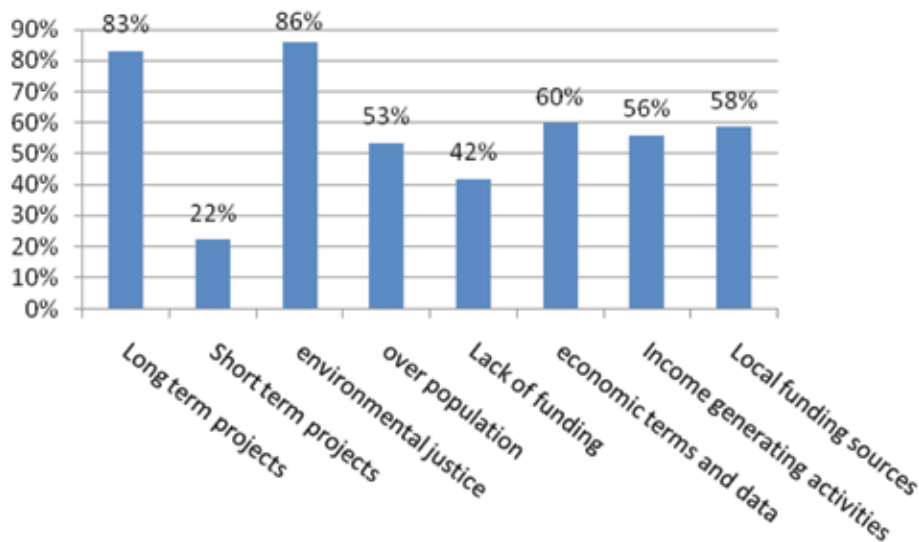
The most common answer is better dissemination of materials. This suggests that despite the relatively new access that internet, email and social networks offer today's organizations (tools that were still largely unavailable in Israel in the year 2000) NGOs are not getting the "word out". Organizations, at least, do not believe that their message is coming across sufficiently. Other institutional aspirations – such as expanding professional staff and technological capacity should be duly noted. It is also interesting that only 50% prioritized improved fund raising capabilities. Given the general distress expressed regarding inadequate financial resources as the leading obstacle to effective performance, this suggests a disconnect or dissonance, where organizations do not see institutional development / capacity building as an area which requires investment. In many cases, organizations are so busy scrambling to meet immediate exigencies that they lack the ability to step back and focus on the development that might relieve some of the relentless pressure.

5. Assessing Israel's Environmental Movement Substantive Orientation

A series of statements were posed to respondents about the approach of the environmental movement and the nature of environmental challenges in Israel. The goal was to sense whether there was a consensus perspective regarding collective attitudes, dynamics, and challenges facing Israel's environmental movement. In some areas there was strong agreement. For instance, the notion that Israel has an "environmental justice" problem – is a relatively recent a concept. Yet, this perception appears to be well entrenched among Israel's environmental organization. Some 86% agreed strongly or agreed with the statement: *The problem of environmental justice in Israel is very severe. Disenfranchised populations suffer from environmental hazards more than established populations do.*

Figure 26 contains a summary of the areas where there appears to be a reasonable consensus regarding a variety of operational orientations or substantive topics. For instance, it is clear that organizations strongly prefer to undertake long-term initiatives rather than short term projects that yield immediate results.

Figure 26 – Support for Positions about the Environmental Movement



It is important to note that only half of the organizations felt that the environmental movement needs to develop more income generating activities and be less dependent on international funding. The following section will offer several conclusions and recommendations, which argue otherwise.

Israel's Environmental Movement: Trends, Needs and Potential

Part 5: Recommendations for Strengthening the Environmental Movement

Parallel to the survey, a series of some 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a variety of stakeholders and experts regarding the state of Israel's environmental movement, its needs and ideas for empower it. This final section reviews their ideas in light of the empirical circumstances described in Part 4 along with the views expressed by the environmental organizations in the survey themselves. The findings are integrated into seven practical recommendations. These constitute possible strategic initiatives by the philanthropic community that would strengthen and upgrade the effectiveness of Israel's environmental movement.

