The Guide to Funder Collaboration with the Government of Israel (GOI)

JEWISH FUNDERS NETWORK

Are you a funder interested in leverage, scale, and collaboration? Are you considering developing a partnership with the Government of Israel? If yes, this guide is intended to help you understand what such a partnership might look like; its pros and cons, benefits and challenges. It provides insights, tools, and the information necessary to ask the right questions, identify the right partners, and structure the collaboration successfully and sustainably.

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Introduction

In recent years philanthropy in Israel and abroad has changed significantly.

Funders have become increasingly interested in targeted giving with clearly defined goals and strategies and the ability to measure impact. Philanthropists are looking for, adopting, and building new tools to deal with the issues important to them. The philanthropic community as a whole is seeking to share knowledge and learn from the experience of their peers in order to maximize their ability to create positive change.

In the framework of philanthropic giving strategies, collaboration is a principal tool that emphasizes funders' ability to work together for a shared cause by leveraging experience, knowledge, and resources to increase their impact on various fields. In Israel this type of cooperation, whether among Israeli funders or those from abroad, is growing; and an increasing number of tangible examples demonstrate the advantages and opportunities inherent in working together.

In 2015 JFN published the Handbook on Funder Collaboration to provide philanthropists interested in building partnerships with the necessary tools. After the publication of the handbook and following numerous conversations with funders in Israel and abroad it became clear that there was interest in and a need for similar knowledge sharing regarding partnerships between philanthropists and the Government of Israel (GOI).

Funders wishing to promote a social agenda in Israel often look to the GOI as a potential partner through whom it is possible to reach broad target populations and national scales of impact. In addition, partnering with the GOI can enable a funder to embed his or her project into the "system" and as part of the national priorities, thus ensuring long term sustainability.

Creating this type of partnership is, by its very nature, a complex task. The GOI and philanthropy have very different characteristics, cultures, and ways of acting. For this reason challenges and difficulties often arise when seeking to enter into this type of partnership and in its administration over time. The goal of this guide is, therefore, to provide funders with a sense of what such a partnership entails.

Why Now?

As the following discussion illuminates, several social trends have combined to create a growing interest in and openness to multisector partnerships on the part of both the GOI and funders.

Over the past twenty years Israel has been undergoing profound changes on the political, economic, and social levels. This period has seen a shift away from welfare state policies and the reduction in resources available for the development of new approaches to answer social needs. It has seen the widening of social and economic gaps on the one hand, and the marked increase in the range and activities of nonprofit organizations and the accelerated privatization of many government services, especially social ones, on the other. These factors have all contributed and continue to contribute to the creation of the need and opportunity for complex and strategic philanthropic involvement in Israel.

In addition, modes of philanthropic giving in Israel have been impacted by **"new philanthropy"** – funders from the world of **hi-tech and business** who feel a deep **commitment to Israel** and are passionate about finding solutions to the problems and dilemmas it faces. These philanthropists bring the methodologies of the corporate world to their philanthropy. They speak about **targeted outputs and products**. They seek to create cultural and administrative changes that streamline the world of local and national government and render it more efficient. They want to generate **out-of-the-box thinking**, expose issues the Israeli government and society have not yet recognized, and identify and initiate **innovative programs that provide efficient and effective solutions to public needs**. Proactive and entrepreneurial, new philanthropy has increased the scope of internal philanthropic funding in Israel and is constantly searching for ways to positively impact life in the country.

These profound changes created new channels of giving that have increased the influence of funders in Israel. They have raised awareness on the part of the government as to the potential benefits inherent in partnering with the philanthropic world.

About the Guide

When is it right to enter into a **partnership** with the **government?** What are the **advantages and disadvantages** in such a joint venture? What has experience taught regarding **do's and don'ts?**

This guide was created to assist funders considering the possibility of partnering with the GOI by attempting to provide answers to these and other questions. We hope that it will help you determine first of all whether this type of partnership is right for you and/or your program, and secondly provide a sense of the process involved and the steps needed to make it happen.

To create the guide we conducted over fifty in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders including funders from Israel and overseas, foundation professionals, representatives of national and local government, professionals, and experts in the field. In addition, during the JFN conference in San Diego in April 2016 we held an information gathering session with a cohort of funders, the outcomes of which have been incorporated into the guide.

The result is a handbook that is a distillation of the knowledge, experience, and insights gained first hand by your peers; **a practical guide to partnering with the GOI.**

Why Work with the Government?

When Working with the Government Works: PJ Library

The Harold Grinspoon Foundation has been active in Israel for many years, focusing the majority of its efforts on promoting education and Jewish identity in the town of Afula and the Gilboa region. In 2008, the Foundation decided to explore the possibility of implementing their highly successful North American-based PJ Library program in Israel.

The Foundation worked closely with its professional staff person in Israel, who was familiar with both the Foundation and its vision as well as with key officials in the Ministry of Education and the local authorities in the Foundation's focus regions, on how best to proceed.

First, the Foundation commissioned a mapping *of what children's books existed in Hebrew that could be used in a Jewish identity book program. Second, the Foundation representative,* ***building on the relationships and credibility*** *she and the   had in Afula and the Gilboa, met with local education and municipal officials to explore implementing the project in the region. The feedback she received was that nothing could happen without buy-in from the Ministry of Education.*

Working simultaneously on both the national and local levels, the Foundation identified the relevant officials with whom to partner. Following initial meetings it became clear that the program **aligned well with the Ministry's own strategic goals** and thus quickly gained its approbation and cooperation.

For the pilot carried out in 2009-2010, the Ministry played an active role in the choosing and implementing of the project, without making a financial commitment. The pilot took place in the Foundation's funding locations and reached 3,000 children.

Following its success, the Foundation representative met with the director general of the **Ministry of Education, who agreed to adopt the program,** and entered into a formal **joint initiative** with the foundation, with 52% foundation funding matched by 48% from the GOI.

The program has continued to grow and now reaches 85% of children in secular and religious state preschools (K and pre-K) in Israel. In 2014, the Ministry, together with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Price Philanthropies, also launched a culturally adapted version of the program in Arabic, Lantern Library, which reaches some 85,000 children in Israel (100% of Arab children in public preschools).

As a result of this success, the Foundation decided to focus its efforts in Israel entirely on this program, as it continues to expand to first and second grades throughout the country.

"If you ask me what were some of the key factors that led to the success of the program, I think it's because, first and foremost, the program aligned well with the strategic goals of the Ministry. It was focused and clear. Also critical was the fact that the Foundation had a presence in Israel, a representative on the spot. Both the Foundation and the representative had long-standing relationships of trust with the local government in the area where we ran our pilot. It was important that, as that representative, I could operate in Hebrew, easily go out and meet people, and had an understanding of both how Israelis think and how Americans think to minimize misunderstandings and misperceptions."

Galina Vromen, Director, Israel Operations-HGF

As the above case study shows, working with the GOI can lead to dramatic, system-wide, sustainable impact. In fact, in recent years cooperation between sectors has been perceived as a necessary, desirable, and effective strategy for dealing with the most difficult social challenges (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone 2006).

Bryson, Crosby & Stone (2006). "The Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaborations: Propositions from the Literature". Public Administration Review 66, 44-45

Philanthropists seek partnerships with the government mainly when they are looking to try and solve a wide-ranging issue and want to think strategically about what the government can do, how philanthropy can contribute, and how to build a relationship that will compel action, leverage resources, and ensure ongoing sustainable support.

In Israel these types of partnerships between government and philanthropy are on the rise, and have already impacted a wide range of areas including education, economic development, at risk populations, health, and more. **There is a growing understanding that working with the government is an opportunity to approach these issues in a more comprehensive and effective way than is possible on one's own, especially when dealing with complex and systemic issues.** The government is also increasingly appreciating the added value of these partnerships. In fact, in some cases it is the GOI who reaches out to funders, either because it recognizes a need, or, occasionally, because it identifies a successful model operating in the field and seeks to scale it up.

