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Ministry of Education

**Education for co-
existence and the
prevention of racism
– Follow-up Audit**



Education for Co-existence and the Prevention of Racism – Follow-up Audit

Background

“Racism’ is any unjustified hatred of a person simply because that person is of a different race or of a different ethnic-national origin”¹. The State Education Law of 1953 (“the State Education Law”) states that its objectives are, inter alia, to teach love of mankind, respect for the cultures and views of others and teach aspirations for peace and tolerance among people and among nations. This reflects an aspiration that the educational system will play a significant role in instilling these values in society, in shaping society and in delineating future public discourse, while allowing every individual to live according to his/her choice and respecting those who are different. Additional objectives of the Law are to instill the principles set forth in the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, of respecting human rights, democratic values and tolerance and of recognizing the culture and heritage of every other population group in the State of Israel². Pursuant to the Law, the Ministry of Education is responsible for laying the foundations for these values among Israel’s pupils and taking the lead in recognizing and creating a sense of partnership among all communities in Israeli society. This partnership is tested especially during emergencies and times of social crisis, such as the global covid-19 pandemic that began in 2020.

1 Criminal Appeal 3831, **Elba vs. State of Israel** 50(5) 221, pp. 256-257 (1996).

2 Public Education Law, paragraph 2(a)(2) under the heading “Goals of the Public Education System”.



Key figures


<p>4 educational tracks</p>	<p>NIS 237 million</p>	<p>2,000 teachers</p>	<p>21 schools</p>
<p>Are offered in the Israeli education system, which reflect the main population groups – secular Jews, religious Jews, ultra-orthodox Jews and Arabs.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education’s budget for the years 2016–2019 for implementing an inter-ministerial program for the integration of Ethiopian Jews, which includes tasks to eradicate racism (the “New Path” program³).</p>	<p>Per annum (on average) attend continuing education courses on the subject of teaching tolerance and anti-racism.</p>	<p>Out of approximately 5,000 schools, as of the 2018/19 school year, participated in the “Israeli Hope” program⁴, which analyzes pupils’ readiness for peaceful co-existence according to four criteria: tolerance, sensitivity to inequality, social identity and openness to social confluence.</p>
<p>13,870 pupils</p>	<p>717</p>	<p>0 get-togethers</p>	<p>75</p>
<p>From junior high and high schools, out of 970,000 pupils in these age groups, participated in joint studies in schools from different educational tracks during the 2019/20 school year.</p>	<p>Teachers of Ethiopian origin were hired in the education system by the 2019/20 school year within the framework of the “New Path” program, compared to the target of 600 teachers.</p>	<p>Up until the completion date of the audit in October 2020, no interactions were held between pupils from the ultra-orthodox Jewish community and pupils from other communities.</p>	<p>Arab teachers were hired during the 2019/20 school year to teach in schools in the Jewish community, compared to the target of 500 Arab teachers.</p>

³ See: Government Resolution 324, “Government Policy to Advance the Integration of Israeli Citizens of Ethiopian Origin in Israeli Society” (31.7.2015); Government Resolution 609, “Government Policy to Advance the Optimal Integration of Ethiopian Israelis in Israeli Society – Programs of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Services and the Ministry of Health and the Team to Implement and Monitor the Programs” (29.10.2015).

⁴ The program led by the President, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, “Israeli Hope,” the Dov Lautman Forum for Education Policy and Accord Center at the Hebrew University.




Audit actions

 In 2016, the Office of the State Comptroller published a special report on the subject of teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism (“the Previous Audit”⁵). From May to October 2020, the Office of the State Comptroller performed a follow-up audit on the Ministry of Education’s activities to rectify the deficiencies reported in the Previous Audit. The audit was performed in the Ministry of Education – in the Social and Humanities Section in the Pedagogical Secretariat in the Headquarters for Civic Education, at the Coordinating Supervisor for Civics and the Coordinating Supervisor for History in the State education track; at the Antiracism Supervisor; in the teaching Staffs’ Administration; in the Educational Psychology Service in the Pedagogical Administration; in the Youth and Society Administration and at the Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Education, who leads the “New Path” program. Supplementary audits were performed in the Government Unit for Coordinating the Struggle against Racism in the Ministry of Justice and in the Council for Higher Education.



