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Evaluation reports

1986-1999

A meta-analysis

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Preface

The ALMAYA non-profit organization for the advancement of the Ethiopian family and child in Israel was founded in 1990 as a continuation of the project funded and operated from 1985 by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation for Ethiopian immigrants in Beersheba (who emigrated to Israel in ‘Operation Moshe’). Throughout the years of ALMAYA’S work, the Foundation supported and assisted financially in the operation of the organization’s programs. As part of this support – and part of its worldview – the Foundation demanded that a continuous and ongoing evaluation process be maintained that would accompany its work. In this way the various ALMAYA programs¹ were operated together with the constant accompaniment of an evaluation team (the teams of evaluators changed over the years). At the end of each year of activity, a concluding evaluation report was compiled by the evaluation team and submitted to the organization. In 1997-1998, the Foundation conditioned its continued support of ALMAYA’s activities upon a process of disseminating the organization’s activities and its worldview throughout the country. The Foundation’s financial support was directed towards ALMAYA’s dissemination setup that also included the operation of the National Center for Instruction, Development of Educational Resources and Dissemination from 1997 and up to 2001, at a reduced financial scale.

As the process neared its conclusion, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation sought to introduce a broad and in-depth evaluation process with regard to what was happening in the organization and the programs it was operating. As part of this process it was also decided to use the evaluation reports that had been written during the years of ALMAYA’s work as they could provide information on the processes, the changes and the problems with which ALMAYA had to cope.

The present report constitutes a summary of a meta-evaluation and is based on evaluation reports written by the evaluation teams between 1985 and 1999.

¹ In the early years the non-profit organization did not exist, but only programs and projects. The acronym “ALMAYA” came into being in 1998 to avoid confusion and a multiplicity of names. Throughout this report I shall use “ALMAYA” for the years prior to its inception as well.

Introduction

This report seeks to learn about the various processes, changes and problems with which ALMAYA had to deal in the past, and those it has to deal with today. It is based upon evaluation reports written by the various evaluation teams that accompanied the ALMAYA programs between 1985-1999. Before presenting the questions and spheres on which the meta-evaluation focused, it is important to note the difficulties and constraints that were part of the task of analyzing the various reports.

The evaluation teams changed several times in the course of the years of ALMAYA's activities. The change was accompanied by changes in the modus operandi and in the different emphases placed on the various aspects of the organization's work. The various changes were observed, described, comprehended and analyzed by different evaluation personnel and in different ways.

The evaluation questions themselves changed from year to year and dictated the frames of reference and analysis employed by the different evaluation teams. The changes in the evaluation questions derived from three principal factors. First, changes deriving from various changes or emphases in ALMAYA's activities. In recent years, for example, the evaluation dealt with questions of disseminating ALMAYA programs, while in the 80s the dissemination of the programs did not even appear on the agenda. Second, the expansion of ALMAYA's activities raised new questions and evaluation spheres. The "Bama'aleh" project², for example, which deals with children who have dropped out of the education system, has been active only since 1996 and therefore the evaluation questions relating to and deriving from it could not have been raised earlier. And third, in numerous instances the evaluation reports themselves constituted the factor that marked the important and urgent evaluation questions for the coming year of activity, and alternatively, the questions that could be assumed and whose examination could be reduced.

The numerous changes that occurred in the evaluation questions guided the evaluation teams which have been active over the years in various reference and examination

² Unlike the majority of ALMAYA programs, the "Bama'aleh" project is operated among children of primary school age who have either dropped out or are in the process of dropping out of school.

directions, and hence to changing answers and reference subjects. The majority of the evaluation reports do not mention the evaluation questions on which the evaluators focused so it is therefore extremely difficult to know which subjects are missing from the reports and whether they were not examined because they were not sufficiently weighty, or due to other reasons. Therefore, we cannot know whether the changes in the questions, subjects, problems, conceptions and the different aspects of ALMAYA's work, as these are discussed in the evaluation reports, derive from a change that occurred in the way the evaluation teams addressed them, or whether they represent some essential change. This question remains open and cannot be answered by the reports themselves, so it is therefore important to bear it in mind when reading this report.

The report is in three parts through which the processes and changes undergone by ALMAYA in the course of its years of activity are examined. The first part examines the subjects that were discussed and examined during the organization's years of activity and the changes that occurred in them over that time. In the second part the problems with which ALMAYA and its evaluation teams had to deal are examined, and the third part will examine the conception of the organization's effectiveness as this arises from the programs' modus operandi, their objectives, the various problems within the organization, etc. It would seem that addressing these three aspects will enable the multidimensional learning of the processes and changes that have taken place over the fifteen years of ALMAYA's activity.

The Subjects Discussed in the Reports

(a) Changes in the reports' subjects over the years:

During the years of ALMAYA's activity changes can be discerned in the subjects discussed in the evaluation reports and their centrality. The importance of subjects that were central in the early years of ALMAYA's activities became diminished and sometimes even vanished completely, while new subjects were put on the agenda.

ALMAYA's first years (1986-1988) are characterized by progress in a variety of intra-organizational subjects that were part of an attempt to study and describe the Ethiopian community in Beersheba in which ALMAYA was active, and by a description of and relating to the way in which cooperation with the community (that was frequently problematic) was conducted.

In the years that followed (1989-1995), the evaluation subjects focused on the presentation of the programs, the difficulties in their operation, the counselors' work and parental involvement. Although intra-organizational subjects and cooperation with the community were still discussed, their discussion was diminished in the extreme. The subject of dissemination began to be discussed in 1993 but appeared only minimally and in a different way from that which would appear later. In recent years (1996-1999), discussions were continued on the counselors' work in ALMAYA programs, parental involvement and operational difficulties. To these were added a more in-depth study of the subjects of the dissemination of ALMAYA programs, inter-organizational contacts and work, and also in-house organizational aspects that mainly derived from program dissemination.

It is interesting to discover that over the years of ALMAYA'S work there is an almost total absence of the subject of relations between the ALMAYA board and the organization's executive committee. This subject is conspicuous by its absence because the working relations and contacts between these two bodies have been part and parcel of ALMAYA'S work throughout its existence. Relations between these two bodies are very important because of their centrality

to and influence on ALMAYA. In addition, we know that relations between the two bodies were complex and were even often accompanied by tension and mutual opposition. Yet despite this, the subject was not examined or discussed in the various reports on a permanent, systematic or in-depth basis.

(b) Changes in the significance of the subjects over the years:

In parallel with the variances between the reports from the standpoint of the subjects therein, variances in the significance of the subjects that recur over the years can also be seen. This variance in significance is also evidence of the processes of change that took place in the organization and the state of its programs. To clarify this, several central subjects and their changing significance will be presented, as these appeared in the reports from different years.

1. Intra-organizational aspects

Throughout the years the evaluation teams that accompanied the organization's work related to intra-organizational aspects and subjects. The centrality of these subjects and their significance varied over the years.

During the first years of ALMAYA's activities (1986-1988), discussion focused on the tensions created in the course of the programs' operation between staff from the community and those who were not. Misunderstandings resulting from cultural differences and tensions between staff from the community who belonged to various groups within the community, impinged on the organization's work during those years.

Similarly, the executive committee was characterized by personal feuds that impaired its ability to work in a businesslike and efficient manner. A further expression of cultural differences and tensions that were created in their wake is the organization's degree of autonomy in recruiting and activating staff, and also in their dismissal. In this context various pressures exerted on the organization's executive were noted during the years under discussion. These pressures came from staff who were members of the community and related to the employment or dismissal of these staff members, against the background of personal relationships and commitments between the members of the

community. ALMAYA's early work was characterized by complex struggles and tensions until it succeeded in employing professional considerations as the deciding criterion.

Additional subjects discussed during these years were definition of roles, authorities and the working routine of bodies and individuals within the organization. Thus, for example, the authorities and working routine of the steering and executive committees were presented as being somewhat problematic, partial and obscure. The work of the steering committee was irregular as was the work of the professional panels.

During the later years (1988-1993), the content of the intra-organizational subjects changed and focused more on the functioning of the office holders in the ALAMAY programs, and also on the functioning of the professional and planning teams. The factors influencing the joint work of the professional team, the work of the administrative team, the change in the professional standard of the staff were all discussed in parallel with the development and institutionalization of ALMAYA, and also the habituation or routine processes of the programs. Also presented were the training and instructional processes of the programs' staff and the dynamics existing between the teams of counselors who were from the community and those who were not. In this context, questions relating to the empowerment of ALMAYA staff who were members of the community were also discussed.

In recent years (1996-1999) the intra-organizational subjects dealt with the training given to the program leaders by the ALMAYA staff, the teamwork of the counselors in the programs, and the changes taking place within the organization as a result of the centrality of the dissemination process and its ramifications. In the matter of the changes that occurred in the wake of the dissemination, subjects were discussed that touched upon the lack of sufficient role definition or the expansion of roles, and the need to draw a distinction between roles as a consequence of the process. Also presented and discussed were the authorities and working routine of bodies and individuals in the organization, such as the dissemination team whose work was presented as partial, non-permanent and irregular. As noted earlier, these subjects had been

discussed in the early years of ALMAYA's work but the discussion had been very limited. In contrast, in the course of the later years of the organization's work these subjects were extensively discussed and addressed in depth by both the evaluators and the ALMAYA staff.

In conclusion, we can say that in the course of the first years of ALMAYA's activity the main subjects that preoccupied its people and their activities mandated looking inward at the organization in order to define its identity and the scope of its work (determining professional autonomy, defining and learning its programs' target audience, mutual familiarization between the staff who were members of the community and those who were not, etc.) In contrast, during the later years of the organization's work, discussion focused on the working techniques, practices and routines required for fulfilling its role and achieving its aims. During the same period the organization also dealt with processes of redefining various aspects of its identity as a result of the dissemination process, such as redefining roles and the creation of new roles that reflected the organization's new objectives.

2. Difficulties in operating the programs

The operational difficulties encountered by ALMAYA have changed over the years. In the organization's early years (1986-1990), the difficulties were mainly connected with the recruitment of staff from the community for filling both senior and junior positions, which hindered the programs' operation. Professional support counselors who were members of the community encountered hostility and strong feelings of jealousy from the community. This made their work in the programs and their willingness to continue extremely difficult. It also placed obstacles in the way of ALMAYA's ability to recruit additional counselors to work in the organization's programs. Furthermore, ALMAYA had to cope with unruly behavior and serious disciplinary problems among the children participating in the programs. The limited and temporary physical conditions also constituted a serious difficulty.

In the later years of the programs' operation (1994-1999), operational difficulties as a subject for discussion were accorded a more limited place in

the evaluation reports. The operational difficulties that were discussed dealt with subjects that were essentially in-principle and lay at the foundations of the ALMAYA programs. Thus, for example, the difficulty of the counselors in wide use of the language in the course of their work was presented, as was that of their conducting informed instruction of a specific subject or game. In conclusion, in the first years of the organization's work the focus was on its difficulties in the practical operation of its programs and with coping with the unique characteristics of the groups with which it worked. In later years, the focus shifted to dilemmas and difficulties that derive mainly from the theoretical positions at the basis of the organization's programs, its socio-educational worldview and the difficulty of their application.

3. Inter-organizational difficulties

The appearance of and preoccupation with these subjects are, to a certain extent, a mirror image of the intra-organizational subjects. We can say in brief that in the first years of ALMAYA's work the preoccupation with inter-organizational matters was certainly limited in comparison with that of intra-organizational subjects, and this gradually became extended over the years together with the relative reduction of intra-organizational matters.

In the first years of the organization's work (1986-1989), addressing inter-organizational matters was mainly focused on the absence of these relations, the need for them and the insufficient contribution of the few contacts that had been established in various ways. Relations discussed were those with the ministries of immigrant absorption and education, relations that in fact did nothing to promote the organization's programs and activities. In contrast with this, a number of positive and fruitful relations were noted in Beersheba between the organization and the community's social workers. In other words, inter-organizational relations at the national establishment level during this period were almost nonexistent, while at the local level there was a lot of room for maintaining fruitful relations of this kind. Despite the preoccupation with this subject, no attempt was made by the evaluation teams to examine and understand the reasons behind the maintaining of relations at the local level

and the reasons for the failure and obstruction of the possibility of relations at the national establishment level.

