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Integrating Arab Teachers into Jewish Schools to Teach English, Mathematics and Science

Evaluation Research

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Advancement of Shared Citizenship in Israel

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Abstract

The research evaluation of the Arab Teacher Integration in Jewish Schools Program (ATI), of core subject teachers of English, math and science, was carried out during the years 2017-2018 and focused on the impact of the presence of the Arab teachers on the attitudes of their students in 3 main areas: stereotypes and prejudice, shared citizenship and future perceptions. In addition, the research addressed the level of satisfaction of school principals and the Arab teachers from the integration process. Students' attitudes were compared to a control group of students from similar schools who were not taught by Arab teachers. The qualitative part of the evaluation focused on 16 schools in which in-depth interviews were carried out with staff. There were 300 students in the sample group and 135 students in the focus group. 72 Arab teachers and 52 school principals completed the feedback questionnaire.

Main Findings

The research findings indicate that the teachers' presence had a clear and significant effect on the students' positions in the parameters examined. In all statements examined, there were differences in favor of the sample group (in a direction that supports the hypothesis). In 80% of the answered statements the differences between the sample group and the control were statistically significant. When analyzing the differences between the groups that were more confident in their replies (replied 4-5 on a 1-5 scale) the statistical significance of the differences is even higher. The in-depth interviews held with the teachers supported the quantitative findings. Almost all teachers claimed that they felt that their presence at the school had a positive effect on the students' opinions.

The school principals were highly satisfied with the teachers' integration. Regarding the teachers' professional level, the principals made it clear that this is a basic term and no concessions were made in this matter. The principals' satisfaction with the teachers' professional level was very high. In addition to the professional value, the principals also felt that the act of integration had many added values that give the students, the school staff and parents an educational message.

The teachers' satisfaction with the integration was very high as well, both in the questionnaire and in the in-depth interviews. The teachers described quite a few challenges throughout the integration process however they all felt that this move contributed to them on a professional, occupational and personal level, as well as to the school and its students on an educational level.

Summary

The bottom line: There is no doubt that the hypothesis of the study has been validated with significant empirical validity, with almost complete conformity between the quantitative and qualitative findings. The research indicates clearly that the presence of Arab teachers in "strong" subjects such as mathematics, English and science has an effect on the positions, opinions and behavior of school students and to a great extent

on the conduct of the entire school. We believe that deciding on subjects that are considered “strong” had a great effect on the success of the program. The very placement of each teacher before the students creates social roles with a clear hierarchy that turns the stereotypical hierarchy built-in the children’s social perception upside down. The additional prestige that comes with the sought-after subject (English, mathematics and science) enhances this reversal of roles and forces the students to reexamine their basic cultural assumptions regarding Arabs in general.

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1 Preamble

This research, the findings of which are presented in this report, deals with sensitive matters (Jewish-Arab relationships in the State of Israel) and sensitive target populations (elementary and junior high students). We would like to thank all those who made an effort and helped plan and execute the study: Ronit Rubanenko, Naomi Avivi Weisblatt, Kamal Aggbriyah and Salma Khaleel from the Merchavim team, Esti Halperin, Executive Director of the Merchavim Institute, the Educational Workers Administration team of the Ministry of Education headed by Eyal Ram, Dr. Sarah Silberstrom and Dr. Tarik Murad, the Ministry for Social Equality - the Economic Development Authority of the Minority Sectors that helped fund this research headed by Iman Saif and Roi Assaf, Dr. Yariv Feniger from the Department of Education at Ben-Gurion University, the school principals, the Arab teachers who were interviewed and those who filled out the questionnaire and all other participants: students, teachers and counselors.

1.1 Background

The program to integrate Arab teachers into Jewish schools to teach English, mathematics and science has been running for the past five years by the Merchavim Institute in collaboration with the Educational Workers Administration of the Ministry of Education and the Economic Development Authority of the Minority Sectors at the Ministry for Social Equality. During the 2017-2018 school year, 805 Arab teachers taught in 239 Jewish schools through the Ministry of Education for all subjects, 361 of which taught the core subjects - English, mathematics and science, for all ages.

The program answers several needs:

- Integrating qualified teachers according to the system's requirements, where there is a shortage of teachers for the core subjects and an excess of unemployed Arab teachers
- Integrating the Arab citizens of Israel into the public system
- Promoting "cohabitation" of Jewish and Arab citizens and mutual respect for others

1.2 Hypothesis

The main hypothesis underlying the research is:

The integration of Arab teachers (for science, mathematics, and English) into Jewish schools will have a positive impact on the attitudes of the students and the educational staff regarding various issues related to how they perceive the Arab minority within Israeli society. The impact will have an effect on the following fields: 1. Stereotypes and prejudice 2. Shared citizenship and cohabitation; and 3. View of the future.

1.3 Methodology

The research was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative part is directed towards a summary evaluation of the program against specific measures of success. The qualitative part focuses on in-depth focus, context, interpreting the findings and recommendations for improvement.

In total the following actions were taken:

- In-depth focus on 16 schools
- 16 interviews with school principals
- 26 in-depth interviews with Arab teachers
- 10 interviews with school counselors
- 8 interviews with co-teachers
- Student survey - 300 respondents from nine schools in which one or more Arab teachers had taught for at least a year
- Control group - 135 respondents from four classes in whose schools there are no Arab teachers at all

Size of the sample group:

Size of the population: Approximately 100,000 students. Minimum sample size - 383 students (including control group). Sampling error - 5%. Confidence interval - 95%.

The calculation was made based on the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 x &= Z(c/100)^2 r(100-r) \\
 n &= N x / ((N-1)E^2 + x) \\
 E &= \text{Sqrt}[(N-n)x/n(N-1)]
 \end{aligned}$$

While n is the size of the sample, N - the size of the population, E - sampling error

Sampling method - the schools were chosen according to the number of Arab teachers and their seniority at the school.

1.4 Research Populations

- Students who had been exposed to an Arab teacher on the school staff (English, mathematics or science) for at least a year
- Schools' educational staff (teachers, counselors and principals)
- Key people and partners (education dpt. manager, Ministry of Education supervisors, Merchavim staff, Ministry of Education representatives and experts)

1.5 Student Questionnaire

The questionnaire is based on five acceptable indexes that examine different aspects of perceptions of inequality, the other, shared citizenship and so forth:

- O Perceptions of inequality
- O Perception of similarity to the external group
- O Motivation to have relationships with the external group
- O Feelings towards the external group
- O Recognition of the external group's sentience

Since the students are 10-12 years of age, the following measures were adapted to this age group both in phrasing the questions and in setting the length of the questionnaire. However, one must remember that nowadays, children this age are used to filling out questionnaires in different forms. The categories that were eventually included in the research are:

- ❖ Stereotypes and prejudice (perception of similarity to external group, feelings towards external group, recognition of the external group's sentience)
- ❖ Shared citizenship (perception regarding inequality, motivation to hold relationships with external group, recognition of the external group's sentience)
- ❖ View of the future (Motivation to have relationships with the external group with an emphasis on the Israeli-Arab context)

(See questionnaire in appendices)

The following is a brief theoretical background for each of the indices:

Perceptions of inequality - Underlying every social change is the need to recognize the existence of inequality and the need to change the existing situation (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Although people easily recognize inequality when it is directed towards themselves, it is difficult for them to see discrimination when it is targeted at external groups. Often members of groups tend to argue that discrimination against other groups does not exist or that the theory is highly exaggerated, a tendency that allows members of discriminatory groups to maintain their positive self-perception, however this also perpetuates discrimination (Knowles, Lowery, Chow, & Unzueta, 2014). The members of the organizations were asked to react on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely) regarding eight statements on the existence and severity of discrimination against groups in Israeli society). Example: "Many in Israel experience discrimination due to their ethnic origin." This index was built inspired by Molina, Phillips & Sidanius's index measuring recognition of discrimination against external groups (Molina, Phillips, & Sidanius, 2014). This index was added this year to the questionnaire for the members of the organizations, after some of the insights that emerged from the evaluation last year defined that more emphasis should be placed on the concepts and effects of the project on the members of the organizations themselves.

