

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

***THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL ON DIASPORA AND ITS APPLICABILITY
TO THE ARMENIAN REALITY***

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to explore and analyze the policy of the State Israel on Diaspora issues and its applicability to the Armenian reality.

The paper starts with discussing different definitions of Diaspora. Then it presents the evolution of the State-Diaspora relations in the case of Israel. The potential role of the different organizations, how they developed and how did they function.

Then the paper reviews the current developments in Israel. Although there are different programs but we are focusing on three main programs: (a) Aliya and Klita (b) Youth Aliya (c) Education. The analysis of different programs in regard to organization as made as well.

The paper next reviews the Armenian Case, studying the State-Diaspora relations development in the newly formed Republic of Armenia. The main objectives will be to make comparative analyses of the two cases with the aim to learn what Armenia can learn from the case of Israel.

The final part of the paper focuses on findings of the research and finally presents a set of recommendation to Armenia, especially to the Ministry of Diaspora on further development of the State-Diaspora relationship.

Introduction

In the last few decades the concept of Diaspora has become a popular subject for researchers and policy makers. Different papers and reports tried to define the Diaspora concept and some of them have focused on its impact on homeland and interpret different policies in this regard.

International practice is extremely essential on State-Diaspora issues and it plays a big role during the organization of repatriation as a social, economic and cultural procedure, especially for those countries that are still on their way of implementing their own concepts and methods (Aghajanyan, 2006).

State-Diaspora relations deal first and foremost with nations that extend beyond states and across state boundaries. Unless there is some possibility of achieving territorial statehood for at least some part of a people, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain intergenerational Diaspora links. The focus of the research is the Israeli Diaspora and its policies. The Israeli experience can be essential for Armenia because of historical (genocide), demographic (the majority of population lives out of the country) and politico-economic (hostile neighbors, poor natural resources) factors, that are common for those countries.

The Armenian Diaspora is a product of the Armenian history. Due to Aleksandr Gevorkyan, a large portion of ethnic Armenians, naturalized or born citizens of other countries, lives abroad and has strong political party that support their ties with Armenia (Gevorkyan, 2006).

Taking into consideration the Israeli policies on State-Diaspora relations, Armenia can develop its policies of state agencies and their responsibilities for the implementation of Armenia-Diaspora partnership.

Armenia is a former Soviet republic, the history of the Diaspora dates back to the early middle ages. On early 1990's the Armenian Genocide scattered survivors all over the world. On the other hand, Armenia since the independence in 1991, dealt with devastating impacts of the 1988 earthquake, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Armenian Diaspora is a large and influential force. It is a wealthy, willing and powerful resource for economic assistance. Many in the Armenian Diaspora have strong desire to fully participate in the life of their historic homeland. Taking all these into consideration, we have to consider the State-Diaspora relations as a vital issue for Armenia.

In recent times, various countries having Diaspora have been developing and implementing policies aimed at strengthening State-Diaspora relationship. The formation of the state of Israel in 1948 is the prime example of diasprans' nationalist claim to a homeland. Due to Aghajanyan (2006) Israel is the country which has the experience of a developed and organized repatriation process. Israeli experience in Diaspora youth affairs can serve as a good example for the Armenian youth as well. So the establishment of the State of Israel and consequently the policies developed by that state can serve as a good basis for this research.

The main purpose of this paper is to reassess the Israeli-Diaspora relations. From this point of view the paper focuses on Israeli experience in State-Diaspora relations development. There is a great importance of preparing the young society of Armenia to successful State-Diaspora relations. The introduction of successful State-Diaspora relations in Armenia requires strong political will and implementation of correct policies in that regard.

Research Questions

Based on the gathered data and analyzing the Israeli experience in State-Diaspora relationship development this paper attempts to answer the following research questions and give recommendations about the Armenian case in order to develop and implement Diaspora related policies.

RQ 1: *What is the Israeli experience in State-Diaspora partnership development?*

RQ 2: *What is the Armenian experience in State-Diaspora partnership development?*

RQ 3: *What can Armenia learn from Israel in developing and implementing a state policy on State-Diaspora partnership development?*

Methodology

The method of research includes the analysis of primary and secondary research data as well as review of relevant documents. This essay examines the case study of the Israeli State, as well as Armenian case. Comparative and policy analysis are used in this essay.

The primary data available both for the Israeli and Armenian cases, such as the Concept on Armenia-Diaspora Partnership Development, draft law on Repatriation of the RoA, Constitution of the WZO was reviewed and analyzed. Books, articles, newspapers achieves, internet information and historical records were the main sources for the observation and analysis.

Findings

According to the experts repatriation serves a number of advantages and beneficial purposes. Repatriation can help stabilize the demographics of the country, promote national security, economic development and global networks. This is the reason that most countries want to encourage their compatriots to repatriate. Repatriation is an effective way to address human capital issues facing developing countries. So it is especially important for small and developing countries that have suffered population loss and brain drain, like Armenia.

Due to the analysis done, in case of Israel although there are different institutions with different responsibilities but all of them are working to fulfill their common goal in a correct way aimed, at State-Diaspora relationship. Israeli Diaspora institutions like the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization and the Joint Distribution Committee were all organized to be the focal point for joint activity, pursuing a common policy on Diaspora and State-Diaspora relationship development.

Israel, like other nations with large Diasporas (Greece, Germany, Hungary, etc), encourages repatriation and have legal provisions regulating the repatriation procedure of their compatriots.

Although there are lots of similarities on State-Diaspora relationship, between Israeli and Armenian cases, unfortunately the absence of a joint stand of the Armenian Diaspora organizations is perceptible in case of Armenia. Also, the lack of cooperation with the Armenian authorities in pursuing Diaspora policies hinders the Diaspora-State relations development.

Defining Diaspora

“Where once were dispersion, there now is Diaspora.”

