THE TRUMP FOUNDATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

KEY INSIGHTS

2-3 NOVEMBER 2016

The Trump Foundation was established in 2011 to help Israel to be better prepared for the second quarter of the 21st century. The Foundation decided to concentrate on halting the decline and catalyzing significant growth in the advanced ("five units") mathematics and science studies in high school. This focus reflects an understanding that mathematics and the sciences are important vehicles for solving meaningful problems and achieving breakthroughs in the fields of economics, medicine, agriculture, security, and the environment. No less important, in Israel in particular, mathematics and the sciences can play a catalytic role in improving education performance, and in opening doors, narrowing social inequalities and expanding opportunities.

After five years of activity, it is indulging to observe that the decline has been halted and that the negative trajectory has been reversed. Expanding the circle of excellence has become a high priority as a national plan has been formulated and public resources are being allocated generously. Local authorities, hi-tech companies, academic institutions, education networks and schools, have all joined in the effort, coordinating, collaborating and sharing knowledge and knowhow with each other. Above all, teachers are pulling together and showing a high level of commitment to expanding the circle of excellence—adopting a nurturing approach, and jointly building professional capability.

However, this rapid transformation has also made the task of teaching a particularly complex one. Classes are being filled with students with diverse levels of knowledge and ability. Schools are expected to further enlarge the five units mathematics and science classes, while facing internal and external pressures. At the current crossroads, it is not unrealistic to assume that many of the students who previously excelled in the medium track, are already studying successfully in the five unit track. Therefore, further expansion will require, greater and more profound efforts, particularly in the country's social and geographical peripheries and in different communities within Israeli society.

Over the past year, the Trump Foundation has made an effort to ensure the documentation and evaluation of its activities in preparation for this next stage. After completing this process, it prepared a comprehensive progress report presenting the activities milestones towards achieving the goals of the foundation's strategic roadmap. This process served as the basis for discussions of the foundation's International Advisory Council. The Council held sessions and discussions in Jerusalem on 2-3 November 2016 to review the foundation's work so far, to listen to many of those involved in the work and to offer advice as to next steps.

The members of the Council are: Lee Shulman (chair), Yoni Amir, Danny Bar-Giora, Peggy Brookins, Shlomo Dovrat, Leah Dolev, Marcia Linn, Eyal Sinai, Kobi Shvarzbord, Muhana Fares, and Dalit Stauber. Two members of the Foundation's Board of Directors, Eddy Shalev (chair) and Tobias Bernstein, also participated in the discussions.

Numerous education experts were invited to the discussions, including key figures from the Ministry of Education, universities, colleges, industry, the military, development institutions, educational organizations, schools, principals, and teachers. All the participants received the background material and questions in advance and were asked to offer their feedback and to raise critique, insights and recommendations. The document below was written by the foundation staff in order to summarize the main insights heard over the course of the days of discussion.

This is a great opportunity to thank all those who took time to read, respond, and join in the conversations, and to thank the members of the Advisory Council for their special efforts.

FROM PROVING FEASIBILITY TO BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CAPABILITIES

The Trump Foundation "sounded the alarm," deployed a network of programs, and worked in collaboration with various partners to halt the decline in excellence in mathematics and science in Israel's high schools. This has been an unusual experiment and a successful experience, arousing cheers of hope and enthusiasm as well as voices of envy, skepticism and resistance. At the current juncture, the education system and the public are eager to see whether the emerging positive trend will plant firm roots, expand, deepen, and endure.

Therefore, the Trump Foundation must now play an additional important role, one that differs from its role of a catalyst and a convener up to this point: helping the education system to build a professional infrastructure which will carry on the effort over the longer term. The goal now is to place the growing initiative on **firm foundations**, base it on **data and knowledge**, deploy **support networks**, and ensure its **independence and sustainability** over the coming years.

