



**יד ביד ידًا بيد Hand in Hand**  
Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel

## Year End Organizational Update 2020 – 2021



# Message from our Executive Director

Dear friends,

Just weeks ago we faced a war with Hamas and eruptions of violence within the country. While the temperature has cooled, the anger and divisions fueling it have not. Much of the internal violence has centered in mixed Jewish-Arab areas, including places where we operate, making our mission and work more urgent and vital than ever. It is precisely during these times that I see the importance of Hand in Hand's role and vision, and feel so proud to be a part of it.

The holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Shavuot took place during this recent conflict, when Hand in Hand schools were on vacation. Yet despite the pain and difficulties, we reached out to one another, and held dialogue meetings with staff and parents across the country connecting to one another during the very moment when circumstances were pulling us apart. We shared our experiences, fears, and heartbreaks, holding conversations that were not easy for anyone. Dialogue is our key to sustaining the Hand in Hand foundation of trust, empathy, and solidarity. This foundation also mobilized our communities to respond to the conflict by taking to the streets, in cities and towns from Jerusalem to the Galilee, publicly declaring our refusal to be enemies and our commitment to shared society.

Tellingly, after the holiday break all of our families returned to school. This return was the latest in a series of returns, following a school year held during a pandemic with repeated closures and quarantines. We have learned how to stay connected digitally, and how to renew our trust-building, friendships, and work, again and again and again. So too now—we come back to one another in renewed commitment to building a shared, equal, and just society for all who call this land home.

Hand in Hand is carrying this message outward, and it is being heard. I was recently invited to the Knesset with our Max Rayne Jerusalem High School Vice Principal Engi Wattad, to discuss Hand in Hand's model, and the critical importance of shared education, particularly in Israel's mixed cities. I stressed the potential before us to change society through education and called on lawmakers to take action to dismantle the institutionalized divisions between Jews and Arabs. MK Gilad Kariv responded to this call, expressing insight and support: ***"This is not a shot in the dark. We are committed to fixing the public education law so that the stream of shared Jewish-Arab schools will be officially recognized by the government."*** I look forward to working with MK Kariv and other Knesset Members to advance this cause.

I also want to share our profound thanks to you, for your support of Hand in Hand, through this difficult period and always. Whether advocating to lawmakers or connecting with fellow community members in dialogue, we feel you standing with us and are strengthened by your partnership.

In appreciation and solidarity,

Dani Elazar  
Hand in Hand Executive Director



# Message from our Director of Education

Dear friends,

As a Hand in Hand parent, teacher, and principal in Jerusalem for many years, and now as our organizational Director of Education, I've long understood Hand in Hand's contribution to society, especially in times of crisis. At Hand in Hand we set a powerful example of tenaciously standing together when society around us is being torn apart.

Crucially, this example has not gone unnoticed, and there is a growing contingent of voices recognizing the need to elevate shared Arab-Jewish society—specifically in moments of conflict. Indeed on “Jerusalem Day”, usually marked by proceedings that hit the very nerve center of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, our Max Rayne Jerusalem High School hosted 40 principals and teachers from across the city. We facilitated potent discussion on our responsibility and opportunity as school leaders to guide the next generation toward better engagement.

Within our own Hand in Hand staff, I can share that monumental and inspiring efforts were made throughout this challenging year. And in the past few weeks Jewish and Arab Hand in Hand teachers have led their classes in open and respectful dialogue, ensuring that even in the face of the conflict outside, students remain committed to our greater goal.

Recent challenges have pushed our staff to refine and refresh their approaches, developing new interdisciplinary programming, and sharpening communication and leadership skills for moments of crisis. As we begin preparations for next year, I am excited about each and every one of the seven Hand in Hand schools, 80 classrooms, hundreds of teachers, and over 2,000 students who will be receiving an education that genuinely prepares them to live together in equality and respect. Extraordinary!