Khachig Tölöyan

The notion of Diaspora is a highly complex concept. The recent promulgation of the word “Diaspora” which is currently applied to countless populations is a phenomenon that warrants analysis. Recently the concept of Diaspora has become a popular subject for researchers and policy makers. There are various definitions for Diaspora by researchers and policy makers, but those definitions are broad and different from each other, thus not specifying the term. They generally conceptualize Diaspora as a community, bounded on the basis of common cultural and ethnic references (Schnpper, 1999). To get on with the matter we refer to the roots of the word and different interpretations as well. Shain defines the Diaspora as “a people with common national origin who reside outside a claimed or an independent home territory. They regard themselves or regarded by others as members or potential members of their country of origin (claimed or already existing) a status held regardless of their geographical location and citizen status outside their home country” (Shain, 1994, 813). Khachig Tölöyan, the editor of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, makes a study of origins and the historical development of the term and discusses how Jewish Diaspora becomes the paradigm of the Diasporic phenomenon. He says that the word “Diaspora” derives from the Greek *diaspeirein*, *dia* ('through') and *speirein* ('to snow, scatter'). In the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides uses the term in order to describe the destruction of the city of Aegina, which it resulted in exterminating, scattering and exile of its population all across the Hellenic world. Diaspora itself can be traced back to the Old Testament, and the experiences of the ancient Jews, and has loosely come to be associated with these peoples' victimized experiences. So the most durable use of the word

derived from its appearance in the Greek translation of the Torah known as the Septuagint¹ to narrate scattering of Jews from Jerusalem by force into Babylonian banish (in Hebrew, *galut*), both as an event and as a punishment for wrongdoing. The use of the word Diaspora in order to describe the experience of scattering became exemplar when it joined to the notion of a desire to return to the lost homeland, indicating not only expatriate but also transferring, however concealed but it would one day be liberated (redeemed) by return and locating to their original land of dwelling. It was this sense which later was applied and put it for the Armenians, the African Diaspora and a wide range of comparable uses, which have served to inflect the idea of Diaspora in a variety of ways (Cohen, 1997).

The word Diaspora is used more broadly to refer to the cultural connections maintained by a group of people who have been dispersed or who have migrated around the globe. Some scholars studying Diaspora recognize that the Jewish tradition is at the heart of any definition of the term Diaspora; among them are Simon Dubnow (1860-1941), an outstanding Jewish historian, and William Safran, professor emeritus of political science, both of them consider the Jewish Diaspora as a paradigmatic “ideal type.” However, not all scholars take it for granted that the Jewish Diaspora is a normative type. Robin Cohen argues, “In trying to draw generalized inferences from the Jewish tradition it is necessary both to draw critically from that tradition and to be sensitive dilutions, changes and expansions of the meaning of the term Diaspora as it comes to be more widely applied” (Cohen, 1997, 22).

Concept of Diaspora makes us to rethink and to question the rubrics and origin of the nation, nationalism and the relations of citizens and nation-states. It can be said that diasporic

¹ Deuteronomy 28:25

25 - *The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed [dispersed] into all the kingdoms of the earth.*

theorists use the concept of Diaspora to oppose the notion of the nation-states. On one hand, the theory of Diaspora calls the traditional definition of home into question. On the other hand, it may serve as another possible model for the concept of nation-states rather than simply as a foe to it (Theoretical and historical approaches to “Diaspora”, [www. nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw](http://www.nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw)).

Evolution of State-Diaspora Relations:

Case of Israel

There is little suspicion that the Jewish people picture the classic Diaspora phenomenon of all time in the history. In fact, it seems that the term “Diaspora” itself originated and got the roots in order to describe the Jewish condition.² As a people who have seen itself to be born in exile and expatriate, as it were, Diaspora is not an abnormal and strange condition even if it is not a desired and coveted one. Jewish tradition has it that Jews were born as a Diaspora people, even though the central aspect of their birth was identification with the land which became known to Jews as Eretz Israel-the Land of Israel. At least for 2’600 years or even maybe longer, the Jewish Diaspora has existed and considering certain local traditions accurate. Without any recognition of the state as politically independent, it has existed along with a functioning Jewish state for about 2’000 years. For about 1’500 years, the Jewish people existed without an effective political center in their national territory. In other words, till the institutions of the Jewish community in Eretz Israel were themselves formed after those of the Diaspora and the Jews performed as a Diaspora community within their own land, they were living exclusively as a Diaspora community (Baron, 1973).

² According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term Diaspora originates from the Septuagint, Deuteronomy 28:25, "thou shalt be a Diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth" (1897 Ed. p. 321).

Whether this was the first Diaspora or not, it is clear that the recognized Jewish Diaspora begins with the Babylonian captivity. It was then that organized communities of Jewish exiles were established in Babylonia and Egypt. In 537 B.C.E., seventy years after destruction of Jerusalem, due to policies of the Cyrus the Great conquered the neo-Babylonian Empire it was given an allowance to Jews to return to Judea to rebuilt their temples. It is to say that only a small number of Jews chose to do so and did secede in reestablishing Eretz Israel as the center of Jewish life (Baron, 1973).

The middle of the seventeenth century was the opening of the modern epoch which slowly eroded the comprehensive framework, in waves rolling from west to east. At first, in the new states, Jews were people without civic status and without the possibility of maintaining their own states within the state. And it led them to demand for citizenship as individuals, which they gained after a struggle sometimes taking two centuries (Baron, 1973).

