



The BE'ERI Program - Modi'in Municipal Partnership

What is Be'eri?

Approximately 50% of all Israeli school children study in secular public schools in which Jewish heritage studies are a minor part of the standard curriculum. This, coupled with very little Jewish training at home and the mistaken equation of Jewish identity with ultra-orthodox practice, often fuels their desire to be Jews in "name alone." The Be'eri program at the Shalom Hartman Institute introduces secular Israeli teens to a multi-faceted approach to Judaism that is meaningful and relevant to their daily lives, enabling them to form a positive Jewish-Israeli identity.



Serving as a resource center for secular high schools across Israel, Be'eri has penetrated the younger generation far beyond the depth and breadth of any other Jewish identity program in the country. By partnering with tens of public high schools and training hundreds of leading educators in the skills required to nurture Jewish-Israeli identity, Be'eri is profoundly influencing a new generation. Be'eri creates a natural connector that links Israeli youth with world Jewry, reinforcing the bond of Jewish "peoplehood" that serves as the foundation of the Jewish people.

Unparalleled in scope and impact, Be'eri stands above other programs aimed at strengthening pluralistic Jewish education among secular youth by drawing on:

- An in-house school for teacher education held at the Shalom Hartman Institute
- Access to the Institute's renowned think tank
- Be'eri multi-grade pluralistic and interdisciplinary curriculum for grades 7-10, approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education
- A team of educational facilitators that provide intensive, ongoing professional guidance in the schools
- Strategic municipal partnerships which enable easy outreach to a large number of schools; provide a platform for inter-school/community center partnerships; and facilitate new sources of funding through municipality and P2K initiatives
- Cooperation with the Israeli Ministry of Education, which supports and partially funds the Be'eri program
- Additional classroom hours which fuse curricular and extra-curricular components
- Informal initiatives that extend the program beyond the classroom

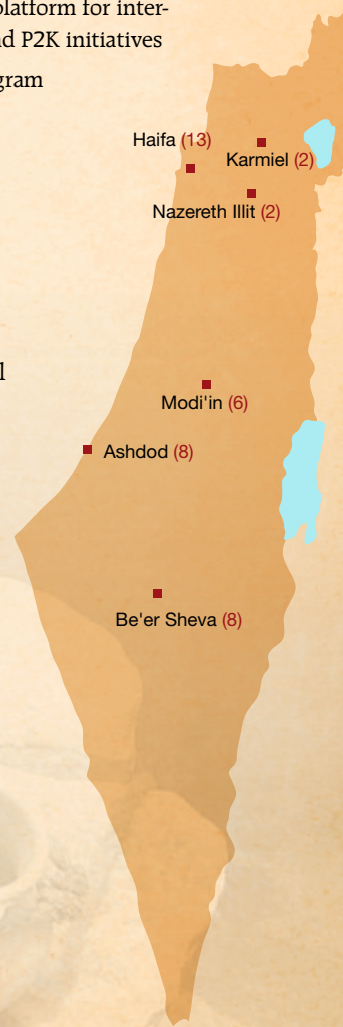
Strategic Municipal Partnerships

Rather than focusing on a "one school at a time" action plan, the Be'eri team has identified strategic municipal partnerships as the most robust framework for maximizing Be'eri impact and growth. Illustrating important public sector buy-in, these partnerships serve as one of the vehicles via which Be'eri will continue to expand its reach and influence and eventually obtain long-term sustainability.

Be'eri is currently operating in partnership with six municipalities—Haifa, Modi'in, Ashdod, Be'ersheva, Nazereth Illit and Karmiel. Each municipal partnership, custom-designed to address the city's particular needs and demographic composition, is guided and nurtured by an experienced Be'eri facilitator who liaises with the municipal authorities and the local schools.

The strategic advantages of municipal partnerships are significant:

- Consolidated commitment of individual schools supported by local public infrastructure
- Easy outreach to a large number of schools throughout the municipality
- Natural platform for partnering among schools in the municipality and with local informal educational institutions, such as community and cultural centers
- Strengthened municipal program facilitated by new sources of funding – municipality and P2K partnerships



The Be'eri-Modi'in Municipal Partnership

Established in 1996, the rationale behind the development of Modi'in was twofold. The city served both as a link in the chain of urban settlements connecting Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and provided living options for people interested in working, but not necessarily living, in one of these main cities. Modi'in has succeeded in attracting a young, diverse and for the most part highly educated population from a variety of locales in Israel, with one of its main advantages being the high quality of life it offers young families raising children. Education is therefore of primary importance on the city's agenda. Modi'in residents do not envision education as being limited to the classroom. The city has met the requirements of its citizens by developing a wide range of informal educational facilities.

The city is home to a plethora of institutions and congregations that meet the religious and spiritual needs of the community, be they secular, Conservative, Modern Orthodox, Reform, or any other denomination. In the context of this diversity, issues of Jewish-Israeli pluralism in education hold particular relevance.

In 2009 the Modi'in-Be'eri partnership was created to lead an initiative for integrating Jewish-Israeli identity studies into all facets of formal and informal education in Modi'in. Going into the second year, the Modi'in-Be'eri partnership has achieved a large number of objectives:

- A Be'eri municipal facilitator works in close partnership with the Modi'in municipality to integrate Jewish-Israeli identity content into all facets of formal and informal education.
- All 6 Modi'in high schools are part of the Be'eri program.
- For the second year running, the Modi'in municipality will invest money in the Modi'in-Be'eri initiative and will fund approximately 20 weekly classroom hours in the schools.
- The Modi'in municipality has initiated an eight-session municipal enrichment course for all senior high school staff, including a two-day trip to Jerusalem.
- Two teacher enrichment programs (one for teachers for grades 7-8, and one for grade 9 teachers) is run in partnership with the Ministry of Education.
- Last year, all Modi'in high schools—religious and secular—participated in a city-wide Tikkun Leil Shavuot led by school teachers.
- Batei Midrash for parents and teachers are being established in the city.

Into the Future

During the coming years, the Be'eri program aims to integrate all Modi'in high schools into the program. Outside of the formal educational system, Be'eri will continue to develop and lead informal initiatives with the aim of creating a landscape in which an ever-expanding portion of the Modi'in community can closely experience their Jewish-Israeli identity.

Following a successful launch, Modi'in serves as one of the Hartman Institute models of municipal partnerships that have led city-wide initiatives for integrating Jewish-Israeli identity studies in all facets of formal and informal education.

"At the core of the Modi'in educational vision is the understanding of the important place that Jewish-Israeli identity plays in the process of forming committed Israeli adults. We believe that schools are a framework that has the power to significantly influence the cultural identity of our students through education. Promoting educational processes that contribute to the familiarity of our graduates with their Jewish-Israeli identity is a central educational goal in the city's school system.

The Be'eri program and the Shalom Hartman Institute have been the perfect partners to lead this process and with which to fulfill our dream. The senior staff of our local schools participated in an intense learning process at the Institute which helped to create collaborations between schools in the city. This year, all of the city's secular high schools have joined the Be'eri program and are benefitting from close professional guidance and assistance in promoting learning and action in the schools. The joint effort with the Be'eri program has broadened the awareness towards Jewish-Israeli identity to wider circles of our municipal community."

*Haya Shitay, Head of the
Education Department, Modi'in Municipality*



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