

**Translation of Midot's
March 2015 Analysis
of
Lasova**

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ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Name: Lasova

Founders: Gil-Ad and Sharona Harish

Chairman: Gil-Ad Harish; appointed in 1990

Director-General (temporary): Gil-Ad Harish; appointed in 2014

Total Employees: 80, including 35 full time

Volunteers: About 800

MISSION

1. To ensure that every needy person receives the most basic needs, namely food, shelter and clothing, without payment
2. To provide education to at-risk children and teenagers via our “Kadima” youth centers
3. To serve all those who seek us out with all our heart while respecting their dignity and privacy
4. To maintain complete transparency in all our activities

ACTIVITIES

Target Population: Those in need

Number of beneficiaries (2014): about 2300, including 110 homeless people in our “Gagon” shelters; 970 children and teenagers in our “Kadima” youth centers; about 1,100 people in need who receive meals at our “Lasova” restaurants; and 150 needy people who have “Lasova” food cards

Area of Activity: Throughout Israel

Main Projects:

1. “Kadima” youth center network
2. “Lasova” restaurants
3. “Gagon” homeless shelter network
4. Food cards
5. Distribution of secondhand clothing

ANALYSIS PROCESS

The process was conducted in cooperation with “Lasova” using qualitative and quantitative tools and a unique methodology developed by “Midot”.

During the analysis, information on the organization was collected with the help of a range of sources: databases, documents, questionnaires, reports, protocols, interviews with holders of positions in the organization as well as experts.

The report was scrutinized by “Midot” and then sent to the organization for study.

The overall findings and the details of the report were sent to the organization in March 2015.

The topics of ethics, supervision and transparency were assessed in the framework of the process, but not graded.

List of Interviewees:

- Gil-Ad Harish, one of the organization’s founders, chairman of the executive committee and interim director-general
- Hagit Giora, member of the executive committee
- Yehoshua (Shuki) Reichart, member of the executive committee
- Eyal Galas, director of the “Kadima” youth centers
- Andrei Bujiko, director of the “Gagon” shelter network for men
- Yogav Golan, director of the Wolfson youth center
- Yoav Ben Artzi, Tel Aviv’s director of treatment for drug addicts, alcoholics and the homeless
- Dorit Altshuler, director of Tel Aviv’s social services authority

Questionnaires:

- Five anonymous questionnaires filled out by executive committee members
- 19 anonymous questionnaires filled out by workers at the organization

OVERALL FINDINGS

The “Lasova organization was found to be eligible for the “Midot” seal of effectiveness, testifying to the organization’s commitment to an organizational culture that places great importance on planning and evaluation, as well as to its focus on results and constant improvement, in order to significantly improve the lives of its beneficiaries.

Planning (15%)	Execution of Plans (25%)	Studying & Evaluation (30%)	Leadership (12%)	Funds (18%)	Overall Grade
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus and Efficacy: The primary and central activity of the organization, its network of “Kadima” youth centers, deals with education of at-risk youth. Additional activities of the organization, which were the basis for its formation, are intended to provide a person’s most basic needs. The target populations and the goals of these two channels are different and sometimes generate contradictions. This situation is not optimal and raises significant questions regarding the focus and the efficacy of the organization. It is recommended to take action for a solution of this matter. One way is to adapt the vision and the goals to the current situation, and another way is the separation of activities in one way or another.

Organizational Flexibility: It is recommended to adopt a more flexible management approach that will provide greater freedom of action to the various arms of the organization. This approach will maximize the organizational effectiveness and help utilize the optimal capabilities and skills of each function of the organizational structure.

Evaluation of Results: It is recommended to implement organized work processes for evaluation of results regarding the activities of the organization in the fields of food, shelter and clothing, according to the criteria that the organization has set for itself. In addition, it is recommended to examine the extent to which the “Kadima” network has achieved its goals, not only in the short term but also in the long term. Analysis of this data will enable the various people concerned inside and outside the organization to make informed decisions regarding promotion and improvement of the organization’s projects.

Leadership: It is recommended to complete the process for selection of a permanent director-general and pass the baton of management to him. This organizational change will help the organization maximize its operations and carry out its strategic plans for the coming years. The executive committee should regularly inspect and supervise the new leadership, but still enable basic freedom of action and operational flexibility for the smooth running of the organization.