Philanthropy comes in all shapes and sizes, from putting a nickel in the pushka (charity collection box) at the local grocers, to setting up a multimillion dollar foundation that touches the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

03/
Proactive

The donor defines the problem and searches for a way to solve it by seeking out and providing financial support to a relevant NGO or setting up an NGO to address the issue

02/
Reactive

Providing financial support upon request and taking a direct and active interest

01/
Passive

Providing financial support upon request with no active involvement

04/

Partnerships among like-minded donors

To widen impact and leverage funds (including peer networks, giving circles, strategic alignment, targeted co-funding, pooled funding and so on up to and including collective impact)

05/

Partnerships on the municipal or regional level

06/

Partnerships with the national government

This guide focuses on those instances in which funders are actively involved in building the partnership and play a central role together with the national government in its development and implementation.

Defining What We Mean When We Say "Working with the Government"

By a partnership between philanthropy and the government we are referring to a situation in which the funder or the government identify a problem/challenge/ need and are interested in working together to bring about a solution and/or improve the situation.

> *"The two (or more) sides are willing to share information, resources, capabilities and organizational infrastructure, to carry the responsibility and the risks of having a shared process of decision making, the joint implementation of programs, and a division of labor determined by the advantages of each of the partners. The initiative can derive either from philanthropy or from the government and for the most part its goals are civic and societal."*
>
> *(Almog-Bar and Zychlinski, 2010)*

Michal Almog-Bar and Esther Zychlinski, **"It was Supposed to be a Partnership"**- The Relationship between Philanthropic Foundations and Government in the "Yaniv" Initiative," **(Bitachon Soziali, June 2010)**, 177

Oppositional:
Philanthropic support for civil society organizations or advocacy groups that work to pressure the government to act in areas of social change.

Independent:
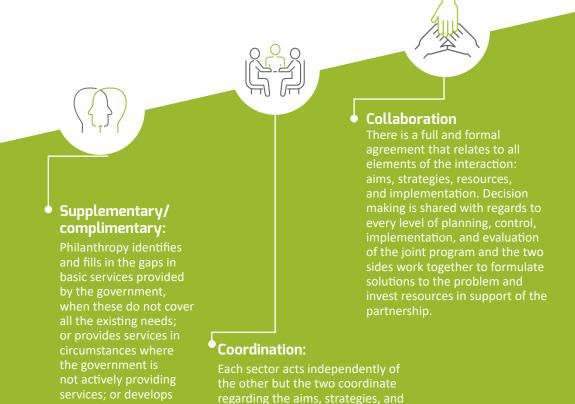The formulation and implementation of a philanthropic strategy without any coordination or interaction with the government.

Communication:
The two sectors share goals and communicate between themselves on resources and strategies of implementation but without any formal agreement. Resources are dedicated only to furthering the lines of communication between them.

Partnerships with the national government can take many forms, differentiated by the level and depth of the relationship between the partners. Funders can be engaged simultaneously in different types of relationships with the government and can move back and forth along the spectrum. Relationships can evolve and develop from one type to another.

Each of these models has its own advantages and disadvantages and there is no "one size fits all." The possibility of partnership depends on the alignment of aims and strategies between the two sectors, but also, and perhaps above all, on the sense of trust between the two.

Supplementary/ complimentary:

Philanthropy identifies and fills in the gaps in basic services provided by the government, when these do not cover all the existing needs; or provides services in circumstances where the government is not actively providing services; or develops alternative services to those supported by the government.

Coordination:

Each sector acts independently of the other but the two coordinate regarding the aims, strategies, and resources devoted to a joint project as set out in a formal agreement. This is a successful mechanism when the issues are clearly defined and each side is already carrying out interventions.

Collaboration

There is a full and formal agreement that relates to all elements of the interaction: aims, strategies, resources, and implementation. Decision making is shared with regards to every level of planning, control, implementation, and evaluation of the joint program and the two sides work together to formulate solutions to the problem and invest resources in support of the partnership.

And what about working with the local government?

In the course of preparing the current guide, the subject of partnership with the local government often came up. While there is indeed much to say on the topic, the focus of this guide is the national level. However, in light of the interest in and importance of the issue we have chosen to share a few key points to consider and perhaps in the future a third guide will be published dedicated solely to this topic.

In recent years there have been a growing number of successful partnerships between philanthropy and the local government (i.e. municipalities and regional councils) in Israel. This growth is the result of an ongoing process in which local government is being given increasing authority to act and create change within their communities. This increase in autonomy is attractive to philanthropists who often feel a connection to a particular geographical area or seek a more clearly defined arena in which to act. For these funders, local government provides fertile ground for their philanthropic activity.

Out of our interviews with players at the local level, including funders as well as mayors and heads of local authorities, we have identified the following:

- On the local or regional level it is possible to achieve results at a **faster pace** than that which can be achieved through working with ministries on the national level.

- There are **fewer levels of bureaucracy,** people, echelons, and stations along the way.

- **Outputs** and results can be **seen more easily,** and the impact on the given area of focus felt more clearly.

- The level of **political turnover** is much **slower,** with some mayors and heads of authorities remaining in their positions for several terms, a fact that allows for meaningful relationships between the sectors to develop and long term goals to be accomplished.

- There is greater **financial flexibility,** even though the available budgets might be smaller.

- **Holistic approaches** that result in system-wide impact are easier to achieve.

- Initiating a project within a local authority enables the crystallization of the model and its implementation, and allows for the possibility that the project can then be expanded to additional local authorities or **scaled up nationally.**

Is Working with the Government Right for You?

Figuring it Out: Yuval/Yuvalim: A Partnership between Eilon Tirosh, JDC, and the GOI

After an exit worth millions, Eilon Tirosh, an Israeli hi-tech entrepreneur and philanthropist, decided to invest in something a bit different – Israeli society. He chose education, an area close to his heart, and set out to focus on closing gaps and creating equal opportunities.

*Tirosh established __Yuvalim__ and recruited a professional to lead it. **After spending a year studying the problems and challenges of the education system,** the two decided to focus on junior high school students in the social and geographic periphery of the country. They developed a unique holistic model suitable for work in these schools.*

*The project began as a **social start-up** in Or Akiva and Tirat HaCarmel and within a couple of years began expanding to additional locations. Funding for the program in each location was divided between the local government, 30%, Yuvalim, 30%, and other donors, 40%. After seven years, and **looking to grow the program and achieve system-wide impact on the national level, the decision was made to seek a strategic partnership with the government.***

*Yuvalim turned to the director general of the Ministry of Education with the proposal to establish a joint initiative. The dialogue with the government required a close examination of the initiative in light of the goals, aims, and priorities of the Ministry and a clear understanding of how it fit into the Ministry's existing plans and programs. At this point it became clear that it was important to involve the professional echelon of the Ministry in the process as well. After coming on board, **Ministry professionals carefully reviewed the model and expressed interest in adopting the program.***

*The complexity of the Ministry's requirements and concerns over the program's long-term sustainability within a three-year joint initiative, led Tirosh to **seek out a partner with proven experience in working with the GOI.***

*Tirosh began discussions with JDC, an organization known for its professionalism and experience. Within JDC, Tirosh worked with **JDC-Ashalim,** the division responsible for the area of children and youth at risk. JDC-Ashalim, one of four core partnerships between JDC and the GOI, has vast **experience in the field and long-standing relationships of trust with the Ministry of Education.** JDC-Ashalim staff met with that of Yuvalim and together began an **in-depth examination of the model from both a professional and financial perspective.***

*Over the next two years, **adjustments were made** to the program to adapt it to the JDC-Ashalim platform and the **requirements of the Ministry of Education,** with the end goal being its **adoption by the Ministry.** It is important to note that all the changes made fit within the red lines that have guided the model from its inception.*

*This process, together with the construction of the partnership, demanded a significant **investment of time,** including monthly meetings and joint committees, as well as **patience, flexibility, and the ability to see the big picture** and the potential that the partnership would make possible in the future. At the end of this process the program was renamed **<u>Yuval</u>,** rather than Yuvalim, to signify that it was a new and joint creation.*

Another significant result of the partnership was the formulation of a complementary model for implementation in the elementary schools that were feeders for the participating junior high schools, and the creation of a conceptual connection between the educational institutions.

