

Druze Education in Israel

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The Druze in Israel

This presentation will describe Druze education in Israel in light of Druze values. The Druze in Israel are a minority within a minority. Their mother language is Arabic but they belong to the Druze nationality. In Israel they comprise approximately 100,000 people, about 1.8 percent of the total Israeli population and about 10 percent of the country's minority population. The Druze in Israel live in a rural, conservative, religious society. They have a philosophic religion that is based on neo-Platonism and ethics. The Druze are known as very loyal to their country and every Druze at the young age of 18 is expected to serve in the army.

Druze Education in Israel

The aims of education in the Druze sector are: "to base education on Druze and Arab cultural values, as well as on the values of achievements in science, and the attainment of peace between Israel and its neighbors. The love of the homeland is common to all its citizens, and thus the Druze are loyal to the State of Israel, and cooperate in the building and running of the state.

Druze education aims to emphasize the special as well as the common interests of all citizens, the special ties between Jews and Druze; an understanding of Jewish culture; the development of an Israel-Druze entity; the firm establishment of Druze youth in the culture of the community; and the common destiny of all Druze communities in all their lands" (Falah, 2002 p. 212).

Doctoral Study

The topic of my doctoral dissertation was "The role of the Druze school system in shaping the personality, identity and level of citizenship of its students: An ethnographic case study in two Druze high schools".

Research Conclusions

1. The Druze school plays a significant role in shaping the identity of adolescents and fostering their sense of citizenship.
2. Adolescent Druze identity is comprised of three identity components - the ethnic

- component is the strongest and the national component the most prominent.
3. The educational goals of the Druze educational system and the school philosophy are reflected throughout the fabric of the school, with an emphasis on highlighting Druze uniqueness, defending the homeland and the vital importance of academic achievement.
 4. The school culture underscores tolerance, coexistence and cultivating the dialogic environment.
 5. The curriculum pertaining to Druze heritage and to “Shelach” (field/nationality/society) and “Israel Studies” serves as the basis for shaping and building Druze-Israeli identity
 6. The citizenship and Arab language curricula are covertly adapted to the needs of the Druze ethnic group.
 7. School activities and projects constitute the basis for shaping Druze-Israeli identity and strengthening the value pertaining to the sense of belonging to the land and the State.
 8. Druze adolescents are aware of the fact that they are a discriminated minority compared to the Jewish majority, and encouraging critical theory in the fabric of the school enables them to express their opinions freely and provides them with the tools for requesting clarifications and elucidation on any topic when needed.
 9. In the school fabric, the good of the community is the foundation for all activities and all educational-scholastic content.

Abbas, R. (2004). *Druze School Culture Compared to Arab School Culture, An Ethnographic Case Study*. Master’s degree thesis, Ramat Gan, Bar Ilan University, Pp (I-V).

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Falah, S. (2002). *The Druze in the Middle East*. Jerusalem, Ministry of Defense, Government of Israel.