

ROSSING CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE




ROSSING CENTER
FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE
מרכז רוסינג
לחינוך ולדיאלוג
מרכז רוסינג
ללרביה וללחואר

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Dear Friends,

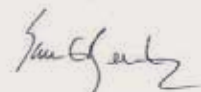
With the launch of two new programs even whilst adapting to the new reality of life with the coronavirus, 2020 was a year of both challenges and growth for the Rossing Center. On the one hand, the pandemic affected nearly all aspects of life, including the manner in which we conduct our work. On the other hand, and despite the pandemic, we were able to establish a new program at the Open House in Ramle and to develop a program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (*Meeting Place*). In fact, by adapting ourselves to the new circumstances and moving much of our content online, we were able to reach hundreds - if not thousands - of new individuals. The pandemic may have limited physical interaction between people, but it also provided opportunities the Rossing Center was quick to capitalize on, such as the series of webinars you will see featured towards the end of this report. Our mission of creating an inclusive society, through education and dialogical encounters, continues to grow and take on new creative forms.

The pandemic was not the only challenge we faced in 2020. In March we saw yet another election process that was characterized by hateful, divisive and racist rhetoric. In December of 2020 the government announced that it would be dissolved and that another set of elections would take place in March 2021. We saw the Nation-State Law used in court to deny Arab schoolchildren reimbursements for transportation costs to

their schools outside of the city (Carmiel). We continue to work against toxic nationalist policy and rhetoric in Israel and refuse to participate in the dehumanization of others.

Our work at the Rossing Center that tackles intolerance, prejudice, negative stereotypes and racism is vital if we wish to build a society respectful of all its citizens and residents. We have devoted time to developing an updated strategic plan that will enable us to increase our impact on key institutions that can shape the future of Israeli society.

The following report provides a glimpse into our work. The ceramic tree which features as a design element throughout was created by the Rossing Center staff to decorate our office meeting room wall. It represents an idea of inclusiveness in which the overall picture is greatly enriched by the diversity of its parts. We invite you to read our report and get to know our work more closely. The Rossing Center appreciates your interest and invites you to partner with us in creating an inclusive society based on understanding, respect, justice and equality for all.



Dr. Sarah Bernstein
Executive Director

ROSSING CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE IN 2020

7
FLAGSHIP
PROGRAMS

2,272
HOURS OF ACTIVITIES
AND EVENTS

10,086
PARTICIPANTS



DIALOGUE AND IDENTITY

Dialogue and Identity twins Jewish and Arab schools, bringing students (aged 10-13) together in four themed encounters over the school year and training teachers to facilitate such encounters. The program enables students to deepen their acquaintance with their religious culture and tradition (Judaism, Christianity or Islam) and build their knowledge of the other's religious culture and tradition. The program aims to promote curiosity, understanding, respect and intercultural tolerance, and encourage the development of social and interpersonal skills in a multicultural society.

Student: “Participation in Dialogue and Identity is so important – we need to end racism and get along regardless of our religion or colour of skin”.

Partnering with 29 schools in 2020, *Dialogue and Identity* continued to incorporate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) principles into its syllabus, helping students to identify and distinguish between thoughts and feelings – and to express them in speech and writing. *Dialogue and Identity* differs from most other encounter programs between Jewish and Arab pupils in that rather than bringing in external facilitators, we train the teachers to facilitate the meetings,

thus nurturing not only sustainability but also a sense of ownership and responsibility on the part of the teachers for the success of each encounter.

After Israel entered lockdown and schools were shut due to the pandemic, the program adjusted to the situation by conducting teacher training and student encounters online. The program also includes a visit to a synagogue, church and mosque, but not all these could be implemented this year due to health restrictions. As a substitute to these visits, dedicated *Dialogue and Identity* videos for the school students on the place of the synagogue, church and mosque in each religion have now been produced.

Teacher: “Not only did the students learn a lot – I did too. We learn just as much as the students in the program!”

