



ROSSING CENTER  
FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE

מרכז רוסינג  
לחינוך ולדיאלוג  
للتربية وللحوار

# ROSSING CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE ANNUAL REPORT 2018



## Dear Friends,

With our new name, new staff members (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) and new program elements – 2018 has been an exciting year for the Rossing Center. One focus in 2018 has been on ensuring that our programs are not only benefiting individuals but are achieving systemic impact. For this reason, many of our programs take place within the mainstream educational system. Furthermore, we seek to develop scalable models that can then be applied system-wide. In 2018, our *Educating for Change* program experienced substantial growth and development, bringing us closer to this goal. We began working with additional schools and teachers whilst also significantly stepping up our work with principals and, as outlined in this report, have achieved much success in this endeavor. Furthermore, we substantially increased our partnerships with teacher training colleges. This is helping to ensure that our model reaches many more people while further positioning us as experts in the field of education for tolerance.

Our *Healing Hatred* program has also reached maturity – after years devoted to developing an innovative model, in 2018 we began training a cadre of facilitators who can apply this model with ever-widening circles of Israeli and Palestinian participants. This will broaden our impact and help change the nature of the conversation.

In fact, the growth and expansion of our programs over the last few years has created the need for a strengthened organizational infrastructure – so one priority over the last year has been ensuring that we have the human resources necessary to address our increased activity and complexity. Just as society needs strong foundations in order to flourish, so does an organization.

This report will provide you with a snapshot of our work in 2018 while showcasing some particularly interesting and important developments specific to our various projects. Please note that many of our programs run according to the academic year: statistics in this report reflect numbers for spring 2018 and fall 2018 (two academic years).

We appreciate your interest in our work and invite you to partner with us in promoting a more just, equitable, and peaceful society for us all.



Dr Sarah Bernstein  
Executive Director



## — DIALOGUE AND IDENTITY —

This school-twinning program, endorsed by the Ministry of Education, began in 2006 in cooperation with the TALI Jewish school network and the National Office of Catholic Schools in Israel. In 2018 we worked with 24 schools - 12 Jewish and 12 Christian - bringing Jewish, Christian, and Muslim pupils, aged 10-13, together in a series of themed encounters designed to promote mutual understanding, respect, and the development of social and interpersonal skills in a multicultural society.

One of the 2018 highlights was the successful piloting of an encounter bringing together the staff of two twinned schools, Al Mutran in Nazareth and Hahitah from Zichron Yaakov. Held at Al Mutran, the meeting was facilitated by the schools' paired *Dialogue and Identity* teachers. In addition to describing the project and its activities, the teachers led one of the activities typically experienced by pupils. Through this activity, teachers got to know each other and better understand the student experience.

In July 2018, a group of 17 *Dialogue and Identity* teachers, hosted by the Swiss organization, *Coexistences*, participated in an intensive five-day workshop, meeting with groups engaged in intercultural dialogue in Switzerland. This learning experience deepened the teachers' understanding of both the potential and challenges of dialogue.



## — 2018 DIALOGUE AND IDENTITY ACHIEVEMENTS —



In September, a popular national daily newspaper, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, featured an interview with three *Dialogue and Identity* teachers; Jewish, Muslim and Christian. The article illustrated that despite the conflict-related tragedies and hardships they and their families had endured, these three teachers were unwaveringly committed to bringing Arab and Jewish children together to get to know each other in shared and meaningful experiences.



Photo Credit: Eli Dasa, Ynet

*Teacher: "We're not 'teaching' them - we're taking them on a journey - an experience - and when you take a child through this [Dialogue and Identity] experience - it sticks with them, for the rest of their life."*

*Principal: "This program is very much part of the vision of the school; there are very close relations between the teachers [of the paired schools] and that gets transmitted"*

“...Because if adults do not make peace, children can do it.”

## — EDUCATING FOR CHANGE —

This 30-hour teacher training program gives core groups of teachers in both Jewish and Arab schools and in teacher training colleges tools for facilitating classroom discussions on conflictual issues. By creating a safe space for individual expression among their middle and high school students, the teachers provide opportunities for the re-thinking of extremist and racist mindsets and attitudes. *Educating for Change* was developed in cooperation with the Center for Civic Education in the Ministry of Education, the Jerusalem Education Administration and the Jerusalem Foundation.

In 2018, our innovative Principals' Forum was an outstanding success – the highlight being the 17 Jewish and Arab principals' five-day study visit to Berlin in March. Berlin, chosen not only for its history – and ever-present memory and awareness of where racism and extremism can lead – provided multiple opportunities to examine present-day efforts in the formal and informal education systems to combat racism. The need for such education has become particularly acute in light of the influx of refugees to Germany. Our *Educating for Change* principals met with officials at the Berlin Ministry of Education; visited schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged students - many from immigrant families; and learned about anti-racism initiatives in the formal and informal education systems.

## — 2018 EDUCATING FOR CHANGE ACHIEVEMENTS —



832  
TEACHERS

37 JEWISH AND ARAB  
SCHOOLS  
across the country

40  
SCHOOL  
PRINCIPALS

730 HOURS of principal  
and teacher training

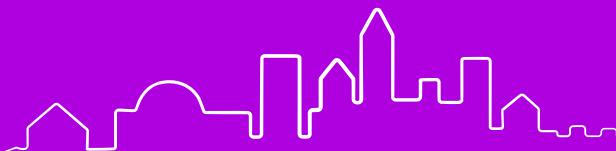
In their June summary meeting with program staff, many principals expressed a strong desire to continue to meet and learn from each other during the subsequent academic year (2018-2019). This testifies to the strength of the relationships built through the Forum, and also their ongoing commitment to combatting racism in their respective school communities. In the fall of 2018 another twenty principals, new to *Educating for Change*, joined the Principals' Forum.



*Principal: "Our commitment level goes beyond the Forum and influences the teachers. I started to think about what else we can do to advance the subject in our schools... this is a difficult time, and if we don't tackle issues in our role as principals, it will become even more difficult. We have the ability to influence."*

*Teacher: "We start with facts but then we make room for emotional issues. We make space so that students feel safe to say what they feel and we express empathy for their feelings. Their opinions become more moderate as they consider different points of view and different ideas."*

**"In the safe space – we can talk about everything and speak freely and nobody will shut us down."**



# JERUSALEM CENTER FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

JCJCR was established to meet the challenges of the complex and unique encounter between the Jewish majority population and the Christian Arab minority in the Holy Land. JCJCR runs a wide range of courses, conferences, seminars and lectures on local Christian communities, Jewish-Christian relations and interfaith and intercultural relations. We target ‘multipliers’ such as teachers and tour guides, along with key stakeholders including government officials and the Israeli army. JCJCR also provides consulting and information services to public and government institutions, diplomatic missions and the media.

Over the 2017-2018 academic year we began working with the staunchly secular Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts, in Tel Aviv. Most of the students had minimal exposure to other religious traditions and little experience in exploring their own Jewish identity. Many students noted that the JCJCR course was extremely beneficial as, in a non-threatening way, it brought to the fore issues of religious identity and belief in a highly supportive forum. It gave them the opportunity to examine Jewish scriptures from multiple perspectives, thus supporting their critical thinking about religion, their society and themselves.



The students were also sensitized to the presence of Christianity and Christians in their everyday context. Unlike in other parts of Israel, the center of the country is more mixed and Israeli Jews are likely to interact with a wide variety of Christians (Arabs, migrant workers, asylum seekers, Russian speakers). Students told us that the JCJCR course helped them understand that Christianity is not only a religion but is also a part of the material culture which Jewish Israelis encounter daily.

## — 2018 JCJCR ACHIEVEMENTS —



**2607** LOCAL participants

**635 HOURS**

**1345** OVERSEAS participants

**188 HOURS**

**In 2018, JCJCR partnered with:**

- David Yellin Academic College of Education
- Kerem Institute for Teacher Training
- Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts
- The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Yad Ben-Zvi Institute
- Avshalom Institute
- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Economy

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
IDF COGAT

IDF Education Units

**Pre & Post Army Frameworks:**

- Beit Midrash Yisraeli – Ein Prat
- Bina Secular Yeshiva
- Tsahali
- Melech Haaretz
- Meitarim - Lachish
- Beit Yisrael
- Be’eri



*“Until this course, Christianity and the encounter with Christianity was strictly reserved to trips abroad. Now, Christianity is also a part of my Israeli reality.”*

*“I learned that the textbooks we use are not very accurate and as a teacher, I need to closely examine them and to pay attention to the prevailing narrative within the text. This course was the most amazing one I’ve had this semester; it left me with knowledge and new awareness of the issues - I really loved it!”*



**“...In my opinion, this course should be compulsory in all training of educators in Israel.”**

## HEALING HATRED

Healing  
Hatred

39 PARTICIPANTS  
8 SEMINARS  
170 HOURS

An innovative model for interreligious dialogue, *Healing Hatred* facilitates participants' understanding of the core spiritual and moral dilemmas that lie at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Developed and implemented by the *Rossing Center*, The Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, and the Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem, the course equips professionals with the tools of spiritual counseling for the healing of trauma and fear.

In late February 2018, we held an intensive week-long 'training of trainers' in Jordan whereby we prepared a new group of facilitators to apply our *Healing Hatred* methodology. Ten Israeli Jews and 10 West Bank Palestinians (eight Muslim, two Christian) participated. The first half of the seminar, conducted in small groups, was devoted to the *Healing Hatred* spiritual questionnaire. Through sharing core intrapersonal and social

dilemmas, and their concerns about the conflict and its impact on their lives, trust was quickly built among the participants. The second half of the week, conducted with the full group together, focused on the future. Participants were encouraged to imagine themselves in old age looking back on their lives; they envisioned the future they hoped to be living and what they had done to make it happen. Then the participants spent time planning action they could take to turn their dreams into reality.

In the fall of 2018, we held the first of six uni-national weekend seminars for new participants. Some 15 individuals from all over the West Bank participated in a 2.5 day introductory seminar where they were introduced to the *Healing Hatred* methodology. They then attended a one-day follow up seminar intended to assess and strengthen the impact of the intervention.



*Israeli Participant: "Before the seminar I was blind, but I didn't know how blind I was. Now the light has been turned on and I have to look at what I can't ignore anymore."*

*Palestinian Participant: "I talked about things that I never believed I could speak about with anyone, not even those who are very close to me."*

“ For the first time, after years of encounters with Israelis, I'm going home with an understanding of so many new aspects of what I need to do. It was a completely different way of being with Israelis. ”



## ADASHA - The Jerusalem Center for Interreligious Encounter

Employing the motto: ‘Promoting Conversation, Not Confrontation,’ ADASHA [‘lens’ in Hebrew and Arabic] provides visiting interreligious groups and groups with interreligious areas of interest with sensitive, nuanced and multi-faceted education about Israel and Palestine. Accordingly, ADASHA participants – often university students and grassroots community activists – learn more about the realities on the ground from diverse political and religious perspectives during their visit to the Holy Land.

The visiting groups meet with individuals representing a variety of religious traditions, peacebuilders, social justice and political activists and academics (particularly in the fields of archaeology, religion and history). They enjoy experiential encounters, engaging in text study, visiting locations of religious and political significance and then processing this learning through discussion.

Through this experience participants acquire in-depth knowledge and the capacity to listen deeply to each other – without their discourse deteriorating into slogans and boycotts. They then bring their knowledge and capacity back to their home contexts – campuses, local communities, media outlets, and more.

## — 2018 ADASHA ACHIEVEMENTS —

**7** GROUPS | **530** HOURS  
**148** PARTICIPANTS | **OF ACTIVITIES**



In 2018, ADASHA provided seminars and tours for seven highly diverse groups from abroad:

- Students at the Mitchell Hamline School of Law (Minnesota)
- Students at the Chicago Theological Seminary
- A Jewish, Christian and Muslim grassroots interfaith group from Birmingham, UK
- Students of journalism at Columbia University (New York)
- Students of religion at Harvard University, Lund University and the University of Oslo
- Representatives of the Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine (UK)
- Students from the London School of Economics, (UK) sponsored by its Faith Centre

*“It has been one of the richest, most insightful, demanding and challenging experiences of my life. The trip has been inspirational for me - I have a deeper sense of affirmation, both in continuing with my work within the Church of England and in building on the faith friendships, many of which started whilst we were away together.”*

*“An amazing life time journey... challenging physically, mentally, emotionally and religiously.”*

*“... a really well planned, thought-provoking tour.... It was intense... and helped us understand the complexities and contradictions of Israel/Palestine.”*

**“ I learned that there was no use in taking sides, but it would be better for me to stand for equality, fairness and justice. ”**

Madrasa is a *Rossing Center* interfaith partnership project with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, its Center for the Study of Multiculturalism and Diversity, and the university's Student Union. The project comprises the theme-based study of texts from the three monotheistic faiths by Muslim, Christian and Jewish students.

