

THE UJIA ISRAEL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

EVALUATION

May 2008

This is an internal document

The following paper relates to both Gap Year and Short Programme volunteering. It summarises and reviews current UJIA provision, records elements of success and tries to understand the challenges and issues that are a current feature of some elements of the programme. Finally, a set of recommendations is detailed, which should act as a lever for change.

Summary of the Facts and Structure of Gap Year Volunteer Programmes

- All UK Jewish Youth Movements receive core funding from UJIA as well as bursary funding for individuals.
- All UK Movements spend from approximately one third to two thirds of the gap year participating in volunteering projects.
- Within the past five years, the number of Youth Movements who participate in UJIA volunteering projects in Israel has fallen from eight to four.
- Apart from the Intifada years, when numbers dropped, the numbers of Israel gap year participants has risen only slightly in the last ten years.
- There are growing numbers of volunteering opportunities elsewhere in the world for gap year students. The UJIA is in an open market place.
- The needs of the individual, the Movement and the UJIA projects in Israel are not always the same as each other.
- Typically, volunteering on UJIA projects takes place in schools, teaching English.
- No specific teacher- training is given to either volunteers or teachers.
- Success is greatest where there is an on-going relationship with a project or region, starting in the years before the gap year experience.
- The volunteering placement is only part of the whole 3 month volunteering experience, which must be organised and supported holistically and with great attention to detail and care, to prevent many of the problems described in this paper from occurring.

Summary of the Facts and Structure of Short Programmes

- Almost all UK short programmes receive bursaries from UJIA.
- Birthright programmes are free to the participant. A third of the cost is funded by UJIA and the rest by major donors and Israel.
- Short programmes include school trips, typically in year 9, Israel Tour at the end of year 11, Birthright tours and *Bogrim* (graduate) trips for 19+ year olds.
- Typically those on a short programme will participate in a volunteering project, which may be from a couple of hours to a couple of days.

Movements will choose the best option for their group, not necessarily with UJIA.

- UJIA Volunteering includes working with the SPNI (Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel), after school or sports clubs, encounters with children on *Moshavim*, and from this year, *Shulchan I'Shulchan* (Table to Table)
- The needs of the individuals, Movements/Schools and the UJIA are not always the same as each other.
- Organisation of the volunteer programmes sometimes suffers because of lack of ability to deliver.

The Context:

Between 17% and 20% of Jewish eighteen year olds typically choose a gap year in Israel, primarily through the Jewish Youth Movements, but also to Yeshivot and Seminaries. Every Youth Movement in the UK with a gap year programme receives significant funding for bursaries from the UJIA, although planning and implementation is done by each Movement independently, with support and advice from UJIA. Almost every programme includes a volunteering component, usually around three months, taken at different points of the year. This is considered ideologically by the Movements as a key aspect of the “living in Israel” experience. In 2007-8, the number of eighteen to nineteen year olds on a Youth Movement gap year in Israel is 223.

Whilst in the past, volunteering in UJIA projects in the Galil was part of many of the programmes, since 2003, our current partner Youth Movements show decreasing involvement in the volunteering programme in the Galil. In 2002, eight Movements participated in volunteer schemes in the Galil. This current year, 2007-8, it is predicted that four Movements will participate. Sometimes, a choice is given during the “volunteering” period and participants choose *Magen David Adom* (MDA)/Fire Service/*Marava* (army)/etc etc or volunteering, or the volunteering has been taken away from the UJIA projects and has been offered in other parts of Israel with other providers. In some cases, our partner Movements are still volunteering with UJIA projects in the Galil.

The way that the Israel year is split could provide for a range of experiences that includes both volunteering in the Galil with UJIA projects and, during another period of the gap year experience, other experiences of contributing to Israeli society e.g. MDA, *Marava*. At present, most of the Youth Movements are no longer pursuing that option.

Approximately 50% of all Jewish sixteen year olds in the mainstream Jewish community (excluding *charedim*) spend a month in Israel on Tour, almost entirely through UJIA Israel Experience. Four Secondary schools send year nine pupils and two Primary schools send year six pupils for between two and three weeks each year. In addition, during the year, some of the Youth Movements send groups on *Bogrim* trips of a week or more. Youth Movements organise *Bogrim* trips on alternate years. In 2008, the total

number of young people from the UK on short term programmes in Israel through the UJIA is estimated at approximately 2200 young people.