Dialogue and Identity is conducted in partnership with the TALI Education Fund and in cooperation with the National Office of Catholic Schools in Israel. With support of the EU and other donors, the program is expected to expand to 40 schools over the coming two years. The Rossing Center team includes Co-Director Hussam Elias and Coordinators Hannan Haddad and Tamer Khalfo.



This project is co-funded by the European Union

28
School
Principals

78
Teachers

90
Hours
Teacher
Training

1470
Pupils



**Principal: "The children's fears
dissipate from one encounter to the
next.... They reveal the things they
have in common and their fears
disappear."**



EDUCATING FOR CHANGE

Beginning some eight years ago as a training program to provide core groups of teachers in Jewish and Arab schools with the tools to facilitate classroom discussions on conflictual issues, and thus combat racist mindsets and attitudes among middle and high-school youth, *Educating for Change* has scaled up both quantitatively and qualitatively. Learning from our own observations as well as program evaluation studies, we decided to redefine, deepen and broaden our *Educating for Change* goal to include the cultivation of a new discourse among youth: one which is respectful of and embraces diversity and difference.

Trainee teacher: “Educating for Change strengthened my perception of the classroom teacher’s role as a leader in change processes and not just a ‘learning technician’”

Throughout 2020, we have brought this approach to additional spheres of influence in the education system. As well as our work with teachers and principals, we trained the schools’ core leadership teams which include, for example, pedagogical and social coordinators, so that they will have the tools to sustain the program’s approach beyond their schools’ formal participation. We increased the scope of our work with teacher training institutions, reaching the Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and Arts, David Yellin College of Education, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Levinsky College of Education, where we were invited to conduct three courses in the 2020-2021 academic year, the first of which – for Jewish and Arab music teachers – was recently completed. Reaching

trainee teachers means that they will be equipped with *Educating for Change* skills from the outset of their professional careers.

Teacher: “Accepting the Other and racism are very relevant topics for youth in school. All teachers should go through this training”.

Perhaps the most dramatic leap for *Educating for Change* over the past year has been its successful outreach to the Municipal Education Authorities (MEAs). Having established a highly committed bi-national forum, we are now working with key actors amongst the MEAs in order to form steering committees in several locations. These committees will develop cohesive strategic plans for collective impact in their localities – and in their schools specifically – promoting a culture that is not merely tolerant of but sees difference and diversity as positive assets to society.

Principal’s reflection: “I introduced Educating for Change in my school in order to bring about real and practical change among my teachers. ...A successful principal makes sure to expose teachers to wide-ranging different tools and cultures, and thus bring about a fundamental change among the students. ...The training added not only knowledge and skills but also a change in the thinking patterns of all participants – myself included.”

120
Trainee
Teachers

15
Schools

330
School
Staff

463
Hours
Training

11
Municipal
Education
Authorities





MEETING PLACE

51
Students

6
Facilitators

157
Activity
Hours

The goal of *Meeting Place* is to promote an inclusive culture on university campuses. It does so by developing and implementing a campus portfolio of interfaith study and dialogue activities that build the capacities of young Jews and Arabs in higher education to facilitate and experience shared learning around their own and each other's religions and cultures, and to cultivate a culture of open discourse around issues of personal identity, belief and politics - however conflictual they may be. The program is held in cooperation with the Hebrew University's Center for the Study of Multiculturalism and Diversity, and the Social Involvement Unit.

Participants told us:

"This program allowed me to meet people I would never meet elsewhere. I want to continue the relationships I made."

Over the course of 2020, a series of text-based study groups were conducted with Jewish, Christian and Muslim students. During these sessions, students used texts from the three Abrahamic faiths in order to explore subjects such

as identity, belonging, faith, family, Jerusalem and more. In addition, students participated in a *Healing Hatred* weekend seminar, where they explored the dynamics between their identity, personal conflicts and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The students reported to an external evaluator that the weekend seminar was extremely impactful and meaningful.

