

**Report on Living Organ Donor Benefit Policies in Eight
Countries other than Iran or the United States
Memo prepared for the Center for Ethical Solutions and The
American Living Organ Donor Fund
by Vandana Apte (July, 2015)**

Introduction

Much has been written on the Iranian system of organ procurement, which provides extensive benefits to living kidney donors including in some cases financial compensation above donation related expenses. In the United States the last five years have seen a downward trend in living organ donations despite some efforts to assist living organ donors with their expenses. This memo describes the benefits provided by countries other than Iran and the United States and the percentage increase in living organ donation since the implementation of said policies.

Methodology

A literature review of the most recent studies and national websites that included data on living organ donation yielded the following findings. A list of references are provided at the end of this memo.

Conclusion

The data below show two noteworthy facts. (1) There is a correlation between a country's implementing policies that provide living organ donors with various benefits and an increase in the number of living organ donors. And (2) there is a growing trend among countries to provide living organ donor benefits in an attempt to ease their organ shortage.

Below are listed the various policies countries have implemented in an effort to boost living organ donation. All but the two countries with the most recent policy changes, have experienced an increase in the number of living organ donors since the implementation of such policies. Whether that rise in donation is directly caused by the policies that were implemented is disputed, but the correlation between the implementation of such policies and the rise in donation indicated below is clear. More study is needed to determine which policies or what combination of policies, if any, are the direct cause in the increases in donation shown below.

Saudi Arabia

Living Organ Donor Policies

Saudi Arabia has one of the most comprehensive reimbursement packages for living organ donors, which came about as a result of a law that was passed in 2007.¹

To address the ethical concerns that the organ donor may be donating an organ out of poverty, need, or other pressures, a reimbursement committee meets with the donor at least three times to ensure that the donor is making an independent and informed decision to donate.²

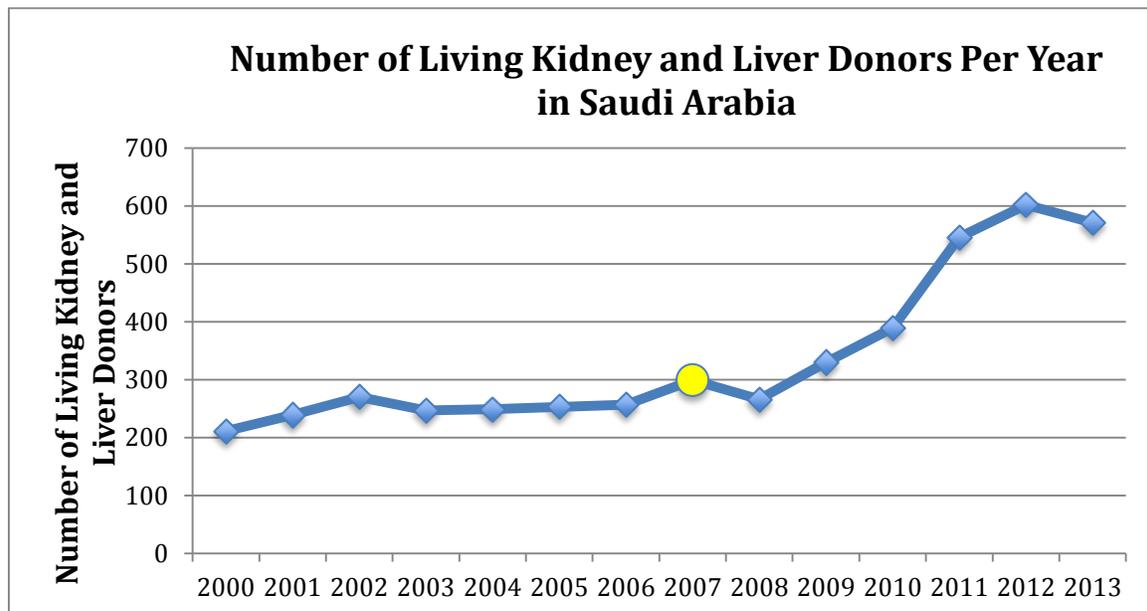
A financial package, which can be up to 50,000 riyals (\$13,330) depending on donor income, reimburses donors for their medical and non-medical expenses—including lost income, lost days of sick-leave, and travel expenses. The living donor is also given long-term medical insurance as a part of the package.^{1,2}