Key findings


 **Implementation of key components of the guiding doctrine** – The Previous Audit found that the Ministry of Education had not advanced components of the doctrine designed to drive a change in its approach towards teaching democracy, civics and ethics in the spirit of the recommendations of the public committee that the ministry had already adopted back in the mid-1990s⁶. The follow-up audit found that no changes have occurred in this regard and the Ministry has not yet begun to promote key components of the guiding doctrine, such as forming a steering committee to integrate these components and set a policy that would be translated into an operative program that would be binding upon all of the Ministry’s units. The Ministry also did not anchor the doctrine in a circular from the Director-General that would outline the milestones


⁵ State Comptroller, **Teaching Peaceful Coexistence and Anti-racism – Special Audit Report** (2016).


⁶ Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, **Kremnitzer Committee Report – Being Citizens of Israel: Teaching Civics to All of Israel’s Pupils** (1996) (“Kremnitzer Committee Report”). The Minister of Education, Culture and Sport at that time, Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, appointed the committee in March 1995.




towards teaching democracy and peaceful co-existence in all communities and throughout all educational stages.


 **Magnitude of the phenomenon of racism among pupils** – The Previous Audit found that the Ministry of Education had not developed an indicator to uniformly, methodically and consistently evaluate the magnitude of the phenomenon of racism in the education system, including behavioral parameters to rank the magnitude of racism and the schools' activities to teach peaceful co-existence in schools. The follow-up audit found that the Ministry began developing a racism indicator in the years 2015–2016, but has still not completed its development. The indicator is designed to be used as a unique tool to present an up-to-date and exhaustive status report on racism among all pupils. The Ministry has also not yet completed the mapping tool of the various aspects of the phenomenon of racism among pupils.


 **“Systemic Program for Teaching Peaceful Co-existence and Anti-racism”** – The Previous Audit found that, in November 2014, the then Director-General of the Ministry of Education had decided that the program would be operated permanently and methodically throughout the education system as of September 2016. The follow-up audit found that the Pedagogical Secretariat has still not approved the Headquarters for Civil Education's recommendations in this regard dating from 2016. The follow-up audit also found that, although the Ministry did include the subject of teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism in the objectives of its strategic plan, it did not develop any outline or practical tools for including the subject in the curricula. Furthermore, participation in the program by the schools and pupils is not measured or evaluated. Moreover, group activities for experiential learning of this subject among pupils and teachers in the schools is voluntary and takes place based on a personal decision by the school or the teacher.

 **“Special Systemic Program for Teaching Peaceful Co-existence between Jews and Arabs”** – The Previous Audit found that the Ministry of Education had not advanced the Program for Teaching Peaceful Co-existence between Jews and Arabs even though it had decided to do so already back in December 2009. The follow-up audit found that the Ministry has still not developed the Special Systemic Program for preventing racism and teaching peaceful co-existence between Jewish and Arab Pupils and that it has not mapped all of the activities on this subject being run by the Ministry's departments and the schools. Furthermore, the Ministry has still not discussed or decided whether to include this subject in a general systemic anti-racism program or in a dedicated program with separate activities.



 **Program to promote interactions between pupils from the ultra-orthodox Jewish community and pupils from all other communities** – The follow-up audit examined this issue for the first time and found that the Ministry of Education did not define specific objectives and targets in its strategic plans to promote interactions between ultra-orthodox Jewish pupils and pupils from all other communities. This despite the prejudices and negative stereotypes among youth from these communities against each other. The audit also found that pupils from the ultra-orthodox Jewish community are not interacting with pupils from other communities.

 **Integration of the subject in civics classes** – The Previous Audit found that the Ministry of Education had not made civics studies as an anchor for imparting knowledge and instilling values and emotional involvement in the issues of tolerance and peaceful co-existence. The follow-up audit found that, apart from including chapters engaging in minority populations in Israeli society in the new civics textbook, the Ministry has not yet made rectification that would make a change in this regard, including expanding civics studies to additional educational stages. The follow-up audit also found that the subject of the rifts in Israeli society is not a compulsory component being taught to all pupils studying civics⁷. The Ministry has also not re-evaluated the nature of the implementation of the new civics curriculum since 2011, particularly the chapters addressing minorities and racism.

 **Programs for professional development and Encourage the management of protected discourse** – The Previous Audit found that the Ministry of Education had not formulated a compulsory professional development program for all teachers on the subject of teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism and in fact, less than one percent of all continuing education courses at that time were dedicated to this subject. The follow-up audit found that an immaterial change has occurred in teachers' participation rate in courses dedicated to teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism, compared to the findings during the Previous audit.



