

# TEACHING FESTIVALS AND COMMEMORATIVE DAYS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD IN A DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGICAL ERA – DILEMMAS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS: CHRISTMAS AS AN EXAMPLE

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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the teaching of the Christmas festival in a kindergarten (3-6 years), in the digital era, in the contexts of religious ethnographic, folklore and education. Arab Christians are part of a multicultural society in Israel, where festivals help to shape individuals' identities and reinforce affiliations, but also help them to recognize and contain others, reinforcing intercultural relations. Kindergartens expose children to the practices and underlying rationales of festivals as a means to transmit social, moral and national values. The child absorbs the festival's religious and cultural dimensions from both the environment, and the experiential transmission process taught in the kindergarten.

## **The Influence of Technological Communications on the Celebration of Christmas in Society and in the Kindergarten**

Communications technology contributes to the celebration of Christmas in three main ways: enlarging the possibilities for characterization of the festival (by providing extra means for representation); providing convenient accessible means of communication; and providing contents from within and outside the local culture. Children in the kindergarten are influenced generally by the events in society and external technological developments, since they are part of the larger society. They receive accurate information and suitable activities for their development mediated by their teachers, who also use communications technology to plan and perform their activities in the kindergarten. One major example of this use of communication technology by kindergarten teachers is for the planning of Christmas festival activities, including the transmission of its symbols. This will be explained and elaborated in a broader manner in the lecture and this paper.

The paper discusses educators' dilemmas concerning the use of different types of communications technology to teach the festivals in kindergartens. The paper also includes practical proposals for the teaching of Christmas as an example.

In recent years we witness the expansion of Christmas festivities around the world, and this is also true for the Christian community in Israel. This expansion is undoubtedly influenced by rapidly developing communications technology media at different levels. The present paper relates to the influence of this technology in the context of a particular ethnographic-religious folklore.

Kindergartens at present face the question of whether technological communications can contribute effectively to their educational, didactic and pedagogic work, since infants in early development stages need to receive their education through appropriate mediation by an adult. The main discussion here will focus on the following dilemma:

in light of this debate: Can the festivals be taught in kindergartens with the aid of communication technology? The main debate is between those who advocate the use of computers in kindergartens and those who prefer to educate without this means. The advocates of the use of innovative technological means believe that it can assist the development of children's literacy, graphic abilities, logic, access to knowledge and cognitive development and help to train the child to enter a society that uses 21<sup>st</sup> century sophisticated technological media. Those who oppose this trend are concerned that the introduction of computer technology in the kindergarten will come at the expense of social interaction, play and creativity (Yogev, 1999), especially because, in the present era, the almost sole interaction of children with their peers takes place in educational settings.

### **The Researcher and the Interviewees**

As an ethnographic researcher and a woman who has celebrated Christmas as part of her home experience, I also work as an educator and have written about teaching the festivals and trained student-teachers on this subject<sup>1</sup>. With the development of global technological changes, I felt it important to investigate how these changes affect cultural aspects of the celebration of Christmas and how this is expressed in the Holy Land in kindergarten educational work.

To better understand this phenomenon, I held conversations with pedagogic mentor colleagues, acting kindergarten teachers and trainee kindergarten teachers – students in the Early Childhood college stream (not all Christians). I also studied my students' works in the field of folklore and the festivals over the last ten years. My work as a pedagogic mentor for future school and kindergarten teachers gave me an advantage in the conversations that I conducted with interviewees for this research and helped me to understand their socio-cultural context (not all of the kindergarten teachers, trainee teachers and mentors, who were interviewed are Christians). As an internal ethnographer I was able to directly and immediately record my impressions regarding the educational settings that I visited and the societies in which they exist.

### **Communications Technology in the Classrooms**

In the last decade, global communications technology in different and parallel channels (television, computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) has increasingly penetrated private homes and is not exclusively limited to educational institutions. From the interviews and observations that I conducted in the field over the last decade, I have found that the attempt of the Ministry of Education since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to introduce a vast amount of computers into kindergartens<sup>2</sup>, has in my opinion not produced the desired results. Computers distributed to kindergartens in Arab society amounted in a good case to one or two computers per kindergarten. The computers have not been maintained properly, and there has also not been a structured program to encourage and adapt computer-assisted thinking and work in a way appropriate for Arab speakers. Thus, many Arab kindergarten teachers consciously declined to use the computers in the kindergarten that could have served as tools for creative activities to develop social and creative interactions<sup>3</sup>.

