Rabbanit Adina Bar Shalom is the founder of the Haredi College in Jerusalem, which is the first ultra-Orthodox institution of higher education established in Israel. Adina Bar Shalom broke ground in the realm of higher education for young ultra-Orthodox women and opened the doors for both men and women in the ultra-Orthodox sector to acquire an academic education.

Adina Bar Shalom, the daughter of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, was born in Jerusalem. She was educated in the ultra-Orthodox Bais Yaakov school system, and a professional high school, in an atmosphere that did not encourage women to pursue an education or professional career. As a result, she was initially forced to forego higher education and instead develop a career as a seamstress and bridal salon manager. After her youngest daughter was married, she decided to devote her time to contributing to Israeli society. During that time, she formulated the idea of founding a university for young ultra-Orthodox men and women, in the belief that academic studies represent the key to an honorable livelihood and a way of reversing the poverty that plagues the sector. With the support of her father, she established an educational system for ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Adina Bar Shalom began her public activities with her battle to establish an ultra-Orthodox university whose goal would be to provide higher education to the ultra-Orthodox sector. She fulfilled her dream in 2000, when she founded the Haredi College in Jerusalem. The college offers a wide variety of programs, including social work studies, computers, medical laboratory sciences, communication disorders, and psychology.

Her involvement in public and cultural activities led Adina Bar Shalom to establish a forum encouraging open communication between the religious and non-religious sectors. In 2011, the economic magazine The Marker placed her on its list of the people who have had the most positive influence on Israeli society. Adina Bar Shalom serves as a board member of Yad Ben Zvi, the “Yahad” council, and the Citizens’ Accord Forum between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

In recognition of her contribution to building bridges within Israeli society, in appreciation of her initiatives and her fortitude in designing frameworks for the Ultra-Orthodox sector to acquire academic and professional skills, and for being a unique role model encouraging leadership among women, Adina Bar Shalom is hereby named an Honorary Fellow of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya.