

בּוּדוּר
BUDUR



"Learning Together"

Bodur Professional Development

Report for the 2024/2025 School Year Summary

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Background

A high proportion of the Arab population is not proficient in Hebrew. This starting point makes it difficult for them to integrate into quality employment and post-secondary education.

In the Bedouin sector, Hebrew lessons are scheduled in the school timetable starting from grade 3 (in most cases). Nevertheless, students' achievements in Hebrew in Bedouin schools are significantly lower compared to students from Druze and Arab groups (according to a report published by RAMA on Hebrew for Arabic speakers in grade 6, 2023). The main barriers identified in the RAMA report are the lack of exposure of students to Hebrew and negative attitudes that lead to low motivation to learn Hebrew.

In 2024, a new curriculum was published for teaching Hebrew to Arabic speakers. The new program is based on CEFR principles and requires engagement in all four language modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). The publication created a need to mediate and interpret the new program, particularly aspects related to spoken language.

The Bodur organization set a goal to promote Hebrew proficiency among students in the Hebrew-speaking community and operates through several channels to achieve this goal. One of the channels chosen by the organization is professional development for Hebrew teachers in elementary schools in the Arab community in Israel.

The professional development is conducted in a two-year format, including 12 meetings each year, with a duration of 4 academic hours per meeting.

The meetings were held within the schools, with the participation of the entire school Hebrew teaching staff. The learning format is mixed—half of the learning time took place in a group format with the entire Hebrew staff (2 weekly hours), and the other half was dedicated to individual mentoring meetings (2 weekly hours, conducted in rotation among teachers, approximately half an hour per teacher).

Short-term and long-term goals were defined for the professional development. In the short term, changes in teachers' instructional practices are expected; in the long term, improvement in students' Hebrew proficiency is expected. This is achieved through:

- Providing tools and methods for teaching spoken language to the school's Hebrew teaching staff
- Mentoring and professional guidance for the school's Hebrew staff
- Promoting school-based teacher communities

In the 2024/25 school year, 38 Hebrew teachers from 8 elementary schools participated in the professional development. Each group was assigned a permanent mentor, with a total of three mentors working in the program.

**Schools that participated in a professional development program
for teachers in the 2024–2025 academic year.**

| Town | School | Teaching staff & work experience | Budur Instructor | Training day | Classes |
|-----------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Bir Hadaj | Bar Hail | 5 teachers (1,4,6,7,8) | Iris | Sunay | 8-1 |
| Bir Hadaj | Aleman | 4 teachers (1,3,8,9) | Iris | Sunday | 8-1 |
| Abu Tlol | Al Islam | 5 teachers (7,5,4,2,1) | Dariah | Tuesday | 8-1 |
| Shaqib al-Salam | Afaq | 4 teachers (1-4) | Dariah | Wednesday | 6-1 |
| Qasr al-Sir | Hussin El Hawashlieh | 6 teachers (3-6) | Raphi | Wednesday | 8-1 |
| Abu Krinat | Al - Majd | 5 teachers (1,1,23,3,7) | Raphi | Wednesday | 6-1 |
| Shaqib al-Salam | Al - Nour | 6 teachers | Dariah | Wednesday | 8-1 |
| Shaqib al-Salam | Ebn Holdoun | 6 teachers (18,10,8,5,2) | Raphi | Tuesday | 6-1 |

Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

An ongoing evaluation of the program began in 2025. In the first year of the professional development program, the purpose of the evaluation is to examine the perceived contribution as reported by the participating teachers.

The evaluation study combines quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research provides a broad and representative picture, while the qualitative research helps identify needs and challenges emerging from the schools, thereby supporting and interpreting the quantitative findings.

Population and Evaluation Tools

Quantitative Study

The quantitative study included all eight schools that participated in the professional development program.

The research tools included online questionnaires distributed to all participants in the professional development program. The questionnaires were administered toward the end of the school year (June 2025) and examined aspects related to perceptions of implementation, quality, and contribution.

Qualitative Study

Four schools were sampled, and in each school a teacher who participated in the professional development program was interviewed. In total, four participants in the professional development program were interviewed. In addition, the three program facilitators and the program's pedagogical coordinator were interviewed.

Since the professional development program is designed to last two years, the current evaluation report—following the first year of the program—serves as an interim report, presenting the current status of the professional development process so far.

