

## Report to the Matanel Foundation - 2025/2026 Citizens Build a Community - Masaak Program Annual Report

Dear Matanel Foundation Team,

We are pleased to submit the annual activity report for the Masaak program for the 2025/2026 school year. With the Matanel Foundation’s support, Citizens Build a Community completed the funded activity and delivered a broad school-based mentoring process for Arab youth preparing for the transition from high school to adult life.

During the year, scholarship-recipient mentors facilitated structured group sessions, provided individual guidance where needed, and helped students build practical tools for academic planning, vocational orientation, employment readiness, financial responsibility, communication, leadership, and community involvement.

### 1. Executive Summary - Full Implementation

Masaak was implemented fully during the reporting period. The program operated through regular meetings in participating schools, with most activity taking place from October to May and several social-entrepreneurship activities continuing into May and June. The implementation included 10th-grade social entrepreneurship groups as well as 11th- and 12th-grade transition-preparation groups.

The year demonstrated the continued relevance of Masaak. Students approached the end of high school with questions about identity, confidence, money, higher education, vocational training, employment, family pressure, and the immediate choices that come after graduation. The program gave them a consistent, structured space inside school to ask questions, practice decision-making, and translate uncertainty into concrete next steps.

- Full activity cycle completed: mentoring, group facilitation, personal support, and school-based activities were carried out during the year.
- Broad school reach achieved: the program operated across multiple schools and grade levels, with group sizes generally ranging from 15 to 31 students.
- Core content delivered: academic orientation, vocational pathways, Holland vocational-interest tools, financial literacy, time management, self-presentation, communication, identity, leadership, decision-making, and social entrepreneurship.
- Student engagement strengthened: students showed increased willingness to participate, ask questions, speak about their future, and consider academic, vocational, and employment pathways.
- Mentor leadership strengthened: the scholarship-recipient mentors gained practical experience in facilitation, group management, listening, adaptation, and youth guidance.

### 2. Program Implementation at a Glance

The implementation scope can be summarized as follows:

Dimension	Implementation
Activity period	Primarily October-May, with selected youth entrepreneurship activities continuing into May-June.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
<b>Participating students</b>	Students in grades 10, 11, and 12, including groups preparing for graduation and groups focused on social entrepreneurship.
<b>School settings</b>	ORT Lod, ORT Ramla, Dar Al-Hakma, Al-Oula, St. George, Terra Santa, the Orthodox High School, and Nour Al-Ghad.
<b>Mentoring model</b>	Group facilitation, classroom workshops, experiential activities, small-group work, individual conversations, and guidance by scholarship-recipient mentors.
<b>Main content areas</b>	Academic and vocational orientation, financial literacy, time management, Holland interest tools, self-presentation, communication, identity, decision-making, leadership, and community engagement.
<b>Practical initiatives</b>	Needs mapping, school-environment improvement, green-space planting, wall-painting and beautification, neighborhood/community planning, and activities with younger children.

### 3. Core Activities and Content Delivered

Masaak’s content was adapted to the age, needs, and readiness of each group. Some groups responded well to structured presentations and academic information; others required more movement-based, interactive, and emotionally supportive methods. This flexibility was essential to maintaining student engagement while preserving the program’s goals.

- Academic orientation: students were introduced to higher education institutions, academic terminology, admission requirements, study tracks, student life, and the value of continued learning.
- Vocational and employment pathways: students explored professional training, short certification tracks, work options, and alternatives for students who may not pursue a full academic degree immediately after high school.
- Holland vocational-interest tools: students examined personal interests and began connecting their strengths and preferences to future study and employment options.
- Financial literacy and time management: students practiced budgeting, saving, responsible spending, income planning, and practical strategies for managing time, pressure, and distractions.
- Soft skills and self-presentation: students practiced communication, active listening, respectful debate, interview skills, self-presentation, and expressing an opinion in a safe group setting.
- Identity, decision-making, and future planning: students reflected on personal strengths, barriers, dreams, fears, goals, and the steps needed to move from aspiration to action.
- Leadership and social entrepreneurship: 10th-grade groups identified needs in their school or neighborhood and planned or carried out initiatives that strengthened responsibility, teamwork, and community belonging.

### 4. Outcomes and Indicators of Success

Across the program, students moved from general uncertainty about the future toward a clearer understanding of the options available to them. The strongest outcomes were not only knowledge-based; they were also visible in students’ confidence, willingness to participate, and ability to see themselves as capable of taking responsibility for their next step.

- Greater future clarity: students became more familiar with academic, vocational, employment, and community-service pathways and began to compare options more realistically.

- Improved self-confidence: students who were quiet, hesitant, resistant, or unsure gradually began to participate, ask questions, and express personal goals.
- More practical decision-making: students practiced identifying a problem, weighing options, understanding barriers, and choosing realistic courses of action.
- Stronger communication and group dynamics: activities around listening, identity, cooperation, and respectful discussion helped students manage differences and build more positive group interactions.
- Practical life skills gained: students learned tools for budgeting, time management, self-presentation, academic planning, and understanding professional training options.
- Community responsibility strengthened: social-entrepreneurship groups moved from identifying needs to planning and implementing school or community initiatives.

## **5. Challenges and Adaptations**

The program was implemented in diverse classroom environments, and the challenges were real. Some groups had low patience for theoretical content, uneven participation, difficulty listening to one another, internal subgroups, or students facing personal and family pressures. In several classes, frontal instruction alone was not effective.

The response was practical adaptation, not lowering expectations. Mentors used interactive activities, movement, games, small-group assignments, role play, personal conversations, and concrete examples from students' lives. Where students needed more emotional support, mentors created space for individual listening and encouragement. Where students were more academically motivated, mentors deepened the discussion around admissions, study tracks, student life, and future professions.

This ability to adapt was one of the main strengths of the year. It allowed Masaak to remain relevant for academically strong students, students seeking vocational options, students with low confidence, and students who needed a safe space before they could participate fully.

## **6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Documentation**

Implementation was accompanied by ongoing coordination, mentor guidance, school contact, and documentation. The program coordinator supported mentors throughout the process and collected information on group composition, meeting content, student engagement, individual progress, and activities carried out in the schools and community.

The documentation shows that the funded activity was completed and that the program contributed to clear qualitative evidence of progress: stronger student engagement, clearer orientation toward the future, improved communication, and increased readiness to consider post-school pathways. The financial report and evaluation report are submitted to Matanel together with this activity report.

## **7. Attachments Submitted to Matanel**

- Individual mentor reports from the participating groups.
- Five student success stories.
- Participant and mentor lists.
- Photographs from program activities and a short video.
- Financial report.

## **8. Conclusion**

Masaak continues to address a critical gap for Arab youth in Israel's social periphery: the transition from adolescence into adult life, higher education, employment, and civic participation. Matanel's support enabled Citizens Build a Community to deliver a holistic model that combines peer mentoring, practical knowledge, emotional support, leadership development, and community responsibility.

We appreciate the Matanel Foundation's partnership and look forward to continuing to strengthen youth leadership, inclusion, and opportunity in Lod, Ramla, and the participating school communities.

With sincere gratitude,

Amira Baba - CEO - Citizens Build a Community