





A lifeline for 80K+ students and 200K+ beneficiaries in 30+ countries spanning 5 continents • A lifeline for 80K+ students and 200K+ beneficiaries in 30+ countries spanning 5 continents •

WORLD ORT PASSPORT *to* INNOVATION

Annual Review 2025







ABOUT WORLD ORT

For more than 145 years, World ORT has been a source of continuity and strength for Jews and Jewish allies worldwide.

Through war, displacement, and renewal, we have remained a constant, and deliver ever-evolving science, technology, and entrepreneurial training to Jews wherever they live.



A single school can change a life.

An educational network spanning more than 30 countries and five continents changes what it means to grow up Jewish anywhere in the world.

Today we serve 80,000+ students and 200,000+ beneficiaries annually. Some 500,000+ alumni carry that education forward right now, and over the last two decades alone, an estimated 4 million+ lives have been touched through our educational network. They are proof that Jewish education, done at scale, becomes something stronger than any one community could build alone.

Together, with our donors:

- We **connect** the Jewish world.
- We **advance** educational excellence.
- We **empower** the next generation of Jewish leaders.

That's the power of World ORT.

Learn more: ort.org

Where we work:

Argentina
Belgium
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Czech Republic
Estonia
France
Georgia
Ghana
Guinea
India
Israel
Italy
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lithuania
Mexico
Moldova
Netherlands
Panama
Peru
Russia
Singapore
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Switzerland
UK
Ukraine
Uruguay
USA
Venezuela

A LETTER FROM OUR IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRS

Dear Friends and Leaders,

What an incredible journey we have been on this past year, and what a privilege it has been to lead our organizations through it. As one of the oldest and largest educational nonprofits in the world, World ORT has been practicing the art and science of innovation since our founding more than 145 years ago. We have each had the honor of stewarding a piece of that legacy, Robert at World ORT, Michael at ORT America, and both of us are honored and humbled that we were able to close our tenures by helping to bring those two legacies together as one.

In 2025, we prepared for a historic merger between ORT America and World ORT, formally uniting our two organizations in 2026. We welcomed a new CEO. Senior management transitioned. Our boards readied for a new global collaboration. We watched this happen not as spectators but as the two people responsible for making sure it happened right, carefully, and with the trust of everyone who has built these organizations for decades.

This, too, is innovation. As these pages unfold, you will read of the many ways our schools, educators, students, and families have innovated across this network, country to country, generation to generation, exchanging knowledge, sharing ideas, broadening horizons, and launching futures. This is what the passport to innovation is all about, the many journeys and pathways so many of us will take because of World ORT.

We leave our roles with full confidence in what comes next. Jon Levine has been appointed Board Chair of the newly-unified World ORT, and Dov Ben-Shimon leads as its first CEO. Between them, and behind them, is an organization that reaches 80,000+ students and 200,000+ beneficiaries in more than 30 countries.

Thank you for the trust you placed in us, and for the trust you will continue to place in the organization we leave stronger and more unified than we found it.

Connecting across borders. Learning without boundaries. **That's the Power of World ORT.**



Robert Grey
Immediate Past Chair,
World ORT



Michael Perlmuter
Immediate Past Chair,
ORT America

FOUNDED, 1880 ST. PETERSBURG. **INVESTED**, 2025 THE WORLD

In 1880, the Jews of the Russian Empire were crowded into the Pale of Settlement, shut out of the professions that could have lifted them from poverty.

Our founders understood that having a desirable skill meant survival, and a trade in hand could open a door prejudice had kept shut.



Delegates during the first ORT Congress, Berlin, Germany, August 1921

They pooled what they had and, with the donations of fellow Jews from across Russia, opened the first ORT schools. Within the next generation, there were 17 schools. Within the next century, there were 50, spanning 30+ countries across five continents.

Today, the 1880 Society, our highest giving circle, is named in their honor and welcomes donors who give $100,000 or more over four years.

Standing on the shoulders of giants, Jon Levine, now our Board Chair, made an investment in the future of World ORT by joining the 1880 Society.



Jon Levine
Board Chair,
World ORT

"As Jews, we're all family, no matter where we live. If I can help a young person in a far corner of the world build a better life, contribute to society, and connect to other Jews in other countries so they never feel isolated or alone, I'm going to do it. That's the power of the World ORT passport."

Jon Levine, Board Chair

The 1880 Society

World ORT's highest giving society welcomes donors who make a commitment of $100,000 or more over 4 years. In recognition of their generosity, members will be presented with an exclusive, commemorative medal, as well as invitation only opportunities to connect with ORT's mission.

Want to learn more?

Get in touch with Allison Baumwald, Global Chief Development Officer at abaumwald@ort.org or (410) 963-6828.

ESCAPED, 1939 GERMANY
HONORED, 2025 THE WORLD

ORT had opened the door for Russian Jews to learn skills and trades in 1880 but, by 1939 German Jews faced that same door closing.

More than 200 boys aged between 14 and 17 were were studying at the Berlin ORT school. They were learning welding, carpentry, and mechanics. In a world closing its borders to Jewish refugees, most countries would not take the desperate. But they would take the skilled. A trade was no longer just a lesson: it was a passport.



ARCHIVE INQUIRIES INCREASED BY 117%

Students working at a tool and die making workshop, ORT Berlin, November 1938
Photo credit: Lilli Szkolny. Archive Ref. psa3004

Weeks before the war began, that training helped 106 of those boys escape to Britain. They became known as the 'Old Boys'.

The World ORT Archive collects and maintains records like theirs, to protect our history and keep stories from our past alive for future generations.

Inquiries to our archive rose by 117 percent in 2025. Two new grants, from the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe and Yerusha, are helping ensure stories like this one will always be remembered. **Our history makes us who we are, and informs who we want to become.**



"If there is one word that I would use to sum up my father, it would be kindness. He knew that kindness multiplies itself a thousand times and that all things can be survived with it. His first teacher in that respect was ORT."

Monica Lowenberg, daughter of Ernst Lowenberg, one of the 106 'Old Boys'

CHALLENGED, 2022 UKRAINE
INNOVATED, 2025 THE WORLD

As the war in Ukraine continued for another year, bomb shelters doubling as classrooms had become part of daily life, shaping how an entire generation experienced high school. World ORT made sure that life, however disrupted, stayed as normal as possible.

When World ORT's Young Entrepreneurship Program (YEP), invited ORT schools worldwide to compete, Ukraine was among the first to sign up.

The flagship program challenged students to build businesses of their own, and solve real-world problems from the ground up. Working in teams, students pitched their ideas to entrepreneurs and business owners, competing for a grand prize.

This annual competition provided opportunities for students across the globe to network with each other and business leaders.



Students at an ORT Ukraine school prepare for an exam

One year later, when another group of ORT Ukraine students planned to present their project, a missile attack hit the city. Eager to continue, the students didn't let it stop them.

Huddled in a bomb shelter, they logged onto their laptops and pitched their ideas to a panel of judges watching from across the world—business leaders who had no idea, until the students told them, that they were presenting from underground.

That's what World ORT does. We don't wait for the war to end to start building the future. The future is happening now.

4,000 STUDENTS SERVED IN UKRAINE

5 ORT + 2 AFFILIATE SCHOOLS IN UKRAINE

$5 MILLION RAISED FOR EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Please note: the cost of supporting ORT Ukraine through 2027 is projected to be an additional $4 million. To help, please contact Allison Baumwald, Global Chief Development Officer, at abaumwald@ort.org or (410) 963-6828.

ENDURED, 2023 ISRAEL
EMBRACED, 2025 THE WORLD

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a terror attack on Israel. The war that followed lasted more than two years, affecting the day-to-day lives of our students. Some of these teenagers were evacuated from their homes. Some lost people they loved. For all of them, their trauma didn't end with a promise of ceasefire.

The World ORT network recognized that these young people needed more than traditional education and provided something that looked different from anything done before.

Journey to Renewal was created for teenagers who needed the chance to feel like ordinary children again. World ORT supporters in cities including Paris, Mexico City, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, and now Detroit, welcomed Israeli teens as if they were part of their own families. Because, as Jews, we are all family.

"The bonds created between the host families and students, gave them a lot of strength. In many cases, they are still in touch."

Dr. Moshe Leiba, Chief Pedagogy Officer, World ORT Kadima Mada



Detroit, Michigan welcomes teens from World ORT Kadima Mada in Israel for respite trip

When 12 Israeli teenagers arrived in Detroit for two weeks of respite, one student told the *Detroit Jewish News* she was worried about going somewhere new, without knowing anyone.

What she found instead was the kind of courage that doesn't come from a textbook. She did not just get through a tough situation, but learned to thrive.

By the end, she realized that it was possible to feel like she belonged in two places at once.

7 CITIES ACROSS 3 COUNTRIES WELCOMED ISRAELI TEENS

BORN, LITHUANIA
EXPLORED, BULGARIA
CONNECTED, THE WORLD

Miglė grew up in Vilnius, a city once so central to Jewish life and culture it was called the 'Jerusalem of the North'. But the Holocaust changed everything. Roughly 95% of Lithuanian Jews were murdered, but the small community endures.

