School As A Framework For Changing Adolescents At Risk [1]

Judi Goldenberg, Eti Ornan, Shlomo Romi

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Introduction

This chapter presents a unique educational model of care for youth at risk and describes the impact of the Menifa intervention program on the youth who participate in it. The model supports holistic activities within the school premises; it views the school framework as the basis for working with these students, as well as the way to retain them in the education system. This model is based on a multidisciplinary approach that combines emotional care, education and teaching.

The welfare, education, legal and volunteer aid systems in Israel recognize the need to help youth at risk and treat them. Such assistance is required to return the youth to a path of study and proper functioning, stopping the process of their deterioration to crime or social isolation. Many funds are allocated and a variety of programs have been established to identify, monitor, educate, care and assist students who are at risk. These programs treat youth at various stages of the process of deterioration - a minority are school-based programs of the Ministry of Education, and most of them are programs of informal education under the management of local authorities or voluntary and social elements. In addition, there are government assistance activities (of the Ministry of Social Affairs) for needy families, as well as programs of "regular visits" utilizing the legal system to help students expelled from all the other systems.

After describing the educational-therapeutic model of Menifa, research findings are presented here of the study of the sources of the program's impact on young people who took part in it. This study was based on in-depth interviews with graduates of the program, as well as with staff and officials.

Youth in Distress in Israel - Research and Educational-Therapeutic Programs

Many studies have been conducted in Israel about youth at risk. The study by Cahn-Strawczynski, Dolev and Shemesh (1999) is also relevant today, although quite a few years have passed since it was carried out. The study analyzed the characteristics of a broad population of detached youth in Israel being treated in the Youth Development Units. According to a survey

conducted by the researchers, in 1999 there were registered at the Ministry of Youth Development Division of Education 13,054 young people - Jews and Arabs, including both those whose parents were born in the country and those whose parents immigrated to Israel from other countries (mostly from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia).

Romi and Getahun (2000) examined the characteristics of the marginalized youth of Ethiopian origin. The importance of the study is its implications on the type of intervention required for this population: the customary procedure of removing troubled youth from parents and family misses the mark in this case.

Romi (2007) reviews the development of services for at-risk youth in the Israeli education system. He notes that there are two main types of services: (a) Services that are part of the court system - their authority stems from the law, and the court system refers the clients to the services (Juvenile Court, Juvenile Probation Service, Youth Protection Authority, and social workers); (b) services that are part of social services - their authority stems from a social-welfare view that is partially anchored by law (such as the Department for the Advancement of Youth of the Ministry of Education and the Youth Service in the Ministry of Welfare). The criteria for referrals to social services are not entirely clear, and therefore the acceptance of youths for these services for the purposes of treatment is characterized by considerable heterogeneity.

In Israel, there are many programs for youth at risk, but there is no single framework that is "responsible for them all" (Gottlieb and Porat Brainin, 1987). The system of services for youth in distress in Israel offers an array of services that are provided by various frameworks - government agencies, local authorities and voluntary organizations. The education system offers programs to improve the level of achievement in the elementary and middle schools supervised by the Ministry of Education. In addition, it provides support services given to students within schools by professionals - counselors, psychologists and truant officers. In some of the technology schools there are educational frameworks and programs sponsored by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and those are designed for youth who dropped out of the regular education system. Likewise, there are programs and other frameworks for children and youth at risk, which provide more "specific" education, for example the Hila program for completing education. There is a range of services available to "detached" and distressed youth - whether they attend school or have dropped out of school (Aharoni, 2005).

In order to meet the many and complex needs of children at risk, especially those at high risk of disconnection and dropping out of school, intervention programs need to address the many aspects - both those concerning the teaching skills of school teachers and those concerned with aspects of the organization of school activities (Cohen-Navot, 2003). Cohen-Navot (ibid.) reviews existing programs in Israel for dropout prevention, such as the "Adam", "Zinuk" and "Ksharim" programs. These are based on the principles of the educational intervention program NEE (new educational environment) for students whose learning achievements are low and "concealed dropouts" (Cohen-Navot and Benda, 2003).

The Ministry of Social Affairs provides services that are different from those that the Ministry of Education provides: If the Ministry of Education focuses on assisting via study and social activities, the Ministry of Social Affairs offers therapeutic services. In addition to these services by government ministries, a range of local and voluntary organizations offer services for defined populations (such as drug users, people who suffer from eating disorders or counseling in matters associated with pregnancy), including general advice and support. The services for youth offenders are provided by the Juvenile Probation Service and the Youth Protection Authority, two units operating in the Ministry of Welfare (Dolev, Cohen, Ben Rabi, Trachtenberg and Barnea, 1998).

Jacoby Silberberg (2007) notes that Miller, Snow and Lauer (2004) proposed an out-of-school learning program called OST (Out of School Time). Within the framework of this plan, small study groups operate and these allow for the provision of personal assistance to students while reinforcing their learning skills. In this program, the learning goals were focused and taught in short time intervals, and the multi-age social encounter increased the self-confidence of the students. One of the large-scale programs in this area, Migrant Education Program (MEP), was carried out in the United States in 2002; this program was designed for youth that are the children of immigrants, and the slogan was NCLB : "No child left behind" (Duron 2004). Another study conducted at the University of Western Sydney, Australia (Vickers, Harris, & McCarthy 2004) encouraged students at risk to interact with the local community. The results showed that youth at risk who were expected to drop out of school at an early stage became part of the learning community and the entire community (from a social standpoint).

The question of whether "connectedness" to the community or school is a means which helps at-risk youth was further examined in an additional program that advocates the promotion of relations between the student and the school, other students and teachers. Studies show that the PBIS program improves the organizational environment of schools, reduces behavioral problems and results in improved academic achievement and decreased dropout rates (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, & McNeely 2008). Studies conducted in Brazil, the Caribbean, Mexico, Honduras and Chile have shown that if students feel "connected" to their schools their motivation to study and participation in class grows, there is an increase in the academic level of the students along with a higher proportion completing their studies successfully and a decrease in the extent of inappropriate behavior such as absenteeism, violence, bullying and vandalism (Blum, 2006; Cunningham, Cohan, Naudeau, & McGinnis, 2008; Cunningham, McGinnis, Garvia 2008, Verdu, Teslinc, & Verner).

Moore (2006) presents an educational approach to psychosocial treatment of at-risk youth. This approach applies knowledge from various disciplines and combines the concepts, principles, methods, strategies and practical tools for the promotion of the multi-value activities for students in need. According to research findings, the educational work of educators and social workers dealing with students at risk has three main characteristics, and the combination between them creates the psycho-social educational approach: (a) personal educational relationship of the caregiver to each student; (b) creating optimal rapport between caregivers and students; (c) adapting the pedagogy to the needs of the students.

Razar (2009) describes a dynamic working model system which is implemented in schools and institutions of youth at risk. The goal is to help the educational staffs to create mechanisms within the school system that will encompass the already marginalized students and provide a real answer to their problems and needs.

