Bilingual Education in Israel
Final Report – November, 2001

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The following report summarizes two years of activities within the framework of a formative evaluation research study conducted at the two bilingual schools initiated by the Center for Bi-Lingual Education in Israel (CBE). This second and final report comprises four sections. The introduction provides a brief theoretical overview, a concise description of the methodologies used in the study, followed by some socio-political and demographic considerations and notes on the development of the schools and their physical settings (informed also by data from the current investigation). The second section includes the results from the analysis of the quantitative data. The third section presents the qualitative analysis, and the fourth and last section offers preliminary conclusions.

A) Introduction

The evaluation study offered the opportunity to overcome some of the shortcomings that afflict current theorizing in the fields of conflict resolution through inter-group encounters and in bilingual education. The first has for the most part occupied itself with short-term encounters specially designed to encourage dialogue between conflicting groups (Genesee & Gandara, 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2001) and the second has emphasized bilingual and academic achievements in educational efforts (Moran & Hakuta, 1995; Tucker, 1998). Our own effort was guided, to a considerable extent, towards a better understanding of cultural and identity issues as these evolve within sustained long term bilingual educational procedures.

There is a rather long history to the attempts, through inter-group encounters, to partially overcome inter-group conflicts. Psychological premises have in one way or another guided for the most part all this activity (for a review see Abu-Nimer, 1999; Stephan &
Stephan, 2001; Weiner, 1998). The Contact Hypothesis, in its various formulations and elaborations, suggests that inter-group contact which takes place under the conditions of status equality and cooperative interdependence while allowing for sustained interaction between participants and allowing for the potential forming of friendships might help alleviate conflict between groups and encourage change in negative inter-group attitudes (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976; Pettigrew, 1998). A recent meta-analysis provided marked evidence for the benefits of intergroup contact, especially when the contact situation maximizes most or all of its optimal conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000).

The study of intergroup contact in general, and of Arab-Jewish encounters in Israel in particular (Bar, Bargal, & Asaqla, 1995; Halabi & Sonnenshein, 2000; Suleiman, 1997), is increasingly adopting a contextual approach, emphasizing the inevitability of accounting for the socio-historical situatedness of the encounter activity, which has always to be analyzed as taking shape in dialogue with the outside world. Recently Maoz (2000) theorized about the need for a new paradigm that would account for the unavoidable incursion of outside power struggles, identity clashes, and structural asymmetry into contact situations.

An additional strategy that has been suggested for the improvement of intergroup relations is bilingual education. Language has been used historically in various educational settings to produce different linguistic outcomes, fostering monolingual and/or bilingual speech communities (Garcia, 1997). However, language education has been shown to entail socio-cultural products beyond purely linguistic outcomes.

Language plays a crucial role in social interaction and the transmission of cultural and social values (Fishman, 1970; Fishman, 1997; Safran, 1999). As a symbolic system, language not only constructs social identity but also may solidify or revitalize national/ethnic identities and loyalties (Fishman, 1989; Haarmann, 1986; Haarmann, 1995; Smith, 1998). One may thus consider language to be a socio-cultural resource with which nations may unify and separate national/ethnic groups into discrete speech communities, each with its own level of access to concomitant social resources and each
lovers to its own divergent linguistically constructed culture (Haslett, 1989; Scollon & Scollon, 1981).

Bilingual education can also serve as empowerment pedagogy through the incorporation of home language and culture in school community participation, increasing the self-esteem of minority students (Garcia, 1997; Giles & Weimann, 1987). As far as the majority group is concerned, bilingualism would not only allow for greater intellectual enrichment, but the elite would also benefit from the social consequences of greater cultural integration and pluralism. Two recent reviews (Genesee & Gandara, 1999; Slavin & Cooper, 1999) have examined the influence of bi-lingual and cooperative learning on prejudice, discrimination and the acquisition of new cultural paradigms. Genesee and Gandara emphasize the importance of paying explicit attention to societally based inter-group factors if bilingual education is to improve inter-group attitudes and relationships. Slavin and Cooper point at the relevance of stressing pedagogical factors such as cooperative educational approaches so as to create the needed conditions for reframing cultural relations.

Considering the socio-political context in Israel (Ghanem, 1998; Smooha, 1996), it is clear to all that the idea of creating Arab-Jewish co-education is a daring enterprise. The Center for Bi-Lingual Education in Israel (CBE) was established in 1997 with the aim of developing and furthering egalitarian Arab-Jewish cooperation in education, mainly through the development of bi-lingual, bi-national and multicultural cooperative educational institutions. Since 1997 the Center has been involved in the establishment of two schools guided by these principles, one in Jerusalem and one in Misgav (the Galil School). The schools at the time of the study include up to the third grade and are recognized as “state schools” supported by the Israeli Ministry of Education. They teach according to the regular curriculum of the state school system, with the difference that both Hebrew and Arabic are used as languages of instruction. The schools have adopted what has been characterized as a strong additive bilingual approach, which emphasizes symmetry between both languages in all aspects of instruction (Garcia, 1997). In terms of aims and processes, it is to be assumed that the initiators of the bi-lingual project would
agree with Skutnabb-Kangas and Garcia’s (1995) three main benefits of an effective bilingual educational project: 1) a high level of multilingualism; 2) equal opportunity for academic achievement; and 3) a strong, positive multilingual and multicultural identity including positive attitudes toward self and others.

During the first year of our study the Jerusalem school functioned as a section of the Nisui (experimental) School. With the closure of the bi-lingual section, because of reasons described in our previous report (Bekerman & Horenzcyk; 2001), a new independent school opened in the Jerusalem area, serving kindergarten, first and second grades. After it became apparent that the educational initiative at the Nisui School in Jerusalem would stop being active towards the end of the 2000 academic year and following deliberations with CBE, we decided that this report will relate primarily to the educational and social processes involved in the functioning and development of the Galil School in Misgav. The data gathered in the Jerusalem schools will be used mainly for the purposes of enriching our analysis in a comparative way and to inform us about processes and structural features, which can endanger the development of future similar initiatives.

Methodology:

For our evaluation we have adopted a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. This combined approach allowed us to gather a large amount of data and provided us with valuable insights into the complexities of the educational, social, and cultural processes involved in the functioning and development of the bilingual programs.

The qualitative approach traditionally turns on the use of a set of procedures that are simultaneously open ended and rigorous in their attempt to do justice to the complexities of the social world (Flick, 1998), approaching the field of study with the aim of understanding the meanings that participants’ in social settings attach to events in their own terms. In education, qualitative research practices have become common and have gained appreciation for the opportunity they offer to follow in detail developmental, social, organizational, and educational processes in ways unavailable in traditional
quantitative research (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992; Wolcott, 1988). Throughout the research process, and through the implementation of a variety of methodologies researchers develop analytical interpretative approaches to their findings to focus further data collection, which they in turn use to inform and redefine their developing theoretical analysis (Charmaz, 2000; Janesick, 1998). All in all this holistic approach has been beneficial in allowing researchers and shareholders to look first at whole pictures while paying meticulous attention to relationships within social and cultural systems with the central aim of understanding these processes but not necessarily making predictions about them.

As for the commensurability between both qualitative and quantitative approaches, there seems to be little doubt that their combination is only problematic when the paradigms that guide both approaches are grounded in different epistemological perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Clinical and educational research is increasingly using combined designs referred to as mixed methods (Spindler & Spindler, 1992; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). As for our case when keeping in mind that both methodologies and their analytical perspectives are guided by similar theoretical approaches, there is little doubt that they have the potential to produce rich and incisive findings. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in this study has proven advantageous in helping us obtain a rich and comprehensive picture of the various facets of the activities in the bi-lingual schools under study.

Our first report offered rather long ethnographic descriptions of a variety of school events with the aim of helping the reader to have a sense not only of ‘what’s going on’ but more specifically of ‘how things get done’ at the bi-lingual schools. Our second and last report will mostly specify the results of the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data regarding three central aspects: language; cultural, religious, and national identity; and social interactions.

