THE JEWISH EDUCATION PROJECT | Stories of Impact

Reimagining Israel Education Through Immersive Professional Development

88% of educators *who traveled to Israel with The Jewish Education Project since October 7th feel more confident teaching about Israel. In a moment of collective grief, we created space for educators to deepen their understanding of Israeli society.*

The Story

Ariel, a **teen educator at a New York City congregation**, struggled to support her students in the aftermath of October 7th. When their Jewish Student Unions were no longer allowed to even say "Israel," Ariel's teens were overwhelmed with **grief, confusion, and doubt**. Amidst her own despair, Ariel wasn't sure how best to show up for them.

In early 2024, Ariel joined an **educator trip to Israel with The Jewish Education Project,** traveling with peers to bear witness to the aftermath of October 7th and to become a more supportive and informed teacher for her students.

Ariel's group traveled to Kibbutz Nir Oz, where a quarter of its 400 members were taken hostage or killed. They were led by a resident and survivor named Ron, who walked with them through the burned homes, thoughtfully sharing the story of each family who lived there. **These were not statistics or headlines, but real lives shattered.** Ron's account was devastating and powerful, and Ariel grasped the **urgency of her work**.

She returned home forever changed, not just in how she sees Israel, but in how she teaches it. The emotional and personal encounters helped her process her feelings and **gain confidence in talking about Israel**. Inspired by the experience, Ariel later led a trip to Israel with her students and their parents, that will stay with them forever.

The Impact

When The Jewish Education Project equips over **15,000 educators** with professional development and immersive experiences, they in turn equip thousands of students and families with nuance, resilience, and meaningful connection to Israel and Jewish life.

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Connecting Teens to Israel Through RootOne

After October 7th, many Jewish teens arrived to college feeling unprepared as they faced open hostility toward their heritage, beliefs, and identity. RootOne, an initiative of The Jewish Education Project, sends North American teens to Israel every summer. As a result, trip participants create meaningful connections to Israel and Israeli peers, and feel better equipped to speak up against hate.

The Story

In the weeks after October 7th, Hannah, a **George Washington University student and RootOne alum**, faced escalating hostility toward her and fellow Jewish students on campus. Suddenly, her campus no longer felt like home. It wasn't until a student leader from Students for Justice in Palestine spat on her that she felt she had no other choice but to **boldly speak out and stand up for herself**.

Hannah drew strength and inspiration from her 2022 **RootOne-affiliated trip through Chetz v'Keshet**, spending time with Israelis her age, experiencing the land firsthand, and **learning about Israeli history with a nuanced approach**. Hannah didn't back down in her loud support for Israel. In fact, she got louder. She became **increasingly involved in Hillel and pro-Israel student advocacy groups**. She even **bravely challenged inaccurate content in a Middle Eastern Studies class critically and constructively**. What's more: she regularly called the Israeli friends she made on her trip. They have become an ongoing source of comfort during this volatile period and have inspired her to further embrace her Jewish and Zionist identity.

Hannah turned an interaction meant to dehumanize and silence her into a display of **Jewish pride and moral clarity**, something she attributes to her RootOne trip, which has also motivated her to pursue a career in foreign policy.

The Impact

18,000+ teens have experienced transformative Israel journeys with RootOne, shaping their identities, fostering a global sense of Jewish peoplehood, and cultivating leadership skills that sustain long after they depart Ben Gurion Airport. RootOne nurtures the next generation of informed, confident, and resilient Jews who are ready to lead on campus and beyond. **92%** of RootOne alumni join a **Jewish student association/club** on campus. **70%** of alumni attribute their participation to their RootOne trip.

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Educating for a Society Free of Antisemitism

The Center for Jewish-Inclusive Learning, a division of The Jewish Education Project, has demonstrated that a thoughtfully designed curriculum can transform a lack of awareness into understanding and empathy. By scaling this proven model through accessible, unbiased K-12 resources, we aim to help educators and students explore the Jewish experience, building thriving communities free of antisemitism.