In 2018, the program was run by one Jewish and one Arab facilitator. They worked with the students who learned in pairs, in small groups and as a full group. The students met 15 times studying texts from the three faiths, with a focus on moral, social, philosophical and theological issues and questions of



## 2018 MADRASA ACHIEVEMENTS

living in a shared society. For example, topics of study included belief in God; the concept of creation of human beings in God's image; treatment of the Other; tensions between religious innovation and preservation of tradition; and the place of women in religion. *Rossing Center* staff provided the facilitators with support, guidance and content preparation in terms of selection of religious texts for discussion.

The students held an open study day to which they invited the university community to join in the discussions. They also organized an annual tour of religious sites guided by *Madrasa* participants.



2 FACILITATORS | 16 STUDENTS | 50 HOURS OF ACTIVITIES

*"I enjoyed Open dialogue – with people I wouldn't otherwise have met. We looked at sources that I could never have had exposure to outside of this shared learning experience."*

*"Through Madrasa I met new people... with different views and thoughts. I learned more about my own religion, as well as the other religions and I changed my own views on some things. Unlike before, I now feel that I can speak about other religions without apprehension."*

**"The program exceeded my expectations. It was completely different from other programs I have participated in."**



**CONSULTATION TO:**

- Reform Movement on a Jewish-Arab dialogue program
- Kibbutzim College and the 'State of Jerusalem' documentary group

**PRESENTATIONS:**

- TETT Conference - Concordia University Montreal
- Mofet Think Tank - Interculturalism in Education Systems
- Jewish People Policy Institute
- Arigatou Foundation - Learning to Live Together Seminar
- Jewish Council for Public Affairs leadership group
- Church of Sweden Societal Theology Research Group

**PARTICIPATION IN:**

- Meeting: Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment - Sponsored by the Synod of Bishops
- Symposium: 70th Anniversary of Israel: Insights and Perspectives - Sponsored by the University of Vienna

**PROGRAMMING FOR:**

- Annual Catholic Bishops' Conference in the Holy Land
- UK Parliamentarians
- Berlin Minister of Education

**PARTICIPATION IN:**

- Religion and Peace Education Seminar - sponsored by the German Federal Foreign Office

**TRAINING FOR STAFF AT:**

- Tower of David Museum
- Beit Hatfutsot: Museum of the Jewish People

**LECTURES:**

- Two lectures for the general public at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque on the Reformation and women in the New Testament
- For Ultra-Orthodox and National-Religious rabbis who will be posted abroad
- For conference participants at the University of Haifa on German and European Studies
- For participants of the Forum for Jewish Studies at Uppsala University

**SEMINAR FOR:**

- Gothenburg Interreligious Center

**MEDIA INTERVIEWS:**

- TV Interview (Channel 10): London and Kirshenbaum on Church Lands
- Radio Interview (Reshet Bet): On the establishment of the Ukrainian Church
- Press Release: The temporary closure of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

## OUR STAFF



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## OUR DONORS

Our heartfelt thanks to all who have so generously supported our work in 2018:

- Church of Hessen and Nassau
- Church of Rheinland
- Church of Sweden
- Deutsche Verein vom Heiligen Lande (DVHL)
- Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland e.V. (EMW)
- FELM
- Gimprich Family Foundation
- Kerk in Actie
- Kindermissionswerk "Die Sternsinger"
- Kirche in Not
- Bischöfliches Hilfswerk MISEREOR e.V.
- Missio Aachen
- Perlin Family Foundation
- Anonymous

We are committed to continuing our work in partnership with you.

**Your support helps us fulfill our mission of promoting an inclusive society in Israel  
for all religions, ethnic and national groups.**

If you would like to support our work, please contact us at:

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To make a donation (tax exempt in USA), please see our website at:  
rossingcenter.org/en/about/donate



*The Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue* is an interreligious organization based in Jerusalem which promotes an inclusive society for all religious, ethnic and national groups. Through education, encounter, research and information services , we foster better relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land. We believe that understanding, respect, justice and equality will enable us all to live in peace.

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*The Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue* is named in memory of the late **Daniel Rossing (1946-2010)**. Founder and first Director of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR), Daniel Rossing received the 2009 Mount Zion Award for his outstanding contribution to dialogue between the different religions and cultures in the Holy Land, and his enhancement of mutual understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims.