

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: *JCM The Matanel Reflection & Vision Retreat for Mechina Directors*

Year: 2026

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: *JCM The Matanel Reflection & Vision Retreat for Mechina Directors*

Year of activity: 2026

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Function of the report's writer: VP of Partnerships

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Number of active participants in the program: 74

Estimated number of impacted participants: 6,300

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

The retreat took place on July 13–14, 2026, at the 'Nof Ginosar' Hotel on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, as a first of its kind pilot for the leadership of the Pre-Military Academies world. The event focused on the theme of "Trust" - the essential social and moral infrastructure for a society, particularly against the backdrop of a tense period of social polarization and ahead of upcoming elections. The Matanel Foundation's long-standing support and partnership made the event possible. On the first day, we were honored to have Johanna, the Foundation's representative, address the participants. The conference offered a space to disconnect from the daily routine. It included in-depth lectures, discussion circles, a comedic-therapeutic workshop, a case study analysis, and time for direct, personal connection. The event was deemed a resounding success and can serve as the foundation for an annual anchor in the Council's work plan.

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

Broad Attendance of Heads of Mechinot: Despite the heavy workload typical of the summer months surrounding staff training in the Mechinot, we convened a broad, diverse, and representative forum of about 74 participants. Among them were heads and directors of Mechinot from across the social and religious spectrum (Religious, Secular, Traditional, from both central Israel and the periphery) who fully committed to the process.

Developing a Shared Educational Language: The retreat enabled the leadership of the Mechinot world to develop a unified, cohesive language to guide educational work during the election period. Through discussion circles and deliberations, we distilled seven core principles that will serve as a key to unity and guide the upcoming year across the Mechinot movement.

Strengthening Personal Connections Among Heads of Mechinot: Beyond the professional content, the retreat established close personal relationships and direct trust among heads of Mechinot from all backgrounds. These connections serve as a vital foundation for open dialogue, resolving disagreements, and preventing on-the-ground friction during times of social and political tension.

Rich and Diverse Content Program: The program featured approximately 15 diverse content sessions, highlighting key selected sessions such as: an opening discussion and mapping of challenges between Joint Council CEO Avishai Berman and Maya Ohana-Moreno; in-depth research lectures by Dr. Yoni Slater and Dr. Shmuel Rosner on polarization trends and societal divides; an ice-breaking comedic-therapeutic workshop led by "Gveret Rabia" (Daniel Kishinovsky) addressing deep-seated tensions through humor; a practical case study analysis on integrating female combatants into IDF maneuvering units to practice active listening and conflict resolution; and a session on leadership during controversy with Adv. Dani Zamir alongside a journalists' panel (Noa Shpigel and Amichai Attali) on the role of the media during election periods.

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

Methodology and Environment: The retreat integrated high-level professional content, intimate discussion circles, and informal time. Choosing the 'Nof Ginosar' Hotel on the shores of the Sea of Galilee provided an essential experience of

disconnecting from the demanding daily routine. This retreat environment and respectful atmosphere enabled full immersion in the process, continuous presence over the two days, and the fostering of deep trust among the heads of Mechinot and the Council staff.

Indirect Impact on Students: The process undertaken by the heads of Mechinot directly trickles down to approximately 6,300 students. The tools, insights, and principles of unity are translated into work plans and discussion workshops across the Mechinot ahead of the upcoming academic year.

Testimonials and Detailed Feedback from Heads and Directors of Mechinot:

- **Shmulik Shaul, Head of Meitarim Lachish Mechina:** "It was an excellent, precise, and highly meaningful gathering. The content sessions were thoughtfully constructed, and the guest speakers were top-tier. Beyond the content, this was a critical meeting for us as a community of heads of Mechinot ahead of the social and educational challenges of the upcoming election season. The ability to pause the daily race, indulge a little, and sit down together for shared work was truly special. A huge thank you to the Council and the Matanel Foundation for an extraordinary investment."
- **Shiri Gorman, Executive Management of the Mechinot:** "The program structure created a perfect and precise mosaic balancing in-depth content with human connection. Knowing that such a gathering was designed primarily to appreciate heads of Mechinot, give us breathing room, and re-energize us created a genuinely pleasant and exceptional feeling. That is no small feat in our demanding routine. I left these two days with a deep sense of partnership, friendship, and trust that continues to deepen across all Mechinot."
- **Hovav Bashan, Head of Hannaton Mechina:** "This retreat was vital and critical for us at this time. It filled us with renewed strength for the coming year and, above all, accomplished the most important thing—bringing hearts together. The direct encounter and the ability to discuss the most complex topics with goodwill and mutual respect proved how much strength the Mechinot movement holds when it works together."
- **Adi Blot, Tzahali Mechina:** "A huge 'chapeau' to the entire team for exemplary organization and clear investment in every single detail. The chosen content was fascinating, relevant, and thought-provoking, and the combination of discussion circles and a welcoming atmosphere helped us process everything in the best possible way. A big thank you for the initiative and support."
- **Eitan Shalev, Head of Beit Yatir Mechina:** "A wonderful and extremely important event. Connecting with colleagues from all sides of the spectrum was

precise. It provided us with vital tools as we face the major challenges and controversies that the upcoming election season will bring to our doorstep.”

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

Establishing the Retreat as an Annual Tradition: The Council intends to make the retreat a permanent anchor event in the annual work plan (in July), aiming to increase registration and participation further, provided the Matanel Foundation supports the project again next year.

Selecting an Alternating Key Theme: Just as this year's chosen theme ("Trust") proved to be precise and critical for the period, a new central topic will be selected next year based on needs arising from the field. (Currently, a proposal is being considered to focus the next retreat on "Education" in methodical and pedagogical contexts).

Creating Continuity and Deepening Impact: We will explore mechanisms to maintain continuity in messaging and gatherings throughout the year (rather than solely at the summer peak event), ensuring that the insights formulated are applied on the ground within the Mechinot.

Strengthening Professional Facilitation: Next year, we intend to bring in a dedicated professional facilitator to lead the discussion circles and deliberations, ensuring the group's diverse and complex voices are effectively gathered, processed, and synthesized.

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.