

*MATANEL FOUNDATION*  
*ACTIVITY REPORT*

**Program:** *Equal in Uniform*  
**Year:** 2023

Name of the Program: Equal in Uniform

Year of activity: 2023

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Number of active participants in the program: 150 participants

Estimated number of impacted participants: 150 persons ages 21-26 with intellectual disabilities or autism, and approximately 1,500 officers, commanders and enlisted soldiers serving alongside the participants on 49 bases across the country.

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

During the war, in order to ensure safety, the IDF restricted access to several IDF bases for EIU volunteers. (Enlisted EIU soldiers continued to serve as usual). For this reason, AKIM provided an array of alternative activities. New program recruits scheduled to begin in October 2023 were postponed and have been placed during the past month. The program has resumed to 90% capacity. Some parents from the southern region are hesitant to allow their children to join the program due to the ongoing war. Expansion to the Erez base, close to Gaza, has been postponed. Despite these challenges, AKIM continues provide alternative activities for those unable to return to their base. The program also continues to evolve. Alumni overwhelmingly pursue free market employment or to join the expanding inclusion in higher education AKIM College program.

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

The grant was instrumental in facilitating the participation of 150 individuals in the Equal in Uniform Program (EIU) at 49 IDF bases nationwide, and in the effective and successful implementation of the program.

Inclusion within the IDF plays a crucial role in enhancing the dignity and self-sufficiency, as well the overall quality of life of young Israelis with intellectual disabilities. In 2023, AKIM provided a total of # 19,650 days of activities and support to the Program participants - 150 participants \* 131 days in the program (base or training).

Participants underwent in-depth interviews, allowing AKIM personnel to identify abilities and preferences to determine the most suitable placements. To ensure participants were well-prepared for their roles, AKIM provided step-by-step training and instruction in effective communication and collaboration with peers in a work environment.

AKIM implemented an effective 3-month preparation program for supported employment in the free market for 40 program participants, focusing on skills and confidence gained during their IDF service. The goal was to prepare them for successful inclusion in the open labor market post-service, facilitating a seamless transition to an independent and fulfilling civilian life.

By offering this comprehensive support system, AKIM not only enhances participants' abilities to contribute effectively during their military service but also empowers them for success in the broader job market, emphasizing a commitment to long-term inclusion and independence.

AKIM is continually identifying positions in the IDF that utilize unique skills, interests, and needs. The program is structured to ensure that work opportunities in the IDF provide not only suitability but also satisfaction and personal fulfillment. A partial list of roles served during 2023- 150 participants on 49 IDF bases:

- Aircraft maintenance
- Text editing in the communications department
- Intelligence units support (8200)
- Graphic design
- Parachute equipment maintenance
- Auto garage mechanics
- Assembly of communications equipment
- Print shop support
- Kitchen staff
- Logistics and supply chain support
- Photography.

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

AKIM tracks the progress of the participants during the program and in the years following. The evaluation begins when young adults enroll as volunteers in the IDF through the program. From the outset, progress and obstacles encountered are monitored by way of a confidential personal file. Progress on self-efficacy, confidence, and skill levels are assessed.

Success is measured by the # of people with disabilities employed, type of employment, level of support, community living situation, and other parameters. The key factor is whether participants continue developing independence by advancing to inclusion by way of employment in the free market or to higher education (also via enrolment in the AKIM College Program, currently offering 3

tracks). To date, 91% of the 1,200 alumni have transitioned successfully to free market employment.

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

Given the circumstances, some families from the south and north were hesitant about allowing their loved ones to join the program. In 2024 AKIM will focus on supporting these families and their children, potential participants, in order to encourage them to join the Program.

Plans to operate the Erez and Yiftach bases, will remain on hold due to the impact of the conflict. In 2024 AKIM intends to keep strengthening the relationship with the IDF to identify new roles and locations where persons with intellectual disabilities and autism may be included.

The project will be implemented by AKIM under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services. Partnerships will continue with many municipalities and regional councils including Be'er Sheva, Kyriat Gat, Ashkelon, Kyriat Malach, Netivot, Ofakim, Omer, and Gilat. AKIM maintains ongoing collaboration with IDF bases in strategic locations, including Be'er Sheva, Kyriat Gat, Hatzerim, Machane Natan, Pikud Darom, and Julus.

**Please find Relevant PDF documents** attached including photos and stories of participants. (AKIM is producing a new professional movie in 2024 and will make it available to the Matanel Foundation – expected by June 2024).

**AKIM is grateful to the MATANEL Foundation for ongoing support  
for the EQUAL in UNIFORM Program - transforming the  
lives of young adults with intellectual disabilities in Israel**