DETAILS OF THE FINDINGS

PLANNING - EXCELLENT:

Theory of Change – Focus and Efficacy: The organization understands the manner in which its various activities promote achievement of goals, so it can be seen that the allocation of resources for the various activities is reasonable and logical. That being said, there is an issue regarding the organization's focus and the realization of its vision, as the goal of some of its activities is to provide a person's basic needs (food, shelter and clothing). These activities were the basis for the foundation of the organization and for the definition of its first vision. In contrast, the primary and central activities of the organization – the “Kadima” youth centers – that developed over the years to meet the need from the public, deal with the education of at-risk youth. These two channels of activity deal with different target populations and are intended for different goals. The general vision of the organization does not match the educational activity, and its vision is often contrary to the goals and the atmosphere of the youth centers. This situation is not optimal and raises questions regarding the issue of the separation of these activities from each other, or alternatively a redefinition of the vision and the theory of change and clarification regarding the framework of the activity and the nature of the desired social change.

Long-Range Planning: The organization has a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan that testifies to realistic planning for the long term. The plan details the priorities and goals, including financial ones, for the next three years (2014-16). However, the plan was not implemented, at least in the first year, due to the absence of a permanent director-general.

Work Plan: Besides the three-year strategic plan, the organization also has high-quality and detailed work plans for the year of 2015 for both its main projects and main functions. Some of these plans were only formulated recently, so it is still not possible to judge their effectiveness as tools, or the way that these plans facilitate the staff's work.

EXECUTION OF PLANS - EXCELLENT

Actual Execution: The organization implemented most of its plans over the past year and achieved its significant targets. However, it did not succeed in significantly widening its activities according to the planning, and part of the plans were abandoned due to external factors. To a certain extent, this can be attributed to the changing of the director-general, a situation that has yet to be resolved although the organization is in the final stages of its process for locating a permanent one. An additional challenge is connected to the management and budgetary flexibility caused by its rigid centralized structure. It is possible that the organization's activity could profit from a more flexible managerial approach that would enable the various arms of the organization to have more freedom of action.

Follow-up after execution: The organization follows up regularly after execution of its plans, both financially and in terms of each goal. It is worth noting the executive committee's follow-up after implementation of decisions, but at the same time it seems that this follow-up is carried out too closely in a manner that may negatively affect the activity.

Workforce Professionalism: It can be seen that the organization is facing a number of challenges in this field. In the "Kadima" youth centers there is a very frequent turnover of counselors and coordinators, especially due to the challenges of the position and the low pay. Hence, there is a need to invest considerable resources in training new workers each year. This situation is not optimal in terms of the investment of resources, and it has a detrimental effect on the professionalism of the workforce and the connection of the beneficiaries to the counselors. This difficulty was also made clear in research carried out by the network. In addition, both service staff and "Gagon" workers are employed at the "Lasova" restaurants. The service staff are problematic in terms of employment, as the organization's auditor noted in a 2014 report. Some of his recommendations have already been implemented, but at the same time, the organization believes that the price of "giving up" these workers is too high in terms of the budget. A method that does not jeopardize the quality of the organization's service needs to be found, as the report also pointed out.

Use of Influence: The organization carries out a number of cooperation projects, mainly to financially promote different activities. It does not engage in a significant amount of strategic cooperation from a wider point of view to promote the goals of the organization.

STUDY AND EVALUATION - EXCELLENT

Criteria for success: The organization has set criteria for the success of all of its plans. In some of the plans, the targets could be clarified and made more precise so the activities of the workers can be adjusted in a clearer manner. Also, it is recommended to carry out an additional study that will focus on determining the criteria for the long-term success of graduates of the "Kadima" network.

Evaluation Periods: The organization conducts regular evaluations of the activity periods that are reflected in continuous reports in all fields.

