

**Jewish life in Ukraine:
Achievements, challenges and priorities from
the collapse of communism to 2013**

Darina Privalko

The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is a London-based independent research organization, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in Britain and across Europe by conducting research and developing policy in partnership with those best placed to influence Jewish life.

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The research for the Ukraine report was conducted between February 2011 and September 2013. As a result, the attitudes and opinions expressed throughout the report do not reflect the most recent developments in what has been a particularly turbulent period in the country.

Events in Ukraine, and particularly in Crimea, are changing rapidly on a daily basis. At the time of going to press, we can therefore only allude to the crisis in general terms and speculate about its impact and potential implications for Jews in Ukraine. We have nevertheless decided to go ahead with publishing this report, since its overview of the history of the past twenty years, the challenges it presents and the conclusions it offers for the future of Jewish life in Ukraine still hold true.

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Editor's introduction

In over two decades since the fall of Communism, East-Central Europe has experienced tremendous political, economic and social change, and the Jews living there have inevitably been affected by the developments that have taken place. The advent of democracy, the integration into the European Union, the rise of populism, major demographic shifts and the global recession have all had an impact on Jewish communities throughout Europe. All these factors combined call for the rigorous identification and up-to-date analysis of the changing needs and challenges facing the Jewish communities in East-Central Europe today.

With this in mind, we are publishing this report as the fourth in a series examining how Jewish communal life has evolved and developed in East-Central Europe since the collapse of Communism. This particular report focuses on Ukraine; three previous reports – focusing on Poland, Hungary and Germany – have already been published.

The project has its origins in two organizations: the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) and the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe (RF(H)E). JPR, a London-based research institute, consultancy and think-tank that specializes in contemporary Jewish affairs, has stood at the forefront of Jewish community research in the UK for several decades. Its work focuses primarily on Jews in Britain, but the Institute has a longstanding interest in Jewish life throughout Europe, and its publications include *Jewish Restitution and Compensation Claims in Eastern Europe and the Former USSR* (1993), *A new Jewish identity for post-1989 Europe* (1996), *Mapping Jewish culture in Europe today: a pilot project* (2002), *Jews and Jewry in contemporary Hungary: results of a sociological survey* (2004), and *Voices for the Res Publica: The common good in Europe* (2006-09). Most recently, JPR won a major commission from the European Union to conduct a pan-European study of Jewish perceptions and experiences of antisemitism, and the findings from that survey were published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in November 2013. JPR has also had a longstanding interest in Jewish culture in Europe, and was a co-founder of the European Association for Jewish Culture, with which it retains close ties.

RF(H)E is committed to protecting European Jewish heritage, fostering scholarship and enhancing Jewish life in Europe. The purpose of their grant programmes are three-fold: to support and develop skilled, trained professionals to ensure that the Jewish heritage found in the archives, libraries and museums of Europe is protected, conserved and accessible to a wide range of people; to encourage and nurture the field of academic Jewish studies across Europe by funding individual scholars, university departments and academic and research conferences; and to enable community groups to explore their own Jewish heritage and disseminate their own research to a wider audience. Lord Rothschild serves as President, Sir Victor Blank is the Chair of Trustees and Sally Berkovic is the CEO.

Both organizations – JPR and RF(H)E – had reached the conclusion independently of one another that the time was ripe for a review of East-Central European Jewish life, and over the course of several discussions, elected to partner on this project. Our shared purpose is to paint a series of portraits of Jewish life in different countries within the region in order to allow both community insiders and outsiders to reflect on each community's achievements, challenges and priorities. JPR developed the initial project proposal which, in turn, was shaped and finessed by RF(H)E. Throughout the process, JPR has taken full responsibility for research matters, and RF(H)E has provided funding and been a consistent source of advice and support.

We would also like to thank the Trustees of the Humanitarian Trust for their support of this project.

I am particularly grateful to my colleagues at JPR, Lena Stanley-Clamp, Judith Russell and Richard Goldstein, for their help with the project: Lena served with distinction as project manager in the early stages of the initiative, and both Judith and Richard have been centrally involved in managing it subsequently, as well as supporting the final stages of translation, editing and production. Without their hard work, commitment and attention to detail, this report would not exist.

In recruiting a researcher to undertake the work, we looked for someone with excellent qualitative research credentials, experience in the field, and the capacity to understand and analyze the particular idiosyncrasies of Jewish life in a sophisticated, independent and sensitive manner. In the particular case of Ukraine we recruited Darina Privalko, originally from Kiev, Ukraine, who has been deeply involved in the life of the Jewish community of Ukraine since the very early stages of its modern restoration after the collapse of the Former Soviet Union. In the early part of her career, she worked as Regional Development and Outreach Director at Hillel in the FSU and Vice-President of Fundraising at the Russian Jewish Congress. After moving to Israel, she continued to maintain her close connections with the Jewish community in Ukraine in her capacity as the founder of the Jewish Centre for Educational Tourism “JUkraine”, whose main mission is to showcase the treasures of Ukrainian Jewish heritage to visitors from all over the world. Currently a doctoral student working on her thesis on informal education for adults in Israel at the National Academy of Pedagogic Science of Ukraine, she has carried out sociological research for a variety of public institutions from the CIS, Europe and Israel, and today is widely acknowledged as an expert in the field of Jewish communal life in Ukraine.

During the research process, she was advised by Dr Betsy Gidwitz, who has undertaken considerable work on Jewish community life in Ukraine, and was formerly a Soviet-area specialist in the Department of Aeronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The survey aimed to address four key questions in multiple areas of Jewish life:

- i) What were the major milestones and developments over the past twenty years in the community?
- ii) Which philanthropic investments (local, national, regional or pan-European) over the same period are notable, either because of the significant impact they have had, or because they failed to achieve their desired outcome?
- iii) What are the central challenges facing the community today?
- iv) What initiatives and investments are most needed in order to strengthen the community in the future on the local, national, regional and pan-European level?

The particular aspects of Jewish life investigated were:

- Jewish religious life;
- Jewish education (formal and informal);
- Jewish cultural development;
- academic Jewish studies;
- preservation of Jewish heritage;
- young adult (18-35) engagement;
- leadership development;
- innovation and social entrepreneurship;
- funding and philanthropy;
- welfare (children and the elderly);
- combating antisemitism;
- Israel education, advocacy and *aliyah* (emigration to Israel).

Finally, the research brief included some basic analysis of any existing demographic data, any relevant social issues within the community, and the broader political context considered necessary to help the reader to best understand the community.

The research for the Ukraine report was conducted between February 2011 and September 2013. As a result, it does not include any reaction to the demonstrations throughout the country in early 2014. They were prompted by the Ukrainian government’s rejection of an accord with the European Union in favour of stronger ties with Russia, that subsequently led to the resignation of Prime Minister Mykola Azarov and his cabinet.

Qualitative methods were used: twenty one-to-one interviews and five focus group discussion were carried out, lasting for between one and three hours. In order to be eligible, interviewees needed to hold a significant role in Jewish institutional and community life, have knowledge of several of the central issues listed above, and be, in the view of the researchers, highly likely to remain decision-makers in Jewish communal life for

the foreseeable future. In the analysis, we have sought to represent the fundamental viewpoints and differences of opinion we heard, as well as the suggestions for alternative ways forward which were proposed by the interviewees. The inclusion of the numerous quotations that punctuate the report should not be misinterpreted as our endorsement of any particular views, but rather simply as illustrations of perspectives we believed worthy of inclusion in a report like this. Furthermore, they do not necessarily represent all of the views that exist; a limited number of interviews was conducted for this study, so the report highlights only those issues that were raised by the interviewees. In this respect, the report should be seen as a gateway into understanding some of the key issues with the Ukrainian Jewish community today; an initial guide, rather than a fully comprehensive assessment. Whilst it might have added insight to attribute each quotation to a particular source, we deliberately kept all of them anonymous in order to allow respondents greater freedom to speak openly and with candour. We hope and believe that the result of our work is a rich and insightful portrait

of Ukrainian Jewish life that captures multiple perspectives, but nevertheless points to a clear set of recommendations concerning how the contemporary community might best respond to the wide range of challenges it faces.

Together with the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, we hope that this report, alongside the others in the series, will provide a guide to all those wishing to understand, develop or invest in the future of European Jewish life. It is aimed at community development professionals, national and international donors and foundations, community leaders, researchers, academics, and ultimately, the communities themselves. We plan to disseminate the reports widely in order to raise awareness of the issues that exist, and our hope and intention is that all of the reports in the series will serve to help all supportive and interested parties to discover new insights, develop new policy ideas, and ultimately make new and effective investments in each community.

Dr Jonathan Boyd
Executive Director, JPR

1 Basic data on Ukrainian Jews and Ukrainian Jewish organizations

1.1 Ukraine: demographic profile

With a territory of 233,000 square miles, Ukraine is one of the largest countries in Europe. It is bordered by Russia to its north and east, Belarus to the north and Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to the west. To the south are Romania and Moldova as well as the coasts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Ukraine is comprised of twenty-four provinces or *oblasts*, one autonomous republic (Crimea) and two cities with special status, the capital city of Kiev and the Crimean port of Sevastopol.

The total population of Ukraine was estimated at 44,854,065 in mid-2012, a decline from its estimated population in 1991 of 53 million. In mid-2012, the estimated birth rate was 9.6 per 1,000 population and the death rate was 15.8 per 1,000 population. The life expectancy at birth is estimated at 63.1 for men and 74.8 for women.¹

The estimated populations of Ukraine's largest cities in mid-2012 are: Kiev, 2,779,327; Kharkov, 1,470,902; Dnepropetrovsk, 1,065,008; Odessa, 1,029,049; Donetsk, 1,016,194; and Zaporizhyya, 815,256.

1.2 History of the Jews in Ukraine

The idea of a distinct Ukrainian Jewry is a relatively modern phenomenon. Ukraine has only been an independent political entity for a very short period at the end of the First World War and post-1991. Historically, the Jewish communities in Ukrainian regions usually identified themselves with the rulers and upper classes, typically Russian, Polish, Austro-Hungarian, or Galician etc. and rarely spoke the Ukrainian language.

Jewish settlements in Ukrainian lands can be traced back to the eighth century and probably to antiquity. During the period of the Khazar kingdom, Jews lived on the banks of the River Dnieper and in the east and south of Ukraine and the Crimea. The Khazar's Empire, at its

Figure 1. Map of Ukraine



height between the eighth and tenth centuries, extended from the northern shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea as far west as Kiev. Jewish refugees from the Byzantium, Persia and Mesopotamia regions, fleeing from persecution by Christians throughout Europe, settled in the kingdom. The Khazars allowed them to practise their own religion, integrate into society and marry Khazar inhabitants. Eventually, the Khazar royalty and nobility converted to Judaism, adopting Jewish religious practices, including reading the Torah, observing the Sabbath and dietary laws, and switching the official written system to Hebrew.

In 1241, the Khazars were defeated by the Mongol invasion and the centre of Jewish life shifted to Poland. Later, Jews from the western provinces of Poland moved to Ukraine because of the economic opportunities created by Poland's expanding influence, which increased particularly in the sixteenth century with the consolidation of the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

By the end of the 1500s, there were about 45,000 Jews living in Ukrainian lands. The Polish nobility invited Jews to help manage their estates and develop economic activity. They were also heavily involved in producing and selling alcoholic beverages, small-scale

1 See: Index Mundi (www.indexmundi.com/ukraine).

manufacturing, the sugar-beet industry, crafts and commerce. As estate managers and tax collectors, Jews became the objects of resentment by the peasants towards the landowners. In 1648, the Cossacks, led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, entered the war against Polish domination in Ukraine, directing their hatred to Poles and Jews alike. By this time the Jewish population had increased to at least 150,000. Some Polish Jews managed to flee, but the majority was brutally murdered. The death toll in the uprising and successive wars reached an estimated 100,000, and nearly 300 Jewish communities were destroyed. As a result of the war, the Russians replaced the Poles as the dominating force in 1654, when Khmelnytsky persuaded the Cossacks to transfer their allegiance to the Russian czars. Antisemitism worsened after Ukraine was annexed by Russia, and reached its peak with the establishment of the notorious Pale of Settlement by the Russian Tsarina Catherine II in 1791, which eventually expanded to encompass most of the territory of modern Ukraine.

The Jews in Ukrainian lands were remarkably innovative. Hasidism first appeared in the eighteenth century in the Podolia Province. The teachings of Israel ben Eliezer (the Baal Shem Tov, 1698–1760), had a profound effect on the Jews in the area. His disciples, such as Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezeritch and Jacob Joseph of Polonoye helped take his message into the heartlands of Ukraine and south-east Poland with a new approach to the practice of Jewish mysticism. In the nineteenth century several cities became important centres of Jewish publishing and Ukraine saw the development of significant Zionist groups, including Hovevei Zion (“Lovers of Zion”) and Bilu. Odessa became a centre of the Haskalah (“Jewish Enlightenment”), Hebrew and Yiddish literature, traditional Jewish learning and Zionism, as well as Jewish commerce and industry. Yiddish theatre and literature thrived in Ukraine, and many early Israeli writers in Hebrew were born and educated there.

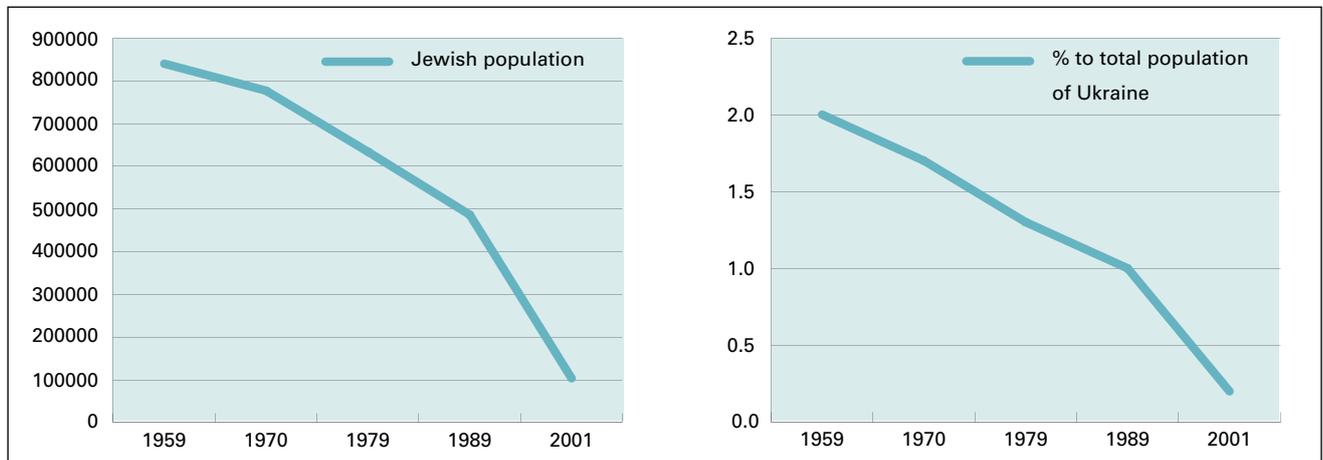
By the mid-1800s, there were almost 600,000 Jews in the parts of Ukraine under Russian rule. Many more lived in parts of modern Ukraine that then belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. According to the Russian census in 1897 there were 1,927,268 Jews in Ukrainian regions, accounting for 9.2% of the total population.

The pogroms of 1881–1884 were carried out throughout Ukrainian areas. However it was during the Civil War and the short period of Ukrainian independence between 1918 and 1920 that the worst pogroms took place since the Khmelnytsky uprising in 1648. The Jews finally received equal rights with the Ukrainian majority in July 1917, but nevertheless, the White (anti-Bolshevik) and Ukrainian nationalist armies, as well as local militias, launched vicious pogroms against the Jews after this, murdering thousands.

During the Nazi period, close to one million Jews were murdered in Ukraine, notably by the Einstazgruppen and local Nazi collaborators. The most notorious massacre of Jews in Ukraine took place at Babi Yar just outside Kiev, where 33,771 Jews were killed in a single operation on 29-30 September 1941.

1.3 The Jewish population of modern Ukraine

The official data of Soviet and Ukrainian Censuses of 1959–2001 indicate an overall decline in both absolute and relative numbers of the Jewish population of Ukraine. The most recent official statistical data on the Jews in Ukraine is the Census of 2001, according to which ethnic Jews make up 0.2 per cent of the population, or 103,591. The size and composition of the Jewish population reflect the continuous interplay of various factors that operate both outside and inside the Jewish community. Calculating the number of Jews in the Former Soviet Union and in the contemporary post-Soviet states is often a contentious exercise, with official state data frequently mistrusted and all research further complicated by differences over the definition of Jewish identity.

Figure 2. Jewish population decline in Ukraine, 1959–2001²

1.4 External and internal factors influencing the size of the Jewish population since the beginning of the Soviet era

During the Soviet era, the Jewish population in Ukraine was significantly affected by major geopolitical and socioeconomic changes. First, Stalin's resettlement policy of the 1920s–30s (the creation of Jewish agricultural settlements (*kolkhozy*) brought over 70,000 Jews to Ukraine from the territory of the USSR, primarily Belarus.³ Second, after the disintegration of Poland in 1939 and the annexation of Western Ukraine by Germany, the Jewish population of Ukraine reached just over 1.5 million, or the equivalent of three per cent of the total population of Ukraine.⁴ During the Second World War, about one-third of the total Jewish population of Ukraine (or 350,000 to 500,000 people) was evacuated⁵ and close to one million Ukrainian Jews were murdered by the Nazis.⁶ The post-war period saw further population shifts in the USSR, partly

caused by the common reluctance of Holocaust survivors to return to their home towns for fear of a hostile reception from the new residents in their abandoned properties⁷ and the repatriation of about 40,000 former Polish citizens, with Jews making up a significant proportion of these.⁸ Lastly, the annexation of the Crimea to Ukraine in 1954, where there were already 26,374 Jews (1959 figures) as well as the Karaite population, which, unlike Ashkenazi Jews, survived the systematic liquidation of the Holocaust era, as the Nazis recognized them as Jews by faith but not by race.

According to Pavel Polyan, the period 1948–1985 was the time of “Cold War Emigration” from the USSR, when the right to leave the country was reluctantly provided to representatives of three nations – Jews, Germans and Armenians.⁹ Heitman argues that those most active in their desire to emigrate were Jews from Georgia, the Baltic republics and the Western Ukraine, and it was these individuals who gave rise to the *refusenik* movement.¹⁰

2 Official data from the USSR censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989, and the independent Ukraine Census of 2001.

3 Bugai N.F. (1993) “20s–50s: Resettlement and deportation of Jewish population of the USSR” (in Russian). Downloaded from: http://ldn-knigi.lib.ru/R/Evr_1920–50.pdf.

4 Gregorovich A. “World War II in Ukraine: Jewish Holocaust in Ukraine”. Reprinted from FORUM Ukrainian Review, No. 92, Spring 1995. Also available at: www.infoukes.com/history/ww2/page-25.html.

5 Ibid.

6 Levin N. (1998). “*The Jews in the Soviet Union since 1917: paradox of survival*”; New York: New York University Press.

7 Gregorovich, A. “World War II in Ukraine.” See also: www.yadvashem.org.

8 Bugai N.F., “Resettlement and deportation.”

9 Polyan, P. “Emigration: Who left Russia in the 20th century, and when.” In: Glezer, O. and Polyan, P. (2005). *Russia and its regions in the 20th Century: Territory, Settlement, Migration*, pp. 493–519 (Russian). See: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2006/0251/analit01.php>.

10 Heitman, S (1987). *The Third Soviet Emigration: Jewish, German and Armenian Emigration from the USSR since World War II*. See: *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien* No.21, p.24.

Table 1. Emigration of Jews, Germans and Armenians from the USSR (1948-1985)¹¹

Period	Jews		Germans		Armenians		Total		Average per annum
	No. of people	%							
1948–1970	25,200	8.7	22,400	21.4	12,000	23.0	59,600	13.3	2,700
1971–1980	248,900	85.8	64,200	61.1	34,000	65.5	347,000	77.7	34,700
1981–1985	15,900	5.5	18,400	17.5	6,000	11.5	40,300	9.0	8,000
Total	290,000	100.0	105,000	100.0	52,000	100.0	447,000	100.0	-

While there are no exact data showing the number of Jews who left the particular territory of modern Ukraine during that period, Table 1 provides the more general picture of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union contrasted with two other national minorities. The total number of Jews who emigrated from the USSR (290,000) goes some way towards explaining the dramatic drop in the Jewish population between the USSR censuses of 1959 and 1979.

Further fluctuations took place in the post-Soviet era. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, many Jews emigrated, particularly from Ukraine, driven in part by political and economic instability. On the other hand, the activity of international Jewish organizations and foundations, aiming to revive the community, helped to rebuild Jewish life, much of which had been destroyed in the previous decades. Today, the three major determinants of population change are the balance of births and deaths, patterns of migration, and changes in Jewish identity and identification.

1.5 The Jewish population in 1989–2000

According to the last Soviet population census carried out in 1989, 486,000 people in Ukraine identified themselves as Jews. As a rule, these were people whose parents were both Jewish and who had the nationality ‘Jew’ written in their internal Soviet passports. This estimate is considered as the ‘nucleus’ of the Jewish population of Ukraine.¹²

11 Ibid.

12 Zissels J. “The Jewish Community of Ukraine: Its Status and Perspectives”. In: Weiner, M. (1999). *Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova*. Routes to Roots Foundation Inc. See: www.rtrfoundation.org/webart/UK-arch-Ch5Zissels.pdf.

It is important to note the official Soviet system of ethnic classification. The ethnicity of every Soviet citizen was written in his or her internal passport once he or she reached the age of sixteen. Anyone with two Jewish parents had no choice but to be registered as Jewish, in many cases without wanting this. The Soviet authorities, contrary to their proclaimed goal of assimilation, actually preserved Soviet Jewry by labelling Jews individually. Only the offspring of mixed marriages could choose to take the ethnicity of one or other parent, and most of these preferred the ethnicity of the non-Jewish parent.¹³

Therefore, demographers suggest a “broadening of the coefficients” of the nucleus by 1.5 to 2.5 times. On this basis, we may conclude that in 1989, the “expanded population” of Jews in Ukraine consisted of more than 1 million people, who, if counted with their non-Jewish family members, enlarged the estimate to 1.2 million–1.3 million.¹⁴

Table 2 shows the overall fluctuation in the size of the “nucleus” of the Jewish population in Ukraine from 1989–2001, according to official statistics.