During the later years of the organization's work (1996-1999), a more significant attempt was made by the evaluation teams to analyze and conceptualize the mechanisms that enabled or prevented the maintaining of inter-organizational cooperation in different forms and at different levels, both local and national-establishment. The evaluation teams sought to learn about the character of the relations, the pattern of the relations formed, the mechanisms for maintaining and advancing the relations and the forms of inter-organizational relations, etc. It is important to note that during these years, the role played by inter-organizational subjects during this period grew steadily. Their representation in the reports also increased in a way that shows the growing place they occupied in the organization's ongoing work. During these years both a change and a reverse can be noted in the types of effective relations that characterized the organization's first years. In recent years the inter-organizational relations that yielded joint work and real fruits were those that ALMAYA maintained with establishment and national bodies (the ministry of labor and welfare, Joint Israel, community centers, local councils and authorities, etc.), while at the local level the inter-organizational relations became weakened and as a consequence the joint work the organization undertook with these bodies was much diminished.

4. Program dissemination

The change that occurred over the years with regard to the subject of dissemination is substantial. During the first years of the organization's work addressing the subject of program dissemination was extremely limited. In fact the first concrete addressing of the question of program dissemination only appeared in the 1987 report, and this was about ALMAYA program dissemination in Beersheba. During this period dissemination meant obtaining local legitimacy in Beersheba for programs operated by ALMAYA. The intention of program dissemination was to broaden the scope of the program's activities in Beersheba itself and so the organization was required to establish

and maintain relations at the local level. Apart from that, there was no local addressing of the dissemination question.

From 1995 onward, the evaluation reports began to show varied addressing of the dissemination of ALMAYA's programs. As we noted in the introduction to the present report, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation conditioned its continued budgetary support for the ALMAYA programs upon their dissemination on a national scale. Hence, discussions were held during these years that dealt with ideological questions of dissemination and its ramifications, and also with practical questions. And indeed, during this period the representation of subjects related to the question of program dissemination increased. This increase was so significant that in 1997-1999 the evaluation reports mainly focused on various aspects that touched upon, affected, or derived from the dissemination process. During this period the meaning of dissemination was in the expansion of the operation of ALMAYA programs outside Beersheba, while relating to the network of relations, instruction, operation, and other aspects of the programs that both affected and shaped them.

In conclusion, the change that occurred over the years with regard to the subject of dissemination is both technical and qualitative. At the program level we can indicate a shift from program dissemination in Beersheba to dissemination on a national scale. At the qualitative level there is a shift from a general, unfocused discussion on program dissemination in Beersheba to a detailed and defined discussion on different aspects of modes of dissemination, strategies, practices, and the various characteristics that are bound up in program dissemination.

5. Relations with the community

It is important to note that the appearance of this subject was extremely common in the first years of ALMAYA's work, while in later years it was gradually reduced. In the first years (1985-1990) the question of relations with the community focused on the tensions that existed between the community and the ALMAYA team. Relations of no-confidence, a lack of

mutual understanding and feelings of frustration on the part of the programs' operators accompanied the organization's work during these years. In addition, subjects relating to the community's limited response to ALMAYA's programs also arose, as did difficulty in mobilizing the community for the organization's benefit. During these years the community's perception of ALMAYA and its programs was also examined as were the roles played by the organization (its programs) for the community.

In later years these subjects were hardly raised for discussion. When the subject of ALMAYA's relations with the community was addressed at all, it was done in a more ideological and theoretical discussion (and not examined practically) on the changes to which the ALMAYA programs would lead. Thus, for example, the implications of working with mothers were discussed as were programs that focused on the functioning of women, while leaving the men on one side, and the consequential influence on the family and the community. As noted above, the discussion of these subjects in the evaluation reports is limited in the extreme.

6. The counselors' work

The subjects dealing with the counselors' work in the ALMAYA programs can be divided into two: those that examine their concrete work and those that examine the counselors as a subject unto itself within the broad and overall context of ALMAYA, and their place in the community.

In the first years of ALMAYA's work (1985-1990), the appearance of subjects from these two groups was very limited and mainly focused on the first aspect presented, i.e., the concrete aspects of the counselors' work. Discussed were the relations established between the programs' counselors and the participating children, while addressing the various aspects that characterized these relations and the reasons behind them.

In the later years of the organization's work (1995-1999), the counselors' work was accorded greater representation both from the concrete standpoint and that of their broader, more overall role in the programs and the community. Thus subjects were raised that examine the course and character

of the counselors' instructional work in the various programs and in different situations. The counselors' interpersonal relations were examined as were relations between them and the mothers in the program, and between them and the organization's professional instructional team. Also discussed was the counselors' developing professionalism and expertise. At the same time, broader subjects were examined that dealt with the counselors' empowerment and their role as bridge builders within the community, and the part they play as role models for the program participants and the community. Finally, also discussed were subjects that examined the conception of the work model at the basis of the counselors' work, according to which they worked as professional support relying on the instruction and assistance given to them by professional workers and experts.

In conclusion, it can be stated that over the years the subject of the counselors' work has become more central for ALMAYA, from the occupational standpoint of their concrete work, the standpoint of the attempt to learn and understand the roles that are not purely instructional work, and their parallel place in the forces and relations within ALMAYA and outside it. The increased preoccupation with the subject of the counselors' work indicates an attempt by the organization, which has intensified over recent years, to conceptualize and understand the qualities and outputs of instructional work in the inter-cultural context in ideological terms..

The Questions and Problems Presented in the Reports

(a) Variance in the questions and problems over the years

Numerous changes have place in ALMAYA's work over the years in both the scope of its activity and the range of its programs. As a result of these changes and a consequence of the organization's accumulated experience, the problems and questions with which ALMAYA has had to deal have also changed in the course of time. And yet, as we shall show, not all the problems that arose were resolved despite the various efforts to deal with them.

The first years of ALMAYA's work (1985-1988) were characterized by two types of problem. The first stemmed from the primary character of the organization's work with the Ethiopian community in Beersheba and its implications. The second derived from various difficulties that arose from the actual operation of the program.

Problems deriving from the primary character of ALMAYA's work. These were related to ideological and even theoretical aspects: Difficulty in defining and maintaining ALMAYA's autonomy within the community from such diverse standpoints as the selection of staff from the community, the organization's decision on the type of programs it would operate (despite various pressures exerted by the community to change certain contents), and ALAMYA upholding its principles while operating the programs.

An attempt to define the success of the programs and their effect on the community. Questions arose in this context regarding the integration and empowerment of the community members as a manifestation of success, like integration and normative functioning in the formal education system. Also discussed were the positive changes engendered by the programs among the teams of counselors who are community members, especially those who are program counselors.

Problems regarding the lack of a defined and sufficiently consolidated ideological framework that stands at the basis of the ALMAYA programs. The lack of an

ideological framework impinged on the direction of the work towards the projected targets and aims and on the programs' expected success. It also impinged on the selection of spheres for expanding activity. Thus, for example, the deliberations that accompanied ALMAYA's work regarding questions of extending the existing activity to new groups or adding programs designed for the population already participating in the programs, were also affected by the above.

Problems linked to the need for role definition, authorities and relationships between various parts of ALMAYA, such as the steering committee, executive committee, professional team, etc.

Problems deriving from more practical aspects bound up in actually operating the programs. Among the main problems that arose and were discussed during this period were:

Behavioral problems displayed by the children who participated in the ALMAYA programs, that were characterized by violence, defacing of property, a singular lack of discipline, and seriously limited cultural skills.

Difficulties in transmitting the messages of the ALMAYA programs to the community. This was manifested in the participants' refusal to pay a token sum for their participation in the programs that did not give them a concrete return, such as food. Similarly, the opposition of a significant part of the community to the ALMAYA programs' ideology that supports non-formal education also indicates the organization's difficulty in transmitting its programs' messages to the community.

The limited and inconsistent participation of the parents that accompanied the programs in their first years. In the programs in which parental involvement was an aim in itself (the "Parents Play Corner", for example), this difficulty was especially notable.

Documentation of the work and processes that were part of operating the ALMAYA programs during this period constituted a difficulty in itself. The documentation that existed during these years was far too limited and brought about the organization's dependence on its staff. Various staff members who left

put ALMAYA into a position whereby the knowledge of the various jobs, the development of spheres of activity and processes in its programs, were unknown to the organization itself. Thus, after a staff member left, ALMAYA was required to relearn new fields of knowledge. In addition, decisions taken and the discussions that preceded them were also insufficiently documented which made the knowledge of all the bodies within the organization regarding these decisions, insupportable.

Inter-organizational cooperation during these years was mainly at the local level in Beersheba. Relations at the wider national level did not exist and ALMAYA encountered difficulty when it sought to establish such relations or reinforce the few that did exist.

During the later years of ALMAYA's work (1989-1994), the problems of the first type – the primary character of the organization's work – were reduced, and the main problems that were part of the programs related to the practical aspects stemming from the programs' operation. The principal problems that accompanied the programs during these years continued to be linked to the subject of parental involvement, that was partial and limited; difficulties in work documentation processes in the organization; and changes in the significance of the various roles (that came in the wake of changes in the scope of activities or changes in the programs themselves). Difficulties also arose regarding the instruction given to the program counselors and also that given to the programs' consumers. Problems also continued to arise regarding the difficulties in transmitting the programs' messages, which were manifested in protracted opposition to paying for participation in the ALMAYA programs, and also the very limited use of ALMAYA play-corners and various other programs by the mothers. In addition, a number of problems and difficulties arose in the inter-organizational relations that existed during these years between ALMAYA and various bodies within the local authority, and also with the non-fulfillment of obligations by ALMAYA's various partners. The documentation problems of the early years continued to appear during these years as well. The expansion of ALMAYA's activities raised new problems regarding the marketing of the organization's programs to potential partners. This marketing was partial, not

structured and insufficiently planned, and this constituted a problem in itself. A further problem noted during these years was related to the lack of application and operation of ALMAYA programs among the male population of the community. Two other central problems that appeared during these years derived from the professional team's insufficient knowledge of the community, and also from inadequate teamwork for various reasons. The professional team's knowledge of the community was found lacking in the sense of a lack of understanding of the implications of cultural differences on the type of involvement enabled by the programs, and also on the kind of cooperation expected from the programs' participants (adults and children alike). The team's work was also found wanting regarding the problems that derived in part from intercultural gaps and differences of the teams members, as well as tensions between the various office holders (who had different interests).

In the more recent years of ALMAYA's work (1995-1999), too, the majority of the problems that accompanied its work had appeared in previous years. However, the expansion of the organization's work to outside Beersheba as a result of the dissemination process brought about the appearance of additional problems and also highlighted the place of the problems that accompanied its work in previous years.

The problem of the absence of application of programs for men became even more prominent than in the past as a consequence of the expanding operation of the programs. In fact, the expansion of ALMAYA's programs and the multiplicity of the frameworks operated and conducted by it served to underscore the absence of programs and the structured addressing of the community's male population by ALMAYA. In various locations in which the programs were operated there were even requests for programs for men, but ALMAYA was unable to meet the demand and need for programs of this kind.

The professional team's knowledge of the community became, in the wake of intensified dissemination, a particularly important and central factor in program operation. Problems in this field made operation of the programs difficult in their national deployment (as a result of successful dissemination) as the team did not succeed in meeting the special needs of the various communities in locations all

over Israel. In other words, the professional team's knowledge of the community was very limited and impaired its ability to identify and define the needs of the community in different locations outside Beersheba.

Difficulties in transmitting the programs' messages arose again due to the expansion of ALMAYA's work to new audiences that it had not dealt with previously (the "Bama'aleh" program, for example) and also to new locations (the operation of a "Parents Kindergarten" in new locations outside Beersheba).

Parental involvement continued to constitute a problem due to the fact that it was limited and partial.

Instruction given to the professional support counselors and that given by the counselors themselves in the course of program operation was still beset with difficulties and problems. In parallel with the discussion on instruction problems also discussed were problems relating to the physical conditions in which ALMAYA programs and activities took place. These conditions often restricted the counselors' ability to operate the program an adequate and satisfying way.

The behavioral problems that appeared during the early years of ALMAYA's work recurred during the last years of program operation, albeit they appeared mainly in new groups and mainly among children in the "Bama'aleh" program.

The dissemination process of ALMAYA programs highlighted various problems:

The tension between the concept of the establishment that supports professional formal education, and the ALMAYA concept that places emphasis on non-formal education provided by a professional support team. This tension sometimes even prevented ALMAYA from operating its programs in various locations and from cooperating with various establishment bodies (the ministry of education, for example).