*Yuval is currently in its third year of a five year pilot, funded by Tirosh, Yuvalim, JDC-Ashalim, and the Ministry of Education. It is active in some 35 schools with plans for tens of additional locations. If it is a success, the next stage is to expand the program nationally under the auspices of the Ministry with the goal of creating a critical mass for change. **The pilot is accompanied by a program of evaluation and measurement to ensure effectiveness and enable modifications and fine-tuning along the way.***

As the above case study indicates, while the program was ultimately a good fit for the GOI, it took flexibility and a willingness to change and adapt to make the partnership a success. So how do you know if this is the right path for you? The points below provide some general guidelines.

When is the Government Right for You?

- When you are dealing with **complex issues,** identify a problem that you **can't solve alone,** or are looking to **scale up** and **increase your impact.**

- When the issue you are dealing with requires **leverage of money** and infrastructure

- When you feel that the existing players in the field are unable to move the issue further because they lack the experience and ability to work directly with the government. In this regard it is always worth considering bringing the professional NGOs in the field into the discussion and partnership with the government.

- When you feel that you are ready to **take your philanthropy to the next level** and want to break into the **circles of influence** and effect **change on a system wide, national level.**

What Does it Take to Build a Successful Partnership with the GOI?

- Experience and **knowledge of the field** you wish to partner on, whether you gleaned that experience abroad or in Israel.

- **"Diplomatic" capabilities** and the ability to network and build relationships.

- Willingness to **compromise and flexibility** regarding ideas and implementation; collaboration often requires significant concessions: over the name, the branding of the foundation, and control over implementation, resources, timing and process. This is especially true in any partnership with the government, which functions according to its own timetable and within a restrictive and complex bureaucratic system.

- **A representative/team in Israel** who can invest significant time and effort in building the relationships needed for the partnership. If you don't have staff in Israel it is advisable to consider a partnership with an Israeli philanthropist or Israeli-based foundation familiar with the field and the mentality and willing to invest the necessary resources in building a partnership with the government.

- **Patience and perseverance**

- A deep and abiding **passion for an issue** that you are willing to invest in proactively.

When Are You Right for the Government?

- When the topic is **aligned with the agenda** and issues that the GOI, and the particular ministry involved, have defined as priorities to be addressed.

- At the **start of a term of office** when a new minister and director general first assume their positions they often bring fresh eyes and ideas to the ministry and look to reformulate the ministry's strategy and agenda. This is when they are often the most invested and energized. This is also when you have potentially four years in which to attempt to accomplish the goal before the political players might change again.

- When there is openness and interest from **both the political and the professional** elements in a ministry to your idea, and a willingness to invest resources: time, money, and staffing while also sharing information.

- When there are **no legal or budgetary impediments** that might hinder the partnership.

- It is recommended to prioritize working with ministries that have had **previous positive experience working with philanthropy** and the Third Sector (such as the Ministries of Education, Welfare, and Health, and the Prime Minister's Office).

- It is **simpler to work with one particular ministry.** However, if the issue you are working on is cross sectoral and the responsibility for it is divided between several different ministries, it is important to try to **get all the ministries around the table.** The barriers to this are great and the process can be quite frustrating. However, often it is precisely philanthropy that is able to facilitate this kind of cross-ministerial interaction by creating a space within the system where collaboration becomes possible.

"A funder who is not willing to make mistakes on his own dime is missing the target – you need to be able to learn as you go, to find the right place, and even to take a few steps back and fix what isn't working..."

(foundation professional)

Do's and Don't's

The Yaniv Initiative: When Working with the Government Doesn't Work, Even with the Best of Intentions.

*In 2003, seeking to make a definitive impact on the lives of children and youth at risk in Israel, a group of philanthropists, including <u>Avi Naor</u>, Haim Saban, the Rashi Foundation, and others, established the Yaniv Initiative. The goals of the initiative were (1) to **decrease** the number of children and youth defined as at risk, (2) to **alleviate the severity of the risk situations** to which these children and youth were exposed, (3) to **prevent** the formation of **new risk** factors, and (4) to **provide assistance and support** to these children and their families across the spectrum of issues that required attention as a result risk factors that already existed. The group committed to raise a total of **$250 million dollars** on the condition that the **government provide a matching amount.** Ariel Sharon, the prime minister at the time, was supportive of the initiative, as were other government ministers. Professional staff was hired and began to carry out wide ranging research on the many facets of the issue and craft a strategic plan, with **the ultimate goal of having the initiative recognized and funded by the government as a national project.** Unfortunately, despite the enormous amount of time and resources invested by the partners in the development of the project, **one important aspect was overlooked** – the development of the partnership itself.*
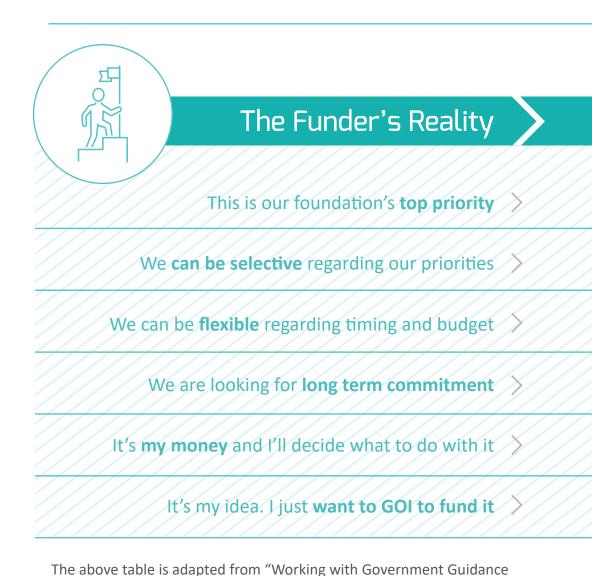
*"The **differences** in how the multi-sector partnership was perceived, and the **absence of dialogue** on the issue, created among the participants various patterns of defensive behavior that became manifest during the development of the initiative."*

Michal Almog-Bar and Esther Zychlinski, "It was Supposed to be a Partnership"- The Relationship between Philanthropic Foundations and Government in the "Yaniv" Initiative," **(*Bitachon Soziali,* June 2010),** 177

The gaps grew and soon became insurmountable. *In November 2004 the partners decided to suspend their attempt to have the initiative recognized as a national project. Instead, a pilot was carried out in two locations, and a comprehensive municipal intervention model for the care of children and youth at risk, supported by the Oran Foundation and the Rashi Foundation, took place over the course of five years. For its part the GOI, prioritizing this area, subsequently launched a groundbreaking strategic national plan for children and youth at risk. Several of the programs developed through Yaniv were incorporated into this national plan.*

*The foundations involved went on to develop new and impactful initiatives, incorporating the valuable insights gained from their experience with Yaniv. In addition, **the lesson learned about the importance of dialogue between the sectors proved to be an important one for all sides,** and contributed to the process that led to the establishment of the multisector round table under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office in 2008.*

As the above case study shows, even with the best of intentions things can go wrong. This chapter provides some perspectives on what to do and what not to do when building a partnership with the GOI.

