



# Report on IDF and Sherut Leumi (National Service) Enlistment Rates

## 2008/2009 Graduates Of Tafnit “Start” Program for Matriculation – Dropout Prevention in Comprehensive High Schools

Students who had an average of 7 failing grades before the program (9<sup>th</sup> grade), and by the end of the program 64% were eligible for a matriculation certificate (end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

### A Joint Program of the Ministry of Education and the Rashi Foundation

All data on IDF enlistment within the report are compiled and encoded data received from the IDF

## Summary

### Operating Partners:

- The Education departments of localities: Beer Sheva, Bet Shemesh, Hura, Bat Yam
- School Networks: Alliance Israelite Universelle, Amit, Amal

### Partners in the Tafnit “Start” Program, 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates, 2008/2009:

- Check Point ▪ Glencore/ D.M. Foundation ▪ Chais Family Foundation ▪ The Morningstar Foundation ▪  
The Nash Family Foundation ▪ Jewish Funders Network

### Additional partners in the Tafnit “Start” Program, in additional classes and schools:

- The Sklare Family Foundation ▪ The Ben and Esther Rosenbloom Foundation  
▪ U.S. State Department – M.E.P.I ▪

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## 1. Background

The “Start” Program is intended for at-risk students, with the status of hidden dropouts and on the verge of actual dropout, in comprehensive ('Mekif')<sup>1</sup> schools.

The program’s goal is preventing their dropping out, and bringing them to acquire a matriculation certificate<sup>2</sup> by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

- **We accept for the program** – at-risk youth, 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in high schools, with the status of hidden dropout and on the verge of actual dropout, with low scholastic achievements in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Average grade – 54 and below. More than half of those accepted have 7 or more failing grades.
- **The goal** – all program students will acquire a matriculation certificate, and their school dropout (hidden and actual) will be prevented.

**The program** – operates in high schools in the periphery, continues for over 3 years (from the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade until the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with continued support in the IDF and academia) for each year group, and is run by coordinators and teachers from the high schools (who receive pedagogical training and guidance by the staff of pedagogical advisors from the Tafnit Program – Rashi Foundation) and with the guidance of the participating school principals. As part of the program the students study during regular school hours, in the afternoons, in the evenings, and during some of the school vacations, in designated classes using the Tafnit Program’s study method and Accelerated Narrowing of the Gaps method, developed by Nissim (Max) Cohen – educational sociologist (N. Cohen, 1994, 1998, 1998, 2005).

- The program operates in cooperation with the Ministry of Education inspectorate in the regions, the Shachar Branch, and the directors of the education departments in the localities.
- **Students in the program** – around 2,000 students from 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades (2008/9) in State, State Religious, Bedouin, and Druze schools, in 10 localities.
- **Program graduates** – the program has over 800 graduates who completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade (2006/7 – 114; 2007/8 – 307; 2008/9 – 399).

The program is jointly run by the Rashi Foundation, the Ministry of Education in the regions, the Ministry of Education- Shachar Branch, and the local authorities, and began to operate in comprehensive high schools in 2003/4, with the first graduates completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade in 2006/7.

For more about the Tafnit “Start” Program for matriculation, dropout prevention – see appendix 1, page 14.

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<sup>1</sup> Non selective public high schools, taking in students from the schools vicinity, from diverse backgrounds.

<sup>2</sup> To attain a matriculation certificate (Teudat Bagrut) at the end of high school, one must pass matriculation exams in a number of required subjects and elective subjects. Matriculation exams are nationally standardized exams given and supervised by the Ministry of Education. Most matriculation exams are taken during 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades and the passing grade for all exams is 55.

## 2. The report's goal and premise

A matriculation certificate is still one of the most important certificates for acceptance to academia and future employment and social integration/mobility.

