



Rooted in the North

Strengthening Northern Israel through Education and Community

MAY 2026



Background and Context

For years, Northern Israel has faced a quiet erosion. Poverty rates exceed the national average. Young professionals often relocate to the center of the country in search of opportunity. The recent war intensified these patterns, placing additional strain on local institutions and communities already operating on very thin margins.

To address the human dimension of this challenge, the University of Haifa is launching Rooted in the North. By providing scholarships, housing assistance, and a supportive communal framework, we are encouraging talented students from the Religious-Zionist community to choose Haifa for their studies and establish long-term roots in the region.

The program aims to enroll an initial cohort of 100 students, with a plan to scale over the next five years. We are seeking partners to help ensure that Haifa is a viable and compelling option for these students at a formative stage of their lives. This initiative represents a targeted, practical investment in the future civic and professional leadership of northern Israel.

Why Focus on Religious-Zionist Students

The Religious-Zionist community is deeply integrated into Israel's civic and professional life. Its members are prominently represented in education, healthcare, social services, and public leadership. They also serve in the Israel Defense Forces at rates disproportionately high relative to their share of the population, particularly in combat and reserve units.

In recent years, many students from this community have pursued higher education in central Israel, where established communal frameworks are readily available. As a result, fewer have gone on to build their adult lives in the North, further weakening the region's future leadership base.



Leadership

Rabbi Dr. Yossi Stamler serves as Campus Rabbi at the University of Haifa. With rabbinic ordination, a doctorate in Jewish philosophy, and twenty years of service as an IDF Armored Corps officer, he reflects the leadership and intellectual rigor this initiative seeks to cultivate. His success in building similar Judaic programming in the past proves that serious Jewish intellectual life can thrive within a pluralistic setting. ***Rooted in the North*** builds on these foundations, applying proven models of engagement to develop a new cohort of student-leaders who bridge the worlds of Torah study, academia, and public service.

Program Overview

Rooted in the North reflects a long-term institutional commitment to building a strong Religious-Zionist student community at the University of Haifa. The intention is to create a stable religious and communal presence on campus that will grow steadily over the coming years.

The initiative begins with dedicated program leadership and focused recruitment within the Religious-Zionist sector. Outreach will include engagement with yeshivot, midrashot, Sherut Leumi programs, sector-wide conferences, and major events hosted on campus. For many students, the decision is not only academic. They are asking whether Haifa can support the kind of religious, communal, and social life they want during their university years..

The Beit Midrash will serve as the central hub of Jewish learning and campus life. It will operate throughout the academic year and offer a variety of study topics and options led by Rabbi Stamler and invited guest lecturers. Volunteer opportunities, two Shabbatonim, and Jewish cultural programming will be offered throughout the year.

The program also addresses practical aspects of student life, including housing options on campus and in established Religious-Zionist neighborhoods nearby, with the goal of helping students build cohesive communities rooted in the North.



Long-Term Impact

Rooted in the North aims to attract the next generation of Religious-Zionist leaders to northern Israel. By attracting high-achieving students to Haifa, the program will influence where they build their lives—cultivating a network of mission-driven professionals with deep, durable ties to Haifa and the Galilee.

We would welcome an opportunity to speak with you about the initiative.