Changes that took place in the office-holder setup and gaps created between the actual office-holder setup and its formal definition and authorities, created further problems.

Problems connected with the too-partial structuring of work processes became more prominent. The need for structuring arose as a result of a significant expansion in the scope of operation of the organization's programs.

Incomprehensible decision-making processes. The processes of discussion, thinking and decision making that were in operation in the organization were characterized by partial structuring, a lack of rationalization, and sometimes their total absence. The main decision making was done in a response to needs, problems, or issues that came from the field.

The documentation of the ongoing process within the organization and its programs was also found lacking and was accompanied by numerous difficulties.

Problems deriving from the operation of the programs at various locations all over Israel in cooperation with local bodies. These problems relate to the degree of supervision and control the organization had over the way the programs were operated in the various locations, and also to their quality of operation and their maintaining and upholding the organization's principles and guidelines.

There were also problems relating to the implications of dissemination on ALMAYA and its programs (such as the change in the degree of the programs' response to specific needs in the field). Problems discussed following the expansion of dissemination deal with the issue of the financing of ALMAYA programs, and mainly with the financing of the organization's educational resource development center. In addition, the centrality of dissemination gave the issues of ALMAYA's marketing greater significance with regard to the organization's working ability and survival. A similar thing occurred with the problems and questions regarding the inter-organizational relations that accompanied the dissemination of ALMAYA. Inter-organizational relations became extremely significant for the actual ability to operate the programs all over Israel, and later for their functional quality. This obliged ALMAYA to examine, study and deal with the problems in these relations, in depth.

In conclusion, it can be said that in the course of the years of ALMAYA's work, the organization was required to deal with numerous problems. Some of these were part of its work in specific stages only, such as the problem of ALMAYA's

autonomy vis-à-vis the Ethiopian community in Beersheba, and the implications of disseminating ALMAYA's programs throughout Israel. In contrast, other questions and problems accompanied the organization during most of its years of work and obliged it to continually and procedurally cope with them. Examples of these problems are parental involvement in the programs, instruction, the professional team's knowledge of the community, inter-organizational relations, etc.

(b) Changes in the significance of the problems over the years:

Despite the recurrence of numerous problems in the course of most of ALMAYA's years of work, the significance and composition of these problems has changed.

1. Tension between the principles of the establishment's conception and those of ALMAYA: These problems started to appear with a certain co-opting of ALMAYA's programs into the establishment from 1989 onwards. However, over the years the tensions between establishment ideology and that of ALMAYA took on different guises and focused on different aspects

Between 1989-1993, the tensions were characterized by a sweeping difficulty of the establishment – the educational establishment in the main – in its recognition of and readiness to cooperate with the ALMAYA programs. Not only the educational establishment opposed the principles of the ALMAYA programs that supported the importance of non-formal education, but also local authorities and welfare services expressed doubts about the fact that the programs were operated by non-professionals, i.e., counselors from the community itself. The fact that these counselors are under the supervision of a very professional team was, in their view, insufficient. The tensions between the principles of the educational establishment that supports formal education, and the principles of ALMAYA (non-formal education), have not changed significantly over the years. Cooperation between ALMAYA and the various arms of the educational establishment has nearly always failed and was accompanied by much opposition on the part of the establishment. In contrast, work with counselors from within the community has become accepted by the establishment over the years and thus

enables the most productive cooperation between ALMAYA and the ministry of labor and welfare in various towns all over Israel. The solution to this problem was through the formation of a defined and structured training setup, with cooperation and integration between ALMAYA principles and the professional requirements of the ministry of labor and welfare. Despite the various attempts to reduce the gaps and tensions between the principles of ALMAYA and those of the establishment as much as possible, they have recurred in different forms in recent years too. The expression they were given during these years was mainly in program application at the local level in the form of operating the programs in a way that deviated from, and sometimes even contradicted, the principles of the ALMAYA programs. Thus, for example, the reduction should be noted in the individual work of professional support counselors in parallel with the broad expansion of group work that is moderated by a professional, such as a social worker, or alternatively, the too-close supervision by the professional coordinator over the work of the professional support instructor.

2. Difficulty in the absorption of the ALMAYA programs' messages: The problems and difficulties in the absorption of the ALMAYA programs' messages has been part of the organization's work throughout the years. However, the prevalence of the difficulties deriving from such partial inculcation was gradually reduced over the years in both character and expression.

In ALMAYA's first years of work (1985-1993) these difficulties in inculcating the ALMAYA programs' messages were characterized by stiff opposition by the community to ALMAYA's demands for a token payment for participation in the programs. The ALMAYA concept, which held that participation in the programs requires an undertaking by its participants in the form of a token payment, angered the community and was unacceptable to it.

The place of the child in the community, and especially the place of the toddler, has also not changed and remains relatively marginal (at least not during the first years of the program's operation). The marginality of toddlers in the community also defined the place of programs designed for this group, hence the importance of the programs designed for pre-schoolers was marginal and relatively inferior.

In addition, the emphasis placed by ALMAYA on non-formal education and its importance was also not absorbed by the community. The community's demands and expectations were for programs that utilized formal education tools, and this together with the feelings of lack of satisfaction at their absence, and the partial and limited use of the programs and activities that ALMAYA placed at the community's disposal.

In recent years (1995-1999) there have been changes in the manifestations of difficulties in inculcating the ALMAYA programs' messages. It is probable that these changes derived from a significant change that occurred in the field and which indicates the organization's success in inculcating part of its principles, such as the importance of the toddler, the centrality and importance of the pre-school age, the importance of non-formal education, etc. However, it is probable that the change in the manifestations of difficulties in inculcating the ALMAYA programs' messages derived from a change that occurred in the examination and attitude of the evaluation teams towards these questions, and not from any essential change. In recent years the discussion has focused on the difficulties in inculcating the programs, various aspects of the functioning of the participants in the programs, and not on ideological perceptions. Thus, for example, the problem of the regular participation of children at the meetings was discussed, as was the passiveness and partial participation of parents in the duty roster at the "Parents Play Corner", and the only partial understanding of parents with regard to the various office holders in the ALMAYA programs (for example, the role of the tutor in the "Big Brother" program). Similarly, ALMAYA's flexibility regarding various aspects of program operation, as well as various deviations of their participants that were often perceived as an expression of lack of seriousness and a lack of professionalism, and was not understood in accordance with the ALMAYA concept. An example of this was some mothers mistakenly interpreting the organization's flexibility and readiness to change the format of the play corner, which did not work well, and turn it into a "Little Kindergarten". Similarly perceived were changes made by the counselors in the course of running the play corner and the "Little Kindergarten" when they tried to adapt them to the group of children and mothers who were present at the time.

3. Parental involvement: Despite the fact that the importance and centrality of parental involvement is one of the basic principles of the ALMAYA programs, it appears that this subject should be discussed discretely and independently, and not as part of the previous section. This is necessary because of the ongoing and changing preoccupation with it in the course of nearly all the years of ALMAYA's work, and also because of the many changes that have taken place in it and in attitudes towards it.

Parental involvement in ALAMYA programs has been a problem since the programs' inception. Parental involvement was extremely low and partial and only met some the expectations of it and of the roles it was required to play. In the early years of operation of the ALMAYA programs (1985-1990), low involvement was manifested in the very low attendance of parents at the group activities to which they were invited. The attendance of parents for duty roster work to which they had been assigned in the framework of the "Parents Play Corner" was also very low, as was their active participation in the duty roster itself. In other words, even when parents came to perform their duty roster assignments they displayed great passiveness that deviated from the definition of the duty parent's task in the course of his/her assignment.

In more recent year (1995-1999), a change took place in the way the evaluation teams addressed the subject of parental involvement. Thus, over the years the parents' actual participation (mainly of mothers) became a fact. In other words, the question of the participation of parents in the ALMAYA programs became relatively marginal and in its place the quality of their participation and the expansion of their involvement beyond the ALAMYA programs was examined. During these years involvement in the programs themselves was insufficient, and also examined was parental involvement in additional frameworks in which they functioned, such as kindergarten parents committees, school parents committees, relationships between the parents and their children's teachers or kindergarten teachers, etc. That is to say, the criterion defining sufficient or insufficient parental involvement changed, and became more demanding of the parents. The appearance of a parent at an activity was no longer enough, and the parent was required to initiate and independently act to a greater degree in various parts of the

activity (for example, group trips and joint parent/children activities). In fact we can say that the actual change in the criterion and its increased rigidity shows significant change and improvement in parental involvement.

4. Behavioral problems of children participating in the programs: The behavioral problems of children who participated in the ALMAYA programs mainly appeared in the early years of the organization's work (1985-1989). The problems that appeared in later years (1995-1997) were mainly among children who participated in new programs whose operation had only just begun, such as "Bama'aleh", and also among children who had participated in the programs operated in new areas, like absorption centers or new towns. In addition, the behavioral problems that appeared over the various years also changed.

In the early years of ALMAYA's work the range of behavioral problems was varied and related to behavioral skills and habits in a variety of spheres. Thus we can indicate problems relating to unruly social behavior and a serious difficulty of the children to work in cooperation while sharing the means they had at their disposal in the program. The children did not know how to divide their roles in different social or role-playing games, and their common playing was extremely limited. The behavior of many children was very aggressive and involved the defacing of program property and equipment, and also damage to the environment. On numerous occasions the program's counselors encountered serious disciplinary problems, so much so that the children frequently ran away from the activity and disappeared for a time. The children's behavior in everything pertaining to eating was also unruly and lacking in permanent and regular behavioral habits. In this context it is worthy of note that during these years, there were some children who suffered from malnutrition.

During the later years (1995-1997) the number of behavioral problems displayed by the children was reduced. First, some of the problems that appeared during the early years disappeared completely. This was the case with child malnutrition and the absence of behavioral habits when eating. The vandalism that appeared during the early years was reduced and disappeared almost completely. The problems that remained were unruly behavior and lack of discipline towards the program's frameworks and its counselors.

It is important to note that what were considered to be behavioral problems during the later years of the ALMAYA programs' work did not arise at all during the early years: wild behavior, partial cooperation on the part of a number of children in various activities, and their lateness and even absence from the activities. Hence, the defining criterion of behavioral problems, like ALMAYA's expectations from the children in its programs, changed over the years and became stricter. This change possibly shows us an objective change that began in the community's population of children that brought about a further change in the criteria and the expectations of them.

5. The professional team's partial knowledge and understanding of the Ethiopian community: This problem arose over the years and appeared in relation to the gaps existing between the state of the Ethiopian community and the programs operating within it, and also in relation to various misunderstandings deriving from this partial knowledge. Here, too, the problems that derived from partial knowledge were gradually reduced with the passage of time, and this took place in parallel with changes in the expectations regarding the degree of understanding and knowledge expected from the ALMAYA professional team.

First, it should be noted that in the early years of ALMAYA's work (1985-1988) the question of the ALMAYA professional team's knowledge and understanding of the Ethiopian community and its unique characteristics neither arose nor was examined. The appearance of these problems only in the later years, after the accumulation of experience with and understanding of the community, shows that they existed previously but were not perceived as problems and were not understood. Hence the change in the first years of ALMAYA's work was the transition from the sphere of ignorance of the existence of ignorance (an absence of knowledge and understanding of the Ethiopian community) to a sphere in which ignorance of the Ethiopian community became overt. This change is very important in itself since it enables a process of clarification and a striving towards a knowledge and understanding of the Ethiopian community. In the early years, ALMAYA realized that the professional team neither knew nor understood the Ethiopian community's characteristics and problems. That is to say that during those years the lack of knowledge and understanding was sweeping and general.

Thus, for example, we can mention the instructional team's amazement and non-understanding of the committee members' passiveness during various discussions, and also the difficulty experienced by women in participating and voicing their opinions in these discussions.

