



**Research Site: Tel Aviv, Israel**

**P**ERHAPS most pressing is the central role that war and conflict play in the lives of Israeli youth. The effects are paramount to youth well being; many children in Israel show symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

**Context and Risk Factors:**



ISRAEL is situated in the Middle East and is bordered by Lebanon in the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the east, and Egypt to the southwest. It links the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city and financial center, is located in west central Israel on the Mediterranean coast. The population in Tel Aviv is 359,000 (2,843,900 in the greater metropolitan area). These numbers continue to rise as Tel Aviv welcomes tens of thousands of refugees from Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America each year. Despite a flourishing economy for some sectors in the city, populations living outside of the city are often marginalized and economically depressed. The proportion of children living in poverty has increased steadily, with approximately 25% of Israeli children living below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup> The issues faced by youth in Tel Aviv include poverty, child abuse and neglect, educational difficulties, and marginalization. Perhaps most pressing is the central-role that war and conflict play in the lives of Israeli youth. The effects are paramount to youth well being; many

children in Israel show symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).<sup>2</sup>

**WHAT is the International Resilience Project (IRP)?:**

The IRP is a mixed-methods, culturally sensitive approach to understanding how youth around the world effectively cope with the diverse challenges they face. The IRP now has partnerships with researchers and community-based organizations on six continents in over 25 communities. The IRP is currently bringing to a close the first three-year phase of research, in which data was collected with over 1500 children in 14 communities worldwide. Tel Aviv, Israel was one of those communities. There we learned the importance of family in providing Israeli youth the safety and support they need to thrive.

**For further information:**

For a full discussion of the International Resilience Project, please see the accompanying Project Report contained with this package or visit us at our website [www.resilienceproject.org](http://www.resilienceproject.org)

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**Participants:** 251 youth from Israel participated in the study, of which 56% (141) were female and 44% (110) were male. The average age of participants was 15 years, ranging from ages 11 to 18. Most of the youth who participated in the study were in grade 9, but education levels of the participants ranged from grades 3 to 12. The communities of the participants saw the youth as coping well, based on culturally appropriate norms for behavior.

# Studying Resilience:

An international team of researchers created the content for the **Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)**, a 58-item instrument administered across all 14 research- sites. Local research teams also added 15 contextually and culturally specific questions to the CYRM during its administration in their communities. Questions were scored from 1 (do not at all agree) to 5 (agree a lot) by the youth themselves.

## Sample of Israel CYRM Mean Scores

(Highest, lowest, and largest variance when compared to overall CYRM mean)

Order	CYRM Question listed by Mean Score	Site mean	Global mean	Variance	Color codes
1	Do you know where your parent(s) and/or grandparents were born? (CYRM 2)	4.6	3.7	0.9	■ ■
2	Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems? (CYRM 33) Reverse scored	R4.6	3.9	0.7	■ ■
3	Do you feel safe when you are with your family? (CYRM 48)	4.4	4.1	0.3	■ ■
4	Are you proud of your ethnic background? (CYRM 25)	4.4	3.9	0.5	■ ■
5	Do you have people you look up to? (CYRM 6)	4.4	3.6	0.8	■ ■
6	Can you openly disagree with your parent(s) and elders when you believe things different from what they believe? (CYRM 55)	4	3.4	0.6	■ ■
7	Does your family or community encourage non-violent solutions to deal with somebody who commits a crime? (CYRM 54)	3.7	3.2	0.5	■ ■
8	Do you need to cooperate with people around you if you want to succeed? (CYRM 8)	3.5	3.8	-0.3	■ ■
9	Do you think each individual is responsible to make the world a better place? (CYRM 13)	3.4	3.8	-0.4	■ ■
10	Do you feel free and comfortable to talk to your teachers and/or other adults about your problems? (CYRM 23)	2.9	3.1	-0.2	■ ■
11	Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards? (CYRM 39)	2.9	3.1	-0.2	■ ■
12	Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you? (CYRM 24)	2.5	3.1	-0.6	■ ■
13	Do you participate in organized religious activities? (CYRM 46)	1.8	2.7	-0.9	■ ■
<b>Overall Mean across 58 CYRM questions</b>		<b>3.62</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.22</b>	

■ Highest Site Scores on CYRM    ■ Largest Variance Below Global Mean (-)  
■ Lowest Site Scores on CYRM    ■ Largest Variance Above Global Mean (+)

