

**National Insurance Institute
Israel**

Research and Planning Administration



Summary of Trends and Developments in Social Security

2013



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
Introduction	1
General	3
Client Service	4
Old-Age and Survivors	5
Long-Term Care	7
General Disability	9
Mobility	11
Income Support	12
Maintenance (Alimony)	14
Children	15
Maternity	16
Work Injury	17
Prisoners of Zion	18
Hostile Action Casualties	19
Reserve Service	20
Unemployment	21
Rehabilitation	22
Insurance and Collection of Contributions	23
Counseling Service for the Elderly	25
Fund for Demonstration Projects	26
Fund for Development of Services for People with Disabilities	27
Fund for Development of Long-Term Care Services for Dependent Elderly	30
Fund for Activities of Safety and Hygiene in the Workplace	31
Fund for Development of Services for Children and Youth	32
International Conventions on Social Security	34
Future Changes	37

INTRODUCTION

The scope of changes that came into effect in the Israeli social security system in 2013 reflects mainly a streamlining of the system, making it a more efficient one.

The scope of the population eligible for benefits was widened in 2013: in the Old-age and Survivors branch, housewives and widows receiving a pension are now eligible for an old-age pension in their own right, even if they were born before January 1930; in the Mobility branch, the permitted distance between the home of the authorized driver and the person with limited mobility was increased, thereby increasing the scope of persons with limited mobility who became entitled to a standing loan; and in the Unemployment branch, a number of changes were enacted with the main goal of benefitting daily employees, many more of whom may now be entitled to benefits.

Benefits were raised in the Income Support branch, as a result of a change in the calculation of income from assets taken into account in determining the rate of the benefit.

A number of changes in the social security system were introduced in 2013 to improve administrative procedures or to correct distortions in the system: in the Long-term Care branch, both the amendment allowing frail elderly to be examined at home and the pilot of payment of the long-term benefit in cash rather than in kind – have been extended; in the General Disability branch, the date of payment of the attendance allowance, paid to the severely disabled may be advanced, under certain circumstances; in the Maternity branch, the policy of initiating claims is continuing, and now mothers previously unemployed have been added to the long list of women who after giving birth receive their maternity allowance without having to submit a claim; and in the Unemployment branch, a new amendment anchors in law the obligation to inform discharged soldiers of their rights and obligations.

This report includes a separate review of the various improvements in client service – a top priority for the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) – as well as a chapter on the Rehabilitation Bureau, whose task is to provide vocational rehabilitation services to various population groups, such as the work injured, disabled and widows.

In the area of collection of insurance contributions, the rates of insurance contributions paid by the employer for his employees have been raised in a number of branches.

Aside from the granting of benefits and the provision of vocational rehabilitation, the NII allots a significant share of its budget each year to a number of Funds, responsible for developing services for various groups in the community. For example, the NII sponsors a wide range of *demonstration projects*, which set up services new in content, in method of operation or in target population. These projects are aimed at improving and expanding the variety of community services available to the Institute's beneficiaries, such as: senior citizens, families, mothers, children and youth, the disabled, widows, orphans, the unemployed and military reservists. Over 280 demonstration projects were in operation in 2013 alone, and a sample of the new ones are briefly described in the chapter on the *Fund for Demonstration Projects*.

Other Funds are devoted to services for the disabled (such as in the occupational, social and housing areas), described in a separate chapter on the *Fund for the Development of Services for the Disabled* – in which the goals and scope of the Fund are outlined, and the main types of services it has developed are briefly reviewed – long-term care services for the elderly (such as day centers and beds in institutions), activities aimed at work safety and the prevention of work accidents, and services for children and youth exposed to neglect, poverty or abuse, described

in chapters on the *Fund for Development of Long-Term Care Services*, the *Fund for Activities of Safety and Hygiene in the Workplace* and the *Fund for Development of Services for Children at Risk*.

As in previous reports, this report also includes information on international Conventions, both bilateral and multilateral, to which Israel is signatory, along with various Western European countries. Israel is in the process of negotiations with additional countries in order to expand the scope of international cooperation by means of such Conventions.

The report includes a chapter on the *Counseling Service for the Elderly*, a professional service operating in all local branches of the NII, providing counseling and support to the elderly by means of elderly volunteers, and offering assistance to new retirees as well.

Changes covered in the chapter on Future Changes include a cancellation of the previous link between vaccinations and payment of the child allowance, nonpayment of the child allowance to high wage-earners, the erasure of debts of insured persons who have passed away, the option of choosing a long-term care benefit in cash for all entitled elderly and the payment of the additional monthly (disability) pension to the emotionally or mentally disabled with 40%-49% medical disability.

GENERAL

Definition of public body for purposes of benefit payments

Under the National Insurance Law, if a benefit recipient resides in an institution and more than half of the expense of his maintenance in that institution is covered by a public body, his benefit will be paid partly to him and partly to the public body.

The list of public bodies is determined by the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Services.

Under a new government decision, as of October 1, 2013, all the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's or sick funds) are now recognized as public bodies for that purpose – and not only the General (Klalit) Sick Fund, as previously

CLIENT SERVICE

In 2013, the National Insurance Institute of Israel (NII) continued its efforts to improve its service to the public, with the aim of reducing the number of visitors to the local branches, enabling faster and more thorough responses to those clients who still visit the branches and promoting take-up of rights in the various social security schemes. There are now 144 kiosks (self-service stations, offering a wide variety of authorizations and forms) dispersed all over the country, outside local branches as well as in municipality buildings, operating beyond reception hours – almost 24 hours a day.

One centralized nationwide *call center* operates in Israel, together with two support centers. The center may be reached almost 24 hours a day, and it provides both general and personal information to callers. The secret code necessary for the latter has been distributed to most of the population and is available to all upon request. It is possible to pay insurance contributions through the *call center*, by means of credit cards.

This year too the NII website (address: <http://www.btl.gov.il>) underwent improvements to provide better services and more information to the public, and it includes summaries of the NII's main policy reports, regulations of the NII Council and application forms to the NII Funds. The personalized service website, launched towards the end of 2010, enables clients – using the secret code – to obtain a wealth of personal information such as insurance status, claim status, benefit payments, payments of insurance contributions, and more.

The website includes a number of simulators to examine whether one is entitled to benefit, as well as calculators that provide estimates of the amount of benefit to which a person may be entitled.

New services available as of 2013 include a list of benefits and discounts available to NII benefit recipients from other organizations, a bank of practical tips, and a number of sub-sites": for "take-up of rights", for the NII archives, for the Medical Department, for the research room at the NII and for perpetuation of the memory of righteous gentiles.

It should be noted that the site in English is being constantly updated, and contains press releases and information on rates of benefits, rules of entitlement, and more. The site in Arabic has been operative since 2007, and includes 40 bilingual claim forms available for downloading. The site in Russian has been on the air since 2010. The booklet "Your rights at the National Insurance Institute" is now available on the site in Amharic as well.

A new service that has been added this year to the cell-phone application (that includes manuals, calculators, an option for paying insurance contributions, information on local NII branches and maps to show how to reach every local branch) is the possibility of ordering authorizations and forms.

An additional service that appears on the application is the provision of updated information regarding whether or not the branch is open to the public at that time, and the reception hours in general.

OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORS

Extension of "Housewife" Law for eligibility for old-age pension

Amendment 7 (1996) to the National Insurance Law determined that housewives, as well as widows who receive a survivors' pension or dependents' pension, and who did not work and were not self-employed, are eligible for an old-age pension in their own right under the following conditions:

1. They were born after December 31st, 1930.
2. They were Israeli residents for 5 years preceding their reaching the absolute age of entitlement to an old-age pension.

Amendment 138 to the National Insurance Law expands Amendment 7, and determines that even housewives and widows receiving a pension who were born before January 1, 1931 are eligible for an old-age pension in their own right, as of January 2013.

The number of recipients of old-age and survivors' pension increased in 2013 by 3.9%, to 833,915 recipients as a monthly average.

The monthly old-age and survivors' pension rates for 2013, basic and including income supplement, are shown in the following table.

Old-Age and Survivors' Pension Rates
2013 (NIS)¹

Old-Age	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Adult with one child</i>	<i>Adult with two or more children</i>	<i>Couple without children</i>	<i>Couple with one child</i>	<i>Couple with two or more children</i>
January- July						
basic	1,502	1,977	2,452	2,257	2,732	3,207
with income supplement (age under 70)	2,752	4,366	5,283	4,086	5,003	5,921
with income supplement (age 70-79)	2,833	4,484	5,401	4,204	5,122	6,039
with income supplement (age 80+)	2,961	4,666	5,583	4,386	5,303	6,221
August-December						
basic	1,502	1,977	2,452	2,257	2,732	3,207
with income supplement (age under 70)	2,752	4,401	5,318	4,086	5,003	5,921
with income supplement (age 70-79)	2,833	4,519	5,536	4,204	5,122	6,039
with income supplement (age 80+)	2,961	4,701	5,618	4,386	5,303	6,221
Survivors	<i>Young widow/er</i>	<i>Widow/er</i>	<i>Widow/er with one child</i>	<i>Widow/er with two children</i>	<i>Orphan</i>	<i>Two orphans</i>
January-July						
basic	1,129	1,502	2,206	2,910	934	1,868
with income supplement (age under 70)		2,752	4,366	5,283	1,947	2,833
with income supplement (age 70-79)		2,833	4,484	5,401		
with income supplement (age 80+)		2,961	4,666	5,583		
August-December						
basic	1,129	1,502	2,206	2,910	934	1,868
with income supplement (age under 70)		2,752	4,401	5,318	1,982	2,903
with income supplement (age 70-79)		2,833	4,519	5,436		
with income supplement (age 80+)		2,961	4,701	5,618		

¹ The rates in this and all other tables are monthly rates, if not otherwise indicated, given in Israeli new shekels. In 2013 the average exchange rate was approximately \$1 = NIS 3.61.

LONG-TERM CARE

Extension of amendment allowing frail elderly to be examined at home by a doctor

The amendment to the law in effect as of May 2012, under which claimants of long-term care benefit from the NII who are aged 80 to 89, and who belong to the Tiberias, Petah Tikvah or Jerusalem NII local branch, may choose between two methods of examination of their dependence on others, has been extended for an additional year, until July 2014. The two methods are as follows:

- An examination of the claimant in his home by means of an evaluator sent by the National Insurance Institute (a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist), as was the case up to now, or
- An examination of the claimant in his home by means of a geriatric doctor from a sick fund or from a public hospital (the option of choosing this method of examination was first offered in the framework of a pilot in effect until April 30, 2013).

The examinations are fully financed by the National Insurance Institute; no payment is required of the claimant.

Furthermore, the implementation of the amendment has been extended to three additional localities: Beer Sheva, Nahariyya and Ramat Gan.

Extension of pilot of payment of long-term benefit in cash in the same local NII branches

The pilot allowing long-term care benefit recipients employing a full-time caregiver to choose, under certain circumstances, a cash benefit, has been extended.

The pilot is being carried out in 9 local branches – Ashdod, Ashkelon, Bnei Brak, Holon, Jerusalem, Nahariya, Netanya, Ramat Gan and Tiberias – and it had been determined to run until December 31, 2012.

However, since the present Knesset dispersed on October 15th, 2012, and the next Knesset is expected to convene only at the end of May 2013, the pilot has been extended until April 30th, 2013.

The number of recipients of long-term care benefits rose in 2013 by about 3.0%, reaching about 156,621 recipients as a monthly average.

The monthly long-term care benefit rates for 2013 are shown below.

Long-Term Care Benefit Rates
2013 (NIS)

<i>Partially dependent</i>				<i>Very dependent</i>				<i>Fully dependent</i>			
<i>Eligible for full benefit</i>		<i>Eligible for half benefit¹</i>		<i>Eligible for full benefit</i>		<i>Eligible for half benefit¹</i>		<i>Eligible for full benefit</i>		<i>Eligible for half benefit¹</i>	
<i>services</i>	<i>cash</i>	<i>services</i>	<i>cash</i>	<i>services</i>	<i>cash</i>	<i>services</i>	<i>cash</i>	<i>services</i>	<i>cash</i>	<i>services</i>	<i>cash</i>
1,956	1,565	978	783	3,224	2,579	1,612	1,290	3,610	2,888	1,805	1,444
Increment to benefit to those employing an Israeli caregiver only				585	468	293	234	778	622	389	311

¹ 50% reduction as a result of income test.

GENERAL DISABILITY

Advancement of date of payment of attendance allowance

Under an amendment to the National Insurance Law as of February 1, 2013, the attendance allowance paid to the severely disabled may, under certain circumstances, be paid from the 31st from the day on which the event that provided the grounds for entitlement occurred, rather than only after the 90th day, as presently.

Under the amendment, all those who meet the following conditions (apply to the vast majority of attendance allowance recipients) are able to receive this benefit after the 31st day:

- His claim was submitted after September 1, 2012;
- A medical disability degree of at least 75% was determined for him for purposes of attendance allowance;
- He has been dependent on the help of others – or in need of supervision – for at least 6 consecutive months;
- He is not entitled to a benefit for disabled child from the National Insurance Institute during this period.

The change is expected to enable the advance of the date of payment of the benefit for about 2,500 new recipients each year, and thereby provide relief to this population group, suffering from severe medical problems.

In any case, it will not be possible to advance the date of payment earlier than 6 months preceding the submission of the claim.

"Persons with disabilities" card

On October 1, 2013, the Equality of Rights Regulations for Persons with Disabilities (Accessibility of Services) 2013 came into effect. Under these regulations, persons (both adults and children) with a mental or emotional disability, including autism, do not have to stand in line to obtain services or to pay for an accompanying person.

The "persons with disabilities" card has been adapted to these regulations; the words "exempt from line/payment for an accompanying person" have been added to the back of the card.

The population of card recipients has been expanded to include also those who receive polio compensation and those who receive benefits to victims of ringworm from the National Insurance Institute.

Furthermore, the cards are now valid for 7 years from the date of their issuance, for all persons for whom a permanent degree of disability has been determined.

The National Insurance Institute has begun issuing bilingual cards (in Hebrew and English) for all those whose name in English appears in the population register.

 In the year 2013 the number of general disability allowance recipients grew by 2.3%, reaching about 222,541 as a monthly average. The number of attendance allowance recipients and recipients of benefit for disabled child rose 8.0% and 12.2%, respectively.

The monthly general disability benefit and attendance allowance rates for 2013 are shown in the following table.