In appreciation,

Nadia Kinane  
Hand in Hand Director of Education





# About Hand in Hand

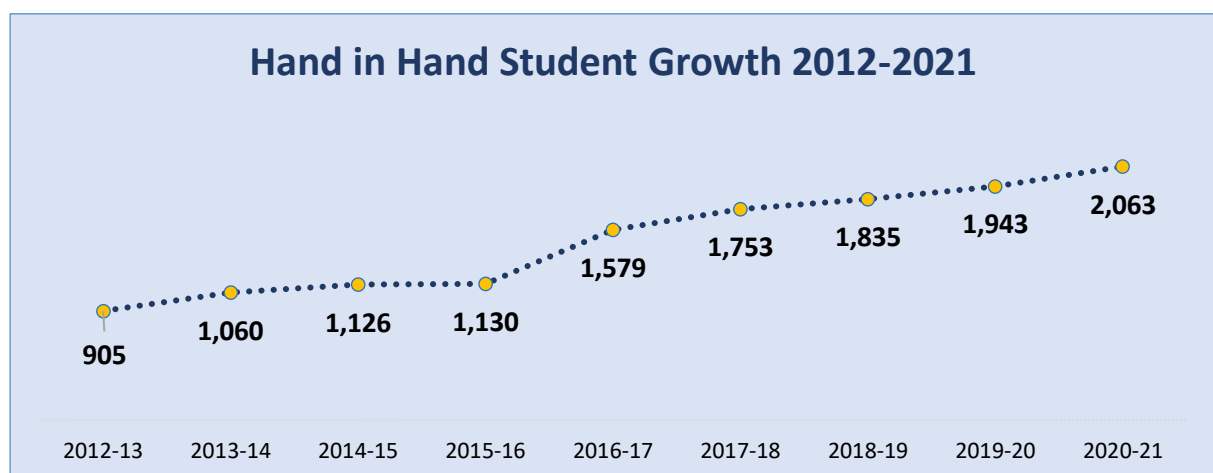
Hand in Hand builds inclusion and equality between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel through a growing network of bilingual, integrated, and multicultural schools and communities. Our schools in Jerusalem, the Galilee, Wadi Ara, Jaffa, Haifa, Kfar Saba, and Kafr Qasim-Rosh Ha'ayin engage in the nuanced and exciting work of raising a new generation committed to building a shared and equal society. Our students graduate as empathic and skilled critical thinkers, who are willing and able to actualize their beliefs. Our families are diverse yet united in the choice of shared education and Arab-Jewish society.

## Hand in Hand's Three-Part Model

- **Schools:** From preschool, Arab and Jewish children study together in both Hebrew and Arabic, learning one another's language, history, and heritage. Jewish-Arab co-teaching teams bring innovative pedagogies that cultivate students' explorations of their own identity while fostering respect for the other. **Equality, empathy, responsibility, and respect are the pillars of a Hand in Hand education.**
- **Communities:** Hand in Hand's community programs engage thousands of Jewish and Arab parents in holiday celebrations, dialogue, language classes, family activities, and more, building a proud shared society of inclusion, equality, and respect countrywide.
- **Public Partnerships and Impact:** We operate in partnership with local municipalities, the national Ministry of Education, and other institutions, including (non-Hand in Hand) public preschool networks in two cities, expanding our impact in the wider community.

## Growth at Hand in Hand

Since its inception, Hand in Hand has grown from two small classes to 2,063 students in seven schools across the country. In the past nine years alone Hand in Hand's student body has expanded by almost 128%.



## 2020-21 Year-End Highlights

- ⇒ Successful opening year of the Hand in Hand Kafr Qasim-Rosh Ha'ayin preschool with 15 pioneer Arab and Jewish families, and **approval to launch a new 1<sup>st</sup> grade class in the 2021-22 school year!**
- ⇒ Reached grade 6 and completed the Kulna-Yachad Jaffa elementary school, reached grade 5 in Haifa, and reached grade 3 in Kfar Saba.
- ⇒ Incredible efforts by our teachers and principals transitioning students back to in-person learning safely, and meeting pedagogic goals despite repeated periods of distance learning.
- ⇒ Bringing Hand in Hand communities back together as regulations permitted, with the year-end highlight of our *activists' conference* gathering community leaders, parents, staff members, alumni, and educators from across the Hand in Hand network.
- ⇒ Ramping up work with Jewish public preschool teachers outside our network, in Jaffa and Nof Hagalil, to bring Hand in Hand baics to their mixed Jewish-Arab classes.
- ⇒ Expanding our Madrassah intercultural text study and dialogue program to four locations, plus running a new Madrassah group for central staff from across the country.
- ⇒ Running a new *virtual visits* program connecting friends and partners abroad with alumni, parents, and staff.
- ⇒ Two addresses in the Knesset by Dani Elazar, Hand in Hand CEO, once together with Jerusalem Vice Principal Engi Wattad, boldly speaking out against racism and championing the potential of shared education and community building to advance shared society.
- ⇒ Hosting visits with the mayors of Haifa and Kafr Qasim, and welcoming Canadian Foreign Minister, the Honourable Marc Garneau, and the Canadian Ambassador to Israel, Lisa Stadelbauer, to our Jerusalem school.