During the later years of ALMAYA's activities in the community (1995-1997), the professional team's problems of knowledge and understanding were reduced, yet the team's work was still characterized by only partial knowledge and understanding of the community. During these years the main problems focused on knowledge and understanding of the specific needs of certain groups within the community with which ALMAYA worked. The serious problems of communication that were part of ALMAYA's work in the early years were not notable in later years. However, the needs of different groups in different towns throughout Israel were not sufficiently clear to the ALMAYA professional team responsible for operating the programs in the framework of their dissemination. For example, some towns were characterized by a population that had only recently moved from the absorption sites to their permanent home in an apartment in a town. In contrast, at other activity locations the group participating in the program was characterized by special difficulties deriving from the problematical physical location of their neighborhood, etc. Each of these groups, of course, had its own unique needs that derived from its characteristics and the specific context in which it lived. The lack of knowledge and awareness of these needs reduced ALMAYA's ability to operate a program that was relevant to its participants. Furthermore, the physical distance and the remote contact deriving from it impaired the professional team's ability to know the community, with its unique and discrete characteristics, in every location and thus the ability to adapt and structure programs that would meet these unique needs was impaired.

It can be said in conclusion that the problem of the ALMAYA team's partial knowledge of the community characterized the work in the course of most of the years of the organization's work in the community. However, the content and depth of the gaps and their implications changed over the years. This change is characterized by a reduction of the parts that were missing and unfamiliar to the professional team for their knowledge and understanding of the community, and

the fact that they were reduced mainly for the new groups and communities throughout Israel, where the ALMAYA programs were operated.

6. Instruction: The subject of instruction in the ALMAYA programs is central and essential to their success. Instructional work in the organization is actually divided into two central and discrete parts or aspects. The first is instruction that deals with instructional processes that take place within the teams that operate the programs. These instructional processes stand at the basis of ALMAYA's ideological conception of teamwork that combines universal theoretical principles with emphasis on singular cultural aspects. Since the teams operating the ALMAYA programs work in cooperation with professionals who convey their professional knowledge to professional support staff, the instructional processes are of great importance. The second aspect of instruction relates to the instructional processes of the program's consumers that are part of the actual operation of the programs, as this is done by the programs' counselors. As instruction in the programs constitutes the central and most influential tool for the program's management and success, the instruction given in it is of prime importance.

During the first years of ALMAYA's work (1985-1999), questions were not asked on matters of instruction and the character and quality of the instruction were not examined in the two different aspects. In the following years the subject of instruction gained a central place in very large sections of the evaluation reports, but an equal examination of the two different aspects did not always take place. There were years in which the first aspect was mainly examined (instruction within the team), while in others the second aspect was mainly examined (the instruction of the programs' consumers). However, in the course of the years of ALMAYA's work, the examination of the instruction of the program's consumers was more prominent and central in comparison with instruction within the team. In most of the years in which the subject of instruction arose and was examined (1989-1997), the central problems related to the instruction given in the ALMAYA programs by counselors. The main problems that characterized the early years were a lack of sufficient and satisfactory planning of activities and difficulty in adapting them to the given time frame. In addition, there was a

problem that recurred in various contexts and programs that related to the counselors' difficulty in asserting their authority, whether it was required for the children participating in the programs or for the parents. The difficulty in asserting authority towards the parents was manifested in different ways, among them the counselors' difficulty in criticizing and commenting on the parents' behavior in the "Parents Play Corner" (despite the fact that from a formal standpoint this was part of the counselors' authority), and also their difficulty in activating the parents in accordance with needs as they arose, and in accordance with the role the parents were required to play. The difficulty of asserting authority towards the children in the programs was also manifested in different forms, among them the counselors' difficulty in setting limits on non-legitimate behaviors and the difficulty of consistently reinforcing desirable behaviors. The counselors displayed a great lack of confidence in the course of their interaction with the children.

There were also problems of high replacement of the programs' instructional teams, which impaired their continuity.

Another problem is of distant relationships between the counselors and the children, which was manifested in a very limited dialogue between the counselors and the children, which focused mainly on the giving of instructions.

An additional problem that arose in this context related to the way in which the programs were operated by the counselors, operation that suffered from being closed, limiting creativity, and the adherence of the counselors to a set routine of activities in a way that limits and reduces the children's range of activities, endeavor and creativity. Activity in this form was so limited and limiting that it frequently ran counter to the principles of various programs (that were directed towards free thinking and creativity), hence it undermined the ability to achieve its objectives.

In later years (1995-1999), the programs' instructional problems focused on the degree of planning and adapting the instruction to the specific needs of the children or families to whom it is given. Thus, for example, the problem arose of the absence of concrete objectives for each family and child in the program. The

work of the counselors that was not dictated and planned by objectives was also noted as a problem. Informed instruction also became central during these years. The fact that the counselors did not explain the objectives of specific activities to the programs' participants and also the objectives of certain games and the setting of rules of behavior and limits, all constituted a problem in the instruction given in the program. It is important to note that part of the problems that characterized instruction in previous years, such as difficulties in asserting authority, etc., still existed but in a more limited and local form, so that the place they occupied gradually diminished.

In conclusion it can be said that ALMAYA's instructional problems constituted the main focus for examination during the majority of the organization's years of work. The main instructional problems in the early years related to assertion of the counselors' authority, while in later years they focused on the degree of planning and adapting the programs to children and families. This change indicates an improvement in instruction as it shows a reinforcement of the counselors' authority and self-confidence during the course of their work. In addition, it appears from the broadening of the discussion on problems of instruction in the programs that the place accorded to this instruction grew, as did the recognition of the importance of professional, planned, pre-structured and informed instruction.

Instruction in the professional team: Problems in this sphere appeared in the early years of ALMAYA's work (1989) and became more prominent and central in recent years (1997-1999). The problems that arose in intra-team instruction in the early years (1989) derived to a great extent from the counselors' lack of skill in their instructional work, and also from their extremely partial knowledge of the subjects the programs dealt with (pre-schoolers, for example). This made internalization of the instructional content conveyed to them by the program coordinators at team meetings more difficult. This, for example, explains the fact that the counselors forgot various subjects from previous instruction given to them at meetings with the coordinator of the program in which they worked, and also their difficulty in understanding different principles given at the instruction sessions.

Other problems that arose in the context of intra-team instruction were derived, to a great extent, from the character of the work processes that typified ALMAYA during this year. This, for example, is the explanation of the fact that the instructional meetings held between the program coordinators and the counselors were short, inconsistent, non-consecutive, and not part of a permanent agenda.

The next occasion on which subjects of instruction within the programs' operational teams was discussed was only in 1995. In other words, between 1990-1994 these subjects were not discussed at all and thus it appears that they were not perceived as central and important and were not closely examined. It is also possible that the intra-team instructional work was perceived as sufficient at the time. In contrast, from 1995 discussion of these problems became extremely central, much attention and thought were devoted to them and they were examined in depth.

It is important to note that during these years ALMAYA was intensively active in the dissemination of its programs and it is probable that this underscored the importance of team instruction that in fact constituted the training and supervisory framework of the program coordinators vis-à-vis the actual program operators. In 1995 the problems focused on the work of the team on the basic difficulties that accompany program operation, and this was due to objective difficulties and the different characteristics of the counselors. Examples of these difficulties may be seen, for example, in the counselors' difficulty in documenting and reporting in writing on the content of the activities and the course of the instruction they conducted.

The basic, primary knowledge relating to the various activities the counselors were required to conduct was very limited and mandated precise and detailed instruction, including details that appeared to be self-evident. That is to say that the problems discussed and presented during this year regarding team instruction were mainly derived from the characteristics of the instruction teams.

In 1996 the team instruction problems focused on the counselors' degree of control and essential understanding of the program in which they worked. It was

found that their proficiency and understanding was frequently partial and very limited, which led to partial instructional work that does not examine these issues.

In the later years of ALMAYA's work, various roles in program coordination were filled by staff from within the community, some of whom at least were promoted to coordinating positions after working in instruction. The transition of these coordinators from being counselors in the programs to being their coordinators constituted a difficulty for them in asserting their professional authority over the counselors under them. This difficulty reduced and limited the scope of the instruction given and likewise the coordinators' ability to cope with real problems that arose in the course of program operation. A problem that arose later was that in some of the programs the instruction given to the counselors was insufficiently concrete and did not provide them with practical tools for the activity, which restricted them in coping with the problems and various other matters.

It appears that in recent years (1998-1999) the issue of team instruction became extremely significant and central. It is probable that significant program dissemination elucidated and underscored the importance of the quality of this instruction. It also appears that over the years the subject of team instruction was recognized as one of central working principles of the ALMAYA programs. During these years the problems focused on team instructional work at its various levels. First, the programs' operating teams were expanded (due to the dissemination) and even started to meet for joint instruction sessions in the framework of area extension courses, and later in the framework of a national course. Hence team instruction was improved and activated at various levels: town, area and national. Various problems arose at each of these levels.

The problems of instruction at town level did not change in comparison to the problems raised in previous years. They related to their insufficient structuring, low regularity in some of the towns and the absence of a training program while providing concrete tools in certain cases.

In instruction at the area and national level, other problems arose that mainly focused on the partial attendance of the activity teams at the various meetings. In

addition there were problems relating to the gaps between various instructional teams (gaps deriving from differences in education, age, work experience in the program, etc.) and the different towns.

In conclusion it can be said that during the later years of ALMAYA's work (1995-1999) the issue of team instruction became central and important for the organization and its examination became more accurate and close. This shows the change in the attitude towards and recognition of the importance of team instruction and their being a central and important factor is the programs' desired operation.

7. Documentation: The problems of documentation in ALMAYA's work were part of it from the start of its work up to today, and the significance of documentation and undocumented aspects have changed only slightly during these years. As early as 1987 the problem arose of the absence of documentation and this was presented as causing the organization's dependence on its staff and the knowledge they had as a consequence of the absence of documentation processes that documented and preserved this knowledge and these facts. Thus, for example, a situation was presented in which staff turnover in the organization brought in its wake problems in ongoing operation, and this because of an absence of documentation enabling work continuity. This is also true of ALMAYA's dependence on its administrative staff and fund raisers.

Additional problems stemming from the absence of a structured and organized documentation process are in the location of program graduates who no longer participate in them. The absence of clear and accurate documentation on program participants obviated any attempt at locating some of the programs' graduates. As the scope of ALMAYA's work grew, the absence of and need for material documenting its activities, the participants in them, the program's structure and their theoretical concept became more noticeable, as did the cooperation and cooperation agreements and the roles of each of the bodies involved in the joint work.

In recent years (1998-1999), discussion of documentation problems related to another aspect touching upon knowledge management in all matters pertaining to

the inter-organizational relations maintained by ALMAYA. The required – and missing – documentation in this instance related to the strategies and initial forms of association maintained by ALMAYA and which were undocumented. The absence of documentation was also notable in relation to the description of the development of inter-organizational relations and contacts during these years, and also contacts and relations that had begun in earlier years.

Despite the addressing of the new aspects of documentation, still conspicuous by their absence were documents and processes that documented the knowledge held by the ALMAYA staff, thus creating the institutionalization of this knowledge and turning it into knowledge that actually belonged to the organization. The significance of the absence of documentation was to make ALMAYA dependent on its staff in a way that characterized, to one degree or another, the organization's work throughout the years.

8. The structuring of work processes in the organization: To operate its programs successfully and efficiently, ALMAYA had to structure various work processes, from the way discussions were conducted on the programs and decision making, and also on communicational processes and information transmission within and without the organization with its partners, through the programs' operation, the contact ALMAYA maintained with the community and the implementation of decisions in the field. In fact, at each stage of ALMAYA's work, from its inception in Beersheba to nationwide program dissemination, the organization's work was accompanied by problems of structuring the work processes. The scope and focus of these problems obviously changes over the years, but the very fact of their existence has never been resolved.

In the first years of ALMAYA's work (1985-1995), the main problems in structuring the work processes related to the absence of sufficient formalization and routine in the organization's work and programs. This, for example, is how relations were described between the executive and steering committees that accompanied the organization's work in its early years. The fact that a permanent work routine relating to information transfer processes between ALMAYA's executive committee and these bodies was not defined, made them dependent on

the administration and on those people with an extremely limited capability for filling their guiding and advisory roles.

The absence of a detailed, consistent and understandable definition of roles impaired ALMAYA's ongoing and orderly work and programs. Thus, for example, the partial definition of the counselors' roles impaired their working ability and similarly, the absence of a structured definition of the roles of coordination, administration, guidance, etc., harmed each of the people filling these roles. With the absence of role definition, it was impossible to structure clear work processes as none of the various office holders were directed, by definition, towards defined spheres of activity and involvement. In addition, this unclear definition creates spheres in which, in the best case, overlapping between the various office holders exists, and in the worse case, it creates spheres that fall between two stools and are not addressed by any body whatsoever.

