



**Matanel Scholarships: Experiencing Science – 2017  
Activity Report**

**Name of Program**

164

**Year of Activity**

2017

**Name of the Report's Writer**

Shoshana Becker

**Function of the Report's Writer**

Resource Development, SAE

**Phone and Email**

Email: [Shoshana.be@kidum-edu.org.il](mailto:Shoshana.be@kidum-edu.org.il)

Phone: 052-7773409

**Give the actual state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):**

In the summer of 2017, one hundred and sixty four children going into 2<sup>nd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grades were able to participate in the Summer Science programs at Israeli universities, as well as 77 who attended the Technoda camps at Givat Olga, thanks to generous financial support from the Matanel Foundation. The programs focused on a wide variety of fascinating topics. Four of the five participating universities, and the Technoda, had two sessions of summer camps. These programs help expose the children to high level study and thought, significantly broadening their horizons and providing them with new ways of thinking and options for the future that they would not otherwise have considered.

**The main achievements during the last year of activity:**

Since the Steering Center for Youth of Ethiopian Descent is no longer operating, recruitment of participants this year was done by an SAE project coordinator, who made direct contact with participating universities, schools and local authorities. It was a challenging and often difficult process but, nonetheless:

- 86 children going into 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades participated in science courses for youth at **Ben-Gurion University**. Of these, the vast majority were from the Merhavim Region.
- 13 children going into 4<sup>h</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades attended a variety of science programs for youth at the **Hebrew University of Jerusalem**.
- 53 children going into 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades attended the **Weizmann Institute of Science** summer programs for youth.
- Eight children going into 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, participated in **Technion** science programs.
- Four children from Bat Yam, going into 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grades, participated in science courses at **Tel Aviv University**.
- 77 children from Givat Olga, going into 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades, attended the **Technoda's** Young Scientists camp.

### **Evaluation and Challenges:**

The dissolution of the Steering Center for Youth of Ethiopian Descent, in September 2016, created quite a number of challenges in recruiting participants and overseeing the students' participation. In previous years, the center's mediators were in the field and familiar with the students and their needs. As such, they were the primary recruiters of students to participate in the programs. With this essential link missing, the SAE coordinator turned directly to the local authorities, schools and the participating educational institutions. This was a complex process, given that communication with the university contact people did not go smoothly in all cases. Additionally, without the mediators, transmission of information was less efficient, at times there were gaps between the children's interests and the focus of the programs, and collecting the minimal payment from families required quite some effort. The children lacked someone to accompany them to the programs during the first days, such that some had difficulty finding the location and simply gave up and went home. For these reasons, fifteen additional students, who were signed up to go to the various camps, either cancelled last minute or did not show up. Some of the participating institutions offered less, or no, discounts to the SAE, limiting the number of children able to participate.

However, despite the challenges present in operating the program without the Steering Center for the first time, a very substantial number of students participated in the camps. This coming summer, we will incorporate lessons learned from 2017. We hope to increase the number of participating students by starting the recruitment process earlier as well as finding individuals to accompany the students during the camps' first days.

There was a great deal of variation in the discounts offered to the SAE for student participation by the institutions where the programs took place – from no discount whatsoever, to a discount of 40% of the price per student.

The local councils did not cover any of the cost of transportation to the programs. In some instances, they did organize transportation but did not fund it, and in others, parents brought their children to the programs independently. For the second session, the Merhavim Regional Council helped cover transportation.

### **Student Feedback:**

The students who participated in the programs were enthusiastic about what they were learning, and wished to express their gratitude for the opportunity to participate in such stimulating and high-level frameworks, saying that they would look forward to attending similar projects in the future.

### **Personal Stories:**

Elinor is a wonderful girl, who was going into 9<sup>th</sup> grade last summer. She is curious and interested, as are most children her age, with a special affinity for history and learning about different cultures. We got to Elinor through our partnership with the Jerusalem municipality, which reported that there was a gifted and lovely child with a complex family situation. The situation in Elinor's home is difficult. Her mother has been suffering from post-natal depression for an extended period, and her father provides for the family and takes care of them on his own. Elinor's school counselor brought Elinor to our attention, and could not stop thanking us for the special opportunity that enabled Elinor to enjoy the "Wonders of the Far East" summer camp for youth at the Hebrew University. At the camp, Elinor was exposed to new cultures, got to know about Chinese food and customs, learned about world-changing scientific discoveries originating in the East, participated in martial arts workshops, and more. At the end of the program, Elinor expressed her gratitude for the opportunity she'd been given, and said that she would never forget this summer.

Liav is a lovely boy with Ethiopian roots, studying at the "Ramat Alon" school in Rehovot, who was going into 5<sup>th</sup> grade last summer. Liav is fascinated by astronomy and the world of space, the stars and solar systems. When it was suggested to his parents that he attend the Weizmann Institute's space and astronomy summer camp for a nominal price, they could not find the words to express their gratitude. Liav's mother said that she'd never had the option of registering him for extracurricular activities in his area of interest due to their complex socio-economic situation, and when she heard about the Matanel Foundation's scholarships, she was overjoyed. At the summer camp, Liav explored the endless cosmos surrounding us, learned about the solar system and the stars that we see at night, and particularly about Mars and the Earth.