## Israel CYRM Results:

- Across all 58 measures of the CYRM, Israel's mean (3.62 out of a possible 5) was higher than the global mean across all sites. Youth in Israel placed particular importance (gave the highest scores) to CYRM questions: 2 'Do you know where your parent(s) and/or grandparents were born?'; 33 'Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems?'; 48 'Do you feel safe when you are with your family?'; and 25 'Are you proud of your ethnic background?' It is important to note that CYRM question 33 is reverse scored. A high score indicates that youth **do not** think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help when they have to deal with lots of problems.
- Israeli youth gave the lowest scores to questions: 23 'Do you feel free and comfortable to talk to your teachers and/or other adults about your problems?'; 39 'Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards?'; 24 'Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?'; and 46 'Do you participate in organized religious activities?'
- When compared to the global sample, Israeli youth showed the most **positive variance** (scoring higher than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 2 'Do you know where your parent(s) and/or grandparents were born?'; 6 'Do you have people you look up to?'; 55 'Can you openly disagree with your parent(s) and elders when you believe things different from what they believe?'; and 55 'Does your family or community encourage non-violent solutions to deal with somebody who commits a crime?'
- Israeli youth showed the largest **negative variance** (scoring lower than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 8 'Do you need to cooperate with people around you if you want to succeed?'; 13 'Do you think each individual is responsible to make the world a better place?'; 24 'Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?'; and 46 'Do you participate in organized religious activities?'

## Israel Site Specific Questions Mean Scores

Site Specific Questions	Mean/5
SSQ 15: Do you feel that you have 'street smarts?'	3.6
SSQ 14: Are you able to keep things in perspective even when something bad happens?	3.5
SSQ 17: Are you motivated to serve in the army?	3.4
SSQ 9: Do you feel you are already used to terror attacks?	3.2
SSQ 16: Do you say to yourself, "This is bad, but our country has seen worse and survived?"	3.2
SSQ 6: Do you feel that bad things that happen in Israel are simply part of living there?	3.1
SSQ 4: Are you restricted by your parents when they feel that your personal security is in jeopardy? ("Don't go to the mall," "Don't go on a bus," etc)	3.1
SSQ 8: Do you participate in youth movement activities?	3.0
SSQ 18: Do you believe Israel is right in its policy towards Palestinians?	2.9
SSQ 1: Do you feel that when something bad happens it doesn't just happen to you but to your society as a whole?	2.7
SSQ 3: Is there tension around the house when something bad happens (a terror attack, for example)?	2.7
SSQ 10: Do you perceive stressful situations as a challenge?	2.6
SSQ 11: Is it acceptable in your family to make jokes about bad things that happen in Israel?	2.6
SSQ 13: Do you feel that people with your social background are not discriminated against?	2.6
SSQ 2: Do you treat bad things on the news as 'just news?'	2.4
SSQ 5: Does your family suffer from the latest financial crises?	2.3
SSQ 12: Do you feel that bad things you see on the news will never happen to you?	2.2
SSQ 7: Do you try to entertain yourself after something bad was on the news?	2.0

The mean score across all site-specific questions for the Israeli site was 3.5 out of a possible 5, which was slightly higher than their overall mean score of 3.4 on the 58 globally administered CYRM questions.

## Understanding the Results "Ecologically":

The IRP team reached a consensus that the 58 global CYRM questions could be separated into four unique and important aspects of resilience: *individual traits and characteristics, relationship factors, community contexts, and social and political aspects of culture*. Of the 58 CYRM questions, 23 related to individual traits and characteristics, 7 related to relationship factors, 15 to community contexts, and 12 related to aspects of culture. Focus on these four areas of resilience shows which aspects are most relevant to children's success in difficult contexts. One can see from the chart below which aspects of resilience are more or less important to Israeli youth when compared to youth across all 14 research-sites.

## Four-part Ecological Model:

Gender Comparison of Israel Site Means with Overall Sample Means (All Sites)

Ecological Model (Aspects of Resilience)	Site	Global	Girls		Boys	
			Israel	Global	Israel	Global
Individual Aspects	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Relationship Aspects	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3
Community Aspects	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.5
Culture Aspects	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3

## Endnotes

- Major Issues Facing Children and Young People in Israel. International Youth Foundation. Retrieved November 3, 2005 from International Youth Foundation Website: <http://www.iyfnet.org/section.cfm/76/90/102>
- Context and risk factors provided by IRP site partner Zahava Solomon, School of Social Work, Tel Aviv University, Israel