General Disability Benefit and Attendance Allowance Rates
2013 (NIS)¹

General Disability	<i>Individual</i>		<i>Couple</i>		<i>Couple with child²</i>	
	2,299		3,448		4,367	
	<i>For performing most daily tasks most hours of the day</i>		<i>For performing all daily tasks most hours of the day</i>		<i>For performing all daily tasks all hours of the day</i>	
	<i>basic</i>	<i>including special benefit</i>	<i>basic</i>	<i>including special benefit</i>	<i>basic</i>	<i>including special benefit</i>
Attendance Allowance	1,075	301	2,256	612	3,761	913

¹ The rates that appear here are of benefits to disabled persons with 100% disability. Benefits to persons with a lower degree of disability are percentages of the full benefit, according to the degree of disability.

² The increment is paid for each of the first two children only.

MOBILITY

Increase of the permitted distance between home of authorized driver and that of person with limited mobility

Under Amendment 24 to the Mobility Agreement that came into effect on August 5th, 2013, the authorized driver of a person with limited mobility may live at a direct distance of up to 1.5 km from the home of the person with limited mobility (rather than up to only 500 meters as previously).

This change significantly increases the scope of persons with limited mobility who become entitled to a standing loan.

The number of recipients of mobility allowance grew in 2013 by 3.6%.

The monthly mobility allowance rates for 2013 are shown in the following table.

Mobility Allowance Rates for Earner¹ **2013 (NIS)**

<i>Owens private vehicle (drives himself)</i>				<i>Owens special vehicle</i>			
<i>1300cc</i>	<i>1800cc</i>	<i>2000cc</i>	<i>2500cc</i>	<i>Drives himself</i>			<i>Does not drive himself</i>
				<i>With accessories worth up to NIS 100,000</i>	<i>With accessories worth up to NIS 100,000</i>	<i>With joystick</i>	
1,709	2,364	2,82	3,214	3,801	5,378	7,668	3,583

¹ Persons with 80%-100% mobility limitation are automatically considered "earners" – in addition to those who have earnings from work. .

INCOME SUPPORT

Change in calculation of income from assets taken into account for purposes of income support benefit

Under an amendment to the Income Support Law in effect as of March 1, 2013 (retroactively from September 1, 2012), the income of a claimant of income support benefit from assets is calculated differently than previously, in examining his entitlement to income support and in determining the rate of the benefit paid to him.

Under this amendment, the value of income from financial assets is determined according to the interest rate and adjusted annually (In 2013 it was 2.7%), while the value of income from real estate is determined according to the designation of the asset: agricultural, dwelling or commercial.

The income from the asset for purposes of income support is affected – in addition to the value of the asset – by family composition and the age of the claimant.

Previously (since 1982), the value of income from assets was at the uniform rate of 8% divided by 12, for all kinds of assets.

The aim of the amendment is to benefit income support benefit recipients who own assets, crediting them with a lower real income than previously.

It should be noted that this change has implications also on recipients of income supplement to their old-age or survivors' pension as well as to recipients of maintenance (alimony) payments from the National Insurance Institute.

The number of families receiving income support benefits increased by 0.6% in 2013, to 104,399 recipients as a monthly average.

The monthly income support benefit rates for 2013 are shown in the following table.

Income Support Benefit Rates
2013 (NIS)

Family composition	Under age 55		Aged 55 or over
	Regular rate ¹	Increased rate ²	
January-July			
<i>Individual</i>	1,697	1,910	2,122
<i>Individual with 1 child³</i>	2,546	2,843	3,008
<i>Individual with 2 or more children³</i>	2,843	3,183	3,517
<i>Couple</i>	2,334	2,546	3,183
<i>Couple with 1 child</i>	2,546	2,843	3,692
<i>Couple with 2 or more children</i>	2,843	3,310	4,201
<i>Single parent with 1 child</i>	2,843	2,843	3,432
<i>Single parent with 2 or more children</i>	3,310	3,310	4,281
August-December			
<i>Individual</i>	1,697	1,910	2,122
<i>Individual with 1 child⁴</i>	2,546	2,843	3,043
<i>Individual with 2 or more children³</i>	2,843	3,183	3,552
<i>Couple</i>	2,334	2,546	3,183
<i>Couple with 1 child</i>	2,546	2,843	3,692
<i>Couple with 2 or more children</i>	2,843	3,310	4,201
<i>Single parent with 1 child</i>	2,843	2,843	3,467
<i>Single parent with 2 or more children</i>	3,310	3,310	4,316

¹ Paid to persons who had been entitled to the regular rate of the benefit in December 2002 or who began receiving the benefit in January 2003.

² Paid to persons who had been entitled to the increased rate of benefit in December 2002.

³ Not defined as a single parent in the Single-Parent Families Law.

MAINTENANCE (ALIMONY)

The Maintenance-Guarantee of Payment Law, which came into effect in 1972, aims at guaranteeing means of subsistence to a woman who possesses a judgment for maintenance, and to her children, regardless of her capacity to enforce this judgment. When the husband obligated does not voluntarily comply with the judgment and does not pay the woman the maintenance to which she is entitled according to the judgment, the law enables the woman to turn to the National Insurance Institute in order that the Institute enforce the judgment; that is, pay an maintenance benefit to the woman and in parallel, collect this money from the person obligated by means of enforcement procedures.

The payment is granted to the woman for as long as the husband is obligated to pay her maintenance. The rate of the payment is as determined in the judgment or under the regulations (of the Maintenance-Guarantee of Payment Law) – whichever is the lower rate. With the NII guaranteeing to pay the woman and her children the maintenance to which she is entitled, it also takes upon itself all that is involved in collecting the amount specified in the judgment. Therefore, only a woman who does not take steps to enforce the judgment on her own or who ceases enforcement procedures before she applies to the NII is entitled to payments.

No major changes in Maintenance Insurance came into effect in 2013.

 In 2013 an average of 18,283 women received maintenance benefits from the National Insurance Institute every month.

The monthly maintenance rates for 2013 are shown in the following table.

Maintenance Rates 2013 (NIS)

Family composition	Woman under 55	Woman aged 55 or over
<i>Single woman without children</i>		
<i>Previously entitled¹</i>	1,910	
<i>Newly entitled²</i>	1,697	2,122
<i>Single woman with children</i>		
<i>With one child</i>	2,843	3,447
<i>With 2 or more children</i>	3,310	4,296
<i>Woman who remarried</i>		
<i>With one child</i>	1,962	1,962
<i>With 2 or more children</i>	2,837	2,837
<i>Children alone</i>		
<i>One child alone</i>	1,962	
<i>2 children alone</i>	2,862	
<i>Each additional child</i>	849	

¹ Entitled to maintenance before January 1, 2003.

² Entitled to maintenance as of January 1, 2003.

CHILDREN

Continued gradual change in the amounts of child allowance

In the framework of the Law for Change in National Priorities, the rate of the "basic amount" for purposes of the child allowance was reduced to NIS 140, as of August 2013, and therefore the amount of the child allowance for all children born after June 1, 2003 is now NIS 140.

At the same time, the amount of the increment to the allowance for the third and fourth children in families was reduced to NIS 98 per child.

 In 2013, the number of families receiving child allowance grew by 1.8%, and about 1.1 million families (as a monthly average) receive allowances for about 2.6 million children.

The monthly child allowance rates for 2013 are shown below.

Child Allowance Rates (per child)¹ **2013 (NIS)**

Date of birth of child	Period	<i>First child</i>	<i>Second child</i>	<i>Third child</i>	<i>Fourth child</i>	<i>Fifth child and subsequent children</i>
Before June 1, 2003	<i>January-July</i>	175	263	295	459	389
	<i>August-December</i>	140	140	172	336	354
On or after June 1, 2003	<i>January-July</i>	175	263	263	263	175
	<i>August-December</i>	140	140	140	140	140

¹ The rates are for children born before June 1, 2003. A uniform sum of NIS 159 per month is paid for every child born on that date or thereafter, regardless of his place in the family.

MATERNITY

Automatic payment of maternity allowance to unemployed women

With the aim of expanding the range of women who receive the maternity allowance automatically, without having to submit a claim, and in order to reach full take-up of rights insofar as possible, a computerized process of examining entitlement to maternity allowance after payment of unemployment benefit has been developed.

Thus, as of October 2013, women who give birth and who had received an unemployment benefit in the month preceding the birth receive their maternity allowance automatically to their bank account. This group of women is in addition to the many groups who already receive the maternity allowance automatically and do not need to submit a claim, such as self-employed women, teachers, government workers and many others.

The number of recipients of the hospitalization grant went up by about 0.3% in 2013, while the number of recipients of the maternity allowance went up by about 2.1%.

The monthly rates of the various maternity benefits for 2013 are shown in the following table.

Maternity Insurance Benefit Rates **2013 (NIS)**

Period	<i>Hospital- ization grant</i>	<i>Birth grant (for birth of one child only)</i>			<i>Maximum daily maternity allowance</i>
		<i>For the first child</i>	<i>For the second child</i>	<i>For the third child and subsequent children</i>	
<i>January- June</i>	11,183	1,719	773	516	1,432
<i>July-October</i>	12,301	1,719	773	516	1,432
<i>Nov.-Dec.</i>	11,777	1,719	777	516	1,432

WORK INJURY

Under the National Insurance (Work Injuries) Law, all workers are insured against the risk of work accidents and occupational diseases.

It is compulsory for all employers to insure their employees (except for policemen, jailers, and defense employees) against the above risks. Such employees include those regularly or temporarily employed, for daily or monthly wages, full-time and part-time workers.

All employees working in Israel – as well as the self-employed – are insured, regardless of the age or nationality of the workers.

Upon the death of an insured person who suffered a work injury (work accident or occupational disease), his relatives – the widow/widower, orphans, parents and other close relatives (defined as dependants) may be entitled to work injury benefits.

No major changes in Work Injury Insurance took place in 2013.

 In 2013, the number of recipients of work injury allowance increased by 4.6%. The number of recipients of permanent disability benefit (out of total work injured) grew by about 5.0%, while the number of recipients of dependents' benefit increased slightly – by 0.7%.

The maximum rates in 2013 for daily work injury allowance and monthly work disability benefit are shown below.

Maximum Work Injury Allowance and Work Disability Benefit Rates 2013 (NIS)

<i>Daily work injury</i>		<i>Monthly work disability</i>	
<i>Employees¹</i>	<i>Self-employed and employees²</i>	<i>Employees¹</i>	<i>Self-employed and employees²</i>
644.55	1,074.55	19,337	32,228

¹ Employees injured before January 1, 1995.

² Employees injured after January 1, 1995.

PRISONERS OF ZION

Under the Law of Benefits for Prisoners of Zion and their Families-1992, a resident citizen of Israel, recognized as a Prisoner of Zion by the competent authority in the Ministry of Absorption, is entitled to benefit from the National Insurance Institute.

Non-disabled Prisoners of Zion are also eligible for benefit, conditional on an income test. Furthermore, disabled Prisoners of Zion are eligible for an additional income-based benefit, in addition to their regular, basic benefit.

Disabled Prisoners of Zion are also entitled to in-kind benefits including medical care and vocational rehabilitation.

Relatives of Prisoners of Zion who are in jail or who have passed away may be entitled to various benefits.

No major changes in the Law took effect in 2013.

HOSTILE ACTION CASUALTIES

Persons injured as a result of a hostile action by enemy forces in Israel or abroad are entitled to cash benefits as well as to benefits in kind such as treatment, hospitalization, convalescence, medical appliances, vocational rehabilitation and assistance in housing and in purchase of a vehicle.

Relatives of persons who died as a result of a hostile action receive a monthly dependents' benefit (equivalent to the benefit rate paid under the Families of Soldiers Killed in Action Law) as well as vocational rehabilitation and special benefits.

No major changes in Hostile Action Insurance came into effect in 2013.

RESERVE SERVICE

All persons serving in the military reserves in accordance with the Defense Service Law or in training under the Emergency Work Service Law (including civil servants, students, etc.) are entitled to a reservist's benefit for every day of service or training, from the first day of service. The benefit is at the full rate of the reservist's daily income.

In addition, grants are provided to youth under the age of 18 who take part in pre-military training (*Gadna*), most of whose time is devoted to study, on condition that they worked for at least 30 working days during the three months that preceded their taking part in the pre-military training.

No major changes in the Reserve Service branch took effect in 2013.

The minimum and maximum daily reserve service benefit rates for 2013 are shown below.

Reserve Service Benefit Rates – Per Day **2013 (NIS)**

<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
192.37	1,414.5

UNEMPLOYMENT

Changes in conditions of entitlement to unemployment benefit

Under Amendment 141 to the National Insurance Law, which came into effect on April 1st 2013, the conditions of entitlement to the unemployment benefit are changed as follows:

- The qualifying period for all kinds of salaried workers is counted as employment months, and not as employment days, as previously, so that even a few work days in a month are considered as a month of work.
- The qualifying period is 12 work months out of the 18 months that preceded the unemployment for all workers (rather than 360 work days out of the last 540 days for regular monthly employees and 300 days for daily employees, as previously).
- The rate of the benefits is calculated on the basis of the claimant's average salary in his last 6 work months that preceded the determining date (the 1st of the month in which the unemployment began), rather than in his last 75 work days, as previously.

The aim of the amendment, enacted in view of the growing number of employees who work part time, is mainly to benefit daily employees – particularly those who work less than 5 days a week – who often found it difficult to accumulate the previously required qualifying period.

The changes are expected to increase the number of persons entitled to unemployment benefits.

Obligation to inform discharged soldiers of their rights

Under Amendment 144 to the National Insurance Law in effect as of July 2013, the National Insurance Institute is obligated to inform every discharged soldier of his rights and obligations in national insurance. These rights are mainly in the Unemployment insurance branch.

It should be noted that the NII has been providing this information to all discharged soldiers, at its own initiative, since the end of 2012.

 The number of recipients of unemployment benefit increased in 2013 to a monthly average of about 69,400 recipients. The unemployment benefit rates for 2013 are shown below.

Unemployment Benefit Rates **2013 (NIS)**

<i>Maximum daily benefit to a single person¹</i>		<i>Discharged soldier's benefit</i>	
<i>First period</i>	<i>Second period</i>	<i>Regular work (daily benefit)</i>	<i>Vital work (one-time grant)</i>
353.12	235.41	102.74	9,370

¹ The first period is the first 125 days of the maximum period of benefit payment to which the unemployed person is entitled, during which the daily unemployment benefit shall not exceed the daily average wage. In the second period (beginning with the 126th day of payment), the daily unemployment benefit shall not exceed 2/3 of the daily average wage.

REHABILITATION

Under the National Insurance Law (1968) and Amendment 13 to this law (1974), the right to vocational rehabilitation is bestowed to the following groups:

- work-related injured people;
- people with disabilities (disability caused at birth, by an accident or illness) or when they are unsuitable for rehabilitation, their spouses;
- widows and widowers.

Under the Benefits to Hostile Action Casualties Law (1974), various services, benefits and rights – including the right to vocational rehabilitation – are granted to injured victims of hostile or terrorist act and to bereaved families as results of such acts.

The vocational rehabilitation services are provided by the means of the rehabilitation departments located in all local branches of the NII throughout the country. These departments are staffed by professional social workers who implement rehabilitation policies.

Vocational rehabilitation services include assessment, career counseling, individual tailored rehabilitation plans, professional training, academic education, and placement services. Most services are purchased by the NII at the open market, while services from segregative frameworks (such as rehabilitation centers) may be acquired for those in need. The process begins with self-referral, with referral by community agencies, or with out-reach activities of the NII. In 2013, 27,500 people received vocational rehabilitation services from the NII.

In the past decade, special focus has been placed on the accessibility of rehabilitation services and on their adaptability to the needs of the severely disabled. For example, support services such as translation into sign language, tutoring and special transportation were set up.

Another trend, notable since 2000, as a result of the increase in terror acts against the civilian population, includes the development of special interventions. During this period, there were over 2000 such acts, injuring over 20,000 people and killing more than a thousand. The high number of injured includes victims of continued incidents in the area surrounding Gaza in the aftermath of the Cast Lead operation, as well as late claims submitted in the aftermath of the Pillar of Defense operation as well as isolated terror acts in the course of the year.

The Rehabilitation Bureau has set up a special community service for these victims, in which about 300 volunteers work in all areas of the country. In addition, victims are accompanied by a social worker (rehabilitation officer) who visits them in the hospital or at the home in a condolence call, and provides continuous support to meet various needs in all areas of their lives and throughout their lives.

Since 2008, lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War were implemented, and in order to prevent the development of post-traumatic disorders, the NII funds emotional treatments as early as possible, including to victims who did not submitted a claim to be recognized as hostile action victims.

Despite the great burden on the Rehabilitation Bureau as a result of the numerous terror acts, the Bureau continued in 2013 to care for the other entitled population groups as well, by means of vocational rehabilitation plans and take-up of welfare rights, with special emphasis on early intervention and work integration.

INSURANCE AND COLLECTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Change in rates of insurance contributions from employers

Under the Law to Reduce the Deficit enacted by the Knesset in August 2012, the rates of insurance contributions paid by the employer for his employees have been raised in January 2013 from 5.90% of wages to 6.50% of wages (rise of 0.6%).

Furthermore, Amendment 143 to the National Insurance Law determined that the total insurance contributions to be collected from employers from the share of wages that is over 60% of the average wage will be raised gradually. This process began in 2013 and will continue up to 2016.

The contribution rates for December 2013 for the various insurance branches, in addition to health insurance contributions, are shown in the following table.

Insurance Contribution Rates
December 2013 (percentages)

Insurance branch	<i>Employee</i>						<i>Self-employed</i>	
	<i>Total¹</i>		<i>On employee's account</i>		<i>On employer's account</i>			
	<i>full rate</i>	<i>reduced rate²</i>	<i>full rate</i>	<i>reduced rate²</i>	<i>full rate</i>	<i>reduced rate²</i>	<i>full rate</i>	<i>reduced rate²</i>
<i>Old-age and Survivors</i>	5.89	1.42	3.85	0.22	2.04	1.30	5.21	3.09
<i>Long-term Care</i>	0.27	0.05	0.14	0.01	0.13	0.04	0.18	0.12
<i>General Disability</i>	2.28	0.37	1.86	0.11	0.42	0.26	1.86	1.11
<i>Accident Injury</i>	0.11	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.08	0.06
<i>Work Injury</i>	1.30	0.37	--	--	1.30	0.37	0.68	0.39
<i>Maternity</i>	1.22	0.15	0.87	0.04	0.35	0.11	0.82	0.56
<i>Children</i>	2.08	1.32	--	--	2.08	1.32	2.40	1.39
<i>Unemployment</i>	0.31	0.04	0.21	0.01	0.10	0.03	--	--
<i>Bankruptcy</i>	0.04	0.01	--	--	0.04	0.01	--	--
<i>Total Insurance Branches</i>	13.50	3.85	7.00	0.40	6.50	3.45	11.23	6.72
<i>Health</i>	5.00	3.10	5.00	3.10	--	--	5.00	3.10
<i>Total Contributions</i>	18.50	6.95	12.00	3.50	6.50	3.45	16.23	9.82

¹ These rates include the share of the employee and the employer in payment of insurance contributions. In addition, the government participates in the financing of the insurance branches instead of the employer at a rate of 0.6%, and instead of the self-employed – at a rate of 0.59%.

² On income of up to 60% the average wage.

COUNSELING SERVICE FOR THE ELDERLY

The Counseling Service for the Elderly was set up in 1972 as a demonstration project of the National Insurance Institute, at the initiative of Mr. Leo Blumensohn. His idea was to have volunteer pensioners support other elderly persons and help them take up their rights at the NII and at other organizations. The Service began modestly with a handful of volunteers working in three local branches. Over the years it expanded considerably, and today includes thousands of volunteers in all local branches throughout the country.

The Service is a professional one, managed by social workers whose expertise is in the fields of gerontology and volunteerism. Its aim is to provide support and assistance to the elderly living in the community, by means of existing resources. The basic perception underlying its work is that there should be a direct link between the elderly person and the volunteer – *elderly to elderly* – in order that the volunteer be able to understand the elderly person's inner feelings stemming from problems related to old age.

The volunteers are required to undergo a four-month training course, during which they learn about the perception of the NII, the special needs of the elderly, the changes that occur at this age, and the skills needed in work with the elderly.

The work of the Service includes:

- Preliminary home visits – Hundreds of visits are conducted throughout the country to predefined population groups, in accordance with information from NII data banks. Groups targeted for these visits include: recipients of long-term care benefits, persons whose claim for this benefit was deferred, elderly widows, the very old (over 88), etc. In the course of the visits, conducted by specially-trained volunteers, questionnaires are filled out by means of which we may ascertain whether or not the elderly receive proper treatment, and then act accordingly.
- Regular home visits – a continued link to elderly persons in need. The volunteers assigned to these elderly become their main intermediaries and defendants.
- Counseling – Elderly persons and members of their families visit the offices of the Service and are provided with counseling on all their problems, mediating services (both with the NII and other organizations), and above all, a listening ear.
- Support groups for widows/widowers – aimed at lifting the widows and widowers out of their loneliness and depression, and helping them get back to daily functioning and social involvement.
- Support groups for spouses of ill or handicapped elderly – aimed at easing the burden of intensive care.
- Joint projects in the community – in accordance with the specific needs of the town or community. The aim is to strengthen the elderly who live in the community, providing them assistance in a wide range of fields.
- Information days for new pensioners – during which lectures on free-time culture are given, and information is provided on a variety of topics, such as community services and activities and rights in social security.
- Information days for widows who have recently become widowed, informing them of their rights in social security and in the community, including a lecture on the legal aspects of widowhood, and providing them with the opportunity to participate in a support group.

All services of the Counseling Service for the Elderly are offered free of charge.

FUND FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

In 2013 the Fund for Demonstration Projects of the NII dealt with 288 demonstration *projects* and project proposals, aimed at expanding and improving social services to a variety of at-risk population groups. The Fund assists the initiators of the projects in a number of ways: it helps to define the project's aims and to plan the project, it provides financial assistance during the initial experimental period (the participating organizations must commit themselves to continue financing the project on their own beyond the experimental stage); it carries out an evaluation research of the project and it actively participates in the steering committee responsible for running the project.