The Funder's Reality

This is our foundation's **top priority**

We **can be selective** regarding our priorities

We can be **flexible** regarding timing and budget

We are looking for **long term commitment**

It's **my money** and I'll decide what to do with it

It's my idea. I just **want to GOI to fund it**

The above table is adapted from "Working with Government Guidance for Grantmakers"(www.grantcraft.org; 2010, p.12)

"Success is about relationships, be open to talking about whatever possibilities there may be and look for each other's' strengths and challenges."

(foundation professional)

The Government's Reality

⟨ This is **one of many issues** we are dealing with

⟨ We **don't have flexibility** re our priorities

⟨ We have to work within annual **budget cycles**

⟨ The **next election** can change everything

⟨ It's the **public's money** and I need to be accountable

⟨ It's my agenda, I want to **find partners to fund it**

Do's

- Before you look to develop a partnership, **develop relationships.** Build and develop relationships in the GOI before you actually need something, let them know what you are working on and thinking about.

- Do your homework: **learn about the field you wish to impact** and become aware of what else is out there (in terms of projects, players, and alternatives). Check what **government priorities** fit your goals, find out who in the government is working on these issues and who are the key people.

- **Involve government partners** as **early** as possible in the planning and thinking process and encourage them to own the agenda.

- Involve **both the professional and the political levels** in the ministries, find out who controls the budget and involve them.

- Take the time to focus on designing and building the partnership and its mechanism (define expectations and roles, be clear about your red lines and limitations, define decision making processes, contracts, time tables, funding stages, evaluation etc).

- **Respect** your government partners, recognize that they are professional and committed with the necessary knowledge, expertise, and experience to make things happen; give credit where it is due and leave your ego at the door.

- **Understand** in advance what each side can and can't do; as public servants your government partners are required to work within the regulations and ultimately it is they who are accountable.

- **Have patience,** it can take a year or more to bring a project from idea to implementation.

- Try to bring **philanthropic partners** with you to the GOI. It strengthens your starting point and brings more diversity and magnitude of experience and influence.

- **Involve local NGOs** – they are context smart, they know the field and the government.

- The "day after"- think in advance and try to plan the **exit process** and division of responsibility over time.

- **Be humble.** Recognize that you are a small fish in a big pond and that your money is a drop in the bucket relative to government money; be aware that funding given to your project is being taken from a different project and what the possible implications of that are.

Don'ts

- Don't talk down to governmental officials

- Don't assume you have all the answers

- Don't disrespect the other side, they have expertise and deep knowledge of the field and in the long term it is they who will need to take responsibility for and implement the project

- Don't forget to involve the NGOs (the professional players in the field/on the ground) in the early stages as well

- Don't commit funds prior to all relevant approvals. That being said, it is important to be aware that situations may arise that require flexibility on this issue.

- Don't dictate conditions

- Don't expect perfection

- And most importantly - don't give up

"Find champions in the government who recognize the need for change and are in a position to make it happen – which doesn't necessarily mean higher up the ladder."

(foundation professional)

Things to Think About – Ethics and Responsibility

Working with the government is complex, and issues of a moral and ethical nature can lurk just beneath the surface. We encourage funders to review the points below and give them some thought both before and while engaging in collaborations. **There is no "right or wrong" but rather a need for awareness and sensitivity to these matters, which can affect the way you approach your collaboration.**

Acting Responsibly

- The government is the elected body responsible for the use of public funds. You, the philanthropist, are neither elected nor ultimately going to be held responsible in the eyes of the public. Therefore, to what extent is it acceptable to pressure the government to act according to your priorities?

- Take into consideration whether or not it's appropriate to interfere or attempt to influence government policy regarding particular issues, such as national security. Where is the red line regarding funding critical needs?

- The above points are even more relevant if you are not a citizen of the country.

- When advocating that funds be allocated to a particular cause, or conditioning your funding on matching funds from the GOI, keep in mind that the funds in question are being redirected away from a different program and at someone else's expense.

- Philanthropic involvement can weaken the government by "enabling" the government to rely on external sources rather than building its own resilience. When does philanthropic support become too much?

"The government, unlike funders, doesn't have the privilege of taking risks."

(senior governmental official)

Working with NGOs and the Government

- What is the role of the NGO within the initiative? Are they merely service providers or full partners? Do you, the funder, see yourself as facilitator or as standing front and center? Which position is better for the initiative in the long run? When making this decision take into account, for example, that while the foundation may have more influence and financial staying power, it is the NGO that has an ongoing and long term commitment to the project.

- Israel is "rich" in NGOs. They are professionals in their field and hold much of the knowledge, expertise, and experience to create change. It is therefore recommended that when developing your initiative you identify the NGOs most relevant for the project and develop a role for them in the partnership as early as possible in the process. However, it is also important to understand their limitations, such as their possibly minimal experience with bigger picture, long term strategic thinking.

- When entering into a partnership with the government on a particular project there is a natural tendency to favor choosing the NGO that you have established or with which you are affiliated as the service provider.

It is important to consider whether this NGO is the best one for the project, and to take care that other, perhaps equally or better qualified and well positioned, NGOs are not getting trampled on in the process.

General Points

- **Time** is of huge value to government staff. As responsible citizens it's important to make sure that we are using their time wisely.

- The government often relies on philanthropy, which has the time and financial resources to carry out the type of in-depth studies it does not, for **research** into a variety of social issues. It is therefore important that the research be thorough, reliable, and professional.

- If you are considering embarking on a partnership with the government but also support advocacy efforts, you might want to take the following into account: is it a conflict of interest for a philanthropist who partners with the government to also fund lobby groups that challenge the government's priorities and policies? And will a funder who supports advocacy groups have a problem gaining trust from the GOI when coming to build this partnership? Conversely, there are also examples where advocacy has served to raise GOI awareness of a topic, ultimately paving the way for a productive partnership aimed at dealing with the issue.

- It is important to ensure that your philanthropic efforts be distinct from any other interactions with the government that you might have, such as commercial or business interests, to avoid the perception of undue influence.

- A word about **exits** – they are often not as clear cut as we would like to imagine. Occasionally a funder's involvement is needed beyond the exit phase either to fund elements inappropriate for the GOI or to ensure a smooth and sustainable transition.

There is More than One Way To Collaborate: Sample Models

Have you heard the saying, "If you've seen one foundation, than you've seen…one foundation."? Each foundation is unique, with its own particular characteristics, ways of working, and so on. In the same way, it can be said that every collaboration between philanthropy and the GOI is unique. No one collaboration looks exactly like any other and there is no "one model" that funders and the GOI can or should use when looking to build a successful collaboration. However, in reviewing the experience accumulated in Israel over the past few decades, it is possible to identify a few distinctive "sample models" of how this can be done and what it might look like.

"It's not a journey, it's a pilgrimage – one that you make together in order to bring about meaningful improvement. Even more than just getting a legal contract signed, the real investment is in creating a sense of joint inspiration and commitment."

(foundation director)

1. Independent Pilot, Joint Initiative, and Handover To The GOI

The Network of Treatment Centers for Sexually Abused Children and Youth

The **Rashi Foundation**, active for over 30 years in the fields of education and social welfare in Israel's socioeconomic and geographic peripheries, **identified an urgent need** for suitable treatment options for child and teen victims of sexual abuse in the south. **In response, Rashi established the first professional treatment center in Be'er Sheva.**

During the years that followed, a number of organizations worked to raise awareness of the issue through a variety of channels and actively developed solutions as well as worked to pressure decision makers. **An inter-ministerial initiative,** led by JDC-Ashalim, **was launched** that included the Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Affairs & Services, as well as leading NGOs in the field. In 2006, in response to the needs and mounting pressure from the field, the Rashi Foundation, together with the National Insurance Institute of Israel's (NIII) Fund for Children and Youth-at-Risk **initiated a discussion** with the Ministry of Social Affairs in order to persuade the Ministry **to develop a new, unique service** for the treatment of the victims and their families. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Rashi, and the NIII established a committee to deal with the issue, and also provided training and guidance for professionals working in the public sector.