1. Beyond Projects and Programs: Support for Core Organizational Needs

After meeting with dozens of environmental leaders as well as hearing feedback in public hearings there is a strong consensus that organizations find the present preference of foundations to fund projects to be problematic. The survey confirms that most of the foundation funding and practically all government funding goes to support specific projects rather than basic organizational needs. The upshot of this dynamic is that NGOs hire staff according to the project demands rather than long-term organization needs, scamper to meet sundry project time tables and exhibit diminished ability to design a long-term strategy to attain their objectives.

The problem is particularly acute in many of the large environmental organizations which engage in projects that are frequently not of high priority in order to ensure sufficient cash-flow to cover operational expenses, payroll, etc. Fundraising expediency, rather than vision, strategy and ideology too often end up driving institutional agendas and performances.

While it is natural for foundations to be prescriptive in their giving, a holistic, strategic perspective needs to recognize the importance of offering organizations and their leaders the latitude to think creatively, proactively and act nimbly, without having to seek support for a given initiative. The large national organizations working in Israel have long since proven their competence, commitment and trust-worthiness. They need an "oxygen supply" that will allow them to continue their long-distance run on behalf of the public interest. These can be granted with clear milestones, performance indicators and reporting requirements to assuage concerns that foundation support is not disappearing into an institutional black hole. But it may help organizations take chances and show more systemic and creative approaches to Israel's environmental challenges.

Recommendation: Multi-year core grants to Israel's leading environmental organizations for work in their core mission will ensure that they continue to provide critical representation for the environmental movement at the national level.

2. Professionalism

During the past decade, the rules of the game appear to have changed in Israel's public policy discourse. On the one hand, environmental awareness has increased and expanded. Many corporations have not only integrated a meaningful commitment to sustainability into their mission statements, but into their production and management processes as well. Environmental laws and regulations have been adopted and enforcement, while still woefully inadequate, has gotten better in many areas. In many cases, this transformation has not been manifested in environmental performance or ecological indicators. But it has surely changed the nature of the challenge facing the nongovernment environmental community.

In order for environmental groups to remain effective, ensuring professionalism in Israel's civil society is critical. Public interest environmental advocates find themselves engaged in discussions, and not infrequently confrontations, with top level experts – both local and international – who are hired by developers, industrialists and the government. Numerous commentators interviewed identified a decline in the influence of environmental advocates who too often come to the table armed only with ideology and self-righteousness, without the requisite expertise, analysis, data and sophistication. The perceived superficiality and populism of some organizations damages the collective stature of the environmental movement amongst government and business decision makers.

The survey results confirm that there is a dearth of qualified, high level experts working in-house for environmental groups. Neither the Society for Protection of Nature nor the KKL can boast a Ph.D. level ecologist working in their organization. *Transportation Today and Tomorrow* is an important think tank for sustainable transport initiatives, but remains small, without a stable of dedicated traffic engineers who can advise the environmental movement. There is no physician or public health expert working in an environmental group, even as there are organizations that designate it as their primary objective. Related professionals (epidemiologists, toxicologists, risk assessors) are also conspicuously absent.

It should be mentioned, that there were those in the hearings who singled out “management” as a profession that was missing among environmental organizations. They held that heads of large organizations need to attain better management skill sets or alternatively, that it would be well to bring more professional managers to key positions in civil society.

