

Lockheed Martin Opening Jerusalem Preschool for Israelis

“We could have set up a research institute on military aviation worldwide, but we went in the direction of [childhood] education because that’s what fires us up.” — Lockheed Martin

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American aerospace contractor and maker of the F-35 stealth fighter jet, Lockheed Martin, is opening a “one of a kind” science-focused preschool in Jerusalem, with plans to serve Israeli children as young as five, according to a [press release](#) from Jerusalem’s municipality.

In May of this year, an Israeli military official [openly bragged](#) that

“Israel was the first regime in the world to have used the U.S.-made F-35 stealth fighter jets in attack mode.”

In December of 2016, Israel received the first two F-35s out of the 50 ordered from the United States.

Lockheed Martin [invested](#) over \$1 billion in Israel between 2010 and 2017.

The new preschool will belong to a larger Lockheed Martin project in Israel that has already seen schools open in Be’er Sheva and Kiryat Malachi. The Kiryat Menachem neighborhood will be home to Jerusalem’s first location, which will serve immigrants, including those of Soviet and Ethiopian backgrounds. While all three locations are in socioeconomically weak areas, the schools have yet to serve Arab students.

The newest school will provide preschool and kindergarten students with computers and other state-of-the-art technology [in an effort](#) to “foster and boost advanced technology.” Expected to cost \$250,000 and to begin operating during the 2018/2019 school year, the school will be the first of its kind to open in Jerusalem. Lockheed Martin, the Rashi Foundation, and the Jerusalem municipality will [foot the bill](#) for the school.

Fired up by fingerpaint

Lockheed Martin’s Israel CEO, Joshua Shani, had this to say of [MadaKids](#), the corporation’s Israeli STEM school network:

Our preschools are an Israeli innovation in every respect, and already delegations have arrived from other countries, like Korea and Germany, that are thinking of going in a similar direction.”

Shani has admitted that a partnership between a school and a weapons manufacturer “isn’t logical” but justified his company’s contributions to MadaKids by saying:

[T]he moment a commercial company wants to contribute to the community, it becomes worthwhile. We could have set up a research institute on military aviation worldwide, but we went in the direction of education because that’s what fires us up.”

In addition to opening schools, the company has also sponsored activities for older students, including Lego competitions and “cyber summer camps” in partnership with the Israel Defense Forces Cyber Command, in what can only be seen as an effort to normalize the war machine.

Israel is a worldwide leader in weapons sales, marketing its wares as “[combat tested](#)” after using them on Palestinians, most frequently in the Gaza Strip. Residents of Gaza are trapped in what is called the world’s largest open-air prison, where they are subjected to Israeli abuses, including a mind-boggling use of [high tech weaponry](#) and [bombs](#).

While such a country’s ongoing partnership with Lockheed Martin, the world’s largest manufacturer of weapons, seems almost natural, the company has ingrained itself in the [very fabric](#) of education across the globe, most notably in the United States. With programs for kids like Lockheed Martin [Engineering Day](#), National Discovery Education Lockheed Martin Beyond Challenge, and Lockheed Martin [Video Challenge](#), as well as the Lockheed Martin Teacher Award, the weapons giant’s interest in education is curious.

The fact that, on the one hand, Lockheed Martin appears invested in childhood education and, on the other hand, produces weapons that murder and maim countless people — while [partnering](#) with Israel, a major [abuser](#) of international human rights law — is a lesson in itself. It might, in fact, be seen as highly educational on the subject of how the modern world works.

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