In recent years (1997-1999) the main problems in this sphere of structuring work processes related to the decision-making processes in the organization. Decisions taken at various levels of the organization and in different contexts within it did not necessarily derive from a structured, predefined discussion for the purpose of taking decisions. On numerous occasions various decisions were taken that were accompanied by only a partial thinking process, and often this did not take place at all. Since in recent years the subject of ALMAYA program dissemination has occupied a central place in the organization's work, it called for numerous changes and the taking of many decisions on various subjects, some specific (whether to stop/start a program in a certain town), and some that were more in-principle (setting criteria for work and instruction in programs in the process of dissemination).

Despite the importance of these decisions, ALMAYA did not take steps to advance the subject of structuring its work processes. A result of this was the non-establishment of the various forums necessary for the consultation, planning and thinking about dissemination. Similarly, ALMAYA's work lacks both a strategic planning process and work planning based on a conscious choice, which in turn is based on the organization's priorities and principles.

In conclusion it may be said that in the early years the problems focused on the structuring of work processes in role definition. Once these problems were reduced or became less central, while at the same time program dissemination gradually accelerated, the absence of structured work processes exerted its influence and was mainly discussed in relation to decision making by ALMAYA.

9. Inter-organizational relations: Problems in the sphere of the inter-organizational cooperation and relations maintained by ALMAYA appeared as early as the organization's first years of work, but they only became central in later years (1997-1999). Together with the change in the degree of importance given to these problems, changes also appeared in fields relating to ALMAYA's inter-organizational relations. It was the expansion of the dissemination process of the ALMAYA programs and their operation throughout Israel that raised these problems to the highest level of importance and centrality, thus making dealing with these problems vital.

During the first years of ALMAYA's work (1986-1998), the organization maintained relations with various other organizations for the purpose of operating its programs in Beersheba. The majority of these contacts were at the city level, i.e., the local authority and other municipal bodies representing the establishment, such as the welfare bureau, education department, etc. Cooperation with these bodies was successful in part, especially that with the city's welfare bureau, but apart from that, ALMAYA's relations with the rest of its partners were only partial and characterized by the partners' unwillingness to fulfil their part in the agreed cooperation.

Significant disagreements were also discovered regarding the operation of non-formal education programs. Thus, for example, the operation of programs in conjunction with the ministry of education suffered from limited cooperation. A further disagreement that characterized ALMAYA's work with the ministry was related to teaching the importance of work, that relied on instruction by professional support counselors from within the community. While ALMAYA placed the counselors' work at center stage and as part of its basic principles, the professional system opposed it and viewed the professional support as part of its basic principles, the professional system opposed it and viewed the work of the

professional support counselors as damaging to the programs' standard and quality.

The absorption department that worked in the city did not fulfil its financial commitments to program operation, which impaired ALMAYA's ability to operate them.

In recent years (1997-1999) the problems of ALMAYA's inter-organizational problems became extremely central for it. Therefore these relations were examined in depth which brought about the identification of a greater number of problems than in the past and which manifested different aspects of the relations maintained by ALMAYA. In addition to the concrete problems in the various relations that had been examined in previous years, evaluation during these years also dealt with an analysis of relation patterns and the formation of inter-organizational relations, as well as a diagnosis of the strategies adopted by the organization for operating its programs through inter-organizational cooperation. The problems that arose in the concrete aspect related to the all too limited place and recognition sometimes accorded to ALMAYA by its partners. Thus, for example, the subject arose of the limited cooperation given to the "Bama'aleh" program's counselors by the schools. Also worthy of note is the fact that the schools in which the "Bama'aleh" program is operated had insufficient knowledge of the program, and in any case did not attribute the positive change that occurred among the program's participants to the counselors' work.

This was also the case with ALMAYA's battle for formal recognition and ensuring its place among the planners and designers of the course for coordinators and counselors at the central school for community work in Tel Aviv.

Additional problems in the concrete aspect relate to the feeling of many of ALMAYA's partners that the organization's approach is frequently amateurish and that its professionalism is found lacking in various spheres. When joint work relies on this kind of evaluation of one party by the other, it is problematic and is liable to place each party in predefined and pre-structured roles (one party is strong and makes the decisions while the other is weak and led, etc.)

As mentioned above, problems also arose relating to the strategy adopted by ALMAYA for the purpose of operating its programs. The problems in this sphere are more general and it sometimes even seems that they constitute the cause of various concrete problems in inter-organizational relations. First, the problem arose of forming the inter-organizational relations created by ALMAYA. An essential difficulty on the part of ALMAYA was identified in the formation of inter-organizational relations with establishment bodies, such as government ministries. In this context it was even found that a large part of the existing inter-organizational relations were formed by chance and randomly, with no preliminary planning or a process of free choice, even when these relations at their inception were very important for ALMAYA. The fact is that the formation of inter-organizational relations without a strategic planning process leads to non-exploitation of various opportunities, and even missing out on them completely. The formation of the relations that ALMAYA creates with various bodies and organizations is mainly characterized by reaction, and it lacks planning and initiative. All of the above make it difficult for ALMAYA to create working inter-organizational relations that meet the requirements of a predefined and pre-structured work model or structure. This also raises difficulties in the strategic planning of the work and programs that ALMAYA is capable of maintaining and operating. This reaction and the absence of planning and structure also characterizes the discussions held by ALMAYA with its partners from the very beginning, i.e., from the organization's presentation of itself to them, through the summarizing discussions of the various programs operated jointly. The lack of planning of familiarization meetings with various bodies constitutes a problem and can sometimes even constitute an essential obstacle to the very possibility of ongoing working relations. On numerous occasions this presentation was unduly lengthy in matters pertaining to historical facts and relations about ALMAYA, while missing out the most significant marketing aspects, such as a presentation of the principles lying at the basis of the programs, or a presentation of the wealth of experience and successes that are part of the organization's work. The discussions on the principles of joint work that were held with various partners at the beginning of joint work with them, were also frequently lacking in preliminary planning and an informed, conscious decision on the most important principles for ALMAYA. The lack of planning prior to these discussions, as with the

discussions held during the program's ongoing operation, often impaired ALMAYA's ability to determine how the discussions should be conducted, and their results.

The Conception of Effectiveness in the Reports

This section will present the components of the conception of effectiveness as this arose in the evaluation reports, and the change in the centrality of various aspects in it in the course of ALMAYA's years of work. The examination of the conception of effectiveness in the reports is complex and problematical on a number of counts. First, the conception of effectiveness that arises in the reports is formed and defined to a great degree by the conception of the assessors who wrote the reports on the question of what effectiveness is. Although there is a relationship between this conception and ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness (to a great extent, ALMAYA shapes and defines the conception of effectiveness of the evaluation team), there is no complete overlapping between them. This fact is extremely important, especially in light of the numerous changes made over the years in the composition of the evaluation team and its head.

Second, the size of the evaluation team varied over the years, hence the scope of the questions and subjects it could examine, and the aspects of the conception of effectiveness reflected from it. In the years that the team was small it addressed more limited aspects that represented only part of ALMAYA's activities and aims, thus reflecting only part of its conception of effectiveness.

Third, changes that occurred in the scope of activity of ALMAYA's programs which created changes in the emphases of the organization's aims as well as its conception of effectiveness. All these changes (the scope of the programs' activities, the composition and size of the evaluation team) took place at the same time and it was impossible to know from what the changes in the conception of effectiveness derived, as these are reflected in the reports (even when the head of the evaluation teams remained in place over a number of years, the assessors in the field were changed). This difficulty is insoluble. In contrast, an overall picture can be drawn that relates to the central processes and trends in ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness, beyond the various evaluation teams.

The conception of effectiveness presented in the reports relates to two discrete types of success. The first relates to success that constitutes attaining an objective, i.e., success based upon a predefined objective, such as improving the performance of

program graduates in formal education frameworks. The second relates to success that is a kind of “by-product” or “unplanned product” of the programs, i.e., success that is not based upon predefined aims. For example, turning the professional support staff of the ALMAYA programs into intercultural bridge builders in the community. Despite the difference between the two types of success, it is not always easy to pinpoint into which category any conception of effectiveness should be placed, as sometimes, with program operation, new program aims were defined that are in fact their expansion, or “taking a step forward”.

In contrast with the previous sections that dealt with “central subjects” and “problems arising from the reports” that were characterized by the changes in and expansion of the programs and their significance, the changes that took place in the significance of the conception of effectiveness in its specific aspects, are extremely limited. Thus, for example, the parental involvement aspect, that was perceived as an index of the conception of effectiveness, did not change over the years. Therefore, in contrast with the previous sections that presented the changes in the significance of the content, this section will first present the components of the conception of effectiveness and then present the (constant) significance of the various aspects of the conception of effectiveness.

- (a) The components of the conception of effectiveness in the reports: The conception of effectiveness changed over the years while maintaining a clear trend towards expansion and detailing of the various aspects of the effectiveness. In other words, in the later years of ALMAYA’s work, more precise and accurate distinctions were drawn between various types of change and success, and each was examined separately. In addition, with ALMAYA’s entry into a process of massive dissemination of its programs, different spheres of the organization’s activity (not necessarily in the framework of the programs themselves) became extremely central and important for it, and so they too expanded the ALMAYA conception of effectiveness. However, a number of subjects recurred throughout all the years as part of ALMAYA’s conception of effectiveness.

We shall dwell on four central categories within the conception of effectiveness:

- I Subjects that appeared as early as the first years of ALMAYA's work and have continued to appear consistently to this day, and which therefore constitute the core of ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness.
- II Subjects that appeared mainly in the first years of ALMAYA's work and ceased to appear later, and which therefore constitute the conditions for ALMAYA's breakthrough and consolidation.
- III Subjects that constitute the mirror image of the previous group, i.e., subjects that only appeared in the later years of ALMAYA's work. This group constitutes the conditions for the preservation and expansion of ALMAYA's place and strength, and also express the learning and emphases created during the previous years of operation.
- IV From subjects that appeared almost one time only (at most, in the course of two years), and which constituted part of the conception of effectiveness of a specific year of activity. This group therefore constitutes the unique addition of every year's work in the organization to the central core. We shall now present the four groups and the subjects that appeared in them

1. The core of the conception of effectiveness: At the core of ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness stand the following subjects which as mentioned above, appeared in all the ALMAYA evaluation reports: the relevance of ALMAYA's programs to the community; ALMAYA'S rational functionality and operation in the programs; internalization of ALMAYA values by program participants; empowerment of the counselors; parental involvement in ALMAYA programs; male involvement in ALMAYA programs; performance enhancement of ALMAYA program graduates; ALMAYA's flexibility and openness towards changes (changes in all aspects of the activity, from the target audience through the partners and modes of operation); joint teamwork; support by external organizations for ALMAYA programs; and the expansion of the activities and scope of the programs.
2. Conditions for ALMAYA's breakthrough and consolidation: The subjects in this group mainly appeared in the first years of ALMAYA's activities, i.e., 1985-1990: ALMAYA's independence of political considerations and pressure; the

bureaucratization and routinization of ALMAYA's work; community empowerment by ALMAYA; community trust in ALMAYA; ALMAYA's response to the community; community integration into Israeli society; sensitivity towards the community; and maintaining ongoing contact with the community.

3. Conditions for the preservation and expansion of the power and emphases created in the previous years' operation: The subjects in this group only appeared in the later years of ALMAYA's activities, i.e., 1996-1999: Emphasis on the community's heritage in the ALMAYA programs; turning the professional support counselors into intercultural bridge builders; ALMAYA's positive image with its partners; and ALMAYA's professional image with its partners and colleagues.

4. The unique addition of each year's activity in the organization: The subjects in this group mainly appeared in the later years of ALMAYA's work. This was because in the first years of its work the subjects were divided among the first two groups: The core of the conception of effectiveness and the conditions for ALMAYA's breakthrough and consolidation. Herewith the special subjects that appeared in the various years of activity:

1986: Participation in ALMAYA programs; improvement in the behavior of ALMAYA program graduates.

1989: Improvement in the behavior of ALMAYA program graduates; ALMAYA's maintaining of its principles in program operation; turning the knowledge required for ALMAYA's operation into part of ALMAYA's knowledge (as opposed to that of its staff).

1994: Professional work in ALMAYA programs.

1995: Parental empowerment in ALMAYA programs; work being carried out while employing an intercultural bridging concept.

