

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: Transition Program

Year of activity: 2024 -2025

Name of the report's writer: Sharon Simmer

Function of the report's writer: Resource Development Officer

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Number of active participants in the program: 75 (2024/25: 39)

Estimated number of impacted participants:

- Approximately 300: 75 - directly impacted, with an estimated 200+ indirectly impacted. Those indirectly impacted include: 1) Support for families of the participants who are dealing with the challenges of raising disabled children, and are encouraged to become active partners in their child's vocational journey. 2) Companies and workplaces who learn how to include people with disabilities in their workplace. 3) School teams who learn and benefit from a complementary professional response that increases the chances of success for their graduates.

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

The program now includes 75 participants from six special education schools and/or schools that include pupils with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Working in a close strategic partnership with each school, all participants underwent an in-depth intake process before being placed in work environments that reflect their personal vocational aspirations, skills and abilities. Each participant is gaining both educational and practical vocational experience, working twice a week in private-sector businesses and services, while receiving synchronized educational instruction in their schools. The workplaces receive ongoing guidance and mediation in how to include people with disabilities in their workplaces. Participants are encouraged to gain experience in a variety of workplaces over the course of the program.

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

The program succeeded beyond all expectations and the number of participants has now almost doubled from 39 participants to 75. A major breakthrough was also achieved in bringing the ultraorthodox sector into the program, whose children did not previously have access to vocational training internship experience and work placement – this involved gaining the trust of the community. An additional achievement, is the recruitment of new business who have now joined the program – we have noted a marked increase of businesses now willing to open their doors to offering vocational internship for young people with disabilities. There were no dropouts from the program, 19 participants have continued the program into their second year while 85% of those who completed the program are now employed.

Challenges of war and program resilience: 2024-5 was marked by the unprecedented challenges of war. For young people with disabilities, disruptions to routine and uncertainty, are devastating and extremely traumatic. Despite the highly complex security situation, we chose not to scale back activity but rather to expand it. We realized that especially in such a year, the program constitutes a vital anchor for our participants. The continuation and subsequent increase in participants testifies to the resilience of the program and the acute need of families and schools for a continuous professional response that does not cease even in times of crisis.

The following are some examples of participants' progress:

Nadav: He did his vocational internship at the Biblical Zoo and very quickly found his place there and began to thrive. He made major strides in learning new meaningful work skills and developed a deep working relationship with the zoo staff. At the end of the year, thanks to the deep connection he formed with the zoo, Nadav was accepted to do National Service there.

Gil: He had to deal with a complex family situation that greatly affected him, causing anxiety, difficulties, and repetitive questioning patterns, which made it hard to find him a suitable vocational internship. Eventually, a workplace was found for him in a natural products store where he had a quiet and independent work environment. Gil found his place there, gained work skills and confidence, and developed personally. Today, he is enrolled in an occupational college and is in the process of enlisting in National Service in a meaningful capacity..

Tamar: Made enormous strides working at a café, which was something she had always wanted to do but didn't originally have confidence in herself to do it. Today, she is performing a variety of roles at the café and the staff are very pleased with her. She is very happy and has expressed great a sense of great achievement and fulfillment. She is now in her second year, doing two full days a week at the café.

Participant testimonies:

David: “It makes me happy that I can try out working in different places, now I know what kind of things I will need to do when I start working in the future.”

Eli: “I really love working at Zamora organic restaurant and shop and I want to work here again next year.”

Tamar: “The café staff are very nice and help me. In the beginning I only worked a few hours because it was hard, but now I work for the full 8 hour shift! I would like to carry on working here after I finish school.

Amir: “When I told staff what I would like to do this year, they listened to what I told them and found me a job that I wanted to do.”

Meir: “This will help me to know what to do, and to work like everyone else after I finish school.”

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

Rigorous ongoing evaluations are carried out through monthly meetings with school staff, where each participant’s progress and challenges are discussed on an ongoing basis.

Digital Tracking System (IEP): We are now operating an advanced digital tracking system for the personal program goals of each participant. The system allows placement coordinators and school teams to track the progress of the young adults in their employment goals, and social skills, in real-time.

Data-Driven Management: The use of this system allows us to make professional data-driven decisions, refine personal progress plans, and reflect the real impact of the program to the families. This is a central tool that allows us to efficiently manage 75 participants while maintaining maximum quality of support.

The method of synchronizing educational and practical vocational internships, through close collaboration with schools has borne impressive results, with 85% finding placements and all participants completing the year. In addition, the program has now expanded to 75 participants, and a new sector has joined the program.

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

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 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.