UJIA take responsibility for providing volunteering projects in the North of Israel for young people on short term programmes. The purpose of these experiences is two-fold: a) to promote volunteering and b) to promote the UJIA image and agenda. The volunteering period may vary from a few hours to a few days.

Movements and schools place their trust in UJIA, expecting efficient and well organised delivery of volunteer programmes for both short programmes and gap year programmes. But, they “vote with their feet”. If a Movement or school feels that the UJIA is unable to deliver, it will go elsewhere to one of the many other providers of programming in Israel. Unless it has a subsequently bad experience, there is little incentive to return to UJIA.

Without exception, every Youth Movement and school in the UK that has a gap year or short programme receives support from the UJIA . This may take the form of one or more of the following: payment towards the cost of the trip, payment for *madrichim* training, bursaries for those participants who cannot afford the full cost of the programme, advice on programme planning. Whilst the UJIA has never insisted that Movements participate in our programmes in the North as a condition of funding, UJIA should be able to build and sustain an excellent programme that is attractive to the Movements.

Purpose of Evaluation:

The desired outcome of this review will be a series of recommendations to be considered which, if implemented, will lead to an increasing number of participants, as well as a higher quality and relevant volunteer programme in the North of Israel as part of the Israel gap year experience and also as part of the short term programmes. The recommendations will need to be budgeted and the UJIA will need to decide on their value and viability. The successful implementation of these recommendations will be shown in the following ways:

- a) quantitatively: by a growing number of participating Movements and growing number of participants within those Movements, and
- b) qualitatively: by the positive experiences and feedback of participants, the projects in which participants volunteered, Youth Movements, UJIA staff and parents. Participants should also have developed a sense of relationship with the UJIA through the projects on which they volunteer.

The Research Framework:

The review of volunteer provision has included:

- A summary of the volunteering that has been offered in the past and what is currently offered.
- A critique of that provision

- An assessment of the needs of the individual, the Movements and the region and what volunteers could reasonably contribute to meet those needs.
- A summary of how the volunteering work is integrated into the holistic experience of living in the Galil (accommodation, enrichment, social interaction with the community, *shabbatot* and *chagim*)
- A critique of that provision
- An overview of alternative volunteering programmes available for UK gap year students, including what is offered in Israel to UK Youth Movements outside the UJIA framework

The research methodology has included statistical and informational data, as well as records of reports and previous reflections on the programme over the past five years, where documentary evidence is available. The research features a focus on semi structured interviews with a range of the stakeholders in the programme. The purpose of the interviews was partly informational, but mainly to critique the programme and work towards recommendations for development. Semi- structured interviews were chosen as the most likely to elicit a full and helpful range of responses as the interviewer has the flexibility within the interview to pursue relevant and interesting responses with probing and supplementary questions, not all of which could be guessed in advance of the interview.

- The details of the research protocol can be found in Appendix One (page 14).
- The time frame and personnel involved in the research can be found in Appendix Two (page 16).
- Statistical data, including Movement and school information of numbers on gap years and numbers volunteering specifically on UJIA programmes in the Galil, can be found in Appendix Three (page 17)
- Current UJIA gap year projects in the Galil can be found in Appendix Four (page 19)
- Statistical data related to short programmes in the Galil 2008 can be found in Appendix Five (page 20)

Findings:

a) The volunteering programme offered by the UJIA

Volunteering is part of the total experience of the ten month gap year experience in Israel for eighteen year olds from the UK. The year typically splits into sections of approximately three months as follows:

- i) Study – *Machon* (Youth Leadership Institute) or tailor made Movement study programme
- ii) Options – MDA, *Marava*, Fire Service, Kibbutz
- iii) Volunteering

The ten months also includes at least two periods of *chofesh* (holiday), typically *Sukkot* and *Pesach* as well as Movement run seminars and other experiences. *Netzer* and *Noam* have followed a different pattern and

volunteering has been one of the options to choose in the final period of the year after kibbutz.

The volunteer placements offered by UJIA are almost always in schools in the Karmiel, Meona, Tzfat or Shlomi areas. Volunteers help to teach English, either to small groups or to individuals. Sometimes the students have good English, which needs improving in order for those students to reach the highest possible examination grade and sometimes the students are below average in their English studies and need substantial help. Volunteering in schools takes place in the mornings, after which the volunteers have no commitments with their allotted school for the rest of the day.