It was too difficult to provide a comprehensive framework for the maintenance of Jewish culture and civilization. In response to this the Jewish national movement developed, whose main goal was restoration of Jewish statehood in Eretz Israel. This movement, known as Zionism, was initially organized on the same covenantal principles as any other Jewish attempt. **The World Zionist Organization (WZO)** constitutes the organizational arm of the Zionist movement. The huge work of this organization is in the Diaspora, where it seeks to preserve and strengthen the Jewish people. It is first developed through local societies and then in a massive leap forward represented by the First Zionist Congress in 1897. In fifty years the WZO succeeded in bringing about the establishment of Jewish state. On the other hand, another important reason why Israel gains success in repatriate Diaspora into their land, Israel, was the helping hand of some comities. They helped Israel overcoming the social challenges of its most vulnerable

citizens. On May 14, 1948 the State of Israel was established for the purpose of repatriating the Jewish people from all over the world, and giving every Jew in each point of the world the choice to return to the land of their fathers. So the establishment of the State Israel, and referring it as one of history's greatest organized mass migration, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's (JDC) aid in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel was highly significant (Ikan, 1997).

As mentioned in Declaration "The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the exiles." For this purpose on July 5, 1950 after the establishment of the State of Israel the Israeli Knesset³ passed the Law of Return which gives right to every Jew to immigrate to the country. The Law on Return has also served as a means of maintaining a Jewish majority within the State of Israel by promoting Aliyah⁴. During the ten years of 1940-1950, Israel's population balance was positively shifted through the state organized immigration of millions of Jews (Plenn, 2003).

Since 1914, the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)** has given global utterance to the principle that all Jews are responsible for one another. After the World War I, Jews of Palestine (then under Ottoman Turkish rule) who had gotten cut off from their normal sources of support, asked for assistance and helping hand. The money was collected through the founding in New York of the Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers, which later known as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Starting its work from early 1914's, JDC's support was a critical in all its history. We can mention its support in the Nazi Era that shows a Rescue Efforts. JDC's mission

³ The Knesset is a unicameral parliament and the supreme authority of the state. It also has broad power of direction and supervision over government operations.

⁴ The immigration of Jews to the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*). Literally it means "ascending" because it implies rescue in ancient Jewish and modern Zionist tradition. It is a basic tenet of Zionist ideology.

in Israel is representing North America's Jewish Federations in helping Israeli society improve its own capacity to meet the needs of its weakest members. JDC funds subsidized medical care, Jewish schools and educational activities, welfare programs, emigration and etc. Then it came the time when JDC shifted from emergency relief to long-term rehabilitation. It set up loan institutions, work projects across the continent and training centers as well for those seeking new lives in the Jewish homeland. In 1948, the birth of the State of Israel which represented the fulfillment of the dreams of thousands of generations brought a huge number of new olim (immigrants) from all over the world, mostly from Europe and Muslim countries. In this regard JDC had a specific role and care for most vulnerable citizens. Thus, JDC always works with Israeli partners through strategic interventions to develop or improve the responses that Israelis themselves offer to its most pressing social needs (website: www.jdc.org).

JDC's assistance was not limited only in the new State of Israel; it has also a full-scale assistance program for the remaining Jewish communities in North Africa, Iran, and other parts of the Middle East and helped them provide a full range of services. It is worth mentioning that in December 1988, during the severe earthquake that hit Soviet Armenia, JDC constructed a child rehabilitation center in the severely hit city of Leninakan. It also gave a helping hand to the crush trauma patients for surgery and successful therapy in Israel (Weismann, 2000).

Different institutions were established by decision of the Zionist Congress; the World Zionist Organization (WZO) in 1897, "the Jewish Colonial Trust"⁵ in 1899, the Keren kayemeth Le'Israel (Jewish national Fund)⁶ in 1901, the Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal⁷ in 1920.

⁵ The Jewish Colonial Trust (JCT) was incorporated in London by Theodore Herzl on March 20, 1899 as a financial instrument for the Zionist movement.

⁶ The Jewish National Fund was founded in 1901 in order to buy and develop land in Ottoman Palestine (later Israel) for Jewish settlement. The JNF is a quasi-governmental, non-profit organization.

⁷ Keren-Hayesod – United Israel Appeal is the central fundraising organization for Israel throughout the world (except the USA). It operates in 45 countries on every continent through 57 Campaigns under the terms of the "Keren Hayesod Law, 5716-1956" passed by the Knesset, in January 1956, and is a duly registered corporation in

In 1929, an expanded agency was established as a partnership between the ZO and non-Zionist, public Jewish groups. The newly founded Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) was established for the purpose of coordinating the works of Israeli government and viewed as a tool for mobilizing and involvement of the entire Jewish people in the building of the land. It served as the chief institution for facilitating the structural link between the state and the Jewish Diaspora. It is dedicated to cultivating Israel-Diaspora relationships and to advancing prosperity within the State of Israel. It was constituted to represent the Jewish community in the Land of Israel vis-à-vis the British Mandate authorities, foreign governments and international organizations. The representatives from Jewish Agency present in all the Jewish centers of the world provide the potential repatriates with appropriate information as well as necessary assistance for immigrating to Israel. The activities directed towards the promotion of Aliyah are one of the priority issues of the Agency (Marutyan, 2009).

The decision to found the JAFI was taken at the sixteenth Zionist Congress (Ikan, 1997). After Israel got independence, some responsibilities for certain national tasks were assigned by law both to JAFI and the WZO. The activities included absorbing and organizing immigration, resettling immigrants and housing, assisting their employment in agriculture and industry, controlling on educational and youth activities, raising funds abroad, and investing and buying land in Israel for settlers through the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet). Theoretically, the WZO was mainly responsible for political and organizational issues important to Zionists-Jewish education in the Diaspora and supervision of the Jewish National Fund-whereas the Jewish Agency's main concern was in the sphere of financial and economic activities (Gidron et al, 2006).

the State of Israel. The main goals of Keren Hayesod - UIA are the rescue of Jews from areas of distress, aliya and absorption, Jewish continuity and strengthening Israel.

