The National Impact of the Trump Foundation

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Natioanal Crisis

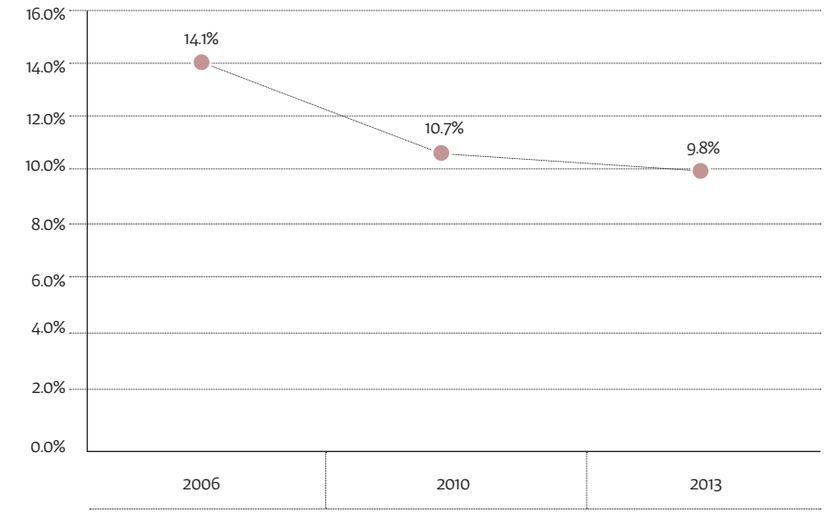
Since the 1990s, mathematics and science studies have occupied decision makers in the Ministry of Education and academia. They were concerned about the decline in the quality of instruction in these fields and there was increasing evidence of a deterioration in the knowledge level of students. Two committees were formed to deal with the subject: the Harari Committee, established in 1990, which examined the state of the sciences and technology in Israel's education system, and the Ben Zvi Committee, established in 2000, which examined the subject of mathematics study and proposed a program for strengthening and developing the field in elementary and middle schools.

The committees, having recognized several problems relating to the study of mathematics at that time, recommended methods for addressing them. The Ministry of Education implemented a substantial number of the recommendations. In the beginning of the 2000s, weekly study hours were increased and new study programs were introduced into elementary and middle schools. However, student achievement was low on national and international tests and the achievement gap between different sectors of the population, and the gap between the center and the periphery continued to concern policy makers.

The crisis intensified between 2006-2012 when it became clear that there was a steady decline in the number of students studying mathematics at the five unit level and that the percentage of Israeli students studying mathematics at an advanced level was low in comparison with other western countries. Whereas in 2006, 14.1% of 12th grade students (nearly 13,000 students) took advanced mathematics matriculation exams (five study units), in 2010, the percentage was 10.7% (slightly more than 10,500 students), and in 2013, the number was less than 10% (9,100 students). This decline existed despite the increase in the total number of students during those years.

This documentation paper, part of the 2016 mid-course review, is included here to provide a more complete look at TTF processes and past insights

Percentage of Students Taking the 5 unit matriculation Exam in Mathematics [Figure 1]



Source: MoE, 2014

Additional statistics indicated that the percentage excelling in mathematics in Israel was lower as compared to other countries in the world, and stood at 9.4% in contrast to the average 12.6% in OECD countries (in 2012).

The report by the state comptroller, issued in 2014, indicated that increasing the number of students taking the four-unit and five-unit matriculation exams in mathematics was a Ministry of Education objective as part of the "Strategic Program" implemented by the ministry from 2009-2012. The program received a budget of 820 million shekels, which was entirely spent. However, implementation of the program did not prevent students from opting to take three study units. The program succeeded in achieving other objectives, principally, Israel's standing on the international TIMSS tests, where there was considerable improvement.

Media Preoccupation with Accelerated Mathematics

Articles published in the national media (*Ha'aretz, The Marker, Calcalist, Ynet, etc.*) indicate the public interest in mathematics in general, and specifically in the area of accelerated mathematics learning. Public interest in the topic, once limited, has focused on two major angles.

The first is the level of difficulty of the five-unit mathematics matriculation exam. For example, in May 2010, the former minister of education, Gidon Sa'ar responded to claims that the mathematics matriculation exam held that month was more difficult than usual and saying that if that were the case "necessary steps would be taken to ensure that students weren't harmed" (Walla! Website).

Two years later, in May 2013, the five-unit mathematics matriculation exam again captured the headlines when students, after having finished the exam, complained about especially difficult questions. In an interview published on the Ynet website, chairperson of the National Union of Israeli Students, Yuval Cachlon, who had also taken the five-unit exam, said: "There were questions that were very hard to understand and it wasn't because we weren't prepared for the exam — simply, the level was too high. When I left the test, I discovered that I wasn't alone and that everyone thought as I did…students who were tested on other question papers of four and five units said that it was hard for them." Mathematics teachers explained that the material that appeared on the exam had been taught, but the questions on the exam had a component of high level thinking. Ron Yechieli, mathematics coordinator in the Ankori school network was quoted as saying: "You can't say that the exam wasn't fair or that the topics on it weren't studied in class. However, on the three question papers, especially on the four and five study units, some of the questions required a very high level of comprehension, thought, and ability and for those who weren't "A" students, there was no real chance to solve them. The level on this exam was much higher than on previous exams."

The Ministry of Education, which saw the appointment of Shai Piron as its minister in May 2013, promised to examine the issue and in June of that year, the ministry issued an announcement supporting the students and it admitted that the test was more difficult than usual. The ministry went on to say that the average score of the examinees was lower than usual and that the exam had too many questions for the amount of time given to the students to solve them. The ministry decided to add a factor and retroactively reduced the number of questions on the exam while giving preference to correct answers. At that time, Director-General Dalit Stauber announced that the ministry would also re-evaluate the mathematics curriculum for five units and would adapt it to the number of classroom hours given to the subject (*Ha'aretz* website, 2013).

The second angle of media focus dealt with criticism of the level of mathematics study and the decrease in the number of students and teachers. This concerned decision makers in industry, academia, and the military who were troubled about national vulnerability and the quality of the future generation in engineering, research, and computer technology. There was concern regarding the potential damage to the Israeli economy and the State's advanced industries and increased vulnerability to Israel's defensive strength. For example, in October 2011, senior commentator for *The Marker*, Meirav Arlozoroff, published an item with the headline, "University lecturers: Math teachers' professional knowledge is appalling." According to the item, 15 mathematics, physics, and computer professors, among them seven mathematics department heads from seven universities, sent a letter to Minister of Education Gidon Sa'ar, titled "The crisis of mathematics teachers in high school." The letter maintained that "faculty members in all the universities complain that new students in mathematics, science, and engineering are less prepared than in the past, a phenomenon that goes together with the worrisome trend of an increasingly severe shortage of suitable mathematics teachers."

Expanding the Circle of Excellence

In light of these issues, The Trump Foundation was established in 2011 with the objective of turning the attention of the public and decision makers towards the data reflecting the decline in excellence in mathematics and science as well as the causes for this decline. The Foundation maintained that it was not possible for the existing attitudes and proposed programs to provide a response to this rapid decline and that it was necessary to adopt new patterns of action.

Underlying the Foundation's activity is the assumption that strategic philanthropy can assist the education system to expand the circle of excellence in mathematics and science learning. The Foundation assists in the implementation of a program designated for teacher training and professional development and for building instructional tools and methods. Furthermore, the Foundation joins districts, municipalities, and school networks to implement the developed components and to demonstrate how sustainable improvement in student performance can be achieved when these components are implemented and integrated. The Foundation also founds and convenes networks for education professionals for joint study and collaborative activity. It engages with the media to inform the public and motivate its active involvement on this issue.