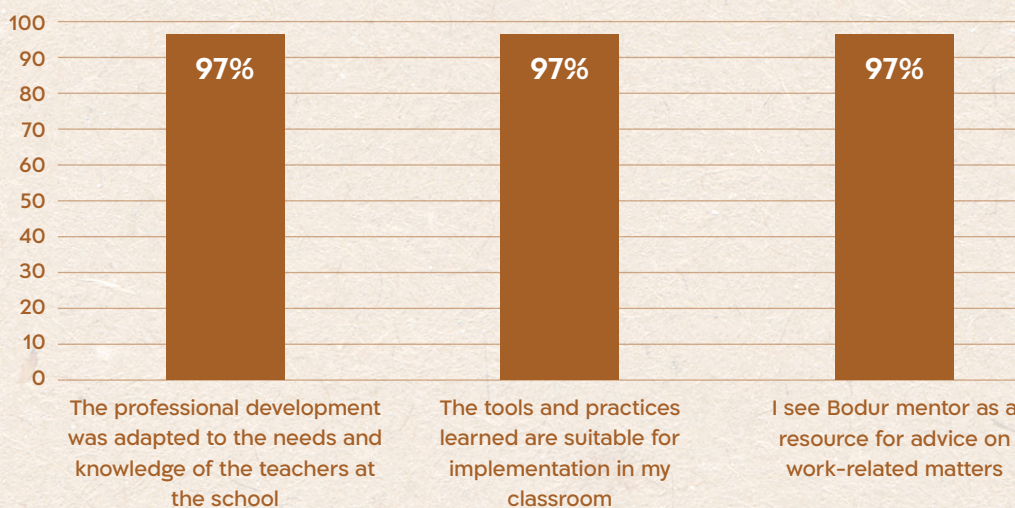
1. Perceived Quality of the Professional Development

The professional development program was based on a syllabus with uniform content and structure for all schools. However, following a mapping questionnaire completed by participants at the beginning of the year, changes were made to the order of topics and their emphasis. Accordingly, teachers were asked in the questionnaire to address both the overall quality of the process and the suitability and relevance of the topics.

Figure 1: Rating of the Quality of Professional Development



Figure 2: Appropriateness and Relevance



The charts indicate the following:

- The vast majority of teachers gave high ratings to the professional development program in which they participated—regarding the overall quality, the individual mentoring, and the group learning process.
- Most participants reported that the program was well aligned and relevant to the needs and characteristics of their schools, and they view the Bodur facilitator as a significant professional figure.

Interviews with teachers, Hebrew coordinators, and facilitators revealed that Bodur’s professional development model is considered innovative within Bedouin school culture, particularly due to its focus on spoken Hebrew:

"Spoken Hebrew is the area in which students struggle the most." (Teacher)

"I enrolled in another Hebrew training program but left because it wasn't suitable. It focused on literacy... that's not the area I thought would help me encourage students to use Hebrew." (Teacher)

"We saw that there are things they already do—they teach Hebrew. The children know how to read and write. But to speak it? That's where [their knowledge] stops... The professional development sets a different foundation from what they previously had, where the goal is to speak Hebrew! ... so that questions can be asked all the time, not only in relation to a text, and that students will recognize questions and answer questions like: 'What's your name?' 'How are you?' ..." (Facilitator)