As a student at the ORT school in Lithuania, Miglė is part of that rebuilding, proudly carrying forward the stories of the past and writing new stories that build the future.

100% OF DSA PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY GAINED NEW SKILLS



"I have always wanted to be involved in cinema and, after seeing everyone work with such passion and creativity, I realized it is what I really want to do."

Miglė, Vilnius Sholom Aleichem ORT Gymnasium, Lithuania, Digital Skills Academy participant

So when the invitation came to attend World ORT's Digital Skills Academy (DSA) in Bulgaria, Miglė was excited. She spent two weeks studying digital video production with ORT students from several countries.

This was her chance not only to meet other teenagers beyond her country's borders, but also to learn the craft of storytelling, giving her the skills and tools to share her voice with the world.



Students from ORT schools spanning the globe pose for a group photo during the 2025 Digital Skills Academy in Bulgaria

BORN, PANAMA
DISCOVERED, THE WORLD

Panama is home to one of the most secure Jewish communities anywhere outside Israel. Roughly 15,000 Jewish people in a country of nearly four million, with a history stretching back centuries and two Jewish presidents to its name. But this strong community is still a small one. Ezequiel, a student at Colegio Isaac Rabin in Panama City, had not met many Jewish teenagers from outside Panama's borders.



He was also shy. A good student who loved science, but lacked self-confidence. The support of a teacher would change that when Ezequiel was recommended for something bigger than the classroom.

World ORT's Ecology Summer School sends ORT students into the rainforest, working alongside scientists from the prestigious Smithsonian Institute where they conduct primary research, study cloud forests, and search for fossils.



"ORT has helped me get to know my Jewish self and the meaning I find in this beautiful religion. It was a wonderful experience to meet Jews from around the world and learn how they live their lives."

Ezequiel, Colegio Isaac Rabin, Panama

Surrounded by other Jewish students who loved science as much as he did, with a common thread of Jewish Peoplehood" to tie them closer, Ezequiel came out of his shell. **His curiosity grew. So did his circle of friends. And somewhere between the fieldwork and the fossils, he came home closer to his Jewish identity, and to the global Jewish community.**

27 STUDENTS REPRESENTING 8 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

100% SAID THEY WOULD RECOMMEND TO A FRIEND

★★★★★ FIVE STAR STUDENT PARTICIPANT RATING

EDUCATED, SINGAPORE
DISCOVERED, SPAIN
COLLABORATED, SOUTH AFRICA
WELCOMED, THE WORLD

Born in the UK, Dean Shannon had been a Jewish educator in Singapore for several years — teaching in a country with approximately 2,500 Jews. It could be lonely work and it only grew more isolating in a post-October 7 world.

When World ORT announced the new Jewish Educators' Seminar, a training program designed for Jewish educators, Dean knew that these four days of academic sessions could change his life.

"This seminar deepened my own Jewish identity."

Dean Shannon, Sir Manasseh Meyer International School, Singapore



It did. Educators from around the world gathered in Barcelona to study classical Jewish sources on ecology, environmental stewardship, and humanity's relationship to the earth. They explored how artificial intelligence could shape the next generation of Jewish classrooms. They walked through Barcelona's old Jewish quarter and sat with grief and memory through art and food.

"Inspiration, innovation, and connection defined every moment."

Keren Lurie, King David Ariel School, South Africa pictured with Gaynor Collins, World ORT's Interim Director of Education



By the end, something shifted in Dean. He came in hopeful, and he left renewed, refreshed, and recharged — as did every educator in that room. Alone, they carried the work. Together, they carried each other.

UNCERTAIN TO UNSTOPPABLE
WORLD ORT KADIMA MADA KFAR SILVER YOUTH VILLAGE

Israel's youth villages were formed to give young refugees a safe haven, among them Kfar Silver Youth Village. **Today, the school welcomes immigrants and native-born Israelis alike, including students who need more support than a typical classroom can give.**

On his first day, Maayan sat in the school auditorium listening to older students describe what to expect. He never imagined he'd one day be one of them.



"Since joining the school, I've improved a lot academically, especially in subjects like chemistry and math. I'm grateful for everything the school has given me – education, friendships, and personal growth. Even during tough times, the school has been a place of stability and support."