The short programmes offer a different range of volunteering options. These range from programmes with the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel, to working with students in a *moadonit* (children's holiday club), to helping clear and plant woodland, as well as a range of other options. Sometimes, the short programmes take the form of encounters with young people their age on one of the *Moshavim* in the Galil, and they also run activities in absorption centres, for example the Ethiopian Absorption centres in Tzfat and Ayelet Hashachar..

Simone Shtriksberger is the UJIA Community programme co-ordinator, working from the UJIA office, Meona. A large part of her responsibility involves co-ordinating the volunteer programme. She recruits co-ordinators for each volunteer area and then supports them in finding suitable placements and accommodation in each area. These co-ordinators generally start their work on a part time basis approximately two months before a group arrives. They are employed on a temporary basis, although sometimes co-ordinators do the role more than once. Simone supervises the co-ordinators, builds the budget for the programmes and co-ordinates the enrichment programmes (see below). She is line managed by Sharon Steinbaum-Open, who is the UJIA Galil representative, and she also engages with Adam Saville, who is based in Jerusalem. This research clearly showed that Adam's role with regard to Simone's work needs clarification.

b) The holistic experience of living in the Galil

The gap year volunteers have many empty hours after their mornings and need other work to fill up their day. This includes the following projects (although not every single one is available to all participants every year) : coaching after school sports, teaching swimming, working with elderly people or the disabled, reading to children in a library, helping with homework clubs, working in a club for disadvantaged or troubled children. Occasionally it has been possible to cater to an individual volunteer's wishes, but usually each group is offered a choice of two or three options.

The gap year volunteers also have *ulpan* – Hebrew lessons once or twice a week. The teacher comes to the volunteers' accommodation, and these lessons are compulsory.

In addition, the gap year volunteers have one day a week for “enrichment” which may be an outing, or a speaker, or a meeting with one or more of the other Movements in the area. Some evenings are programmed within a group and the volunteers can expect to have one or two free weekday evenings. They have Movement *Shabbatonim* every two or three weeks, and otherwise, their Fridays and *Shabbatot* are free time.

The gap year volunteers live in an apartment or house near their work placements. Time is expected to be devoted to looking after and cleaning the house as well as shopping and cooking. This is often the only part of the year that the volunteer lives outside of an institution framework and it is an opportunity to learn how to live in a group, but with a large degree of independence.

Part of the idea of living in a community is to interact with that community and an important aspect of the volunteering months is for the volunteer to develop relationships with residents of the area in which he or she is living. For some of the Movements, this involves linking with a religious community, for example, the Reform Movement linked with a Reform community at Har Halutz and the Masorti Movement has had links with a Conservative community in Karmiel. These links include home hospitality, joint *Shabbatonim* and celebrations of *Chagim*. Volunteers are also offered host families. It is rare for these offers to be taken up due to poor matching of hosts with volunteers.

Short term programmes do not give the participants the same level of immersion into life in the region. Movements and schools do, however, want to make links with communities where appropriate and do want to see the volunteering piece as an integrated part of a period of time being spent in the Galil. For the UJIA, this may mean being involved in providing programming to “wrap around” the hours of volunteering as well as being involved in the logistics of the volunteering, including transport and accommodation.

c) Successes of the UJIA volunteering programme

Success looks a little different from the perspectives of the individual, the Movement and UJIA projects in Israel.

From the individual perspective, the volunteers want a sense of achievement, to make a difference as well doing something “different”, and to have a good time.

From the Movement perspective, these goals are important, and in addition, the Movement wants the volunteers to make strong community links and Movement links, to be able to come back and be good advocates for Israel and the Movement in general and the gap year programme specifically.

From the Israel perspective, the UJIA want volunteers to develop a relationship with the P2K region through the volunteering programme. This

begins with the short programmes and develops through the gap year volunteering experience.

For the gap year volunteers, the schools really need volunteers and so this is where the volunteers are deployed. From the UJIA London perspective, the quality of the volunteering programme is important, and so is the quantitative element i.e. an increase in the numbers of the Movements and in the numbers of young people choosing to volunteer on UJIA projects in the Galil.