As described in detail in our previous report, our evaluation was based on data gathered from a variety of sources using diverse quantitative and qualitative research methods.
These included interviews with parents, children, and school staff. Parents from children in all grades were interviewed (both individually and in focus groups) several times during the two years of the study. Throughout the two years we had also many opportunities to hold short interviews with the students during the many days of observations we conducted in the schools. They were conducted in Hebrew with the Jewish students and in Arabic with the Arab children. All teachers and principals involved in the project were also interviewed. These interviews were broader in scope than those conducted with parents and children, and focused on a variety of personal and educational topics, including: reasons for joining the program, goals and objectives, pedagogical approaches, multicultural ideology and identity, etc. All interviews – with parents, children, and staff we recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Observations served as another major research tool employed in our study. They were conducted during approximately sixty days of school activities, two thirds in the Galil School and one-third at the two sites of the Jerusalem school. The project staff participated in class activities and recesses, observing (and partially videotaping) educational and recreational activity. We also followed a specific class period, and a particular student and teacher throughout the progress of the school year. All observations were carefully documented in writing. In addition, most meetings of the parents’ committees and the steering committees were audio-recorded (after requesting permission from all parties involved), and the rest were carefully documented. The research staff participated also in a special events such as on the Ramadan/ Hanukkah/ Christmas party and the Independence Day celebration. All these events were carefully documented.

Our study included also the assessment of current first-language skills, using a tool (based on the ‘Frog Story’) adapted specifically for the population under examination. We employed a quasi-experimental design, with children from mono-lingual neighboring schools as comparison groups. This methodology was also described in detail in our previous report.
Quantitative data was also gathered through structured and semi-structured questionnaires completed by parents. These dealt primarily with reasons for joining the school, expectations and the extent to which these are been met by the program, fears and concerns, satisfaction with various aspects of the program (educational and social), aspects of group identity and culture, the image of the ideal graduate of the school, etc. Hebrew questionnaires were developed for Jewish parents, and two versions of the Arab questionnaire (in Hebrew and in Arabic) were made available to the Arab parents. The various sections as well as the individual items were mostly based on preliminary insights gained from the interviews with parents, teachers, and school principals. The questionnaires were developed in close association and cooperation with the consultant on Arab language and culture, who also gave final approval to the Arabic translation.

More than 50% of the parents returned completed questionnaires.

It is worth mentioning that throughout our project we were fortunate to receive full cooperation from the school staff and from the CBE. This is not to say that our activities have always gone smoothly but we have to acknowledge that in general, a study of one of the best kept secret professions of the world – education - is highly difficult, and overall we were very fortunate.

The large amount of data gathered provide us with valuable insights into the complexities of the educational, social, and cultural processes involved in the functioning and development of the bilingual programs. We are convinced that this and future information will render rich and varied knowledge which will contribute to the improvement and growth of the programs in the future.

Short socio-political and demographic considerations

Considering the socio-political context in Israel, it is needless to say that, regardless of the organizations involved, the idea of creating Arab/Jewish co-education is in and of itself, a daring enterprise.
Israel, a land ridden with conflict and social cleavages, must attempt to meet the often-competing requirements of a multi-ethnic-national-religious society. The Jewish-Arab conflict remains perhaps the most potentially explosive of conflicts of Israel, placing the Jewish majority (80%) and the Arab (primarily Moslem) minority (20%) at perpetual odds. These and other conflicts are reflected in the Israeli educational system which is consequently divided into separate educational sectors: Arab, Jewish, Non-religious, Religious National and Orthodox all under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education.

The bilingual initiative we are reporting on is not the first attempt at bilingual, desegregated, education in Israel. In the last decade the Neveh Shalom School, located in a small Arab-Jewish settlement in the vicinity of Jerusalem, has also been dedicated to similar ideological aims. The YMCA kindergarten program in Jerusalem has also been functioning for many years with somewhat similar educational aims. The central difference between these initiatives and the one we are looking at in this report lies in the environments within which they have evolved. The Neveh Shalom School is situated in a small settlement, ideologically identified with the vision of full equality for Arab and Jewish community members, while the two bilingual programs initiated by the CBE in 1998 were implemented in the National Secular Misgav School in the Upper Galilee and in the urban National Secular Nisui (Experimental) School in Jerusalem, the second to be moved in the second year of its activities into a new independent site in Jerusalem.

Until 1970 the Galil school locale – namely the upper Galilee area – had a predominantly Arab majority with almost no Jews living there. In the 1970’s, government policy encouraged Jewish settlements to develop in the area. These settlements were successfully established throughout the seventies and eighties and populated by a relatively highly educated population working for the most part in urban centers in the surrounding areas. In a sense, the settlements created became the suburbs of Haifa and other urban northern centers.

The Arab population in this northern area, scattered throughout villages and cities of varying sizes (e.g. the City of Sachnin) boasts a long history and is known for its proud
national identity. In 1976, six Arabs from Sachnin lost their lives protesting the confiscation of Arab land by the Israeli Government. These events are commemorated yearly on a Memorial Day called the Land Day (Yom HaAdama). Since the Oslo agreements, the area has gradually become characterized by peaceful coexistence where the mixed Arab (majority) and Jewish (minority) populations have allowed for the development of cooperation mostly on the economic sector but also, to some extent, in the social arena.

Until the 1967 War, Israeli Jerusalem had a Jewish majority. Since that time, with the occupation of eastern Jerusalem and surrounding areas, the demography has changed, reflecting an increase in the Arab population. Still there has been little, if any, dialog between Arab and Jewish populations. The Arab pupils attending the Jerusalem bilingual school program live primarily in the village of Beit Zafafa, an Arab village divided in the war of Independence in 1948 with part of the population remaining under Jordanian rule and part under Israeli rule. It is worth keeping in mind that the Palestinian Arab population conquered during the 1967 war attends schools operating under the Jordanian educational system. Most of the Arab parents of children in the Jerusalem bi-lingual school are now living in Beit Zafafa but were originally from Northern Israel (the Sachnin Area, where the Galil school is located). These parents prefer that their children attend National Israeli schools, primarily for two reasons. Firstly, in general, Arab schools have a very low status in Jerusalem, secondly, the parents prefer Israeli schools that operate according to the Israeli Ministry of Education’s curriculum (and not the Jordanian), in the hope that the Israeli system will prepare them for matriculation and ultimately access to higher education in Israel.

While the Northern Jewish population cannot but acknowledge the presence of the Arab majority and must seriously consider the type of relations it wishes to develop with their Arab neighbors, the Jerusalem Jewish population may remain blind to the Arab minority and evade the question. Even those who may lean toward left wing political perspectives appear to prefer to avoid this sticky matter. Overall, the socio-political atmosphere in Jerusalem lends to a more explosive environment in which to establish a bilingual
program. There is good reason to believe that these demographic-contextual factors have, amongst others, contributed to the success of the northern bilingual program as compared to the Jerusalem based program.

The rather optimistic political outlook that characterized the atmosphere in which the bilingual schools have been created has radically changed in the last 16 months. Last years Yom HaAdama (March 30, 2000 – the first year of our project) was followed by a rather strong wave of demonstrations that erupted in the northern Palestinian Israeli settlements in opposition to a new attempt to confiscate lands for the benefit of the military industry in the area. Later, in October 2000, Ariel Sharon, the Likud party nominee for Prime minister elected later in the year, conducted a visit to the El-Aksa Mosque area on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This visit provoked an outburst of violence throughout the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority and in other areas still under Israeli military domination. Finally towards the end of October, Palestinian Israelis in the northern area of Israel staged demonstrations in support of their brethren in the Palestinian Authority that ended with the tragic death of 13 Israeli Palestinians in the violent clashes that took place with Israeli police forces. These events weakened already fragile Palestinian-Jewish relations within Israel and shocked both schools populations. The fact that, despite these events, we can report that both schools are still functioning and are preparing to begin their fourth year of activity is a testimony to their ongoing efforts to keep their dream alive under extremely difficult circumstances.

Short notes on the development of the schools and their physical settings

The Jerusalem School
The Jerusalem school has had a double start. The bilingual school program opened the 2000 school year as a section within the Nisui School and in the 2001 school year opened for the first time as an independent school. The Nisui attempt ended in failure essentially because it was established without ‘due process’. The experimental bilingual program was actually founded in the Nisui School, itself defined as an experimental school. The program was thus ‘an experiment within an experiment’, which proved to be too much of
an experiment all together (for full information on this and other related issues see our previous report).

The opening of the school in an independent site in Jerusalem for its second year of activity reflected what had been learned from the failed Nisui experience. The school opened in an independent section of a larger school building in the northern area of Jerusalem near Beit Zafafa, a Palestinian Israeli neighborhood, which is a stronghold of potential Palestinian school attendants.

