

Israel





Social and Emotional Education in Israel

Eliezer Yariv

Abstract

Israel is a nation of 8 million people located in the Middle East. Long before its establishment in 1948, the Jews who used to live there and who were exiled 2000 years ago never stopped dreaming of returning to their homeland. The emergence of the Zionist movement in Europe in the late 19th century set the agenda and the political platform to establish a Jewish and democratic state, which is the world's only Jewish-majority state. Although Israel is a young country, the Jewish people have experienced over 4000 years of troubled history in the Holy Land and elsewhere in the Diaspora. Jews have suffered persecutions, wars, threats and catastrophes, such as the Holocaust. Rulers such as Pharaoh (identified as Horemheb (1319-1292 BC), Ramesses I (c.1292-1290 BC), and probably some others) and Hitler, to name but a few, have continuously tried to exterminate the Jewish people. With such painful collective memories, it is no wonder that one scholar has recently portrayed the Israeli psyche as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (Yair, 2011). These haunting shadows are just one among a number of other sources of stress (Israelashvili, 1993):

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- A Israel is a nation of immigrants, established as a home for Jews throughout the world. Almost every family has at least one member who has experienced immigration. Uprooting one's life and settling in a geographically and culturally remote environment is certainly a challenge that leaves emotional scars;
- B Israel is surrounded by hostile countries and terrorist organizations that aim to destroy it. The state of war is a very real aspect of life for all Israeli citizens. For example, every young man and woman must serve in the army, a source of concern for every parent. I served for three years in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) intelligence service and fought in two bitter wars. My three sons also carried out various duties in the IDF. One of them was engaged in combat missions in Lebanon for two years;
- C The security problem is not confined to war-like situations. The constant terrorist threats and attacks cause Israelis to take such dangers into account in their daily routines. Of special focus are the populations who live near the borders and suffer recurring attacks;
- D The constant historical and current threats increase own-group cohesion and suspicion of others, the 'outsiders'. But who is not an 'outsider' in a nation of immigrants? The historical, political and demographic developments have divided the Israeli society along

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nationalistic (Jews vs. Arabs), religious (secular, non-observant Jews vs. orthodox and ultra-orthodox), political (pro democratic and liberal vs. right wing and nationalistic), societal (Israeli-born and veteran citizens vs. new immigrants), and territorial lines (mainstream Israelis who live in the pre 1967 war area vs. settlers who live in territories occupied in that war). Each of these divisions tends to come to the fore from time to time, threatening to tear apart the delicate fabric of Israeli society.

The first section of this chapter briefly describes the long Jewish and Israeli history, from the Biblical times of the three founding fathers, to the Romans who conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and sent the Jewish people into exile; until the rise of the Zionist movement that established the ideological foundations and the organisational infrastructure that enabled Jewish pioneers to leave their European countries and immigrate to Palestine. The chapter ends with a short discussion on the reasons for the painful relations among Jews and Arabs in Israel. The second section describes the structure and operation of the Israeli education system. Special emphasis is given to the ultra-orthodox and Arab sectors which have unique demographic and cultural characteristics. These sectors are expected to comprise half of the Israeli school population within one generation due to rapid population growth. The third section is devoted to the national campaign led by the Ministry of Education to foster students' social and emotional well-being, and to improve the social climate and sense of safety in schools. This national initiative (known as the violence prevention programme) is currently being implemented in 1200 schools and has managed to reduce school violence by 30 per cent over the last two years. This government funded programme adopts, among other aspects, the long-established 'Life Skills' curriculum. This core-curriculum programme which is taught to all children and young people from kindergarten (5-6 years old) to twelfth grade (17 years old) is also described. I then argue, according to my eco-systemic theoretical framework (Yariv, 1999, 2010) that (a) the social and emotional educational taught curriculum should be augmented by (b) system wide school organizational measures, as well as (c) effective intervention strategies aimed at dealing with misbehaviour once it occurs.

The last section of this chapter provides four detailed case studies and examples which illustrate the eco-systemic theoretical framework. These case studies are based on careful and systematic observations and interviews, which helped portray schools' staff and pupils and their programmes as accurately as possible. Due to ethical and legal stipulations the names of the schools, the staff members and the pupils have been changed. The first case study describes "The Giraffe Language", a taught programme that promotes non-violent communication skills among kindergarten and children with special needs. The children learn how to avoid saying certain provocative and judgmental phrases, and inherit conflict-free modes of discourse. The

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second programme describes 'Discipline and Dialogue' - a brief psycho-educational intervention (Yariv, 1996). This tool enables the teacher to lead a constructive discussion within a stressful setting, after the child or young person has misbehaved. The third case study describes an educational initiative run by the Abraham Fund aimed at bridging the divide between Jewish and Arab children. In the 'Mirkam' programme pairs of fifth and sixth grade pupils from neighbouring Jewish and Arab schools meet together. The last case study describes the case of a public inner-city elementary school where the principal and teachers have developed impressive social and environmental initiatives. The principal's vision is to improve the pupils' academic achievements without neglecting their individual needs. This vision of caring and determination is translated into many varied actions that lead to effective educational outcomes.

Dr. Eliezer Yariv is a senior school psychologist. He earned his BA and MA degrees in psychology at the University of Haifa. He studied for his Ph.D. degree in Education at the University of Leicester, UK (2002). Dr Yariv is a senior lecturer at Gordon College of Education, Haifa, and also serves as a staff member of the psychological service of the municipality of Keriat Motzkin. Eliezer is a referee on the Journal of Education for Teaching and served as a senior researcher at the 'Above Average Ltd' survey institute which ranked Israeli universities and colleges. In this regard he edited with Guy Yariv the 'Above Average Guide to Academic Institutions in Israel' (2005). His expertise is in classroom management and school discipline: identifying personal and organizational causes and offering remedies to parents, pupils and teachers. His three textbooks on the subject: 'Discipline and Dialogue' (1996); 'Silence in Class' (1999), and 'I've Got Eyes in the Back of my Head' (2010) are studied in educational departments at Israeli colleges and universities. Dr. Yariv has published more than 25 papers in a peer-reviewed journals, as well as dozens of articles in Israeli professional journals. Dr. Yariv currently leads workshops and academic courses for students and in-service teachers on classroom management. His professional experience includes, among other aspects, working as a youth leader in a boarding house, an emissary to the Jewish community of Rochester NY (USA) and an organizational consultant to various public institutions.

Introduction

If you ask me to summarize what social and emotional education is all about, I would skip the vast amount of psycho-educational scholarly literature and quote a phrase uttered some 2000 years ago in Jerusalem by Rabbi Hillel the Elder. Hillel, a famous Jewish religious leader was once challenged by a heathen who wished to become a Jew. He asked Hillel to summarize the essence of the Jewish religion in one short sentence, while standing on one foot. Hillel chided him for his behaviour, but in a constructive way: **“What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn”** (Shab. 31a). Hillel certainly recognized that brotherly love was a fundamental principle of Jewish moral law, but instead of the idealistic commandment ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ (Lev. xix. 18), he adopted a realistic and humble approach that teaches us several lessons: Firstly, as in the Latin phrase *Primum non nocere* Hillel asked **“First, do no harm”**. Hillel was aware that hatred and aggression reside in every human being, and once these inner drives erupt they endanger both attackers and victims. Unlike the peaceful and comforting nature of love, aggression manifests in dramatic, powerful, destructive acts that leave wounds and create suffering. It is essential, therefore, to stop war before forging strong relationships, and prevent future irreversible damage before it is too late. Secondly, Hillel knew that emotions, more than thoughts, drove human behaviour and shaped people’s relationships with one another. The first commandment, therefore, calls for self-awareness and empathetic skills that help us to understand others’ point of view and decrease the tendency to respond aggressively in conflict situations (Goleman, 1996). Thirdly, Hillel was convinced that (as told in the old fable) a good fence made good neighbours. Barriers keep individuals and nations from infringing on each other’s space or

meddling in each other’s affairs. Such boundaries provide each ‘neighbour’ with the freedom to run his or her own life autonomously. Setting boundaries (‘do not’) and stating clear norms are effective means to encourage people to respect others. Fourth, Hillel’s imperative sets us a modest and realistic educational goal. As stated in five out of the Ten Commandments, Hillel’s negatively phrased imperative (‘do not’) is probably easier to fulfill than an active commandment (such as ‘respect your parents’), but nevertheless requires strong will power. Such self control, he believed, could be learned and developed.

This story about Hillel is just one example of the rich Jewish scholarly literature on relationships and feelings. In order to understand the Jewish psyche and the nature of social and emotional education (SEE) in Israel we must first ask the client to lie on a historical-psychoanalytic couch and tell us how it all began.

Section 1: the history and society of Israel

The rise and fall and rise: A concise Jewish history

According to the Bible (although not supported by archeological findings), Jews are descended from the ancient people of Israel who settled in the land of Canaan, located between the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River (1451 BCE). The Children of Israel included the ‘three fathers’: Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Jacob’s family left for Egypt, where they were enslaved by the Pharaoh. The identity of that ruler mentioned in the book of Genesis is unknown. After 400 years of slavery, the Israelites, who were led by Moses, escaped from Egypt. Historians agree that at least two pharaohs are involved in the book of Exodus, the “pharaoh of the oppression”, probably Horemheb (1319-1292 BC), and the “pharaoh of the exodus”, probably Ramesses

I (c.1292-1290 BC). After 40 years of wandering in the Sinai desert and receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, they returned to their ancestral homeland in Canaan. This event marks the formation of Israel as a political nation in Canaan, in 1400 BCE.

