

### **MATANEL FOUNDATION – 2026 ACTIVITY REPORT**

Name of the Program: "Employment on the Horizon"

Year of activity: 2026

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#### **Number of active participants in the program:**

In 2026, 50 teenagers with blindness and visual impairments, aged 14-18, participated in the program. The participants came from 36 localities throughout Israel, representing diverse geographic, social and cultural backgrounds.

#### **Estimated number of impacted participants:**

We estimate that the program directly and indirectly impacted approximately 275-300 people in addition to the participating teenagers. This number includes parents and siblings, employers, workplace supervisors and colleagues. The program also has a broader impact by exposing employers and members of the public to the abilities of young people with blindness and visual impairments and encouraging more accessible and inclusive employment practices.

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

Young people with blindness and visual impairments face significant barriers when entering the workforce, including limited opportunities to gain early work experience, employers' lack of familiarity with workplace accessibility, and low expectations regarding their abilities. "Employment on the Horizon" addresses these barriers by combining professional preparation, practical summer employment and individualized support for both participants and employers.

The 2026 program was completed successfully and in full, despite the ongoing war and the security and logistical challenges it created. Fifty teenagers aged 14-18, from 36 localities throughout Israel, participated in the program. A professional training day was conducted, hosted by Bank Discount, followed by summer work experience and ongoing guidance from Ofek Liyladenu's professional team. The annual evaluation survey has been completed and is currently in the final stages of processing.

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

A central achievement in 2026 was the successful implementation of the full program despite the ongoing war. At a time when many activities for children and youth were restricted, postponed or cancelled, the program provided participants with a stable and meaningful framework and an opportunity to take an important step toward future independence.



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The training day provided the teenagers with practical tools for entering the workplace, including preparation for job interviews, self-presentation and body language, teamwork, workplace conduct, financial literacy, employees' rights and responsibilities, and coping with challenges at work. Bank Discount's hosting of the training day enabled participants to experience a leading professional work environment firsthand.

Following the training, the participants gained practical summer work experience in workplaces in their communities. Ofek Liyladenu's professional team provided individualized guidance throughout the process, with particular attention to first-time participants and teenagers facing additional emotional, social or logistical challenges.

The program enabled participants to develop confidence, independence and practical employment skills. Its impact also extended to employers and workplace colleagues, who gained firsthand familiarity with the abilities of young people with visual impairments. This helped challenge misconceptions and encouraged more accessible and inclusive employment practices. Program alumni have reported that their early work experiences strengthened their confidence to pursue voluntary military or national service, higher education and future employment.

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

The program is evaluated annually through an evaluation survey completed by the participants, together with feedback collected throughout the process by the professional team. The evaluation examines the participants' experience of the training and employment, the relevance of the tools they acquired, their sense of confidence and preparedness for future employment, and the quality of the guidance and support they received.

The 2026 survey has been completed and is currently in the final stages of processing. Its findings will be used to identify strengths, difficulties and areas requiring improvement and to adapt the training, individual guidance and work-placement process for the coming year.

Initial feedback from participants indicates that the program strengthened their confidence and independence, provided them with practical tools for entering the workplace, and helped them recognize their own abilities and potential. Participants also emphasized the importance of the professional preparation, personal guidance and opportunity to gain meaningful work experience. These initial indications will be reviewed and further substantiated once the full survey analysis is completed.

In comparison with previous years, the program maintained its full scope and broad national reach despite the ongoing war. The experience of recent years has demonstrated the importance of maintaining flexibility, close personal contact with participants and families, and individualized support when security, transportation or personal circumstances create barriers to participation.



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

We seek to build on the program's success and continue improving all stages of the process, from recruitment and training to placement and support in the workplace.

The experience of 2026 reinforced the importance of practical and relevant preparation for entering the workplace, alongside individualized emotional and professional support. We will therefore continue to refine the training content based on participants' feedback and the findings of the evaluation survey.

We will also seek to expand and strengthen our relationships with employers, recruit additional workplaces and deepen employers' knowledge of accessibility and the inclusion of workers with blindness and visual impairments. Particular attention will be given to increasing opportunities for teenagers living in Israel's geographic and socio-economic peripheries.

In addition, we aim to strengthen follow-up with program graduates in order to understand the program's longer-term contribution to their participation in voluntary military or national service, higher education and employment.

### **Attachments:**

1. Financial Report – PDF
2. List of Participants – PDF
3. Evaluation Report – PDF
4. Five Short Participant Testimonies
5. At Least Five Photographs – JPG files
6. Short Film Presenting the Program: <https://ofekl.org.il/summer-job/>