Matanel Foundation
Activity report
Meitarim Lachish Mechina – Nahal Oz

Program: Meitarim Lachish Mechina
Activity year: 2016-2017
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Current state of the program:
The Mechina began its fourth year in September, with over than forty students. Last year the number of students increased and our group consisted of more than thirty students. We have a diverse group of students, each coming from a different background: Urban & Kibbutz, Religious & Traditionalist, and Immigrants from all over the world.

Throughout the years, our Mechina program has reached a stable state educationally, physically, and financially and has been able to establish a close connection with the Kibbutz and the community. We started the year with a new and improved classroom, and we believe that the Mechina is fulfilling its goal of restoring life to the Kibbutz Nachal Oz after everything that occurred during "Tzuk Eitan".

Main achievements during the last year of activity:
We have finished the school year of 2016 with 38 students.

Our main accomplishment of this year was the program's advancement in the educational field; we have set a very high standard of learning. Our syllabus has improved; our staff has grown, along with our amount of lecturers. Additional resources were invested in renovations and equipment, and we have succeeded to raise the program's standard in every aspect. We also faced a difficult challenge financially that is common in a Mechina's first years; we had to take out a number of additional expenses beyond the basic expenses.

We feel that we have accomplished these goals while simultaneously succeeding to reach out to every student and help him or her go through a meaningful and personal process. Our students finish the year with a rich collection of values, an established identity, and the desire to contribute to society. Our students leave Mechina with high learning skills and the ability to demonstrate seriousness and ethical thinking in any framework they may be in, military or otherwise. The students are now better
prepared for a meaningful military service in training command and contribution to the Israeli society.

We have succeeded in creating a group that can learn, a group that has explored the country and volunteered with the Israeli society. This group has bonded with the help of social activities, the endless support they have shown for one another, and countless projects they have raised as a group.

Each member of the Mecina acquired abilities of initiative, cooperation, original thinking ability and self-expression. These are the qualities that we believe are needed for the future generation of the leaders of Israeli society. This self-improvement can happen only in a group that requires the students, offers them methods of action and requires them to cooperate with their friends in order to implement the projects they are working on.

Even with all of the effort we have put into advancing this year's group, we have not neglected the recruitment of students for next year and have been to schools all over the country in search of next year's group of students.

In terms of the area the Mechina is based- Kibbutz Nachal Oz and Sha'ar Hanegev Regional Council, the Mechina is a main part of the cultural activities and contribution to the community. Our students volunteer on a regular basis with hundreds of teenagers, children, and seniors in a variety of activities and centers.

The evaluation:

During the year, we operated a few systems of internal and external monitoring.

Both an experienced accountant, and an examination committee that consists of two members, monitor the Mechina as an organization. The examination committee's job is to inspect the organizational, administrative, and budgetary conduct of the Mechina. The examination committee noted that the budgetary conduct is very organized and controlled, and recommended to authorize the annual report.

In addition, during the year we held three events dedicated to giving internal feedback, in order to examine the quality of our lecturers and lessons, and in order to measure the degree of satisfaction with the operation and activities of the Mechina, among the students. The feedback conclusions lead us to make a few changes in the curriculum.

In addition, we extensively monitor our staff and their function, through the early interviews, and the student feedbacks, which function as a utility for development and improvement during the year. In retrospect, you can say that the feedbacks constituted one of the meaningful milestones in the instructor's personal development. As a result of the feedback, we had a deep personal conversation with every staff member that taught us valuable lessons on improving our staff and our work.

With the hopes of improving the quality of our staff, we have employed an external instructor to escort and accompany our staff- Avigail Moshe, who escorts a number of programs in addition to ours. We feel that our educators receive a much-needed
response to their personal problems and dilemmas relating to the education of the students. In addition to this, our staff receives important tools that will only contribute to their work in education, their personal connection with the students, and their ability to accompany the group and guide them. The instructors also have periodic training sessions in Beit Avichai with the instructors of all the Mechina programs.

To conclude, the Mechina manages to achieve its goals and fulfill the vision of the Mechina. Therefore, we will be continuing in a similar program next year with changes made according to experience and lessons we have taken from this year.

Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

We are investing great effort in continuing the activity of the Mechina with the help of various donations and different workdays the students participate in, in order to provide the students with the best possible learning environment. We put a strong emphasis on the external appearance of the buildings, caring for the lawn and the surrounding gardens, and creating an environment that is pleasant to learn in and experience.

In terms of the educational program, we are planning to expand the group, to add or switch lecturers and class subjects according to experience, and redesign the yearly program with the help of lessons we have learned this past year.

In addition to this, we are in constant contact with the Kibbutz and are developing plans to integrate the Mechina with the Kibbutz life and its young community, which includes plans and activities involving the youth and college students.

The graduates’ organization of the Mechina sees the branch in Nahal Oz as a central goal in its projects. There is a great wish on the part of the graduates to establish a community of graduates in this area of the Negev that will deal with education in the social and economic periphery of the State of Israel.