When it began its work, the Foundation board determined that its success would be measured on three dimensions:

1. Did it motivate change in the measures of excellence? If so, was there an increase in the number of graduate with five units in mathematics?

2. Did the change permeate the education system and to what extent?

3. Were capabilities and awareness constructed to allow for change to occur upon conclusion of funding by the Foundation, after it ceases operation?

After five years of operation, it is now worth examining whether, from a public viewpoint, the Foundation has met these objectives or acts in a way which will enable them to be met in the coming years.

The basic question that needs initial examination is whether the Foundation successfully convinced the system's leadership and created a sense of urgency when it first sounded the alarm about the rapid decrease in excellence in mathematics and science studies. The opposition to this sentiment needs to be examined as well, as to how and whether this sense of crisis was translated into preparation for action. It is important to learn who was enlisted and why, and whether there were also negative effects. For example, was there a sense of despair, a sense of concession from the outset? Was there evidence of refusing to see improvement once it had begun?

Shai Piron, Mnister of Education 2013-2014, is an important figure when considering these questions. In an interview in March 2016, he maintained that, at the time, he wasn't convinced that there was an urgent need to deal with the crisis in mathematics which required action on his part as the head of the system. Nevertheless, in May 2014, the Ministry of Education waved the flag of excellence and initiated the "Math First" program headed by Mohana Fares, a member of the Ministry team who was appointed as the integrator to lead the program. "Math First" set a first stage goal of doubling the number of students studying five units of mathematics and its second stage goal was to double the number in science and technology subjects.

The program and its implementation were accompanied by a joint steering committee led by Mohana Fares with the participation of Ministry of Education representatives and representatives of "5x2" (see box below).

Piron explained his position: "I agreed with the program not because I had chosen accelerated mathematics as an area that needed reinforcement. I was choosing the principle of excellence according to which each child should fulfill his abilities. A lack of self-fulfillment and laziness has dominated the system. The education system and the Israeli public lack a yearning for excellence; they do not encourage the child enough to believe in his abilities, to "sweat." I have seen too many children who do not take five units due to considerations of convenience. Why does this happen? Essentially, when there are both psychometric exams and matriculation exams, it's not worth it for the student to be tested on five study units and get a score of 80, when he would rather take four study units of mathematics and get 90. Therefore, in 10th grade, the students choose a study track according to the bonuses. My goal was to have an effect on the value of excellence, so that a child doesn't give up on five-unit mathematics due to external considerations. Therefore, my criticism of the Ministry of Education's mathematics campaign today is that it is a campaign for mathematics and not for excellence (referring to the "Give Five" campaign, part of the national program for the advancement of mathematics). Furthermore, I haven't seen statistics showing that the number of students tested in mathematics in Israel is less than the accepted percentage in other populations. It's very similar to the percentages in other places, and also, there are no statistics as to the precise need for five study units in mathematics."

In 2013, the 5x2 coalition began operation, with the aim of doubling the number of students who complete high school study tracks in mathematics, science and engineering at the five-units level. The initiating and financing bodies that support its activities are the Trump Foundation, the Rashi Foundation, Intel, SanDisk, Microsoft and World Ort Kadima Mada.

The 5x2 initiative was joined by many bodies from the business, public and social sectors and the partner network includes around 100 representatives of organizations including the Defense Ministry, the IDF, local authorities, along with academic institutions, school networks, science museums, educational organizations and philanthropic foundations. The Ministry of Education joined as a partner in leading the process. The backbone organization of the initiative is Sheatufim, Strategies for Social Impact, which specializes in the management of social, philanthropic and dialogue between sectors. This is all managed by the 5x2 steering committee, which is responsible for policy making and strategy formulation.

Piron explains why, nevertheless, he supports the initiative: "The advantage of the program for reinforcing accelerated mathematics, led by the Trump Foundation, was that it didn't come from me, that it wasn't 'mine,' but rather, that it came from civic society. They established a coalition and that was a very effective step, due to the sense was that it wasn't the initiative of one person, but of a significant group in society. Because the professional staff in the Ministry of Education was involved, the director-general came to me with a wonderful program and I saw that they had brought in Mohana Fares, and so I supported it."

According to Piron, there were also opponents to the initiative: "I explained to them that I was simultaneously raising other flags, that it wasn't only mathematics. Those flags included the regeneration of vocational schools, providing a bonus for five units in literature and other areas.

In other words, I saw this as part of a comprehensive program and therefore, I agreed to promote accelerated mathematics as well." Piron maintains that if he had not supported the program, it would not have received the backing of the Ministry of Education and if he had opposed budgeting the program, it might not have been implemented.

Lea Dolev, director of math instruction ORT Israel Network, also maintains that she wasn't convinced of the existence of an urgent crisis. "I have been serving in this position for five years. Six months after starting the job, it became clear to me that a problem existed. Not enough schools were preparing for five units and there were more students who could study the subject if they were given the opportunity. I didn't see this as a crisis, but as an unwelcome trend that had to be dealt with. In previous years, most attention had been focused on eligibility for a matriculation certificate in general, including the area of mathematics. It was clear to me that a need existed to carry on and deal with the issue of accelerated mathematics learning at the four and five study unit level in order to encourage more students to learn at a higher level."

The Importance of Timing

In May 2015, Naftali Bennett began his position as the new Minister of Education. In contrast to Piron, Bennett was convinced of the importance of accelerated mathematics and science studies and it was a burning issue for him when he began his new role. The title of his speech at his Ministry of Education opening ceremony was, "The strength of a country is not only measured by the flight range of its planes, but by the values beating in the hearts of its children." In his speech, he declared "I believe that Israel needs to be and can be a world leader in some of its achievements, as well as in mathematics and the sciences. I believe that if we know how to lead in technology all over the world, this must also be seen in our education system. The decrease in numbers of students completing five units in mathematics from 13,000 to 8,000 is, in my opinion, a strategic threat to the State of Israel. Whoever doesn't create an educational Iron Dome for a child in 8th Grade, won't reap an Iron Dome developed by that same child when he finishes 12th grade" (from an announcement by the Ministry of Education's spokesperson).

When Bennett assumed his position, the Trump Foundation had already been at work for four years, the "5x2" coalition had been in operation for two years, and "Math First" had begun the previous year. Bennett's clear commitment may have stemmed from the Foundation's effort to "sound the alarm." It is also possible that the new minister's personal experience entered into this due to his high-tech background and his awareness of the difficulty recruiting personnel with a high level of mathematics. In his previous position as minister of the economy, he had met the leaders in the high-tech industry and they may have spoken with him about the issue.

An important perspective on this question is supplied by Ofer Han who served as Minister of Education Shai Piron's chief of staff and who today serves as an adviser to Minister of Education Naftali Bennett. According to Han, the issue of mathematics was not a burning one in the ministry during Piron's period in office beginning in 2013: "It's impossible to say that from 2013 to 2014, mathematics was center stage, although the issue received consideration and we understood that there was a need to act. I didn't know back then whether this understanding was because of the Foundation. On the other hand, Minister Naftali Bennett 'came with it': he came from the high-tech world; he knew how to read the need, and in my opinion, he came with his own understanding of the issue of strengthening the areas of mathematics and science. Bennett is 'crazy' in the good sense of the word, and I don't think the Foundation is what roused his understanding regarding the importance of the issue."

Han continues: "Nevertheless, the Trump Foundation has an important place in the implementation of the measure, which is a rare step for the Ministry of Education to take and worth teaching as a model for developing national programs. This is due to the fact that it operates by harnessing the force of a round table that includes the third sector which is led by the Trump Foundation but also includes other institutions such as academia, the IDF, hi-tech companies and industry, that are all dedicated to the issue. This has allowed the Ministry of Education to take the lead while they operate effectively behind the scenes. Presently, it is impossible to expect that education will filter down — that it will begin with the director-general and move down the Ministry of Education's chain of command from subject coordination supervisor to principal, to teacher and student. Therefore, the contribution of these different groups, such as high-tech companies, to the process, is huge. When we began operations, all we needed to do was to 'raise the curtain' because these different groups already had the motivation to encourage mathematics learning. If it becomes clear that the Trump Foundation roused them to action, then I will say that the Foundation's contribution was priceless."