Almost all the programs presented in this section have a common denominator: participation of the educational staff in the interventions that take place in the schools, creating good relationships between school staff and students at risk and focusing on multidisciplinary treatment - both the student's learning needs and their personal and social needs. The following describes Menifa, a program developed to facilitate the provision of multidisciplinary support to at-risk youth within the school.

Menifa

In 2004, the Menifa program began to operate to prevent youth at risk from dropping out of educational institutions by providing both educational and emotional reinforcement. This program operates in accordance with a comprehensive educational approach (holistic) in the areas of instruction, treatment and education. One type of intervention that the program offers is for marginalized youth who do not attend a recognized educational institution ("Menifa to the Height"): Youth, sometimes "literally from the streets", are gathered at a certain school in Jerusalem where efforts begin to return them to accepted educational frameworks. Another type of intervention represents what is happening in most of the Menifa centers and can be seen in the principle model of the program: treatment of youth registered as students in a regular school who are in the process of concealed dropping out.

Youth who participate in the program study in a separate class in the school. A coordinator, dedicated teachers and a team of social workers, therapeutic consultants and psychologists from Menifa support the students, and in accordance with needs provide services to several schools in the area. The role of the coordinator is to treat all students' needs, including social activities, enrichment and dealing with issues concerning the student's home, the student's family and the student's schedule. The coordinator deals only in care and help for the student and is not part of the teaching staff. Most of the teachers in the Menifa centers are students studying for a teaching degree who are in the fourth year of their studies, their internship year. The teachers are given guidance and coaching in teaching at-risk youth and participate in continuing education programs on this subject during the school year.

Each year, students learn only a few subjects out of those appearing in the curriculum for matriculation exams. Learning is done in small groups, while providing individual assistance. It should be noted that while each Menifa center acts in accordance with similar principles, there is unique interpretation of these rules in each educational institution; the Interpretation of the principles reflects the construction of the delineation of the functions and the informal hierarchy of Menifa position holders. The two main objectives of the program are dropout

prevention of youth at risk (through implementing behavioral norms and normative reasoning) and ensuring regular school attendance.

Methodology

The study described in this chapter was based on two research methods: (a) quantitative approach - this approach was used to examine the effect of participation in the program and to measure the change in the students as a result; (b) a qualitative approach - this approach was used to analyze the influences of Menifa. For this purpose, personal interviews were conducted with some of the graduates of the program, with members of the educational-treatment staff and with teachers. A qualitative analysis of the process of change in students since joining the program is also carried out.

Participants

As noted above, the study was based on two approaches - quantitative and qualitative. Each of these methods of investigation has different goals and accordingly, each examines a different target population.

The quantitative portion of the study focused on 184 boys and girls in grades X-XII who in the 2007-2008 academic year learned in the Menifa program, as well as on 11 coordinators who worked as part of this program. The study was conducted in 11 schools across the country within which the Menifa program operated (each of the schools had a Menifa coordinator).

The qualitative part of the study interviewed 24 participants who took part in Menifa during the 2007-2008 academic year. The interviewees were in five groups (numbers in parentheses indicate the number of members in each group): Members of the management and other senior staff in Menifa (4) ; members of the educational-therapeutic staff which guides the students - social workers, therapy counselors and psychologists (5); Menifa program coordinators in schools (5), the designated teachers (usually teaching interns) of the students in the Menifa program(6), graduates who completed their studies in the Menifa program in previous years (4).

Approach A - Quantitative Analysis

Research Tools

For each student two evaluation metrics were prepared - academics observation pages and behavioral observation pages - based on data collected three times in the course of a year. The observation pages were prepared by members of the Menifa program management in order to assess the students. For several years these pages have been used in a random and inconsistent manner. In the present study, two types of observation pages were completed for most of the students on three occasions: the beginning, middle and end of the school year. Two evaluators filled in the observation pages: the students themselves (self-report) and the coordinator of the

Menifa program at the school in which the student studied. The scores in the observation pages ranged from 1 to 5 (5 is the maximum score).

The behavioral observation page indicators included: truancy, social functioning, study skills, responsibility and focus on goals, relation with parents, self-esteem and student satisfaction. The academics observation page indicators included: reading comprehension, knowledge of concepts, academic formulation, answers to questions on matriculation exams, verbal skills and writing skills. Two assessors (the student and the coordinator) determined the scores, so that there were 12 "behavioral measure" scores and 12 "academics index" score each time. Completion of the questionnaires on three occasions during the course of the year can thus result in a maximum of 72 scores for each student, but not always, as not all the indicators were necessarily scored each time (this was taken into account when analyzing the data).

In order to divide the six behavioral indicators to defined areas of content, factor analysis was used (principle component analysis) via varimax with orthogonal rotation. This analysis found that two factors explain 76% of the variance:

A. Self discipline - this factor includes the measures: truancy, study habits and responsibility (Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.79, 2.9 = eigenvalue).

B. Social-emotional resilience - this factor includes measures of social functioning, family relationship with the parents, self-esteem and satisfaction of the student (Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.78, 1.4 = eigenvalue).

Loadings of the six indicators included in both of these factors are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Factor analysis of the evaluations of the coordinators in the behavioral indicators at the beginning of the year

Topics	Loading of explanatory elements	
	1 Self discipline	2 Social-emotional resilience
Truancy	.861	-.033
Study habits	.855	.107
Acceptance of responsibility and focus on goals	.806	.280
Social functioning	.358	.799
Self-esteem and student satisfaction	-.167	.797
Relationship with parents	.268	.545

In addition, an analysis of the elements of the six factors of the academics assessments of the coordinators was carried out. In this analysis it was found that one key factor explains 65% of the variance. This factor was verbal skills, and included the metrics: reading comprehension, knowledge of concepts, academic formulation, answers to questions on matriculation exams,

verbal skills and writing skills. (Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.84, 3.9 = eigenvalue). Loadings of the six indicators included in this factor are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor analysis of the evaluations of the coordinators for academics indicators at the beginning of the year

Index	Loading
Reading Comprehension	.774
Knowledge of concepts	.825
Academic formulation	.860
Matriculation exams questions answered	.821
Verbal skills	.752
Writing skills	.817

After these findings were obtained, three-factor scores were calculated (total of all sub-scores recorded on the observation pages), and subsequently the links between these three grades were examined. Correlation coefficients (Pearson correlations) among the three factors suggest that there are significant, though not strong, positive relationships between two behavioral factors: Self-discipline and social-emotional resilience r=0.50, p<.001). This means that there is a connection between these two subject areas, although this relationship is not strong. In contrast, there is no statistically significant association between socio-emotional resilience and the third factor, verbal skills (r = -0.02, n.s.). This finding indicates that the content area of the third factor is unique and distinct. A weak link was found between self-discipline and verbal skills (r=0.19, p<.05).

It is clear from the above examination that the three factor scores are quite independent measures. The strength of the connection between behavioral measures is moderate, while the academics index is not associated with this content area and is an independent factor which represents the cognitive-academic area. In the context of this research, the significance is that there may be differences in the assessment of the student in each element, and the student's assessment in one index (factor score) does not indicate the student's assessment in a different index.

The links between the assessments of the coordinators of the three elements and the self assessment of the students of these factors were examined using Pearson correlations. This test found very strong and significant relationships between the assessments (r=0.64-0.75, p<.001).

Findings

As noted above, the three element scores on three dates during the course of the school year were calculated for each student: at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. The observation pages were filled by the students themselves and by the Menifa program

coordinator in the school, such that at each date there were three factor scores reported by the student and three factor scores reported by the coordinator.

Comparing the means of the estimates at the beginning of the year, mid-year and year-end

A comparison between the student's element scores in each period indicates a change in the students during their participation in Menifa - both as perceived by the program coordinator and as perceived by the students themselves. Table 3 below shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the assessments of all students in the Menifa program at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

Table 3: Comparison between assessments of Menifa program coordinators of the students and the students' self-assessments on the three dates:

		Assessment of Coordinators			Assessment of Students		
		Mean	S.D.	Total Assessments	Mean	S.D.	Total Assessments
Self discipline	Start of year	3.26	1.06	157	3.65	0.94	129
	Middle of year	3.60	0.97	107	3.95	0.88	106
	End of year	3.54	1.00	108	4.02	0.87	90
Social-emotional resilience	Start of year	3.71	0.83	159	3.82	0.93	130
	Middle of year	3.84	0.82	107	4.00	0.77	106
	End of year	3.73	0.84	108	4.13	0.76	90
Verbal skills	Start of year	3.08	0.90	103	3.80	0.68	90
	Middle of year	3.36	0.71	69	3.86	0.88	69
	End of year	3.65	0.75	114	4.12	0.62	97

A review of the table finds that at the beginning of the year, the average evaluation of the program coordinators ranged from 3.08 to 3.71. These averages rose slightly later over the course of the year, and at the end of the school year there was significantly marked change in the assessments of the coordinators on two factors: self-discipline (up from 3.26 to 3.54) and verbal skills (up from 3.08 to 3.65).

The means of the self-esteem of the students ranged from 3.65 to 3.82 at the start of the year, namely slightly higher than the average assessments of the coordinators. Most of their assessment averages rose during the year, and at the end of the school year there was a clearly marked change in students' self-esteem in three factors: self-discipline (up from 3.65 to 4.02), social-emotional resilience (up from 3.82 to 4.13) and verbal skills (up from 3.80 to 4.12).

Each of the factors was analyzed via ANOVA with repeated measurements which compared the assessments obtained at the beginning of the year, the middle and the end. In this analysis, we compared the student's scores at three different times and subsequently examined statistical significance of differences in the scores during the year. The analysis was performed for all

assessments of the coordinators (three factor scores), as well as for each student's self-esteem assessments (the three factor scores).

For the purposes of the analysis of variance of the means, only data for students whose assessments were recorded in the questionnaires in all three time periods were included. Table 4 below therefore shows only the means and standard deviations, as well as statistically significant differences.

Table 4: ANOVA with repeated measurements comparing the assessments of Menifa program coordinators of students and the students' self-assessments on three dates (only for students having all three assessments recorded)

			Mean	S.D.	F	Total Assessments
Assessments of coordinators	Self-discipline	Start of year	3.20	1.09	8.96*	64
		Mid-year	3.62	.98		64
		End of year	3.60	.89		64
	Social-emotional Resilience	Start of year	3.86	.73	n.s.	64
		Mid-year	3.93	.81		64
		End of year	3.86	.75		64
	Verbal skills	Start of year	2.74	.56	40.9*	28
		Mid-year	3.57	.56		28
		End of year	3.52	.66		28
Assessments of students	Self-discipline	Start of year	3.72	.95	16.29*	49
		Mid-year	4.18	.89		49
		End of year	4.18	.88		49
	Social-emotional Resilience	Start of year	3.94	.83	8.57*	49
		Mid-year	4.33	.72		49
		End of year	4.18	.77		49
	Verbal skills	Start of year	3.77	.65	13.79*	28
		Mid-year	4.30	.43		28
		End of year	4.20	.43		28

* $p < 0.01$

Assessments of Coordinators

ANOVA analysis with repeated measurements of the assessments of the coordinators of the self-discipline factor found significant differences between the three time periods (F=8.96, p<.001). A post-hoc test using Bonferroni found that the differences are due to a significant increase (effect size is 0.20, p<.01) of the mid-year scores (mean: 3.62) compared to the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.20), as well as a significant increase (effect size is .20, p<.01) of scores at the end of the year (mean: 3.60) as compared to the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.20). No significant difference was found between mid-year and end of the year scores.

ANOVA with repeated measurements of assessments of verbal skills found significant differences between the three dates (F=40.9, p<.001). A post-hoc test using Bonferroni found that these differences are due to a significant increase (effect size is 0.60, p<.000) of the mid-year scores (mean: 3.57) as compared to the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 2.74), as well as a significant increase (effect size is 0.66, p<.000) of end of the year scores (mean: 3.52) as compared with the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 2.74). No significant difference between the mid-year and end-year scores was found.

This finding may indicate that there is a positive initial impact of the program on the student, an influence expressed by an improvement in the assessment of the student at the end of the first half of the school year; but that toward the end of school year it appears that a drop in tension along with the set school routine serves to moderate this improvement, such that there is no further improvement in the assessment of the student at the end of the school year.

Assessments of Students

ANOVA with repeated measurements of the students' self assessment of the self-discipline factor found significant differences among the three assessment times (F=16.29, p<.001). A post-hoc test using Bonferroni found that the differences are due to a significant increase (effect size 0.24, p<.000) of the mid-year scores (mean: 4.18) as compared to the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.72), as well as a significant increase (effect size 0.24, p<.000) of scores at the end of the year (mean: 4.18) as compared with the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.72). No significant difference between the mid-year and end-year scores was found.

ANOVA with repeated measurements of self assessments of social-emotional resilience found significant differences between the three time periods (F=8.57, p<.001). A post-hoc test using Bonferroni found the differences are due to a significant increase (effect size 0.24, p<.000) of the mid-year scores (mean: 4.33) as compared with the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.94). No significant differences between the scores at the beginning of the year and the scores at the end of the year or between the middle of the year and the end of the year were found.

ANOVA with repeated measurements of self assessments of verbal skills found significant differences between the three time periods (F=13.79, p<.000). A post-hoc test using Bonferroni found that the differences are due to a significant increase (effect size is 0.43, p<000) of the mid-year scores (mean 4.30) as compared to the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.77), as well as a significant increase (effect size is .36, p<.005) of scores at the end of the year (mean: 4.20) as compared with the scores at the beginning of the year (mean: 3.77). No significant difference between mid-year and end of the year scores were found. The following figures present the assessments of all of the students in the Menifa program.
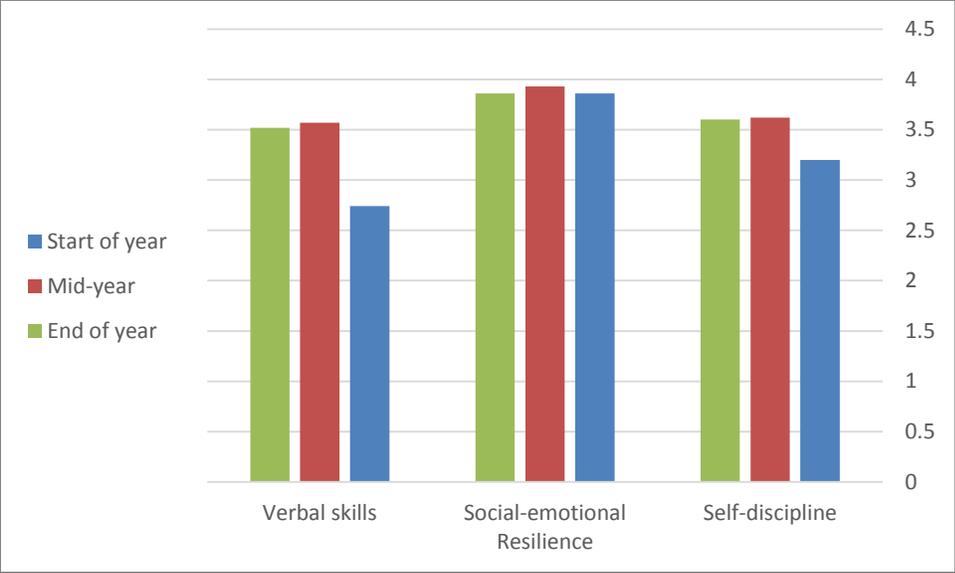
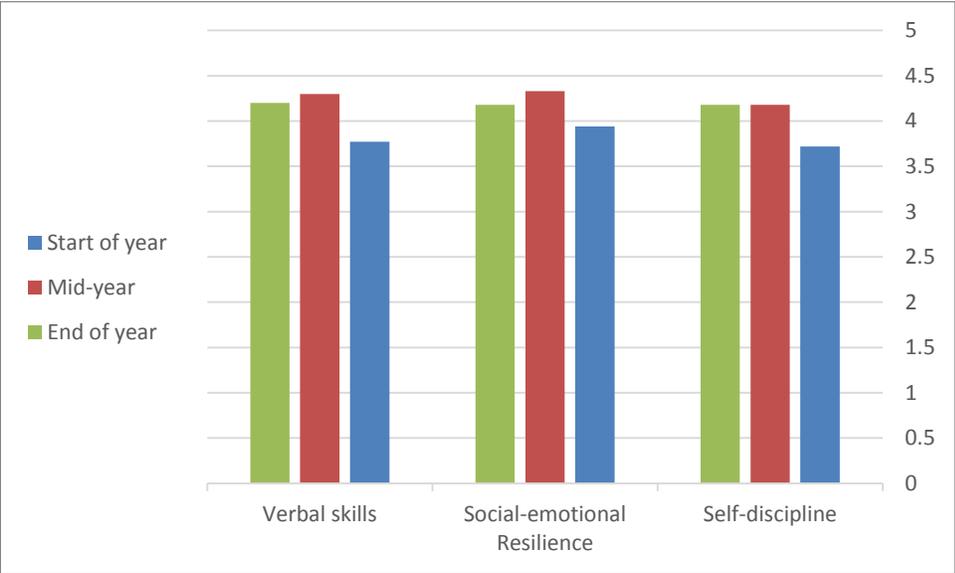Figure 1: **Assessments of Menifa coordinators – comparison of means**

Figure 2: **Self assessment of the students in the Menifa program – comparison of means**

There is a critical comment to be raised regarding how the quantitative data was collected for this study. The assessments of the students were collected by the Menifa staff itself and not by independent unrelated researchers. There may have been an influence on the nature of the answers and on the extent that the students were apt to provide "socially desirable" responses; they know that they are expected to improve, so their inclination is in this direction. In such a situation it is impossible to avoid the influence of the coordinators on the answers.

Approach B - Qualitative Interpretative Analysis of Personal Interviews

Analysis of the interviews is designed to identify the sources of the impact of the Menifa program and examine how this is reflected in the statements of the participants - students, alumni and program staff – in personal interviews with them.

Research and Analytic Tools

The research tool in the qualitative approach was personal interviews with five groups: members of management and other officials in the Menifa program; educational-therapeutic staff members of the program (social workers, therapeutic advisors and psychologists) who guide the students; Menifa program coordinators in the schools; designated teachers of students in the Menifa program (usually teaching interns); and graduates who completed their studies in the Menifa program in previous years.

For each of the five populations a unique interview was designed that included questions relevant to the interviewee and to their connection to the Menifa program. The interviewers were "professional interviewers" with master's degrees in education. The interviews were based on a guide written by researchers (in accordance with the purposes of the research and in consultation with the coordinator of the Menifa program), and they were recorded and transcribed for the purposes of content analysis. All interviews conducted were subject to qualitative-interpretative content analysis, analysis of which considers the words and descriptions of the interviewees as a reflection of their experiences, knowledge and beliefs (Shkedi, 2011, 2003). The researchers focused on "what the interviewees said" and "how they said it", and transcripts of the interviews were a "window that allows a look into the human experience" (Shkedi, 2003: 94).

Content analysis and formulation of themes were divided into two phases. In the first phase, content analysis was conducted for each of the sub-groups of respondents. The many issues raised and expressed statements of the interviewees were classified into six themes that expressed the point of view of each of the sub-groups: (a) The organizational structure of Menifa - Project Manager, coordinators and holders of therapeutic roles; (b) The secret of the success of studies in Menifa, according to the coordinators, graduates and therapeutic advisors; (c) Change that took place in the students as a result of their studies at Menifa; (d) Informal education in Menifa; (e) The vehicle of linguistic design - metaphors and contrasts; (f) The weaknesses of the program. In the second stage, the six themes in the first classification were reduced to three themes: (a) The educational structure-treatment; (b) Working principles of Menifa in formal education and informal education; (c) Sources of influence and the factors that contribute to the change in students as a result of their participation in the program. The linguistic aspect of the interviews was also analyzed and it was found in this investigation that the principle means of linguistic structure of the interviews were metaphors and the presentation of contrasts.

The qualitative data analysis was completed after the three themes were formulated, the relations between them were delineated and "a meaningful picture" was created (Shkedi, 2003: 95). One of the researchers carried out the content analysis and their validity was established by two other researchers. The process of formulating the themes was conducted jointly by the three researchers.

Theme 1: Educational-Therapeutic Structure

The selections below present part of what was said by the interviewees regarding the structure of the program and the role of officials in the Menifa program: program director, therapeutic consultants, coordinators, psychologists, teachers and their advisors.

The Program Director is at the top of the pyramid. According to the senior therapeutic counselor, the director "came up with a great idea, led on this issue, got it up and running and extended it". Graduates of the program mentioned the strong influence of the director, especially at the stage of joining the program: "I heard about the Menifa program from a friend who is a "town square person"[…] One day the friend told me: You have to come with me to the director, I want you to at least meet her. Then, the next day, I started to learn". The director applied pedagogical authority ("forced me to achieve 85 on the pre-tests. If not, she won't submit me for the matriculation exams"), yet at the same time participated in informal activities ("every Thursday pizza in town"). According to the therapeutic educational staff, the director of Menifa created the concept, initiated the recruitment of staff, guides the team and directs the development of the project. According to the program graduates, the director acts as "instant recruiter" who manages to bring girls from the street and from the town square to the classroom. It appears that the director of the program has a big impact on the students at the stage of entry to the program, as well as the educational aspect and informal aspect. Descriptions of her performance indicate that the role of the director is one of the factors of influence which prevent students from dropping out.

The therapeutic advisors (social workers, coordinators and psychologist) worked in a "nationwide distribution". The significance of the role of the therapeutic counselor became clear after analysis of the interviews with field personnel, with graduates and one of the therapeutic advisors (most senior): "I support the transition, the staff; Even the coordinator himself and the teachers". This therapeutic adviser stressed that "we are developing another option as to how to look - how to look differently on the student, to somehow accept him and start from that place". That same consultant failed to articulate precisely his job description, but instead provided details of himself via descriptions of his involvement in 'life skills' group therapy: "the detailed involvement of the coordinator, who I sit with once a week, and the support of the staff at staff meetings or regional seminars, thus closing the circle".
According to the therapeutic educational staff, the impact of the program derives from its holistic approach and cooperation among staff members. One of the senior advisors claimed that the "secret of the matter is in its system which provides an envelope that a regular school cannot provide – both the academic and the therapeutic elements [...] a total envelope that allows the child not to drop out and not to give up". In this context it should be noted that

management itself has chosen to describe the program as enveloping ("Menifa envelopes"), and therefore it is no wonder that according to that same advisor, "the coordinator is here to "wrap" them here [...] the overall envelope provides that the child does not drop out, does not give up".

The two therapeutic consultants in the field also emphasized the importance of the holistic work of program officials and especially their own work: "We have created a triangle of the student, his parents and school staff. I ran workshops [...] and the same workshop was heard by the child, heard by the mother and the father and heard by the teacher"; "We are doing extended workshops and joint conversations with the participation of the girl and her parents." The therapeutic advisors support the remarks of the others and maintain that it is necessary to have the "development of a treatment plan for each girl: definition of roles, placement of clear limits and learning habits". The joint work in teams is very important. One of the therapeutic field advisers asserted that "I strongly believe that the individual creates the group and there are therapeutic counselors who very much believe that you see the individuals through the group: 'open table', workshops in the field, the class as a group". Also the veteran therapeutic advisor stressed the importance of teamwork: "I'm sure it's something that especially promotes this process. This is teamwork, as people are aware that the power is the power of the group [...] the young people are more willing to learn from each other". It is therefore possible to determine that the holistic vision of the therapeutic consultants is also long-term. As one of them put it, "you have to think carefully how to grow their wings so that they can deal with the rest of their lives".

The coordinators function in the schools as therapeutic educators of the students in the Menifa classes, and they deal with everything associated with the students. The director of the program defined their role as "making the coordinator into the class educator is a revolution". Interviews with the coordinators found they noted their multiple roles: "I am collecting all the information [...] check attendance every morning [...] phone home to clarify absences". One of the coordinators even accompanied students for their most intimate medical treatments. Another coordinator said that she and the other coordinators are expected to carry out the following: "many personal conversations, help in the library, guidance when necessary, telephone contact with home and parents". From an analysis of the interviews it develops that the coordinators deal with ethical dilemmas and conflicts in their work with the students. Such dilemmas are a matter of setting boundaries - both in the field of studies and in personal behavior. In the area of studies, the teacher is the one who sets the boundaries: "there is a teacher who sets her limits, who says, 'I cannot concentrate when I hear your music'". In contrast, "on the level of personal behavior, both the teachers and coordinators act in the setting of norms of behavior".

The descriptions of the graduates reinforce the findings on the matter of the coordinators and according to them it can be determined that the coordinators have an educational and learning impact on the students in the Menifa program. For example, in response to the question from the interviewer: "who in the staff had the greatest influence on you", one of the graduates cited the coordinator: "Every problem in life we were going to talk to her." The coordinator also initiates meetings: "If I did not speak for a month with her, she would be concerned, set a

meeting with us, taking us somewhere to talk." Another graduate summarizes the overall feeling of the graduates: "the coordinator is an angel. She's amazing. She saves us. You can talk to her about anything, about any personal problems, emotional, family [...] she will always relate to it, give you her heart, not give up on the girl, call in the morning to wake her up if she skips."

In these contexts the graduates chose to use the metaphor "rescue": "her soul was cast aside and rotten. If not for Menifa she would probably be cast aside someplace and just waste her life"; "I do not know if it saved her, because I do not know what would have happened if I had not come"; "Most girls do not go out with matriculation in Menifa, they do not come from a background that they can. This is rescue".

Even the coordinators used derivatives of the word 'rescue': "The system vomited her up and threw her somewhere. Now the girls say that Menifa rescued them. That they had no option to learn anywhere. Somehow Menifa saved them"; "We saved some of them and we are advancing some of them [...] This saved the girls [...] Whoever saves one life in Israel [...]"; In response to the interviewer's question "What is the interest of Menifa to look for children in the streets", the response of one of the coordinators was: "To save. This is a mission to save at-risk youth." In this context one of the students said that "this is the framework that saved me. This is the first time after 12 years that I am in a framework for two continuous years".

The metaphor "family" also appears in many interviews: "The coordinators are like parents, are the big brothers of the children"; "Grandmother, mother, psychologist, friend"; "A daughter with no mother - I am a kind of mother or older sister for her." However, later one of the coordinators claimed that "girls do not see us, in the staff, as a substitute for home". Even graduates often used the metaphor of a family when they talked about the coordinators: "Amazing, angels, like mother, like a big sister, like a teacher"; "Elizabeth, she is like the mother that way", "The two coordinators at the school are amazing, great. Each of them is really mother and big sister". Even the therapeutic field advisor uses this metaphor of the family: "The coordinator who is present in the area is the father and the mother of these children; he has a very heavy weight".

==In summary, the main role of the coordinator is educational-therapeutic holistic. She is engaged in pooling academic, personal, administrative and media resources and her success in this may explain the success of the students to study regularly and not drop out of school.==

The supervisors guide the teacher interns, as well as the coordinators. The veteran supervisor described how she guides the teachers in detailed pedagogical planning of the lesson: "The first seven minutes - providing the material to the whole class, and only then memorization, exercises, worksheets, individual work". Additionally, it is also working with the students: "Out of five hours of instruction a day - two should be dedicated to conversations with children that you have problems with. Those with serious learning disabilities should receive instruction an hour a week, plan their curriculum and help them to practice, to mediate learning". The veteran supervisor instructs both the child and the teacher: "I take responsibility for the entire system with its coordinator, to build learning strategies with him". She also provides didactic training to the teachers: "First you completely build her and only then go into the details". She defines her role as follows: "I can say that I am the 'case manager' between the child, the counselor, the coordinator and professional teacher."

The teachers in Menifa are teacher training college students who are teaching in their internship year. During this year, they are given guidance by a veteran teacher, as well as formative assessment of their work. The teachers participate in bi-weekly workshops led by instructors from the Menifa program and the coordinator and educational-therapeutic staff in the program.

Theme 2: Working principles of Menifa in formal and informal education

The working principles of the formal education program are coordinated with the stated goal: Training teachers to treat students who might drop out of the education system (covert or overt dropping out). The first principle is **contact with the parents**. According to the director, ''Menifa developed very significant mediation between the parents and child, between the institutions and the child [...] the parents are the real solution to the whole story [...] we have parent meetings for combined therapy, there are parent conferences, there are all kinds of home visits [...] there are a lot of investment in parents". According to the senior therapeutic adviser, "parents are partners in the initial contract along with the child. There is a lot of contact between the coordinator and the parents themselves, since it is necessary to take into account that the child returns home and the parents should be part of the entire process".

The second principle is that the program is based on collaboration between Menifa and the school. In this context, the program director described the process that takes place at the school following the addition of the Menifa coordinator: "Menifa is a very significant mediation between the institutions and the child [...] Menifa influences in much wider circles than the children, each school we reached has changed."

The third principle is the principle of **personal responsibility of the students**. The goal of fostering personal responsibility is the development of autonomy in students who learn in Menifa. For example, when the director of Menifa described the process of joining the program, she emphasized the personal responsibility of each one who joins: "To this day I can show you pizza boxes with cartons of contracts" [the director means in her remarks that she signed up the students on improvised contracts – that were written on the back of the cartons of pizza that they ate together - that delineated the personal responsibility of the student in the matter of their school studies]. The veteran therapeutic advisor also emphasized that "the framework of Menifa is characterized [...] that once you get a child ready to adapt himself to the program, there is also a contract. That is to say, a child wants to be in Menifa and is willing to take responsibility for what happens [...] It's no trick to come and do this in his place. The idea is to teach them how to do it, but each at their own pace". The matter of responsibility was mentioned also in interviews with graduates. For example, one graduate explained the difference between Menifa and the conduct of her previous school: "It seems to me something else, as if it is not imposed on you here. If you didn't do your homework it is your problem. After that you'll have to complete the notebook [...] If I say I want to learn a certain course, I undertake to study it. I set a target, so I have to reach it in the end". Another graduate explicitly stated the concept "responsibility" in her words: "the girls have responsibility to invest and learn [...] those who do not study for the exams will not succeed". The term 'contract' is also

mentioned by the graduates: "There is such thing as a 'personal contract' - each is committed to act, how many classes to attend, at what times".

The informal educational activities that take place in the Menifa program are trips, field workshops, eating pizza in town and other "routine breaking" activities. These activities are important in and of themselves, but are principally for creating an atmosphere that supports the formal learning processes. In interviews with the director these informal activities were mentioned: "I do not take them out of 'opening table' nor from social activities [...] and trips, you remain a part of this group [...] basically Menifa is a youth movement". One of the coordinators explained: "During the course of the year there are eight field workshops only for the Menifa classes. These workshops include tours and activities such as rope climbing and they are aimed at strengthening the self-esteem and social skills of the girls". Another coordinator explained that "the field workshops are geared for a specific purpose, that via nature and by dealing with all of this personally [...] and also at the group level [...] what happens in the workshops is that the girls undergo incredible processes. For me, it's a very significant part in the process they experience in Menifa. Once every two weeks there is an 'open table' activity in the classroom or in a cafe, at the expense of Menifa, in order to consolidate". Even the graduates mentioned the non-formal activities which "break the routine": "We had a lot of routine breakers, like special classes". The contribution of the activities was detailed by one graduate: "I'll never forget one trip we had in the Jordan Valley. I sat with my friend and we only talked to the morning, amazing [...] we simply left this trip like truly new people".

In summary, the non-formal education contributes both in terms of formal schooling and from a social standpoint. It develops self-esteem and social learning and it can be stated that this is one of the factors that impacts the program and explains its success.

Theme 3: Sources of influence and the factors that contribute to change among the students as a result of their participation in the program

During the study, six sources of the success of the Menifa program were identified:

A. The high intelligence of some of the "under achieving" students - 57% of the coordinators mentioned the abilities of the students: "It can be that there are girls who are simply geniuses. One of the girls is hyperactive, dyslexic. She understands the material, photocopies it before the matriculation examinations, studies it and has great scores. She is really smart". Support for this can be found in interviews with graduates: one of them claimed that "it's girls with brains", and another graduate said that "In Menifa most of the girls have no problems with their brains and thinking [...] they are intelligent, smart, can learn".

B. Development of personal capability – since the students have high abilities, one of the keys to their success is the development of personal capabilities: "The girls feel that they are important to someone, and someone wants to invest in them. Give them an anchor". One of coordinators claimed that the high expectations of the students can be a self-fulfilling prophecy (the 'Pygmalion effect'): "What is amazing is that you only have to believe in a child. Look what he can become".

C. Systemic activity that expresses the therapeutic educational pedagogy – selecting students before admission to the program; preventing the dropping out of students; "organizing" the school day in accordance with the needs of the students; instruction in small heterogeneous classes; Setting a personal curriculum for each student. This therapeutic educational pedagogy is described by the director as holistic work: "Also the educational side, the interns, the coordinators, and therapeutic advisor [...] this mix is the winning combination."

D. Coordination between the educational pedagogy in the classroom and the educational-therapeutic pedagogy system – in interviews with management and other members of the organization five subtopics were mentioned: (1) the structure of the desired course ("the teachers are guided not to start teaching, but instead to talk for seven minutes, put on music, talk with the children, listen to them, pay attention"); (2) through the appropriate work ("very small classes, so that work on an individual basis is possible"); (3) The importance of learning in small groups; (4) The level of the classes ("very professional classes"); (5) the need for "marathons" of study before pre-exams and matriculation exams to produce experiences of success for the students. The graduates praised the quality of classroom pedagogy and indicated that teachers "know the material and how to convey it in a way that allows one to understand more". According to them, the learning is authentic: "we make parallels to things of today, things that are easier to understand, so that we can connect". Graduates mentioned some characteristics of the studying: "We managed to do everything in the classroom and we didn't have go over it at home; the learning in small groups; many hours of study - from eight to three; individual programs with individual reinforcement after school; there are breaks in the classes, but we always come back to listen and learn. We had marathons as we approached the matriculation exams".

E. Integrated holistic treatment – the coordinators emphasized the importance of the combination of the setting of boundaries and the expression of love: "I'm in a position that is not a friend, nor a mother, it's something stable that accepts them [...] There were cases that I put them in their place. However, the students also feel the limits and are committed"; "We are, in the end, tools that can push them as much as possible and provide them the tools [...] hug, love, faith in themselves [...] to suddenly reach the place that you succeed and they love you, hug you and support you".

F. Characteristics of the teaching interns - according to the director, there is great value to the characteristics of the teaching interns: "It's the teacher's personality [...] who still remember the material and they still have it". The senior therapeutic advisor also noted the uniqueness of young teachers: "You have someone here who is very new, who is open, who can look [...] because the moment that a teacher comes from a place she puts her ego aside and comes from a place of love and connection, the child [...]". One of the guides described the teaching interns this way: "I think that the issue of age is critical, that's to say their young age [...] they are not fixed yet to their traditional concepts". Also according to the coordinators, the uniqueness of the teaching interns is their being young and not worn down yet "fresh knowledge, young teachers, close to the age of the students, not worn down"; "An attitude of love and

appreciation for the students"; "an attitude of respect and great love."The teachers themselves recognized the unique identity of each one of the students: "Everyone is a case in and of itself [...] each has its own personality [...] everyone is built differently [...] everyone is seen".

According to the educational-therapeutic staff, there is a relationship between the change that takes place in the students and the holistic approach that characterizes the program and the teamwork. One of the veteran guides argued that "the secret of the matter is its system, the envelope that provides the children [...] that a normative school cannot provide, both on the academics side and the therapeutic side [...] the encompassing envelope allows the child not to drop out, not to give up". Two therapeutic field consultants also stressed the importance of the holistic work of program officials, and especially that of themselves.

The Change in Menifa Students

According to the program's director, "there is no child who didn't change somewhat in his personality, his social life, his academic life". The veteran educational-therapeutic guide emphasized the personality aspect: "This builds them to be a more independent person, thinking, reacting, self driven". In this context, Fox (1998), as well as the researchers who preceded him, distinguishes between first-order and second order changes. First order changes are "changes made within the framework of values, interests and norms, and they occur in a given system" (ibid: 32-33). However, second order changes reflect changes "in the nucleus, foundations, paradigm [...] such a change is made in a jump: there is no clear continuity between past and present after the change" (ibid: 33). According to the educational-therapeutic staff in the Menifa program, the change is second order: "One girl came, a different girl came out". The following metaphor describes the change: "They really come broken up in pieces. It's like you slowly gather yourself, understand that you're worth something, that you were good". Likewise it was said that "in truth during the matriculation examinations I generally see some increase in the girl's also addressing all sorts of facets of life, it's amazing"; "They want to succeed because no one is forcing them [...] it mentally matures them considerably".

The coordinator added that: "They have already made the switch in their heads and the key is first of all the will of the girls. This is the change". The field therapeutic counselor also noted that "the studying causes the girls to meet with their difficulties [...] something's going on there all the time".

According to the interviews with the students, the change in Menifa students was only first order and did not express a revolution in them: "Now, I could be in the framework"; "Now I do it with awareness [...] everything is with consideration". One graduate described the change in her, a change after which she helps children learning in 5th grade much as the coordinator: "I walk into the classroom, and let's say a teacher brings the work of a class, so she takes me and the children who have difficulty [...] I do not know if I feel myself more their half student-friend than teacher [...] I help them with their homework [...] listen to their stories". The change is therefore based on role models, as well as a sense of confidence in the future: "I also know that

if I have problems, I can go back to them, talk to them [...] they will always help me, they will not leave me like that [...] even after I finish school".

What are the professional dreams of the graduates? First and foremost to learn: Two of the eight graduates wanted to go to university, two wanted to study design, and one wanted to study audio engineering. Two graduates wanted to serve the country: one wanted to be an officer in the army and the other intending to serve in national service. Only one graduate did not mention at all future professional ambitions.

Five of the graduates told the story of their lives - how they "rolled" from one framework to another framework until they made contact with the director or the coordinator - and in doing so often used the language of 'opposites'. Each expressed (at different magnitudes) anger over prior frameworks: "I do not know if I quit or they expelled me […] but I did not connect to their religion"; At the ulpana [...] they threw me out because of my clothes […] because I dressed like that, so I'm not a person? That was it, then at Menifa there were no such things". Another graduate told that she "passed through a number of educational institutions and I didn't last more than four months anywhere [...] I am shocked that I am in Menifa already for three years [...] I was at a ulpana, I was in a youth village, I left every place. I did not like the institution, the framework. I did not like the stiffness, the rules, the strict religious life". The same graduate went on to tell that "here at Menifa they gave me back my self-confidence, human dignity. I know who I am and what I want to be. I'm not lying around and aimlessly wandering but really studying for the exams. If I had not been in Menifa, I would certainly be thrown somewhere just wasting my life". Another graduate said that at the ulpana "they did not relate to me, because I was not the norm. They erased me from the ground". In contrast at Menifa "they restored my personal dignity to me, related to me, I'm someone, suddenly I am being taken into account. It's a great feeling". In addition to the return of her own personal trust and restoration of confidence destroyed in the past, "There is personal attention to each girl, unlike at the ulpana. [there] are thirty girls, and there is no time for personal attention. All the time you have to behave well and show respect for teachers. Here she feels love, that they really love her". The coordinator also highlights these contrasts: "They come from places that do not believe in them. They fell and did not receive love [...] and suddenly to reach a place where you succeed and they love you, hug you and support you".

Linguistic design measures present both the feelings of the graduates and the educational activities of the coordinator. The use of metaphors 'rescue' and 'family', as well as presentation of the contrast between the bad past and good present, reinforce the words of one graduate: "There is no youth at risk. There is youth with no family, who was thrown out from educational institutions, and is in need of rescue by the Menifa family".

It appears that the interviews showed that the most important element in the program is the constant integration of educational-pedagogical matters and social-emotional therapy matters.

Discussion

This chapter presented a holistic model for treating youth at risk, a treatment which provides a combination of educational and emotional reinforcement for students within the school framework. The model supports "keeping" the students within the education system, that is to say, not transferring them to special frameworks that are outside of school. The chapter analyzed the specific instance of Menifa as an example of the implementation of such a model, and tried to reveal the sources of influence of the program.

Based on the extensive information (quantitative and qualitative) collected in this research about the Menifa program, it is possible to point to a characteristic that may explain the uniqueness of this program. The Menifa program is conducted within a formal school format, and therefore the program participants enjoy the benefits that staying within the normative frameworks that are acceptable to their peers provides. However, within the formal school framework, the program applies the principles of treatment developed (and usually implemented) in non-formal frameworks - activities of wilderness survival for personal empowerment, social evenings ("opening pizza table") for social formation and so on. Thus the program participants enjoy the advantages of the treatment principles, which are expressed in activities that usually take place in non-formal frameworks. The informal activity in a formal framework gives the program its uniqueness.

The findings of the evaluations indicate a significant improvement in the functioning of the participants in the program over the course of a year of activities - both in academic areas such as verbal skills and in personality areas such as self-discipline and social-emotional resilience. The study found that the Menifa program has a positive effect on the advancement of youth at risk studying in the schools, so one of the conclusions is that it is possible to carry out "secondary prevention" and keep the students in the system by investing in an appropriate therapeutic-education program such as Menifa. The quantitative portion of the study indicates the high correlation (in the three sources of evaluation that were tested) between the self-esteem of the students who participated in the program and the assessment of the students by the coordinators of the program. In the quantitative section some differences were also found between the assessments at the beginning of the year and assessments at the end of the year. The findings indicate an improvement in the evaluation of the three factors studied – 'self-discipline', 'social-emotional resilience' and 'verbal skills' - both in the self-evaluations of the students participating in the program and the evaluations of the coordinators. In this context it should be noted that the improvement during the year stood out in a comparison of mid-year scores and scores at the beginning of the year, while a comparison of the scores at the end of the year and mid-year scores found no significant differences. This pattern was particularly evident in assessments of the coordinators, and it is possible to learn from this the differences between the two parts of the school year: the improvement in assessments in the first half of the year was higher than the improvement in the second half of the year. There may be several explanations for this finding. The first explanation is that the program has a positive initial impact on the student. This effect was expressed in the evaluation scores - the reduction in tension in the second half of the year moderated the improvement and in any case evaluations

in that half. Another possible explanation is the 'ceiling effect': In the first part of the year there was a very big improvement and it could not be repeated later (in the second part of the year).

It is important to note that the improvement in scores was significant only for some of the tests. In the case of the coordinators, it was significant for two factors, self-discipline and verbal skills, but not for emotional and social resilience (for the students the improvement was significant in all three factors). On the one hand, it is possible that the lack of significance for the social and emotional resilience factor suggests that the coordinators are more critical in light of their expectations from their students, and therefore there was no significant improvement in their evaluation scores. On the other hand, the finding indicates the need to deepen the actions in this field – a complex field concerned with the internal elements of the student's personality.

The qualitative portions of the personal interviews demonstrated the impact of the Menifa program. The findings showed the great power of the program, a power of which only part of it was reflected in the quantitative section. Moreover, the findings of the qualitative analysis of the interviews confirm the findings of the quantitative and explain them. For example, a high degree of correlation was found between the assessments of the coordinators and the self assessments of the students in the quantitative section. A possible explanation for this finding is that the coordinators are well acquainted with the students. Another explanation relates to the feedback that the coordinators give the students during the course of the year: frequent or intensive feedback sessions cause the students to internalize the assessments of the coordinators and adopt them (a "self-fulfilling prophecy"). Indeed, the importance of the coordinators and their influence on the students was noted in all the examinations in the quality section. Also the quantitative findings on changes in the self-esteem of students in accordance with the valuation date "reinforced" the findings of the analysis of the interviews: the change in the student, first-order change (according to graduates) or second order change (according to educational-therapeutic staff), is due to the holistic dimension of the program – that includes all educational and therapeutic elements under one broad umbrella.

This is the place to discuss the central points that affect the effectiveness of the program. With regard to the **organizational structure and educational therapeutic staff** of the program, the importance that the participants relate to the prominent program director and her dedicated work is prominent - especially at the stage of recruiting students from the "street" and adding them to the program at the school and after that the ongoing encouragement and push to achieve. This is consistent with the words of Moore (2006) regarding the importance of the head of a program such as Menifa: "the character of the organization is affected, first and foremost, by the leader's personality, his patterns of his communication, his patterns of esteem for his employees, and more. Over the years we have learned that the nature of the emotional dynamics by the director with his immediate surroundings has a decisive influence on the quality of the teachers' contact with their vulnerable at risk students and their parents" (ibid: 222).

The high regard of the graduates for the coordinators should be noted. The graduates spared no praise and pointed to the holistic dimension of the treatment, namely including dealing with

the overall functioning of the students and handling the various difficulties that they encountered in their path (not only in the educational arena). These findings reinforce the words of Moore (ibid.), according to which one of the main characteristics of the educational psycho-social approach is ongoing concern of the adult for the youth's life and supporting it. Likewise the results of this study can be linked with those of Soroka (2008). Soroka describes five success stories of therapeutic systems and notes the main factors acting in these systems, factors that can be viewed as the holistic perspective that was noted many times in this chapter. He distinguishes between classical treatment factors such as the therapeutic relationship, empathy, "forces" of the client, social support and so on between "extra-therapeutic" elements such as self-help, warmth, honesty, general positive attitude, comfort and closeness or the provision of elbow room.

Another point to be addressed is regarding the factors that cause us to assess the Menifa program a successful program. On the one hand, there is a great appreciation (a kind of positive countertransference) of the coordinators towards the students and their diverse capabilities. The coordinator's assessment of the learning ability, readiness and personal competence of the students, as well as personal autonomy and responsibility of the students develops as part of their integration in the program. On the other hand, there is a difference between the factors mentioned by the coordinators as the secret of success of the Menifa program and those mentioned by the graduates: the coordinators assigned great value to the capabilities of students, while the graduates mentioned above all the teachers (the teaching interns). According to the reports of the graduates, the interns are "young, close to their age" functioning "like friends studying with you", and the pedagogy in the class includes small groups and individual studies. Perhaps it is possible to attribute the differences to the low evaluation of the graduates of their own ability.

The description of the teachers in the Menifa program is strengthened also by a study by Karassin (2010), which describes the successful teacher in the Hila program as a teacher who accepts responsibility for the youth's process of change and via its resources structures his role. She notes, "It is vital that the teachers will be committed to the job and come to it by choice and a sense of mission" (ibid: 118).

The holistic aspect came up already many times in preparatory conversations of the researchers with the program director. During a discussion held then it was said that indeed the holistic matter was the important thing, but not necessarily at its ideological dimension - as there are already references to it in various programs (Bohbot, 2009) - but rather in implementation and execution, namely the act itself. The Menifa program coordinators jointly contribute at the same time resources in the educational, personal and organizational field, caring quickly and conscientiously for students and not "sending" them to someone else (usually something that causes systemic internal friction as to "who handles what", as it also prolongs processes with students falling "through the cracks" and finally even dropping out of the system).

This comprehensive approach for treating youth has been adopted also in the NEE ("New Educational Environment") program which was implemented in high schools in Be'er Sheva

(Cohen-Navot and Benda, 2003). This program for the advancement of at risk students and underachieving students adopted the principles of relating on a multidimensional basis to the needs of the student, staff work and cooperation of the parents. It also established a permanent arrangement for managing the program in the guidance classes, permanent mechanisms were established (appointment of a program coordinator, educators and an educational consultant) and general staff meetings were held.

Shmida and Romi (2007) describe the relationship between a 'formal education system' (within the school framework), an 'informal education system' (everything done in non-institutional frameworks) and 'the non-formal education system' (indeed taking place within an institutional framework, but outside of the school and classroom framework). According to Shmida and Romi (ibid.), this third framework is seen as important especially in places in which the formal framework fails to be dominant or significant enough, since it complements the things that the school framework fails to achieve. In some cases it may be used as an effective alternative.

In the present case of the Menifa program, the formal educational systems have failed to prevent the dropping out of these young people. Conversely, the Menifa program manages to accommodate the youth by adopting the principles existing in non-formal education and informal education, and the integration of these principles within a framework of formal education. It is possible that this is what the participants and coordinators meant in "their holistic approach". In our opinion, the unique combination that makes the intervention of the Menifa program a therapeutic education program should be emphasized. Such synergy between its elements is the 'winning element'.

A significant part of the conduct of Menifa is informal in nature, one characterized to a high degree by its unmediated friendly and pleasant directness. It is evident that the Menifa program tries to navigate its way between being a flexible program that adapts to the individual needs of each student and an orderly organized program with a course of action and specific procedures. Some officials in the management of the program and its organization have expressed concerns that the tendency in the latter direction will cause the loss of the uniqueness and quality of the program.

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