



ENHANCEMENT GUIDE

AT-RISK YOUTH IN ISRAEL

Created by Honeycomb

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This At-Risk Youth Enhancement Guide is designed to accompany Honeycomb's [ChangeMakers: A Journey Through Jewish Teen Philanthropy](#) curriculum, [ChangeMakers90](#), or your own established Jewish youth philanthropy program.

As part of this educational model, Honeycomb has identified 22 Justice Issues that reflect the needs and challenges of the world we live in. While we recognize there are more than 22 issues that need to be addressed in the world today, by providing this standard, we can introduce new opportunities for participants to engage with and understand the power of philanthropy through a specific issue area.

In order to help create a deeply meaningful and focused experience, this guide will provide additional framework to include the topic of at-risk youth in Israel. By adding these questions and activities, participants will be able to have a deeper understanding of the issues at-risk youth in Israel face to help guide the participants in their grantmaking choices.

This Enhancement Guide includes activities, suggested scripting, handouts, templates, and frameworks that you can implement during your youth philanthropy program in order to explore this topic, and ultimately make a grant to a nonprofit that is working to support at-risk youth in Israel.

How Do We Define “At-Risk” Youth?

At-Risk Youth is a broad category referring to young people ages 12 to 26 who face a wide range of challenges, including emotional crises, school dropout, social and familial rejection, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, violence, homelessness, and a lack of support systems.





Terminology and Statistics

The following categories represent the severity of risk that many youth face in Israel.

As of 2025, American Friends of ELEM reports the following data, aggregated from the Israeli Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and National Child Welfare Reports:

Stress-Affected Youth (750,000 – 900,000)

- Stress of life in Israel, including the threat of violence and war

Marginal Risk Youth (150,000 – 180,000)

- Inability to function at school
- Sense of failure
- Dropout from school or educational gaps
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Severe emotional and family problems

Serious Risk Youth (100,000 – 120,000)

- Difficulty dealing with adolescence and functioning
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Lack of adequate response from family, friends or school

High Risk Youth (40,000 – 50,000)

- Disconnecting from school and structured systems
- Struggling to fit into new settings
- Social detachment
- Vagrancy
- Turning to risky coping strategies
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Delinquency and crime

Fatal Risk Youth (10,000 – 12,000)

- Homelessness
- Making choices leading to harm or serious consequences
- Drug addiction
- Detachment from family and society



While Israel does not publish updated national figures across these exact categories, current research and field data clearly show a significant increase across all levels of risk, particularly in stress and trauma-related distress following October 7th.

More information about research and data:

“The high prevalence of probable PTSD among Israeli adolescents in the wake of the October 7th, 2023 attack suggests an urgent need for action. Evidence-informed mental health policies and services should prioritize adolescents, with targeted support for high-risk groups.”

“Post-traumatic stress among adolescents following the October 7th attack in Israel: implications for mental health policy and planning”

Research from the National Library of Medicine.

“Suicide is already one of the leading causes of death among adolescents in Israel, with a mortality rate of 6.9 per 100,000. About five percent of Israeli teens aged 14–17 report suicidal thoughts, and around a thousand adolescents are referred to emergency rooms each year following suicide attempts. The Schneider data suggests that the pressure on this generation is intensifying.”

“Teen suicide risk is climbing in Israel, and we're not ready”

Gila Tolub, Times of Israel



“As of 2024, 83% of children in Israel were experiencing emotional distress in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attacks, according to a study by the Israeli Pediatric Association. According to the chairman of ELEM, former Minister of Education Rabbi Shai Piron, before the Oct. 7 attacks the at-risk youth population accounted for 10% of Israeli teenagers; but since the start of the war, ELEM has become relevant for more than 60% of the country’s youth.”

“Trauma among youth: The quiet emergency in Israel, and the role of Diaspora giving” - Liora Attias-Hadar, eJewishPhilanthropy



ACTIVITIES

OPENING ACTIVITY:

Option 1 - Think and Share

When can you use this activity?

As an opening activity to start your session, near the beginning of your program cycle, to start the conversation around at-risk youth.

Instructions:

To help frame the conversation, ask participants one of these prompts and invite them to share their responses:

- What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “at-risk youth”?
- What challenges do you think young people might face that make them feel unsupported or alone?
- What does it mean for a community to take responsibility for its youth?

Spotlight a few responses and invite 1–2 participants to elaborate.





OPENING ACTIVITY: Option 2 - Picture Prompts

When can you use this activity?

As an opening activity to start your session, near the beginning of your program cycle, to start the conversation around at-risk youth.

What resources do you need?

Print out the photos in Appendix II, pages 17-21, or use the cards from the Honeycomb [Imagining Giving Card Game](#).

Instructions:

This activity will give participants the opportunity to explore the topic of at-risk youth in Israel through images. Here are a few different ways you can use the photos:

Gallery Walk

1. Print the photos out and hang them around the room.
2. Give each participant a few sticky notes and a pen.
3. Have the participants do a “gallery walk” to look at each image. Invite participants to write reflections or questions about the images on sticky notes, and place the sticky note around the images.
4. Bring the group back together to reflect:
 - What came up for you while looking at the images?
 - Are there any sticky notes that you wanted to respond to or ask questions about?



