We led a successful campaign to include a lesson on antisemitism and Middle Eastern Jewish Americans in California’s Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

With the support of a multitude of Jewish and non-Jewish communal agencies including American Jewish Committee (AJC), Stand With Us, and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), JIMENA’s lesson plan, *Antisemitism and Middle Eastern Jewish Americans* was officially adopted by the California Department of Education in March 2021. The inclusion of JIMENA’s lesson plan in the final draft of California’s controversial Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum was a significant accomplishment as it is the first time the largest public school system in the United States has included materials focused on Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish Americans. The lesson plan includes meaningful definitions of antisemitism from the Anti-Defamation League, Facing History and Ourselves, and most notably the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The inclusion of the IHRA definition in the ESMC sends a clear message that the California Department of Education is serious about protecting its Jewish students, setting a strong example for other states.

Despite the progress made on California’s Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, efforts to protect Jewish students from antisemitism, bias, and discrimination in the classroom are far from over and JIMENA encourages our members to be vigilant in tracking antisemitism
We educated students at over 200 schools with our Journey to the Mizrah Curriculum

JIMENA’s highly adaptable Journey to the Mizrah curriculum continues to be an extremely popular Sephardic resource for Jewish educators around the world. Each day new users register on our website to receive full access to the curriculum and we are proud to see the curriculum being successfully taught in classrooms and Jewish educational spaces across the United States and in five countries around the world. Our hope in 2022 is to translate the curriculum to Arabic for Moroccan schools and to host a national Journey to the Mizrah Workshop 2.0 for educators seeking support as they integrate Sephardic educational modalities and curriculum into their classrooms.

Please visit journeytothemizrah.org to access the curriculum and read this article written by a Bay Area educator regarding her experiences implementing the curriculum in her 5th grade classroom.

We launched JIMENA’s Sephardic Leaders Fellowship

With the support of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation, in January 2021 JIMENA piloted the first cohort of our Sephardic Leaders Fellowship. This six-month program is designed for Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish communal professionals, lay leaders, and allies to gain traditional Middle-Eastern Jewish knowledge, build a community of practice and friendship, and learn new leadership skills in an effort to build more inclusive Jewish communities. Each fellow participated in bi-monthly learning and engagement sessions facilitated by top Mizrahi and Sephardic thought-leaders, scholars, activists, and rabbis from around the world. The program was a huge success and included CEOs from both the East Bay and San Francisco JCCs as well as professional and lay leaders from Apple, Facebook, Stanford University, AT the...
We called out antisemitic leadership in the California Democratic Party

As an organization that is unafraid to call out antisemitism when we see it, in July 2021 JIMENA asked Governor Newsom and California Democratic Party (CDP) leaders to take active steps to hold CAIR LA's Executive Director, Hussam Ayloush accountable for virulent antisemitic statements he’s made in the course of his leadership. Mr. Ayloush previously served as a CDP Executive Board Member and is currently a delegate for the party putting him in a position of influence. With our Sephardic partners across California, we demanded accountability and swift action to protect the state of California from the influence of antisemitism in democratic party politics.

Please read our letter to Governor Newsom here.

We continued our efforts to protect confiscated Jewish cultural properties in the Middle East and North Africa

Despite the protestations of the American Jewish Community, the U.S. Department of State has continued to sign MOU cultural property agreements which transfer ownership of confiscated Jewish communal and private property to Middle Eastern governments. JIMENA has remained committed to pressuring the U.S. government to recognize, in the clearest terms, that Torah scrolls, Jewish manuscripts, and Jewish cultural materials confiscated from Jewish homes and communities in the Middle East and North Africa are rightfully owned by Jewish individuals and communities. In direct correspondence to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and through the circulation of petitions we have asked
the U.S. Department of State to adhere to Article 17 of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and modify MOU’s to protect Jewish cultural and private properties.

Please sign this petition to protect confiscated Jewish cultural property in the Middle East and North Africa.

We led virtual tours to Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and Yemen

In 2021 JIMENA’s Arabic Outreach Program expanded to include unique engagement opportunities for young adults in California to travel virtually to sites throughout North Africa and the Middle East. These virtual tours brought together Arabic, English, and Hebrew speaking musicians, activists, lawyers, filmmakers, rabbis, dancers, entrepreneurs, and many new friends from around the world to connect and explore Jewish heritage in the North Africa and the Middle East. JIMENA is thrilled that the Abraham Accords are providing a burgeoning backdrop for deeper engagement of diverse Middle Eastern communities. In the coming year we look forward to bringing young Americans into the fold of various people-to-people initiatives taking place between Israelis and Arabs in Morocco and the UAE. With our partners on the ground in the Middle East, we plan to offer in-person experiences in Israel, Morocco, and the UAE.

Please RSVP for our upcoming tour to Kurdistan and stay tuned for more.

We launched and completed phase one of the Sephardic Jewish American Diversity and Inclusion Initiative

Empowering the Jewish community with rigorous data, expert recommendations, Sephardic communal infrastructure, and trained leadership in order to build a more welcoming and diverse community that reflects Middle Eastern Jewish heritage.

With the support of the Jim Joseph Foundation, in 2021 JIMENA completed the first phase of an unprecedented national study of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish Americans. During phase one of the project JIMENA assembled a 40-member Sephardic Leadership Advisory Committee composed of Sephardic communal leaders, scholars, heads of school, rabbis, and thought-leaders representing diverse Sephardic communities...
from across the United States. Sephardic leadership participated in research to identify the goals and priorities for a larger national study and community building initiative.

You can learn more about this program by visiting sephardicstudy.org.

Please make sure to support JIMENA's efforts with a Jewish New Year's contribution today!

DONATE

Follow JIMENA on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for more culture, news, and updates!

Use the hashtag #jimenavoice to share photos, news, and ideas to our online communities

JIMENA's mission is to achieve universal recognition of the heritage and history of the one million Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa and their descendants.