Two years later, a government decision clarified that every sexually abused child was entitled to care from the state and dedicated funds were set aside for this purpose within the Ministry of Social Affairs. The existing center in Be'er Sheva became the model and the basis for a national conversation on how best to treat the problem.

In 2008, 11 local centers were established by this **joint initiative;** in 2010 these were transformed into six regional centers soon followed by an additional six. In 2013 another center opened in Jerusalem, servicing the city and the surrounding areas. By 2014, this network of 13 regional centers, with local branches, was **handed over to the GOI.**

Implementing the GOI's decision and determining the right professional path required a high level of cooperation, both programmatic and administrative, between the ministries and the NGOs. The Rashi Foundation and the NIII, for whom the issue was a priority, took the lead on building the partnership.

The partnership was characterized by the involvement of **senior representatives** of all the participating bodies from the earliest stages; by the establishment of a number of committees that included leading professionals in the field; and by the active participation and representation of all the partners from all three sectors.

Together, **a shared outlook and vision** regarding the needs on the ground was formulated, and the details of the collaboration itself worked out: areas of responsibility were clearly delineated and **each partner took on a role expressive of their particular strengths.** It is important to note that chronologically this took place after the professional service was already in operation in Be'er Sheva. Despite this, there was significant investment in the building of the partnership to ensure that all voices be consistently represented in an integrated

way. The initiative is managed by a professional team that is also responsible for ongoing research and evaluation.

The Ministry of Social Affairs functioned as both convener and destination for the development and absorption of the new services developed for the program, organizationally, financially, and professionally. This decision was made in order to facilitate the implementation of the program in practice and ease its ultimate transfer to the GOI. In addition, also during this period, a comprehensive and uniform national policy and plan of action was formulated.

The initiative transitioned into its final stage of implementation and handover to the GOI, closely monitored by the partners. It soon became clear, however, that the GOI did not yet have the organizational infrastructure necessary to absorb the program by the date planned. Rashi and the NIII showed great financial and organizational flexibility in overcoming this unexpected challenge. Now implemented, the Ministry of Social Affairs is working on scaling the program to cover all of Israel, while maintaining its high level of standards and professionalism.

"One of the successes of these partnerships is that it creates a platform that can be used to deal with other issues and work together to develop additional services."

(foundation professional)

Magshimim Cyber Program

The Rashi Foundation operates in the social and geographic periphery of Israel identifying gaps and devising targeted solutions. In some cases, solutions emerge as a result of unique and unanticipated opportunities.

Over the course of the first decade of the 21st century, the Israel Defense Forces began discussing moving the vast majority of its army bases to the Negev. As part of this process, the IDF's Intelligence Corp sought to significantly expand its cyber unit. The Rashi Foundation saw a unique opportunity in these developments. In fact, Rashi realized that with proper training, the youth in Israel's southern periphery would make excellent candidates for intelligence units. Following a thorough needs assessment, they realized that the proper approach could serve to both help youth in the periphery increase their social mobility, and simultaneously boost the IDF's pool of applicants to elite intelligence units.

*With this in mind, in 2010 **Rashi launched a pilot of Magshimim,** an after-school cyber education program for promising high school students from the periphery. The intensive three-year training program in cyber and other technologies opens doors for these youngsters to the IDF's elite cyber unit, and from there to employment in Israel's hi-tech industry.*

*Though initially funded entirely by Rashi, the pilot quickly proved successful and sought immediate expansion following Year 1. Through **dialogue with the IDF and the Ministry of Defense,** Rashi resolved to*

open an additional location for the program in the north during Year 2, when it was again the sole funder.

*In 2013, following extensive talks with the Ministry of Defense, and having **recruited additional partners** from the philanthropic and business sectors including Keren Daniel, the William Davidson Foundation, Adelis Foundation, and the Schulich Foundation, as well as the State Lottery Fund and other government ministries, Rashi **launched the project as a five-year joint initiative.** The Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Defense now provides 50% of the funding and the program is overseen by a steering committee of partnership representatives led by the Commander of the IDF Cyber Command. **The project is run by professional staff, and the roles of each of the partners have been clearly defined.***

It is important to note that although the Ministry of Education is not an official partner in the joint initiative, it is instrumental in implementing the project through the education system and is a significant factor in the success of the program.

The program is currently in its third year as a joint initiative. The hope is that it will eventually be fully adopted by the GOI.

About the Model

Experience has shown the Rashi Foundation that a strategic coalition of funders working with the GOI is a proven model for achieving significant and sustainable impact.

The foundation functions to a great extent as a social innovator. It identifies a need and develops a response: first researching the issue

and the current treatment methodologies in existence in Israel and elsewhere and then constructing a program. Concurrently, even at this early stage, the Foundation reaches out to representatives of the relevant government ministry to keep them informed and get them involved. The Foundation then seeks additional partners for the initiative from the philanthropic, public, and business sectors in order to expand impact and pool knowledge, experience, and investment. When partners are in place the Foundation turns to implementation. In order to ensure optimal actualization of their programs the Foundation established a number of NGOs that specialize in its different focus areas. These are charged with operating the majority of programs supported by the Foundation. Once a program is up and running, the Foundation continues to improve and perfect the model and recruits additional partners. Finally, when the efficacy of the program is clear, the Foundation looks to ensure continuity by turning to the GOI to adopt it.

In turning to the GOI, the Rashi Foundation is building on a long standing relationship of trust with the government. The ongoing and in-depth dialogues carried out in each instance of a new initiative explore potential channels of cooperation for its national expansion. Based on these dialogues, the most effective platform for collaboration for the particular program is chosen, such as a joint initiative, and the key components, such as the length of the partnership, the level of funding, the administrative mechanism, and the decision making process, are jointly determined, as is the timing and structure of the exit vis-a-vis the GOI where relevant.

"When you start something it is hard to predict if it will be the next new thing or not. Sometimes the risk pays off and changes the world, and sometimes the project falters and dies."

(Foundation professional)

2. Full Strategic Collaboration

Israel Unlimited: The Ruderman Family Foundation, JDC, and the GOI

The **Ruderman Family Foundation** has engaged in numerous philanthropic partnerships over the years. Yet when they first contemplated working with the GOI in the field of disabilities, they feared their lack of personal relationships with officials in the Ministry of Welfare would constitute a serious barrier.

From the time of its establishment, JDC has been developing programs for people with disabilities, but prior to 2009 it had no strategic partnership with the GOI in this area, as it had in the areas of the elderly, children and youth-at-risk, and workforce integration.

After the Second Lebanon War, amidst a growing awareness of the challenges facing people with disabilities, **the Ministry of Welfare began a series of discussions with JDC aimed at establishing a strategic partnership to develop a comprehensive range of services for people with disabilities.** JDC reached out to the Ruderman Family Foundation, to explore the possibility of the Foundation joining the partnership as a third partner. Their meetings focused on the needs on the ground and on identifying the added value that each side could bring to the partnership.

Ultimately, JDC and the Ruderman Family Foundation entered into a **joint initiative** with the Ministry of Welfare aimed at providing comprehensive services to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in Israel. Each

partner committed to provide a third of the funding needed ($500,000 a year) for a period of four years, at which point an additional funding period would be considered. The initiative, called Israel Unlimited, was established in 2010.

It is interesting to note that prior to this the Ruderman Family Foundation had been supporting organizations carrying out advocacy and awareness-raising on the challenges facing people with disabilities in Israel with the goal of bringing the needs on the ground to the attention of the government. This advocacy work did not prove to be a barrier to the development of the strategic partnership between the Foundation and the GOI.