The Story

In 2024, a 12th grade English teacher in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn had a goal: to educate his students about the Jewish people. Recognizing antisemitism as a highly relevant issue and wanting to provide his students with education to understand it, he partnered with The Jewish Education Project's **Center for Jewish-Inclusive Learning** to run a **groundbreaking project**: assigning the book, ***The Golem of Brooklyn*** by Adam Mansbach, to his **ethnically diverse, largely non-Jewish class** of high school seniors.

The Center for Jewish-Inclusive Learning helped distribute the books to the entire class and supported curriculum development, with the goal of **building empathy** and **teaching about the Jewish experience** through a modern, creative take on the golem story.

The results were striking. At the beginning of the project, students, through a pre-survey study, said they either didn't know anything about Jews, or thought all Jews shaved their heads and wore wigs. After reading the book, they gained **a more nuanced understanding of Jewish life, deeper respect for Jewish culture**, and a curiosity to learn more.

The Impact

96% of the students from this class were able to express why it's important for **non-Jewish people to care about Jewish communities**, and **88%** believe that Jewish people face discrimination, a **34% increase** from prior to reading *The Golem of Brooklyn*.

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Empowering Educators to Lead

*Over **53% of Jewish American educators** we surveyed in 2024 reported that their students have experienced a spike in antisemitism since October 7th. Educators and parents turn to The Jewish Education Project for professional development that helps strengthen how they teach Israel, antisemitism, Jewish values, Jewish peoplehood, and more.*

The Story

Last year, Matt's 11-year-old son had to report 12 swastikas in his school building. As a father and educator, Matt faced the painful task of explaining the implication of a swastika to his child, something his son hadn't even yet learned in school. Having faced antisemitism growing up, Matt hoped this would never happen to his child. After learning about it, his son became the "antisemitism police" at school, **calling out hatred whenever he saw it.**

As an educator, Matt understands the power of giving students the right words to speak up. Before this crisis, he had participated in key professional development opportunities with The Jewish Education Project, especially timely webinars such as: **"How to Talk to Children About Israel Today"** and **"Talking to Teens About Operation Iron Swords."** He also participated in the **Mishlachot Areyvut** program, a life-changing trip to Israel for educators post October 7th.

Through his relationship with The Jewish Education Project, Matt grew into the educator his family and community desperately needed. Attending ongoing professional development events, he continues learning how to be a better parent and a better educator. His son doesn't just understand what hate looks like – he now knows how to call it out and stand strong in his Jewish identity.

The Impact

When **15,000+ educators** are equipped with **350+ professional development events**, **seminars, workshops, and conferences** each year, the Jewish journeys of over **500,000 children and their families** are transformed. We empower all Jewish educators with the confidence and knowledge to lead effectively in their schools and local communities.

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Elevating Jewish Education with The Jewish Educator Portal

*Jewish educators are constantly seeking ways to elevate their teaching. The Jewish Educator Portal provides over **15,000 educators** around the world with curated resources and professional development opportunities that help enhance their lesson plans, keeping their subjects – from Shabbat to Yom Ha'atzmaut – fresh and inspiring for their students.*

The Story

At Julia's childhood dinner table, her father **turned Judaism from a mere obligation into a source of inspiration**, making their heritage feel urgent, relevant, and intellectually alive. **Yet, despite loving her Jewish identity, Julia hated the experience of Hebrew school.**

Today, in her role supporting other Jewish educators, Julia sees the challenge clearly: passionate teachers do not always have access to the resources they need. Too many students still have an uninspiring Hebrew school experience rather than the kitchen table magic that ignites lifelong engagement. **The gap isn't in commitment, but rather in access to quality, practical, and energizing resources.**

The Jewish Educator Portal has become Julia's constant companion – well curated, comprehensive, and user friendly. In addition to Julia, over 15,000 educators rely on our custom digital portals. There, they access over thousands of resources, including curricula, lesson plans, guides, videos, podcasts, articles, and research.

Now, thanks to The Jewish Education Project, Julia is helping share the right educational tools so that other educators can inspire their students to feel pride and joy in being Jewish, just like her father did.

The Impact

Reaching communities in all **50 states** and dozens of countries, The Jewish Educator Portal is an indispensable partner in shifting learning from obligation to inspiration. By delivering **4,200+ curated resources**, we ensure every Jewish educator worldwide can access the tools needed to shape their students' Jewish education journeys.