Figure 3 shows that the general trend of Jewish births is downward. The ratio of children born to intermarried families increased when compared with families with two Jewish parents, yet the overall tendency to a low birth rate prevails in both cases.

The same downward trend can be observed with regard to the ratio between Jewish births and

13 Mark Tolts. “Mixed Marriage and Post-Soviet Aliyah.” In: Reinhartz, S. and DellaPergola, S. (2009). *Jewish Inter-marriage Around the World*. Transaction, pp.89–104.

14 Zissels J., Jewish Community of Ukraine, op. cit.

15 Ibid.

Table 2. Fluctuation in the size of the 'nucleus' of the Jewish population in Ukraine according to the official data of the State Committee on Statistics of Ukraine (1989-2001)¹⁵

Ukraine	Number as of Jan 1	Emigrants	Immigrants	Deaths	Births of Jews of matrilineal descent		
					Total	Jewish father	Non-Jewish father
1989-2001		291,704	6,882	87,336	12,423	5,383	7,045
1989	487,300	17,600	100	11,054	2,919	1,552	1,367
1990	460,298	51,800	250	10,578	2,064	951	1,113
1991	399,121	45,061	322	9,629	1,618	695	923
1992	345,448	26,830	665	9,479	1,342	679	663
1993	310,483	21,622	639	9,123	1,134	546	588
1994	280,923	28,306	588	8,449	918	448	470
1995	245,204	23,857	1,037	7,305	717	167	550
1996	215,246	20,493	791	6,119	638	151	487
1997	189,576	15,924	711	4,898	576	104	472
1998	169,569	11,550	533	3,912	291	50	241
1999	154,690	12,087	457	2,828	134	25	109
2000	140,257	9,859	426	2,262	72	10	62
2001	128,572	6,715	363	1,700	NAD	5	NAD
2002	120,525	NAD	NAD	NAD	NAD	NAD	NAD

NAD = No available data.

deaths. According to the chart, we can estimate that over the past decade, the "natural decline" of the Jewish population amounted to more than 70,000 people. Figure 4 demonstrates the dynamic of births and deaths, and while the number of deaths also consistently declines, it obviously outnumbers the births during the same period of time. The decreasing number of deaths may be explained, first of all, by the high rate of emigration in the early 90s, when entire families left Ukraine, including Jews of the older generation.

Between 1989 and 2002, more than 1,500,000 ex-Soviet Jews and their relatives emigrated to countries outside the FSU. Most of this emigration (about 940,000 people, or 62 per cent) went to Israel, and the rest was divided mostly between the United States and Germany.¹⁶

The high rate of intermarriage in Ukraine is the legacy that Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Union. The steep rise of mixed marriages

became one of the most characteristic features of Soviet Jewry after the Second World War, yet rates of intermarriage had already begun to increase before this period (see Figure 5). Ethnically mixed marriages were widespread in the Soviet Union, whose total population hosted many relatively small and widely dispersed ethnic groups, and the Jewish population was no exception.

Table 3 provides statistical data on all registered mixed marriages in the FSU republics with the relatively largest Jewish populations, i.e. Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, and enables us to observe the development of the trend both chronologically and geographically.

Figure 5 demonstrates the dynamic of the growth of mixed marriages in Ukraine. It is important to note, that while the offspring of such families are not included in the formal 'nucleus' of the Jewish population of the country (with two Jewish parents), about half of them (those of matrilineal descent) would

16 Tolts M. "Mixed Marriage", pp. 89–104.

Figure 3. Decline in numbers of Jewish births (by matrilineal descent)

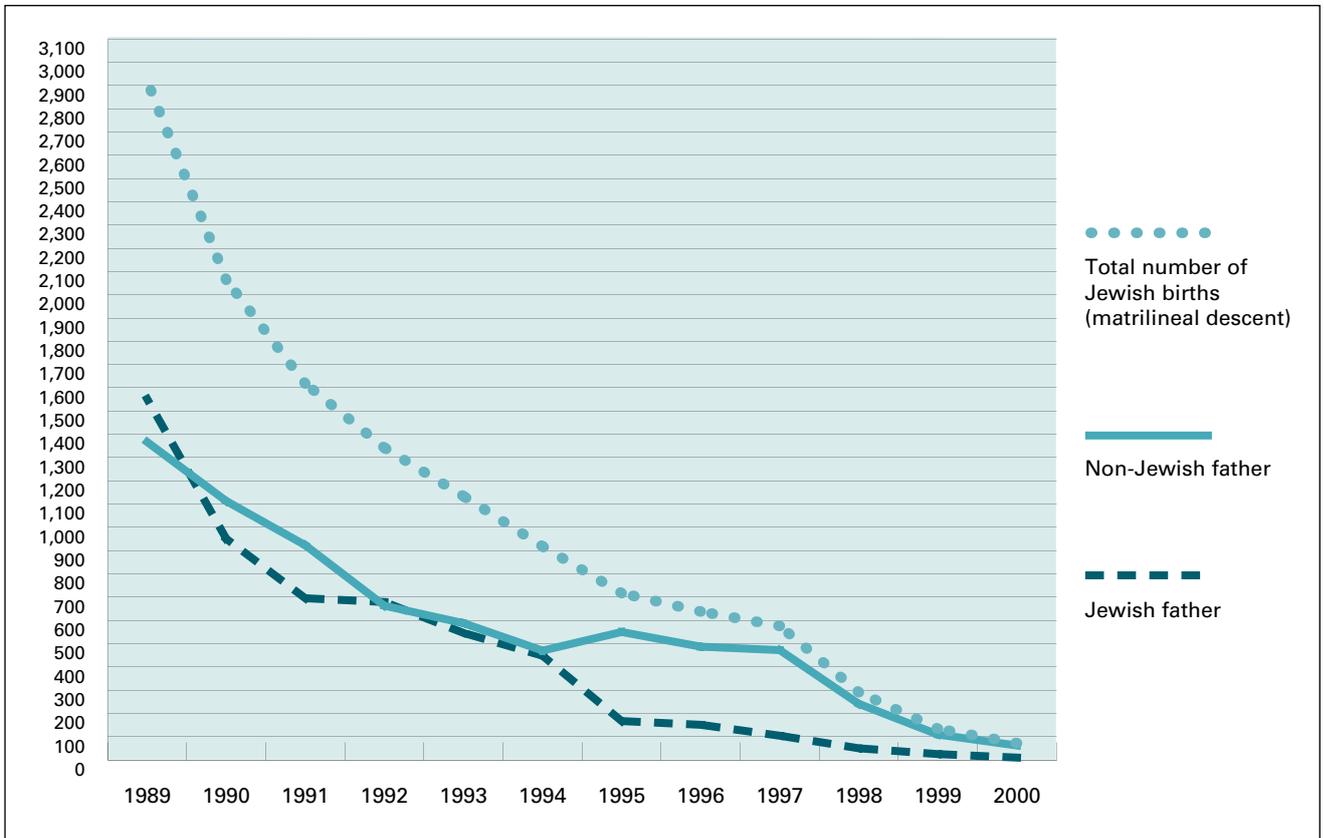


Figure 4. Changes in number of Jewish births (matrilineal descent and deaths)

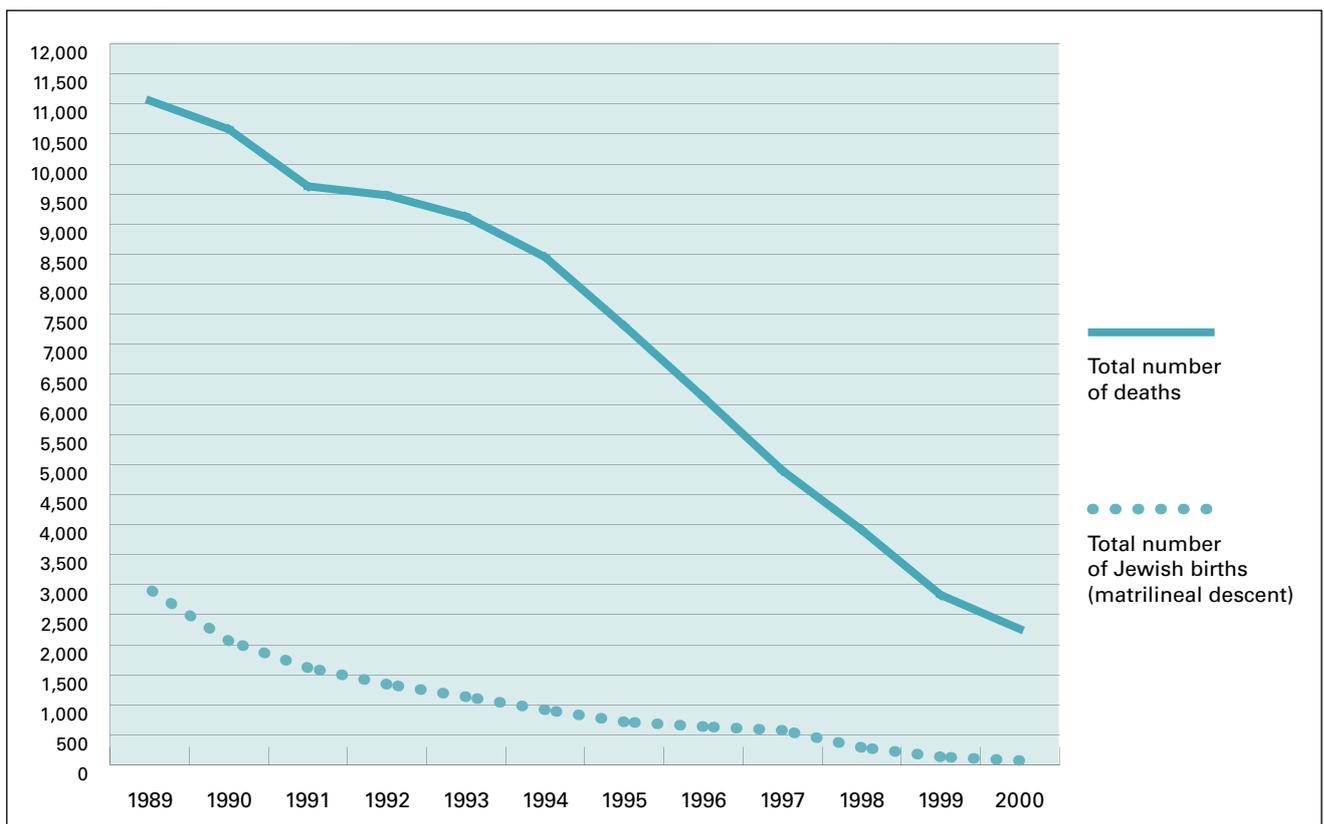
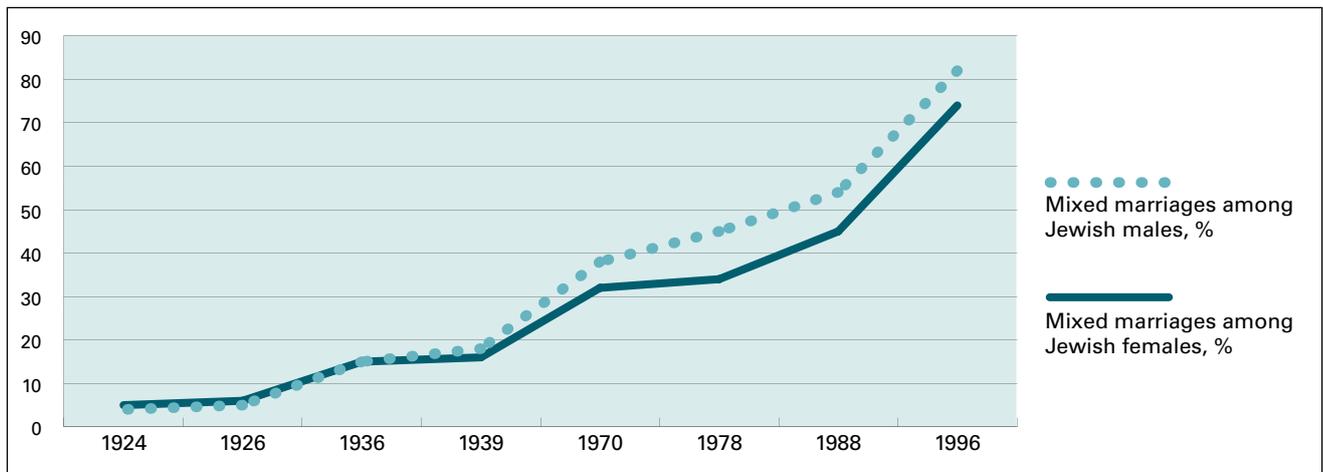


Table 3. Percentage of mixed marriages among all registered marriages Involving Jews in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, 1924-1996¹⁷

Year	Russia		Ukraine		Belarus	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1924	17	9	4	5	2	3
1926	25	17	5	6	2	4
1936	44(a)	35(a)	15	15	13	11
1939	--	--	18	16	--	--
1970	--	--	38	32	--	--
1978	59	43	45	34	38	26
1988	73	63	54	45	48	40
1996	--	--	82	74	--	--

(a) Ashkenazi Jews only

Figure 5. Change in numbers of mixed marriages in the territory of Ukraine



still be considered as Jews according to *halacha* (Jewish law)

The cumulative effect of these factors is that Ukraine was included by all researchers and observers in the list of countries with a decreasing Jewish population. According to the *World Jewish Population Report*,

Ukraine belongs to the “terminal” type of demography.¹⁸

1.6 The Jewish population, 2001 to the present

According to the *World Jewish Population Report*, in 2010 Ukraine belonged to the list of countries with the largest ‘core’ Jewish

17 Ibid. See also: Altshuler M. (1987). “Soviet Jewry since the Second World War: Population and Social Structure”. New York; Greenwood Press; Denisenko M. (2002). “Jews and Germans in the USSR: Mixed Marriages in the 1920s-1930s”. *Rossiskii demograficheskii zhurnal*, No. 1, pp. 46–57 (Russian); Oren (Nadel) Y. and Prat N. (1996). *The Shorter Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 8. The Society for Research on Jewish Communities and the Hebrew University, Jerusalem (Russian)

18 DellaPergola, S. (2010). “World Population Report”, p.29; (see: www.jewishdatabank.org). The technical term “terminal” specifically relates to an age composition where 5% or less of the population is comprised of children below 15 years old, and 35% or more is comprised of people aged 65 and above. It does not suggest that such a Jewish aggregate cannot continue to exist and to produce for many more years, but rather that it has ceased regenerating itself and is bound to decline quickly.

populations, ranked eleventh in the world with 71,500 Jews, or 0.5 per cent of the world's Jewish population. For the purposes of the report, the definition of 'core' is different from the notion of 'nucleus' referred to above. According to DellaPergola, the concept of a core Jewish population includes all those who, when asked in a socio-demographic survey, identify themselves as Jews, or who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same household, and do not have another monotheistic religion. Such a definition broadly overlaps, but does not necessarily coincide, with *halacha* or other normatively binding definitions.¹⁹

If an 'enlarged' Jewish population definition is considered, including non-Jews with Jewish ancestry and non-Jewish members of Jewish households, estimates of the number of Jews living in contemporary Ukraine vary from 100,000 to 300,000, depending on one's approach to the definition of who is a Jew. The largest Jewish population centres are Kiev (60,000–75,000), Dnepropetrovsk (30,000–40,000), Kharkov (20,000–25,000), Odessa (18,000–22,000), and Donetsk (10,000–12,000). These figures represent popular estimates of the Jewish population according to the Israeli Law of Return.²⁰ In the Census of 2001, 103,600 people identified themselves as Jews (but only 3,100 of these indicated Yiddish as their native language). Ashkenazi Jews represent the largest Jewish ethnic group. There are small groups of Krymchaks (700), Bukharian, Mountain and Georgian Jews living in the state. There is also a small community of Crimean Karaites (834 according to the 2001 Census, 671 of them in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea).²¹

19 Ibid., p.13

20 Gidwitz, B. "Jewish Life in Independent Ukraine: Fifteen Years after the Soviet Collapse", *Jewish Center for Public Affairs*, 15 April 2007.

21 Krymchaks and Karaites are autochthonous Jewish sub-ethnic groups, officially classed as two of the few "indigenous" ethnicities of Ukraine. However, the official leaders of most Ukrainian Karaite organizations (especially the Krymkarailar Association of Crimean Karaites, the Supreme Council of Crimean Karaites of Ukraine, and the Religious Board of Ukrainian Karaites) refuse to consider Karaites a part of the Jewish nation, emphasizing instead the Turkish elements of their culture. The path of "Turkishizing" their national identity was also chosen by some Krymchak organization leaders.

All observers agree that the Jewish population of the post-Soviet states has declined dramatically in recent decades, in greater proportion than the general post-Soviet population. Like the broader population, Jews have experienced a negative growth rate since the collapse of the Soviet Union due to high mortality and low fertility rates. The death-to-birth ratio among Ukrainian Jews is 13:1, that is, 13 Jews die for every Jewish child who is born. However, continuing emigration – albeit in smaller numbers than in previous years – and assimilation continue to deplete the Jewish population.

The balance of international migration (immigration and emigration)

In the last years of the first decade of the twenty-first century there was a gradual increase in the numbers of Ukrainian Jews emigrating to Israel. The specific demographic feature of the *aliyah* of the 2000s is the growing proportion of young, educated, often well-established and well-off individuals in their late twenties and thirties, who are looking for career opportunities rather than being motivated by a particular ideological desire to live in the Jewish State.

Age composition

The low birth-rate and outflow of the younger generation of Ukrainian Jews resulted in an abnormal age composition of the Jewish community of Ukraine, with a disproportionately large older cohort and a much thinner "stem" of active younger people. Table 4 provides the official statistical data of the most recent Ukrainian Census (2001) with regard to the percentage of people in each age group for the Ukrainian population, as a whole, and among Ukrainian Jews, in particular.²²

Whilst the overall picture is one of 'terminal' decline (DellaPergola), there are certain communities within Ukraine, notably Dnepropetrovsk, whose demographic profile differs significantly from the gloomy mainstream pattern. Furthermore, over the last twenty years, major efforts have been made both by international Jewish organizations and local Jews to create and sustain the Jewish community in

22 Gidwitz B. "Changing Jewish Communities: Post-Soviet Jewry on the Cusp of Its Third Decade"; *Jewish Center for Public Affairs*, 25 May 2007.

Table 4. Analyses of Jewish population of Ukraine compared to the total population of Ukraine, by main age groups, 2001

	Year	Total	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Median Age
Population of Ukraine, as a whole*	2001	100	14	20	28	22	16	40.2
Jewish population	2001	100	6	10	14	35	35	56.4

* Estimated age breakdown compiled from various sources²³

Ukraine. The analysis in section 1.7 provides an overview of the development of Ukraine's Jewish community beyond pure statistics, depicting its achievements, challenges and trends for the future.

1.7 General information on Jewish organizations in Ukraine²⁴

According to the State Committee on Ethnicities and Religions, 288 Jewish national organizations and 297 Jewish religious congregations were registered in Ukraine at the beginning of 2010. About 100 Jewish charitable organizations and foundations should be added to this number. However, according to Nativ,²⁵ only 15% of Ukrainian Jews take any part in the programmes of these organizations; 85% of Ukraine's Jews do not participate in organized Jewish community life.²⁶

The main international Jewish organizations in Ukraine are:

- The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), the largest Jewish non-profit organization in the world, has served as the primary organization responsible for the immigration (*aliyah*) and absorption of Jews from the diaspora to Israel, and has offices in over seventy Ukrainian cities;
- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a worldwide Jewish

relief organization that offers aid to Jewish communities around the world through a network of social and community assistance programmes and also contributes to disaster relief and development assistance to non-Jewish communities, maintains missions in four cities (Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk);

- Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the Claims Conference), which, through the JDC, supports the wide network of 'Heseds' (welfare centres) in almost seventy cities;
- Hillel, the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, which engages thousands of Jewish college students in local religious, cultural, artistic, and community-service activities, has eight centres across Ukraine (Kiev, Odessa, Lvov, Kharkov, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Sevastopol and Simferopol).

The major Ukrainian Jewish organizations and umbrella associations of local communities include:

- The Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities (Va'ad) of Ukraine, which was established officially in 1991 with the purpose of creating and strengthening the Jewish institutions that promote Jewish national revival, and establishing connections between Jewish organizations. It was previously part of the united Va'ad of the USSR (Confederation of Jewish Organizations and Communities of the USSR). Today it includes 266 organizations from ninety cities. In 2002, the Va'ad became one of the co-founders of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC).
- The Jewish Council of Ukraine (JCU), which was established in 1992 as a successor organization to the Republican Association

23 Other sources used include: Gitelman Z. Y., Glants, M. and Goldman, M.I. (2003). "Jewish life after the USSR". Indiana University Press

24 Unless otherwise indicated, the primary source utilized is: General Information on Ukrainian Jewish Organizations; see: <http://ejc.org/page208>.

25 'Nativ', or officially, 'Lishkat Hakesher' or The Liaison Bureau, is an Israeli liaison organization that maintained contact with Jews living in the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War and encouraged *aliyah*.

26 For the purposes of this survey "Jews" are people entitled to repatriation under the terms of the Israeli Law of Return.

of Jewish Culture (established in 1991), which, in turn, was the successor of the Kiev Association of Jewish Culture, founded in 1988. Today the JCU, among others, initiates and arranges Jewish public cultural events and exhibitions, erects monuments, contributes to the commemoration of the Babi Yar tragedy and acknowledges 'Righteous Gentiles' and their descendants.