But during the years many of these responsibilities have been assumed by the government, and the division of the functions made abstruse as far as duplication of efforts and bureaucratic morass in those sphere was noticeable. In 1971 the relationship between the WZO and the Jewish Agency was reestablished as part of a continuing effort in order to improve the operations of these bodies, harmonize and strengthen the ties between the state and the Diaspora. The need for this step was thought to be particularly acute after June 1967 War, the Six-Day war led to a change in mutual relations between Israel and the Diaspora. Israel requested to get stronger and the contributors wished to take a part in the responsibility for the Jewish Agency activities. Impressed by the show of support, the congress of the WZO directed the Jewish Agency to inaugurate discussions with all fund-raising institutions working for Israel. One of the main purposes of these negotiations was to establish a central framework for cooperation and harmonization between the Jewish Agency and other fund-raising groups. These discussions came in to an agreement in 1971 whereby the governing bodies of the Jewish Agency were expanded and enlarged to provide equal representation for Israeli and Diaspora Jews (Elazar, 1986).

Today the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) is a primary organizational expression of the relationship between the State of Israel and world Jewry. The Jewish Agency's task is not limited only on coordinating various fund-raising institutions but it also finances programs such as immigration and land settlement. It also coordinates and assists immigrants in matters of housing, education, social welfare, Aliyah programs and youth care as well.

Due to the 1971 rearrangement, the WZO, in terms of its functions, was separated from the Jewish Agency but still remained as a leadership. The organization was directed to continue

as the organ of the Zionist movement for the performance of Zionist programs and ideas but its operations mainly confined to the Diaspora.

After 1971, among the main functions of the WZO were Jewish education, Zionist organizational work, cultural programs, youth work, external relations, rural development, and the activities of the Jewish National Fund. For the most part, these functions were financed by funds derived from the Jewish Agency, which continued to serve as the main financial pillar of the WZO. However, because of United States tax law provisions, funds allotted for the WZO by the Jewish Agency were required to come from those collected by Keren HaYesod (Israel Foundation Fund), the agency's financial arm in countries other than the United States (<http://countrystudies.us>).

Current Developments and Programs:

Partnership 2000

Assisting immigration to Israel needs a huge portion of JAFI's budget, as far as it gives services such as pre-immigration preparation, absorption centers and resettlement program as well.⁸ JAFI accelerate numerous opportunities for direct, people-to-people encounters between Israelis and their Diaspora counterparts, and the primary vehicle for such experiences is Partnership 2000.

Partnership 2000 was created to meet the challenge of developing Israel's priority areas – the Negev, Galilee and Jerusalem, and transform the Diaspora-Israel relationship into a partnership of peers working to strengthen ties between Israel and the Jewish people. Partnership 2000 has built partnerships between more than 550 Diaspora communities in the

⁸ In order to illustrate so called activities of JAFI, refer to appendix 1, which shows the budget program of JAFI and distribution of services in 2000.

United States, Europe, Canada, South America, Australia and South Africa and 41 regions in Israel. It was created in 1994 by the United Jewish Appeal (now part of the UJC, the United Jewish Communities), the Jewish Agency for Israel and participating Jewish Federations. Partnership 2000 is the world Jewish community's direct connection to the people of Israel. It has created dynamic relationships between people and communities throughout the world and those in Israel. It's about building lasting connections between the people linked by common history and joined by common interests. Two prime challenges facing the world Jewish community addressed by Partnership 2000 are as follow:

- Developing Israel's main concern areas
- Linking Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora to promote Jewish stability

At first, most Partnership 2000 programming focused on economic development and social welfare issues. Today, the emphasis has focused on developing and strengthening relationships between Israel and Jewish people. It works on partnering global Jewish communities directly with Israeli communities-the majority of which are in national priority areas. The projects of Partnership 2000 have included developing connections in areas of community building, youth and regional development. The living bridge of Partnership 2000 has thrived on the relationships and friendships among Jewish communities. By working together, Partnership 2000 has enhanced Jewish life and Jewish continuity, promoted tolerance and mutual understanding, and developed greater economic ties that have been mutually beneficial both in Israel and different countries. Partnership 2000 program is one of the successful programs which bonds between Jewish communities worldwide and communities in Israel (<http://www.jafi.org.il>).

It is clear that the other successful Jewish Agency-related attempt since the establishment of the State, to strengthen Israel-Diaspora relations is Project Renewal. This project program was

not only proven itself in connection with urban revitalization in Israel, but also it has given us the entire clue for what can be achieved in the Israel-Diaspora relations. Twinning of Diaspora and Israel communities can be named as one of the key policies of the project Renewal Model which led to its success. To be more comprehensive it would be more interesting to study the programs in more details:

1. ALIYA AND KLITA⁹: Since becoming state in 1948, Israel has absorbed several million immigrants. Getting settled, learning the Hebrew language, finding a job and gaining acceptance within the community can be considered as the key elements in Klitah. Getting settled, learning the Hebrew language, finding a job and gaining acceptance within the community and the state are the key elements in Klitah. Klita is the formal responsibility of the Ministry of Immigration (Misrad Haklita) and immigrants under the law of return are taught Hebrew and provided with houses in Merkazei Klita¹⁰ and offered employment and job.

