



The Hannaton Mechina Report for 2018-19

The report below includes a summary of goals and activities, as well as some evaluation by the students as answered in an online survey conducted at the end of the year.

The class of 2019 was comprised of 23 women and 20 men; 6% of the students attended religious public school, 70% attended secular public school, and 9% attended a TALI school or mixed school, comprised of religious and secular students.

The words used most frequently to describe the values of Hannaton and the Mechina: activism, volunteerism and social engagement (43%); pluralism (43%); acceptance of “the other” (63%); Zionism and love of Israel (36%); humility (30%); integration and accessibility (37%); Judaism (27%).

Jewish and Israeli Identity

- 94% said they gained a greater understanding of their Jewish identity and 96% said they gained a greater understanding of their Israeli identity.
- 84% said they strengthened their connection to the Jewish world.
- This year students overwhelmingly said that the seminar on religion and state (30 out of 32 students) and the seminar on Judea and Samaria (28 out of 32 students) had a very big impact on their understanding of Zionism and the challenges of Israeli society. Courses on the history of Zionism and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict also had a strong impact on their understanding.

Shabbat and Judaism

- More than 92% of students said that shabbat at Hannaton was meaningful or very meaningful for them.
- Most students (21 out of 32) also said that attending services with the Hannaton community helped bring them closer to Judaism.
- Among the more significant experiences on shabbat: Friday night dinners with the group and time with their host families on Hannaton.

Leadership

When asked what they consider a leader to be, the most frequently chosen answers were:

- a person who is an example to others
- one who works to make the lives of others better
- someone who turns words into action

- one who leads others by inspiring them.

Community Service

This year, students once again volunteered two days a week in 16 locations throughout the lower Galilee and the Jezreel Valley.

- When asked if it is important for them to be social involved (activism, volunteer work) in the future, 78% of the students who answered said that it is very important or important for them to be involved in the future and of those, 80% said the mechina had a very large impact on their answer.
- The areas students said they are interested in being involved in in the future were: religion and state, education and local community.

Place	Description	Weekly Volunteers
Dor L'Dor	Mechina students volunteer with an elderly person in Upper Nazareth, meeting weekly for conversation and friendship	6
Tav Hevrati	One of the highest-impact projects undertaken by Hannaton program volunteers, Tav Hevrati raises awareness about accessibility for those with disabilities as well as workers' rights in local businesses.	3
The Ahava Boarding School	Volunteers help students with homework, emotional support, and big brother/sister activities.	7
Etgarim at Nahalal	A bike-riding group for people with disabilities. Volunteers accompanied individuals on rides.	4
Achva School	At this school for children with special needs in Kfar Manda, a local Arab village, volunteers coordinate art and Hebrew classes and socialize with the children.	4
Kfar Manda Community Center	Hebrew lessons at the community center for children aged 8 – 11.	4
Kfar Tikva	In this village for adults with special needs, Hannaton volunteers lead discussions on current events and social issues, and help with a variety of creative projects.	6
The Equalizer	After-school programs in the Arab town of Shefaram focused on sports and help with schoolwork.	5
Big Brother/Big Sister	One on one work with special needs children in Hannaton	4
After-school program	Informal activities and homework help for children in Hannaton in 1 st through 4 th grade	6
NOAM and Bnei HaMoshavim youth movements	Counselors in the NOAM and Bnei HaMoshavim youth movements for 3 rd through 12 th grades	3
Kfar Manda	Teaching Hebrew to ten adult women in the village	2
Firefighters brigade	Serving as volunteer firefighters' in Upper Nazareth	6
Activism	Work on issues of accessibility and workers' rights	5
The Horse Farm at Hannaton	Volunteers assisted staff at the therapeutic horse farm that helps children with special needs	2
Shema	After-school program for hearing-impaired children, where mechina students led chugim.	2

An article about the volunteer work of the mechina in Arab villages in the lower Galilee appeared in the local [Yediot newspaper in Hebrew](#).

Each year, staff works to find meaningful volunteer placements that can have a real impact on the organizations and individuals with whom the mechina students work. This year there were two new volunteer locations: the firefighters' brigade in Upper Nazareth and teaching Hebrew to women in Kfar Manda. Due to a firefighters' strike at the beginning of the year, the six Mechina students were not able to start their course – which lasted two months - until December, leaving little actual volunteer time after completion of the course. There were also organizational problems on the side of the brigade. It was decided not to continue with this volunteer program next year.

The program teaching women in Kfar Manda was a big success. It came out of a request from the head of the community center who saw the need for women in the community to have better spoken Hebrew in order to advance professionally. Beyond the actual teaching, a special relationship developed between the mechina students and the women from Kfar Manda. At the end of the year, the women visited Hannaton, had a tour of the kibbutz and made a meal together.

Challenges and Changes

After helping found the Mechina and heading it for the last seven years, Itai Capsouto left his position as Head of the Hannaton Mechina in June. He will remain involved advising the new Head, Gad Spector. Prior to Hannaton, Gad worked at Beit Yigal Alon, managing the “Shnat Mafne” program which trains counselors and heads of mechina programs. Gad also led the Religious Scouts in Israel, directed the educational programs at Kibbutz Maalei Gilboa and worked as a teacher.

In February, the Midrasha began a strategic planning process that will help determine a three to five-year plan that includes programming and plans of action. We are using this to strengthen our current programs, focus more clearly on our goals and determine the work we want to be doing in the coming years.

Each year we have participants with special needs, who generally becomes well-integrated into the group. This year this integration was more challenging. N.' came with more challenging cognitive issues and despite the efforts of the staff and the other participants, his integration was not as good as we have seen in the past. Itai and the staff were in regular contact with N.'s parents throughout the year. Despite the issues, Nitai had a very positive experience at the Mechina, the first time he was in a program with other young people his age.

Partnerships and collaborations

Collaborations continue with the many places in which our students volunteer – schools, youth villages, community centers, other nonprofits and with Kibbutz Hannaton. In some instances, these collaborations started seven years ago when the Mechina first opened and we expect them to continue and grow as the Mechina grows.

The Hannaton Mechina is an active member of the Joint Council of Mechinot, an umbrella organization serving the pre-army mechinot throughout Israel. Itai Capsouto was central to the ongoing discussion with the Ministry of Education on safety guidelines following the tragedy at Nahal Tzafit. Hannaton will continue to be involved in the Joint Council but the new Head of the Hannaton Mechina will wait to decide where his focus will be.

The Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael has been supporting the work of the Hannaton Midrasha for several years. This year the KKL completed a landscaping project next to the Mechina and in the coming year, two new dorm rooms will be added to the Mechina with the KKL's support.

We continue to have a close working relationship with the Masorti Movement in Israel, hosting groups that come through the movement as well as the NOAM pre-army program each September through November. We also welcome groups affiliated with the Conservative Movement in the U.S. and England, including NOAM, synagogues and missions. And JTS rabbinical students will be attending the Galil Seminar program for the sixth year in September 2019.

For the third year in a row, the counselors at the mechina received training and support at Beit Yigal Allon in Kibbutz Ginnosar.