After entering Canaan, the land of Israel was organized into a confederation of twelve tribes ruled by a series of Judges. In 1000 BCE, an Israelite monarchy was established under Saul, and continued under King David and his son, Solomon, who built the First Temple. Upon his death a civil war erupted between the ten northern Israelite tribes, and the tribe of Judah, which led the nation to be split into two kingdoms, that of Israel in the north, and the Kingdom of Judah in the south. Later, Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in the 8th century BCE. The kingdom of Judah suffered a similar destiny, being conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BCE. The elite of the kingdom and many of their people were exiled to Babylon. After a few generations, some adherents led by the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah, returned to their homeland and constructed the Second Temple. Later, the Hasmoneans established an independent Jewish kingdom but the Romans conquered it in 63 BCE. After the Bar-Kochva revolt (132-136 CE) the Romans decided to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem, razed all the Judean villages, killed many of Judah's inhabitants and sold the rest of the population into slavery.

After a period of 1500 years of nationhood the Jews were sent into exile. For nearly the next 2000 years they were dispersed across many continents and countries, dwelling in territories belonging to others. As tribes that were used to living in small cohesive communities, keeping persistently to their unique faith, language, clothing and rituals, the Jews aroused much interest and suspicion among

their neighbours. They became known for being a highly talented and educated group of people (for example, about one quarter of the Nobel Prize laureates are Jews); they were often more affluent than others due to their talent and expertise in commerce, and thus it is no wonder that they aroused the bi-polar sentiments of admiration and hatred. Monarchs were sensitive to changing public opinion towards the Jews: at times providing them with safe shelter and harnessing their commercial and scholarly talents for the benefit of the kingdom; at other times they adopted (and sometimes intensified) the public hatred towards the Jews and acted to oppress and victimize them.

It is impossible to depict this long period of Jewish history in only a few sentences. Instead, for our Spanish readers here are a few short historical examples to illustrate the above-mentioned trends. As citizens of the Roman Empire the Jews of Spain engaged in a variety of occupations, including agriculture and commerce. Until the adoption of Christianity by the Spanish (about the 8th century), Jews had formed close relationships with Muslim and other non-Jewish populations, and played an active role in the social and economic life of the Spanish provinces in which they resided. The first period of exceptional prosperity took place under the reign of Abd ar-Rahman, the first Caliph of Cordoba and his Jewish councillor Hasdai Ibn Shaprut from 882 to 942. During this period of time Córdoba became the "Mecca of Jewish scholars", Jewish intellectuals who received there a hospitable welcome from Jewish 'men of means'. The intellectual achievements of those scholars influenced the lives of non-Jews as well. But despite their scientific and cultural contribution, Christian communities were bothered by the Jewish "problem". For example, the Eighth Council of Toledo (which took place in the 7th century) issued orders that forbade all

Jewish rites (including the observation of the Sabbath and circumcision). Those who were found to have aided Jews were punished by

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seizure of one quarter of their property. A turning-point in the history of the Jews of Spain was reached under Ferdinand III when the clergy ordered the Jews to distinguish themselves from Christians by wearing a yellow badge on their clothing. And later, in 1492, under the rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella they were forced to convert to Catholicism or expelled from Spain. About 200,000 Jews left Spain, many of whom went to Turkey; 50,000 were baptized, and 20,000 died en route to Turkey and elsewhere in Europe. These tragic events, both

At the same time many other Jewish families immigrated to the USA, South Africa and Australia, establishing vibrant and prosperous communities there.

In 1933, with the rise to power of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, the situation of the Jewish community in Germany became more severe. Economic crises, racist anti-Semitic laws, intensive levels of intimidation and a fear of an imminent war drove many Jews to flee from Europe. As World War II broke out and following the invasion of the Soviet Union by

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for Spain and the Jews, occurred within a well established trend from the 13th to the 16th century, when many European countries expelled the Jews from their territories.

In the 19th century many European Jews abandoned their orthodox faith, became "modernized" and integrated into the mainstream of European society. The Zionist

Germany, the 'final solution' began. This was an extensive organized operation on an unprecedented scale which aimed to exterminate all the European Jews. Six million Jews were murdered in ghettos, concentration camps and gas chambers. This genocide, known as the Holocaust, heavily affected world public opinion, and intensified the efforts to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.

Three years after the end of World War II the United Nations decided to end the British mandate in Palestine and divide the land between the Jewish state and the Hashemite kingdom (Jordan). In May 1948 David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel, which immediately led to a bitter war with the surrounding Arab states who refused to accept the UN resolution. In 1949 the war ended and the state began to absorb massive waves of Jewish immigrants from all over the world. Since 1948, Israel has been involved in a series of major military conflicts as well as an almost constant series of ongoing minor conflicts. Since the Six Day War in 1967 Israel has occupied the Palestinian territories, and the various efforts to reach a long lasting peace agreement between Israel and Palestine has so far failed. The Jewish Arab conflict, both with the Arab minority inside Israel and with the neighbouring countries is certainly central to Israel's existence.

Jews and Arabs

Each country has its own minority groups; some of which are more welcomed by the majority than others. The Arabs in Israel represent a unique case, where the Jewish

villages' farmers, who were concerned by the 'invasion', initiated ongoing military attacks. The Jewish settlers, in response, established militia forces to defend their villages and cities. The conflict escalated after the UN resolution of 1947 to divide the land between the two peoples. In May 1948 when David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the state of Israel, all the neighbouring Arab countries declared war, which ended with the victory of the Jewish side and the flight of the local Arab populations to refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and other countries. The remaining Arabs within the new borders of the state of Israel had to live under military rule (this stricture was lifted in 1966) and severe limitations of their civil rights.

The suspicion and alienation of the Arab population is still evident not only in people's attitudes and individual relationships, but also in formal and legal aspects. Arabs in Israel comprise about 20 percent (1.5 million) of the entire population. Most Arabs are Muslim (83%) while others are Christians (12%), Druze (5%) and Bedouins. In a nation that grants immediate full citizenship to any Jew in the world who immigrates to Israel, Arab citizens are in various senses second class

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majority identifies them as a group affiliated with the enemy in neighbouring countries. The seeds of the conflict were planted at the beginning of the 20th century, with the arrival of the first waves of Zionist settlers in Palestine. The newcomers purchased lands from Arab landlords and soon established *kibbutzim* (rural collective settlements) and cities. The veteran neighbouring Arab

citizens who have a split identity: they identify themselves by their nationality as Israelis citizens, but as Arabs or Palestinians according to their ethnic affiliation. Many citizens have family ties with Palestinians in the occupied territories and in the surrounding Arab countries. Despite making up approximately one fifth of the Israeli population they are certainly discriminated against: their

share of the budgets and services provided by the government is significantly smaller in proportion to the resources allocated to the Jewish population; their political power, and to a certain extent even their legal rights, are somewhat restricted (e.g. Arab parliament members are not allowed to sit on committees that deal with security issues); according to the CBS, average monthly income for an Arab household is about 60 percent of that of an average Jewish household; many new Jewish settlements and cities have been established since the declaration of independence, but only one new Arab city (Rahat) and a few villages have been founded during this time. The quality of education in Arab schools certainly falls short when compared to that in the Jewish sector. School facilities are less well developed and equipped, especially in the periphery (for example, schools for the Bedouins in the Negev desert); budgets are limited; classes are more crowded. It is no wonder then that the academic achievements of Arabic students in national and international examinations are significantly lower in Israel than their Jewish counterparts, whose schools are sometimes located just a few miles away from each other.

Today (2013), Israel is a parliamentary democracy with a population of over 7.8 million people, of which 75 percent are Jewish and 20 percent are Arabs. The rest are not identified as either Jewish or Arab and make up the remaining 4.1% of the population. Israel is now a diverse, multicultural society, and its population is considered young compared to other Western countries. In 2012, 28% of Israel's population was aged between 0-14, compared to 17% in other Western countries, and about 10% were aged above 65, compared to 15% in Western countries. The size of an average family is 3.03 children per household compared with fewer than 2 in European countries. The majority of the Jewish population (70%) is made up of Israeli-

born citizens and most are the second generation, compared to 1948, during Israel's first year, when only one third of people were born in the country.

Section 2: The Israeli educational system

Education is compulsory in Israel from age 5 through to age 18. The state also encourages the enrollment of children in preschools from age 3 to age 5 and has secured a budget to build thousands of new classrooms to accommodate this population of children. About half a million children were enrolled in public kindergartens and nurseries in 2012 (CBS, 2012), over 800 thousand pupils were enrolled in primary schools and 642 thousand studied at middle schools and high schools. In every school level, slightly less than 80 percent of the pupils and teachers are affiliated with the Jewish sectors and the rest study and work in Arab settlements (CBS, 2012).

The primary education system serves children aged 6 to 12 years who study from first to sixth grade. They then move to the secondary education system, which is divided into junior and senior high schools. Nearly half (47%) of these schools are operated by not-for-profit organizations, while the other half are run by local authorities (38%) or the Israeli government (15%) (Volansky, 2010).

Kindergartens and elementary schools are dispersed across neighbourhoods, while high schools serve the city-wide youth population. From an organizational standpoint, kindergarten teachers are considered as the 'principals' of their classes. Each school is led by a principal who is responsible for the daily ongoing operation of the organisation, including supervising and developing the professional performance of staff, sometimes in collaboration with the school inspector. Elementary schools tend to be smaller (having,

on average, 350 pupils) than junior and senior high schools, many of which have one thousand or more, and an average of 25 students in each class.

On the local and national level, the government's duties include hiring teachers, paying their salaries, setting the curriculum and supervising its implementation and the quality of teaching. The local municipality is responsible for pupils' registration; the maintenance of the buildings and hiring teaching assistants (who mostly work in preschools). In secondary schools the organizational framework, including the budget and the supervision of teaching, is more complicated. For example, not-for-profit organizations and local municipalities may replace the government with regards to managerial and inspection roles.