Given all of the above, the greatest successes are where real relationships can be built with communities. This makes the volunteering more meaningful. The best example of a successful volunteering programme is AJ6, who have a long standing and on-going relationship with Shlomi since 2000/1. Shlomi send their teenagers to AJ6 conferences and camps, and on Israel Tour at age 16, the AJ6 participants have home hospitality in Shlomi with teenagers their age. This creates a “real connection” and so by the time the gap year participants come to the volunteering part of the year, they are really looking forward to it and it is the anticipated highlight of the year. As the AJ6 *Mazkir* states “It is a long lasting *mifgash* and creates a real connection that is lasting. Kids stay in contact well beyond the programme”. In return, Shlomi sees all kinds of benefits in the help that AJ6 volunteers give them, and the town really values the on-going relationship.

The FZY connection with UJIA through the Ethiopian *Bnei Mitzvah* project in *Tzfat* is also very successful. Again, it is on-going, and crucially, according to the FZY *mazkir* “it ticks all the boxes and most importantly, FZY feels like an equal partner with that project – it’s the relationship building that makes it so good”. On the other hand, the director of FZY Israel Tours comments that there is no or little UJIA branding on this programme and participants come away with very little awareness of UJIA involvement or partnership.

Both the above examples begin with the years of Summer Camp, continue with Israel Tour, and relationships are deepened through the Gap Year.

A further success of the gap year volunteering programme is again to do with relationship building, where volunteers work in the afternoon in a library or after school project and really get to know the children with whom they are working. They feel they are making a positive difference to those children’s lives.

Where volunteers’ individual needs are specifically met, the volunteering part of the gap year can be a very rewarding experience. This year, a Maccabi volunteer with special needs has been found a very appropriate placement and is having a very good experience thanks to the dedication of one of the UJIA staff in Israel. It must be said however, that this only happened because of the efforts of one individual over and above a negative response from Movement staff, Israel Experience Ltd. and UJIA staff in the Galil. In previous years, work placements have sometimes been able to be very individually tailored to a person’s interests, for example setting up a football club, and this is successful both for the individual and the community.

The short term programmes are most successful for the participants when an immediate impact has been felt and where the participants have had a very enjoyable time.

A key element with both short and gap year programmes is the influence of the UJIA volunteer co-ordinator and in the case of the gap year programmes, the additional *madrich/a*. Whilst this part of the year enables the volunteers to live more independently than on other parts of the gap year, they still rely on the support of adults as well as their own Movement personnel in Israel. This triangle of *madrich/a*, UJIA and Movement can help to provide a most positive experience for the volunteers when it works well in relation to organisation before and during the volunteering, communication, contact and support.

d) Challenges of the UJIA volunteering programme

The director of the *Machon* identifies three types of volunteering:

- i) Volunteering that is symbolic or tokenistic
- ii) Volunteering that changes the world
- iii) Volunteering that is important and significant

The Movements and volunteers want to change the world. The UJIA want to provide important and significant volunteering, for example teaching English in schools. The volunteers perceive this as tokenistic and symbolic.

With respect to the gap year volunteers, this disconnect happens because whilst the work is needed, the schools often do not know how to best use the volunteers. Several interviewees stated that “it didn’t seem to matter” whether they turned up for work or not. Some participants spend a lot of their time “waiting to volunteer i.e in a five hour day they were only used for two hours”. In addition, the volunteers do not know how to teach English. They have good *hadracha* and youth work skills, but no teaching skills.

Finding meaningful volunteering placements is a challenge. In almost all the UK interviews, a common thread was recorded: the volunteers want to do something “meaningful and exciting”. Their life experience to this point has been in school – they do not necessarily want to spend more time in school now. They want to be able to go to University and be able to say that they did “exciting volunteering” in their gap year. Working with *Magen David Adom* or taking part in *Marava* for example, are perceived as exciting in a way that working in a school is not. There is an issue here of course of managing the volunteers’ expectations: making a meaningful contribution is not always about doing sensational or exciting work. There should be scope, however, to broaden the possibilities of volunteering within a UJIA framework, particularly taking into account the Living Bridge programme, and some creative thinking needs to take place to develop new placements and projects for volunteers.