Expanding the menu of professional expertise may contribute to a parallel improvement in the effectiveness of the organizations in a broad range of environmental areas. During the hearings, a feeling was also expressed among many environmental leaders that green NGOs definitely had ongoing access to the Ministry of Environmental Protection staffers and were able to influence its policies in a reasonable way. But at the same time, environmental NGOs are unfamiliar with other government ministries. When there is a dedicated and effective Minister of Environment, as is the case during the past couple of years, civil society needs to expand its perspective and the scope of its activities. Indeed, in order to solve many environmental problems, it is no less important today to influence the Ministries of Infrastructure, Transportation, Health, Interior, Housing, Industry and Trade than the environmental ministry. In practice, Israel's environmental movement has not been successful in opening meaningful channels of communication with these agencies. In order to establish a connection and to engage these ministries, expansion of the professional capabilities may be needed to effectively address the myriad areas of expertise required to solve the complex range of issues surrounding sustainability.

It would a fair assumption that law is one profession that is well represented in Israel's environmental movement. But the study results suggest otherwise. For some twenty years, Israeli environmental groups have availed themselves of Israel's courts and their generous policies regarding standing for public petitioners (Morag-Levine, 2001, Marom-Albeck, Tal, 2000). Yet, the dockets among the public interest attorneys who

work at *Adam Teva V'din* generally are too full with petitions on behalf of the national/ public interest to allow for pro bono representation of environmental groups. Indeed, some 10% of the organizations described filing legal actions as their greatest operational difficulty. So, even legal expertise is in short supply.

One of the suggestions for improving the effectiveness of environmental organizations that was raised in the hearings involved strengthening the connection and integrating the activities of the universities. They hold an enormous reservoir of expertise and knowledge. Many have begun going beyond their institutional walls through the growing “Green Campus” program. Expanded cooperation could include dissemination of information, joint conferences and workshops, research cooperation, etc.

It is possible to already see progress in this area during the past decade. For instance the series of symposia and environmental events co-sponsored with the Porter School for the Environment at Tel Aviv University have been an important forum for new ideas, in depth discussion and introducing international expertise. Research funded by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (JIIS) at times was important for NGOs, such as the brief period of collaboration between the Heschel Center and JIIS in printing an Israeli version of the annual environmental audit *Vital Signs*, or research conducted by SPNI professionals that was sponsored under the JIIS center. The Neaman Center at the Technion has also been an important sponsor of applied environmental research. Such collaborations can and should be greatly strengthened.

Further, a suggestion was forwarded to upgrade the discourse between Israeli organizations and the international NGO community. It is clear that there is great merit in increased openness to new ideas, strategies and concepts, where Israeli organizations can learn from the success and failures of their colleagues abroad and be updated about the agendas and perspectives of the European and American environmental movements. It is likely that staff experts that are members in international professional societies will naturally establish ongoing contacts with their counterparts outside the country.

In short, the absence of competent professional experts is particularly ironic as the past decade has seen an explosion in graduate school programs that provide degrees representing the full range of environmental disciplines. There is no shortage of qualified people who wish to work for the non-profit sector, notwithstanding the relatively modest salaries they would receive.

Recommendation: Foundation support should assist environmental organizations to attract high level professionals in appropriate fields and guarantee them job security for a reasonable period of time.

3. Money Talks: Upgrading the Movement's Capacity in Economics

As the level of “ideology” and “lip-service”, the environment is now ubiquitous and an integral part of most government and private-sector official perspectives. The policy discussions about implementation frequently are based on economic considerations. Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis serve to translate amorphous, general commitments to actions.

For instance, ever since the lead up to the Copenhagen COP in 2009, the discourse among government ministries over Israel's national green house gas mitigation measures has centered around the “cost-effectiveness” of sundry interventions. This debate over so-called “no-regrets” measures is based on economic analysis. If the environmental movement does not have its own independent capacity to generate financial analysis and to engage decision makers at this level, its voice will simply not be heard. Israel's accession to the OECD constitutes an enormous opportunity for environmental upgrading that some interviewees feel has largely been missed. But the OECD ultimately is an economic organization and appeals that are based on Israel's commitment there need to be couched accordingly.