The Israeli educational system certainly reflects the national mentality of solidarity, familiarity and warm relationships. But it also reflects the social and ethnic divisions, which are manifested in the relatively large number of educational streams and sectors. Most of the schools in Israel are "state-run" institutions, namely they are funded and inspected by the government, but there is a vibrant and steadily growing private sector. Arab pupils study in state-run ethnically segregated schools, even in Jewish-Arab mixed cities like Jaffa and Acre. Most of the Jewish schools are either secular or religious, but of special interest is the ultra-orthodox sector ('Haredi'). The ultra-orthodox communities tend to be confined to segregated urban vicinities, mainly located in the cities of Jerusalem and Bnei-Brak (near Tel Aviv). Due to the high birth rate, this is the most rapidly growing demographic group in the educational system. Its schools are affiliated with the "independent" educational stream, namely, funded by the government but autonomously-run and seldom inspected by the Ministry of Education. The ultra-orthodox

sector runs separate schools for boys and girls, refrains from teaching the national curriculum in elementary schools and focuses solely on religious studies. Boys hardly study secular education topics (e.g. mathematics, science and foreign languages) after eighth grade, when they are sent to "yeshiva", unique religious high schools. With such minimal general education it is no wonder that ultra-orthodox pupils who finish their studies have grave difficulties in joining the work force and becoming fully-productive citizens of the State of Israel. Ultra orthodox girls continue with a general education and many go on to study at mainstream high schools, then attend teacher training colleges, and become teachers. Another unique ethnic group is the Arab sector, which is more fully described in the chapter about the Abraham Fund initiative. The continuous governmental efforts to integrate the various streams in education have borne no fruit. At the moment, no ultra-orthodox pupils would study in a school with secular students; Jewish schools would not accept Arab pupils, and poor families could not afford to send their children to a private school.

Section 3: Social and Emotional Education (SEE) in Israel

Social and Emotional Education (SEE) is included in the national curriculum, and SEE programmes, such as 'Magic Circles' (Nadler, 1973), Duso (Dinkmeyer, 1989), and 'Life Skills', are practiced in many kindergartens and schools in Israel (except in ultra-orthodox institutions). These programmes were developed and are promoted by the Department of Counselling and Psychological Services at the Ministry of Education. This department provides guidance, counselling and therapeutic services to almost every formal educational institution in Israel. These services are mainly provided by school counselors and school psychologists. (I have been a school psychologist for over 30 years). Due to

a shortage of mental health professionals, the current standard for one full time job counsellor is about 500 pupils and 2000 school children for a psychologist (Rabinowitz, 2010). A school psychologist and a counsellor work in almost every school in Israel, and these professionals carry the lion's share of responsibility for students' welfare and mental health. The school counsellors are trained teachers who studied educational psychology and counselling at BA and MA level. They are stationed in every kindergarten and school and two of their key roles is either to teach the 'Life Skills' lessons themselves or to train 'educators' (an all embracing Israeli term for a teaching role, where the educator is responsible for all their pupils' personal and academic needs) to run 'Life Skills' lessons. These lessons deal with a variety of themes such as the prevention of violence and drug use, "saying no" to sexual harassment, identifying child abuse, providing lessons on sexual education and the like (Shechtman & Abu Yaman, 2012).

The 'Life Skills' programme

The Israeli Ministry of Education's flagship SEE programme is called '*Life-skills*' (Kishurei Chai'im), which has been implemented since 1996. It was revised in 2007,

improves the quality of life during childhood and adolescence; the school environment can serve as a training ground for developing life skills; and that the school climate should enable students to make use of their newly-acquired life skills (Ministry of Education (2011). The programme also helps to create a supportive climate for learning.

The programme includes 30 structured lessons for each year, in first grade (age 6) up to end of middle school (age 14). An additional 15 sessions are recommended for junior high school (ages 15 to 18). The 45 minute lessons take place weekly and usually include a hands-on activity to open the lesson (e.g. reading a relevant text, holding a discussion in pairs) and a follow-up group discussion. To facilitate an open atmosphere, large classes are divided into two groups of 15 – 20 pupils each, which are facilitated by the school counsellor and the class 'educator' respectively. Each meeting is devoted to specific aspect of Life Skills such as interpersonal interactions, maintaining friendships, teamwork, conflict resolution, leadership, and taking social responsibility. Such aspects require acquiring skills of cooperation, giving and seeking help, respecting others, negotiating and personal qualities like empathy,

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and ever since it has been a mandatory part of the national core curriculum. The programme is based on the following assumptions: life skills can be taught; such learning

flexibility and the like. The programme also includes aspects of coping with stress in life-endangering situations (how to avoid dangerous situations, how to cope with personal

threats and the like), inter-personal crises or inner-personal crises (such as failures). Such situations require resilience skills such as positive self-talk, methods of self-relaxation, and value clarification. The programme is adjusted to the developmental level of the students. For example, a discussion about a typical life event in the first grade (age 6) deals with coping with changes and transitions. For fifth graders (aged 11) a typical life event is social integration and leisure activities. Lessons at junior high (ages 12 to 14) and during adolescence refer to interaction with the peer group and the first steps in establishing a romantic relationship. The main clusters of skills which are taught are:

- Self identity (body image, feelings, thoughts and behaviour), finding meaning in life, gender identity and cultural identity.
- Self regulation of expressing feelings and, self guidance of planning, executing and monitoring own activities.
- Interpersonal interaction
- Learning, leisure and playing skills
- Coping with danger, stress and crisis

Longitudinal follow-up studies revealed that 'Life Skills' increased pupils' self-awareness; enhanced their own sense of self-efficacy

favourably and experienced higher levels of self-efficacy, compared with a control group who did not receive such training (Shechtman, Levy & Leichtentritt, 2005).

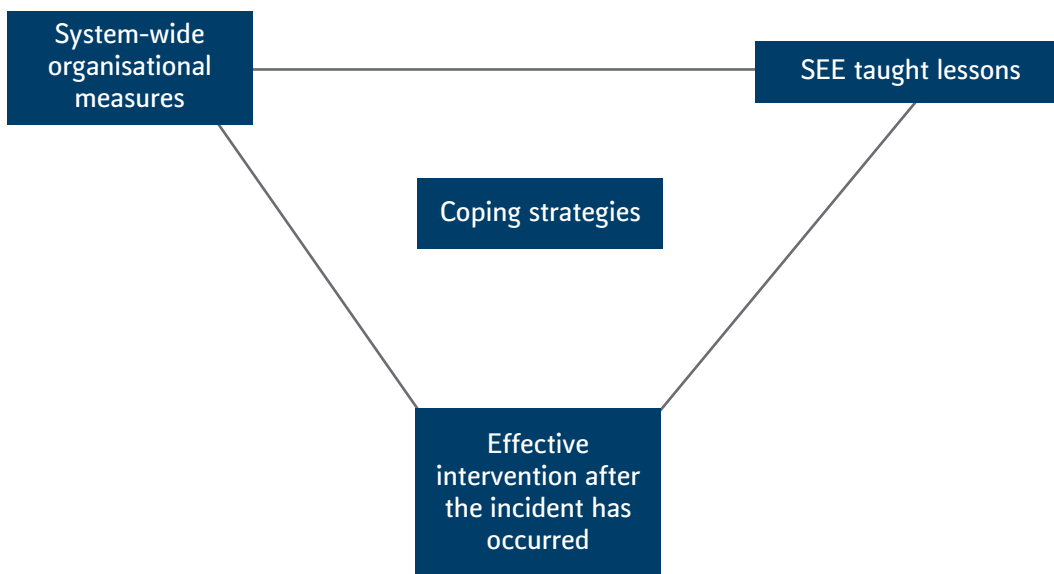
SEE is everywhere

Social and emotional learning may take place everywhere in a child's life: at home and at school; with parents and while playing with peers; when they cooperate and when they quarrel. This chapter focuses on structured **educational programmes** that encourage SEE and elicit self-awareness and pro-social behaviour. Many studies and meta-analyses that were carried-out in the last decades have clearly shown that SEE programmes help children develop social skills, reduce or prevent problematic behaviour and promote pro-social behaviour. However, as Diekstra (2008) points out these programmes' results remain unclear with regard to certain individuals and particular groups of youngsters in need (for example, minorities, young people who live in poverty, youth delinquents). Actually, no 'one-size-fits-all' programme can assist every pupil and other measures must be taken to enhance the well-being of children. According to my **eco-systemic theoretical model** (Yariv, 1999), in addition to the structured programmes, there are two other sources:

'Life Skills' increased pupils' self-awareness; enhanced their own sense of self-efficacy and helped reduce the level of violence in schools. (Shechtman, Levy & Leichtentritt, 2005).

and helped reduce the level of violence in schools. Teachers who attended a two-year training in facilitating the programme perceived their work environment more

namely, A) system-wide organizational measures and, B) individual interventions in response to pupils' misbehaviour.



