

## Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives

November 2015

### Educational Communities

Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives is currently partnering with 27 communities around the country, impacting lives of over 1,300 educators and 9,600 youth at-risk.

Out of a total of 27 educational communities, Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives is working with:

- 10 youth villages
- 14 schools
- 3 residential communities

Furthermore:

- 15 communities are currently in the implementation process (4 youth villages, 9 schools, and 2 residential communities)
- 12 are graduate communities (6 youth villages, 5 schools, 1 residential community)

Success in working with a range of communities and populations has shown how relevant and adaptable the methodology can be to meeting the unique needs of each community

### The Village Way Implementation Process

The Village Way Educational Institute facilitators work closely with educators in each community through its multi-year implementation model. Much of the added value of our implementation process is the rich educational materials developed and used by our Village Way Educational Institute.

The Educational Institute works with its partnering educational communities on two levels: by influencing the individual **identity** of each educator, so that each one will have the tools and outlook to become a meaningful adult in the lives of the at-risk youth in their care. They also work on the level of the **community**, by creating a holistic annual work plan and traditions that change the educational activities that are provided to the youth in the community.

### Trailblazer's Course

This year YOEI has reintroduced its Trailblazer's Course for emerging leaders in partnering educational communities, now in cooperation with Tel Aviv University's Continuing Education Unit. A hand-picked group of community representatives from

across our movement has been selected, based on recommendations from school principals and village directors. Every two weeks participants meet for day-long active learning sessions on theory and practical applications. This program aims to create a professional framework for learning and developing leadership abilities while deepening the participants' understanding of the Village Way methodology. Participants will become leaders in their individual communities, as they must develop and run a new educational program in their community as a part of this course. They will also serve as leaders in the wider Village Way educational movement, as they work together to lead programs on a wider scale, such as developing and leading forum meetings, publishing an e-newsletter, taking part in the annual conference and publishing in the Village Way portal.

### **Recent Examples: Identity of the Educator**

At an end-of-year seminar over the summer, Ruti, the guidance counselor at Beit Shean Ort technology, described part of the impact that the process has had on the educators: "We have learned to give a place for the stories that the children bring with them – their personal story, family story, community story. **Today there is not a single child at our school who has not been asked what his dream is.** That comes from the Village Way."

At Hadassah Neurim Youth Village the staff recently went through a Beit Midrash learning session on graduates. One of the informal educators described the impact of that session for her, "We have a girl in our care who in 10 days (since the beginning of the school year) has succeeded in bringing us to the edge of despair. As a result of the Beit Midrash activity, **I feel I have become re-energized, and now I can go back to that girl who has been giving us trouble and work with her from a new place of strength.**"

Orit, a teacher at Marom Akko High School, recently looked back on how she has changed as an educator, through the experiences of the programs, together with Village Way learning and awareness. "The school choir illuminated the students for me in a new, unknown light. I felt that I was different with them after I heard them sing," she said. **"Since then I insist on attending every ceremony and event even if I am not involved with planning it at all – because it makes me a different educator."**

At Yad Shapira High School last spring, the school administrator opened up his personal story to the students in a daring new way. As a part of school activities surrounding Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day) he shared with the 12<sup>th</sup> graders his experiences being seriously injured during the first Lebanon War, and his story of physical and emotional recovery. This very difficult and personal story had an immense impact on the students, who were exposed to a new side of the school staff members, now feel a personal connection with him as a meaningful adult in their lives, and see him as a role model for bravery and overcoming obstacles.

### **Graduate Communities**

As the number of graduate communities continues to grow each year, Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives is developing new methods to keep these communities active in

the Village Way educational movement. These communities can serve as wonderful role models and resources for other communities in the movement, but ensuring knowledge sharing and participation in Village Way activities is vital. This year, a facilitator from the Educational Institute was appointed as the graduate community coordinator, who will encourage their involvement in forum meetings, conferences, content development, and intercommunity activities. The facilitator will also serve as a contact for support in times of difficulty.

## **Evaluating Success**

Our third-party evaluator, the Tel Hai College Evaluation and Measurement Unit completed its first annual evaluation over the summer months. In the summary of its findings, the researchers wrote as follows:

**"Summing up the evaluation process**, high levels of satisfaction were found among the various communities in relation to the work with the team of the Village Way Educational Institute. Educators attributed significant value for working with the staff of the Village Way Educational Institute. Working with the Institute creates new educational opportunities for the community, such that were unavailable before. Results obtained from the attitudes questionnaire indicate high relevance of the educational perception for educators.

In addition, in 2015, the Tel Hai College Evaluation and Measurement Unit conducted a graduate's survey measuring the impact on graduates of Village Way communities. This survey reported that **majority of the graduates (96%) work, study or are in military or national/civil service – on a normative societal path despite their difficult backgrounds.**