Faith in the malleability of groups -The faith that groups, and specifically the external group, may change, is tied to hope, reduced use of stereotypes and greater motivation for a connection. On the other hand, the belief that the external group cannot change is related to anxiety from the external group. This index was constructed on the basis

of a recognized and up-to-date index of the perception of the external groups' ability to change (Halperin, Crisp, Husnu, Dweck, & Gross, 2012). Since the index is indirect and does not ask direct questions regarding the external groups, it is less inclined to be influenced by social desirability.

Perception of similarity to external group - The feeling that the members of the external group are similar to you (but not to the extent that they are not differentiated from your inner group) leads people to accept the sentience of the external group to a greater extent (McDonald et al., 2017).

Motivation to have relationships with external group - In order to examine the readiness to deepen the connection with external groups in general, students are asked to respond on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely) regarding their motivation to meet with members of another group. This index was built based on a readiness-for-contact questionnaire used in Halperin and his colleagues' article (2012 Halperin et al.).

Feelings towards external group - One of the variables that decreases willingness for contact with the other group is negative emotions such as anxiety. These emotions are a barrier to motivation for inter-group contact (Halperin, Crisp, Husnu, Dweck, & Gross, 2012). The participants are asked to respond on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely) and state to what extent they feel each of five emotions when meeting the other group. Three of the emotions are negative (fear, threat, embarrassment) and two are positive (calm and relaxation, security).

Perception of the homogeneity of the external group - People have a tendency to see the members of the external group as similar to each other. This tendency is due to the way in which the system of human perception works, to which inter-group processes of differentiation between us and them are added (Linville, 1998). The perception of the external group as homogeneous is the basis for stereotypical perceptions of the same group, and the basis for a profound change in attitudes towards the other is the ability to see the external group as diversified and to distinguish between the different members of the group. In order to examine whether homogeneous perceptions have changed as a result of the program, students will be asked to report on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely) to what extent they agree with each of the three statements about the group they met (example statement: "I think most of them tend to think the same way").

Recognizing the sentience of the external groups - Feeling compassion is a unique human trait (as opposed to animals or machines). One of the problematic elements of the way external groups are perceived is denying their sentience. Studies in social psychology have demonstrated that believing the other cannot feel compassion expresses the negation of his sentience (Leidner, Castano, & Ginges, 2013). On the other hand, when we see the other as able to feel compassion, it indicates that we see him as more human. In order to examine whether as a result of the venture the de-humanizing perceptions of the external groups became more moderate. The students were asked to report on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely) to what extent each of the groups included in the table (Jews, Arabs, Druze, Palestinians) are able to feel compassion towards another.

1.6 Research Process

- The study began with a qualitative pilot in five schools in which in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, counselors and colleagues.
- Following the pilot, the questionnaire was written and authorized by the Ministry of Education's general scientist.
- In the next phase, the qualitative part was extended to 16 schools and the quantitative questionnaire was given to the students of the sample group.
- The questionnaire for the Arab teachers was uploaded online and three rounds of contact with the teachers were made to fill out the questionnaire.
- Supplements to the qualitative part.
- At this stage, the questionnaire was given to the students of the control group. It should be noted that this part was fraught with challenges since schools who did not participate in the program had no obligation or interest to agree to such a survey among their students.

1.7 Analyzing the Data and the Structure of the Report

The report presents the findings in two main parts. The first part is the quantitative and qualitative findings related to the research hypothesis. This part is a summary assessment. The second part presents different matters and outlooks related to the integration process. This part is a formative assessment.

The quantitative analysis presents the averages of the responses to the various questions, as well as the distribution of those who responded 4 or 5 ("to a great extent" or "very much" in the questionnaire). These two points of view give a complete picture of the differences between the sample group and the control group. For some of the questions, a T test was conducted to examine the significance of the differences (stated in the report).

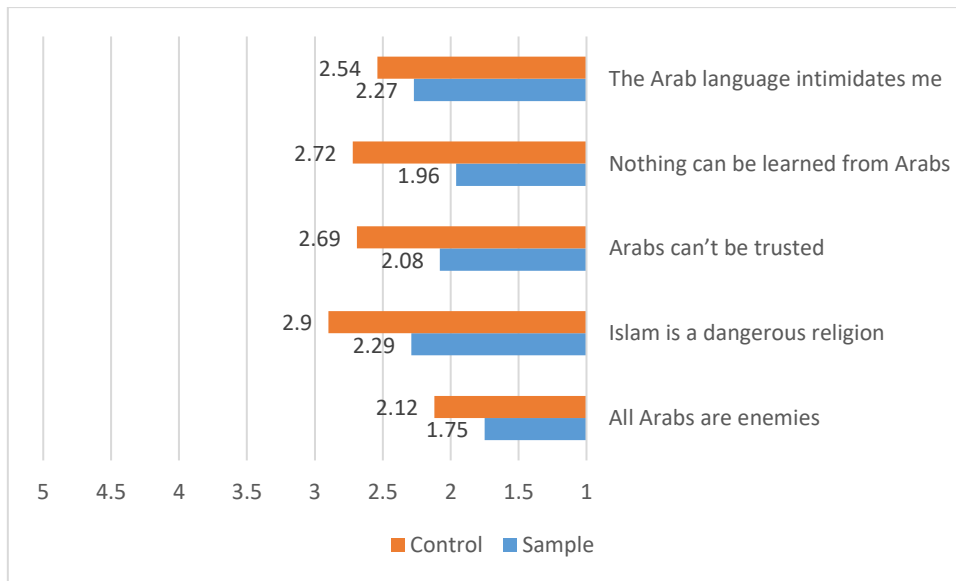
The first part presents qualitative findings that support the main hypothesis and reinforce the quantitative findings. In the second part, the qualitative findings are organized into main themes that represent significant patterns that emerged during the interviews.

2 The Teacher's Impact on the Students and School

As we have seen, one of the significant assumptions of the program and the main hypothesis of the study is that meeting with Arab teachers will have a positive effect on the students' and teachers' attitudes towards the "other" in general and the Arab minority in Israel in particular. In this part we will present the findings directly related to this matter.

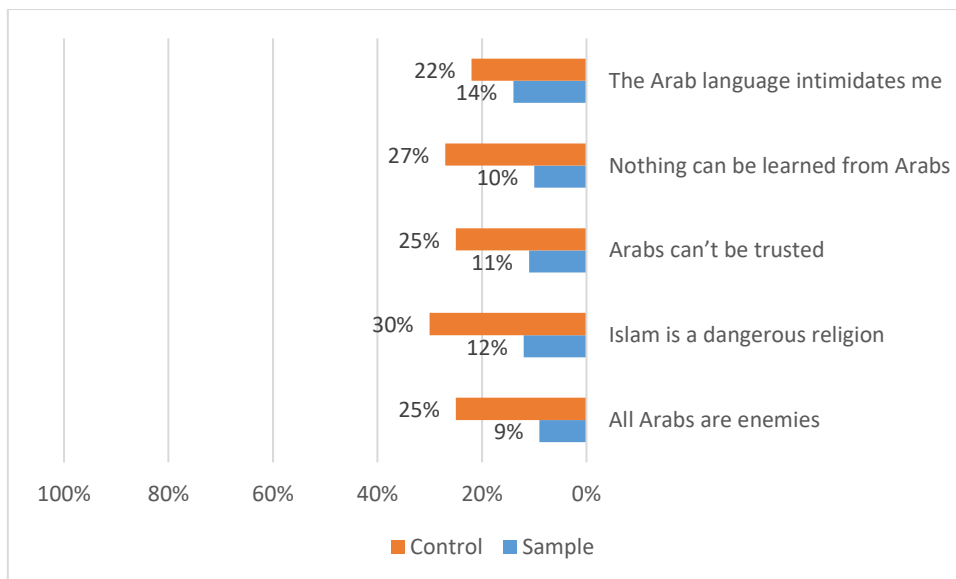
Diagram 1 presents stereotypical perceptions of the Arab culture and Arab citizens. One could see that in all the statements, the average score of the sample group reflects a lower level of stereotypical perception. Apart from the first statement, all other differences are significant (with a 5% significance rate). The greatest differences are found in the statements “We have nothing to learn from the Arabs” and “Arabs can’t be trusted.” We assume that in both of these statements the students from schools participating in the program have the image of the teacher from whom they learn and whom they trust before their eyes. In general, the average score of the sample group reflects a lower level of stereotypical perception compared to the average of the control group reflecting a moderate level.

