



Alternative to Hate Education: The Challenges of Activities beyond the Classroom

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While IMPACT-SE diligently monitors school textbooks (particularly across the Middle East) to help educators and decision-makers foster peace and protect children, other school activities may unfortunately escape notice. The Jerusalem Post recently showed a video of Arab [kindergarten students in East Jerusalem gleefully play-acting the murder of a Palestinian by an IDF soldier](#). This hate-education video was posted on the Arabic-language Himma News site and then quickly taken down, leaving only still photos from the event. The play included accolades—in music and poetry recital—of militants who were implicated and convicted in various cases of the murder of innocent civilians.

Such hateful activities involving children have long occurred within areas controlled by the [Palestinian Authority](#), [Hamas](#) and [Hezbollah](#). However, ignoring such activities within a multi-ethnic city such as Jerusalem is a disaster waiting to happen. IMPACT-SE has warned of the dangers of teaching hate within Jerusalem; in 2011 it recommended that the city establish a curriculum for peace, coexistence and interfaith understanding.

In September 2014, following the wave of violence in the city, [IMPACT-SE pointed again](#) to the dangers of hate education in the Palestinian curriculum and the lack of civil education in the city's ultra-Orthodox curricula. We stressed that the accommodation of Palestinian education within Israeli Jerusalem is a “positive phenomenon,” reflecting the deep Israeli commitment to multi-culturalism. However, teaching hate—particularly in a city of diverse cultures and traditions—aside from the inherent dangers, is simply not acceptable.

The video of the hate-play appeared on the websites of various media outlets including the [English-language “Russia Today” television network](#). As a follow-up to the report, IMPACT-SE's Dr. Eldad Pardo was interviewed. The questions revolved around whether such school performances were inevitable, simply reflecting the apparent violent environment to which students are subjected.

In his response, Dr. Pardo stressed that even though violence may exist in everyday life, there can be no justification for school curricula to teach children to be violent. He pointed to the particular danger of hate education in a [mixed city where people from all walks of life and from many ethnic and religious backgrounds intermingle daily](#), working and playing together while shopping in the same stores, dining next to one another in restaurants and using the same modes of transportation and health services.

Add to the equation universities and colleges, where teachers and students from all backgrounds study together and are involved in various social activities.



Palestinian Authority Educational Activity: Facebook page of 'Tamun' Girls High School in Qalqilya showing Israel as a poisonous snake (July 4, 2012)

At a time when the Middle East is experiencing increased violence and cruelty toward women, children and the elderly, it is especially incumbent on us to invest all of our efforts to preserve our's children's sanity. We must begin to heal our children from the horrific traumas they may have suffered during conflagrations (or even from watching the news), rather than continue to lure them into the cycle of hate and violence. We should prepare them for a future of fruitful and happy, hopeful lives, with mutual respect for, and the tools to cooperate with, "others." The [IMPACT-SE UNESCO-derived educational standards](#) can serve as a beacon, lighting the way to a healthy new generation and future of peace. These standards should be applied both in the curriculum and in all school and educational activities. It is for us to rise to the challenge.