Han believes that the change would not have occurred without the commitment of the Ministry of Education by Minister Bennett: "The revolution wouldn't have occurred if Bennett hadn't placed it center stage and said, 'I want this' again and again, along the entire chain of command in the Ministry of Education. However, it can be said that it wasn't particularly difficult to engage the ministry because it already had Mohana Fares who was prepared for this objective, and Ministry Director-General, Michal Cohen, who had been recruited to it. I believe that at an early stage, Bennett had already identified Eli Hurvitz and the Trump Foundation as a central partner."

Zeev Bielski, Mayor of Ra'anana, reinforces the latter point raised by Han. He believes that timing had great importance in the promotion of the issue to the public and decision makers. "The Foundation was 'lucky' inasmuch as it promoted the issue before Bennett assumed his position as minister of education. Then, a minister of education came along who raised the issue on his own, which has greater resonance. In one of my first meetings with the minister, he asked me about the Trump Foundation and whether I was familiar with it. It was as if he had discovered an extraordinary device for fulfilling his dreams. In my opinion, Minister of Education Bennett didn't go into this because of the Foundation, but rather because he was a high-tech person himself. Every minister of education looks for things that he can innovate. Usually, it's so he can leave his mark. Ministers of education deal with matriculation exams, with cutting short or extending summer vacations. The discourse among the public and decision makers in the Ministry of Education also generally deals with the need to reinforce weak students, to operate in development towns, and to narrow gaps between strong and weak students. Up until now, no one has come with a structured program like the Foundation has in its area. Once the minister had understood its benefit for fulfilling his objectives, he was happy to join forces with them."

The Ra'anana Municipality is an example of the way the Trump Foundation successfully enlisted local authorities. Bielski attests that the Foundation created marked change in his attitude as mayor towards the issue: "In the past, I had little interest in excellence in mathematics and science. The issue was never discussed or a high priority in our system. My attitude and the attitude of others in the municipality dramatically changed towards the issue after the foundation's entrance into the area, its appeal to the heads of the local authorities after becoming acquainted with it, and the understanding that it was something serious. I am sure this was true for other places as well. The significant monetary grant made me roll up my sleeves. I had gained a partner who not only spoke about and explained what had to be done, but who also funded different programs such as a program for hiring teachers."

Meirav Arlozoroff, senior commentator for *The Marker* who often writes about economic issues and the relationship between them and education and society, believes that the Trump Foundation is responsible for the increase in public conspicuousness of the mathematics five unit crisis and for the issue having gone from being a societal coalition to being a central program in the Ministry of Education: "The Trump Foundation is responsible for encouraging public awareness of the mathematics five-unit crisis. They brought the topic to the fore, enlisted the Ministry of Education and influenced its programs. They should be given credit for this."

Creating Demand

The Center for Educational Technology is one of the prominent bodies enlisted for action in five-unit mathematics and science learning around the same time as the establishment of the Trump Foundation and in cooperation with it. According to Gila Ben Har, CEO of the Center for Educational Technology, awareness of the need to develop and promote the field of mathematics was already present in the Center before the Foundation's operation: "The need to assist accelerated math students who weren't reinforced by private mathematics lessons, to prevent them from dropping out, was part of the Center's DNA before the Foundation's activities. For example, we held marathon study days for Israeli students in preparation for the mathematics matriculation exams and the response was great because the need was great. So, we were aware."

"Furthermore, we worked to raise the percentage of students studying science in the periphery, without any connection to the Foundation. In 2012, we decided to develop programs and study materials in mathematics and the sciences for middle schools. We discussed the issue with the Yad Hanadiv Foundation while also developing language learning programs for immigrants, programs for students of Ethiopian origin and more. We implemented the Nachshon Project that supports students with difficulties in mathematics and science with financial assistance from Yad Hanadiv and

later with funding by the Ministry of Education. The initiative for the promotion of mathematics learning arrived on fertile soil and it was very natural for us to work with the Trump Foundation later on. Nevertheless, in keeping with our agenda, we didn't think that it was our job to claim that there was a crisis in the area of mathematics as the Trump Foundation claimed."

Ben Har provides an additional perspective for evaluating the influence of the Trump Foundation on Ministry of Education policy and its subsequent recruitment to the issue of accelerated mathematics and science because of its urgency. "In my opinion, the Trump Foundation had an important role in 2012 in the project developing the virtual high school, which allowed students from locations where there were no accelerated mathematics and science classes to study remotely and synchronously, with the help of teachers and practice session tutors. The Foundation pushed for the development of a virtual high school focused on the areas of mathematics and physics in 11th and 12th grades, which it had targeted as primary and important areas. Otherwise, we certainly could have focused on different areas of study. The Trump Foundation had a very significant role in thinking, initiating, assisting, and funding. Today, approximately 900 12th grade students study in the high school. In July 2015, the first session of 12th grade virtual high school graduates from the periphery in mathematics and physics came to a close. These students took five-unit mathematics and physics matriculation exams. Their scores were above the Israeli average: 84 in mathematics and 85 in physics."

She notes that the Trump Foundation's influence was also evident in the "creation of demand" for other programs in the Ministry of Education: "The minister of education asked us to develop an asynchronous mathematics course for five-unit study, open to the public. I believe the minister wanted this because of the Trump Foundation's push to raise awareness. The course, including elaborate media, had already been developed by us with government funding." According to Ben Har, the Trump Foundation's push created shock waves affecting other places: "The moment the Foundation created a dialogue with the Ministry of Education, different forums were created to deal with the subject of mathematics — in other words, something happened. The Foundation managed to create a situation in which mathematics and science would stand out in the conversation of the minister and the policy makers."

Ben Har also believes that the Foundation had fortuitous timing by having a minister of education who came from high-tech and who held the area of excellence close to his heart, albeit ascribing less significance to the minister's identity: "The shifting ministers of education, Shai Piron and after him, Naftali Bennett, did not bring about negative change regarding accelerated mathematics and science. Clearly, the minister wouldn't say 'I don't want to strengthen the sciences.' In general, the Foundation was right to recruit academia, the state, and also different non-profit organizations. It focused on an issue, but was open to the different groups that it approached."

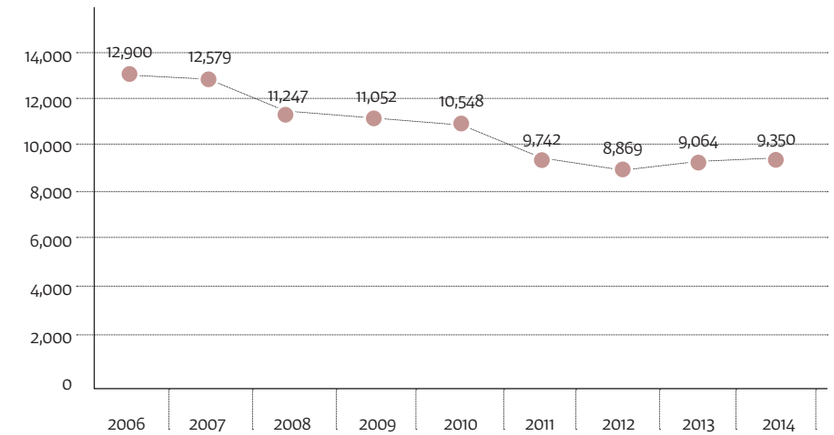
Avi Kaminsky, chairperson of the Israel Union of Education Directors in Local Municipalities and head of the Education Department in Ashkelon, surmises that the timing of the Foundation's activity was advantageous because it fell on attentive ears: "There was a minister who viewed mathematics and the sciences as an important part of education and who understood the significance of a decrease in the number of students learning five study units of mathematics. The timing was excellent and therefore, 'the two fit together' (the Ministry of Education and the Foundation) and it's important for it to be that way."

