

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Prime Minister Olmert at Mandel Education Conference:
"Nurturing Leadership in Education is a Crucial Step in
Upgrading Education"** 2

**An "Authentic" Jewish Experience? The Mandel Winter
Consultation 2008** 5

The Mandel Winter Consultation provided an opportunity for a select group of Jewish educators and innovators from the United States to study the topic of authenticity - a topic which quietly underlies Jewish life.

60 Faces of Education in Israel 6

A photography exhibition initiated by the Mandel Graduate Unit portrays the colorful mosaic that is Israeli education today.

Jewish Agency Managers Face a Changing Jewish World 8

The Mandel Leadership Institute teams up with the Jewish Agency to train a professional leadership prepared for what the future will bring.

'Live from Mount Sinai' 10

Combining Jewish studies with theater and educational entrepreneurship, Mandel Jerusalem Fellow Amichai Lau-Lavie brings his unique method "Storahtelling", to Israel. Haaretz reports on this creative thinker's recent endeavors.

**IDF Educational Leadership Development Program
Continues at Full Steam** 11

Twenty new fellows are welcomed to the Mandel community and encouraged to take advantage of the benefits MLI can offer them.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert at the Mandel Education Conference: Nurturing Leadership in Education is a Critical Step in Upgrading the Education System

Mandel Education Conference "60 Years of Education in Israel: Past, Present, Future"

Throughout the years, Israel has faced significant challenges in the realms of security, economics, welfare and education. As a country poor in natural resources, social capital is the main resource upon which Israel can rely to position itself as a leader in various fields. Thus, education is a necessary tool to develop and build a better future.

This past year marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. This occasion presented an opportunity to examine the educational practices of the last sixty years, the current educational reality as it is reflected in the field today, and the educational challenges of the future. These topics were explored at the Mandel Education Conference "60 Years of Education in Israel: Past, Present, Future", which was held on Thursday, December 18, 2008 at Kfar Ha'Maccabia in Ramat Gan.



Among the honorable guests were Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Minister of Education Prof. Yuli Tamir and the Director General of the Ministry of Education Shlomit Amichai.

The Conference was covered by the media including television, radio, newspapers and internet.



Newsletter January 2009

Excerpts from the Prime Minister's speech at the Conference's opening session

To read the Prime Minister's speech (full text) [click here](#) (Source: Prime Minister's Office)

Distinguished Guests,

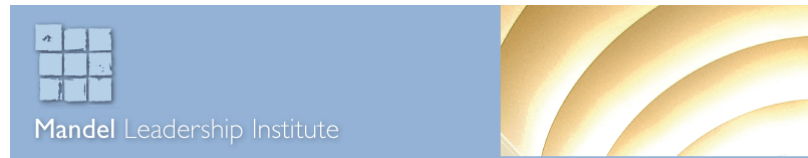
The Mandel Leadership Institute – with whose work I have long been familiar – is greatly occupied with strengthening and empowering educational leadership among those working in education in Israel and around the world.

I wish to congratulate the Graduate Unit of the Mandel Foundation for organizing this important Conference marking 60 years of education in Israel. I welcome the fact that the Conference will deal less with the history of Israeli education and more with what it could be if we continue providing the necessary tools...

When I speak of values, I mean those which will remind us who the real heroes of a civilized society are, and, ladies and gentlemen, you will not find them on the reality television shows broadcast on our screens every night during primetime. These shows – their content and the tremendous popularity they attain – arouse penetrating social questions, and at the same time gloomy regret.

I wholeheartedly believe in the mission Mort Mandel adopted – with the assistance of my beloved friend who has passed on, the late Professor Seymour Fox – and which is now under the leadership of Annette Hochstein. The bottom line is that there is no substitute for leadership based on personal example.

There can be no excellence in education without excellence in the leadership of the education system. A school cannot be good with a bad principal, and no class can excel if the teacher is bad. Therefore, nurturing leadership in education is a critical step in upgrading the education system. The Mandel Leadership Institute took the bull by the horns... The Mandel Leadership Institute is the clearest example of nurturing excellence in the level of leadership as the basis for improving education in the State of Israel.



The education system in Israel will soar again if principals and teachers improve. I was young and now I am old, and I never saw a failed school or weak students when their teachers were excellent and the school principal was outstanding.

This is the focus of the Mandel Leadership Institute's work. Even now, the Institute's contribution to the education system is impressive and encouraging. And we are only at the beginning of the journey.

I am proud to call Mort and Barbara Mandel my friends, and most of all, I am proud of their tremendous contribution to education in the State of Israel.

An "Authentic" Jewish Experience? The Mandel Winter Consultation 2008

How important is it for us to be “authentic” in our professional practices? Where does authenticity reside – in the individual, in the community, in history or elsewhere? What is the relationship between authenticity and creativity? Are there Jewish experiences that are “inauthentic”? These were some of the questions up for discussion at the Mandel Winter Consultation (MWC) which took place at the Mandel Leadership Institute (MLI) in December 2008.