On short programmes, it is even harder to find meaningful or interesting options. For example, FZY would like to bring several of their Israel Tour groups to volunteer for a day in the Galil. UJIA staff in Israel are anxious that

they cannot deliver a programme for them due to lack of resources. The school trips have also given very negative feedback on last year's volunteering programme. Immanuel College was told that there would be an "amazing volunteering experience" and when they arrived "it was a disaster – there was nothing for them to do".

From this year, UJIA hopes to be using "*Shulchan I'shulchan*" which specialises in finding appropriate and immediately relevant projects for one day or less. This is not finalised yet, and there is some disagreement as to whether *Shulchan I'shulchan* is indeed the most appropriate organisation with which to be working. [Note: There is an opinion that volunteering should not be primarily focused on feeding the hungry and that this gives an exaggerated view about extreme poverty in Israel]. It is crucial that a clear decision is made, and that an excellent experience had by the participants or it is unlikely that the school will partner UJIA in the future.

King Solomon High School is in a slightly different position. Even though they were unhappy with the volunteering experience provided, they desperately need the financial assistance they receive from UJIA, and so are more likely to continue to partner UJIA.

Vital for these short programmes is to provide the scaffolding around the volunteering element – good quality and imaginative sessions to both promote volunteering and the role of the UJIA in the Galil.

Up till this year, the volunteering part of the year has not come at a helpful time for the Israeli schools. Volunteers are in schools from April to June, which is examination time and therefore there is not enough for them to do in the classrooms. The Movements recognise that efforts must take place to change the timing of the gap year volunteering.

Most of the short programmes take place during the summer months, when schools are closed. This opens up possibilities of volunteering with holiday schemes, as well as the other schemes mentioned earlier, but many of these do not find it helpful to accommodate volunteers for just a few hours or days.

The challenges with the gap year afternoon activities include finding work that the volunteers find interesting and ensuring that volunteers feel valued and needed. Some of the Movements also employ Hebrew teachers once or more often a week for the volunteers. These teachers are not always good and often have the effect of thoroughly disengaging the volunteers.

The overall gap year volunteering experience is not always positive. Unsuitable accommodation has been a problem for some groups. No one is proposing luxury housing, but last year, one group had a house in which the electrics did not work, and nothing was mended for several weeks. Another group requested a television, but were not given one, a further group had a cooker which did not work.

Netzer is an example of a Movement which had a bad overall experience last year. This was in part due to a *madrich* who was “not great” and was unable to build a positive relationship with the volunteers. Personality clashes between volunteers, Movement workers and UJIA volunteer co-ordinators, have also, caused problems and dissatisfaction with both the long and short programmes. Some of these issues have been to do with a lack of patience and understanding of needs on both sides. Some of these issues have been to do with a lack of communication between the UJIA volunteer co-ordinator, the *madrichim*, the participants and the Movements/schools. In one extreme example, the AJ6 *Mazkir* was unaware that one of his gap year participants was returning to the UK due to illness.

In addition, during last year, school strikes meant that the volunteering experience was very haphazard and resulted in the volunteers sitting around at home with little to do for much of the time. Some of this is obviously not in the control of the UJIA, but *Netzer* reacted to the overall experience by re-designing their volunteering this current year away from UJIA projects in the North.

Understandably, the Movements feel more loyalty to their sister Movements around the world than they do to UJIA. One of the challenges to UJIA, is to persuade Movements to volunteer in an area when their sister Movement has links with other parts of Israel, for example FZY and Young Judea, RSY/LJY *Netzer* and *Netzer Olami*.

Geographically, the fact that UJIA operates in the North of Israel is a challenge. Many of the interviewees – both the Movement professionals in the UK and the graduates of the gap year programme, expressed a feeling that they would rather be in the centre of Israel for their volunteering. They “want to be where their friends are”. They “want to be near the beach, the night life”. It’s “too quiet” in the periphery and “transportation is hard”. Some of these issues are real although some are perceived – after all, there are beautiful beaches in the North of Israel! From the UJIA and Israel perspectives, part of the experience for the participants is precisely to take them out of their comfort zone, and immerse them into a new and different community. This can work well, but too often links with host families do not work well due to lack of support and communication, and gap year volunteers have limited or no role to play within the local community.

