

עם ישראל חי
AM ISRAEL CHAI
2025 שבוע התפוצות



"They That Sow in Tears Shall Reap in Joy"

The impact of the events of October 7 on Jewish communities and
Jewish schools in the Diaspora

March 2025 | Adar 5785

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המכון למדיניות העם היהודי
JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY INSTITUTE



Ministry for Diaspora Affairs
and Combating Antisemitism



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Amichai Chikli,

Minister for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism

The Jewish people have experienced an unprecedented dramatic and complex period over the last two years. The events of October 7 shook the very foundations of Jewish existence worldwide, and their repercussions continue to affect Jewish communities in the Diaspora in terms of personal security, a dramatic rise in antisemitism, and a sense of connection and solidarity with Israel. In this context, Jewish education repeatedly proves to be the backbone of Jewish identity and a critical component in ensuring the continuity of our people.

Jewish schools in the Diaspora are not merely educational institutions; they are vibrant communities, nurturing proud Jewish identity and building a strong connection with the State of Israel. Studies clearly show that education within a Jewish school framework is the most effective way to ensure future commitment to Judaism and Israel, regardless of the students' religious or family background. Graduates of Jewish education integrate into community institutions, take on leading roles within them, and raise their children in Jewish tradition. In a time when external pressures on the identity of Diaspora Jews are increasing, the role of Jewish education becomes more significant than ever.

This report is presented with a clear recognition of the strategic importance of Jewish schools and with a deep commitment from the Israeli government to support them. Since the events of October 7, we have witnessed an unprecedented wave of antisemitism

in public educational institutions worldwide, leading many Jewish families to reconsider their educational choices. While some communities have seen a significant increase in enrollment in Jewish schools, in other places, a lack of resources, economic constraints, or inadequate educational infrastructure still pose barriers for many.

In this reality, the duty of the State of Israel is clear: we must act, in partnership with Jewish communities and organizations working in the field, to ensure that every Jewish child who wishes to do so can study in a Jewish educational framework that strengthens their identity and deepens their ties with their people and country. We are committed to extensive investment in innovative educational programs, supporting teachers and administrators, creating partnerships with Jewish schools around the world, and providing pedagogical and strategic resources to help the Jewish education system adapt to the new challenges.

This report is a call to action. We are at a historical point in time, where crisis and challenge are intertwined with a rare opportunity. We must ensure that the surge in the sense of Jewish identity and Jewish connection we have seen since October 7 translates into a long-term educational reality that guarantees a strong future generation, connected and committed to its people and country. The State of Israel will not stand idly by. The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism will continue to act with full force to strengthen Jewish education in the Diaspora, understanding that it is the key to ensuring the future of the entire Jewish people.

Sincerely,



Hana Dorsman

CEO of UnitEd

Dear all, the current report, which we are honored to present to you, is the result of comprehensive and in-depth research on the implications of the events of October 7 on Jewish communities in the Diaspora. The report focuses on the central role of Jewish schools in strengthening Jewish identity and the connection with the State of Israel, and on the critical importance of investing in them at this time.

UnitEd – Long-Term Commitment to Jewish Education in the Diaspora

- UnitEd was founded in 2018 as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, with a clear vision: to strengthen formal Jewish education around the world to enhance Jewish identity, connection to Israel, and the bond of Jewish students worldwide with their communities.
- Today, UnitEd operates in more than 40 countries, in collaboration with over 600 schools, philanthropic foundations, Jewish communities, and local and international Jewish educational organizations. The organization works on several key action axes:
- Increasing the number of students in Jewish schools – Various projects and partnerships aimed at addressing this challenge through precise marketing, enhancing the value proposition of schools in their communities, family guidance, building new economic models, reducing costs, expanding audiences, and more.

- Educational Leadership and Teacher Status – Content and pedagogy training, strategic processes, placement, and providing coaching and consulting services for teachers, coordinators and principals in Jewish schools.
- Educational Content – Developing, translating, and providing tailored, relevant, and updated lessons and curricula on Judaism, Zionism, and Hebrew.
- Professional Networks – Developing, nurturing, and building professional networks for all teaching levels to develop and strengthen the teacher's status, enable peer learning, define needs, and find common solutions.

Since the events of October 7 and the Iron Swords War, UnitEd has expanded its activities to urgently address the new challenges Jewish communities are facing:

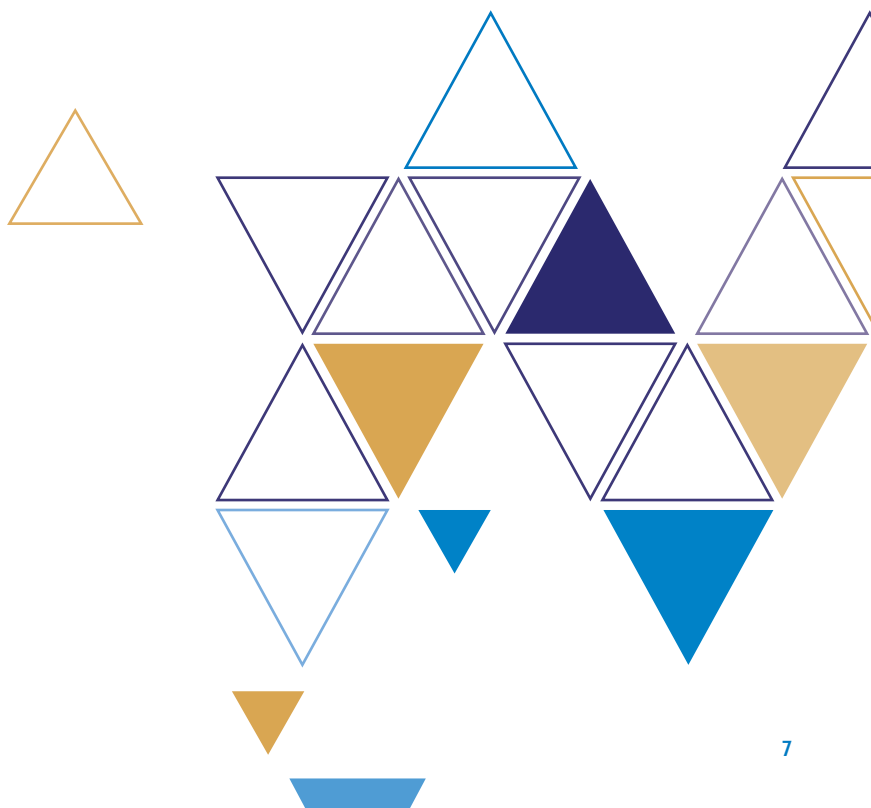
Project AlephBet - This project, aimed at increasing enrollment in Jewish schools in North America, began before the war. After October 7, its budget was reduced, but it gained renewed importance due to the increased demand for Jewish schools, as explained in the report below, stemming from a heightened desire for community involvement on one hand and rising antisemitism on the other.

Educating About Israel – Following October 7, schools reported an immediate need for information they could convey to students. Consequently, the most urgent solution was to create educational content for all ages that provided tools to understand

the situation initially and later served as a reliable source of information for school communities regarding the war and Israel. Additionally, teacher training sessions were held on resilience, education about Israel, war updates, and more. Ultimately, over 150 educational units were developed in four languages, which were downloaded thousands of times from UnitEd's digital platform, and seminars attended by thousands of teachers were conducted. Furthermore, today UnitEd is a member and leader in several groups seeking to define the future of Zionist education about Israel in the Diaspora.

Global Virtual Events – To strengthen Jewish pride and a sense of belonging, UnitEd began regularly conducting virtual events for schools, such as prayers for Israeli soldiers and events to commemorate Yom Haatzmaut and the events of October 7. Tens of schools and thousands of children participated in these events each time.