"I now have more knowledge, I'm less ignorant. This reduces feelings of fear and anger. For example, when I hear a Muezzin call, I know that the Muslim student in the group feels a sense of awe. He hears it and stands straight, even if he doesn't go to pray... for me it used to be like a call for war ... like 'HaTikvah' [Israeli national anthem] might have been for him. So now, the program gave me an inner voice which influences me."

During the pandemic, students continued to conduct meetings online, and even held a session on the pandemic itself. The group also continued their joint initiatives—including



a video on Ramadan that was published on social media and a meeting on Jerusalem which was opened up for friends to join—to convey a positive interfaith message on campus despite health and movement restrictions due to the pandemic. This was an opportunity for the group to expose the wider university campus and their friends to the program.

An additional activity was added to the program towards the end of 2020 - *Dialogue Circles*. This activity uses our *Educating for Change* methodologies to train students and equip them with the skills to facilitate conflictual conversations on campus.





Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations
מרכז ירושלים ליחסי יהודים ונוצרים
مركز القدس للعلاقات اليهودية المسيحية

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 programs on local Christian communities, Jewish-Christian relations, and interfaith and intercultural relations, targeting 'multipliers', such as teachers and tour guides, along with key stakeholders including government officials and the Israeli army, and young adults in pre-and post-army community service and leadership programs. JCJCR also provides consulting and information services, lectures and study tours for public and government institutions, diplomatic missions and the media.

Students told us:

"This was the first time that I studied Christianity and it opened a whole new world for me".

Much creative thinking was demanded from JCJCR Director Hana Bendcowsky to engage active participation in the online sessions which constituted so much of the 2020 JCJCR experience – and Hana clearly rose to the challenge. One example was the teaser opening in teacher training sessions "I heard this week...", in which students connect a topic in the media with their studies, research and present their findings which then gain further exposure for the issue on the JCJCR Facebook platform.

A library of online lectures, including interviews with researchers, religious leaders and virtual tours, has introduced our



educational materials to thousands of trainee tour guides. Lectures were supplemented with 'live' question and answer sessions.

"Hana opened my mind to the Christian world, connected the content to local communities and contemporary issues".

An online Tour Guides' Colleagues Forum created and facilitated by Hana has been continuously growing and is enormously popular, meeting at least every two weeks if not more, and addressing wide-ranging issues related to tour-guiding in the context of the three faiths' narratives.

781
Activity Hours

5,831
Local & Overseas
Participants

2,310
Webinar Attendees



As well as producing a range of webinars that gained extensive attention from the general public, JCJCR marked the 10th year since the passing of its founder, Daniel Rossing, with a webinar that showcased a video with prominent religious leaders in the Holy Land and abroad discussing Daniel's legacy. This was followed with the launching of the Rossing Center's new program—the *Open House* in Ramle.

“Hana taught the class in such an interesting way. Her energy and interest in the subject made me connect to the class. I would be happy to hear more about the relations between the Jewish and Christian community in the Holy Land”.

In fact, with the increase of online events during the pandemic, JCJCR was able to reach thousands of existing and new audiences in the Holy Land and abroad.





HEALING HATRED

16

Facilitators Trained

50

Activity 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 counselling for the healing of trauma and fear.

Participants told us:

"I felt that I was in a safe space and could bring up really personal topics, which is incredible because I only met the other group members yesterday."

We continue to share the *Healing Hatred* methodology with new and key audiences in the Holy Land. In January 2020, we conducted a week-long training seminar for new *Healing Hatred* facilitators in Jordan – this time for people with some background in facilitation. The group of 16 Jewish Israelis, Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians from different cities in the West Bank began with a round of sessions based on the unique methodology of the spiritual questionnaire. The intensive week-long program

enabled the participants to delve into the roots of their fears and personal conflicts, and to receive immediate feedback from their peers and the program staff about their facilitation implementation. Two months later, the group held a reunion meeting online (due to the Coronavirus situation) in which they discussed the impact of the virus on their communities and how they might, individually and collectively, create change in the midst of the Coronavirus crisis.

"From the age of 15, I have participated in these kinds of dialogues and usually I return home tired and irritated. Here I feel that I am leaving with positive energy. The conversation was honest, and we really listened to each other."

Some of the new facilitators soon had the opportunity to put their acquired skills into practice – facilitating a weekend seminar for a group of students participating in our *Meeting Place* program at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In addition, the *Healing Hatred* methodology was implemented in programs conducted by our Holy Land Trust partner in Bethlehem and has also begun implementation in our *Open House* programs in Ramle.

“I never wanted to address the conflict because I had a lot of fear but here I felt that I could discuss the topic without fear. I am really happy that I came here and heard first-hand what people had to say.”





OPEN HOUSE

The Rossing Center is delighted to embark on a new initiative, having been invited to take over the management and operations of Ramle's *Open House*, with its powerful history of Arab-Jewish relations. Our overall objective is to transform the house into a Ramle-based hub of grassroots interfaith and intercultural activity – created, implemented and sustained by Ramle residents and leading to an empowered and sustainable interfaith, intercultural and inter-generational local leadership. We are working in coordination with the Ramle *Open House* association and owner of the house, Ms. Dalia Landau.

Participants told us:

“I was in a ‘bubble’ – that everything was alright in Ramle – but now, here, I’ve learned that not all women feel equal.”

In 2020, we completed minor renovations to the house in order to enable project activities to take place in a safe and comfortable environment. In parallel, Program Director Vivian Rabia, newly recruited Program Coordinator Nily Nevo, and Rossing Center Executive Director, Dr. Sarah Bernstein, identified key actors in Ramle and

reached out to the Mayor of Ramle, several city councillors, and to municipality-supported institutions (such as the Center for Community Mediation and Conflict Resolution, the Center for Youth and the Development of Human Capital) with significant results. Two taskforces have already been recruited with funded scholarships for participants at various stages of their academic studies.

“This is the first time I’ve sat and talked about these subjects with Jewish and Arab women together.”

The first taskforce is responsible for the Ramle Women's Stories project and the second for the organizing of intercultural events at the *Open House*.

In all its activities, the *Open House* focuses on combining dialogue with collective action. Since most, if not all, of our participants will be from the city itself, identifying and working on shared needs will be a unique angle in moving from interreligious dialogue into collective action. We look forward to learning from this new process at the *Open House*.

2

Student Taskforces

18

Participants



ADASHA – The Jerusalem Center for Interreligious Encounter

3
Groups

85
Participants

166
Activity Hours

ADASHA (meaning 'lens' in Hebrew and Arabic) provides visiting groups with a sensitive, multi-faceted yet balanced educational Israeli/Palestinian experience. In their 'Geo-Political Historical-Archaeological Tour', each group visits sites of religious and political significance, and meets and studies with Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious actors and peacebuilders, as well as with social justice and political activists across the spectrum and academics in relevant fields.

Two groups from the USA and one from Sweden participated in study tours and lectures organized by ADASHA before the coronavirus closed the borders. The first group from Mitchell-Hamline Law School in Minnesota consisted of 32 people (law students and graduates) who stayed for four days, visiting religious sites and meeting local peacebuilders. The second group, from the Chicago Theological Seminary, consisted of 31 graduate students of theology and 4 faculty members. Their 14 day visit in January included an extensive introduction to

the religious sites, the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israeli/Palestinian politics, and meetings with different activists. Our third group, from the Diocese of Karlstad, was comprised of 22 participants. They had originally planned to travel and stay in the Holy Land for 10 days, but the abrupt lockdown in March curtailed their visit. We look forward to renewing ADASHA's study tours as soon as conditions allow.