A. Organizational measures

The ways in which schools are organized have an impact on their social climate and pupils' well-being and academic success. Clean, painted and decorated halls and corridors, a well organized timetable, highly trained staff and even small measures such as a principal who stands at the school gate every morning and greets everyone, provide (especially for elementary school children) a secure and warm atmosphere. Such system-wide organization may take place in a structured and planned manner, as it is done, for example, in the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support programmes run in thousands of schools in the USA (Simonen et al, 2008). An impressive national initiative is currently being implemented in 1200 Israeli schools. The '**Systematic Program to Promote Safe Climate and Reduce Violence**' encourages all the schools' stakeholders to join forces in order to foster a warm and open climate in the school. More specifically, four years ago the Ministry of Education set eight qualitative standards that each school is expected to attain:

- a safety and order;
- b good relationships between everyone in the school community (school staff and pupils);
- c social and emotional learning;
- d an environment that facilitates learning;
- e differentiated responses to children with special needs;
- f maintaining quality relationships between staff and parents, combined with holding community-wide activities;
- g taking care of the schools' physical environment;
- h meeting students' needs, feelings and difficulties

In sum, teachers are expected to maintain close relationships with their students. These goals are attained by several consecutive steps: first, an annual survey is completed to measure the school's social and academic climate; then within three weeks the results are sent to the principal who then sets up a committee comprised of the school counselor, psychologist, educators and the Ministry of Education's facilitator. Based on the specific

strengths and weaknesses identified in the survey, the committee plans school-wide initiatives and sets targets; teachers are asked to maintain an active presence and intervene immediately when conflicts between students occur; the plans also aim to strengthen teachers' authority, student-teacher relationships, improve students' sense of well-being and increase the school counsellor's and psychologist's involvement in educational activities and decision making. These plans include the use of 'Life Skills' workshops at each class

and aggressive during recess times. The boys used to rush along the corridors, shouting and pushing others who walked by. The growing number of students who got hurt and parents' complaints forced the school's management to intervene. We decided, as a first step, to monitor the social climate of the school. To do this we used a questionnaire which I developed and is based on my eco-systemic theoretical model (Yariv, 1999). The survey's findings confirmed our concerns: many students expressed how stressed

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level. Recent follow-up surveys conducted by the Ministry of Education have found that the level of school violence has dropped dramatically, by 30 percent over a two year period. Such a large-scale initiative would never have gained prominence without public support and governmental funding. The Israeli people and political leaders are aware of how stressful life in Israel is and how much encouragement and support children and young people need.

A.1. "Circled chairs": System-wide response to emerging problems

Not every school enjoys a warm and open climate and teachers sometimes face unfavourable conditions that force them to take creative and courageous measures. Such an outstandingly example is provided by Dahlin (2008) who described the Rinkeby School in Stockholm. I wish to provide a small example from my own experience as a psychologist in a middle school. For several months we noticed that students had become restless

they felt at school, how their personal belongings were frequently stolen from their bags, how the staff were not perceived as a solid source of support and defense.

We decided to adopt unique system-wide intervention which had been implemented at a school for children with special needs, where the staff had managed to overcome similar challenges. Originally the school was based in a deprived neighbourhood in Tel Aviv. Several years earlier, due to demographic developments, the mayor of Tel Aviv decided to move the school to a remote prestigious suburb. Since there was a need to erect a new building, the mayor offered the staff the opportunity to collaborate with an architect and work together to design the new campus, according to their educational vision. While working on the design, the staff considered what the arrangements during recess should be: would the teachers sit in the teachers' room, separate from their pupils, or would the teachers spend the breaks with the pupils

in a shared public space? They decided to get rid of the teachers' room and have teachers spend the breaks sitting in comfortable arm-chairs arranged in circles that would be scattered through all the open spaces in the school. And so, teachers who had finished their lessons used to take their cups of coffee and sit together during the breaks. The effect of the presence of the seated teachers on the pupils who passed by was dramatic. The pupils began to walk quietly, behaved politely and helped to keep the environment calm.

While discussing this example, we knew that our teachers would not be happy about the change, especially about losing the privacy they used to enjoy, but nevertheless the principal of our middle school courageously decided to close the teachers' room for several

B. Effective individual intervention

Despite the organizational measures taken by schools in order to maintain a warm and learning-oriented climate, and the social and emotional education curriculum being taught, teachers worldwide face classroom disruptions and aggressive behaviour that hinder their efforts to lead "smooth" lessons and to help their students to learn. Typically, such disruptions are unexpected, chaotic, context-related and relatively short-lived (Yariv, 2010). They often involve intense negative emotions on all sides, distract teachers and pupils from doing their work, consume a lot of time and may damage the effectiveness and the reputation of the school. In my view, misbehaviour can serve as excellent 'raw material' to foster pro-social behaviour and SEE. Due to the unexpected nature of disruptions, it is not easy to conceptualize these

...teachers worldwide face classroom disruptions and aggressive behaviour that hinder their efforts to lead "smooth" lessons and to help their students to learn.

weeks. She arranged circles of chairs and tables in the corridors, provided coffee and refreshments and asked staff members to spend their recess times there. The results were immediate and remarkable: the level of violence decreased sharply; the boys stopped rushing about; the teachers' presence helped to monitor and control the incidents in the school's open spaces; and teachers and pupils enjoyed the informal opportunities to chat together. Never in my professional life had I seen any educational intervention that had produced such immediate and effective results.

situations and to train teachers in how to cope with them when they arise. However, if properly handled, a teacher's intervention with an individual can create a unique social and emotional experience that cannot be addressed in any well-planned and carefully led lessons. The real situation, with its intensive personal and emotional involvement, and possible future consequences (e.g. punishment) sets the stage for an encounter that is tailored to each individual student and which will not easily be forgotten by either the teacher or the pupil. Any effective intervention, in my view, must include not only structured taught programmes, such as

Table 1: SEE Strategies: the pros and cons (Yariv, 1996)

Strategy	Advantages	Disadvantages
System-wide organizational measures	<p>Change organizational system-wide aspects that apply to all school-goers</p> <p>Cost-effective</p> <p>Preventative</p>	<p>General and impersonal in nature</p> <p>Does not tackle individual difficulties</p>
Structured SEE taught curriculum	<p>Covers essential aspects of SEE</p> <p>Uses effective didactic practices</p> <p>Teaches modes of behaviour, communication and self-awareness</p> <p>Preventative</p>	<p>Being perceived as ‘material’ and ‘a taught lesson’</p> <p>‘Theoretical’. Is seldom practiced outside the classroom in real life situations</p> <p>Not designed to address specific situations faced by individuals</p>
Individual interventions	<p>Tailored to individual situations</p> <p>Solves specific cases effectively</p> <p>Meets the students’ needs such as affiliation and acceptance</p> <p>May strengthen student – teacher relationships</p>	<p>Often involves resistance and limited cooperation from the student</p> <p>Time consuming</p>

learning how to express negative feelings verbally instead of acting out aggressively, but also involve system-wide measures, such as writing school’s bylaws and asking teachers to supervise the courtyards during recess time. In addition, teachers and principals must take effective measures whenever misbehaviour and violence occurs.

The three strategies which have been briefly described (see Table 1) and the next four case studies provide detailed examples which illustrate the eco-systemic theoretical framework.

- 1 “The Giraffe Language” is a taught programme that promotes non-violent communication skills among children at kindergarten and children with special needs.

Table 2: *The SEE Strategies used in the case studies in this chapter*

Programme	System-wide organizational measures	Structured SEE taught curriculum	Post-event individual interventions
'Life Skills'		+	
The national system-wide programme	+	+	
'Circled chairs'	+		
'Giraffe language'		+	+
'Discipline and Dialogue'			+
Abraham Fund Initiative		+	
Mount Carmel school	+	+	

- 2 "Discipline and Dialogue" is a brief psycho-educational intervention that enables teachers to work through pupils' misbehaviour with them.
- 3 The third programme is an educational initiative aimed at bridging the divide between Jewish and Arab children.
- 4 The last section depicts the case of a public inner-city elementary school where the principal and staff members have developed several impressive social and environmental initiatives.

Case Study 1: Giraffe Language

The language we use carries within it much more than words and meaning. The words we

use shape our relationships and social connections. Nonviolent Communication is an educational platform developed by Marshall Rosenberg, which helps to connect people and allows everyone's needs to be equally valued. The process of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) helps to connect us with what is alive in ourselves and heightens our awareness of what gets in the way of natural giving and receiving. Nonviolent Communication is aimed at strengthening the ability to inspire compassion from others and to respond compassionately to others and to ourselves. It enables us to reframe how we express ourselves, how we hear others, and how we resolve conflicts (The Center for NVC, 2012). A letter sent to the

(Nonviolent Communication) enables us to reframe how we express ourselves, how we hear others, and how we resolve conflicts (The Center for NVC, 2012).

parents of one Israeli kindergarten explains the programme's rationale:

We teach and learn in our kindergarten a new language - 'The magic keys to good communication'. The programme was developed by Dr. Marshal Rosenberg, an American clinical psychologist and it is meant to educate children and adults in how to relate to each other nonviolently. Dr. Rosenberg, who teaches these principles in many countries, uses the metaphors of two animals to describe the old and new languages: giraffe and jackal. He explains that day to day language includes many expressions of judgment, generalizations and accusations (the jackal language). Such communication sets up barriers between people and creates a climate of alienation and suspicion. The Giraffe Language involves compassion by

enables us to observe and learn and get to know the others with whom we communicate. All three keys create the place for the fourth key - the heart key. The Giraffe eats leaves (she is not a predator) and her long neck enables her to stick out, to see a balanced picture from above which makes her the perfect mascot for compassionate communication. When we meet with someone and connect with his or her inner light, we allow the most wonderful communication to happen, be it with words, gestures, with a smile or even in silence.

The letter also explains that the programme teaches children how to develop their emotional intelligence, improve their social skills, broaden their discourse abilities; and learn how to solve problems. The new language also teaches them to broaden their emotional vocabulary, express emotions, and comprehend

**“There are no “violent” children, ... but only children who have been made emotionally numb ...”
(Lior Idan Aburman).**

speaking from the heart. Because the giraffe has the biggest heart of all the animals, it enables her to contain many feelings, both good and bad. In our kindergarten we use the book Didi's Magic Keys, written by Lior Idan Aburman (1999), which tells us that the big heart contains four 'magic keys': The key of the mouth' that helps us to open our hearts and express ourselves; the 'key of the ears' helps us to listen openly, without judgment and rushing to respond; and the 'key of the eyes' that

the names of different everyday feelings. Children learn gradually how to relate to their feelings, to say when they are happy or sad, yell and stamp their feet when they are angry. Being aware of one's own feelings, naming and expressing them make up the first stage of acquiring the language of giraffe. Then the teacher establishes a centre in the classroom called 'we speak the 'giraffe language' where children are encouraged to share their feelings and solve disputes. At the end of each day they are encouraged to share with their friends how they felt that day.

