**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

* As a result of approval by the mayor of Kafr Qasim, Adel Badir, for hosting a bilingual first grade at the al-Manar school in the city for the Kafr Qasim – 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 guidance 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 still aiming for all the work to be 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 update with precise details.
* We launched the 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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| **Institution Name** | **Number of Students** |
| **Jerusalem** | **664** |
| Preschools | 128 |
| Elementary school | 312 |
| Middle school | 118 |
| High school | 106 |
| **Galilee (elementary school only)** | **305** |
| **Bridge over the Wadi** | **199** |
| Preschools | 45 |
| Elementary schools | 154 |
| **Haifa** | **271** |
| Preschools | 105 |
| Elementary school | 166 |
| **Jaffa** | **481** |
| Preschools | 175 |
| Elementary school | 306 |
| **Beit Berl** | **123** |
| Preschools | 40 |
| Elementary school | 83 |
| **Kafr Qasim** | **19** |
| Preschools | 12 |
| Elementary school | 7 |
| **Total for all Hand in Hand frameworks** | **2062** |

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. Later on, when the infection numbers stabilized and it became possible to build a study routine, we continued to face the sensitive and behavioral challenges resulting from COVID, while many students faced difficulty readapting to the school routine after the extended lockdowns. As a result, the schools invested time and energy in rebuilding socialization processes and in emotional and academic support for students.
* **Haifa:** Geezel Absawy entered the position of director of the bilingual track in Haifa. Beyond the general challenges in the educational system, Geezel will have to deal with the challenge of creating managerial stability and preparing the organizational and pedagogical infrastructure for the transition from a bilingual track running within a regular school to an independent bilingual school, a transition expected to occur in upcoming years.
* **Beit Berl:** Mohammad Kundos entered the position of principal. Our school at Beit Berl is the only school defined as recognized but unofficial, and in the upcoming year Mohammad will lead its transition into a public school with full Education Ministry recognition. The school’s first cohort reached fourth grade, and after two years during which much energy was invested in dealing with COVID, Mohammad and the school’s staff will this year lead in the definition of the school’s unique vision and its pedagogical character, which is becoming 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 in the position of director of the Jaffa preschools. Hadir served for many years as administrator and deputy director of the Jaffa preschools, so she is very familiar with the work there, but she too faces many challenges. Beyond the continued success of the preschools, the parents and students community in Jaffa faces challenges related to the socioeconomic situation of the Jaffa population and to repairing the damage and pain wrought by the violent events of this past May.
* **Kafr Qasim:** Shagi Galili just entered the position of principal of our new track in Kafr Qasim last month. Shagi, 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 Kafr Qasim, and within a week we prepared by performing a complete renovation to prepare the two classrooms. The necessary equipment for the classrooms arrived the night before classes started. The challenge is huge—to build the framework and train the staff while classes have already started, and in parallel to deal with the challenges of a new framework active within an existing school. Shagi’s entrance to the position will help greatly in the construction of a professional process that enables the project’s success an the continued construction of the framework in upcoming years.
* **Encouraging the growth of new schools:** Two schools we opened six and seven years ago, in Haifa and Jaffa, respectively, are marking 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, both of which are located in the heart of the largest mixed cities in Israel and thus our intent is to grow them into bilingual high schools, which will enable their graduates to continue to study together rather than splitting 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 vis-à-vis the Haifa and Tel Aviv–Yafo municipalities with the aim of opening high schools already next year. These efforts are being led by Hen Aharon of the pedagogy department together with the schools’ principals and the parents’ leadership of 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 salient of them was a [series of pieces](https://www.mako.co.il/news-israel/2021_q4/Article-5af42b350ad9c71026.htm), impressive in scale, by journalist Ohad Hemo of News 12, which covered Arab society in Israel. Hemo followed several Arab families of various profiles, including [the Nahas family from the Haifa community](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4692589957472031)—Ayman, Sahar, and their children. Hemo 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 joint 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 complimentary](https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.10312125?fbclid=IwAR08xSRhExQLY2b8pbBFpOx_IexZrhPCyeFXBVA4NT05rRXnI_csmkDFRTA) 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, which is created by graduates of the Hand in Hand schools and covers Israeli and Palestinian culture together. The launch event was held at the Mazkeka club in Jerusalem, where we held a bilingual party that included performances by three artists who previously were interviewed in Mishmish and the screening of a [new episode](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/posts/4598958590168502) (which covered the Barbur Gallery, a Jerusalem cultural center). The event was covered broadly on the online television channel DemocratTV, which invited to its studios two of Mishmish’s editorial staff, Osayed Jamal and Noa Posen, 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 establish in Israel. In parallel, an additional Mishmish editorial staff member, Basel Issa, [was interviewed on Makan radio](https://www.facebook.com/HandinHandil/videos/220043673516587/) by the journalist Gazi Abu Bakr, where he talked about the essence and importance of the project. The event itself was very successful, drawing approximately one hundred attendees, some of whom Hand in Hand graduates, and some of whom 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 updated that around November–December the filming of a new comic drama series called Madrasa written by Sayed Kashua, which will deal with a bilingual school in Jerusalem, is supposed to start filming. The series’ producers have updated us since that filming has been delayed, apparently to the first third of 2022.
* In late November a Hand in Hand graduate, Hadassah College student Bashar Masalaha, was attacked with shocking violence. The attack was covered at length in Arabic 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 wing, along with the graduates forum, organized a protest demonstration against violence directed at Palestinians on Jerusalem’s streets and against the police’s insufficient action addressing the topic **(add link on Sunday after a post from the event goes online).**
* Throughout this entire period, we continued filming well-done videos that document the essence of Hand in Hand’s work and spreading 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), whereas 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 Kafr Qasim preschool and first grade. It is important to note that because of COVID the hiring process dragged into the school year itself.
* Shagi Galil joined us as director of the primary school track in Kafr Qasim and was successfully absorbed into her work. Shagi is a mother to three girls who are graduates of Bridge over the Wadi and has much experience in managing early childhood education systems.
* We hired a donor relations director and an English-language social media director, both of whom have much experience in their fields, who will join the resource development staff.
* We started searching for a community organizer for the Jerusalem community.
* Shada Mansour, deputy director of the communities wing, joined the organization’s administrative staff and in the future, when Mohamad Marzouk will be appointed director of development, initiatives, and projects, will replace him as director of the communities wing.
* Raya Khoury was promoted to 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. She was director of the Jaffa preschools until recently.
* Iris Giller-Klein was appointed deputy director of the pedagogy wing 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 human resources and teaching hours costs budget for the upcoming year in accordance with the unique needs of all the schools and preschools. We are also continuing to increase the precision of 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 the topic of 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 it appears that the salaries we pay are within a range close to the average accepted salary at organizations.
* We finished inculcating 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 event, yet because of COVID we were forced to gather on Zoom. We also distributed gift cards to workers of the accepted value at workplaces.
* We held a familiarization meeting and training day in Kafr 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 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 recognition of 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 dialogical capability, training which will provide them an academic certificate.

1. A Look Ahead—Main Issues Expected

* 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 later on with additional MKs on formally arranging the place of 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 growth into a middle school.