A Changing Trend

In 2014, the decrease in the number of students taking five units in mathematics and sciences was curbed and there were early signs of improvement. For example, after seven consecutive years during which the number of students taking the five-unit mathematics matriculation exam had been in steady decline, in 2014, the trend reversed and there were 9,350 students who took the exam [Figure 2]. In addition the number of students taking the five-unit matriculation exam in physics rose for the first time since 2010[Figure 3]. Particularly encouraging were the statistics regarding the number of students who had completed 11th grade physics studies, which showed a steady increase— 10,300 in 2013, 11,500 in 2014, and 11,700 in 2015 [Figure 4].

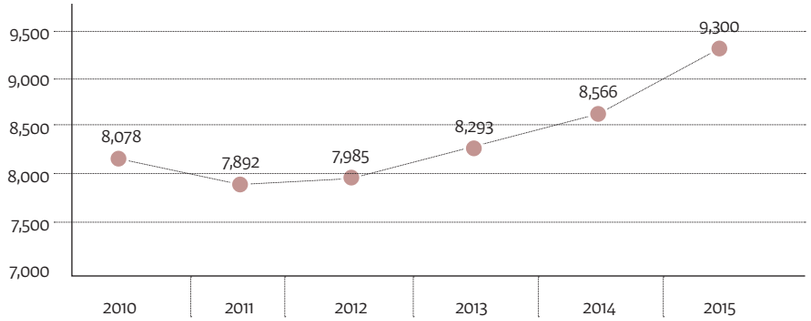
In 2016, the Trump Foundation was five years old. In the world of social change, five years is not considered a long time, certainly not when attempting to influence large and complex systems such as the education system. However, there is good reason to now examine the results in the field in order to reach understandings, to draw conclusions in a dynamic situation, and to improve.
This section examines the decision makers' positions in the field. Its objective is to understand whether, in their estimation, it is possible to draw connections between the Foundation's activities and changing trends as described above, and to clarify which of the Foundation's activities they believe contributed more and which, less. For this purpose, the interviewees were requested to consider both the numbers of students who took the five unit mathematics matriculation exam and softer qualitative measures, such as awareness, teacher and parent organization, enthusiastic sentiment, etc.

Students Taking the 5 Unit Matriculation Exam in Mathematics [Figure 2]



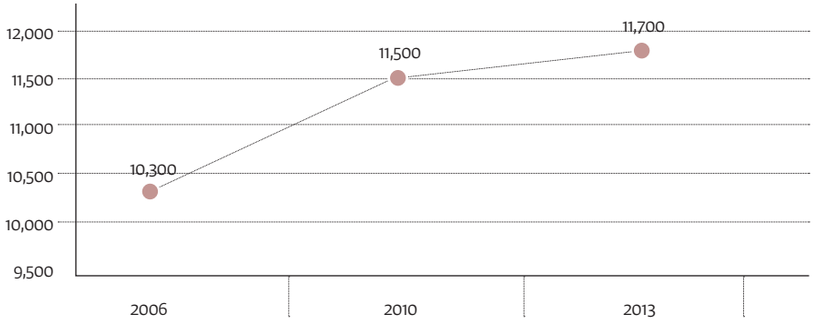
Source: The National Center of Physics Teachers, Weizmann Institute, Szold Institute for the Trump Foundation, 2015

Students Taking the 5 Unit Matriculation Exam in Physics [Figure 3]



Source: The National Center of Physics Teachers, Weizmann Institute, Szold Institute for the Trump Foundation, 2015

11th Grade Graduates Studying 5 Units in Physics [Figure 4]



Source: The National Center of Physics Teachers, Weizmann Institute, Szold Institute for the Trump Foundation, 2015

Meirav Arlozoroff, senior commentator for *The Marker*, believes that dry statistics are less important at this stage and she would not emphasize them in evaluating the Foundation's endeavors: "What is important is that they put the issue at the center of public discourse."

On the other hand, Foundation Chairperson, Eddy Shalev, believes that the current day statistics suffice for making the claim that the Trump Foundation's influence is already evident: "The trend has reversed: the number of students studying is on the rise; the public is talking about it; and of course, professionals in the field of education are talking about it. There is particular awareness in the municipalities that operate higher learning institutions and we have heard from them that they are very interested in promoting the issue. This is especially important because the councils and local authorities have a lot of power and influence. They are the high schools' 'landlords.' They have say in the selection of principals and teacher compensation and they have room to maneuver."

Zeev Bielski agrees with Shalev's concluding words: "Without a doubt, an increase has begun in the numbers studying mathematics and physics. One of the factors for this is the awareness that can be seen among students and parents in preparation for the school year. Each year, for example, we invite parents and students to Eshkol Payis (community center) to hear about opportunities for accelerated mathematics studies. I come to these events and the auditorium is packed with hundreds of people. This certainly reflects the atmosphere."

Gila Ben Har also agrees that awareness regarding mathematics and science learning has increased dramatically: "The Foundation has created a high level of awareness among subject coordination supervisors and the subject supervisors in schools. The heads of local authorities know that they are being judged on this and parents are questioning them. It's possible to say that the Trump Foundation has shaken up the system. For example, when it gave money to the mayors and said to them: show me that you have stopped the drop-out trend."

However, Ben Har also expresses doubts: "It needs to be examined whether awareness has risen in all parts of the country or only in certain locations where the parents have demanded to put a stop to the drop-out trend and know to ask questions about the issue. In Ra'anana, parents are aware that they have to pay for tutoring and they accept this, but what happens in Ofakim?" Ben Har also doubts the claim concerning the increase in the number of students and raises the question as to whether it indeed reflects a changing trend: "The number of students has increased, but is this change proportional to the growth of the population? I suggest waiting and examining the latest matriculation scores."

"Without a doubt, the Trump Foundation has succeeded in putting mathematics and science on the agenda," says Michal Beller, president of Levinsky College, which also operates a "Teaching Plus" program, with the assistance of the Trump Foundation. The program's objective is to integrate quality teachers into mathematics and physics instruction at an advanced level after training them in advanced teaching methods in the field. "The choice of mathematics is important, because clearly, they have started with what was most urgent. In my opinion, they have created a wave effect, because everyone is talking about mathematics today, even when the Trump Foundation isn't present in the room."

Beller points to teachers' professional development as very important for achieving positive results and recommends: "It's worth continuing support of teachers' professional development in the schools' upper levels. You can't just walk in and out in this area. The teachers must receive continued guidance, particularly new teachers who will be introduced into the system in the coming years, for example — to work according to the Teach First Israel model, which works with the program's students for a number of years after they enter teaching."

Ofer Han, former chief of staff for Minister of Education Piron and current adviser to Minister of Education Bennett, believes that even if there are signs of improvement, a waiting period of four years is necessary to determine this with certainty: "We have set a goal of 18,000 students completing five units of mathematics in four years. Let's see if we attain this. That's the first stage, along which there are midpoint goals at the three year mark amd until that date. Even if we meet the quantitative goals, it still won't be enough because we're not doing this just to 'win the championship.' We also want to 'keep the title' for ten, twenty years and that requires something else: building infrastructure. The issue of teachers is the one that determines whether we have made a quick fix for two or three years, and then another crash. We will succeed if, in the coming years, we learn how to reinforce current teachers and bring good teachers into the education system, expand their certification, and equip them with the right tools. We will have made it if ultimately, a teacher stands in the classroom who has strong content knowledge, knows how to motivate the students properly, and uses the tool box we have provided."

Han lingered on the nature of the program implemented by the ministry to ensure a change in the trend: "One of the good things in this program, as opposed to many government programs, in general, and those of the Ministry of Education, specifically, is that the program addresses issues longitudinally and horizontally. It addresses what surrounds the issue as well as the root problems and infrastructures. It defines metrics, knows how to implement a campaign and talk about motivation, to shout 'Let's go' and prod everyone onward and it never stops doing things, even things related to root problems. In between, it provides creative solutions. Thus, we've caught mini 'bugs' that were creating interference and we've dealt with them. For example, we've raised the university bonus by 35 points, and have provided a safety net, etc."

A Sustainable Infrastructure

The Trump Foundation declared at its outset that it would aspire to fulfill its goals within a decade and that it would work to create sustainable systemic change that would continue when the Foundation ceased operating and the programs did not rely upon its funding. In light of this, the Foundation acts in different ways so that the change will be systemic: it invests in teachers and indirectly in students; it avoids funding incremental activity that is solely dependent upon the Foundation (pay raises, camps, museums, etc.); and it builds coalitions of players and networks between professionals. The question has now arisen as to whether the Foundation has succeeded in creating the necessary network. Have measures been constructed that will presumably exist without it? What needs improvement?

These questions can be evaluated by looking at one of the first activities implemented by the Trump Foundation, the teacher communities. This project enabled excellent physics teachers to join a community of physics teachers for their joint professional development and development of classroom instruction. The teachers meet at the Weizmann Institute once every two weeks, on their own time, to exchange opinions about current classroom activity and discuss how to improve their methods of teaching.

Today, ten communities are in operation that bring together approximately 200 physics teachers, constituting a quarter of the total number of teachers in the field. The Trump Foundation funded the operation of the communities of physics teachers for three years. This includes meetings at the Weizmann Institute and a modest payment to the communities' leaders. At the end of this period, the funding of the sessions was transferred to the Weizmann Institute: "The Foundation has succeeded in creating a sustainable infrastructure for the physics teachers' communities," states Kobi Shvarzbord, science coordinator at Leo Baeck High School and the recipient of the Trump Master Teacher Award in 2015 and coordinator of a community himself.

According to Shvarzbord, the communities are a strong example of the Foundation's activities and will be able to carry on in the future without its support.

In the ORT network of schools, a slightly different opinion has been voiced. ORT has adopted the terms of a quality matriculation certificate or a matriculation certificate with excellence, which includes five-unit mathematics study. According to ORT Director of Math Instruction, Lea Dolev, the Trump Foundation projects help teachers prepare students to meet the subject's demands, and for this, the Foundation's infrastructure is critical: "The actions of the Trump Foundation support the introduction of more students to five units. I don't know how we will operate without the Trump Foundation." However, she also expressed doubts: "Our programs began before the Foundation's support and they will continue even if it stops supporting them because we are committed to the goal of achieving a matriculation certificate with excellence."

At Levinsky College, the partial dependence on the Foundation's budgets for implementing programs for career changers to mathematics instruction has also been noted. According to Michal Beller, president of the college, without the Foundation's support, the Levinsky College's program will change: "The program will stay, but not in the form it is in today. We will be able to implement its logic on our own, but we will have to let go of certain aspects." To ensure the long-term effect of the Foundation, Beller proposes considering the creation of online courses: "These courses have become more and more effective in the field of education throughout the world. Since mathematics is a field that hasn't changed significantly, if the Foundation can provide a one-time investment for high quality on-line courses in the field, its influence will continue even after it has ceased its operations."

Avi Kaminsky, chairperson of the Israel Union of Education Directors in Local Municipalities, believes that without continued support of different projects by the Foundation, a significant amount of its influence will disappear: "There are many programs that the foundations and non-profit organizations have tried to implement in the local authorities beyond the content provided by the education system. They come for 3-4 years, and afterwards they are implemented and become a regular part of the curriculum and are successful in some locations, while in other locations, they fade away the minute the money disappears. The Trump Foundation is a professional foundation, but if something isn't in the Ministry of Education's work plan — its continued existence is doubtful."

Mayor Zeev Bielski of Ra'anana maintains that the moment the Trump Foundation ends its support and involvement in projects in the city, the priorities may return somewhat to the priorities that existed before the Foundation's activities: "In a city like Ra'anana, we wouldn't claim that there wasn't any money and cancel everything, but in many other places, life is such that the minute public opinion veers to other issues, the focus of education will also go there."

Gila Ben Har, CEO of the Center for Educational Technology, notes that the nature of an organization such as CET allows it to continue implementing projects that were supported by the Foundation, such as the virtual high school, even without direct support: "Next year the Foundation's budget will end for the virtual high school project anyway. The Center for Educational Technology relies upon a variety of forms of financing and therefore, we can enlist the needed resources for the continuation of the project."

Ben Har raises another issue, a very important one related to metrics. In her opinion, the Foundation still hasn't learned to create sustainable infrastructure: "The Trump Foundation wants to know whether its actions have succeeded in increasing the number of mathematics and science students and the quality of their knowledge. It also wants to know which of the interventions had the most influence on this success. Was it the opening of additional classrooms? Was it the development of models for instruction and learning? Today, the Foundation is analyzing the data itself. However, looking to the future it's important for the country to do this and in this area the country is still far from being independent. The Trump Foundation needs to help the state create databanks to ensure that it has appropriate systems for information and data analysis of the programs in the area of mathematics and science learning."

The process led by Minister of Education Bennett to anchor an annual budget of 75 million shekels for reinforcing accelerated mathematics study in the Ministry of Education's regular base budget is an important stage in the creation of a sustainable infrastructure. This budget has been principally designated for the opening of small classrooms for the study of accelerated mathematics in the geographic and social periphery in schools that do not have accelerated mathematics programs. "The minute you anchor the budget in the ministry's regular base budget, you are in a different situation. The regular base budget, by virtue of its automatic pilot function, continues from one year to the next, so that essentially the 75 million shekels are always guaranteed, unless someone decides to cut them. This is important money that goes directly to the periphery, mainly to the weak sectors; for example, we opened approximately one hundred new mathematics classrooms in locations where they hadn't existed," says Ofer Han, adviser to the minister of education.

In the world of social change in which the Trump Foundation operates, anchoring a designated budget in the ministry of education budget constitutes "the holy grail" for social organizations that seek to influence government policy. This can be seen as a fantastic success, certainly in light of the fact that it occurred soon after the initiation of the Foundation's operations. It also removes the need to determine the issue of the Foundation's direct contribution to this, a subject discussed in the previous section.

Public Opinion

The Trump Foundation sees the general public as a springboard for creating meaningful change and acts to convey public messages designed to motivate more students to select and persevere in five-unit studies, to encourage suitable candidates to opt for careers in education, and to strengthen the public's trust in its teachers. These messages for formulating public opinion can be conveyed on a local level, for example, in conferences, events, competitions and meetings in the school environment or in the local authorities where the target audience is students, parents, and teachers. They can also be conveyed on the national level, for example, in speeches by decision makers, by holding competitions and awarding prizes, and in general, in the media via articles or interviews with opinion makers, advertisements in newspapers, on the radio and on commercial television channels during prime time.

In this section, we will examine how the Foundation has conveyed these messages up to now. Have they succeeded and to what extent? This section will also propose an answer to the question of how it should continue to act in order to recruit wide swaths of the Israeli public.