A small minority of the kindergarten teachers, computer-literate and with computer skills who managed to attain budgets for the maintenance of their computers (repairs, updating, and Internet connections) from the local municipalities or raised funds for the installation or purchase of an interactive whiteboard, actually use the computers in

supervised activities. But these computer-assisted activities are not used instead of interpersonal communication activities with the children or instead of the use of playground games (sandbox, and playground games, reading corners, drama, music, puzzles, nature trips, creative work etc.). Rather they used the computer games in addition to these activities in the few cases where they were used. Moreover, we should not ignore the fact that over the years, with the development of work in the field of linguistic literacy for early childhood, many kindergarten teachers used the computer to teach children the letters and the basics of typing and writing, where the goal was mainly to produce linguistic literacy, and this did not require expensive programs. Other kindergarten teachers used different drawing programs that they were able to purchase. These were used mainly to enable the children to train themselves in creative work, in a period that communication technology was not yet part of daily life and the computers in the kindergartens were still relatively new.

However, in practice, because of the lack of computer resources, I, as the educator of future teachers, who advocates communication technology and even encourages the use by my students during the lectures, often prefer to forego the use of an old, unworkable computer that cannot be easily used in the kindergarten for productive interactive activities, unless the computer can be properly maintained and the kindergarten is equipped with suitable programs for the desired activities, something that I would suggest is also relevant with regard to the planning of teaching of Christmas activities as explained below.

Thus, the model of the independent learner in which the child goes to the computer in order to discover something or to experiment, whether with or without the teacher's mediation, is not a useful model since the desktop computers in the kindergartens, as mentioned above, are not necessarily available or in working order. In conclusion it can be said that computerized kindergartens where there is a computer for each child with a control mechanism for all the computers are not a strong feature of kindergartens in Arab communities in Israel.

### **A Question for Discussion**

Given the above-said, it seems pertinent to ask: How can communications technology make the teaching of festivals in the kindergarten more effective, in an era of developing computer technology, without forgetting for a moment the fact that Christmas is a universal festival and that the natural local environment of the kindergarten teacher and the child is not detached or free from globalization processes and their influences? If so, how can the teacher teach Christmas in a kindergarten when global messages encompass the image of the festival in the home and society? And how can the teacher enlist communications technology to benefit the program that she plans?

### **Correct Information as a Source for Appropriate Planning**

Given the fact that the kindergarten teacher is not the sole source of knowledge, and her role becomes that of mentor and guide, the teacher needs to be prepared for the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, equipped with suitable methods to assimilate computer-literacy and to teach and mediate information through the digital environment<sup>4</sup>. Using all the rapidly developing communications technology channels in addition to her professional training in education and her religious and cultural knowledge, the teacher can plan the subject that she teaches in an appropriate manner. In the present case these resources could be used to plan work on Christmas (a universal festival rich in festivity and ideas) and to

introduce concepts and different means of celebration in the kindergarten. Even if the teacher does not have a PC or mobile computer in the kindergarten, the smartphone in many cases can solve the problem by supplying information. Indeed, if she is able to access digital information of whatever kind it will be beneficial since every screen offers different social and technological interaction characteristics (National Association, 2012). Thus, whether the kindergarten is equipped with suitable communications technology or not, the relevant communication channels may be accessible to serve the kindergarten teacher, expanding the teacher's knowledge, enriching it and providing her with tools and ideas to apply in teaching the children about the festival in an appropriate manner. The development of the smartphone in this case responds to the need for communications technology because the teacher can attain all the necessary information and any activity or song through an Internet search at any given moment.

### **The Festivals**

The festivals capture a central position in folk cultures, they strengthen affiliations and contribute significantly to fostering individual and social identities, especially in a multicultural society. In cultures that live together or one beside the other similar texts and practices can be found that reinforce the individual's sense of his or her their own culture and strengthen intercultural ties with neighboring cultures (Sela', 1995). Christian Arab society in Israel contains many cultures, stemming from different Orthodox and Latin churches, and these are just part of the multiple cultures of Arab society in Israel including Muslim and Druze cultures. And in turn these Arab cultures are part of a larger multi-cultural circle including Jews from different parts of the diaspora and from different ethnic groups, non-Arab Orthodox Christians and Latin Christians (Greek, Russia, Syrian, Coptic and Armenian) and foreign workers, especially from the Far East and Eastern Europe (Da'eem et al., 2016). The cultural uniqueness of each of the ethnic groups and religions living together in Arab society in Israel does not prevent members of one national group or culture from celebrating together with members of another culture despite religious differences, since they speak the same language, hold the same values and have similar texts and practices<sup>5</sup>.

