

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: *Mechinat Ha'Emek*
Year: 2020-2021

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

Name of the Program: *Mechinat Ha'Emek*

Year of activity: 2020

Name of the report's writer: Naor Gail

Function of the report's writer: Head of the Mechina

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Number of active participants in the program: 81

Estimated number of impacted participants: 500

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

Following a successful and challenging year, our 15th class of graduates are in the process of being drafted to the army. July was spent preparing for the arrival of next year's Mechina staff, and in August we trained the staff, exposing them to the world of education and leadership, and consolidating their understanding of the vision of the Mechina. We also revamped and renovated the volunteer centers, in preparation for next year's 83 participants, who begin on 1 September.

At present, alumni activity continues all around the country:

- Accompaniment of recent graduates over the course of their military service.
- Group meetings, with a view to settling in the Emek.
- A virtual study group for graduates.
- Arrangements for alumni events to take place during the year.

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

1. A suitable routine – We created a year filled with substantial content, group life, and social activities despite and in light of the challenges brought about by Covid-19.
2. Initiative and responsiveness – The year's events demanded that we adapt to a changing reality. Likewise, Mechina participants recognized their pioneering force in Israeli society, and when difficulties arose, both due to lockdown challenges, and

during the outbreak of *Operation Guardian of the Walls*, we sought to be active and contribute to society. For instance, during lockdowns we initiated activities assisting farmers and helping at tourist centers that were affected. During Operation Guardian of the Walls, we accumulated donations amounting to NIS10,000, which we transferred to soldiers and policemen as gifts. In addition, we transformed the Mechina premises into a guest house for residents from the South who were compelled to evacuate their homes as a result of ongoing missile fire.

3. Safety and security – Despite the abovementioned events, one of our year-long challenges was maintaining the safety of our participants and ensuring the security of the volunteer centers in which we work. Operating a program for approximately 75 youth living under boarding school-like conditions and complying with Covid-19 regulations was extremely challenging, however to my great joy, I feel that we were successful in achieving this goal, without significantly affecting the program content. (Some would say that the constraints created new opportunities.)

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

1. Feedback every four months– Over the course of the year, feedback surveys were conducted at the end of each third of the year, for the purpose of improvement and maintenance. The feedback focused on the performance of the lecturers and leaders.
2. In-depth analysis – Towards the end of the year, we held discussion circles split up according to various subjects, and set up committees whose purpose was to provide an in-depth analysis of the successes and what required improvement and change for the future.
3. Summary meeting for the year with the Mechina staff – The purpose of this meeting was to accumulate information garnered from the feedback and discussion circles, and to build on the lessons learned, as well as recommendations and implementations for next year.

Main Insights and Conclusions:

4. Connecting to Emek HaMa'ayanot and Beit Shean – to deepen the participants' connection to the area and create a long-term impact with the aspiration to encourage them to return as adults and settle and work in the area. Their knowledge of and activity in the area needs to be increased. **We undertake to establish a *Soul of the Emek Day***, the aim of which will be to meet with people involved in valley activities and work, and to establish an educational hike among the valley scenery along various trails.
5. Selecting productive volunteer activities accurately – over the past year, we felt that the work at the volunteer centers did not produce the desired results, due to lack of mentoring and support from the respective institutions, and due to the objective difficulty of reaching places across the valley because of lack of mobility. **We undertake to have one full volunteer day** (as opposed to two half-days). In addition, we shall revise our choices of volunteer centers in line with criteria which include the approach and ratio for mentoring each volunteer.
6. Preparation for the military – The subject of army preparation seemed to be of secondary importance during the program, even though it is at the heart of the Mechina's calling. **We undertake to develop an annual comprehensive program**, which will include preparation for the military covering four aspects: organizational, mental, physical, and informational preparation.

7. Safety – Mechina activities are varied and include numerous risks. In order to regulate all routine and emergency activities, next year we shall place an emphasis on safety, and conduct routines, monitoring, and follow-ups on activities in this regard. **We undertake to** recruit an additional staff member responsible for outings and hikes.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

1. Laying an educational and organizational infrastructure for establishing a division in order to return to intimate group activities.
2. Growing and expanding circles of activity in the community, with a focus on the city of Beit Shean.
3. Establishing the alumni committee, which was initiated this year.
4. Expanding the manpower and budget resources with the assistance of a nucleus of alumni due to return to the Emek.