The Fund's annual budget is NIS 20.8 million.

Research evaluations of two projects completed – and with reports published in 2013 – are described below.

Eyal

The objective of the Eyal program was to foster success among teens with learning disabilities who are particularly high risk because of additional psychiatric problems and/or come from a low socio-economic sector. Close cooperation between the Learning Disabilities Unit at the Ministry of Education and the Learning Disabilities Clinic at the Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel made this program possible.

The program aimed to comprehensively assess all the teen participants, to design an intervention program, to provide the pupils with academic and emotional reinforcement, and to oversee and support the family during the process, while also providing the educational, psychological and medical staff with the professional tools required to work with the learning disabled pupils.

Two groups participated in the program during the years 2009 to 2012.

In general, it was clear from the evaluation that the program had a positive effect on the school and in particular on the case managers.

The Counseling and Therapy Center for People with Special Needs who have Experienced Abuse

The Counseling and Therapy Center for People with Special Needs who have Experienced Abuse was a new and unique service intended to fill an obvious gap in the services offered to children, adolescents and adults with special needs who were the victims of physical or sexual violence, neglect or emotional abuse, or who have abused others.

The findings of the evaluation pointed to the suitability of the model of action of the new service provided by the Center to the characteristics and needs of its target population, in terms of the treatment tools, of the diagnostic and treatment processes carried out in it and of the profile of the professional staff. The findings testified to the positive influence of the treatment, as expressed in small but cumulative changes in the lives of those treated, in how they related to themselves and to their surroundings, in the increase in awareness of the risks and dangers and in strengthening their defenses.

FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to the provision of various benefits for the people with disabilities, the National Insurance Institute provides funding for the development of new and the enhancement of the existing network of services for the people with disabilities in Israel, through the Fund for the Development of Services for People with Disabilities.

The Fund has for the past thirty years provided major assistance for the purchase of new equipment, renovations and for new building to a multitude of governmental, municipal and voluntary non-profit service providers. In 2013, the Fund began providing assistance to private service providers for the development of new employment services. In the year 2013 there were about 1,350 projects (including applications and projects in process); 135 of these approved in the course of that year.

The Fund draws its budget from the annual allocation earmarked for the General Disability Insurance branch (NIS 109 million in 2013), and it provides allocations for a very wide range of disabilities – including the developmentally disabled, emotionally disabled, blind, visually disabled, deaf and hearing-impaired, motor-function disabled, autistic, learning disabled and individuals with disease-related disabilities.

The Fund considers its main goal as one of fostering the integration of the disabled in the community at large. It provides assistance for the initiatives of only those service-providers who can provide proof of their ability to maintain and operate their services for an extended period. To date, it has provided funding for hundreds of services in virtually every town and city in the country. The main types of services developed by the Fund are community residences, vocational rehabilitation and sheltered workshops, leisure activities, and special education, early childhood intervention programs, accessibility infrastructure and new assistive technologies.

Community Residences – The Fund has been a primary catalyst in the development of residential services for the disabled, which have experienced an enormous expansion in the past five years. Funding is provided for a continuum of different residential options, such as hostels, sheltered apartments and training apartments. Support for community residences is provided for individuals who are either developmentally disabled, emotionally disabled, autistic or learning disabled.

Employment Services – the Fund has assisted in improving basic work conditions throughout the country. These workshops provide a basic work situation for individuals aged 18 or older who lack the basic skills for full employment in the work force. In the past several years the Fund has helped establish twenty new workshops, mostly located in outlying areas and in the Arab sector. The Fund is currently supporting the building of twenty additional workshop centers, some of which are intended to integrate individuals with various disabilities. The Fund also provides extensive assistance for establishing pre-employment therapeutic centers for individuals with severe cognitive, emotional and physical disabilities who are unable to function in a sheltered employment center. Assistance is also provided for the establishment of small businesses operated by individuals with disabilities such as catering services, direct-mail services, a variety of packaging services and laundry services. Extensive assistance is also provided for expanding employment training centers which provide short-term intensive training and placement services for individuals with disabilities who seek employment in the workforce at large.

Recently, the Fund has expanded its assistance to students with a variety of disabilities in major universities and institutions of higher learning. The Fund has been instrumental in establishing Support Centers for students with visual disabilities in all the main universities.

Therapeutic Day Centers for Adults – During the past several years, the Fund has helped to establish a nationwide network of Therapeutic Day Centers for adults with severe physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities, who are unable to participate in employment programs. These Centers provide occupational, physical and speech therapy, assistance with activities of daily living, recreational programs and support for the families of the disabled.

Special Education – The Fund has provided assistance to scores of special education programs for the purchase of equipment in the following areas: therapeutic programs, pre-work training programs, independent living training, specialized playground and group activities and specialized computer accessories and software. The Fund will now be focusing its efforts in assisting special education schools for children with severe disabilities and on transitional programs for the 16-21 age group.

Early Intervention – Having recognized the importance of early detection and intervention of developmental disabilities in the 0-5 population, the Fund has been a primary mover in the establishment of community-based treatment centers. These centers provide physical occupational speech and psychological therapy under the guidance and supervision of the main Child Development Centers. With the passage of the Rehabilitative Nursery School Law, the Fund has expanded its assistance to establishing special nurseries throughout the country.

Recreational Activities – recognizing the importance of recreational activities as an essential component in the well-being of the developmentally-disabled individual, the NII has provided support for a multitude of both segregate and integrative recreational programs. These include afternoon community clubs for young adults, evening recreational social clubs for adults, sports facilities and music and drama centers.

Hydrotherapy – In 2012 and 2013, the Fund approved renewed funding for the building of therapeutic swimming pools. During this year, an extensive study was carried out on all existing therapeutic pools, and clear guidelines were established for building and operating these pools. In 2014 the Fund will provide assistance for building six new therapeutic pools.

Accessibility – In order to facilitate the full integration of the disabled in Israeli society, the Fund has expanded its traditional role of developing services that primarily serve the disabled. In 1998, the Fund embarked on a national program to ensure accessibility of the disabled to all public services. These include Government offices, municipal buildings, schools, universities, museums, theatres, and courts as well as outdoor recreational sites such as the National Parks' nature reserves and picnic areas. Assistance is provided for special adaptations required by the physically disabled, such as ramps, paths, elevators, chair-lifts and adapted restrooms. Additionally, special adaptations have been provided for the visually and hearing disabled such as Braille signs, "ringing" traffic lights, special 3-D models, audio guides and FM systems for screening background noises. The Fund intends through these efforts to enhance public awareness of the need for accessibility to all services and to serve as a catalyst for additional funding sources. In 2005, as a result of growing public awareness and partly due to the involvement of the NII in funding accessibility projects, a new accessibility law was passed by the Knesset, as part of the "Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Law" of 1998. During 2009 and 2010, and until the full implementation of the law, the Fund is focusing its efforts on expanding accessibility in institutional residences, universities and colleges, as well as in informal education settings such as community centers and libraries. During the period of 2013

and 2014, the Fund will also significantly expand its budget for accessibility projects and will be focusing on new areas of involvement. These will include: developing new accessible technology, accessibility in colleges and universities, accessible adaptations in National Landmarks, experimental accessibility programs for people with a cognitive disability and a special initiative for accessibility in Jerusalem's Old City, a site which annually attracts many millions of visitors. In 2013, the Fund began on a national initiative to develop integrative municipal parks that promote play and social interactions between children with disabilities and their peers. Additionally, the Fund will be establishing a model accessible neighborhood together with the Jerusalem municipality, which will serve as a learning resource for municipalities and organizations nationwide.