Leadership Networks – Together with the Department of Education of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), The Jewish Agency for Israel, and The Pincus Fund, UnitEd established a global leadership forum for senior leaders in formal Jewish education worldwide. Today, this forum includes more than 40 network managers, opinion leaders, and philanthropic foundation representatives from Israel and around the world.



This report was written in recognition of the critical importance of the current moment for the future of the Jewish people. It is based on in-depth research conducted by Rosov Consulting company, integrating studies by JPPI and many other entities, and presents updated findings on the implications of the events of October 7 for the Diaspora Jewry. The report is structured into four main parts:

Analysis of trends in Jewish communities since October 7, focusing on the rise in antisemitism and its impact on the daily lives of Jews around the world. This section includes an analysis of changes in Jewish identity and the connection to Israel.

A review of the impact of October 7 on Jewish education worldwide, including how schools are coping with the increase in antisemitism, the mobilization of staff and organizations to rethink education about Israel at this time, and the deep need for teachers and educators to receive training in these subjects.

How these trends and others are affecting **enrollment patterns in Jewish schools worldwide**.

The conclusion of the report contains **practical recommendations for educational policy** on issues where the investment of the Israeli government is crucial, to ensure the continuity and resilience of Jewish identity in the Diaspora, and to strengthen the connection between Israel and the various communities.

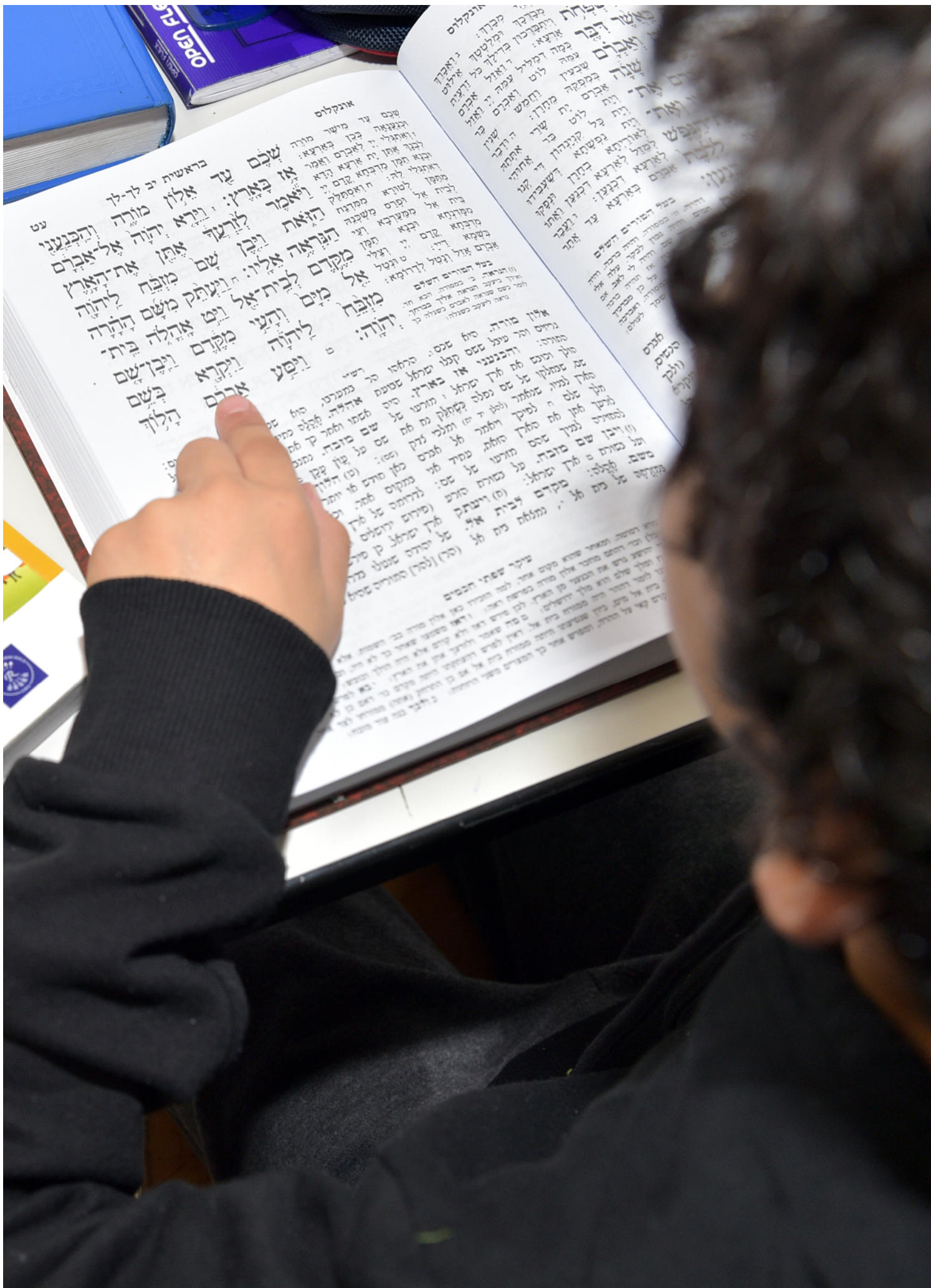
We would like to thank all the partners who were part of the report production and research: The

Honorable Minister of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, Mr. Amichai Chikli, for his steadfast commitment to promoting Jewish education in the Diaspora. To the ministry's General Director, Mr. Avi Cohen-Scali, for his professional leadership and dedication to providing strategic responses to Jewish communities and their needs, and to the entire ministry staff for their professionalism and dedication in formulating and leading solutions. To our partners around the world, including PaJeS, a network of Jewish schools in the UK, the Alliance Israélite Universelle network in France, the FAB project in Australia, and the Prizmah Jewish schools' network in North America, along with other organizations and members of UnitEd's advisory committee, for their significant contributions to the research and to establishing the global situation. And of course, to the Rosov Consulting research company for conducting a thorough and in-depth study that provides a broad picture and allows us to define future directions of action.

We hope that this report will be an important tool in shaping the policy of Jewish education in the Diaspora and will serve as a basis for a broad strategic dialogue between the Government of Israel, Jewish educational institutions, and Diaspora communities.

Sincerely,

חנה נוסר



Introduction

In Jewish communities in the Diaspora today, young Jews learn and participate in activities at Jewish schools more than in any other communal activity. Approximately 400,000 children aged 3-18, in Jewish communities around the world, study general subjects alongside Jewish studies in schools of all Jewish denominations¹.

Jewish schools are also the best means of preserving Jewish life outside the State of Israel. Research shows that these schools are a foundation for Jewish continuity², strengthen the connection to Israel³, serve as incubators for future Jewish leadership (volunteer or paid)⁴, and act as anchors for a stable Jewish community⁵. Graduates of these schools, regardless of their family background, feel a strong commitment to raising their children as Jews⁶. No other educational action can ensure such far-reaching results concerning children, families, and communities.

The climate and atmosphere in Jewish schools in the Diaspora are closely linked to broader social trends and contexts. What happens in schools largely depends on the amount and variety of resources the local Jewish communities have. Since the horrific events of October 7, 2023, many of these communities have experienced turmoil but also growth.

This report presents the processing, integration, and summary of various studies on the impact of the events of October 7 and the subsequent period on Jewish communities worldwide. The report also examines the implications of these developments on schools and their enrollment.

In the final part of the report, recommendations are presented for the Israeli government and its policymakers, aimed at helping schools cope with these events and leveraging the momentum created by them to strengthen Jewish identity in the Diaspora.