Questioning the authenticity of a Jewish experience has become - in our pluralistic, increasingly post-denominational world – taboo or off-limits. The MWC provided an opportunity for a select group of Jewish educators and innovators from the United States to study this topic – one which quietly underlies Jewish life.



By focusing on the notion of authenticity, participants had the chance to examine some of the fundamental assumptions of their work, offering them new insights upon which to build.



The program included seminars taught by Mandel faculty, a project workshop, site visits and reflective time, giving the participants a taste of the kind of learning that takes place at MLI.

The seminar was also an opportunity for MLI to learn about the concerns and interests of the leading educators and social entrepreneurs of the Jewish world.

The MWC was modeled after the year-long Mandel Jerusalem Fellows program, in which fellows develop a clear and well-grounded vision for their work in the Jewish community. By engaging Jewish educators and innovators in serious thinking and discussion about their work, the Mandel Leadership Institute strives to enrich Jewish identity around the world.

[Read a reference to the Mandel Winter Consultation in the Ha'aretz newspaper](#)

60 Faces of Education in Israel

In an attempt to portray the colorful mosaic that is Israeli education today, the Mandel Graduate Unit has created a photography exhibition entitled: 60 Faces of Education in Israel. Mandel graduates, fellows and individuals with key roles within the Israeli education system took photographs which reflect how they view education in Israel. The project has come up with diverse results.

Most of the participants in this exhibition were not professional photographers; some needed coaxing to explore their artistic side and join the venture.

The concept behind the project is to give expression to the different faces of educational activity in Israel, as perceived from within the system, through a variety of different perspectives. The newly appointed photographers interacted with members of the Graduates Unit to create a dialogue helping them find their unique perception and the best way to illustrate their insight from the exclusive view of the photographer.

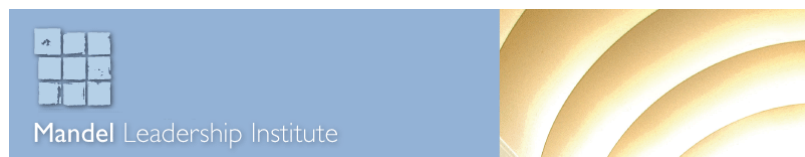


“At its best, photography can portray many different aspects – hidden and exposed – of an infinitely multifaceted reality,” said MSEL graduate Osnat Bar-Or, who is acting as artistic advisor to the exhibition.

“The exhibit displays a wide variety of projects, from the fields of art, music, and technology, together with photos that reveal absence, density, violence and neglect. They encompass contemporary trends in education as well as its timeless aspects, which include the classroom, the hallway and the chalkboard.”



Contributors to the exhibition include Mandel Graduate and Mayor of Ranaana Nachum Hofri, Mayor of Abu Ghosh Salin Jaber, and several Mandel fellows. Photographs featured in the exhibition were selected by a professional committee made up of Mandel graduates who work in the arts and members of the Graduate Unit.



Newsletter January 2009

A booklet that was distributed at the Mandel Conference presents the story of each photograph and why it represents education in Israel. The exhibition was displayed at the Mandel Education Conference, which took place on December 18, 2008 at Kfar Ha'Maccabiah in Ramat Gan.

[To view photos online \(Description in Hebrew\)](#)

Jewish Agency Managers Face a Changing Jewish World: The Mandel Leadership Institute teams up with the Jewish Agency to train a professional leadership prepared for what the future will bring

Jewish organizations are realizing the need to constantly assess their changing environment if they wish to remain focused, relevant and cutting edge. The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) is no exception, as it faces diminishing funds, dwindling sources of aliyah, and the proliferation of other Jewish organizations dealing with Jewish education, aliyah and Israel. In an attempt to ensure that it continues to play an effective and central role for the Jewish people into the 21st century, the Jewish Agency has begun a process of strategic reassessment of the environment in which it operates, and implications for priorities, structure and the role it plays in the Jewish world and Israel.

As part of JAFI's commitment to improving the operational capacity of the organization, the Mandel Leadership Institute was asked to develop a program for a cadre of middle management designated to be the Jewish Agency's reserve of new senior leaders for tomorrow.



The initiative to start the program at the Mandel Leadership Institute came from the Jewish Agency, as Dr. Rimona Wiesel, Director of Training, Human Resources Unit, explained: "Once we defined our expectations from the future leaders, and decided that what we want to do in this program is to develop leadership, we came to the best in the field."

The Professional Development Program for Future JAFI Leaders, which began in January 2008, aims to examine the assumptions, basic concepts and perceptions shaping the work of the Agency, with an attempt to examine their suitability to the constantly shifting environment. Participants of the program, who hail from various departments of the Jewish Agency, were recognized as potential candidates for senior leadership positions in the future.

