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# One of us-2012-2013

**Name of program**

One of us

**Year of activity**

2012-2013

**Name of the report's writer**

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**Function of the report's writer**

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**Status of program**

In September 2013 we opened the third year of the Mechina with 40 students. Today we have 37 students who are undergoing significant social and physical changes and, most importantly, of personal empowerment. This year too, all students from underprivileged backgrounds, towns in Israel's periphery, youth villages (boarding schools for at risk youth) and Kidum Noar youth.

The Mechina team has increased accordingly and includes two managers and four instructors. This year we added another function – graduates coordinator – who is in charge of following our graduates that are serving in the IDF and experience difficulties (including conversations with their commanders), organizing graduates days, managing a tracking program, graduates conservation.

We proceed in our successful weekly voluntary project from last year - the students have one day a week of community outreach in organizations such as AKIM, Beit Hagalgalim (disabled children), Beit Hayeladim in Hadera (for Ethiopian children), Kfar Hayeladim in Netanya (children at-risk), and the local kennels. To date the students have participated in four week-

long field activities: an “opening” trip, a team-building trip to the Judean Desert, a navigation trip that focused on developing and empowering a sense of capability, and a trip to Judea and Samaria that focused on social and national issues. Seven students passed the one-day "gibush" (tryout) for two elite army reconnaissance units.

### **Main achievements during the last year of activity**

1. Low dropout rate: We proceed with our success – 94% from the students that graduated the first and second years serve in the IDF! 88% from them are in combat units. Those results are indisputably amazing for such population that those students come from.
2. Trip to Poland: This year too, thanks to an earmarked donation, the students flew to Poland as part of a delegation, which strengthened their sense of Jewish identity and national responsibility, and empowered their feelings of capability.
3. Army recruitment success: Nine enlisted in the Paratroopers Brigade – four of them are serving in an elite reconnaissance unit. Six enlisted in the Golani Brigade – two in the reconnaissance company and two in Egoz (Special Forces) reconnaissance unit. One graduate enlisted in the Armored Corp and completed a tank commander course, and additionally we have three students intended to command and officer's class.
4. Tracking graduates program: This year we commenced an organized tracking program which assists us to develop our graduates even after they graduate the Mechina. This program is managed by the graduates coordinator (the new function we added this year), as mentioned above.

### **Evaluation**

Students: No doubt there is a significant improvement in the process the students are undergoing compared to those in our first course, mainly due to the higher number of students which broadens the scope of group activities and processes.

Educational program: The educational program is based on that of the previous year, with greater emphasis on community outreach and on decision making processes in the group (by delegation of more responsibility to committees run by the students themselves).

Upgrade the place: This year we invested in improvement the living conditions of the students – renovation of the structure walls, the toilets and the kitchen.

Therapy and guidance:

- This year includes two additional therapy sources: A psychologist to provide support for the Mechina team once every two weeks, and additionally the students participate in team dynamic classes guided by an expert in this field.
- Upgrading the management committee: in order to save the management committee dynamic, three sub-commissions were established: finance committee, development and strategy committee and pedagogic committee. Each sub-commissions includes external consultants, and each two months the management committee makes decisions according to the sub-commissions' conclusions.

Recognition:

This year we eventually got recognition from the ministry of defence (the social-security department) and from the ministry of education as official Mechina with all its implications – actually we completed the two-year entrance examination as "Mechina under founding", and we approved officially. We entitled to financial support by the ministry of defence and the

ministry of education each month. Additionally, we got an approval for tax-at-sources exempt under section 46a.

## **Others**

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

One-of-Us plans to continue to work towards realizing its vision – to narrow social gaps in Israel – by means of a pre-army preparatory course.

The organization will focus on expanding the program, in accordance with the provisions of the law, to 75 graduating students at the end of the preparatory course's Fourth year. The organization is currently striving to open another school (probably a Mechina for girls). We are all hope that in September 2015 a Mechina for girls will be opened. These days we already have an approval from a communal civilization that wants to have a Mechina for girls within it.

As mentioned above, the organization is also working on expanding the mentoring program for graduates.

The Mechina will continue to meet the goals stated by the organization with regard to dropout rates and rates of enlistment to the IDF for significant military service.

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