1. The impact of the events of October 7 and the Iron Swords War on Jewish communities

Antisemitism

Since October 7, 2023, Jewish communities in the Diaspora have been grappling with shocking waves of antisemitism. In 2024, Jews in Canada (75%)⁷, North America (78%-90%)⁸, Latin America (91%)⁹, and France (96%)¹⁰ reported that antisemitism has intensified in their countries since October 7. Immediately following the most severe attack in the history of the State of Israel, there was a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents in the UK, France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, America, and Germany. These trends reflect the highest rise in antisemitic events in those countries¹¹, and the rate of incidents has remained high since then¹².

The increasing antisemitism has profoundly affected the behavior and conduct of Jews. Jews across Europe (78%)¹⁹, Canada (60%)²⁰, the United States (46% among ages 18-40)²¹, and the UK (73%)²² reported that the upsurge of antisemitism after October 7 undermined their sense of security due to their Jewish identity. Many Jews are more fearful of publicly displaying their Jewishness: 22% of Australian Jews feared to show their Jewishness, and 38% indicated they choose to conceal their Jewish symbols²³. In the United States, only 39% reported feeling safe wearing Jewish symbols in public, while 42% reported they are afraid to do so. 64%²⁴ of British Jews reported they are afraid to openly display their Jewish identity²⁵, and 66% of Jewish leaders in Latin America think it is unsafe to

wear Jewish symbols in public²⁶. Many Jews reported severed friendships with non-Jews because of antisemitic or anti-Israel statements or because non-Jews disapproved of their support for Israel. Among British Jews, there is an increasing feeling that non-Jews hold them responsible for the actions of the Israeli government²⁷, and Jewish leaders in Europe feel that events in Israel could provoke antisemitism in their countries²⁸. A report from The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism stated that since October 2023, antisemitic incidents have increased in Europe, especially following reports of many Palestinian casualties²⁹.

Figure 1. Examples of the Prevalence of Antisemitic Events Worldwide



Table 1. Personal Impacts of Antisemitism on Jews Around the World

United States	47% of all young people under the age of 35 stopped talking to another person, face-to-face or online, because of an expression related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
United States	13% of respondents ended friendships or relationships due to disagreements about the war, and 12% did so because of antisemitism.
Europe	38% of leaders of Jewish organizations in Europe reported growing distant from their non-Jewish friends.
United States	33% of Jewish students who responded to the survey lost friends due to the conflict; at elite university campuses, the rate reaches 45%.
United States	43% of people aged 18-40 felt unwelcome or excluded from a group because of their views or the group's views on Israel.
UK	24% of Jewish respondents feel that there has been a distancing from their non-Jewish friends.

Jews and Israel

Many surveys conducted among Jews in the Diaspora after October 7 tried to understand their feelings towards Israel³⁰. In Australia, 91% of respondents said they felt some emotional connection to Israel. In Canada and the United States, the rates were lower: 70% of Canadian Jews³¹ and 79% of American Jews³² reported feeling an emotional connection to Israel. Similar data was recorded in the UK, where 78% of Jews reported some emotional connection to Israel.³³

A survey conducted among American Jews aged 18-40 found that although 90% reported caring about what happens in Israel, only 76% reported feeling connected to Israel. Among those who had visited Israel before, the rate of respondents who

felt connected was 86%³⁴, while among those who had never visited, it was 68%. Jews who grew up in traditional families and had connections to the Jewish world (summer camp, synagogue, school, etc.) tended to support Israel more than those who did not have such connections³⁵. A survey conducted among college-age Jews in the United States found that 39% felt very close to Israel shortly after the events of October 7, but only 36% felt this way in the spring of 2024. In that study, an increase in the sense of connection to Israel occurred only among Jews who indicated they had a strong connection to Judaism. Among Jewish leaders in Europe, support for Israel went up in priority (from 14th place in 2021 to 5th place), and 83% of them believe that the State

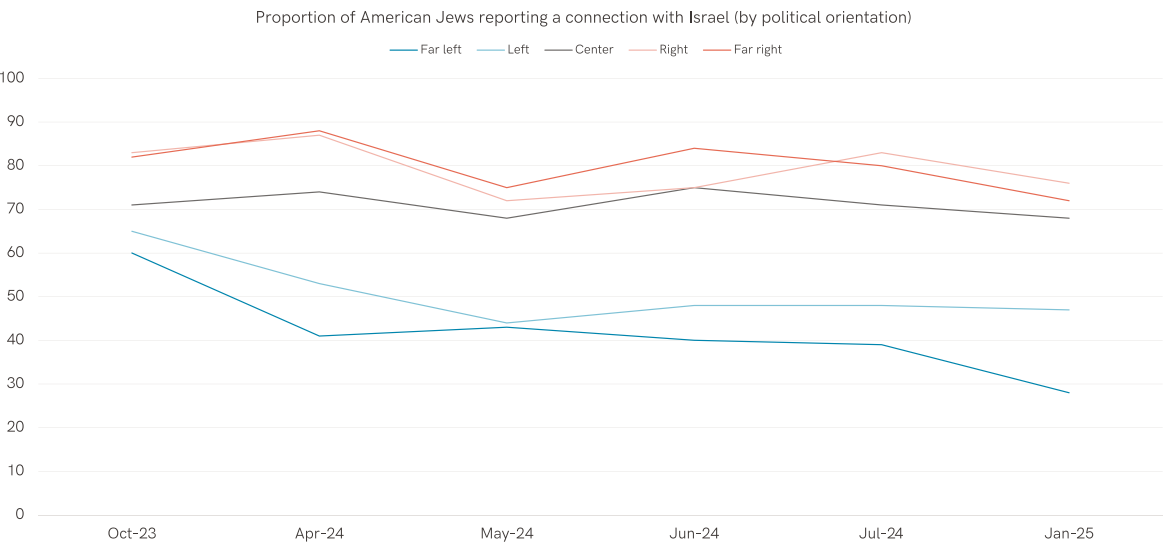
of Israel is critical to the existence of Jewish life in Europe (an increase of 2.36%)³⁶. In other words, the emotional connection of Jews to Israel is strong, especially as respondents had a strong connection to Judaism or involvement in the Jewish community before October 7.

A more complex question to assess is whether Jews in the Diaspora feel closer or more committed to Israel since the October 7 massacre. This question is methodologically challenging because it relies on respondents accurately remembering their feelings towards Israel before October 7 and then reporting how they feel now³⁷. Nevertheless, various studies have attempted to measure this around world. In Europe, the largest increase in these measures was reported:

82% of Jewish organization leaders in Europe reported

feeling more committed than their commitment before the war³⁸. 68% of Jewish youth from France reported feeling closer to Israel in a survey from the beginning of 2024³⁹, and 47% of British Jews reported feeling a stronger emotional connection to Israel in July 2024⁴⁰. It is important to note that along with reports of strengthened commitment and closeness, there are studies indicating erosion in these measures over the past year and a half. A study conducted among American Jewish students found that the connection to Israel peaked in October 2023 and has since been in a steady decline, except among Jews with a strong connection to Judaism⁴¹. Similar results were observed in a study conducted by the JPPI, which showed an overall decline in feelings of connection to Israel among American Jews across the political spectrum from October 2023 to January 2025 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. American Jews' feelings of connection to Israel over time, according to political orientation.⁴²



Another way to examine the connections of Jews in the Diaspora with Israel is to check if they actively supported Israel after October 7. In the first five weeks after October 7, 57% of surveyed Australian Jews reported participating in a pro-Israel event or publicly displaying something pro-Israel⁴³. Such activity among Australian Jews after October 7 aligns with the survey findings where 37% of respondents noted that their concern for Israel's security after October 7 was so deep that they felt as if their lives were in danger⁴⁴. By early 2024, almost 50% of Jewish leaders in Europe mentioned that the likelihood of participating in public action in support of Israel increased after October 7⁴⁵. Among American Jews aged 18-40, 69% reported some active involvement by June 2024, and 77% were interested in learning more about Israel or participating in discussions about Israel⁴⁶. In other words, following October 7, there was a peak in the commitment of Diaspora Jews to Israel. This commitment is also reflected in the immense resources directed from the Diaspora to Israel in the months after the war broke and in individuals' willingness to act through various channels in their communities for Israel⁴⁷. However, this commitment has been waning since then. In other words, there is now a historic opportunity for increased commitment of Diaspora Jews towards the Jewish people, the State of Israel, and Jewish life, but it is crucial to act quickly and seize this opportunity before it passes.

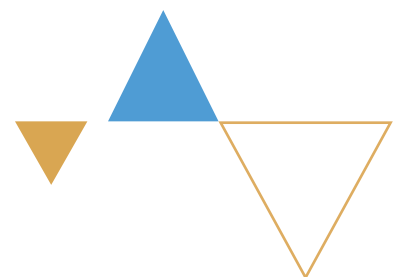


Jews and their connection to the community and their Jewish identity

The strong impact of the events of October 7 on the connection of Jews in the Diaspora to Israel was also evident in their connection to Judaism. American Jews in particular were deeply affected by the massacre: between 48%⁴⁸ to 54%⁴⁹ of respondents reported feeling more connected to their Jewish identity than before the war. American Jewish students reported an increase in the importance they attributed to their Jewish identity after October 7, regardless of their level of community involvement or prior connection to Judaism⁵⁰.

Diaspora Jews also reported a stronger connection to other Jews after October 7. In the UK, 39% of surveyed Jews felt closer to their Jewish friends, and 39% felt very connected to the Jewish community, a significant increase compared to previous studies⁵¹. American Jews studying in higher education institutions reported feeling closer to the Jewish community after the events of October 7, regardless of their religiosity and Jewish background. However, over time, a decrease in the intensity of this connection was observed in all groups, and it was noted that Jews with a weak connection to Judaism reported feeling less connected to the Jewish community than before October 7⁵². Beyond emotional connection, American Jews were more involved in Jewish life compared to before the war. 43% of respondents indicated that they were interested in increasing their involvement in Jewish life or had actively have done so, a phenomenon dubbed "The Surge." This phenomenon crosses involvement levels and is particularly prominent among singles aged 18-34, families aged 35-54, and individuals aged 55-74⁵³. In Europe, Jewish community leaders reported a 30%

increase in the number of community events held at the beginning of 2024 compared to the period before October 7⁵⁴. These patterns indicate that the current point in time is a special opportunity for Jewish communities in general and Jewish schools in particular, if they can leverage the sharp increase in interest in Jewish identity and belonging to strengthen ties to Judaism and Israel. Jews feel more connected to Israel, to their Judaism, and to each other on a scale not seen for decades. However, the erosion in these figures over the past year and a half indicates that this is a unique moment that should not be missed.





2. The impact of the events of October 7 and the Iron Swords War on Jewish Schools Worldwide.

Schools, wherever they are, are deeply influenced by the social and political climate in which they operate; this is also true for Jewish schools⁵⁵. The schedule and curriculum reflect the community's expectations and needs, and if the schools are recognized by the state and its education system, they must also comply with various governmental regulations that limit them⁵⁶.

The trends described in the previous section have posed challenges and created opportunities that schools need to address. As we will see, many schools require support to continue performing their educational mission effectively: ensuring that their students graduate with knowledge about contemporary Israel, pride in their Jewish identity within the general society, and a desire to contribute to Jewish life and Israel.

Educators Under Pressure and Shortages

Educators are at the educational forefront since the massacre of October 7 – both in the context of Israel and local antisemitic events. In many countries, Jewish educators report that parents and students ask them to help explain the new expressions of antisemitism in their local communities⁵⁷. The non-Jewish environment expects them to respond to images of death and destruction in Gaza broadcast on social media and television. At the same time, educators are expected (and willing) to meet the

growing needs of their students' families⁵⁸. These families expect educators and schools, among other things, to provide up-to-date information about Israel and the war, and to offer skills to combat antisemitism and advocacy for Israel from a Zionist perspective. Not surprisingly, Jewish educators report difficulty in meeting these needs⁵⁹. Like other Jewish adults, educators are also experiencing the whirlwind of emotions created during this period but must simultaneously guide those who depend on them, mediate, and explain the situation.

A study conducted in November 2023 among more than a thousand educators in formal and informal Jewish educational organizations worldwide, including a considerable number of Jewish school teachers, highlights the recognition of the historical significance of this period in Jewish history and the acknowledgment of educators' role in "helping students cope with the era." However, only 35% of respondents reported a high ability to meet this challenge⁶⁰. In response to an open survey question focused on the main challenge of the current period, one educator described their involvement as follows:



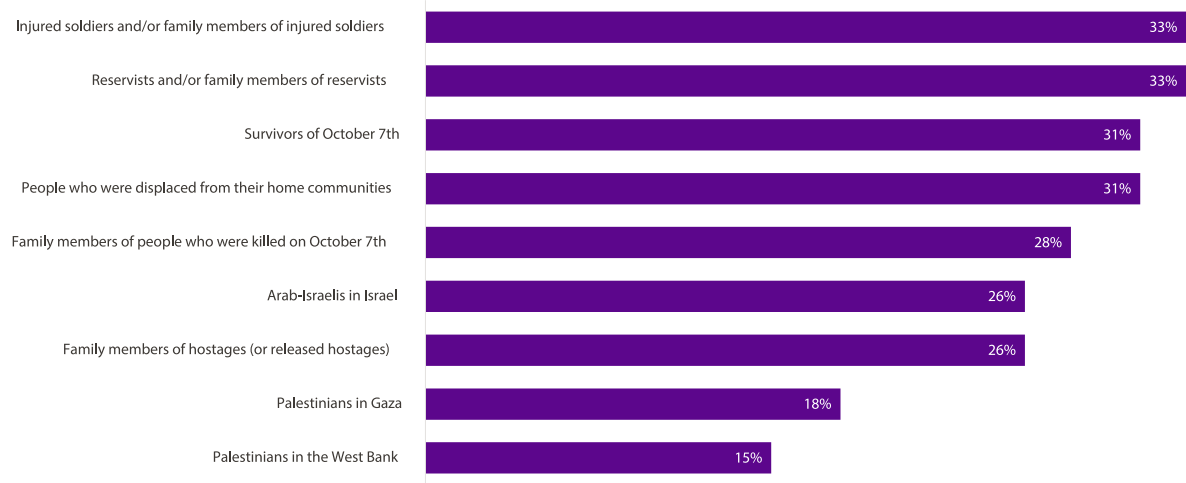
"I help students understand a world that has become frightening; provide historical context for what is happening now. I do my best to teach others what I know"⁶¹.

A follow-up study conducted from June to August 2024 among some respondents from the first study found that 42% believed they could significantly or very significantly help students during this period, a slightly higher rate than the first study⁶². According to the follow-up study, although many felt solidarity (with the Jewish community and Israel), even more reported anxiety and despair, and only 38% felt they received professional support from the educational institution's management⁶³. Two additional studies conducted among educators who participated in professional development programs in Israel between February and August

2024 help identify the main factors contributing to the significant difficulties educators experience during this time. Firstly, educators report a lack of sufficient understanding of what is happening in Israel, let alone the skills on how to present this information in the classroom. Responses from 50 educators from Latin America, Europe, and South Africa also reinforce this broad finding. Although two-thirds of respondents reported being familiar with the "main issues in Israeli society post-October 7," the same proportion (see Figure 3) indicated a lack of confidence in their ability to address specific groups.