During the in-depth interviews and in the course of the public hearings, many environmental leaders emphasized the significance of developing economic competence amongst green NGOs in order to strengthen efforts to transform and expand the conventional economic indicators and perspective. For example, “local economics” as an alternative to global / neo liberal economics for many people is considered to be an important component in any new vision of a sustainable Israel. The environmental discourse should

not ignore the economic trends in Israel today and the relative prosperity, but needs to put different terms of reference on the table.

Despite the growing concern about social aspects of environmental problems, relatively few environmental groups perceive “globalization” as a phenomenon against which it is possible – not to mention desirable to fight. Outside Israel, many environmental groups see egregious environmental risks associated with the increasingly unregulated global economy. It is important that a cadre of public interest environmental economists help Israel’s environmental community articulate a clearer, economic approach.

In short, no profession is more important to the improved performance of environmental organizations of Israel today than “economists”. The environmental movement understands this. Over half the organizations strongly agreed that “*Environmental organizations need to talk more in economic terms and generate better economic data to support what their position*”. Yet this is not reflected in the resumes of environmental staffers whose managers and top professionals have academic backgrounds in any numbers of disciplines other than economics. Israel’s environmental has made only token and symbolic effort to produce economic analysis. Except for brief periods at Adam Teva V’din – the major environmental organizations have never hired staff economists. This needs to change.

Recommendation: A competitive grant to encourage integration of new staff positions in the field of environmental economics should be considered, with the goal of producing an enhanced capacity for advocacy.

4. Environmental Justice: Engaging Israel’s Arab and Haredi Sectors

While Israel has become a more affluent society, its socio-economic gaps have also grown. This is reflected in growing concerns about “environmental justice” – where economic status and disenfranchisement are translated into inferior access to natural resources and higher exposures to pollution and hazards. There are no shortage of indicators which suggest that environmental conditions among Israel’s Arab community are disproportionately degraded, relative to the Jewish majority (Benstein, 2004; Tal, 2006; Daud, 2005, Lubinov, 2005). Demographically, poverty is particularly prevalent among Israel’s Arab and “Haredi” (ultra-orthodox) populations whose high birth rates exacerbate the number of Israelis living below the poverty line. Indeed, 50% of Israeli first graders are from the Arab and Haredi sectors.

Yet, these two communities remain largely uninvolved in environmental protection efforts. Interviews with Arab environmentalists even suggest that in many Arab communities, environmental and nature protection groups are unpopular, suspected of perpetuating discrimination and squelching Arab development in the form of preservation policies. There was a brief period of time during the 1990s’ when the Arab towns of Israel benefited from a policy of affirmative action. This boost occurred during the tenure of environmental minister Yossi Sarid. But preferential support from the central government soon dwindled and many of the new Arab municipal environmental protection units established were closed. It is clear to most environmentalists that even without considerations of social justice – on a practical level - engaging the Arab sector is critical: Quite simply, emissions and discharges are mobile. Given geographical proximity, pollution problems will not be solved without partnership and involvement.

The good news is that remarkable individuals have created organizations that are active in both the Arab and Haredi sector. These groups, for the most part are still in rather nascent stages of development. Yet, they prove that concern for public health, aesthetics and the natural world is universal and that the environment can be a force for bridging the extreme polarization within Israeli society. Unfortunately, these organizations typically have difficulty competing for support with mainstream Jewish organizations, because of their less developed organizational infrastructure and experience in completing grant applications. A proactive effort is necessary to galvanize Arab and Haredi groups who can, and should be an integral part of Israel’s environmental movement.

Recommendation: A targeted program should be considered for developing environmental leadership and expanded activism among the Arab and Haredi populations in Israel.

5. Expanding Donations and Membership in Environmental Organizations

The environmental movement has benefited greatly from several international foundations' interest in Israel's environment. Yet, many of Israel's leading environmental groups are now highly dependent on this type of funding and have not diversified their income sources. This is a pity because Israeli society has enjoyed a prosperous decade and the ability of Israeli citizens to make meaningful financial contributions to civil society has improved.