In Aliya from free countries the communities from which the olim come have a huge responsibility for their successful aliya and klita. They take a responsibility for enabling the transition with a minimum amount of conflict to occur as far as different people come from different cultural backgrounds. All these plans are practical by cooperation of local communities with the Jewish Agency Project Renewal Department. With regard to olim from countries of oppression where there are no local communities to provide them with support, twinings arranged with Diaspora communities in the free world provide similar services in conjunction with the Jewish Agency and the government. It can said that the aliya and klita system is a kind of quadripartite partnership which has worked so well in Project Renewal, the Jewish Agency,

⁹ Absorption; social and economic integration of immigrants

¹⁰ The *merkazei klita*, or absorption center, was developed in the late 1960s to accommodate the increased immigration that occurred between 1969 and 1975 of relatively well-off and educated Jews from the West, particularly from the United States.

involving the Diaspora community, the immigrant associations in Israel, and the Israeli government. Expanding its programs, depending mostly on where you are coming from, there are two main ways to make aliyah in Israel. The best way to make aliyah is through Nefesh Be Nefesh. It started functioning from 2002, with the main idea of revitalizing North American Aliyah. Nefesh Be Nefesh will also assist Olim financially so that the burden of making aliyah is lessened. Another way to make Aliyah is through the Jewish Agency of Israel which is the original aliyah department. Their main activities range from helping Olim from third world countries such as Ethiopia or enemy states. Paying the olim for their ticket to Israel, they help them to find a place to live and help them throughout the entire aliyah process. Since aliya is a never ending project, so we can expect the Jewish Agency to continue to be active for the indefinite future and it should be structured accordingly (Elazar, 1986)

2. YOUTH ALIYA:

As mentioned earlier Youth Aliya (in Hebrew, *Aliyat ha-Noar*), is another highly successful program provided by Jewish Agency which played significant role in absorbing Diaspora returning youth. This program runs by the Zionist movement to rescue Jewish youth in Europe by sending them to Palestine and providing them with vocational training. Starting function from 1933, Youth Aliyah was originally founded in order to rescue youth from Nazi Germany. Youth Aliya continued its aid and rescue activities, as well. Children arriving illegally in Palestine under the sponsorship of Youth Aliya were taken to live at well-established youth villages and education institutions. Youth Aliyah programs, mostly financed by the Jewish Agency, have helped integrate more than 300,000 children into Israeli society.

This program is implemented through two distinct directions; one by establishing youth centers which are daytime programs for disadvantaged youth who remain at home with their

families and the second is introducing some programs in order to bring Diaspora youth to Israel to study for limited time periods. Still today Youth ALiyah villages continue to play a vital role in absorption of young newcomers to Israel (Elazar, 1986).

As mentioned earlier this is another successful program through which Israel took up young generation. The secret of Youth Aliyah's success over the past years has been the organization's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, while keeping its essential recipe of an excellent education in a warm and nurturing residential environment.

3. Education

The Jewish Agency has different responsibilities in the field of education:

1. Providing an Israel experience for Diaspora youth which has a strong effect on their Jewish identity and knowledge and encourage them staying in Israel
2. Assisting in improvement of the Jewish education in the Diaspora communities.

The institutions themselves are major elements in the structure of Israel-Diaspora relations. So with regard to the first point it can be said that planning for higher education is not only in the interests of the Jewish Agency but it is also in the interests of the state council which lead to the way of increasing Israel-Diaspora relations and acting as a vehicle for fostering Israel-Diaspora cooperation. Every Israeli university is governed by a board of trustees with faculties and student bodies equally diverse which obtain their capital and operating budgets from Jews all over the world. With regard to the second point, the Jewish Agency has its own impact on institutions of higher education in Israel. The Agency's Jewish Education Committee involves at work exploring the possibilities of increasing the Israel experience. And finally in regard to third point, it can be said that having been supported by funds and bonds of the State of Israel, the Jewish

Agency has become involved significantly in Jewish education in the Diaspora in recent years. As mentioned earlier, planning for educational system is not limited to the Jewish Agency only, since local communities play a major role in this sphere as well. However where there are no possibilities for the local community, Jewish Agency do not involve in operating schools in Diaspora communities. It is also clear that the Jewish Agency has a role to play, mainly in the smaller communities, for example in providing back-up assistance, whether in the form of teaching personnel, or in other similar areas (Elazar, 1986).

Diaspora Interface with Israel's Public Sector

As mentioned earlier, much of the responsibility for negotiating the relationship between the Israeli polity and the Diaspora rests on JAFI, historically a quasi-governmental agency. Some of the activities of government bodies interfacing with Diaspora are as follow: the "Israel House" a forum where cultural and social events are conducted. This program, with the help of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, seeks to facilitate the final return and integration of Israeli nationals abroad. Similarly, the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport coordinates cultural and sports exchanges with Diaspora communities. And finally the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor targets the Diaspora to promote trade and investment in Israel through its commercial attaches at key diplomatic missions. One of the very well publicized and well-known ways for Jews abroad to invest in Israel is by purchasing the legendary "Israel Bond". The sale and repurchase of Israel bonds are done under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. Buying and purchasing the bonds and doing financial investment, strengths the link between Israel and Diaspora all over the world. Israel once again played the central role in Judaism, but instead of

just encouraging immigration it tried to help strengthening the Jewish community in the Diaspora (Schwartz, 2008).

Large scale immigration and positive integration serve as a powerful incentive to Israel's development and progress in all areas (Lav, 2009). By organizing repatriation the Israeli authority strengthens not only Homeland-Diaspora relations but uses it as a tool for regulating problems existing in the country. For example the provision of Jewish repatriation played a substantial role in the development of different spheres such as science and education. By encouraging repatriation the Israeli government strives to contribute to the improvement of national defense and security (Veranyan, 2005).

So we can conclude that during several decades before and after the establishment of the State of Israel the notion of "the unification of all the Jews in the world" was in the basis of their ideological, political and social development. By organizing repatriation the Israeli authority strengthens not only Homeland-Diaspora relations but uses it as a tool for regulating problems existing in the country. So during the decades much has been done for implementing the successful policies on State-Diaspora issues. Marking the immigration and absorption of more than 3,000,000 new immigrants over the 60 years since the State of Israel was established, the Jewish agency and the Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption declared May 5 as "Aliyah Day 2008", which can serve as a proof of being successful State in implementing relevant policies on State-Diaspora issues.

