

# Hand in Hand

Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel  
יד ביד: המרכז לחינוך יהודי ערבי בישראל (ע"ר)  
يداً بيد: مركز التربية العربي اليهودي في اسرائيل



## 2013-14 HIGHLIGHTS

June 2014



## INTRODUCTION

For the past 15 years Hand in Hand (HIH) has been developing a network of bilingual multicultural schools with an integrated student body and faculty of Jews and Arabs. This is a singular accomplishment in a society that generally finds Arabs and Jews living apart and studying in separate institutions with minimal contact. Starting in 1998 with two schools and 50 children, Hand in Hand in 2013-14 has grown to five schools (Jerusalem, the Galilee, Wadi Ara, and Haifa, Tel Aviv/Jaffa) and 1,100 students in grades K-12. HIH schools are amongst the only places in Israel where Jews and Arabs engage on a daily basis in an environment of mutual respect, utilizing a co-teaching model with Hebrew and Arabic-speaking teachers, a shared calendar to celebrate the holidays of each culture, as well as a multicultural curriculum.

Hand in Hand is now working systematically to establish community leadership and structures, and develop a range of vibrant community activities (from sports, culture, family activities and excursions, to dialogue groups, language study, and responding to discriminatory events) that will create a civic infrastructure for social inclusion and civic equality beyond the walls of the school. Over the next ten years, Hand in Hand aims to create a network of 10-15 integrated bilingual schools, supported and enhanced by active communities, involving some 20,000 Israeli citizens. These visibly integrated shared communities will not only help HIH schools succeed and expand, but will also show the broader public that Israel can be a diverse democratic state where Jews and Arabs live together peacefully.



LOCATION OF HAND IN HAND'S  
**5 BILINGUAL**  
SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES



## HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following is an account of the work that Hand in Hand has done to bring Arabs and Jews together throughout Israel during the 2013-14 school year.

### NEW PRESCHOOLS AND STRENGTHENING MUNICIPAL RELATIONSHIPS

With great excitement, Hand in Hand opened two new preschools in Haifa and Jaffa for the 2013-14 school year. There are currently 77 Jewish and Arab children attending the new preschools and more than 300 families have expressed interest in joining the schools for the 2014-15 school year. These children are at the beginning of their Hand in Hand journey that will expose them to an inclusive multicultural environment built on tolerance and mutual respect.

### JAFFA

**Preschool:** After over a year of work, the Hand in Hand Jaffa preschool attained official approval from the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality to become an official Municipal preschool, which opened in September 2013. While still celebrating the accomplishment, the community has already gotten to work on attaining approval for another two preschool classes next year, and a 1st grade in 2015-16.



The Jaffa Preschool hosted the Mayor of Tel Aviv/Jaffa, Ron Huldai, along with other key municipal and Ministry of Education officials in December in a show of support. The children greeted the visitors with songs in Hebrew and Arabic, and the Mayor accompanied them on a flute.





**Community Organized Tour:** The Jaffa community organized a successful tour of the Bedouin village of H'shem Zana. It was an educational event to teach about the social and political situation of Bedouin in Israel. On the tour, the group went to a look-out point over unrecognized villages and then proceeded to a guest house in one of the villages, and heard from local people about their lives in general, and specifically in H'shem Zana. While the adults were listening to these stories, the children had an arts and bread-making activities outside- and then spontaneously started playing soccer with some local children. This event raised the level of social-political discussion in the community and fostered solidarity with the Bedouin population.



**The Community Garden:** Parents and teachers partnered in preparing a plot in the community garden adjacent to the Jaffa preschool and creating weekly activities for children and parents to work in the garden, planting herbs and vegetables that they will use for meals in the school. It is important to the Jaffa community that the children learn about a sustainable environment as part of their education towards a shared and sustainable society in Israel.



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## CITY RESIDENTS SAYING YES TO A BILINGUAL KINDERGARTEN IN HAIFA

### HAIFA

**Preschool:** The Haifa preschool opened in August 2013, with 42 Jewish and Arab children, more than tripling in size from the previous year's day care program. However, the school has not yet gained official recognition from the municipality, which would provide core resources to the school. In December, the mayor officially denied the community's request for municipal support. Despite the ongoing bureaucratic obstacles, members of the community are determined to gain recognition from the municipality and make the Haifa preschool a public school, like all of the other Hand in Hand schools. To this end, the community members have launched the "Say 'Yes!'" grassroots campaign raising awareness about their cause, and gaining the support of Haifa residents. We expect to open 4 classes in 2014-15 with 70 children and will continue to seek municipality approval.