In addition, the organ donors receive the King Abdul Aziz medal as well as a discount card with Saudi airlines.²

Currently, the Ministry of Health and Saudi Center for Organ Transplantation are responsible for administering the reimbursement policy.^{1,3}

Recent Rise in Donations

Since the passage of the law that reimburses living organ donors in 2007, the number of living kidney and liver donors has increased from 299 in 2007 to 571 in 2013. This constitutes a 91% increase in the number of living kidney and liver donors since the law's passage.³



 = Year that reimbursement/benefit law was enacted

Israel

Living Organ Donor Policies

The Organ Transplantation Law, which outlines a procedure for providing reimbursement and benefits to living donors in Israel, was passed in 2008.⁴

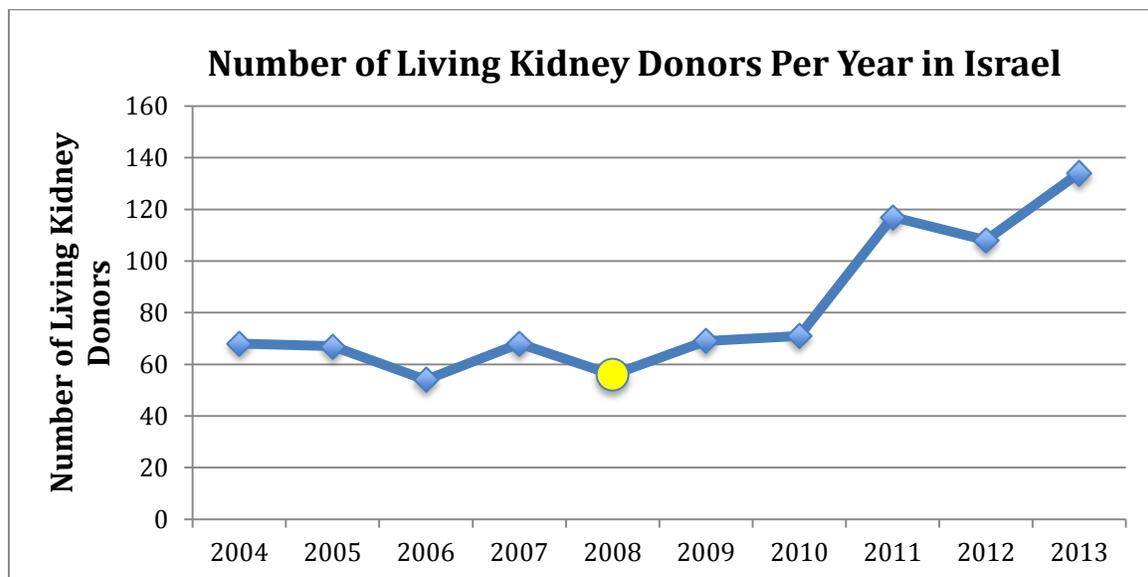
Under this law, employed living donors will be reimbursed for lost income for forty days based on the donor's average salary, and unemployed living donors will be provided a minimum wage salary for forty days.⁴ Furthermore, living donors will be reimbursed for all transportation costs; for seven days of recovery in a recuperation facility; and five years of medical, work capability loss, and life insurance.⁴ If the donation process takes a toll on the donor's mental health, living donors can even be reimbursed for five psychological consultations and treatments.⁴

Other non-monetary benefits for the living donor include high priority on the organ transplant list should the donor require an organ in the future as well as free admission to all national parks within Israel.^{2,5} Living donors will also be exempt from the national health tax for a period of time and receive a Certificate of Recognition.^{2,5}

The National Transport Center under the Israeli Ministry of Health currently administers the reimbursement and benefits package for living donors.⁶

Recent Rise in Donations

Since the passage of the Organ Transplantation Law in 2008, the number of living kidney donors has increased from 56 in 2008 to 134 in 2013.⁴ This constitutes a 139% increase in the number of living kidney donors since the law's enactment.