- The All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress (VEK), the largest Jewish organization in Ukraine aiming at the rebirth of Jewish life in Ukraine, was established in 1997; its first President was businessman Vadim Rabinovich. While not all Jewish leaders could be united under Rabinovich's leadership, VEK has had a number of indisputable achievements, including a consistent presence in the public space.
- In 1999 Rabinovich initiated the creation of the All-Ukrainian Union of Jewish Public Organizations "United Jewish Community of Ukraine" (OEOU), an independent public organization that concentrated its efforts on supporting the daily life and activities of Jewish communities of Ukraine. In 2008, at the third convention of the OEOU, a major entrepreneur, Igor Kolomoisky, was elected its President. He was re-elected as the President of OEOU in 2012.
- The London-based European Jewish Union (EJU), a non-profit organization with the sole aim of promoting Jewish life in Europe, sees its priorities as bringing together Jewish students and young professionals from across the continent for meaningful encounters and in fighting antisemitism in Europe. The EJU was started by Kolomoisky and Rabinovich, after the withdrawal of Kolomoisky from the position of President of the European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC), which he held from 2010.
- The Jewish Fund of Ukraine (JFU) was formed in 1997 with the purpose of strengthening the Jewish communities of Ukraine in the field of Jewish education, culture, welfare, community building, publishing, international and intercultural dialogue. Its founder and first President was Alexander Feldman, an entrepreneur from Kharkov and people's deputy of Ukraine; its executive director was Arkady Monastyrski, who registered another all-Ukrainian organization in 2008, the Jewish Forum of Ukraine (also JFU).
- In 2008, Feldman, together with Eduard Dolinski (former executive director of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine), founded the Ukrainian Jewish Committee (UJC), which was designed to become a political, representative and lobbyist institution.
- The Jewish Confederation of Ukraine (EKU) whose President is Sergey Maximov, was created in 1999, as an all-Ukrainian union consisting of independent public, charitable, religious Jewish organizations active in the field of welfare, the restoration of a Jewish way of life and the support of humanitarian values.

2 Major achievements and milestones over the past twenty years

Looking back over the past twenty years, some of the most important achievements and milestones in the development of the Ukrainian Jewish community have been:

- The creation of a communal infrastructure, consisting of the religious institutional framework and a range of welfare and cultural institutions. These include the full traditional Jewish religious and life-cycle services, kosher stores and catering, a broad network of welfare centres (mostly represented by JDC's Heseds), orphanages and elderly care homes, local and pan-Ukrainian cultural initiatives. In addition, for historical reasons, much has been built aimed at the preservation of Jewish heritage, including the creation of Jewish museums, and the cataloguing of Jewish archives and cemeteries, etc.

Remarkably, in addition to the international support from overseas donors, local Jews have assumed a greater responsibility for their own community needs, although, so far, this trend prevails only among wealthy individuals of large cities, rather than the majority of the Jewish population of Ukraine.

- The recognition of the Jewish community of Ukraine by the State, including key decrees by the President of Ukraine with regard to the Jewish community. These include: "On measures of returning religious property to religious organizations" (1992), according to which religious communities must be handed back their religious buildings and properties confiscated in Soviet times; and "On transfer of Torah Scrolls to Jewish religious communities of Ukraine", according to which State archives are due to return to the Jewish communities Torah scrolls confiscated in the 1920s-30s by the Communist authorities.

Since 1999, "Lessons of the Holocaust" has been a mandatory subject in Ukrainian schools, (but in reality, each Ukrainian schoolchild attends only one two-hour lesson as an introduction to this tragedy). The Presidents and Prime

Ministers of Ukraine officially take part in both commemoration ceremonies dedicated to the anniversaries of Babi Yar and festivities on Jewish holidays.

- The creation of a broad Jewish educational infrastructure: educational institutions have been established across the full spectrum, from nurseries, through primary schools, to the Jewish University. Today the framework of Jewish formal and informal educational institutions belongs to various denominations, including several Jewish state schools.
- The establishment of links with international Jewish organizations: Ukraine is represented in major European and international Jewish organizations, such as the European Jewish Congress, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, World Jewish Congress. The Jewish communities and organizations of Ukraine have established connections with international organizations and institutions, whether directly or with the assistance of international Jewish organizations represented in Ukraine (JDC, JAFI, Chabad).
- Thanks to the activities of JAFI and the Embassy of Israel operating a pan-Ukrainian network of Cultural Centres, Ukrainian Jews have become familiar with Israeli institutions, culture and everyday life. For the younger generation, visits to Israel through Birthright, MASA and other exchange programmes have become the norm. In 2008, the Trade and Economic Department of the State of Israel to Ukraine, a professional unit of the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour, was established to promote and facilitate economic and trade cooperation between Israel and Ukraine. Since 2010, 'the Days of Israel' have been run regularly in Ukraine, while the cancellation in 2011 of the requirement for visas between Israel and Ukraine served as an additional incentive for the growth of tourism and business relations between the two countries.
- An upsurge of Jewish life outside the official Jewish institutional framework. Among

the largest grassroots initiatives: Limmud-Ukraine; Moishe House Kiev; web-portal www.jewishnet.ru; the launch of Jewish Centre for Educational Tourism and guiding school “JUkraine”; the growth of interest in educational trips across Jewish sites in Ukraine; independent entertainment and educational projects, such as JAFARI-Quest; and the opening of private kosher cafés and restaurants.

- The emergence of multiple Jewish religious alternatives: Ukrainian Jews may choose from a wide spectrum of opportunities to practise their Judaism, from Orthodox (represented by Hasidic movements, in the first place Chabad) to Reform. The Conservative movement, even though less

widespread across Ukraine, has an active educational and cultural centre in Kiev.

- The creation of the largest Jewish community centre: in 2008, the construction of a new community centre “Menorah”, advertised as the largest multifunctional Jewish centre in the world, began in Dnepropetrovsk with the aid of businessmen Igor Kolomoisky and Gennady Bogolyubov. Seven towers of “Menorah” (from five to twenty floors), form one complex, together with the Golden Rose synagogue, a four-storey community centre and a *mikvah* (ritual bath). The centre was opened on 16 October 2012 and is now in operation, together with the Jewish Memory and Holocaust Museum located in one of the towers.

3 Major philanthropic investments over the past twenty years

In order to achieve all of these developments, it has been necessary to cultivate a variety of funding sources. Some of the major donors (mostly overseas) support a wide range of community projects and allocate unrestricted donations to core activities, while others prefer to focus on and facilitate communal advancement in specific areas.

3.1 Key infrastructural investments

Most of the community development projects and capital funding have taken place due to the consistent support of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which has been, and remains an indisputable leader of financial support for the Jewish community of Ukraine, particularly in terms of creating communal infrastructures, building Jewish life and establishing the welfare system of the Hesed centres. Two additional significant foundations that are active in Ukraine via JDC are the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the Claims Conference) and the UJA Federation of New York.

Another prominent supporter of Jewish community life in Ukraine has been the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). Its initial priority of outreach to Jews according to the Law of Return and the promotion of *aliyah*, has shifted to working with local Jewish youth over the past decade, when *aliyah* from the FSU declined. In recent years, the Genesis Philanthropy Group, acting in the countries of the Former Soviet Union via CAF-Russia, the Moscow representative office of Charities Aid Foundation (London), has also made a significant contribution through a special programme called 'Jewish Communities.' This fosters the revival of Jewish identity and encourages grassroots initiatives based on cooperation between independent youth groups and established community organizations.

Among the major local donors who provide core funding to Jewish communities and organizations are the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, United Jewish Community of Ukraine, the Victor Pinchuk Fund (which primarily supports the Jewish Community of Dnepropetrovsk),

and Alexander Levin, supporter of the Brodsky Synagogue.

A number of Ukrainian communities are twinned with cities in the USA (Dnepropetrovsk with Boston; Kiev with Chicago; Odessa with Baltimore; Kharkov with Washington; and others). The most consistent support is provided by the Greater Boston Jewish Federation to the Jewish Community of Dnepropetrovsk within the Kehilla Project. This includes ongoing assistance of various kinds and support for capital projects, such as the establishment in 1997 of the Women and Children Clinic.

3.2 Welfare investments

While all of the donors and foundations which supported the core activities of Jewish communities and organizations of Ukraine have also helped to alleviate the hardships of the most vulnerable community members, a number of foundations focus their support on welfare programmes.

World Jewish Relief (WJR) has been working in Ukraine since the 1990s providing relief to the most vulnerable strata of the Jewish population, in the first place to elderly, impoverished and homeless people, children at risk and people with disabilities. The practical support ranges from meeting essential material, health and educational needs, to the building of Jewish community centres (in Kharkov and Krivoy Rog). The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ) is also involved in this area, and focuses its activity on life-saving care for the elderly and orphaned Jews in the FSU. The fund works in Ukraine via JDC, but also accepts direct applications from individual Jewish communities and organizations. In addition, GJARN (Global Jewish Assistance and Relief Network) has provided humanitarian assistance of clothing, pharmaceuticals and food packages.

3.3 Educational and cultural investments

An undisputed leader in the support of Jewish education, according to most of the

respondents, is the Ohr Avner Foundation (Chabad Lubavitch), which established a wide network of Jewish schools in almost every city throughout Ukraine, as well as the international college for women “Beit Chana” in Dnepropetrovsk. Other supporters of Jewish education in Ukraine include the Israeli Government, which initiated and supported the Heftzibah Programme of pro-Israel education at Jewish schools (via Nativ); the L.A. Pincus Fund for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, which supports innovative initiatives in the field of Jewish education; Igor Kerez, who is a principal supporter of the Jewish Studies Certification programme at Kiev Mohyla Academy; Va’ad and Sefer Centre (Russia) both provide multilateral assistance to scientific research on Jewish civilization. Conferences, publication activities and summer schools with elements of field research supported by these organizations have prompted the rise of a new generation of Jewish academics in Ukraine; and the Chais Centre for Jewish Studies in Russian initiates and develops Jewish studies in Russian at the highest academic level in both the FSU and Israel, and supports various educational initiatives, including training and internships in Jerusalem.

3.4 Jewish culture

The Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe and the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund (JHF), both of which are committed to the enhancement of Jewish life in Europe, have made a significant contribution during more than a decade of activity in Ukraine, by supporting a wide range of educational, cultural, heritage and community-based initiatives, including museum and archival programmes.

The Avi Chai Foundation has also made numerous investments in the FSU, including the online portal Booknik.ru (a Russian-language site providing access to detailed information on Jewish life and thought, with a separate section for children and family reading). It has also made valuable contributions to Jewish schools, academic Jewish studies and Jewish camping.

Another pan-FSU initiative, the educational forum “Limmud”, is supported by a wide range of individuals and foundations, including the Cahn Family Foundation, Diane Wohl Family Foundation, Chester Foundation, European Jewish Union, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Jewish National Fund, Keren Hayesod (United Jewish Appeal), Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, Ministry of Information and Diaspora Affairs, World Zionist Organization, World Jewish Congress and many others.

Some of the largest investments in the preservation of Jewish heritage have been made by local businessmen who have supported the restoration of synagogues and cemeteries. A special role has been played by the leader of Va’ad, Josef Zissels, who initiated and carried out a thorough inventory of Jewish communal property, as well as restoration works in various parts of Ukraine. In addition, the Lo Tishkach Foundation, a joint project of the Conference of European Rabbis and the Claims Conference, supported by the Genesis Philanthropy Group, works on surveying the locations and assessing the current condition of Jewish cemeteries and places of mass killing.

3.5 Jewish religious life

The Federation of Jewish Communities (FJC) supports almost 200 large and small Jewish communities across Ukraine that belong to the Chabad movement, with permanent rabbis in over thirty cities. In addition, the Rohr Family Foundation, among others, supported the building of ritual baths across Ukraine.

Systematic assistance from the World Union of Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) has played an important role in the development of the Reform movement in Ukraine, taking care of the administrative overheads of Reform communities and helping to fund programme costs, directly and assisting in fundraising.

3.6 Other key investments

The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Hillel International make large

investments in the field of young adult engagement and leadership development through consistent support of Hillel centres in Ukraine.

There are also a number of foundations and initiatives active in the field of combating antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment, whose core impact may be divided into two major areas: the monitoring of antisemitism and proactive education for tolerance.

With regard to the monitoring of antisemitism, respondents mentioned the Expert Group for Problems of Antisemitism of the Former Soviet Union Commission of the World Jewish Congress; the International Renaissance Foundation (“Soros Fund”) that supported the “Monitoring of inter-ethnic agreements in the context of elections”; the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Community, which monitors local antisemitic publications on the Internet; and especially, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, an umbrella organization of Jewish human rights groups working in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, that went beyond random reports or breaking news announcements, by launching the systematic monitoring of antisemitism.

Concerning tolerance education and Holocaust remembrance, respondents mentioned the Anne Frank House supported by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which plays an important role in seminars and exhibitions, and the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (recently renamed The International Holocaust Remembrance

Alliance (IHRA)), an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders’ support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally.

A recently established initiative by Alexander Feldman, of the Institute of Human Rights, Prevention of Extremism and Xenophobia (founded in 2010), supports conferences promoting interfaith dialogue.

The activities of the Boris Berezovsky Foundation of Civil Rights, the Marko Otten Fund and MATRA programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs were mentioned as contributing to the combating of antisemitism in Ukraine through publishing, seminars, round-tables and interfaith dialogue.

Apart from these major donors, a number of philanthropic foundations and private individuals also give financial support and seed funding on a smaller scale to various religious, social, educational and cultural organizations grass-root initiatives and local Jewish business start-ups, such as the Hamama programme (JAFI), Natan Fund, and Nachshonim Programme of Norway.

The Embassies of foreign countries (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Canada, USA, etc.), present a separate category of funding sources that indirectly support the development of Jewish community life, since non-profit organizations can receive grants for projects that are not specifically Jewish.

4 Jewish community life and its organizations

4.1 Religious institutions and religious life

During the past twenty years several all-Ukrainian religious unions were formed. The orthodox communities are organized under the umbrellas of three such bodies: the Chabad Lubavitch, with headquarters in Dnepropetrovsk, comprises 123 registered communities; the Association of Judaic Religious Organizations of Ukraine (OIROU), comprises eighty-four communities; and the All-Ukrainian Congress of Judaic Religious Communities (VKIRO), with thirteen registered communities. Followers of Reform Judaism have their own organization – the Religious Association of Progressive Judaism Congregations of Ukraine (ROOPIU) – which is comprised of fifty-one registered congregations. The other twenty-six officially registered religious communities do not belong to any all-Ukrainian union and act independently. There are a few notable communities of Skver, Braslav and other Chasidim in Ukraine. The Conservative Movement is active in Chernivtsi, Berdichev, Kiev and other cities.

Several religious leaders compete for the title of Chief Rabbi of Ukraine. In 1991, Karlin-Stolin Hasid Rabbi Yakov Dov Bleich was proclaimed Chief Rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine. However, at the 2003 Convention of the Rabbis of Ukraine, Chabad Lubavitch representative Rabbi Azriel Haykin was elected Chief Rabbi. He was mostly supported by rabbis who were members of the FUJC (the majority in Ukraine). However, as OIROU and VKIRO rabbis also took part in the convention, Rabbi Haykin's election as Chief Rabbi could be considered legitimate. Nevertheless, in 2008, Rabbi Haykin left his post due to old age and ill health. Furthermore, at the 2005 convention of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress another Chief Rabbi was elected – Rabbi Moshe Reuven Azman, who also belongs to Lubavitch. Throughout these years, Rabbi Bleich has continued to refer to himself as Chief Rabbi of Ukraine. Moreover, the Reform congregations elected a Progressive Chief Rabbi – Rabbi Alex Dukhovny – in 2003.

Despite this confusion, most of the respondents emphasized that the restoration of Jewish religious life in Ukraine is one of the biggest achievements that has brought about change in the lives of local Jews:

“ ... If we compare the functioning of our religious and non-religious Jewish communities and organizations, it is evident that religious infrastructures are more efficient, especially considering that they were restored virtually from scratch. They attract more and more people. Sure, we won't be able to reach the level of the countries that have not undergone secularization, and the number of truly observant people will always be just a tiny part of the entire Jewish population of Ukraine, yet the very fact that Ukrainian Jews are aware of some elements of Jewish tradition and feel the urge to come to the synagogue, even if only from time to time, can be credited to the Jewish religious structures ... ”

Nowadays, Chabad dominates over the other religious movements in all the regions of Ukraine. Many respondents commented on the unprecedented expansion of this strictly Orthodox movement:

“ ... Sometimes they ask me, how come that Odessa, a historical centre of Reform Judaism, is a home for flourishing orthodox Hasidic communities today, rather than for Progressive Judaism? I have a simple answer: Reform was waiting for favourable, comfortable conditions before coming to Ukraine, while Chabadniks stepped in without reservation, even though they had to live on carrots and potatoes to keep kosher. The situation was extremely difficult.”

Similarly:

“ ... Chabad was the first here and remains the strongest, as it was the only movement prepared to send its 'shlichim' [emissaries] and professional community leaders from abroad to build something out of nothing. Chabad's approach to community management, outreach and cooperation with business people proved to be

highly efficient and its structures are perhaps the most powerful in Jewish Ukraine ... ”

Nevertheless, the Reform Movement is gradually catching up, gaining more supporters.

“ ... In 2000, there were eleven officially registered communities of Progressive Judaism. Today there are forty-seven across Ukraine. We managed to get back seven synagogue buildings as a result of restitution of Jewish property. There are communities in Ukraine where the Reform synagogue houses all the Jewish organizations. We managed to achieve such wonderful results due to the support of local donors, who took an active part in the restoration of the synagogue and the development of Jewish life in their cities ... ”

“ ... Today in Ukraine there are two Reform rabbis and several people work as acting rabbis, and I see positive signs for the further progress of our movement. I attribute our growth to the fact that we welcome people rejected by the Orthodox communities, as they are not Jews according to halacha. We work with Jews according to the Law of Return, even third and fourth generation. ... Not only can they participate in cultural and entertainment activities, such as in JAFI clubs or the Israel Cultural Centre, but they can also take a leading position in the community, vote and be elected. They enjoy full rights ... ”

The willingness of the Reform community to embrace people who are not considered Jewish according to *halacha* is often criticized by Chabadniks, who blame the Reform for promoting assimilation. Supporters of the Reform Movement clearly disagree:

“ ... They [the Orthodox] accuse us of promoting assimilation among Jews. It is not true. Quite the opposite. We work with intermarried families to encourage non-Jewish spouses to join the Jewish community and stay here, learning how to build a Jewish home, thus avoiding losing Jews who marry out of the community ... ”

Moreover, the Reform Movement believes that working with non-Jews is a crucial factor for building a tolerant society in Ukraine:

“ ... When we interact with the Ukrainian public, and we see ourselves as an integral part of the

wider Ukrainian civil society, it is very important for us to show that Judaism has many dimensions and colours, not only black hats and peyot [sidelocks]. Judaism is less about the way you look, and more about inner spirituality and values ... This work contributes greatly to the creation of mutual respect and tolerance ... ”

Such different approaches to the interpretation of Judaism have inevitably led these main religious movements in Ukraine towards different types of challenges. For example, Orthodox communities are commonly looking for fresh ideas, how to make Judaism appealing to the active professional strata of the Jewish population:

“ ... Much more has to be done with the intelligentsia, with academics, students, you know they are a little bit outside [of the community]. The more intelligent they are, the more secular they become ... ”

In contrast, the Reform Movement has had some success dealing with this challenge:

“ ... One of the achievements of the Reform Movement in Ukraine is that we have made Judaism appealing to intellectuals. Today, among our congregants are artists, composers, choreographers, theatre directors, rectors of universities, professors, scientists. That’s the calibre of our congregation and the fact that they are interested in our movement and are willing take an active part in the development of our community speaks for itself better than any words ... ”

However, the infrastructure of the Reform Movement is much less developed than that of the Orthodox communities. For example, a representative of the Orthodox community in Dnepropetrovsk reported that:

“ ... annually or biannually we initiate a new capital project, creating new buildings that become homes for community projects; in such a way we are trying to respond to all the needs of the Jews in our city.”

In comparison, Reform communities, in most places, rent their offices and synagogues and are only beginning to look into ways of acquiring their own premises. They see this lack of

facilities as a serious impediment to their further development:

“ ... The community has functioned for almost twenty years, and has always had to rent premises for our activities, and often they barely cover our needs For example, today the Kiev community has about 500 members, while the prayer hall that we rent now in Kiev is intended for forty people maximum ... ”

“ ... Because we don't have our own premises that conform to the standards of success, we are sending out the wrong message. On the one hand, the artists and business people who are our congregants rarely come to the synagogues, which are adorned with gold and marble. On the other hand, they don't gather in our space, either, as it is below the level of their expectations. Therefore, for the meetings of the Club of Jewish Intellectuals we have to rent additional space ... Still, I believe that the community is not about walls and furniture, but the souls of the people who feel themselves a part of it ... ”

The representatives of all congregations and religious movements note that whatever results they have achieved so far, there is still a lot more to be done in terms of outreach and fostering the development of Judaism among Ukrainian Jews. Among the most recent signs of positive development in this field are the dedication in autumn 2013 of two new synagogues, one for the Reform and the other for the Orthodox Jewish community of Kiev.

4.2 Jewish education

Jewish educational institutions in Ukraine include almost all types known in other diaspora countries, such as pre-schools, day and Sunday schools, *yeshivot*, women's colleges, summer camps and community centres, youth and young adult clubs, specialized research institutions dealing with the Holocaust and university departments of Jewish studies.

There are thirty-seven Jewish day schools in Ukraine, which (until autumn 2008), were mainly financed by the Chabad Ohr Avner Foundation, as well as sixty Sunday schools, eleven kindergartens, eight *yeshivot*, and seventy *ulpanim* (Hebrew-language schools), attended by an estimated 10,000 children and adults in total. Apart from

Chabad schools, there are also traditional schools, supported by the Karlin-Stolin Orach Chaim Foundation, a network of ORT technological colleges, and a day school established by the Conservative Movement in Chernivitsi. The Va'ad runs a Jewish education centre. Children's, youth and family summer recreation camps are organized with the aid of JAFI, JDC, Ohr Avner, Midreshet Yerushalayim, Hillel and Va'ad.

Formal Jewish education

Most of the Jewish schools are fully accredited and include Jewish studies and the state curriculum. Upon graduation children receive state diplomas, and are fully prepared for entrance exams into higher education institutions. Many parents of children in Jewish schools perceive the quality of education in Jewish schools to be higher than in state schools owing to a number of factors: the combined state and Jewish studies curriculum, the quality of teaching, foreign language instruction (including Hebrew) and the provision of extra-curricular activities. Nevertheless, the main challenge facing the Jewish secondary education sector is that unless parents have a strong Jewish identity or plan to make *aliyah*, they often prefer to send their children to a private school if they can afford it, or to a free state school instead. However, there are also some cases where parents with no Jewish background would love to send their children to Jewish schools if only they would accept them.

