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Matanel Scholarships: Experiencing Science-2014

Name of program

Matanel Scholarships: Experiencing Science

Year of activity

2014

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Status of program

During July-August 2014, Matanel scholarships enabled 170 boys and girls of Ethiopian origin to participate in science oriented summer camps run by 12 universities, academic institutes, colleges and regional councils.

Operation Protective Edge: Unfortunately, due to Operation Protective Edge, activities in Beersheva and in Ashdod were halted after eight days of activities. Activities at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot were postponed for three weeks. Otherwise, the program was conducted as planned.

Main achievements during the last year of activity

Ben Gurion University (BGU)-Thirty three students from Kiryat Gat, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Kiryat Gat participated in a science sleep-away camp at Sde Boker. The students were graduates of grades 8-10.

Madadarom – Beersheva: Ben Gurion University did not operate a youth science camp in Beersheva thus the Steering Center worked with Madadarom. Fifteen 3rd to 5th grade students participated in various Madadarom camps at the BGU campus include "Making Science Fun", "Mathematical Summer" and "Website Building."

Weizmann Institute, Rehovot: Twenty one 4th and 5th grade students from Ashdod, Bat Yam and Rishon Letzion participated in "Making Science Fun", "Science Experts", "Photography" and "Communications" camps at the Weizmann Institute.

Technion, Haifa: Thirteen 7th-10th grade students from Kiryat Bialik and Kiryat Yam attended summer camps focusing on mathematics, architecture, aeronautics, biotechnology, animation, chemistry, computers, robotics and mathematical thinking.

Tel Aviv University (TAU): Eighteen 6th -11th grade students from Bnei Brak, Petach Tikva, Or Yehuda and Rishon Letzion participated in TAU summer camps. Students participated in day camps focusing on "Young Lawyers", "Social Psychology", "Neuroscience", "Astronomy" and "Introduction to Psychology" and "Game Theory." Two additional students in 11th grade participated in a five-week overnight camp at the university for a total of Twenty students.

Tel Aviv University, Erica Landau Institute for Engineering: Fifteen 6th grade students from Netanya participated in the "Learning for the Future" program.

Yasa Camp, at the Arts and Sciences High School, Jerusalem: Five 7th grade students from Jerusalem and Lod participated in a six-day overnight camp. One 8th grade student from Bet Shemesh attended a 10-day overnight camp.

Hebrew University, Jerusalem: Twelve 6th-9th grade students attended courses including medicine, psychology, chemistry, space sciences and astronomy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Horizons and Spaces School for Gifted Students: Three 5th grade students attended the day camp.

Oranim Academic College: Twelve 5th and 6th grade students from Afula participated in courses including "Animals", "The Vikings" and a course in economics.

Ashdod Municipality: Six children in 4th and 5th grades participated in day camps run by Ashdod Municipality at the local Eshkol Payis center: "Robotics" and "Making Science Fun."

Technoda Hadera: Fourteen children from 1st-5th grade attended the "Making Science Fun" day camp.

Evaluation

Program Methodology: "Experiencing Science" participants were selected by a network of

mediators and liaisons operated by the Steering Center nationally, and through recommendations from teachers. The Steering Center ensured that parents of all participants understood the goals of the project, and gave written consent for participation. Parents paid a nominal participation fee of 50 NIS (\$13) which was mainly used to offset the cost of transportation. Steering Center staff accompanied all the students for the duration of the science oriented summer camps, and administered questionnaires at the end of the summer.

Feedback from Instructors: The instructors reported that the students learned about topics that they had not previously encountered. The attendance was high and in many cases, without a single absence. The level of knowledge varied but all the instructors commented on the students' active participation. Additionally, most of the students integrated socially into the group which was facilitated by the decision to have at least two students of Ethiopian origin in each group.

Feedback from Participants: All the students reported that they enjoyed camp: they want to attend next year and they will recommend it to their friends. Additionally, students reported that the courses were interesting and encouraged independent thought. Many students shared that they learned about concepts that were completely new to them, such as 3D printers and optical illusions. Most of the 7th through 12th grade students indicated that the science camps raised their motivation to invest efforts in their studies.

Quotes from Participants:

"The course reinforced my dream to be a pediatrician and I'll help children heal."-Sixth grade student in Jerusalem.

"I used to dream about being a professional athlete, but now I want to be a scientist"- Sixth grade student in Tel Aviv.

Others

Future Plans:

In the coming year, the Steering Center plans to recruit new funding partners in order to enable children from the Ethiopian-Israeli community to participate in science oriented summer camps during the summer vacation (July-August 2015).

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