Case of Armenia

Throughout the history, Armenia's strategic location was the reason for many empires and clans to fight over to dominate. Tölöyan states that during the early 11th century, Armenian people resided in a homeland that was six times bigger than today's Armenian Republic. After numerous devastating occupations, Armenians today find themselves dispersed around the world and organized as Diaspora communities. For several centuries, the Armenian nation has been formed on interconnected communities without an umbrella government of its own. That is why immigration to other countries and continents became a part of the Armenian population's destiny. As Minassian states, the geography determined the history in the Armenian case (Minassian, 2000)

Armenian Diaspora is one of the transnational communities that practically fits all of the Diaspora definitions given by numerous authors up until now. Forced separation from the homeland, the evolution of the national sentiments over time, and idea of the return, and concerns about the homeland's future are just some of the various issues that are attributed to the concept of Diaspora and it appears that the Armenian Diaspora fits all most all the criteria (Baser et al, 2009). Being more conscious, it can be said that the Armenian Diaspora was formed throughout the centuries as a result of the loss of Armenian statehood and establishment of foreign powers, mass killings of Armenians and Genocide of 1915, in result hundreds of thousands were displaced from their homes and joining Armenian communities in Georgia, Syria, Lebanon, Greece, France, USA, Argentina, Iran as well as other countries.

For the Diasporas there is always the issue of returning to the homeland. The idea of possible return affords them a legitimate risk in the way they interfere with homeland policies. The perception of a "secure homeland", a place to return in time, plays a very important role in

Diaspora behavior. Demmers contributes to the debate on this problem: "...the dilemma of wanting to return home and not wanting to give up relatively secure future, which creates a fear for peace among Diaspora communities" (Demmers, 2007, 15).

Diaspora Institutions:

Preserving national identity is one of the main issues that Armenian Diaspora deal with during the whole its history. After the late 1970's and 80', by the huge inflow of Armenian immigrants to Armenia the Armenians of Diaspora tried to establish strong bonding features within the community which contributed to increasing the awareness of national identity. In order to do that, Armenians would establish schools, churches, cultural homes and pan-Armenian organizations. For example the Armenian-Americans created several organizations and networks such as unions, cultural groups, political parties, charities etc. Furthermore, they took advantage of already-existing institutions such as the Armenian Apostolic Church. After the independence of Armenia, relations between Armenia and the Diaspora intensified and reached a new level of cooperation.

Among the Diasporan institutions, the most prominent one which have played and still plays a significant role in the preservation of the Armenian identity in the Diaspora and in insuring rights for Armenians is the Armenian Apostolic Church , to which the absolute majority of the Diasporan Armenians adhere. The Armenian Church through its branches abroad is considering as the oldest diasporic institution, which played and continuous to play various roles in the transnational environment, including mobilization of humanitarian assistance and coordination of charitable activities. As Pattie explains, "...today the church remains a central symbol in the Diaspora and in the republic where it plays a powerful role in the new polities of

nation-building and Diaspora networking” (Pattie, 5). Unfortunately, during the Cold War, the Armenian Churches of the Diaspora were caught up in the political and ideological altercation, with some dioceses refusing to acknowledge the supreme spiritual and administrative authority of the Holy See of Ejmiatzin and affiliating themselves with the See of the Great House of Cilicia in Antilias, Lebanon . This has negatively affected the effectiveness of pan-Armenian activities of the Armenian Church in the Diaspora, and it can ultimately be addressed by the reunification of two Sees of the Armenian Apostolic Church. In addition to the Armenian Apostolic Church, most Armenian communities have a number of practicing Armenian Catholics and Evangelicals (Concept on Armenia-Diaspora Partnership development).

Other pan-Diasporan organizations which have been of primary importance in the development of Armenia-Diaspora partnership include the political parties, such as Social Democratic Hnchak Party (SDHK – Hnchaks), Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF – Dashnaks), Ramkavar Azatakan Party (Ramgavars), cultural groups, such as New Generation (Nor Serund), Tekeyan Unions, and youth groups – Armenian Youth Federation, Armenian General Athletic Union (Homentmen), Armenian Athletic Association (Homenmen). Compatriotic unions are also widely represented in the Diaspora. Charity and relief foundations and endowments played an important role in the Diaspora as well; the most prominent among them are the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and Armenian Relief Society (HOM) (Concept on Armenia-Diaspora Partnership development).

Many argue that preserving wide-ranging and strong relations with the homeland is vital for the Armenian Diaspora to maintain its own ethnic and national identity. However, keeping these strong relations was not always easy, especially when Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. During Soviet times, Diaspora Armenians and the Soviet Armenians had to live in a sort

of separation since all contacts between them were controlled and programmed by the central Soviet government (Melkonian, 2002).

In that regard, Armenian General Benevolent Union aimed at preservation and promotion of the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs. The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) is one of the largest single philanthropic institutions with an admirable history going back to the early 1900s. After the earthquake of 1988, most of the philanthropic organizations operating in the US integrated their efforts by creating the United Armenian Fund (UAF)¹¹, which provided about half a billion USD in humanitarian assistance to Armenia since its inception in 1989. Through its extensive global network of 75 chapters, it claims to be the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Another independent, non-governmental and non-sectarian organization is Armenian Relief Society. It started serving the social and educational needs to Armenian all over the world since 1910. It is mainly seeking to preserve the cultural identity of the Armenian nation and show humanitarian help to all communities in distress.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union a whole new set of national organizations and unions were established across CIS. There are different public, charitable, cultural, educational, youth, sport and other different organizations in almost all Diaspora communities. But unfortunately there are no representative bodies that could act on behalf of the Diaspora as a whole.