Unfortunately, several foundations that were responsible for the recent "boom years" of international philanthropic support have already begun to phase out support for environmental activities or have announced their intentions to do so imminently. For example, the CRB Foundation, that for the past fifteen years arguably served as a hub for Israel's green foundations has announced that it will cease Israeli operations within a few years. *The Goldman Fund* is to disband following the death of the great environmental philanthropist, Richard Goldman. For Israel's green NGO community, this phenomenon should be alarming and constitute an existential risk.

There is still time to make a substantial shift in their fund raising strategy. Israeli society today is sufficiently affluent to make far more meaningful contributions to environmental organizations and is probably willing to do so. A substantial segment of society cares deeply about the physical health of the land of Israel. But Israelis must be approached wisely and the environmental community needs to learn how to reach out to them. As mentioned, most environmental organizations do not even have a framework for membership which allows for such donations and support.

The *Society for Protection of Nature in Israel* constitutes something of an exception in this regard. With some 43,000 households, its membership offers it both a strong political base of legitimacy – as well as a reasonable contribution to its budget. It also shows that Israelis are just as willing to be members of national green organizations as citizens of other countries. While the SPNI membership base remains an extremely impressive achievement – in practice it has not grown in its dimensions for 30 years. It is important to recall that an additional 3 million people are now living in Israel and there has been an even greater quantum leap in general environmental awareness among the general public. Moreover, the ability to communicate (and receive credit card donations) via the internet offers a critical technological boost for membership infrastructure.

A grant program which assists Israeli NGOs in establishing such an infrastructure in order to attract and engage members can take advantage of the present opportunity for expanded support for environmental causes. It will also be an important contribution to local capacity building – providing a proverbial "fishing rod – rather than merely a "fish" to the environmental community. Assistance could be provided to attract Israeli individual philanthropists to the environmental community and upgrade the economic contribution of organizational boards to NGO economic security. One interviewer contrasted the critical role that the board of directors plays as donors in many international green organizations relative to the trivial economic contribution of their Israeli counterparts.

Specific numeric objectives can and should be set – with assistance from telemarketing experts to promising organizations at the local and national level. There is no reason why 100,000 Israelis cannot be drafted to support the environment during the coming years, adding a couple million dollars to the coffers of national green organizations while simultaneously reinforcing the political power of civil society. There is no reason why two dozen local environmental groups cannot have a membership base, whose dues cover the costs of an office, a director and basic operational expenses.

Recommendation: An initiative that challenges organizations to establish membership programs to provide a new, local income source for the years to come could contribute greatly to the environmental movement's economic sustainability.

6. From Reactive to Proactive

Israel is still a young country, open to new ideas – where inspirational and creative ideas can still be implemented without facing an impassable wall of bureaucracy and cynicism. Israel's "high tech" revolution is given as an example of the nimble and dynamic nature of its society (Senor and Singer, 2009). The environment also offers an arena where proactive, constructive proposals can transform predicaments into opportunities. Tactically, activists have long since learned that when lands are not clearly designated and there is a vacuum, a developer will fill it expeditiously. Waiting for problems to arise and responding defensively creates conditions which lead to superfluous conflicts and often cedes the field (and the momentum) to competing approaches which are environmentally harmful. It is best to act proactively. Indeed, resourcefulness is the very appeal of "sustainable development".

In many cases, "the system" is already designed to accommodate compelling ideas. Israel's planning framework, for example enables the public to file alternative plans for development, allowing civil society to seize the initiative and control the terms of the development discourse. Jerusalem has seen such efforts in the lovely Ein Karem neighborhood, where residents refused to let a massive, luxury, housing development destroy the idyllic, undulated landscape. Recently, *Ramot for the Environment*, another neighborhood group in the capital, filed an alternative plan that would turn an adjacent hillside ecosystem into a permanently protected urban nature reserve, rather than the paved complex of flats and apartments to which the city government is committed.