The Tafnit "Start" Program believes and assumes that the change and academic successes, both for matriculation examinations, and for acquiring a matriculation certificate, experienced by the program students before beginning the program, when they were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade – and at-risk adolescents, with hidden dropout (with an average of 7 failing grades per student, and an average grade of 52) – will influence and increase the tendency to conformity and the wish for social integration within normative frameworks, such as enlistment for compulsory service in the IDF and *Sherut Leumi* (National Service)<sup>3</sup> (among the program population in schools where the students are obligated to serve in the security forces), and we estimate that the rates of IDF enlistment among the program graduates, despite their starting data before the program will be, at the very least, similar to that of the Israeli population.

## 3. Data

### Schools and students

The 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates in 2008/9 studied in the Tafnit "Start" Program framework, in 12 comprehensive and boarding schools, within the State, State Religious, Bedouin, and Rural inspectorates, in the Southern, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa Ministry of Education districts, in 6 periphery localities.

The average socioeconomic index<sup>4</sup> in the 12 schools – 6.8.

### Scholastic achievements of 2008/9 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates, before joining the program, in 9<sup>th</sup> grade:

1. Average number of failing grades per student – 6.9.
2. Average grade – 51.9.
3. Rate with 7 or more failing grades from when they began studying in the program in 10<sup>th</sup> grade – 51.9%.

### Scholastic achievements of 2008/9 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates at end of program (final results<sup>5</sup>)

1. 64% in relation to those starting 10<sup>th</sup> grade, are eligible for a matriculation certificate.
2. 100% of those eligible, have a certificate enabling acceptance to academic studies.
3. 43% of those eligible, have a matriculation certificate allowing university acceptance.
4. 95% of those beginning their studies in the program, studied until the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the school where the program operated, or in another high school.
5. There was a clear decrease in behavioral problems among students in the program, from 2.8 to 1.8 (on a scale of 1-5).
6. There was a clear increase in the aspirations and academic perception of the future, from 2.8 to 3.9 (on a scale of 1-5).
7. There was a clear increase in the focus on inner control from 3.5 to 4.3 (on a scale of 1-5).

<sup>3</sup> Voluntary national service, replacing the mandatory army service and referring to Israeli citizens who get an army exemption (usually females on religious background) and volunteering non-Israeli citizens. Sherut Leumi offers programs in a wide range of fields including special education, administration, hospitals, law, geriatrics, nursing homes, health clinics, teens at risk, internal security, education, disadvantaged communities, immigrant assistance and other related non-profit organizations.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education rating system for all schools in Israel to evaluate their socio-economic status, calculating such components as family income and size, parents level of education etc. The scale of 1-10 in which socio-economically well-to-do schools are in the 1-3 range while the lowest actual ratings are in the 8-9 range).

<sup>5</sup> Please see the intermediate results for 2008/9, published prior to the final results, Tafnit "Start" Program, 2008/9, p.3.  
[http://tafnit.rashi.org.il/menu/high\\_schools/doh\\_1\\_artzi\\_start\\_sopi\\_-\\_30\\_1\\_10.pdf](http://tafnit.rashi.org.il/menu/high_schools/doh_1_artzi_start_sopi_-_30_1_10.pdf) [in Hebrew]

## Data collection

With the aim of examining the enlistment rates to the IDF, we gathered and confirmed data regarding the 2008/9 program graduates and their enlistment in the IDF and volunteering for *Sherut Leumi* (national service).

The IDF passed on compiled and encoded data for our study, regarding the enlistment to the IDF of all 399 of the 2008/9 Tafnit Program graduates. So as to examine the rate of Sherut Leumi participation, a comprehensive telephone survey was carried out (by a pollster from the Tafnit Program), in which the details of Sherut Leumi participation were examined among all 2008/9 program graduates who were eligible for service, who did not enlist in the IDF for any reason, according to IDF statistics.

The IDF data file and the file with the telephone survey results regarding volunteering for Sherut Leumi are retained by us, and the current report contains only compiled data.

## Data processing

For data processing purposes, the graduates were classified into "eligible for service" and those "not eligible for service", from the IDF data received.

