



Israel Unlimited is a strategic public-private partnership between the Government of Israel, JDC and the Ruderman Family Foundation to meet the needs of disabled adults, through the development of innovative social services and programs tailored to various types of disabilities

Background

The past decade has marked a tremendous rise of awareness for Israel's 700,000 adults with disabilities. Many factors are contributing to this climate of change, including: (i) socio-demographic changes of the disabled; (ii) the growing recognition that Israel lacks community services in many cities and towns tailored to their particular needs; (iii) new findings linking chronic illness and disability; (iv) shift in perceptions emphasizing these adults abilities rather than their disabilities, and (v) longer lifespan of these adults. During this decade Israel also saw a rise in activism among adults with disabilities. Leaders from the community emerged and advocated for their rights. Israel passed the Law of Equal Rights for People with Disabilities, ensuring public funding and legal rights for the disabled. Yet despite this wave of optimism and grassroots activity, the needs of Israel's disabled living in the community continue to grow and require action.

Fast Facts - Israelis with Disabilities

The number of adults with disabilities in Israel is 700,000 (17.9% of the population of 4 million aged 20-64). Of these, 241,000 are severely disabled (6.2%) and 456,000 are moderately disabled (11.7%). These rates are growing continuously due to the aging of the Baby Boomers. The annual growth rate of the disabled population receiving government allowances is 6.3%, while the annual growth rate of the general population is 2.6%. One-third of those receiving allowances live below the poverty line. Israel Unlimited develops programs responding to the multiple social and functioning needs of a broad spectrum of disabilities: physical, sensory, cognitive, mental and chronic illness. Several groups are of particular interest to the partnership. These include: parents with disabilities, women, immigrants, Arabs, young adults, newly disabled individuals and people with multiple disabilities.

The Partnership Goals

Israel Unlimited focuses on 20-64- year-olds who live in their homes. The partnership enables:

- The collaboration of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and other national and local agencies addressing challenges facing the disabled through various disciplines;
- The pooling of financial and professional resources for the planning and development of innovative services for the disabled;
- The replication and dissemination of proven and economically viable programs nationwide;
- Long-term funding ensuring the continuity of new initiatives;
- Effective response to the changing realities and to new challenges faced by the disabled.

The Partnership Programs

Israel Unlimited takes a leadership role in:

- Promoting **independent living** in the community by expanding the number of Supportive Communities and Centers for Independent Living and strengthening families of the disabled;
- Tailoring services for the **disabled who are at high risk**, among them disabled parents, people with multiple disabilities, newly disabled individuals, immigrants and women with disabilities.



- Developing health promotion programs for **disabled who are also chronically ill.**

A cross-cutting theme in all the programs of Israel Unlimited is raising the **awareness** of the general public to the needs of people with disabilities and the importance of integrating them into the society.