During the discussions, the members of the Advisory Council identified a number of challenges on the ground level that demand attention and a profound and thorough response. It is proposed that the foundation examine now whether and how it will be able to take on these challenges, together with its partners:

1. **Clinical teaching**. Five unit classes are filling up and becoming more heterogeneous. Simultaneously teachers are facing the expectation of supporting each individual student without compromising on quality and pace. Teachers need tools, conditions, and methods that will enable them to undertake such differential teaching. Conversely, the education system has not yet defined an ongoing policy or allocated stable resources to this end. Many teachers remain unconvinced of the necessity or feasibility of such measures.
2. **Management for excellence**. The goals of the initiative found many schools unprepared. After years of making do with eligibility for matriculation, the encounter with high standards of excellence, the need for substantial effort, perseverance and a culture of measurement, "disrupted" the school routine. In contrast, the mathematics and science teachers expressed a deep need for their schools to operate relentlessly and encourage excellence, provide the teaching and learning with a support network, adopt a coherent clinical instructional system and managed with routines, procedures and a culture of excellence.
3. **Equal access**. The first stage "plucked ripe fruit" and offered access to opportunity for every willing and able student anywhere in Israel, across ethnic, religious and geographic communities. The second stage, however, will be more complex as the target audience is no longer on the margins of excellence, but rather a broader circle which needs to be nurtured at an earlier stage and in a more comprehensive manner. The challenge will be particularly complex in the country's periphery due to the profound gaps it suffers.
4. **Public impetus**. The Israeli public has been convinced of the importance and benefit of studying mathematics and science at five units level. However, a successful social movement is one that addresses not only the head, but also reaches the heart, and sweeps people along into action. Beneath the radar, opposition has been coalescing, reflecting reservation and feelings of reluctance, therefore a sensitive response is now necessary.
5. **Organizational capacity**. A professional support network of educational organizations operates around the schools, including many that run programs funded by the foundation. In the medium and long term, it will be desirable to support the development of organizational infrastructure in some of these organizations, assisting their preparation for scaling up and sustaining their activities. They will need to better manage their data collection and analysis, build stronger operational capacities and develop closer connections to government policy vehicles.

ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED TEACHING

During the first five years, the Trump Foundation cooperated with academic institutions and educational organizations to develop tools and techniques for clinical teaching of mathematics and the sciences. These include training lead teachers, forging teachers' communities, deploying diagnostic tasks, and using video and simulation. When these cutting edge methodologies met the practical reality in schools, it sparked a transformation in the instructional approach of many teachers. A traditional selective approach turned into to a nurturing one, and a somewhat judgmental standpoint developed into to a more open, reinforcing and an atmosphere of trust.

This is an important first step in transforming science teaching from a blue collar profession, structured and dictated from the outside, to a clinical and knowledge-based field of expertise, developed jointly and from within practice. The next step however will require a closer connection between different components and a focus on an individualized learning plan meeting the needs and abilities of every student. Such an adapted pedagogic response forms the core of clinical expertise and is particularly important now, when five unit classes have become larger and more diverse.

However, it is neither possible nor desirable that a philanthropic foundation continues to lead the implementation of this type of professional framework from within its own team. This stage will require the profound engagement of the best leading teachers; the recruitment and cooperative efforts of academia; and a supportive and facilitative policy on the part of government. Such a connection will not emerge automatically, but will require an infrastructure and professional capability facilitating such cooperation and allowing it to flourish. In this stage, it is appropriate and desirable that the vision of an "Institute for Advanced Teaching" for lead teachers be seriously explored.

The three central roles of an Institute for Advanced Teaching, as raised by the participants in the discussions, are as follows:

A. A professional home. Enabling lead teachers to define professional standards and create examples, certification procedures, and training for lead teachers based on these standards.
B. A Center of expertise. Integrating and focusing current and future development efforts in clinical teaching, accompanied by documentation and practical research into their application in the field.
C. Policy arm. Assisting the government in the systemic implementation of frameworks for professional development of teachers, nurturing clinical teaching, and inculcating its applications in schools.

Mutual affinities and inherent tensions can be identified between these three components, as the discussion made very clear. The demand to decide between these elements would seem to be one of the reasons why the idea of establishing the institute has not yet materialized. Therefore, the foundation must now take the bull by the horns and look for the most suitable and mature moment to initiate this process, in order to ensure quality and sustainability. The foundation should play a proactive role in concluding the discussions on this issue and in getting things moving.