From among those eligible for service, the IDF assignments were classified and collected into 4 major types, in accordance with the IDF Magen Division's recommendation, as presented within the body of the report.

There may be changes in the data presented in this report in all that regarding military placements, as a result of placement changes both before and after enlistment.

**Table 1 – Distribution of 2008/9 Tafnit “Start” Program graduates and those eligible for service**

Locality	School	School No.	Inspectorate	Boys	Girls	Total graduates	Eligible for service	Not des. to service
Beer Sheva	Meikif Aleph	1	State	15	13	28	28	0
Bet Shemesh	Shachar (girls)	2	S. Religious	0	31	31	31	0
Kfar Galim	K. Galim high school	3	Rural	19	9	28	27	1
Beer Sheva	Meikif Het	4	State	14	12	26	25	1
Beer Sheva	Meikif Vav	5	State	27	20	47	46	1
Hura	Al-noor	6	Bedouin	26	21	47	0	47
Bat Yam	Hammer (boys)	7	S. Religious	18	0	18	18	0
Bet Shemesh	Dvir (boys)	8	S. Religious	22	0	22	22	0
Beer Sheva	Tuviyahu	9	State	29	19	48	47	1
Bat Yam	Ramot	10	State	30	18	48	48	0
Mikve Yisrael	M. Yisrael - general	11	Rural	5	6	11	10	1
Beer Sheva	Meikif Zayin	12	State	18	27	45	44	1
<b>Total</b>				<b>232</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>53</b>

**Table 1A – 2008/9 Graduates of “Start” Program – those who enlisted in the IDF and those who did not**

<b>1. 2008/9 “Start” graduates and eligible for service</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
A. Total 12 <sup>th</sup> grade graduates	232	167	399
B. Graduates eligible for service	201	145	346
C. Graduates not eligible for service	31	22	53
<b>2. Total who enlisted and completing enlistment process (including “Atudaim” [military soldier- students] and cadets)</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>301</b>
A. Enlisted in the IDF when data was received (April '10)	161	91	252
B. Undergoing enlistment process and will enlist by Aug '10	11	1	12
C. With induction order – atudaim and cadets	10	0	10
D. Located (designated for an as yet undecided course of service)	11	16	27
<b>3. Eligible for service – did not enlist in the IDF or Sherut Leumi volunteering</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>4. Total who were exempted from IDF enlistment</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>
A. Exemption on medical grounds	1	1	2
B. Exemption on criminal grounds	1	0	1
C. Exemption for full time Jewish studies	1	0	1
D. Exemption for other reasons	3	7	10
<b>5. Enlistment evaders</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

Out of 399 program graduates in 2008/9, 346 are eligible for service and 53 not (47 of them are 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates from the Al-noor School in Hura, from the Bedouin sector), and the examination of the scope of IDF enlistment in this report, is carried out among these 346 eligible for service.

330 of the total 346 eligible for service (95.4%) enlisted in the IDF (including atudaim) and will complete their enlistment process, or volunteering for Sherut Leumi, by August 2010.

16 additional graduates from those eligible for service (4.6%) did not enlist in the IDF. 14 for reasons for which they were exempt (health, religion, and other reasons) and 2 others – evaded enlistment.

The data analysis also presents the IDF enlistment rates of the Tafnit “Start” Program graduates in comparison with the enlistment rates among all those required to enlist in Israel, even though this comparison of program graduates who were youth at-risk for dropout (see their starting statistics in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, as presented above), is biased against the Tafnit “Start” Program graduates.

#### 4. Main findings 2008/9

**95.4%** of all the 2008/9 Tafnit “Start” Program graduates who are eligible for service in the IDF, **enlisted** in the IDF or **volunteered for Sherut Leumi (National Service)**.

##### A. Males – program graduates\*

- **96%** of all the males who were 2008/9 **program graduates** and eligible for service, **enlisted** in the IDF, as compared to **74.2%** of all males eligible for service in Israel.
- **24.4%** of all males who enlisted are serving as **combat soldiers**.
- An additional **21.2%** of all the males who enlisted are serving in **combat supporting** positions.
- An additional **6.7%** of all the males who enlisted are serving in **high quality positions**.