The programme

The 'Giraffe Language' is a widespread (though not mandatory) SEE programme used in Israeli preschool classes. The written programme was created by Lior Idan Aburman (1999) who translated Marshall Rosenberg's ideas into the Israeli context. The book "Didi's Magic Keys" was created after she attended a symposium in Jerusalem led by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg 15 years ago. Lior who experienced childhood violence swore that her children would grow up in a different climate. *"There are no "violent" children", she explains, "but only children who have been made emotionally numb, children who carry their pain silently inside themselves but no one can hear and care for them."*

'Didi's Magic Keys' (Idan Aburman, 1999) is the story of a young boy who wants his mothers' attention and gets very angry when she is too busy to play with him. The impatient Didi embarks on an exciting journey to Magic Land with his friends, Giraffe and Jackal. On the journey he meets a variety of colourful characters who pile obstacles in his way. With the help of his friends Didi learns the language of the heart. The books and songs are currently widely used in Israeli kindergartens and special education institutions. The principles espoused in the books are relevant for every age and educational institution. Although the programme is not included in the core national SEE curriculum, the Ministry of Education provides partial training and some guidance on how to teach the programme, and many teachers use its tenets in their classes.

The programme is practiced both in a structured manner and informally during the school day, both in scheduled activities and as a tool to solve unexpected conflicts (Mamelia, 2004). Observing a morning session in a municipal kindergarten I gained several

insights into how the programme works. Each morning session takes about 30 minutes and the session begins with several routine activities: counting the children who came to school that morning; naming what day it is today; raising the national flag and singing the national anthem, etc. For every segment of the session the teacher assigns a child to lead it. That morning it turned out that the teacher intentionally assigned the same child to lead a segment several times. Other children who noticed the discrimination began to complain loudly.

Teacher: yes, you are right. I made a mistake when I asked [her] several times. But I ask you to look at yourself: are you a jackal or giraffe? Do you envy other children who get things more than you do?

Some children admitted to being selfish while others expressed 'giraffe' sentiments. As they reflected upon their own feelings the teacher encourages the girl to continue with her assignment. The fact that the teacher admitted making a mistake and that she explained her considerations decreased the children's criticism while the reflecting helped them to become aware of their inner motives.

Before ending the morning session the teacher asked the children to divide into pairs, sit face to face, and tell their partner how they felt that morning. She reminded them to look one another in the eye and to listen carefully while the other child spoke. In the first round the children followed her instructions and listened carefully, but as the teacher rang the bell to signal that they should change roles, the quality of listening declined. Some children turned their heads and spoke to other children. The next activity was meant to end the morning session. The teacher asked the children to get into pairs and imitate a 'wheelbarrow walk', in which one child

holds the legs of the other child who 'walks' on his hands. She reminded them that selecting the roles, who 'walks' and who 'carries', must be agreed upon through discussion and not by coercion. When someone forgot the rule and ordered his counterpart: 'you walk!' the teacher stopped the activity and speaks loudly (to the boy): 'you are now speaking the jackal's language (turns to the group) could you tell me kids how he could speak the giraffe language?' Several children suggested that he ask her if she would agree to him 'carrying' her. The child turned to his partner and asked her what role she would like to perform.

A few minutes later, as the children were playing freely, the teacher heard a loud cry from a nearby room. She hurried and found David and Saul quarrelling over a superman doll. David, a shy boy, starting playing with the doll first and Saul then chased him and tried to grab the doll from his hands. The teacher asked the boys to join her in the 'peacemaking centre' where she put two chairs in the middle of the room, one designated for the 'speaker' and one for the 'listener'. After they sat face to face she reminded them of the conversation's rules, where the 'listener' is asked to remain silent, calm down and listen carefully to his rival (a challenging demand for a five year old child who has just been involved in a fierce argument).

Teacher: I understand that David played with the doll for a long time (Saul, who cannot overcome his nervousness, weeps and rushes to explain, but the teacher signals to him not to interrupt her). David, what do you say? How do you feel?

David: He could have taken another doll to play with. (After the teacher verifies that he has nothing else to add she asks them to exchange seats and now Saul

has the right to speak).

Saul: I had already been playing with (that) superman doll.

The teacher, who had kept a rather low profile while managing the conversation, enabled each child to fully express his thoughts and feelings. When each speaker seemed to be finished, the teacher suggested they would exchange roles and seats, and after several turns she encouraged the boys to reach an agreement. The dispute was resolved within few minutes and both children agreed that David would continue to play with the superman doll for a few more minutes and then hand it to Saul. At the end the teacher reminded them to enact the 'peace gesture' – one of bending thumbs.

The principles of the Giraffe Language are rather simple to learn and use. They can be included in many daily planned activities as well as in unexpected situations, but in order to embed the language into the daily routine the principles must be implemented consistently. The teacher whom I visited that morning confided that at the beginning she had found it difficult to adopt the strict communication rules, and to insist that the children did what she was modelling. Despite discouraging messages from colleagues, she continued to invest the time and effort to lead the children to adopt the language of the Giraffe whole-heartedly. Some of them even took the language home. One girl, for example, 'taught' her parents how to use the 'peacemaking centre' procedure to solve their own disputes. The teacher also explained that the guidelines for successful implementation are as follows: Firstly, fruitful cooperation with the parents is essential. For example, at the entrance to the classroom she hung a box labelled 'The Giraffe-letters' for the letters describing the good deeds which the children had done at home. Parents were encouraged to post such letters into the box every week.

Once a week she reads the letters and the children receive a 'Giraffe certificate'. One of the goals is to encourage the children to behave well at home. Another is to help the parents acquire the Giraffe language to refer to their child's conduct, describe their feelings and to explain how the child's behaviour contributed to the family's wellbeing. The more that parents are familiar with the four-stage language, the more they phrase their letters and discussions with their children accordingly. She also recommends that staff should have proper training in the programme's rationale, curriculum, language and activities. Implementing the language should be consistent with the stages of the programme and its rationale. Secondly, the kindergarten team needs to help the children to phrase their day to day problems in the correct language. Since the children observe what their educators do, the discourse and relationships among children and adults should follow the proper language (e.g. a calm tone of voice, expressing an interest in others' needs, and so on).

Outcomes

The programme certainly teaches and encourages children to use nonviolent communication, but only one study to date has ex-

that the 'Giraffe Language' increased cooperation and mutual listening, and reduced the level of violence among children. Parental cooperation increased the use of the programme's principles in the classroom and at home. She also observed that girls solved conflicts better than boys and needed less assistance from their teachers. Ezer found a significant positive correlation between the use of emotional intelligence and the use of Giraffe language. At the end of the report she refers to the connection between the children's experience and the national context:

The Israeli government begins its military indoctrination at preschool age with messages that support the use of military power as a legitimate and reasonable line of action. The regime glorifies Jewish statehood, belittles the Arab peoples' right to exist, reinforces admiration of the nation's strength, and intensifies fears of a second Holocaust. As a counsellor I believe this thesis on non-violent communication is the first step towards introducing a change in the educational climate. Counsellors must be aware of the existing realities in Israeli society and adapt SEL programs to the context and needs

... 'Giraffe Language' increased cooperation and mutual listening, and reduced the level of violence among children. (Ezer, 2011).

amined the programme's outcomes in Israel. For one year Ezer (2011) observed how the programme was being implemented in a kindergarten in Tel Aviv. She also surveyed 28 parents and 83 preschool teachers about the programme's effectiveness. She found

Case Study 2: Discipline and Dialogue

When pupils break the rules teachers are called upon to intervene. Holding short discussions after the incident has occurred enables both parties to explore what happened,

what the underlying reasons for the misbehaviour were and how to solve the problem. For the teacher to engage in a dialogue with the student is probably the best way to solve the problems and it provides an opportunity for experiential social and emotional learning. When both parties take part in such an open discussion and reach an agreement together, it paves the way for future cooperation and reduces the chances of the events recurring. Unfortunately, underlying obstacles discourage both partners to set up an encounter and reach an effective solution:

Firstly, arranging an encounter during a busy school day is extremely difficult, especially when the school's facilities do not include somewhere comfortable and quiet; when both parties are stressed and annoyed; and when the teacher intends to interrogate or reprimand the student. In such a situation the pupils are concerned that the teacher will discover what they have done and punish them, and the teachers also prefer to avoid such unpleasant encounters.

Secondly, time constraints and a heavy workload drive teachers to use fire-fighting strategies to calm down disruptions. They prefer to ignore, reprimand, punish or use other short-term bureaucratic measures such as a letter to the parents and suspension from school. These interventions are often ineffective since they fail to address the child's inner social and emotional needs and motives.

Thirdly, misbehaviour and violence are complicated phenomena. In many cases the student is often solely blamed for the interruptions to the lesson, but in addition to his or her deeds, other 'ecological' (e.g. crowded corridors and playgrounds) and social factors (e.g. bystanders who silently support those who are misbehaving) fan the flames. Any diagnosis and intervention must take the hidden contributing factors into account.

Teachers hold many kinds of discussions each day, and some of these discussions are held to solve difficulties:

- A An '**open door**' discussion - when a distressed student asks to meet with the teacher and the discussion they have is warm and empathetic;
- B A '**cheer up**' discussion when the teacher notices that the child is struggling and invites him/her to talk and encourages him/her;
- C An '**interrogation**' encounter, initiated by the teacher to collect details about a case of aggression;
- D '**Discipline and dialogue**': the teacher invites the student to discuss his/her misbehaviour and to solve the problem together. The climate is often unpleasant during the intervention;
- E A '**reprimand**' discussion, that the teacher initiates (very unpleasant).

