

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program:

Year:

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: Support for Advocacy Efforts to Enhance the Wellbeing of IDF Soldiers

Year of activity: 2014 - 2016

Name of the report's writer: Shifra Shahar

Function of the report's writer: CEO – A Warm Home for Every Soldier

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

We began our struggle to raise the soldiers' salaries, when wages were between \$100-\$200 per month, and it was understood that over a third of the soldiers (more than 60,000) could not succeed in their military service due to severe economic problems. These hardships led to very bad consequences, and in many cases soldiers deserted their service and ended up in prison, which then had negative ramifications on their lives following their discharge. Due to our efforts, we succeeded in raising their salaries dramatically and they now receive nearly three times as much as they did when we began our struggle. Moreover, their salaries are due to be raised once again next January. Then hopefully they will meet the realistic costs of the soldiers' needs during their service.

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

- Regarding the soldiers' raise in salary, as a result of our campaign, a total of 800,000 million NIS has been added to the budget of the Defense Ministry for soldiers' salaries. All soldiers now receive much higher salaries than in the past 12 years, the raise so far is between 500-900 NIS per month, (depending on the soldier's job, if he/she serves in a combat unit, etc.). This helps to add to the financial stability of thousands of soldiers.
- As for removing incarceration and defection records from underprivileged soldiers' Certificate of Discharge from Duty, we have 41 MKs (members of parliament) who have signed the proposed legislation, and we are waiting for the decision of the Minister's Committee to decide if it will be voted upon in the Knesset. In the meanwhile, and as a result of this initiative, there were many discussions in the

Knesset regarding this practice; it was discovered that most likely the army records this illegally, and now it may be stopped even if the law will not pass. Another advantage of our activity in this matter is that there is more awareness and more help available for these soldiers who face these hardships in order to avoid their being imprisoned.

-As for promoting the exemption of discharged soldiers from National and Health Insurance payments in the first year following their discharge, we have succeeded to pass 2 months so far. Thus the soldiers are free from paying 2 months of National Insurance following their discharge from service.

Our efforts will continue in this arena until we achieve a full year free of charge. It is important to note that passing these 2 months was a minor achievement in terms of the wider goal to receive the entire year (or first six months) free of charge

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

-The result of the raise in the soldiers' salaries is that many soldiers, who suffered from severe economic difficulties with the low wages, can now pay for most of their expenses and needs during service.

-There is more awareness regarding the problems that lead thousands of soldiers to desert their service in order to work and thus more help is provided. There is also a reconsideration of army officials in keeping records of defection in their documents.

- Receiving two months free from paying National Insurance helps many soldiers who could not afford it since they do not have the chance to find a job yet, and in many cases they were not even aware of the fact that they need to pay it and thus they accumulate debts and fines.

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

A summary table – as PDF document – specifying the progress in the program since the beginning of the encouragement by the Matanel Foundation according to the main parameters and objectives such as:

Number of events: -----

Number of participants: Soldiers' salaries - All 180,000 IDF soldiers (including מג"ב)

NI free of payments - All 180,000 IDF soldiers (including מג"ב)

Number of beneficiaries: Soldiers' salaries - All 180,000 IDF soldiers (inc. מג"ב)

NI free of payments - All 180,000 IDF soldiers (including מג"ב)

Passing the law – 20,000 soldiers who are denied rights at the moment.

Please joint photos – as photos – and any document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as PDF document.