Figure 3. Lack of Confidence Among Educators
"To what extent are you confident in your ability to talk about the experiences of the following social groups?"

Below are the percentages of participants who chose "a lot" or "very much" (the top two points on the scale)⁶⁴.



Secondly, beyond the lack of sufficient information about what is happening in Israel, educators also lack the broader picture, the "big story," they are supposed to convey to their students. One of the respondents described it this way:

”

"Education on issues related to Israel has become 'terra incognita' for me. The previous narratives are no longer relevant, and our students and stakeholders need knowledge and skills to explain Israel, educate about Israel, and survive. Therefore, our educational mission is of crucial and vital importance"⁶⁵.

Educating about Israel after October 7

Educators in Jewish schools are at the forefront of addressing and responding to contemporary challenges, while school administrations react by adapting teaching strategies on issues related to Israel. Open responses in questionnaires and interviews, answered by more than 200 educators in North America, indicate the changes following October 7:



Expanding scopes.

Schools integrate essential content about Israel from the early grades and throughout all school years.



Incorporating into curricula.

Schools integrate studies about Israel within the teaching of other subjects and/or various activities, rather than as a separate topic.



Increasing collaborations.

Schools are strengthening partnerships with Israeli institutions and incorporating Israeli speakers and guests more than before.

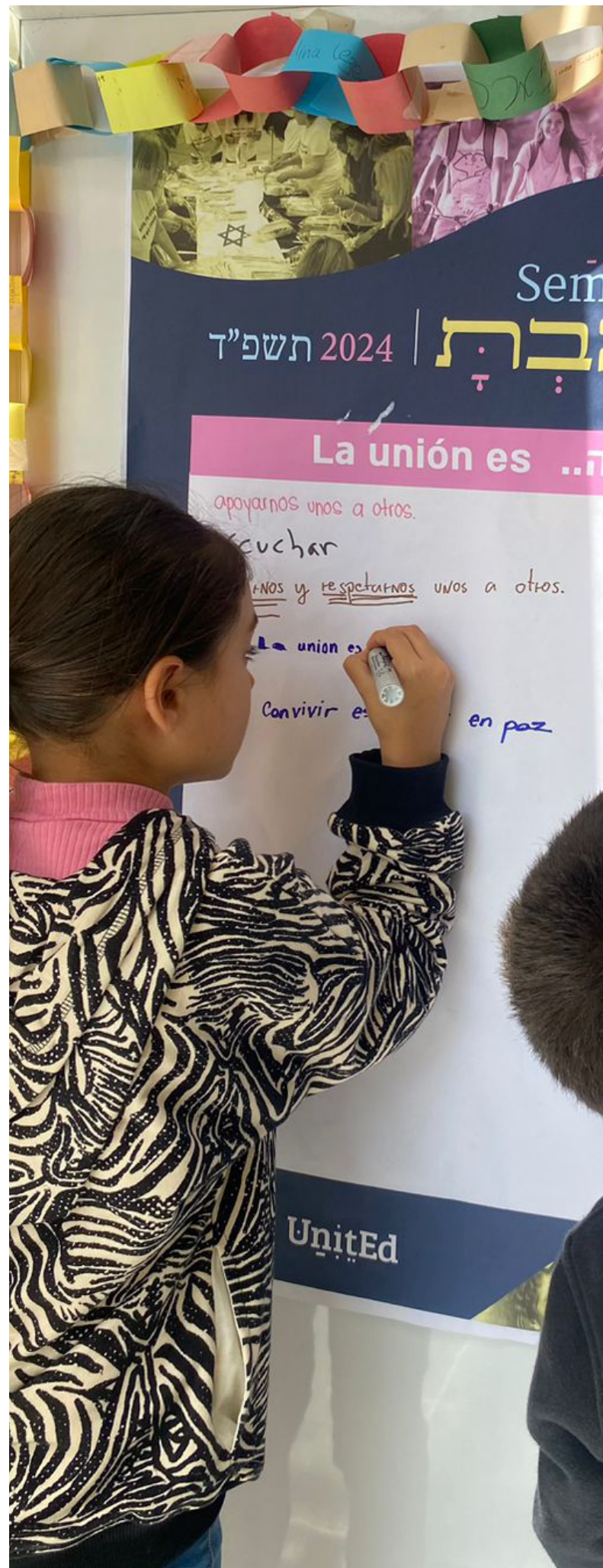


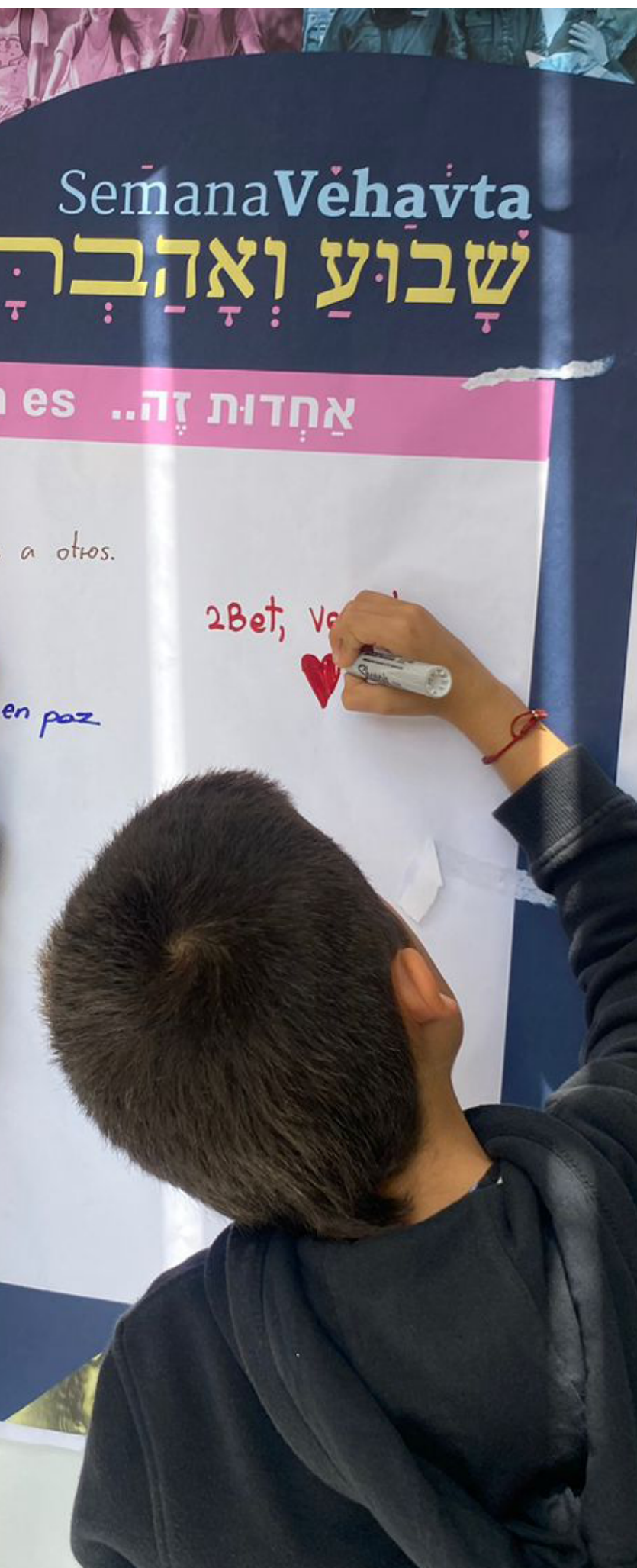
Creating safe spaces for open dialogue.

There is an increasing recognition of the need to create safe spaces where people can openly discuss topics related to Israel⁶⁶.