Rossing Center Webinars in 2020

The Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue is happy to invite you to participate in our Webinar **Between Hanukkah and Christmas** with:

His Beatitude Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa,
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
in conversation with
Rabbi Adv. Gilad Kariv,
Executive Director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ)

Religious Leadership in the Holy Land

Tuesday December 22nd at 17:00 Jerusalem Time

For Free Registration: [Registration and Zoom link](#)

for more details: hanab@icjr.org




Women and Corona Virus

zoom



Interfaith Work on Campus September 2020

ROSSING CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE

We cordially invite you to celebrate the legacy of **Daniel Rossing**, the founder and the first director of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations, now the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue.

Daniel established ICJCR in 2004 as an organization to promote peace and understanding between different segments of society in the Holy Land.

In November, we will mark 10 years since Daniel's untimely death, in a webinar held on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 17:00-18:15. We will cherish his memory and work, and present the new project of the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue: the Open House in Exile.

Program:

- In his memory - Hana Benkowitz, partner and friend.
- Kanah: A meeting place of cultures, nationalities and religions - Uri Feinberg
- The story of the Open House in Ramat - Dalia Lander
- The Rossing Center at the Open House - Petrus Pines - Victor Rabin
- Opportunity for all students to share their thoughts and memories of Daniel.
- Zoom registration and link.





ROSSING CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE

رمزکز רוסינג للتربية والحوار

Ramadan and the Coronavirus in the Holy Land

Thursday 30th of April
16:30 (GMT+3)




Coronavirus in the Holy Land April 2020

zoom

Our Staff



Dr. Sarah Bernstein
Executive Director



Ophir Yarden
ADAShA Director



Hannan Haddad
Dialogue and Identity;
Municipal Education
Departments
Coordinator

New Staff in 2020



Keren Hendin
Strategic Development
Coordinator



Hana Bendcowsky
JCJCR Director



Vivian Rabia
Open House and
Healing Hatred
Director



Laura Wolovelsky
Educating for Change
Administrative
Coordinator



John Munayer
Communications
Coordinator



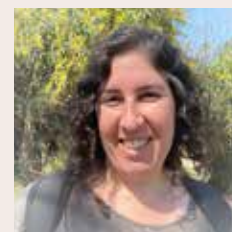
Hussam Elias
Dialogue and Identity
Director



Gal Eblagon
Meeting Place Director



Dr. Pamela Lubell
Resource
Development Director



Nily Nevo
Open House and
Municipal Education
Departments
Coordinator



Cami Mizrahi
Educating for Change
Director



Tamer Khalfo
Educating for Change;
Dialogue and Identity
Coordinator



Salpy Arakelian
Office Manager and
Treasurer

OUR DONORS

With heartfelt thanks to all the institutions, foundations and individuals who have so generously supported our work in 2020:

GENERAL SUPPORT

Act Church of Sweden
Uppsala, Sweden
www.svenskakyrkan.se

Bischöfliches Hilfswerk MISEREOR e.V.
Aachen, German
www.misereor.de

Joseph and Mildred C. Stern Philanthropic Fund

PROJECT SUPPORT

ACN International Kirche in Not
Königstein, Germany
www.kirche-in-not.org

Anonymous Family Foundation

Deutsche Verein vom Heiligen Lande
Köln, Germany
www.heilig-land-verein.de

Diocese of Hessen-Nassau
Bickenbach, Germany
www.imdialog.org

Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland
Düsseldorf, Germany
www.ekir.de

Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland e.V. (EMW)
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www.emw-d.de

FELM

Helsinki, Finland
<https://felm.org>

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www.gimprich.org

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Utrecht, Netherlands
www.kerkinactie.org

Kindermissionswerk "Die Sternsinger"
Aachen, Germany
www.sternsinger.org

Missio Aachen
Aachen, Germany
www.missio-aachen.de

Rabbi Amy R. Perlin, D.D.

U.S. State Department
www.il.usembassy.gov

We look forward to your continuing partnership and support for our mission to promote 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.

Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue

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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.

