



TEL AVIV **YOUTH** UNIVERSITY



Matanel Summer Tracks for Outstanding Students from the Periphery

Summary Report

The Ilse and Willi Rothschild

Summer Program 2016



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Students at the end of their graduation ceremony – summer 2016

Tel Aviv Youth University
Discovering the human capital of Israel

Background on the program

Tel Aviv University launched the *Youth University* in summer 2001 as part of the Dov Lautman Unit for Science Oriented Youth. To date, there have been 15 sessions of the program, all with 10th - 11th grade participants with a high-index care. Each summer the program brings excellent high school students with high motivation and achievements from across the country (young Jews, Arabs, Druze and Bedouins, religious and secular, Israeli born and immigrants, from the social and geographic periphery, from towns in the north and the south, development towns and villages), who are first generation in higher education. The program takes place during the summer semester at Tel Aviv University campus, exposing these students to subjects that are not part of the curriculum at their schools as well as empowerment, social and cultural activities.

During the week (Sunday to Thursday) Students live in a dormitories near Tel Aviv University. Daily activities continue from morning to night, and include participation in academic courses, study groups and reinforcement, social and cultural activities, and more. The students select various courses in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and personal tutors accompany them throughout their studies and help them cope with the syllabus through strengthening development and learning skills. The students accumulate academic credit which is accepted like any university credit for their future studies.

The main goal of the program is to expose students to the academic world. Based on research and many years of experience, we know that early exposure to academic studies, while students are in high school, reduces concerns about their integration to academic studies in the future. In addition, this exposure contributes to a positive approach to higher education and strengthens their faith in their ability to succeed in undergraduate studies and in advanced degrees. Later, these students will serve as ambassadors for higher education in their communities and will serve as a role models and positive example for younger generation.

In order to recruit these students we work in collaboration with schools, which provide us with names and information of relevant candidates. Students are required to send us an official grade certificate from their school and recommendations. Later, they will be invited to a rigorous screening process which includes a screening test and a personal interview. The admission process takes into account all the students information (diploma, exam scores, Hebrew level) and their motivation.

During the summer of 2016, as part of the Matanel Summer Tracks for Outstanding Students from the Periphery, 60 students participated in the program, from 26 different localities around the country (Eilat, Ashdod, Beer Yaacov, Buena – Nujidat, Beit-Jann, Ginosar, Wadi Hamam, Zeitan, Hadera, Haifa, Tiberius, Yeruham, Yarka, Kabri, Kfar Tavor, Carmiel, Maghar, Maalot, Nahariya, Niin, Nazareth, Akko, Afula, Mitzpe Ramon, Sderot and Shlomi.)

We had 2 main events during the duration of the program – an open day with and for parent and a closing ceremony. The open day occurs at about half way through the program. For that day we invite the parents of the participants to experience what this program is all about - not only to ask questions and learn about the program, but also to see their own children present presentations on the subjects and academic courses they are taking. An invitation to the closing ceremony is enclosed at the end of this report.



Students at "Meet Tel Aviv" activity

The program team

Program Director: Heads the program. In her past she was a social counselor and a lecturer at the Unit.

3 Graduate Social Counselors: First degree or graduate students studying for academic degrees (bachelor's or master's) in various disciplines from the faculties of social sciences and the humanities. Responsible for the social and personal aspects. Manage the social activities, accompany the students and provide answers to various needs. The counselors also may help with academic aspects.

2 Academic Counselors/Tutors: Graduate students. Each of the tutors is responsible for the study units accompanying an academic course - tutoring and reading group.

5 Young Counselors: Outstanding students who participated in the previous year's program. Each one is teamed up with a social counselor and an academic tutor. These youth counselors are the heart of the program. They stay with the students around the clock during activity as well as O/N. They accompany them both academically and personally - they hold personal conversations, help them learn the material, and take part in the ongoing activities. The program team is part of the staff of the Dov Lautman Unit for Science Oriented Youth/Tel Aviv Youth University, headed by Shira Shofty.

Students say about the staff:

"With Jonathan [a young counselor] I had personal conversations. We talked about things, I told him about my difficulties and he was with me even when it was difficult."

"Dunia [a young counselor], made sure I was o.k. and shwed empathy and helped me when I needed it."

"I really appreciate all the work and effort the staff puts into the program, how you think about everything; everything to the last details- this is very impressive and admirable. Well done and thank you!!!"

"Thank you for an amazing experience; it [the program] gave me a lot of knowledge and power. It is difficult to accept that it's [the program] over. So thank you for everything."



Head of the program with her guides at the graduation ceremony

The importance of the program

Tel Aviv Youth University was established with the aim of generating personal and social change. This change is led by hundreds of young people from all strata of Israeli society, a mosaic of worlds that have in common a fierce desire to learn, to move ahead, to excel, to change and to cause change - in their lives and ours. We are discovering Israel's human capital. We believe that striving for excellence and education is an existential need in Israel. Through integration in academic studies, we are taking steps to make it possible for high school students to realize their potential, and to come up with a dream to follow.

