

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CONFLICTED SOCIETIES

Contributed by Administrator

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28 May – 1 June, 2005

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, in conjunction with the Center for Jewish Education of the University of Haifa, conducted a four day conference on “Education for Citizenship in Societies in Conflict” on the 29 May 2005 until the 1 June, 2005 in Jerusalem at The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (how to get there), and at the University of Haifa (how to get there).

About the Conference

Education for citizenship has become a global issue of social and educational research. Philosophers, sociologists, and policy-makers have come to recognize issues of educating citizens for democratic societies in multicultural, post-modern, and post-industrial societies as extraordinarily complex. This has created an exceptionally fertile ground for academic and public debates in recent years. Israel too has turned to citizenship education to address several of its internal conflicts and social tensions. Indeed in recent years we have witnessed a plethora of curricula and programs being created and offered to schools which deal with issues such as tolerance, Israeli Jewish identity, Jewish-Arab coexistence, and much more. Nevertheless, so far, only few Israeli academics, educators, and policy-makers have joined the international academic discussion on citizenship education. There is an urgent need to consider the growing body of citizenship education initiatives in Israel in light of international academic debates in the field. Israel is a deeply divided society associated with high levels of conflict between its various constituent ideologies, cultures, and religious and ethnic sectors; a society in which the very meaning of being a citizen is hotly contested. These characteristics suggest that issues to be raised in relation to citizenship education in Israel and other conflicted societies, would be of interest to a wide international audience in addition to Israeli academics.

The aims of the conference were threefold:

- a) To bring international scholars working in the field into conversation with Israeli academics, educators and policy makers.
- b) To encourage a more active debate in Israeli academia on citizenship education which will inform and be informed by educational initiatives in the field and international academic debates.
- c) To use the complex Israeli case, which raises questions about the very essence of membership in a polity, to steer international discussions about the role of citizenship education and the forms it should take in multicultural, multi-ethnic and conflict-ridden societies such as Israel.

The main themes offered for this four days conference were as follow:

1. Conceptualizing citizenship education and different pedagogical approaches.
2. Citizenship education in multicultural and conflict-ridden societies.
3. Citizenship education, religion and nationalism.
4. Citizenship education in the age of globalization

5.â â â â â Citizenship education in Israel: initiatives and challenges.

[Click here to access the conference program](#)