

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Bezalel's Center of Excellence in Art and Design in Ofakim

Year: 2020

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: Bezalel's Center of Excellence in Art and Design in Ofakim

Year of activity: November 20, 2019 – January 29, 2020 (First Semester)

February 5, 2020 – August 20, 2020 (Second Semester extended due to COVID-19)

Name of the report's writer: Tali Dowek & Shelly Hershko

Function of the report's writer: VP for Resource Development & Dean of Students

Mail: tali@bezalel.ac.il

Phones: 050-5172888

Website / Facebook address of the organization: <http://www.bezalel.ac.il/en/>

Number of active participants in the program: Throughout the 2019-2020 academic year, Bezalel's Center of Excellence in Ofakim had 58 active participants in the program 30 first year students and 28 second year students.

Estimated number of impacted participants:

The number of participants impacted by the program extends well beyond the students themselves. For them the impact is proving tremendous, the program gives these talented students a real opportunity not only to expand their talent and learn new topics in art and design but to begin planning advanced studies and higher education in these areas. In addition, this year the impact went well beyond, as the program and its continuation throughout the Coronavirus Pandemic closure gave the students a sense of normalcy, a way to express themselves and connect to one another and the world around them. This impact was also significant for them families, who could rely on the framework of the program knowing that their children were not missing a unique opportunity to develop their talents, express themselves, develop positive and close contact with other youth with similar interest and be accompanied by experts in the field who teach and mentor their children on an ongoing basis.

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

The mode of study of the second semester has been a hybrid mode – partly online and partly at the Center physically. From June students have resumed physical classes completely, in small capsules and to ensure they achieve the most from the year we have lengthened the semester (as we did at the Academy) ending the year only tomorrow August 20, 2020.

Moreover, in order to ascertain every student would be able to complete the year successfully, a decision was taken that in addition to the regular meetings in capsules we would hold an additional six full-day sessions which took place twice a week

from Wednesday July 8th through Sunday August 16th. These sessions have been focusing on advancing in the workshops and completing all final project as well as end of year exhibition preparations. The End of Year Exhibition itself will take place in September, in small capsules for select visitor groups (like the Academy's graduate exhibitions) and in addition a catalogue of the students' work is being prepared.

In parallel, as we are approaching the beginning of the next 2020-2021 academic year, we have commenced recruitment of the third cycle of students for Ofakim and are preparing the curriculum for year 1, 2 and 3 of the program (which will be held in hybrid mode taking into account COVID-19 restrictions).

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

Bezalel Academy is proud to report many successful achievements in the 2019-2020 academic year at the Center of Excellence. We expanded the center by not only adding new students to the second cycle, but recruiting enough students for another two classes to open for the first year cycle. The additional lecturers that taught at the Center allowed us to expand the curriculum and offer classes on additional subjects including Painting, Visual Communication, Industrial Design and Fashion beyond the classes taught last year.

In parallel, we collaborated with different schools in the neighborhood including a boarding school that specializes in art and music. Additionally, we organized a day where we collaborated with the "Amal Amirim Ofakim School" where a former student from Bezalel, Eyal Assulin taught the students about "Cultural Heroes" via the use of graffiti.

Additionally, despite COVID-19, our staff ensured that the students have continuity and consistency throughout the program. While courses at the Center were closed for one week in March, the faculty and staff worked vigorously to adjust their courses and curriculum while also maintaining personal contact with the students. Towards the third week of March, we resumed, and the various courses began being taught remotely in a three-part series.

At the start of COVID-19, the students received a link to a Whatsapp group (created for this purpose) with an exercise from one of the lecturers that included a presentation or tutorial video. At the same time, we created an Instagram page where students were able to upload the results of the exercise that was based on each lecture.

In addition, in the period leading up to Passover, the students lead by the instructor, Maayan Shachar, took part in "Days of Art Challenges" where each day the students were challenged to address a new topic. On a daily basis, we published a headline and the students had to respond to it via art or design, such as by using a photograph, painting, sculpture, illustration, etc. They posted their work on an Instagram account created specifically for this period and each was given feedback of their work – please visit it at <https://www.instagram.com/bezalelofakim2/>

The third series was five zoom sessions led by their instructors who gave presentations with inspirational sources. The students then completed projects based

on the lecture which were also posted on an Instagram account created for this purpose. The sessions were routinely scheduled during the day and hours of the Center's activities, thus effectively establishing the first step towards the long-awaited return to their regular routine.

As noted above starting from June students resumed activities physically at the Center in small capsules, adhering to all social distancing and health requirements.

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

Below is a summary of the evaluations from the first semester (second semester evaluations will be held later on):

- 89% of students responded that they are either happy or extremely happy to be learning at the Center.
- While all students said they learned new topics, 74% of students were satisfied with the amount of new topics they learned.
- 83% of students indicated that they were comfortable or very comfortable being part of the Center

Comments on student evaluations include:

- I really enjoyed the activity where we were not allowed to look at the page (while painting) since that way I was not focused on the painting itself and how it looks. It was extremely liberating.
- I found the self-sketch that we did without looking at the page very relaxing and it helped me understand the proportions between reality and the page itself. This helped me understand how to create the drawing and increased my confidence in my drawing.
- In my opinion, what helped me the most was the classroom atmosphere between the lecturers and the students.
- In general, I found that we received positive support and attitude from the lecturers and staff, as well as in the overall atmosphere.
- I loved the exercise with the toys that allowed us to think more broadly and out of the box, as well as the exercise in the first lesson where we were given just a few minutes to think and create a new idea.
- I enjoyed the freedom to experiment and the understanding that I was able to grasp while working.
- There was a fun and free atmosphere, where I was not ashamed to express myself.

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

At the beginning of the next academic year, October 26th, we intend to open the third cycle of the program and thus reach the scope of a full program (three-cycles) for the first time.

In addition to recruiting new students for the third cycle, we intend to expand the student culture and diversity by having religious students from Ofakim attend the Center as well

We are planning and developing the program for the first graduating class that includes personal guidance for each student as well as have each one complete a final project.

We also plan to develop a series of meetings with guest artists, collaboration with the new print workshop, "Gildat Haomanim" that opened in the Eshkol Regional Council, as well as visits to Bezalel Academy's Mount Scopus Campus.

In addition, we are in discussions with Lod Municipality and additional partners there to open a Center of Excellence in the city, but will most probably have to hold off from opening the Center till after the pandemic.

Please join the Evaluation Report, the Financial Report and the list of the participants to the program (as PDF documents)

Please see the attached document with the list of students & Financial Report.

Please join photos – as JPG files – and any link or any other document connected to the program which will seem to you relevant – as PDF document.

Please see the attached document with photos. Additional photos and the catalogue will be sent at a later date.

Please join a 5 minutes movie which presents your institution and the particular project supported by the Matanel Foundation. The movie should be accessible to the philanthropic world and to other potential donors.

No new videos have been made yet, these are planned with the final exhibition.