Finally, in addition to its commitment to the development of community services, the Fund has since 1994 embarked on a massive program – together with the Ministry of Social Affairs – to improve the quality of life in twenty large governmental and public voluntary residences for the developmentally disabled. Efforts have been concentrated on refurbishing residential pavilions, building new housing to cope with chronic overcrowding, building day activity centers and improving basic infrastructure. In recent years, the Fund has also focused on assisting institutions for residents with severe motor disabilities and residences for young adults with severe emotional and behavioral disorders.

Multi-service Centers – In the past few years, there has been a growing trend to develop multi-service centers that provide a wide range of programs under one roof, such as afternoon leisure clubs for children, respite services, small workshops, therapeutic day programs and support and referral services. The Fund has helped develop these centers especially in outlying, peripheral areas that have smaller numbers of clients, and where it is economically unfeasible to establish separate services.

FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES FOR DEPENDENT ELDERLY

Under Article 237A of the National Insurance Law, the National Insurance Institute finances the development of community and institutional services for frail elderly individuals who are limited in activities of daily living and require long-term care services.

In 2013 the Fund's assistance to developing new services amounted to about NIS 38 million. The Minister of Social Affairs and the Minister of the Treasury authorize projects approved by the NII, after consultation with the Public Council.

The Fund assists public bodies in the development of infrastructure and equipment for services, contingent on the commitment to finance operating expenses of the program for which assistance is requested.

The Fund supports service development in the following areas: building, expanding and enhancing day centers for the elderly, including raising the standard of day centers by adding functions such as physiotherapy, health fitness equipment and therapeutic gardening; additions and upgrading of beds and the physical environment in nursing homes.

In 2013, the Fund developed and supported programs according to the national program of dementia, such as day care centers and support groups for families of demented elderly.

In 2013 the Fund approved 40 new programs, which included 28 community and 12 institutional projects. During this year, a total of 350 projects received funding from the Fund.

FUND FOR ACTIVITIES OF SAFETY AND HYGIENE IN THE WORKPLACE

Under Article 149 of the National Insurance Law, the National Insurance Institute participates in the funding of activities aimed at safety and the prevention of work accidents in factories or in other workplaces. The Fund's current budget in 2013 is about NIS 8.5 million, all which is spent on projects.

Such activities include:

- research in the area of safety and hygiene in the workplace, aimed at formulating conclusions which are widely applicable to prevent or reduce work accidents;
- examining the conclusions of the above research by means of their experimental application in a certain workplace, in order to examine the extent of their applicability and contribution to the promotion of work safety and hygiene;
- the survey, mapping and evaluation of existing and future risks in workplaces, and the proposal of solutions to remove these risks;
- activities of information, training and practice of behavior to prevent work accidents in workplaces;
- developing or improving means, tools and accessories aimed at increasing safety and hygiene in the workplace, in order to offer them to other employers;
- conducting nationwide information campaigns by means of the mass media and other means of publication, aimed at developing awareness concerning safety and hygiene at work.

In 2013, the Fund operated about 75 projects, some of them new and others carried on from previous years.

FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Fund for The Development of Services for Children and Youth was established in 2004 with the aim of developing services for children and youth at risk. In Israel there are well over 350,000 children whose functioning is impaired due to conditions of neglect, poverty or abuse (physical, sexual or emotional). All these factors affect the normal development of these children and leave them exposed and in distress. In these difficult times, children are often in the most sensitive position and their welfare is the most threatened.

The strategic aims of the Fund as defined for the first three years were to develop programs in the following areas:

- a) *To provide a “second chance” to at-risk youth for matriculation exams, higher education and provision of job skills;*
- b) *To prevent and reduce violence among children and youth, by means of intervention in educational and community frameworks;*
- c) *To treat and support children who are victims of sexual abuse;*
- d) *To develop programs for at-risk youth and young girls in distress;*
- e) *To promote programs for enhancing parenting skills.*

The Fund participates in welfare programs aimed at developing local, regional and nationwide services in the community by means of assistance in funding these programs for defined periods, with other bodies – the government, local authorities or public bodies – committing themselves to operate the program after this initial period.

200 projects have been approved to date (in the course of ten years), and have begun to be implemented, with a total budget of NIS 200 million.

Since 2009, the emphasis has been on preparing underprivileged and at-risk youth for the future work force. Preference is given to programs that stress life skills and work skills, hopefully better preparing youth for employability. In order to be effective in this goal, it is important to start working intensively with children already at the middle-school level.

Furthermore since 2007 the Fund has been instrumental in the establishment of 13 treatment centers for children who are victims of sexual abuse. This project was a joint venture with Keren Rashi and the Welfare Ministry. This year the project has been successfully taken over by the Welfare Ministry.

Considering the nationwide impact of the aforementioned project, the three bodies have initiated another joint venture: Treatment of Children Suffering from Neglect. This project is presently in its initial stages and in 2014 the Fund will be starting a pilot project in 6 cities. The project will require clearly defining who these children are and working on preventive programs with the children and their families.

Although the emphasis in the Fund’s call for proposals is changing, it will continue to work intensively with the projects already approved. These projects are of a very large range and focus on working with children from every sector of the population, whether these are ultra-Orthodox, national religious, Bedouin, or other. In each of these sectors special emphasis is placed on working with girls at risk and each project is matched with the special needs of each community. Furthermore, the Fund has been instrumental in the establishment of treatment centers for children who are victims of sexual abuse.

Trends and Developments 2013

With the Fund's intervention, services have been developed that are an integral part of the network of services for children at risk, remembering all along that children are the country's future, and that the children of today need to be given better opportunities so that they will have a better future and will not need to depend on benefits from the National Insurance Institute.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

International social security Conventions, bilateral and multilateral, are designed to assure equality of treatment or reciprocal treatment, the right to export benefits, as well as to protect rights of persons and their families who move from one country to another for employment or other reasons. The need for such Conventions stems from the fact that social security programs do not usually give adequate consideration to the special needs of persons who are outside its jurisdiction. Israel, as an immigration country, is interested in such Conventions in order to assure each beneficiary an adequate benefit for prior social security credits in their country of origin.

Another dimension of these international Conventions is the need to avoid dual coverage and contributions for workers posted temporarily by their employer in another country, while assuring continuity of protection and adequate benefits under the social security legislation of their country of origin.

Bilateral conventions

Israel signed the first bilateral Convention in 1957. Since then, continuous efforts have been made to enlarge the scope of our international cooperation through bilateral Conventions. At the present time, nineteen such Conventions have been concluded and are in force.

On January 1, 2013, a bilateral social security Convention with Romania came into effect.

The Convention guarantees continuity of social security rights to persons who have been insured under the Israeli or Romanian social legislation and who move from one country to the other.

The Convention applies to the following social security branches: old-age and survivors, general disability and children.

Furthermore, it arranges for an exemption from double payment of insurance contributions for employees and for self-employed persons, as well as for persons who are not gainfully occupied who move from one country to the other.

The bilateral Conventions presently in force between Israel and other countries are shown in the following table.