These changes, described by principals in North American schools, are also evident in interviews conducted with principals in Mexico, Australia, and France. However, it is clear to everyone that changes in schools happen slowly. The annals of educational endeavor are strewn with failed attempts to initiate reforms. The reporting of such changes in many countries indicates the extent of political and social changes that Jewish communities are experiencing and is a sign of the assistance that schools need and will continue to need.

For example, in the Jewish community of Montreal, in a joint effort with UnitEd has begun in 11 Jewish schools to implement a new curriculum that integrates Israel within Jewish history studies, Jewish texts, and Hebrew⁶⁷. Similar initiatives, in varying scales, have been launched in Argentina, Mexico, France, and the UK – all with the involvement of UnitEd. Other educational systems, which have more limited resources, will need greater assistance. **That is, some schools recognize the needs of their communities and act immediately to meet them, while others lack the resources to do so quickly and comprehensively or sufficiently. In these places, action by the State of Israel can be critical and have a significant impact on the Zionist identity of students and communities.**





Opportunities in Times of Crisis

The changes described above are reported in many countries and Jewish communities, but there are also trends that characterize only some places. It is possible that these unique examples may serve as precedents or models for other communities and schools to follow.

Recruitment and Repurposing of Teams

For decades, Jewish schools have struggled to recruit enough Jewish educators. These institutions rarely succeeded in offering competitive employment conditions compared to those provided in public education systems, let alone compared to 'liberal professions' such as law, medicine, and financial services, in which Jews have been overrepresented since the early 20th century. Therefore, schools had to recruit educators based on the promise of educational and communal impact.

The normalization of antisemitism in public institutions in many Western countries has created a new phenomenon: Jewish professionals working in public institutions are interested in moving and fulfilling their professional calling within Jewish community settings. So far, this phenomenon has been prominent particularly in health professions, but there is evidence that in certain places, it may happen in schools as well. In France, where there is a shortage of teachers in state schools, government authorities make it difficult for teachers to move from state schools to Jewish schools. However, Jewish schools succeed in recruiting them as 'volunteers' who invest their time in the Jewish community. In Toronto, the Jewish community federation is launching an initiative to recruit and train educators from public schools for positions in Jewish schools, after Jewish teachers in public schools expressed a desire to work in Jewish schools.

Evidence that this period presents an opportunity

to recruit skilled teaching staff is, paradoxically, found in a phenomenon that did not occur: during the COVID-19 pandemic, when teachers had to work under stressful conditions, many Jewish schools were affected by the "Great Resignation," (a global phenomenon of early retirement from caregiving professions during and following the pandemic,) as many teachers left them. However, today, despite the pressures described above and widespread reports of teacher burnout in Jewish schools since October 7, there is no evidence of Jewish teachers leaving (although the phenomenon may be happening among non-Jewish teachers.) It seems that Jewish educators want to connect to the Jewish community – to move to or continue working in Jewish schools, driven by a sense of mission and commitment to their students and community.

Connecting Schools to a Broader Common Goal

Jewish schools often work in isolation, particularly due to geographical distance and cultural differences. The global impact of COVID-19 has helped reduce this isolation, as has the surge in the use of video communication. In Latin America, these phenomena have prompted the establishment of the "Forum for Jewish Educational Vision," a network connecting 30 schools from 11 countries. The network was founded in collaboration with the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, UnitEd, and the Zionist Enterprises Department of the Zionist Federation. Today, it also includes the Pincus Fund and the WZO Education Department. Since October 7, the network's activities have intensified, evolving from a professional community into an organization seeking to drive initiatives and activities. The forum helps schools respond collectively to contemporary events and their impacts and works to develop programs that deepen connections between Jewish people worldwide. For the first time, the network will to

Israel, a group of leading students from their schools, as part of a joint training for them and a group of teachers who will serve as 'Israel Ambassadors' in their schools. A similar trend is also seen in Australia. This year, for the first time in over a decade, Jewish schools from across the country are participating in a joint professional development initiative with the Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust. Moreover, there is an initiative, in collaboration with UnitEd, to establish a continental network for training Jewish teachers – JENA, for the first time in the community's history. In Britain, the 33 schools of the Chief Rabbi are participating in a strategic process for formulating a vision, building a curriculum, and creating a joint response to educational and economic challenges. The Global Jewish Education Leadership Group (GJELG), led by UnitEd in collaboration with the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the Pincus Fund, was also made possible through understanding the global challenge of this period. The cooperation among schools indicates a shift in perception: in this challenging time, the differences between schools matter less than the things they have in common.

3. The impact of the events of October 7 and the Iron Swords War on enrollment in Jewish schools

Following the events of October 7 and the rise in antisemitism, Jewish families around the world are re-evaluating their educational choices for their children. For instance, 39% of American Jewish parents indicated they are reconsidering which schools and summer camps to send their children to⁷⁶, and 40% of British Jewish parents whose children were victims of antisemitism reported that they are more likely to send their children to a Jewish school after October 7⁷⁷. However, parents have many considerations when choosing a school: whether they can afford the costs (in many places, Jewish schools are private), what services and educational support the school offers, accessibility, academic quality, and the social and community makeup of the school, and more. Parents may be reluctant to change previous choices and switch educational settings for their children. Therefore, it is important to examine not only the expressed interest among parents but also the actual actions taken. In this regard, the situation varies from place to place, so it is essential to consider the main drivers for the increase in enrollment in Jewish schools in the Diaspora.

Increase in enrollment rates

So far, there has been a significant increase in enrollment rates in the following places:

France:

In France today, about 40% of eligible children attend Jewish schools, compared to only 16% in 1986 (when a comprehensive study was conducted that allows comparison with current trends). Most of this increase can be attributed to the rise in antisemitic and anti-Israel incidents in general public schools. A recently published report estimates that in the last decade, approximately 2,000 students per year have transferred from public schools in France to Jewish schools due to the decline in the quality of public education alongside concerns about violence and antisemitism⁷⁸. These trends have led to many Jewish schools (especially in the Paris district) being fully occupied until October 7, and thus more parents are enrolling their children in Jewish kindergartens, anticipating that it will be harder to get their children into the Jewish education system when they are in middle or high school⁷⁹. Community leaders note that the students who transferred to Jewish schools in the last decade were from traditional families who moved from public schools, whereas now the inquiries are coming from secular families wanting to leave private schools due to antisemitic incidents⁸⁰. The most significant indicator that this trend has intensified since October 7 is fundraising from local philanthropists to fund the construction of



several new schools to serve the growing number of students. Another sign can be seen in a report from the organization Choisir l'école Juive, which operates in partnership with UnitEd to encourage enrollment in Jewish schools, showing a 27% increase in inquiries for enrollment in Jewish schools since October 7 (from 1,121 to 1,432).⁸¹

Netherlands:

At Rosh Pina school, the only Jewish school in Amsterdam, there are currently 385 students enrolled, and their number has doubled from 2015 to 2025. The significant growth in student numbers stemmed not only from transfers from public schools that became an unfavorable environment for them, but also due to the immigration of Israelis to the area. The institution continued to grow even after the events of October 7, until it reached maximum capacity. Similar to the trend observed in many schools in France, this educational institution will also not be able to accommodate additional students without a significant investment in infrastructure development.

