

SIJS REACHING OUT to the COMMUNITY TALI EDUCATION

Rabbi Eitan Chikli, Executive Director

The **TALI Education Fund (TEF)** supports a network of TALI schools throughout Israel, where Israeli schoolchildren and their families are reclaiming their right to be knowledgeable Jews, through a comprehensive Jewish studies program. As of September 2000, the network comprises more than 100 schools and kindergartens, reaching more than 20,000 children and their parents with a pluralistic approach to Judaism based on tolerance, democratic values, and Jewish tradition.

Highlights of the Year

In 1999/2000, the TALI Education Fund showed significant growth in the development of educational materials and pedagogical support for TALI teaching staff, and in the scope of activities of the TALI National Principals' Center.

Growth in Numbers - Pre-school classes to Double

The establishment of a pre-school department in 1998 created a strong base for future TALI school growth, with 19 kindergartens joining TALI at that time. Forecasts for the 2000/2001 year call for unprecedented growth in early childhood education, with the numbers of classes to double, reaching 42. The challenge is to find the funding to assure the quality of TALI pedagogic support. There will also be an additional seven elementary schools joining the TALI network.

TALI Expansion

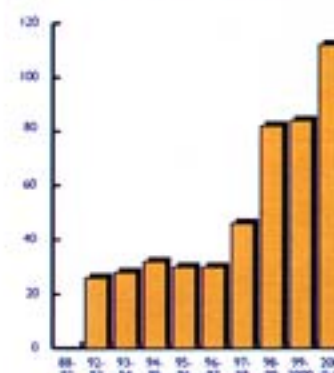
- **Haifa:** Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzneh personally approached TEF with a request that it become involved in increasing the level of Jewish studies in the Haifa elementary school system. The project, in cooperation with Haifa University and the Municipality of Haifa, is three-pronged: 1) enlarging activities of the existing five TALI schools in Haifa; 2) providing information on TALI education to other Parents' Committees in Haifa; and 3) working with principals to attract them to the TALI program. As a first result, three additional Haifa schools will enter the TALI network in 2000/2001.
- **Tel Aviv:** A project to develop learning programs for Tel Aviv's Junior High schools was initiated with a directive to establish more TALI schools in addition to the three already operating. As a result, two additional schools joined the TALI system, including the prestigious A.D. Gordon School which includes a junior high school.
- **Modi'in:** Four kindergartens and the first two classes of an elementary school are opening in 2000/2001 in this new town between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The pupils are drawn from over 200 families coming from both observant and secular populations. Modi'in already operates a "School for Democracy" which includes a TALI track.
- **Yokne'am:** 27 teachers, the town's entire non-religious kindergarten teaching staff, completed a seven-month TALI course on "Torah Stories for Young Children." Following the success of this initial learning encounter, three TALI pre-schools are opening in 2000/2001.

Educational Materials and Pedagogic Support

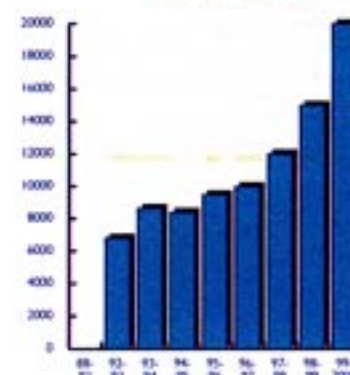
New concept of regional learning. Six TALI In-Service Regional Training Centers were established in 1999, offering weekly two-hour courses to 250 TALI teachers. These courses, accredited by the Ministry of Education, enrich the teachers' knowledge of Judaism, assist teachers in dealing with questions of personal Jewish identity, and introduce new teaching programs and methods.

Learning Kits. Twelve Learning Kits (two per grades 1-6) are being produced to enhance the TALI basic curriculum. They include: "Getting Ready to Pray," first grade; "The Family in the Book of Genesis," second grade; "Rosh Chodesh," third grade; "On Listening,"

Total TALI Frameworks



Total TALI Students



TALI student

fourth grade; "Texts and Worship in the Jewish Life Cycle," fifth grade; and "He and She," sixth grade. Eight kits were completed this year.

Training TALI Coordinators. A top priority at TEF is to provide TALI schools with the tools to shape their own unique TALI doctrine, eventually being able to run their TALI programs independently. To that end, each school appointed a TALI coordinator (chosen from school staff) to participate in a two-year course. As a result of the program, a number of TALI coordinators have already begun to play key roles in their schools.

Learning Communities. Initial work in establishing "Learning Communities," where parents and teachers will study together, began this year. The program calls for five study sessions a year, as well as communal Shabbatot. More than 16 "Learning Communities" are slated to open in 2000/2001.

Parent-Child Workshops. One hundred and twenty-two Parent-Child Workshops were held, presenting a variety of Jewish topics in an informal educational setting.

Weekly Torah Portion Sheets. Each week, 12,000 students received these graphically pleasing and intellectually challenging worksheets.

TALI on the WEB. The TALI-Net internet site contains information on TALI schools and TEF, as well as the Weekly Torah Portion sheets. This year a virtual learning community was set up for both pupils and parents. Older students could join a group to discuss core issues highlighted in the weekly sheets. Participants could take part in chat groups.

Bar/Bat Mitzva Seminars. Forty Bar/Bat Mitzvah Seminars were held at two locations: Kibbutz Hanaton in the north, and the Bet Meir hostel in the Judean Hills. These popular seminars are also open to schools that do not belong to the TALI network.

TALI-Gezer Connection. An inter-active Jewish studies enrichment seminar for fourth and fifth graders completed a successful first year of operation. Run jointly by the TEF and Kibbutz Gezer's "Pinat Shorashim," the program emphasizes the concept of Jewish responsibility - in regard to both social action and the Israel-Diaspora relationship.

P r e - S c h o o l E d u c a t i o n

A national conference on TALI Pre-School Education was held at the beginning of summer 2000 with 40 TALI educators from around the country attending. Five pedagogic counselors provided on-site support throughout the year for 21 kindergartens. A newly created TALI syllabus for kindergartens will be distributed during the 2000/2001 school year. A new workshop for pre-schoolers, "Respect for Fellow Man and Acceptance of Others," was developed this year. The "Shabbat" workshop was re-worked for kindergarten-aged children.

T A L I N a t i o n a l P r i n c i p a l s ' C e n t e r

Conferences. The center organized four conferences this year, two for new principals.

Educational Advancement. Three TALI principals are studying for an M.A. degree at the Schechter Institute. A class of eleven TALI principals completed their first year in a post-graduate two-year program of Jewish Studies. Two additional classes - a second group of principals and a group of senior staff - will begin studies in 2000/2001.

Delegation Exchange. In February, the TEF hosted a delegation of New York Jewish educators in Jerusalem, focusing on "The TALI Education Fund and Jewish Identity." Similarly, a mission of Israeli TALI educators travelled to New York to meet with colleagues and partnered schools.



TALI students enjoying a day of fun and Jewish learning at Pinat Shorashim, run jointly by SIJS and Kibbutz Gezer.



TALI principals in Educational Leadership Program.



New York Jewish Day School educators are the guests of the TALI Education Fund in Jerusalem.