Diagram 1. Stereotypes and Prejudice (Average 1-5)



The following diagram presents the rate of those who answered 4 or 5, namely those with a stronger opinion regarding the statements. One could see that in these groups the differences are much more apparent and significant in all statements:

Diagram 1.1 Stereotypes and Prejudice (Percent of those who responded 4-5)



The following quotes are taken from in-depth interviews held with the teachers, in which they described, from their personal experience, examples of the influence which their presence had at the school on the students' positions, opinions and behavior. Almost all the teachers that were interviewed brought up examples of the positive influence which their presence had on the students' opinions and behavior. The following quotes represent a dominant pattern that appeared in approximately 80% of the interviews. The first example illustrates the encounter between the image that the students had and between the persona of the actual teacher. Such a meeting, which shatters the prejudice regarding looks, also leads to questioning the other "truths" stemming from prejudice or stereotypes.

"(It) unravels students' stigmas... They didn't think I was Muslim, they thought I was from France. They asked me and I answered, they were shocked. You introduce them to something else... They see something else, in the news they see extreme people. It exposes them to the more common reality. It unravels prejudices if the narrative is presented properly."

In the following example the teacher describes an unfortunately common example, especially with children from a homogenous environment, where the word "Arab" is used as a curse or provocation. Here too, the teacher's presence makes the children examine themselves against reality and realize that their generalization is illogical. Many teachers spoke of letters of apology or thanks which they received from students after similar cases.

"Sometimes the children say to each other "Arab" which they consider to be a curse, and then they immediately say - oops, sorry, I didn't mean it, you are something else. I tell them we are all humans. Or they write me a letter of apology..."

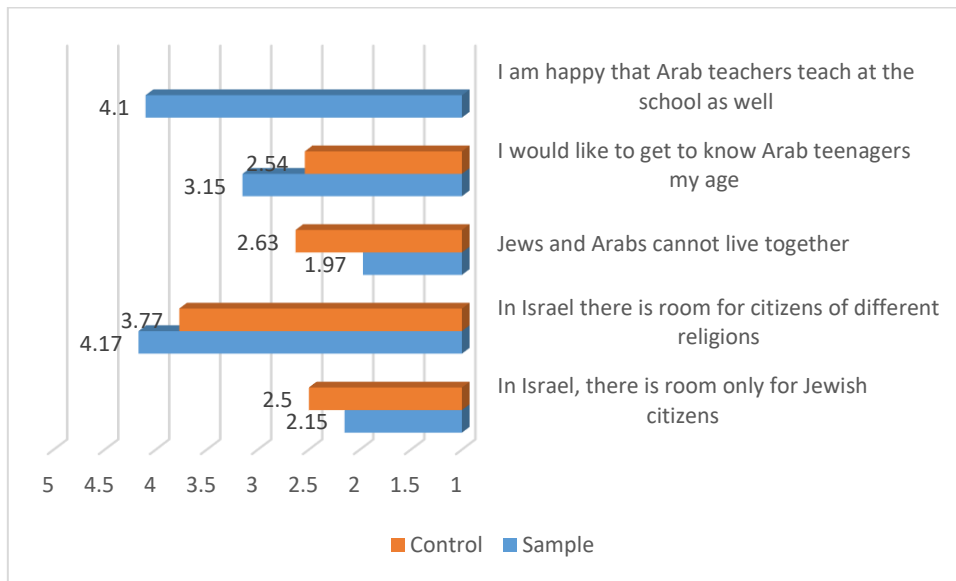
After a period that varies from a few months to a year, the students' reactions change and they reflect more and more interest and curiosity regarding the Arab teacher's culture. Naturally, the greater the teacher's seniority at the school or the more teachers there are, the more students reach this stage in which they are open and interested in learning about the background of the teacher and the Arab culture in general.

"Children, be they Arab or Jews, will look at him differently at first. You can't until you talk to a person. Sometimes if you hear Arabic you recoil... It creates a connection, be it to the language or the culture, what do you do there, what holiday did you have, it becomes interesting to them"

Diagram 2 presents opinions regarding cohabitation and shared citizenship. This variable represents the willingness and stance towards the daily-civilian arena (as opposed to general opinions regarding the "other" presented in the previous diagram). Here, too, there are one-way differences between the sample group and the control group. Students from schools who participated in the program see Arab citizens as legitimate and a part of Israeli society to a greater extent. They also express interest and motivation to get to know and have shared activities to a greater extent than the control group. In statements 2-4 the differences are significant with a 5% significance

rate. The first statement is relevant only to the sample group and demonstrates a high degree of satisfaction with the fact that an Arab teacher teaches at the school.

Diagram 2. Shared Citizenship (Average 1-5)



A breakdown of those who responded 4 or 5, demonstrates yet again that the differences are more significant. 74% of the students in the sample group expressed a great or very great satisfaction with the fact that an Arab teacher teaches at their school. 41% of the sample group are greatly or very greatly interested in getting to know Arab teenagers their age, compared to 27% of the control group, and so forth.

Diagram 2.1 Shared Citizenship (Percent of those who responded 4-5)

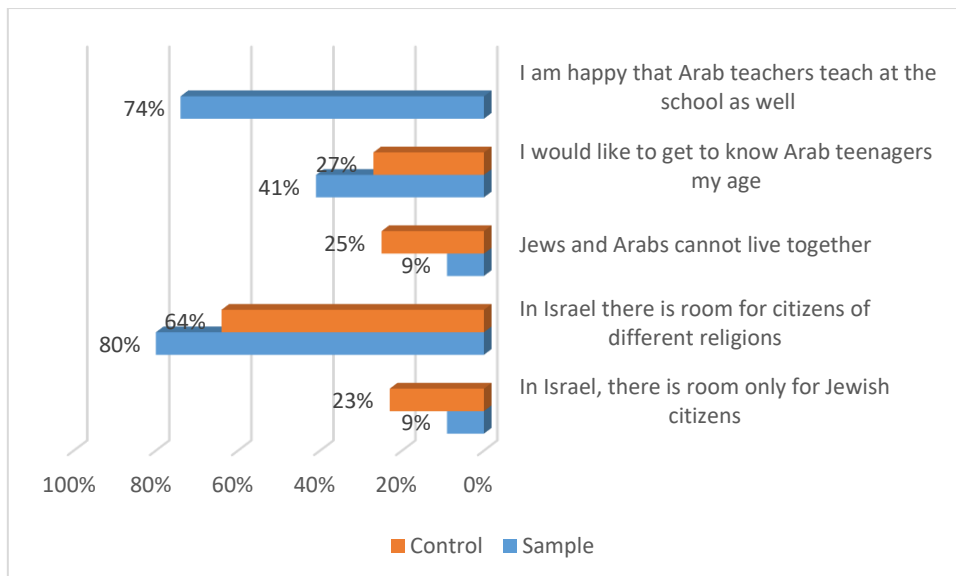
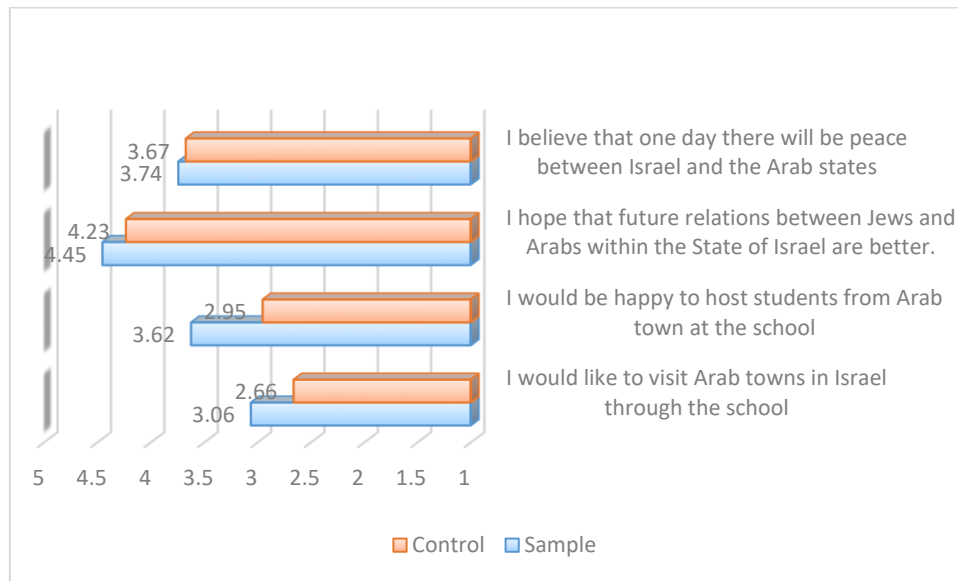