Maayan, Kfar Silver Youth Village Graduate

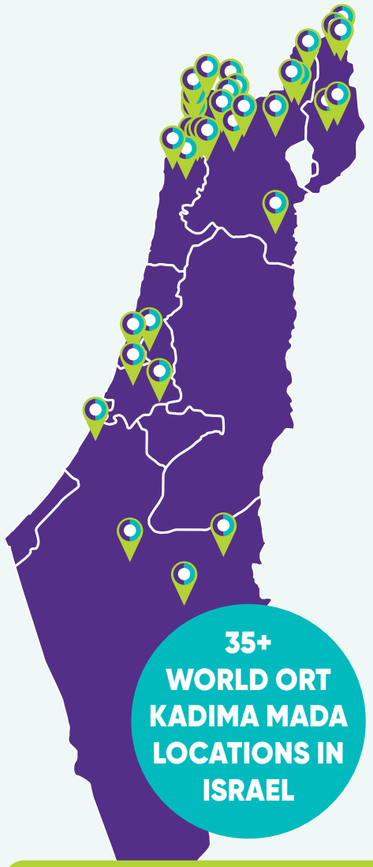
Coming in, Maayan was shy. He avoided group situations and public speaking, even in his own classes. He was a strong student, especially in chemistry and math, but his confidence hadn't caught up to his talent, until a teacher recommended him to speak publicly about his own experience at an event for the school's younger students. Uncertain, but with encouragement, he agreed. It was the first of several invitations. Not long after, the school asked him to represent Kfar Silver again, this time before visiting companies.

He speaks to rooms full of younger students. He fields questions from company executives. He mentors children who remind him of himself a few years earlier.

Somewhere between the classroom and the stage, Maayan's confidence grew, and so did his sense of what's possible. Now he imagines a future combining his passions in science and math. "I want to teach others the way I was taught," he says.

LAYING A FOUNDATION
WORLD ORT KADIMA MADA PLANS FOR CHANGEMAKER HUBS

In 2025, we laid the foundation to rebrand YOUniversity into Changemaker Hubs. Partnering with municipalities across Israel, World ORT Kadima Mada now operates 35+ locations nationwide. **We fill the gap, providing access and opportunity for the students who need us most.** Classes span three categories: 1. Science & Technology, 2. Resilience Training, and 3. Leadership Pathways.









World ORT Kadima Mada students participate in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) worshops and activities

World ORT Kadima Mada Municipality Locations: Acre, Arad, Be'er Sheva, Beit She'an, Dimona, Ein Qiniyye, Ganei Tikva, Gezer, Giv'atayim, Golan Heights, Haifa, Hof Ashkelon Regional Council, Jordan Valley, Karmiel, Katzrin, Kfar Blum, Kfar Vradim, Kibbutz Afek, Kiryat Bialik, Kiryat Haim, Kiryat Motzkin, Kiryat Yam, Ma'ale Yosef Regional Council, Ma'alot-Tarshiha, Majdal Shams, Mas'ada, Mateh Asher Regional Council, Merom HaGalil Regional Council, Mevo'ot HaHermon Regional Council, Misgav Regional Council, Nahariyya, Nesher, Rishon LeZion, Shlomi, Yarka, Yesud HaMa'ala

Thank You!

THANK YOU TO THE DONORS WHO CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN $14 MILLION INCLUDING CONTRIBUTIONS, GRANTS, AND LEGACIES IN 2025 TO SUPPORT OUR WORK. YOUR GIFTS REACH AROUND THE WORLD!

In 2025 our fundraising communities were hard at work, raising the dollars that support our mission and drive the future of our Jewish world. Today our team looks different. We are proud to work closely with fundraising regions around the world including Canada, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.

To see a list of our 2025 donors and learn about our fundraising regions around the world visit: ort.org/donors2025 or scan the QR code.



Check out a few snapshots of our donors and team members who connect local initiatives to global causes.

When you're part of World ORT, you're welcomed into a warm network of Jewish community members in areas where we may not have schools, but we do have passionate donors who believe excellent education is a tool to self-sufficiency and success.

Grab coffee with our staff. Sit down to dinner with guests from around the world. Show up for a gala, a fundraiser, or a panel discussion that gets you thinking. Or get on a plane to see the work firsthand, in Israel, Mexico, or any of the 30+ countries where we operate.

Be inspired by the world of difference your donation makes. Because of you, World ORT connects, advances, and empowers the next generation of students.

INTERESTED IN GETTING MORE INVOLVED?
Contact Allison Baumwald, Global Chief Development Officer at abaumwald@ort.org or (410) 963-6828.

WORLD ORT

15 West 38th St., Floor 9
New York, NY 10018



ARE YOU RECEIVING **DOV BEN-SHIMON'S FRIDAY EMAILS?**

Do we have your email? If not, you're missing out on a weekly message from World ORT CEO, Dov Ben-Shimon. Every Friday, he sends personal reflections: visits to schools around the world, his response to world news affecting Jewish life and education, and his perspective on the everyday moments that shape our work.

Sign up today at
ort.org/friday