The curriculum and enrolment requirements at Jewish schools vary, depending on the founding organization or individual funders: from an intensely religious curriculum for halachically Jewish pupils at Chabad Schools, to a curriculum with enhanced computer technology programmes at ORT day schools which is available to both Jewish and non-Jewish children.

Typically, Jewish schools in Ukraine offer six to eight class periods in Jewish studies each week. Half of these classes are devoted to Hebrew instruction and the other to a mix of Jewish tradition, history and culture. Jewish holidays are observed, and occasional *shabbatonim* (educational events or programmes held over the Sabbath) for pupils and their parents take place at local resorts.

Teacher training opportunities are available through several institutions. The Jewish Agency

and the religious movements provide some training seminars, as well as teaching materials, for instructors in both day and Sunday schools. Several Chabad colleges in the post-Soviet states enrol young women for early childhood teaching certificate or degree programmes; teachers of Jewish studies in Orthodox middle and high schools are often recruited in Israel. Russian or Ukrainian-born instructors of Hebrew may have learned the language at Jewish Agency or other *ulpan* classes; several colleges and universities in larger cities also offer undergraduate preparation in Hebrew and in Jewish history. Some Hebrew instructors are offered stipends by the Jewish Agency for advanced study in Israel.

According to one respondent:

“ ... Jewish schools should uphold the level of professionalism of their teachers. No doubt, Judaism, Jewish tradition and history should be taught by a rabbi or professional Jewish educators. If the schools ensure that the rest of the teaching staff, for example, teachers of maths, physics, world history, foreign languages, are as professional as the teachers of Jewish subjects, then Jewish educational institutions will become prestigious and instead of dealing with enrolment challenges and ways of attracting pupils, we shall have to discuss the problem of how to accommodate everyone who wants to study at such Jewish schools ... ”

Nevertheless, some respondents expressed strong concern about the quality of Jewish studies teaching:

“ ... the level of Jewish studies teaching in Jewish secondary schools is disastrously low. And here we can't rely on methodological support from abroad, we need to raise our own methodological level, and the creation of a professional centre may be a very important step forward ... ”

Several respondents also raised the issue of the quality and availability of published teaching materials. Few Jewish education professionals are satisfied with the Russian-language textbooks available in either Hebrew language or Jewish studies. Teacher groups under the auspices of different Chabad rabbis have produced Jewish studies textbooks in Russian, but these publications are not coordinated by any central body, have not been developed as a comprehensive

age/grade-related series, sometimes appear simplistic and usually do not address the needs of non-Chabad organizations. Furthermore, the translations of textbooks are often insensitive to local cultural conditions.

Most respondents reported declining enrolment levels at Jewish schools. The main reason for this is the competition from free state schools and private, non-Jewish, international schools. Mostly deprived of state support, Jewish schools in Ukraine compete with both of these because they offer double periods of instruction in foreign languages, mathematics, science or other specialized subjects. Too often, Jewish schools are unable to match either the quality of education provided by these elite public schools or the quality of their buildings. Many Jewish day schools attract large numbers of single parent and underprivileged families seeking extended day programmes that keep their children safe and warm with various welfare benefits, such as hot lunches and free bus transport. The Jewish middle class typically prefers alternative surroundings for their children, especially as they reach secondary school age.

Particularly vulnerable are schools under Hasidic or other Orthodox auspices whose interpretation of Jewish tradition and observance does not appeal to the largely secular majority of post-Soviet Jews. The only exception is ORT where religious observance is secondary to the intense hi-tech curriculum, but ORT caters only for eleven to eighteen year-olds, and quite often, parents prefer not to move their children from a familiar non-Jewish environment to an unfamiliar Jewish school.

Respondents emphasized that efforts should be focused on the quality of teaching, in order to make Jewish schools more attractive to parents.

“ ... I would argue ... that any Jewish education must include Jewish tradition, Jewish history and, no doubt, Torah studies, as without this fundamental knowledge a person simply can't develop a Jewish identity. A Jewish education deprived of these essentials resembles Soviet Jewish schools of the 1920s: the only Jewish thing about them was that most of the pupils were Jews, which is not bad, but not enough. I believe that the Jewish schools today fulfil their task of

restoring Jewish life in Ukraine, as children bring Jewish knowledge to their families and thus we are indirectly reaching their parents who are too busy to participate in community life other than by attending school meetings. Parents generally like whatever is good for their children ... It's not an issue of whether the education is 'religious' or 'secular'. What matters is the quality of teaching. Jewish schools will have a chance only if the quality of their teaching overtakes those of non-Jewish educational institutions."

On the other hand, some respondents noted that the real issue is not the quality of teaching at Jewish schools, but rather a general perception among the assimilated majority that Jewish education lacks relevance for children living in contemporary Ukraine, as the Jewish community does not provide clear answers about how Jewish schools might help young Jews get established in life and make a career.

"... The success of any Jewish school greatly depends on the local community and the message it sends out to the public. It depends on a specific director, whether he hires his own relatives or reaches out to real professionals. It depends on the overall aims of the school, whether its graduates are able to find jobs and feel comfortable in both Jewish and non-Jewish labour markets. It depends whether the community itself provides competitive vacancies and thus may guarantee employment to its graduates ..."

Supporters of the Jewish school system include international Jewish religious streams (notably Chabad and other Hasidic organizations), international and local Jewish organizations (ORT, the Jewish Community of Kiev), and the Ukrainian State. Some Jewish day schools in Ukraine receive operating subsidies from the Israeli Ministry of Education and JAFI through the 'Heftzibah' programme, and some schools charge modest tuition, transport, and/or lunch fees. However, the imposition or increase of such fees often spurs an exodus of students whose families cannot afford them and prefer to send their children to other types of schools.

"... The system of Jewish schools in Ukraine is in survival mode. The financing it requires is comparable to the amounts consumed by welfare programmes, and since welfare needs always

prevail in the public conscience, it is unclear how formal education may get out of this crisis. Professionals are aware of it, they discuss various ways to solve the problem, but no clear solution has been found yet ..."

One of the suggestions about how to challenge the stereotype of Jewish education as lacking in quality and relevance was to re-brand the image of Jewish schools, although whether this would be possible, or for that matter effective, is questioned:

"... The answer is 'it depends'. I hardly believe that someone in Kiev or Odessa will decide that Jewish education should be presented in a certain way and suddenly everyone across the country picks this idea up and starts implementing it. To become mandatory, such decisions should be made on a governmental level by a minister of education, which is barely feasible. And yet we are talking about the image of individual schools, and good ones already take care of their public image, while bad ones won't benefit from promotion, anyway ..."

Informal Jewish education

Informal Jewish education is multi-faceted and extensive, and constitutes a wide variety of activities, including cultural initiatives, youth movements, summer camps, extracurricular programmes for schools, adult education programmes and walking tours. The organizations and initiatives described below have representative centres across Ukraine, unless otherwise indicated. Each organization has its own agenda directly related to Jewish informal education, though in recent years there is an obvious tendency to gather individual organizations, initiatives and projects under the same roof as the Jewish Community Centres, thus making it easier for the wider Jewish public to grasp the full diversity of the activities offered, as well as to use the available resources more efficiently to substantially improve the quality of events and ongoing projects.

The most prominent examples of such JCCs are Beit Grand in Odessa, Beit Dan in Kharkov, the recently opened Menorah in Dnepropetrovsk, as well as the entire system of JDC Jewish community centres and Heseds that, among others, serve as the seat for community-based youth clubs and are of especial importance for smaller communities without Hillel centres or

JAFI youth clubs. While the absolute number of members of such clubs is rather insignificant, as a rule they reach a much higher percentage of the target audience than Jewish youth organizations and clubs in large cities.

Among organizations and projects which facilitate the engagement of young people are:

- Student organization “Hillel” and JAFI youth clubs, described in greater detail in section 4.6;
- “Netzer Olami” (since 1993) – the youth movement of Progressive Judaism, which arranges educational training seminars, camps, trips to Israel and Eastern Europe;
- Tzofim programme for teenagers of Nativ (Israel Cultural Centre) – which encourages them to serve as madrichim (youth leaders) for younger participants;
- Jewish Youth Zionist Movement Bnei Akiva (since 1990) – today it is primarily active in Kiev, with its headquarters located in Galitskaya Synagogue (“Beit Yakov”) within the framework of Midrasha Tzionit, an educational platform for intellectual and spiritual growth, learning and community building which promotes the laws of Torah and firm ties with the Land of Israel. The core activity of Midrasha Tzionit is running the “Tchelet” camps for young people and teenagers.
- Ezra Ukraine – its main activity in Ukraine is the independent recruiting for Taglit-Birthright;
- Ukrainian Union of Jewish Students (since 2007) – the Ukrainian chapter of the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS);

Some worldwide Jewish youth movements such as Habonim Dror and Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed are not represented in Ukraine.

Jewish summer and winter camps are gaining in popularity. Notably:

- JAFI traditionally runs summer camps for children and teenagers;
- JCCs often arrange a variety of day-camps as well as family camps that are often based

outside of Ukraine and are considered a good option for family holidays;

- Hillel runs a summer camp for students that takes a format of a youth congress, in which educational and recreational activities are combined with opportunities for youth to meet, communicate and discuss urgent issues, and together seek solutions for the problems raised;
- There are camps for members of communal organizations (for example, the Reform movement, Orthodox Jewish camps, Nativ/Tzofim) that use camps, among other tools, to reward activists or recruit new members to their organization.

The most innovative Jewish camp for children is an international Jewish sports camp, J-Sport, launched under the initiative of Genesis Philanthropy Group, that brings to Ukraine Jewish children from an ever growing number of countries (e.g. five countries in 2013) to immerse them in a fascinating combination of sport, experiential learning activities, cultural encounters and discoveries during educational trips to Jewish sights in Ukraine. Since the camp does not belong to any of the existing communal organizations, it operates with the ultimate purpose of creating an international community of proud Jews, able and willing to contribute to the future. Its unique programme, excellent accommodation and facilities, as well as its relatively high participation fees make J-Sport attractive to a difficult target audience of prosperous yet unaffiliated Jewish families, who would normally be reluctant to send their children to any camp with a clear-cut ideological or religious agenda, or to highly-subsidized, yet poorly equipped camps.

4.3 Academic Jewish studies

Higher education in the field of Jewish studies is provided by several educational institutions in Ukraine. The International Solomon University in Kiev was founded in 1993 and received state accreditation in 1998. It provides a university level education in a variety of subjects, combined with a Jewish educational programme. It also has an Eastern-Ukrainian branch (VUF) in Kharkov which signed a cooperation agreement with Kharkov State University (KSU) and the Chais Centre at Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2008, and as a result, in 2011 opened a joint Ukrainian-

Israeli Centre of Academic Studies at the Kharkov State University.

The Jewish Women's Pedagogical College Beit Channa (Chabad) was founded in 1995 in Dnepropetrovsk to train teachers and childcare workers for Chabad-sponsored pre-schools and elementary schools throughout the post-Soviet states. The college currently offers programmes leading to certification as teachers in pre-school and primary grades, and childcare workers in pre-schools. In cooperation with the Crimean State University, it also offers bachelor's degrees in education. Its diplomas and degrees are recognized in the post-Soviet states and Israel.

The Odessa Jewish University was founded in 2003, and the South-Ukrainian Jewish University 'Chabad-Odessa' was founded in 2008. Both provide full scholarships to religious and halachically Jewish students and an education in economics and the humanities.

There is also a two-year certification programme in Jewish studies run by the humanities department of the National University of Kiev-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA).

Among other institutions active in the field of Jewish Studies, but not engaged in regular work with students are the Judaica Institute in Kiev (founded in 1993 by Va'ad), which conducts research, holds annual conferences on Jewish history and culture in Eastern Europe and has various archival and publishing activities; the Centre of History and Culture of Eastern European Jews at the NaUKMA (which was created when the Judaica Institute and the Jewish Studies department of the Vernadsky Central Academic Library combined forces to run programmes, publish and conduct research); and the Centre of Jewish Culture and History (known until 2008 as the Department of the History and Culture of the Jewish Nation) in the I.F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

There are also a number of institutions concerned with Holocaust Studies. The major Ukrainian ones include the All-Ukrainian Centre of Holocaust Studies (founded in 2002), and the Dnepropetrovsk *Tkuma* Centre. Ukrainian researchers have made significant strides forward

in their study of Holocaust history, and both of the institutions publish academic journals – *Kholokosti Sovremennost* (Holocaust and Modernity) and *Voprosy Kholokosta* (Issues of the Holocaust) respectively. Furthermore, the All-Ukrainian Centre of Holocaust Studies has worked with Yad Vashem to take teachers to Israel for a Holocaust education seminar, and collaborated with other international organizations such as the USC Shoah Foundation and Mémorial de la Shoah. The *Tkuma* Centre recently established the Jewish Memory and Holocaust Museum, located in the Menorah Jewish Community Centre in Dnepropetrovsk.

In addition, since 2004, a number of educational and research projects have been carried out by the International Centre for Jewish Education and Field Studies, and there are small research groups in Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk.

Like other areas of Jewish life, the field of academic Jewish studies is still relatively new in Ukraine. More or less absent twenty years ago, it is gradually being developed, and the quality is improving all the time. A respondent representing one of the institutions listed above commented:

“... We probably publish up to ninety per cent of all the books on Jewish studies in Ukraine. As of today, we've published about eighty books, a number of brochures, calendars, etc. Among them are books that undoubtedly may be considered academic publications, while there are some publications from the early years that we'd even be embarrassed to mention today, as they are semi-literate to some extent. But it couldn't be otherwise: we started when Ukraine had no experts in the field of academic Jewish studies. We started from scratch and step-by-step advanced to what we have today. I believe in ten years we'll be able to talk about more or less professional publications, professional exhibitions ...”

Similarly, a respondent from Odessa shared her experience in this area:

“... We gradually started discovering the history and culture of Odessa Jews. Again, a lot of assistance came from abroad. And not always financial, any support counted. For instance, Steven Zipperstein and his book 'The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History.'

This book gave us the basics that enabled us to move ahead, at least we knew what to look for. Then there was a book by Yigal Kotler, various publications by Migdal, a 'Moriah' scientific almanac. The twelve issues of 'Moriah' shed light on huge pieces of history of Jewish evolution, cultural facts, interpretations ... The Claims Conference supported the publishing of the book 'The Holocaust in Odessa Region' ... it was so important when there was no specialist source of information on this topic, and now there is ... "

Jewish studies disciplines are also beginning to be integrated into the curriculum of the state higher education institutions. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, over seventy higher education institutions run courses and extracurricular educational programmes connected to Jewish studies, the history of the Jewish people, Hebrew, Biblical studies, the Holocaust, etc. Some respondents noted that in terms of interaction and cooperation with the government educational authorities, the Jewish community of Ukraine has surpassed some other European countries.

" ... When we compare the extent of penetration of Jewish studies into the curriculum of public educational institutions, the situation in Ukraine is much better than in many European countries ... "

Nevertheless, some respondents considered this positive appraisal to be incomplete and raised the issue of the quality of the teaching of these subjects.

" ... Yes, technically there are classes and students, but who are the teachers? Some recently graduated quasi-experts? We really need both financial and organizational support for higher education in the field of Jewish studies. Any partnership with the developed centres of higher Jewish education would be much appreciated, and we are looking not only for money, but also internships, visits of tutors, books, opportunities to run joint projects, publishing of a scientific magazine ... "

Respondents noted that even though the introduction of Jewish subject courses is certainly positive, it is insufficient without fully-fledged departments of Jewish studies to provide students with systematic knowledge of the subject.

" ... One of the important tasks is to establish departments of Jewish studies in several Ukrainian universities, but we can't accomplish it by ourselves, we need partner support from Europe or the USA. And it shouldn't be a one-way process where we act as mere recipients of money and advice. This would be very important work for them and their research centres, too, as an important part of Jewish history and European history took place in these lands. Especially interesting are the periods of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries that have been little studied so far. Many books end with the Partition of Poland [at the end of the eighteenth century]. For instance, today we are working on the translation of an Oxford text book of Jewish studies in which the history and culture of Eastern European Jewry is almost missing ... I'm convinced this is not right. The Jewish history of this region deserves attention ... "

Furthermore, even though Ukraine has several higher educational institutions that specialise in Jewish studies, a number of other concerns were expressed by respondents. The numbers involved – both of academic scholars and students – is very small. Far from all of them are Jews – indeed, one respondent raised the question about the extent to which academic Jewish institutions should provide education about Jews or education for Jews – “whether formal Jewish education should be intended for Jews or for everyone who wants to study Jewish subjects” and whether it is “legitimate to spend Jewish money on non-Jewish students?”. Some pointed to a lack of financial support for young academics, and bemoaned the absence of “individual grants for graduate researchers in the field of Jewish history, Jewish art [and] Jewish literature.” Similarly, they noted the absence of a properly funded and “fully-fledged academic school of Jewish studies in Ukraine.” One respondent pointed out that “the Kiev Institute of Oriental Studies supports Aramaic, Chinese and Japanese studies, and the scholars in those fields enjoy a regular salary from Ukraine and in addition apply for various grants. [In contrast], specialists in Jewish studies work ‘on call’, as from time to time they are invited to join a research project because there are some grants available, but then they return to their main places of work and dedicate their time to different topics ... ”

Respondents called for several further initiatives to help address some of the challenges in this realm, notably “a scholarly journal on Jewish studies”; co-operation or partnership between a Ukrainian Jewish studies facility and a foreign university specialising in Jewish studies; and conferences to help connect experts in the field.

4.4 Jewish culture

In addition to numerous informal cultural programmes run by Jewish community organizations, there are several major festivals and exhibitions that attract professionals in the field of Jewish culture and also appeal to the wider public beyond the organised Jewish community. Amongst these are the theatre festival “Wandering Stars” and the festival of Jewish art “Shalom, Ukraine”, initiated by the Jewish Fund of Ukraine; the International Festival of Jewish music “Lviv Klez Fest” arranged by “Hesed-Arie” in Lvov (a JDC structure); the Sholom-Aleichem Festival of Jewish Culture, initiated by the Chernigov Jewish community, and supported by the Cultural Department of Chernigov State Administration; and the Jewish Book Festival, initiated by the Community Home of Jewish Knowledge “Moriah” in Odessa. The most significant exhibition held on a national scale in recent years was in 2008 when the Ukrainian State Museum of Art housed “Kultur-Liga: The artistic avant-garde of the 1910–1920s.” A catalogue was published, and several associated events were held. The exhibition was organized mainly by the Centre of History and Culture of Eastern European Jews, which, among others, is engaged in collecting the literary heritage of nearly forgotten Jewish writers and poets.

Virtually all the large regional communities have their own publications (about thirty in all). The newspapers with the largest circulation and geographic reach are *Khadasbot* (published since 1991 by the Va’ad of Ukraine); *VEK* (published by the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress since 1997) and *Yevreyskie Vesti* (published by the Jewish Council of Ukraine, funded by the State Committee on Ethnicities and Religions). Leading magazines include: *Yegupetz* (a literary-journalistic almanac published by the Kiev Judaica Institute; *Moriah* (a scientific and journalistic almanac published by Odessa Community House of Jewish Knowledge “Moriah”); *From Heart to Heart* (an illustrated

magazine published by the Jewish Community of Kiev (Chabad, Brodsky synagogue)); and *Orah Chaim* (an illustrated magazine, published by the Association of Judaic Religious Organizations of Ukraine (OIROU)).

In spite of these activities and publications, respondents argued that the cultivation of Jewish culture in Ukraine is compromised by various factors. First and foremost, respondents noted that whilst not the universal rule, much of what exists is rather amateur. For example, one respondent stated:

“... We are experts in organising Jewish community concerts rather than Jewish culture concerts. The difference is huge. When a little boy gets up on the stage at a community concert and tortures his poor violin, the entire audience applauds, as it is our boy, we know his parents, we know that just a year ago he dreaded the very thought of a public appearance, and we applaud his personal growth, rather than the quality of his performance ... While a Jewish culture concert is intended for an audience that doesn’t care who the actor’s mother is ... If you can play violin, do so; if not – too bad, the audience won’t listen to amateurs. You have to be a master to appear on the big stage ... ”

Second, concern was expressed about the integration of Jewish cultural activities into the larger Ukrainian context:

“... It is very important to integrate Jewish culture into the life of the city. ... If it’s a Jewish exhibition, could it be shown at the city museum? If it’s a Jewish concert, could it be performed in the best hall of the conservatory? In such a way, the Jewish community, with its best achievements and best examples of Jewish heritage and talents, will gradually become a part of the life of the city, including the Jews of this city, and help us to solve the eternal problem of how to attract Jews to Jewish community life ... ”

However, third, according to most respondents, the development of Jewish culture appears to be low down on the list of communal priorities. They reported that funding streams from overseas bodies are drying up, and the subsequent lack of a stable financial base is having a detrimental effect. Financial instability of this type clearly has

a qualitative and quantitative impact on Jewish culture. As one respondent pointed out:

“ ... Today we witness a drop in numbers of Jewish ensembles and art collectives. It’s a sad result of financial cuts and the lack of stability in funding Jewish cultural initiatives. We are losing great professionals, who used to form the backbone of those collectives. They have to leave as they have to feed their families ... ”

Nevertheless, several respondents were quick to note that investment in the development of Jewish culture always needs to be weighed up against other factors, and if it is a priority, it needs to be effectively articulated as such. One respondent stated:

“ ... When business-minded people approach community development they know what they want and invest their resources for important things. ... for instance, why should the community support the Union of Jewish Photographers, in seeking to express themselves, to create and work independently? How would that prompt people to observe the commandments, study Torah and Talmud, and eat kosher? One may try to explain that in the long run this creative project may result in bringing in people who are not interested in Jewish life today, but may like Jewish photography, to eventually join the community. However, the reply will probably be that there are more direct ways to reach this goal: to launch a Jewish business school, to create incentives to come to synagogue, and all that can be done without photos and other cultural trifles ... ”

However, other respondents introduced a fourth issue concerning the development of Jewish culture, suggesting that investments do not always appear to be particularly well thought through, and that there is no overarching strategy in this area:

“So far, welfare needs have always superseded creative aspirations, which is fair enough. We only hope that finally our local magnates and oligarchs will reassess their attitude to the significance of culture in community development, and in addition to investing astronomic amounts in the restoration of synagogues, they will extend their support to gifted and promising artists and collectives ... ”

“ ... Today, Jewish cultural development in Ukraine desperately needs a consistent strategy, as so far we’ve had none. We have almost lost the Yiddish culture that was authentic for this area, we can’t absorb modern Israeli culture, so the question is what kind of modern Ukrainian culture do we want to create? A Russian-speaking Jewish culture, about Jews, by Jews, but in the vernacular? A renaissance of Yiddish culture through the contemporary interpretation of klezmer music? A Hebrew-language Jewish culture by Ukrainian writers? Or the translation of modern Hebrew writers into Ukrainian? A creation of recordings of Hebrew poems by Ukrainian Jewish composers? Or a combination of all of the above? One thing is clear, it all depends on the emergence of gifted individuals and whether the community finds and supports them. If not, they will become active in other fields.”