In Israel, there are huge social, economic, and digital gaps between the center and the periphery, both geographic and social. In order to reduce the gaps, it is important to enable citizens from all parts of society to participate in scientific and academic studies. Only 9% of young people living in development towns and the country's geographic periphery go on to study at university, by comparison with 37% from urban centers. Even if we ignore the potential financial obstacles, the main reason lies in lack of awareness that university studies are a practical possibility for people with the desire and the ability .

Accordingly, we are taking steps to remove the psychological obstacle facing young people and help them overcome their anxiety and fears. Empowering students, so we hope, will increase their aspirations for the future, both with regard to employment and with regard to academic studies.

Tel Aviv Youth University, and the summer program in particular, is intended to open the door to higher education for a critical sector of Israeli society that is not aware of this possibility, offering a university experience in a rich intellectual environment, while providing emotional support and creating a learning community of people with shared interests from throughout the country.

In addition, over and over we show that each year our students have higher grades than 'regular' students in most of the academic courses, and 90% of our graduates continue to higher education and attend universities and colleges in Israel and some around the world.

% of summer graduates	% In general population	Attend colleges and universities
100	37	From the center of Israel
90	9	From the periphery of Israel

The academic component

Each Youth University student chooses to participate in two of the academic courses on offer in the program. The list of courses includes 2 - 4 credit introductory courses dealing with a wide range of issues in the different disciplines of social sciences and the humanities. This year, the students were offered the following courses: Introduction to statistics, introduction to psychology, Intro to psychology, introduction to political thought, and introduction to logic. During their academic studies in the program, the Summer Youth University students enjoy the same learning experience as regular students at Tel Aviv University. They also meet all the course requirements, the reading list and other assignments, as well as passing an exam or final project.

In addition to the lessons and exercises of the different academic courses offered in the framework of the program, Summer Youth University students participate in a variety of academic frameworks offered by the Unit for Science Oriented Youth. These frameworks are suited to the special requirements of high school students wanting to make the less-than-easy transition to studying in the academic arena, and are aimed at giving participants in the program basic university student tools and learning skills.

Below is a list of the different academic frameworks in which Summer Youth University students participate during the program, in which they acquire the habits, tools and skills detailed above:



Prof. Gideon Kunda at the students visit at the southern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv

- **Reinforcement** - a 90 minute study unit accompanying the different academic courses in which the students participate, throughout the program. The unit is taught by a veteran student studying for a recognized academic degree (bachelor's or master's) in the discipline in which the academic course is offered. In this framework, the participants process the contents of the lessons and exercises by means of active teaching methods (such as: extracting problematic issues that have arisen in the course of the lesson / exercise from the students, independent working in groups, rounds of feedback, mental processing of the material by means of tables / diagrams, discussion of the material through examples from literature and the media, and so on). In this process, the participants acquire various different academic habits, tools and skills to suit the specific requirements of each course, which help them to succeed in meeting the demands (for example: in courses for which there are closed exams,

participants are taught skills relating to solving multiple choice questions, while in courses with open exams and/or papers, they are taught various writing skills).

Additional basic skills put across in the reinforcement framework: Summarizing lectures, quick and in-depth reading of academic sources, summarizing academic source material in Hebrew or English, time management in the course of the semester, peer learning, academic writing (basic rules, style, form, making a comparison, establishing a case theory), organizing for the exam period, methods of processing and learning material for an open (mass answer) or closed (multiple choice) academic exam, and so on.

- **Reading group** - a 90 minute study unit accompanying the different academic courses in which the students participate throughout the program. The unit is taught by a veteran student studying for a recognized academic degree (bachelor's or master's) in the discipline in which the academic course to which the reading group applies is offered. In the reading group, participants read the academic material accompanying the specific course they are studying together, and process it together through peer learning, guided by the veteran student leading the group.
- **Research Workshop and academic writing** - a 90 minute study unit. The course provides students with basic research tools and skills for reading and academic writing. Emphasis was put on aspects of academic research practices, including critical analysis of sources: primary sources and secondary sources.
- **Workshops** - in the course of the program, the students participate in a number of study workshops in which they practice basic academic skills such as: time management in the course of the semester, organizing for the exam periods, and methods of processing and learning the material for an open or closed academic exam. These workshops are given by the team of social counselors and the program coordinator.
- **Marathons** - concentrated study days ahead of exams / final projects (two or three days), adapted to the specific content and requirements of the different academic courses in



which the students are participating during the program. In these concentrated days, the students learn how to organize and process the material in preparation for the exam / final project, and practice different ways of learning, by means of active teaching methods led by the tutor of the specific course for which they are going to be assessed.