*The initiative is characterized by a **shared vision, joint decision making processes,** a focus on strategic thinking with regards to broadening impact, development of **effective responses,** and system wide change. It is run by professionals located in JDC, and overseen by a broad-based steering committee of stakeholders, professionals in the field, relevant academics, and government representatives. It has been successful not just in providing services to the community but also in changing the way the government thinks about the issue.*

Today the initiative is in its second round. The GOI has increased their level of funding significantly, as has JDC, with the Ruderman Family Foundation now funding 10% of the $3 million dollar annual partnership that brings in an additional $2 million dollars of donations. There is a sense of commitment and a comprehensive system wide approach. The initiative has reached over 30,000 people in 54 local authorities, and works with three government ministries, some 29 different NGOs and 15 institutes of higher education.

About the Model

JDC (the Joint Distribution Committee's) unique historic relationship with the GOI goes back to the founding of the state, when it began working with the government to assist the country's most vulnerable citizens. JDC brings the government in from day one. On the one hand, this unique relationship enables it to enter into joint initiatives occasionally with as little as 25% (rather than the standard 50%) funding, with the GOI making up the rest of the 75%. On the other hand, working with JDC is often a long process, requiring patience, flexibility, and stamina.

The organization currently has four main strategic partnerships with the GOI in the fields of children and youth at risk (Ashalim), the elderly (Eshel), employment (Tevet), and people with disabilities (Israel Unlimited). They also work to promote civil society and senior leadership through the Center for Leadership and Governance.

In each of JDC's core areas (noted above) they develop programs according to the following (DNA) model:

Design – identify a significant issue, research relevant solutions in Israel and abroad, and develop a response model

Nurture – implement a pilot project together with partners, evaluate, and improve it

Accelerate – integrate the project within existing social service systems through the government ministries, other national organizations, or local authorities, in order to scale the model and ensure its sustainability over time.

As it is primarily a development organization JDC does not operate programs, which are instead implemented by NGOs and other organizations in partnership with JDC.

JDC has vast experience developing social services in Israel, a widespread network of relationships across the country and the ability to bring people to the table, as well as a close working relationship with the GOI. As a result, JDC programs often achieve system-wide impact and national distribution and have long-term sustainability. The JDC model is especially relevant to funders who recognize the value of partnership and are willing to forgo a certain degree of control over the program and in some cases even direct contact with the field.

3. Cross Sector Collaboration

The Opportunity Fund for Civic Engagement - A Fund of Funds

The Gandyr Foundation, established by Judith Yovel Recanati and family, is active in the field of young adults in Israel, with the aim of promoting their integration into Israeli society as contributing beneficial citizens in all areas of life. After years of experience in the field of civil service, the Foundation, together with the Charles H. Revson Foundation, identified a need for a systemic change with regards to the availability of the service to disadvantaged youth (youth with disabilities, youth at risk, and minorities). The two foundations realized that facilitating this change would require raising awareness of the issue within the government, the expansion of available national service volunteer positions, and the creation of a holistic approach for the development of the field. **In light of these multifaceted needs, they put together a strategic partnership to promote the issue.**

The Foundations invested time in **identifying potential partners in the GOI and in the philanthropic world** in Israel and abroad. Their partnership model grew to include these two elements as well as appropriate NGOs. These independent efforts, which included research and evaluation, then became the backdrop for discussions and dialogue with the GOI.

*After putting together a coalition of NGOs, the Gandyr Foundation and the Charles H. Revson Foundation established the **Opportunity Fund for Civic Engagement,** and were soon joined by the <u>**Ted Arison Family Foundation,**</u> <u>**Yad HaNadiv**</u> (in the founding stages), <u>**the UJA Federation of New York**</u>, the <u>**Littauer Foundation,**</u> and the <u>**Ruderman Family Foundation.**</u> <u>**The National Insurance Institute of Israel**</u> (NIII) also became a partner. The Fund is run by a professional administrative staff.*

*The next stage of development was to create **a strategic partnership with the GOI.** While this is not a formal "joint initiative" it is a committed partnership with shared vision, goals, and a system of joint decision making. Currently five ministries are partners in the Fund.*

The partnership is expressed in the following ways:

1. *Financially (with a ratio of 2/3 GOI and 1/3 philanthropy)*

2. *Programmatically (a professional committee, on which sit representatives of the NGOs, the GOI, and philanthropy, determines standards of quality for the program)*

3. *Formally (operating organizations are selected via a joint tender)*

4. *Developmentally (via ongoing accompanying research and the training of professional staff)*

Uniquely, it was determined from the beginning that the partnership would expire on a set date, at which point the entire program will move entirely to the GOI. Initially it was decided that this would take place at the end of four years, but the date was soon extended by a further four years. As a result, the program was developed with an eye to its suitability to the GOI, so that a full transfer of responsibility would be possible.

This has the advantage of ensuring that the level of dependency of the GOI on philanthropic backing has been kept to a minimum, and that the mechanisms within the GOI that would eventually assume operational responsibility were defined and established from the beginning. The limited time also proved attractive to funders, who might otherwise have been hesitant to commit support for a program with an unknown and extended time frame. The Opportunity Fund is now concentrating on expanding the model to include minority populations. In addition, the funding partners are supporting the documentation of the entire process of the establishment of the Fund to enable others to make use of the model in the future.

About the Model

The model of partnership with the GOI expressed by the Opportunity Fund has the following characteristics:

- The program was created incrementally, by **first bringing in the operating organizations (NGOs), then funders, and, finally, the GOI,** to create a three way partnership.

- This is consistent with the founding partners' overall approach, which holds that **organizations (NGOs) have an important role to play** in leading and implementing initiatives. They are the experts and therefore should be brought in as active partners and professionals. Organizational representatives play key roles in the development of programs in many of the Fund's initiatives and are front and center in interactions with the government.

- The partnership was created to **solve a significant systemic need** in which the GOI is a dominant factor.

- It served to **strengthen the ability of organizations** to negotiate and interact with the GOI.

- It involved funders from Israel and abroad for a **pre-determined length** of time.

- It emphasized not just the expansion of financial resources but the quality of the components of the program and the development of related fields (with regards to research, evaluation, training and standardization).

The Gandyr Foundation believes strongly that partnerships enhance the reach and potential of a given program, and increases leverage and influence. The Foundation has often acted as a local resource for foundations from abroad who want to work in partnership in Israel but lack representation in the country.

Other Models:

As has already been mentioned, **there are as many ways to collaborate with the government as there are funders or foundations interested in doing so.** In addition to the examples showcased in this guide, in recent years several new and exciting models of collaboration have emerged, offering different, creative approaches to cross sector collaborations including with the GOI. As these models are still in the early stages of implementation in Israel, we are limited in our ability to share long-term achievements and perspectives but would like to draw attention to two models in particular.

Collective Impact

As a strategy for coping with some of society's intractable social problems, the collective impact model has made strides in Israel in recent years. Originally developed in the United States by the consulting firm FSG, it is based on the idea that solving complex social problems cannot be achieved by individual organizations acting alone. Rather, it requires that the government, philanthropy/business, and the third sector to collaborate by creating a common agenda, action, and shared measurement systems. Results can be achieved only by a unique, long-term commitment in which the partners agree on the essential problem, act separately but in coordination with each other towards a shared goal or goals, and use the same criteria of impact measurement. The initiative is managed by a support organization that ensures that each member of the collaboration is functioning according to the rules of the initiative. The solutions and resources used are not predetermined but arise over time. The entire approach is one that enables flexible and dynamic action that changes

according to the needs on the ground.The model is appropriate when a broad, systemic challenge is identified that requires government involvement but in which the roles of the other sectors are vital and clearly definable, and when there is a desire to move beyond isolated impact to collective impact, a shift that is long term, measurable, and output focused.