Diagram 3 demonstrates a view of the future and aspirations in the Jewish-Arab relationship context. In this category too, all the averages of the sample group reflect a more optimistic outlook for the future than that of the control group. The differences in the second and third statements, regarding the wish to host Arab students and visit them, were significant. In the first statement the difference is small but the averages are high in both groups (both groups greatly hope that the future relationships

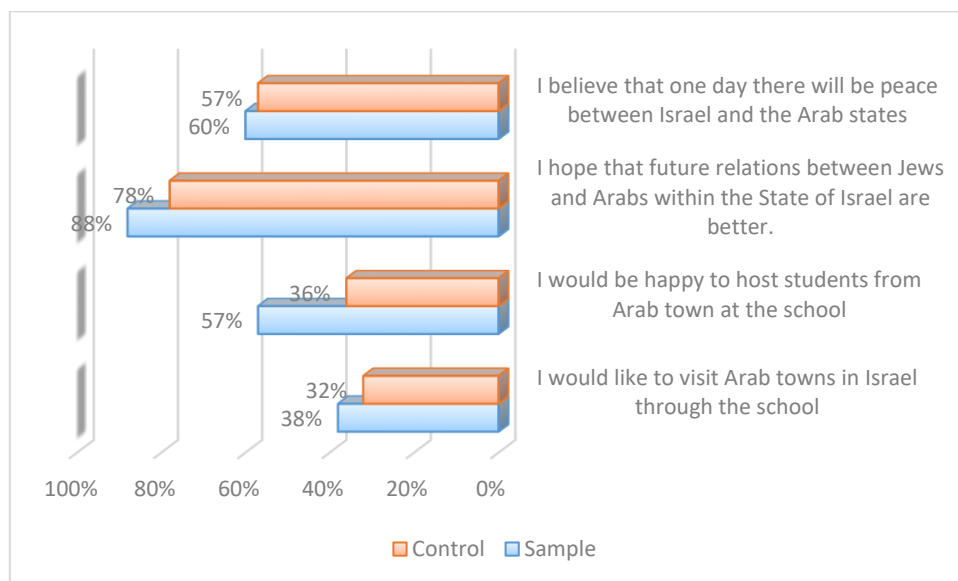
between Jews and Arabs within the State of Israel are good). As for peace with the Arab states, both groups expressed moderate optimism.

Diagram 3. View of the Future (Average 1-5)



In this group of questions too, the breakdown of responses of 4 or 5 reveals significant differences, mainly in the willingness to host Arab students at the school or to visit them.

Diagram 3.1 View of the Future. Percent of those who responded 4-5.



In conclusion, in all of the statements examined in the questionnaire, differences were found between the sample group and the control group. In most cases, the differences were significant and in all cases the differences supported the research hypothesis, namely, that students from schools in which Arab teachers taught would exhibit a lower level of stereotypical perceptions and prejudices, would hold opinions that supported shared citizenship and cohabitation and would be more interested in meeting and getting to know Arabs their age.

In the in-depth interviews, almost all the Arab teachers claimed that their presence had a positive influence on students' attitudes and behavior. Almost every teacher

described cases and reactions, some of which were a crisis or a challenge when they occurred, but over time they resulted in a change in the students,' teachers' and parents' attitude towards the teacher.

“One student told me she wanted to tell me something about her father... Yesterday there was some article on the news about the situation and Dad cursed you, I stopped him and told him I had a teacher that wasn't like that, don't judge them all. Also among the Jews there are those who are good and those who are bad... My presence has an influence on the school.”

“A student wrote his roots [ancestry] project and mentioned me as a figure that changed him. His mother felt it important to show me. I'm an educator before I'm a teacher.”

3 Integration Process

3.1 The Principals' Motives

The interviews show that all principals attach great importance to integrating Arab teachers in the school as an educational agenda. There were principals who declared that they had "right-wing" views, but believe that integrating teachers from all groups of the Israeli society is a central educational value and part of the school's educational message to its students.

“At the end of the day, we do not educate a person to be religious but rather we talk about universal values. The school has a duty to connect people from different nationalities, to educate for coexistence and tolerance. The school gives an equal chance to everyone no matter their culture. I believe that is the school's role.”

“I am obligated to educate, I do not deal with political opinions. Mine are the opposite - I am very right-wing, I have solutions that some would not want to hear. We need to educate the generation that we live together. I do not claim to be changing the world I am not a politician. It is the minimum [I] could bring to my system [I] understand we are dealing with people. I can only educate.”

“It is important that students and parents be exposed to another side of the Arab citizens of the country, so that they do not see only negative connotations or low-level people such as workers, cleaners, hardworking and weary people... and as a humanist it is important to me to expose them to other possibilities as well.”

3.1.1 Professionalism

The principals attach great importance to the professionalism and quality of teachers. From their point of view, that is the main criteria and it precedes any opinions regarding integration. The prerequisite to teaching at a Jewish school is of course command of the Hebrew language.

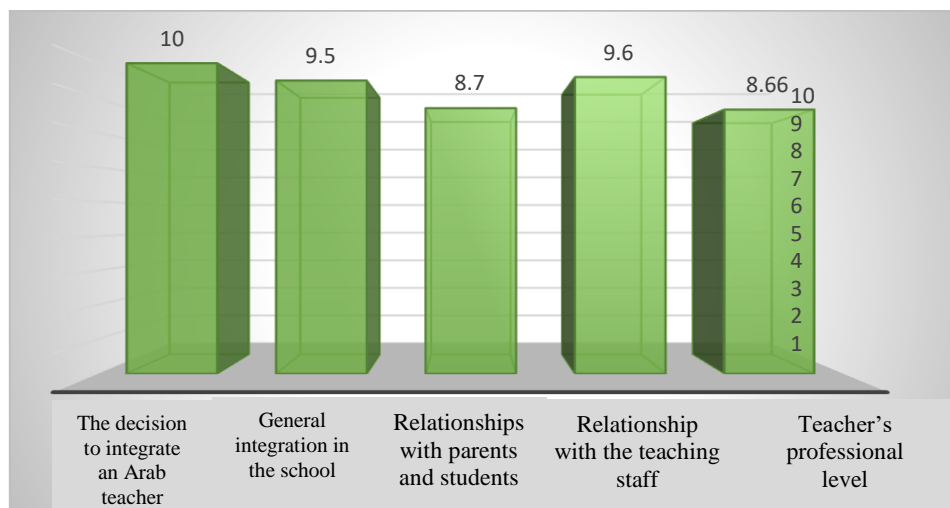
“When it was offered to me, I jumped on the offer in all respects. It fit in with the school’s vision to introduce children to the most diverse human diversity there is. But for that I need perfect teachers. I cannot bring an Arab teacher that is no good. The Arabs, all those who came, were excellent.”

“I interviewed teachers I was sent and that I did not accept. Poor language, I thought it wouldn’t be right to bring in such a teacher.”

3.1.2 Principals’ Concluding Positions

All the principals interviewed were asked to quantify various aspects of the integration of Arab teachers. In the following diagram one could see that in all fields, the satisfaction was very high, especially with the very decision to follow through with the integration.

Diagram 4. School Principals’ Concluding Positions (Average 1-10)



All the principals emphasized that no compromise was made regarding the professional level of the teachers. It is a basic condition to the teacher’s integration and success. If an Arab teacher would not have met the professional standards, she would not teach at the school. Accordingly, one could see that the principals’ satisfaction with the teachers’ professional level was very high.

3.2 The Teachers’ Motives

The teachers' statements reinforce the assumption that there is a real need on both sides to integrate excellent Arab teachers into Jewish schools. The interviews reveal that Arab teachers who finish school are forced to wait years until they are placed at a school and many of them have to work in another field. Most teachers claimed that they were not aware of the option to teach as part of the program.