*Foreign Minister Garneau and Ambassador Stadelbauer with Hand in Hand students*

# Hand in Hand Schools Overview

From our oldest schools in Jerusalem and the Galilee, with over 20 years of operations, to our brand new preschool in Kafr Qasim-Rosh Ha'ayin, it has been a year like no other. Hand in Hand teachers always bring a special level of commitment; this pandemic year our students were especially blessed to have such dedicated teachers. This report covers the latter part of the school year, from March to July, when Ministry of Education regulations enabled us to resume in-person learning. The joy of returning was palpable, with projects refreshed, friendships renewed, and learning became hands-on once again.

Back in the classroom, Arab-Jewish co-teaching teams modeled the unique cooperation and mutual respect intrinsic to a Hand in Hand education. Students were able to not only learn one another's languages but practice them while at play. And the impact of a physical re-immersion in our multicultural environment of equality is being felt yet again.

When the recent conflict hit, the ongoing work that Hand in Hand educators undertake to bond students together really shone through. Our students are taught to develop an instinct for listening to other narratives without feeling immediately threatened, which helped equip them to process such crises without automatically resorting to divisiveness and hate. The following are key programming highlights from recent months:

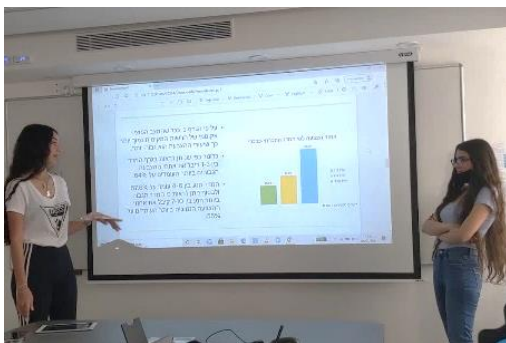
## Jerusalem 674 Students

*Max Rayne Elementary School:* As the grades gradually returned and our largest school steadily resumed its full hum, teachers were able to reintroduce many of the school's core projects. For example, teachers ran the school-wide "Identity Project" that begins with an exploration of the individual and then continues on to family, community, city, and role models. The school also introduced new hands-on classes about nature and animals, venturing outdoors and also welcoming special guests into the classroom. Sixth graders resumed a volunteer tutoring project for 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and 1<sup>st</sup> graders themselves helped one another with peer-coaching in spoken Arabic, strengthening both language skills and friendships. Teachers have also introduced mindfulness exercises into the start of the day as well.





**Max Rayne Middle and High School:** Middle and high school students only began in-person learning in March, yet the school was able to cultivate a sense of togetherness between students all year despite the distance. Upon returning to campus, students took part in two weekly hours of facilitated dialogue discussion with their teachers. The school also officially opened a new outdoor classroom, used for a bevy of alternative learning projects ranging from tutoring to carpentry. The specialized, regional civics program created and run by our high school tweaked its second semester strategy: instead of a planned practical project, 12<sup>th</sup> grade students took part in a Hebrew University political science course. Hand in Hand students presented their final projects to the Hebrew University professors, and earned college credits for their participation. We also want to congratulate the school astronomy team, who earned second place out of 200 schools in a countrywide competition, for their design of a satellite able to detect plastic in the Pacific Ocean!



## Galilee 297 Students

The Galilee elementary school is a countrywide leader in *Project Based Learning*, a hands-on, interdisciplinary educational model centered on process and student-led exploration. This year's PBL focus was language and literacy, and students learned to formulate arguments and express them persuasively in writing and speech, life skills that will serve them for years to come. The librarian transformed the whole school into a big library, setting up book displays throughout the halls on topics that students were learning about in their classes. Due to COVID regulations in the winter, the school built additional classrooms, and is now utilizing the new spaces for small group lessons, projects, and mentoring sessions. Students enjoyed returning to the campus, particularly the greenhouse and makerspace, as well as elective mini courses in a wide range of subjects from zoology to comics. The school mentoring program, which pairs teachers with small groups of students, proved vital during lockdown and then again during the weeks of the conflict and its aftermath.



## Wadi Ara

239 Students

Teachers at the “Bridge over the Valley” Wadi Ara school introduced several new interdisciplinary projects this year. Each grade worked on ‘people and places’ projects, exploring their own environments and cultures as well as other societies around the world. Students created beautiful presentations and artworks, and held a big exhibition for parents. One exciting project was done by 4<sup>th</sup> graders, in which they learned filmmaking and video editing while working on bilingual skills writing scripts in both Hebrew and Arabic. Second graders took part in the school’s annual sleepover, a beloved tradition held at the end of a unit on creation narratives in Islam and Judaism. Students and teachers gazed at the stars and moon in the evening, and woke up to greet the sunrise in the morning, bringing our peoples’ treasured stories to life in a powerful, experiential way. Students have also been enjoying new playground facilities, and recently took part in a school-wide sports day.



## Jaffa

489 Students

Hand in Hand Jaffa students are extremely diverse in both religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, and our staff worked hard to help close gaps in learning and development in classes from pre-K to grade 6. Teachers followed a dialogic education model in which class discussions help direct which subjects are investigated. Preschool classes spent significant time in their campus garden, which families were invited to on weekends to help tend.

*Kulna-Yachad Elementary School:* Teachers in elementary school resumed focus on the school’s *Place Based Education* model, turning the city into one large classroom. Students learned about timekeeping and visited Jaffa’s iconic clock tower, explored Jaffa history through local art and architecture, practiced math and life skills at nearby grocery stores, and much more. The school also ran a partnership with the Seminar Hakibbutzim College, through which the college students ran movement workshops teaching shapes, letters, and group cooperation. The college students also led a mural painting project with graduating 6<sup>th</sup> graders, our original pioneer class that launched Hand in Hand in Jaffa eight years ago.



Our new graduates culminated a six-year project documenting their journey through the school, and created fantastic self-portraits that were exhibited at the graduation ceremony.



New Jaffa graduates ♡

## Haifa

### 232 Students

Our Haifa preschool brought together the youngest Hand in Hand children in our network, less than a year old, while also reaching the 5<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time this year. As it was particularly challenging to work with preschoolers over Zoom, in Haifa (and at all Hand in Hand preschools) we were delighted to return to in-person learning. Teachers devoted significant time to seasonal and holiday celebrations, and we were honored to host Haifa Mayor Einat Kalisch-Rotem at the preschool's Passover-Easter celebration.

The Hand in Hand Haifa elementary school incorporated *Project Based Learning*, with a focus on projects exploring students' roots and identities. Students conducted research projects on their families, interviewed grandparents, created artwork, and wrote reports on their findings. Other PBL projects included building clocks, researching women change-makers, and translating popular song lyrics into Arabic and Hebrew. After the recent conflict passed, each student created a quilt square expressing their feelings and hopes, and staff sewed them together into one large tapestry. It serves as a poignant reminder that we are united regardless of the conflict outside, and that we can strengthen one another during hard days. The school celebrated the end of the year with a school-wide sports day and party, which was actually the first and last time when everyone gathered together this year.



## **Kfar Saba**

### **117 Students**

Located on the verdant Beit Berl College campus, the Hand in Hand Kfar Saba school reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade this year. Teachers began each day with a 30-minute discussion on how students' feelings, yoga or movement, meditation, or a story. The school started a new mentoring program, pairing each teacher with half of the students in their class and holding regular one-on-one meetings with each of their mentees. The school held elective mini courses twice a week—with students able to choose from yoga, ceramics, knitting, cooking, and more—and taking some responsibility for their own learning. Students also enjoyed short trips around the Beit Berl campus, and to museums and other cultural centers nearby.



## **Kafr Qasim-Rosh Ha'ayin**

### **15 Students**

Hand in Hand's newest school completed an incredible year, a testament to the commitment of our pioneer parent cohort who have been true partners with our staff. The Kafr Qasim-Rosh Ha'ayin teachers led a classroom steeped in humanistic and multicultural values, built on experiential approaches incorporating meditation and mindfulness, cultivating bilingualism through play, and utilizing nature as a lens to teach everything from letters to values. For example, teachers taught about time and patience by bringing caterpillar eggs into the classroom, and the children followed their progress into caterpillars and then butterflies. We are thrilled to have recently received approval to open a Kafr Qasim-Rosh Ha'ayin 1<sup>st</sup> grade next year, and even possibly a second preschool class.





# Hand in Hand Pedagogy

*Project Based Learning, Problem Solving Based Learning, Placed Based Education, Outdoor Learning, Humanistic Education*—these exciting pedagogical models drive our mission to run schools that are both integrated AND centers of excellence, innovation, and persistent creativity. These approaches enable our 2,000+ students to gain a fuller contextual understanding of how and why the world looks the way it does, while understanding their role in it and responsibility for making it a better place. In their mission to foster curiosity, critical thinking, bilingualism, and multicultural learning, Hand in Hand teachers are bolstered by the pedagogic coaches staffing the **Hand in Hand Education Department and Resource Center**.

