



Myers JDC
Brookdale

Place-Based Programs An International Review

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Abstract

Background

In 2014, the *Final* company decided to develop a place-based program in the Yoseftal neighborhood of Petah Tikva. The program aimed to promote sustainable social change, emphasize measurable outcomes, and encourage employee engagement. Upon completion of the Yoseftal initiative and following an assessment of several potential locations for the intervention, the company decided in 2024 to continue its place-based social investment strategy in the Atikot neighborhood of Ashkelon. To this end, *Final* turned to the Quality Assurance Team at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute and requested that it undertake an international review which would provide the basis for designing the new program model and advancing its development.

Objective

To examine the characteristics of place-based programs, identify desired outcomes, and review implementation challenges – while highlighting best practices that contribute to successful results.

Method

The review draws on diverse sources collected between September 2024 and January 2025, including academic literature (Israeli and international), research reports, official documents from government ministries and statutory authorities, and publications of third-sector organizations. In addition, ten semi-structured in-depth interviews – conducted online and face-to-face – were carried out with experts in place-based programming. The review focuses on five place-based programs: *Mutav Yachdav*, *HaYeshuv BaMerkaz*, *Ir Shava*, the *Yoseftal Program*, and *Cradle to Career*.

Findings

The review indicates that while place-based programs vary in their specific structures, they generally follow a similar four-stage process: planning, implementation, exit, and follow-up. Each stage is guided by clear principles, such as selecting an appropriate location for the intervention, building partnerships with local stakeholders, basing implementation on ongoing measurement and evaluation, and maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing community needs.

Several best practices emerged as critical for success, including:

- Building trust and fostering residents' sense of belonging and pride
- Identifying and mobilizing local leadership
- Establishing a stable infrastructure for program management
- Promoting collaboration and coordination among multiple stakeholders
- Ensuring continuous measurement and transparent communication
- Maintaining operational flexibility

An examination of the target outcomes indicates that place-based initiatives seek to effect change across three principal dimensions: improving the well-being of the local population, strengthening the physical infrastructure of the local area, and developing the social infrastructure. At the same time, the review underscores the complexity of implementing place-based programs – stemming from their holistic nature, the extensive needs of the disadvantaged populations they target, and the requirement to provide tailored responses across multiple life domains. These challenges include shortages of resources, lack of interorganizational coordination, and mistrust among residents. Nevertheless, when designed and implemented with precision and flexibility, place-based programs have significant potential to generate meaningful change, strengthen local communities, and serve as a lever for promoting social mobility.