“In the Arab sector, I waited three years for work, in the end I worked for a communications company for three years. I went through many positions at Bezeq Benleumi. On the other hand I said no, because I wanted to move ahead... In working together with Jews and Arabs I saw the Jewish culture and there was something good in that.”

“I didn’t know it was a possibility I only discovered it two years ago. On the other hand I was the one with the problem, I had no confidence and I thought I wasn’t good enough.”

All the teachers that were interviewed, had a wide range of experiences in the first year or two as a result of the initial encounter. Some were due to curiosity but a large portion were an expression of stereotypes and prejudice, ignorance, racism etc. Following are a few examples:

“In the first year there were difficulties - the parents asked if I had children, they thought that if I had children I’d be more loving and warm. Children also ask... A child asks out of curiosity, not with malice... Children also said “we do not have Arabic classes,” they were surprised that I was a mathematics teacher. The children said “you could help us with our Arabic.”...

“They are interested. I have holidays, I tell them when I am going on holiday and they ask what holiday it was and they are interested. Once, there was a girl who asked me, forget the holidays and all that, do you have long or short hair? Everybody laughed... I answered, is that all you are interested in right now? In any case I have long hair.”

4 Connection with the School’s Teaching Staff

“Already at the first teachers’ meeting they wanted to change my name, a difficult name, I told the teacher she should learn to pronounce my name correctly without shortcuts. We are a culture that exists on honor, it is difficult to accept such things.”

It was important to all principals to have a varied, unified and inclusive teachers’ room. In each school the situation is somewhat different, there are schools with a few Arab teachers, and there are those with one, and of course the personal differences between the teachers and the staff also have an effect on the integration. However, it can be said that across the board, after a short period of time, beautiful social ties and even friendships are forged. The more seniority the teachers’ have at the school, the stronger and deeper the relationships, and added layers of friendship such as mutual visits and acquaintance with family circles etc., are added.

Two schools have one Arab teacher out of all the school staff, the rest have several teachers and some have a tradition of employing Arab teachers (especially for Arabic). The teachers tell of warm connections and friendships that were forged from the joint work, as well as isolated cases (that were dealt with) of harsh feelings and discrimination.

In one school in the North, one of the teachers felt socially isolated because she didn’t understand the humor in the teachers’ room. In collaboration with Merchavim, a show on the matter was put up and after a while the situation improved. Most probably, most teachers who join a Jewish school have self-confidence and belief in their ability to fit in. Most teachers spoke of warm beneficial relationships with the teaching staff. In all the schools we were in, efforts were made to unify the teaching staff and no special incidents were recorded.

“The teaching staff accepted me with a warm hug, I didn’t feel different even though I was, and still am, the only Arab teacher. There is nothing like the Mathematics team [they are the best], may it continue that way.”

“I’ve been to happy celebratory events as well as [visiting the houses of] mourning. We share together. I’ve seen a Jewish wedding, a Huppah, and it is interesting to see. Everybody is waiting to see me get married.”

“There are personal relationships between myself and the teachers, I go to weddings and Bar Mitzvahs and Brits, love them. Here at school I went through a divorce in 2013, they wrapped me with warmth and love, they lifted me up and lighted my way and supported me, it’s different I cannot give up on the team here.”

“It’s gotten better and is still improving, and the feeling of home is getting stronger and stronger. I love the atmosphere at the school more than in an Arab school”

5 Challenges

5.1 Coping During Tense Periods

“There were stabbings in Afula, I always feel the need to prove my loyalty as an Arab. Our war as educators is to maintain our routine. I am also afraid to come, I also have feelings and I also have to worry, I could be attacked too.”

Apart from two teachers, all the rest had difficulties due to offensive statements at the school. Sometimes these were intentional statements, sometimes incidental and sometimes made indirectly. In each case, the teachers remember these events well, and the way they were handled them shaped the future relationship between the teachers and the students, other teachers and parents. It is important to note that the schools reacted to the incidents and usually solved the matter and backed the teachers. During difficult periods and in certain cases, the supervisors’ intervention was required.

An example of the teachers' unique dilemmas can be seen in the following example:

“When Gilad Shalit was abducted, I looked at my students and said please God, don’t put me in a situation where one of the students is a kidnapped soldier. I felt torn in half. On the other hand this is a war on my people, and innocents are being killed, towards my students who will go to the army. One student said to me I won’t shoot at protestors, because I am afraid I would shoot someone from your family. I touched their hearts, they don’t want to hurt me or my family. Those are statements that moved me, there are teachers with children in the army and we are friends and it hurts.

During times of tension or bloodshed, the teachers also handle reaction from the staff and parents:

“During Tzuk Eitan (Operation Protective Edge), WhatsApp was full of sentences and sayings, and I’m here... I sent the principal a message that there

are racist sayings. Why generalize, we are Muslim too, the principal sent a WhatsApp with a certain goal, the staff has offensive comments, there are those and those, and that same teacher apologized. I need to understand the Jewish culture and follow it but so should they.”

“When I just started, there is a cafeteria on Fridays, the parents run it and it goes to the children’s activities, there was a ceremony and children come up from the ceremony, I see a father with a knife, I said why don’t you switch to scissors. I took the knife to the teachers room and one mom yelled that there was an Arab here walking around the school with a knife.”

5.2 Additional Challenges

Most challenges mentioned by the teachers were mostly unrelated directly to teaching at a Jewish school: distance from the Arab village in which the teacher lives in, difficulty in obtaining more teaching hours to increase the job, school-related load, etc. Some of the teachers are worried about being promoted, and whether they could be a home room teacher. The subject of vacation days over the Muslim holidays also created tension at times.

“I’m worried, I don’t know if you could advance to higher positions I don’t know what’s accepted, I don’t know what the limit is in terms of employment. If you could move up and develop as a coordinator, it depends on the school itself, I don’t know if it acceptable as far as the parents are concerned and what their position on it is.”

“I don’t know, there is “receiving the Torah” - could an Arab home room teacher do it unlike a Jewish home room teacher. I’m afraid it would limit me to a certain place, only on this condition, I would go back to an Arab school.”

“There are problems during the holidays - according to the Ministry of Education I cannot take Erev chag off, the eve of Id el Adcha I need to work - I have less holiday days. Ramadan we work as usual, during the seventh period it is also hard to talk. Here we don’t know exactly what [when] the holiday is, it changes and confuses the principal, we explained to her that lunar holidays are subject to change. There may be important days like Yom Ha’adama, which are not in the system, and with us there are strikes.. a page needs to be given out that the holidays change, it's not something fixed but we need to be given our holidays.”

Many school principals (approximately half those interviewed) told of incidents related to the teacher’s ethnicity especially during the first year at the school. All these incidents were handled and solved in real time, but they reflect the challenges which the teachers face, however so do the administrators and the entire system.

“When the first Arab teacher came with a hijab, and the guard gave her a difficult time, and she came in crying. That was our first encounter. She needed to be calmed down that she came to a good place. We calmed her down and told her he did it to everybody.”

“The beginning was tough, because it was a year in which there were street terror attacks in Jerusalem, and it was tough. The parents came in frightened, “could you promise us she wouldn’t stab” and students said accusing statements towards her. Home room teachers came into class and with working methods and explanations recruiting parents who were willing to be with us there were classes where we had greater or less success. She herself was strong too and we gave her strong support.”

“During the political tension, the teacher became anxious that she would be viewed as having something to do with the knife [stabbing] terrorism. The lesson is that she should be strengthened in the classes too, she needs to answer difficult statements about Arabs and how they are all terrorists. And I told her that was her job. You place on your back all sane Arabs. She was afraid that something in the team, me or the parents would change. There was a time when I was afraid she would leave. I felt that I was undergoing a loyalty test in her respect, that values do not change in times of crisis.”

6 Teachers Survey

Diagram 5 demonstrates a high satisfaction of the Arab teachers in all matters regarding which they were asked. Their satisfaction from the very decision to teach at a Jewish school was very high (4.78 on a scale from 1-5).