The festivals are special occasions distinguished from the normal passage of time. On these days routine activities cease, and special ceremonies and symbolic acts are performed in order to note events rooted in history, religion or nature. The festival strengthens the social and emotional unity of a people. Participation in the festivities from an early age ensures the continuation of that people's values. Tradition includes national values, customs and accepted social behaviors passed on from generation to generation. Among the functions of a kindergarten, it is expected to instill social, moral and national values and to expose the child to a complex of practices for festivals and commemorative days and to explain their underlying rationales (Da'eem, 2011).

### **Christmas in the Kindergarten**

The kindergartens deal with Christmas as one of the important subjects in the annual cycle. The teaching of the festival in the local context is undoubtedly influenced by changes in universal communications technology. Although the kindergarten program draws contents and activities from the child's close environment to respond to the child's need, it also provides the child with rich opportunities to help them to learn to assimilate and to cope with the surrounding world, according to the child's level of development (Brunner, 1966; Misrad, 2010). Like other festivals, the celebration of Christmas in a multicultural society contributes to the shaping of the individual's

awareness of his or her own identity and the identity of others in the following ways (Sela', 1995):

1. Shaping individual identity, reinforcing the individual's religious affiliation, encouraging observance of religious duties, getting to know the individual's historical, cultural, religious and spiritual background and shaping the individual's inner value system. This bonding with an inner world of values reinforces the individual's connection to his culture and heritage in the past and present and ensures his continued affiliation.
2. Training the individual to recognize and contain the "other," his culture and ethnic group in an active manner and also to become familiar with and strengthen his own identity by distinguishing what is similar and what is different in the culture of others, without relinquishing his own identity.

From a didactic viewpoint, the teaching of Christmas helps the child to get to know the historic and religious story of the festival and to become familiar with its religious and social practices and values and the holy sites of Christianity. Using dictionary work and assignment sheets with the symbols of the festival it can help to develop the child's vocabulary and acquisition of scientific and mathematical concepts (Tannus & Zahalqa, 1996).

The child becomes familiar with religious and folk symbols in the close environment and this influences his sense of belonging to his people; the child learns to internalize values such as tolerance, help to others, respect for parents and giving presents. Aesthetic education is also imparted as the children become involved in decorating and preparing the table for the festival, decorating a Christmas tree and the home, the church and environment and the kindergarten. The child learns the traditional aesthetic customs relating to Christmas. The close environment of the child and the child's natural curiosity are exploited in order to gain educational benefit from the different activities (Da'eem et al., 2016).

The child absorbs the concepts and rituals of the festival through two complex inseparable channels (Da'eem, 2011):

- The external channel influenced by the environment and everything that happens there.
- The internal channel organized by the kindergarten teacher in a transmission process teaching the children about the festival in an experiential manner.

It is difficult to separate these two channels since the child brings his family experience (especially in regard to Christmas for those who are Christian) into the kindergarten and their social experience (Christian, Muslim or Druze in a multicultural society)<sup>6</sup> together with all they have absorbed from the mass media, which imports Christmas knowledge from all over the world even before the date of the festival. In parallel the kindergarten teacher relies on the child's accumulated experience to teach him in an experiential manner about the festival as she has planned ensuring continuous developing interaction between the child and the festival.

The teacher can turn the child's attention to what is happening in the environment and link the changes in that environment with the festival activities in the kindergarten. This can help to increase the child's knowledge, vocabulary and creativity. Among other

things the child can learn about his people's customs and folklore, and learn to respect their religious and cultural values.

My vision as a researcher and also as mentor for student-teachers is to enlist communications technology for the teaching of the festival in the kindergarten and to offer suitable action programs for a wide range of children. I would also like to expose these children to complex experiences which would enable them to realize their inherent abilities and allow them maximal functioning in their close physical and human environments. Using activities concerning the festival, the child would get to know culturally rich contents with the values of the society to which they belong and in which they are raised. I would like to exploit communications technology in a maximal way for the child's benefit at any given moment whether the kindergarten is equipped with a network of new computers or just one single computer and whether the teacher advocates use of technology as a foundation for the educational work of the kindergarten or believes in interpersonal interaction as the tool for work with the children.

