

The Historical Background of the Israeli Payments to the Authors

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The first survey, which resulted in the distribution of payments to Israeli authors, was conducted in 1987.

In 1984 several Israeli authors sent a memo to the then prime minister, Mr. Shimon Peres. The memo listed various demands to improve the standing of the Israeli authors. Mr. Peres was attentive to the authors' demands and proposed the traditional solution for problem solving in Israel: a committee.

A committee was appointed in 1985 to be headed by the General Director of the Ministry of Finance, Dr Emanuel Sharon. The committee undertaking was to examine the conditions of the Israeli authors and present the government with recommendations. The committee discussed the authors' memo in depth and reached ten conclusions, which were presented before the Prime Minister. Among them, the committee suggested that authors be paid according to the number of loans their works generated in Public libraries.

In keeping with the recommendations, Mr. Shimon Peres approved the sum of 1.2 Million NIS as an addition to the regular budget for literature.

Within a few days, a joint committee of the authors and the culture administration was formed to recommend the method and procedure to administer the payments to the authors,

At this stage it was agreed that authors should receive **payment awards** and not **royalties**. The goal of this enterprise is to promote Hebrew literature and to enable authors more spare time for writing and creating

At this stage an appeals committee was formed in order to deal with the author's complaints.

The first survey was conducted at the end of 1986. The initial list of authors included 187 authors. In 1987 we distributed the first payments to 157 authors. Since then, the monies needed to conduct the survey and the payments to the authors themselves are included in the regular budget of the Libraries Division

The Survey method

The method of payments to the authors, adopted in Israel, is based on the number of loans the author's works generated in a sample of libraries. The sample is done with the help of statistics expert. It includes 20 out of 1000 public libraries in the Jewish sector, and 5 out of 50 public libraries in the Arab sector. The libraries themselves were chosen to represent various forms of settlements and different

populations: cities, villages (moshavim, kibbutzim), the secular sector, the religious sector etc. We strive to find a sample, which would most accurately represent the various parameters. Most of the municipal libraries record their circulation by computer while most of the rural libraries still enter the records manually.

The Authors Included in the survey

Israeli citizens who live in Israel on a regular basis.

The widows of Israeli authors.

Authors who write in Hebrew or Arabic in the following literary forms: fiction, poetry, children's literature and literary essays.

Plays that were not performed on stage, biographies and personal Holocaust documentations were also included in the survey.

Adaptations and Anthologies were not included.

The Method of Payment

In order to distribute the monies on a fair and egalitarian scale, the value per loan varies by the form of the literary genre. Since poetry books are not borrowed very often, we multiply the number of their loans by 4. On the other hand, the distribution of monies between adult books and children's books is at a ratio of 64 to 36 percent in favor of adult books. There is a maximum ceiling of 21,000 NIS to be paid to one author. This maximum is less than 2 percent of the total sum distributed to all the authors. There is also a minimum payment of 200 NIS. Authors, who do not meet this sum, do not get paid and the monies are returned to the general pool.

A special database was developed to store and compile the survey results. The programmers were confronted by some problems particular to the Israeli book market. Some of the books are published without an ISBN number. The solution was to identify these books according to their catalogue number in the Israel center for libraries, or by title and author. Since there are several spelling systems in Hebrew, our computer system allows human intervention in order to identify correctly the books.

We approached Israeli authors by advertising in the local newspapers and by sending letters to all the authors listed in the database. Once we receive the authors' replies, we set out to prepare a catalogue of all the books to be included in the survey, sorted according to the literary genres. The sample libraries transmit their survey results to us. Then, with the aid of statistics expert, we examine the results to verify that there are no erroneous data.

Based on the results of the survey, the authors are notified of the payments they are entitled to receive.

The Arab Survey

The first survey in the Arab sector was conducted in 1988 and reflected loans transacted in 1987.

The payments to the authors are distributed according to two parameters: the number of title per author at the public library and the number of loans these works generate. The survey included a sample of five public libraries out of 50 in the Arab sector. In 1998,135 authors participated in the survey and a sum of 150,000 was distributed. Our Library Supervisor for the Arab sector conducts the survey.

Survey Data at the Jewish sector from three years

| Survey Year | No. authors participated | No. authors that received payments | Percentage authors that received payments | Sum for division |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1986 | 187 | 157 | 84% | \$212,972 |
| 1992 | 718 | 439 | 61.1% | \$307,420 |
| 1998 | 1,005 | 450 | 44.78% | \$275,365 |

Survey Data at the Arab sector from three years

| Year participated | Survey No. authors | No. authors that received payments | Percentage authors that Received payments | Sum for distribution |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1987 | 50 | 33 | 66 | \$25,714 |
| 1994 | 93 | 79 | 73-47 | \$48,151 |
| 1998 | 136 | 96 | 70.5 | \$38,292 |