Diagram 5. The Arab Teachers’ Positions (Average 1-5)

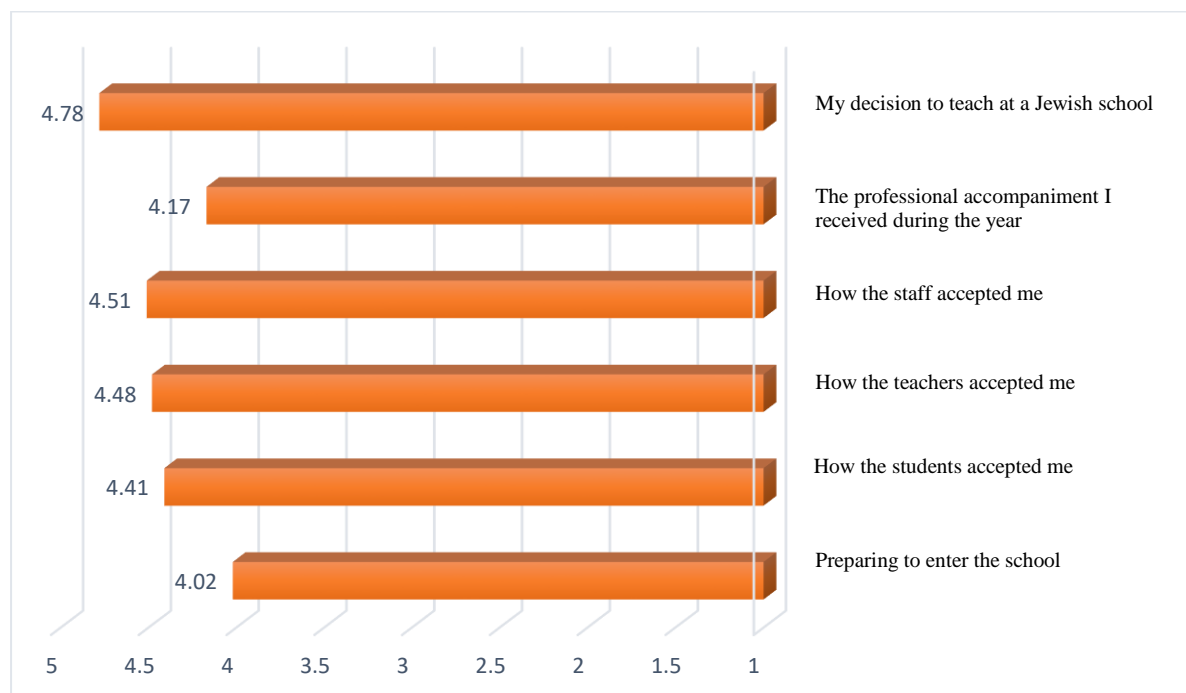


Diagram 6 represents the family’s and close social environment’s opinions before joining the school and while answering the questionnaire (at least a year later). One could see that the support was high in the first place, of the family even more than the close social environment. As a result of the experience, the teachers report an even greater support at the current point in time, a fact that probably attests to a positive experience.

Diagram 6. The Family's and Social Environment's Opinions (Average 1-5)

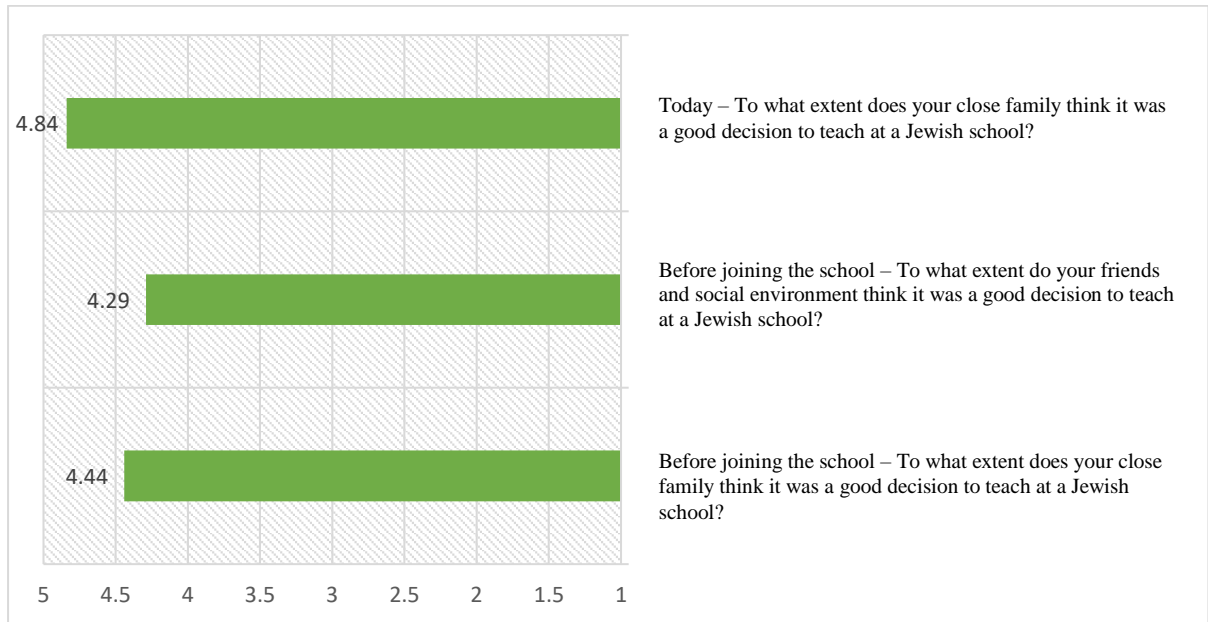
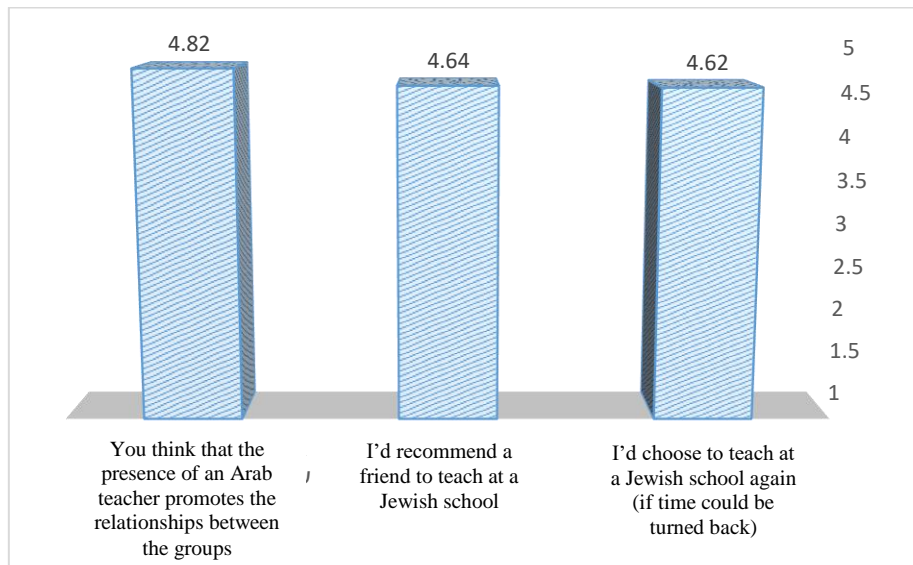


Diagram 7 represents the teacher's summary positions regarding their participation in the program:

Diagram 7. Teachers' Concluding Positions (Average 1-5)



One can see that the teachers' general satisfaction is very high (in line with the qualitative findings) because they believe that their presence at the school contributes to the promotion of Jewish and Arab relations.

7 Discussion Regarding the Findings and Recommendations

We will start with the bottom line: There is no doubt that the hypothesis of the study had been validated with significant empirical validity, with almost complete conformity between the quantitative and qualitative findings. The research indicates clearly that the presence of Arab teachers in “strong” subjects such as mathematics, English and science has an effect on the positions, opinions and behavior of school students and to a great extent on the conduct of the entire school. We believe that

deciding on subjects that are considered “strong” had a great effect on the success of the program. The very placement of each teacher before the students creates social roles with a clear hierarchy that turns the stereotypical hierarchy built-in the children’s social perception upside down. The additional prestige that comes with the sought-after subject (English, mathematics and science) enhances this reversal of roles and forces the students to reexamine their basic cultural assumptions regarding Arabs in general.