Appointment of an anti-racism supervisor to the education system – In September 2019, the anti-racism supervisor was appointed in the Ministry of Education's headquarters. The supervisor is subordinate to the Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Education. The supervisor was a member of the ministerial team tasked with formulating the Ministry of Education's strategic plan for the 2020/21 school year, a team that is responsible for instilling the value of "partnership and unity in the education system." The supervisor resigned from his position and on 3.12.20, a tender for the position was published.

⁷ The subject is compulsory for all populations (excluding ultra-orthodox Jewish pupils) for one year in junior high school (usually 9th grade) and in high school.



“New Path” – inter-ministerial program for advancing and integrating Ethiopian Jews in the education system – The Ministry of Education has developed and implemented a unit of study on the subject of the Ethiopian Jewish community’s culture and heritage. It launched an “immigration and absorption week” in all educational levels; and it included a professional development course for teachers on the subject of multi-cultural skills during seminar days and courses being taught in teachers’ colleges. The Ministry also referred to these actions in circulars from the Director-General.

Inclusion of the topic of anti-racism in history classes in the State education track – The follow-up audit found that changes were made in relation to two key topics in the history curriculum in the State educational track: A unit of study was added to the history curriculum on the subject of the Druze and Circassia communities, and the development of a unit of study for 8th-grade pupils on the subject of anti-racism from a historical perspective. It was further found that a new curriculum was approved for the Druze and Circassia communities to instill the values of tolerance, acceptance of others and peaceful co-existence, and references to other cultures and societies were added to the history curriculum in the State-religious educational track.

Integration of the subject of anti-racism in the teachers’ training program – The Previous Audit found that the Ministry of Education had not taken action to make this subject an integral part of the training program for new teachers. The follow-up audit found that the committee for re-evaluating and updating the teachers’ training curriculum included compulsory study units and content on the subject of teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism in its recommendations to the Council for Higher Education in mid-2020. However, the Council for Higher Education has not yet approved the new format and the teachers’ colleges have not yet included these study components.

Key recommendations








It is recommended that the Ministry of Education continue implementing the recommendations in the Kremnitzer Committee report that the Ministry adopted long ago. It should form an executive steering committee, headed by the Ministry’s Director-General or by another ministry executive, which will set policy, monitor implementation and, at the same time, serve as a forum for reaching binding decisions, including budgetary decisions, and for resolving disagreements. Additionally, the Ministry should provide the anti-racism supervisor with the standing and tools that would enable him/her to actually integrate and manage measures to contend with racism in the education system.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Education complete the formulation and approval of a document with regard to the teaching of democracy and a democratic lifestyle to



pupils of all ages, and it should publish a Director-General's circular on the subject of tolerance and anti-racism. It is also recommended that the Ministry finalize a long-range, systemic work plan encompassing all schools and teaching staffs, and consider making participation in these activities compulsory.

-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Education complete the development of a racism indicator and initiate, analyze and map the levels of racism and of the encouragement of peaceful co-existence among all pupils in the schools. It is also recommended that the Ministry use the findings of the surveys ascertaining the magnitude of racism among pupils to review the curricula and all other after-school activities under its responsibility. It is also recommended that the Ministry consider the possibility of imposing an obligation to report incidents of serious verbal violence and racism within the framework of a Director-General's circular on the subject of promoting a safe environment.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Education map the variety of actions being initiated by various staff units to promote interactions between Arab and Jewish pupils from different communities and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. It is also recommended that the Ministry formulate a strategy for driving a turnaround in the relations between the two populations that would lead them on a path towards peaceful co-existence.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Education take action to eradicate the stereotypes attributed to the ultra-orthodox Jewish community, including initiation of get-togethers between pupils from this community and pupils from other communities. It is also recommended that the Ministry concurrently strive to instill in all pupils from the ultra-orthodox Jewish community the values of tolerance, inclusion of others and respect for all other communities and groups in Israeli society.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Education consider expanding the content of civics courses. This particularly in relation to the issues of peaceful co-existence and anti-racism, to all educational stages and to all educational tracks. It should also consider expanding civics courses to additional educational stages, evaluating the quality of the civics classes taught in the schools, and analyzing the difficulties that teachers are facing when teaching in the various educational tracks. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education consider ways to remove obstacles and to expand the number of joint civics assignments and take action to encourage the various educational tracks to cooperate during the performance of these assignments.
-  It is recommended that the Council for Higher Education complete its approval proceedings for the teacher-training curriculum, while being mindful of the importance of future teachers' initial exposure to the complexities of teaching tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Israeli society. It should also consider the importance of integrating this content in their studies at academic institutions, particularly considering the government



resolution of August 2016 about the eradication of racism and recognition of the need to train teachers in this regard.

