

Summer Camps 2008

Summary of Activity & Evaluation Report

November 2008

Executive Summary

Science summer camps operated in the summer of 2008 as part of the activity of the Madarom project through a tender of the Ministry of Education. The Rashi Foundation has been operating these camps for 10 years, offering tens of thousands of pupils from the periphery rich programming, varied activities and exciting experiences in science centers and universities throughout the country.

As required by the terms of the tender, Madarom has published a call for proposals from managers of science camps, and established a pedagogic committee to approve the camp programs, with representatives of the Education Ministry and the Rashi Foundation.

This report presents a summary of the summer camps in 2008 including marketing and recruitment of participants, target population, places of activity, budget and realization of goals. In addition, it presents the results of the online feedback questionnaire which examined the satisfaction of the participants with the camps, and the implementation of the recommendations of the 2007 report.

Marketing the science camps

The summer camps were advertised through a brochure listing all the centers of activity. The brochure was distributed in the municipalities, in all the schools in the southern region and in various education institutes, targeting mainly pupils who participate in Madarom programs throughout the school year.

According to the online feedback form, 31% of the participants saw the brochure (of them, 62% said that it was a useful source of information). Participants also said they heard about the camps mainly through the school and/or from family and friends.

Participants

- The number of participants in the summer camps exceeded the plan (3,935 participants, 3,865 planned). The camps operated in 14 centers of activity out of the planned 21. Several centers (Hatzeva, Revivim, Beit Yatziv, Ilan Ramon Center, Technoda, Migal) managed to accommodate a larger number of participants than planned due to a high demand.
- Most of participants came from the southern region (3,328), and the rest from the north (544) and center (63) of the country. In the south, most of the participants live in Be'er Sheva (1,435). 418 came from the Sderot area, 81 from Bedouin localities (compared to 334 in the previous year). A relatively small number of participants came from the targeted towns of Ofakim, Kiryat Malachi, Mitzpe Ramon, Netivot and Yeruham.

- Most of the participants were elementary school children (67%); 27% were from junior high schools and 6% were high school pupils.
- Distribution by gender shows a slightly higher proportion of boys (52%) than girls (48%).
- 30% of the pupils have participated in summer camps in previous years.

Budget and implementation

The budget allocated for the program was utilized in full. Regular participants pay only 34% of the actual cost of activity. Additional subsidy that can cover up to 100% of the cost is available through a scholarship fund, which assisted 929 pupils in 2008.

Feedback results

For the second year, participants filled an online feedback form to measure their satisfaction. 1,037 pupils aged 10-18 from 13 centers of activity responded as follows:

- The level of satisfaction with the camps was high, especially with the instruction, the social and educational activity. However, the satisfaction with the conditions in the camps, particularly with the food, was lower (although higher than the previous year). The overall impression was very positive (average rating 8.5), and 75% of the participants said they would like to come back to the same camp next year.
- The following parameters were strongly correlated to high satisfaction: varied social activity, interest in studies, new knowledge, the taste of food, hygiene and physical environment, relations with the counselor, pleasant learning environment, varied educational activity (8 parameters out of 28).
- The main benefits of the camps for the pupils were educational (70%) and social (66%).
- The camps help pupils with their school studies: 89% of the participants in all the camps said they will use the knowledge acquired through the camp at school.
- The camps increase the motivation to learn science: 50% of the participants said they would like to take part in extra-curricular science activity; 72% of the elementary school pupils (4th-6th grade) said the camps aroused their curiosity about science; 58% of the junior high pupils (7th-9th grade) said the camp made them interested in science courses of study; 77% of the high school pupils (10th-12th grade) said the camps inspired them to study science at university.

Comparison between 2007 and 2008

Comparing the findings for each camp, it was found that the following camps improved in 5 satisfaction parameters or more: Hatzeva, Ilan Ramon center, Migal, Tel Aviv University, Nitzana, Revivim. Camps which went down in more than 5 parameters are: Sde Boker, Beit Yatziv, Ben Gurion University.

Implementation of the recommendations of 2007

The findings of the summary report for 2007 were presented to the director of the program, representatives of the Rashi Foundation and the Education Ministry, and the directors of the summer camps. Most of the practical recommendations were implemented: approving the pedagogic program by the Education Ministry, improving the physical conditions (mainly the

food), and adding recreational activities in university camps. The recommendations regarding the introduction of summer activity into the school program and the allocation of "quotas" to targeted schools were not implemented, since the Education Ministry issued a tender for Madarom in 2008 and started to operate with its approval only in February 2008.

Main problems in 2008

1. Only 14 centers operated out of 21
2. A small number of participants from localities ranking low on the socio-economic scale: Mitzpe Ramon, Ofakim, Yeruham, Kiryat Malachi and Netivot

In summary, most of the goals and objectives of the program were achieved: a number of participants over the plan, high satisfaction among the participants and increase in motivation to study science among more than 50% of the pupils. On the other hand, the participation of pupils from localities with a weak socioeconomic status was low.

Recommendations and directions for 2009

1. Defining goals and meeting them, including criteria for the target population
2. Instructing the directors of the camps to bring a specified number of participants from localities outside Be'er Sheva with a low socioeconomic ranking
3. Examining the possibility of strengthening the connection between the year-round activity in science centers and the summer activity
4. Continuing to increase the involvement of the Education Ministry through the approval of the pedagogic programs of the summer camps
5. Adding new centers of activity, introducing new topics of study and upgrading the learning environment in existing centers
6. Reinforcing the new center at the Manof Youth Village, which will serve pupils from the north (considering a unique veterinary camp with year-round activity)
7. Recruiting additional funding sources in order to increase the number of participants
8. Improving the physical conditions and particularly the food at Sde Boker and Nitzana