1996: Improvement in the behavior of ALMAYA program graduates; activity while learning from past work and the evaluation process.

1997: The training of program counselors is relevant to their needs; activity planning in the framework of ALMAYA programs.

1998: Turning the knowledge required for ALMAYA's operation into part of ALMAYA's knowledge (as opposed to that of its staff).

1999: Obtaining ALMAYA funding for continued program operation.

(b) Significance of the various aspects of the conception of effectiveness: The following presents the significance of the various aspects of the conception of effectiveness in relation to the subjects that appeared in the first three categories, i.e., the core of the conception of effectiveness, the conditions for ALMAYA's breakthrough and consolidation, and the conditions for the preservation and expansion of the power and expansion created in the previous years of operation. The aspects that appeared in the fourth category representing the unique addition of each year's activity in the organization only appeared in isolated years, and it is therefore understood that their significance was stable and constant.

1. The relevance of ALMAYA programs to the community: The significance of the relevance is very varied and is manifested in the programs' developing and their ability to identify and understand the community's needs and capabilities, and also their influence on it. Identifying and understanding the needs is expressed, inter alia, by the programs being tailored, in the sense that their capabilities of achieving differential operation is defined and designed in accordance with the community's special needs, of some sections of it, and of specific participants.

It is also expressed in making the programs essential and important for the community and arousing interest within it over a prolonged period of operation. The programs' consideration of unique cultural characteristics and their integration into the programs also heightens the program's relevance.

2. ALMAYA's rational functionality and operation in its programs: The expressions of rational functionality mainly relate to ALMAYA's ability to operate while relying on professional working relations and considerations. In addition, rational functionality is expressed in work with professional staff who

are suited to their jobs, and also operation committed to preserving the principles of the ALMAYA programs. In other words, the expression of rational operation is in the emphasis placed on the professional and practical considerations (as opposed to extraneous considerations that are often likely to interfere with and harm the work) that stand at the basis of program operation.

3. Internalization of ALMAYA values by program participants: The changes that took place in the significance of this aspect mainly derived from the expansion of ALMAYA's activities into new spheres and programs, and not from real changes in the significance of the internalization of values with regard to specific programs. The various expressions of internalization of ALMAYA's values are manifested as follows: (a) The community's acceptance of the programs' values that emphasize the importance of non-formal education; (b) Understanding the importance of education and enrichment at pre-school age; (c) A change in the parents' perception of the child's place and internalization of the fact that the child is an independent entity with its own needs. Further expressions are in the assimilation of the concrete contents conveyed in the programs and their application among the population, from changes in nutritional patterns and social behavior habits, to observing a schedule and times of the program activities.
4. Empowerment of the counselors: The expressions of this empowerment are mainly manifested in the direct context of the counselors' work in the programs, such as the confidence they feel regarding their instructional skills, their ability to confidently deal with problems arising in the course of their work, the expansion of their spheres of work and the responsibility they are given, and the development of abilities of initiative, independence and creativity.

Further expressions of the empowerment of the counselors are in their personal development and growth as this is manifested in their interpersonal relations, their relations with their children and the programs' children, and also with the project's senior staff and the organization's non-Ethiopian staff. The counselors' confident coping with the latter constitutes a significant indication of their empowerment.

Active participation of the counselors in team and other meetings attended in part by men, is also an expression of their empowerment as is their ability to level criticism at their superiors. Finally, the professional and functional advancement of the program's counselors, such as the advancement of counselors to coordinating positions and the widening of their authority and roles in the framework of their instructional work, also constitutes an expression of their empowerment.

5. Parental involvement in ALMAYA programs: Parental involvement constitutes one of the basic principles of the ALMAYA programs. Parental involvement in ALMAYA's early work was both limited and problematical and therefore the subject of parental involvement arose in various forms in the reports, so it also constitutes a significant index in the success of the ALMAYA programs. Parental involvement is manifested by the participation and presence of the parents at relevant activities, and in the frameworks at which it is required, like "Parents Play Corner". In addition, their involvement in external frameworks, such as the compulsory kindergarten (in the context of "Parents Play Corner" graduates) or even the schools, constitutes an index and expression of significant success for ALMAYA.
6. Male involvement in ALMAYA programs: ALMAYA's need for programs that will bring about male involvement and the desire for their participation in the programs that ALMAYA has been operating for some time did not meet with success, despite the fact that from the time it began its work, ALMAYA recognized the importance of the integration and involvement of men in its programs. The importance of this subject comes up in almost every year of ALMAYA's activity, but despite this it does not operate programs that provide a solution to this need and deficiency.
7. Improvement in the performance of ALMAYA program graduates: This aspect is actually one of ALMAYA's most primary aims for which its programs are operated. Improvement of the performance of the programs' graduates stands, to a great extent, at the core of ALMAYA's aims and conception of its success. One of the expressions of this aspect is the recent examination that drew a comparison between kindergarten children who are ALMAYA program

graduates, and children who are not, and which found better performance among the graduates. The graduates' performance was better in various aspects, from behavioral habits and social skills to verbal ability and other cognitive skills.

8. ALMAYA's flexibility and openness towards changes: The changes towards which ALMAYA is flexible and open are in various aspects, from the target audience through its partners and the modes of operation of its programs. ALMAYA's ability to display this openness and flexibility is a significant index of effectiveness as this arises from ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness in the reports. ALMAYA's openness and flexibility were expressed, inter alia, in its readiness to institute changes in its programs in the course of their operation due to needs that arose in the field, and even to build programs or cease their operation. Thus, for example, ALMAYA decided to forgo the operation of various programs when the organization realized that they did not meet the needs in the field, or were not sufficiently relevant to the community, and so it gave preference to the operation of other programs. Flexibility was also manifested in non-rigidity regarding various aspects that were not perceived by ALMAYA as being essential to the question of operating one program or another (such as changes in the time or place of the activity), and so even if a number of conditions set by ALMAYA were not met (the operation of a home program in a clubhouse and not at the temporary housing site), it sometimes chose to continue with the program operation out of flexibility and recognition of the importance of program operation, even when this meant forgoing various other elements. Another aspect of ALMAYA's flexibility is its ability to operate responsive programs, and not those that are pre-structured and predefined.
9. Joint teamwork: The manifestations of joint teamwork are very limited and constitute a significant aspect of the conception of effectiveness. They include the ability to achieve ongoing teamwork between the counselors and their supervisors (as opposed to work stressing hierarchical relations of professional authority and subordination), and relate to the maintaining of good relations within the instructional team between the counselors from within the community and those who are not.

10. Support by external organizations for ALMAYA programs: The existence of this support has on more than one occasion constituted an expression of ALMAYA's success and of the effectiveness of its programs. The expression of this support by these organizations is not particularly varied and relates to the support and cooperation existing between ALMAYA and external bodies and organizations in the operation of the programs in Beersheba and outside it, and also to ALMAYA's success in persuading these bodies to adopt its principles and mode of work. This support is also manifested in the form of the participation of external bodies and organizations in funding the programs, and also in the promotion of new inter-organizational cooperation between ALMAYA and additional bodies.
11. Expansion of activities and program scope: The expressions of the expansion of activities and program scope relate to program dissemination in Beersheba, and in later years beyond Beersheba, while preserving ALMAYA's principles, even when the programs are directed towards and operated among new groups that are not part of the Ethiopian community in Israel. A further aspect of expansion related to the ability to operate the disseminated programs while cooperating with the bodies operating the program on site.
12. ALMAYA'S independence of political considerations and pressures: Political interested parties and political pressure have been part of ALMAYA's work environment since its early days. The organization's ability to work independently and free of these considerations and pressures has been a central aspect of its conception of effectiveness. This independence was almost entirely, expressed in its independent resistance and actions towards political groups of vested interests within the community, its ability to overcome intra-community rivalries on the way to operating its programs, and its ability to surmount political obstacles and successfully operate its programs in spite of them. In addition, the professional, autonomous running of the programs free of the influence and manipulations of intra-community struggles, such as considerations of hiring and firing, is an expression of ALMAYA's independence of these political considerations and pressures.

13. The bureaucratization and routinization of ALMAYA's work: The expressions of this aspect are limited and are focused on the sustained, constant, formal working and functionality of groups and office holders in the organization and their influence on what is happening in the organization and its programs, by virtue of their roles and offices. They also relate to the institutionalization of work procedures and decision making by authorized bodies in the organization.
14. Empowerment of the community by ALMAYA: The expressions of this aspect are in the development of the community's ability to advance and even manage part of the ALMAYA programs. A further aspect is advancement of the community organization and institutions in a way that will enable the community to act towards advancing its own matters by itself.
15. The community's trust in the organization: The expressions of this aspect are in ALMAYA's ability to bring about a reduction of the community's hostility towards and lack of trust in the organization, the establishment and its representatives.
16. ALMAYA's responsiveness towards the community: Here ALMAYA's ability to respond to the various requests by the community in a way that meets their needs, hopes and even their hardships, is given expression.
17. Integration of the community into Israeli society: Despite the community's integration into Israeli society being one of the ALMAYA programs' principal aims (from the pre-schoolers programs through the programs designed for youth and even adults), this index does not constitute a central part of ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness. However, it appeared several times in the first years of ALMAYA's work and was expressed by the community and the individuals in it becoming involved in and part of Israeli society. In later years, of course, ALMAYA took various steps to promote this objective and attain community involvement in Israeli society, but it no longer appeared as part of the conception of effectiveness.
18. Sensitivity towards the community and maintaining ongoing relations with it: This index emphasizes the importance of continuous contact between ALMAYA and the community as part of the organization's conception of effectiveness.

According to this conception, the relations maintained by ALMAYA with the community is necessary for continuity while maintaining the delicate balance between meeting the community's needs as these are perceived by ALMAYA, and the community's demands, while developing mutual channels of communication between the community and ALMAYA.

19. Emphasizing the community's heritage in the ALMAYA programs: Despite the Ethiopian community in Israel's heritage occupying a central place in the ALMAYA programs during the course of the organization's work, the reports show that recognition of the importance of placing emphasis on the heritage and turning it into a component of ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness is relatively new (from 1996 onwards). The expression of the subject's centrality appeared in ALMAYA's recognition and efforts to make the subject a central part of its programs, as well as the definition of the role focusing on and solely dealing with this subject.
20. Turning the professional support counselor into an intercultural bridge builder: This aspect only became central to ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness in the later years of its work (from 1995 onwards). This is a product of the training undergone by the professional support counselors working in the programs, since the counselors' role did not constitute a part of its earlier job definition. Only in later years when the professional support counselors had the knowledge and skills that enabled them to become intercultural bridge builders did ALMAYA identify the power inherent in their role and its great importance to the programs' success. Expressions of the counselors' bridge building work are in their ability to help mothers in various subjects that are not directly connected to the program, such as creating contact between the mother and various social agents, deepening the mothers' familiarity with and use of the bodies and services at their disposal, such as the welfare bureau, employment agencies, counseling bodies, etc. In addition, the counselors bridge the gap between the programs' participants and the western system that is not completely understood by them, and this while relying on the counselors' strengths and knowledge.
21. ALMAYA's positive image among its partners and colleagues: The dissemination process of the ALMAYA programs placed emphasis on inter-

organizational aspects and their importance to the success of those programs. The expressions of this aspect were in ALMAYA's ability to be perceived by its various external organizations and partners in a very positive light and to be admired by them.

22. ALMAYA's professional image among its partners and colleagues: As in the previous index, this one also became important and central in the ALMAYA conception of effectiveness in the wake of the expansion of the dissemination process. Its expressions were in ALMAYA's success in being perceived as representative, understanding and even expert in all matters pertaining to the population with which it works. A further expression is in the perception of ALMAYA as an organization, working with which is professional, in-depth and uncompromising, while strictly adhering to the central and significant principles of the work without relinquishing its flexibility and readiness to compromise and yield its position.

Abstract

This report is a summary of a meta-evaluation based on evaluation reports submitted by the evaluation teams between 1985-1999. It constitutes part of an extensive and in-depth evaluation process conducted with the help and encouragement of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, and seeks to study and examine what happened and what is happening in ALMAYA and the programs it operates. The report seeks to study the various processes, changes and problems that ALMAYA faced in the past and those with which it is dealing at present.