One of the indicators of a vibrant community is that it is able to generate new forms of culture. It is clear from the respondents that whilst the contemporary Ukrainian community has made some progress in this area over the past twenty years, there is a long way to go. Among other factors, financial shortages, the plethora of other more pressing challenges – particularly in the realm of welfare – and the absence of an overarching coherent plan for Jewish cultural development, are all conspiring to weaken Jewish cultural growth and development.

4.5 Preservation of Jewish heritage

In relation to the discussion about the importance of investment in contemporary Jewish cultural development, some respondents felt that the Jewish community of Ukraine should focus on the preservation of its once immensely rich Jewish cultural heritage, over and above producing new cultural works of seemingly little significance.

“ ... Each Jewish community has a mission, but the Jewish community of Ukraine has a special and very important one, as for over 500 years, Ukraine was the centre of Yiddish cultural civilization. Contemporary art historians and critics note that artefacts of Yiddish culture have a rightful place in the treasury of the world’s culture. Yiddish literature and drama, painting, stone carving, metal works, jewellery, architecture ... Most of these masterpieces had religious connotations, but

their artistic qualities make them significant to mankind, regardless of faith and nationality ... and this unique culture perished in the flames of the Holocaust ... ”

There is, of course, an argument, as one respondent noted, that the preservation of Jewish heritage is “incredibly important ... for the community’s revival too.” Whether these two notions are linked in practice, however, is a moot point. However, according to many respondents, the preservation of Jewish heritage is the field where the Jewish community of Ukraine has achieved the most significant success. The work done may be divided into two sub-categories: the restitution of communal property and the preservation of Jewish material and intellectual heritage.

Restitution of Jewish communal property

In 1992, Ukraine’s president signed a bill about the return of religious property to religious organizations, according to which religious communities were obliged to receive back their religious buildings and properties confiscated in Soviet times. The Va’ad and OIROU have taken up this task within the Jewish community, and, in 1995, launched a project cataloguing Jewish property in Ukraine. To date, out of more than 2,500 objects of former Jewish property known to the Va’ad, about fifty have been returned. The restitution process is complicated by the fact that, despite numerous attempts, the state has not compiled a registry of Jewish religious buildings, and, in many cases, both the institutions currently located on synagogue premises, and the building themselves, have been privatized.

Nevertheless, several provincial synagogues have been returned to the community, as well as two synagogues in Kiev – the Galitzkaya and the Central Synagogue of Kiev (the Brodsky synagogue). In the latter case, the community funded the relocation of the puppet theatre previously housed there. Also some local authorities have given several buildings to religious communities in place of synagogue buildings that had been destroyed (Bila Tzerkva, Cherkasy, Ovruch, Chernihiv, Novohrad-Volynskiy), and in 2010, two new synagogues were opened in Kryvyi Rih and Kherson.

The restitution programme has generated some extraordinary success stories. For example, one respondent recounted an episode that occurred in Dnepropetrovsk:

“ ... In our city there is a huge shopping centre, Most-City. It stretched for an entire block and all the old buildings were pulled down to enable its construction, except for the small building of the old Dnepropetrovsk synagogue. Today it is surrounded on three sides by the shopping centre, it’s actually built into it, but it remained intact, even though the community was offered a lot of money and a newly built building to hold services in some other place ... But the elders said: ‘our grandfathers saved this building under the Soviets, didn’t let it become a cinema, and our fathers fought for it in the Second World War. We won’t let them demolish it ... ’ And one of the owners of the centre, a Jew, said that even though it’s very inconvenient, the elders shouldn’t be upset. And this provides real evidence of the spiritual growth of the community because when this very synagogue was renovated for the first time, in the 1970s, the unique wall paintings, masterpieces of Dnepropetrovsk Jewish art, were simply plastered and painted over ... ”

Furthermore, in some instances where buildings cannot be restituted, successful efforts have been made to place memorial plaques on houses with Jewish historical significance. In many respects, these alone capture the significance of Ukrainian Jewish history, and the importance of its preservation:

“ ... In Odessa there are many memorial plaques and everyone who wishes may see where the Jewish historian Dubnov and the Jewish poet Bialik, and the Zionist activist Leib Pinsker lived and what they did. One plaque even says “Here lived Jabotinsky, friend of Ukraine, defender of Jerusalem”. This is a true achievement”

Nevertheless, many issues concerning how to handle and maintain the sheer amount of property remain unresolved. One respondent noted:

“Out of the buildings that once belonged to the Jewish community, only a small proportion has been restituted and restored, while whether they are returned to the community or not, they often remain neglected, as the community has no money

for restoration. Sometimes there are ironic cases, as in Buisk, where there are no Jews left today, and the synagogue is divided in two parts. One has been turned into a residential house, and the other is occupied by the Baptist community that maintains the building. And there are other examples of such unbelievable metamorphoses.

“The situation with non-ritual buildings is still more difficult. Unique old Jewish residential houses in the Ternopol region, in Shargorod, in Bershad are literally falling apart if they stay abandoned, but if any residents move in, they inevitably rebuild everything and the house loses its historical significance.”

Some respondents noted that there are cases where the communities are unable to restore buildings. Yet, when addressing the question of whether there is a need to pursue the restitution of still-to-be-returned buildings, rather than focus on the proper restoration and maintenance of those that have been restituted, the majority of respondents supported the former option.

“... In the event that some Jewish community or organization has a chance to regain the possession of a building of the synagogue, yeshiva or another property that can be returned under the Law of Restitution, it has to be done ... ”

The inability to restore and maintain the buildings was – fairly or unfairly – quite commonly attributed to the poor managerial skills of the community leaders:

“... In order to restore something that you already have, you need brains rather than money. After all, if you managed to obtain a large building in the historical part of the city, a failure to attract money and manpower signals the inefficiency and failure of the community leadership”

Some respondents emphasised the use of communal properties as a source of income for the community, rather than a burden that requires funding, that could otherwise be used for operational purposes.

“... Property is always property. For instance, our community only survives on account of the rent payments that we receive from businesses that are located on the first floor of our synagogue.”

However, fundamentally, the effort required for the restitution of the large number of registered Jewish community properties that may be claimed, indicates that there is still much to be done before the Jewish community of Ukraine may say with confidence that it has completed the process. As one respondent noted:

“... The restitution of Jewish property is a very complicated process here ... For instance, in the West, Jews received back what was expropriated by the Nazis, but in our country everything was taken away by the Soviets, right after the Revolution, which means more time has elapsed. Therefore, if Ukraine maintains its desire to enter European civil society, we may hope for at least the partial restitution of Jewish property, which would mean that the community will have more opportunities for the preservation and development of Jewish heritage. However, I don't have much hope it will ever happen ...

The particular situation with *sifrei torah* (Torah scrolls) is equally complex. In October 2007, the President of Ukraine signed a decree to enforce the transfer of 700 scrolls preserved in Ukrainian archives to the Jewish religious communities. However, to date, this decree has not been fully implemented. In fact, there have been instances where archival organizations have made unsubstantiated claims against communities permitted to store and use Torah scrolls from the state collections, maintaining that communities damaged state property. Some of these cases have even reached the courts: the most striking example is the protracted court litigation between the State Historical Archive of Ukraine and the Jewish Community of Kiev that was finally settled in 2011 when the High Court of Appeal finally decreed that eighteen Torah scrolls should be irrevocably transferred by the State Archive to the Jewish Community of Kiev.

Preservation of Jewish material heritage

Virtually all Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine are in extremely poor condition. Despite an existing agreement with the USA and a corresponding edict from the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the state does not concern itself with this problem, and the Jewish communities lack the necessary funds to look after the cemeteries. In recent years the “Lo Tishkach” project carried out significant

work cataloguing and cleaning up old cemeteries. By February 2012 the database contained 1,800 records of cemeteries scattered across Ukraine.²⁷

In autumn 2009, the Jewish community of Zhitomir announced a similar project that was intended to go beyond the mere location and describing of cemeteries, and carry out the physical restoration and maintenance of over 1,500 Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine, including photographing and deciphering the inscriptions on the tombstones. However, physical restoration takes place very slowly, while hundreds of old Jewish cemeteries deteriorate rapidly and may eventually disappear and be lost forever. The problem is aggravated by the fact that quite often there are no viable Jewish communities near such sites to care for the results of random cleaning work.

However, respondents noted that specific funding for both the preservation of cemeteries and the restoration of old synagogues cannot provide a long-term solution to the fundamental problem of the deterioration of the Jewish heritage in Ukraine. A systematic approach is needed in the first place.

“ ... The issue of the restoration of Jewish cemeteries is perhaps one of a few that must be dealt with in a centralized way ...

“ ... There’s no organization or international programme aimed at the physical restoration of Jewish cemeteries. Naturally, the Ukrainian government doesn’t care about it at all, and international organizations, seemingly, neither. We are so poor because we are so rich. We have immense heritage, and we desperately need an international project dealing exclusively with the preservation of Jewish heritage of Ukraine ... There are some programmes that create electronic databases of cemeteries and unique grave sites, but they don’t deal with actual preservation. And at any rate, no one knows what will remain when the project is completed, as this priceless heritage deteriorates every day ...

“ ... All the individual enthusiasts and organizations, who put their soul and money into attempts to slow down the process of deterioration,

are scattered across Ukraine, and it’s important to identify and unite them.”

One of the ways to address this challenge may be to run education programmes both for Jews and Ukrainians in general, to foster the preservation of Jewish heritage.

“ ... It is very good that young people take part in the actual physical work on Jewish heritage preservation. For instance, Hillel students are getting involved with cleaning Jewish cemeteries, but all such actions are sporadic, and there must be an umbrella Jewish organization, playing both representative and coordination roles, as our today and tomorrow are based on our yesterday, where our “matzevot”, (gravestones) stand.”

“ ... Teachers from small towns know nothing about the Jewish history of the place, where, quite often, Jews used to form thirty to seventy per cent of the population of such towns. And after our seminars [by the Judaica Institute in Kiev], that are literally shocking for them, teachers return to their towns and tell everything to their pupils, and in time we receive amazing feedback, as our information begins to spread, sometimes even without our supervision. For instance, recently we received a video about an old synagogue filmed by teachers of a Ukrainian school in a town where there’s not even a single Jew. Some people planned to restore an old building and it turned out to be a synagogue. And they made a beautiful movie. The boys dressed up like Hasids, sang and danced, they discovered the history of Jews of their own town. Why is it important? Because there’s a great number of Jewish cemeteries in the places where there are no Jews left, and whether they will be preserved or demolished depends on the non-Jewish population of those towns. The same may be said about synagogues and other types of Jewish buildings. Therefore we invest a lot of effort to convince the Ukrainian public that the Jewish heritage of their towns is not only a Jewish cause, but it’s also theirs. It is their asset, as people will come to visit them because of that. It is their history, their memory ... ”

Preservation of Jewish intellectual heritage

In addition to these types of physical sites, several respondents also spoke of the rich intellectual heritage of Ukrainian Jewry that

27 See: www.lotishkach.org.

ought to be preserved: archival materials of various types that need to be discovered, collated, organised and made available to researchers and the general public. They indicated that considerable efforts are being made in this realm:

“ ... Colleagues from the Vernadsky Library [Judaic Department of the Central Scientific Library of Ukraine] managed to preserve a large library, over one thousand volumes of Jewish periodicals in various Jewish languages. The famous collection of wax cylinders with recordings of Jewish music and folklore was transferred to modern media and was recently recognised to be of cultural value by UNESCO ... ”

“ ... Over fifteen years we have gathered the archives of Jewish writers. We have over fifteen such archives, some of them contain unique items that belonged to writers who wrote in Yiddish in the post-war years. In some cases, it's several folders, in others, several hundred folders. Specifically, we are talking about the archives of Nathan Zbar, Yitzik Kipnis, Leonid Talalaevsky and others ... ”

“ ... We have collections of posters of Jewish parties and movements, materials on the history of the State Jewish Theatre GOSET in Kiev and Chernovtsy, we gather modern Jewish art, it exists and is very interesting. We collect pre-Revolution pictures, have over 4,000 family albums, as well as a rich collection of Jewish postcards ... I believe that the potential for such preservation is huge and it's important to continue this work for the sake of the entire Jewish world ... ”

“ ... There are films on Jewish topics both silent and in Yiddish, it would be great to transfer them to modern media and publish a book on the history of Jewish cinematography in Ukraine ... ”

“ ... One of the important projects that we run together with American and Russian partners is the description of Jewish collections in official Ukrainian archives. We have published several such volumes ... ”

In addition, efforts have been made to take down the testimonies of the older generation:

“ ... For ten years I led the Mnemosina Club. This is a club for elderly people, it's a very sweet project. We are interested in the history of Kiev Jewry, the history of the streets of Kiev. There's a group that works on archives and brings interesting facts about Kiev Jewry at the turn of the twentieth century. Some people are outstanding storytellers – when we discuss this or that street or last name, they share what they remember. Many of them are writing a series of wonderful essays, memoirs, letters, pictures that are then preserved at the Institute of Judaica. We call it the History of Ukrainian Jewry in documents, pictures and oral stories ... ”

“ ... The Centre of History and Culture of Eastern European Jews has collected over one thousand testimonies of oral history, memoirs of elderly people. In addition, we have a project to gather the archives of Jewish families, we have over a hundred such archives. We realized that this is the only alternative to official archives, whether gathered by the communist party or KGB, or the Nazis during the war. Yet these archives are more informative and personal ... ”

Nevertheless, while much has been done, the respondents noted several challenges, particularly the lack of specialists in Ukraine in the preservation of Jewish heritage and interviewers to take testimonies. The situation is exacerbated because existing institutions active in the field are unable to sustain professional workers.

“ ... Holocaust studies is the only field in which we have professionals of world class. The Holocaust is not the only thing that characterises Ukraine, there are many more landmarks and heritage-related subjects that may be studied here from the vast culture of Ashkenazi Jewry. Specific things like the spiritual heritage of Hasidism or works of Jewish intellectuals, artists, public figures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jewish media, Jewish political parties, architecture, all such things are barely studied here. In fact, today Western and even Russian specialists arrive in Ukraine to survey Jewish cemeteries and synagogues, to work in the archives and study the Jewish history and culture of this region. We simply don't have the professionals of the required level and don't have an educational system that trains them ... ”

“ ... We desperately need to train a network of interviewers, who could conduct interviews with Holocaust survivors, who witnessed the vanished history of Jews ... The Spielberg Foundation has done a lot with Holocaust survivors, and today many have passed away, but we have their testimonies. We have a handful of witnesses of the past, living in small cities, and local teachers and schoolchildren could talk to them. There are specialists, who could train such interviewers, but we need funds to run seminars. We are fighting against time ... ”

“[The Institute of Judaica] ... initially had a very dynamic operation, a lot was invested in various projects, publishing activities, running international conferences, etc. At a time of financial crisis, we have to work very hard to survive. Still we manage to accomplish some projects. Our work is focused in the first place on the creation of a network of specialists and teachers who work across Ukraine to raise the qualifications of local experts. They are our biggest asset And we never feel secure because of the financial instability. I can't hire the employees I need to run projects, we can't make long-term projects, the money's enough for a couple of months unless we receive some grants for multiple-year projects”

Several local museums exist. There is a museum of the history of Odessa Jews which was opened in 2002 by the Jewish Community Centre Migdal “Shorashim”; a museum of the history of Jewish life in Bukovina opened in Chernivtsi in 2008, with the financial support of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress; and several provincial museums (Vinnytsa, Mariupol, Khmelnytsky, Bakhmut) featuring exhibitions dedicated to the history of the Jewish communities of the region. However, for the main part, these are local initiatives developed by community enthusiasts, and they lack operational funds to update collections and for curatorial research. For example, referring to the Odessa museum, one respondent argued:

“ ... The Jewish Museum is a real programme that should be supported in every possible way. It needs money to buy exhibits. Even though it receives gifts all the time, every museum should have at least some operational money for independent purchases ... ”

“ ... The museum should be a research centre. For instance Dnepropetrovsk has such a centre, called “Tkumah”, but here, in Odessa we have amazing documents in our archives! Researchers from all over the world come here to read our archives, but no one in Odessa does, as such work costs money. We need a Jewish research institution with three employees or so. May they at long last [...] describe these collections, then, at least we would know what we have! Some people arrive [from abroad], find whatever information they need and write their doctorates, while we keep sitting here, with nothing ... ”

However, at present a large, ambitious project, *A Museum of the History of Jews of Ukraine and the History of the Holocaust* is being developed in Dnepropetrovsk, which is regarded as a highly significant contribution:

“ ... The creation of the Dnepropetrovsk museum will fundamentally change the situation in Ukraine, both in terms of heritage preservation and advancement of Jewish studies, as it will be a fully-fledged research and resource centre.”

While this museum is still in progress, the respondents reflected on what its most essential features should be to meet all needs and if any single location can provide a solution at all.

“ ... The interesting feature of this museum is that it doesn't try to collect artefacts and exhibits from all the various places in Ukraine and concentrate these treasures in one place. On the contrary, its main purpose is to support local museums and museum programmes of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, even the smallest ones.”

“ ... So far the museum is being created as an online portal and one of the most essential parts is the virtual platform for Jewish museums and museum programmes of Ukraine. In other words, if any museum or Jewish museum programme has a website, it is being promoted with the assistance of the All-Ukrainian Centre of Holocaust studies “Tkuma”, the research body of the museum. If it doesn't have a website, “Tkuma” invests money to set one up, in order to create an information space and enable further work, as there are museums that are alive, unique and may they continue developing ... ”

In addition, an initiative to create the “Babi Yar” Memorial Centre in Kiev, launched by Vadim Rabinovich of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress and Igor Kolomoisky of the United Jewish Community of Kiev, could represent a significant breakthrough. In the past, all attempts to create a Babi Yar memorial failed as a result of internal community dissensions, but respondents expressed their hope that this time this important initiative would finally succeed.

4.6 Young adult (18–30) engagement

Since the 1990s, several major international organizations and movements have dominated the young adult scene. The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) has been a pioneer in the engagement of young adults, particularly through its MASA programme in Israel (since 2004). Young adults often attend various community programmes before the trip, spend time living and working in Israel during it, and often become quite involved in Jewish community life in Ukraine on their return. Hillel has also been a major player in Ukraine since 1995 – indeed, respondents consider it to have the most developed infrastructure for reaching out and educating unaffiliated Jewish youth and encouraging their integration into Jewish community life. In recent years, informed by the results of an extensive sociological study it conducted in Ukraine, Hillel has developed its Vkonnecte (“Get Connected”) programme, which is aimed at building a stronger Jewish presence at Ukrainian universities. Specially trained youth leaders (or “Connectors”) are now working with individual Jewish students to help them to find ways to connect to their particular Jewish interests, as well as with other Jews, and specially designed software is being used to keep track of the young people they have engaged in order to increase the efficiency of follow-up activities. Taglit-Birthright has also been active since 2000, and since that time has identified thousands of young adults with Jewish ancestry, offering them the incentive of a free ten day trip to Israel. It is facilitated by Hillel, JAFI and the Israel Cultural Centre, with Hillel the key organization focused on work with Taglit alumni.

In addition to these organizations, several others are active in this area, notably the Ukrainian Union of Jewish Students; Moishe House Kiev and Odessa (grassroots initiatives which create

informal home-based meetings of Jewish young adults, regardless of their affiliation or religious views); and various community based youth clubs, usually created by and operating within JDC Jewish Community Centres and Heseds.

In many respects, the challenges involved in engaging young adults in Ukraine are similar to those in other countries. One respondent, pointing to the challenges of attracting the indifferent, argued that a clear distinction can be drawn between the engaged and unengaged:

“... today, as we deal with the generation of Jewish children of the ‘90s, we see the emergence of two types of Jews in Ukraine: those who see the Jewish community as an indispensable part of their life, who built their lifestyle, families and circle of friends around it, or at least acknowledge the very existence of Jewish life in Ukraine and understand what it is all about, and those who are absolutely indifferent to their own Judaism. And the gap between them keeps growing. Moreover, such assimilated Jewish young adults don’t even feel they are lacking something, as being a part of the Jewish community has never been included in their value system ... You know, we can lose them to assimilation, to not caring about being Jewish. We are fighting against time ... This situation is typical for the entire FSU, not just Ukraine ...

According to one respondent, part of the challenge of engaging the unengaged relates to the image of the Jewish community as a whole:

“... It’s important to increase respect for the Jewish community in Odessa. People should realise that Jews are somehow connected to something good, just like it was achieved in some other cities, say in Dnepropetrovsk ... Today we have to work on the level of prominent symbols. For instance, the Jewish museum of Odessa is a prominent symbol, the “Migdal” centre – is the [public] face of the community. And we need more such places so people say “Wow, look how smartly Jews have arranged everything”. Then Jews too will start to respect themselves and cling to Judaism and their Jewish heritage ... ”

However, competition for people’s leisure time has also become an issue, particularly as Ukraine has developed a stronger activity infrastructure for young people:

“ ... In the ‘90s youngsters had nowhere to meet and socialize, and Jewish young people were grateful for every chance suggested by Jewish organizations to organize their leisure, especially in such meaningful and exciting ways. All we had to do was to spread the word, people came from everywhere by themselves. Today in Ukraine there are a lot of night clubs, discos, bowling alleys, professional clubs for all kinds of hobbies etc. So we have to compete and make our activity relevant.”