It is not at all superfluous to ask why the Foundation needs to affect public opinion. Eddy Shalev, Foundation chairperson, maintains that it is important to convey a message to students: "One of the programs to encourage mathematics study among female students is called 'Break the Glass Ceiling," and it operates in Bat Yam at the initiative of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The program's initiators have tried to understand why in low or middle socio-economic populations the number of girls studying mathematics is significantly lower than the number of boys, in spite of their similar backgrounds, and given the fact that they share the same teachers and schools. We visited a Bat Yam high school and met the female students and their teacher. We understood that the female students receive negative feedback from their environment, the spirit of which is that if they make an effort in mathematics, 'they won't get married,' or 'they won't get anywhere,' and in any case, 'a woman's place is in the home.' To change such perceptions it's necessary to act to shape public opinion."

Shai Piron, former Minister of Education, maintains that the Ministry of Education's present public campaign ("Give Five") misses its mark. "Not enough effort was made to turn studying five units in mathematics into a language ingrained in the education system and its students. It doesn't open a conversation that conveys a message of 'don't be lazy,' when what's important is to maximize their potential. In reality, the children won't study mathematics or science because this advances the GNP or because there is a shortage of engineers, which is the message of the 'Give Five' campaign. In my opinion, the campaign is wrong. It needed to be 'don't give up on yourself.'"

Nurturing Teacher Status

Kobi Shvarzbord, a physics teacher and science coordinator at Leo Baeck High School and recipient of the 2015 Trump Master Teacher award, presents another reason for enlisting public opinion, which is to positively influence the status of the teacher: "I think that the teacher's status in the country is fairly bad. There is a sense that the profession has been cheapened. Many people believe that it's a very simple profession. There are people who compare us to babysitters. If a perception were promoted that teachers lead the success of their students and influence them, thus, recognizing our work, that would be beneficial to the teacher's status."

Shvarzbord believes that the Trump Foundation has not succeeded, or perhaps has not done enough to gain media exposure: "It seems that they haven't managed to receive exposure in the national media.

One example of this is that not one of the four recent Trump Master Teacher Awards, which the Foundation bestows on the teachers in the presence of the prime minister, has received significant newspaper exposure. The government was toppled on the day they gave the first prize and attention was focused on that. When I received the prize the next year, it wasn't in the newspaper because something about the president of the country captured the headlines. I was interviewed by Army Radio's Niv Raskin but on the day of the interview, the series"The Beauty and the Nerd" either began or was over and that item received more attention than the prize. The third candidate didn't meet with the prime minister at all because there were elections and he postponed bestowing the prize and so on and so forth. This is in contrast to another competition, "The Teacher of the Year", which receives a lot of exposure. This is despite the fact that the selection is not according to professional parameters in comparison to the Trump Master Teacher Award, where a professional committee recommends the recipient after examining the quality of instruction and pedagogy, and the prime minister bestows the prize. In my opinion, there needed to be more of a stir surrounding it and thereby, it would affect teacher status."

Shvarzbord suggests an activity that has succeeded in exposing the world of physics to the general public — such as the series, "Bar Lectures," which the Trump Foundation supported, but he has doubts about the extent of the exposure created: "The result of an absence of proper exposure is that many teachers, perhaps even physics teachers in certain schools, are unfamiliar with the Foundation and certainly, the public is not familiar with it."

The Danger of Too Much Exposure

It seems that exposure via the national media, including commercial campaigns, has been felt by the general public. Ofer Han, adviser to the minister of education, believes that the campaign for encouraging mathematics study has reached the point of being too pervasive and that it is advisable to let the programs be seen in the field without continuing their aggressive promotion in the media.

His thoughts were reinforced in an unusual manner, which must receive consideration — on the NonStop Radio program, "Mashal in the Morning," on May 3, 2016 with Rina Matzliach and Haggai Golan. Matzliach, a senior media figure at Channel 2, expressed her sentiments rather strongly: "What really annoys me is the television ad for five units in mathematics. Forget that anyone who doesn't take five units because it's not right for him, because he's not capable of taking it or doesn't want to, now that person feels like he's not a worthy individual. So I hate this campaign and I want to say that whoever doesn't take five units in mathematics ...may be very smart, very talented, very successful and even very happy. The campaign says five units will get you ahead in life. You can also get ahead without five units. Each student should be pushed into whatever he's talented at and into whatever he'll succeed at. Five units in mathematics is not right for everyone and students aren't supposed to feel not okay because they haven't managed to take five units in mathematics ... what is that? Some supreme value?"

Without reference to the question of who funds or is responsible for this publicity campaign or any other (the Trump Foundation, the Ministry of Education, a coalition of organizations, etc.), it may arouse antagonism and even cause future damage to the Foundation's objectives as it seeks to influence public opinion.

What's Been Missed

The Foundation has a directed and precise strategic outline and is strict about not deviating from the tasks it defined for itself at the beginning of its operations: it focuses on mathematics and science learning at the highest level; it focuses on high school; and it focuses on teachers and not on students.

This section will try to clarify what the decision makers think about the advantages and disadvantages of these choices. What was the price the Foundation had to pay for this? What are the issues and problems it hasn't considered, whether consciously or not, and what are the future dangers inherent in this?

Shai Piron, former minister of education, believes that in general, the focus on strategic activities by the Foundation was correct, although he thinks that it would have been more correct to act in the middle schools because "research shows that the greatest gaps occur there."

Eddy Shalev, Foundation chairperson, referred to the issue of the target audience's diversity. According to him, while the Foundation has operated in a balanced manner relating to diversity in terms of Jewish and Arab populations and has reached both audiences, the Foundation has not operated in the ultra-Orthodox community: "In the meantime, the ultra-Orthodox present an insoluble problem because they don't study English, physics or mathematics. They complete their arithmetic studies in 3rd grade, basically after they've learned the multiplication tables, so that any programs designated for them are only relevant after they've completed yeshiva at the age of 18. It's so remote to them. Many years will have to transpire until the ultra-Orthodox are integrated into high school mathematics studies. The Trump Foundation doesn't operate in the ultra-Orthodox sector because that is a task on the national level."

Gila Ben Har, CEO of the Center for Educational Technology, believes that a focus of five units in mathematics is legitimate and correct for a philanthropic foundation. However, from a national perspective, if the minister of education had consolidated his own plan on the issue, he should have focused on something else: "The Foundation has the privilege of only dealing with excellence and doesn't have to deal with lower levels of mathematics. Despite this, the agenda of the minister for education has to be different. Aside from excellence, the minister has the responsibility for there not being a single student who completes 12th grade without at least three study units of mathematics."

Furthermore, Ben Har notes the project of the virtual high school, which the Trump Foundation was a partner to, that provided yeshivas and ultra-Orthodox girls' high schools with access to mathematics study at a high level: "They have the desire; there is teacher as well as parent awareness. We discovered that the yeshivas and ultra-Orthodox girls' high schools were starving for this. They have students with very high learning potential and there was no reason why they shouldn't study mathematics and science at a high level, except for the fact that they didn't have enough students to open classes.

The success was extraordinary in this sector, and this year there are two full classes of ultra-Orthodox girls in the virtual high school and we have even trained ultra-Orthodox teachers to teach them."

Another group that has enjoyed the opportunity to study accelerated mathematics is Bedouin students: "This year, these students are studying in three classes. This has raised unanticipated difficulties. A portion of virtual high school learning is done at home. However, in the homes of the Bedouin students, there is no access to the internet. Therefore, we provided laptop computers and cellular modems for the students because we didn't want a child to not attain five units because of defective infrastructure. The ultra-Orthodox sector also doesn't have computers, and we built a different model there. The students remain at school or in a community center to learn mathematics using the computers there. It is evident that these populations demand more extensive consideration than what they are presently getting."

Ben Har proposes a number of insights relating to the strategic outline that the Foundation has implemented until now. First of all, in the area of the sciences, most of the Trump Foundation's activity has been in physics, and the Foundation has done nothing significant in the area of chemistry (if at all). It would be advisable for the Foundation to expand its operations into this field as well. Another comment raised by Ben Har relates to the need to extend the Foundation's focus to younger grades: "The Foundation may need to enter the middle schools to create a future group of learners for the high schools. Most of the science teachers in middle schools have training in the field of biology. They don't know how to teach physics and chemistry and certainly, they are not specialists. They have approached us for help. If the Foundation doesn't reach these students in middle school, how will they know that they want to study physics or chemistry in high school?"

Technology study is another area that is close to the heart of the Foundation's strategic operations. In Ben Har's estimation, the Foundation will need to make decisions regarding the promotion of this area further on: "Throughout the world, the talk is of STEM (the knowledge areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). It's not entirely clear how the Foundation team has dealt with technology learning. This is different from mathematics and the sciences for which there is consensus that they should be part of the students' general education and later on whoever has the opportunity and potential can specialize in these subjects. I don't think that it's right to say that from first grade, everyone needs to learn programming in the same way that they learn mathematics because I don't think that it's the mission of the education system to produce new workers for industry. However, the position of this important field must be considered."

Looking to the Future

It's important to examine the challenges placed on the Foundation's doorstep at the conclusion of five years of activity and looking forward to five additional years.

Similar to any organization operating in a complex and uncertain environment, decision makers have also been asked about what might risk or interfere with fulfilling the Foundation's objectives and in light of this — what steps should be taken to deal with them.

"Presently, I don't see a threat to the Foundation's endeavors or successes, aside from the fact that they intend to shut down the Foundation at the end of ten years of operation," says Michal Beller, president of Levinsky College. According to her, the Foundation has done amazing work in identifying a vulnerable issue and advancing it. "They have influenced the decision makers in Israel, have operated in a focused manner, and are very influential and impressive."

"After they deal with the acute issue of high-level mathematics and science, looking toward the future, they should expand the focus. For example, as part of mathematics study, there is a need to look at the younger age group as well, inasmuch as high school studies are built upon what students have already learned in middle schools and before that, in elementary schools. In my opinion, the most urgent issue is to deal with the middle schools, beginning with 7th grade. The transition to this grade creates a crisis, because the mathematics subjects are different from those studied in elementary school. It's possible to continue to the higher grades from that point. The Trump Foundation could also further expand into the area of four study units in mathematics. In my opinion, that doesn't involve a huge expansion. The issue that is worth continued support is teachers' professional development in the higher grades. I also think it's important to stress that this is an area that you can't just walk into and then leave. The teachers must have guidance, particularly new teachers to be absorbed by the system in coming years." Beller points out another issue that creates a threat to one of the efforts focused on by the Foundation: recruiting quality teachers, and keeping them, which is part of the effort to increase the number of mathematics and science teachers in particular. Another effort is, of course, to improve the quality of teaching instruction.

According to Beller, graduates of flagship programs for career changers to teaching, such as Levinsky College's Delta Program, suffer from depressed earnings. Most of these students have come from the high-tech world and they have been integrated into teaching in the framework of a second career. Their lower earnings are detrimental to their motivation and this may sink the efforts invested in them: "The program's successful graduates arrive at school and discover that their salary is 4,500 shekels. This is because the Ministry of Education doesn't recognize their seniority from their previous positions, and therefore, an increase in teachers' wages based on seniority doesn't benefit them. This creates both distress and insult as a result of the state not being a partner to their sense of mission and the importance they attribute to their newly acquired profession."

Gila Ben Har, CEO of the Center for Educational Technology, maintains that she does not have any criticism of the Foundation's activities, but she has encountered a sense of confusion among different bodies regarding the division of labor between the Foundation and the government: "Sometimes, an eyebrow has been raised as to whether the Foundation is filling a function that the government needs to fill. It's important that the state knows its responsibilities if tomorrow, the Foundation ceases to operate. Like a parent who lets go of his child, will the child know how to walk alone?"

Lea Dolev, ORT's director of mathematics instruction, further clarifies the point: "In the past when we worked with donors, they generally gave money and forgot about us and we forgot about them. In my opinion, this wasn't particularly successful. Today, we work with donors of a different sort, such as the Trump Foundation, and others as well, who are involved in the field of operations and determine the agenda.

So, if the ORT network didn't want to deal with the issue of five units in mathematics, we wouldn't have any collaboration with the Trump Foundation. However, I think that the pendulum has swung too far in the sense that a Foundation such as the Trump Foundation has to a certain extent taken the place of the authority, in other words, the Ministry of Education, in determining priorities."

The Trump Foundation does indeed consider the time frame of ten years as a window of opportunity for instituting change, although according to Eddy Shalev, Foundation chairperson, it will continue to operate beyond that: "We aren't in a race against the clock, and it's not essential for the Foundation to cease operation in another 10 to 15 years. We thought that we would take out such and such an amount each year, and apparently it's not a simple matter to withdraw the money. We select the projects individually, invest modest amounts in each project and examine the results for a year or two. Only if the project is suitable, do we continue funding it." It may be that conveying a different message regarding the continued operation of the Foundation will allow partners to re-evaluate programs and to plan differently, more for the long-term.

The Importance of Documentation and Measurement

In the 2015-2016 school year, Minister of Education Naftali Bennett initiated the national program to strengthen mathematics study, an emergency program that for the first time, would allow all of the high schools in Israel to teach five study units in mathematics by opening 100 new study tracks. The ministry set a goal of doubling the number of students studying five units to 18,000 students in four years. An additional goal is to double the number of teachers teaching five study units from 1,000 to 2,000 teachers. (In the "National Crisis" section above, the involvement of the Trump Foundation in consolidating this program is mentioned).

Ben Har notes that the shortage of teachers is a strategic threat to the success of the Ministry of Education's program and indirectly — to the success of the Trump Foundation: "They opened a class for every five students who want to study five units in mathematics. Where will the teachers they're talking about come from? I know that there is a shortage of teachers. I don't see a significant increase in the number of teachers who are now being trained, and as a result of the shortage, schools that haven't managed to find teachers, certainly quality teachers, have had to give back hours they received as part of the program. Another question is what happens in classes that have been opened now? Who's teaching them? Are they good teachers? And if so, where were these teachers in the past?" Ben Har is also concerned that the schools will be unable to continue operating these small classes for only two or three students if there is drop-out from higher levels.

Opening the small classrooms harmed the activity of the virtual classroom operated by the Center for Educational Technology and Ben Har believes that the state has made a critical error: "The virtual high school is very transparent with clear and quantified data. We know how many students were at each study level in every stage and how many are promoted from one grade to the next. Once they had generously proposed study hours to the schools, the schools took students out of the virtual high school in order to open classes for every 4-5 children.

A gap was created in quantification. A situation may have been created in which in the future, schools that opened new classrooms won't report when some students drop out. Some of the statistics will appear at the end of the year when the schools report that a certain number of students have taken the matriculation exam. However, without documentation it will be impossible to monitor and see what has caused the students to drop out and whether the small classrooms have affected success," says Ben Har.

The desirable solution, according to Ben Har, is for the Trump Foundation to make a special effort to coordinate the data in the field and to analyze it: "I believe that the Trump Foundation must put pressure on the Ministry of Education to collect and share the statistics about what has actually occurred in these classrooms so that it is possible to monitor the program. I expect the state and the Trump Foundation to monitor the students entering 10th grade, examine who advanced to 11th grade and then 12th grade, the students who took the matriculation exam and the scores they attained. Without real data, it will be difficult to evaluate which of the different interventions led to the students' success. It should be remembered that the Trump Foundation has encouraged the state to invest more money, which has happened — and therefore, the Trump Foundation has a responsibility. Quantification must be carried out for another reason: it is uncertain whether two years from now the budget that currently exists for small classes will exist. Measurement will allow us to know the relationship between gain and benefit, and where there was a high return on the investment. Therefore, the Foundation must insist and demand the data from the state."