'*Discipline and Dialogue*' is a tool that I developed to assist teachers and students to overcome these emotional barriers (Yariv, 1996). This brief psycho-educational intervention aims to collect details about the incident, to encourage the student to take responsibility for the situation, to solve the problem and (if possible) to prevent such incidents reoccurring in the future. From a SEE standpoint, such encounters can help children to understand their own motives, learn how to solve conflicts, better understand social norms, and learn to how deal in a more constructive manner with their own needs and drives. Since both partners are annoyed and stressed, especially in the initial phase, the three stage intervention is structured to address their annoyance and hesitations.

- At first, the teacher listens empathetically and non-judgementally to the pupil's report. It alleviates the tension, increases the

pupil's cooperation and paves the way for the second phase.

- Secondly, the teacher explores the details of the case and the pupil's motives. Such questioning slightly increases the pupil's tension and gradually builds up his/her willingness to take responsibility.
- Finally, both participants search for a solution. Reaching agreement reduces uncertainties, transmits a sense of hope and clarifies how the student needs to behave in the future.

Such an encounter is rather short, taking from 10-20 minutes. It should be held in a calm place, preferably with both partners sitting face to face. The teacher is asked to stick to four communication rules:

- 1 **'Sharing the time fifty/fifty'** - the accumulated time spent speaking by each person during the meeting represents the amount of responsibility each party takes. When students wait patiently and say nothing, it reflects their minimal involvement. In order to prevent the tendency of teachers to dominate the discussion and speak continuously, they are asked to monitor this and ensure that the student spends no less than one half the entire meeting speaking and that the time that the teacher spends speaking does not exceed the other half of the time.
- 2 **'One step at a time'**. As in a dance, after each verbal statement the teacher makes (a question, a remark), he/she is asked to let the student respond.
- 3 **'Lead a calm conversation'**, in order to have a fruitful encounter in a tense situation any external (and internal) noise should be kept to a minimum. Speaking softly and calmly imbues the conversation with a sense of openness and confidence, enables sensitive issues to be touched on, and helps to solve complicated matters.
- 4 **'The more severe the case, the longer the meeting should be postponed'**. As

with the third rule, intensive negative emotions, while both parties are still distressed, diminish the chances of reaching a solution and reduces the likelihood that the student will change his or her behaviour in the future. Timing is an important factor and teachers are encouraged to let the student calm down before they meet that day or the next.

During the last ten years I have taught about 1000 teacher training students how to lead such discussions. I first model the approach in the classroom through role-play. I then ask them to practice the tool in their classrooms and provide a written report of their experience. Enclosed is a typical example:

The green pencil

Cedar is an elementary school with 470 pupils located in a medium-sized town in northern Israel. Many of the town's residents immigrated from the former Soviet Union and the socio-economic status is below the average. Ofek (this is a pseudonym, the name means 'Horizon' in Hebrew) is an impulsive, low-achieving second grade student (aged 7). He finds it difficult to get along with his peers, and to postpone gratification. On a Monday, the teacher gave the class crayons and pencils and asked them to draw their family. Alex (not his real name) is a clever and polite child whose parents immigrated from the Ukraine. When Ofek noticed that Alex had received a green pencil he decided to take it from him. Both children began to quarrel over the pencil until Ofek grabbed the pencil and hit Alex in the eye. Avital, the student teacher who was teaching the class, met with Ofek two hours later.

The beginning of the discussion is the most sensitive and vulnerable stage, when both parties are concerned and suspicious. Many children, like Ofek, feel uneasy when asked to face what they have done wrong. The

Table 3: An example of the four communication rules

Stages	Dialogue
LISTENING	
The teacher greets the student	Avital: <i>good morning Ofek</i> Ofek: <i>Good morning Avital</i>
The teacher defines the subject in a non-judgmental manner	Avital: <i>I want to talk with you about the conflict with Alex (Ofek bends his head, tears in his eyes)</i> Avital: <i>Can you tell me what happened?</i>
The child describes the case freely The teacher listens empathetically	Ofek: (unwillingly answers my question) <i>I wanted to draw with the green pencil.</i>
GOING INTO THE DETAILS	
The teacher questions the pupil	Avital: <i>What happened when you tried to take the pencil from Alex?</i> Ofek: <i>Alex didn't want to give it to me, so he held onto the pencil and when I tried to pull it out of his hand, he got hit in the eye.</i> Avital: <i>what happened later?</i> Ofek: <i>then he hit me and I began to cry and so you heard me and came to see what had happened.</i>
The teacher explores motives and emotions	Avital: <i>There is something I don't understand: why was the green pencil so important to you?</i> Ofek: <i>It shines.</i>
Summarizes the sequence of events	Avital: <i>Well, you wanted the green pencil but it was already in Alex's hands. You got angry and could not wait. Ofek, you have difficulty in waiting for your turn and probably other children do not like it when you grab everything from their hands, Isn't this the case?</i> Ofek: <i>yes.</i>

teacher's short, non-judgmental questions encourage Ofek to respond.

The teacher helps the child understand his motives and behaviour, and connect his behaviour to the reasons for his poor relationships with others. Ofek already knows that

grabbing is forbidden, but the need to own objects and his poor self control derail again and again his relationships with his classmates. The teacher is quite pessimistic about the likelihood of him changing this behaviour in the long term, but she is determined to stop it, at least in the short term.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM TOGETHER

The teacher offers Ofek the chance to make a suggestion of his own, but he fails to do so

Avital: *could you behave in another way?*
Ofek: *I do not know*
Avital: *So, let's think together. Could you ask Alex to give you the pencil?*
Ofek (frustrated): *He would not let me*
Avital: *Have you tried?*
Ofek: *no*

The teacher is forced to suggest several ideas until she reaches an agreement with Ofek

Avital: *well, every problem has a solution and it is for us to choose one. You decided to grab the pencil from Alex and it is due to this that he got hurt. This is not the first time you have become angry, refused to share things and have had conflicts with your classmates*
Ofek: *true*

The teacher ensures that she plays an active role in any solution

Avital (assertively): *we will not tolerate these frequent quarrels. It is time for you to stop quarrelling and I want to help you. If you do not get along with others please call me. By the way, would you like me to change the group you are studying with?*
Ofek: *no*
Avital: *okay. I understand that you would prefer to sit by yourself to do the assignment individually. In the next lesson I will move you to a table by the window, and when you have finished preparing your assignment you can go back to your group.*
Ofek (smiles): *Well, okay, that's best.*
Avital: *and I beg you: count to ten. If you want something, ask the others or come to ask me. Do not harm others.*

The solution they have reached has not solved the underlying psychological reasons for Ofek's behaviour, but the teacher is optimistic that as Ofek grows up he will learn to control his impulses. In the meantime it is for her to help him to minimize his conflicts with others.

From a general standpoint, my student-teachers and experienced teachers who are taught how to lead such encounters often find that the pupils, who are so accustomed to the conventional reprimand discussions, are

taken by surprise at being given the opportunity to share information, uncover their inner motives and express their own feelings. Solving the problem takes place in an egalitarian and supportive climate, in a non-punitive manner, where both parties share equal responsibility for the outcomes of the encounter. Based on two evaluation studies, one explored the quality of my instruction how to acquire and use the tool (Yariv, 2008), while the other examined the use and effectiveness of the tool being used in the field by my courses' graduates (Yariv, 2009) I found that

Discipline and Dialogue is a practical, useful and quite effective means to solve incidents of misbehaviour at schools and in preschool classes. The facilitative climate; addressing the pupil's inner conflicts; solving the problem from a non-judgmental perspective; encouraging the pupil to empathize with others, are all powerful psychological means.

Case Study 3- Remote cousins: The 'Abraham Fund' project

Despite the tense relationships between the Jewish and the Arab sectors, several initiatives have been developed to bring members of both groups together. Probably the most comprehensive and courageous one is the cooperative village *Neve Shalom/ Wahat*

The Abraham Fund Initiatives has been working since 1989 to promote coexistence and equality among Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens. Named after the common ancestor of both Jews and Arabs, the Abraham Fund supports a cohesive, secure and just Israeli society. For that sake the fund uses advocacy and political lobbying that promote policies of cooperation; and also initiates innovative large-scale educational and social projects in cooperation with the government. The Abraham Fund believes that constructing a shared society of inclusion and equality among Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens is a moral and pragmatic imperative for the State of Israel; a society in which the individual's rights as well as the political, cultural and

Jewish school children speak hardly any Arabic and are not familiar with Arabic culture. The Abraham Fund's educational initiative aims to change this situation.

al-Salam (literally 'Oasis of Peace'). The binational community of 52 families demonstrates the possibility of coexistence between Jews and Palestinians, by developing a community based on mutual acceptance, respect and cooperation. The village was established in 1977 and is located on the pre six-day war (1967) Jordanian - Israeli border. The village runs several communal educational enterprises such as a bi-lingual elementary school, a guest house and 'The School for Peace' which provides educational programmes for local and international groups. Needless to say, such co-existence is neither simple nor tranquil and the continuous need to negotiate every aspect of day to day life brings with it ongoing tension. *Neve Shalom* is one of several similar educational initiatives, such as the 'Abraham Fund' project.

religious character of each community should be clearly and unambiguously recognized and respected.

