

INTERVENTION MODELS FOR THE PERIPHERY

A meeting with the heads of national, collaborative, and local intervention programs to strengthen excellence in mathematics and science studies in the periphery

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The doubling of the number of high school graduates with five-units of mathematics and the growth in the number of science major graduates did not bypass the communities in the periphery. Approximately 1,000 students in the “virtual high school”, who came from small and distant schools where there was no mathematics or physics teacher, proved that with outstanding teachers and educators, they can meet the challenge of five-units. The school networks which operate mainly in the periphery, alongside local authorities, defined goals, invested resources, and created momentum. New, trained teachers chose to work in the periphery communities, side-by-side with veteran teachers who established learning communities, broadened their certification, and strengthened abilities at the local level.

Despite initial reservations, in practice the scope of growth in the periphery is almost identical to that of the center. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the turnaround in the periphery began about a year later than in the center and from a much lower starting point. It should be noted that at present there are signs of stagnation in several places in the periphery. It appears that more complex infrastructure challenges are coming to the fore. The initial leap, built on enthusiasm and dedication, now requires profound effort and stable building blocks. High-level planning, management and implementation are needed, as are belief in the students and teachers’ abilities. There is a need for support and a push forward from parents and stakeholders.

In order to assist with these needs, during the past two years, various intervention models have begun to appear in the periphery: 1. A new national program which has decided to focus its comprehensive efforts in 14 communities; 2. An inter-sector program which recruits regional key players to make a collective impact in three communities; 3. Municipal and school programs in 27 communities that concentrate their efforts on strengthening teaching. In addition, development of professional tools has begun in the areas of growth mindset and of instructional and management coaching, as well as, promoting tools and methods for data-driven management.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What can be learned from implementation of the various intervention models and what conditions are needed for their success? What kinds of coordination should take place between them? Does local leadership heartily adopt them and what can be done to ensure that the system continues for the long-term even when the programs conclude?
2. Which building blocks are lacking in order to assist the effort in the periphery to cope with unique challenges, or with challenges that come up in significantly greater proportions than in the center of the country? What needs to be done in the area of teaching capabilities, school administration, and harnessing parents?

3. Can a trend of surfeit and stagnation truly be discerned in the periphery communities? If so, why is it happening and how can it be detected in advance? What can and should be done to overcome it and how can intervention programs help?

As **background** to the discussion, we recommend reading the following:

- A. [Advisory Council Insights and Recommendations 2016, p. 5](#)
- B. [What is Needed to Promote Excellence in the Social Periphery](#) – Anat Lahat and Rona Refaeli-Hirsch
- C. [How to Expand the Circle of Excellence while Ensuring Access to Opportunity - Insights from a US Study Tour, 2018](#)

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