Bilateral Conventions

Country	Date of Signature	Operative Date	Coverage	Insurance Branches	Competent Institution
<i>United Kingdom</i>	April 29, 1957	Nov. 1, 1957 Amending protocol: April 1, 1984	British or Israeli citizens who are employees or self-employed and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Maternity, Children, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	The Pension Service, International Service, Newcastle upon Tyne, England NE98 1BA ¹
<i>Netherlands</i>	April 25, 1963	Nov. 1, 1963 New Agreement: Sept. 1, 1985 Amendment: December 1, 2003	Dutch or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Maternity ² , Children, Unemployment, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	SVB Vestiging Roermond Postbus 1244 6040 KE Roermond Netherlands
<i>France</i>	December 17, 1965	October 1, 1966	French or Israeli citizens who are employees, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Maternity, Children (Family Assistance), Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	C.L.E.I.S.S. 11 rue de la Tour des Dames, 75436 Paris, Cedex 09, France
<i>Belgium</i>	July 5, 1971	May 1, 1973	Belgian or Israeli citizens who are employees, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	Office Nationale de Securite Sociale, Place Victor Horta 11, 1060 Bruxelles, Belgique
<i>Austria</i>	November 28, 1973	December 1, 1974	Austrian or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Maternity, Children (Family Assistance), Unemployment, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	Pensionsversicherungs-Anstalt Friedrich Hillegeist str 1, 1021 Wien, Postf 1000, Austria
<i>Germany</i>	December 17, 1973	May 1, 1975	German or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Maternity, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	DRV Bund 10704 Berlin, Germany ----- DRV 40215 Dusseldorf 1, Germany
<i>Sweden</i>	June 30, 1982	July 1, 1983	Swedish or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Maternity, Children, Unemployment, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	Pensionsmyndigheten, Box 855, SE 971 26 Lulea, Sweden

¹ An additional institution in UK: Inland Revenue, Centre for Non-Residents-BP1301, Benton Park View, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE98 1ZZ, England.

² Cash benefits only (not hospitalization).

Bilateral Conventions (cont'd)

Country	Date of Signature	Operative Date	Coverage	Insurance Branches	Competent Institution
<i>Switzerland</i>	March 23, 1984	October 1, 1985	Swiss or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors and Disability	Caisse Suisse de Compensation, 18 Ave Ed Vaucher, CH-1211 Geneva 28, Switzerland
<i>Italy</i>	January 7, 1987	November 21, 1989	Italian or Israeli residents employed in the territory of the other country	None	Ministero del Lavorare e della Provvidenza Sociale 17, Via della Trezza 00187 Roma, Italy
<i>Poland</i>	October 31, 1991	December 31, 1991	Polish or Israeli citizens entitled to work injury or occupational disease benefits	Work Injury and Occupational Diseases	Zaklad Ubezpieczpienzen Spolecnych Biuro Rent Zagranicznych ul. Senatorska 1000-082 Warszawa, Poland
<i>Denmark</i>	July 3, 1995	April 1, 1996	Danish or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury and Occupational Diseases, Maternity and Children	Pensionsstyrelsen, Landemaerket 11, 1119 Kobenhavn K, Denmark
<i>Finland</i>	September 15, 1996	September 1, 1999	Finnish or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury, Maternity and Children	The Social Insurance Institution KELA Office for Int'l Affairs, PO Box 72 00381 Helsinki, Finland ¹
<i>Uruguay</i>	March 31, 1998	November 1, 1999	Uruguan or Israeli citizens, employees or self-employed, and members of their families	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury, Maternity and Children	Banco de Prevision Social, Gerencia de Area de Investigacion, y Asuntos Internacionales, Calle Colonia 1921 Piso 1 Montevideo, Republica Oriental del Uruguay
<i>The Czech Republic</i>	July 16, 2000	July 1, 2002	Czech or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons and their dependants	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury, Maternity and Children	Caska sprava socialnino zabezpeceni, Krizova 25, 225 08 Praha 5, Czech Republic
<i>Canada</i>	April 9, 2000	September 1, 2003	Canadian or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed.	None	CCRA, Ottawa Tax Services Office, 333 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa ON K1A 0L9 Canada
<i>Norway</i>	May 23, 2006	April 1, 2008	Norwegian or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed.	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury, Maternity and Children	NAV – National Office for Social Insurance Abroad, Postboks 8138 Dep N-0033 Oslo, Norway
<i>Republic of Bulgaria</i>	March 25, 2008	September 1, 2009	All persons who are or who have been subject to the Israeli or Bulgarian social security legislation, their family members and their survivors.	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury and Maternity	National Social Insurance Institute, Directorate for European Integration and International Treaties, Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd 62-64, Sofia 1303, Bulgaria.
<i>Republic of Slovakia</i>	July 15, 2010	January 1, 2012	Slovakian or Israeli citizens, refugees and stateless persons who are employees or self-employed.	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability, Work Injury and Children	Socialna Poistovna Ustredie (SIA) -426- Ul.29 augusta 8 a 10, 81363 Bratislava 1 Slovak Republic
<i>Republic of Romania</i>	February 28, 2011	January 1, 2013	All persons who are or who have been subject to the Israeli or Romanian social security legislation, their family members and their survivors.	Old-Age, Survivors, Disability and Children	

¹ An additional institution in Finland: Elaeketurvakeskus, 0065 Elaeketurvakeskus, Finland.

FUTURE CHANGES

Cancellation of linkage between vaccination and payment of child allowance

Under the Economy Arrangements Law for 2013-2014, payment of child allowance will no longer be conditional on the child having undergone vaccinations as prescribed by the Ministry of Health.

Previous to the change, the Ministry of Health regularly transferred to the National Insurance Institute lists of children who were not duly vaccinated, and the child allowance payments for these children were ceased.

The change will be in effect as of January 1, 2014.

Cancellation of entitlement to child allowance for persons with high incomes

Under an amendment to Article 66 of the National Insurance Law due to come into effect on January 1, 2014, a parent who has a taxable income that is higher than a certain amount will not be entitled to a child allowance for his children.

Erasing debts of insured persons who have passed away

Under an amendment to Article 363 of the National Insurance Law expected to come into effect in 2014, the National Insurance Institute, may, under certain circumstances, erase the debt of a person who passed away, and by force of whose entitlement a survivor's pension is paid to his dependents.

Presently, the NII erases the debts of persons who pass away only in cases in which no survivor's pension is paid.

Option of long-term care benefit in cash

As of March 1, 2013, all persons entitled to a long-term care benefit who employ a caregiver (either Israeli or foreigner) for at least 12 hours a day and at least six days a week will be able to choose a cash benefit rather than a benefit in kind (services). He also will have the option of combining the two.

Presently, under a pilot program, the cash benefit option is restricted to those living in certain areas as well as to those who receive benefit at one of the two higher levels.

Payment of additional monthly payment to mentally disabled

Under Amendment 150 to the National Insurance Law, the *additional monthly pension* (AMP) – at a rate of 11% of the full individual disability pension (NIS 252 in March 2014) – will be paid to recipients of disability pension with a mental or emotional

disability degree of 40%-49% for whom a full degree of incapacity has been determined.

It should be noted that this population group, unlike others, is not entitled to any NII benefit (such as attendance allowance or mobility benefit) in addition to their disability pension.

Presently, only persons with a medical disability of at least 50% are entitled to the AMP.

The change will come into effect on March 1, 2014.