

The Best of TALl Education

TALl Education Fund

Rabbi Eitan Chikli, Executive Director

The TALl Education Fund (TEF) supports a network of TALl schools and kindergartens throughout Israel, where thousands of Israeli schoolchildren and their families are experiencing the beauty of Judaism through comprehensive Jewish studies programs.

The Year in Review... The Brightest Moments

Award-winning TALl

The TALl Frankel School in Jerusalem was this year's recipient of the State of Israel Prize for the Outstanding Elementary School in the country. Congratulations to Principal Barbara Levine and her prize-winning school.

Nava Tal, principal of the TALl Ramat Moriah school in Jerusalem's East Talpiot neighborhood and student at the SIJS-TALl Educational Leadership program, won the Ministry of Education's national award for best "school-based" management of an elementary school in Israel. Mazal Tov to Nava and her successful school community.

Development Department

The Development Department is responsible for fundraising, development of the TALl school network and disseminating information about TALl. In December 2000, Mr. Eitan Cooper, education director of the Young Judea programs in Israel from 1987-1998, and most recently, a Fellow at the Mandel School for Educational Leadership, became director of the Department, replacing Dr. Chaim Rubenstein, who moved to the Ministry of Education.

In 2000/01, TALl operated in 61 schools and 42 kindergartens. The schools function in ethnically and socially diverse settings, but all parents share a common consensus: that Jewish studies and Jewish experiences should provide the central narrative for their children's education.

In Israel today, it is widely recognized that the *Mamlachti* (secular public) schools have, on the whole, failed to provide an education that links children to Jewish tradition and peoplehood. Israel's Ministry of Education officially adopted the conclusions of the Shenhar report in 1994, calling on schools to dramatically improve the level and scope of Jewish Studies.

Nonetheless, the real work of rebuilding Jewish studies in schools has been left to grassroots organizing by school professionals and groups of parents. The number of school communities requesting to enter the TALl network of schools and kindergartens and receive TEF services is much greater than what TEF resources allow. The TALl executive staff is currently creating a strategic development plan to meet this demand that includes the creation of specific criteria for the initiation of services, and evaluation of current TALl intervention.

TALl Schools and Kindergartens in 2001/02



Children from the TALl Frankel School, chosen as Israel's outstanding elementary school for 2001.



Pupils from TALl Maale Adumim School

No. of TALI Schools to Increase 10% in 2001/02

In the 2001-2002

school year, the TALI network is expanding by 10%, initiating activity in five new elementary schools and three middle-level schools, adding TALI tracks in a number of schools, and opening ten new kindergartens, bringing the total number of TALI frameworks to 111.

Education Department

The Education Department continues its ongoing work of providing educational support to TALI schools, including pedagogic counseling, in-service teacher training, weekly Torah portion sheets, thematic parent-child workshops, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Seminars for 6th-7th grades, and "Individual and Community" Seminars at Kibbutz Gezer's Pinat Shorashim for grades 4-5.

Learning Communities

The learning communities project is the newest innovation to be implemented by TEF in the TALI school system. The initial goal of the project was to create a culture of adult learning within the school community, but in a number of schools, it has had a positive impact beyond initial expectations. The synergy created by parents and teachers studying sources together extends to many other areas of school life, and has redefined the level of parent-professional cooperation.

Learning communities, now active in twenty schools, have been attended by one thousand parents and teachers this year in over 100 meetings nationwide. The groups meet on average once a month during the school year. TEF's goal is to expand the program to 25 schools in the coming year. Each learning community has a facilitator who provides ongoing guidance and materials. A number of the facilitators are SIJS advanced students or graduates. All facilitators bring to their sessions a deep and enthusiastic knowledge of Judaism, as well as an open and creative approach to Jewish learning. As an outgrowth of the learning communities, Purim Megillah readings took place at three TALI schools, where a total of about 1000 people, in costume with "graggers," participated in the festive occasion.

Middle School Curriculum Writing Project

TALI efforts until now have been directed mainly at the elementary school level. TEF is beginning to shift attention to middle schools, where the Minister of Education has announced the creation of a "Heritage" curriculum. In 2000-2001 a pilot project was launched to counsel and facilitate a team of three teachers (in two Tel Aviv schools and one Jerusalem school) in the writing of a multi-disciplinary curriculum in Jewish Studies. The program reflects the TEF philosophy that effective curriculum/school change is an ongoing process requiring directed guidance for the teachers and principals.

Curriculum Hits

The education department produced three new curriculum kits designed for TALI teachers, with the dual purpose of deepening their Jewish knowledge and equipping them with models for designing lesson plans. The kits produced to date are: "Rosh Hodesh" - a booklet for 3rd grade teachers; "He and She" (Gender in Jewish Sources and Tradition) - a booklet and set of "trigger" materials for 6th grade teachers; "P'tach Lanu Sha'ar" (Open the Gates) - a booklet and CD on prayer for 1st grade teachers. The total project will encompass twelve kits, two for each grade.

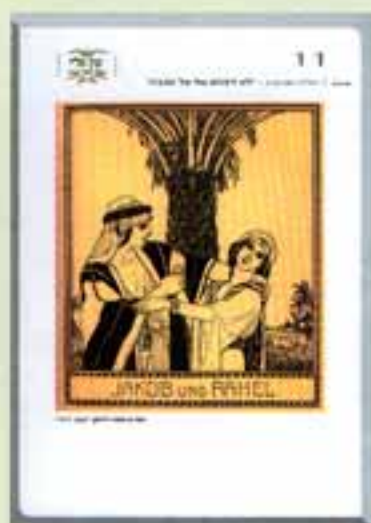
Project coordinator and TEF pedagogic counselors follow up the production of each unit with workshops in the field, to help teachers implement in the classroom. The kits also received very positive feedback by non-TALI secular schools, a number of which have ordered them and are integrating the material into their curricula.



"Learning Community" parents and teachers of Jerusalem's Pisgat Ze'ev neighborhood.



Curriculum Kit on "Rosh Hodesh"



Visual aid accompanying "He and She" Curriculum Kit.



Seminar at Pinat Shorashim, Kibbutz Gezer.

Weekly Torah Portion Diary

For years, TEF has been producing weekly portion sheets for all TALI schools. The sheets have become an integral part of the TALI curriculum. In 2000-2001 TEF produced and distributed 12,000 weekly portion sheets to students and teachers in 350 TALI classrooms. Toward the coming year, TEF is preparing a new format for the worksheets for students in grades 4-6. The new format is a daily diary that integrates the contents of the weekly portion sheets (including weeks when children are on holiday) with a day-by-day diary that highlights the cycle of holidays and events in Jewish History. Suggestions have arisen for translating both the curriculum kits and the weekly portion diary into English. The translation and distribution of these materials to teachers and students could lead to projects connecting schools in Israel to Jewish schools in the Diaspora.



TALI Weekly Torah Portion Diary

Seminars at Pinat Shorashim, Hibbutz Gezer

The Individual and Community - All Israel is Responsible for One Another, a seminar for 4th and 5th grades, continued this year. The number of seminars (24 seminars and 1500 pupils) was down somewhat as were all school-extra-curricular activities nationwide, due to the security situation.

Bar-Bat Mitzvah Seminars

Two-day experiential workshops on *Jewish Responsibility and Practice* for sixth grade TALI pupils were held at Kibbutz Hanaton and at Moshav Beit Meir hostel facilities. This year, 1150 pupils participated in 23 seminars.

Parent-Child Workshops

Seventy-seven TALI Parent-Child workshops were held, with 4800 pupils and their parents participating.

Looking Toward 2001-2002

All seminars and workshops will be combined into one TALI Experiential Jewish Education Center, with a full-time coordinator, who will oversee all staff recruitment, training, implementation and development.



Children of TALI Modi'in school bring food to soldiers guarding near their town.

TALI Principals' Center

The Principals' Center builds and develops TALI educational leadership as well as tools to evaluate effective educational leadership. It has developed the following programs:

TALI Educational Leadership Program - Impressive Growth in Numbers

Thirty-seven TALI principals and leading school staff, more than triple the number of participants (10) who learned in 2000, traveled to Jerusalem each week to learn in a two-year educational leadership program. Co-sponsored by TEF and the Schechter Institute, the program is designed to deepen the educators' understanding of TALI philosophy as well as widen their knowledge of Judaism.

NEW! Learning in Hevruta

A new program for principals seeking to study Jewish texts relevant to TALI curricula, will begin in the fall of 2001-2002. Groups of 4-5 principals will meet with a mentor once a month for a day of studies. One group will study the subject of "prayer," while the second group will learn "Jewish school curricula." A third group is being organized around the subject of "Jewish environmental education."

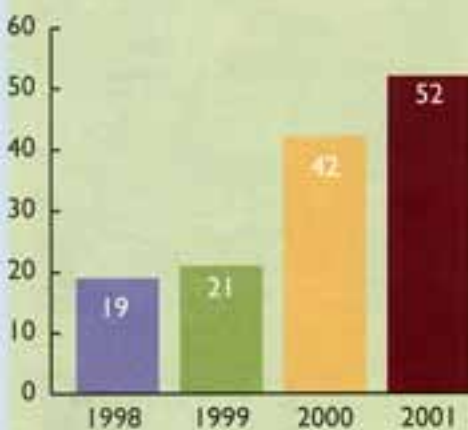


"Adopting Senior Citizen" project at TALI Alonim School in Hadera.



TALI Principals' Center Annual Conference in Jerusalem.

Numbers of TALI Hindergartens



TALI pre-schooler



Havdalah service for TALI kindergartners



National TALI Kindergarten Teachers' Seminar in Jerusalem.

Traveling Towards the Self While Visiting the Other A research paper written by TALI Principals' Center Director, Hannah Regev, Dr. Lisa Grant, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Rabbi Na'ama Kelman, the Reform Movement's Director of Educational Initiatives in Israel, sheds light on what impact a short-term visit to North American Jewish educational institutions can have on Israeli TALI school educators' personal and professional lives vis-a-vis pluralistic approaches to Judaism. It was presented in December at the Israeli Association of Research in Jewish Education Conference held at Bar Ilan University.

The Genger Prize for Outstanding TALI Principal The first annual Devorah and Shraga Genger Prize for Excellence in TALI Education will be awarded to Barbara Levine, principal of the TALI Frankel School in Jerusalem on December 11, 2001. The process for selecting the outstanding TALI principal was based on criteria for excellence that have been established by principals, pedagogic counselors, parents and teachers. This document will also serve as a guideline for translating TALI principles into practice at the schools.

TALI Early Childhood Department

Why the TALI Pre-School Program Spells Success

- The potential impact of the TALI philosophy is greater at the pre-school level, because parents are usually more involved in their child's education during the early years, which as a result, provides them with a greater exposure to TALI education than parents of older children.
- Children often come from "mixed marriages" where one parent is more religious than the other, making the TALI concept the perfect compromise.
- Reaching children at an early age with a healthy sharing of Jewish "experiences" rather than formal learning, often results in a more favorable reaction to religion, which the children then take with them throughout their school careers.

Growth - TALI Hindergartens to Reach 52 in 2001/02 The Early Childhood Department will be opening ten new pre-school classes in the fall of 2001, bringing the total of TALI kindergartens to 52.

Pedagogic Counseling The department's five pedagogic counselors provided regular on site support for staff of the 42 TALI kindergartens around the country by augmenting teacher programs in the areas of Prayer, Blessings, Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh and Torah Stories. The five counselors themselves underwent in-service training programs every six-eight weeks that strengthened their pedagogic skills as well as deepened their knowledge of Jewish Studies.

TALI Pre-School Guidelines A seven-page booklet which took the TALI Principles and translated them into practice for the pre-school level was produced and distributed to all TALI kindergarten teachers this year.

The National TALI Hindergarten Teachers' Seminar Held July 4-5 in Jerusalem, the conference was attended by 70% of the TALI pre-school teachers from around the country. A highlight of the seminar was a workshop, "Hunting for Treasures in Jewish Education," made up of four "stations," each one designed to replicate a pre-school classroom experience.