The cost of Jewish activities was also highlighted by some respondents. For example:

“ ... Today, most of our programmes involve some fees, and some of them are relatively high (e.g. for seminars, camps). I say ‘relatively’ as \$100 is a significant amount for some people, especially from small cities, even though this amount doesn’t cover the actual cost of the programme. I know cases where people save money for several months to take part in our programmes, i.e. it’s a conscious choice ... ”

And, even when activities have been sufficiently successful to attract participants, follow-up remains a challenge:

“ ... We invest so much effort in reaching out to people, that sometimes we forget about what to do with them next, when they are already identified. It’s crucial to involve them on the spot and help them find their place in the community, or they will leave for good, thinking that Jewish community life is not for them ... ”

Respondents offered several suggestions about how to improve work done for this age group, and particularly pointed to the importance of connecting with individuals, as opposed to thinking about the age group *en masse*, and creating opportunities for networking with others (particularly if doing so might help them to advance their careers). The use of technology to facilitate this was explored in some detail by respondents. As the modern Internet generation lives in a world of short messages and virtual encounters, this makes their deep involvement in Jewish community life and their actual attendance at communal events ever-challenging. Some young adults use available web resources to create very personal Jewish experiences for

themselves, their relatives and friends, without active exposure. The respondents explored the notion of virtual Jewish communal life, and expressed contrasting views. According to one:

“ ... The Jewish community has to be up-to-date with the development of modern technologies. If all young people are online today, then that’s where we have to run our projects. The Internet provides a lot of opportunities to make projects more successful, in terms of outreach and PR”

However, another was less than convinced:

“ ... How can the community be ‘virtual’? Community is about real relationships, face-to-face conversations, a feeling of belonging, real interaction and real, not ‘virtual’ help ... Sure, the Jewish community should be represented online, but this can by no means serve as a replacement for a real community and projects.”

“ ... The Internet is dangerous not because of all the smut it spreads, but because it creates the illusion of real communications between soul-mates. People talk only to their friends on Facebook, VKontakte, Odnoklassniki²⁸ and think the world is beautiful, their work is praiseworthy and they are flawless. Yet should they step beyond this comfort zone they would realize that in the real world their projects and services are below standard. What kind of outreach or engagement can we talk about? It’s simply boring ... ”

Furthermore, building a strategic approach to young adult work based on technology assumes a certain level of wealth:

“ ... When we talk about Ukraine outside of Kiev and other large cities, this issue of virtual communities is irrelevant, as families from small cities often can’t afford a computer. And if we move on to the virtual world, we may simply lose these people without giving them a chance to join us ... ”

Nevertheless, all agree that it is necessary to respond in some way to the emergence of the new phenomena of Internet-based communities and

28 “VKontakte” and “Odnoklassniki” (“Classmates”) are popular social networking sites among Russian speakers.

develop criteria that will allow the assessment of the efficiency of such engagement.

“... If all our members are online and never show up, it may be difficult to assess the impact of our activity. On the other hand there’s a big question – what do we really want? What do we treat as a success? Do we want everyone to go to synagogue and pray? Or to read Jewish websites and click “Like”? Or send their children to the Jewish school because they saw its group on Facebook? How can we assess the qualitative results of online activity versus quantitative ones?”

For anyone involved in young adult work, these issues are very familiar. The challenges in Ukraine, whilst undoubtedly amplified because of the region’s particular history, are not dissimilar to those in other parts of the Jewish world. Judaism and Jewish life must be sufficiently compelling to engage people in them, and individual needs and interests must somehow be accommodated in the context of a community-wide strategy. Cooperation between existing organizations needs to be improved to create more of a seamless link between different initiatives, and barriers to entry need to be lowered so as not to exclude anyone, particularly on financial grounds.

4.7 Leadership development

The question of how to cultivate and develop leaders for the Jewish community in Ukraine is a complex one. The desire to cultivate them is evident by looking at the efforts made by each of the organizations and projects highlighted in section 4.6, all of which include leadership development among their priorities. In addition, there are several other projects and organizations specifically designed to cultivate leadership skills for the Jewish community. One example is the JDC’s Metsuda Jewish Young Leadership Programme, which seeks to develop leadership skills and volunteerism among young Jewish adults in Northern and Eastern Ukraine. Another is the Melamedia International Centre for Informal Jewish Education (Steinsaltz Institute for Jewish Studies in the CIS), which is dedicated to creating an inspiring and safe space for Russian-speaking Jewish men and women – of all ages and from both religious and secular backgrounds – to study classic and modern Jewish texts; Jewish culture and arts; develop leadership; storytelling or coaching

skills; and interact with other Jews and grow professionally. Project Keshet – an international organization (in Ukraine since 2006) that gives women and girls the personal and technological skills to develop themselves and their society is another example. Furthermore, Ukrainian Jews have participated in several major international leadership training programmes, including ROI (www.roicommunity.org), the Paideia Project Incubator (www.paideia-eu.org), and the Centre for Leadership Initiatives (www.leadingup.org).

According to one respondent, some of these efforts have had a significant impact. Referring to the situation in Dnepropetrovsk, he commented:

“... We have young leadership ... The dream of every young successful Jewish person is to make enough money to become a member of the Board of Trustees. This is like a dream come true. More than they want a car, more than they want a private home, they want to become a part of this group. Why? Because we have such nice, good people here. We have never lost one board member. Never. We keep them, we stay with them, with their families. We have some very important people on the Board who serve as role models, not only with the money they give, but with their involvement, care for the community. So, people in their twenties have a dream. They want to be a part of it. But it’s not enough to be involved with your time, and your soul, and your effort. You have to give money. There’s a minimum fee that you have to give. So you have to feel comfortable enough to be able to pay your monthly fee, and then everybody has to agree to accept you. This is a big system, the way we built it”

However, this was an isolated comment. Most respondents opted to highlight the many leadership development challenges in the Ukrainian context. First and foremost, one respondent, who had been given an opportunity to participate in a prestigious executive educational training programme at an American university, noted *“how backward we are [in Ukraine], both mentally and organizationally. We may have made some progress in the for-profit world, everything is more civilized than it used to be in the early 1990s, but in the field of charity we are years behind ... ”*

Given the challenges, the need for a high quality infrastructure for training is self-evident, yet

another respondent was less than convinced by the community's capacity to benefit from what exists:

"... OK, we can find a person and tell him or her: "You are a young leader!" and start to develop his or her leadership skills, hoping there are some. But then no one cares whether or not they really are a leader; what happens subsequently with participants of leadership programmes, what they do, how they implement the skills they should have acquired ..."

Others argued that simply getting people to sign up for such programmes is a challenge in itself. One respondent maintained that *"... Today the most precious asset is time. And even though many can be attracted by a subsidized trip or training, they wouldn't go unless they are really interested in the topic. Why should they? They could just stay at home and chat online or play video-games ..."*

Furthermore, for those who choose to participate, it seems that their motivations may not always be as altruistic as one would hope. Until the economic downturn in 2008, most programmes for young Jewish adults were heavily subsidized, and even since then, they have continued to be available at significantly less than the actual cost of the activities. Therefore, some respondents questioned whether potential leaders were attracted to the various programmes because they were genuinely interested in building a sustainable Jewish community life for Ukrainian Jews, or simply eager to receive a 'freebie'. Some argued that participants of leadership programmes should have to both prove their ability and worthiness to join the activity, and have to commit to continued participation after the programme ends.

However, even assuming young leaders are properly trained and highly motivated to bring about change in the community, there may be more obstacles hindering their successful integration into the Jewish community framework, and causing their departure to other spheres of life. One respondent maintained that young people should only hold particular roles in the community:

"... I believe that only a young person can be a youth leader. Mature professionals can be advisors, consultants, mentors, but they simply can't create the right atmosphere for the youth, they don't

speak 'youth' language and simply can't keep up with the pace of rapid change in the life of every modern young person ..."

Other respondents noted that the leaders of communal organizations have a tendency to hold on to their positions for too long and are reluctant to change their traditional agenda. Thus the alumni of Jewish leadership programmes often leave community life and use the skills they have acquired in the commercial world, as they find it difficult to shift the rigid infrastructure and enrich the on-going programming of Jewish organizations with fresh ideas. This is particularly problematic if, as seems common, successful organizations are run by a single individual who has dedicated his or her life to the cause:

"... Today, if you see that something is working, it means there's an enthusiast who is the driving force behind the process. Yet as a rule, such enthusiasts are elderly people, and everything will stop with their departure. The problem could be solved if we developed a systematic approach to the delegation of responsibilities to a younger generation ..."

While the handover of responsibility from one generation to the next often involves a degree of risk and uncertainty, for one respondent, at least, there was little justification for such feelings:

"... The heads of local Jewish communities shouldn't be afraid to involve youth in running the community. Only when young people feel they have trust and power, will they have the incentive and motivation to move ahead and develop within the community not only as clients, members or activists, but also as professionals ..."

Nevertheless, for those who graduate from leadership programmes and opt to work within the Jewish community, considerable concern was expressed about their capacity to make a living:

"... Say there's an interesting project, a team of good professionals is working on it, yet when the project is over, the team splits up and they have to look for another job to earn their living. And little by little Jewish professionals develop an attitude to projects they are working on, that it is something temporary, unstable. And it's a shame, as we are losing true leaders and professionals who leave for different fields and the community

suffers. For instance, there was a period when teachers of Jewish schools received competitive wages and they appreciated their workplaces. Now, as school funding shrinks, the teachers start seeking better openings, and we have to look for new teachers, whom we need to train and invest money in, and the same may be applied to community professionals. Today there are fewer enthusiasts willing to volunteer. If, in the 1990s and even in the 2000s, there were enough people willing to work for token pay, today there's just a handful of them, especially because a talented professional can find alternative interesting work with much better conditions ... ”

Another respondent acknowledged this challenge, but argued that the leadership opportunities that exist are important, and the existing leadership of the community needs to maintain a link with programme graduates, irrespective of whether or not they end up applying their new-found skills in a communal context:

“ ... Some graduates of leadership training schemes successfully employ the skills they acquired during Jewish leadership training. What we can do is maintain a connection with them rather than blame them for leaving the organization, and create opportunities to support our own communities that raised them. Instead of blaming them for ingratitude, we should act proactively and keep them in the loop once they step on the road of for-profit business ... And many do help. All we need is to remember them and ask ... ”

As was the case in the previous section about young adults, these leadership development challenges are commonly found in many other Jewish communities. Arguably, they are rendered more complex in Ukraine than in many other countries due to the fact that the existing communal infrastructure is only two decades old, and still establishing itself. On the one hand, this should create a greater sense of flexibility and openness to change; on the other, the implications of failure are perhaps greater than elsewhere. It seems clear that leadership development initiatives need to be embedded fully in the architecture of the community, and connected appropriately to the many Jewish organizations operating throughout the country.

4.8 Innovation and social entrepreneurship

As the Internet has become more accessible and widespread, innovative means of community engagement and development are being created, particularly in the United States, but increasingly throughout the Jewish world. Ukraine is no exception, with several ventures that are deeply integrated into the social media world, utilizing new technology and creating opportunities for meaningful experiences in the realms of travel, informal meetings and Internet communication. In most of these instances, participants willingly incur the costs of their own involvement, which helps to make the projects sustainable and sets good examples for the future. Amongst these are JewishNet (www.jewishnet.ru), a Jewish social platform for the younger generation; JUkraine (www.jukraine.com), a Jewish centre for educational tourism committed to making the Jewish heritage of Ukraine accessible through educational trips, training of Jewish guides and distance learning; JAFARI-Quest (<http://vk.com/club1221280>), an intellectual game for young adults which combines a popular youth game night car quest with intense learning about Jewish heritage; Shabbat Host, which creates a comfortable environment for more assimilated Jews to become immersed in tradition through visits to observant families for Shabbat meals; and Moishe House (www.moishehouse.org/), part of the aforementioned international initiative to gather together Jewish young adults in an informal home-based atmosphere and provide them with meaningful Jewish experiences.

These activities represent the positive view of this type of activity – the notion that creativity of this sort is indicative of a vibrant and vital community – but a degree of cynicism could be discerned from some respondents. Notably, one commented:

“ ... Sure, the new generation is more pragmatic than we used to be, and it's natural to expect that they bring new ideas. But as I look back and recall the last twenty years, I see it's difficult to reinvent the wheel. When I see what kind of grants people receive, what kind of projects they propose, I am convinced that there's nothing new under the sun. People come and go, while ideas tend to repeat themselves. Well, today they will be implemented differently – after all, we live in an age of new

technologies – but for the most part, this progress influences only the technical side of projects, the essence is the same as ever ... ”

Furthermore, another argued that the community should focus on the development of previously launched ideas, rather than initiate new projects.

“ ... I don’t believe we have to brainstorm new ideas. We already have a great variety of underdeveloped ventures. What we should do is work out what we actually have and sort them out and make clear connections between otherwise unconnected projects, so that similar grassroots initiatives and start-ups could cooperate, rather than compete with each other ... ”

However, trying to control innovation and creativity is unlikely to work in a context in which anyone with Internet access and a bit of creativity can set up a new initiative. Thus the real challenge in this area concerns how to support the individuals with the best ideas and best chances of success, whilst simultaneously maintaining investment in the organizations and endeavours that may appear less exciting, but nonetheless play critical roles within the community. Several respondents highlighted the value in learning from people and activities elsewhere, and building exchange programmes for volunteers and professionals:

“ ... The more volunteers we have from the advanced countries, or even professionals who would agree to come to Ukraine and work here for a while, say three to six months, in order to give us some hands-on tips and skills, the better. Despite the fact we have Internet and other means of communication, we are still human beings and when we go abroad and visit other community organizations, we see how it works in other countries, learn new ideas, and discover more efficient ways of doing things. The same applies to visitors to us. Such exchanges are very useful ... It would be worthwhile to invest in twinning with other European communities, fostering relations and sharing best practices. And it would be great to promote the arrival of volunteers to Ukraine, who could strengthen our organization with their experience, vision and serve as role models of commitment to the development of Jewish life”

Others, noting that travel and exchange programmes would incur significant expense, argued that new technologies should be utilized to share best practices:

“ ... Young people today spend most of their leisure time online, using social networks and other tools. I am sure some tools have been developed to draw their attention to the Jewish cause, to leadership, volunteering and social entrepreneurship. We have some ideas, we have already started developing them, but it’s a shame to reinvent the wheel, and we’d appreciate any help and advice in this area ... ”

4.9 Funding and philanthropy

As with the rest of the FSU, one of the greatest problems of the Jewish community of Ukraine is its strong dependence on external funding, and the lack of funds for communal programmes. According to the estimates of the Va’ad, only about fifty per cent of the relative total budget of the Jewish community of Ukraine is collected within Ukraine itself, most of it through Chabad. However, this is already a significant achievement when compared to the beginning of the twenty-first century, when virtually one hundred per cent of the financing stemmed from overseas sources.

One of the greatest challenges to the further development of local funding for Jewish causes is Ukrainian legislation, because donations are not tax-deductible. Despite this, the Jewish community of Ukraine has made some progress in the development of local fundraising thanks to several factors: the activities of boards of trustees, the introduction in many instances of organizational membership fees, the emergence of professional fundraisers and the development of for-profit initiatives to help support community development. Each of these is explored below.

First, nearly every Jewish community in Ukraine today has a board, consisting of wealthy and/or influential Jewish businessmen and public figures. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to actively engage local donors in the life of the community, to educate them and listen to their advice:

“ ... If you are a fundraiser going to ask people for money, I think it’s not the right way to go about it, because you are always the one asking and someone

is the one giving to you ... It's much better if people feel they don't give money to somebody else, but that they give money for something that is theirs, something important to them. And I think this is what we've built here ... We built what they call "popechitelsky sovet" (the Board of Trustees). It's not really a Board, it's a group of people who care about the life of the community. You don't need to make them give money. You don't have to make them zombies, or hypnotize them, and extract the money from them. They are giving happily to something they care about ... I don't think that's philanthropy. Just like they support their families, or pay for electricity in their homes, for their food, the community is part of their lives. This is how they look at it ... "

Second, at the same time, it has been necessary to build a broad base of support from across the community. To achieve this, virtually all Jewish organizations and communities have now introduced membership and participation fees, although they make exceptions for the more financially challenged or insolvent members.

" ... The secret to building a stable community is not to collect consumers attracted by freebies, but people who are interested in the activity itself, willing to support the good times they have at the community, both with their time and money. And I'm not talking only about rich people. Even elderly retirees who basically depend on welfare packages come and they give too. Sure, we differentiate in the size of their membership fees, but people understand and see what they are paying for, because they want to create a Jewish environment for themselves and their children ... "

Third, in recent years, Jewish communities in Ukraine have also begun to employ professional fundraisers:

" ... Today, many communities and organizations hire professional fundraisers, whose only task is to look for grants and fill in application forms. They know how to turn a good idea into a viable project and implement it professionally. The most important thing is to ensure they also understand the specifics of Jewish community life and are able to focus not only on the success of a given project, but also to consider the entire picture as a whole, and contribute with each good project to the further development of the community ... "

Arguably, the most experienced Jewish institution that approaches fundraising in a professional way is the Jewish Foundation of Ukraine:

" ... Today we work in several directions: with state governmental authorities, international foundations and the embassies of different countries in Ukraine. Sure, not every one of our applications is granted, but we are gathering priceless experience, and in fact, today, we actually serve as a consulting centre and not only raise funds for our own ideas, but also assist other Jewish community structures to attract funding for their ideas ... "

Finally, some organizations do not rely on donations at all, but rather launch commercial projects to support their charitable activities. This is especially the case for smaller communities with low growth potential and a lack of prosperous businessmen, for example Ivano-Frankovsk, Berdichev, Uzhgorod and Khmelnytsky. In each of these places, local rabbis or community leaders have managed to build a commercial infrastructure (often travel-related, such as hotels, kosher restaurants, etc.) to provide services to general visitors and Jewish-related services. However, on the whole, their income is very limited due to the fact that Jewish tourism in Ukraine is underdeveloped.

The question of how to bring more funds into the Ukrainian Jewish community to support its development is complex, and should be explored through two lenses – the internal and the external.

Internally, within Ukraine, more donors need to be cultivated. One respondent spoke of the challenges that exist in this regard:

" ... today Jewish businessmen have no moral obligations to help the Jewish community. Everything that exists is just a fancy trend, a kind of business club, most often centred around synagogues. They do not help because they understand why it is necessary, but because of peer pressure. 'Look, I give, so you must too'. And thinking critically, we can't blame them. None of these rich people was raised in the atmosphere of Jewish values of tzedaka [charity], they don't know history, tradition, most of them are not religious, and – and this is especially important – most of them worked really hard to get their wealth, so

why share it? The community has to understand. Today they help because it's trendy, not because they care, and do something about it, as tomorrow they may change their interests and priorities, unless you find that soft spot in their hearts ... ”

Another spoke of the importance of preparation prior to meeting with potential donors, in order to understand their interests and treat them “as individuals, not as living wallets”:

“ ... Each donor is an individual with his own interests, culture, past experience. Someone who has achieved success has something to share, and not only his money! I guess the biggest mistake of Jewish community organizations is that they ask for money with zero understanding of whom they are talking to, and whether their words will be heard or just irritate ... You should do your homework first and only then go and ask ... ”

Some respondents showed that they managed to win the trust and loyalty of their supporters when they became personally engaged in the business development of local donors, thereby shifting the relationship from one of dependency to mutuality:

“ ... We are very grateful to all our supporters, and the least that I can do is assist my donors in making contacts abroad, enhance their business and ultimately, this will give them the chance to offer more help to our community ... But this can't be done overnight. It's a long, systematic process, both to build the loyalty of a businessman and to show him that you care not only about your cause, but his business, too.”

There were some indications from respondents that a common concern among donors was that money raised might not be used for the stated purposes. As one commented:

“ ... The problem is that local donors often feel used. When they gave money, someone took it, spent it, but why, how, how much and who benefited? These questions remain unanswered ... ”

As a result, ensuring transparency and accountability is critical. According to one respondent, one community that appears to have made significant strides in this direction,

by building a parliamentary system, is Dnepropetrovsk:

“ ... Our Board of Trustees is like a parliament, with people who vote, and these people are lay leaders. Then we have the Executives. In the parliament we have committees – which means the involvement of people – they don't only give money. Now, all money that goes into the community, from these people and from tzedaka raised in the synagogue, everything comes to one place, to the parliament. The parliament appoints an Executive Committee which spends the money that the parliament gives them. The parliament [then] has a budget: religion, education, and so on, so the Executive Committee has to come once a year to the parliament and present the budget that they need. The synagogue ... has a budget of say \$250,000 – for light, gas, utilities, the kiddushim, [refreshments served at synagogue following prayer services] and shiurim [lessons] ... and they get a budget. And the school system also comes to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then comes to the parliament and asks for the money, so this is how it works. We are very organized. It's very transparent, with auditing, so everyone is happy. Everybody knows that it's fair, that it's honest and that it's distributed in a very clear way. And it's very important. And that is why people trust the community ... ”

Other respondents highlighted the importance of bringing in matching funding for donors as a means of raising the level of confidence in giving to Jewish causes:

“ ... Today when you approach businessmen with a request for support, they often ask who else gives? There used to be a time when they wanted to be the 'exclusive' owners of this or that project, but today everyone counts money and doesn't want to be bound to support any cause by themselves, even a good one ... ”

All of these relate to internal factors and the challenges of cultivating a culture of giving within the Ukrainian Jewish community. However, externally, relationships with overseas foundations and donors remain a critical feature of Ukrainian Jewish life. This is also beset by a number of challenges, particularly bearing in mind the assertion by several respondents that some of the

overseas foundations have lost trust in grantees in Ukraine. One respondent argued:

“ ... When foreign foundations ... first arrived in Ukraine, there was no operating infrastructure at all, so everything had to be carried out literally ‘in the dark’. Foundations had to find someone, give him money, and then – who knows? And as far as I understand, the money was often used inappropriately, or simply stolen, which caused mistrust and a feeling that it’s impossible to build partnerships with Ukrainian institutions. Yet even though I understand that such an attitude of the foundations and grantors was shaped for a reason, I do not understand why this situation could not be resolved during the past twenty years ... ”

As a result, virtually every respondent mentioned the need for external funding bodies to establish a healthy dialogue with local grantees (on-going consulting, clarification of expectations, assistance in filling out application forms, etc.) as the mandatory condition for the successful development of fundraising activities by local Jewish community structures in Ukraine.

“ ... There’s a gap between overseas foundations seeking to develop community life in Ukraine and ‘doers’ who actually implement the programme, as the ‘doer’ lacks skills, time and staff to run donor cultivation relations and fill out the sophisticated application forms ... ”

Similarly, another respondent remarked:

“ ... I see that the biggest challenge is the complete absence of any dialogue between donors and potential grantees ... ”

This appears to result in a considerable degree of frustration at the local level:

“ ... We can’t afford to hire a professional fundraiser. At the same time, the enormous efforts that we make in order to fill out grant applications, in most cases, are fruitless, while instead we could spend this time on our specific tasks, scientific research, the development of study materials, etc ... Yet the most unfortunate aspect is that they [external foundations] never explain why they decline this or that proposal ... Thus I believe that if there’s a foundation that wants to work with Ukrainian Jewish institutions, it should

provide some kind of consultation about its specific requirements. It would be very useful to have seminars or consultations, where institutions that apply to the foundation receive feedback and ‘do their homework’ next time ... ”

In response to these types of challenges, some respondents called for the creation of a coordinating centre for grant distribution, “a very serious institution, with proficient experts.” In addition to finding funding sources and giving references to diligent potential grantees, its role could be to:

“ ... make an inventory of everything that exists here ... then make an expert assessment of what should be done in each place, what kinds of requests are redundant, and then understand how to satisfy the existing need in the most efficient way. But everything should be structured in a very meticulous way. It should be an international systematic programme, we need a well-structured approach here ... ”

However, whilst clearly acknowledging and appreciating the support the Ukrainian Jewish community had received from foreign donors and foundations, respondents also had a number of messages for them to help enhance the effectiveness of their investments. In particular, there were strong voices calling for long-term support of stable, independent bodies:

“ ... I believe that foundations should first of all support those organizations that show sustainable independent activity over a certain period of time, rather than those that were created to carry out a certain project and get ‘frozen’ right after the completion of the grant, when the money is used up ... ”

“ ... I believe foundations should reconsider their own policies with regard to the length of the projects they support, as quite often a successful project that was run for a year may rely on an extension of support on the condition that independent funding is found from other sources. Sure, the necessity to match the grant stimulates us to look for new money and strive for sustainability, yet our ability to do so signals that the organization is able to continue working and developing, that it’s not just totally dependent on external funding. The boards of foundations should support such

successful organizations or community projects to add stability to their activity in the long run ... ”

Furthermore, others called for foreign investment in local Jewish businesses committed to support local charities. One talked of a particular valuable relationship with a foundation that functions in this way:

“ ... We worked for a year with [a foundation that invests] in the development of local Jewish businesses to enable Jews who receive such seed money to develop their own commercial projects to support their local community from the revenues they gain when the project starts working. There’s only a few such initiatives in Ukraine that support entrepreneurship and Jewish business. They would be able to attract to the community people who know how to do business, who, in turn, would be able to form the backbone of local boards of trustees or leadership of such communities, and eventually lead these communities and support them financially ... For instance, if the community manages to reconstitute a building that needs to be repaired, the community may build a commercial structure that will pay the rent and also refurbish the building. Or, if someone opens a café, insurance company, or a credit society that may work for the benefit of local Jews, offering discounts, etc., that could also support the community. I believe it’s an interesting direction in addition to purely charitable projects ... I believe that we have to dedicate some time and effort to work systematically with small business initiatives. I understand that not every foundation has in its statute a clause that enables it to invest money in for-profit projects, but in the long-term it would enable the community to earn money independently, which is very important”

Not dissimilarly, another respondent called for the creation of mutual funds with local communities:

“ ... Often Americans who donate to support Ukraine via [foreign] organizations, don’t really know what happens to their money, where it will eventually end up. It goes into the general pot that’s difficult to control. However, if the donor creates a mutual fund with the local community, when people arrive and see the fruits of their donations or investments, they can better understand the specifics of working here and how to achieve better results. And local Jews also put

more effort into such common activity, as there’s a sense of personal responsibility ... ”

Certainly, the gradual shift away from dependency on foreign investments requires careful thought if the Ukrainian Jewish community is ultimately going to become self-sufficient. Judging by the remarks of our respondents, dialogue between donors and recipients needs to be improved, and more creative means of investment should be explored.

4.10 Welfare: children and the elderly

All respondents emphasized the significance of the broad welfare system of the Hesed Centres. Indeed, one considered it to be the most successful project carried out in Ukraine:

“..The most important thing that Hesed managed to achieve is that it made the Jewish community visible and known across the city. It simply raised awareness about the community’s existence. Indeed, if over 10,000 pensioners are registered as its clients, and each has a family and friends, then while only ten per cent of the population benefits directly, twenty per cent more know about all the good it does from the first ten per cent. And that’s a lot. There’s no other organization that would serve so many people and be known and appreciated by many more. For instance, if you stop any passer-by on the streets of Odessa and ask what he or she knows about the Jewish community, most probably you will hear about the welfare centre, even if they would have a hard time recalling its exact name. Thus, the Hesed welfare centre almost symbolizes what Jews do ... ”

Similarly:

“ ... Hesed’s activity goes beyond its walls. The way they work with the older generation shows everyone that the Jewish community exists ... ”

Nevertheless, the internal/external funding dynamic described above has led to some concern about long-term support for elderly Ukrainian Jews. According to some respondents, the downside of the assistance offered to Ukrainian elderly Jews, provided by overseas donors, is that it has actually undermined the local initiatives that initially started to develop as the network of Magen Avot

welfare centres. Today there are no examples of the successful establishment of a fully-fledged welfare system supported by a local community, although some communities have now started this work. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that with the ever-growing life-span of the Ukrainian population, there are more and more elderly Jews who are not eligible to receive full support through the system of Heseds (because of restrictions introduced by JDC and the Claims Conference):

“... Something should be done to tackle the challenge of supporting elderly Jews who are not considered eligible for Hesed assistance, as they don't fit the criteria of 'Holocaust victims' ... How can those who weren't even born in those terrible days judge who suffered more and who is more deserving..?”

Furthermore, heavy dependency on foreign investments and the absence of consistent local support for welfare projects create economic problems. Any fluctuations on a macro level in the global economy end up affecting the most vulnerable strata of population, both the elderly and orphans.

On the other hand, constructive foreign support appears to be extremely welcome. As the Jewish communities are developing an independent infrastructure for local fundraising (see 4.9), it is clear that they are also willing to utilize the world's best practices to develop an independent welfare system.

“... A lot of know-how that we have in the community came from Boston. This is our real twin. Professionals visit us all the time, and they share their expertise. They see how we work and give priceless advice that helps us to grow and transform our community, otherwise we'd live in a closet, with no idea of the opportunities or technologies that exist. All our kindergartens, schools, old age homes are connected to the respective institution in Boston and regularly receive methodological support from there ...”

In terms of developing the welfare infrastructure, respondents referred to two particular types of institutions that require additional support: orphanages and hospices. In Ukraine there are several Jewish orphanages, all supported by religious institutions that care for halachically

Jewish children, with very rare exceptions. For one respondent, this work is critical:

“... I believe the Jewish community should work with governmental orphanages to deliver the message of Judaism to the children who are Jews according to the Law of Return ... He who saves one soul, saves the entire world, and these kids – God forbid! – would have been killed had they lived during the Holocaust ...”

Another respondent noted that whilst Ukraine has some rare examples of Jewish homes for the elderly, a hospice system is entirely non-existent:

“... It's almost seventy years since the Second World War, the survivors are over eighty years old, and fewer remain each year. For many years I've been trying to set up in Ukraine a hospice for elderly, lonely, bed-ridden Jews. Can you imagine the way they are dying? In fact, many of them have passed away already ... I bet their death is sometimes very sad and lonely. If there's anything we can do to give them a chance to spend their final days and be buried decently, we have to do that ...”

In the final analysis, creative thought is required in the welfare sector as much as in every other. One respondent reflected:

“... we'll always need more and more money to support our welfare system, unless we think creatively and invent some system whereby people can allocate money to supplement their meagre pensions for the future, like an insurance [scheme] ... But someone needs to guarantee that these welfare allocations are secure.”

4.11 Combating antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment

Antisemitism

According to monitoring data compiled by the Va'ad and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress prior to the unrest throughout Ukraine at the beginning of 2014, the number of registered manifestations of antisemitism has been decreasing in recent years.²⁹ This has been the case both in the number

²⁹ It is important to note that, while this report was being completed, several antisemitic incidents took place in the context of the unrest in early 2014.

of violent incidents and of antisemitic publications in the press. The most evident drop in antisemitic propaganda and incitements took place between 2007–09, when the notorious Inter-Regional Academy of Personnel Management, known by its Ukrainian acronym, MAUP (a private Ukrainian university), ceased its blatant antisemitic crusade in response to local, national and international outrage, and its instigators were removed from positions of influence. Sponsored by some Arab and Middle Eastern countries, its activity terminated immediately after its funding ceased.

Nevertheless, antisemitic behaviour has been in evidence during recent political campaigns. During the 2010 presidential elections, some of the candidates used antisemitic rhetoric. However, support for antisemitic candidates was minimal in those elections, and the most extensive manifestations of antisemitism related to attempts to discredit the more popular politicians, Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Yuliya Tymoshenko, by highlighting their alleged Jewish origins.

During the parliamentary elections of 2012, the radical right-wing nationalistic party “Svoboda”, under the leadership of Oleh Tyahnybok, gained considerable support. It entered the Ukrainian Parliament with an unprecedented 10.4 per cent of the vote, in comparison with 0.4 per cent in 2006 and 0.8 per cent in 2007. Such dramatic success reflected the rise of a nationalistic mood in contemporary Ukrainian society. Moreover, during the first half of 2013, Oleh Tyahnybok frequently and publicly expressed discriminatory and intolerant statements. The most controversial was his insistence on formally de-classifying the word “*Zhid*” (“Dirty Jew”) as a race-hate word, referring to its Slavic etymology and consciously ignoring the insulting connotation this word has for Ukrainian Jews. Alarming, despite the widespread condemnation of international Jewish organizations, the Ukrainian government has refused to act on their concerns, preferring to distance itself from the controversy rather than to take any decisive measures.

Even though state-instigated antisemitism is not prevalent among the highest ranks of the Ukrainian authorities, anti-Jewish bigotry continues to exist throughout Ukraine at the street level. The most common targets of antisemitic assault are individuals in identifiable Hasidic attire

and institutions clearly associated with the Jewish population, particularly synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. Some Orthodox rabbis in traditional clothing venture outside their synagogues only when accompanied by security personnel. Most Jewish institutions regard antisemitic attacks as a serious risk, and many employ security guards; some also maintain sophisticated electronic security systems. Acknowledging the potential threat of antisemitic attacks, many buildings housing Jewish organizations are not publicly identified as such. Jewish community leaders complain that police often appear reluctant to pursue offenders, even when institutions are able to help to identify them. Furthermore, apprehended wrongdoers are frequently charged with relatively minor misdemeanours, such as hooliganism, rather than with more serious crimes of ethnic bigotry.

Many younger Jews, however, appear rather more relaxed about publicly acknowledging their Jewish identity. Having few or no memories of the Soviet period, they tend to be less fearful of official antisemitism, and more confident of their ability to overcome any street antisemitism in the country.

Nevertheless, respondents indicated that there is much room for improvement in the proactive work on antisemitism prevention, and pointed to three major areas that should be developed in this respect: work with local governmental authorities; work with civil society; and the establishment of a proactive monitoring system. Each of these is explored below.

According to one expert, the most important way to prevent antisemitism is to work consistently with official governmental structures:

“... We have a problem in establishing relations with the governmental authorities and law enforcement bodies ... Ironically, the smaller communities are more effective in dealing with the Ukrainian authorities than the Jewish community of Ukraine as a whole. In this respect, the Jewish community is very weak and can't effectively solve a lot of urgent issues, such as antisemitism, or restitution, or support for Israel. Where antisemitism specifically is concerned, it is treated as xenophobia, while hate crimes are not considered by the Ukrainian state to be significant,

and actually remain unpunished, as the law enforcement bodies don't know how to deal with them, and that's very bad."

Furthermore:

"... We need to work with the law enforcement bodies, with government authorities, because they are very slow and bureaucratic. All orders may go only from the top to the bottom, while the state doesn't carry out any statistical monitoring of antisemitic incidents, or crimes, or hate speech, nothing ... The state doesn't ask for our material, the state is not interested in any enlightening conferences for investigators, prosecutors or judges. Bottom line, we desperately need to establish some interaction with the state, which is basically non-existent at the moment"

At the same time, respondents noted that much more work should be done within Ukrainian society to challenge any stereotypical ideas that exist.

"... We need to interact with the wider public. Generally, society is not aware of the importance of preventing antisemitism and xenophobia. Here the Jewish community has a lot to share, some educational models ... but it's not really clear how to introduce such interaction to make it effective. Perhaps some parliamentary hearings, or joint projects with journalists or representatives of NGOs or state workers ... Yet it's very difficult to ensure that these actions are effective ..."

Similarly:

"... The only way to counteract antisemitism is to build civil society at the individual level. Our substantial experience shows that the level of antisemitism is very high in Ukraine. The general attitude of people to Jews seems to be positive, but when we carry out special tests on stereotypes, we see that the actual situation is not so good. When we discuss the results of the tests with participants during the feedback after the seminar, both teachers and schoolchildren say that they have never thought of that [that their responses may have been fuelled by prejudice], while students at teacher training institutes say they don't even want to think of that [about antisemitism in Ukraine], which means that they are already quite set in their views. And these students will soon graduate

and teach a new generation of Ukrainian children at schools!"

Developing an educational approach to solve some of these issues was clearly seen by some to be a priority:

"... I believe our biggest priority is to run educational seminars for teachers and students on the history of the Holocaust, to immunize against the disaster that may break out. Today dissatisfaction and aggression among the wider public are on the increase, and the 'blame the Jew' idea may arise at any moment. The way to prevent that is to run proactive mass seminars and publish good books ..."

Third, there was a clear call for the establishment of an antisemitism monitoring centre, appropriately equipped and staffed to fulfil its goals. Interestingly, there was an attempt to gather a pool of Jewish organizations to create such a centre, but it failed.

"... Well, we tried to prompt [various major community leaders] to start cooperating in this field, as this is the kind of problem they all seem to care about, and such a monitoring centre would provide objective information for the community, for Ukrainian authorities and for international organizations. We managed to involve the Anti-Defamation League in this process, and it was supposed to back the initiative and also give us some methodological guidance, ultimately becoming our fundraising partner in the West. But regrettably, all efforts were in vain, mainly because of the different structures, and because community leaders were unable to reach agreement, even on such a basic, self-evident issue ..."

Yet the need for such a centre was stressed particularly strongly:

"... We desperately need an independent monitoring centre. It should be a Jewish community structure, yet free from control from any specific organization and supported both by the Jewish community and NGOs. It should have official formal contacts with international organizations and state authorities. This is an ideal model that we'd be happy to develop in Ukraine, yet there is no doubt that it would require very significant financial support."

Respondents noted that “the lack of funds is the largest challenge for us.” In raising such funds, consideration would need to be given not only to the task of monitoring the situation, but also to ensuring the effective dissemination of publications and materials:

“... It’s clear that the monitoring of antisemitism is necessary, and it’s a problem if no one monitors such incidents ... Yet it is just as important to disseminate the results among the wider public in the form of books, leaflets and conferences. These materials should be translated into other languages, so that everyone interested can access this information ... I’m not satisfied with what we have managed to achieve in this field, but this is because of a lack of resources”

4.12 Israel education and *aliyah*

Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Israel were established in 1991, and in 2008, Israel appointed its first commercial attaché in the country to promote economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. (Prior to that, the commercial attaché at the Israeli embassy in Bucharest was in charge of Ukrainian relations.) The Ukraine-Israel Chamber of Commerce (created in 1995), the activities of the Embassy of Israel and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), including programmes such as Taglit and MASA, as well as the cancellation of the requirement for visas between Israel and Ukraine (in 2011), have ensured that many Ukrainian Jews have become familiar with Israeli institutions, culture and everyday life, and many indeed have relatives in Israel.

At the same time, many respondents noted the lack of consistent *hasbara* (information) aimed at presenting some of the realities of Israel beyond the conflict with its neighbours. The activities of the Israel Cultural Centre, as the major resource designed to educate the population about Israeli life, make a valuable contribution within the Jewish community, but few Ukrainians know anything about some of the more positive sides of Israel: democracy, hi-tech, medicine, agriculture, etc.

The overarching criticism of work done in these realms is often related to its quality:

“...Fifteen years ago, when the first Israeli speakers started arriving in Ukraine to give lectures, not everyone was suitably qualified, the majority were very poorly prepared ... At that time the audience consisted of professors from universities, Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, scientists, everyone was interested to hear from Israeli experts. And regrettably, the fiasco of those ‘lecturers’ undermined the efforts of the Israel Cultural Centres for many years to come ... ”

Similarly, concerning the teaching of Hebrew:

“I read a book by JDC Director Dr Seymour Epstein ‘From Couscous to Kasha’ ... where he mentions the Hebrew teachers of the 1990s. They were completely unprepared. They had no idea where they were going, didn’t speak Russian, didn’t know the background of the people they were going to meet. Who decided that any kibbutznik may be sent to Siberia? They were simply told they were to go to teach Russian Jews Hebrew. But how? Using what materials? The same may be applied to modern speakers brought from Israel. What are the selection criteria? Are there any? Who organizes such events? And yet we must establish consistent intellectual relations with Israel ... The quality of Israel-related programmes should be the highest priority to uphold the image of Israel, foster respect and empathy for the country and ignite interest to learn more ... ”

Whilst the quality of these activities may have improved in the intervening years, there is still a clear view that the relationship with Israel needs to be tighter, and, for them to have genuine impact, Israel-related activities must be high quality:

“... we need to be able to meet Israelis once every four to six weeks, and have serious, fruitful conversations with them. The interlocutor should be able to represent Israel, Israeli science, culture in a proper way ... it’s impossible to overestimate the significance of Israel for Jews of the Diaspora! It is our essence, our meaning. That is why it’s a disaster when we see a low-quality Israeli exhibition, go to a poor concert, or hear a weak lecturer ... Some lecturers behave as if they are in the middle of nowhere talking to illiterate aborigines ... ”

Similarly:

“ ... The Israel presence in Ukraine shouldn't be limited to one-off actions, exhibitions or random concerts by a mediocre violinist who happened to agree to come by ... Instead of propaganda and slogans, we need on-going high-quality programmes. Generally, local intellectuals [in Odessa] have a very positive attitude to Israel, but we don't need seminars of the 'how to make aliyah or not make aliyah' kind. We want to attend seminars that have a wider scientific significance. Israel has great specialists in so many fields ... And there should be a dialogue with the organizers and funders of any Israel-related programme, so they could understand better what is needed here ... ”

One of the particular challenges concerning Israel education in the Ukraine is due to the fact that many Ukrainians made *aliyah* and then returned to Ukraine. Indeed, an ever-growing community of *yordim* (Israelis who have moved back to Ukraine) exists, who, whilst continuing to identify themselves as Israelis, often settle permanently in Ukraine, have families (sometimes with non-Jewish spouses) and establish businesses in the country. However, some felt that they commonly contribute to an 'anti-*aliyah*' phenomenon. As one respondent commented:

“ ... We need to identify such people who return and ensure that they don't create an unattractive image of Israel in the eyes of local people. You know how people think: why would anyone leave a good place to live?”

Other respondents countered this view:

“ ... it's a waste not to engage Israelis who are settling in Ukraine in shaping a more favourable attitude to Israel. They could also act as speakers at meetings featuring Israel ... also many of them are well-off and could be

attracted to support local Jewish enterprises and charitable causes ... ”

One of the novel ways of enhancing relations between Ukraine and Israel, as well as deepening understanding and connections between Jews in Israel and Ukraine, is the Mahut Project, a joint initiative of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), the Genesis Philanthropy Group (GPG), Friends of the IDF (FIDF), and Beit Morasha of Jerusalem. Through visits to diaspora communities and encounters with local Jews, it aims to develop Jewish and Israeli identity among IDF officers, strengthen their connection with world Jewry and expose them to the history and cultural heritage of the Jewish people. Since Ukraine enjoys a special place in the history of Chasidism, Zionism, Jewish literature, fine arts and science, and possesses unique cultural landmarks, it is a key destination for the Mahut Project. This project has a profound effect not only on IDF officers, but also on Ukrainian Jews, who often reassess the richness and significance of their own heritage through the genuine interest and appreciation of the Israel military visitors, and in turn, become more aware of the current situation in Israel and its significance in their everyday life.

Either way, the unique relationship many Jews from the FSU have with Israel is an important consideration to bear in mind when developing Israel education initiatives in the country. The overarching sense that came out of the interviews was that quality was the primary issue to address. If Israel is presented in a dynamic, compelling and genuinely informative way, efforts in this area are likely to be effective.

Finally, the increasing political instability in Ukraine may have an impact on the rates of *aliyah*.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

Today, there can be no doubt that Jewish communal life in Ukraine is active, wide-ranging and diverse. Since the collapse of communism, an organizational infrastructure has been developed, which reaches into virtually all corners of Jewish communal activity.

The individual interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this study have borne tangible results. Not only did they provide valuable insights into the various successes, challenges and dilemmas of Ukrainian Jewish life, they also accurately highlighted the wider, structural problems underpinning many of the current issues.

Recommendation 1

Work towards a common organizational framework for the development of Jewish life in Ukraine

Solving these structural problems may be the greatest challenge facing the future of the Jewish community in Ukraine. Since the collapse of communism, the Jewish community of Ukraine has developed in a rather haphazard manner. The three main centres – Kiev, Odessa and Dnepropetrovsk – all show potential for development, but are very different from one another. Kiev is the administrative capital of Jewish Ukraine, with head offices of the majority of local and international Jewish NGOs and the largest Jewish population. However, it is a multi-faceted community, which lacks the guiding authority of a central organization able to determine a common strategic path towards its development. Odessa, at one time the third largest Jewish community in the world, has a more pluralist community today, with several prominent powers, each with its own agenda. Dnepropetrovsk has a single powerful leader with a clear vision regarding the development of the community, who has managed to unite all strata of the city's Jews around him, and, as a result, a community development strategy exists, and activities are coordinated.

Whilst, as one respondent noted, there is a 'United Jewish Community of Ukraine' organization that "demonstrates a desire to move towards

unification," it is clear there is still some way to go. Arguably, the most important feature of any strategic unification process will involve a gradual shift from international to local responsibility: a reduction in the influence of international Jewish organizations alongside a parallel increase in the empowerment of local Jews to help enhance their engagement in shaping the future of Jewish life.