Evaluation of Results: In this field a significant difference can be seen between the "Kadima" youth center network and the rest of the organization's activity. The "Kadima" network regularly carries out research to assess and measure the results of its activities and prepares reports showing the extent of reaching its targets and goals. But in the rest of the fields, some of the evaluation is frequent and systematic, and some of it is based more on reports from the organization's representatives on the ground. Since this is frequently due to the nature of the organization and its fields of activity, there is room to widen and deepen the evaluations, and to implement regular work procedures for measuring results (as it is done in "Kadima") just like the rest of the organization's activities. In addition, it seems that the organization is aware of the challenge facing the "Kadima" network in terms of the long-term evaluation of its activities for youth (changing opinions, ways of thought, behavior, worldview, etc.)

Processes for Improvement and Drawing Conclusions: The organization has established regular processes of studying and drawing conclusions. The data and the conclusions are used for continuous improvement and as the basis for reaching decisions. As part of these processes, it is recommended to consider a focused examination and perhaps a study during each year of activity (not only at its end) to get indications of unusual developments and use the data for improvement during the current school year.

LEADERSHIP – EXCELLENT:

Executive Committee: The organization's executive committee consists of eight members who meet formally at least once a quarter. In addition, it has subcommittees on various topics (funds, shelters, education, etc.) It can be seen that the committee is very involved in the activities of the organization, both strategically and financially. The members of the committee lead the organization and promote its goals in various ways beyond the formal meetings. Gil-Ad and Sharona Harish, the founders of the organization, are the leading and dominant figures in the leadership, and Gil-Ad temporarily reassumed the position of director-general until the completion of the process for locating a successor. It can also be seen that there is a certain level of inspection and supervision by the rest of the members of the committee. In addition, a decision was reached to appoint a paid director-general in order to ensure that the organization is capable of functioning without the involvement of Gil-Ad and Sharona, who will reduce the extent of their involvement in the future.

Director-General: The organization appointed a search committee within the executive committee to locate a new director-general since the two previous post-holders were not successful, and were both removed from their posts. The search committee saw fit to write a report that is now in its final stages. The organization learned from its previous experiences and established a mechanism that limits the involvement of the chairman in the selection process, as well as decided on an initial six-month period of probation for the next director-general. "Midot" sees the establishment of those mechanisms as important, and hopes that the process will be completed successfully and help the organization, among other things, promote its strategic plan for the coming years.

FUNDS – EXCELLENT:

Financial Strength: The organization's income comes mainly from private donors, and the rest from local authorities. It does not rely on a central source of financing, but usually each one of the "Kadima" youth centers is dependent on a single source (not including from the local authority) and thus their financial stability is affected. It is recommended to find ways to shrink the dependence of each youth center on a single source and dispel the inherent risk in this kind of dependence. Lasova ended the 2013 fiscal year with a deficit of about 1.5 million shekels after ending previous years with a profit or a balance. The organization is reasonably sturdy and has a very good current ratio, reflecting its ability to keep its short-term commitments and testifying to its financial strength.

Management Processes and Financial Supervision: The organization closely and regularly monitors both its cash flow and the status of its budgetary goals. Lasova also maintains good financial supervision methods that are implemented by those in the relevant positions.

LASOVA BY THE NUMBERS

These are the main statistics that Lasova checks regularly regarding its activities:

The organization operates three restaurants that provide a hot meal every day to about 2,300 people.

The organization operates three “Gagon” shelters that house about 100 homeless people every night. It also uses three apartments as interim shelters that regularly house about 15 homeless people.

The organization operates 19 youth centers throughout Israel that provide a stable and safe educational environment to about 900 children and teenagers from 1st to 12th grade every day. Research of the “Kadima” network shows that most of the young children (1st to 6th graders) report improvement of their studies during the year.

The organization distributes hundreds of food cards, with an accumulated value of millions of shekels, to the needy population each year, enabling them to buy food directly, effectively and with dignity.

The organization collects leftover food using four of its “Asif Ha’ir” vehicles used by those in need at the various institutions of the organization.

The organization collects large amounts of secondhand clothes and distributes them to those in need throughout Israel using its bus.

ETHICS, SUPERVISION AND TRANSPARENCY

No ethical shortcomings were found in the organization.

Lasova's website is updated to include the financial reports from recent years as well as other relevant official documents. The names of the executive committee members and senior staff members are published on the site.

The organization's inspection committee deals with wide-ranging aspects of all of the organization's activities, and is not limited to a technical role.

The organization declared that there are no conflicts of interest among the leadership or among others concerned.

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