The current Israeli educational system is divided into various ethnic and religious streams. Jewish school children speak hardly any Arabic and are not familiar with Arabic culture. The Abraham Fund's educational initiative aims to change this situation. The fund's main project is called *Ya Salam*, which includes three programmes: firstly, the 'Language as a Cultural Bridge' initiative, in which students in more than 200 Jewish schools study the spoken Arabic language and culture, taught by Arab teachers. In addition to twice-weekly Arabic language lessons, each student enjoys Arabic cultural activities featuring traditional Arab storytellers,

Arabic music workshops and bilingual theatre productions produced especially for the programme by leading Arabic artists and theatres. The programme has been adopted by the Ministry of Education and has been made mandatory in the northern part of Israel. Secondly, Hebrew language and cultural enrichment activities are held in Arab schools. Thirdly, 30 pairs of Jewish and Arab schools in northern Israel and in Haifa (the largest mixed city) participate in a series of guided encounters designed to promote shared society values and facilitate communication and understanding. The programme aims to bring together Arab and Jewish children, as well as their teachers, to get to know each other and share activities together.

The programme was developed by The Abraham Fund together with *Ma'arag*, an educational think-tank. It runs at each school for three consecutive years, and is funded (and managed) by the Abraham Fund with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the relevant municipalities. The extensive budget covers the development of the programme, the hiring of facilitators and supervisors, staff training and the transport and equipment costs. The programme for the children consists of five meetings: initially, at their own school the children learn about the neighbouring village and its culture. They are also briefed about the upcoming meeting. The second, third and fourth bi-national meetings are carried out interchangeably at each school. The fifth and final meeting is devoted to summing up the project. The organizers hope that after gaining the necessary knowledge and experience, each school will adopt the programme and continue to maintain the meetings with the neighbouring school without additional funding.

The programme combines two main principles with regard to how to enable members of two rival groups to meet one another

(Allport, 1954). The first approach assumes that merely being together and enjoying common activities is enough to reduce suspicion and increase the forming of bonds. The second line of thought assumes that until both groups have negotiated the issues in the conflict the relationships will remain shallow and superficial. These principles are translated into intensive three-hour staff preparation meetings. The first meeting is a preparation session focused on their own culture led by a facilitator of the same culture. The teachers are asked to express their own attitudes and concerns. Later, after each meeting, a joint follow-up feedback meeting is held by the teachers of both cultures. The developers have found that unspoken thoughts interfere with the teachers' cooperation. Resistance is also evident in the discussions about which language to speak in the meetings; Some Jewish principals object to the use of Arabic. The Jewish and Arab teachers take part in a total of five sessions, all facilitated by professional Jewish and Arab facilitators. The sessions are held in parallel with the children's encounters.

'Isaac-West' is a Jewish village close to the Arab village 'Abraham-East' (all names have been changed for ethical reasons). Despite the close geographical location and being governed by the same regional authority, the informal relationships between the citizens in both communities tend to be alienated and are sometimes tense. Within this climate, the principals of the two elementary schools, Ruth and Muhammad, work closely together, and their joint collaboration in the 'Ya Salam' Encounters programme enables them dissipate the tension and allows their pupils to get to know each other. On the morning of the first meeting, after intensive preparatory work by the participating teachers and pupils, 20 fifth grade children (age 11) from 'Abraham-East' arrived at the Jewish school. The reason for focusing on this age group is to bring change to the current situation in

which Israeli adolescents who have already developed already strong political and ethnocentric attitudes tend to object to studying a second foreign language (Arabic/Hebrew) in middle school. The developers of the programme hope that after two years of exposure to the pupils of the other culture they will be more receptive to studying these languages in middle schools.

The programme: Travelling to the “star of coexistence”

Any good educational programme needs a rationale, a narrative that translates its principles into an appealing storyline, and enjoyable social and academic experiences. The Ma’arag think-tank has developed the theme of an adventurous space-craft that flies to a remote star and discovers there the conditions which are needed to live peacefully together. Preparing such an imaginative mission entails the ‘pioneers’, i.e. the children from both villages, to plan the mission to-

bours’ culture, and the forthcoming mission they will be carrying out.

The meeting I observed was the second in the programme of five sessions. As I watched the teenagers arriving by bus from the Arabic village nearby, I noticed their concern about this first visit to a Jewish settlement. But their fears were quickly forgotten when the teachers (three from each school) welcomed them and divided them into three smaller groups. After a short explanation by Yasmin, the ‘Ya Salam’ facilitator, the teachers began with fast-paced warm-up games. Each facilitator translated what her colleague had just said into her own language: ‘now, each one of you will say what your name is’. Then they brought out stickers and asked the children to write their names on the stickers in both languages. In order to do this each pupil had to ask a child from the other school for help. After the warm-up session the children enjoyed a lunch prepared by the host school and

While sitting on the floor, working with crayons and large paper sheets, the children forgot all about the personal, cultural and language barriers ... and worked enthusiastically together for the next two hours.

gether, what they need to take with them, how they could get to know each other better, what conditions would enable them to live together there. The programme is based on ‘zoom-in’ and ‘zoom-out’ experiences that enable the children to become acquainted with their neighbours’ culture.

The first meeting is held separately at each school and the pupils are briefed about the programme, their Arabic or Jewish neigh-

then spent a joint recess together. Playing together is known to be a very effective ice-breaker, but in one of the groups two girls had a bitter quarrel, which strained the developing relationships.

After returning from recess, the groups received a colourful bi-lingual ‘invitation’ to the next activity, which was to design a spacecraft that would take them to the Planet of Co-existence. Based on the notion of ‘Seeing

things from another angle' the story is told about a small team (in this case three from each school) who develop an agenda to lead a peaceful life in a small shared living situation. Each team planned what equipment to take; how to create a comfortable and peaceful way of living with regard to religious and cultural aspects; and how to get to know each other. While sitting on the floor, working with crayons and large paper sheets, the children forgot all about the personal, cultural and language barriers (the children from the Abraham East school who already knew some Hebrew switched to speaking that language) and worked enthusiastically together for the next two hours. Their teachers remained in the classroom to watch and kept chatting with their colleagues. By the end of the session, the children returned to the circle of chairs. Each team presented the poster that they had created and explained what their considerations were and how the process had gone. The pupils then reflected upon their initial concerns how they would be welcomed and current positive feelings. Finally they stood up, held hands and said farewell.

The third meeting would be taking place a month later in the 'Beit Ha'Geffen' Arab-Jewish museum in Haifa. The children would continue to learn about the 'star of co-existence' and the actual coexistence of Jews and Arabs in Israel. They will watch a short video about the museum, and then will continue to work in mixed teams on the conditions needed to live together. Through the use of interactive games they would be enabled to write a covenant together. In the fourth session the children would be taking part in a quiz about the two cultures and then each team would prepare a poster depicting their space craft which would be hung on the wall. After all the participants have attended the poster exhibition and have listened to the explanations from the other teams they all

summarize their experiences in the teams and are given a certificate. The fifth and last session is held separately at each school. The children are shown the photos and watch the videos that were taken during the sessions and share their experiences, memories and insights.

Ruth, the principal, arrived at the 'Isaac-West' school seven years ago. She was born in a nearby town to Jewish-Iraqi parents. She recalls how her father used to invite local Arab friends to their home. She speaks some Arabic and believes wholeheartedly in principles of co-existence. It is due to this that she initiated Arabic studies in her school for fifth and sixth graders (ages 11-12) and hired an Arabic born teacher (through the Abraham Fund's "Ya Salam" programme for Arabic language and culture). She regularly meets with her colleague from Abraham East, and two years ago she participated in a Jordanian-Israeli women's task force. But even in a region where the population is made up almost equally of Jewish and Muslim citizens, with a political climate that favours cooperation, there were other voices of parents who spoke out against the programme and tried to cancel it.

The Arabic-Jewish joint encounters programme has now been expanded to include 60 schools, representing a total population of 200,000. The positive outcomes and the growing number of city mayors and school principals who ask to join the project reflect its success. But the initial warm welcome from staff is sometimes replaced later with practical as well as hidden objections as educators are actually asked to roll up their sleeves and begin the collaboration with other schools and communities. Much lobbying is still needed to convince mayors, supervisors from the Ministry of Education and school principals. The organizers know that the programme's success depends not only on the

support of high ranking officials, but also on the gradual and continuing implementation in the field; and careful and immediate guidance when tensions arise. To sum up, the Abraham Fund is rowing their boat against a very negative historical and political stream. Trying to change this is certainly a big challenge.

Case Study 4: A supportive environment: The 'Mount Carmel' elementary school

The 'Mount Carmel' elementary school (all names have been changed) is located in one of the less affluent sections of a medium sized city near Tel Aviv. The population of this quiet neighbourhood is comprised of long-term residents who immigrated to Israel from North Africa during the 1950s and young Israeli-born families who cannot afford to purchase a flat in the more well-to-do cities in the centre of Israel. The school was established in the early 60s. About 450 pupils who make up the sixteen first to sixth grade classes (age 6 to 12) are taught by 37 teachers. The single storey school building has two main wings and three additional buildings (including a petting zoo), and a large courtyard with trees and a playground that can be observed from the large windows of the main ground level building. In the vicinity of the school grounds are a municipal library, a sports hall and a cultural and sports centre. The old and quite worn-out looking school (scheduled for major renovations in 2013) seems just another typical inner-city school, but in this case there is nothing more misleading than the first impression.

Ruth, the principal, accepted her current post five years ago. After completing a BA in economics and a Masters degree in Business Administration she began her career as an economist, but she soon found the job too boring and decided to switch to teaching. She first taught economics and computer pro-

gramming and then served for eight years as a middle school principal. Then, looking for a more challenging position, she applied to the Ministry of Education for a post and after an in-depth discussion with the city's mayor, Ruth was asked to take on the leadership of an elementary school that was facing severe difficulties. It took her two years to gain the support of the staff and the parents before she pushed forward with bringing her educational vision into reality. 'The challenge we face is how to improve our pupils' academic achievements without neglecting their individual needs', she explained. Ruth tends to visit and observe classes and then confer with the observed teacher to discuss various aspects. These short meetings help solve problems and encourage staff members to improve their teaching. Her educational vision is comprised of three principles, and the first on the list is sensitivity to children's needs.