**Holiday Celebrations:** The Haifa preschool celebrated various holidays together. For example, for the holiday of Eid Al Adcha the preschool children decorated their room with sheep, and learned about the tradition related to the sheep and the meaning of the holiday. The students also made cards to send home to their families. The following week, the preschool held an afternoon parent-children celebration focused on the olive tree, and celebrating the traditions related to olives. On Tu B'shvat, the Jewish New Year for the Trees, there was a joint parent-children celebration with the planting of a communal garden in the preschool area. Parents and children planted together, and since have been taking care of the garden together.





## OUR VETERAN SCHOOLS

### JERUSALEM

**Hand in Hand Wins 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in National Science Competition:** This is the third year that the Max Rayne Hand in Hand Bilingual Jerusalem School's 9th grade has participated in the Ministry of Education's science competition and won first place in the city's science fair for their high level of research and for the working model they prepared on the topic of using metal detectors to help locate shrapnel in the human body and to determine the type of metal involved. The school's 6<sup>th</sup> graders received honorable mention for their work on using spectrometers to identify components of various solutions. 51 schools from the entire country participated in the National Competition, and the Max Rayne School 9<sup>th</sup> graders won second place country-wide!

# Science Class Wins Prize in Country-Wide Competition!





**School Wins Values Education Prize:** The Max Rayne Bilingual School won an award for excellence from the Ministry of Education for its participation in the “Ambassadors that Open Hearts” Program. The program is designed for students in grades 1-6 and asks teachers to take a different social value each month, design experiential activities for the children, and examine it in various circles, such as me, my family, my class, my school, my society.

In November, first graders took the value of the month, “differences,” which they had discussed with their teachers, and taught that value to another class through a matching game where the children had to find the similarities and differences between various flowers. Some of the other values include: how we are the same and how we are different, responsibility, respect, and how to deal with conflicts. In addition to academic excellence, the school emphasizes values education and is helping students develop social and life skills.



Another example of concern for others in our society came from fifth grade students and teachers who decided to volunteer in an old age home during Hanukkah to bring some holiday cheer to the residents.

**Standing Together in Support of ‘Price Tag’ Victims and Against Hate Crimes:** In recent years, there has been a phenomenon of vandalism or “Price Tag Attacks” by extremist groups targeting Arabs or anybody who is perceived as “other” (e.g. Christians, and other groups who represent liberal views). Anti-Arab graffiti was painted on walls three times in the last year in the neighborhoods of Beit Safafa, Sharafat and Beit Hanina. After each of these incidents, Hand in Hand parents and community members gathered in a spontaneous show of support for the communities affected and to protest the hateful vandalism.





**Jerusalem School Principal Invited to Speak at Education Conference:** The principal of the Jerusalem Elementary School, Nadia Kinnani, was invited to speak at the opening of the citywide Ministry of Education Annual Conference about the unique bilingual school model.

**Middle School Teachers Win Prize from Jerusalem Education Authority (“Manchi”) for Community Work:** Two teachers in the Jerusalem Middle School were awarded prizes for their values education work with students and teaching the importance of taking responsibility for improving the community and becoming active citizens.

**Identity Day:** The identity exhibition in the Jerusalem school was the culmination of months of learning in the 1st-9th grade classes and included expressions of many layers of identity: personal, familial, communal, religious, and national. Parents were invited to visit the final presentation, share in the excitement, and enjoy the music that the school choirs and ensembles performed for the audience.







**Neighbors' Café:** In May 2013, Jerusalem community members launched the Jiran-Neighbors' Cafe, an idea that emerged from the meeting of two mothers searching for a comfortable communal space to share. The café runs once or twice a month as part of other communal cultural events, musical performances and discussions, and has become a unique and fruitful meeting place for community members.



**Basketball Teams and Running Groups:** There are women's and men's running groups and basketball teams in Jerusalem. They meet weekly and the men's team plays in the Jerusalem municipal league. The teams send an important message to opposing groups and fans that Jews and Arabs can play together - challenging many stereotypes and norms in the general public. These activities are also an important avenue for keeping the diverse Jerusalem Hand in Hand community connected to each other.

