ESTABLISHING CLARITY
BUILDS STRENGTH

THE TREASURE HUNT PROGRAMME

DID CHILDREN INDEED BENEFIT AND FIND ANY TREASURES?

Excerpts from
'A rigorous assessment of the piloting of the Treasure Hunt Programme in the UK'

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OVERVIEW (Excerpt – page 4)

Results reflect clear indications of the children's' excellent grasp of the material. **87%** of all children scored between **80-100%** on all **Assessments For Learning (AFLs)**. The Self section rather than the Relationship with Others section was taught, hence the findings from the **Sociograms** revealed unexpected results. A comparison was made between the pre-pilot stage and post-pilot stage, after the pupils had participated in the Treasure Hunt Programme. There was a **68.3% increase in reciprocal relationships and a 76.3% increase in cohesion** (אחדות), when overall results were weighted to take the different class sizes into account. The results of the **Field Studies** consistently support and **clearly document the children's ability to apply what they have learnt to their daily lives, improve their emotional resilience, behaviour, self-awareness, spirituality and their character development, which in turn affects their relationship with others.** There was a direct correlation between the lessons and the impact reported on the progress in the above-mentioned areas. **Children could actually self-report which lessons triggered their growth during interviews. Children scored within the 90-100% range on all quantitative questions asked in all the Field Studies.** There was unsolicited positive feedback relating to improved family dynamics and positive effects on practitioners' growth. (Please refer to Sections 5-8 and Appendices 3-7 for in depth analyses of results).

These results have important ramifications in education. Based on the success of the results of the pilot study, it appears that there is a crucial advantage of further school usage of this Treasure Hunt Programme in a variety of schools at all ages and stages.

RATIONALE FOR SEL [Social-Emotional Learning] (Excerpt – pages 5-8)

For emotional and psychological good health, a child needs to have secure attachments with the main significant adult or adults and experience environments that provide consistent and warm relationships (Bowlby, 1988). Attachment is fostered through attunement — where the emotional and physiological states of a child are the focus of attention by an adult (Trevarthen, 2011). Attunement promotes a sense of 'felt' security in children enabling them to develop mental representations of the self (essential to the development of internal working models) which guide their thoughts, feelings and behaviour and supports the teaching of coping strategies when the child is distressed (Sroufe, 1997). **The first section of the Treasure Hunt Programme inculcates children's attunement to their inner selves and provides them with internal working models irrespective of whether they received attachment, which is the ideal.** This is being lost in our technological era where

efficiency is the key and yet there is often more chaos and little intrapersonal or interpersonal connection. Society at large has become more materialistic and can have instant gratification at the push of a button and yet so many people suffer from low self-esteem (Kraut et. al., 1998).

Family and the society in which children live, are often the key to their growth and development. Education is a mirror image of that society and the central values within it. Many pupils in our schools are struggling with how they feel about themselves, the world around them and the life they are living. For a significant proportion this is so serious it impacts on their ability to function and they have been diagnosed with mental illness. (Roffey, S. 2015). **It has been estimated that about one in every ten children aged 5 to 16 has a diagnosable mental health difficulty (Green et al., 2004)**. This is about three students in every class, with issues including self-harm and depression.

Worldwide concern for and understanding of childhood well-being has increased over the past decade (UNICEF, 2007). This is reflected in the increasing dominance of well-being discourse in cross party-political thinking with national and societal success no longer being considered to be exclusively defined by traditional economic indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), but also by measuring well-being (Stiglitz et al., 2010).

Western countries and other countries have become painfully aware that we are vulnerable to random attacks of terrorism. In response to such factors, stress, physical and mental health issues, people develop dysfunctional coping mechanisms. It is not surprising that this has impacted on our work, social and familial relationships. No creed, faith or sect is immune from this nor from any type of mental health disorders listed below. Accordingly, this has implications for the Jewish community at large:

- In the 2014/15 Child Line Review, 1 in 6 young people are reported to be suffering from **Anxiety**. People are stressed.
- OCD-UK posits that **OCD** affects as many as 12 in every 1000 people (1.2% of the population) from young children to adults.
- The press release from the Centre for Social Justice shows that more than 1,100 UK babies have been born addicted to drugs in 2012. New figures show that the number of babies born suffering Neonatal Withdrawal Symptoms is increasing in the UK. The Centre for Social Justice calls for more abstinence-based treatment for **Addictions** which are on an upward trend.

- The Counselling Directory writes that **depression** is a common mental disorder that affects nearly 80,000 children and young people. Many people think depression is only prevalent in adults, but in fact 2% of children under 12 years old will experience depression.

- The Mental Health Foundation reported that between one in 12 and one in 15 people **self-harm**. Some research suggests that the UK has the highest rate of self-harm in Europe. However, many young people who self-harm will not harm themselves in a way that requires medical attention, so the numbers only show part of the picture.

- The NSPCC estimate that more than half a million children in the UK are **abused** each year in different ways. Abuse and neglect of children is not unique to the UK. It is a global problem that has significant consequences for public health (Krug et. al., 2002). There is a concurrent rise in **trauma.**

- The NHS estimates that about one in every 100 people in the UK has **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Social Communication Difficulties**. More boys are diagnosed with the condition than girls are.

- The Foundation for **Learning Disabilities** estimated in 2011 that there are 286,000 children (180,000 boys, 106,000 girls) age 0-17 in the UK with a learning disability. Approximately 200,000 children in England are at the School Action Plus stage of assessment of SEN or have a Statement of SEN and have a primary Special Educational Need (SEN) associated with a learning disability. Of these, four out of five have a moderate learning difficulty, one in twenty have profound multiple learning difficulties.

- **ADHD** is more common in boys than in girls, affecting 1 to 2 children in every 100. It is the most common behavioural disorder in children according to the Counselling Directory.

- Eleven percent of UK children reporting **bullying and aggression** (Currie et al., 2012) and are becoming increasingly distressed.

In terms of clinical experience, many of those working within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) and schools **report that the upward trend continues**. For many reasons it is imperative that we address both mental health issues in childhood and promote psychological, social and emotional wellbeing. The significant impact of personal suffering and distress aside, a number of studies have found that mental health difficulties in childhood impact on educational attainment, physical health, peer and family relationships, 'life chances' and the likelihood of persistent mental health difficulties into adulthood (Edwards et al., 2003; Felitti et al.,

1998; National Institute for Clinical Excellence, 2004; Richards & Abbott, 2009; Kessler, 2010; Goodman et al., 2011).

We also know that many young people who are anxious or miserable are not noticed; unless their behaviour is challenging or their learning evidently impaired; they may 'fly under the radar.' Keyes and Haidt (2003) refer to these individuals as 'languishing', and this applies not only to pupils but also to many of the adults who teach and care for them. Well-being is not, however, the opposite of being mentally ill, but rather the presence of multiple contributory factors — both personal and environmental that enable people to flourish.

In light of such information there is a call for initiatives within the school setting. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines for social and emotional well-being in secondary education (NICE, 2009) recommend that secondary schools, 'adopt an organisation-wide approach to promoting the social and emotional well-being of young people' (p.7). Langford et. al. (2014) state, 'Investment in these formative years can prevent suffering, reduce inequity, create healthy and productive adults, and deliver social and economic dividends to nations. Schools are an obvious place to facilitate this investment' (p.34).

There is also a growing recognition that staff well-being is important, not only in terms of the individual's quality of life but also in relation to retention (and, therefore, consistency for students and their families), improved health (and hence, a reduction in time away from work) and enhanced performance. (Refer to Challenge 8).

Murray-Harvey (2010) suggest that educators and parents need further convincing of the importance of individual social and emotional well-being as an achievement in its own right, and particularly its link with academic outcomes. Reticence to change practice may reflect a lack of consensus about how best to incorporate the promotion of social and emotional well-being into schools (Pianta et al., 2003). Roffey (2010) identified that for successful implementation and integration of intervention programmes, the symbiotic relationship between the two educational systems, one which concerns school culture and climate, and the other the social and emotional curriculum for pupils, must be recognized, and addressed. Failure to adequately connect and coordinate these two systems lies at the heart of the apparent unease, about developing inter- and intra-personal skill programmes in school.

There is a proliferation of programmes being devised, books being written and many people qualifying in the helping professions. **The Treasure Hunt Programme presents Torah SEL as its hallmark and perceives it logical to counterbalance the aforementioned decay in our society and build, strengthen and nurture our inner selves, our connection to Hashem and our relationship with others within the school system.** It requires that we need to be mindful of what our real purpose in life is, who we are by rekindling the true value and recognition of internality – our essence and how we will achieve our ultimate goals. **It starts at a grass root level with young children in primary education, as a preventative rather than a curative measure**. The programme represents some of the key components covered by means of in-service training days, training events, lessons, experiential classes, parents' evenings and one-to-one and group interactions throughout the school. Once individuals become aware of the Treasure Hunt model, and begin to apply it to their own lives, bespoke and inspirational applications spontaneously flourish. **The Treasure Hunt Programme reaches beyond the quest for academic knowledge and physical strength to the spiritual, emotional core of the child and ameliorates the deterioration in our society. The opening paragraph in the Shulchan Aruch quotes the verse in Psalm 16:**

שויתי ה׳ לנגדי תמיד – **I have placed Hashem before me.**

This is the rationale for the Treasure Hunt Programme, to anchor our children in a Torah based programme that addresses the whole child and restores their Social and Emotional balance. Parents and school are key stakeholders in this initiative and also benefit from this programme.