A. Caring for the children

From when children begin school, the first grade 'educators' (an all embracing teaching role) collect detailed information about them and their families. The data is collected continuously and is used throughout their six years in elementary school. Every 4-6 weeks the counselling staff review and assess the child's situation and tailor, where necessary, a wholistic personal therapeutic and educational programme to meet the child's needs. Such an individual programme may include therapeutic and counselling sessions, remedial academic assistance in subjects which the child is struggling with; referring the child to the school's boarding house (which provides lunch and assistance with homework during the afternoons); or referring the child's case to a social worker. Recognizing names and personal details and maintaining intensive follow-up is essential for educators and certainly a challenging task for principals. Every morning Ruth stands at the school gate

and says a warm ‘good morning’ to every child (‘It helps me to get to know their names, to notice whether a child has arrived with torn clothes and a sad face, and I can compliment children on their new shoes and neat appearance’).

Another aspect of the principal’s vision is that many students’ personal and academic difficulties are not properly addressed by schools, and therefore she has invited several experts to enrich the regular core curriculum with SEE. These unique programmes, especially applied in the first to third grades (ages 6 to 8), are aimed at developing some basic abilities. For example, twice a week first grade students (age 6) enjoy a lesson that takes place inside and outside the classroom, where unique didactic toys are placed on tables, and several large plastic plates, about

Approach (NDEFA), which stimulates specific neural pathways and strengthens various groups of muscles (e.g. in the shoulders and arms). Such activities and outdoor games which were common in the past are not as common today (e.g. skipping with a rope, marbles) and the didactic games help to improve the children’s motor, sensory and social development. The NDEFA was developed by Rami Katz, an Israeli developmental psychologist who has helped the school develop these activities and whose trainers continuously guide the members of staff.

In a nearby classroom the children have a weekly yoga lesson. The coach opens the lesson with a Japanese fable, followed by an interesting discussion with the children about its meaning. Then they rehearse drills that imitate animals’ postures (e.g. cats and dogs)

... the ‘Magic classroom’ aims to provide recognition and reward to pupils who have shown significant improvement and have worked hard ...

one meter in diameter, built to improve vestibular (balance) competences, are scattered along the corridors. The children are thrilled to have the opportunity to roll on the plates while carrying out academic tasks such as reading or sorting flash cards with words on them. Other children put their hands into large opaque glass bottles, covered with heavy pieces of cloth, which contain dried peas and chickpeas to improve their tactile abilities. They are asked to pull out and arrange into words small discs each with a letter written on them which are hidden in the jars. On a nearby table children are sculpting letters out of plasticine. These activities are based on the Neuro Developmental Functional

and actually massage (as if ‘kneading dough’) their peers’ bodily organs. Finally he shows them how to give a shiatsu facial massage to their cheeks and eyebrows and asks them to offer similar massages to their parents. Such activities that are taught at school and are practiced at home (e.g. how to take deep breaths to reduce stress) were found in the school’s follow-up survey to foster openness and strengthen familial ties.

Many schools suffer from insufficient resources to assist children with special needs. ‘Mount Carmel’ makes use of several programmes that broaden the therapeutic and educational assistance provided to individual

children. For example, the ‘**Magic classroom**’ aims to provide recognition and reward to pupils who have shown significant improvement and have worked hard, or to those children who live in poverty, experience academic difficulties and failure and

B. Caring for nature and the environment

Another aspect of the principal’s vision relates to the importance of the environment and its preservation. The school has developed a unique environmental preservation programme that provides the students with

The animals are cared for by several children ... who volunteer to arrive every morning to feed the animals and clean the cages.

need a place to relax. ‘I realized that reprimanding and punishing children is not as effective as rewarding them’, the principal explains. The Magic classroom is mostly used during noon hours, when children are tired and agitated. In order to provide a containing and relaxing atmosphere, the floor of the room is covered with wall-to-wall carpet, several sofas, and a large box containing toys. Twice a week each class selects and sends 3-4 children who meet specific criteria (efforts are made to send more frequently children who face difficulties). In the room they meet a special education teacher who talks with them about the reasons they were selected. She accompanies them in their play and creative activities. At the end of the session this teacher attaches a round big sticker to their shirts that says ‘I am a magic child’, and they proudly show this sign to their (envious) friends and to their parents at home. As in many other educational institutions in Israel, the school runs SEE programmes such as ‘Life Skills’ and ‘the Key of the Heart’ (Ministry of Education, 2013). These weekly session programmes are taught at each grade level by two teachers. The programmes promote social skills and help improve the learning climate in the classroom.

knowledge and shapes their attitudes about the meaning and the nature of a higher quality of living. For example, every Friday (except on rainy days) the children use the ‘green bus’, which means that they walk to and from school. In order to help the younger children, their parents wait for them at bus stops along the road. This year the school is focusing on ways to save electricity and on preserving the water quality in Israel.

The petting zoo - The garden consists of two sites: one is a small zoo which has a small inner yard and cages and tanks that hold ducks, rabbits, parrots, birds, fish and other small animals. The second site is located in a classroom where several cages contain various species of parrots, rats, hamsters and chinchillas. Both sites have been developed and expanded over the last three years, and the substantial funds needed to purchase cages, animals and food come from private benefactors and from the municipality. These sites serve two functions: for leisure activities, families and pupils from other schools can come to watch the animals, and for supporting taught zoology lessons. In one such lesson for second grade pupils (age 7) the teacher explained how birds and mammals prepare for the chilly winter nights. To back up his

explanations he gave them a parrot and a small mouse to handle. The animals are cared for by several children (known as ‘trustees’) who volunteer to arrive every morning to feed the animals and clean the cages. The trustees, who are guided by a teacher, also arrive during the recess time to watch and play with the animals. The trustees are selected by the counselling staff’s recommendations according to the expected beneficial role. The children love to volunteer and spend much of their free time with the animals, as one 3rd grade pupil (aged 8) explained: ‘Animals are like humans. We need to take care of them and it fills me with joy’. The counselling staff views caring for animals as a therapeutic activity that is especially beneficial to children who either need to develop empathetic skills or those whose families are not caring enough for them. To support this work, the school also provides animal-assisted therapy given by an expert to several children each year.

The ecological garden - In the courtyard there is a unique ‘inviting garden’ where vegetation that attracts birds and insects has been planted. During their lessons there, the young pupils (1st to 3rd grade, ages 6 to 8) plant seeds, cultivate the garden, water the vegetation and observe the animals and flowers. The school has won the Ministry of Education’s ‘green school’ award for the last four consecutive years and has also won similar local municipality awards. The principal expressed her vision:

“I wish our pupils to be more sensitive to the environment and recognize their important role in protecting it. It is for us to ensure that we wake up every morning to a more healthy, clean and safe world”.

C. Caring for the community.

The school initiates activities that promote cooperation with community-wide organizations,

such as the local sports and cultural centre, local elderly citizens, and the municipal authorities. For example, the principal invites pupils from a nearby special education school to visit the petting zoo to watch the animals; she frequently meets with neighbours to discuss common issues; the pupils are encouraged to contribute and collect goods for poor families and the like. On the morning of my visit, all the children and their teachers gathered in the large sports hall to participate in a ceremony devoted to the rights of disabled people. A day earlier, all the parents and their children attended a monthly evening that was devoted to the ‘value of the month’ – social involvement. Another way that the school connects with the community is called the ‘educators’ alignment’ – where teachers and parents meet to discuss the school’s educational policy.

Mount Carmel elementary school places special emphasis on its pupils being active and involved. The pupils run ‘the children’s society’ that consists of committees elected by the pupils themselves. The children take photos and film short video reports of school events, which are included on the school’s website. Members of the society are called upon to express their views on a host of issues, such as developing the ‘magic room’ and their expectations for the future renovation of the school. The principal invites children to her office to discuss ongoing issues. Children are asked (and feel privileged and honored) to serve one full day once a year as the ‘school’s trustee’, namely to support the secretary and help to keep the school clean. Whenever guests visit the school, the principal asks some fifth and sixth graders (age 11 to 12) to accompany and guide the visitors. The structured social organization is augmented by taught lessons on democratic thought, led by professional facilitators affiliated with the ‘Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace’. Democracy is not only taught but also actively practiced in the school. In addition, the school

... providing guidance and training children in how to understand and respect others is a long process that requires intensive efforts and continuous involvement.

has participated in a municipal campaign against violence that was launched nine years ago. All the parents and their children who participated in that initiative signed a municipal treaty that bans violence. In addition, a bylaw was developed to guide the children with regard to social norms in the school. The posters hanging on the walls reflect the school, city and country's history. They also reflect the communal values, such as the one that is devoted to pupils who are scouts and another declares 'we are one human fabric'.

Visiting the school reveals a simple 'secret': holding a clear vision of caring and having the determination to translate it into many varied actions bears effective educational outcomes.

Conclusion

As we come to the end of this chapter, we may return to the imperative '**What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow**'. Hillel knows that any short statement, no matter how elegantly and succinctly phrased, is just the first step along a long road, so he asks the heathen to go and learn the whole Torah. Such is also the lesson with regard to social and emotional education; providing guidance and training children in how to understand and respect others is a long process that requires intensive efforts and continuous involvement. It also requires the use of various methods, not only running structured lessons, but also shaping the organizational and physical environment (including a petting zoo and even the teachers' seating arrangements during recess time). Teachers and

principals also need to develop effective ways of coping with recurrent disruptions and misbehaviour. The brief psycho-educational intervention I introduced is one measure aimed at replacing the conventional punitive talk educators tend to use so frequently. And last but not least, despite being challenged by the heathen, Hillel responds with presence of mind. Such is the patient and caring example teachers need to provide to their students in how they cope with emotionally loaded situations.

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