Rectification of the main deficiencies reported in the Previous Audit

Teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism					
Audit section	Deficiency reported in the Previous Audit	Extent to which the deficiency has been rectified according to the follow-up audit			
		Not rectified	Slightly or partially rectified	Largely rectified	Fully rectified
Implementation of the key components of the guiding doctrine	The Ministry of Education did not form a steering committee headed by the Ministry's Director-General to integrate the subject, to set policy, to formulate an action plan, to resolve disagreements and reach decisions, including budgetary decisions that are binding upon all of the Ministry's units.				
Evaluation of the magnitude of the phenomenon of racism among pupils	The Ministry of Education did not develop an indicator that uniformly, methodically and consistently evaluate the magnitude of the phenomenon of racism in the education system, including behavioral parameters to rank the magnitude of the racism and the schools' activities to teach peaceful co-existence.				



Teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism					
Audit section	Deficiency reported in the Previous audit	Extent to which the deficiency has been rectified according to the follow-up audit			
		Not rectified	Slightly or partially rectified	Largely rectified	Fully rectified
systemic Program "Teaching Peaceful Co-existence and Anti-racism"	The Ministry did not formulate a program for teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism. The Ministry did not define the milestones in the program's foundation, did not map the schools and did not formulate a program for teachers' professional development.				
Special systemic program for teaching peaceful co-existence between Jews and Arabs	The Ministry of Education has not completed the formulation of the draft Director-General's circular on the subject of advancing the teaching of peaceful co-existence between Jews and Arabs in the education system since March 2011.				
Interactions between pupils from different communities	The majority of the budget that the Ministry allocated for operating programs for inter-community dialogues was allocated to one organization that has no interest in holding interactions between pupils of different communities. The Ministry has no information about the actual volume of these activities or about the budget that was utilized.				
Integration of minority teachers in schools	The Ministry did not achieve the target of hiring 500 Arab teachers to teach in schools in the Jewish community.				



Teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism					
Audit section	Deficiency reported in the Previous Audit	Extent to which the deficiency has been rectified according to the follow-up audit			
		Not rectified	Slightly or partially rectified	Largely rectified	Fully rectified
Integration of the topic of peaceful co-existence in civics classes	It was recommended to the Ministry of Education to make civics classes in the education system a key subject that imparts knowledge and instills values and emotional involvement. The Ministry has not implemented the recommendations in the Kremnitzer Committee report that it had adopted to integrate the topic in the new curriculum since 2011. It did not expand civics courses to additional age levels; it did not formulate teaching manuals on the subject of minorities and did not allocate teaching hours for this subject; matriculation exams did not include reference to the issue of the rifts in Israeli society and no format for joint civics assignments was advanced.				
Inclusion of the topic of peaceful co-existence and anti-racism in the history curriculum in the State education track	Components of the core program in all communities for teaching pupils about the history of the Arabs and Druze were not added to the curricula and emphasis was not placed on the universal principles of anti-racism and tolerance.				
Integration of the subject of anti-racism in the teachers' training program	The Ministry of Education did not take action to make this subject an integral part of the teacher training program.				



Teaching peaceful co-existence and anti-racism					
Audit section	Deficiency reported in the Previous Audit	Extent to which the deficiency has been rectified according to the follow-up audit			
		Not rectified	Slightly or partially rectified	Largely rectified	Fully rectified
Programs for professional development and limited management of protected discourse	The Ministry of Education did not formulate a compulsory professional development program for all teachers on the subject of anti-racism and dealing with prejudices. Apart from a few courses for protected discourse moderators in social science and humanities courses, it was not found that the protected discourse program is being assimilated among teachers.				



Summary

Even at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, the phenomenon of all types of racism is still prevalent in Israel and around the world, which is intensifying in multicultural societies with diverse communities such as Israel. The follow-up audit's findings of numerous deficiencies approximately five years after the previous audit was performed show that the Ministry of Education largely rectified some components and slightly rectified other components that are vital in order to advance the teaching of peaceful co-existence and anti-racism. Significant improvement is needed in order to create an educational foundation that provides a response to these complex challenges.

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education promote systemic coping with the phenomenon of racism and advance the teaching of peaceful co-existence, while conveying a message to all teachers and pupils in all educational stages in the education system about the utmost importance of this subject. It is recommended that the Ministry integrate the topics of peaceful co-existence and anti-racism in a structured way in the curricula and activities for all pupils and in its evaluations of schools and of teacher training programs.