Our expert pedagogic coaches provided regular sessions with hundreds of teachers, developed curricula and best practices built on more than two decades of Hand in Hand pedagogy, and provided responsive professional training and support throughout the year. Our pedagogic team has been particularly focused on developing Arabic as a second language programming, which is both a key function of a Hand in Hand education while also promoting language equality in our schools.



## ***Municipal Preschool Partnership Project***

Following months of COVID delays, our pedagogic team was delighted to fully ramp up a long-planned partnership with public preschools in Jaffa and Nof Hagalil. Both of these municipalities run Jewish preschools in which at least half of the children enrolled are Arab, however the education provided there had not reflected their language or culture until now. Working with teachers in nine schools, Hand in Hand pedagogic coaches provided training and educational materials to help them incorporate basic Arabic language, Muslim and Christian holidays, and other important Palestinian cultural touchstones into classrooms.

It is notable that two Jaffa preschools in this program have an even more diverse mix of families, with immigrants from Russia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Leading these classrooms is a hugely complex endeavor, and ours was the only professional coaching that these teachers received this year. We have discovered that Hand in Hand's inclusive pedagogical model is effective and vital in multiple diverse contexts, far beyond what we had imagined.



# Hand in Hand Communities Overview

In a year of virtual gatherings, our communities experienced great joy in being able to come together in-person in the spring, as regulations permitted. Highlights this year include:

⇒ Many hundreds of community members joined together in locations across the country in response to the recent conflict, demanding a de-escalation of hostilities and proclaiming support for shared society. These gatherings took place within a wider environment of growing hate and mistrust, and Hand in Hand’s communities loudly and proudly affirmed a contrasting message of partnership. These gatherings were no less meaningful to our community members themselves, serving as a vital reminder of our commitment to promoting equality and a renewed pledge to building shared society.



⇒ Close to 50 Jewish community members from across the country participated in beginners and intermediate level Arabic classes.

⇒ An unprecedented 100+ participants took part in six **Madrasah** intercultural text study groups, a program infusing our community fabric with a rich, text-driven underpinning that promotes understanding of one another’s heritage. New this year, we ran a Madrasah group for Hand in Hand central staff from around the country, enriching and connecting members of our operational teams too.

⇒ After repeated COVID-delays, the Communities Department was able to run our annual Activists Conference in June, titled “The Power of Solidarity in Times of Crisis.” Over 50 teachers, NGO staffers, teachers, principals, graduates, and parents came together to discuss the heartbreak and challenges caused by the conflict, but also how powerful and empowering it is to gather together just at this time. The event concluded with a beautiful concert under the stars.



## Alumni Overview 2020-21

Hundreds of Jewish and Arab graduates are the foremost ambassadors of Hand in Hand's vision of social inclusion and civic equality. Hand in Hand's Alumni Program empowers graduates to translate their shared education experiences into engagement and leadership in their communities, university campuses, and workplaces. We recently conducted an in-depth evaluation of 80 graduates, and are proud to share the following results:

- 79% of respondents feel that their Hand in Hand education provided them with the tools to make a difference in Israeli society
- 90% of respondents find it is easy for them to connect with people from different backgrounds
- 89% of respondents report that their knowledge of the other's language has had a significant positive impact on their perception of the other
- 62% of respondents are currently involved in social change initiatives

This year, graduates launched the second season of the “Mishmish” web series project (with about 270,000 views to date!), exploring local culture and politics through their unique and bilingual lens. The alumni program has also been running a series of dialogue sessions for graduates to share and connect during recent weeks, both in response to the latest conflict and looking ahead to the kinds of changes they want to help initiate in society. Our graduates were an active presence at recent protests, serving as living examples of the genuine possibility of shared education and community.



Graduates ended the program year with a night of pizza and live music, to which, in true Hand in Hand style, they invited friends from other schools to join and experience a joyful moment of living together.



“Only Partnership Will Bring Change”



# Thank you, friends!

We are, as always, in great appreciation of your support and friendship. With you by our side, we continue to hold our values dear even in times of crisis, working to strengthen these principles when they are needed most. We thank you for continuing to build a more inclusive and equal society in Israel with us. We wish you, your families, and communities good health and safety, and hope to welcome you back to our campuses again soon!



*Preschool graduates in Kfar Saba*