These premises, at this point, offer little opportunity for growth. The school currently building allows only for the comfortable existence of one class in each grade level from kindergarten (independent administratively from the school according to municipality guidelines) to third grade and it is already clear that next year new solutions will have to be found if the school is to grow further. The expectations are that the shrinking adjacent school will allow the bilingual school to extend into their premises. The opening of the new school offered the opportunity to overcome some of the difficulties encountered in the past. Regarding staff, all but two teachers are new in the school setting. As opposed to the Nisui experience, the principal was elected by the NGO and the Advisory Board and all newly elected teachers agreed to join what was a clear educational bilingual bicultural plan. This was a radical departure from the Nisui model in which most of the teachers had been mainstream teachers who had taught in the school prior to the implementation of the bilingual program.

Parents and staff expressed great satisfaction with these new developments. They saw in the new independent building the opportunity, finally, to start developing the school they had dreamed for. Freed from the outside constraints of competing projects, they were able to plan in advance and shape the new premises in line with what they believed to be necessary to house their bilingual project. Indeed the new school had the potential of becoming ‘home’. All was set to allow for all educational initiatives and their implementation to evolve from the deliberative activity that engaged the support of all ‘shareholders’ in the process, be they parents, teachers, and school administrative staff.
The school opened its sessions with a staff composed of a male Jewish principal, two female teachers in each of the two grade and two kindergarten teachers (in all cases a Jew and a Palestinian). A Jewish teacher assistant in kindergarten and a Palestinian secretary completed the school staff. All Palestinian teachers were fluent both in Arabic and Hebrew while, amongst the Jews, only the kindergarten teacher and the kindergarten teacher assistant had some knowledge of spoken Arabic. In addition to the very successful support they offer in terms of organizational and language consultation throughout the year, the NGO secured the involvement and academic support of one of the Teacher Colleges in Jerusalem. It is yet to be seen in what ways this academic support will benefit the school’s activities and enrich the staff training.

It should be noted that there was no Arab co-principal available and thus no Arabs were represented in the leadership of the school administration in direct opposition to the CBE guiding principals. Budgetary constraints still prevent the nomination of a co-director for the school. The directors of the CBE, the school principal and Arab and Jewish parents equally represented served as the Steering Committee of the school.

For the 2000-1 school year participation in the Jerusalem school was as follows: a total of 37 Arab children (21 boys and 16 girls), mainly from Arab neighborhoods with a few from Jewish neighborhoods. Jewish participation was as follows: 26 Jewish children (both sexes equally represented), all from Jerusalem neighborhoods or nearby settlements. It’s worth paying attention to the fact that the Palestinian population includes more boys than girls, in line with the Palestinian inclination to keep the female child more within traditional boundaries. Second, there is a higher attendance of Palestinians than Jews. This disproportion points at one of the weakest links in the program and one of the most serious issues threatening the existence of the bilingual schools as they function today. Arab registration, given the very few options Palestinian populations have in Israel for good education, is always high; while Jewish registration is conditional and dependent on strong ideological commitment and is thus relatively low.
By the end of June 2001 the school was in a state of crisis. This situation was the outcome, primarily but not solely, of two central factors – one political and the other administrative. Registration for next year had been problematic throughout the year. The political events did not help raise confidence that the Middle East was indeed on the road to peace. The Palestinian reactions in support of the suffering of their brethren in the dominion of the Palestinian Authority had gone a long way in undermining the delicate balance of confidence between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. Parents of Jewish children in second grade which, since the start of the year, had suffered from a large disparity in Jewish (6) and Palestinian (11) participation, threatened that, if a solution is not immediately found to balance the numbers, they would pull their kids out for next year, thus aggravating the situation even further. In reaction to this, the school has been considering working within a young division setting so as to better hide the imbalanced numbers of national participation. At the administrative level, it had become apparent almost since the start of the year that the choice of principal had not been successful. All teachers had complained about his functioning at all levels and throughout the year. The NGO and the Steering Committee had decided it would be better to support the principal until the end of the year rather than creating more disruption by his departure during the academic year. There was an almost total breach between the teachers and the principal throughout the year with the teachers directing the pedagogical work in school almost alone and the principal dealing with administration and extracurricular issues. Towards the end of the year a new principal was found and hired, a Jewish woman who had just finished a prestigious postgraduate leadership educational program and who has some Arabic background. The new nominee became involved in school activities towards the end of the year becoming familiarized with the school and its functioning. We hope that her election will stabilize school work next year, work which, needless to say, will not be easy.

The Galil School

The Galil bilingual school is based within the Misgav Jewish regional school, and is the flagship of the NGO’s efforts to develop bilingual education. The initiative to create a bilingual school started well in advance of its implementation. Program implementation
was carried out with great care and in affiliation with multiple future shareholders within the Arab and Jewish communities in the area.

Though the bilingual Galil program is situated within the Misgav School, the bilingual Galil School is located in a partially separate and independent locale. Administratively the Galil school is considered part of the Misgav school, something which carries with it pros and cons. On the positive side this connection is exactly what allowed the school to first start its activities and offered partial solutions to economic problems that could not have been solved outside of this arrangement. On the negative side, the school presently finds itself in urgent need of a new house for the school year 2002-3 at which time the present building will not allow for the addition of a fifth grade. Finding a new site for the school entails two difficult issues: on the one hand large amounts of money have to be raised to build a new building; on the other hand a suitable site has to be identified at which the new school may be built. In an area such as the Galil with a long history of conflict over ownership of land, such a task is not easy. The Steering Committee and the NGO have long tried to secure a site which would represent a neutral place between Palestinian and Jewish settlements such as areas bordering both the city of Sachnin (Palestinian) and the settlement of Rakefet (Jewish) but the problems are difficult to solve both at the municipal and national level. It is clear that for the Palestinian population, the fact that the school is, at this point, part of a larger Jewish school is not an easy issue. Although we do not expect this to become a reason for Palestinians not to send their children to the bilingual initiative (remember the few options Palestinians have in Israel for good education) it is clear that the present location stands in opposition to the symmetry rules so dear to the NGO ideology. If, ultimately, the budgets are secured and a suitable locale is identified, it is yet to be seen how the new site will influence the decision of Jewish parents to register their children. Even before the violent events that took place in the area in October of this year, Jewish parents expressed concern about sending their kids to a school in a totally Palestinian settlement.

As far as staffing is concerned, the new Palestinian co-principal who joined the school towards the end of last year has been very helpful in stabilizing the school’s activities.
Both he and the Jewish principal (who also functions as the principal of the Misgav school) are recognized as the true leaders of the initiative and the spirit behind its success. Equal representation is secured at almost all levels. Two teachers for each grade, one Palestinian and one Jewish, totaling six, together with a Jewish secretary make up the regular staff of the school. The staff gets regular and very successful support from two consultants one organizational and the other dealing with language issues. This last year the Ministry of Education has recognized the Galil school as an “experimental school” – a recognition which carries with it not only national clout but also monetary support.

The Galil bilingual school’s Steering Committee is composed somewhat differently from that in Jerusalem. Participants include not only two parents from the P.T.A., CBE Directors and the school principal but, in addition, representatives from the Departments of Education of key Jewish and Arab villages in the area. Again, as stated above, the Galil School offers a good example of the careful planning required when implementing a delicate initiative, alongside the benefits inherent in its implementation within a nurturing context characterized by participants who view the program as both ideologically desirable and administratively under their control.

Bi-national participation in the Galil School is as follows. There are a total of 41 Palestinian children, 25 boys and 16 girls. Demographically, the Palestinian children come from cities and villages in the vicinity of the school such as Shaab, Sachnin and Kawkav. Jewish participation is as follows: 35 children in total, 17 boys and 18 girls. The Jewish children are generally from the nearby settlements of Shorashim, Rakefet, Yaad, Tuval, Avtalion, Camun and Pelech.

Like in Jerusalem, the Palestinian population in the Galil school includes more boys than girls; there is also a higher attendance of Palestinians than Jews. This disproportion, though less glaring than in Jerusalem, is also a point of grave concern for the school leadership. Arab registration, given the very few options Palestinian populations have in Israel for good education, is always high; while Jewish registration is conditional and dependent on strong ideological commitments and is relatively low. Recently serious
consideration has been given to widening the areas from which Jewish children would be accepted to include nearby cities such as Carmiel.

The Galil school, though a much more stable school than the one in Jerusalem, went throughout the year through periods of crisis mostly provoked by the death of 13 Palestinians after the violent demonstrations in support of the Palestinian Authority’s struggle for independence in the month of October 2000. The Jewish population in the Galil area who, for many years had grown to believe that they were slowly overcoming the barriers that existed between them and the Palestinians in the area and were well in their way to a fruitful co-existence, found themselves, rightfully or not, questioning if co-existence was possible at all. The Steering Committee and the CBE were very active throughout this period in trying to present the school and its ideology as a true bridge towards understanding. They organized a delegation to the mourning Palestinian families in Sachnin, they published ads on national and local newspapers and were interviewed by local and foreign television networks. In spite of all their activity the events hit the school parents hard – parents who, although at no point threatening to leave school, expressed serious doubts about the possibilities of achieving true intergroup understanding. Registration to the school stopped and only towards the end of the year did it become apparent that enough Jews had registered for 1st grade to allow the school to continue its regular development.

B) **Analysis of quantitative data**

The findings summarized below are based on data gathered from structured and semi-structured questionnaires administered during the second year of the study. Due to space limitations, we will not report on results related to all the sections of the questionnaire. We also refer the readers to our previous report that summarizes data gathered during the first year of the evaluation study. Detailed information on the statistical analyses performed will be largely omitted from this report.
Fulfillment of expectations

Parents were asked about the extent to which their expectations from the program are being met. A preliminary Principal Component Factor Analysis on the nine expectation items yielded two factors; we labeled the first of them “academic success” and the second “cultural aspects”. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the factor scores in each of the schools and in the two national groups.

Table 1: Fulfillment of Expectations by site and national group

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<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Site</th>
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<td>Mean</td>
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<td>Mean</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jew</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>4.5000</td>
<td>4.3542</td>
<td>1.2472</td>
<td>.3720</td>
<td>3.2540</td>
<td>3.8175</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Galil</td>
<td>3.7577</td>
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<td>.7142</td>
<td>.6687</td>
<td>4.3556</td>
<td>4.3333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>4.4902</td>
<td>4.0686</td>
<td>.5153</td>
<td>.6797</td>
<td>4.4271</td>
<td>4.1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>4.5000</td>
<td>4.3542</td>
<td>1.2472</td>
<td>.3720</td>
<td>3.2540</td>
<td>3.8175</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Galil</td>
<td>4.4902</td>
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<td>.5153</td>
<td>.6797</td>
<td>4.4271</td>
<td>4.1927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>4.4058</td>
<td>4.3406</td>
<td>.8100</td>
<td>.4780</td>
<td>3.8070</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>4.0847</td>
<td>.8980</td>
<td>.6495</td>
<td>3.8070</td>
<td>3.9298</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Overall, there were no differences in the extent to which the two types of expectations were fulfilled. Generally, the values were high (approximately 4 in a 5-point scale). Results from a Mixed-design Analysis of Variance revealed a significant effect of national group – Arab parents were more satisfied than Jewish parents, and a significant effect of site – parents in Jerusalem more satisfied than in the Galil school. A close inspection of the table shows that these two effects can be attributed to the relatively low level of satisfaction among the...
Jewish parents in the Galil school, especially in the area of academic success (significant site*nationality interaction).

**Satisfaction with school**

Parents were also asked directly about their satisfaction with different aspects of the program. A Principal Component Factor Analysis performed on the nine items included in this section yielded three factors, which we labeled “School conditions”, “Social aspects”, and “National/religious aspects”. The first item, dealing with Teaching Level was kept as a separate factor. Results are summarized in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Conditions Mean</th>
<th>National/Religion Mean</th>
<th>Social Mean</th>
<th>Teaching Level Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Jew</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
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<td>3.2500</td>
<td>4.4583</td>
<td>3.8750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.7855</td>
<td>.7071</td>
<td>.6156</td>
<td>1.3562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galil</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.6825</td>
<td>3.3095</td>
<td>3.5397</td>
<td>3.2857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.9024</td>
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<td>3.7931</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.8610</td>
<td>1.4013</td>
<td>1.0551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
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<td>4.2333</td>
<td>4.5333</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.5616</td>
<td>.7988</td>
<td>.4680</td>
<td>.9612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.5294</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.6673</td>
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<td>4.3906</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>3.8125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.6808</td>
<td>.7667</td>
<td>1.0298</td>
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<td>3.2319</td>
<td>3.8913</td>
<td>4.5072</td>
<td>3.9130</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.8913</td>
<td>.5112</td>
<td>1.0835</td>
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<td>3.8553</td>
<td>3.5351</td>
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<td>.9858</td>
<td>1.2144</td>
<td>1.0064</td>
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<td>3.8689</td>
<td>3.9016</td>
<td>3.6393</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>.8680</td>
<td>.9438</td>
<td>1.1095</td>
<td>1.0493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results show relatively high satisfaction with all aspects of the bilingual schools (mean values between 3.5 and 4 in a 5-point scale). In general, there were very few differences among aspects and between sites and national groups. Analyses of Variance revealed some significant “site” effects: Parents in the Galil school seem
more satisfied with school conditions but less with the social aspects, as compared to those in Jerusalem. We also obtained a significant “nationality” effect: Arabs parents showed higher levels of satisfaction with the school’s dealing with national and religious aspects, as compared to Jews (the absolute value of the Arab parents’ satisfaction with this aspect is particularly high).

Intergroup visits

Parents were asked about intergroup visits in which they or their children participated. We asked them 4 questions related to the last school year: How many times did they receive visits from children from the other group, who many times their child visited children from the other group, how many times parents from the other group visited them, and how many times they visited parents from the other group. Their answers are summarized in Table 3 below, where values are means of numbers of visits. Analyses of Variance revealed a very strong “site” effect on all variables: More intergroup visits in Jerusalem than in Galil. In general, results seem to suggest a satisfactory degree of intergroup contact; this finding, however, is quite problematic, and will be discussed later. Results also show one significant “nationality effect”: Jewish parents report more visits by them to Arab parents than vice versa.
Intergroup Relations

The issue of intergroup relations was also addressed by another section of the questionnaire, dealing with the preferred nature of intergroup contact between the children. Four modes of interaction were presented, and the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they would like each to characterize the intergroup relations in the school. The four types of interaction were: harmonious contact between two national groups, contact between children without reference to their nationalities, forgetting nationalities, and as “Israelis”. These modes correspond to strategies of intergroup contact discussed in contemporary socio-psychological literature (e.g., Brewer & Gaertner, 2001).

Table 4 shows that the most preferred mode of contact was the “personalized” or “de-categorized” intergroup interaction (“as children, no nationality”). This option was followed closely by the “as Israelis” one; this corresponds to the “recategorization” or
“superordinate categorization” strategy proposed by Gaertner et al. (1993). Analyses of Variance revealed no significant differences between national groups in the endorsement of the various modes of contact. One “site” effect emerged from the analyses: Galil parents tend to favor more the “categorized” option (“nationality to nationality”) than Jerusalem parents (who are strongly opposed to this mode of contact).

Table 4: Modes of Preferred Intergroup Contact by site and national group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jew</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>1.6250</td>
<td>.9161</td>
<td>4.7500</td>
<td>.7071</td>
<td>1.8750</td>
<td>1.1260</td>
<td>4.3750</td>
<td>2.3867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galil</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.6677</td>
<td>2.4563</td>
<td>4.4762</td>
<td>.9808</td>
<td>2.1429</td>
<td>1.3522</td>
<td>4.1905</td>
<td>1.0305</td>
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<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<td>4.1905</td>
<td>1.0305</td>
<td>1.0305</td>
<td>2.3867</td>
<td>2.3867</td>
<td>1.0305</td>
<td>1.0305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.3793</td>
<td>2.1780</td>
<td>4.5517</td>
<td>.9097</td>
<td>2.0690</td>
<td>1.2798</td>
<td>4.2414</td>
<td>1.4797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>1.8000</td>
<td>1.3732</td>
<td>4.8000</td>
<td>.5606</td>
<td>2.6000</td>
<td>1.8048</td>
<td>3.7333</td>
<td>2.1202</td>
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<td>1.6934</td>
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<td>2.2096</td>
<td>4.0588</td>
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<td>2.5882</td>
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<td>2.3311</td>
<td>4.0588</td>
<td>4.0588</td>
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<td>2.3311</td>
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<td>4.5625</td>
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<td>2.5938</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
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<td>1.2936</td>
<td>2.2050</td>
<td>2.2050</td>
<td>3.9062</td>
<td>3.9062</td>
<td>2.2050</td>
<td>2.2050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definition of the school

One of the topics of debate among the CBE and school staffs is the issue of the proper definition of the innovative education institutions. We decided to examine the views of parents on this issue, by asking them to choose the definition(s) they prefer for the schools: bilingual, binational, and/or bicultural. Respondents were allowed to check more than one definition.
Results suggest that parents do not seem to make marked distinctions between the three definitions. The most preferred one is the “bilingual” definition, chosen by 66% of the parents. The binational definition was selected by 56% of the parents; however, there were significant differences between the national groups: more Arab parents (67%) opted for the binational definition as compared to Jewish parents (45%). The bicultural definition was chosen by 49% of the parents (similar percentages among Arab and Jewish parents). Parents checking more than one definition were asked for the one that they favor most. Here an interesting finding emerged: Jewish parents tend to favor slightly more the bicultural definition, whereas Arab parents tend to prefer the binational one.

Assessment of first-language skills

A question frequently asked with regards to bilingual education relates to the possible negative effect of second language learning on the child’s acquisition of skills in his or her first language. In order to examine, although in a limited way, this “substractive” possibility, we included a quasi-experimental design in our investigation to assess comparatively competencies in 1st language among the children studying in a bilingual educational context.

This sub-study was conducted only in the Galil School, close to the end of the school years. The “experimental group” consisted of all the children attending the bilingual school; at the end of the first year of the study we assess language skills of all 1st and 2nd graders, and at the end of the second year of the study all students (1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders) participated in the assessment. First-, second-, and third-grade children from the regular Misgav School adjacent to the bilingual program served as monolingual comparison groups for the Jewish kids, whereas students at an elementary school in Sachnin served as monolingual comparison groups for the Arab children in the bilingual program. All children met individually with research assistants who showed them a series of pictures telling a story about a frog. The children were asked to tell the story, and all the interactions were audiotaped and carefully transcribed. They were then coded
according to a-priori, well-defined, criteria. This “frog story” methodology has been widely used for assessing language skills in a variety of countries (Berman & Slobin, 1994), including Israel. Unfortunately, there is no data available about performance on the frog story among Arabic-speaking children. This methodology can provide us with rich and multifaceted information about the children’s linguistic skills and competencies.

A complete description of the methodology and the results is beyond the scope of this report. We will limit ourselves to the analysis of seven of the numerous variables measured in our study:

- **Number of clauses** per text, where a clause refers to “any unit that contains a predicate which expresses a single situation, an event or a state”.
- **Narrative composition** refers to the complexity of the story, measured by the number of story plot components mentioned by the child (up to 6). This variable was also dichotomized: ‘0’ for respondent mentioning less than 4 components, and ‘1’ for respondent mentioning 4 or more components.
- **Syntactic connectivity** is analyzed in terms of three kinds of clause-initial markers: deictics, sequentials, and subordinators:
  - **Percentage of deictics** (out of the number of clauses) –deictics include locative markers such as (in Hebrew): po, kan, hine, axshav;
  - **Percentage of sequentials** – temporal markers such as (in Hebrew) az, axrey ze, axar kax, pit’om;
  - **Subordinators**
    - **Percentage of subordinators (a)** – introducing complement and relative clauses;
    - **Percentage of subordinators (b)** – introducing adverbial clauses;
    - **Percentage of subordinators (c)** – infinitivals to express purpose and nominalizations.

The results are presented in Tables 5-8. Our analyses were limited by a strong methodological constraint: Although many students from the bilingual school were assessed twice – at the end of the 1st and 2nd year of our study, we had to include only their responses to the first measurement, since it is reasonable to assume a “testing” effect on their second performance. Thus, tables 5 and 6 are based on the responses of 1st and 2nd graders at the end of the first year of the study, from the bilingual and monolingual schools. This design allows for full comparability of the responses between the two groups. Tables 7 and 8 are based on a larger number of students, including an additional
group of 1st graders from the bilingual school (interviewed at the end of the second year of the study) and a group of 3rd graders from the comparison schools. No 3rd graders from the bilingual school were included, since these have been already assessed previously. One of the variables (percentage of subordinators [c]) was omitted from these last analyses, since a preliminary examination revealed a significant difference between monolingual 3rd and 2nd graders in their scores on this variable. Since we cannot guarantee, at this stage of the study, equivalence and comparability of the Hebrew and Arab data (because of possible differences in administration and coding), we suggest examining only differences between children studying in monolingual and bilingual classes within each language group.

Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Clauses</th>
<th>Narrative Composition</th>
<th>% of Deictics</th>
<th>% of Sequentials</th>
<th>% of Subordinators (a)</th>
<th>% of Subordinators (b)</th>
<th>% of Subordinators (c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Jew</td>
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<td>33.9000</td>
<td>4.1500</td>
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<td>4.5330</td>
<td>2.5652</td>
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<td>.2310</td>
</tr>
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<th></th>
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<td>33.3%</td>
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Table 7:

<table>
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<th>Number of Clauses</th>
<th>Narrative Composition</th>
<th>% of deictics</th>
<th>% of sequentials</th>
<th>% of subordinators (a)</th>
<th>% of subordinators (b)</th>
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</table>
Table 8:

### Table 8: Narrative composition (dichotomized) -- all students 1st administration

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</thead>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>58.1%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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The tables reveal very few differences between bilingual and monolingual students within each national/language group. T-tests between the two groups (bilingual vs. monolingual) performed on the data for all dependent variables summarized in Table 5 revealed only two statistically significant differences: Within the Arab-speaking children, those attending the monolingual school scored significantly higher in number of clauses ($t = 3.65$, $df = 49$, $p < .01$), and percentage of subordinators (c) ($t = 3.45$, $df = 49$, $p < .01$). Results from t-tests performed on the expanded data summarized in Table 7 show similar patterns: The advantage of monolingual Arab students in number of clauses is statistically significant ($t = 3.12$, $df = 75$, $p < .01$); as indicated earlier, group comparisons in percentage of subordinators (c) could not performed for this sample. Results of Chi-Square tests conducted on the crosstabulations presented in Tables 6 and 8, showed no significant differences between monolingual and bilingual students in narrative composition, neither among the Jewish nor among the Arab students. In sum, we can safely conclude that our results do not to provide support for the “subtractive” hypothesis regarding any detrimental effects of second-language learning on the acquisition of skills in the first language.
C) Analysis of qualitative data

In this section we present findings from the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from our observations and interviews. In our previous report we divided our analysis into four sections corresponding to the central populations involved in the program: parents, teachers and students plus one section dedicated to the discussions of the steering committee. In our final report and building upon our past work we have chosen to divide this section of the report into five subsections corresponding to the four central issues with which the schools are dealing from an educational perspective: Language, Cultural and Religious identity, National identity, and Social interactions. At the end of the report we offer some tentative suggestions for the future of the CBE.

Language
From its inception the CBE has adhered to an ideology based on symmetry by which it is meant that all its organizational structures and frameworks would be characterized by an equal representation of Jews and Palestinians at all levels. Except for the fact that the Jerusalem school does not yet have a Palestinian co-director, it could be said that this policy has been fully implemented. A second cornerstone of the CBE ideology is concerned with symmetry at the language level, as it is expressed in the official name they have adopted: “The Center for Bilingual Education in Israel”. Within this track the CBE has adopted what is defined in the literature as a strong bilingual approach, one which emphasizes the need to sustain symmetry at all organizational, curricular and practical levels in the educational initiatives. Again, for the most part, they have been successful in sustaining this goal by securing the services of a well balanced educational staff, both a Palestinian and a Jewish teacher in each grade and, for the Galil school, a Palestinian and a Jewish school principal. At this point the symmetry at the administrative secretarial level is sustained at a macro level where the administrative help is offered by a Jew at the Galil school and a Palestinian at the Jerusalem school. All these efforts, though always threatened by budget constrains, have ensured that all involved have a sense that equality is not only spoken about but actually sustained, though not
perfectly, at the practical level as well. It is within this setting that we will consider the issues of language and bilingual symmetry as they are expressed in the schools life.

If the first year of our research (the second of the schools’ functioning) was characterized as the year of symmetry, the second year of our research was the year of outright affirmative action in all that relates to making the Arabic language a relevant option for the schools’ community. The first year was a year in which teachers experimented with ways to prevent any of the languages used at school from becoming segregated or compartmentalized into any specific discipline or time slot while continuously trying to assure equality in the presence of both Arabic and Hebrew in class practice. Needless to say, this was a laudable and demanding endeavor when considering that, at present, there are no existing textbooks or other educational aids to support this approach. It could be said with ease that such curricula had to be invented from scratch. As we mentioned in our preliminary report, these efforts were successful mostly with the Palestinian participants at school. Palestinian students were able to learn Arabic at a similar pace to that in which Arabic is learned at the regular Arab Palestinian schools in Israel, and were also able to learn Hebrew sufficiently well to be optimistic about their future achievements. As to Jewish student population, the story was somewhat different. Jewish kids did well in their mother tongue when compared to other kids in regular Jewish schools, but in regard to Arabic their achievements were lower than expected.

For the second year, and well aware of the obstacles encountered during the first, the school staff adopted a new policy regarding language. Arabic would be this year preferred over the Hebrew. Both schools adopted this policy. In the Jerusalem school, as an example, eight out of the nine extracurricular activities (chugim) where conducted by Palestinian teachers and in Arabic, and in the Galil school the co-teachers organized their work so as to allow Arabic to be the leading language worked upon and spoken in class. In the third grade of the Galil school, when the Jewish teacher left the school for maternity leave, a Palestinian teacher was hired as the Hebrew teacher for the class. Even after all these steps were taken, the educational staff was still aware that symmetry would not be easily achieved and that the affirmative action initiatives taken might not succeed.
They were conscious that much of what went on in the educational background was still tilted towards the Hebrew language. Teachers interactions were conducted in Hebrew, and Hebrew was also the reigning language of teacher meetings and training sessions, parents meetings and steering committee meetings. For the most part interactions among children in class, breaks and in the rather few visits they exchanged with their “outgroup” friends were conducted in Hebrew as well. Worth mentioning is the fact that in this last year English lessons had started being taught in the Galil school. This language has successfully captured the good will of both Palestinian and Jewish children and their parents. With the appearance of English in school we have come to hear more Jewish parents’ and children’s voices questioning, if not the absolute need to study Arabic, then the amount of time invested in it. In the larger context within which Hebrew is the dominant language and English has the potential of offering a free pass into a global reality, Arabic risks being undermined at any turn. Context might be too powerful to be overcome even by the most well-intentioned bilingual educators.

Thus, in spite of all the efforts invested in the direction of allowing kids to acquire both languages, nobody in the educational staff seems to be happy with the results. We emphasize the staff because seemingly, and in spite of a partial rhetoric which denies it, most Palestinian and Jewish parents seem not too worried about this issue. In fact, in the section of the questionnaire dealing with fears and concerns, parents expressed the lowest level of concern in the area of language. This result is supported by our interview findings: Palestinian parents have a sense that their kids are doing fine with the Arabic language when compared to other Palestinian kids learning in regular segregated Israeli schools and rely on their own efforts at home if anything is in need of strengthening. Palestinian parents expect the Hebrew of their kids to advance to a level which will allow them to go unrecognized in the larger Jewish Israeli population and as they see it, this aim will be achieved in the long run when considering their childrens’ Hebrew achievements in school at present. Jewish parents do not worry either. From their perspective Arabic could be a worthwhile addition but it is not necessarily an essential one. They are happy that their kids are getting a basic knowledge of the language and have some passive understanding, and that the kids with special language skills have gained a relative
literacy in it, but their true expectations fall on regular school achievements. All in all their approach fits their basic perspective that what is needed to reduce the pain of Palestinian-Jewish relations is cultural knowledge and understanding and that this is much more important than the knowledge of Arabic. From their standpoint the school’s bicultural aims and achievements are much more important than its bilingual aspirations.

It is of utmost importance to emphasize that we are not suggesting in any way to change the current language policy. Present efforts to sustain symmetry are of great importance in creating the environment of trust and recognition needed to sustain a worthwhile bi-national educational initiative, in particular in areas of conflict such as Israel. The present policy is ultimately the one which allows Palestinian parents to be proud of sending their children to an educational setting which otherwise would be ideologically difficult to defend from their perspective as a minority. Still the analysis above points at the fact that the present option might limit greatly the potential of growth for these educational initiatives. Rather few parents within the Jewish population might be ready to join such experiments.

Cultural and religious identity
Dealing with culture and religion is relatively easy. Culture and religion are consensually agreed by all as areas which can help bridge the gaps that separate both populations in Israel and contribute to peaceful coexistence. All parents mention the importance they see in getting their children to better know and understand the other’s culture. All parents agree that this is well in its way of being achieved successfully in school. Throughout the year, and at times interlaced with regular subjects of study, cultural issues are raised; such is the case, for example, of the sessions of study dedicated to olives and the olive tree. Still for the most part dealing with cultural and religious issues becomes part of special events such as school field trips (e.g., as the ones made to visit nearby synagogues, mosques and a church) or school ceremonial events such as the celebration of Channukka, Id’l Fitter and Christmas. When following these events it becomes apparent that dealing with these issues is never spared from considerations which can influence the delicate balance of the assumed ideological messages the educational staff wishes to
transmit, such as the case in which a trip to a nearby Palestinian village was cancelled because of security considerations following the turbulent events of last September in the area. In general, and as also clearly shown in our quantitative report, parents highly commend the efforts invested and the accomplishment achieved in this area. They express satisfaction with the way all involved have come to learn about the other’s group traditions and customs. Even when at the beginning of our research project some Palestinian parents expressed their worries about the unequal amount of Jewish and Moslem or Christian festivals and as a partial solution some new Moslem traditions were invented to somewhat balance the system (i.e. a Moslem Kabbalat Shishi as a counterpart for the Jewish traditional Kabbalat Shabbat) – inventions which soon proved not to be able to survive since they were contingent on personal initiatives unsupported by the wider system – parents in general accepted that symmetry was not a central issue in this case.

Religious ceremonies became central events which usually allowed for expressions of solidarity and mutual understanding. Such was the case for the Id’l Fitter/ Channukka/ Christmas celebration in which the school invests great efforts since the calendar allows for their combination into an unitary occasion. What becomes apparent in these celebrations is that to a certain extent they carry a strong religious emphasis. Paradoxically it could be said that religious aspects are unproportionally emphasized when considering that for the most part the school population belong to secular segments of the Israeli society. The Jewish population of the school is in its vast majority secular and the Moslem population can be characterized as relatively traditionalists but mostly not religious. It is worth remembering that in both schools special time has been allotted to religious studies which are conducted separately for the Jewish, Moslem and Christian populations.

As stated above, Moslem, Christian and Jewish parents are for the most part happy with the functioning of the school at this level. Jewish parents express however some concerns. They are ambivalent about the religious emphasis when considering their secular ideology but at the same time seem to find in the religious underpinning solace
from their mostly unarticulated fear from assimilation given their children’s participation in a bi-national program. Jewish teachers also pointed out in interviews the need they feel to emphasize knowledge of Jewish traditions as an antidote to the perceived superficiality of secular Jewish identity and its possible weakening in a bi-national environment.

When considering these fears it becomes apparent that religious identity issues cannot be separated clearly from other issues related to national identity. Jewish parents and teachers – who, as part of the reigning majority, see themselves as the ones having to make the greater concessions for the benefit of the bi-national educational enterprise – struggle continuously with the question: how much could be considered too much?

As an example we could consider the approach adopted for presentations at the Hanukkah/Id’l Fitter/Christmas celebration. In both schools these celebrations downplayed the traditional national overtones of Hanukkah celebrations in regular Israeli schools making. The national hero Yehuda Ha’Maccabbee almost disappeared from the scene, whereas the miracle of the oil slack which light for eight days in the temple was emphasized. In the Jerusalem celebration, Christmas was as well deluded from its messianic overtones and presented as heralding the New Year almost not mentioning the birth of its Messiah. This step seems to have been taken hoping to prevent an offence to Jewish sensibilities. In the Galil school, Arabic traditional music played by a Palestinian ensemble and a Druze dance troop took a large portion of the rather long two-hour celebration. It seems as if given possible religious sensibilities mostly within the Jewish and Christian groups Arabic folklore was a solution to divert possible tensions.

Although problems in the religious cultural arena are few, we will see how given the larger national issues (to be dealt with shortly) much has yet to be done in the educational sphere to reach a situation in which these issues are not dealt with as a default option so as to appease possible contradictory undercurrents but instead are developed so as to reflect present conceptions and expectations of parents. This last statement is put carefully since it is clear that these same parents have not yet themselves answered the question as to how do they want their cultural and religious traditions represented from
their somewhat present secular modern perspectives. The school itself cannot be expected to offer solutions all by itself; it might at its best become a catalyst to induce parents to seriously confront and discuss these issues. Not taking these steps might in the long run mean adopting a reified perspective of culture that stands at the basis of stereotypical – and at times racist – attitudes.

Cultural religious issues touch upon another whole set of sensibilities and needs as expressed by parents expectations mostly of the Arab group. We have underlined in our previous years report the importance Arab parents give to what they perceive to be good educational practices. An orderly curriculum and homework are the hallmark of their expectations for a good education. Paradoxically these elements are the ones that characterized the regular educational Arab system they so willingly abandoned when the bilingual opportunity appeared. At the same time, Arab parents cherish what they perceive to be the self-confidence of Israeli Jewish kids, a trait they assume to be the product of educational practices adopted by the Jewish general Israel system. These contrasting practices are the source of much tension especially for those Arab parents sending their kids for the first time to school. These same parents also fear that their children might adopt some of the cultural patterns of modern Israeli Jews that are perceived to be un-respectful of traditional cultural Arabic patterns. They fear that crossing such cultural boundaries might threaten their children’s ethnic identities and uncover them in the eyes of their own communities as un-respectful of their own culture and in danger of assimilation. What seems never to be fully articulated, not in our interviews nor in the many discussions we attended during parent meetings or steering committee meetings, is the possibility that their willingness to encourage their children to gain that self-confidence might not be necessarily accompanied by the adoption of modernizing patterns which at this point are not seen fit to their present cultural situation. Indeed it could be said that Arab participation in the bilingual adventure precipitates tensions between modernity and tradition which are in urgent need to be faced at all educational levels. Ironically, with regard to cultural religious issues Arab parents are ready to easily give up on their well-organized curricular expectations. Indeed culture and
religious tradition, although important, is ultimately less central to their overriding aim of helping their kids join modern Israeli society.

Jewish parents’ fears seem to mirror Palestinian fears. The more Palestinians lose their stereotypical features as these are perceived by Jews, the more modern they act, the more Hebrew they know, the more the power differentiation is in danger, thus raising the silent anxiety of assimilation mostly expressed in the fear of intermarriage. This aspect of Jewish fear becomes apparent in two somewhat unrelated issues. The first relates to the desire of many Jewish parents that school development should proceed up to the end of primary school (sixth grade). This desire, although explained in terms of doubts that a rather small school can offer their kids the variety of disciplines needed to secure successful choices towards the high-school diploma is accompanied as well in interviews by statements which deal with the need at some point not to confuse kids regarding their ethnic/national/religious identity. The perceived sincretistic approach offered by bilingual education seems at times to threaten such identities. The second issue – partially addressed above – relates to the sorrow expressed by some Jewish participants about the loss of Arab cultural authenticity. This somewhat paradoxical attitude was clearly expressed in an interview by one of the Jewish parents in the Galil school who feared that the Arabs attending school were people more similar to his kind than true representative of their own.

National identity
At the bilingual schools, national identities are to be kept separately. The bilingual initiative stands strong behind this commitment. Without it, it is believed that parents would have not registered their kids. In this sense dealing with national identity is easy but as it becomes apparent from our work this is as well the ultimate educational challenge for parents and educational staff in the bilingual schools. National issues are easily compartmentalized into a rather short period of the year – that corresponding in the Jewish Israeli calendar to the events of the Independence Day. Other days connected to national issues can be overcome with relative ease. The Jewish Hanukkah can be deluded of national overtones, and the Day of Remembrance for the Holocaust victims can easily
be accommodated since it allows for identification also by the Palestinian population in school (partially as a counterpart later in the year to their own Nakbe commemoration – The Day of the Catastrophe). In the Palestinian calendar, the Day of the Land – although more difficult to be accepted by the Jewish population because of its undertones which possibly challenge Jewish Israeli hegemony – can function as well with relative ease. The Independence Day and the Nakbe day pose much greater challenges. These events are also influenced by the political events in the outside surrounding context. During the first year of our study, the Israeli population was still living in the optimist atmosphere of the Oslo agreements. The September and October events of this year and the violence that overcome the area since then have seriously damaged past optimism. Much of the educational work invested this year developed under a growing sense of suspicion on the part of both national groups represented at school. For example for the first time this year the Jewish staff requested information from the researchers (who attended all national ceremonies) as to if the Arab teachers had or not made use of the Palestinian flag in their ceremony. The Day of the Land commemoration became as well a difficult event this year with many Jewish parents questioning the ways in which they had been represented at school and the possible influences of the texts invoked in the ceremony on their children’s perceptions as Jews.

We see from the above that the Jewish group is the one which feels threatened the most. This can be considered the outcome of their status as a majority which for the most part was able to assume its identity as granted given the Jewish hegemonic power in Israel. Jews at school clearly represent politically liberal center-left segments of the Israeli population. They perceive themselves as being truly open to the needs of the Palestinian population at school and willing to allow for their ‘selves’ to be expressed. Unfortunately the needs of Palestinian expression do not always coincide with the limits that Jews consider legitimate for Arab Palestinian expression. For Jews, Israeli Palestinian cultural and religious expression is legitimate, but for the most part national identification with the Palestinian Authority is not welcomed.
Palestinians, having become used as a minority to subdue the expressions of their national consciousness within the State since its creation, approach the school which offers them a refuge from the mediocre educational standards represented in Arab general schools in Israel with restrained expectations regarding their national needs. They clearly expect not to have to hide their cultural national identities but seem to be ready (at least in advance) to apply the many mechanism they have developed through long years of repression such as not attending school on national Jewish days or just quietly reinterpretng ritual events when compelled to do so. Palestinian parents and educational staff seemed grateful to the more liberal approach offered by the school initiative and their perception of the Jewish honest openness towards their needs. This approach has affected them, and in this last year it has become apparent that they have ever growing expectations to give what in their eyes is a proper expression to their national identity. Jews have reacted with surprise and at times with a sense of danger. At first they were happy to consider themselves true liberals willing to open up their doors to those oppressed; now they had to encounter their own misconceptions and examine their own fears. Palestinians were asking for more than what they expected to have to give from the start.

School – through specially devised parents and staff meetings before the national events – encourages participants to air their fears and expectations at both personal and institutional levels. The meetings led by the organizational consultant – a Palestinian himself who has gained the confidence and respect of both parents and educational staff – become arenas in which displays of profound sensibility and direct misunderstanding are played out. At parents meetings, we become aware of how repressed are the national feelings of many of the Palestinian parents. They recall how they have not dealt openly with themselves or their families on these issues. Jewish parents react to Palestinian relative modest expectations with encouragement, at least at first. When Palestinians, previously encouraged, express expectations that might in any way override Jewish Israeli hegemony many of the Jews present become defensive and offensive at the same time. On the defensive side they call for a balanced approach to the historical narrative; they emphasize the emergent need for a home after the catastrophic events of the
Holocaust. Some even consider the need to share joint commemorations for Nakbe and the Israeli (IDF) Soldiers Remembrance Day offering Palestinians the opportunity to reinterpret the traditional 11 o’clock siren as one remembering the victims of the Nakbe as well. Majorities find it somewhat easy to enlarge the limits of their hegemonic context; the inclusive approach offered can never be enough for the repressed. On the offensive side, the discussions on national events allow Jews to display their ultimate weapon – the threat that if the delicate balance of national representations is violated they will consider pulling their children out of school. It is quite clear that not all parents would carry out such a threat, but as a rule in these types of discussions the extreme voices are welcomed passively and allowed to be voiced actively. Palestinian parents for the most part stoically refrain from attacking back. When considering the very few options open for their children in the present Israeli school system they prefer to quietly try to work things out, usually in successful ways which allow them – without betraying their own feelings and symbolic needs – to find fitting solutions to these problems. Given their historical development any one step further can truly be conceived as a triumph.

And triumphs they are. The ‘modus vivendi’ achieved – which includes separate Nakbe and Soldiers Remembrance Day ceremonies, and the Day of the Land commemoration as practiced in the bilingual schools – are outstanding examples of progress so much so that regular Arab schools try to learn from the bilingual experience.

Teachers’ discussions are characterized by what is seemingly a very professional separation between regular pedagogic issues and issues related to national identity. While for the most part there is full agreement on issues related to language and culture the national subjects become also sites for airing disagreements. Every detail of activity and every word in a text have the potential of becoming obstacles. Jewish teachers believe they are doing their best. They assume they have gone a long way to allow for Palestinian inclusion, but have at times a sense that nothing will satisfy their counterparts’ appetite. Jewish teachers might express discontent and at times anger but never will they consider the option of going back from what has been already achieved. Palestinian teachers have
become the true guardians of national Palestinian ideology at a level which is not always clear Palestinian parents are in search of.

The above descriptions are not to be understood as an accusation to either of the groups. It only suggests again to the need to seriously consider, if at all possible, how to widen in school the open dialogue between adults so as to help them shape acceptable solutions for these urgent issues, solutions which if not developed in the future might endanger the bilingual endeavor and the achievement of its goals.

Regarding the children, it is worth reminding us all that they are shaped into their ‘national being’ by social forces through long periods of enculturation in multiple contexts. The bilingual school allows for no ambiguity: From the start children are encouraged to recognize their “either-or” national identity. Children are children, and they slowly adopt this view. But, for the most part -- although conscious of the differences and the conflicts – much of what their parents struggle with goes over their heads. During the few sessions at school which dealt with national issues, they replicate their own worlds: they draw helicopters, burning villages, explosions, flags and soldiers, all according to the expected affiliation. But when the bell rings they want their break.

We have come to question if at times the school, the parents and the CBE have not imposed too much on these children. We question if they do not reflect too much an environment which more than helping to shape chosen identities, it imposes only one according to birthright and even then not paying enough attention to those who according to birthright not even clearly fit the dichotomous pattern (i.e. children of mixed marriages and Armenian siblings), ultimately replicating the political world outside. We hope all those involved in this strenuous educational effort will find the peace of mind needed to consider other options to the difficult issues related to national identities; we believe that the effort might hold some new promises for the future.

Social interactions
‘Nobody is really happy’ is a statement which reflects what all adults involved in the bilingual schools feel regarding social interactions. Not being really happy does not mean being upset it just means that adults expected more.

Throughout the two years off our research we have seen some development but in general the patterns stay fit. In class inter-group interaction is larger than when kids are free in their own during breaks and at other unstructured periods. In class kids will work together in joint national groups and assist each other with different assignments but when at home inter-group visit are rare. Exceptions do exist in both schools (see our quantitative findings above) but in general the educational staff and parents keep questioning why more gains have not been made in this area.

Attempts to explain the present situation are varied. Some attribute it to geographical distance. Others point at cultural differences which still remain regarding social interaction protocol; still others mention that language gaps are a barrier to social communication outside of class. Some blame the October 2000 for worsening the existing situation. Solutions are being searched for. Only recently, for example teachers in the Galil school discussed plans to introduce guided game activities in breaks so us to encourage more intergroup interaction.

Children are also aware of the situation. In our conversations with them they acknowledge the patterns described above and openly discuss issues which adults find more difficult to confront. In both groups we have heard expressions regarding the fact that the kids know that not all children on the other group love the group they belong to. Still they clearly differentiate between bad and good members of both the Palestinian and the Jews groups. All of the school population belongs to the ‘good guys’ in both groups. Outside of school is the place where some bad members can be found. There have been some events of profound empathy. Such was the case when Jewish children expressed fear their Palestinian friends would be expelled from their homes and offered them shelter after the commemoration of the Day of the Land; once again, this shows that children’s perceptions of historical narratives do not always fit adult plans – for the young children
remembering what had happened 25 years ago was as much part of a possible present as of a possible past.

Parents expected more from themselves as well. They seem to be aware that to reinforce social ties between their children they should engage more in intergroup interaction themselves. They are all very satisfied by the joint activities organized by the school but when these are over they fall back for the most part into a passive mode. Exceptions exist here as well. In isolated cases parents have sustained mutual visits for long periods of time and some mention with satisfaction that during the violent events what helped them overcome the sense of despair was the regular telephone conversations they held with each other. Ways to increase intergroup contact among parents have been searched for too. Teachers have discussed options to widen parent activity around school curriculum and the CBE offered this year a “bridging” course for parents, which had to be closed after the second session for lack of interest. We doubt, in spite of the good will expressed by parents in interviews, that much can be done in this area. Most parents are too busy in their regular professional working lives to be able to spend more time around school initiatives in a school which by its nature already imposes on them a heavier time commitment than in any other regular school.

Teachers and the educational staff in general are the ones that seem to have overcome almost all obstacles and, in spite of ideological tensions, have managed to create for themselves an environment of true friendship and partnership. This in itself is a welcomed and promising development that influences all of school activity for the better.

Conclusions and suggestions
The bilingual schools are indeed an extraordinary new experiment, one that carries the promise of a better future for Jewish – Arab Palestinian relations in Israel. The initiators of this educational initiative at the CBE should be highly commended for undertaking against many odds the creation of educational environments which if only by their existence carry the dream for a peaceful, more honorable world, of co-existence. We hope that the budgetary resources needed to support this worthy educational initiative
will be made available by charitable enterprises as well as by national institutions which need soon to recognize their importance.

In the future the CBE should invest much effort in trying to develop educational materials necessary for achieving their educational goals. It is clear that at this point that there are no such materials in existence and that there is an urgent need to develop them. The experience gained by the teachers involved in the project could be of great benefit in developing such materials and ways should be found to allow them to pour into this creative activity some of the knowledge they have gained.

The educational staff, teachers and principals, at the bilingual schools are in need of much support. Their work is done on roads which have not been traveled yet. Without much preparation and with the partial and restricted support of two excellent consultants in language and organizational issues they have done an excellent job – one which is deeply appreciated by all parents and children. Still much is yet to be uncovered and much more can be done. But for things to get done the educational staff is in need of proper slots of time to reflect on the knowledge gained and to consider the best ways to develop existing programs further. In a school, which by its very nature is very time consuming, their time is already stretched to the limit. The CBE should search for ways to free some of their time so for it to be invested in more training and curricular development activities. We have no doubt that this direction would improve what is already a successful educational enterprise.

The CBE should give serious consideration to questions regarding the envisioned scope of the school development, namely, whether is should develop beyond primary education. Especially when considering the very few options available to the Arab Palestinian Israeli population, the CBE should be careful to allow them well in advance to know how to plan for their children’s future. Ideologies are not always a good recipe for the human condition; pragmatic judgment based on the serious consideration of the shareholders needs should guide their decisions.
The CBE has started a new educational era in Israel. At this point their goals are fixed on the idea of developing further bilingual educational programs as the ones in Jerusalem and the Galil. We are sure that some more schools based in these principles could be developed in the future but we wonder if these would be many. We believe the CBE has triggered with its educational initiative new educational concepts and curricular ideas worth introducing into other educational settings. A variety of schools, those with rather small numbers of Palestinian participation, other which because of demographics contain large numbers of both Jewish and Palestinian populations (i.e. in Jaffa and Akko), and even regular segregated Palestinian and Jewish schools in Israel could benefit from the educational and curricular perspectives already developed. Clearly the existing approaches will have to be adapted to the new settings but they carry with them the promise of a better approach to difference, recognition, and inclusion for many of the ethnic/religious/national groups which populate this conflict ridden area.

Before we finish, we want to express our deep feelings of gratitude to all those who opened their doors, minds, and hearts to us throughout the two years of our work. The Co-principals of the Galil school are the first in line: The Jewish co-principal (the only one at the time we started our research project) was willing to facilitate our work and to guide us through the intricacies of a complex new educational project. She always pointed at the difficulties and tried to make sure we get to all details of information necessary, out of a profound and honest conviction that research can only help fulfill her dream. The Palestinian co-director who joined a year later followed her course trying continuously to accommodate our needs and offering insightful interpretations of events. We know well how much their work is appreciated by all involved in the bilingual adventure parents, teachers, and children alike. We know as well they are the true leaders which have shaped the initiative and allowed it to smoothly ride over, at times, very troubled waters.

All teachers in both schools, in spite of their tight schedules, found always the time to answer our questions and share with us their experiences. As for teaching being considered one of the most secret professions taking place only behind closed doors, their
openness denies this affirmation. There was never hesitation; they always invited us to their classrooms and to the more sensitive school events. It was clear they had nothing to fear and that they were convinced their work was shaping new educational paths. Two years latter we can affirm that they are right, and we are indebted for their ongoing cooperation. The CBE staff should as well be acknowledged for their unlimited and unconditional support; throughout the research process they saved no efforts to help us in our task.

Parents kindly agreed to meet with us and to share for many hours their dreams, fears and expectations helping us uncover a bit of the complex world within which they courageously decided to give this new education a chance. They allowed us to be present in multiple meetings and follow discussions on issues which at times positioned them in situations which many of us would have preferred to keep in the family sheltered from outside observers. And then there are the children – the central actors in the daring venture. Children used to refer to us smilingly as “those who ask the funny questions”. We have learned a lot from watching them act and from the many conversations we held with them. Clearly they are the most honest of all and seem to interpret reality in ways which might make adults jealous. We deeply thank them and hope that in the future they will look back into their school experience with pride knowing they pioneered a very humane educational experiment.

Last we are grateful to the Ford Foundation for their support in carrying out this research project.
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