North America:

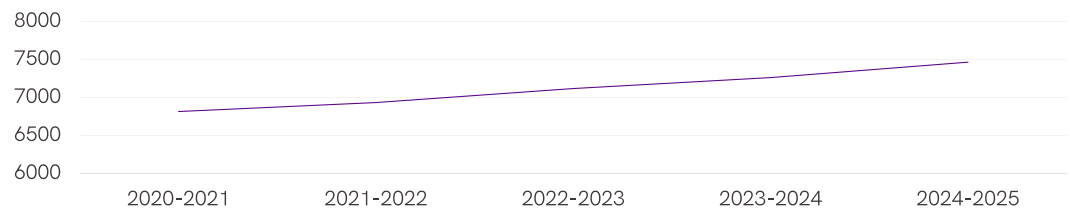
Just weeks after October 7, Jewish schools began receiving numerous requests from Israeli parents to enroll students after the start of the school year, with 278 new students registering within two weeks of the war's onset⁸². In December 2023, 42 out of 110 schools participating in a survey by the Prizmah Center reported receiving inquiries from families seeking to transfer their children to their institutions. The majority of these schools reported a sharp increase in requests for student transfers from

public schools and non-Jewish private schools⁸³. A later survey, conducted among 107 schools, recorded a 1.3% increase in student numbers for the 2024-2025 school year compared to 2023-2024⁸⁴. Although it's not a dramatic change, it represents a renewal of a growth trend that had frozen since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic – an estimated increase of approximately 500 families. This reported increase, of at least one percent, occurred in schools across a variety of denominations: Orthodox, communal, Conservative, Reform, and pluralistic⁸⁵. Additionally, 72 out of 121 schools reported the enrollment of new students due to events or feelings related to October 7, such as antisemitism or parents' desire for their children to be in a Jewish environment⁸⁶.

Toronto:

In an education system where 33% of children attended Jewish schools before October 7⁸⁷, requests were received for the enrollment of pre-k children beyond the maximum capacity for the 2024-2025 school year, and the forecast for 2025-2026 is similar. Additionally, 69 children transferred from public or non-Jewish private schools to Jewish day schools in the city. Non-Haredi schools in the city have experienced consistent annual growth in student enrollment for at least the past five years: in the 2020-2021 school year, a 1.7% increase in enrollment was recorded. Three years later, the growth was already 2.65%, and in the current school year, it stands at 2.79%. Schools attribute the increase in enrollment rates to the rising antisemitism in the public school system, as well as to initiatives to make tuition more accessible, including a dedicated initiative to prepare students transferring from other schools for Hebrew and Jewish studies.

Figure 4. Cumulative registration in non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish schools in Toronto⁸⁷

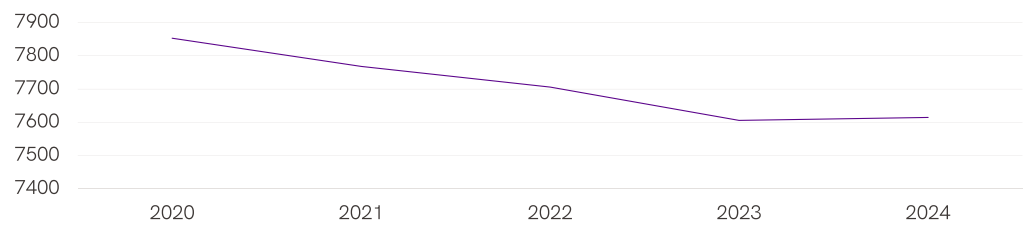


Stable Enrollment

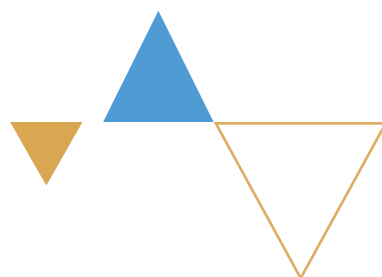
Interviews with figures in Jewish communities in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and the UK indicate that there have been no significant changes in enrollment in Jewish schools since October 7. The commonality among these countries is that, even before the war, more than half of the eligible students attended Jewish schools. Children in families who chose not to enroll in Jewish schools were already well-established in a social environment within general schools, and according to one interviewee – the situation in non-Jewish schools would have to be particularly dire to consider transferring to a Jewish school, and even then, several years might pass before they actually transfer⁸⁸. It appears that the changes in enrollment rates in some places were not due to rising antisemitism but due to other general phenomena. For example, in the UK, school

enrollments were affected by the imposition of VAT on independent schools, and possibly other factors⁸⁹. What is happening in Australia may offer some interesting insights: Figure 5 shows that there was a 3.1% decrease in enrollment rates between 2020 and 2023 across all 12 mainstream Jewish schools. In 2024, the decline was halted, and there was even an increase, with 100 additional students joining the schools. This brought the total number of students in the 12 schools to 7,615. Despite reports of numerous antisemitic incidents, the stabilization of enrollment in 2024 may not have been caused by the rise in antisemitism, but rather by the development of a new scholarship registration mechanism – FAB (with the aid of UnitEd).

Figure 5: Cumulative registration in 12 Jewish schools in Australia from 2020 to 2024⁹⁰.



The data collected here points to four trends since October 7, 2023:



An Outbreak of Antisemitism

Jewish communities worldwide have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of antisemitic incidents. Reports from numerous countries, including the United States, Canada, the UK, France, and Australia, indicate that Jews feel less safe in their daily lives, are more hesitant to display their Jewish identity in public, and are even losing personal connections with non-Jews due to antisemitic or anti-Israel rhetoric. This rise in antisemitism has changed the way Jews conduct their lives and their relationships with the surrounding non-Jewish communities.

Changes in Jewish Identity and the Connection to Israel

The October 7 massacre profoundly impacted the connection of Diaspora Jews to Israel and Jewish life. The involvement of Diaspora Jews in pro-Israel activities has increased, and Jewish identity has strengthened in many communities, manifesting in heightened engagement of individuals and families in their community and Jewish identity. However, while many reported a stronger emotional connection to Israel at the beginning of the war, survey data indicates that this connection has somewhat waned, particularly among younger American Jews.



Challenges and Opportunities for Jewish Schools

Jewish schools worldwide are facing new pressures due to the political and social climate created after October 7. Educators feel they are not equipped with the necessary tools to teach about Israel and are still at the forefront of addressing the concerns of students and parents. Schools, as organizations, are not shying away from dealing with these issues and are adapting by expanding Israel-related content, integrating it into various subjects, creating partnerships with Israeli institutions, and building safe spaces for open dialogue. Despite these efforts, many educators still feel a lack of support and significant burden, but they are not leaving the schools (as happened during the COVID-19 period), likely due to a sense of mission and commitment.

Changes in Enrollment in Jewish Schools

The increase in displays of antisemitism and changes in Jewish identity have led to a rise in enrollment in Jewish schools in certain areas. A significant increase in student numbers has been observed in France and some regions of North America, due to security concerns and a desire for a Jewish educational framework. However, in areas where enrollment rates in Jewish schools were already high, such as Latin America, no major changes were seen. In some cases, such as in Australia, other factors, like initiatives to reduce tuition costs or demographic trends, may have influenced enrollment patterns more than antisemitism itself.



4. Recommendations: Leveraging the Opportunity to Strengthen the Connection to Israel and Jewish Identity

As mentioned in the introduction, Jewish schools are the most effective means of preserving Jewish life outside of Israel. Given the changes in the social and political climate in which these schools operate, it appears that the number of young Jewish students who will enroll in them in the near future may increase significantly. UnitEd's Project AlephBet, initiated by the Minister of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, is already working to encourage enrollment in schools in North America (where the enrollment rate is the lowest among all Jewish communities) through partnerships in a series of local pilots. However, whether such an increase occurs or not, schools need immediate assistance due to the social changes described above, to ensure that educational staff receive the tools to fulfill their core missions and to advance the students who are already studying in them.

A

Moving Parents from 'Interest' to Actual 'Enrollment'.

Several stages separate parents' expression of interest in Jewish school education from actual enrollment. In the AlephBet project, UnitEd is already collaborating with JFNA (the Jewish Federations of North America) and Prizmah on various initiatives, relying on in-depth research that identified several areas for action: strengthening excellence, reducing service costs, marketing, and the transition from kindergartens to schools. Each of the pilots focuses on one or more of these axes. UnitEd is also a partner in a community scholarship initiative in Melbourne, Australia, which is already showing very positive results, with the transfer of more than 100 children to Jewish schools in the current academic year.