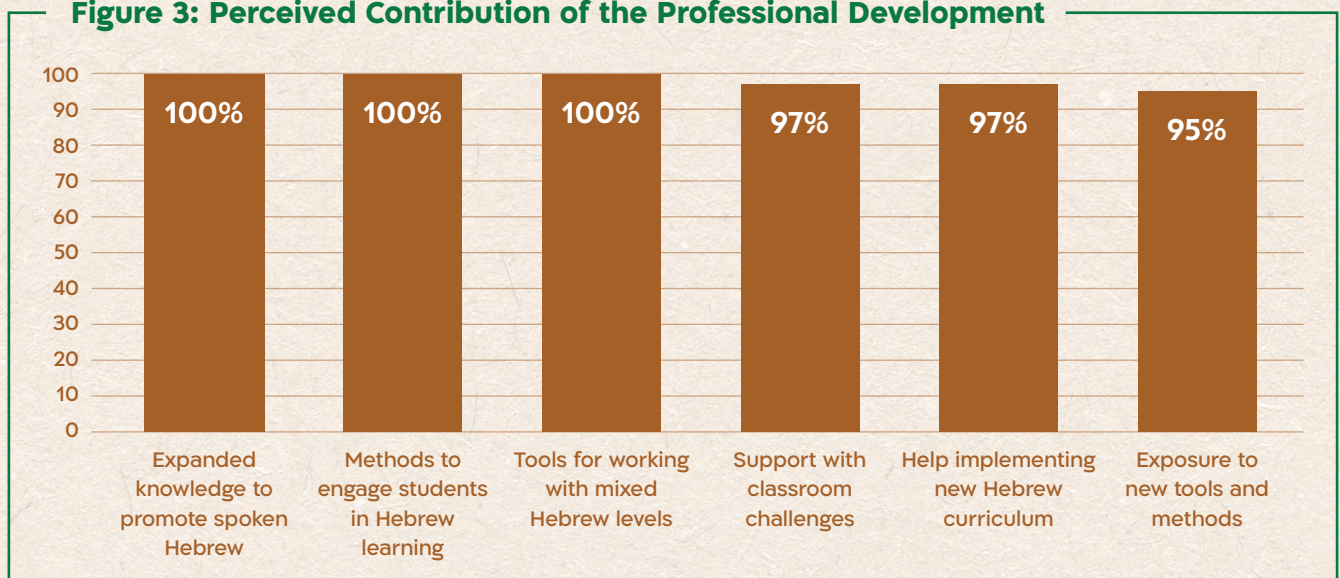
"The national supervisor changed the matriculation goal, but did not work backward from it... Our uniqueness is explaining the principle and deriving principles, methodologies, and explaining what a classroom should look like when spoken language is being taught." (Facilitator)
Another distinctive element is the joint peer learning of the entire Hebrew teaching team—including both teachers and the coordinator:

"One of the strengths is that the entire team is together. They have a language instructor from the national supervisor, but they meet with her individually. There isn't the aspect of 'learning together.'" (Facilitator)

2. Perceived Contribution of the Professional Development

In the short term, the expected goal was defined as a change in teachers' methods of teaching Hebrew. Accordingly, teachers were asked to assess the extent to which the professional development program provided them with tools to encourage learning and to implement the new curriculum.

Figure 3: Perceived Contribution of the Professional Development



The chart indicates:

That all teachers gave very high ratings to all aspects of the contribution examined regarding the professional development program.

In conversations with teachers and Hebrew coordinators who participated in the professional development program, they described their need for mediation and interpretation of the new curriculum in order to implement it in the classroom. According to them, this need was addressed through the professional development program:

"The national supervisor said there is a new curriculum, gave us the focus areas, and left us to figure it out ourselves... The facilitator [from Budur] is a teacher from the field and understands how principals and students think. Both the content and the teaching methods fit the new curriculum... Recently we discussed the new program and what is expected from elementary and secondary levels. We talked about three levels: basic level, independent user, and proficient user." (Teacher)

In addition, teachers and coordinators described how they changed the structure of their lessons and their teaching practices toward experiential learning that encourages speaking—even among struggling students—and enriches students' vocabulary:

"I learned new things, new methods... how to get them to speak more in spoken Hebrew, how to enrich vocabulary, how to speak in everyday language—not just words from the textbook—how to conduct lessons in a more experiential way." (Teacher)

"Many things were new to me... for example, playing a song and giving the students the written lyrics, and only afterward exposing them to the song." (Teacher)

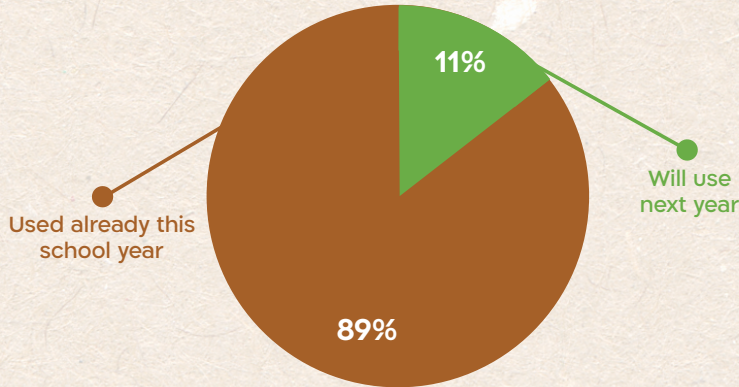
"Linking what was learned before to the current lesson. It helps a lot... The beginning of the lesson is a review. We talked about this a lot [in the professional development]... repetition really helps students remember." (Teacher)

"One of the sessions was about how to start a lesson and allow children to raise ideas." (Teacher)

"Providing feedback to weaker students... when they speak, giving them feedback helps them integrate." (Teacher)

Figure 4: Statements Regarding the Use of Tools and Methods

Will you use the tools or the methods that were learned this year in the professional development of Budur?



Approximately 90% of the teachers reported immediate implementation of tools and methods learned through the professional development program.

In the interviews as well, some teachers described the immediate implementation of practices learned during the professional development program and reported that the experience led to successful outcomes:

"We placed emphasis on the struggling students—those who are usually set aside while the focus is on the more prominent students who participate. We received tips on how to work with struggling students who do not cooperate... it helped." (Teacher)

"We are improving our teaching now, not in the future! I taught the lesson as they suggested and wrote the lesson sequence in parentheses. For example—starting the lesson with an intriguing question, breaking the word into syllables so they know how to write the word correctly, and not letting them give up." (Teacher)

3. Components of the Professional Development

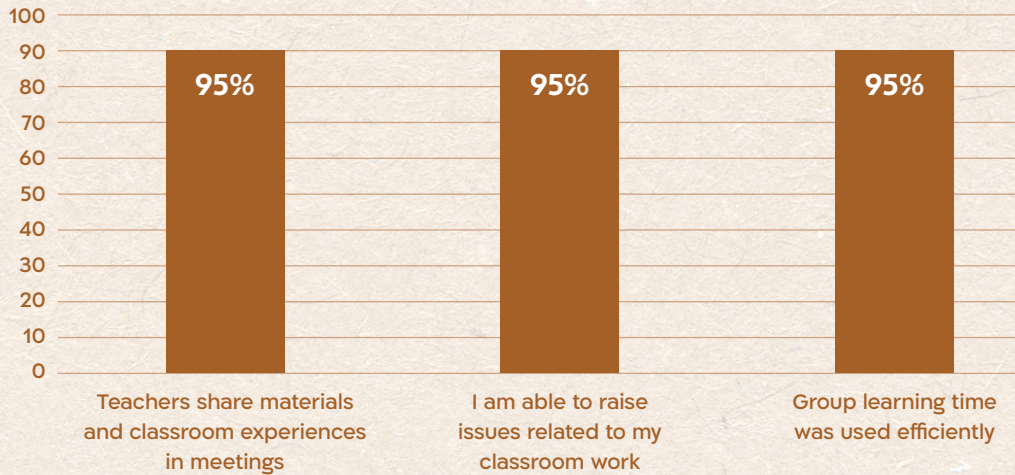
The 12 meetings held throughout the school year (approximately once every two weeks) consisted of two hours of a group session with the entire school Hebrew teaching staff and two hours of individual mentoring sessions.

Teachers were asked to refer to the contribution of both the group component and the individual component. Their responses are presented in the following four charts.

3.1. Group Meetings

Chart 5: Attitudes Toward the Conduct of the Group Meetings

Hebrew teachers

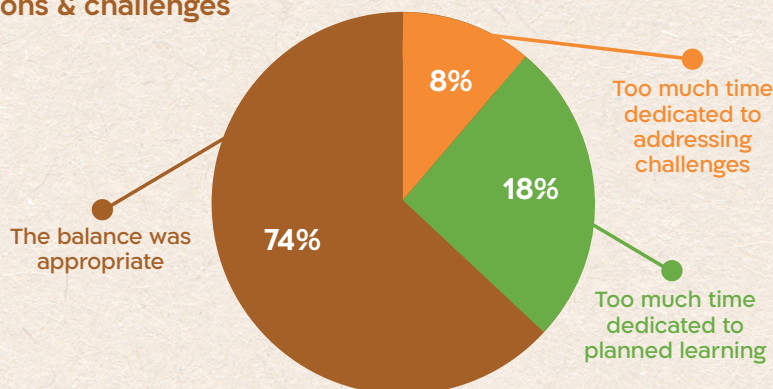


The chart indicates:

An overwhelming majority of teachers rated the group meetings as active and effective sessions, in which meaningful discussion takes place and issues from classroom practice are raised. Teachers were asked to express their opinion regarding the balance between **time dedicated to pre-planned content by the facilitator** and **content arising from questions and challenges raised by the teaching team**.

Figure 6: Balance Between Planned Content and Field-Based Topics

Balance between planned contents and content arising from teachers questions & challenges



The chart indicates:

- The majority of professional development participants (74%) felt that there was a proper balance between pre-planned content and topics shared by the teachers.
- In contrast, about one-fifth of the teachers felt that more time should be dedicated to teacher sharing and analyzing classroom cases

3.2. Group Meetings

Chart 7: Attitudes Toward the Individual Meetings

Hebrew teachers

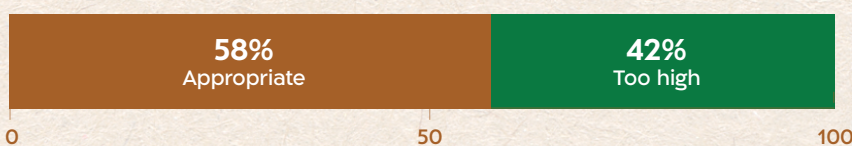


The chart indicates:

- Teachers expressed complete satisfaction with the format of the individual meetings and with the assessment of their contribution.

Figure 8: Scope of Individual Mentoring

Hebrew teachers



The chart indicates:

- Despite the high ratings of the contribution of the individual meetings, about 40% of teachers felt that the amount of individual mentoring was too high.
- There was variation in responses among participants of different facilitators. Participants of one facilitator were more likely to feel that the individual mentoring was excessive (53% compared to about one-third for the other two facilitators).

Conversations with the teachers and mentors revealed that the frequency and scope of individual meetings vary. Each individual meeting lasts between 20 minutes and half an hour, and in schools with a "large" staff, there was a tendency to hold meetings in pairs. Paired meetings also took place according to the perceived need or the topic designated by the mentor. Consequently, each teacher meets with the mentor individually between once every two weeks and twice a month.

"I meet each teacher individually for about 20 minutes. These are precise meetings—if it's before mapping, we go over the students' forms, or sometimes we need a moment to process things before the observation..." (Mentor)

"In a school with seven or eight teachers, I meet them in pairs. I try to give half an hour per pair, because it doesn't need to be more than 20–30 minutes, and I don't have time for longer." (Mentor)

Teachers reflected on the balance between group and individual components. Some felt the balance was appropriate, as each component offers a unique contribution: the group meetings allow peer learning and teaching content exchange, while individual meetings enable goal-setting and personal follow-up:

"There are special things I discussed one-on-one with the mentor... I'm waiting for further conversations with her... There was also a very pleasant conversation with the group. The group has positive aspects too... I learned new things about the other teachers." (Teacher)

"The division is very good... pleasant and enjoyable, we take away a lot." (Teacher)

"The format is good; we should continue with both group and individual meetings. For individual meetings, it's better to sit with one teacher at a time, ideally for a full lesson period." (Teacher)

Other teachers felt that more emphasis should be given to the individual component, arguing that it is important to meet teachers one-on-one rather than in pairs, because each teacher has unique characteristics that are better addressed individually:

"At first, we sit with the whole team and then individually with each teacher. For me, as a teacher, it's better to sit with the mentor individually. When we sit together, we talk about each of our classes and how to conduct lessons and learn from others. That helps, but I need to sit individually to discuss how I deliver the lesson and ask questions I don't want to ask in front of the whole team, because sometimes there are challenges that are hard to share in front of everyone." (Teacher)

"[In individual meetings] not in pairs, but one teacher at a time. We get feedback and analyze it together when sitting separately with the mentor." (Teacher)

The professional development syllabus planned for lesson observations toward the end of the school year, based on the understanding that mutual trust needs to be established before observation and feedback. Mentors reported that in some schools, participants requested to advance the timing of observations, recognizing them as a significant professional development tool. Teachers and coordinators in interviews described lesson observations as a key part of individual mentoring, emphasizing the need to combine it with detailed feedback:

Regarding the timing of lesson observations, some argued that they should begin toward the end of the first training year (as scheduled in the syllabus), while others thought individual mentoring should focus on observations already in the first half of the year:

"I needed classroom observations with teachers at the start of the year, because students aren't as focused in summer as they are at the beginning of the year... Observing teachers from the start allows us to follow up and tell them what to improve." (Teacher)

Other teachers suggested that mentors conduct model lessons in classrooms, co-teach lessons with the teacher, or observe lessons by peer teachers:

"If it's possible to teach lessons or observe lessons together, and take notes on new things... the mentor can observe lessons or we can deliver them together. There can be learning from each other within the team—everyone learns something different. Even though we are all professionals, we can learn from each other." (Teacher)

4. Suggestions for Improving Professional Development

Teachers were given the opportunity to respond freely to the question, "What would you suggest improving in the professional development process?" The following is an analysis of their responses according to the main categories that emerged, presented in descending order of frequency, along with selected quotes:

| Details | Number of teachers | Category |
|---|--------------------|--|
| <p>"Work more on the material taught in the curriculum." "Focus on personal goals and provide practical, applicable feedback." "Strengthen personal guidance." "Build a personal development plan together and include ongoing mentoring. It is important that the meeting includes constructive feedback, emotional and professional support alike." "Individual meetings should be more dedicated to classroom mentoring and providing feedback." "Provide constructive and in-depth feedback. Not just praise or comments, but analyze examples from the field together (lesson, classroom management, communication)."</p> | 8 | Refine the individual mentoring component so it supports teachers' personal development |
| <p>"In group meetings, I prefer more content for classroom implementation, such as games and activities." "In both [group and individual], I think more tools for teaching Hebrew in the classroom need to be improved to enhance spoken Hebrew." "Develop practical tools for immediate implementation." "More focus on spoken Hebrew, tools and practices to strengthen it among students." "Provide practical tools to teachers."</p> | 6 | Provide practical and applicable tools for teaching spoken Hebrew |
| <p>"Dedicate time to analyzing classroom cases." "In group meetings – add more time for open discussion and sharing among participants." "Knowledge sharing within the team. Encourage teachers to share from their experience, present tools that work for them or examples of effective teaching."</p> | 5 | Dedicate more time to knowledge sharing and classroom case analysis |
| <p>"Organize the individual meetings system with the school so that everyone gets their time." "Schedule mentoring times to better fit the entire staff."</p> | 3 | Address logistical aspects – fixed and pre-coordinated times, increase mentoring frequency |

conversations with teachers, needs for expansion within professional development were described:

🍃 Pedagogical focus: Optimal lesson structure, providing tools for classroom management, means to engage students in learning, means to encourage students to express themselves in Hebrew.

- "There are students who have vocabulary and ability but are afraid to speak in Hebrew. Learn ways to encourage them." (Teacher)

🍃 Expanding the range of tools for teaching spoken language beyond classroom learning:

- "Tools to help students not only in lessons, but so that the student uses the words we teach in class all the time and it helps them speak the language more correctly. Activities in the school... a corner in the school with stories." (Teacher)

🍃 Adding learning components related to digital learning and artificial intelligence:

- "It would be better if the material were more relevant to the topic of artificial intelligence that has come in, because the children are in front of screens all the time." (Teacher)

5. Professional Development from the Mentors' Perspective

Mentors and headquarters staff described a professional development program based on structured content, following a uniform syllabus for all mentors. The content focused on principles for teaching spoken Hebrew, combined with a broader perspective on pedagogical approaches (such as differentiated instruction in a heterogeneous classroom) and teachers' individual instructional needs. It was emphasized that the Hebrew language itself is not the focus of the program, as this is the responsibility of the national Hebrew curriculum coordinator. During the year, various needs emerged from the field, leading to slight adjustments in the emphasis and sequence of the syllabus. Flexibility and responsiveness to field needs were described as strengths of the program:

"Every week there is a Zoom session where we refine the program for ourselves, discussing what worked and what didn't. Thanks to our shared learning, we can make the program flexible. If a certain topic was planned earlier... and we saw the staff wasn't ready yet, we move it to a later time. This flexibility is excellent; there's no rigid point we have to stick to."

Mentors supported the continuation of a mix between group meetings and individual meetings:

"The balance between team meetings and individual meetings is excellent... Thanks to the individual meetings, there is room to remove defenses and masks... The individual meetings greatly contribute to the following sessions. In the individual meetings, something comes out that doesn't emerge in the group meetings, and teachers feel there is space for their words even if they aren't heard in the larger team meeting."

Regarding group meetings, mentors emphasized that the physical conditions of the meeting space greatly affect the quality of dialogue (for example, sitting behind computers creates a barrier between participants):

"Do not give up on an hour and a half with the entire staff."

Regarding individual meetings, mentors reported that sometimes they occur individually and sometimes in pairs, depending on the topic and the number of teachers on the school staff (to ensure individual meetings are not too infrequent). The duration of the meeting ranges from 20 to 30 minutes and is perceived as appropriate and sufficient.

In interviews, it was described that the Bedouin education system experiences challenges related to discipline, declining literacy even in the mother tongue, reduced parental authority to motivate learning, and sometimes parental indifference toward education. These combine with the difficulties of a conflict environment and create challenging conditions for teachers of Hebrew.

Mentors and headquarters staff distinguished between schools that, in their view, implemented the learned content more fully, compared to those that implemented it less. They attributed the success of professional development to two main aspects:

a) Level of school organization and commitment: Allocating the entire teaching staff to the group meeting, encouraging persistence and regularity of meetings, assigning a fixed room for meetings, etc., throughout the school year:

"In today's meeting, one teacher didn't come, another had to handle a classroom incident... Generally, attendance is good, but the school needs to commit to Hebrew instruction meetings."

"In one of my schools there were clear organizational difficulties, and if there isn't continuity with a fixed hour and a half with the teachers, it's hard to create a process."

b) Level of team cooperation: Openness and sharing of classroom case stories (during meetings and in the WhatsApp group opened for staff and mentor), willingness to complete mapping forms, and implementation of learned content in classrooms.

From interviews with mentors, several insights and recommendations regarding the format and organization of professional development emerged:

Need to tighten the organizational structure: School principals receiving professional development were required to commit to the program by freeing time for shared team learning. In practice, variations in school commitment were described: canceled meetings, partial release of teachers for group meetings, no fixed room for meetings. Logistical difficulties may have been due to professional development starting in November–December, when schedules were already set. Therefore, it is recommended:

Coordinate scheduling of professional development meetings so that all teachers are present and available, a need also expressed by teachers.

Emphasize to principals their commitment to holding group and individual meetings throughout the year for the entire staff.

Start meetings at the beginning of the school year, so that meetings occur throughout most of the year. At the same time, space the meetings approximately every three weeks, giving teachers time to implement what they learned and bring examples from classroom practice.

Coordinate expectations of professional development goals with school leadership and pedagogical coordinators, as sometimes there are different objectives in Hebrew teaching (e.g., the number of texts studied).

Additional insights regarding the professional development program:

Conduct lesson observations and peer learning through observation starting from the first year, after establishing trust between the mentor and staff, a need also expressed by some teachers.

Demonstrate learned principles using videos.

Develop and distribute feedback tools to assess classroom implementation, which will help measure the contribution of professional development to teaching practices and student achievement (the long-term goal of professional development).

6. Summary

The professional development program for Hebrew teachers began operating in the 2024–2025 school year in eight schools. The program was designed in alignment with the new Hebrew curriculum, which emphasizes the four language modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and focuses on developing skills for teaching spoken Hebrew. The professional development program comprises 4 weekly hours, of which 2 hours are devoted to group learning and 2 hours to individual mentoring (approximately half an hour per teacher).

This report presents the evaluation findings after the first year of the two-year program.

Participating teachers reported a high perceived contribution of the program as a whole – both the group and individual components. Engagement with spoken Hebrew is innovative and encourages teachers to incorporate it into their lessons. Teachers viewed the combination of group and individual learning as a good mix, as each component provides unique value: group sessions enable peer learning and content delivery, while individual sessions allow goal-setting and personal follow-up. However, about 40% of teachers felt that the individual component was too extensive. This can be linked to teachers' desire to include lesson observations and constructive feedback within the professional development framework.

Insights for the future:

🌱 The program's success depends largely on staff availability. It is recommended to coordinate meeting schedules in advance with school administration so that all Hebrew teachers are present and available, and the program begins at the start of the school year.

🌱 Both mentors and teachers highlighted the importance of lesson observation and formative feedback. It is recommended to systematically integrate observation as a key component even in the first year and to explore the possibility of peer observations within the staff for learning and development purposes.

🌱 To maximize the impact of direct mentoring, before accepting new schools into the program, it is advisable to assess whether they are suitable in terms of the size of the Hebrew teaching staff (and whether staff may decrease during the year due to maternity leave or professional development) and their availability for learning.

🌱 A large majority of teachers reported applying tools and methods learned during the professional development program. It is recommended to examine whether and how this application continues over time.