Legislation is another realm where experience suggests that proactive measures can be transformative and far more effectively tactically than simply waiting to respond to the bills of parliamentarians that emerge from time to time. In practice, the vast majority of Israel's environmental law began as NGO proposals. For example, during the 1990s, environmental groups around the country attempted to stop a litany of plans to develop marinas and housing along the Mediterranean coast. Some five court cases ended with mixed results. Eventually, *Adam Teva V'din* prepared a coastal zone management law, which proscribes development on lands within a 300-meter distance of the sea. It took several years to garner the necessary political support for its passage. But since its enactment, *Israel's Coastal Environment Protection Law* has stymied most beachfront development plans and left much of the Israeli coasts open to the public and undeveloped.

Recently, another *Adam Teva V'din* legislative initiative proved to be successful. A *Clean Air Law* was passed in the Knesset that came into force in 2011. The law has the potential to completely change the regulatory calculus in Israel. It affords greater authority to local levels, imposing emission standards on major industries and creates a modern administrative framework for controlling mobile source, tailpipe emissions. Rather than enjoining a single smoke stack at a time – the air quality of an entire country stands to benefit through a national action plan.

Proactive work is not only effective in activism but also via education. The *Heschel Center for Environmental Thinking and Leadership* is perhaps the only organization in Israel that has tried to translate sustainability's commitment to "long-term planning" into an organizational strategy. Hundreds of leaders representing all walks of Israeli life – from the media to architectures to municipal officials – have received training in its many educational programs. The results can most conspicuously be seen in the two greenest members of today's Knesset, whose interest in the field began in *Heschel* seminars. The Center also launched a school enrichment program which brings environmental ethics and activities to primary schools across the country. While it enjoys tremendous regard locally and internationally, the organization has practically no resources for "R & D" – to develop Israel's next generation of environmental programs.

Proactive planning, educational and legislative initiatives were funded by special one-time grants. At the very least, proof of concept has been established. A program that enables environmental organizations to find the time and personnel to prepare sophisticated and compelling alternative plans and laws which can compete successfully in the existing democratic frameworks offers a far more strategic utilization of foundation funds than programs that are solely based on responsive dynamics.

Positive press exposure is also likely to improve with greater proactive activities. Environmental correspondents who participated in the interviews emphasized the importance of running workshops to raise

awareness and knowledge among editors and relevant members of the press. (Similar suggestions arose with regards to workshops for judges as well as politicians.) Symposia involving expert lectures, field trips, etc. may make a deeper impression about the target environmental topics among decision makers and the media.

Finally, there is a very commonly held view that from a strategic perspective, the environmental movement needs to be better integrated into communities across Israel. Obviously, there will be cases where professionalism is the primary call of the day – and an effective intervention will have to be “*Top Down*” in character with a strong role for experts and expertise. Yet, it would be foolhardy to neglect the potential role of the environmental movement as a catalyst in community building. As part of a “*Bottoms Up*” approach, there is enormous potential to strengthen the power base of environmental organizations through a healthier connection with the country’s sundry cohorts and sectors who can become natural partners in a common vision of local and national sustainability.

Recommendation: Earmarking funds to a program for local and national organizations so that they might undertake proactive environmental initiatives may constitute the optimal utilization of philanthropic resources.

7. Symptoms versus Causes: Addressing Consumption and Overpopulation

In a classic 1971 article, Stanford University ecologist Paul Ehrlich posited the “Impact Law”, (Ehrlich, and Holdern, 1971) attributing environmental impact to three factors in a famous I=PAT equation:
Environmental Impact = Population + Affluence + Technology.

In practice, environmental organizations in Israel today focus almost exclusively on the final variable – controlling the technologies that produce pollution, or trying to reign in the machines of physical development. Yet, the first two factors – which are at the heart of most environmental conflicts, have been largely neglected in NGO agendas.