However, before relating to the practical plan for Christmas I feel it pertinent to mention that the festivals and the work on the festivals in the kindergarten are different and distinct from the regular routine work. Thus, the kindergarten's educational program for the festival should be innovative, adopting technology-enriched activities, adapted to the character of the festival, exploiting the technology to the maximum.

It is worth noting that even when she believes in the importance of interpersonal communication for the child's development in early childhood, the kindergarten teacher can still use communications technology in a focused and controlled manner in the kindergarten especially because children today are increasingly exposed to communications technology in the home and they master its tools, at least technically. The teacher can exploit this technology for two main purposes:

1. To provide the child with a different experience during the period of the festival, different from the normal kindergarten routine using activities and activation relating to Christmas.
2. To mediate contents to the child and to guide him in the correct and controlled use of communications technology tools, explaining the risks of surfing to unsupervised sites without adult supervision or over-use of tools that may in particular harm the development of motor and sensory abilities. This mediation can be especially productive when the teacher uses pleasurable technological materials that differ from routine experiences.

### **Christmas in the Technological Era in Society and in the Kindergarten<sup>7</sup>**

The influence of communications technology on Christmas in society and in the kindergarten is felt in three main areas:

1. Broadening the range of festivities.
2. Comfort and easy access to communications.
3. Combining contents from within a culture and those from other outside cultures.

Communications technology has contributed to the development of cultural customs relating to Christmas in the Middle East since it broadcasts events in real time from different world sites in which Christmas is respected. Even in the multicultural Holy Land, members of different ethnic and religious groups have begun to imitate customs from different countries.

Helped by globalization, importers bring in all sorts of accessories for the festival used in the home and in public spaces in new forms unknown in the past. New activities develop and are published aided by communications technology including exhibitions, bazaars, celebrations, parades, Christmas trees lit up at social occasions, etc. The activities begin in October while in the past they would begin a week or ten days before the festival. In the past, greetings would arrive for selected people in the form of Christmas cards, but this has given way to rich and varied electronic messages sent quickly and cheaply. Awareness of Christmas as a cultural act has increased among members of different ethnic groups, who adopt a large selection of customs and take part in many activities, not only because they live in a multi-cultural society but because of the interaction that is created mainly through communications technology. This interaction enables individuals to form dynamic relations between their own culture and those around them, and Christmas with all its events holds a central place in these dynamics.

The various innovations are assimilated by the members of the different Christian ethnic groups to the extent that new practices are adopted in homes such as setting the Christmas tree in the home or inviting Santa Claus to distribute presents. In addition, these new cultural activities have influenced the education system because the educators themselves live in a multi-cultural society and are exposed to the different communications networks' festival events. The educators then bring them in a formal or informal way into the schools or kindergartens. The children in the kindergartens are influenced in a general way by events in society and external technological developments since they are part of the larger society. They also receive accurate information and suitable activities for their development through the mediation of their teacher who also uses communications technology for many of the activities concerning the festival and its symbols.

### **The Fundamentals of Christmas in an Era of Communications Technology – Proposal for a Practical Program**

Fundamental technological means needed to transmit Christmas with technological appliances like:

1. At least one working computer for use by the teacher and/or the children.
2. A projector linked up to the computer.
3. Connection to the Internet contributes significantly to the application of the proposed program and assists the teacher's search for materials and activities.

The basic historic, religious, cultural and social elements of Christmas constitute the foundation for the teaching of the festival in kindergartens while maintaining a structured gradual progress from the easiest, closest and most concrete to the abstract and more difficult (see: Ibn-Khaldoon [1377 – 14<sup>th</sup> century], 1992; Brunner, 1966). The use of communications technology helps the teacher to find materials, films, pictures and activities on the one hand and to provide the children with enjoyable experiences that satisfy the children's natural curiosity (Misrad, 2010).

The use of communications technology is suitable for all the kindergarten children since they each develop in the kindergarten according to their own pace (Sela', 1995). Most of the children have not yet learnt to read and write (Salama, 2010), and there may be some children, with as yet, unidentified learning disabilities. Advanced technological tools allow children to learn and enjoy what they see or do according to their own developmental stage.

### **The Book Corner and Listening**

The presentation of the festival story includes the historical background for the period of the birth of Jesus, folk stories relating to the meaning of Christmas or the Christmas festivities, stories relating to Santa Claus, and stories of "here-and-now.". It should be taken into account that if the children are younger (3 years old) they will hear stories relating to their close surroundings, and when they are older (5-6 years) they will hear history stories. The teacher can scan the story of the festival and present the pictures and text on a large screen, she can record the story in her own voice accompanied by written text and illustrations. She can also find appropriate film clips on the Internet.

Although it is important to use pictures and stories in order to maintain interpersonal communication (Da'eem, 2015), we should not forget that this is festival time activity that allows us to deviate from the norm as on the festival itself. The use of films on the screen can be enjoyable and facilitate learning for children who find it difficult to absorb the story in the form of illustration or text. It should also be remembered that the children are exposed to films and video clips on various types of communications technology at home.

The kindergarten book corner should also include pictures of holy sites and holy icons that are accessible on the Internet and can be printed at a reasonable cost, but it is also possible to present them on a large screen and to conduct a conversation concerning the religious story using the icon or to show a presentation of several icons that the child can study as part of a personal activity in the kindergarten (Salama, 2010).

Although communications technology outside the kindergarten may have a negative influence since they expose the child to the violence and chaos prevalent in the world, using suitable films that present universal social and humanist values such as tolerance and love and not necessarily particular religious or historical values, it becomes possible to present the children with a vision of a better world than that which they encounter in the mass media and to instill in them values of self-worth and acceptance of others. Christmas is some festival rich in song and music. The children hear the songs of Christmas everywhere and at different times. The teacher can collect all the relevant songs for the children in the kindergarten and print their lyrics, presenting them to the children together with the melody.

### **Didactic Activity (Da'eem & Younis, 2007)**

One of the advantages of the use of communications technology and technology-assisted activities is that they help to prepare the child for the skills required in the technological era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the necessary cognitive, literacy and mathematical abilities. And since the child is in the pre-school stage, meaning that he has not yet learned to read and write the child can learn literacy skills and mathematical abilities while enjoying pleasurable activity with technological tools. Children with learning difficulties cannot always be identified in early childhood but activities with



technological tools have value-added for these children since they can understand them easily and so they can be included in such activities.

**Linguistic and mathematical literacy.** Cards with letters and numbers in graphic form and musical notes can constitute an interesting game for children. In this context mathematical computer activities relating to form and amount and linguistic elements (single-plural, male-female, opposites can be adapted to include festival content and symbols.

**The calendar.** Reading the names of the months, the days and festivals on a computerized calendar strengthens the child's perception of the annual cycle, and contributes to their literal literacy. The child can read the words and also hear them simultaneously on the computer.

**Computer puzzles and matching games.** Puzzles and matching games such as lotto and jigsaw puzzles, and any other card games or a series of narrative pictures that have to be placed in a logical order to tell a story can be challenging and interesting for the children's linguistic and cognitive development and can be adapted to teach about Christmas using the festival symbols.

**Task sheets.** These are pages on the computer with assignments that allow the child to perform a task such as drawing a line between a shape and a word or searching for a suitable word among a set of words, etc.

### **Observation of Processes**

In the past, Christians in the Middle East would plant seeds in clay, glass or plastic pots on a mat of cotton wool, to symbolize the beginning of new life, to decorate the home at Christmas. Children would watch the growth of the seeds, which they planted in the kindergarten. Today the Internet sites are full of pot planting games showing seeds and their harvesting, including competitive games. It is therefore possible to develop similar technological games in which Christmas seeds are planted, or typical Christmas plants such as the Christmas flower (poinsettia) or Holly and Ivy, and to observe the way in which they grow. All the work with the symbols of the festival (presents, the tree, lights and candles, the cave (stable), Santa Claus, the star etc.) whether it is handiwork or digital work is based on the accumulated culture of the festival.

Computerized activities include receiving presents from Santa Claus in a game where the object is to succeed in the task or digital decoration of the tree and cave according to instructions, or writing a digital greeting card, all of which improve the learning of the cultural aspects of the festival. The local cultural foundations of Christmas are not reduced by globalization at all. The mutual in-culture (within different Christian societies) and ex-culture influence between cultures in a multicultural society affects the manner of celebration, which it seems is the element most affected by mass media and contributes much to the way in which educational work is performed in the kindergarten.

### **The Connection with Nature and Environmental Preservation**

In parallel to the development of communications technology there has been increasing international awareness of the need for environmental quality among kindergarten teachers. In my opinion this is the result of two main factors: the first, extensive

publicity relating to environmental quality that reaches the teachers through the media, and secondly the teachers succeed in implementing the philosophy of nature preservation through the use of recycled materials in many creative ideas for arts and other activities. The kindergarten teachers often use recycled materials to create decorations with the children, for example, decorating the Christmas tree or the classroom. The use of recycled materials helps to preserve the environment and develops creativity.

As noted above, teachers are increasingly exposed to learning materials advertised on the Internet and derive practical ideas from innumerable sites dealing with Christmas, accumulating stories and creative and decorative activities for children, assignment sheets, sketches and stencils, greeting cards, songs, etc. However, as the teachers enjoy the computer in many ways as they learn new methods and activities concerning Christmas, their need to occupy the children in practical creative work that will contribute to their development grows. As noted, they try to do this with cheap recycled materials. Having a printer in the kindergarten can help the teacher to print assignment sheets whereas in the past she would have to draw things by hand or with a stencil on a suitable number of pages for each child.

Greetings cards have almost disappeared in Israel although they still exist in other places in the world. The teachers make them with the children and even make sure to recycle cards. They then take the children to the post office to send a greeting card to their parents. One additional prevalent activity is composing a greeting card on the computer and printing it. Of course, this is only possible if the kindergarten has a computer in working order and a printer.

### Summary

Christmas is an international festival that is celebrated in various different and rich ways in different locations. The use of communications technology in the kindergarten prepares children for life in the technological era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, allowing them to connect to universal channels relating to Christmas.

Communications technology cannot replace the interpersonal communications in the kindergarten, and so I would not recommend complete computerization of the kindergarten, rather appropriate planning of the children's use of computers in the kindergarten, especially since the children are exposed to the use of different intelligent appliances in their homes. What is really needed is the teachers' mediation for the proper use of various types of technological accessories.

At the same time, communications technology has influenced the work of the kindergarten teacher, both deepening and expanding it. This is expressed in the teacher's direct work with the children. The teachers learn from many world Internet sites and especially from films that show how to make handicrafts from simple and recycled materials; they attain new ideas that until not long ago would have necessitated greater efforts to learn or access. They can now find an activities book that might not be available on the local market, or learn from other teachers, or try to be innovative and creative with the assistance of the ideas of others.

The teachers sing songs in the kindergarten and lead dramatic productions of the Christmas story. They search on the Internet for Christmas stories that are not easy to attain, including picture books relating to the festival published abroad. They also look for historical, religious and artistic films telling the Christmas story and scan stories to show as presentations or with a projector.

The value added of the use of communications technology in the kindergarten is that it is possible to adapt the activities including didactic activities for children with learning difficulties, who can learn and develop in these alternative ways. Technology has an influence on the development of Christmas celebrations at the socio-cultural level, and it seems that the kindergarten can benefit from this technology to reinforce the authenticity of Christmas.

### Notes

1. From 2007-2012 I headed a team writing a guidebook for the teaching of festivals in Arab (Christian, Muslim and Druze) kindergartens (Da'eem et al., 2016) in line with the immense development of communications technology in the last decade, including YouTube and smartphones.
2. On the issue of introduction of computers to kindergartens in Israel see Yogev, 1999.
3. Finding from the interviews conducted for the writing of this paper.
4. In 2012, Israel's Ministry of Education initiated a project known as "A mobile computer for each kindergarten teacher" together with several NGOs and sponsors, the vision being that they would reach their target in the field by 2016. The program included the distribution of mobile computers to each teacher that participated in a 90-hour course in computer literacy. The purpose of this initiative was to develop the teacher's basic skills in computer-literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, so that the mobile computer would become the teacher's work desk, to promote organizational work with different official and professional entities, and this would assist pedagogic activities and contact with different stakeholders including the children's parents (Hadad et al., 2012).
5. The rational discussion concerning multiculturalism is based, among other things, on the report of Shinar (1994).
6. Some of the kindergartens in Arab society have mixed populations with different religions (Christian, Muslim and Druze) since they are situated in districts populated by members of all these religions.
7. See Da'eem et al., 2016; Da'eem & Younis, 2007; Tannus & Zahalqa, 1996.

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