



January 21, 2014

**Activity Report for the “Midrasha L’Metzuyanut” Project in Kfar Batya for the Year 5773**

**Name of the school:** AMIT Kfar Batya

**Name of Coordinator of the Program:** Yinon Aviad

**Academic Year of Activity:** 2012-2013

**Name of the report’s writer:** Judith Schwed-Lion, AMIT VP for International Development

**Project Description:** The Midrasha L’Metzuyanut Project started 5 years ago, with the aspiration and real wish to enable young people from disadvantaged families to become socially integrated with young people who come from a different, more established background. The idea was to give the same youth from the periphery an opportunity equal to that of any other youth in the State of Israel and to develop and realize their inherent potential. Apart from this idea of social justice, the young people who studied in Kfar Batya were able to make new friends with other young people from a different background, and they were able to cope successfully with the reality of learning to accept the other, to accept those who are different.

**1. Status of the Program**

The year 5773 (September 2012 to July 2013) was the fifth year of the Midrasha L’Metzuyanut program. During this year, 10 new students joined the program. They came from disadvantaged families and were integrated in to the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva High School in Kfar Batya in Raanana. The teaching staff reports that the students have integrated well both in terms of their studies and in terms of social relations in the Kfar.

**2. Significant achievements during the past year:**

- 10 students were integrated into the Midrasha L’Metzuyanut Project in Kfar Batya since the beginning of the academic year.
- Beginning this year, the students have been absorbed at the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva High School, rather than the AMIT Gwen Straus science school (as mentioned in last year’s report). This has proved to be a very good move, as there is a real focus at Hevruta to look for the hidden talent in each student and to focus on that talent, thereby building self-confidence in the students.
- The students were placed in various tracks according to their talents and interests. Some joined the music track, some joined the tourguiding track, and others joined the animal-



*Development Unit*  
28 Hamaccabim Street, Petach Tikva 49220  
P.O. Box 567, Petach Tikva 49104  
Tel: 972-3-912-3171; Fax: 972-3-912-3166; [www.amit.org.il](http://www.amit.org.il)

training track. The students really developed their inner talent and feel good<sup>ת"מ"ת</sup> about what they are doing.

- Most of the students successfully passed all their examinations in the various scholastic subjects that were taught during the year.
- All the students in the program received remedial instruction in their scholastic subjects.
- Students in the program arrived in Kfar Batya with culture gaps in relation to other students their age who come from more established neighborhoods. By the end of the year, the students ultimately succeeded in integrating well in the social life of Kfar Batya. They went on trips with everyone, to plays and performances, and also participated in social events in smaller groups. In some cases, students in the program were even invited to be guests at families of other students who are studying with them in class.
- In end-of-year discussions, all the students expressed their satisfaction and gratification at being part of the Hevruta school.
- Kfar Batya also made certain to maintain a connection with the students' families during the year and held group sessions with students' families as well as individual sessions in cases where intervention and finding solutions was necessary. The idea is to turn the families into true partners in the process – which is said to be a guarantee for their children's success in the program. Overall, all the families expressed their satisfaction with the development of their children.

### **3. Evaluating Results Compared with Previous Years and Conclusions for the Future**

- The move to another school in the same campus, the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva this year, has been extremely successful. Often, students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds have extremely low self-confidence. They feel that they are failures in society and have nothing to contribute. Joining a school that really focuses on finding the positive in each student, has done wonders for these students. Watching the students playing in musical performances, leading other students on tours around the country, etc., one can clearly see the benefits of such a philosophy.
- All of the students at the Hevruta yeshiva, no matter their socio-economic level, live in the dormitories, together with faculty. This helps to build a very strong bond between all the students, as well as with their staff.
- This year, a decision was made to strengthen the connection and cooperation with the families of students studying in the program. The connection with the families is, as stated above, an important part of student empowerment in the program.
- Conclusions for the future: The Midrasha L'Metzuyanut Program will continue at the AMIT Bienenfeld Hevruta Yeshiva High School in the future.



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#### **4. Directive for Project Development in Coming Years:**

- We will continue the program in its current format, taking in an additional 10 disadvantaged 9<sup>th</sup> grade students every year and integrating them into the AMIT Hevruta Yeshiva High School. This format has proven to be very successful and we have seen the satisfaction of both the students and their families.