**Language Classes:** Groups of Arab and Jewish adults meet for language instruction and social meetings once a week. Learning language is an important step towards creating a truly equal community and society.

**Women's Day Event:** This year, for the first time, the Hand in Hand Jerusalem community partnered with Ibna Al Kuds, an Arab community center that serves residents of East Jerusalem. Together, they marked International Women's Day, supporting local Palestinian and Israeli women's craft collectives and individual artists at a crafts fair hosted at the Max Rayne Hand in Hand Bilingual Jerusalem school. Hundreds of children, families and community members gathered to listen to an Arabic music ensemble and to explore the many crafts stalls- from soaps to tapestries to home-made olives that women from East and West Jerusalem sold.





## WADI ARA

**10 Year Celebration:** The Gesher School in Wadi Ara, which opened its doors in September 2004, is celebrating 10 years this year. It marked this event with a public celebration with hundreds of students and their families, alumni and staff attending. The children participated in various creative activities, including painting t-shirts and creating school logo pins. In addition, each class presented a sample of their talent in art, music, and dance while proud parents and staff looked on.



**Language Classes:** Groups of Arab and Jewish adults meet for language instruction and social meetings once a week. At the end of the learning year, the classes conducted a joint meeting of the Hebrew and Arabic language classes. They had a party where each of the participants brought an ethnic food to share, participated in a group activity and practiced their new language with each other. It was exciting to bring them together and see what they had learned.

**Jewish-Arab text study:** Jewish and Arab community members gather to explore Jewish and Muslim texts together in a weekly text study in Wadi Ara. It is an opportunity for community members to learn about and share each other's culture.





## Gesher Goes Green!

The Gesher School launched its Green School Initiative on November 30th with the slogan, “Sustainable Learning, Sustainable Living.” Parents mobilized to create an event for over 200 students and families with eight craft stations, including art out of plastic bags, old toys, and used clothes, and making mosaics out of broken pottery. There was also a potluck meal with re-usable silverware, and a clown show.



The school’s principal, Dr. Hasan Agbaria welcomed the large crowd, including 48 new students and their families from Jewish towns throughout the Wadi Ara area (Katzir, Pardes Hanna, etc.) and noted: “This initiative emphasizes the spirit of the school and is a central part of the school’s vision; teaching our children to take responsibility for their surroundings - community, society and environment.”





## GALILEE

**Music Ensemble Performs:** The Hand in Hand Galilee School ensemble performed for some 400 school supervisors and principals at the opening regional conference of the Ministry of Education that focused on the annual theme of “The Other is Me”.

The audience was deeply moved by the performance seeing in it a clear statement about the viability of integrated frameworks. As Rina Glassner, Supervisor of Musical Education in the Northern Region noted: “Other people talk about coming together, and they are actually doing it.” This is an example of how Hand in Hand school frameworks are making an impact on the broader public.



**Olive Festival:** In November, community members, together with other local organizations, organized an Olive Festival in Sachnin. With over 300 people in attendance, there were hikes focused on environmental issues, workshops on building mud ovens, pickling olives, and making candles out of olive oil, as well as children’s stories in Hebrew and Arabic, and theater and musical performances.



**Holiday of Holidays:** The community members planned a “Holiday of Holidays” event, in which the winter holidays of all the different religions were celebrated together. More than 300 people attended, children, parents and grandparents from the school as well as neighbors and friends. After the event, participants expressed their excitement at this opportunity for shared celebrations and asked to turn this into an annual tradition.



**Enlarging its Library:** In addition to the 24 registered first-graders, 12 new first-graders enrolled just after the start of the school. The Galilee School decided it needed a larger space for its library, one that would encourage especially the young children to enter the world of books. It therefore, moved the library with its Hebrew and Arabic books and games into the main building where the first grade classrooms are located. 1st-3rd graders visit the library once a week and listen to books that are read aloud. The older children come during recess. There is a computer corner for student use, as well as separate sections with board games and magazines. The librarian enlists students who, as part of their community service, volunteer in the library doing a variety of tasks, including returning books to the shelves, helping younger children select and locate books, signing out books and running weekly story hours. In May the “Parade of Books” took place and children made posters, created games, performed in story theater, and sold second hand books to help support the library.