Geographical considerations are less of an issue for the School and Israel Tour short programmes. These groups almost always spend some time in the North of Israel and are willing to incorporate an element of volunteering into their programme. The *bogrim* tours are more independent. RSY-*Netzer* for example were to be based mostly in the South during their one week *bogrim* tour to take place in Autumn 2008 (because that is where their Movement kibbutzim are situated) and wanted to volunteer in the *Arava* region. The Habonim *bogrim* programme in March based in Nitzana did not come to the North at all, as this did not fit into the particular aims of their programme. Adam Saville was, however, invited to run a session with the group to talk about UJIA.

Financial considerations also come into play. Several interviewees from the Movements and from UJIA spoke of the importance of making the UJIA short and long volunteering opportunities financially competitive for the Movements to literally buy into. Movements felt that if there was no financial advantage in volunteering in the North with UJIA projects, in addition to the experience being one of high quality, then they did not feel a sense of obligation to do so.

e) Alternative volunteering opportunities

Young people live in a market place environment. UJIA volunteering opportunities in the North of Israel must compete with both alternative volunteering opportunities within Israel as well as non-Jewish programmes available for eighteen year old school leavers.

We are already seeing that the Movements do not feel obliged to remain within a UJIA volunteering framework unless it works for them. FZY, *Netzer* and Noam for example all create a range of frameworks for their gap year participants to experience. These include MDA, *Marava*, the Fire Service, Journalism, working with animals and others. Movements are open to working with the UJIA. As a direct result of the interview with *Netzer* in Israel, the *Netzer* co-ordinator contacted UJIA to discuss returning to UJIA volunteering projects for next year. On the other hand, two of the biggest Movements – FZY and *Bnei Akiva* - feel that they can provide a more appropriate framework for their gap year participants themselves. They are not averse to keeping open the channels of communication, but they feel that they have yet to be convinced that UJIA can offer them a better, or competitive programme than they currently run themselves.

Precisely because of this, it is vital that UJIA provide an excellent experience for those on the short programmes. If for example, FZY have a high quality experience with UJIA for their Israel tour groups, they may be more inclined to take up UJIA options for longer programmes.

We know (see Appendix three, page 17) that fewer than 50% of the Jewish eighteen year olds we surveyed who take a gap year, choose to spend part of it volunteering on programmes in Israel. A wider survey may or may not uncover different statistics. Some of those who do not volunteer choose to spend all year studying at Yeshiva or Seminary in Israel, or in Gateshead. Others choose non-Jewish volunteering options. These vary from teaching and care work, to working with animals and conservation, sports, construction and humanitarian projects.

Identifying features of these non-Jewish options include:

- i) Making use of location – exploring exotic places in the world.
- ii) Tailoring to specific interests – medical, educational, building.
- iii) Immersion – living in a new and different culture
- iv) Flexibility – volunteering can be anything from a month to a year.
- v) Support – to learn the language, and work skills needed.

Many of these features parallel the experience of the volunteer in Israel, with the difference that firstly, the options in Israel are less varied and secondly that for many Jewish young people, a gap year in Israel is not seen as relevant, let alone exotic. UJIA could emphasize far more strongly than it currently does the unique qualities of the North of Israel, the different and exciting projects, the different populations with whom we work, the needs of the people living in the North and so on. At present, the participants and their parents are mostly unaware of the UJIA component that relate directly to the gap year, beyond the financial help they may receive. There is a clear marketing opportunity here to be developed.

The costs of these non Jewish programmes are in general at least equivalent to the cost of the Israel gap year.

Recommendations:

Immediate recommendations to address needs of both short and gap year programmes:

1. A list of controls necessary for the organisation and smooth running of the short and gap year programmes must be put into place. This is absolutely urgent with respect to the summer short programmes taking place in 2008.
2. The following are basic responsibilities that must be met. UJIA must ensure that adequate human/financial resourcing is provided to discharge these responsibilities:
 - a) Pre-planning must take place with the Movements/schools in the UK and in Israel.
 - b) All aspects of the volunteering programme must be worked out in advance and all necessary local staff trained and prepared:
 - i. Volunteer placement
 - ii. Afternoon activities
 - iii. Wrap around care
 - iv. Accommodation
 - v. Transport
 - vi. Links with local community
 - vii. Pastoral support
 - viii. Communication with volunteers and Movements
 - c) Clear and constant support and communication during the planning and implementation stage of each programme must take place.
 - d) Clear orientation and induction to the participants of the area and all aspects of the programme must take place.

