

THE ABRAHAM FUND INITIATIVES 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

2016: Conflicting trends in Jewish-Arab relations in Israel

In 2016 the government approved a groundbreaking economic development plan for the Arab sector, to tackle major gaps between Jewish and Arab citizens. A further resolution allocated 1.35 billion NIS for Israel's police to tackle violent crime and personal safety in Arab communities. **Both are unprecedented and represent huge steps forward.**

At the same time, trends in Israeli public opinion worsened. The Pew Survey found that 48% of Israeli Jews support the transfer of Arab citizens from Israel; our recent survey of Arab students on campus showed that 47% experienced racism on campus. **These conflicting trends continue to shape the direction of our work - The Abraham Fund is helping implement positive government resolutions, while trying to shift worrying public opinion trends.**

Top 10 of 2016

1

MANDATORY ARABIC

The government announced **mandatory spoken Arabic** for 5th & 6th grades in Jewish elementary schools. This decision is the result of our work bringing spoken Arabic classes to **24,000** students a year.

6

TRAFFIC SAFETY

The Abraham Fund produced a series of **Driver Safety PSAs** aired on Channel 2. They reached thousands, and tackled the disproportionate amount of traffic accidents affecting Arab communities.

2

VOLUNTEERING

Our community volunteering program for post-high school Arab youth expanded to **6 towns across Israel**. **75%** of participants said that without this program, they would not have done any community service.

7

FUTURE LEADERS

The Abraham Fund now works in five **pre-army leadership academies**, teaching Israel's future leaders and opinion shapers about Arab society and Jewish-Arab relations.

3

SPOKEN HEBREW

Our Spoken Hebrew program was adopted in **50 Arab schools** in the Haifa district. The program expanded to include 3rd to 6th grades with **16,000** Arab students benefiting.

8

HIGHER EDUCATION

We piloted the first ever **cultural sensitivity training** for security and administrative staff at the Hebrew University. This course trains staff to better cater to the Arab student population.

4

RACISM ON CAMPUS

The Abraham Fund commissioned the largest ever survey of Arab students in Higher Education in Israel. **47%** reported that they had faced incidents of racism & discrimination at their college.

9

YOUNG LEADERS

The Abraham Fund launched the first **Young Adult Leadership program in Bedouin Society**, bringing together a diverse group of community activists committed to building a brighter future.

5

JOURNALISTS LEARN ARABIC

Over 100 journalists from Israeli media channels participated in The Abraham Fund's **Arabic language courses**. These aim to produce a greater will to include Arab perspectives on key and contemporary issues.

10

JEWISH-ARAB WOMEN TOGETHER

Our first **joint Jewish-Arab women's leadership group** paired graduates from Jewish and Arab women's leadership programs, working together on shared causes, and gender issues.

THE ABRAHAM FUND INITIATIVES FACES OF 2016



Amir Bakish, father of fifth grader Yonatan from the Ziv School in Ra'anana, twinned in our Encounters program with the Al-Rashidiya School in Qalansawe:



"I describe myself as a typical Israeli; I grew up in a religious Zionist home, and was never exposed to Arabs. At 18, I joined the army as a combat fighter, and interacted with Arabs from a purely military perspective. It wasn't until I began working with Arabs and started to interact on a daily basis, outside of the security world, that my personal understanding changed.

I've volunteered my time to chaperone Yonatan during these encounters, taking a vacation day from work, because I'm inspired by Arab and Jewish children meeting at such a young age. This is a fantastic program, that needs to be expanded. The more encounters, the better. Every encounter has an impact, lights a spark that can bring change. This is the only way towards shared living. I recently began learning Arabic. For generations we're going to live here together. Only through meaningful encounters and getting to know each other, can we move towards change."

Dunya Makhoulf Abu Hamed, facilitator in our pre-army academy program. Directly before their army service, Dounia teaches these post-high school Jewish students about Arab society in Israel and discusses Jewish-Arab relations:

"I'm from Haifa, from the mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood of Wadi Nis-Nas. When I turned 18, I started university and found out that residents from our building weren't eligible for scholarships from the municipality. I began to wonder what makes me different? Why I am subject to discrimination that other are not? This was my first exposure to this issue.

In college, I was deeply involved in projects bringing Jewish and Arab women together to discuss joint issues. Since then, so many places have rejected me because I'm Arab. It even impacts the business I own, where sometimes I'll bring my Jewish friend along to meetings to make sure the deal goes through.

I got involved with the Abraham Fund because I want to do something that impacts upon young people; something that can change society. My relationship with the participants in these programs gives me hope. They really internalize what I say."



Jalal Abu Alkiyan, participant in our Arab Youth Leadership program in the Negev, southern Israel:



Jalal, 28, is an English teacher from Hura, a Bedouin community, in southern Israel. He is married and father to a one year old daughter. Jalal finished high school with a high score on the psychometric exams. Everyone told him that he should become a doctor, however, after three years of studying medicine in Germany his heart wasn't in it. He left Germany and came home. Despite much resistance from his family, he re-enrolled in college in Israel and became an English teacher in the local school - which he loves!

"The course spoke to me. There's no guidance in my community to help young people find themselves and figure out what they want to do. People just do what everyone else is doing. We need serious change in Arab society. Many of our leaders are still functioning within the old social order. We have to improve the environment in which our kids are being raised so that they too can be agents of change and development for our communities."