In light of the above, it is recommended that the foundation define the establishment of an Institute for Advanced Teaching in mathematics and science as one of the main items on its agenda for the coming years. It should now develop a founding team to develop the necessary partnerships and consolidate the initiative, including locating points of balance and breakthrough. It should engage in detailed and serious consideration of the idea of establishing such an institute within the Weizmann Institute of Science, in partnership with the different universities and with mutual undertaking on the part of the foundation and the Ministry of Education.

NURTURING A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Research and experience show that a coherent instructional system is a key component in the sustainable success of schools. School principals explained that they present the students with ambitious objectives and future scenarios; diagnose abilities and difficulties; measure progress; and build trust and dialogue with every student. They added that they create a "buzz" in their school around the theme of excellence and apply management routines to promote it. They noted that the entire staff of the school works together in a professional community to improve the response to every student.

It is important to note that until now, the Trump Foundation has rarely engaged with schools in a systematic manner, despite the important role attributed to schools in its strategic roadmap. In practice, the foundation's programs mainly work directly with mathematics and science teachers, in meetings that usually take place outside the school and after school hours. In these programs, the teachers consult with one another and with experts, and receive supervision and mentoring. They learn together and acquire tools and skills that they test in their classes, returning to the peer community for feedback.

These programs have led to a rapid improvement in the practice of teaching and in the depth of professional responsibility shown by the teachers. However, these targeted actions also have a price, particularly in the long term. The mathematics and science teachers who participated in the discussions mentioned their need for support and backing from the school principal, the department head and their teacher colleagues —when none of these are partners in the initiative, this depends mainly on goodwill. Moreover, when the goal of excellence and clinical teaching are implemented solely in mathematics and science classes, this often leads to confusion and opposition.

The principals who participated in the discussions reported that some of their colleagues expressed ambivalence about encouraging excellence and about the values of achievement entailed by measurement, retention, and perseverance. They themselves said that they were uncomfortable about the possibility that the efforts made in mathematics and science will become a "desert island" within their school, and that students and their parents will get the message that those who do not study for five units mathematics and science are doomed not to succeed in life. One principal commented: "What am I supposed to say to a student who's excellent at music, to the civics teacher, and to the social education coordinator – that they are less important?"

All the principals noted that the policies and resources of the national program were accompanied by high expectations on the part of the government and the public. They emphasized that their teachers who took part in the foundation's programs were well prepared for the task ahead and have sharpened their professional capabilities. Now, however, their classes are crowded and the challenge is considerable. They added that their own training as principals did not prepare them to lead for excellence or to nurture clinical teaching, and that they need a deeper exposure to best practices of management, knowledge sharing and mentoring.

Accordingly, the foundation should prepare itself to support high schools interested in fostering a culture of excellence. This process should integrate components of clinical teaching, with an emphasis on individualized learning plans, as well as cooperation and joint learning between schools. The foundation must be sensitive to the fact that the perception of excellence varies in different cultures and communities, and it must engage the community in the initiative in a profound way. This effort will require the foundation to be better acquainted with schools and principals and it is recommended that further attempts are made to harness Avney Rosha to the task. Additionally, the foundation should integrate its schools outreach with the partnerships it has already forged with local authorities and school networks.

PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS IN THE SOCIAL PERIPHERY

The deep social gaps in Israel are reflected in the education system. A generation ago these gaps were manifested in eligibility for matriculation, however today the gap has leapfrogged. In Israel of 2016 students who graduate with a high quality matriculation diploma, including five units in mathematics, English, and science, enjoy a relative advantage. This advantage is evident in acceptance to key positions in technological units of the military, in competitive university faculties, and in prestigious jobs.

Unfortunately, the best predictors for students obtaining such a strong matriculation certificate are still their family's place of residence and their parents' background and education level. Efforts by the government and philanthropic bodies over the years, with substantial resources, have not changed this unfortunate correlation, as they focused mainly on increasing the proportion of students eligible for matriculation. In some cases, these efforts have even come at the expense of the aspiration to excel, in order to avoid jeopardizing the prospects of students gaining a matriculation diploma.