“We aspired to create a leadership program that can transcend departmental divisions within the Jewish Agency; enrich their knowledge of subjects at the heart of the Agency’s work, strengthen participants’ professional identity and enhance their understanding of the organization, thus enabling this next-generation of leaders to identify with and take responsibility for the bigger picture,” said Richard Juran, Director of Management Excellence Programs at MLI.

"In a uniquely ‘Mandel’ style, the program constantly examines the interplay between theory and practice,” continued Juran. “The training also focuses on professional identity and employs policy and management studies to teach about leading an organization through change – which is a grounding the Jewish Agency wants its leaders to have."

Modules in the program include ‘Building the Map’ – a look at Jewish sociology, demography, economics and philanthropy; ‘Community’ – which examines the concept, the models and specific communities in the Jewish world; ‘Professional Identity’ – in which participants explore the core values that inform their vision and guide their practice; ‘Organization in a Changing Environment’; and ‘Policy and Management’. During this last module, which occupies approximately one third of the 18 month program, participants also research and write policy papers.



So far, the Professional Development Program has received impressive feedback from its participants, but can this course really make a difference to the future of Jewish Agency? Juran is optimistic: “MLI can help the Jewish Agency cultivate better prepared, more capable, grounded, competent, professional leaders who will be better equipped to help the organization deal with the dramatic changes it faces.”

Mandel Excellence Programs currently include a variety of organizations, among them the Jewish Agency for Israel, JCC Association, the World Confederation of JCCs and the Israel Association of Community Centers.

'Live from Mount Sinai'

Combining Jewish studies with theater and educational entrepreneurship, Mandel Jerusalem Fellow Amichai Lau-Lavie is bringing his unique method "Storahtelling" to Israel. Haaretz reports on this creative thinker's recent endeavors.

"Torah service is a disservice," says Amichai Lau-Lavie, moving easily between the rhyming discourse of hip-hop and advertising slogans, between biblical quotations and academic reflections, as he discusses his current project: finding a way to engage Israelis with the texts of the Bible. "I should have gone into advertising," he says, "but my customers are not buying something - they're getting something."



Lau-Lavie is one of a select group of Jerusalem Fellows - who are "changing the definition of what it means to be a Jewish educator," according to Abigail Dauber Sterne, an official at the Mandel Leadership Institute, which sponsors the fellows enterprise...

...Reclaiming a ritual that has become, in his words, "so boring no one wants to go near it," through music, audience participation and performance art, Lau-Lavie's method - "Storahtelling" - revives the ancient role of interpreter in the synagogue, "translating" the texts into contemporary discourse. Although he has met substantial success in overcoming the apathy of American Jews...

To read the rest of the article by **Ayelet Dekel**, featured in **Haaretz**, **[click here](#)**

To read more about Storahtelling, **[click here](#)**

IDF Educational Leadership Development Program Continues at Full Steam

“We, like the IDF, believe that the essence of education is character building, acquiring values and knowledge,” said Annette Hochstein, President of the Mandel Foundation-Israel, in an opening ceremony to welcome the 4th cohort of the IDF Educational Leadership Development program.

The ceremony was attended by Marcela Asulin, Head of the IDF branch for female soldiers, Education and Youth Corps; Annette Hochstein, President of the Mandel Foundation-Israel and Dr. Eli Gottlieb, Director of the Mandel Leadership Institute (MLI).

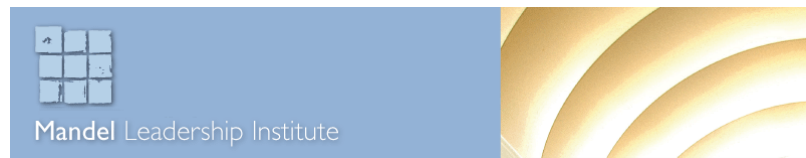


“We have learned from previous cohorts, just how significant the role of IDF education officers are – your professional decisions and the work you do influence so many Israeli youth in their formative years,” said Hochstein to the new fellows, stressing the importance of their contribution as IDF officers to Israeli society.



The 20 new fellows were welcomed to the Mandel community and encouraged to take advantage of the benefits MLI can offer them. “We invite you to take a journey of personal introspection and public examination that will take you deep inside the issues of Israel society,” said Hochstein. “It is likely to be a difficult journey, but also an opportunity for growth and both personal and leadership development.”

The new cohort learned about the other programs of the Mandel Leadership Institute from MLI Director Dr. Eli Gottlieb, who invited the officers to get to know fellows from other programs and other parts of the world, interact and exchange opinions with them.



Newsletter January 2009

Marcela Asulin, herself a graduate of second cohort of the IDF Educational Leadership Development Program, told participants: “You will feel the effect of the tools you will acquire here in your daily activity, and you will understand the significance of elements of this program such as personal instruction and reflective practice.”

“Remember that your time here is a gift – so make the most of it,” concluded Asulin.