The study also clearly shows that the process is sensitive and requires flexibility and adaptation throughout the process, starting with the interview with the principal, continuing with meeting the students, parents and educational staff, adapting to different cultural norms and values, dealing with racist incidents or offensive responses, and so forth. From the experience accumulated so far, a few characteristics of the teachers who’d make the process easier can be defined:

- Fluent in the Hebrew language
- Some acquaintance with the Jewish-Israeli culture
- An understanding that there will be a need to be flexible (or find a diplomatic solution) in events such as ceremonies, the singing of the national anthem, memorials etc. Together with the need to respect the place
- An understanding that there will be reactions from parents and students and that that is a part of the process
- A strong wish to excel, to succeed and break through boundaries

The teachers who were interviewed see their integration into Jewish schools as very important. They will recommend that their friends get through the challenge and do it due to the advantages it entails: an appropriate way to make a living as well as a possibility for a social change. In the end they all agree that the employment is on a personal professional basis only.

As we have seen, when the teachers joined the schools it created challenging situations that expose the attitudes and opinions of the students, parents and sometimes teachers towards the Arab minority. All of the teachers think that their ongoing presence and the relationships created over time positively influence the circles surrounding them in the schools and contribute to the mutual acquaintance between the groups (Jews and Arabs).

“More Arab teachers. Cohabitation is always talked about, it needs to be put into action, and an educational institute, this is where it starts, we can’t educate the parents but the children, it also gives an opening to those who have been looking for a job for several years.”

“I joined a Jewish school with a “creed”, I want to change the stereotype of an Arab from a positive place, I want them to see that he is not a terrorist or fighter. A child who learns Arabic, makes an effort and loves the teacher, appreciates the language. That is my job. Especially when there is a difficult situation they come and ask, it is important to them to know what side you are

on, because they love you. They need to see that it could be different, to take students on cohabitation activities.”

“The advantage is that they get to know the other, the language and culture. We live in the same country. Your neighbors. We need to know how to communicate with each other. To get to know each other. No matter what color or religion you are. We are human beings. From afar you cannot get to know each other. From close up you can.”

In addition to the teachers' characteristics, a prerequisite for the integration's success is a school principal who is committed to the matter and understands that the process will require his/her involvement, support and response to various cases that will arise, especially during the first year. The principals emphasized the importance of the professional and pedagogical consideration as a precondition to the teachers' integration, and the ethical considerations only afterwards.

Some of the teachers who were interviewed or who filled out the form are not accompanied by the Merchavim Institute. Merchavim addresses all teachers in providing comprehensive services such as guidance counselors for teachers, conferences and advanced studies, and any guidance as needed, however focuses mainly on accompanying and guiding new teachers as they begin their position. We think that the Merchavim Institute's guidance, especially for new teachers with little previous experience in Jewish society, has great significant impact on the success of the integration process, in the best way possible. It is recommended that all teachers teaching today be aware of the possibility of this guidance.

In conclusion, the program for integrating teachers promotes win-win processes for all those involved: teachers who find work in their profession in a framework perceived as high quality that enables professional advancement and appropriate pay, schools that gain good teachers for science, mathematics and English, and get a chance to handle educational issues such as shared citizenship, accepting the other, being open to different cultures and the Arab culture in general, etc., the education system, which gains diverse schools and students that are exposed to a variety of teachers and the State, which places the issue of the integration of the Arab population in the general labor market as its priority.

8 Integration Index

Now that there is a good reason to assume that the presence of Arab teachers in Jewish schools has a positive effect on the students, the question is how to maximize this result and extend the impact to the level of the education system as a whole. One of the tools to do so is a national index of schools or authorities. The index will reflect the level of integration of the different schools and will consist of different categories that will determine together the level of integration of the school or authority.

On a school level we recommend the following categories:

- The number of integrated teachers at the school: no integrated teachers - 0 points, one integrated teacher - 5 points, two or more integrated teachers - 7 points.
- The accumulated number of years of the integrated teachers: zero to two years - 2 points, two to five years - 4 points, over five years - 6 points.
- The subjects of the integrated teachers (per teacher): Arabic - 0 points, mathematics, English or science - 3 points, other subject - 1 point.
- The average satisfaction of the Arab teachers from the integration - highly satisfied - 3 points, moderate - 2 points, low - 0 points.
- Number of peak days or activities related to cohabitation - zero activities - 0 points, one-two activities - 1 point, between two-three activities - 2 points, over two activities - 3 points.
- Number of student or school staff visits at Arab schools - no visits - 0 points, one visit or more - 4 points.
- Likewise regarding hosting Arab schools.
- The presence of the Arab language or culture in the school space - none: 0 points, some: 4 points.

Let's take three imaginary schools as an example. In one of them, a mathematics teacher has been integrated for the past three years. In the other one there are two Arabic teachers for the past year and the third has no Arab teachers at all, but they participate in a joint program with an Arab school that includes mutual visits. The first school has two peak days a year related to cohabitation. The second school has one a year and third has none at all. The rest of the activities could be seen in the following table:

	School 1	School 2	School 3
No. of teachers	5	7	0
Seniority	4	4	0
Subject	3	0	0
The average satisfaction of the Arab teachers	3	2	0
Peak days	2	1	0
Visits to Arab schools	0	4	4
Hosting Arab students	4	0	4
Presence of the Arab language in the space	4	4	0
Total	25	22	8

The categories and their values are merely a suggestion and they could, of course, be changed and defined as necessary. However, it can be seen that the index enables easy comparison between a large number of schools with relative ease and by changing the weight of different categories, it is possible to lower or increase its partial value in the general index.

Appendix 1 - Tools

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Student,






The following is a questionnaire made of different sentences regarding Israeli society. For each sentence, please mark if you strongly agree with it (5), agree (4) somewhat agree (3) don't agree (2) or completely disagree (1). Please take a minute to think before you answer and choose the number that best reflects what you think. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Most important is that you answer according to what you think. If you have no opinion on the matter, skip the sentence.





















For your information, the questionnaire is used for research purposes only. It is your right not to fill in this part or any other part of this questionnaire or to stop filling it in the middle

without being harmed in any way by your decision. 😊


























The following are a series of sentences. Please mark regarding each sentence whether you strongly agree with the sentence, agree, somewhat agree, don't agree or completely disagree with it.

Mark X as in the following example:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Agree	Completely Disagree
I love the school					

Sentence	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Agree	Completely Disagree
In Israel, there is room only for Jewish citizens					
In Israel there is room for citizens of different religions					
All Arabs are enemies					
Islam is a dangerous religion					

Jews and Arabs cannot live together					
I would like to get to know Arab teenagers my age					
I believe that one day there will be peace between Israel and the Arab states					
The Arab language intimidates me					
I would like to visit Arab towns in Israel through the school					
I would be happy to host students from Arab towns at the school					
I hope that future relations between Jews and Arabs within the State of Israel are better					
Arabs can't be trusted					
Nothing can be learned from Arabs					
I am happy that Arab teachers teach at the school as well					
My acquaintance with Arab citizens of Israel is mainly					

through the TV or the internet					
I do not have much tolerance for opinions that are different than mine					
I am always happy to meet people who are different than me					
In class, it is important to me that my opinion on different matters is heard					
In Israel, everyone has an equal chance to succeed in life					
My success depends mainly on me					

Questionnaire for Arab teachers

Dear Teacher,

The questionnaire in front of you is a part of an evaluation research for a program to integrate Arab teachers into Jewish schools. Please mark the answers that best reflect your opinion and actual experience. Filling out the questionnaire will help us learn, improve and draw conclusions that will help all those involved.

Thank you for your cooperation.

How satisfied are you with the following matters:

	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Somewhat agree 3	Don't agree 2	Completely disagree 1
Preparing for joining the school	5	4	3	2	1
The way the students accepted me	5	4	3	2	1
The way the teachers accepted me	5	4	3	2	1
The way the staff accepted me	5	4	3	2	1
The professional accompaniment I received throughout the year	5	4	3	2	1
My decision to teach at a Jewish school	5	4	3	2	1

To what extent did my friends and family think that my decision to teach at a Jewish school was a good one?