In other words, Israel’s environmental movement deals with symptoms. Most of Israel’s environmental (and social problems) can in fact be linked to the fact that the country has become very crowded. There were 1 million people in Israel in 1950; 2 million in 1960; 3 million in 1970 – and so on - until today’s 7.7 million. Hebrew University Environmental planning professor Eran Feitelson long ago showed that most environmental conflicts in Israel occur when burgeoning populations creep closer to pollution sources.

Rapid population growth didn’t happen by chance. It is the direct the result of an aggressive pro-natal / pro immigration policy and massive subsidies to that end. Such a policy was rational and even critical during the state’s early years when there was a need to establish demographic facts along Israel’s borders to ensure the country’s sovereignty and establish a critical demographic mass economically. Today the situation is different. Practically no Jews in the world face state-sponsored discrimination. And most importantly – Israel doesn’t need more people. In the non-desert regions, it is by far the most crowded country in the Western world: population density (330 persons/km² with the Negev, 740 persons/km² in the northern 40% of Israel) is roughly twice that of Holland and six times that of Denmark.

The environmental ramifications are profound. It became especially clear when the Israeli government sought to put together a greenhouse gas mitigation strategy and bring it to the UN in the 2009 Copenhagen conference. While most Western countries are trying to field a strategy to cut emissions by 30 or 40% by 2030 – the best Israel could cobble together was a shameful *increase* of over 30% by 2030. The reason: relentless population growth undermines even dramatic shifts to solar energy or expansion of green building.

Similarly, in recent years, Israel has increasingly become a consumerist society. Children spend their free time in malls and shopping for many has become an obsessive form of recreation. As a country that used to pride itself on frugality and humility, conspicuous consumption is considered by many to be a status symbol. The resulting production and waste have profound environmental implications.

Sadly, no organization or philanthropic organization is willing to seriously address these issues, which will ultimately make Israel ecologically barren and socially untenable. Of course there are cultural sensitivities that must be considered: traditional Jewish (and Moslem) inclination towards large families, residual impulses to replace the Jews lost in the Holocaust and disingenuous attempts to attain political advantage via demography are just some of the reasons why confronting the issue is complicated and challenging. But this in no way makes the problem more acute. Present government policies will not change without an effective intervention by civil society.

Just as a revolution in Israeli environmental awareness has taken place – a similar revolution and societal transformation regarding responsible family size and consumption is possible. For this to happen, resources must be available. And civil society must be engaged and offered incentives to be courageous and follow their minds and their hearts, in taking on the issue. It will not happen overnight and will undoubtedly engender antagonism. But it is time to begin.

Recommendation: A foundation initiative to change Israel society's attitude towards large families/ pro-natal policies along with the culture of consumption would for the first time address the key drivers behind Israel's primary environmental problems.

Israel's Environmental Movement: Trends, Needs and Potential

Part 6: Conclusions

Israel's environmental conditions are degrading. Some of the damage done to ecological systems, to human health and to the beauty of the land is irreversible. But most of the environmental problems that Israel faces were created by humans – and humans can still solve them. Restoration frequently is possible.

Israel's environmental movement is a large, diverse and fascinating community. It has the proven capacity to galvanize the underlying national passion for the promised land, provide pragmatic solutions and expedite change. Historic successes in areas such as oil pollution, wild flower preservation solid waste management or coastal zone management suggest that well considered public interest efforts can succeed. But these endeavors must be funded.

No foundation has the resources to address all of Israel's ecological woes. But strategic, targeted funding has in the past made a difference, changing the face of Israel's environmental community and changing the environmental fate of the state of Israel. Israel's environmental movement today is more diverse, mature and experienced than ever before. The challenges it faces are also as daunting as ever. Philanthropic intervention continues to be critical to ensure its success and a healthier future for all.

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