**Quarterly Report for Hand in Hand Board of Directors**

**And AFHIH Board December 2021**

(The report covers the period of August–November 2021)

Main Developments

* Following approval by the mayor of Kfar Qassem, Adel Badir, to host a bilingual first grade class at the al-Manar school in the city for the Kfar Qassem–Rosh HaAyin community, we opened a kindergarten and first grade with nineteen students.
* At the request of the Tel Aviv–Yafo municipality, we expanded our teaching at the multicultural preschools in Jaffa (integrated preschools that are not Hand in Hand preschools) from eight to fourteen preschools, for which the teachers receive training from us, and the children receive language enrichment from our teachers. The program is funded through matching funds from the municipality and the organization.
* The training program at the integrated preschool in Nof HaGalil in partnership with the municipality and the Education Ministry continues.
* In October, we finally entered our new high school building in Jerusalem. Not everything is yet complete; we are aiming to have all the work completed by the end of December. Due to the COVID restrictions, the ceremony dedicating the building was delayed, and the current date is May 16. We will provide an update with precise details.
* We launched our student community in the French Hill near the Hebrew University, with twelve students, four of whom are graduates of our educational frameworks.
* Hand in Hand was selected as one of the ten finalists for the Global Pluralism Award out of five hundred candidates from seventy countries.
* We met our objective of raising $100,000 from Israeli donors, paired with a matching donation from Warren Eisenberg.
* We approved the organization’s 2020 financial reports.

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| **Number of Students** | **Institution Name** |
| **664** | **Jerusalem** |
| 128 | Preschools |
| 312 | Elementary school |
| 118 | Middle school |
| 106 | High school |
| **305** | **Galilee (elementary school only)** |
| **199** | **Bridge over the Wadi** |
| 45 | Preschools |
| 154 | Elementary schools |
| **271** | **Haifa** |
| 105 | Preschools |
| 166 | Elementary school |
| **481** | **Jaffa** |
| 175 | Preschools |
| 306 | Elementary school |
| **123** | **Beit Berl** |
| 40 | Preschools |
| 83 | Elementary school |
| **19** | **Kfar Qasssem** |
| 12 | Preschools |
| 7 | Elementary school |
| **2062** | **Total for all Hand in Hand frameworks** |

1. Schools and Municipalities

* **Schools during the “COVID routine”:** COVID remains with us and continues to influence schools’ agendas. During September, we returned to the classroom, but many of our students and teachers were in and out of quarantine. With time, as the infection numbers stabilized and it became possible to build a study routine, we continued to face emotional and behavioral challenges resulting from COVID, with many students experiencing difficulty readapting to the school routine after the prolonged closures. In response, the schools have invested time and energy in rebuilding socialization processes and in emotional and academic support for students.
* **Haifa:** Congratulations to Geezel Absawy, who has taken up the position of director of the bilingual track in Haifa. Beyond the general challenges in the educational system, Geezel will have to face the particular challenges of creating managerial stability and preparing the organizational and pedagogical infrastructure for the transition from a bilingual track operating within a regular school to an independent bilingual school, a transition expected to occur over the upcoming years.
* **Beit Berl:** Mohammad Kundos took up the position of principal of our school. Our school at Beit Berl is the only school defined as recognized but unofficial, and in the upcoming year, Mohammad will lead its transition to a public school with full Ministry of Education recognition. The school’s first cohort of pupils reached fourth grade, and after the last two years, during which much energy was invested in dealing with COVID, this year, Mohammad and the school’s staff will take the lead in defining the school’s unique vision and its pedagogical character, which is now being established. The year started very well and Mohammad is leading educational and communal processes that are important for the school’s growth.
* **Jaffa:** This year, Hadir Gouti replaced Sigalit Givon Fadida as director of the Jaffa preschools. Having served for many years as administrator and deputy director of the Jaffa preschools, Hadir is very familiar with the work there, but she too faces many challenges, notwithstanding the continued success of the preschools. The community of parents and students in Jaffa faces challenges related to the socioeconomic situation of the Jaffa population and to the need to repair the damage and pain brought on by the violent events of this past May.
* **Kfar Qassem:** Sagi Galili just entered the position of principal of our new track in Kfar Qassem last month. Sagi, an educator, was one of the parents who founded Bridge over the Wadi and has served in many volunteer roles in the school. Several days before the start of the year, we received the final approval to open a new first grade and kindergarten in a regular school in Kfar Qassem, and within a week, we undertook a complete renovation to prepare the two classrooms. The necessary equipment for the classrooms arrived the night before classes started. The challenge is formidable—to build the framework and train the staff while classes have already started, and, at the same time, deal with the challenges of a new framework operating in an existing school. Sagi’s taking on this position will help immensely in developing a professional process that can facilitate the project’s success and the continued construction of the framework in the upcoming years.
* **Encouraging the growth of new schools:** Two schools we opened six and seven years ago, in Haifa and Jaffa, respectively, marked their first cohort’s completion of sixth grade (in Jaffa this past June and in Haifa in the upcoming June). Beyond the great excitement surrounding the maturation and strengthening of these two schools, because they are located in the heart of two of Israel’s major mixed cities our intent is to expand them into bilingual high schools. This will enable their graduates to continue to study together rather than splitting off into different schools. The processes of founding high schools have been ongoing for several years, but with the systems’ return to functioning after a year and a half of being frozen in many fields, we have begun to work earnestly with the Haifa and Tel Aviv–Yafo municipalities with the aim of opening high schools already next year. These efforts are being led by Chen Aharon of the Pedagogy Department together with the schools’ principals and the parent leadership groups from the two communities.

1. Media Activity

* As was described in the previous quarterly report, the security escalation in Gaza, and primarily the violence between Arabs and Jews within Israel, led to a major rise in the scope of media interest in the Hand in Hand organization and the educational institutions we operate. Most of the segments and coverage sparked by this increased interest were broadcast during or soon after the period of fighting. But some of the articles were published later. The most prominent of these was a [series of pieces](https://www.mako.co.il/news-israel/2021_q4/Article-5af42b350ad9c71026.htm), impressive in scale, by journalist Ohad Chemo of News 12, covering Arab society in Israel. Chemo followed several and very different Arab families, including [the Nahas family from the Haifa community](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4692589957472031)—Ayman, Sahar, and their children. Chemo documented Ayman’s work as an Arabic stand-up comedian, the couple’s concerns about how to present the war and the violence in the streets to their children, and the satisfaction provided by living in a mixed community alongside the complexity of life in Haifa. This was excellent coverage of the essence of Hand in Hand’s work, because the series’s staff also filmed [in the school](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4695628750501485) in Haifa and offered a [very](https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.10312125?fbclid=IwAR08xSRhExQLY2b8pbBFpOx_IexZrhPCyeFXBVA4NT05rRXnI_csmkDFRTA) positive impression of our institutions’ educational approach and educational routine.
* In September we launched the start of the third season of the bilingual internet series *Mishmish*, created by graduates of the Hand in Hand schools and covering both sraeli and Palestinian culture. The launch event was held at the Distillery Club in Jerusalem, where we held a bilingual party that included performances by three artists who previously were interviewed on *Mishmish* and the screening of a [new episode](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4598958590168502) (which covered the Barbur Art Gallery, a Jerusalem cultural center). The event received wide coverage on the online television channel DemocratTV, which invited two of *Mishmish’s* editorial staff, Osayed Jamal and Noa Posen to its studios to talk about the series and the idea behind it. Because the interviewer was Lucy Aharish, [the conversation was conducted bilingually](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/videos/364491618733183/) and provided a great example of the bilingual future Hand in Hand and its graduates seek to create in Israel. At the same time, another *Mishmish* editorial staff member, Basil Issa, [was interviewed on Makan radio](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/videos/220043673516587/) by the journalist Gazi Abu Bakr, where Basil talked about the essence and importance of the project. The event itself at the club was very successful, drawing approximately one hundred attendees, some Hand in Hand graduates, and others from the Jerusalem general public. DemocratTV, which fell in love with *Mishmish*, decided to send reporter Yisrael Frey to the launch party to cover the event in his unique style. [His segment](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4669214853142875) was broadcast several weeks later.
* In the previous report, we provided an update that a new comic drama series called *Madrassa*, written by Israel’s well-known writer Sayed Kashua, dealing with a bilingual school in Jerusalem, was supposed to start filming around November–December. The series’ producers have since updated us that filming has been postponed, apparently to the first third of 2022.
* In late November, a Hand in Hand graduate, Hadassah College student Bashar Masalha, was attacked with shocking violence. The attack was covered at length in Arab media, and in [some](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4813489402048752) [parts](https://www.mako.co.il/news-law/2021_q4/Article-b7e6ebab3825d71026.htm?utm_source=AndroidNews12&utm_medium=Share) of Hebrew media. As a result of the attack, our Communities Division, along with the Graduates’ Forum, organized a protest demonstration against violence directed at Palestinians on Jerusalem’s streets and against the police’s inadequate response in addressing the problem **(add link on Sunday after a post from the event goes online).**
* Throughout this entire period, we continued filming high-quality videos that document the essence of Hand in Hand’s work and distributing them on social media. Examples of these videos can be seen [here](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/videos/563872408364738), [here](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/videos/4173280952741043), and [here](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/videos/985394058990579), and the three were viewed by a total of 61,000 people.

1. Central Office and Administration

* We completed hiring the educational and administrative staff for the upcoming school year, including the Jerusalem high school and the Kfar Qassem preschool and first grade. It is important to note that because of COVID, the hiring process extended into the school year itself.
* Sagi Galil joined us as director of the primary school track in Kfar Qassem and was successfully integrated into her new position. Sagi is a mother to three girls who are graduates of Bridge over the Wadi and has extensive experience in managing early childhood education systems.
* We recruited a donor relations director and an English-language social media director, both of whom have extensive experience in their fields, who will join the resource development staff.
* We started the process of recruiting a community organizer for the Jerusalem community.
* Shada Mansour, Deputy Director of the Communities Division, joined the organization’s administrative staff and in the future, when Mohamad Marzouk takes on the position of Director of Development, Initiatives, and Projects, Shada will replace him as director of the Communities Division.
* Raya Khoury was promoted to the position of National Collections Officer and will join the financial staff. Raya worked as a budget officer and deputy director of the Haifa preschools and will also continue to serve as budget officer for our educational institutions in Haifa.
* Sigalit Givon was appointed to director of the Jaffa multicultural preschools project and joined the staff of moderators of the multicultural dialogue. Until recently, she was director of the Jaffa preschools.
* Iris Giller-Klein was appointed Deputy Director of the Pedagogy Department and will continue to serve as pedagogical counselor of the Bridge over the Wadi teaching staff. She previously served as principal of the Haifa school.

**Human Resources Costs Budget**

* We completed planning the budget planning for the human resources and teaching hours costs for the upcoming year in accordance with the unique needs of all the schools and preschools. We are also continuing to refine our work in raising government funding that is supposed to be available to us from the Education Ministry and local authorities.
* We continue to develop our monitoring reports on human resources costs and are working to integrate a computerized attendance system to make the attendance reporting process more efficient.
* We conducted a salary survey for administrators at various organizations and the salaries we pay appear to be within a range close to the average accepted salary at organizations.
* We completed implementing the components of the new collective agreement in our salary systems and held workers’ meetings to explain the pay slips, including the updated employment conditions.

**Training and Activities for Employees**

* We marked the Jewish new year with the traditional toast, although because of COVID, we had to gather on Zoom. We also distributed gift cards to workers at the acceptable value at workplaces.
* We held a training and orientation day in Kfar Qara for the leadership and administrative staff of the various schools and preschools, along with the financial and human resources staff. The feedback was very positive.
* We held a team building and training day in Akko for all our central office staff, including a fascinating tour of the social and political situation in Akko led by Juhina Safi, a member of the organization’s dialogue staff and an Akko resident.
* We are examining the possibility of recognizing the intake days for new teachers at the organization’s programs as in-service-training days. We are also examining the possibility of training teachers / coordinators serving as moderators in the schools on the topic of shared society and dialogic capability, training which will provide them an academic certificate.

1. A Look Ahead—Main Issues on the Agenda

* The start of the school enrollment process. This year we built an organized process with a special emphasis on Jerusalem and the Bridge over the Wadi.
* The initiation of the process of writing a strategic plan for the upcoming five years.
* Work with MK Gilad Kariv and subsequently with additional MKs on formally arranging for bilingual education in the educational system.
* Completing the process of receiving the status of “recognized and official” at Beit Berl.
* Continued work with the Haifa municipality to receive institutional certification, an independent building, and expansion into a middle school.