UnitEd is also a partner in the CHOISIR L'ECOLE JUIFE initiative in France, which combines digital marketing and family support to transfer children from public to Jewish schools. The initiatives with the greatest impact, along with other promising initiatives, should be identified and given support to enable their expansion to additional communities and countries. Based on existing initiatives, these models can be immediately expanded or replicated.



B

Building Teacher Capacity and Confidence in Teaching Topics Related to the State of Israel.

One of the most effective ways to support Jewish educators in fulfilling their educational mission is to bring them to Israel to participate in concentrated and focused professional development programs. These programs can greatly contribute to fostering teachers' sense of self-efficacy and professional confidence in teaching Israel-related content and accelerate the development of new educational resources (in Diaspora communities and in Israel)⁹¹. There are excellent models, such as teacher training from the Diaspora in Israel within the framework of Call for Applications at teacher training colleges in Israel, on behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, as well as models developed by the Jewish Agency, the Pincus Fund, and iCenter. UnitEd is currently engaged in implementing additional journeys with the Alliance network in France, AMIA in Argentina, and others. Since October 7, Jewish educators have participated in similar initiatives, and the scope of these programs can be further expanded to reach a wider target audience. Furthermore, creating a support system that enables ongoing professional learning and development processes after teachers return to their countries of origin will ensure effective implementation of learning outcomes in educational practice. Here too, there is an opportunity for immediate expansion based on existing structures.

C

Helping Educators Interested in Transitioning to Teach in Jewish Schools.

In light of the growing demand for Jewish schools described above, there is a need to increase the number of quality teachers and principals. 'Absorption' packages, provided with a commitment to professional development and job retention for a minimum number of years, will encourage teachers considering transitioning from general public schools to Jewish schools. Professional development programs will encourage experienced teachers to transition, as they will enable them to better understand the culture and unique teaching methods prevalent in Jewish schools. UnitEd operates the 'TalentEd' program, which focuses on identifying, placing, and training teachers for Jewish schools and assists teachers in integrating into the Jewish education system. Additionally, it currently operates a think tank on this topic within the Global Leadership Forum, which will recommend actions and programs designed to increase the number of teachers in Jewish schools. Actions in this area should be pursued and amplified. This working group will complete its work by the coming summer, and it will be possible to move to an implementation phase with the appropriate resources.

D

Networking.

This historical period is unique in that the challenges Jews face due to antisemitism and the events of October 7 transcend national borders. Schools around the world are trying to find the best response to these challenges. The Global Leadership Forum is working to address this need and has already begun, through working groups, to address the challenges of Jewish education at this time. The goal of the groups is to develop position papers that will mature into partnerships and additional projects. However, there is a need to promote further discussions between schools regarding support for the needs of teachers and students, the appropriate educational response to the events of the period, and strategies suitable for student enrollment and retention. Additional spaces should be created, such as the Global Leadership Forum, the European Teachers Network, and the Jewish Education Vision Forum of Latin American principals, for facilitated conversations between principals, curriculum developers, teachers, and enrollment administrators, focusing on sharing practical solutions that have been successfully tried, recommended practices, and learning from the successes of other schools. Various stakeholders in the field recognize the urgent needs that have arisen since October 7, and this can be leveraged to quickly develop such networks.

Summary

In the past 18 months, Israel, and the Jewish world along with it, have experienced numerous challenges. These challenges have created an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen the connection to Judaism and Israel. This is the moment to maximize the capabilities of Jewish schools – the most important cornerstone in Jewish communities of the Diaspora.

This comprehensive report analyzed the profound repercussions of the events of October 7 on Jewish communities worldwide, with a particular emphasis on the central role of Jewish schools. The report establishes the understanding that these institutions are vital cornerstones for preserving Jewish identity and deepening the connection between Diaspora Jewish communities and the State of Israel.

The analysis presented in the report illustrates that Jewish communities around the world experienced a powerful upheaval following these events and due to a sharp and dramatic increase in the number of antisemitic incidents. This shock was expressed in the erosion of a sense of security and in relationships with their surroundings and directly affected the daily lives of community members. The report's findings reflect a positive trend of growth in commitment to Jewish identity and an increase in the sense of connection to Israel.

Against the backdrop of the unique challenges posed by the new reality, the report emphasizes the need for a focused, rapid, and effective response from the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, in close cooperation with UnitEd. This response is essential to provide Jewish communities in general, and Jewish schools in particular, with the necessary tools and resources to cope with the challenges of the period.

Accordingly, the report proposes a structured action plan to address these challenges and leverage the opportunities created. The plan includes practical recommendations in areas such as: expanding existing initiatives to encourage Jewish students to transfer to Jewish schools, developing up-to-date educational programs, strengthening and training educational personnel, educator trips to Israel, and establishing a global Jewish educational leadership network. Implementing these recommendations, led by the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism and UnitEd, will ensure that Jewish schools continue to be leading educational and community centers, strengthen Jewish identity, and deepen the connection to Israel among Diaspora Jewry in future generations.

In conclusion, with a deep understanding that the State of Israel and Jewish communities in the Diaspora share a common responsibility for preserving the future of the Jewish people, this report emphasized the strategic importance of Jewish schools and educators. As demonstrated in the findings, these institutions are a central engine in preserving Jewish identity and a conduit for transferring knowledge and skills from Israel to communities that so desperately need them to impart Jewish heritage and deepen the connection to Israel among young people.

The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, together with UnitEd, are committed to implementing the detailed recommendations in the report, developing advanced educational programs, expanding teacher training programs, and strengthening ties with Jewish communities worldwide. Investing in Jewish schools in the Diaspora is a direct investment in the future of the Jewish people and a central component in strengthening the ties between the State of Israel and Jewish communities in the Diaspora. This joint action is essential to address the challenges we currently face and to build a prosperous future for generations to come.



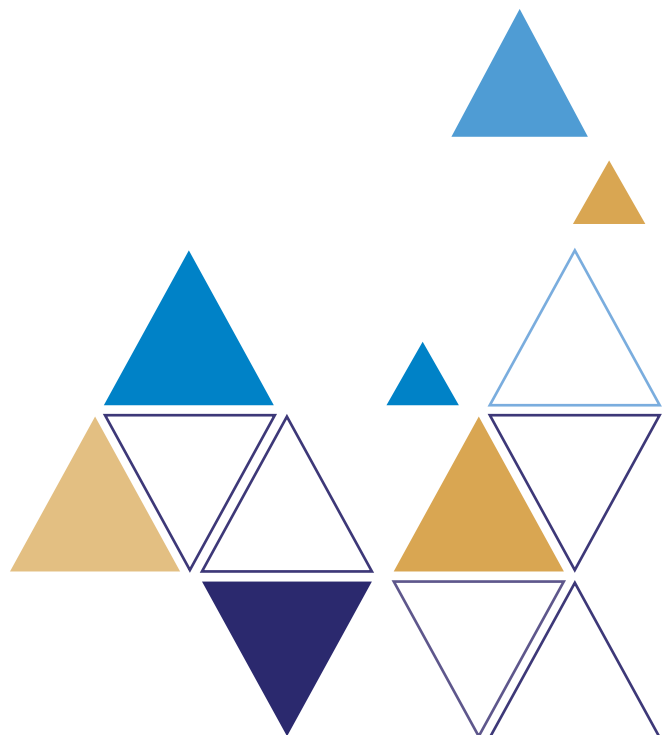


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AM ISRAEL CHAI
2025 שבוע התפוצות

