

*MATANEL FOUNDATION
ACTIVITY REPORT*

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

Name of the Program: IASA-Guatemala School

Year of activity: 2018-2019

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Number of active participants in the program:

120 middle school students, 30 middle school teachers, 250 elementary school students, 30 elementary school teachers.

Estimated number of impacted participants:

- 120 middle school students, including 8 Arabic-speaking children (Muslim, Christian and Druze), both secular and religious Jews, and special needs students.
- 250 elementary school students
- 30 middle school teachers,
- 30 elementary school teachers
- 150 neighborhood residents in old age homes, community centers, and kindergartens who are served by the students' Community Service.
- 40 neighborhood parents who participate in the IASA's Parent Education Forums.
- Hundreds of Kiryat Menachem residents who benefit indirectly from the improved reputation and educational options of the neighborhood.

- 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 second year of operation in June 2019. The school has quickly established itself as an important feature in the Jerusalem educational landscape. Demand for middle school education focused on excellence is high, and 350 students applied for the 60 spaces available in next year's 7th-grade class, testifying to the important gap the school fills in Jerusalem. At the elementary level, next year's registration to the Guatemala Elementary School includes a record number of socioeconomically strong families, which marks a departure from the traditional demography of the school and is a change that is taking place thanks to the association of the elementary school with IASA.

- 2) The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):

The IASA-Guatemala project set itself goals of providing a source of excellence middle school education in Jerusalem that fosters academic excellence, leadership, and community service; creating an educational partnership between a nationally-renowned school and a struggling elementary school in a disadvantaged neighborhood; and cultivating positive change in the disadvantaged Kiryat Menachem neighborhood by making it a location of excellence education.

Excellence Middle School Education

IASA established its middle school as a means of addressing the crisis in middle school education in Israel today. We are creating a model for excellence education in the middle school years that can be replicated throughout Israel. Our curriculum focuses on cultivating students holistically. The approach includes enriching the national academic curriculum with elective courses and more effective pedagogic methods, instilling values of civic responsibility by bridging between classroom learning and wider society, and fostering social responsibility through a robust community service requirement.

We are pleased to share these central elements of our success in creating this educational model:

- 1) **Rich academic experience:** Students learned hands-on through building models, experimentation (every other Friday students learned in the IASA-HS's cutting-edge laboratories), playing instruments, fine arts, teamwork, writing, and research. Unlike at most Israeli middle schools, IASA-MS teachers are specialists in their fields, many holding advanced degrees as well as teachers' certificates. In addition to core classes in biology, chemistry, math, physics, music, art, history, geography, civics, English, Arabic, Hebrew, Bible and Israeli Studies, students chose from enriching elective courses including game theory, philosophy and cinema, debate, sociology, theatre, halacha, Excel, art printmaking, scouting, and activist literature. Many of these courses are taught by external professionals including university professors and professional artists and writers. All students participated in a class on gender and healthy sexuality.
- 2) **Project Weeks:** Twice this year, IASA-Guatemala students put their regular studies on hold and poured all their energy into IASA's unique Project Weeks program. Project Weeks introduce students to the structure of advanced research and group study and enable them to explore an area of personal interest. The first project week focused on two topics: for 7th graders, "Asking Questions," and for 8th graders, "How is what I learn in school connected to the real world?" The 8th-grade students researched and visited a number of work places, including hair salons, Machane Yehuda shops, hi-tech offices, companies, and a recording studio to investigate the relationships between school learning and workplace skills. They discovered that a lot of the "soft skills" they learn in school such as interpersonal relations, working in teams, creative thinking, and problem solving are essential in the "real world." In the second Project Week, both 7th and 8th grade students researched the concept of "Success." They investigated questions they raised, such as how companies manage to sell products that consumers know are unhealthy, and what makes some people succeed in keeping friends and others struggle. Israel's Channel 2 did a report on the project (please see attached video).
- 3) **Community Service:** IASA-Guatemala is the first school in Israel to instill the value of social responsibility in elementary and middle school students through a mandatory volunteering component. IASA-MS and Guatemala 5th and 6th-grade students volunteered in community gardens, helped disadvantaged toddlers in local daycares, and did activities with elderly immigrants from Ethiopia and the Former Soviet Union.