There are three prominent examples of collective impact in Israel today and a few more in development. The first is the 5x2 Program. Founded in 2013, the program seeks to increase excellence in the sciences by expanding the number of high school students who take the top level (5 points) matriculation exams in math, science, and engineering. The second, called Collective Impact: The Partnership for a Breakthrough in Arab Employment, was also established in 2013, and focuses on widening employment opportunities for minorities. The third example is The Fund for National Initiatives – The Health Initiative, which was established in 2015 to reduce the number of deaths from infection in hospitals in Israel.

The model is still young, both in Israel and abroad, and it is too early to examine long-term successes, but the results so far are encouraging and are already broadening the circles of influence in the field and generating platforms from which government ministries, philanthropy, business, and third sector organizations can work together to devise effective solutions to complex social problems.

Social Bonds

Social bonds are a model from the world of social finance. SFI (Social Finance Israel) was established in 2013 based on a model that was first piloted in England. A form of impact investing, it operates on the seam between nonprofit and for-profit investment.

SFI describes social impact bonds as a financial product that raises capital from private investors to fund nonprofit organizations who carry out programs designed to reduce the occurrence of particular social ills, such as unemployment, substance abuse, or prisoner recidivism. If the performance of the nonprofit organization is effective, the government is saved the money it would have had to spend to deal with these issues. Once determined as such, this savings is then quantified and a proportion of it is returned to the investor, via the bond. Thus, the investor potentially earns a financial return, the nonprofit receives the funding it needs to scale up successful social interventions, the government does not need to finance the program upfront (which is instead funded by the investor), and social ills are effectively reduced.

Social bonds are therefore an investment model in which philanthropy works together with the government to provide solutions to social problems by relying on financial incentives and measurable results. It works to create paradigm changes within the government in its ability to focus on the long term, to define success, and to provide a monetary value to the solution of social problems and risk management. The model offers philanthropy and NGOs a language of measurement (inputs, outputs, and results) and greater budgetary surety.

In Israel there are several initiatives working under this model, specifically in the fields of reducing dropout rates from higher education, Haredi employment, employment for minorities, prisoner rehabilitation, and diabetes prevention.

Practical Guide to Working with the Israeli Government: What You Need to Know

Basic Structure: or GOI 101

Israel is a parliamentary democracy with executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

The executive branch is headed by the prime minister who is the leader of a multi-party system. There is also a cabinet on which sit a varying number of ministers. These ministers are appointed by the prime minister and approved by the Knesset. The number of cabinet seats each party receives is determined by the proportional representation of their party in the Knesset. Cabinet members are usually, but do not have to be, members of the Knesset. Ministers without portfolios and deputy ministers can also be appointed to the cabinet.

The legislative branch consists of the Knesset, which has 120 members who are elected every four years (in point of fact, while elections are indeed meant to be held every four years, in practice the average time between elections is 2.5-3 years) through a party-list proportional representation system. This means that citizens vote for their preferred party and not for individual candidates. Each party is given seats in the Knesset based on the proportional number of votes

received. The president, after conferring with all the parties, appoints the party most likely to successfully put together a coalition to head the government under the leadership of the prime minister who is a member of their party. This is often, but not necessarily, the party with the largest number of seats in the Knesset.

The judicial branch is independent of both the executive and legislative branches. Judges are appointed by a Judicial Selection Committee headed by the minister of justice.

The president of Israel is elected by the Knesset. This is largely a ceremonial role and is independent of the other branches of government.

The Government of Israel currently (as of February 2017) consists of 26 ministries and 37 authorities and units. The number of ministers is not identical to the number of ministries, as there are ministers who are responsible for more than one ministry, as well as ministers without portfolios. Some ministries have deputy ministers responsible for particular issues. In the United States it is the president who places his appointees in government positions, and they report directly to him/her. In Israel, although ministerial appointments are decided by the prime minister, each minister is also a member of a political party and thus they are committed not only to the government and the coalition but also to the party they represent.

Ministries are divided between those considered headquarter ministries and those dedicated to operations.

Headquarter Ministries

The Prime Minister's Office: this office creates and guides government policy and the director general of this office is considered the "director general of all the director generals."

Ministry of Finance: responsible for the budget, income, and expenditures of the State

Ministry of Justice: responsible for all judicial matters concerning the State. The ministry controls legal approval of processes and agreements and outlines policy with regards to the third sector.

Operational Ministries

Operational ministries are those ministries responsible for carrying out the policies of the government, such as education, health, welfare, defense, culture, and so on.

Government ministers are responsible for the operation of their ministries. The administration (the government bureaucracy) is responsible for carrying out the policies of the government, the ministers, and the Knesset. The administration consists of the director general of each ministry, the heads of departments and divisions, and various levels of officials and clerks who are responsible for the actual implementation of these policies on the ground. The former are considered political (although properly speaking the director general is also the senior professional of the ministry) and the latter is the professional element of the government.

The ongoing work of the government is carried out through special committees appointed for particular issues, such as the Ministerial Committee for Security, the Ministerial Committee for Society and Economy, and so on.

While the responsibility for the various aspects of life in the country are divided between these ministries, social challenges are not as neatly compartmentalized and dealing with them effectively often requires the input of several ministries.

Inside the Ministry

Each ministry is different. They differ in size, structure, and budget and have different ways of working. Some have more experience with the philanthropic sector than others, or have more experienced personnel. Some have a strong and seasoned director general and some have one who is new to the position. All these elements will have an impact on the building of the partnership. Therefore, before beginning the process with a particular ministry it is worth taking the time to learn about its unique structure, key players, and working methodology.

That being said there are a number of roles that are similar to all the ministries.

Minister: a political appointee, the minister does not necessarily have prior familiarity or experience with the field covered by his ministry before his appointment.

Director General: the political appointee of the minister. Some come from within the system and some from without. They are responsible

for the implementation of the minister's plans and policies and for the running of the ministry. The director general is considered the senior professional in the ministry.

Senior staff (deputy director generals, division heads): these are professionals appointed through tenders. These are long term employees who are usually (again not always as each ministry is different) a good entry point for dialogue. They will tend to pass the subject to a staff member lower down in the hierarchy to do the work but without first going through them it will be very difficult to build a relationship with the ministry.

Head of planning and strategy (or planning and budget): responsible for building the work plans for the ministry

Budget Controller *(hashav)*: a staff member of the Ministry of Finance embedded in the ministry who is responsible for overseeing its expenditures. Each ministry also has a corresponding clerk (called a *referant* in Hebrew) in the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance who is responsible for their ministry.

Legal counsel: a staff member of the Ministry of Justice embedded in the ministry and responsible for dealing with the legal issues and contracts of the ministry.

Who are the Right People to Approach?

The short answer is that it depends. It depends on the ministry, on the philanthropist, on the subject matter. However, what is important to remember is that it is essential to get the right people, whether from the political echelon, the professional echelon, or both, on board.

It is the minister and the director general who are crucial to ensuring that budget is made available and that any roadblocks are cleared away. However, the professional staff do not appreciate having processes or initiatives decreed from above and it is important to work with them to instill a sense of shared ownership and co-creation. They are the professionals who know the subject inside and out and are closely connected with what is happening in the field. It is they who can push things through quickly or cause them to be stalled indefinitely in bureaucratic limbo. In addition, political appointees usually remain in their positions for only two to three years, while the professional echelon experience considerably less turnover. Therefore the success of long term plans and initiatives is in their hands.

How Long Does it Take

Change takes time. In fact, it can take between five to seven years for the GOI to make changes to its priorities, policies, and practice. Therefore, when you come to propose a particular initiative to the GOI, you can shorten this process significantly (sometimes even to only a few months) if your program aligns with the existing agenda and needs of the ministry.

It is worth learning what these are and the language used when referring to them. For example, if the Ministry of Education sets itself

the goal of raising the number of Ethiopian-Israeli students eligible for a *teudat bagrut* from 31% to 33%, then speaking about how "my program can help x number of Ethiopian-Israeli students achieve a *teudat bagrut*" will be more effective than saying "I want to help improve the education of Ethiopian-Israelis."

