

Ha'ir (local newspaper of Ha'aretz), August 31, 2007. Special Supplement on Education featuring the "50 Most Influential People in the Field of Education."

15th place: Nissim Matalon, General Director of the Karev Program

Keren Karev enjoys almost total freedom in developing enrichment programs that are implemented in 694 schools.

Caption under photo: Today, it is hard to imagine the implementation of a single major project – from *Shlav Alef* (First Stage) of the Dovrat Report to the rehabilitation programs in the north of Israel –without the participation of Keren Karev instructors.

Whoever wants to generalize about the past school year can say it was the "year of fieldwork." Inasmuch as the Minister of Education has not yet announced a consolidated policy to change education, and with budgetary priorities that do not allow investment in schools, educational institutions are dependent on a variety of intervention organizations that implement social programs, provide lessons and enrichment activities and in this way, satiate the appetites of principals, parents and students for that extra, different, unique something that will make school a place for which it is worthwhile to get up in the morning.

Sometimes these intervention organizations are called in to respond to an acute and immediate need, such as to strengthen students before their matriculation exams. They often work together with the local authority to provide enrichment activities that the Ministry of Education no longer finances. Researchers from "The Institute for Entrepreneurship in Education" at Beit Berl College have identified approximately 500 such intervention organizations working within the education system, and they think the number is even higher. When Yuli Tamir assumed office, she announced she would map out these organizations, check their activities, authorize the better ones and sift out those who were not so good. So far this has not been done.

Keren Karev, founded by millionaire Charles Bronfman, is probably the largest intervention organization in the system. It operates in 113 cities and towns, 694 schools and 1,600 kindergartens, providing mainly enrichment programs, which range from creative thinking, to space exploration to petting zoos. For many parents, Keren Karev means "enrichments activities" or "additional payment to schools." The activities of Keren Karev in schools are financed equally by the Ministry of Education, the local authorities and the parents.

Karev enjoys almost total freedom in developing its enrichment programs, and this is largely because Nissim Matalon, head of the program, is highly respected and admired. The organization does groundbreaking work, often promoting advanced programs that would never have gotten off the ground if processed through the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education.

Keren Karev is often mentioned along with the Sakta Rashi Foundation, but the two organizations are very different. While Rashi pours considerable private funding of a philanthropic nature into the system, Keren Karev depends mainly on public funds that are channeled toward extensive educational and enrichment activities. It is with good reason that Matalon, a highly estimated former school principal and head of the education branch, has served for many years as director of this program.