



reGeneration Education's mission is to promote peacebuilding by increasing access to trauma-informed education, such as the Waldorf approach, for children in crisis zones. In Israel, while there are nearly 200 Hebrew language Waldorf kindergartens, elementary schools and high schools for Jewish children, there are only three kindergartens and one elementary school for Palestinian Citizens of Israel (PCI)/ Arab Israeli children. reGeneration sought to understand the cause of Waldorf's struggle to grow in PCI/ Arab Israeli communities. After 21 months of research, reGeneration detailed its findings in: *"Closing the Gap: Increasing Access to Trauma-Informed Education for PCI/Arab Communities in Israel Through Waldorf Education."* Below is an abbreviated recap of the report's findings regarding the growth of the Arab Waldorf education movement in Israel.

Five key obstacles prevent the expansion of Arab Waldorf, which affect every stage of a Waldorf educational institution. These challenges disproportionately negatively affect PCI/ Arab Israelis who attempt to expand educational options for their children.

OBSTACLES TO ARAB WALDORF GROWTH IN ISRAEL

Obstacle #1: Systemic and Individual Governmental Biases- PCI/ Arab Israelis encounter systemic and individual biases when attempting to register a Waldorf kindergarten or school with the Ministry of Education and municipality. The registration process is opaque, abruptly changes, and is exclusively in Hebrew, creating a language barrier for PCI/ Arab Israelis. Many municipality officials also hold biases against Waldorf institutions that would compete with local state schools for budget.

Obstacle #2: Fundraising in the Face of Communal Poverty- As Israeli government funding is insufficient, Waldorf institutions must fundraise to cover all costs. PCI/ Arab Israeli communities are often low-income and cannot provide additional funding from their local tax base.

Obstacle #3: Hiring Difficulties for PCI/Arab Israeli Teachers- Unlike Hebrew Waldorf schools, Arab Waldorf schools must hire teachers from a 14,000-teacher waitlist managed chronologically by the Ministry of Education. Arab Waldorf schools may circumnavigate the list only if the teaching applicant has extensive credentials, which is rare due to affordability, language barriers, and other challenges.

Obstacle #4: Inaccessible and Culturally Irrelevant Teacher Training- Waldorf teacher training is often inaccessible and culturally irrelevant for PCI/ Arab Israelis. Arab Waldorf institutions need their teachers to understand the basics of Waldorf pedagogy in their native tongue, but there are no Waldorf teacher training programs in Arabic. The cost of Waldorf teacher training is also out of reach for most PCI/ Arab Israelis whose families often live near poverty.

Obstacle #5: High Risk of Teacher Burnout- There is a glaring lack of readily available Waldorf resources in Arabic. The onus to bridge this gap in resource availability falls onto the shoulders of

existing Arab Waldorf educators, who are required to translate existing Waldorf resources from Hebrew into Arabic and to adjust them to incorporate PCI/Arab Israeli culture. This burdens teachers with large extra workload and increases the risk of teacher burnout.

The Arab Waldorf Growth Platform contains seven actionable opportunities derived from the needs expressed through interviews conducted by reGeneration Education. These actions will lay a strong foundation for scaling Waldorf in Arab communities in Israel and throughout the Arab World.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT ARAB WALDORF GROWTH IN ISRAEL

Opportunity #1: Translate Waldorf Materials- The lack of comprehensive Waldorf materials in Arabic creates a disconnect between the extensive Waldorf scholarship — including teacher training manuals, parent engagement strategies, and teaching materials, amongst others — and Arab and bilingual Waldorf institutions in Israel.

Opportunity #2: Offer Culturally Relevant Professional Development- Implementing additional professional development for PCI/Arab Israeli teachers about the intersection between Waldorf and Palestinian Arab culture will provide greater institutional knowledge around Arab culture in Waldorf and lessen Arab Waldorf teacher workload.

Opportunity #3: Expand School Fundraising Capacity- Given the pervasive poverty in PCI/Arab Israeli communities, Arab Waldorf kindergartens and schools will need to devise a strategy to ensure financial support from the community, and philanthropic institutions in Israel or abroad.

Opportunity #4: Engage New Arab Israeli Parents- A more comprehensive and effective parent engagement model will allow more PCI/ Arab Israeli parents to conscientiously engage with Waldorf.

Opportunity #5: Create an Arab Waldorf Leadership Incubator- A Leadership Incubator will prepare a new generation of Arab Waldorf leaders. Participants may be teachers interested in taking on new administration tasks, existing administrators interested in further professional development, or individuals who wish to create new Arab Waldorf institutions.

Opportunity #6: Engage Proactively with Municipal and Ministry of Education Authorities- Many municipalities and Ministry of Education officials are resistant to new Waldorf institutions. This challenge can be ameliorated by more proactive and consistent engagement through meetings with municipality and Ministry of Education authorities in cities and towns.

Opportunity #7: Scholarships for PCI/Arab Israelis to be Trained in Waldorf- The lack of Waldorf-trained PCI/Arab Israeli teachers presents a significant challenge for sustaining existing Waldorf institutions and the growth of the larger Arab Waldorf movement. Scholarships or a scholarship fund for PCI/Arab Israelis to study Waldorf at accredited universities will allow for the Arab Waldorf movement to expand to meet the needs of this community.