



L'Shana Tovah from Shaharit.

We at [Shaharit](#) are happy to share with you these updates from the last few months, and excited to look forward to another year of fulfilling work.

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Reflections on the Recent Israeli Elections - Dr. Eilon Schwartz, Director, Shaharit

Dear All,

As Rosh HaShanah approaches, we here in Israel have greeted the new year with our second election in five months. The results, when looked at closely, remain essentially the same as the last election. What are called the two blocs - right and center-left - remain as they were, locked in a zero-sum game with almost no movement from one bloc to the other. This despite a particularly hateful election cycle, that once again demonized Arabs, as well as the Haredim. Mud is thrown, and everyone remains firm where they stand.

(Click [here](#) for Eilon's three major takeaways from the election).

What will be is anyone's guess. By the time you read this, it is highly likely that there will have been more than one change to the story-line. In light of these elections, we are hopeful, but recognize that there is still a strong need for our work: creating a decent Israeli politics that sees everyone as a partner and rejects those that reject the worlds of others, and creating a center that connects the moderate voices that can be found in every political corner of Israel, and are searching for each other.

Here's to a year of good health and good deeds, and to borrow a phrase from George Orwell, to a year of the flourishing of common decency.

Shanah Tovah,
Eilon

Four Female 120 Graduates Breaking Down Israeli Political Barriers



As demonstrated by the last two elections, Israeli politics, like that of democracies around the world, are mired by conflict. There are

seemingly intractable barriers among diverse parties and identities, which prevent the cooperation and sense of shared purpose needed to address the country's many issues and unite its citizenry.

Four graduates of Shahrar's [120 Program for Multicultural National Political Leadership](#) are demonstrating powerful ways to break down these barriers from within the political system. The examples and stories of these four exceptional women illustrate the kind of change Shahrar aims to promote:

[Iman Khatib Yassin](#), an Arab Citizen of Israel, became the first woman to run for Knesset in the Islamist Ra'am party, impacting the discourse in the country's most Islamist party by bringing a female voice and advancing her publicly [stated](#) belief in and hope for greater Arab-Jewish peace.

[Carmen Elmakiyes](#), a Mizrahi woman from Israel's periphery, ran on the Labor Party list in this past election. The Labor party has traditionally focused on the country's geographic center and the Kibbutzim, and was the face of the country's Ashkenazi male hegemony for decades. One columnist [wrote](#) that Elmakiyes "*embodies the bid to unify Israel's left and Mizrachim.*"

[Zainab Abu Swaid](#), a Bedouin woman from the North, was the first Bedouin woman to ever be elected to an Israeli city council, and ran on the Knesset electoral list of the mostly-Jewish Democratic Camp.

And [Idit Silman](#), a Mizrahi (descendant of Jews with Middle Eastern roots) religious feminist, was elected to the last Knesset as a member of the Religious Zionist party HaBayit HaYehudi, which has been traditionally dominated by Ashkenazi men.

All four women are working to influence their parties to think beyond their traditional bases and look for new forms of inter-sectoral cooperation by bringing new identities, perspectives, and notions of the Common Good. Through Shahrar's "[120](#)" program, these women built

on their desire for such cooperation, and developed the political skills and networks to make an impact. (*read more [here](#)*).

Scaling Up: Building the Foundations of a Healthy Democracy through Relationship-Based Community Organizing

We are proud to announce a **new stage** of our relationship-based community organizing work, scaling up from training and supporting organizers in five pilot cities to now working in twelve cities across Israel (with a special focus on three Ethiopian-Israeli communities). Our successful pilot work has proven that **unlikely coalitions can be formed amongst diverse neighbors** – even those whose groups may be in conflict at the national level – by building **relationships around shared local concerns**. We know that these coalitions influence municipal governments to embrace the Common Good, and as we expand nationally, we hope to see a country-wide upswell of support for a new kind of Israeli politics that reaches across the divides. (*read more [here](#)*).

**2019 Peace Conference Video:
"Different Voices, Different Visions: Broadening the
Ways to Imagine Peace."**



(Photo links to the video)

In Spring 2019 we hosted a conference, titled "**Different Voices, Different Visions: Broadening the Ways to Imagine Peace,**" in partnership with The Van Leer Institute, The Citizens' Accord Forum, and Tikkun.

The purpose of the conference, which over 350 people attended, was to bring diverse voices, identities, and worldviews into the peace conversation, especially those that have traditionally been excluded.

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