

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Together – a Regional Program for Educating Arabs and Jews in Technology and Science
Years: 2021-2024

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: Together – a Regional Program for Educating Arabs and Jews in Technology and Science

Years of activity: 2021-2024

Name of the report's writer: Anat Monastirsky

Function of the report's writer: Resource Development Coordinator

Mail: anat.m@technoda.org.il **Phones:** +972-4-633505 ext. 717

Website / Facebook address of the organization: <https://en.technoda.org.il/>

Number of active participants in the program: In 2023-2024, the Together program had 42 active participants.

Estimated number of impacted participants: Since 2021, there have been 125 active participants. Based on past experience and participant testimonies, we know that close friends and family members are also impacted by our projects. We estimate that, to date, the Together program has indirectly affected approximately 370 individuals in participants' social circles. We expect this number to continue growing, further amplifying our impact in the broader community.

Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines): In June, we completed the third year of the program and are currently drawing conclusions from the evaluation results of the current year. Please find the enclosed evaluation report detailing the outcomes.

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

In 2023-2024, the Together program successfully engaged 42 gifted Arab and Jewish participants in scientific and technological activities at Technoda. Building on previous evaluations, we implemented several key improvements. We enhanced social activities to foster communication between Arab and Jewish participants, addressing previous tendencies of limited interaction. The program was targeted towards teenagers to mitigate language barriers often experienced by Arabic students in Hebrew-language settings. We focused on gifted children from both sectors, leveraging their characteristic open-mindedness and willingness to accept others.

The outbreak of war in Israel presented significant challenges, delaying the project's start and initially affecting participation. Many Arab students were hesitant to leave their villages and schools due to safety concerns, while some Jewish students were reluctant to participate given the heightened tensions. Despite these obstacles, the program achieved notable outcomes. Participants reported experiencing kindness and mutual respect from peers in the other sector. Arab students highlighted the supportive and respectful approach of the staff members.

An especially encouraging achievement was the strong desire expressed by many participants for the program to continue during the summer. This enthusiasm is remarkable considering that teenagers often have numerous appealing options for their summer break, yet they stated they would prioritize the Together program. This high level of engagement and satisfaction aligns closely with the project's core objective of promoting tolerance and understanding between Arab and Jewish communities.

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

As in past years, to evaluate the program's effectiveness, we conducted assessments of participants at the beginning and end of the program by distributing questionnaires. The results showed significant progress towards meeting our core objectives, as initially defined, as follows:

1. Promoting tolerance and understanding among Arab and Jewish children.
2. Encouraging scientific thinking among children and imparting them with the skills for carrying out scientific research.
3. Inspiring curiosity and a will to engage in future scientific and technological activity.

The program evaluation demonstrates significant success in meeting objectives. 75% of participants recognized the importance of shared language among medical staff in emergencies. There was a 15% increase in those strongly agreeing to future Arab-Jewish collaborations, and a 12% increase in those agreeing on the importance of learning the other sector's language. These outcomes indicate an increased openness and willingness in getting to know the other sector better, showing significant progress towards meeting our first objective.

The program also inspired scientific engagement, with participants reporting that it reinforced their decision to pursue a medical career. This outcome aligns with our goal of inspiring future scientific engagement and indicates success in cultivating scientific interest among participants.

Consistent with previous years, children showed optimism about improved Arab-Jewish relations. Weekly meetings fostered understanding and common ground, challenging media narratives. The program created a welcoming environment for positive interactions and learning, even in difficult circumstances. It allowed Arab and Jew participants to see their similarities and common interests, providing a perspective they wouldn't have gained otherwise.

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

We plan to refine our assessment tools by simplifying reverse-coded questions for Arabic-speaking participants with limited Hebrew proficiency and introducing daily group feedback for improvement. We also aim to start the program earlier, subject to regional stability.

We are considering targeting younger age groups because as such they are often easier to influence children about acceptance when they are younger and more open-minded. In terms of staffing, we are considering to include Arabic-speaking staff to address language challenges. The curriculum will be revised based on participant feedback.

These improvements aim to build upon its successes, address challenges, and continue promoting tolerance, understanding, and scientific curiosity among Arab and Jewish youth. By bringing young people together in a scientific environment, we are advancing academic skills and fostering intercultural understanding for long-term community benefit.

At the following link, you can watch a 5-minute film showcasing Technoda:

<https://youtu.be/vI8PXEgj5o4>