The priorities of the Diaspora include the preservation of the Armenian identity through preservation of the Armenian language, culture and Armenian family as well as creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust. Strong and comprehensive relations with Armenia help guarantee

¹¹ The UAF includes the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Armenian Relief Society, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America and the Lincy Foundation.

strong Diaspora; these relations reached a qualitatively new level after 1991 independence. Since 1991, Armenia-Diaspora partnership has developed in several limited areas. The All Armenia Fund was founded as a big fundraiser for social and physical infrastructure rehabilitation. Establishment of the “Hayastan” All-Armenian Fund in 1992 brought together many Diaspora Armenians, whose donations have been directed at strengthening of the newly created Nagorno Karabagh Republic. For the discussion of the Diaspora issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia held “Armenia-Diaspora” pan-Armenian conferences in Armenia. The first one was held in 1992, then 2002 and 2006 (Concept on Armenia-Diaspora Partnership development).

Armenia has always been the homeland and the haven for all Armenians. Therefore, the independent statehood of Armenia, and protection of the political, social and economic potential should be the axis of Armenia-Diaspora partnership development. In that regard, in 2008 the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia, a body of executive power, was established by the decree of the President of RA. It was established to strengthen Diaspora-Armenia relations, develop their partnership and promote repatriation. Preservation of the national identity, the reveal and use of the Armenian potential, repatriation can be listed as Ministry of Diaspora’s main policies. In regard to repatriation the Minister of Diaspora, Ms. Hakobyan, stated that it does not certainly mean only physical repatriation. It primarily means developing spiritual and psychological ties with the homeland, which she considers just as important (www.mindiaspora.am).

In order to implement the policies, different programs were initiated and held by the Ministry of Diaspora of RA. Among them “Ari Tun” (Come Home) program was one of the most successful. For the first time “Ari Tun” program was successfully launched in 2009 with visits of over 700 Diaspora Armenian youth from 26 countries. “Ari Tun” program aims to

contribute to the preservation of the Armenian identity, and the establishment of a unified network of communication between the youth. Among the main objectives of this program are introducing the Diaspora Armenian youth to the Armenian history, culture, public life, religion and family traditions; building strong relations with the Homeland; reinforcing national self-determination and establishing friendly relations between youth of Armenia and the Diaspora. Accepting the Diaspora as a reliable and effective bridge for world integration, the Ministry of Diaspora of RoA held programs designed for different Armenian communities. It is organizing different pan-Armenian forums and professional conferences with the purpose of consolidating and effectively using the potential of all Armenians in such spheres as; science, education, economy, culture, etc. (www.mindiaspora.am).

One of the main priorities of the Ministry of Diaspora is the development of the Repatriation Law. The need for such a Law was realized following the recent inflow of refugees from Iraq and Georgia, most of whom were ethnic Armenians.

As mentioned earlier, into its third year, the ministry has notably supported programs encouraging participation of the Diaspora in Armenia's life. Its activities often seem to fall under cultural or foreign-affairs objectives.

Repatriation is important for different parts of Diaspora for not being subjected to speedy acculturation and assimilation as well as it is rather important for solving the demographic as well as territorial-strategic issues for the Homeland. In that regard today the Ministry of Diaspora of RA underlines the role and the importance of having a Law on Repatriation in Armenia. It is of great value to be able to take lessons and implement policies successfully applied there. For the monitoring of the Armenia-Diaspora partnership development public policy the priority direction is given to the establishment and development of an institutional system ensuring

reliable, compatible and integrated information and support to the development of the monitoring and evaluation capacities of the Armenian non-government sector.

“I should like to see any power in this world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people whose history is ended, whose wars have been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, whose literature is unread, whose music is unheard, and whose prayers are no more answered. Go ahead, destroy this race! Destroy Armenia! See if you can do it. Send them from their homes into the desert. Let them have neither bread nor water. Burn their homes and churches. Then, see if they will not laugh again, see if they will not sing and pray again. For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia.”

William Saroyan

Comparative Analysis

For the Jewish people, their restoration at the historic homeland in our times and the establishment of a real and solid state was probably necessary, both for the pure physical survival of many Jews, and for the survival of the Jewish people as a people. The reestablishment of the Jewish state has brought about a period of re-constitution for the Jewish people as a whole. Hence the Jewish people today are more involved in constitutional design, not only of their state, but also of State-Diaspora relations through the State of Israel and its institutions and the individual Diaspora country communities.

We have learned that in the case of Israel, a meaningful relationship with Diaspora Jews is contingent upon cultivating a sense of partnership with them based on equality and mutual respect, which requires empowering those with whom we are interacting. And such a sense of cooperation and responsibility for a common future can be developed through the structure of a pan-Diaspora agency. In the case of Israel the WZO offers one model for such a body, with branches in more than 30 different countries. There is an ongoing contact between those branches and the central office throughout the year. Unfortunately the absence as well a need for this type of organization is apparent in Armenia.

A decision to repatriate is not an easy decision which can take overnight. Although providing a comprehensive framework for the maintenance of Jewish culture and civilization was a problem but developing the Jewish national movement with the aim of restoration of Jewish statehood in Eretz Israel, and functioning different Diaspora institutions like the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization and the Joint Distribution Committee provided this framework for the State of Israel. Each organization has its own functions and duties but it does not mean they have separate aims. All they have done is to give constitutional design to State-

Diaspora relations and bring tight connections between State and the Diaspora. In the case of Israel the model of WZO might prove to be instructive. It is not the State of Israel, but the Zionist Congress that convenes in Jerusalem and determines policy of the Zionist movement. Although most of the delegates to the Congress come from the Diaspora, but many of the Congress resolutions are meaningless unless acted upon by the Government of Israel. So obviously there is a close cooperation between the two bodies. Further expressing the intimate relationship between the WZO and the Government is the Covenant between the two that is embedded in Israeli Law, which is not visible in Armenian case. The advantage of such an arrangement is that even as representatives of the Diaspora are empowered by the autonomous nature of their organization, they recognize that it is only through the special relationship that they enjoy with the Government of the Homeland that their efforts can be meaningful.