To achieve this, it will be particularly important to reconcile internal dissension, and establish a healthy and constructive dialogue between the representatives of different Jewish movements and organizations, so as to build a more joined-up approach to Jewish community development. In addition, efforts need to be made to train a new generation of responsible community leaders, and to work towards a situation in which local Jewish organizations become financially sustainable and independent.

Recommendation 2

Achieve financial sustainability

The question of how the Ukrainian Jewish community might reduce its reliance on external sources of funding and become more financially independent looms large. Whilst respondents clearly state that some progress has been made in this regard (notably, they point to greater activity among trustees of Jewish organizations, the introduction of membership and participation fees, the emergence of professional fundraisers and introduction of commercial elements into the agendas of previously exclusively not-for-profit ventures), they also argue that more needs to be done.

In considering the steps required to achieve financial sustainability, they argue that part of the solution requires an internal communal cultural shift to take place. Due in part to the reliance on overseas investors, a local culture of giving needs to be established. There are several obstacles to this, some of which are beyond the reach of the Jewish community, but essentially, donors must want to contribute to Jewish communal work, have confidence in the organizations requesting their support, feel secure that their donations will be used for the purposes stated, and be able to

make their donations with minimal effort. This will inevitably require organizations to establish more transparent and accountable fundraising and fund-management systems, and to develop more robust systems of organizational management and planning. Specific actions will help to bring in new local donors: more individualized approaches to them to help explore their interests and motivations; creating partnerships to ensure that the Jewish community is supporting their business endeavours in return for communal support; and providing high quality opportunities for donors to develop their Jewish knowledge and understanding.

At the same time, Jewish organizations in Ukraine and overseas foundations/organizations need to interact more efficiently and effectively, with a long-term view to empower the community to stand on its own feet. Overseas bodies have a particularly important role to play. Respondents want to see them support the long-term projects of stable organizations with independent agendas and at least a small donor base, and work with them to help them to achieve independence. They would also like to see them establish a dialogue with local grantees to clarify expectations, help them to complete application forms and provide ongoing consultation. They maintain that they should invest more in local Jewish businesses committed to supporting local Jewish charities, and help to establish mutual funds with local communities to work with Ukrainian Jewry to help it transition towards greater local independence. Whilst this transition from dependence on overseas donations would seem to be an obvious policy for overseas organizations to pursue, the reality is that this is not always the case. Indeed, some organizations in particular were commonly criticized for failing to support local initiatives because they regarded them as competition with the potential to damage their own power base.

Recommendation 3

Enhance Jewish education

Respondents commonly regard the provision of Jewish education to be a precondition for the community's successful development and steady growth, but consistently argue that greater investment is required in this area. They maintain that many Jews in Ukraine regard Jewish education to be irrelevant and obsolete, and thus

argue that new and alternative Jewish educational models – self-study programmes, educational trips, immersion experiences, grassroots initiated conferences, distance learning – need to be cultivated.

Three specific issues emerged in the interviews. First, given the high levels of intermarriage among Ukrainian Jews and the issues of Jewish status that ensue, a policy of inclusion ought to be adopted. Many of those who identify with the Jewish community are not halachically Jewish, but respondents commonly agreed that, in the Ukrainian context, they must be included and welcomed into Jewish educational activities.

Second, respondents are pondering the role of academic Jewish institutions in Jewish education, and the extent to which they should operate purely in the realm of academia, or engage much more directly in Jewish community development. Clearly, the answer to this question will be partly driven by the preferences of academics themselves, but in the course of cultivating the field, the role academics can or should play in helping to develop Ukrainian Jewish life is an important issue for consideration. This concern also relates more generally to a lack of access to high quality Jewish educators and teachers. It is clear that steps need to be taken to attract more people into Jewish education, and to provide them with in-service training and appropriate remuneration. More generally, respondents agree that academic Jewish studies need to be developed in Ukraine: young academics need to be supported, programmes of study require more long-term investment, greater levels of cooperation between Jewish universities should be developed, and efforts should be made to establish a state-sponsored institute for Jewish studies.

Third, as has been noted in other studies, respondents maintain that there is a paucity of Judaic curricula and teacher-training materials available in Russian and Ukrainian. These urgently need to be developed or adapted from elsewhere – it is inconceivable that Ukrainian Jews will be able to develop as Jews without access to materials that they are able to understand. This linguistic issue concerns educational delivery and teacher training,

and written and online material as well as visual aids.

Recommendation 4

Preserve and make accessible Ukrainian Jewish heritage

Ukraine's extraordinary Jewish history and heritage has the potential to offer the contemporary community a valuable mechanism to attract academics, archivists, tour guides, educators and artists to the country, as well as formal students, informal learners and tourists. Efforts in this realm, developed strategically, could provide a concomitant boost to Jewish community development.

In this regard, respondents variously call for a continuation in the activities concerning the restitution of communal property, alongside a more systematic approach to the preservation of Ukrainian Jewry's physical and intellectual heritage. They argue for the cultivation of a more active programme aimed at non-Jewish Ukrainians to foster interest in Ukrainian Jewish history and culture, and to inspire their active engagement in the preservation of Jewish historical sites, particularly in places where no Jewish population remains. This could help to create more favourable conditions and career opportunities for qualified professionals in the field. They, in turn, may also be well-placed to support Jewish educational and community development initiatives, and to generate better public access to information about Ukrainian Jewish life for all.

They further note that there is a connection between the preservation of existing Jewish heritage and the cultivation of contemporary Jewish culture. Greater access to Ukrainian Jewish

history could inspire new forms of Jewish cultural development, particularly if efforts are made to make it widely accessible in multiple ways.

Recommendation 5

Preventing antisemitism

Like other diaspora communities, the Jewish community of Ukraine has an important role to play in countering antisemitism in the country and garnering support for Israeli causes. With this in mind, respondents made several recommendations.

Notably, they call for the creation of a centre to monitor antisemitic incidents, suitably staffed to be able to gather data, draw up and disseminate reports, and liaise with government, police and security services to work in partnership with them to counteract antisemitism. In order for this to be successful, such a body would need to work with local authorities to develop a system to encourage and enable individuals to report acts of vandalism, discrimination, harassment or violence, and combine forces to help prevent the emergence and development of extremist movements bent on targeting Jews and other minority groups. It would further need to work with Ukrainian civil society to help it to understand the roots of antisemitism, and encourage appropriate partner organizations to confront the underlying problems rather than simply their consequences.

In addition, they maintain that efforts should be made to counter any anti-Israel sentiment among the non-Jewish population, particularly by developing high quality Israel programming, bringing specialist speakers to Ukraine to teach about Israel, and seeking ways to develop economic cooperation with Israel. This is especially urgent in the light of recent political upheavals and developments in Ukraine.

Appendix A

Map of officially organized Jewish religious communities in contemporary Ukraine



Appendix B: Jewish organizations in Ukraine

All-Ukrainian Jewish Organizations and Associations

Association of Jewish organizations and communities VA'AD (member of Euro-Asian Jewish Congress)

Address: 8/5, Voloshska str., Kiev 04070
 Telephone: 380-44 248-3670, 425-9757, 425-9758, 425-9759
 Fax: 380-44 425-9760
 E-mail: vaad-ua@ukr.net
 Website: www.vaadua.org

Jewish Council of Ukraine

Address: 7, Nemanskaya, Kiev 01103
 Telephone: 380-44 286-3961, 284-9154
 Fax: 380-44 285-9604
 E-mail: levitas@ukr.net

All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress (VEK)

Address: 14/1 Mechnikova, Kiev 01023
 Telephone: 380-44 235-7120
 Fax: 380-44 235-1067
 E-mail: chabad.beit@gmail.com; kievcommunity@gmail.com
 Website: <http://sinagoga.kiev.ua>

All-Ukrainian Union of Jewish Public Organizations "United Jewish Community of Ukraine"

Address: 14/1 Mechnikova, Kiev 01023
 Telephone: 380-44 235-7120
 Fax: 380-44 235-1067
 E-mail: vek@i.kiev.ua
 Website: www.jewish.kiev.ua

Jewish Foundation of Ukraine (JFU)

Address: 10-b, Pushkinskaya str., Kiev 01034
 Telephone: 380-44 278-7793, 279-6542
 Fax: 380-44 371-6527
 E-mail: jfu@silvercom.net
 Website: www.jew-fund.kiev.ua

Jewish Confederation of Ukraine (EKU)

Address: 29 Schekavitskaya, Kiev 04071
 Telephone: 380-44 463-7085
 Fax: 380-44 463-7088
 E-mail: eku@jewukr.org
 Website: www.jewukr.org

All-Ukrainian religious Jewish unions

The Chabad Lubavitch Association of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine (former Federation of Jewish Religious Communities of Ukraine (FIROU))

Address: 11 Donetskoie Shosse, Dnepropetrovsk 49080
 Telephone: 380-562 326400
 Fax: 380-562 326870
 E-mail: office@fjc.org.ua
 Website: www.fjc.org.ua

The Association of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine (OIROU)

Address: 29 Schekavitskaya, Kiev 04071
 Telephone: 380-44 463-7085, 463-7087
 Fax: 380-44 463-7088
 E-mail: synag@users.ukrsat.com

All-Ukrainian Congress of Jewish Religious Communities (VEK)

Address: 13 Shota Rustaveli, Kiev 01001
 Telephone: 380-44 235-9082, 246-4622, 246-4620
 Fax: 380-44 235-9083
 E-mail: chabad.beit@gmail.com; kievcommunity@gmail.com
 Website: <http://sinagoga.kiev.ua>

The Religious Association of Progressive Judaism Congregations of Ukraine (ROOPIU)

Address: 4-d, Zolotovorotskaya str., Kiev, 01001
 Telephone: 380-50 351-9256
 E-mail: rupjcu@ukr.net
 Website: www.pjukr.kiev.ua

The Educational and Cultural Centre of the Conservative Judaism Movement "Midrasha Tzionit"

Address: 97-a, Zhilyanskaya str., Kiev
 Telephone: 380-44 494-1737
 Fax: 380-44 494-1738
 E-mail: prozenfeld@gmail.com
 Website: <http://midrasha.net>

Regional Jewish community Centres

Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Religious Community (FIROU)

Address: 4, Sholom Aleichem str.,
Dnepropetrovsk, 49000
Telephone: 380-562 342120
Fax: 380-562 342137
E-mail: jewcom@a-teleport.com
Website: www.djc.com.ua

Jewish Community Centre “Migdal”, Odessa

Address: 46-a, Malaya Arnavutskaya, Odessa,
65012
Telephone: 380-48 777-0718
Fax: 380-482 343968
E-mail: migdal@migdal.ru
Website: www.feldman.org.ua/commity

Odessa Jewish Cultural Centre “Beit Grand”

Address: 77/79, Nezhinskaya, Odessa, 65023
Telephone: 380-48 737-4052
Fax: 380-482 343968
E-mail: info@beit-grand.odessa.ua
Website: www.beit-grand.odessa.ua

Educational institutions

ORT Ukraine (Charitable Institution Educational Resources and Technological Training)

Address: 14-a, Tampere str., Kiev 02105
Telephone: 380-44 559-3455, 559-1838
Fax: 380-44 559-3409, 559-9404
E-mail: info@ort.org.ua

South-Ukrainian Jewish University “Chabad-Odessa”

Address: 21 Osipova str., Odessa 65011
Telephone: 380-48 728-0770
E-mail: rabbiodessa@gmail.com
Website: www.chabad.odessa.ua

Odessa Jewish University “Tikva”

Address: 25 Evreiskaya str., Odessa 65125
Telephone: 380-48 777-1564
E-mail: tikvaodessa@ukr.net
Website: www.tju.od.ua

All-Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies “Tkuma”, Dnepropetrovsk

Address: 15-b Barrikadnaya str., Dnepropetrovsk
49000
Telephone: 380-56 744-0723
Fax: 380-562 368711
Email: tkuma@tkuma.dp.ua
Website: www.tkuma.dp.ua

The Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies (UCHS)

Kutuzova Street, r. 109, Kiev 01011
Tel: (044) 285-90-30
Email: uhcenter@holocaust.kiev.ua
Website: www.holocaust.kiev.ua

International Solomon University, Kiev

Address: 1-b Sholudenko str., Kiev 01135
Telephone: 380-44 236-1273
Email: isu@solomon-un.kiev.ua
Website: www.isu.edu.ua

Preservation of Jewish culture

Jewish Studies Institute “Institute of Judaica”

Address: 25 Evreiskaya str., Odessa 65125
Telephone: 380-48 777-1564
Email: kievkon@gmail.com
Website: www.judaica.kiev.ua

Welfare centres

Kiev – Hesed Nahalat Avot Azriel

Address: 4-a, Piterskaya str. Kiev, 03087
Telephone: 380-44 241-0302/03
Fax: 380-44 241-0746
Email: office@hesed.kiev.ua
Website: www.hesed.kiev.ua

Dnepropetrovsk Rosalind Gurwin Jewish Community Centre

Address: 4, Sholom Aleichem str.,
Dnepropetrovsk, 49000
Telephone: 380-562 362982, 362994
Fax: 380-562 342137
Email: jcc@jcc.dp.ua
Website: www.jcc.dp.ua

Odessa Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Hesed Sha'arei Tzion

Address: 77/79, Nezhinskaya, Odessa, 65023
 Telephone: 380-48 737-4052
 Fax: 380-482 343968
 Email: gmilus@tm.odessa.ua
 Website: www.gmilushesed.narod.ru

Simferopol (Crimea) – Hesed Shimon

Address: 58, Miller str., Simferopol, 95048, Crimea
 Telephone: 380-652 519354, 519353
 Fax: 380-652 248172
 Email: shimon@utel.net.ua

Vinnitsa – Hesed Emuna

Address: 8, Kosmonavtov str., Vinnitsa 21021
 Telephone: 380-432 446015
 Fax: 380-432 431134
 Email: office@hesed.vn.ua
 Website: www.jewish.vinnitsa.com

Donetsk – Hesed Tzeddakah

Address: 96a, Bogdana Khmel'nitsky Ave.,
 Donetsk 83050
 Telephone: 380-622 3343856
 Fax: 380-622 3343856

Zhitomir – Hesed Shlomo

Address: 10, Yana Garmanika str., Zhitomir 10003
 Telephone: 380-412 418616, 426197, 426198, 426201
 Email: hesedshlomo@mail.ru
 Website: www.hesedshlomo.com.ua

Uzhgorod (Trans-Carpathian region) – Hesed Shpira

Address: 8, Podgornaya str., Uzhgorod, 88000
 Telephone: 380-312 612033, 619201
 Email: fond@hesed-shpira.com.ua
 Website: www.hesed-shpira.com.ua

Zaporozhie – Hesed Michael

Address: 4, Podedy str., Zaporozhie, 69061
 Telephone: 380-61 213-5562, 213-5750, 224-3306
 Email: hesed.zp@gmail.com

Ivano-Frankovsk – Hesed Leib

Address: 27, Syrika str., Ivano-Frankovsk, 76018
 Telephone: 380-342 230600
 Fax: 380-342 522843
 Email: albert@il.if.ua

Kirovograd – Hesed Shlomo

Address: 90/40, Dzerzhinskogo str., Kirovograd,
 25006
 Fax: 380-522 24-6944, 32-0429, 24-3231
 Email: heshlomo@mail.ru

Lugansk – Hesed Ner

Address: 193, Sovetskaya str., Lugansk, 91053
 Telephone: 380-642 531332, 501057
 Fax: 380-642 501058
 Email: office@hesed-ner.lg.ua
 Website: www.hesed-ner.org.ua

Lvov – Hesed Arie

Address: 30, Kotlyarevskogo str., Lvov, 79013
 Telephone: 380-32 238-9860, 238-9861, 238-9869,
 238-9914, 238-9915, 238-1178
 Email: arie@hesed.lviv.ua
 Website: www.hesed.lviv.ua

Nikolaev – Hesed Menachem

Address: 67, Dekabristov str., Nikolaev, 54002
 Telephone: 380-512 478192
 Email: hesed@menachem.mk.ua

Mirgorod – Hesed Shahar

Address: 9, Kashinskogo str., Mirgorod, Poltava
 region, 37600
 Telephone: 380-5355 52143
 Email: mgebc@poltava.ukrtel.net

Rovno – Hesed Osher

Address: 8-b, Gagarina str., Rovno 33000
 Telephone: 380-362 223106
 Fax: 380-362 240469
 Email: office@osher.rivne.com

Konotop – Hesed Esther

Address: 33, Shevchenko, Konotop, Sumy region,
 41615
 Telephone: 380-5447
 Fax: 380-5447
 Email: ester@ester.org.ua
 Website: www.ester.org.ua

Sumy – Hesed Chaim

Address: 17, Supruna str., Sumy
 Telephone: 380-542 255330

Kharkov – Hesed Sha'arei Tikva

Address: 82, Akademika Pavlova str., Kharkov, 61068
Telephone: 380-57 760-1503, 760-1567, 760-1568, 760-1502
Fax: 380-57 714-3908
Email: office@hesed.org.ua
Website: www.hesed.org.ua

Kherson – Hesed Shmu'el

Address: 124, Krasnoflotskaya str., Kherson, 73000
Telephone: 380-552 425307, 425306
Fax: 380-552 425303
Email: shmyel@tlc.kherson.ua
Website: www.hesed.kherson.ua

Khmelnitsky – Hesed BESH”T

Address: 40/2, Shevchenko str., Khmelnitsky, 29000
Telephone: 380-382 700954, 700955, 702054, 702254, 559253
Fax: 380-382 720181
Email: hesedbesht@ukr.net
Website: http://thiya.at.ua/

Cherkassy – Hesed Dorot

Address: 66, Bogdan Khmelnitsky str., Cherkassy, 18015
Telephone: 380-472 473128, 477079, 476985
Fax: 380-472 544148
Email: hesed@megastyle.com
Website: www.hesed-dorot.uch.net

Chernigov – Hesed Esther

Address: 58, Schorsa str., Chernigov
Telephone: 380-462 152831; 152965; 147610
Fax: 380-462 152531
Email: root@esther.chernigov.ua

Sevastopol – Hesed Shahar

Address: 26, Kulakova str., Sevastopol, 99011
Telephone: 380-692 548300
Fax: 380-692 559141
Email: shahar@ukrcom.sevastopol.ua

Funding and philanthropy

Jewish Charitable Fund “Ukrainian Jewish Forum”

Address: 8/4 Zhelyabova str., Kiev 03068
Telephone: 380-44 371-6524
Fax: 380-44 371-6527
Email: secretary@jforu.com.ua
Website: www.jforu.com.ua

Combating antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment

Ukrainian Jewish Committee

Address: 1-b, Darvina, Kiev 01004
Telephone: 380-44 585-8700
Fax: 380-44 585-8701
Email: red@i.kiev.ua
Website: www.feldman.org.ua/commity

All-Ukrainian Association of Jews – Former Prisoners of Ghetto and Concentration Camps

Address: 4-a, Piterskaya str., Kiev 03087
Telephone: 380-44 243-6339

Youth organizations

Kiev Hillel

Address: 30 Krasnoarmeiskaya str., office 1, Kiev, 01004
Telephone: 380-44 248-7698
Fax: 380-44 278-7687
Email: hillel.info@gmail.com
Website: www.hillel.com.ua

Odessa Hillel

Address: 7, Grecheskaya str., office 3, Odessa 65023
Telephone: 380-48 725-6000
Fax: 380-44 278-7687
Email: odessa@hillel.su
Website: www.hillel-case.org

Dnepropetrovsk Hillel

Address: 1-a Klary Tzetkin str., office 1, Dnepropetrovsk, 49000
Telephone: 380-56 374-2158
Email: dnepr@hillel.su

Moishe House Kiev

Address: 4a, Kameneva, Kiev
Website: https://www.facebook.com/groups/moishehousekiev/

Moishe House Odessa

Address: Osipova str. 32, Odessa, 65125
 Email: mshsodessa@gmail.com
 Website: <https://www.facebook.com/MoisheHouseOdessa>

Ukrainian Union of Jewish Students (UUJS)

Address: 34-a, Grushevsky str., office 13, Kiev, 01021
 Telephone: 380-44 491-6193
 Fax: 380-44 491-6194
 Email: info@uujs.org
 Website: www.uujs.org

International Jewish organizations in Ukraine

**International Public Organization Centre
 “Joint” – Representative office of American
 Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in
 Central and Western Ukraine**

Address: 8/4 Zhelyabova str., Kiev 03068
 Telephone: 380-44 490-2190, 453-2672
 Fax: 380-44 277-3170
 Email: office@joint.kiev.ua
 Website: www.jdc.org

**International Jewish Student Organization
 Hillel in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia,
 Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan**

Address: 14/1 Mechnikova, Kiev 01023
 Telephone: 380-44 246-5411
 Fax: 380-44 278-7687
 Email: hillel@hillel.com.ua
 Website: <http://www.hillel.su>

The Claims Conference: Liaison office in Ukraine and Moldova

Address: 7, Nemanskaya, Kiev 01103
 Telephone: 380-44 295-0206
 Fax: 380-44 295-0206
 Email: zelyal@voliacable.com

Offices of the State of Israel in Ukraine**Embassy of the State of Israel in Ukraine and Moldova**

Address: 34, Lesi Ukrainkyblvd., Kiev 01133
 Telephone: 380-44 586-1500, 285-5718
 Fax: 380-44 586-1555, 284-9748
 Email: info@kiev.mfa.gov.il
 Website: <http://ukraine.mfa.gov.il>

Israel Cultural Centre in Kiev (ICC)

Address: 34, Lesi Ukrainky blvd., Kiev 01133
 Telephone: 380-44 285-6836, 284-9735
 Fax: 380-44 285-3369, 284-9736
 Email: icckiev@il4u.org.il
 Website: www.il4u.org.il/kiev

Jewish Agency for Israel “Sochnut-Ukraine”

Address: 10 Starokievskaya str., Kiev
 Telephone: 380-44 230-0451, 230-0463, 230-0464, 230-0457
 Fax: 380-44 230-0452
 Email: ua@jafi.org
 Website: <http://jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/Russian/Delegations/Kiev/>

This report is the fourth in the JPR series *Jewish life in East-Central Europe since the collapse of communism*.

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