**Malka Haas**

**Kindergarten teacher and teachers’ trainer, educator, proponent and developer of the “Kindergarten as a Microcosm of Life” educational approach**

1920-2021

“Our role is to help the child develop the traits which will enable him to search for meaning… What are these traits? For example – the courage to experience, and the courage to free oneself of patterns.”

Malka Haas was born in 1920 in Berlin. In 1935, at age 15, she came to Israel, and joined a group of young people who established Kibbutz Sdeh Eliahu in 1939, in the Beit Shean valley.

Malka was the first kindergarten teacher in the kibbutz. She conceived and created the first kindergarten in the kibbutz and worked as a kindergarten teacher until the end of the 1950s. Afterwards she established the “Arts Pavillion” in the kibbutz, enabling children in primary school to experience, create and express themselves through art materials in an easy, unstructured, and supportive environment.

From the early 1960s until the 1990s Malka taught her educational approach in a program for training kindergarten teachers at Oranim. Initially her teaching focused on giving children art supplies, viewing activities with these materials as a model for learning and for the child’s activities in early childhood, through the process of developing their drawing skills in early childhood.

Later on, Malka developed the approach of “Kindergarten as a Microcosm of Life,” which relates to the garden as a framework which touches upon the children’s various life spheres in a holistic manner. According to this approach, the art of pedagogy is the ability to create a significant integration between the various factors which shape the children’s lives. The kindergarten content and program are in constant conversation with the (kibbutz) environment and its culture, and are adapted to the lifestyle of the community in which the kindergarten is situated.

To better connect the children to their community and its culture, Malka emphasized the educational value of bringing the children closer to the reality of the adults’ world. This, by instituting a daily promenade through the community as well as playime in the junkyard, whose content was supplied by the community.

Malka Haas’ writings have been used, for years, as reference and consulting materials for kindergarten and preschool teachers; kindergartens and nurseries throughout the country follow the principles she set up.

Malka Haas passed away in 2021 and is buried in her Kibbutz, Sdeh Eliyahu.

**Miriam Roth**

**Kindergarten teacher and teachers’ trainer, educator, and children’s author**

1910-2005

“The kindergarten teacher must be knowledgeable about both the close environment and the needs of the child, in order to base her work plan on these two elements: the environment and the child.”

Miriam Roth was born in 1910 in Hungary. She came to Israel in 1931, with a bachelor’s degree in education and psychology from Brno university in Moravia, and was one of the founders of Kibbutz Sha’ar HaGolan, established in the Jordan valley in 1937.

Miriam was chosen to be the first kindergarten teacher in the kibbutz. She devised a personal training program for herself, which included tutelage under Yehoshua Margolin, who established the Kibbutzim Seminar in Tel-Aviv in 1939.

Miriam developed her educational approach while working as a kindergarten teacher. This approach views the young child through a humanistic perception that believes in the child and in his potential strengths; that esteems and respects him; one which adapts the child’s environment to his developmental abilities, while understanding his needs and desires.

In 1951, when the “Oranim” seminar was founded, Miriam was asked to teach and to establish the kindergarten teachers’ training track. Miriam headed this track for years and served also as a pedagogical trainer.

Her book “The Kindergarten Doctrine – Chapters on Educating Pre-School Children” was published in 1955 and was the first book in Hebrew to formulate the Israeli kindergarten doctrine – an original doctrine with an air of the communal kibbutz education.

In the 1970s, when already in her 60s, Miriam started to write her first children’s books: A Tale of Five Balloons (1974), Boots (1975), Yael’s House (1977), and Hot Corn (1978) – books which entered every kindergarten and home in Israel, whose key lines and refrains are quoted by all until today.

Miriam Roth was a very prolific children’s author, publishing 26 children’s books.

She passed away in 2005 at age 95, and is buried in her kibbutz, Sha’ar HaGolan.

Miriam donated her rich and unique collection of children’s books, which includes children’s books from the whole world, to Oranim College. The collection is found in Oranim College’s Center for Children’s Literature, which is named for her.

**Gideon Levin**

**Founder of the “Children’s Activity Center” in Oranim, proponent and developer of the educational theory “A different kindergarten doctrine”**

**1921-2004**

“I want an active person.

An active person is a person who cares,

who keeps improving his abilities.”

Gideon Levin was an Israel educator and theoretician of preschool education, and one of the prominent scholars of progressive education in Israel. Gideon was born in 1937 in the city of Breslau, Germany, and came to Israel with his friends in the Zionist Youth Movement. In 1945 he established the Lehavot HaBashan kibbutz in the Upper Galilee.

From 1953 Gideon taught psychology at the Kibbutzim Seminar in Tel Aviv, and later also at Oranim, a position he filled for 35 years.

In 1975 Gideon Levin established the “Center for Learning Children’s Activities” in Oranim College, and researched the essence of child activity and its consequences for working in kindergartens. Levin directed the “Center” and actively conducted research there until 1988.

His studies led him to consolidate an educational theory which he called the “Different Kindergarten Doctrine,” and coined new terms in the world of child activity such as “Activity flow,” “Equal value activity,” and the “Active kindergarten.” He called the kindergarten teacher’s actions “participatory involvement.” These terms serve many preschool educators until today, both in academia and in the field.

Levin’s approach is founded on the philosophical claim that the child’s activities express his personality, which is based on initiative and curiosity. The child’s activities, according to his perception, are comprised of four elements: Play, work, learning, and creativity, each of which has equal developmental and educational value. This understanding put the child’s activity as the central axis of the kindergarten, where free choice between the offered activities dictates the schedule and work plan within the kindergarten.

Levin published many books and articles and trained dozens of kindergarten teachers and preschool educators. He viewed doubt as an important element of the educator’s role and believed that educators should consider different solutions, which may then change.

Gideon Levin passed away in 2004 and is buried in his kibbutz, Lehavot Ha-Bashan.