**Accessibility Workshop:** Sixth grade students are learning and becoming active in raising awareness about accessibility for the disabled in school as well as in the larger Jewish and Arab communities in the Galilee. Rutie Gefer and Rasha Joubran are the co-teachers leading the project. They explain: “We hope to lead a learning process in which our students will become ‘ambassadors of accessibility’, eventually learning to teach students in other Jewish and Arab schools in the surrounding areas. The project will continue next year, which will broaden and deepen students’ engagement in this topic, expanding our circles of impact.” As part of this unique initiative, supported by Access Israel, students learn basic concepts of mass media and global accessibility, meet with professionals and people engaged in advertising, accessibility & mass communication. With this knowledge, students will design promotional products to raise awareness among teenagers in their area.

**Good Deed Day:** In March 2014, the Galilee school students, parents and broader community members gathered to fix up the school garden. Dozens of families and over 100 students participated. Men, women and children lent a hand, weeding, planting, fixing the terraces and making food.





## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

***Establishing An Early Childhood Division:*** HHH's Education Department, headed by Dr. Inas Deeb, plays a crucial role in providing HHH's growing network of schools with the school leadership, and the training, supervision and pedagogic tools the educational staff need in order to teach in a bilingual and multicultural school and transmit to students HHH's social vision of civic equality and mutual respect between all Israeli citizens. No academic certification exists in Israel to prepare teachers for bilingual education. HHH teachers must be able to co-manage a classroom and teach in two different languages; they must be able to discuss, celebrate and commemorate together each other's religious traditions. With the opening of two new preschools in Haifa and Jaffa, we have had to expand our organizational capacity by creating an Early Childhood Division with both a Jewish and Arab early childhood expert to ensure the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of our current and new operations and for the development of early childhood materials.



***Principals' Forum:*** The Principals' Forum enables Hand in Hand's principals to learn from each other's experience and to take the lead in helping inculcate HHH's vision and the bilingual multicultural model in their school. There were 8 Forum sessions during the year. The last one took place at the end of May where the principals and vice-principals discussed their goals for the coming school year and suggested that they will (1) discuss methods for pedagogical implementation of the Hand in Hand vision and (2) prepare a document that provides guiding principles for all school staff as to how to deal with the many issues that arise around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and National days such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, Naqba and Land Day.



### ***Joint Training Seminar for Early Learning Staff:***

In addition to regular training sessions with our Early Childhood Coordinators, in March we brought all the early learning staff from Haifa and Jaffa together for two full-day seminars on the topic of bilingual education with pre-school children. The seminars included a survey of the different models of co-teaching and a discussion of which model to use for particular activities. This was followed by workshops in which teachers prepared an activity according to a specific co-teaching model and then presented it to the group for their feedback. Additional sessions discussed how to use games to teach vocabulary in both languages and to help children learn each other's names.



The group also visited the Old City and heard about its history and the complexity of living there. The staff had an open discussion about the meaning of the different National holidays. Different perspectives were heard, and all participants felt that the discussion was important and beneficial. Thereafter, the group prepared a document with guidelines concerning how to approach the National holidays with pre-school children. The joint training session was an important tool in helping our staff get to know one another, to hear different perspectives, and to help them realize that in addition to being teachers, they are also civic leaders who are part of a country-wide network that is initiating long-lasting changes in social attitudes.





## DIALOGUE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

A central aspect of our work is about how to create mutual knowledge, understanding and appreciation between Jews and Arabs within both our communities and schools.

**Dialogue Groups:** In Jerusalem, over 50 new and veteran parents participated in a series of dialogue sessions during December-March 2013, discussing what it means for their children, themselves, and for the community to be part of the Hand in Hand network. In February, parents also participated in a conference which included lectures and break-out discussions about topics such as bilingualism, identity and community building.



**National Days:** Hand in Hand schools and communities address the complexity of the Jewish and Palestinian community identities and narratives throughout the year. However, the National Days highlight the core differences at the heart of the communal and national conflict. Holocaust Day, Memorial Day for the Fallen Israeli Soldiers and Terrorist Victims and Independence Day are central to Jewish-Israeli communal identity. For Arab citizens of Israel and Palestinians Naqba Day and Land Day are dedicated to their communal narrative. For Hand in Hand this means an extended period of learning and dialogue at both the school and communal level throughout the period in which these days take place.