Consequently, until several years ago, many schools in the periphery did not offer the opportunity to study mathematics, physics, and chemistry at five units levels. This was also due to difficulties in recruiting outstanding teachers, and in some cases a lack of faith in the ability of students to meet such a tough challenge. Nowadays however, the joint effort has clearly yielded results: throughout Israel. Today, if a student is willing to take on the challenge, and if the school is interested, they can study for the five units track with a teacher in class or through the virtual high school.

The current question however is what steps should be taken in order to further expand the circle of excellence. This challenge will be much more difficult in the periphery, since in some areas most students who were performing excellently at the medium level have already moved over to the five units level. In several communities, the local leadership has yet to be convinced of the need to prioritize this issue, sometimes due to concern that students who graduate at advanced level will use the opportunity in order to leave the area or community.

Participants in the discussions explained that the gaps emerge at a young age. Accordingly, various bodies active in the periphery in recent decades have reached the conclusion that earlier intervention is required. They have recognized the need to create exposure to science in order to stimulate motivation, reinforce language skills, operate enrichment frameworks, and in some cases even to support such aspects as nutrition and welfare. As a result, their efforts tended to be dispersed and prolonged, and their impact failed to keep pace with the widening gaps.

Other participants emphasized the importance of focusing on schools, setting high standards of excellence, embracing a growth mindset, and fostering a culture of management for excellence. They noted the important function of teachers as outstanding professionals and as people who see their role as a social mission. They stressed the need for local action with real potential, as well as the importance of developing municipal or regional cooperation between all stakeholders, while focusing on a shared vision, objectives, and measures.

Accordingly, the foundation should examine whether and how it could help model systemic improvement in potential areas in the periphery. It is recommended that the foundation maintain its focus on the goal of advanced level mathematics and science, while emphasizing the need to ensure quality teaching and a school culture of management for excellence. At the same time, it is recommended to consider using a regional "collective impact" method around a common vision and objectives. The foundation should also initiate public and media actions to reinforce awareness of excellence and to encourage the adoption of a growth mindset in the regions where it will be active.

GENERATING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT AROUND EXCELLENCE

Traditional philanthropy generally acts to create a supply of high-quality capabilities, based on the assumption that demand will emerge automatically. The Trump Foundation preferred a proactive approach, accompanying its activities with openness and dialogue not only with the professional community, but also with the general public. In the first stage, an effort was made to draw public attention to the decline in excellence and to spark a sense of emergency and urgency. This public sentiment contributed to the engagement of decision makers in leading efforts to solve the problem.

In the second stage, the foundation drew on this sentiment in order to encourage capable individuals to join the national effort and to choose teaching as a profession. The goal was to imbue the process with the character of "modern pioneering" – a combination of self-fulfillment and social mission. As the late Shimon Peres declared in advertisements: "Give to the state, give to yourself, give five." The foundation sought to add to this a dimension of "professionalism," exposing interested sections of the public to stories about teaching practice and high quality clinical teaching.

On the one hand, the initiative was a success. Many good candidates registered for the training courses and career-change programs. The acute shortage of mathematics and science teachers improved and the ranks of the profession swelled. On the other hand, the initiative accentuated still further the gap between the low public image of the teaching profession and the growing importance attached to teachers by the public. This perception is deeply-rooted and it will be very complex for a philanthropic foundation to attempt to change it. Episodes, such as teachers' protests at the non-payment of their salaries and recognition of seniority, complicate such efforts even further.

In the third stage, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Council, the foundation turned directly to parents and students. The goal was to expand the circle of students registering for the five unit tracks. The appeal was formulated logically, including attempts to explain and to convince parents and students that efforts and investment in high school will open doors for the students later in life. Some three million viewers were exposed to the television and internet campaign, and it is apparent that an understanding of this reality has trickled down. Five unit classes are filling up and in the 2016-2017 school year over 15,000 twelfth grade students are studying in such classes.