The report is divided into three main parts which examine the processes and changes ALMAYA underwent over its years of activity. In the first part the subjects and changes were examined as they were discussed during the organization's years of activity. The second part examines the changing problems that faced ALMAYA and its evaluation teams. The third part examines ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness, as this emerged from its program operation methods, purposes, various organizational problems, etc. Relating to these three aspects enabled a multi-dimensional study of the processes and changes that took place over the 15 years of ALMAYA's work.

The report's first section dealt with **“Subjects discussed in the report over the years,”** with reference to the change of subjects in the reports and changes in the significance of these subjects over the years. Over ALMAYA's years of activity changes can be discerned in the subjects discussed in the evaluation reports, and their centrality. Subjects that were central in the early years of the organization's activity, scaled down and often disappeared entirely. ALMAYA's early years (1986-1988) were characterized by focusing on diverse intra-organizational subjects, an attempt to study and describe the Ethiopian community in Beersheba with which the organization worked, and a description of methods of cooperation (which were frequently problematic) with the community. In later years (1989-1995) evaluation focused on presenting the programs, difficulties in their operation, counselors' work and parental involvement. Intra-organizational subjects, and cooperation with the community were still discussed but this was far more limited. Discussion of

dissemination (1993) began, but here too, the discussion of the subject was far more limited and different than the way in which it appeared later. In recent years (1996-1999) the reports continued to deal with the counselors' work in ALMAYA's programs, parental involvement and operational difficulties. In-depth treatment of the dissemination of the programs, relations, and inter-organizational work were added, as well as an intra-organizational aspect the mainly derived from program dissemination. It was interesting to discover the significant absence of the subject of the relationship between ALMAYA's management and its executive committee, despite the importance and complexity of the relationships between the two bodies that headed the organization.

Examination of the changes in the significance of subjects over the years focused on six main subjects: intra-organizational aspects, difficulties in program operation, inter-organizational aspects, program dissemination, relations with the community, and counselors' work.

The subject of "changes in intra-organizational aspects" showed that during the first years of ALMAYA's activities, the main subject that preoccupied the organization team and activity mandated internal observation, within ALMAYA, in order to define its identity and spheres of activity, (determining professional autonomy, definition and study of the programs' target audience, mutual familiarization of employees and community members, non-community members, etc.). On the other hand, in later years, the organization focused on a discussion of the techniques, practices and work routine required for fulfilling its role and achieving its goals. It also dealt with processes related to the redefinition of the organization's various identity aspects, as a result of the application of the dissemination process, such as redefining roles, as well as creating new roles that reflected the organization's new goals.

The subject of "difficulties in program operation" showed that during the organization's first years of work its difficulties focused mainly on the practical operation of its programs and implications on the groups with which it worked. In later years difficulties pertained to dilemmas and problems that derived mainly from theoretical positions that lie at the base of the organization's programs and its educational-cultural worldview, and problems of their application.

The subject of “intra-organizational aspects” showed that during ALMAYA’s early years, dealing with these subjects was very limited; they gradually grew over the organization’s years of activity. The inter-organizational connections and relations changed over the years; the transition that took place was from the level of a city, i.e., Beersheba, to inter-organizational relationships on a national level; at the same time there was both a deepening and expansion of the relationships ALMAYA maintained with establishment organizations, such as government ministries.

The subject of “program dissemination” showed that over the years content and qualitative changes took place in ALMAYA’s attitude to dissemination. On the content level a transition took place from disseminating programs in Beersheba to dissemination on a national scale. There was also a transition from a general and unfocused discussion of disseminating the program in Beersheba to a well-defined and detailed discussion on the various aspects of dissemination methods, strategies, practices and various characteristics related to its actual existence.

The subject of “relations with the community” showed that over the years of working with the community, preoccupation with the subject and its prominence lessened. In the early years of activity the subject was cardinal to the organization’s work and was characterized by a lack of trust, suspicion, and limited response to ALMAYA on the part of the community. Over the years discussion of the subject was characterized by an examination of theoretical questions relating to the changes and the implications of ALMAYA’s programs, and its involvement in the community.

“Counselors’ work” showed a notable development in the discussion of this subject over the years, with an increase of the room allotted to examining the broad and overall role of the counselors’ team in the program and the community. The subject of the counselors’ work became more central to the organization from the perspective of dealing with their concrete work and an attempt to study and understand the forces and roles they played in their work. The increased preoccupation with the subject indicated ALMAYA’s ever-growing attempt in recent years to conceptualize and understand, in in-principle terms, the quality and products of instruction in an

intercultural context. Thus, during ALMAYA's early years of activity the discussion focused on the subject of the counselors' work and specific aspects of their work, while in recent years the broader roles they play were examined.

The report's second chapter dealt with **“questions and problems that arise and are represented in the report”**. As in the first chapter, here too the problems raised in the reports and the changes in their significance over the years, were examined. Over ALMAYA's years of work numerous changes have taken place in its work, scope of activities and diversity of programs. As a result of these changes and the organization's accumulated experience, both the problems and questions have changed. Nevertheless, not all the problems raised were resolved, despite the various attempts to deal with them.

ALMAYA's first years of work (1985-1988) were characterized by two kinds of problems. The first stemmed from the primary nature of the organization's work with the Ethiopian community in Beersheba and its implications. The different aspects involved in the difficulties of defining and preserving the organization's autonomy in the community, such as selecting employees from the community, the organization's decision on the type of programs to be operated (despite various pressures exerted on the part of the community for specific changes of content) and the organization's safeguarding its principles in the framework of program operation, are an example of this kind of problem.

The second kind of problem related to the more practical aspects that were part and parcel of the actual operation of the programs, their primary nature and subsequent difficulties. Examples were behavioral problems presented by children who participated in ALMAYA's programs, behavior characterized by violence, damage to property, severe lack of discipline and the most minimal social skills. Another example was the difficulty encountered in transmitting the messages of ALMAYA's programs to the community.

The majority of the organization's problems in the recent years of work (1995-1999) have already appeared in previous years. However, the expansion of the organization's work outside of Beersheba, as a result of the dissemination process,

brought about additional problems and underscored the place of problems that attended the work in earlier years. Thus, for example, the professional team's familiarity with the community became a particularly important and central factor, and the attendant problems made the programs' operation difficult in its nationwide deployment (a result of successful dissemination). Limited knowledge impaired the ability to locate and identify the needs of communities in various settlements outside Beersheba.

The dissemination of the organization's programs revealed and highlighted additional problems, beyond those that had appeared in the past. Examples of these were an emphasis on the tension between the establishment's perception, which supported formal vocational education, and that of ALMAYA that underscored the importance of non-formal education provided by a professional support team. The tension made it difficult and at times even prevented the organization from operating its programs in other settlements, and cooperation with various establishment bodies such as the ministry of education. In addition, problems that stemmed from the operation of programs in the various settlements throughout Israel, in cooperation with local bodies, also emerged. The centrality of dissemination rendered the organization's marketing issues more significant in relation to its ability to work and survive.

Examination of the changes in the significance of the problems over the years focused on nine central questions: tension between the establishment's perception of principles and that of ALMAYA, difficulties in assimilating ALMAYA programs' messages, parental involvement, behavioral problems of children participating in the programs, the professional team's knowledge and partial understanding of the Ethiopian community, instruction, documentation, structuring ALMAYA's work processes, and inter-organizational relations.

The problem of "tension between the establishment's perception of principles and that of ALMAYA" first emerged when the organization's program became somewhat institutionalized, as of 1989. During the early years, tensions were characterized by the far-reaching difficulty of the establishment, particularly the educational one, to recognize the organization's programs and be willing to cooperate with it, as an organization based on non-formal education. A further difficulty was revealed

regarding the acceptance of the fact that the programs were provided by a non-professional workforce, i.e., professional support counselors from the Ethiopian community. These tensions, related to the place of programs based on non-formal education, did not change significantly over the years. Cooperation between ALMAYA and the various branches of the educational establishment almost always failed and were attended by a great deal of opposition. On the other hand, over the years work with the professional support counselors became more acceptable to the establishment and enabled productive cooperation between the organization and the ministry of labor and welfare in various cities throughout Israel.

The problem of “difficulties in absorbing the ALMAYA programs’ messages” emerged throughout ALMAYA’s years of work but their frequency was reduced. During the early years the difficulty focused on absorbing in-principle perceptions such as the importance of pre-school programs and affective relationships with toddlers. In recent years the main problem of program absorption focused on various aspects of participants’ functioning in the programs and not on in-principle perceptions. One example is the problem of the regular participation of children at meetings, as well as parental passiveness and partial participation during their duty assignments in the “parent-kindergartens.”

The problem of “parental involvement” was long discussed over the years of the organization’s work, since it constituted a problem and focal point for coping. Parental involvement was limited and extremely partial, and met only part of the expectations and roles it was required to fulfill. In the early years this was manifested, inter alia, in extremely limited parental presence at the activities. On the other hand, in recent years a change has taken place in the attitude towards parental involvement. Their participation has become a fact and the question of their participation is no longer discussed, nor does it constitute a problem. Instead, the quality of parental participation and involvement was studied, with an expectation for increasing and adding frameworks for their involvement. In other words, over the years a change has taken place in the criterion that defines satisfactory or unsatisfactory parental involvement and it has become more demanding of parents.

“Behavioral problems of children participating in the programs” appeared mainly during the organization’s early years. In fact, here too, like in the previous group of problems, a change has taken place in the criterion defining normal behavior that meets expectations, and that which does not. In the early years, behavioral problems were acute and prominent, such as unruly social behavior, aggressive behavior attended by damage to property, and so on and so forth. In recent years behavioral problems among the children have become more limited and the majority relate to lack of discipline in relation to the framework, and to the extent the problem of “the professional team’s familiarity with, and partial understanding of the Ethiopian community” related to the gaps between the Ethiopian community’s situation and the programs the organization operates, and its attitude to various misunderstandings that derive from this partial familiarity. This problem also became gradually more limited the more ALMAYA accumulated experience in operating its community programs. In the early years of the organization’s work this problem was not diagnosed at all and was not perceived as such by the team. Only in later years did the organization understand that the professional team was not familiar with and did not understand the characteristics and problems of the Ethiopian community. An example of this kind of unfamiliarity was the surprise the team displayed at a staff meeting at the passiveness and lack of participation on the part of the women, as well as the problem of the presence of men. In recent years problems related to the professional teams’ familiarity and understanding are more limited, and mainly focus on their partial familiarity with the various communities in which the programs are operated. In many cases the communities live far from the professional team, as a result of the dissemination of the organization’s programs in settlements that are unfamiliar to the professional team.

For many years the problem of “instruction” in the organization’s programs constituted a focal point for examining ALMAYA’s work. Problems in the sphere of instruction were divided into two categories: instruction processes that take place within the teams that operate programs, and instruction processes that attend the actual program operation, as conducted by the program counselors. In the first category, which deals with intra-team instruction, numerous changes have taken place. The main part of the discussion of these problems commenced only in the later years of the organization’s operation, but it then transformed into a significantly

central matter. It appears that dissemination of ALMAYA's programs throughout Israel highlighted the need and importance of intra-team instruction. In the beginning problems related mainly to basic, in-principle and theoretical knowledge that was too limited among counselors, and to the difficulties they encountered in documentation and writing. In later years the subject matter of the problems changed and became more in-principle. The subject of team instruction became a central and important issue for the organization, and its study became more and more precise. This change shows recognition of the importance of team instruction and the fact that it constitutes a central and important factor in the programs' desirable operation. In the second category, which deals with the instruction provided by the program's counselors, the main problems in the early years related to counselors' asserting their authority. On the other hand, in later years problems focused on the extent of precise planning and adjustment of the programs to children and families. This change indicates a certain improvement in instruction since it shows a strengthening of the counselors' authority and self-confidence in the course of their work. Furthermore, the expansion of the discussion of instructional problems shows that the place allotted to instruction was expanding, as well as recognition of the importance of professional, planned, pre-structured and informed instruction.

The problem of "documentation" in ALMAYA's work appeared from the beginning of its work until the present day, and in fact the significance of documentation and the non-documented aspects have changed very little since then.