 = Year that the Organ Transplantation Law was enacted

Australia

Living Organ Donor Policies

In response to decreasing numbers of living donors, the Australian Department of Human Services initiated a pilot program in 2013 that provided monetary support for living donors who needed to take time off from work to recover from the transplantation surgery.^{7,9} Since July 2015, the program has been renewed.⁷ It is now administered by the Department of Health and is called The Supporting Leave for Living Organ Donors Programme.⁷

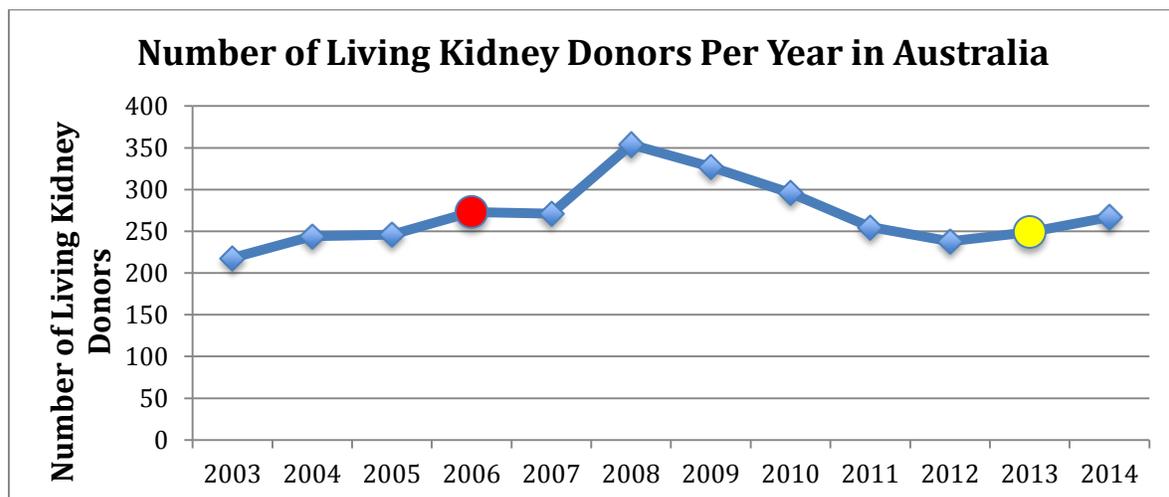
The program provides compensation for living donors' lost income for up to nine weeks, based on a 38-hour week, at up to the National Minimum Wage (\$656.90/week) or current salary.⁷

This program is unique because rather than paying the donors directly, support is given to the donor's employer, who then distributes the money to the donors in the form of standard paychecks.⁸ In this way, the program compensates employers for loss in productivity rather than the living donors for loss of income.

Additionally, in 2006, before the initiation of the Supporting Leave for Living Organ Donors Programme, Western Australia passed a policy that provided travel reimbursement for living kidney donors who were donating at Perth hospital.¹⁰ The policy, which is administered by Western Australia Country Health Services, provides reimbursement for transport, meals, accommodations, and incidentals.¹⁰ Reimbursement is provided within six weeks after the living donor submits receipts and those receipts have been approved.¹⁰

Recent Rise in Donations

Since the enactment of the Supporting Leave for Living Organ Donors Programme in 2013, the number of living kidney donors has increased from 249 in 2013 to 267 in 2014.⁹ This constitutes a 7% increase in the number of living kidney donors since the program's initiation.



-  = Year that Supporting Leave for Living Organ Donors Programme was initiated
-  = Year that Western Australia enacted Travel Reimbursement policy

Singapore

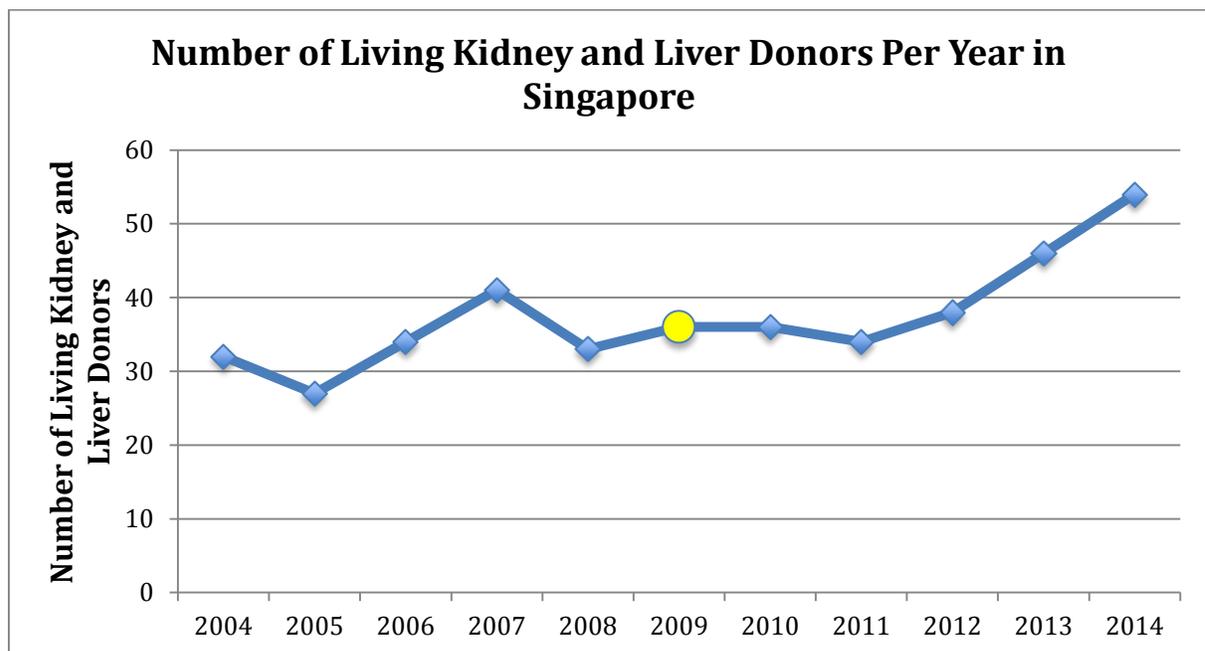
Living Organ Donor Policies

The Parliament of Singapore passed an amendment to the Human Organ Transplant Act in 2009 that established a benefits program for living organ donors.¹³

According to the amendment, living donors must first be interviewed by a Transplant Ethics Committee (TEC), which confirms that the donor is making a conscious, informed decision and is not being coerced into donating.¹¹ After the donor has been approved by the TEC, he or she can receive reimbursements from the National Kidney Foundation for medical procedures relating to the transplant, travel expenses, accommodations, loss of income, and child-care services.¹¹ In addition, the donor may receive long-term medical insurance to cover necessary medical procedures as a consequence of donating an organ.¹¹

Recent Rise in Donations

Since Parliament passed the amendment to the Human Organ Transplant Act in 2009, the number of living kidney and liver donors has increased from 36 in 2009 to 54 in 2014.¹² This increase constitutes a 50% increase in the number of living kidney and liver donors since the amendment was passed.



 = Year that Human Organ Transplant Act was amended

United Kingdom

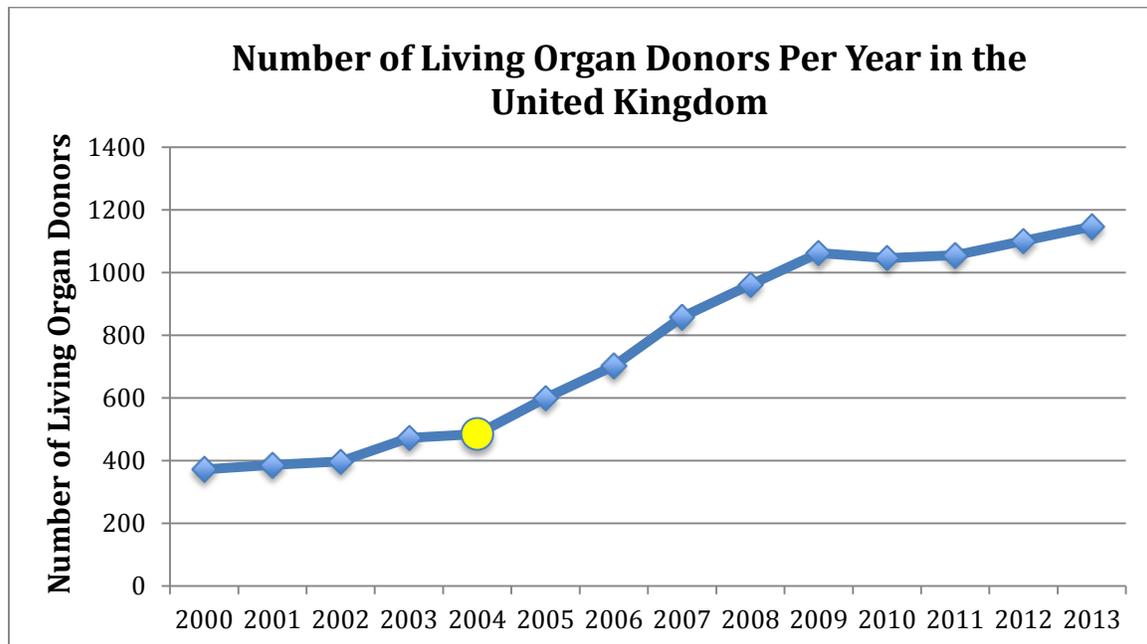
Living Organ Donor Policies

The Human Tissue Act was passed in 2004, and while the act prohibits the donor from receiving direct payments or rewards for donating, the act does allow the living donor to be reimbursed for reasonable expenses relating to the donation process.¹⁴

The National Health Service reimburses living donors for travel expenses, loss of earnings, accommodations, child-care, and other incidentals relating to the donation for up to twelve weeks after donation.¹⁵ The donor must claim expenses before they are incurred.¹⁵ They then must show proof of purchases (receipts) and income (payslips) in order to be reimbursed.¹⁵

Recent Rise in Donations

Since the enactment of the Human Tissue Act in 2004, the number of living organ donors has increased from 485 in 2004 to 1147 in 2014.¹⁶ This increase constitutes a 136% increase in the number of living organ donors since the act was passed.



 = Year that Human Tissue Act was enacted

Canada

Living Organ Donor Policies

While Canada does not have a national policy for reimbursing living organ donors, some provinces within Canada have their own donor reimbursement programs.

British Columbia

The National Kidney Foundation of Canada—British Columbia branch initiated the Living Organ Donor Expense Reimbursement Program (LODERP) in July 2006.¹⁷ The program reimburses the living donor for travel between home and the transplant center, accommodations, parking, and meals.¹⁷ In addition, LODERP can provide up to eight weeks of lost income support at 55% of the usual weekly net income, up to \$400/week.¹⁷

Ontario

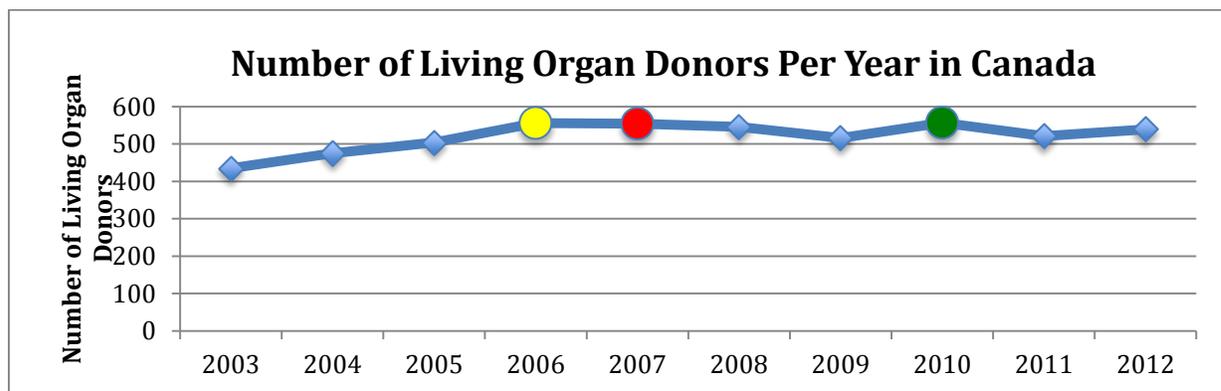
In August 2007, Ontario enacted the Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Organ Donors (PRELOD).¹⁸ Through the program, the Ontario Trillium Gift of Life Network reimburses living donors for travel, parking, transit, accommodations, and meals.¹⁸ Additionally, the program subsidizes lost income but only after all other sources of income have been utilized and exhausted (eg. paid leave of absence, sick or vacation time, Employment Insurance benefits, etc).¹⁸ In rare cases, the program reimburses child-care services.¹⁸

Quebec

In December of 2010, the National Assembly of Quebec passed the “Act to facilitate organ and tissue donation”, which establishes a system for reimbursing living organ donors.¹⁹ The act creates a reimbursement program under Transplant Quebec that mirrors LODERP in British Columbia.¹⁹

Recent Rise in Donations

The effect of these policies on the total number of living organ donors in Canada is negligible, for the number of living organ donors in Canada has remained fairly static from 2003 to 2012.²⁰ Perhaps this situation illustrates the need for a comprehensive national policy for reimbursing living organ donors.



- = Year that Living Organ Donor Expense Reimbursement Program was enacted in British Columbia
- = Year that Program for Reimbursing Expenses of Living Organ Donors was enacted in Ontario
- = Year that Act to facilitate organ and tissue donation was enacted in Quebec

Ireland

Living Organ Donor Policies

In November of 2014, Ireland passed the Policy on the Reimbursement of Expenses of Living Kidney Donors.²¹

The policy ensures that the Living Donor Reimbursement Office of the Health Service Executive will reimburse living kidney donors for the cost of accommodations (up to €110 per night) and for travel expenses for the most economically advantageous mode of transport.²¹ Additionally, living kidney donors will be compensated for loss of earnings for up to 12 weeks (capped at €6,000).²¹

Recent Rise in Donations

Because the policy was enacted last year, there is no data on any potential effect the law may be having on donation rates.²¹

New Zealand

Living Organ Donor Policies

In June of 2015, New Zealand Parliament passed the Financial Assistance for Live Organ Donors Bill.²² This law reimburses living donors for lost income based on his or her marital status. Additionally, the law provides childcare reimbursement if the donor has children under the age of 14.²³ Payments are made by the Ministry of Health and cover costs for the 12 weeks during and after transplantation surgery.²³

Recent Rise in Donations

Because the bill was enacted a couple months ago, there is no data on any potential effect the law may be having on donation rates.²²

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