Students' presentation of Introductory to Logics course at the open house for parents

Lectures and workshops

In the framework of the social program, the students took part in a number of enrichment lectures and workshops, such as:

- The history of the refugees and asylum seekers in Israel - a visit to South of Tel Aviv, at the "new central station" and afterwards a meeting and discussion with Prof. Gideon Kunda
- Innovation – a lecture by Lionel Mitelpunkt, an activist and entrepreneur in education and media
- Alice in Wonderland – a lecture on dreams by Assaf Adar, an experienced lecturer
- Animal Behavior – a lecture by Neta Lee Ganor
- A lecture on Alan Turing and Computer Sciences by Shahar Brener

Scholastic achievements

Table of scholastic achievements

Course name	Average
Introduction to political thought	84
Introduction to psychology	81
Introduction to logic	87
Introduction to sociology	88
Introduction to Statistics	81

The social and cultural component

We see the time that the students spend at Tel Aviv University as an opportunity to expose them to various different social and cultural aspects. For many of them, this is their first time in Tel Aviv and therefore an additional, important purpose of the program is to introduce them to the cultural institutions and lively life of the city. Some of the activities are at the initiative of the children themselves.

Students learning into the night



An extracurricular lecture by Shahar Brener



Below are the activities enjoyed by the 16th session of Summer University students:

- A guided tour at picturesque Neve Tzedek neighborhood.
- A Beit Lessin play: The Glass Menagerie. Every year we go together to see a play at Beit Lessin, and every year the students amaze us; their behavior during the show was exemplary and they enjoyed the play very much. The following morning, the main counselors had a theater workshop during which they analyzed the play with the students.
- A workshop on the topic of "the power of a word" including designing carrying bags with positive sentences prints.
- An opera performance: as part of a Summer Fair at Tel Aviv port, the students watched an opera show of a new musical interpretation of Ehud Manor's songs - one of Israel's most renowned composers.
- Meet Tel Aviv - In order to be exposed to the different colors of Tel Aviv city, we took the students to a night-out at Tel Aviv. The students were divided into groups of five and were given various tasks in different locations of Tel Aviv. As part of these 'missions', students were asked to bargain in the Carmel market, to perform 'a street show' at Habima, to answer riddles and to reach specific destination using cryptographic puzzles.
- An open house for parents - Every year, at the midst of the program, students' parents were invited to an open house. During this event, student presented their parent a taste of their academic course. The purpose of these meetings is, of course, to inform and connect the parents to the program. In addition, at this meeting Prof. Itamar Rabinovich honored us with his presence and interested us with a wonderful lecture.

Other activities: Introductory meeting on the first evening, Cultural evenings organized by the students, time management workshop, sports, preparatory meeting prior to going home, and a moving graduation party at the Green Village.

At the same time, there were two other social frameworks:

1. The "mamma groups" - the general group of students was divided into 3 "mother groups". These groups were called "mamma groups". Each group had a social counselor and two youth counselors. The groups met once a week, on Sundays, in a warm and open atmosphere, for group activities. The name "mamma groups" gave the students a strong connection with the counselors, a feeling that the counselors were parental figures, or big

brothers. At the beginning of the summer, they dealt with introductory activities, teambuilding and breaking the ice. Later on, these meetings were used for expressing emotions and feelings, as well as a platform for in-depth discussions on cultural gaps, current affairs, and many other issues. The meetings of the "mamma groups" were a great success.

1. **Projects:** The three social counselors chose a field from their personal world (details below) and gave a process-based workshop taking place once a week, the main objective of the project being to serve as a leisure and enrichment framework in a non-academic field. In addition, the students enjoyed exposure to a different field, from the personal world of their counselors. This summer there were three projects: 1) Body and mind workshop, 2) Art workshop and 3) Multimedia workshop.



Products of the Multi Media workshop

Greetings from the graduation ceremony

"Summer Youth University experience is an unforgettable one-time experience which will accompany us through the rest of our lives. We cannot ignore the journey and challenge we went through and the change each of us has experienced. From Adjusting to a different kind of studies; a higher level, different kind of 'game' rules through connecting to different types of people, people whom never in our lives we have connected to before [the program]."

Tarik Takatka, a student from Wadi Hamam

"As the young counselors' representative, I must admit that this event is very exciting to me, even though I was standing here last year as a student and experienced what you have just experienced and feel how you feel now.

For me, our acquaintance began when we started the admission process, choosing the right candidates for the program. The choice was very difficult due to the large number of applicants and high quality candidates and therefore, the fact that you have been chosen,

indicates that you are the top tier and highest quality of all the candidates. And for that you and your families deserve congratulations.

During the 7 weeks' program, I saw how you progressed - academically, socially and personally. Some of you have not even noticed how to respond, answered or acted in the first week compared to the last week. Without noticing you have become white swans.

A challenging journey, we have passed. I was granted the right to see you succeed through this journey in the best way possible, aiming high and not give up when things got rough.

Take pride in yourself and smile.

Today you leave the program and return home to your daily routine. I assure you that in the coming days you will remember very well the time you were here together. So remember, every end is a new beginning and from here, from this stage, I send you all a huge hug with congratulations and infinite pride, knowing that the added value that you acquired here at the university, will be utilized and will help you make decisions in the upcoming challenges (and there will be challenges).

We are proud of you more than anything. We had the honor to accompany you as young students. To help, support, teach and even learn from you.

And on a personal note - you are dear to us, keep in

touch. "

Tal Raif, a young counselor from Karmiel



Graduation Party



אוניברסיטת תל אביב לונער



Invitation to the closing ceremony