IASA-Guatemala Partnership

- 5th- and 6th-grade Guatemala School students participated in Community Service together with IASA middle school students.
- The elementary school teachers began offering enrichment classes to their students based on the IASA-MS model. This year, 6th-grade students were given the option to participate in the middle school courses, and 50% took on the challenge with great success.
- 80% of teachers from the elementary and middle schools participated in joint teacher training to enhance their tools for fostering co-operative learning amongst their students.
- Elementary and Middle School teachers organized a number of joint activities to strengthen the bonds between their students. Please see the attached video of their joint mass singing event.
- This year, elementary and middle school project weeks took place simultaneously to promote cooperation and mutual learning.
- 8% of next year's 7th-grade IASA-MS class come from the Guatemala School, an unprecedented number pursuing excellence education.

Expanding our Circles of Impact

- Parents from both schools as well as the wider Kiryat Menachem neighborhood attended 3 evening events we organized in partnership with the Kiryat Menachem Community Council. The subjects were: "Sex education in a sex-saturated society," "Approaches to ADHD," and "Parental Authority." In addition, the IASA-MS principal held monthly roundtable meetings with IASA-MS parents to engage in frank examination of subjects relevant to the school. We believe it is essential to include parents in the ecosystem of excellence in education.

- IASA-MS principal Anat Maoz lectured at a professional education conference, sharing the IASA-MS's methodology for teaching and learning with gender equality.
 - IASA-MS joined the "Jerusalem Shared Education" program, based on the successful model from Northern Ireland, to bring together East and West Jerusalem students. This year, the principal and two teachers participated in joint teacher training with East Jerusalem educators. Next year, these educators will work together to run a leadership and neighborhood activism program for East and West Jerusalem middle school students.
- 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.

Major Learnings

- 1) IASA's excellence can be successfully shared to other educational institutions within a short time, including to disadvantaged populations.
- 2) The IASA-MS fills an important gap in Jerusalem education: For the 2019-2020 school year, we received 350 applications for the 60 spaces available in the new 7th-grade class.
- 3) The model of a school for excellence growing within a disadvantaged school and sharing its expertise to benefit an entire community is unique in Israel. Creating this precedent is an integral part of Jerusalem's role in spearheading nationwide educational change.

Teachers evaluated student progress based on achievement in written work as well as observations of the students' thought processes, work habits, and work with other students. Teachers communicated evaluations as verbal feedback as well as a number grade.

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 ICEE Board for evaluation.

The school welcomed parental evaluation of the program both through the monthly parent roundtables the principal held and on an informal basis.

- 4) Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:
 - Next year, we will add the 9th grade, for a total of 180 middle school students.
 - IASA-MS teachers and leadership are developing a new curriculum for the 9th grade class. It will include more advanced community service options that reflect the students' greater maturity, as well as opportunities to learn and develop together with the IASA-HS students in preparation for their entrance into the IASA-HS environment the following year.
 - Students will participate in a joint leadership and neighborhood activism program with an East Jerusalem Arab school in Beit Hanina.
 - Apart from designated coexistence education programs, East and West Jerusalem young people very rarely communicate. Providing a middle school for academic excellence open to both East and West Jerusalem students based on educational excellence rather than political ideology is part of the IASA-MS vision, but it is extremely difficult to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. Until now, while IASA-MS has attracted the highest number of Arab students outside coexistence schools, the students have been from socioeconomically well-established families from the North of the country who moved to Jerusalem, rather than East Jerusalem Arab families. Next year, the IASA-MS welcomes its first socioeconomically disadvantaged Muslim Arab student from East Jerusalem. She is the daughter of a single mother earning minimum wage, who studied until now at a Muslim girls' school and heard of IASA-MS when her school principal began participating in the Shared Learning program with Anat Maoz. She feels IASA-MS will further her dream of becoming a mathematician, so she decided to attend despite cultural stigmas and the need to learn Hebrew. We hope this breakthrough will lead to future growth in a joint East-West Jerusalem student body.