

Each field day track offers a different lens through which to view some of the primary values and principles that underpin all of JDC's efforts in Israel. The selection of programs on each track reflects the wide range of JDC's work while also elucidating the common threads running throughout this work. And while each lens captures a different layer of our work, all equally convey what we do and how we understand our impact in Israeli society.

Track 3: Empowerment

The notion of empowerment – helping individuals increase their autonomy and self-determination – is essential to JDC's work. We see the person first, and work to create solutions that address individual needs in ways that transform society over time.

Program: Families First (Ashalim)

The need: In Israel, 18.6% of families live below the poverty line. That translates to 463,300 families who cannot break out of the cycle of poverty. The national welfare system does not have the models or mechanisms to help them.

The response: Transforming Israel's social services so that they are able to addressing the full range of needs to help families get out of poverty, including employment, housing, food, clothes, education, psychosocial functioning, and community involvement. Provides:

- Specialized social workers who help families create a detailed plan of action
- Family mentors who help families execute the plan of action
- Family Assistance Fund that helps families meet the objectives of their plan of action

This program is at the N stage of the DNA model.

Families First has already reached 3,000 families – over 9,000 children – from over 90 communities across Israel. Group workshops and community services assist over 10,000 adults as well, nationwide.

An evaluation is being conducted by the ERI Institute, a research and consultancy firm specializing in social impact. Major findings from the February 2017 Interim Evaluation Report (based on sample of 1,900 families):

- 7.8% of families in the program have moved above the poverty line
- 34.4% have increased their disposable income and lessened the severity of their poverty

Day in the Field



Program: Tzilum Bagil- Photography with Joy (Eshel)

The need: In 2017, some 220,000 Holocaust survivors were living in Israel, the average age of whom was 84. These seniors face multiple challenges related to aging and compounded by the ongoing impact of having lived through the Holocaust. Often, survivors feel isolated and subsequently experience reduced health and wellbeing.

The response: A yearlong therapeutic process that helps survivors learn both the art and science of photography.

- Participants create a portfolio of photographs that help them process and share their experiences of the Holocaust and how it has continued to affect their lives
- Participants exhibit their work to the public at the end of the year

Each year, 75 participants benefit from the healing effects of Photography with Joy and tens of thousands more are impacted from their visits to the exhibitions.

Participants continually remark that the opportunity to exhibit their work and share their stories is both cathartic and empowering.