

*MATANEL FOUNDATION*  
*ACTIVITY REPORT*

**School: IASA-Guatemala Middle School**  
**Academic Year: 2017-2018**

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole rapport will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (**as a word document**).

Name of the School: IASA-Guatemala School

Name of the Director: Etay Benovich

Academic year of activity: 2017-2018

Name of the report's writer: Eleanore Lightstone

Function of the report's writer: Resource Development and Public Relations Officer

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

The IASA-Guatemala School successfully completed its first year of operation in September 2018. Students, parents, faculty, and the directors are very pleased with the accomplishments of the program and are looking forward to next year. The school has already earned such a positive reputation that 300 students applied for the 60 spaces available for next year's new 7<sup>th</sup>-grade class. Moreover, the association between IASA (the Israel Arts and Science Academy) and the Guatemala School has led to a 10% increase in registration in the Guatemala School's for 2018.

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

**Academics with a Difference**

Our goal at the IASA-Guatemala Middle School is to teach students to think, both individually and as a team. Our faculty successfully developed an enriching curriculum to complement and enhance the required Ministry of Education curriculum. In addition to covering the Ministry requirements, students learned to seek information, reflect, connect, and evaluate.

Students taste the rich offerings of IASA's four departments: humanities, sciences, art, and music. Unlike at most Israeli middle schools, IASA-MS teachers are specialists in their fields, holding M.A. or Ph.D. degrees as well as teachers' certificates. Students learn through solving riddles, building models, hands-on experiments (every other Friday is spent at IASA-HS's laboratories), and working in teams on group research projects. In addition to advanced core classes in biology, chemistry, math, physics, music, art, history, geography, English, Arabic, Hebrew, Bible and Israeli Studies,

they choose from enriching elective courses such as Debate, Media & Journalism, and Critical Analysis. All students participate in a class on Gender and Healthy Sexuality.

A unique element of our curriculum is Projects Week. Three times a year, IASA-MS students put their regular studies on hold and pour all their energy into Project Weeks. The three Project Weeks introduce students to the structure of advanced research through activities and projects that center around the themes of Asking Questions, Researching Resources, and Presenting Information. Students take their curiosity beyond the classroom walls, visiting Israel's museums, the National Library, nature sites, laboratories, and arts performances.

### **IASA-MS and IASA-HS: Students teaching students**

Educational research consistently demonstrates that students' interest and performance increases when they learn from their peers. IASA-HS students come weekly to IASA-MS to operate a study support group, debate club, and science workshop. In addition to acting as role models of youth leadership and academic excellence, the high school students spread IASA's unique atmosphere to the middle school.

### **IASA-Guatemala: An exceptional partnership**

Located in the low-income Kiryat Menachem neighborhood, the Guatemala School suffers from low registration numbers due to stigma attached to its primarily immigrant and Ethiopian student body. One of our goals in establishing the IASA Middle School there is to bring about renewal in Kiryat Menachem by attracting families seeking quality education. There are several joint programs between the Guatemala School and IASA Middle School. 5<sup>th</sup>- and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade Guatemala School students participate in Community Service together with IASA middle school students. IASA educators mentor Guatemala School teachers and provide in-service training. In addition, the Guatemala School has begun offering its students elective enrichment courses based on the IASA-MS model. The Jerusalem Education Authority now promotes the school as the IASA-Guatemala School. Thanks to its partnership with IASA, the Guatemala School has already increased 1<sup>st</sup> grade enrollment for next September.

### **Community Service: A first in Israel**

Just as the IASA high school was a trailblazer in teaching its students civic leadership through mandatory weekly volunteering, the IASA-Guatemala Middle School is Israel's first junior high school to make community service an integral part of its curriculum. Joined by 5<sup>th</sup>-and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade Guatemala Elementary School Students, the IASA middle school students volunteer in age-appropriate ways, working in community gardens, delivering flowers to isolated elderly residents of Kiryat Menachem, and playing with disadvantaged toddlers in local daycares.

### **Educational Excellence for All: Pluralism at IASA-MS**

Diversity and respect are a way of life at the IASA-Guatemala Middle School. While the school is officially categorized as a secular Jewish school according to Ministry of Education parameters, IASA's reputation is so respected that Arab Christian, Arab Muslim, and Orthodox Jewish families choose to send their children to us. IASA teachers sensitively guide students to hold respectful dialogue and develop friendships across cultural and religious borders.

**3) The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):**

The Grant Agreement specifies an evaluation report, but as no separate evaluation report was sent with this Activity Report, we have included the evaluation report here.

Evaluation of the first year of the IASA-Guatemala school was internal and took place in several areas: Teacher, Management, and Parents.

**Teacher evaluation** of student work demonstrated a significant rise in quality between the beginning and end of the year, which we may confidently attribute to the quality of instruction and to the curricula developed by the faculty. In addition, both teachers and counseling staff worked together with students to ensure that they were able to reach their potential despite the challenges of a heterogeneous student body. In the first semester, teachers experimented with giving verbal evaluation rather than number grades. Students, however, expressed that they preferred to receive number grades, and so teacher evaluation in the second semester included both verbal and number grades.

**Management evaluation** was undertaken by the Project Director, Etay Benovich (CEO of the Israel Center for Excellence through Education and Principal of IASA High School) and Anat Maoz, Principal of the IASA-Guatemala Middle School. Anat observes classes followed by feedback sessions with the teachers. She holds regular staff reflection and teaching maximization meetings. In addition, she reports to Etay and the Board for evaluation.

**Parent feedback** took place on an ongoing basis over the course of the year. IASA takes parental input seriously and believes the school forms a partnership with parents for the good of the child. Challenges brought up by parents included the need to strategize together over how to make Arab students feel included during national and Jewish holidays, which provided an opportunity for learning for members of both cultures. Principal Anat Maoz meets once a month with all parents at a roundtable on a subject of relevance to that point in the school year or to adolescent development. At the end of the year, she held a parent evaluation session at which she gathered information about how the parents viewed the learning process the school had built over the course of the year. Overall, parents are delighted with the new school. One father, for example, called the principal specifically to thank her and the staff for the wonderful educational and social experience his daughter had this year. He said, "The difference between this school and her school last year is immense. My daughter is finally challenged and is excited to learn."

**4) Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year (please give the number of students, the number of classes and the main guidelines of the project in case where such project is implemented in your school):**

In the 2018-2019 school year, the IASA-Guatemala Middle School will expand to include 8<sup>th</sup> grade as well as 7<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2019-2020, we will add 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Each grade is limited to 60 students due to space restraints, but the demand for registration is great. 300 students applied for 60 spaces in the 2018-2018 7<sup>th</sup> grade class.

**5) A summary table – as PDF document – specifying:**

The main achievements in the area of the Matanel Social Aid for students' families and their involvement in school life.

The Main achievements in the area of the Matanel Scholarships for Excellency.

The Main achievements in the projects which have been implemented in your school grants to the Matanel encouragements.

Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the lists of the beneficiaries from the Social Aid (which will not be published), and the list of the beneficiaries from Scholarships of excellence (which will be published) (**PDF documents**)

Please join photos – separate photos – and any document (**as PDF document**) connected to the program which will seem relevant to you.

Please join a 5 minutes movie describing the project.