Israeli experience in Diaspora youth affairs can serve as a good example for the Armenian youth as well. Over the past few years, the WZO has placed an ever-increasing emphasis on developing the “next generation”. Initiatives in this area include: 1) the creation of regional networks of young Jews that facilitate programming, social interaction, and leadership training; 2) development of informal ongoing experiential study and culture circles that take place in the homes of the participants. One can see that similar activities are conducted in Armenia as well. Different programs are developed and implemented by the Ministry of Diaspora of RA aimed at tightening the ties between the Armenian youth spread all over the world. As discussed earlier, since 2009 the Ministry of Diaspora has been organizing “Ari Tun” program for periodic visits of Diaspora Armenian youth to Armenia to get them acquainted with the traditions of the Armenian family, establish contacts with fellow youth in Armenia, get acquainted with the interests of their compatriots, and learn lessons of patriotism in Armenia.

Another program is aimed at supporting Master's students of Diaspora Studies for organizing, preparing and training specialists in Diaspora studies. By this program, the ministry supports the development of knowledge in Diaspora Studies such areas as religion, culture, history and society in different Diaspora Armenian communities.

In order to make sure the effective implementation of the Armenian-Diaspora partnership it is necessary to develop and introduce an assessment system for the project implemented within the policy and their impact on the Armenia-Diaspora partnership. With this purpose, a concept paper on monitoring and evaluation system were developed, report forms of the public administration bodies of the Republic of Armenia and the subsequent requirements are also developed and submitted to the government of Armenia for approval. These activities will allow give realistic assessments to the development of the Armenian-Diaspora partnership and will serve as a basis for introducing amendments and change in the priority directions, objectives and programs. The priority directions for the monitoring and evaluation of the Armenia-Diaspora partnership development public policy are: elaboration, introduction and development of the monitoring and evaluation of the Armenia-Diaspora partnership development policy, establishment and development of an institutional system, compatible, quality and integrated information, support to the development of the monitoring and evaluation capacities of the Armenian non-governmental sector.

Taking all these into consideration, it would be better to say that Armenia needs to have a well designed policy and all those policies should be examined carefully and be compared with the actual policies and activities of other successful governments like Israel.

Recommendations and Conclusion

It is well-known fact that Diaspora is the comparative advantage of Armenia. The idea of strengthening Homeland-Diaspora relations has been one of the major issues of all times both in Armenia and the Diaspora. Such issues as preservation of the Armenian national identity, strengthening of the Armenian family, repatriation and others need to be addressed to further foster Armenia-Diaspora relations.

Based on the analysis of the findings, international practice and past lessons the paper gives some recommendations that will hopefully provide useful suggestions and guidance in developing reintegration policies.

First of all if Armenia wants to be in an accurate path of State-Diaspora relationship, it needs to have a well designed policy for State-Diaspora relations and the policies should be carefully examined and be compared with the actual policies and activities of successful governments like Israel, and others. Government policies are usually set forth in the legislation and its proper implementation mechanisms. The paper studies the case of Israel as a success story the lessons of which can be applied to the Armenian reality.

One can conclude that during the decades much has been achieved through the successful organization of repatriation and integration policies in Israel. The united activities of various organizations in Israeli case led them to be more successful in State-Diaspora relationship. Unfortunately, until now these experience is not adopted by the Armenian organizations, which lack unity in their missions and actions. Thus the establishment of all-Armenian umbrella organization to represent Armenian Diaspora organizations and the State, aiming to unite them,

is very important. As the Minister Hakobyan stated in one of her speeches, we must combine efforts to create the Homeland of our dreams and all these efforts owe to unity.

As mentioned earlier, since its establishment among the main functions of the Ministry of Diaspora is to develop policies on repatriation. So it is recommended to designate a lead agency to implement those policies and oversee integration issues.

Another important aspect that should be taken into consideration is further development of youth projects. As done by Israel, Armenia should place more emphasis on developing the new generation which can strengthen the relations between Diaspora youth and the State.

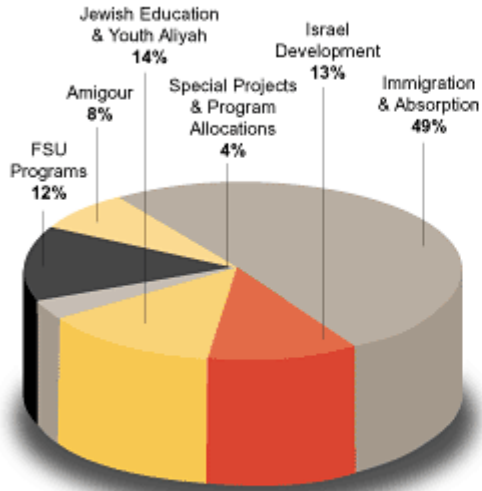
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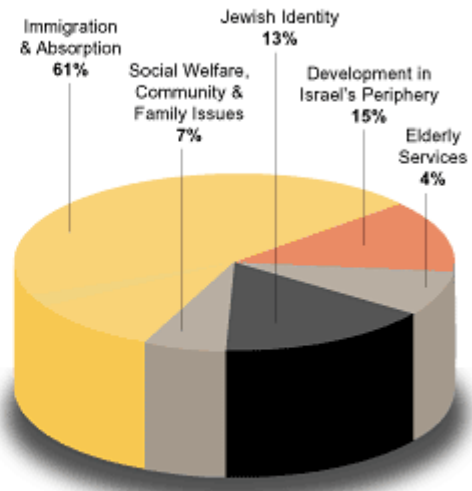
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APPENDIX 1:



2000 JAFI PROGRAM BUDGET: \$333,591,000*
*including special rescue budget.



2000 JAFI DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES