

Promotion of interreligious dialogue through the work of André Chouraqui
In collaboration with the Open University Center for the Study of Relations between
Jews, Christians, and Muslims

The Open University

The Open University of Israel (OUI) is the pioneer to making higher education accessible to the entire population in Israel, offering diverse study methods, including remote learning via the latest technology. Its internet-based support system for independent learning includes course websites, digital content, and guided assignments. The instructional sessions that are held in person or over Zoom are hallmarks of the flexible learning environment along with the university studies centers for frontal learning situated across Israel, including in remote underserved or deprived areas. The OUI has around 50,000 registered students on its courses, making it the largest university in the country, close to half of its students are located in the country's social and economic periphery.

The Center for the Study of Relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims

The Center for the Study of Relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims focuses on encouraging academic research as well as public discourse about relations between the primary monotheistic religions. Collaborations have been forged with other academic institutes and with groups of scholars in Israel and abroad in order to increase research in this field. Conferences and publications are usually focused on revisiting various historical periods and an updated review of a particular religious phenomenon from a comparative perspective. In addition to that, the center participates and supports grass-root initiatives to increase awareness to phenomena of religious intolerance towards minority groups in Israel and aims to assist those collecting the data regarding these phenomena. These activities are supported and recognized by the management of the Open University, researchers, and the general public in Israel and abroad.

Details of the proposed program

1. Development of a Religious Tolerance Index

This qualitative and quantitative index will assess the legal status and practical reality of religious communities in Israel. The index will consist of two parts: the first part will focus on the state's attitude toward religious communities in Israel (politics, legislation, points of friction, etc.), especially the function of the Ministries of Religious Services, Justice, Interior, Education, Culture and Foreign Affairs, and other governance agencies such as local municipalities, the police, and the supreme court of justice. These and other organizations granted authority and responsibility over matters related to the status and wellbeing of religious communities in Israel will be reviewed, with an emphasis on the Christian, Muslim, and Druze minorities. The second part will deal with the statistical measurement of religious tolerance and attitudes towards religious groups across the board and within faith groups (for example: attitudes toward Reform Jews in Israel, from the perspective of the secular

community and from the perspective of the ultra-orthodox Jews who are highly influential in matters of religion and state).

The Chouraqui Tolerance Index will provide information about the state's attitude toward religious communities in Israel for which there are no official figures. This information will be shared with relevant authorities, the Knesset, and the media, as well as with the social science research community providing a platform for public discourse on the relations between different faith groups within the highly fragmented Israeli.

2. The Chouraqui Tolerance Index Conference

Upon publication of the index, it will be presented and discussed at a conference at the OUI in Ra'anana which will include researchers from different disciplines. The goal of the conference will be to present the findings of the Chouraki tolerance index to decision makers, the media, and the general public.

3. The Chouraqui Platform for Interfaith Dialogue

The Chouraqui Platform for Interfaith Dialogue will include about ten monthly lectures per year on an interfaith subject. The topics will not be limited to Israel and the Middle East, but will include Jewish-Christian, Jewish-Muslim, and Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue from the past and present. Both senior and younger researchers will be included on the Chouraqui Platform, and doctoral students with thesis reflecting these subjects will be featured as well. The lectures will be based on books or papers that have been published, or on research that is in progress.

4. The Chouraqui Prize for a Research Book on Interfaith Dialogue

Among the research books published each year on the subject of interfaith dialogue, one book written and published recently in Israel will be selected. The book selection will be accompanied by a monetary prize awarded to the authors. The program plans to award three prizes: one for a Hebrew book, another for a book published in English, and the third for a book published in French. The three researchers will be invited to deliver a lecture on the winning book at a conference to be held at the OUI.

5. Research scholarships for students

Research scholarships will be awarded to a MA and Phd students focusing on relevant topics. The first part will be awarded to the student upon receipt of the prize, and the second part after completion of the research and the thesis.

6. Translation and publication of André Chouraqui's book

To date, two titles by André Chouraqui' saw publication in Hebrew: *Herzl: Life and Vision* (Am Oved ,1962) and his pioneer work: *History of the Jews in North Africa* (Am Oved, 1975). In line with the endeavor to promote André Chouraqui's life work in Israel the institute will pursue the translation and publication of at least one book every three years, chosen by committee assigned to the task. A representative of the association will be invited to partake in the decision making regarding the choice of book.