



HOW IS ISRAEL PREPARING FOR EXPANDING THE CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE?

Dinner with experts from industry, the military and higher education to discuss how they prepare for a reality in which Israel will have far more students graduating high school with excellent science achievements.

NOVEMBER 2, 2016, 19:00-21:00, TERASA RESTAURANT, MENACHEM BEGIN HERITAGE CENTER

In 2012, the number of graduates of five-unit mathematics matriculation tracks dipped below 9,000, a sharp decrease of some 40 percent since 2006. Concurrently, universities widely reported on a drop in students' over-all preparedness for academic work while the high-tech sector complained of a lack of skilled labor. Research groups made gloomy predictions for the future of the "startup nation" should the situation continue. The government even discussed a proposal to import engineers from India.

In 2016, as the result of a joint program, the trend had been reversed, and Israel has returned to the high recorded in 2006 with 13,000 high school students passing the five-unit mathematics matriculation examination. The government has set a goal for 2019 of 18,000 students. This academic year, there are already 15,000 twelfth-graders in the five-unit mathematics track. In physics, too, there has been an increase of students in the five-unit track after a decade of attrition and inaction, and new cyber classes are opening all over the country.

At dinner, we will speak with women and men who are intimately familiar with the systems that absorb high school graduates after matriculation – the army, higher education, and the workforce. We will try to learn from them whether they felt and still feel a sense of crisis, on what evidence this is based, and if and how they are preparing for the quantitative and qualitative growth in the next few years.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Did the army feel the drop in the number of graduates of five-unit tracks? If so – in what way? Did the army readjust its training tracks as a result?
2. Do the universities already feel a drop in the number or quality of applicants, or has the media campaign encouraged more young people to apply? Are the universities prepared for an increase in the number of applicants we can expect to see from 2020?
3. How does industry explain the lack of engineers and programmers? What is being done to handle the shortfall? Will there be enough jobs for a larger influx of candidates?
4. Have the army, universities, and industrial sector engaged in systematic planning that takes the changes in high school graduates of 5-units into account? Do they need the foundation's help with this?

PARTICIPANTS

SHAHAR **BAR OR**, CEO "Sandisk" Israel

MENAHEM **BEN SASSON**, President, Hebrew University

TOMER **GOLAN**, Former senior in 8200 Unit, Director of program unit, Branco Weiss Institute

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IRAD **YAVNEH**, Dean, Faculty of Computer Science, the Technion

YAFFA **ZILBERSHATS**, Chairperson, the Council for Higher Education