Before joining the school

	Strongly supported the decision 5	Supported the decision 4	Somewhat supported 3	Did not support the decision 2	Did not support the decision at all 1
Close family	5	4	3	2	1
Friends and social environment	5	4	3	2	1

Today

	Strongly supported the decision 5	Supported the decision 4	Somewhat supported 3	Did not support the decision 2	Did not support the decision at all 1
Close family	5	4	3	2	1
Friends and	5	4	3	2	1

social environment					
	5	4	3	2	1

To what extent did you feel that at the onset or throughout the first year, you were a target of stereotypes or prejudice by:

	Very much so 5	Very much 4	Moderately 3	I didn't feel that I was 2	I didn't feel that I was at all 1
Students	5	4	3	2	1
Educational staff	5	4	3	2	1
Parents	5	4	3	2	1

Examples

To what extent do you feel the target of stereotypes and prejudice today?

	Very much so 5	Very much 4	Moderately 3	I don't feel that I am 2	I don't feel that I am at all 1
Students	5	4	3	2	1
Educational staff	5	4	3	2	1
Parents	5	4	3	2	1

Examples

To what extent

	Very much so 5	Very much 4	Somewhat 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Would you choose to teach at a Jewish school again (if time could be turned back)	5	4	3	2	1
I'd recommend a friend to teach at a Jewish school	5	4	3	2	1
I think that the presence of Arab teachers at Jewish schools promoted the relationships between the groups	5	4	3	2	1

Guidelines for an interview with the school principal

1. Please tell us a little about yourself, professional background, how long have you been in office, previous positions.
2. Please tell us a little about the school - educational vision, the characteristics of the students and parents (socio-economic, parent involvement, social-cultural backgrounds).
3. When and how did the possibility to integrate Arab teachers come up?
4. What did you think when the offer came up? (concerns, expectations, hopes, challenges etc.)
5. Did you brainstorm or consult on the matter? Whom with?
6. If no answer was given ask - Did you have any expectation from the presence of an Arab teacher at the school beyond the professional value?
7. Were any preparations made before the teachers' entry into the school? What [were they]?
8. What was the educational staff's reaction to the decision?
9. Were there any reactions from the parents? Other factors?
10. What was the authority's (educational dept., mayor) role in the process?
11. How was the specific teacher/s chosen? Were there any considerations in choosing beyond the professional consideration?
12. What connection did you have with the Merchavim Institute during this time? Was it satisfactory?
13. Likewise regarding the Ministry of Education?
14. How satisfied are you with (quantitative and qualitative from 1-10):
15. The teacher's professional level
16. His/her relationship with the teaching staff
17. His/her relationship with the students and parents
18. His/her general integration at school
19. The decision to integrate an Arab teacher at the school
20. Did any special challenges surface throughout the year regarding this teacher (or teachers)?
21. What are your lessons / recommendations from these cases?
22. Were any changes made at the school as a result of the teachers' integration? (procedures? shared space? tolerance? getting to know the other? etc.)
23. Were there any incidents throughout the year related to the presence of an Arab teacher at the school (parents', students' educational staff's reactions, anything special that happened that has to do with the Arab teachers)?
24. What activities were held this year (or in the last few years) at the school regarding coexistence? Getting to know the other etc.?

25. Does the school have a defined educational creed regarding this matter?
26. How do the students and teachers react to these activities?
27. Was there any change in the scope of these activities as a result of the integration of the teacher (teachers)? In its nature? In its effect on the students and teachers?
28. Is there any intent to integrate additional Arab teachers in the future? Please state your reasons why yes/no
29. Would you recommend that a principal who has no Arab teachers on his/her staff go through a similar process? Why?
30. What guidance did the school receive on the matter and who from?
31. What is your feedback regarding the guidance?
32. Is there a need for any additional or other tools, guidance or direction?
33. How do you summarize the process in general?
34. Would you like to add anything?

Guidelines for an interview with the counselor

Tell us about yourself, background etc.

How long have you been at the school?

How would you characterize the student population? The parents? Teachers?

Did you hold your position the year the Arab teacher joined the school?

Did the teacher's entry into the school require special preparations?

Were there any special incidents during the teachers first year (and in general) related to her (reactions from students, teachers, parents)?

Did the teacher require any special guidance / help in settling in?

What recommendations do you have for a school who wishes to employ an Arab teacher?

Do you think that the teacher's presence at the school affects the students'/teachers'/parents' attitudes towards the Arab population in Israel / coexistence? Examples

Were any peak days or events regarding relations with Arab society in Israel held at the school?

Would you like to add anything?

Guidelines for an interview with co-teachers

Tell us about yourself - why are you a teacher?

How long have you been at the school?

Were any preparations made concerning the teachers before the Arab teacher joined the school?

How did the teachers and educational staff react to the teacher's entry?

How did you personally react? Did you have any concerns / expectations?

Did you have any professional connection with the teacher throughout the year?

Did you get to know the teacher beyond professionally throughout the year (or at all)?

Do you see any professional or other differences between the Arab teacher and any other teacher?

Do you think that the teacher's presence at the school affects the students'/teachers'/parents' attitudes towards Israeli Arabs / coexistence? How? Examples

Do you see any need / place importance on integrating Arab teachers for science, English and mathematics at Jewish schools? Why?

Would you like to add anything?

Guidelines for interviewing teachers

Before

1. Tell us about yourself - where are you from? Family status? Education?
2. Please tell us about your training as a teacher - where did you study? (Did you study together with Jews?) When did you receive your diploma?
3. Did you have any special difficulties during your studies?
4. Please tell us about the period after receiving your teacher's diploma, did you work as a teacher?
5. Did you try to find work at a Jewish school before you found out about this program?
6. Contacting the program
7. How did you connect with the Merchavim organization?
8. Did you hear previously of the program to integrate Arab teachers into Jewish schools?
9. What did you think when you heard of the program or when you first made contact?
10. Did you have any concerns? Expectations?
11. Did you know Arab teachers who taught at Jewish schools? What did you hear of their experience?
12. Did Merchavim hold any preparation / training process?
13. Did you interview with other school principals before your current school? (If so - how did you feel during these interviews? What were you asked?).
14. How did your family and social environment react to your decision to teach at a Jewish school?
15. The first year
16. Please extensively describe your first days at the school - how did you feel, meeting the school staff, students, parents... how did you feel? How were you greeted?
17. For a good integration -
18. Were there any unusual reactions throughout the year (positive or negative) from students? Teachers? Parents? Other?
19. Were any or all of your concern realized?

20. How do you summarize your first year in view of your expectations?
21. Professionally speaking, do you feel you succeeded? (studies, grades, control of the class etc.)
22. (Make sure again) Were there any special reactions to the fact that you are Arab? from the students? Teachers? Parents (during parent days or throughout the year)?
23. Was there any change in their attitude towards you throughout the year? (during days of political tension? in view of successes? other?)
24. Did you receive any professional and social guidance throughout the year? Who from? How often?
25. Did this guidance help you integrate into the school? Handle special situations? How?
26. Did you feel you were missing knowledge or tools that you would expect to receive during training / guidance?
27. Were any special activities held this year regarding Jewish - Arab relations (or tolerance, accepting the other etc.)? Did you participate in these activities?
28. What do you think are the important factors to a successful integration?
29. What relationship did you have with the school principal?
30. What do you think is the principal's importance / role in the success / failure of the integration?
31. Would you recommend your colleague or friend in a similar position to go through this process? What would you say to him/her? Yes.

(For teachers who have been teaching for over a year)

32. Were there any changes during the second (and third) year: in how you felt at the school? In the teachers' / principal's / students' / teachers' attitude? Other?
33. Do you think your presence at the school affected the students' attitudes / opinions / feelings regarding Arabs or anyone who is different than they are ("other")?
34. Likewise regarding parents and teachers?
35. (Explain and give details - Why yes? Why not? Examples if any)
36. Do you think your presence affected the school environment? Special activities? (peak days, trips, lectures, workshops etc.)? Examples

Summary

37. How do you summarize your integration experience at a Jewish school so far?
38. What are the advantages and disadvantages for you? What changes did you go through? Did your opinions change as a result of the encounter?
39. What are the advantages and disadvantages for the school?
40. Do you think the program should be continued / extended?
41. Would you like to add anything?