

YOURGLOBALSTRATEGY

CASE STUDY: ASSESSING IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON ITS VICTIMS

How do acts of terror impact the lives of victims? In what ways are victims held back from moving on? Are there productive ways to help victims of terror (VOTs) beyond what is already done, to move forward and succeed? And many more questions about living a normal life.

Who Initiated the Assessment: A husband and wife involved in international/global business approached Michael Steiner (YGS co-founder) in mid-2000 with a most unusual series of question about the **impact of terrorism on the future of young people.**

Impetus for the Assessment: Their initial questions were about decision-making.

How do kids who lost one or both parents make decisions about their educations and careers? How do they pick up and build their future. And *do they*? If the answer is NO – are there things that can help children and young adults move forward with their lives?

Is it possible to assess in a strategic way what makes a difference in the lives of terror victims? In other words: Can one come up with a rational fact-finding and evaluation process and strategy, and not just a check-writing mechanism...

What are some of the specific issues that the victims of terror struggle with? Who else is involved in helping victims of terror? And in what ways is assistance provided to VOTs?

As they do today, in 2007 these and other questions begged for an action-oriented “Assessment”. An international team was assembled to review and begin assessing the issues we were asked to investigate.

Value Proposition: Are there impactful approaches that are not already being addressed by existing players?

Timeframe

Initial Assessment: Twelve months, included numerous meetings with survivors of terror attacks – even young children – and with surviving relatives of those deceased.

Throughout, we also consulted relevant government officials and professionals working with Victims of Terror.

Evaluation and Implementation: An additional two years to evaluate the findings and implement the proposed program to the point of success.

Cost for the Assessment: \$125,000

Most of the budget was to cover for the cost of the assessment, as well as out-of-pocket expenses – flights to the region, meetings, including social workers & VOT counselors accompanying us. Special allocations were also disbursed in the course of the assessment, in cases where immediate assistance was deemed necessary and appropriate, and in consultation with professionals and officials on site.

Organizations Involved in the Assessment: Jewish Agency for Israel, Government of Israel, UJF Pittsburgh, Jewish Federations of North America, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Process, Conclusions

It was clear through the early stage of the assessment meetings, taking place both in the United States and in Israel – where much of the terror activity was taking place – that the assessment would include three main demographics:

1. Victims of Terror – those who suffer most and would dominate our assessment, along with their loved ones
2. Professionals who work directly with VOTs
3. Individuals who decide on funds or services impacting VOTs - mostly government officials foundation CEOs

During the assessment, we met several people who were able to take steps to ‘move forward’, either by themselves or with the help of others. Initially seen as sporadic in our mind, these special terror victims gradually formed into a ‘picture’.

- Not all terror survivors are ready to move forward within a statute of limitations, and some are unprepared to acknowledge their status – if signing an affirmation is a precondition for support, then many are left out.
- Many terror victims reject a victim mentality. Most of the recipients have already overcome challenges and still fall short of financial resources or human support. They are not asking for ‘charity’.
- We found that each terror survivor – however defined – had a unique response and very individual mechanisms for coping and moving on – taking on more public responsibilities, career changes, occupational and sports therapy, and relationships, etc.
- Beyond providing basic services, there is no way to meet their needs and enable opportunities without resort to financial and human resources that are both flexible and responsive. Government and more established funds can hardly take on themselves to care for individual VOTs one by one, day in and day out for long time.

The Victims of Terror Assessment concluded with findings and recommendations that were presented to the two philanthropists who had commissioned the assessment (and who also participated meaningfully in the process). The findings were then shared with the other entities that were involved in the assessment (Jewish Agency for Israel, Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, JDC, etc.).

Post-Assessment: The assessment in this case led to a somewhat revolutionary mechanism that has been working now for close to a decade with many successes.

- A fund which enables immediate, overnight response and is coordinated with the government efforts, to unique and individual needs of those who seek to get up on their feet and keep living.
- Because no bureaucracy can allow itself such latitude and discretion, the fund fills in where the government leaves off especially where individuals and even the deceased might not meet the specified criteria – from paying for burial to catering the makeup wedding for a bereaved couple, and supplementals like tuition, counseling, and treatment.
- The fund relies on existing agencies to identify candidates, with an international committee including the philanthropists to approve each case – with provision for emergency allocations.
- In most cases, the funds help the recipient initiate or complete the transition to a successful future.