Over the past few years the GOI has moved towards a more efficient process of strategizing and goal setting. All the ministries are required to list their priorities in an official GOI manual called the ***Madrich HaTichnun HaMemshalti (The Government Planning Guide).*** Based on the Government Planning Guide, the goals, strategies, and measurable outputs in each area are further delineated in the GOI's ***Sefer Tochniot HaAvoda (Book of Work Plans).*** Both these sites are useful for understanding government priorities and identifying opportunities.

"There are talented, devoted people in government who can really move the project forward…"

(foundation professional)

GOI Yearly **Financial** Planning **Timeline**

In *January & February*

the ministries focus on reviewing the previous year (planning versus implementation) and extrapolating lessons learned for the coming year. This is when decisions are likely to be made regarding which programs or areas of activity to expand and which to close, as well as operative decisions regarding the current year.

By *April*

the ministries are expected to formulate and present their plans for the coming year. They are expected to present any changes and indicate how these will be a more effective use of the existing budget, and also indicate areas requiring a change in government policy. Each ministry can expect to receive a 5% increase or decrease to their budget at this point. Therefore the ministries also prepare alternative plans.

In *May*

the plans of each of the ministries are reviewed by the "headquarter" ministries, and a general national assessment is prepared.

Starting in June

and based on the general national assessment, the prime minister and the finance minister begin to make policy decisions and determine priorities, and begin budget negotiations with the various ministers. This process continues until around September when the budget is supposed to be submitted to the Knesset for approval.

In July

a half year assessment of the activities of each ministry is carried out with lessons learned that are then applied to the work plans that each division must submit in the coming months.

From September to November

each ministry prepares their work plan for the coming year according to the approved budget and based on the plans submitted in April and the operative outcomes of the half year review. This is when the ministry decides where and how to move the budget around, shifting resources from one project in favor of another, etc.

It is important to note that if the government is before re-election (which happens on average every two to three years as noted above) then the flow of the budget year ceases, and stringent rules regarding new expenditures come into play. On the flip side, if the government has just been elected, the budget cycle is in abeyance until the new ministers are appointed.

When to Approach the Ministries

The best time to approach ministries about a new initiative is around March-April, when the major components of the upcoming work plan are being considered and formulated. The worst time to approach is in July and August, when the government is busy preparing the actual budget. Between September and January, when the ministries are once again focused on work plans and implementation, is another good time to approach with new ideas. Ministries on the whole are not receptive to being told what they should do. They are more open to ideas when they arise as part of a dialogue. Therefore it is worth proposing a joint brain storming/thought meetings in March/April and changes in implementation "after the holidays" in September and October.

In addition to the yearly cycle, it is also important to pay attention to the political cycle. The beginning of a term of office is when the ministries are reshaping their agendas. This is the time when energy, opportunity, and openness to new ideas are highest and it is worth approaching ministries during this period.

In general, it is worth developing relationships with key figures in a ministry as early as possible; even as early as when you first begin to explore the issue you want to address. Maintaining these relationships is a good long term investment.

Mechanisms of Cooperation with the GOI

Tenders are the mechanism by which the government interacts with those who supply it with products or services. The process by which government tenders are won is clearly defined and determined by law.

There are certain instances when tenders are not required.

- When a single supplier can provide the entire service or in instances relating to national security

- Certain national organizations such as the JNF, JDC, Keren Hayesod, and JAFI are exempt from the need for tenders

- A joint initiative (see below)

Subsidies: the GOI grants subsidies to over 3,000 public institutions and thousands of other bodies that provide educational, religious, health, and welfare services, among other causes. These subsidies are provided through a strenuous process of applications, approvals, and legal agreements. The GOI grants millions of shekel a year through this mechanism.

Joint Initiatives *(meizam meshutaf)*: a ministry can establish a tender exempt program that is not for profit with a body that is providing at least 50% of the funding. This is a legal and bureaucratic relationship established through a vigorous process carried out according to clearly defined parameters. This type of initiative is usually of 1-3 years duration. This is often a common mechanism for philanthropic and GOI collaboration and in many cases this mechanism results in significant financial leverage for matching funds and generates long term GOI commitment.

The Relationship between the GOI and Civil Society

A key turning point in the relationship between the GOI and the Third Sector was reached in February 2008 when the GOI passed [Decision No. 3190](#) that regulated a policy regarding the relationship between the government, civil society organizations, and not-for-profit businesses. Prepared by the Prime Minister's Office, it presented three main goals:

- Strengthening cooperation and grounding the relationship between the sectors while maintaining the independence of all three

- Increasing the involvement of organizations in the implementation of social services and encouraging dialogue between the sectors prior to reaching policy decisions

- Encouraging processes that promote empowerment, professionalization, monitoring, and transparency in civil society while embedding similar norms within the government and the business sector with regards to their activities within this framework

As a result of this decision a **Round Table** was established under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office in July 2008. It was composed of representatives of the government, the business sector, and the third sector. The Round Table meets once every few months to discuss issues relevant to all three sectors. Members of the philanthropic sector are also included in these meetings. Representatives of each of the sectors participate in the Round Tables for a period of three years. Since the original Round Table was established it has resulted

in the development of several initiatives such as a model for cross sector coordination during times of emergency, the broadening and coordination of volunteers in Israel, expanding philanthropy in Israel, the establishment and development of social business and so on. Currently the Round Table has been working with the Ministry of Defense on a wide-ranging program to improve resilience in Israeli society during times of emergency. Additional Round Tables, focusing on particular issues or attached to particular ministries, have also been established.

Another ongoing point of contact between the GOI and the Third Sector is the **Government-Civil Society Initiative,** a joint venture with seven ministries (the Prime Minister's office, welfare, finance, education, health, law, and absorption) and led by JDC's Institute for Leadership and Governance.

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*This chapter was written with the assistance of the **JDC Institute for Leadership and Governance.** The Institute promotes and facilitates effective interfaces between and within the different sectors engaged in the provision of public services.*

"I've learned that one of the most important things is simply to sit together - long enough and often enough so that you begin to get an inkling of each other's thought processes, culture, even language…"

(Israeli philanthropist)

Final Thoughts

Recent years have proven that **partnerships are an effective and impactful way to bring about systemic change.** They are also a challenge to build and nurture, particularly with so complex an entity as the Government of Israel.

Our goal, therefore, in researching and compiling this guide was to provide funders with a sense of what is involved in such a partnership – the process, the pitfalls, and the benefits, as well as the practical knowledge necessary to be successful.

This is not, however, a step by step guide. Nor is it an exhaustive survey of the field. The case studies chosen to illuminate different aspects of the process are a few out of the many fine examples that exist and the types of collaborations that we mentioned are only some of the models available. It is also clear to us that there will always be exceptions to every rule and that nothing is ever completely cut and dried.

The guide thus provides you with the benefit of the experience gleaned by a selection of your peers but is only a first step on that journey. **If you are excited by the thought of this type of partnership, we encourage you to reach out to JFN and we will connect you with funders in the network who have established such partnerships, provide you with guidance on methodologies, models, and best practices, and offer additional support as you move forward.** In the meantime, we leave you with a final review of the important steps to carry out before you start thinking about developing the actual program or initiative:

1. Make sure the idea of a partnership with the GOI is **right for you**

2. **Learn** as much as possible about the field you wish to address

3. See if it is right for the GOI in terms of **timing and priorities**

4. Identify the **right partners** (funders, NGOs, and government)

5. Invest time in **developing the relationship** with these potential partners and focus on the **building of the partnership** itself

Acknowledgments

Finally, and in the best tradition of collaboration and partnership, we would like to thank our three partners whose generous support, knowledge, and experience made this guide possible:

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The Gandyr Foundation

The Rashi Foundation

To share with us your
collaboration experience,
or to offer feedback,
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