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Initiative in the voluntary sector: “Transfer the unemployment funds to us, and we’ll keep employing our staffs.”

25% of the voluntary sector organizations have halted operations, while 50% of employees have been put on unpaid leave. The organizations demand a billion dollars support package, and not a hundred million, as discussed by the government. Hertzog at the convention: “The officials just keep passing the responsibility from one person to another.”

Written by Sachar Ilan.

Members of the voluntary sector are calling upon the government to transfer unemployment funds directly to them, so they can keep employing their staffs. ELEM’s CEO, Inbal Dor Kerbel said, “employees who go on unpaid leave receive 75% of their salary from the government. So why can’t they keep their jobs and get those 75% rather than sit at home on a leave?”

Member of Knesset, Michael Biton of the Blue&White party echoed the sentiment. “Giving the nonprofit organizations that are willing to maintain continuous staff employment the funds, which the staff was going to receive anyway, functions as a direct fund to prevent layoffs. In return, there must be a commitment to employ these staff members for at least a year.” It’s important to note that in other countries, including England and France, the government decided to give the employers the majority of the salaries, as long as the employers commit to not fire the employees.

Dor and Biton spoke at an emergency convention held by the leadership of the voluntary sector, Civilian Leadership. The convention took place due to the growing concern of the collapse of the sector’s organizations. Civilian Leadership’s CEO, Lior Finkel Pearl, said that a quarter of the sector’s organizations has ceased operations, and that 50% of the organizations employees were put on unpaid leave. “If we don’t find a quick and immediate solution, the voluntary sector will collapse and the most vulnerable demographics in Israel will suffer beyond belief. It’ll be a disaster,” she explained.

Civilian Leadership Chairman, Attorney Ofir Katz, rejected the idea of establishing a 100 Million NIS fund for the organizations, and demanded a sum of 1 Billion NIS. "If society doesn't get the support it needs, many will not be able to overcome this crisis, and decades worth of work will go down the drain. The government is fully responsible."

Jewish Agency Chairman, Isaac 'Bougie' Herzog added: "There are talks about one fund or another, but there is no concrete plan. The officials just keep passing the responsibility from one person to another."

Dor Kerbel also mentioned that "we see an escalation. Youths who've attended boarding schools that were now shut down were sent home, we see more running away from home, we see an increase in sexual violence, general violence, and roaming the streets. We're required to do way more these days, and at the same time we don't receive the means or the approval from the government to keep up the work, and our pockets are getting empty by the second."