However, this direct appeal also provoked a widespread wave of opposition. Before the campaign, students studying five units constituted a small minority in their grades; they were seen as geeks or nerds, as opposed to their classmates. The increase in the number of students at the five units level, and the campaign depicting them as "winners," cast a heavy shadow over their classmates. The public received the message that "students who don't take five units won't be successful." A debate erupted in the media and was reflected in homes and families. As a result, the prestige of the five unit option is now accompanied by a somewhat bitter taste.

Accordingly, the foundation should act to connect the public's heart and emotions to the investment in excellence in mathematics and science. This could be achieved by exposing groundbreaking activities in the periphery, the inspiring stories of outstanding teachers, and examples of the value of excellence as a way of life. These efforts should also emphasize the process of character building that forms part of the effort, together with perseverance and coping with difficulties. The appropriate tools for this tell a human story and create a profound encounter with characters, particularly through the medium of documentaries and drama. At the same time, the foundation should combine this emotional appeal with the intellectual effort and a call to action to help foster a social movement that will maintain public support, even after the foundation completes its philanthropic activities.

INVESTING IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF KEY PARTNERS

The foundation's main method is to award grants to programs run by well-established educational organizations. In many cases the government has acted as a "co- investor," without any binding agreement with the foundation. The foundation selected organizations with proven capabilities that share its belief in the importance of clinical teaching as a means for expanding the circle of students studying for five units in mathematics and science. The purpose of this approach was to catalyze a rapid and effective process of change based on existing knowledge, experience, and reputation, and to create focus and impetus reflecting the foundation's objectives.

The selection of this method certainly yielded very good results in a short time, but there is a flip side to the coin. The organizations the foundation cooperates with have a broader agenda than the focus on five-unit study. Their dialogue with the foundation is intended for the purpose of implementing a pinpointed "task" and is confined mainly to the program directors. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that the foundation's impact on these organizations has not gone beyond the achievements of this specific program and its ancillary outcomes. Moreover, in many cases government funding is dependent on goodwill and on the availability of resources.

The question of the impact on the organizations is important in the medium and long-term context. In the medium term, as the scope of activities continues to expand, a question arises regarding the organization's "carrying capacity." In other words – will an organization that has proven the feasibility of action on a small scale be ready in managerial, organizational, operational, and budgetary terms to act at scale? In this stage, the organization will need to be ready to form deeper, more structured, and more formal connections with the channels of government policy and public funding.

The long term will bring a significant test. The organization management will need to decide whether to continue the effort to strengthen excellence, and if so – on what scale and at what level of organizational priority. It is important to take into account that once the organizations no longer receive grants from the foundation, and against the background of changing governmental and public priorities, they will face internal and external pressure to deviate from the original focus. At this moment of truth, the depth of the commitment on the part of the organization and the government will play a crucial role, as will the aspect of organizational capability.

This stage will also require changes in the perceptions of the foundation staff. They will need to "loosen the reins" and enable the organizations to assume ownership and leadership over the activities, while strengthening their relations with the government. From the outset, the Trump Foundation has aimed for its partners to lead the agenda and shape the joint course. However, alongside its genuine respect for its partners, the foundation has assumed a leading role – determined and sometimes dominant – in order to ensure adherence to the tasks and the chosen focus. This role will have to change now, to an extent, in order to ensure the independence and sustainability of the initiative.

Accordingly, the foundation should identify a number of organizations among its partners that it believes are capable of playing a significant and leading role in the continuity of the initiative to nurture clinical teaching in order to expand the circle of excellence in mathematics and science. It is recommended that the foundation engage in discussions with these organizations in order to examine whether and how it can help them reach the optimum position ahead of this stage. At the same time, the foundation should work with these organizations and with the government to improve and elaborate mutual cooperation and the use of data in order to encourage a culture of knowledge-based decision making, a common language, and mutual and ongoing learning. The foundation should assist in the development of policy and the establishment of funding channels for teacher training, the mentoring of new teachers, and the operation of teachers' communities. It should do so while creating formal (and in some cases legal) commitments, and while gradually exiting its role as the funder and convener of these activity clusters.