



**DCI**  
**ISRAEL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MONITOR**  
 Twelve years of pioneering work **1987-1999**

This issue of the Israel Children's Rights Monitor is dedicated to the twelve years of work of DCI - Israel. This human rights organization for children works for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



**DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL - ISRAEL**

Twelve years of pioneering work

**1987-1999**

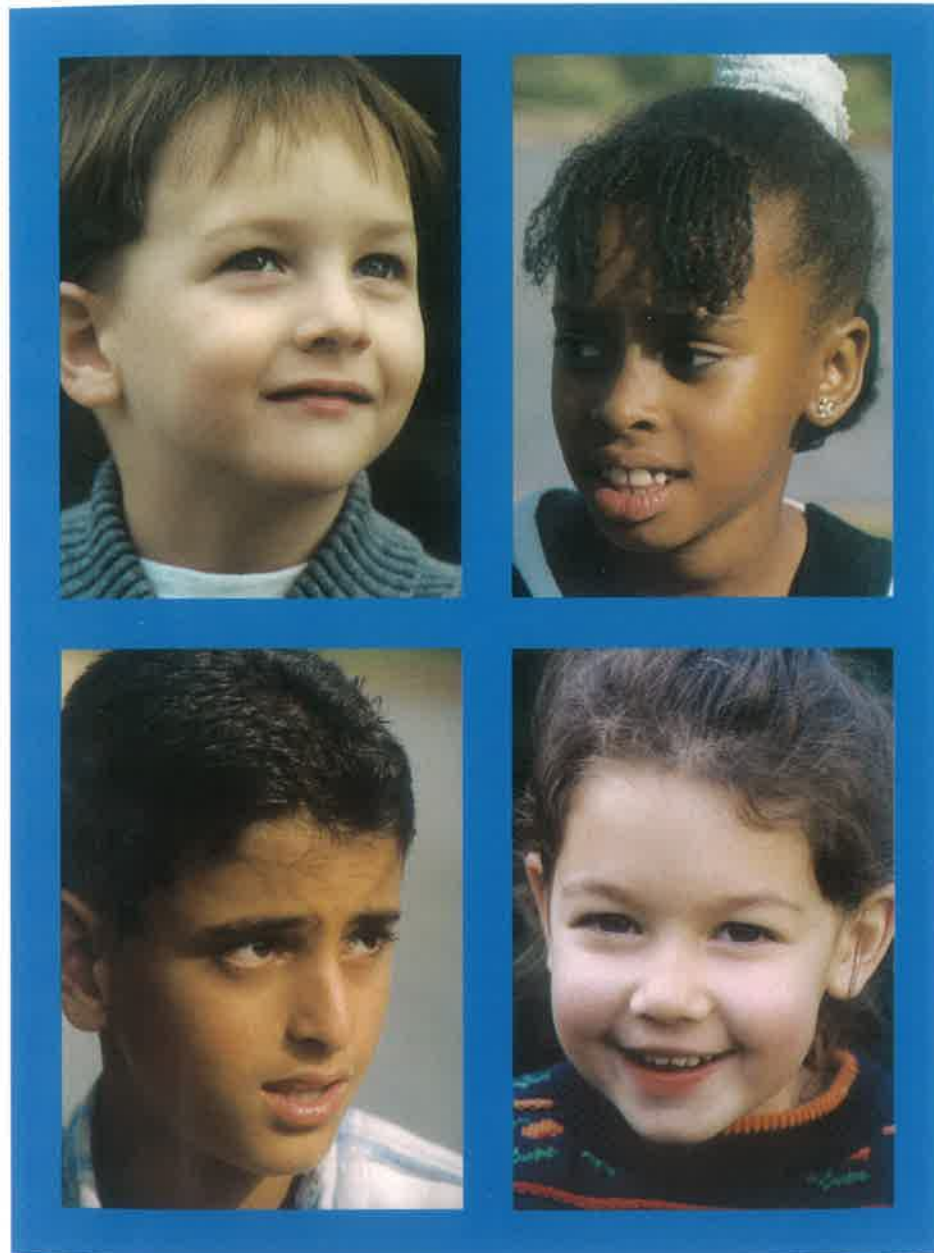
**DCI ISRAEL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MONITOR**

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Twelve years of pioneering work **1987-1999**

editors: **Guy Tatsa and Dan Leon**



**Special issue**

**DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL - ISRAEL**



**DCJ** **ISRAEL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MONITOR**  
A Report on Twelve Years of Achievement **1987-1999**  
and a Three-Year Plan for the Future

**editors: Guy Tatsa and Dan Leon**

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Israel Children's Rights Monitor  
A Report on Twelve Years of Achievement (1987-1999)  
and a Three-Year Plan for the Future (2000-2002)

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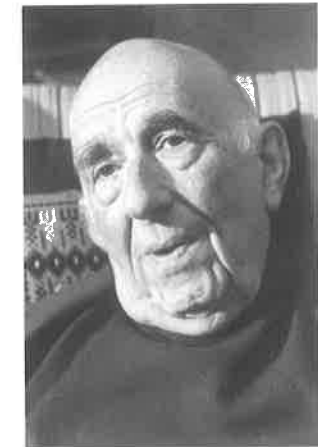
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## **Introduction: Twelve Years of Impressive Achievements**

**Justice Dr. Haim Cohn,  
Supreme Court (ret.),  
Chairman of the Advisory  
Board of DCI-Israel**



The twelfth anniversary of the Israeli Section of Defence for Children International (DCI-Israel) provides an opportunity to look back in order to recall past achievements and — even more important — to take note of what has to be achieved in the future. The present report is most impressive evidence of DCI-Israel's activities and accomplishments up to now.

The most important event of this decade was the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, one of whose prime advocates was DCI-Israel. The Israeli Section of DCI naturally saw as its first aim to bring about the signing and ratification of the Convention by Israel and to work for its effective implementation, when necessary through legislation. The ratification of the Convention generated new levels of public consciousness on the issues involved, and we have now reached a situation in which nobody in Israel can overlook the rights of the child as an indivisible part of basic human rights.

The report also presents a comprehensive picture of the multifaceted activities of DCI-Israel, which was the first organization in Israel to effectively organize legal representation for children. This was particularly significant for those

children and adolescents who had no chance of having effective defence lawyers paid either by their parents or by the authorities. DCI-Israel has brought about significant progress in this field thanks to the fine work, devotion and proficiency of the lawyers and other professional staff members and of DCI-Israel's volunteers.

The Children's Rights Information Centers which DCI-Israel established in several cities work to increase the children's consciousness of their legal rights and to pave the way for their implementation. It is necessary to extend the scope of this work.

This is a good opportunity to express my gratitude to all those involved in this blessed work — the staff and the field workers, led by Dr. Philip Veerman: he built this Association with endless knowledge and devotion, directing it from the start and infecting all its workers with his enthusiasm. All their efforts are highly appreciated.

## Preface: Both Enthusiasm and Professionalism

### Dr. Philip Veerman, Director of DCI-Israel\*



This report covers twelve years of DCI-Israel's activities and I wish to express my appreciation to all those who participated in this endeavor — members of the Advisory Board, the Board of Directors, the various Committees of the Board, the staff, the volunteers and the Foundations which believed in us and contributed to our work.

The following pages do not cover all our activities over the last twelve years, but make an effort to show both the individual trees and the forest as a whole. Our main goal is the implementation of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in Israel and in areas under Israel's control. In the last twelve years our priorities have been: our pioneering work in the field of *legal representation*; the *monitoring of prison conditions for minors*; developing *Children's Rights Information Centers* and outreach work with Ethiopian and Arab children; promoting *human rights* for Israeli and Palestinian minors, including *introducing the concept of participation rights* for young people and assuring them greater influence. Our work is based upon the universality of children's rights and we therefore work for all children under Israel's jurisdiction.

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\* Philip Veerman is also the President of the International Executive Council of DCI (worldwide).

During the last decade DCI-Israel gained recognition as an established and dedicated organization which as part of its approach devotes time and resources to the creation of good working relations with other organizations in Israel and other countries.

The Israeli section actively contributed to the work of the International Executive Council of DCI, and this involvement enabled us to be among the early participants in international debates in the broad field of children's rights.

DCI-Israel is constantly becoming more professional and our case management system is now computerized, enabling us better to evaluate our work. We employ 24 dedicated employees. The supervision of the work of our lawyers is now in the hands of Attorney Dana Marshak-Marom, our Legal Coordinator. I find myself in a constant learning process concerning management and organizational skills. Our organizational consultant Gabi Neiman of *Shatil*, the New Israel Fund's Capacity-Building Center for Social Change Organizations, continues to guide us in this process of learning and self-evaluation. However, after 12 years as DCI-Israel's Director, I believe the time has come to look for an experienced administrator to work as Director, enabling me to serve DCI-Israel in other ways (such as the development of projects). I would also like to concentrate on my work for the 66 Sections of DCI worldwide.

We are very proud at having being awarded the 1995 Israeli Knesset's (Parliament) Quality of Life prize for our pioneering work in legal aid and legal representation of minors. While expanding and striving to maintain a high level of organization, we have nevertheless not lost our enthusiasm, some of which we hope you will share as you read this report. We thank all those who have supported us over the last twelve years and we hope for your continued support and that of new partners, in the coming years.

Our plan for the next three years (2000-2002) is presented in the last chapter of this publication. Those interested in helping us to make some of these plans

into a reality can contact Attorney Risa Zoll, our Development Officer, in our main office in Jerusalem.

Despite the apathy of large segments of Israeli society concerning children perceived as 'non-Israeli,' we recognize the importance of overcoming discrimination and caring for the children of other sectors of the population like Arab children or the children of foreign workers. We have to speak out on behalf of protecting the rights and the equal opportunities of all children.

Children with disabilities are at a disadvantage in spite of many available services. For instance, we intend to continue to make a special effort on behalf of disabled Bedouin children in the Negev who lack vital services. Also, in Israel's rather paternalistic society where so many know what to do with children 'in their best interests,' we have started to introduce the concept of participation rights of minors, which is no easy task. Israel is in many respects a violent and aggressive society in which children, especially those of disadvantaged parents like non-western Jews and Israeli-Palestinians, need a strong lobby group whose voice rings out loud and clear. DCI-Israel willingly undertakes that role.

The fight for the implementation of children's rights in Israel does not in principle differ from the situation on the international level: all agree with the claim that children are 'our future' but politicians are not dependent upon children. In the transition from declaration to reality, children's interests have to compete for budgets etc. with other seemingly more important demands. Hence the special significance of watchdogs for children and spokespeople for their interests like DCI-Israel.

Thank you for your backing over the last twelve years. Please continue supporting DCI-Israel!

# The International Arena



# A



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## The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

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The Convention naturally guides Defence for Children International the world over, but DCI-Israel has a particularly difficult task in overcoming the ambivalent attitude in Israel toward the United Nations and in convincing the opponents of ratification that this new consensus on children's rights is a balanced one.

The Convention is generally divided into three categories: provision, protection and participation. The first refers to rights like health services and education; the second to the child's right to be protected against exploitation or illegal arrest; the third to the child's right to express his/her opinion and to have this opinion taken into account.

The Convention applies to all children without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, etc. The ratification obligates the State to honor and guarantee the Convention through legislation and through suitable administrative measures. The Convention itself also lays down when the State Party has to respond to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee provides guidelines how this should be done.

Overcoming resistance to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child did not come easily. Israeli ambivalence regarding increased international involvement on the subject of human rights was connected to the harsh criticism directed at Israel by United Nations institutions in the past. Israel's attitude to the UN and to Treaty bodies overseeing implementation of different Human Rights treaties was therefore ambivalent. It was only

following the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the beginning of the Middle Eastern peace process that some change occurred in the Israeli view. This enabled the ratification in 1991 of various Human Rights treaties like those against discrimination against women, against torture, and the Covenant on Civil and Political rights, as well as the Covenant on Social, Cultural and Economic rights, and last but not least the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The hostile attitude in Israel toward the UN also exists to some degree in the judicial system. However, an encouraging change in Israeli rights legislation must be noted. In 1992 the Knesset (Parliament) passed two basic laws on the subject of human rights. In several points, they correspond with the international Covenants, adapting their principles into Israeli law. Israeli Treaty Law requires that for a treaty to become the law of the land, a law must be passed by the Knesset; ratification by the government alone is not enough.

The best way to promote the Convention in Israel is, as we have noted, to adopt such a law of implementation. This, however, is not a simple task. Prof. David Libai, a former Minister of Justice, told DCI-Israel that he had accepted inclusion of the Convention into Israeli law (which DCI proposed) but it would meet resistance because of the fear that it would lead to more financial expenditure. He also recognized the possibility that government policy would be challenged by Supreme Court cases in the event of a law incorporating the whole Convention into Israeli law.

Justice Minister Hanegbi of the Netanyahu government appointed a Committee headed by District Court Judge Saviona Roth Levy to come up with a proposal for a Children's Rights law. DCI-Israel's fear is that this will be a protracted affair, and that the proposed law will in the end fall short of introducing into Israeli law the Convention in its entirety. However, such a law will be welcome if it strengthens the following:

- ◆ the assurance of children's rights without discrimination
- ◆ the right of the child to preserve his or her identity



◆ Visit to sick Palestinian children.



◆ Rabbi Arik Ashermen of Rabbis for Human Rights and Dr. Philip Veerman director of DCI-Israel bring jointly a condolence visit to the parents of a shot Palestinian boy in the refugee camp near Bethlehem, 1998.



◆ In 1998, the Jerusalem office of DCI-Israel. From left to right, Hannah Smilan, legal coordinator Nitzana Ben-David - Grados; Dr. Philip Veerman, Guy Tatsa and Zalman Sagi.



◆ 1998, the staff of DCI-Israel and MIGBATZ Joint project in Jerusalem: advocate Jossi Levi and Ifat Eden.



◆ A representative of the Ashdod Student Council opens the Ashdod Center.



◆ Ten years DCI-Israel celebrations in Jaffa, with among others Prof. Shevah Weiss, M.K., previous chairman of the Knesset; Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv, Mordechai Virschovsky and then DCI-Israel chairperson Rina Yitzhaki.



◆ DCI-Israel director visits a Jewish boy wounded by a bomb in a bus, Afula 1994.

- ◆ the right of the child to freedom of expression, to express his/her opinion and to have that opinion taken into account
- ◆ The right of the child to privacy, self respect and the preservation of his or her good name.

Since 1994 DCI-Israel has been leading a lobby whose purpose is to introduce the Convention into Israeli law. It approached the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and the National Council for the Child to come up with a joint law proposal. They met the Deputy Attorney-General and senior members of the Ministry of Justice, who presented the law proposal to the Minister of Justice, Prof. David Libai, on February 27, 1995. On May 17, 1995 the Ministry of Justice promulgated a proposed memorandum on the law. Meanwhile, however, the existing government was replaced and legislation was frozen.



The Ashdod City Council adopts the Convention on the Rights of the Child. From the right: Deputy Attorney General Judith Karp, Mayor of Ashdod Zvi Tsilker, DCI-Israel Executive Director Philip Veerman.

As part of the struggle, DCI-Israel initiated contacts with various municipalities to persuade them to adopt the Convention. The City Council of Ashdod was the first to respond favorably and it adopted the Convention in September 1997. In a special ceremony, DCI-Israel representatives and Ms. Judith Karp, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, were invited to sign the document, along with all the members of the Ashdod City Council.

### The Convention as DCI-Israel's Mandate

The Convention is the framework for DCI-Israel's work and sets its agenda, and its spirit forms the basis for almost all the Association's projects. DCI-Israel provides free legal advice and representation at its Youth Information Centers in Haifa, Ashdod, Beersheva, Ramle and other cities. This legal assistance ensures the right of the minor to express his or her opinion on all relevant matters, and additionally ensures that it will be taken into account, in accordance with article twelve of the Convention. In this 'empowerment philosophy' DCI-Israel differs from other organizations.

In its opposition to proposed legislation which would limit compensation to Palestinians, including many minors wounded by Israeli security forces in Gaza and the West bank, DCI-Israel tries to implement article 39 of the Convention. This deals with the physical and psychological rehabilitation of child victims. Recently, DCI-Israel has also been acting along with an existing children's lobby in the Knesset to apply article 34 which deals with defending children from sexual exploitation. Until recently it was believed that child prostitution did not exist in Israel. The reality, however, is very different.

As the above examples illustrate, the Convention plays a key role in the activities of DCI-Israel, and the Association will in the decade ahead continue our unremitting struggle to fully implement the Convention in the State of Israel.

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## The Israeli Children's Rights Coalition

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In the year 1996 DCI-Israel initiated the establishment of the **Israeli Coalition for the Rights of the Child** composed of seventy NGOs involved in this field. This initiative was motivated by a deep feeling that Israel does not take seriously its obligations under the Convention, which it ratified in 1991. For instance, until now Israel has not lived up to its obligation to submit a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, on how the Convention is implemented. The report should have been submitted in 1993.

The first meeting of the Coalition took place in Tel-Aviv on March 31, 1996, with the participation of Ms. Gerison Landsdown from the Children's Rights Office in England, who had prepared a non-governmental report on the position of children's rights in Britain. Attorney Judith Karp, the Deputy-Attorney-General, surveyed her work as an expert member of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child.

### The Aims of the Coalition

- ◆ The Coalition will work to promote the rights of the child as they appear in the Convention
- ◆ It will concern itself with strengthening consciousness concerning the implications of the Convention among children, policy makers, educators and legislators
- ◆ It will encourage government activity in applying the Convention and improving the quality of life of children in Israel and those under Israeli control

- ◆ It will exchange information on applying the Convention on the national and international levels all over the world
- ◆ It will participate in discussions in the government and Knesset Committees with the aim of having the Convention made into the law of the land, and will also act in the Knesset and vis-a-vis the Government as a lobby on behalf of optimal application of the Convention
- ◆ It will maintain contact with Palestinian NGOs and ascertain that the Government of Israel fulfills its obligations under the Convention toward Palestinian children
- ◆ It will press for improving the reporting mechanism by the Ministry of Justice to UN treaty bodies dealing with the Human Rights Conventions
- ◆ It will submit alternative reports to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child.

## International Connections

Shortly after the United Nations decision to adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child, many international non-governmental organizations came together in Geneva to establish the NGO Group for the Convention for the Rights of the Child.

The Israeli Coalition maintains regular contact with the Secretariat of the NGO Group in Geneva. 1991 saw the establishment of the Task Force of National Child Rights Coalitions, in which the Israeli Coalition also participates.

## The Importance of NGO Coalitions in the Reporting Process

The application of the Convention is the task of the government of Israel. The NGO Coalition should perform the vital task of actively commenting on the draft state report to the UN. However, to date the draft report has not been

given to the Coalition. The Coalition plans to increase national consciousness concerning the rights of the child, to identify children's problems and to find ways to tackle them.

In every state there are many NGO groups and it is important to organize them into a Coalition in order to strengthen their influence. Such Coalitions exist today in fifty states. The organizational structure, the type of membership and methods of work, all differ greatly. Many Coalitions submitted alternative or supplementary reports to the UN Committee. These reports can assist the Committee to relate to the report submitted by the Government, and enable it to reach a better quality of constructive dialogue with the representatives of the State party and the Committee members, as well as promulgating more relevant concluding observations.

## The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

The UN Committee is made up of ten experts, chosen by the member States which ratified the UN Convention (now all States in the UN except the USA and Somalia), with consideration given to geographical distribution. The Committee meets 13 weeks a year in Geneva and maintains a permanent Secretariat at the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Its main task is to monitor progress on rights of the child in the different countries where the Convention has been ratified. It does not have the right to examine individual complaints.

The basis for the Committee's sessions are the reports submitted by each State. Every State which ratifies the Convention must submit such a report within two years after ratification, and every five years thereafter. Israel's initial report is now six years late.

Preparing such a first State report is a means to allow the states to make a comprehensive and prolonged survey in their country on ways of ensuring the rights of the child according to the Convention, and the progress made

toward it. Progress can then be measured by comparison with the base-line data in the initial report submitted by the State. Rather than being a public relations effort, the report should also point to those difficulties preventing full compliance with the Convention.

Upon its completion the State report is sent to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva and a date for the meeting with the Government is determined. Parallel to this, the Committee seeks written information from other sources such as NGOs and agencies like UNICEF, the ILO, the WHO, etc. Following the presentation of the State report and the dialogue with the Committee (where questions are often inspired by the report put together by a Coalition of NGOs), the Committee prepares concluding observations.

In its procedures, the Committee on the Rights of the Child is the only treaty body which specifically involves the NGOs by encouraging them to submit the NGO report in a pre-session. The importance of this is that presentation of information in those areas not covered by the State report — or areas covered, in the opinion of the NGO, inadequately or misleadingly — can often lead to questions raised with the Government delegation in the session of the Committee.

## Plans of the Israeli Coalition

The full implementation of the UN Convention will bring about a significant improvement in the health, education and overall welfare of Israeli and non-Israeli children under Israeli jurisdiction, and children of foreign workers. Fully implementing the Convention will likewise enable children to participate in decisions affecting them.

DCI-Israel, which has served as Secretariat to the Israeli Coalition since its inception, provides regular information on the UN Convention and the work of the UN Committee to the different members of the Coalition, and has already organized several joint discussions. Parallel to this, DCI-Israel acts

as liaison between Israel and international organizations in dealing with the rights of children.

DCI-Israel is now working for the Coalition on an alternative report to the UN Committee, in constant consultation with its Coalition partners. At an Assembly of the Coalition which took place in February 1998 it was decided to appoint a steering committee to guide the drafting of the alternative report. Soon, with publication of a State report, to which our alternative report will relate, the Coalition will increase its activity.

**Children's Rights in Theory and Practice**



**B**



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## Implementing Children's Rights on a Local Level

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**Dr. Philip Veerman**

Local authorities constitute the backbone of work for children's rights in various parts of the world, promising community participation and continuity. Nevertheless, in DCI-Israel's experience the Municipality does not always manage to give the necessary priority to children. Often in the communities themselves, where there is an urgent need for a special support system for children on a community level, we find ourself confronting a municipal framework which is disorganized and lacking in economic resources.

In many cases, receiving support of any kind from the municipal authorities constitutes a real challenge. The recruitment of volunteers on a local level is also difficult. Law students can help to represent children but after their army service, those in Israel are usually older than their counterparts abroad and don't tend to take up voluntary legal assistance.

In order to empower children with information about their rights, and inspired by the 'Children's Law Shops' in Holland, six years ago DCI-Israel opened the first Children's Rights Information Center in Haifa. The model met with wide acclaim and such Information Centers are now open for young people across the county. Other children's organizations have replicated the idea launched by DCI-Israel of creating Walk-in Centers, and as a result additional non-stigmatic services for children have been created.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child serves as a strategic tool for

DCI-Israel to promote children's rights, and to provide a minimum standard for examining policies and practices.

Although it is up to the States-parties to ratify the Convention, DCI-Israel additionally promotes application of the Convention on the local level. On September 3, 1997, at the request of DCI-Israel, the Municipality of Ashdod, a southern Israeli port city, adopted the Convention as a guideline for municipal policy concerning children. The Municipality representatives declared that 'the city would honor the principles of the Convention in all its areas of work' in this field. This meant for us that all municipal services must from now on be child-friendly and that the City Council must take into consideration the views of the youngsters, even if they are unable to vote.

In implementing the Convention in the City of Beersheva, the Deputy-Mayor for Youth and Young People was a great help. DCI-Israel pleaded with Prime Minister Elect Ehud Barak to appoint in his government a Deputy-Minister for Children in the Prime Minister's Office.

DCI-Israel also called upon Local Councils and other bodies to join, adopting the Convention as a guideline for policy and practice on a municipal level. If this effort succeeds, DCI-Israel would consider starting a large public campaign for signing the Convention. Placing the subject of children and youth at the center of the political agenda on the municipal level, achieved in Ashdod by DCI-Israel with the support of Deputy-Mayor Ilan Gilon (now a new Knesset Member), is a bold step forward, serving the interests of all the children there. We hope that the list of communities which consider children to be a top priority will soon expand.

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## The Haifa Children's Rights Information Center

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DCI-Israel's oldest Walk-in Center was established in 1993 in the northern port city of Haifa, Israel's third largest city, in a public housing complex in the Sprinzak neighborhood. It was operated by a professional staff with the help of volunteers from schools and from the Haifa University. Center staff placed four subjects on its agenda: direct service; community and educational contacts; consultation for professional workers; and social action to improve policies on the local level.

Direct service is provided to young people by telephone or during personal meetings after they are directed to the Center by social workers, juvenile probation officers, school counselors, truant officers, parents, lawyers or teachers. The aim of community educational activity is to inform young people of existing services for youth and foster their consciousness in regard to their rights and how to implement them. This activity targets new immigrants and children in the Arab sector, who receive social services inferior to those of the veteran population and who mistrust the local agencies providing the services.

The Center is directed by a lawyer, Pamela Buter who also studied social work. The outreach work of the Center is carried out by an Israeli Arab educator who is fully aware of existing cultural sensibilities. Since its establishment the Center has provided advice and legal representation in a variety of areas, including family law; educational benefits; civil, political and criminal law; sexual exploitation; human rights etc. The Center receives many telephone calls reporting sexual abuse of children, and the staff subsequently monitors the cases, advises the youngsters and represents them when necessary.



Deputy Minister of Education Micha Goldman opening the Children's Rights Center in Haifa, 1993.

Since the inception of the Center six years ago, attitudes regarding the rights of the child in Haifa have undergone a drastic transformation. The number of minors directed to legal counseling by social workers and counselors increases yearly. Harrowing cases of maltreatment in the imprisonment of minors in the Kishon jail near Haifa — children who may be Israeli, Arab, or new immigrants — have been made public and championed by lawyers and other professionals. Over the years fruitful cooperation has developed between lawyers, social workers and juvenile probation officers in all matters pertaining to the rights of the child.

The introduction in 1995 of Family Courts constituted an important development in implementing children's rights and created an alternative structure parallel to the Religious Courts. These new Courts deal with cases of

guardianship, visitation rights, and violence in the family. In accordance with the implicit goal of the Convention to make children's voices heard, a Family Court judge at the request of the child appointed a DCI-Israel attorney to be his independent representative in a custody case in which parents were represented by counsel.

## The Ashdod Center

This Center was inaugurated, as noted above, in September 1997. It is a joint project of the Municipal Corporation for Youth, Sport and Community Centers and DCI-Israel. The National Insurance Institute was also a partner in the first two and a half years and provided the start subsidy. The Walk-in Center deals with crisis intervention and legal advice, and with counseling youngsters — particularly those who have disputes with other bureaucracies in the local establishment, with the police or with their employers. It also refers young people to the services they need.

This was the first Center in Israel which brought together different disciplines such as a community-social worker and a legal advisor under one roof. The staff includes two lawyers from the DCI-Israel, a coordinator from the Municipality and three community workers who do outreach work in order to attract young people who would not otherwise come into the Center. Seminars and lectures are conducted for teachers, di-



The Ashdod Center

rectors of schools and community centers, social workers and youth workers; legal counseling and representation in court are provided.

During its first two and a half years of activity, the Center handled an average of twenty cases per month and the number is growing. A high proportion of Ashdod's younger population is made up of new immigrants, many from the former USSR, who suffer from problems unlike those of the veteran population, including differences of language and culture. There is a larger number of school drop-outs among the newcomers. The Center employs a Russian-speaking outreach worker.

Ethiopian children suffer from a unique set of problems. Unlike their Israeli counterparts, they generally do not look for help. Out of 2,000 Ethiopian youth in Ashdod about 400 are sent away to boarding schools in other parts of the country, a much higher ratio than in other communities.



Deputy Mayor of Ashdod and now MK Ilan Gilon (right) and DCI-Israel Executive Director Dr. Philip Veerman at the opening of the Ashdod Center.

Innovative methodology supports the integration of social welfare and of legal services under one roof, combining it with outreach work. Among a number of social welfare organizations in Ashdod, the Center is unique in being the only one offering free legal counseling to youth.

Building on its record, the Center hopes in the future to raise young people's consciousness of their rights, along with fostering a similar understanding among adults. Seriously addressing these matters will provide better opportunities for the younger generation to become good citizens when they grow up. This Center in Ashdod, whose work has been positively evaluated by the National Insurance Institute, was developed by DCI-Israel as a model to be followed in other places.

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## A Tale of Two Cities — Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem

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DCI-Israel has established a partnership with the Youth Advancement Departments in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, both of which are working with youth in distress and youth on the border of criminality. They developed Walk-in Centers, *MAAN* in Tel-Aviv (Maze Street, in the center of the city) and *MIKBATZ* in Jerusalem (King George Street).

In these Centers DCI-Israel advocates provide legal advice to young people, and represent them in court. Likewise, they offer legal advice to the social workers who are often the last resort for the minors in preventing their possible descent into a life of crime. Many of those coming to *MAAN* or *MIKBATZ* already have had criminal suits filed against them. DCI-Israel lawyers also serve as a resource for the social workers in cases involving the use of drugs, or school drop-outs, and report cases of child abuse and sexual abuse to the police or to welfare officers. They also advise the young people how to proceed when the minors have conflicts with their employers.

The clientele at *MAAN* in Tel-Aviv and *MIKBATZ* in Jerusalem come from disadvantaged families, many with long histories of abuse and neglect. These young people are unaware both of their rights and of how and where to obtain information about them. The Center provides that information. Now that cooperation has been established between lawyers and social workers, the projects are in need of consistent funding support for retainer payments to lawyers and coordinators. The work of the Centers must be brought to the attention of the public through brochures, posters, and other means of publicity and education.

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## 'Hafuch al Hafuch'

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Under this strange but catchy name in Hebrew slang meaning 'upside down', our colleagues at *ELEM* (the Association for Youth in Distress) launched a plan to develop a network of non-stigmatic advice and information Youth Centers all over Israel in 1998. The JDC/JOINT was soon involved and provided financial support to set in motion the plan for such a network. DCI-Israel's Ashdod and Haifa Centers, which had pioneered the concept, were no doubt



In 1999 the DCI Beersheva Center was integrated in the '*Hafuch al Hafuch*' project and DCI-Israel became the Executive Agency of the Beersheva center. The new deputy mayor for young people, Ruvik Danilowitz (in the center), helped enormously to find an excellent location in the center of town. Coordinator is Salit HaHermoni (on the right), with a representative of the Beersheva Student Council.

a source of inspiration to *ELEM*. The project set out to develop Centers all over Israel providing as many services as possible under one roof.

An agreement was reached that DCI-Israel and *ELEM* would develop the network of Centers jointly, in cooperation with a new organization *Ashalim* (a project of the JDC/JOINT and governmental partners) as the major funding source. The Israeli Association of Community Centers and the Youth Advancement Departments of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs are also involved in the National Committee of the project. In all the other centers (Kfar Saba, Kiryat Shmoneh, Natanya) DCI-Israel will also provide legal aid. We are already providing legal advice in the Kiryat Yam Center, near Haifa. DCI-Israel is also the local executive agency in Beersheva and Ramle.

DCI-Israel took the lead in developing such a new walk-in project for the Arab sector in Israel and it is now likely that in January such a project will open in Tira and Taibe, with DCI-Israel as the Executive Agency.

## The Beersheva Information Center

The Center opened in July 1995 in the building of the Youth Advancement Department in the poor 'Dalet' neighborhood. The Beersheva Municipality encouraged cooperation between the two bodies, with the Youth Advancement Department directing youngsters to the DCI-Israel lawyer where necessary.

Of particular significance is the Center's involvement in the Ethiopian community. A social worker, Worki Kassai, who is herself an Ethiopian immigrant, started outreach work. For this reason we obtained a place for her at the offices of the Association for the Advancement of the Ethiopian Families



Lawyer Yunis al Krenawi and social worker Worki Kassai in the Beersheva Center, 1998.

and Children, in the Shaul Hamelech neighborhood where many Ethiopian families live.

The efforts of the Ethiopian outreach worker are concentrated on enhancing the children's own understanding of their rights. DCI-Israel builds its reputation on the successful outcome of individual cases, as well as its interventions with the police, the courts, prosecutors, the Ministry of Education and the Municipality. DCI-Israel's social action in Beersheva uncovered deficiencies in policy and services, and we subsequently demanded that the authorities introduce appropriate changes.

DCI-Israel took a major step forward in the beginning of 1998 when it moved the Center from the isolated 'Dalet' neighborhood to the center of town. A coordinator who had studied psychology and sociology conducted intake interviews and developed good contacts with agencies in Beersheva. Recently (February 1999) the DCI-Israel Beersheva Center was integrated into the 'Hafuch al Hafuch' joint project, with DCI-Israel as the executive agency. Therefore, as in Ashdod, it can now deal with criminal and social welfare cases under one roof.

DCI-Israel has also mounted campaigns in the country's marginalized outlying areas. When the Bedouin population of the Negev, which now numbers some 180,000, was encouraged by the Government to move to permanent settlements in towns like Rahat, the community was promised proper welfare services. Not many services were actually provided to youngsters in the community, despite their special needs. DCI-Israel tried, despite cultural barriers, to compensate for some of these deficiencies. For a year DCI-Israel operated a project in Rahat, addressing the problems faced by children with special educational needs.

When the Bedouin lawyer Yunis Al Krenawi started work in the Beersheva Center, the Rahat project was integrated into the larger Beersheva project. Today, the Beersheva Center (now part of 'Hafuch al Hafuch') enjoys an excellent location in a quaint house in the old city of Beersheva.

DCI-Israel continues to fight for the rights of the underprivileged youth of all sectors of society, including the Bedouin youth, to enjoy those benefits granted to the more entitled sectors of Israeli society. A long and arduous struggle must be conducted if we are to raise the services provision and policy formulation to the level of international standards.

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## The Ramle Center

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After several years of providing legal consultation, DCI-Israel Attorney Talya Darri joined with the team of the Ramle Youth Advancement Department — DCI-Israel, *ELEM*, the Ramle Youth and Advancement Department to open a new Youth Information and Consultation Center under the umbrella of '*Hafuch al Hafuch*'. The Center, of which DCI-Israel is the executive agency, is located in the main street of Ramle, a city of 60,000 inhabitants.

The Center provides a panoply of services under one roof: short-term intervention by social workers, legal aid (by a DCI-Israel lawyer and a legal intern), information resources for many questions relevant to young people, and outreach to young Ethiopians. The 60,000 residents of Ramle reap tremendous benefit from the described services, particularly due to the difficult circumstances under which many residents live.

The town, near Ben-Gurion airport, has a mixed population of Russian and Ethiopian immigrants, Arabs (including Bedouin), many veteran Israelis from multi-problem families, and a high percentage of children in distress. There is great unemployment, poverty, intergroup violence, crime and major drug problems. The school dropout rate is particularly high.

The first cases handled by the Center's lawyer involved young people under enormous pressure by the police in Ramle to become police informants in return for closing their pending criminal files. We brought the issue of the undue pressure on minors to inform on their peers to the attention of the Ministry of Internal Security (Police), asserting that the pressure put on the young clients was out of proportion and unethical.

The city has a dedicated team of social workers in the Youth and Advancement Department, combining community referral and treatment approaches. The



City's Coordinator for Youth Services, Orna Shemtov, is a moving spirit behind many new projects in Ramle in the areas of drug prevention and school dropouts. One of the projects initiated by DCI-Israel involves *crime prevention*. This project, not under the umbrella of 'Hafuch al Hafuch', was based on the experience of the Howard League for Penal Reform in London and teaches young people in the Ramle schools and youth organizations about the consequences of crime.



DCI-Israel projects-coordinator Zeev Zamir with 'Hafuch al Hafuch' staff of Ramle, including DCI-Israel lawyer Talya Darr.

## Outreach Project with Children of Ethiopian Background

The Beersheva Community Project was founded in June 1996 within the framework of the DCI Information Center. Worki Kassai, an Ethiopian social worker, is responsible for the community project on behalf of DCI-Israel. As an Ethiopian she had instant community access. Ms. Kassai enjoys wide support from Ethiopian organizations in the city and due to this broad-based support has achieved great success in solving these youngsters' problems. Her first goal was to make the Ethiopian immigrants conscious of the rights of the child. She mediates between the children, their parents and the authorities in seeking solutions to their problems.

This is a continuation of a DCI-Israel project which had been active for several years, for an Ethiopian Ombudsman. We recognized that it would be more appropriate and effective to de-



An immigrant father and his child at the office of a director of an absorption center.

velop the outreach work with Ethiopian youngsters on a local level, and therefore integrate the project into the Children's Rights Information Center.

A major problem which came to light in Beersheva was the arbitrary placement of Ethiopian pupils in frameworks for 'special education' without culturally-sensitive testing. In some cases pupils would study in special education for a year or more before the parents understood they were actually in such frameworks. This violates Ministry of Education regulations, which stipulate that a placement committee making these decisions must involve the parents. Unaware of the decision-making process, the parents were never invited to placement committee meetings where it was decided to place the child in a special education framework.



DCI-Israel Ombudsman Mulatu Dessie and Minister of Absorption Yair Tsaban with a poster of the outreach work by DCI-Israel with children of Ethiopian origin.

Ms. Kassai raised the problem with the Ministry and with the Knesset Immigrant Absorption Committee and initiated a reexamination of the children by Prof. Reuven Feuerstein of the International Center for the Advancement of Learning Potential. The exam results revealed that some of those who had been placed in special education were actually gifted children, and Ms. Kassai then found them suitable educational placements. In other cases she persuaded the authorities to carry out an appropriate examination of the youngsters before deciding where they would study.

Ms. Kassai also deals with many cases of neglect and/or exploitation, which necessitate finding alternative residential frameworks; some of these cases include children accused of petty crimes, which are handled by DCI-Israel's lawyer in Beersheva.

DCI-Israel's Ethiopian worker now has an established reputation. She is known to the immigrants and her work is covered by the local press. She is partially integrated into 'Hafuch al Hafuch' yet remains somewhat independent. The Moriah Fund supported this project for many years.

A new DCI-Israel project was recently initiated to treat the problems of Ethiopian street children, who congregate in shopping malls. A student working for DCI-Israel is doing sport activities with these Ethiopian young people (jogging and swimming). This project is a joint project of DCI-Israel and the social welfare department of the municipalities. The War Against Drugs also contributes now some manpower to this project. This year DCI-Israel will open a flat (safe house) for these young men who mainly live on the street.

## Outreach Work in the Arab Sector

'The subject of children's rights was hardly known in the conservative Arab family', says Ashraf Kurtam, aged 24, who in September 1995 accepted the task of laying the basis for DCI-Israel's work in the Israeli Arab sector. 'First I approached schools, youth clubs and youth movements. I prepared both publicity and detailed work programs answering basic questions on the granting of rights to children, on the UN Convention and on our Children's Rights Information Center in Haifa'. He also spoke on the local Arabic radio program.

As Mr. Kurtam began the above work, he was simultaneously developing relationships with youth movements like 'Re'ut', a Jewish-Arab movement for Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, with the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) in Haifa, with the Association of Forty (Unrecognized Arab Villages), with local Arab organizations in Haifa, and with community centers. He wanted to get through to parents, children and teachers as quickly as possible. Within two years, Kurtam became known as an expert on children's rights, conducting workshops and seminars and appearing on television. He had a radio show on an Arab station which led to tens of requests every week from



Arab outreach worker in the north Ashraf Kurtam broadcasting on children's rights.

teachers and pupils concerning problems at school and at work, and from children and young people up to the age of 18 talking of family violence and sexual abuse. The lack of services for Arab children was also a regular topic. The cases were handled directly on the radio or referred to the DCI-Israel Information Center. Reports estimate that some sixty percent of Arab teachers in the Northern region listen to Kurtam's program. In such a conservative society, this is a success story.

In an educational project called 'Coexistence', supported by the Abraham Fund, Arab and Jewish primary school students learn jointly over the course of a school year about diversity, tolerance, the rights of the child, freedom of expression and the right to privacy. New workshops using innovative means of illustrating study material are conducted in individual schools and in joint meetings between Arab and Jewish pupils. The program includes meetings

with parents and with members of the Education Committee of the Knesset in Jerusalem.

## The Youth to Youth Project

Ashraf Kurtam also coordinates a project, which started in October 1997, entailing meetings between Israeli and Palestinian youth. 30 youths aged 15 to 18 are involved, half Israeli and half Palestinian. The Israeli group, which comes from Haifa and the North, is composed of Jews, Muslims and Christians, mostly members of the DCI-Israel youth group 'Tsva'im' (Colors). The Palestinian youths come from varied backgrounds but all belong to the Palestinian Youth Union, some come from Jericho, others have returned with their parents to the Palestinian Authority (PA) from Tunis or from European



The Israeli-Palestinian Youth to Youth project meeting in the DCI-Israel Haifa branch.

countries after the Oslo Agreement. Among them are children of senior officials in the PA and the Palestinian National Council.

Meetings in Haifa, East Jerusalem and Jericho were organized by DCI-Israel and LAW (The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment). The aim is to encourage the children to make their own decisions on matters relating to them. The mere existence of direct dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian children and the joint study of democratic values has tremendous significance.

The meetings between the Israeli and Palestinian youth were supported by FAFO (People to People of the Norwegian government) and UNICEF in New York; the subjects on the agenda are also chosen by the children particularly when discussing the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child. The discussion tends to highlight cultural differences.



The Youth to Youth project is hosted by the Jahalin Bedouin tribe.

**Juvenile Justice**



**C**

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## The Representation of Minors in Criminal Cases

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**Attorney Nitzana Ben-David Gardos\***

In 1998, approximately 70 percent of minors appearing in the courts in Israel's central region were without defense counsel, despite the presence of the Public Defender's Office. To fill the void, DCI-Israel has been providing legal consultation and representation for minors, as set forth in the Convention and in standard minimum rules on the administration of juvenile justice resolutions of the United Nations.

The State of Israel ratified the Convention in 1991, thereby undertaking the task of adapting its laws to conform with its international obligations. Accordingly, DCI-Israel proposed a change in the Israeli youth law in 1993, with the goal of legislating the minor's right to legal representation from the stage of interrogation and arrest. The proposal was rejected at the time, primarily due to budgetary difficulties.

However, opponents of the proposed statutory change cited reasons other than budgetary concerns. Opponents feared that defense counsel would undermine the authority of those responsible for rehabilitation. They feared that minors would be defended 'at all costs' and more weight would be given to the legal process than to the best interests of the child.

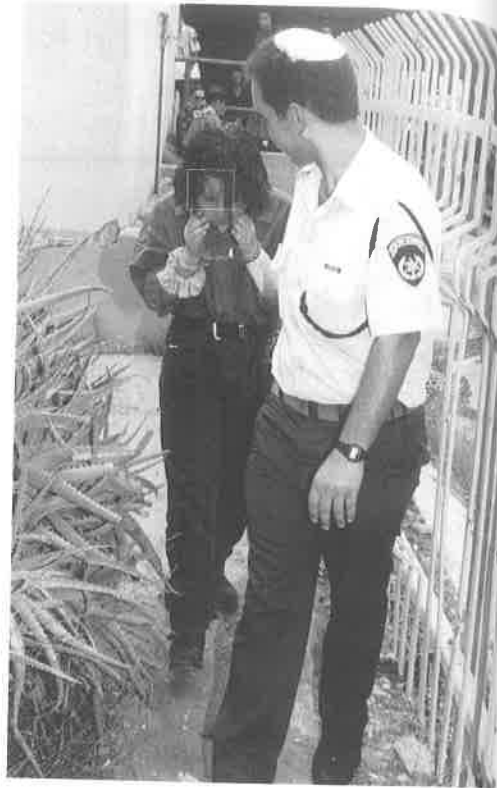
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\* Attorney Nitzana Ben-David Gardos was DCI-Israel's Legal Coordinator and now works with the new office of the Public Defender in Tel-Aviv. She prepared the following report during her tenure at DCI-Israel.

Our experience has shown that the following conditions should be met to ensure qualified representation of minors in legal proceedings:

- ◆ the choice of suitable lawyers with adequate training and familiarity with proceedings in the juvenile courts; DCI-Israel already plays an important role in organizing such training
- ◆ teaching the subject of representation of minors in law faculties, and following up with further study and guidance
- ◆ a permanent forum for the exchange of information between professionals in this field; and guaranteeing a minimum number of cases for those lawyers specializing in the subject and paying them adequately in order to attract qualified professionals.

DCI-Israel will undoubtedly play a major role in developing an appropriate framework for representation of minors in youth courts.



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## Changing Priorities of Legal Objectives

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**Attorney Dana Marshak-Marom\***

The major changes in this field, following the establishment of the Public Defender's Office throughout the country, was the enactment of the Public Defender Regulations (Entitlement for Representation for Additional Minors) 1998. The two main groups of minors who are now entitled to representation by a public defender in criminal proceedings are minors who have been arrested and minors who have been indicted.

Now that the State has recognized its responsibility for funding representation in such proceedings, it seems that the first task of the legal coordinator of DCI-Israel is to redefine the objectives of the legal staff and of the role of the legal coordinator. There is no doubt that as an NGO, DCI-Israel can continue to contribute in many fields of law, in order to advance the enforcement of children's rights.

The future objectives for the coming year are:

- Advocate Dana Marshak-Marom is the DCI's new Legal Coordinator. She worked as Deputy District Public Defender in the Tel-Aviv Central District and as a litigator and instructor at the Center for Criminal Aid of the Tel-Aviv University. She has an LLM degree in Human Rights from Washington College of Law of American University (New Israel Fund scholarship). She prepared the following report during the initial stages of her work.



◆ **The role of the legal staff:** DCI-Israel's legal staff is unique in its approach of providing legal assistance to individuals. All these attorneys specialize in representing minors in various fields of law. There is a need to create an organized system of constant quality control in order to locate common problems, and to create suitable solutions. This national outlook can reinforce the staff's status as a resource to the legal community concerning children's rights.

In addition to the specific tasks detailed here, DCI-Israel lawyers act as general legal counsel at the various Information Centers. Minors who are referred to Centers throughout the country receive legal assistance in all areas of law, in the courts and vis-a-vis government agencies. An additional important service is to inform the minors of their rights and to refer them to the correct agency, when such exists (Public Defender, rape counseling, etc.).

◆ **Litigation:** The tool of litigation on principle issues has seldom been used in Israel in order to advance children's rights. The advantage of the geographical spread of DCI-Israel's legal staff can aid the legal coordinator in locating national issues which can be brought before the Supreme Court, petitioning for writs of action.

◆ **Legal counseling and representation in pre-trial and post-conviction proceedings:** According to the Public Defender Regulations, not all minors involved in criminal activities are entitled to counsel. A minor who is under interrogation but not detained cannot receive legal counsel from the State. This stage of interrogation is of course critical and can determine the outcome of the minor's case. DCI-Israel's legal staff have been instructed to update community and social workers and to locate all those sources which can inform minors, before or in the course of interrogation, of DCI-Israel lawyers' ability to provide them with legal counsel. At this stage the main aim is to inform the minor of his/her rights and what he/she may encounter at the police station, while this involvement also enables lawyers to monitor police conduct.

DCI-Israel lawyers will also represent minors who have been interrogated but have not yet been indicted. At this stage, which can also be very critical, our lawyers will represent the minor vis-a-vis the prosecution, in order to close the case or reach any satisfactory outcome, thus saving trial proceedings or preventing listing of a criminal record. DCI-Israel lawyers will assist convicted minors in post-conviction proceedings, such as amnesties, petitions concerning prison conditions, etc.



Attorney Debra Fattel of the Center in Kiryat Yam.

◆ **Monitoring the quality of justice in criminal proceedings and joint training programs:** DCI-Israel lawyers still have a major role in ensuring that minors do in fact receive quality representation in the Public Defender's Office. There are geographical areas in which suitable lawyers to represent minors are scarce and the role of DCI-Israel lawyers is to report incidents of misrepresentation and, when agreed upon, to take over the representation of the minor. DCI-Israel will continue its joint training program with the Public Defender's Office in order to ensure the development of this expertise.

◆ **Representation of minors in Family Courts:** DCI-Israel lawyers who specialize in this area of law will continue to act as Guardian Ad-Litem in suitable cases. It is equally important to develop the trend to bring before the Family Courts suits in which the minor is the plaintiff, according to Article 3(d) of the Family Courts Law, 1995, when a right of the minor can be harmed. This specific article is an important example of the implementation of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

◆ **Representation of disabled children and the mentally ill:** DCI-Israel



lawyers will continue to represent disabled children in all matters concerning education, health, and social security infringements. Our lawyers will also continue to be a major resource in hospitalization cases in which juvenile court judges are mandated according to the law to appoint an attorney. The unique expertise needed in these cases is well recognized by the judges, who refer these cases to DCI-Israel lawyers.

◆ **Lobbying, participation in Knesset Committees, instructing community workers:** all these categories are mentioned together as tasks of the legal coordinator. DCI-Israel will continue to play a major role in legislative initiative and influence in the Knesset. The expertise derived from routine litigation and ongoing legal counsel to the individual minor constitutes a special dimension through which DCI-Israel can contribute in this field.

There are also problems raised by community workers regarding their legal duties to report on a child in danger or a child who may have been sexually abused. Another subject around which there is much confusion is that of these workers' duty to report to the police on criminal activity conducted by minors which harms other minors. DCI-Israel will organize symposia on these subjects, as well as other issues and difficulties related to the ethics of professionals dealing with minors.

# D

Human Rights work



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## DCI-Israel and Work for Human Rights

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The universality of human rights is a very important principle for DCI-Israel and in the last twelve years many interventions were motivated by this principle. For instance, DCI-Israel recently joined the coalition of human rights organizations in Israel opposing a proposed law to make compensation impossible for severe cases of maltreatment by our security forces or army.

The law would prevent full compensation for a child who was made into an invalid by fire from the security forces; it would also determine that the security forces do not have to take the most stringent precautions against any unjustified opening of fire in the presence of children. We believe that if this law denying compensation is passed, the norms in Israel as a State guided by the rule of law and justice will be weakened. Then not only Palestinian children but all of us will suffer the consequences. We have meanwhile succeeded in keeping the law proposal in the Law Committee of the Knesset.

Throughout the years since the establishment of DCI-Israel, we have visited injured victims and families of those killed on both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In July 1997, DCI-Israel along with the organization of Rabbis for Human Rights, visited a girl's school in Hebron which had been badly damaged in an act of vandalism by Jewish settlers. Children's desks were damaged, the walls were smeared with acid and paint, books were destroyed and Korans ripped apart. The two organizations presented a Koran to the headmistress of the school. Two members of the Palestinian Legislative Council came to thank them for their gesture of solidarity.

Motivated by a desire to uphold universal human rights standards, DCI-Israel intervened in the Supreme Court to ensure the equal allocation of gas masks to

Israeli and Palestinian children during the Gulf War. We received an assurance that in the future, the whole civilian population would be taken into account.

DCI-Israel is now participating in a coalition opposed to the confiscation of ID cards in East Jerusalem, focusing on helping Palestinian minors in this struggle. In 1989, following our call to stop firing live ammunition and/or rubber bullets at young Palestinian demonstrators, and to employ standard riot control means like water cannons, DCI-Israel was threatened and needed police protection. However, our struggle for the universal application of human rights standards will continue despite all obstacles. We will maintain our protest against all categories of violations, for Jewish and Arab children alike.

DCI-Israel expressed happiness in September 1999 with the decision of the Supreme Court that torture of suspects during interrogation is illegal. DCI-Israel requested the Minister of Justice, Jossi Beilin, not to give in to pressure to make special legislation (to circumvent the Supreme Court's decision), and thus violate article 37 of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child.

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## In Defense of Wounded Palestinian Children\*

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Here is a riddle: how many Israeli soldiers are needed in order to guard a 14 year-old boy, badly wounded, chained with handcuffs to his hospital bed? The answer is that three soldiers stood guard over Muataz Jaradat (14) and Galab Alphroch (17) from the village of Sa'ir near Hebron. The two Palestinian youngsters were badly wounded by IDF fire during disturbances in their village in October 1996. The IDF took them with stomach wounds to the Hadassah hospital in Ein Karem, Jerusalem, where they underwent surgery.

Nobody bothered to inform the families about the whereabouts of their missing children. The Jaradat family was certain that their son had been killed and they were getting ready for the funeral ceremony. In the evening a cleaning worker at the hospital who happened to live in a neighboring village, put them at ease. She had seen the boy. The parents were refused a permit to visit the children and later the mothers stole over the Green Line to visit them.

On the day of the disturbances, Muataz had gone out to see what was happening but was shot before reaching the village. He was hospitalized, operated on and at once handcuffed to his bed. He cried less because of pain than loneliness. Only one of the soldiers guarding him talked to him and helped him put on the television.

As for Galab, on the day he was shot he left his family's summer home, heard

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\* Extracted from an article by Guy Tansa in the Jerusalem weekly *Kol Ha'ir*.

a noisy crowd, came near and was shot as he approached. The family took him in a private car to the checkpoint and from there he was flown, unconscious, by the IDF in a helicopter to hospital. He woke up there, handcuffed to the bed. The soldier guarding him refused to talk to him and told him to lie facing the wall. This went on for three days, while he was also being interrogated. His interrogators told him he was lying and would go to prison. His mother believed he was dead.

A Palestinian human rights worker, Amal Nashashibi, heard of the case and tried with a colleague to see the boys. They were told at the hospital that they could neither see nor speak to the boys. Arab workers at the hospital showed them the room but the soldiers refused them entrance. Amal saw the handcuffs before she was thrown out of the room. She managed to learn from the boys that they hadn't talked to a soul or had any contact with the world for four days.

At the request of Ms. Nashashibi, at this stage the director of DCI-Israel, Dr. Philip Veerman, intervened, sending strong letters to the IDF, to the Hadassah hospital and to the Israeli Medical Association. The same day the handcuffs and the guards were removed. Suddenly the boys no longer constituted a security threat.



Orna Shem Tov, the coordinator for youth services in Ramla and DCI Israel lawyer, Talya Darr.



The staff of the Haifa office, Yaacova Yogev, advocate Debra Fattel, Ashraf Kurtam and advocate Pamela Butter.



Worki Kassai and advocate Yunis Al-Krinawi of the Beersheva office.



◆ Two DCI-Israel lawyers in East Jerusalem, Hiam Karawani and Osama Halabi



◆ Three outreach workers of the Ashdod Center, 1998.



◆ A DCI-Israel delegation meets the new Minister of Education, Yossi Sarid (September 1999). On the agenda was the request of DCI-Israel to teach the Convention on the Rights of the Child in schools, a request to support DCI-Israel's Children Rights Information Center in Ramla and a new one in the Arab town of Tira, the Ethiopian street children project in Beersheva and the lack of education of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem.



◆ The Minister of Education with DCI-Israel chairman Rami Bar Giora, Zeev Zamir and legal coordinator Dana Marshak-Marom.

## Israeli-Palestinian Joint Legal Aid Project

This joint program of the Israeli and Palestinian sections of the DCI was carried out from the beginning of 1992 to December 1996. The dire need for legal assistance and representation for Palestinian minors in the West Bank reached its height at the beginning of the Intifada. The Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza strip led to a series of arrests by Israeli authorities and trials of Palestinian adolescents accused of causing damage to the security of the state and obstructing public order. As part of our campaign for universal legal representation, lawyers on behalf of DCI-Israel started representing Palestinian minors in military courts in the West Bank in 1992, with a small grant from the European Human Rights Foundation.

However, DCI-Israel did not consider it appropriate to work on its own in the West Bank and fostered the creation of a DCI-Palestine Section, which was admitted by DCI's Credentials Committee in 1994. The director of DCI-Israel was instrumental in convincing the DCI bodies to admit a DCI Section in an area which was not yet a State. The two sections decided to join forces to establish a legal aid project for legal representation in the military courts; the first office opened in the Paradise Hotel in Bethlehem. This office later moved to a building in Bethlehem, and subsequently to a building near the checkpoint on the way to Ramallah.

Three people staffed the project — an Israeli and a Palestinian lawyer and a Palestinian director, Mohammed Abu Harthieh. The Israeli and Palestinian lawyers represented hundreds of Palestinian adolescents, including those in administrative detention, during the joint project. Imprisoned adolescents were located for their parents, and received visits in jail. Violations of rights by the military were brought to the attention of the authorities and the media.

The work was coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations.

Torture during interrogation, deplorable conditions of imprisonment, including cruel and humiliating treatment of minors, and the absence of education in prison, were among the subjects dealt with by project staff. A report on the project was submitted in November 1995 to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child in Geneva on the occasion of the thematic day on juvenile justice.

The project also dealt with the right of prisoners held in detention or in prison in Israel to be released on parole after serving two-thirds of their sentence, as set forth in Israeli law. Although Palestinian lawyers had never sought to enforce this option for their clients, it was successfully litigated by the joint project attorneys.

The joint project terminated in December 1996 when the Palestinian Section requested to reorganize and define its aims in the light of the new political reality. The two organizations continue their legal work, each in its own domain, on behalf of the youngsters. They are proud of the success of the joint project both in its scope and in the close relations forged between the two organizations in spite of the difficult political situation.



Palestinian youngsters in the Israeli Military Court.

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## A Palestinian Youth Law: A Joint Project with 'Palestinian Lawyers for Human Rights' (Gaza)

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The Palestinian Authority does not have a Youth Law in its system. The association of 'Palestinian Lawyers for Human Rights' is a small organization in Gaza aiming to raise consciousness concerning human rights.

In March 1994, about half a year after the signing of the Oslo agreement and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, a joint project of DCI-Israel and the above association in Gaza was started, with the goal of teaching Palestinian lawyers juvenile justice principles and helping them in the future to set up their own juvenile court system.

It was also intended to foster relations between Israeli and Palestinian lawyers appropriate to colleagues concentrating on children's rights rather than politics. A multifaceted program was developed, presenting a series of seminars for the Palestinian lawyers on juvenile justice and youth in the context of international human rights law, with the participation of experts from several foreign countries. A joint international conference on juvenile justice was held on March 29-30, 1995, in Tel-Aviv and East Jerusalem. It was cosponsored by the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice branches in Vienna.

Under the direction of Dr. Gabriella Maxwell from New Zealand, Palestinian lawyers started, with the help of Israeli colleagues, to formulate the draft of a legislative proposal which would constitute the basis for a Palestinian juvenile justice system. The joint project included mutual visits to local conferences and to the May 1995 UN Congress of Prevention of Crime and the Treatment

of Offences in Cairo, Egypt. After years of fruitful dialogue the project was recently terminated.

All Palestinian lawyers in Gaza have studied law in Russia, in Egypt or in other universities where human rights standards on juvenile justice were not taught, and they greatly appreciated exposure to these subjects. The Palestinian colleagues also appreciated discussions on juvenile courts, family hearing systems and juvenile probation services.



Palestinian Lawyers for Human Rights in Gaza — joint training on juvenile justice with DCI-Israel.

## The Initiation of Legal Advice in Civil Cases in East Jerusalem

From December 1997 to the middle of 1999, DCI-Israel and the Palestinian Counseling Center operated a joint project. It was financed by USAID.

Children in Jerusalem live in a city unequally divided. The discriminatory division is felt in all areas of life — the political, geographical, economic, psychological and child welfare spheres. The Palestinian residents of Jerusalem pay 26% of municipal taxes but receive proportionally far less services. The



Advocate Eliyahu Amram at a human rights conference organized by DCI-Israel, L.A.W, P.C.C and Hamoked in Jerusalem.



status of the Palestinians as 'temporary residents' in their own city limits their rights and has an impact on the lives of their children.

The present lack of security and stability in East Jerusalem often constrains the ability of the parents to care for the economic and psychological welfare of their children. The harsh overcrowding in East Jerusalem housing also causes problems.

The joint project brought together parents in the offices of the Palestinian Counselling Center in Beth Hanina, a different group coming monthly from East Jerusalem. They came to consult with a DCI-Israel lawyer on issues dealing with birth registration, health insurance, child allowances and the National Insurance Institute. We tried to empower the Palestinian parents with the relevant information but they often needed legal representation which they could not afford. Consequently, DCI-Israel designed a new project (the East Jerusalem Children's Rights project) for this purpose which started at the end of 1998, and on which we report separately.



## Accessibility of Palestinian Children to Israeli Medical Facilities

A conference on the above subject took place on behalf of DCI-Israel and the Palestinian Union of Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) on November 10, 1993. About 40 Israeli doctors and a similar number of Palestinian doctors participated, as well as ten representatives of international agencies such as the WHO.

Those present agreed on the need to give top priority to continued development of health care for children in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The conference was part of a joint program of DCI-Israel and UPMRC. Concomitantly, it is clear that directing Palestinian children to medical specialists in Israel and in the neighboring countries (Egypt and Jordan) will continue because many local services are not yet developed.

The aims of the conference were:

- ◆ to map those areas in the West Bank and Gaza where the various medical services for children are lacking
- ◆ to find ways of improving the system of referring young patients from the territories to Israel until suitable facilities become available in the territories
- ◆ to identify budgetary pressures on the medical insurance system
- ◆ to encourage increased cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian pediatricians

These are old problems, but during the Intifada the financing of child-patients directed to Israel became even more restricted. Medical specialists in the West Bank and Gaza are limited or non-existent in the fields of burns, oncology

and chemotherapy, treatment for children with heart and chest operations, and operations for babies and young children suffering from birth defects.

Practical recommendations were formulated for improving and implementing policies for directing children to medical facilities in Israel. The problems encountered included financing, the arbitrary granting by the Israeli authorities of medical services to patients, and favoritism by Palestinian health authorities in helping children to access the treatment. Difficulties resulting from the establishment of the Palestinian Authority were also discussed, as well as the functioning of medical insurance in the interim agreement period. Among the questions raised were: who is responsible (Israel or the Palestinian Authority) for health insurance in the interim period, and who will finance those directed to Israel and according to which criteria?

It was recommended that the government of Israel allow referrals of child-patients in the interim period and that Palestinian patients requiring urgent treatment should not be rejected for financial reasons. Many of the problems in providing medical services in the autonomous areas are the result of a lack of infrastructure and adequate investments during the period of Israeli rule.

## Conclusions:

1. During the interim period the government of Israel must continue to pay for diagnosis and treatment and must also pay for treatment of child-patients in Israel
2. Israeli doctors must make their voices heard regarding the issuing of additional permits for sick Palestinian children to be treated in Israel and concerning the development of suitable medical facilities in the West Bank and Gaza
3. The Palestinian policy makers must develop criteria for referring child patients for treatment in Israel

4. In some cases treatment in Israel is too expensive compared to comparable treatment in Egypt and/or Jordan.
5. With the establishment of the autonomous area, which is not a state, Israeli responsibility for medical treatment of Palestinian children is not over, as set forth in the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child. The Convention refers to the responsibility of the State party and 'children under the jurisdiction of the State party'.

The Palestinians are interested in compensation for the slow and insufficient development of a health service infrastructure during the years of Israeli rule. At the minimum, they should be entitled to a reduction in the price of referring child-patients to Israeli hospitals during the interim agreement period. This gesture would create goodwill and contribute to confidence-building.



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## The East Jerusalem Children's Rights Project: Aid to Palestinian Jerusalem Children

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Since 1996, there has been a clear intensification of government policies aimed at reducing the number of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. In particular, the Israeli Minister of the Interior was making the life of Palestinian children in the city increasingly difficult and many 16-year olds have been stripped of their ID cards.

The implications of this policy are highly dangerous since Palestinians deprived of their Jerusalem ID cards lose access to crucial services such as medical insurance, primary school education and government child allowances.

This is precisely where the East Jerusalem Project can be of help to Palestinian Jerusalem children. Our team is familiar with the Israeli legal and social institutions involved — including the National Insurance Institute, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and Israeli courts, especially the Labor Court and the Supreme Court. We can thus successfully maneuver through such an institutional labyrinth.

The project was established in October 1998. We are currently handling 60 cases and preparing five cases for High Court appeals. The most alarming recent category of cases is that of thousands of Palestinian children and adolescents whom the Israeli authorities refused to register after birth, thus denying them health care benefits or child allowances. These children live in East Jerusalem but have a parent from the West Bank and are therefore not recognized by the Israeli authorities.

DCI-Israel staff member Attorney Hisham Abu-Sheadeh notes some of the

problems faced by citizens needing legal aid: Advocate Abu-Sheadeh says that 'unfortunately, the average man or woman does not have a full knowledge of the various intricacies of law (so as) to stand against the capriciousness of the authorities. They do not have the economic capabilities to receive legal aid and they do not have the tenacity needed to struggle with a complete state mechanism of social and political injustice' (*Consequences for Social Security and Education*, paper presented at the conference of DCI-Israel, LAW, Hamoked, and the Jerusalem Aid Center: The Right to be Registered, Jerusalem, 1997).

Many children and adolescents in East Jerusalem live in fear of being moved out of their homes. The tragedies in Palestinian families revealed by DCI-Israel in recent months are overwhelming. For example, one young child, born with insufficient oxygen and suffering from heart disease, cannot undergo an



The staff of the East Jerusalem Project. From right to left: Advocate Hiam Karawani, Advocate Hisham Abu-Sheadeh, Hadeel Yunis, Fatmah Al-Mouket.

operation because he lacks health insurance. His father cannot receive an identity card and his parents are unable to pay for private surgery.

The first step undertaken by the East Jerusalem Children's Rights Project was outreach within the East Jerusalem communities. An intensive effort was made to develop working relations with NGOs, as well as with social and medical centers that offer services to Palestinian Jerusalemites.

As was expected, many of the organizations are overwhelmed with cases. In particular, East Jerusalem lawyers are flooded with individual and family cases, with most clients unable to pay for legal services. This was the first instance in which it was clear that the East Jerusalem Children's Rights Project legal team could be of immediate assistance by taking over a number of cases.

In the ensuing months we also received referrals from:

- ◆ The Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights
- ◆ Social service centers in Shu'afat and Beit Hanina
- ◆ The East Jerusalem Citizens Advice Bureau
- ◆ Al-Haq Human Rights Organization
- ◆ The Spafford Children's Clinic
- ◆ The Women's Center in Beit Hanina

Al-Haq responded very positively to our offer of assistance. In addition to referring cases to us, Al-Haq requested that a member of the East Jerusalem Project team set up weekly office hours at their offices in Ramallah. Accordingly, an East Jerusalem Project staff member offers free legal service there every Monday from 10 a.m. until noon.

The Project represents many children who need operations but have no health insurance. The project staff consists of Hisham Abu Sheadeh, Attorney-at-law; Hadeel Yunis, coordinator/social worker; and Fatmah Al-Mouket, outreach worker.

As we go to press, the project staff are handling 70 cases of children in need of operations, medical services, and the like. Referral and advice have also

been shared between the East Jerusalem Project and representatives of the Palestinian Counseling Center in Beit Hanina, Physicians for Human Rights and Hamoked, the Center for the Rights of the Individual. In May 1999, the Project opened an office in Abu Obedah Street in East Jerusalem (opposite the American Colony).

## Bridges to Peace Youth Project

In May 1992 the President of the Spanish Section of the DCI invited 40 children, 20 Jewish and 20 Arab, who had suffered injuries from Scud rockets during the Gulf War or who had been injured during the Intifada, to a two-week visit to Spain. They were to be accompanied by adults from DCI-Israel and Palestinian adults. The program in Spain focused on learning more about children's rights and meeting Spanish youngsters.

DCI-Israel approached both an Israeli community center which had been destroyed by a Scud during the Gulf war, and 'Children Teaching Children', a program of the Givat Haviva seminary. Counselors were chosen from Givat Haviva and from the Jewish-Arab community of Neveh Shalom. There were seven counselors and two DCI-Israel overseers. The whole delegation consisted of 36 people, half Jewish and half Arab, 11 youngsters from Neveh Shalom, and 25 from 'Children Teaching Children', all aged 11 to 15. The DCI-Israel treasurer at that time, Yvonne Mansbah, was very active in organizing the event.

On arriving in Spain on May 18, 1992, the first three days were spent in a lovely hotel near the capital, then in Andalusia. A rich educational, cultural and sports program was arranged but all integration within the group was left to the children themselves. At the end of the trip each national group summed up its own experience.

The Jewish children were happy that there was no 'forced integration' while the Arab children thought more directed integration was necessary and the possibility of integrating as they wished was lacking. They thought the segregation characteristic of Israel was continued on the trip. There was a mini-crisis when the Arab girls wanted to listen to Arabic music and the

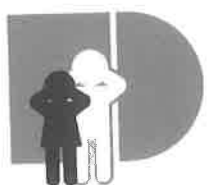
Jewish girls wanted rock. The Arab children interpreted this as proof that the Jewish girls didn't accept them. The adults tried to explain, with only partial success, that taste in music is acquired and must be separated from acceptance of the Other.

At a meeting in Givat Haviva upon the group's return from Spain, contrary impressions were heard once again. The Jewish children felt they had achieved a lot in learning about the rights of the Other and coexistence. On the other hand, the Arab children, especially the girls, felt that many barriers remained and the trip had not contributed to a better common understanding.



The Norwegian Ambassador with a Palestinian and an Israeli girl after the Peace Festival in Norway, 1993, in which a delegation from DCI-Israel participated.

# Young Leadership



# E

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## Toward a Pedagogy of Children's Rights

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Rina Yitzhaki

DCI-Israel has prepared a program whose aims are:

1. Creating a culture and climate of rights — at school, in the classroom, in the mutual relations between teacher and pupil and between teacher and parents
2. Informing teachers, pupils and parents concerning the different aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its importance and its significance as an international instrument indicating the minimum standard for the full development of children
3. Bringing the teachers to accept the principal ideas of the Convention and encouraging them to apply the spirit of the Convention in the school and the classroom. We want to help the teachers to meet the challenge as agents of change and defenders of children's rights
4. Encouraging pupils to take an active part in exercising their rights. We invite them to express an opinion on issues of importance for them and to influence the society in which they live through bringing the message of the Convention to the whole community, and to parents.

### The Rationale of Developing a Pedagogy of Education for Rights

The sort of education to which we aspire is unable to flourish in an authoritarian climate. Pupils and teachers must speak together about the significance of

freedom of expression and about taking children's opinions into account, and must clarify how all this will be put into practice in the classroom. In order for the rules of the game to change in accordance with the Convention, there must be a period in which teachers and pupils will join together to learn their rights and honor them.

In order to introduce a pedagogy of rights, attention must be paid to content and method in teaching. The school must guard the privacy and good name of the pupils, give them access to information and the opportunity to produce a school newspaper for which they will be responsible. Controversial subjects must be discussed openly, without threats toward those holding unconventional views and with a readiness to listen to all opinions.

A pedagogic formula of rights already appears in the Jewish sources and it is worth considering why it didn't become an accepted educational model: 'Blessed be the generation where the old listen to the young' (Rosh Hashanah 22). According to the sources, in order to be a role model of identification for the young, adults must listen to youngsters and respect them. Currently, the trend has shifted to various models of autonomous, democratic schools, promoting 'active' and 'joint' learning in a 'just community'.

### A Policy of Rights

It is important to understand the universality of the children's rights formulated in the Convention and how it touches upon all children in the whole world. The value of equality, and its application, is most central because it promises rights to every child, regardless of origin.

DCI-Israel's educational activities are founded on the following principles:

- a. The duty of making the Convention known to children and adults alike;
- b. Making the teachers active partners in bringing the rights of the child to the attention of the public and of the school;
- c. Developing and updating study programs;
- d. Identifying the characteristics of a 'friendly climate' for children as a

condition for accepting the Convention and applying it in the educational system and in the family.

As regards the principles guiding the development of the study program, we try to make the teacher understand that *implementing the rights of the child is not intended as a threat to the authority of the teachers*. We have to find ways to clarify to the teachers the advantages accruing to them from this new approach of showing willingness to consider the issue of the rights of the child. It is worthwhile for the teachers themselves to be the source of this change.

Since the Convention is written in a legal and abstract technical 'UN' language, DCI-Israel teaches youngsters their rights not directly from the text of the Convention but through clusters of subjects associated with the child's own world, with the rights relevant to the child's own life experience.

Constant attention is paid to current events touching upon the position of children — situations in which children have been harmed or have had their rights violated. This brings home the direct importance of the Convention to the children and to their parents.

We promote integrating the parents into events connected with learning about the rights of children.

DCI Israel has been experimenting with teaching about children's rights at the *Reali* high school in Haifa and other educational institutions in the region. We are now preparing a project of teaching about the Convention in Teachers' Colleges.



## DCI-Israel's Youth — 'Tzvaim'

The *Tzvaim* (Colors) Association consists of a group of young people aged 13 to 18 working on behalf of youth in Israel, irrespective of class, religion, gender, age or political opinion. The overall goal of this DCI-Israel youth group is to establish a democratic group of young people who will make their voices heard in raising issues of concern to the younger generation.

The elected leadership of the *Tzvaim* Association speaks for a substantial and significant portion of the population not usually represented in various institutions. *Tzvaim* sets out both to change the prevailing view that children



DCI Executive Director Dr. Philip Veerman giving members of *Tzvaim* a book on children's rights.

cannot make their own judgements and to strengthen the concept of equal rights for children.

The platform defines the issues currently on the agenda of young people:

- ◆ Rights of children and youth: The young people of *Tzvaim* have formulated as their broad aim to ensure that all young citizens of Israel will be aware of their full rights, deriving from Israeli laws, as well as from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Association is working toward providing complete freedom of expression for young people in their families, in the community and at school so that they can both make their voices heard and have their opinions taken into account.
- ◆ Young people will have the right and freedom to express themselves in any way according to their choice, as long as they do not violate the law or infringe upon the rights of others.
- ◆ Monitoring and control of the Children's Rights Law: The *Tzvaim* Association calls upon the State of Israel to fulfill the obligations it undertook when it ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of these obligations was to submit a report to the United Nations and to take the opinions of young people into account. The Chair of *Tzvaim*, Niv Assaf, aged fifteen, spoke in the committee headed by Judge Roth-Levy which discussed a children's rights law in Israel.
- ◆ Students' Rights: In collaboration with Student Councils, *Tzvaim* works toward promoting the rights of students in the education system, and assuring that schools treat all students equally, without discrimination against any sector.
- ◆ School curriculum: *Tzvaim* calls upon the Ministry of Education to integrate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into the school curriculum, so that all young people will recognize their rights.
- ◆ Divorce: *Tzvaim* informs young people of their rights in the event that parents are going through divorce proceedings. Youth group representation

makes children aware that the minors' parents have no right to forgo child support payments.

DCI-Israel's *Tzvaim* Association incorporates all young people: Jews, Arabs, secular, religious and immigrants, working in cooperation with similar movements in neighboring countries and throughout the world. All young people can exercise their legal right to freedom of association by joining *Tzvaim*.

# F

## Children of Minorities



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## Deaf Bedouin Children

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Dr. Philip Veerman

On June 22, 1994 DCI-Israel visited several Bedouin villages where there is a high proportion of families suffering from deafness from birth, and whose children lack suitable schooling. In the village *El Sa'id* (a village which is not recognized by the Ministry of the Interior and therefore has no electricity, water or permits to build permanent structures) the number of deaf children is about seventy. Many of the children suffer from total deafness because of the intermarriage ('consanguinity') in the clan and a 'deafness gene' in the



Presenting a *Hanukiya* from deaf Jordanian children to the family in Beit Shemesh of a deaf Israeli girl killed by a Jordanian soldier.

Bedouin tribe. The DCI-Israel team of specialists included doctors, educators and anthropologists.

Most of the deaf children are attending the *Niv* school in Beersheva where they had to learn Hebrew sign language, although they spoke in Arabic only. Nearly all of the pupils were Bedouin. It was argued that teaching them Hebrew sign language would help them find work in Beersheva; their mother tongue was completely ignored. Teaching them sign language in Arabic, as well as the written Arabic language to the greatest extent possible, is crucial in order to help them interact with the Bedouin community and family.

An additional problem in these Bedouin communities is the generally low rate of school attendance, especially among girls. Distance, budgetary constraints and cultural concepts placed a question mark over the extent to which the education received by the Bedouin in Beersheva was effective. DCI-Israel began exploring the possibility of creating an educational institution for the deaf Arab children in the village itself.

### The Course of the Project:

The lobby which DCI-Israel established for the deaf Bedouin children sought to benefit from the experience of similar centers all over the world. Israeli experts, both Jewish and Bedouin, had the opportunity to exchange views, thanks to the Canadian Cooperation and Development Fund, with partners from the Sun Center for the Deaf in Gaza, headed by Dr. Hatem Abu Gazallah.

Prof. Robert Molton from Lamarre University proposed a bi-lingual Hebrew and Arabic sign language study program. Following similar models for deaf Mexican children in Texas, he proposed teaching Arabic sign language and spoken and written Arabic. The conclusion of the discussion was that Bedouin deaf education teachers should be specially trained and placed in the *Niv* school.

In April 1995 the Canadian Embassy Dialogue and Cooperation Fund of

the Canadian Embassy in Tel-Aviv provided a budget for cooperation with Jordanian and Palestinian specialists on deaf children, enabling DCI-Israel to submit realistic and culturally sensitive recommendations. DCI-Israel people met in July 1995 with Jordanian specialists, in Salt, Jordan.

The problems facing the *El Sa'id* tribe included the following: (1) a lack of suitable Arab specialists in education of the deaf in schools for the deaf; (2) the need to set up a lobby of parents of these children; (3) the lack of general services provided to the unrecognized village for political reasons; (4) problems relating to old Bedouin traditions.

DCI-Israel started a lobby for encouraging the schools attended by the Bedouin to adopt bi-lingual sign language programs. In Ministry of Education circles one often finds a patronizing approach to the Bedouin, whereas the situation demands a creative approach and new educational models. The visit (which included Ministry of Education officials) organized by DCI-Israel to the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Jordan pushed the Israeli authorities to place more Bedouin deaf teachers in the school in Beersheva.

Subsequently, the visit to Jordan had another effect. Following the murder of Israeli girls by a Jordanian soldier at Naharayim in March 1997, pupils of the Jordanian Holy Land Institute for the Deaf at Salt, which was cooperating in a joint project with DCI-Israel, presented a *Hanukiya* via DCI-Israel to the mother of one of the Israeli girls, who was also deaf.

As a result of the DCI-Israel project, progress has been made. Bedouin teachers are working in the *Niv* school in Beersheva (where eighty percent of the pupils are Bedouin) and the Ministry of Education provides scholarships for Arab teachers prepared to work in special education. The children are studying in both Hebrew and Arabic and their knowledge of Arabic sign language will stand them in good stead in the future.

## Kindergartens in Bedouin Villages

In the year 1990-1991 a special DCI project campaigned successfully for the recognition by the Ministry of Education of a kindergarten in the Bedouin village *Arab Al Kamanah* near Carmiel in Galilee. Two additional kindergartens are now functioning there. DCI-Israel was not always successful in attempts to have kindergartens opened in Bedouin villages, even though according to the law, education from the age of five is compulsory.

*Arab Al Kamanah* was one of some 100 unrecognized villages in Israel, mostly Bedouin, which have a total of 16,000 residents. Without recognition by the Ministry of the Interior, these villages have neither electricity, water, telephones, roads or permanent buildings to replace the present tents. The Education Ministry finally recognized the kindergarten in this particular village in 1995, after DCI-Israel threatened to file a law suit in the Supreme Court against the Ministry of Education. After first giving the kindergarten a temporary permit, the legal advisor to the Ministry later gave a real permit and, subsequently, a subsidy for a kindergarten.



Bedouin children from the village of *Arab Al- Naim*.



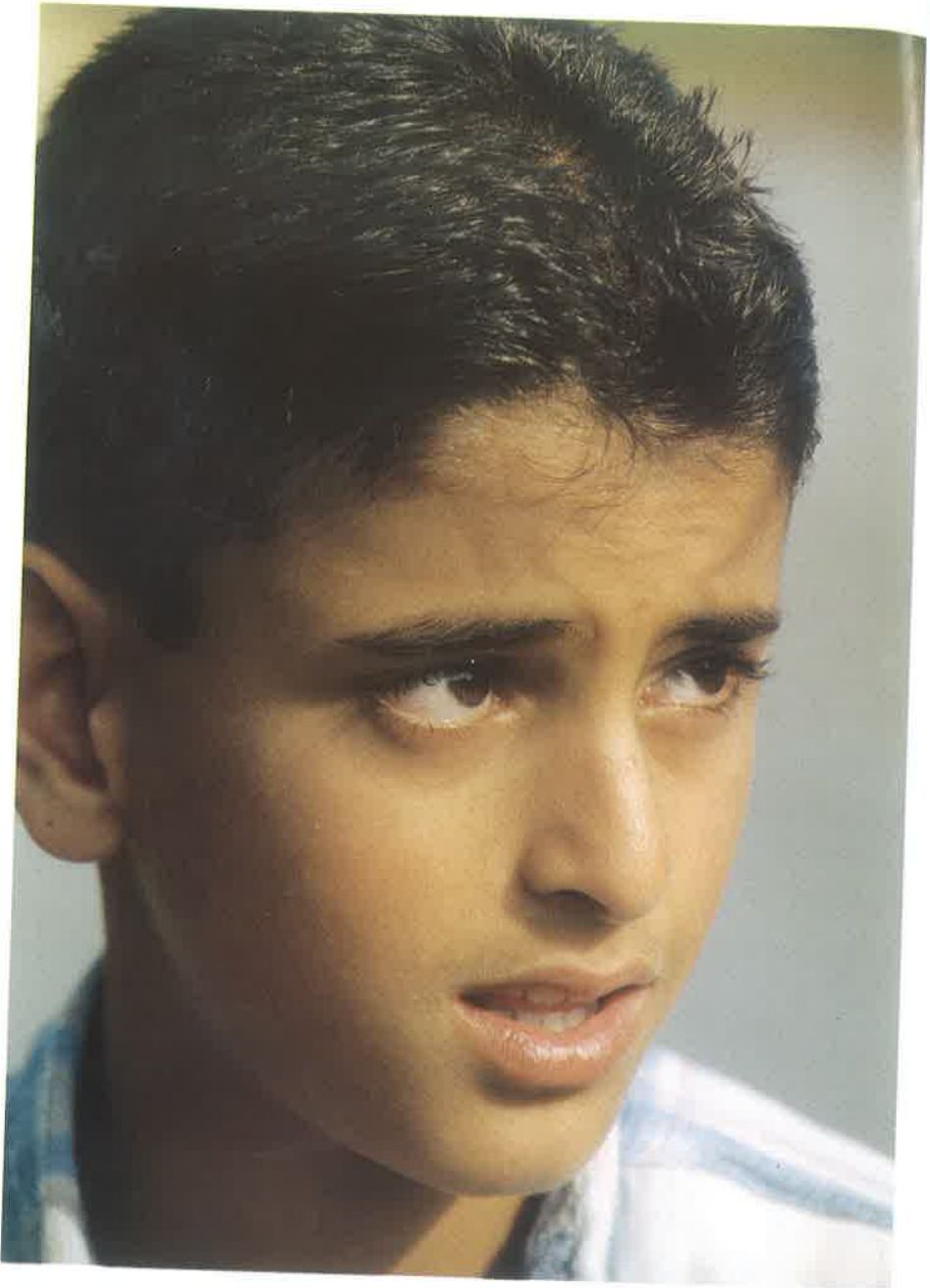


◆ The Minister of Absorption, Yair Tsaban, with DCI-Israel is ombudsman for immigrant children Mulatu Dessie (1994).



◆ Ethiopian children and parents demonstrate outside the Ministry of the Interior in 1994 to speed up procedures for family reunification.





# Child Labor, Sexual Exploitation



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## Working Children

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There is a dangerous lack of information about many thousands of youths in Israel working illegally. These children work long hours, often from early morning to late at night, and sometimes in dangerous jobs. There is a lack of reliable data about the extent of child labor and obtaining this is essential if the phenomenon is to be eliminated. Progressive laws exist but are not implemented, so that the authorities, the media and the public tend to take child labor for granted.

As part of our struggle to implement that part of the Convention concerning child labor (the protection of children from economic exploitation), DCI-Israel conducted walk-throughs in markets and other areas where children, mostly new immigrants from the former USSR and Arab children, are illegally employed. In addition to collecting data, DCI-Israel is concentrating on the extreme conditions of child labor and on drawing attention to the new ILO (International Labor Organization) Convention on this subject.

Recently DCI-Israel started to cooperate with the merchants of the Mahaneh Yehuda market in Jerusalem, who employ many Palestinian children (often from the Kalandia refugee camp near Jerusalem). The merchants noticed that if the Police drove the children away, they would be back to work in the morning. DCI-Israel will do liaison work with the Palestinian Authority in order to improve the situation of these children.



Photographs by Sara Gundle



DCI-Israel is now lobbying for signing and ratification of the new ILO Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, adopted by the ILO on 17 June 1999.

DCI-Israel is planning conferences on this issue in cooperation with the Histadrut Labor Federation, the Employers Organization, the Women's Organization (NAAMAT) and an Organization for Working Youth (*Noar Oved ve Lomed*).

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## Sexual Exploitation

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What can be done about sexual exploitation now that social consciousness concerning its existence in Israel is growing? In 1996 the deputy Attorney-General established a special Committee on child prostitution in Israel, with the participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations, including DCI-Israel. Three categories of commercial exploitation of minors exist in Israel: child prostitution; trafficking in girls to Israel for reasons of prostitution; and pornography. We submitted a report on legal aspects to the committee, including over thirty proposed recommendations relevant to the special cultural, religious, social and economic characteristics of Israeli society.

The DCI recommendations which are included in the report by the Committee, are those intended to broaden the existing law on prostitution in general and that among minors in particular. Sexual exploitation of minors constitutes a very real and tough problem among Israeli youth, and DCI-Israel is actively fighting the phenomenon.

A new phenomenon is the depriving of the liberty of girls from the former Soviet Union (Ukraine, etc.) waiting in Israeli jails to be extradited. DCI-Israel talked with many of these young prostitutes (who often had been in Israel as long as two years) and called upon the authorities to prosecute not the young prostitutes, who were the victims, but the traffickers, who often belonged to the Russian or Israeli Mafia.

DCI-Israel recently became active in protecting minors in a related phenomenon: the easy access of minors to telephone sex lines and the misuse of minors in child pornography. A complaint was submitted to the Police against a shop selling child pornography.

# H

**Mission to Ethiopia (1990)**



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## A Mission to Ethiopia (1990): Uprooted Ethiopian Children

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Through the early 1990s, 22,000 Jews were living in Addis Ababa, 4,000 of whom were in the 6-11 age group and 2,000 of whom were without guardians. From October 15 to November 6 1990, psychologist Dr. Gadi Ben-Ezer and educator Dr. Chaim Peri spent time in the community visiting them on behalf of DCI-Israel. Their aim was to see what could be done about uprooted Jewish children in Addis Ababa. In their report to DCI-Israel, they surveyed all aspects of the difficult conditions in which these Ethiopian Jewish children were living.

'Our major findings indicate that these children live in constant insecurity and harbor a sense of existential transience. Their tension and fear manifest themselves in diverse ways (eating arrest, loss of appetite, sleep disorders, nightmares, fear of leaving the house, etc.). These feelings are connected with the dramatic upheaval that they have experienced in both physical and social life. This upheaval has devastated the family unit, which cannot cope successfully with the situation. The parents cannot serve their children as sources of support; nor can they resolve the youngsters' distress.

We also note the caregiving services available to the children and point out that the protracted, indefinite stay in Addis Ababa and the undermining of hope of reaching Israel impair the children's ability to endure.

We likewise stress our fear of the possibility of irreversible damage — damage that cannot be remedied even by the children's arrival in Israel — in the following main areas:

1. Emotional development — loss of faith in the parents' ability to protect the

children may impair their emotional development and ability to become able parents in their own right. Thus the trauma of Addis Ababa would become intergenerational.

2. Education and culture — the children may lose critical years of schooling and education, thus affecting the nature of their integration into Israeli society for the rest of their lives.

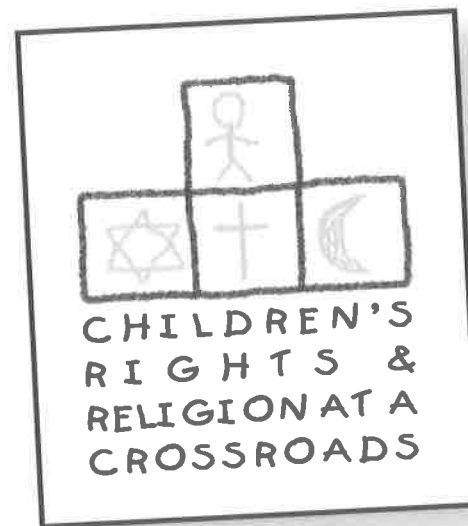
Undoubtedly the problems of Ethiopian Jewry may be fully resolved only by resettling the entire community in Israel. Therefore, all efforts made in this direction should be commended and encouraged.

It is nevertheless abundantly clear that even if the gates of emigration are opened, it will take many months, if not years, to bring all the Ethiopian Jews to Israel unless a full-scale operation takes place. Thus all possible efforts should be made to care for the community in Addis Ababa, especially the children. The recommendations in this report address themselves to the modalities of this care.

Our approach is multi-dimensional, attempting to offer simultaneous solutions for aspects connected with the children's physical condition and health, with family and society, with emotional condition and education, and with organizational matters. Our central concept is education and care in the service of survival. This, the major focus of our approach, is the need to help children cope with the existing problems in Addis Ababa. We attempt to mobilize the children's emotional strengths, coupled with those of their families and the surrounding community, to this end.

It seems to us that only such an all-embracing effort can reengage the positive strengths that this community has. This is how they can counteract the undermining effects they are presently experiencing, thus restoring the human dignity of the 'Beta Israel' (Ethiopian-Jewish) community. Such an effort would facilitate the education and maturation of the children's generation in such a way that the experience of Addis Ababa will not be a trauma with severe, long-range effects'.

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## Children's Rights and Religion at a Crossroads

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### **International Conference in Nazareth on Children's Rights in Judaism, Christianity and Islam**

DCI-Israel, *Wia'm* the Palestine Center for Conflict Resolution and the City of Nazareth invite international and local participation in 'Entering the New Millennium: Children's Rights and Religion at a Crossroads', an international conference to be held in Nazareth on November 21-24, 1999.

Marking the tenth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this will be the first forum ever to feature a dialogue on the rights of the child in the context of the 1981 UN Declaration of Freedom and Belief, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Prof. Amor, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, has been invited to give a keynote address.

'This dialogue marks the first time that two of the most critical issues in human rights — children's rights and freedom of religion and belief — have been discussed in the same breath', said Dr. Philip Veerman, Director of DCI-Israel, Conference Co-Chair and Initiator. 'It will bring together disparate communities, many of whom have never participated in a dialogue on the neglected issue of children's rights within Judaism, Christianity and Islam'.

In the eyes of Dr. Sami Adwan, Director of *Wia'm*, Professor of Education at Bethlehem University and Conference Co-Chair, 'This is not just another academic conference — all talk and no action. We are looking to this groundbreaking gathering to launch an international and regional effort to advance

children's rights and religious tolerance in relation to the three monotheistic religions. The conference will produce ongoing working groups that will further children's rights and religious tolerance worldwide'.

'Nazareth is particularly pleased to welcome conference participants on the eve of the new millennium', said Ramiz Jeraisy, Mayor of Nazareth. 'Our population of 60,000 Christians and Muslims has been living together for centuries and is in a unique position to host this inter-faith, intercultural dialogue that affects all our children'.

The object of the conference is to make concrete progress in advancing children's rights and tolerance within the three monotheistic religions. With this in mind, regional working groups will be formed to continue the dialogue and to develop children's rights initiatives worldwide. Israeli, Palestinian and Palestinian-Israeli and international participants include children from Belfast and Sarajevo, religious leaders, children's rights activists, scholars and teachers.

'Entering the New Millennium: Children's Rights and Religion at a Crossroads' will feature several cultural events designed to bring together the communities represented at the Conference. These include a concert for children and adults, an exhibition of children's art, and a photographic journey through the lives of children in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Conference will provide transport to Amman, Jordan, on November 24, where the World Conference on Religion and Peace will take place. More information on joining the Conference is available from DCI-Israel and Wia'm Palestine. Please contact:

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**Facing the Future**



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## DCI-Israel and the Challenges Ahead: A Three Year Work Plan (2000–2002)

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Dr. Philip Veerman

### Introduction: Placing Children's Rights on the Agenda

We have been witness to extraordinary changes in the world of children's rights during the past ten years. 191 states have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child since its adoption by the General Assembly in 1989. Going further back, the changes become even more striking. In 1978, when Poland introduced in the UN the idea of a Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was not immediately accepted with enthusiasm. UNICEF and most child-oriented organizations like 'Save the Children' in the UK and USA, were ambivalent as to the question of including 'children's rights' in their mandate. Defence for Children International, founded in Geneva in 1979, was especially created to promote the rights of the child.<sup>1</sup>

DCI was joined by a small group of progressive organizations associated with children's rights (like the Swedish 'Save the Children', *Radda Barnen*) and human rights organizations like Amnesty International. Only now, twenty

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<sup>1</sup> I am against the theme of 'Completing the Human Rights Agenda' (HURIDOCs News no. 23, Jan., 1999, p. 15) because it suggests that such an agenda is close to completion. So does 'The Unfinished Work' (Clarence D. Diaz, *Informal*, April 1988, pp. 22–3) which suggests that if we work hard, the agenda will be finished. I object to this because as long as mankind exists, we will have to continually push the agenda forward, and it will never be completed.



years later, are children's rights prominent in all such organizational mandates, including the specialized UN agencies. DCI played a pioneering role in bringing about this change.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels; much remains to be done. What will be DCI's role in the future? Under the new leadership of Secretary-General Maurice Graber and the new International Executive Council, a workplan for a coherent strategy to further promote the children's rights agenda can be implemented.

On a national level DCI-Israel Section, being so closely associated with current thinking and practice on children's rights, can make its own unique contribution to the field. We too have seen enormous changes, many the result of political developments. When DCI-Israel was established in 1987, with the exception of Egypt, peace with Israel's neighbors looked merely like a dream. Now peace with Jordan is a reality and with sufficient political will through a 'two states' solution, peace with the Palestinians looks feasible. The scope and number of human rights violations, including those perpetrated against children, have diminished since the Israeli army pulled out of the Gaza Strip and various areas of the West Bank.<sup>2</sup>

Further progress on eradicating human rights violations depends on whether the new government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak will be sincere about concluding a just and lasting peace with the Palestinians, this being the core of the Middle East conflict. However, if the government which comes into power does move toward peace, DCI-Israel's workload on issues like open fire orders will decrease.<sup>3</sup>

However, our work with Palestinian children in East Jerusalem will increase

<sup>2</sup> In the first year of DCI-Israel's existence, we investigated many cases of Palestinian minors killed or seriously wounded by gunfire.

<sup>3</sup> Along with Rabbis for Human Rights, DCI-Israel made condolence visits to many bereaved parents of children killed in the conflict.

because once the Israel government enters into final status negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, the fight over Jerusalem will begin in earnest. The situation of Palestinian Jerusalemites, including many children — already made difficult by the 'silent transfer' policies of the Ministry of the Interior — could worsen dramatically. We would then need to intensify our efforts to help the many humanitarian cases of those who are unable to register the birth of their child and are denied child allowances, and whose children lack health insurance and need medical treatment and operations (see under 'Protection of human rights'). We believe children should not suffer from the political conflicts caused by adults.

Israel's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is at last beginning to have an impact. The Ministry of Justice has appointed a Committee headed by Judge Saviona Roth-Levy to draft a children's rights law. It also appears that the Ministry has finally realized, after four years of deputy Attorney-General Judith Karp's involvement in the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child — the importance of a good State Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. One can see this as making progress, though the Report should have been submitted in 1993.

DCI-Israel will assure that the State Report be used as a base-line from which progress can be measured in the future. With the NGO report which we are coordinating, we will also encourage different State agencies to see to it that the views of the children themselves be more seriously taken into account.

More progressive concepts of the Convention, such as the empowerment of children, are gradually seeping into the consciousness of Israeli NGOs and of the Ministry of Justice. DCI-Israel has already proved that it is in a good position to play a leading role in making adults realize that they have to listen more carefully to what children and young people have to say. Paternalistic views on child welfare, out-of-home placement and schooling are still dominant, and we will try to change this trend.

In the last 12 years, child abuse and sexual abuse have attracted much more

attention than before in the Israeli media. More cases are reported every year. Mandatory reporting of child abuse has strengthened public awareness of the seriousness of this problem. We intend to initiate an evaluation of the mandatory reporting law and we plan to place more elements of children's rights into the protection-welfare approach.

DCI-Israel is one of the 28,000 voluntary organizations in Israel. Work in this non-governmental sector is sometimes used by the government to cut the budget of essential health services work and of educational and community policies. We have developed excellent relations with the Knesset children's lobby and will work with this broad coalition of Knesset members from all political parties for children, in order to fight budget cuts which will seriously affect the life of children.

On November 20, 1997 (International Children's Rights Day) we organized a public discussion on 'Children and Poverty'. The gap between rich and poor in Israel, where 22% of the children live in poverty, is on the rise. We must bring before the public the struggle to permit children from poor families to live in dignity, without which the message of the Convention would be distorted.

We will lobby for free early childhood education and genuinely free education in the primary stages. This will make it easier for poor families in development towns to decide whether or not they want to send their children to the relatively cheap ultra-orthodox kindergartens. Our main area of work will remain legal aid.

During the next three years we will concentrate on:

- ◆ legal representation of minors in the various stages of interrogation and before an indictment
- ◆ training of new lawyers in the juvenile courts in cooperation with the office of the Public Defender, and developing a manual for lawyers in juvenile courts and for lawyers with a children's rights approach

- ◆ pioneering independent legal representation for minors in the family courts and religious courts
- ◆ monitoring of detention, and improving conditions of minors (Israelis and Palestinians) in Israeli prisons and jails
- ◆ ensuring through contact with Israeli and Palestinian governmental factors that Palestinian minors (criminal cases) can serve their prison term in a closed Palestinian institution (in Ramallah or Gaza) rather than in the Sharon prison in Israel
- ◆ expanding the network of Walk-in Centers where legal advice will be provided for adolescents; expanding our legal consultation service to local youth advancement departments of municipalities; and expanding DCI-Israel's youth organization *Tzvaim* to the center and South of the country
- ◆ stimulating interest in the new ILO Convention on the elimination of extreme forms of child labor and the optional protocol (to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) to raise the age limit for the participation of minors in armed conflicts.
- ◆ advocating for incorporating into Israeli law the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in its entirety
- ◆ teaching standard minimum rules on the administration of juvenile justice and deprivation of liberty to civil servants and to the prison service, the probation service, and welfare officers
- ◆ increasing financial resources for the existing outreach work with children of the Arab and Ethiopian populations (in Haifa, Beersheva and Ramle) and for more outreach programs among the children of the population from the former Soviet Union
- ◆ expanding the new DCI-Israel project for Ethiopian street children in two shopping malls in Beersheva (a joint project with the Social Welfare

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Department of the Beersheva Municipality), where we will have a safe house in addition to our street corner work)

- ◆ expanding educational work with teacher's colleges to teach the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ◆ develop a CD-ROM for minors with educational material and stories about the Convention
- ◆ organize summer camps during the summer holidays on children's rights in several places in Israel for children and adolescents at risk, and design programs to teach the Convention at these camps.

## Legal Representation of Minors

In the field of legal representation of minors, which DCI-Israel pioneered beginning in 1988, there have been speedy developments. Since 1993, when DCI-Israel came up with a proposal to change Israeli law so that children facing possible imprisonment would be legally represented in the Juvenile Court, we have played the roles both of 'pioneer' and of 'expert'. Only recently (January 1999) was a new Office of the Public Defender opened to represent such cases.<sup>4</sup>

DCI-Israel will continue to be involved in the area of juvenile justice (see under: Institution Building) through the several full-time attorneys which it employs in different regions of Israel. These lawyers will represent children in the stages prior to involvement with the Public Defender, for example before a charge sheet has been issued and when the minor is being interrogated. They will also handle appeal cases, cases to be brought before the Supreme Court, and detention-monitoring in the period following the trial. DCI-Israel lawyers will also be involved in the training of new lawyers in the juvenile courts.

<sup>4</sup> Already in 1988 DCI-Israel started to represent minors in the courts.

Our legal coordinator Dana Marshak-Marom completed the draft of a brochure for minors who are in trouble with the law, informing them of their rights (with the police and in court). We will print and distribute this brochure. The new crime prevention project in Ramle can be extended to Netanya and other towns where there is much crime.

## Detention Monitoring Project

By the spring of 1998, the influence of the new Law of Criminal Procedure (Enforcement Powers-Arrests), which had been implemented a few months earlier, was beginning to be felt.

The law sets minimal conditions for the holding of detainees in jail before and after sentencing and it was framed much in the spirit of the new Basic Law on Human Dignity and Freedom. It came into being after considerable lobbying by DCI-Israel, since it pertains in a large degree to juvenile detainees.

Prior to the enactment of the law, people could be held in jails for long periods until space was found for them in Israel's overcrowded prisons. This applied particularly to minors who were often kept waiting in cells for up to six months until facilities were made available to them at the new youth wing of the Sharon Prison, in central Israel.

During this waiting period, juveniles were allowed only one hour's daily exercise in the jail yard. Typically, they would spend the rest of the time either sleeping, or, if they were 'lucky', smoking. Very few books and no sports or recreation facilities whatsoever were available.

It appears that the protests of DCI-Israel and other bodies against the appalling conditions for juveniles at the Russian Compound lockup in Jerusalem, and at Abu Kabir in Tel-Aviv, have had some effect. Since the implementation of the new law, basic guidelines have been set forth for prisoners in detention, such as the right for each prisoner to sleep in a bed and to be able to wash and launder clothes regularly.



From left to right: Dr. Awni Habash, advocate (now a District Court Judge); Dr. Menachem Horowitz (first chair of DCI-Israel); and Dr. Philip Veerman at the DCI International Assembly in Haikko, Finland, in June 1989.



The staff in 1992. From left to right: Dr. Philip Veerman, Jossi Miller (law student who started the Haifa Center), advocate Daniel Malka, advocate Awni Habash.



In 1993 the organization grew enormously.



Boardmembers rabbi Ehud Bandel, advocate George Samaan and Prof. Leslie Sebba.

DCI-Israel has noted that the staff at the youth wing in the Russian Compound lockup has become more open to rehabilitation efforts over the past year. They approached DCI-Israel to help obtain a public telephone for the youth wing so that the young people could call home. The Bezeq Telephone Company thought this would not be a profitable project and refused to install a phone. Only after DCI-Israel approached the Minister of Communications was the telephone installed.

In a project coordinated by Advocate Debra Farrel, we will increase the number of visits we make to jails and monitor statistics of the jails and prisons. Many jails will be transferred in the next few years from the administration of the police to that of the Prison Commissioner. This could mean more professionalism. It can provide an opportunity for DCI-Israel to keep pushing for improved conditions for minors, as well as for the closing of old facilities and the building of new ones.

## Children's Rights Information Centers

DCI-Israel initiated a new Israeli model with the opening in 1992 of our Haifa Children's Rights Information Center, and the launching in 1997 of the Ashdod project (in collaboration with the Ashdod Municipal Corporation for Youth, Sport and Community Centers and the National Insurance Institute). In Jerusalem we developed formal cooperation with the *Migbatz* Walk-in Center (of the Youth Advancement Department) and now operate a joint Children's Rights Center. Similarly, in Tel-Aviv we work in the *MAAN* Walk-in Center of the Youth Advancement Department.

The Haifa and Ashdod Centers proved so successful that they inspired the development of a new network of Centers: Beersheva, Ramle, Kiryat Yam, Kfar Saba, and Kiryat Shmoneh.

Together with *ELEM* (an Israeli NGO for youth in distress), the JDC/Joint and *Ashalim*, DCI-Israel forms the Executive Board of the new project, called

*'Hafuch al Hafuch'*, which intends to develop a network of Centers all over Israel. DCI-Israel views this project, with its Walk-in Centers providing crisis intervention, short-term social work intervention, and legal aid and advice, as an excellent opportunity to provide services on a large scale and in a non-stigmatic manner to Israeli adolescents.

However, the project will only succeed if all the partners devote substantial energy and commitment to establishing genuine cooperation. DCI-Israel will do its best to achieve this, with the project partners simultaneously managing to maintain their organizational independence and cooperating with each other. Recently the Israeli Association of Community Centers and the Ministries of Education and Labor and Social Affairs, joined the steering committee. Success in such a project can set an example in Israel. (It seems that nowhere in the world is cooperation amongst NGOs as fraught with problems as it is in Israel!)

## Setting Standards

DCI as an international champion of children's rights came into being in Geneva in 1979, with the intention of playing a central role in standard-setting with respect to children. Defence for Children International has indeed played such a role, most notably in its own input, and coordination of the input of other NGOs, in the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In its special role as a national section of an international movement, DCI-Israel strives to introduce the new international standards into Israel, both to its policy makers and to the general public. This includes generating governmental and public debate, as well as advocacy.

DCI-Israel has the potential to initiate and encourage this sort of debate about new international standards as they relate to children. Of course, to play this role effectively will require both organizing explanatory meetings on the subject and translating documents into Hebrew and disseminating them.

The Permanent Mission of Israel at the UN in Geneva does not normally participate in the meetings of working groups to draft new international human rights laws. Therefore, new human rights standards only become an issue in Israel with the actual adoption of the standard. Even then it takes some years for the NGO community to become aware of its importance. Here, it is critical that DCI-Israel take the lead.

### Implementation of Existing Standards

The implementation of existing children's rights standards will require a tremendous amount of work by DCI-Israel over the next three years. Rather than being alone in this work, we will be working alongside our partners in the Israel Children's Rights Coalition, composed of 70 member organizations. DCI-Israel is the Secretariat for the Coalition and is responsible for coordination.

Once the first State Report of Israel to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is published, the Coalition will be able to respond. While initial drafts of comments have been prepared, we will have to wait until the actual publication of the State Report before formulating our own fully researched comment, the 'NGO Report'. Simultaneously, DCI-Israel will lobby for a yearly Report to be presented to the Knesset by the Israeli government on the implementation of the Report, as is done in France.

DCI-Israel will not decrease its efforts to have the entire UN Convention on the Rights of the Child become the law of the land. We are closely following the work of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Justice and headed by Judge Saviona Roth-Levy, as it drafts a Children's Rights Law. At this stage it is unclear whether the law would include implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in its entirety as proposed by DCI-Israel, or only selected items. These issues necessitate advocacy and a public campaign on our part.



The DCI-Israel delegation received by Justice Minister Prof. David Libai in 1995. From left to right: DCI-Israel chair advocate Dov Israeli, Dr. Levi Eden, Prof. Leon Sheleff, the Minister Prof. David Libai, Dr. Philip Veerman, Zeev Zamir and legal coordinator Yair Ronen.



1999 staff meeting of DCI-Israel.

Little is known in Israel about the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction, which came into force on December 1, 1992. Lobbying for the ratification of this Convention, DCI-Israel had to overcome opposition by a former Ministry of Justice official, Pliya Albeck. At a meeting with then Minister of Justice Dan Meridor, he agreed with DCI-Israel that Israel should not become a haven for child abductors and a law proposal was formulated to incorporate this Hague Convention into Israeli law. We intend to teach the above Convention to social workers and lawyers.

### Promotion of Human Rights

The Hague Convention on International Adoption is another item which needs to be monitored. So does the changing legislation in Israel, where until recently only the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs dealt — or rather did not deal — with the subject. Now that in Israel private adoption agencies are allowed, it is particularly important for DCI-Israel to become more involved in order to promote the best interests of the child rather than financial interests of middlemen. We intend to raise the issues by organizing conferences and monitoring the private adoption agencies dealing with international adoption.

The UN Declaration on Freedom of Religion and Belief (with its important Article 5 on education) is also little known in Israel. Information about this Declaration will be provided at the special Conference in Nazareth in November 1999, 'Entering the New Millennium: Children's Rights and Religion at a Crossroads'.

Since there is widespread ignorance throughout Israel on minimum UN standards and minimum rights, the promotion of the protection of children's human rights will be a central goal for DCI-Israel in the three-year period ahead. DCI-Israel is designing courses on ways of improving the human rights situation and promoting knowledge of international norms, directed to lawyers, judges, officials from the Ministries of Labor and Social Affairs and

Education, and other key players. DCI-Israel will initiate a public campaign to heighten public awareness of these issues.

We have already started raising funds for mass distribution of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Hebrew, Russian and Arabic. These will be circulated to lawyers, judges, juvenile probation officers, educational institutions among students and teachers, governmental agencies and libraries. Posters in Hebrew and Arabic on the Convention are now being printed for schools. We will also produce a 'revised' more accessible version of the Convention, in contrast to the Convention's abstract, dry, legalistic UN wording, so that children can be empowered with the information it contains.

Following the example of Ashdod, we will endeavor to enlist more municipalities to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guideline for local policy and planning. They can then utilize it to make their services more 'child friendly'.

In the next three years we will enlarge DCI-Israel's outreach work, which now includes an Arab outreach worker in Haifa, an Ethiopian outreach worker in Beersheva, Russian and Ethiopian outreach workers in Ashdod, and Arab and Ethiopian outreach workers in Ramle. DCI-Israel has much experience in the important subject of the methodology of outreach work: we will mainly focus in this work on the task of asserting and implementing children's rights. However, in coming years we will need to consider if we should concentrate only on legal advice, carrying over the outreach work to other associations working in the same field. Your suggestions on this subject would be welcome.

DCI-Israel's efforts to promote and protect children's rights are also having a positive impact on national efforts to create a 'culture of human rights'. In contrast to human rights organizations which focus on Israeli human rights violations perpetrated against Palestinians (torture, administrative detention etc.), DCI-Israel's focus on children's rights everywhere is a relatively 'unthreatening' way of introducing human rights to Israeli society. Monitoring, implementation and advocacy of the Convention are at the heart of



DCI-Israel's mandate. All our actions spring from this: we must act whenever and wherever we see that these children's rights are being violated.

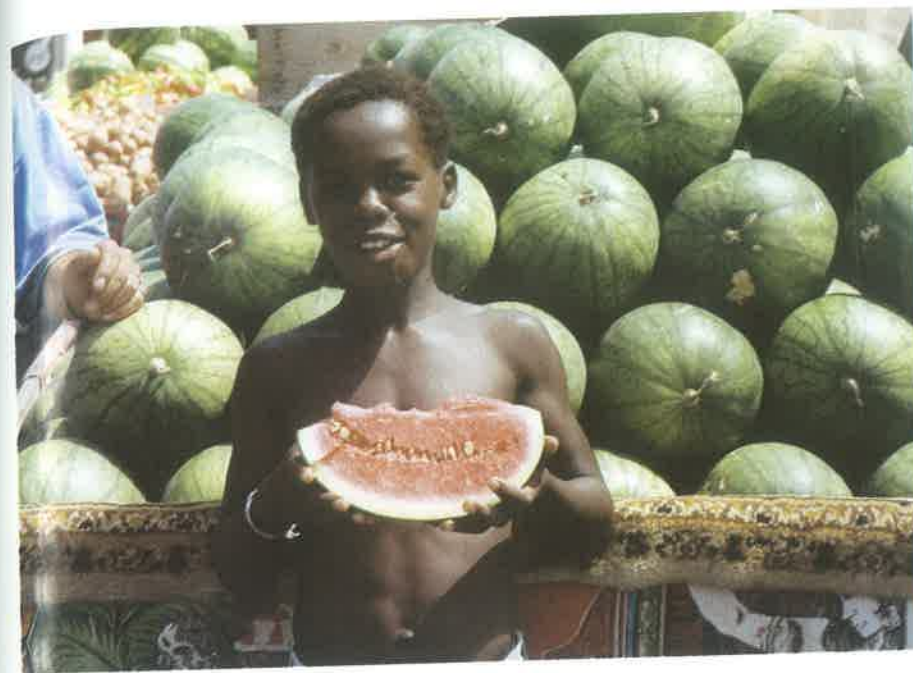
## Public Education

In the year ahead, DCI-Israel will start carrying out more programs for teaching children's rights in schools. We will also raise new funds to create and implement more effective educational programs, concentrating on colleges for training teachers. We will update and improve the DCI-Israel Web-page, developing a CD Rom about the Convention with educational games. All this will be made more accessible both to young people and the general public.

Moreover, we will design small tailor-made educational projects like *Bayit Cham* (a warm home), a project for adolescents in distress in Jerusalem, teaching the rights of the child in ten sessions. This is a very practical project, relating to all levels of daily life situations of minors in distress. In the holiday period we will also organize more summer camps on children's rights, for children from the disadvantaged sections of the population.

## Institution Building

In recent years DCI-Israel has successfully focused its energies on institution-building, foremost of which is the new network of Children's Rights Information Centers. Introduced by DCI-Israel in Haifa, Ashdod, Beersheva, Ramle and Jerusalem, the staff of these Centers offer free legal advice to children and adolescents on a 'walk-in' basis. DCI-Israel Centers in Haifa and Ashdod, and *ELEM's* 'alternative cafe' in the Tel-Aviv bus station both served as the model for the '*Hafuch al Hafuch*' network of 'Walk-in' Centers. Additional Centers, a joint effort of DCI-Israel, *ELEM*, *Ashalim*, the DCI/Joint and other national and local partners are currently being implemented, or are in the planning stage. DCI-Israel plans such a Youth Advice Center in the Arab city





◆ A young Palestinian child after a house demolition by the army.

of Nazareth, with the National Insurance Institute and the Association for Youth and Community Centers

DCI-Israel continues to be involved in the running of several such Centers long after their establishment. Our approach is deliberately long-term since we believe that this is the only way to ensure that the Centers will continue to offer a 'children's rights' approach, rather than becoming 'stigmatic'.

The main challenge facing DCI-Israel in working with the Centers is to ensure that the local communities feel that the Centers belong to them, and that they should start investing in them financially. This would offer a unique opportunity for advocacy and implementation of the rights of the child by the community itself on a local level. Such an approach, which is the very opposite of dictation from the top, is the best way to prevent the local people from rejecting our efforts as outside interference in their business.

As DCI-Israel becomes involved with more local Centers as their executive agency or as legal consultants, the need for case management guidance, supervision and planning will intensify. Our new Legal Coordinator Advocate Dana Marshak-Marom will be responsible for this essential work in the next three years, and for the expansion of legal advice for children. It is of particular importance to increase funds for outreach projects — for Arab communities in the Negev and Ramle, Russian communities in Ramle and Haifa, and Ethiopian communities in Ashdod, Beersheva, Ramle and Kiryat Yam.

## Child Labor

Little is as yet known about the phenomenon of child labor in Israel since we are only familiar with the tip of iceberg. We will undertake more work to reveal the facts on this subject through active research to first map the problem, especially relating to extreme forms of child labor, and then to bring it to the attention of the public.

On several occasions in the past we carried out walk-throughs in Jerusalem



◆ A retarded Beduin boy in the Negev.

and Tel-Aviv markets (Mahaneh Yehuda and Shuk Hatikvah respectively). We spoke to many Russian and Arab children working as porters with heavy loads, or cutting up chicken or fish. Our efforts are concentrated on child labor which damages the health of minors. Recently, concerned merchants at Mahaneh Yehuda asked us to do something for Arab children working in the market and a half-time community worker now works with them, with DCI-Israel providing guidance and legal counselling. In this project for Palestinian children working in the market, we plan to have another half-time community worker to do liaison work with Palestinian authorities.

### Project for Children of Illegal Workers

In 1999 DCI-Israel will create projects for children of foreign workers (from Africa, Asia and especially from South America). Not only does this growing group of children often endure inhuman conditions, with poor housing, no health insurance and frequently receiving no education; the children or their child minders are also afraid to go out onto the street for fear of being arrested as illegals. These children, who clearly fall under DCI-Israel's jurisdiction, cannot be blamed for the decision of their parents to live in Israel illegally, frequently because there is a civil war, or conditions of extreme deprivation, in their home countries.

With its connections to DCI Sections in many of the countries of origin of the illegal workers and with its international standing, DCI-Israel is well-suited to advocate on behalf of these children.

In collaboration with the Division of Youth Advancement in the Tel-Aviv Municipality, DCI-Israel plans to develop a club, to be open to children of foreign workers as well as other disadvantaged groups (new immigrants, Palestinian Israelis, Jewish children from low socio-economic strata). This joint project of DCI-Israel and the Tel-Aviv Municipality will start at the Bialik Primary School in Tel-Aviv, a neighborhood where many illegal workers live.

### International Networking

In the year 2000, DCI-Israel will organize an international Conference in Ashdod, with the aim of establishing an international network of Children's Rights Information Centers. We will invite French 'info jeunes centres', Dutch 'Youth Law Shops' and others to meet and exchange information and join the new network.

The Nazareth Conference, 'Children's Rights and Religion at a Crossroads', which will take place in November 1999, is organized by DCI-Israel, the Municipality of Nazareth and *Wia'm* (the Palestinian Center for Conflict Resolution). An international network of Children's Rights and Religion will be established there. This is an unusual Conference which reaffirms DCI's innovative character. Also in the year 2000, DCI-Israel will organize, in collaboration with the Taubenschlag Institute for Criminal Law at Tel-Aviv University and the Office of the Public Defender, an international Conference for lawyers working with children. In addition to supporting children's rights, such gatherings, which bring together experts from local, regional and international communities, enhance the profile of DCI-Israel both at home and abroad.

### Participation Rights

One of DCI-Israel's priorities will be to develop its Youth Movement for Children's Rights, *Tsvaim* (Colors). We need to provide more training and administrative support for the young leadership of the movement, enabling it to open branches in many Israeli cities and towns. More meetings with the Palestinian youth group will be organized on certain topics such as child labor.

## Concluding Remarks

Because DCI-Israel has been dramatically expanding its services and the scope of its work, long-term institutional planning is underway to ensure the continuing productivity of our projects. We will explore options for core funding and long-term grants of financial support to promote stability within the organization.

DCI-Israel must expand if the projects described here are to come to fruition in the next three years and beyond. The number of staff for the central office in Jerusalem must be increased. We will also develop a fuller program for our many fine volunteers, so that their individual skills can be more effectively utilized and their numbers increased. This requires a part-time volunteer coordinator.

A full-time staff member will be responsible for public relations because our work, while it is known to juvenile probation officers, to lawyers and to social workers, is still not sufficiently familiar to the general public. This situation can only be changed if we can devote adequate financial means to publicity.

Finally, we intend to preserve the professionalism of our legal aid and social services while continuing our steady organizational expansion and assuring our financial viability. Given the means, we can constantly and consistently increase our goal of improving the lives of children.