The third chapter deals with the "**conception of the effectiveness of the reports**"; the components of the conception of effectiveness and changes in the centrality of various aspects over the years of the organization's work were presented. The conception of effectiveness presented in the reports related to two separate kinds of success. One dealt with success as achieving goals, i.e., success that is based on a predefined goal such as improving the performance of the programs' graduates in formal educational frameworks. The second related to success that was a kind of "by-product" or "unplanned product" of the programs, i.e., success that does not depend on predefined goals, such as making professional support counselors in ALMAYA programs into intercultural bridge builders in the community. Despite the difference between these two kinds of success, it is not always easy to indicate which category belongs to a

specific conception of effectiveness since frequently, during the programs' operation, new goals were defined, which constituted their extension and "taking a step forward".

Over the years the conception of effectiveness changed while maintaining a clear-cut trend towards the expansion and specification of its various aspects. In other words, in later years distinctions became more precise and incisive, relating to the different kinds of change, and the success of each was studied separately. With ALMAYA's massive dissemination of its programs, its diverse spheres of activity (not only in the framework of the programs themselves) become more central and important to the organization, and therefore its conception of effectiveness expanded. In this context four major categories of the conception of effectiveness were presented. The first comprised subjects that appeared in ALMAYA's early years and continued to consistently appear until the present; they therefore constitute the core of ALMAYA's conception of effectiveness. The second comprises subjects that appeared mainly during the first years of work, and ceased to appear later, and therefore constituted the conditions for ALMAYA'S breakthrough and consolidation. The third category comprised subjects that appeared only in later years; they constituted the conditions for preserving and expanding the place and power of ALMAYA and they express both the study and emphases created in previous years of activity. The fourth category comprised subjects that had an almost one-time appearance (at most over a two-year period) and constituted part of the conception of effectiveness for a specific year. These subjects therefore constituted the singular addition of each year of activity to the central core. The changes that took place in the specific aspects of the conception of effectiveness are extremely limited and were not discussed in this chapter that dealt mainly with changes that took place in the significance of various aspects. Instead their significance was presented as it appeared in the evaluation reports.

In conclusion we may say that during its 15 years of work, ALMAYA coped and dealt with the development of programs for the Ethiopian community in Beersheba and later throughout Israel. It also engaged in the development of skills for intervention and intercultural community activity, while emphasizing the place of non-formal education, as well as the importance of work with an instruction team which is part of the community in which the program operates. Over the years the organization dealt

with diverse subjects, problems and difficulties, part of which at least attended it throughout its work. However, the significance of the problems and subjects changed over the years in a way that indicates the direction of change, development and study that took place in the organization. Changes also took place in the conception of the organization's effectiveness, and here too we can identify the existence of a central and stable core that was attended by a variety of additions, which derived from the specific context in which ALMAYA was engaged.

**Department of Education
Center for Research and Evaluation**

**Meta-Evaluation: Analysis of the Evaluation Subjects in ALMAYA's Work,
1985-1999, as Shown in the Evaluation Reports**

**ALMAYA Non-Profit Organization for the Advancement of the Ethiopian
Family and Child in Israel**

Written by Ronny Blatman

Evaluation director: Dr. Miri Levin-Rozalis

January 2001

List of sources in chronological order

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Appendix 1

Summary of the subjects arising in the reports over the years

Ashkenazy, 1986: Operational difficulties, program autonomy, intra-organizational issues, relations with the community.

Ashkenazy, 1987: Operational difficulties, presenting activities, relations with the community, project goals, cooperating with the community, intra-organizational issues, inter-organizational relationships, dissemination in Beersheba.

Levron, 1988: Parental involvement, intra-organizational issues, presenting ALMAYA's activities, ALMAYA's counselors, documentation.

Ashkenazy, 1989: Presenting the programs, operational difficulties, who is the community, documentation, inter-organizational issues, inter-organizational relationships, relations with the community, project objectives, ALMAYA's counselors.

Ashkenazy, 1990: Presenting ALMAYA's activities, inter-organizational relationships, what is success, ALMAYA's autonomy, empowering the community, ALMAYA's working principles.

Ashkenazy and Levron, 1990: Presenting ALMAYA's activities, parental involvement, ALMAYA's counselors, intra-organizational issues, what is success.

Rosentein and Yasu 1993: Empowering the counselors, the executive committee's work, dissemination in Beersheba, presenting ALMAYA's programs, operational difficulties.

Levin-Rozalis, Schneider, Erez, Dayan-Perl and Yasu, 1994: Presenting ALMAYA's activities, inter-organizational relationships, ALMAYA's counselors.

Levin-Rozalis, Degani-Zemel, Schneider, Yasu, Blai and Shafir, 1995: Presenting ALMAYA's activities, ALMAYA's counselors, parental intervention, intra-organizational issues, operational difficulties, relations with the community, who is the community.

Levin-Rozalis, Degani-Zemel, Schneider and Reikin, 1996: ALMAYA's counselors, presenting ALMAYA's programs, intra-organizational issues, inter-organizational relationships, dissemination, parental involvement, who is the community.

Barkan and Levin-Rozalis 1997: Intra-organizational issues, ALMAYA's counselors, inter-organizational relationships, achieving objectives, presenting ALMAYA's activities.

Levin-Rozalis, 1997: Strategic planning objectives, committee work in ALMAYA, structuring working processes, work planning.

Barkan and Levin-Rozalis 1998: Intra-organizational relationships, presenting ALMAYA's programs, inter-organizational relationships, dissemination.

Bar-Nadav and Levin-Rozalis 1998: Dissemination, inter-organizational relationships, inter-organizational issues, work characteristics.

Blatman and Levin-Rozalis, 1999: Dissemination, presenting ALMAYA's programs, operational difficulties, intra-organizational issues, inter-organizational relationships, ALMAYA's counselors, documentation, structuring work processes, program objectives.

Appendix 2

Summary of the problems raised over the years in the reports

Ashkenazy, 1986: The steering committee's functioning, ALMAYA's autonomy, lack of institutionalization and routine in work.

Ashkenazy, 1987: ALMAYA's autonomy, children's disorderly behavior, lack of a well-formed ideational framework, lack of documentation and reporting, no application to men, tensions in the community, lack of interest in ALMAYA's programs on the part of the community, difficulties in transmitting ALMAYA's messages to the community, difficulties in dissemination.

Levron, 1988: Children's disorderly behavior, lack of documentation and reporting, parental involvement, instruction in programs and team, change of role definition.

Ashkenazy, 1989: Tension between the establishment's perception and that of ALMAYA, difficulties in transmitting ALMAYA's messages to the community, no application to men, tensions in the community, instruction, counselors' familiarity with the community, documentation, teamwork, executive committee's work, lack of planning, parental involvement, inter-organizational relationships, tensions between ALMAYA's perception and that of the establishment, dissemination.

Ashkenazy, 1990: The organization's autonomy, what is success, work difficulties, tensions in the community.

Ashkenazy and Levron, 1993: Instruction, teamwork, documentation, intra-organizational relationships, difficulties in transmitting the messages of ALMAYA's programs to the community.

Levin-Rozalis, Schneider, Erez, Davan-Perl and Yeso, 1994: The professional team's familiarity with the community, instruction, dissemination, inter-organizational relationships.

Levin-Rozalis, Degani-Zemel, Schneider, Yeso, Blai and Shafir 1995: Instruction, documentation, the professional team's familiarity with the community, difficulties in transmitting the messages of ALMAYA's programs to the community, children's behavioral problems, no application to men, change in role definition.

Levin-Rozalis, Degani-Zemel, Schneider and Reikin, 1996: Instruction, the professional team's familiarity with the community, difficulties in transmitting the messages of ALMAYA's programs to the community, parental involvement, change in role definition, inter-organizational relationships, dissemination.

Barkan and Levin-Rozalis, 1997: Lack of structuring in decision-making processes, instruction, inter-organizational relationships, difficulties in transmitting the messages of ALMAYA's programs to the community.

Levin-Rozalis, 1997: Tension between the committee and the professional team, the committee's work, lack of structured strategic planning, teamwork.

Barkan and Levin-Rozalis, 1998: Instruction, change in role definition, inter-organizational relationships, parental involvement.

Bar-Nadav and Levin-Rozalis, 1998: Documentation, dissemination, tension between ALMAYA's perception and that of the establishment, inter-organizational relationships, instruction, decision-making processes, change in role definition.

Blatman and Levin-Rozalis, 1999: Changes in role definition, decision-making processes, documentation, dissemination, teamwork, instruction, inter-organizational relationships, no application to men, tension between ALMAYA's perception and that of the establishment.

Appendix 3

Summary of the conception of effectiveness shown over the years in the reports

Ashkenazy 1986: Independence of political considerations, relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, internalization of ALMAYA's values by program participants, work becoming routinized and bureaucratic, flexibility and openness to change.

Ashkenazy 1987: Independence of political considerations, relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, integrating the community into Israeli society, empowering the community, support of external organizations, rational functioning in operating ALMAYA and its programs, improving program graduates' behavior, internalizing the organization's values by the program participants, involving men in the program, broadening activities.

Levron, 1988: Independence of political considerations, relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, empowering the community, parental involvement, support by external organizations of ALMAYA and its programs, rational functioning in operating ALMAYA and its program, internalizing the organization's values by the program participants.

Ashkenazy 1989: Independence of political considerations, relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, empowering the community, parental involvement, support by external organizations of ALMAYA and its programs, improving program graduates' performance, improving program graduates' behavior, rational functioning in operating ALMAYA and its programs, internalizing the organization's values by the program participants, ALMAYA's flexibility and openness to change, involving men, broadening activities, maintaining ALMAYA's principles, maintaining cooperative teamwork, maintaining ongoing relations with the community, ALMAYA's sensitivity to the community, turning employees' knowledge into ALMAYA's knowledge.

Ashkenazy 1990: The community's trust in ALMAYA, ALMAYA's response to the community, independence of political considerations, relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, empowering the community, support by external organizations of ALMAYA and its programs, improving program graduates' performance.

Ashkenazy and Levron, 1990: Relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the community, empowering the counselors, parental involvement, support by external organizations of ALMAYA and its programs, broadening activities, maintaining cooperative teamwork, improving graduates' behavior, inter-organizational cooperation.

Rosenstein and Yeso, 1993: Empowering the community, support by external organizations of ALMAYA and its programs, broadening activities, parental involvement, community trust in ALMAYA, maintaining cooperative teamwork.

Levin-Rozalis, Schneider, Erez, Dayan-Perl and Yeso, 1994: Relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, parental involvement, support of external organizations, professional work in the programs.

Levin-Rozalis, Degani-Zemel, Schneider, Yeso, Blai and Shafir, 1995: Relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, parental involvement, improving graduates' performance, internalizing ALMAYA's values by the programs' participants, flexibility and openness to change, empowering parents, work through a bridging approach and the counselor as bridge builder.

Levin-Rozalis, Degani-Zemel, Schneider and Reikin, 1996: Relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the counselors, parental involvement, support of external organizations, improving graduates' performance, improving graduates' behavior, internalizing ALMAYA's values by the programs' participants, professional image of ALMAYA among its partners, positive image of ALMAYA among its partners, the counselor as mediator, operating programs through learning.

Barkan and Levin-Rozalis, 1997: Parental involvement, broadening activities, emphasizing heritage in the ALMAYA programs, providing relevant instruction to the counselors, ability to plan ALMAYA's activities.

Levin-Rozalis, 1997: Cooperative teamwork, empowering staff, providing relevant instruction to decision-makers, ALMAYA's professional work, ability to plan activities, structured work.

Barkan and Levin-Rozalis, 1998: Relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, ALMAYA's flexibility and openness to change, broadening activities, transforming knowledge into ALMAYA's property, positive image of ALMAYA, emphasizing heritage in ALMAYA's programs.

Bar-Nadav and Levin –Rozalis, 1998: Relevancy of ALMAYA's activities to the community, empowering the community, external organizations' support of ALMAYA, ALMAYA's rational functioning, ALMAYA's flexibility and openness to change, broadening activities, ongoing relations with the community, ALMAYA's professional image among its partners, ALMAYA's positive image among its partners, obtaining funding for operating programs.

Blatman and Levin-Rozalis, 1999: Community response to ALMAYA's programs, empowering the counselors, external organizations' support of ALMAYA's programs, internalizing ALMAYA's values by the programs' participants, work in ALMAYA becoming routine and bureaucratic, ALMAYA's flexibility and openness to change, involvement of men, broadening of activities, maintaining ALMAYA's principles in program operation, cooperative teamwork, professional work, work through a bridging approach, the counselor as bridge builder, ALMAYA's professional image among its partners, relevant instruction for the program counselors.