Chevruta

1. Break participants into groups of two or three.
2. Give each group one image to study, reflecting on the following questions:
 - What do you see in the photo?
 - How does this image make you feel?
 - What else might be happening that you don't see?
 - How might the image connect to at-risk youth in Israel?
3. Have each group share reflections of their photo.



Instructions continued...

Caption Writing

1. Have the participants look through all of the photos.
2. Tell the participants to choose one photo that stood out to them and write a caption that tells a story of what might be happening in the photo.
3. Invite participants to share the captions they wrote. This can be shared out loud, or have the participants hang their captions below the images on a wall and do a “gallery walk” so everyone can read each other’s captions.
4. Ask the group the following reflection questions:
 - What did you notice when you heard/read other people’s captions? How were they the same or different?
 - Did any images or captions remind you about at-risk youth in Israel? How so?
 - What does this teach us about everyone’s story being unique?





WHAT IS JEWISH ABOUT PHILANTHROPY?

When can you use this activity?

This activity can be used after playing GIVE10 or a general game where participants choose what to give away and what to keep. Instructions for GIVE10 can be found on page 7 of ChangeMakers90.

What resources do you need?

Paper, pencils, copy of [Changemakers90](#).

Instructions:

1. Complete the activity as written in Changemakers90.
2. Conclude or segue to your next activity using this script:

"In Jewish tradition, tzedakah (giving guided by Jewish values) is not just about generosity, but also about areyvut (responsibility). We are called to support others while also recognizing that we still live with abundance. But when it comes to supporting at-risk youth, giving is not just about WHAT we give, it's also about HOW we give.

In this activity, you chose something meaningful to give away. But what if the item you chose wasn't actually what was needed? What if what someone truly needed wasn't visible from the outside? Meaningful support begins with listening, building trust, and meeting people where they are. As givers, our role is not just to offer help, but to better understand the real needs of individuals and communities. To support at-risk youth in Israel, it is important to understand not just what services are available, such as mental health support, education, and prevention, but the root causes at play and how they impact the individual."





VALUES AND TEXT STUDY

When can you use this activity?

When you are diving deeper into the subject matter, when you first introduce the concepts of Jewish values.

What resources do you need?

Your chosen pair of texts (either printed or electronic), online manipulative board with texts and values (see links below), [7 Core Values sheet](#).

Instructions:

Jewish youth philanthropy begins with an exploration of big ideas or Core Values that can impact the way we interpret and find meaning in our lives. Honeycomb has identified 7 Core Values that we believe underlie the whole process of Jewish philanthropy.

1. Say to participants:

"We are going to explore how Jewish values can guide us in understanding and responding to the needs of at-risk youth in Israel. In particular, we will look at 7 Core Values tied to philanthropy: Responsibility, Service, Lovingkindness, Human Dignity, Preservation, Hope, and Justice. We'll also look at both traditional and modern texts that relate to these values. These texts will help us think about what it means to support young people who may feel unseen, unheard, or disconnected."

2. Choose one of the following pairs of text to explore with your participants:

PAIR 1:

"You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to Me."

- Exodus, 22:21-22

"Few are guilty, but all are responsible."

- Rabbi Abraham Jonathan Heschel

PAIR 2:

"And Rabbi Yitzhak says: Anyone who gives a peruta (small coin) to a poor person receives six blessings, and whoever consoles him with words of comfort and encouragement receives eleven blessings."

- Bava Batra, 9b:8

"We learn to love humanity by loving specific human beings. There is no short-cut."

- Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

PAIR 3:

"Let the dignity of your friend be as dear to you as your own."

- Pirkei Avot, 1:10

"We must teach our children to dream with their eyes open."

- Golda Meir



Instructions continued...

1. Explain the context for your chosen pair of texts:
 - **PAIR 1:** Exodus is a book of the Torah that tells the story of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt and the formation of their covenant and communal responsibilities. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel was a Jewish philosopher and civil rights activist.
 - **PAIR 2:** Bava Batra is a Talmudic tractate, part of a collection of Rabbinic teachings and interpretations of Jewish law, ethics, and traditions. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks was a global leader, philosopher, and author.
 - **PAIR 3:** Pirkei Avot ("Ethics of our Fathers") is a collection of ethical teachings and moral principles from Jewish tradition. Golda Meir was the fourth Prime Minister of Israel, known for her leadership during the country's early decades and her role as one of the first women to lead a modern nation.
2. Have participants share their reactions to the quotes, using any of the following questions as prompts:
 - What words stand out to you?
 - What do these texts teach us about responsibility?
 - How do these texts make you feel?
 - What does Jewish tradition tell us about helping those who struggle?
 - What feels challenging or unclear?
 - How would you summarize each text to a friend?
 - Is there anything you disagree with?
3. Say to participants:

"Now that you've explored the texts, look at the 7 Core Values. Choose three values that you think best reflect the messages of the texts. You might choose three different values than someone else, and that's okay! There is no right or wrong answer."
4. After participants had a chance to individually choose three values, invite a few to share which values they chose and why.
5. When the participants are done sharing, say to the group:

"As you can see, there are many ways to connect values to real-world challenges. Supporting at-risk youth can be approached through many lenses: dignity, hope, responsibility, and more."





CASE STUDY: Meet Sapir

When can you use this activity?

Once you have chosen your mission statement/group value, before site visits or guest speakers, before you review proposals.

What resources do you need?

YouTube link for [Meet Sapir](#) video.

Instructions:

To help participants understand what at-risk youth looks like on the individual level, this activity will allow them to hear directly from a teen who experienced abuse and homelessness as a child and teen.

1. Before playing the video, say to participants:

“While hearing the number of youth who are at-risk in Israel can feel overwhelming, it’s important to remember that each of those numbers are people with unique stories. We’re now going to hear from someone who experienced hardships as both a child and a teen. Sapir will reflect on the difficulties she faced and how she was able to find hope to turn her life around. As Sapir speaks, notice how her body language changes as she shares her story.”

2. Play the video using these suggested prompts and stopping points:

- 3:47
 - How do you feel while hearing Sapir’s story?
 - What do you think happened to bring her from that experience to now?
- 7:28
 - Sapir asks, “Can you imagine a 14-year-old living alone?” Pause to reflect on her question, then continue playing until 7:48.
 - Are you surprised by Sapir’s answer to her question? Why?
- 9:04
 - We hear someone on the side say, “I believe in you.” What does it mean to have someone believe in you?
 - How might that change someone’s life for the better?
- 13:36
 - Sapir not only makes changes to her own life but joins the Alma outreach team to help others like her.
 - Have you ever had a negative experience that inspired you to do something positive?
 - How might philanthropy play a role in making a difference for teens like Sapir?
- 14:05
 - Sapir asks that you “Look at kids like me with kind eyes”. What does it mean to look at someone with kind eyes?





CLOSING REFLECTION

When can you use this activity?

At the end of your program cycle, during the last session.

Instructions:

As participants reflect on their journey, consider the following questions:

- What surprised you most about the experiences of at-risk youth in Israel?
- What does it mean to support someone with dignity rather than assuming what they need?
- How might you continue supporting at-risk youth in Israel in the future?
- What questions do you still have about at-risk youth in Israel and how you can help support them?





HANDOUTS AND TEMPLATES

APPENDIX I - CHECKLIST TO PREPARE FOR GRANTMAKING

Option 1: Requests for Proposals

Suitable for programs with at least six weeks between a mission statement creation session and the proposal review session.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a way for a philanthropic board or foundation to ask various nonprofit organizations to send in their request for funding. For a large-scale program, each nonprofit organization sends a funding proposal or completes an application stating what they will do with the funds and why it is important.

- Ask participants for their suggestions for nonprofits that might fit with their chosen Justice Issues and guiding group value(s).
- You can send this [Organization Packet one-pager template](#) to nonprofits for them to fill out or you can send out a series of specific questions.
- Prepare a Request for Proposal email/letter to send out to potential nonprofits and attach or hyperlink the one-pager. You can view a sample [Request for Proposal template](#) from the Honeycomb website.
- Send the email/letter to either a finite list of nonprofits (so that it is “invite only”) or post the RFP openly on your host organization’s website, social media, local philanthropy message boards, etc.

NOTE: *Be sure to state a clear deadline and leave enough time for the nonprofits to return the one-pager.*

- After the deadline, check and collate all one-pagers and compile so that they can be distributed to the participants for review.

NOTE: *You might want to consider organizations that have a “friends of...” entity in the USA for ease of grantmaking.*



Option 2: Organization Packet

Suitable for programs with less than six weeks between a mission statement creation session and the proposal review session.

If preferred, rather than sending a Request for Proposal (RFP), the facilitator can compile the potential nonprofits themselves. This will secure a set list of nonprofits to examine (rather than Option 1 above, where the number of received proposals will be known beforehand). This also gives the facilitator more control over which nonprofits will be considered. However, it removes a certain element of “real-world” nonprofit interaction.

- Research potential organizations that do work with at-risk youth in Israel for the participants to consider. Please note any parameters on giving that need to be adhered to by your host organization (local, global, population served, 501(c)(3) status, etc.) and perform due diligence. Make sure the mission of the potential organization aligns with your organization’s mission and research any potential conflicts of interest including on their website, articles, and social media.
- Select six to eight potential recipient organizations for the participants to consider, keeping in mind any parameters set by your host organization (local, global, population served, etc.).
- Fill out the [Organization Packet one-pager template](#) for each selected organization.
- Put all the completed templates together to create the Organization Packet.
- Email participants the Organization Packet to review prior to the meeting or place in a Google Drive and ensure permissions are set to “anyone with link can view”.

NOTE: *You might want to consider organizations that have a “friends of...” entity in the USA for ease of grantmaking.*



APPENDIX II - OPENING ACTIVITY PHOTOS











All photos can also be found in the Honeycomb [Imagining Giving Card Game](#)

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