

*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:** 2019-2020

**Name of the report's writer:** Eleanore Lightstone

**Function of the report's writer:** Resource Development and Public Relations Officer

**Mail:** eleanore@iasa.org.il

**Phones:** 02-675-5100, 054.232.8385

**Website / Facebook address of the organization:** <https://iasa.excellence.org.il/middle-school/>;  
[www.iasa.org.il](http://www.iasa.org.il)

**Number of active participants in the program:**

175 middle school students, 35 middle school teachers, 250 elementary school students, 30 elementary school teachers.

**Estimated number of impacted participants:**

- 175 middle school students, including 12 Arabic-speaking children (Muslim, Christian and Druze), both secular and religious Jews, and 4 special needs students.
- 250 elementary school students who benefited from community service of middle school students.
- 35 middle school teachers,
- 30 elementary school teachers
- 40 school and 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 current state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):**

The dream of a IASA middle school in the Guatemala elementary school has come to fruition. The IASA middle school has completed its 3-year building stage. It has three full grades, 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, and for the first year, graduates will continue into the IASA high school.

35 middle school graduates chose to take on the great challenge of attending the IASA High School next year. Amongst these students are 2 disadvantaged residents of Kiryat Menachem, 1 special needs student, and 2 Arabic-speaking students.

The school has met and surpassed expectations. There is high demand for the IASA Middle School: 270 students applied for the 2020-2021 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. Registration at the Guatemala elementary school has risen so much that it is opening a second 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. 3 years ago, before the IASA-Guatemala partnership, the school could not form even one full 1<sup>st</sup>-grade class.

The school is realizing its goal of socioeconomic change in Kiryat Menachem and Jerusalem.

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

The Ministry of Education chose the IASA Middle School as one of 9 middle schools across the entire country to serve as model schools for its initiative to address the Israeli middle school crisis. It will participate in a unique pilot program next year.

Academic Achievements

The IASA-MS has now developed full innovative curricula for all areas of study. The multidisciplinary humanities curriculum, which is being studied for replication, teaches subjects

in pairs which vary each year of study (e.g. literature and history, Tanach and Hebrew) in order to enrich understanding of cultural patterns and interrelationships.

Enrichment courses this year included philosophy, mindfulness, coding, chemistry, Ancient Egyptian, statistics, and a course on the Middle East region structured on the Settlers of Catan game.

Students and parents took agency in supporting the school community. For example, a group of (mostly female) students initiated a Robotics team, and parents volunteered to supervise their meetings after school. The girls' leadership encouraged students with no previous robotics experience to join.

IASA's unique Projects Weeks took place in all grades and in the Guatemala school, exploring subjects including "How to Ask Questions," and "The Connection Between School and Life." 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students took a leadership role, working in small teams to learn a subject of interest in depth and producing videos to teach the subject to their peers.

#### Community Service

Learning from past years, IASA and Guatemala schools worked together to develop a new, more effective model for community service. This year, each middle school class paired with an elementary school class to provide mentoring to the younger students. They helped with academic work as well as providing enriching social activities. The program also strengthened the relationship between the middle and elementary school teachers.

#### IASA-Guatemala Connection

IASA and Guatemala students worked together on a "Young Architects" program in partnership with the Machshava Tova organization. They planned a renovated schoolyard to transform the neglected appearance of their learning space. The renovations were disrupted because of the corona closure, but we hope they will resume next year.

IASA-MS continued its Parent Education Forums for both schools and the neighbourhood. This year, they focused on parenting in an age where students live a significant part of their lives online. We partnered with the Horeshet organization, which educates parents regarding healthy online activity for youth. 4 meetings were very successful, with lots of parent participation; unfortunately, the last event in which students from IASA-MS and Guatemala were to teach parents in a large forum at the IASA-HS, had to be cancelled due to corona.

#### IASA-MS and IASA-HS Connection

The connection between the middle and high school is vital, and also serves to inspire the Guatemala school with a connection to Israel's top high school for excellence. Experienced IASA-HS humanities and English teachers teach at the middle school, and the IASA-HS principal Dr. Dan Steinitz teaches physics.

12<sup>th</sup>-grade IASA-HS students led the middle school students as counselors on their school camping trip to the Beit Guvrin area, which very fortunately took place right before the corona closure.

In a new partnership between the IASA Alumni Association and the Jerusalem Foundation, 5 IASA alumni at the Hebrew University are receiving scholarships for intensive tutoring of IASA-MS students in order to ensure their success. The MS students include two of our Arabic-speaking students, who are exceptionally bright but need help overcoming the language barrier.

#### IASA-MS Contributions to Education in Israel

IASA-MS partnered with the Jerusalem Municipality to hold a conference on gender and education. IASA-MS principal Anat Maoz and a IASA-HS alumna gave two roundtables for educational professionals.

IASA-MS's involvement with the Jerusalem Shared Education program continued this year. 15 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students from IASA-MS joined in a Jerusalem Peacebuilders program with 15 students

from Ruadh Al Kuds middle school in Beit Hanina to work on issues of youth identity and conflict resolution. The program took place in English.

IASA-MS was selected as one of 9 middle schools nationwide to serve as a model for transforming middle school education in Israel.

#### IASA-MS and Corona

Within 2 days of the government's decision to close schools, IASA-MS had transitioned to online learning. We developed an effective scheduling system that balanced frontal time with teachers, emotional support, maintaining routine, and guided independent work. Each day ended with optional enrichment classes led by faculty and guest lecturers (including parent volunteers). We achieved an astounding 90% student participation rate in classes, attesting to the students' passion for learning and love of the school.

We lent out laptops to students who did not have computers for distance learning, in order to ensure there were no barriers to learning. Because IASA-MS already invested a great deal in learning through technology, the teachers and students were able to adapt quickly.

Teachers discussed with their students who could continue mentoring the Guatemala students during the closure. Those students who had regular access to phones and did not have other responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings, continued to mentor as many of the Guatemala students as had access to phones and computers.

IASA places a strong emphasis on the emotional and physical well-being of both teachers and students, and upon returning from the corona closure, teachers participated in two days of training to address the emotional, psychological, and practical challenges of transition.

The school managed to successfully hold the second Projects Week only a couple of weeks after school reopened!

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

It was not possible to conduct formal external evaluation; however, IASA-MS principal Anat Maoz and the IASA-MS teachers conducted informal evaluation on the model of Action-Research, an important pedagogical research and evaluation model. The process empowers teachers and administrators to reflect, evaluate, and improve on an ongoing basis.

IASA-MS and Guatemala Elementary School principals met regularly with their teams to evaluate progress in each program and to identify areas for improvement.

IASA-MS also believes that parents are a vital part of the educational community, and Principal Anat Maoz held regular roundtables with parents to hear their input and gain insights for improvement from their perspective. This year, the IASA-MS established its own parent committee independent of the IASA-HS parent committee.

#### **4) Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:**

We are proud and excited that the 3 years of building the IASA-Guatemala school have culminated with such great success, and we look forward to striving for continued growth and improvement.

Next year's planning centers on the issue of continuing to provide holistic education for excellence within the challenges of the corona era. The faculty is designing a double curriculum delivery system that includes options for both in-school and online learning, to prepare for possible school closure, and to ensure that students who must stay home in quarantine or for other reasons can continue to learn along with their classes. The elementary and middle schools are working together to find creative ways for the students to continue community service if school closes.