



# Haifa Laboratory for Religious Studies – HLRS

## Unlocking The Intersection Between Academia & Religion



The Haifa Laboratory for Religious Studies (HLRS) was founded in 2020 as a platform to bridge academic research with practical application, harnessing the positive potential of religion in our contemporary society. In just a few years, HLRS has emerged as a widely recognized agent of change in Israel and internationally, pioneering innovative models that advance the role of faith in governance, civic cooperation, and conflict resolution.

Situated within the University of Haifa, HLRS drives its mission through education, civic engagement, and applied research. These core avenues equip new generations of civic and religious leaders, engage directly with communities to generate tangible societal impact, and translate new insights into practical knowledge. By working with governmental, civic, and faith partners, HLRS positions religion as a constructive force to meet the pressing challenges of our time.

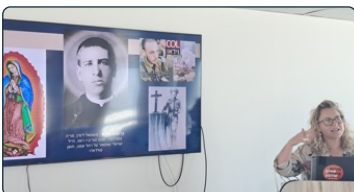
### Core Programs & Highlights



**Education** Since its foundation in 2020, HLRS has trained hundreds of students, including clergy, educators, and civic leaders. Building on this foundation, it launched the Interfaith Ambassadors M.A. Program for religious leaders in 2024 and will inaugurate an M.A. in Democracy & Religion in 2025.



**Outreach Projects** HLRS established Israel's first municipally integrated multifaith councils in Haifa, Ramle & Acre, and now anchors 251 community partnerships. In the past year alone, its initiatives have reached over 3,100 direct beneficiaries.



**Applied Research** Through regional and international collaborations, HLRS produces applied studies that inform policy and practice; addressing religious leadership, law and pluralism, urban coexistence, and interfaith pedagogy - contributing directly to shaping policy in some of Israel's most acute points of Jewish-Arab friction.





## Ongoing Initiatives

**Multifaith Councils** In 2024, HLRS launched Israel's first municipal multifaith councils, bringing religious and civic leaders together to tackle sectarian challenges to peace and shape cooperative civic development. Active in Haifa, Ramle, and Acre, the model is set to expand to all 10 major multifaith Israeli cities as a national framework for conflict resolution and development.

**Interfaith Ambassadors Program** This M.A. program unites Abrahamic religious leaders to combine academic study with hands-on community projects. The 2024 graduates have already begun implementing initiatives across Israel, soon to be joined by the new 2025 cohort.

**Grassroots Community Projects** HLRS creates local initiatives that convert interfaith cooperation into community engagement. Recent examples include multifaith leaders addressing high school students, an advisory committee to Haifa's mayor, and interfaith conflict-resolution efforts in Ramle.

**Intertwined Worlds** This fellowship nurtures doctoral & postdoctoral scholars through study tours, dialogue with religious leaders, and an annual international conference. It builds a new generation of researchers connecting academic theory with lived community practice.

**HLRS Peace Award** Conferred annually at the HLRS Symposium, the award honours visionary leaders of peace and reconciliation. Recipients include Rabbi David Rosen and, most recently, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who will be honoured in November 2025.

**High School Educational Programs** HLRS is opening Israel's segregated school system to new curricula on inter-religious and cultural pluralism. Piloted in Haifa and Ramle in 2025, the program blends text study, field visits, and research to provide students with hands-on knowledge about communities and traditions other than their own.

**Mapping Faith-Based Communal Leaderships & Initiatives** HLRS is producing Israel's first analytic map of religious leadership and interfaith initiatives, giving policymakers and communities tools to engage faith leaders, civil society organizations and influencers

## Partners & Supporters

### Government & Municipal Partners



### International & Civic Organizations



### Academic Partners



### Faith-Based Partners

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Maronite Church, Anglican Church, Armenian Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Ahmadiyya Community in the Holy Land, Bahá'í World Centre, Spiritual Leadership of the Druze Community in Israel