- e) Clear introduction to the role of the UJIA must take place at the start of each programme.
 - f) All relevant health and safety guidelines must be adhered to.
 - g) During short programmes a UJIA co-ordinator will be present with each group.
3. Clear management structures must be implemented to ensure that all UJIA volunteer staff are well supported.
 4. A timetable will be drawn up to implement these immediate recommendations.
 5. Clear demarcation of responsibilities of existing UK and Israel staff with regard to the above must be in place to ensure that the above recommendations take place.

ACTION POINT: Employ suitable staff member(s), ensure clear management structures are in place.

6. For this year at least UJIA will immediately contact *Shulchan I'shulchan* to provide elements of the short term volunteering projects.

ACTION POINT: set up short term volunteering projects

Additional short term recommendations specifically for gap year volunteers:

1. Set up a programme of induction for the volunteers for a week before they start teaching to teach them how to teach. Either the Lockey Institute in Haifa (Shelley Kedar), for example, or *Merkaz Mase* (Judith Werchow), or Kibbutz Tuval, would be happy to set this up with the UJIA in the Galil.

ACTION POINT: Identify a partner.

2. Set up a programme for induction for the teachers before the volunteers arrive, so that they know how to best make use of their volunteers.

ACTION POINT: Agree and implement suitable programme with partner organisation

3. The UJIA volunteer co-ordinator must develop relationships with the Movement *Mazkirut* from the UK as well as with those in Israel, to ensure understanding of all needs. This could take place at the annual *Hazon* seminar or through at least one visit to the UK each year.

ACTION POINT: UJIA volunteer co-ordinator to organise visit to the UK and participation in *Hazon* Seminar.

Additional medium term recommendations specifically for gap year volunteers:

4. A broader base of volunteering options must be developed in order to attract a greater number of volunteers to the area.
5. A wider range of teaching options (e.g. Bedouin villages, Arab schools) must be offered to those who do want to teach English.

ACTION POINT: Ensure a staff member is recruited to explore and create new relationships with a range of volunteering options. Make sure that these are ready for 08-09 volunteers.

6. If volunteering is to take place predominantly in schools, the timing during the gap year must be altered to make best use of the volunteers.

ACTION POINT: Ensure a staff person is recruited to work with the Movements and the Israeli schools to maximise timing of gap year volunteering.

7. Better screening must take place to employ high quality *madrichim* who understand the needs of the volunteers, the Movements and the UJIA.

ACTION POINT:

Recruitment process must be re-visited by staff in Israel and UK, including re-writing of job descriptions and person specifications.

8. A tighter and overall higher quality programme must be developed to wrap around the morning volunteering hours.

ACTION POINT: UJIA Staff members must work to put in place a high quality “wrap around” programme.

9. A fresh look must be taken at the potential for developing relationships with host communities which are on-going and meaningful.

ACTION POINT: UJIA staff members must work proactively with host communities and with the Movements to enable good relationships to develop.

10. An excellent and competitive marketing campaign must bring together volunteering options and target both the Movements and potential gap year participants.

ACTION POINT: A marketing strategy must be developed that is then translated into practice. A member of UJIA staff must take responsibility for this work.

UJIA must decide to what extent they wish to invest in the volunteering aspect of the gap year. Does UJIA want to improve the existing situation from within? Or should volunteering be completely outsourced to a different provider, for example *Mercaz Masei*? Does UJIA see itself as the provider or the enabler? To improve the current programme requires considerable financial and human resourcing and UJIA must decide both in the short term, and in the medium term, their increased level of financial commitment. My review has shown that there is a critical need for organisational and administrative change to take place. Additional personnel must be employed to support the currently overwhelmed staff, who are not as effective as they need to be. Systems must be implemented to ensure that staff are able to deliver high quality programmes for all the UJIA groups spending time in Israel, and this will have to include an increased staffing level, as well as an effective and efficient management structure.

More than two thousand Jewish teenagers from the UK will be on an organised visit to Israel this coming summer. They should be able to return home knowing that UJIA played a significant part in their Israel experience.

Dr. Helena Miller
UJIA Director of Research and Evaluation,
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