Multiplying the Success

Kobi Shvarzbord, science coordinator at Leo Baeck High School, points to an important perspective which deals with what seems to be a duplication of something already in existence: "I have the feeling that in certain situations, the Trump Foundation has sent out too many feelers, sometimes in the same direction. The Foundation team can fund the same item from several angles and then there's overlap and the programs become inundated. For example, in relation to the middle schools where there are plans to set up science teacher communities similar to the communities established for high school physics teachers. There's a "Kadima Mada" network program operating with the Trump Foundation's funding while at the same time the Weizmann Institute is working on building communities for middle school teachers, which the same Trump Foundation is funding. Perhaps each one of the programs is different and fits different populations. However, this could create duplication."

There is a great deal of importance attached to the issues voiced in this context by Ofer Han, adviser to the minister of education, regarding the Foundation's future. He goes further and wonders, in light of the program's backing by the Ministry of Education, whether the Foundation's original objectives weren't realized: "The Ministry of Education is already extensively and forcefully implementing the program. The Foundation needs to re-organize, especially relating to the question of its present role.

When the Foundation was instituted, if its role was to place mathematics at center stage, so now, when mathematics is at center stage in the Ministry of Education's endeavors — what does it want to do further?"

Han also proposes two options for possible future focus: "The Ministry of Education needs a fast 'commando unit,' a quick executor. My advantage, as the Ministry of Education is great, but the disadvantage is the ministry's slow speed. It may be that the Trump Foundation needs to become the body of execution to whom I can say, 'come, take my ideas into the field, go ahead before I submit a tender that will take a long time.' The second option is for the Foundation to enter other areas. For example, the subject of English is very interesting to us."

Risky Dependence on the Minister of Education

On the eve of the 2015-2016 school year, Minister of Education Naftali Bennett expressed his aversion to the title of the education system's central program, "The Other is Me," designed under his predecessor. He said that he believes in strengthening identities and that he will increase the number of students going on identity-formation trips. "I don't agree with 'The Other is Me,' the other is not me, each person is different," the Minister of Education said at a meeting. (*Ha'aretz*, August 2015). In March 2016, statistics of students eligible to receive a matriculation certificate were published. They were revealed by the Freedom of Information Law and showed that "according to the statistics, during the present academic year, the Ministry of Education has spent 75 million shekels to increase the number of students tested at the highest level in mathematics (five units). Nevertheless, the Ministry statistics reveal that the small number of five unit students in mathematics is only the tip of the iceberg concerning the education system's troubles: in 2014, approximately 50% of 17-year olds did not receive matriculation certificates (among Arabs, 55% were ineligible for matriculation certificates and among the ultra-Orthodox, 91% were ineligible for a matriculation certificate)" (Ha'aretz, March 2016).

These two items demonstrate possible and rapid changes in the Ministry of Education's focus: the first item, which is not directly related to mathematics, indicates the relationship between the personal positions and the apparently political positions of the minister of education, between encouraging and funding certain educational programs. The second item, dealing with mathematics, presents statistics that could create public pressure — or be used as an excuse, depending on one's perspective, for changing the policy of expenditure for achievement in accelerated math in favor of promoting the value of equality in the Ministry of Education.

These case-studies, which serve only as examples, do not depend on research relating to the policies of Israel's ministers of education, but constitute a backdrop for the interviewees who wondered about the ability of the Trump Foundation to continue advancing its objectives when ministers of education are replaced. The new minister then seeks to introduce different emphases into the system. . "The Trump Foundation was lucky that Piron agreed to their agenda, and Bennett has made it the first sentence spoken at every opportunity. However, what would happen if a minister of education came along for whom this was not his agenda?

Would the Foundation undermine the goals of the new minister?" asks Lea Dolev, ORT's director of math instruction.

"There were ministers of education before Piron who never placed this on any platform, or in any plan of action. Ultimately, the budget is limited and if there's a minister of education who has a different priority, the present harmony will be destabilized. Without the monetary support and professionalism of the Ministry of Education, it would become more difficult, because a school principal is under obligation to the Pedagogical Secretariat and its whims."

An additional danger stems from the possible identity of the Foundation's measures with a rightwing, anti-humanist agenda. The person who today is identified with such an agenda (without referring directly to the correctness of this claim) is present Minister of Education Naftali Bennett, who is portrayed in the public as desiring to influence the values studied in the education system. An echo of this can be found in the words of Dr. Zeev Dagani, principal of Gymnasia Herzliya, who has earned a relatively high public profile. In an interview with *Ha'aretz* newspaper, Dagani said that "Education doesn't interest him [Bennett]. He only uses it as a platform to advance his nationalist political ideas. He fires and gets rid of all the people who think and express themselves otherwise…and introduces into the system people who serve his ideology… even this whole business about studying mathematics above all else. The budget goes to this. What does he say about it? That other things aren't important. Humanism, combatting racism, ignorance. People don't understand what's bad about it. They say, what do you want, what's bad about mathematics?" (*Ha'aretz Supplement*, 13.5.2016).

In contrast to this approach, Ofer Han, chief of staff to the minister of education (during Piron's time as well as Bennett's) diminishes the claim that the minister of education's identity is important because the budget for strengthening mathematics studies is anchored in the regular base budget of the Ministry of Education, beginning in 2015-2016:

"The significance is that the next minister of education won't need to say 'I want this' and be judged by obtaining a budget like Bennett was. It's very dramatic. If a future minister of education wants to back out of the program, he'll need to go to the Treasury and say that in a budget of 50 billion shekels, there are 75 million shekels designated for mathematics and he wants to decrease this as part of a budget cut or to divert it to another destination. However, then he'll be asked, 'Why mathematics? Find something else in the budget.' To make a comparison, there are a number of programs undertaken by Shai Piron that weren't anchored in the regular budget and that's the whole difference. A new minister of education apparently won't fight to obtain a budget for a program that the previous minister initiated and that was identified with him. However, once you anchor the budget in the regular base budget, you are in another world. The regular base, due to its automatic pilot function, continues from one year to the next. Thus, there will be 75 million shekels forever. It would be very difficult to trim the amount because it would be necessary to face the senior personnel in the high-tech branch, 8200's commander, academia, and anyone lobbying forcefully for the program."

Shai Piron expresses a different concern. According to him, the campaign encouraging mathematics only scratches the surface and won't become ingrained in the values of the Ministry of Education: "When I was a school principal and I was told that we were receiving hours for a project, I would have joined the project — not because I wanted the project but because I wanted more hours. It may be that this is also the case today in the schools. I am concerned that too few things are done here deeply, gradually, and in an organized way. One of my concerns is that as a result of the campaign that focuses on accelerated

mathematics, teachers will simply change the scores or some minister of education will give an order to make the exams easier in order to increase the number of five unit graduates and attract other students. When will we see this? Only on the comparative international tests."

Piron goes on: "Different from other subjects, mathematics and English are part of the consensus, but the initiative can easily crumble. In Israel's political DNA, it is customary for the minister to show achievements. What will happen if the pace of progress in increasing the number of students isn't the pace that satisfies the political needs of the minister of education? If the minister of education sees that it hasn't succeeded — he'll move on to English. He'll come out with a new program for English." In Piron's opinion, in order to avoid a situation in which a program disintegrates, there's a need to create a deeper infrastructure within the education system so that it won't be dependent upon the minister: "I think that the more something goes from being a project to becoming a culture, something at the heart of learning, at the depth of things, it will have a greater chance of success." ■