Because of the commitment of all parties to tolerance and to respect the other, a moment that otherwise could be one of divisiveness, turns into a deep experience of connectedness as both sides learn to understand each other better. At one event in Jerusalem three parents in the school told the personal story of their family's experience in May 1948. What emerged repeatedly was the appreciation that both sides felt - those who spoke appreciated the opportunity to share their experience and to be heard; those who listened appreciated that they had been entrusted with the personal story. As one participant noted:

*“The human side is the most important, not the political side. So many things happened - whether fleeing or being forced to flee or told to flee is not what matters. It is the human experience of it that matters most.”*





## WEBSITE LAUNCH

***Bringing Our Story to the Jewish and Arab Israeli Public:*** The new Hand in Hand Hebrew-Arabic community website went live in April, 2014. Unlike most other multi-lingual websites which have mirror sites in different languages, every page of our site is bilingual with the Arabic and Hebrew side by side or one following the other in an effort to maintain the greatest degree of parity as possible. The website provides background, updates and stories about our schools and communities. The goal is two-fold:

- (A) Inform, inspire and link our school and community members, serving as a platform for diverse and thoughtful discussion; and
- (B) Reach the Israeli public, showing that an inclusive shared society is viable.

## SHARED COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

***Community Activities:*** A three-year grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has enabled Hand in Hand to launch its community activity so that each school is surrounded and supported by a vibrant adult community. Together with community leaders, HIH Community Department staff have designed and implemented hundreds of activities throughout our five locations, with more than 1,000 individuals attending. The events, examples of which are given in this report, range from integrated sports teams, holiday celebrations, cultural activities, excursions, and family fun days, to dialogue groups, language study, text study and responding to discriminatory events taking place in the communities such as price tag attacks. The Community Department is also developing a Community Vision document delineating the overall concept behind their work that will serve as a basis for working with community leaders and empowering them to take responsibility for creating and implementing shared activities.





## INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

***Pope Francis Meets Hand in Hand Students:*** Christian, Muslim and Jewish students from the Max Rayne Hand in Hand Bilingual School in Jerusalem were invited by Mayor Nir Barkatto personally welcome Pope Francis I as he arrived in Jerusalem in May. It was a moving experience for the children who exchanged words with the Pope and presented him with a basket of fruit and a plate of earth from Jerusalem.

High School Vice Principal Widad Naoum noted:

*“Our school was chosen to welcome the Pope because we are the only school in Jerusalem that includes the diversity of faiths.”*

## Pope Francis I Greeted by Hand in Hand Students





**Visitors From Around the World:** This year, Hand in Hand welcomed more than 1,200 supporters and visitors to its schools. They wanted to learn about our vision, accomplishments, and challenges as we bring people together on a daily basis. Our visitors included donors, Federations, educational groups of students and teachers, tourist groups, and journalists. They come from all over the world including:



***Hand in Hand Featured in Local and International Media and in PBS Documentary:***

Hand in Hand was featured in Simon Schama's PBS documentary series "The Story of the Jews." In the fifth episode Schama offers insight into the moments of challenge and connection between Hand in Hand high school students, and how these inclusive relationships "immunize students against the habits of hatred. Where others see enemies, they see friends." [Click here to watch the episode](#)



Hand in Hand schools and community activities were also featured in 35 media pieces this year. This includes newspaper articles, radio and TV segments, and on-line media outlets, in Hebrew, Arabic, English and other languages, and in a wide variety of countries including Israel, the United States, France, Germany, Portugal and the UK. These stories provide a powerful message that a different reality is possible and Israel can be a multicultural democratic state where Jews and Arabs can live together in peace and equality.



## OUR GRADUATES

At the end of June, the Max Rayne Bilingual High School in Jerusalem graduated its fourth cohort of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Often our students take a year off immediately after graduation to travel, work, volunteer, or study for their psychometric exam or are doing their Israeli Army service. Those who have begun or about to begin their studies have chosen a variety of fields including, law, dentistry, political science, architecture, social work, business administration and international relations, and medicine.

We are very proud of our graduates who will become the future leaders of our society and will be role models, exhibiting tolerance and respect for those with different beliefs and viewpoints. To close with the words of one of our graduates:

*“ We are the pioneers of a different reality, a better one... When a child is taught to hate, he will hate until the very end of his life, but if a child receives the proper education that’s based on the moral values of acceptance, tolerance, respect and love, our society will look much better than it does right now. ”*

***Hand in Hand thanks its many partners – students, parents, community members, the Ministry of Education, and donors from around the world – for being a part of this change.***



**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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