##### B. Females – program graduates\*

- **74.5%** of all the females who were 2008/9 **program graduates** and eligible for service, **enlisted in the IDF**, as compared to **53.6%** of all females eligible for service in Israel.
- An additional **20%** of all female program graduates and eligible for service, volunteered for **Sherut Leumi**.
- A total of **94.5%** of all female program graduates **enlisted in the IDF or Sherut Leumi**.

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*\*The comparison of the IDF enlistment rate in Israel with the Tafnit “Start” Program graduates, whose students are at-risk youth, is one which is **biased against the program graduates** (see below their before-joining-program statistics).*

##### The scholastic achievements of 2008/9 graduates before joining the program (when they were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade)

- Average number of failing grades per student – **6.9**
- Average grade – **51.9**
- Rate of those with 7 or more failing grades beginning their studies in the program in 10<sup>th</sup> grade – **51.9%**

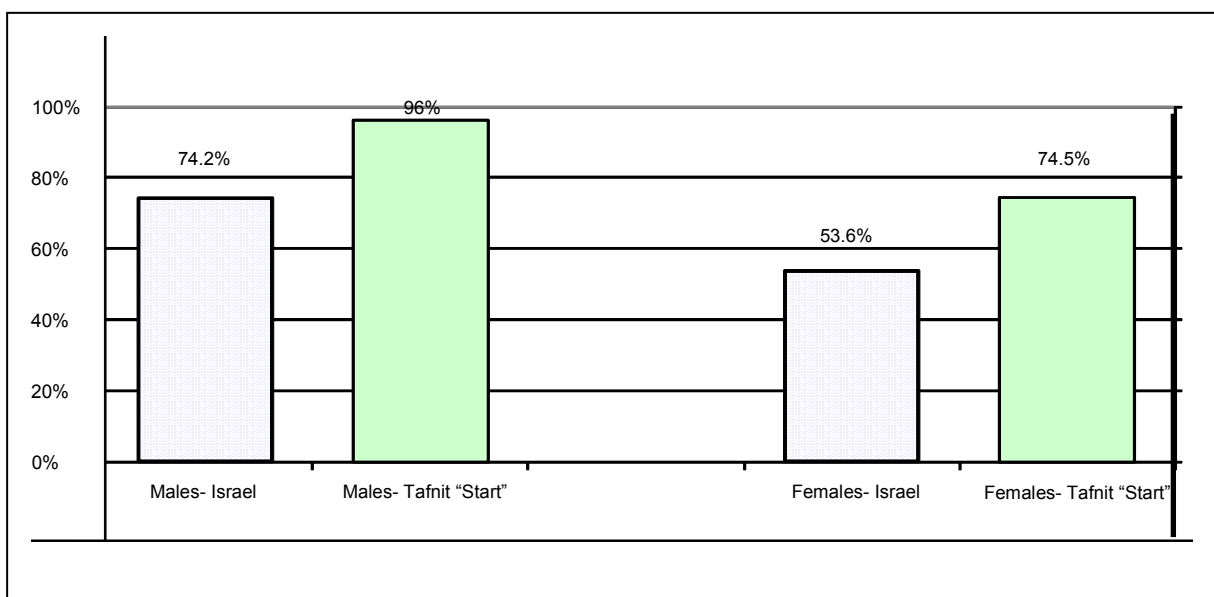
##### The scholastic achievements of 2008/9 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates at end of program

- **64%** in relation to those starting 10<sup>th</sup> grade, are **eligible for a matriculation certificate**.
- **100%** of those eligible have a certificate enabling **acceptance to academic studies**.
- **95%** of those beginning their studies in the program, **studied until the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade**.
- There was a **clear decrease** in behavioral problems, from 2.8 to 1.8 (scale of 1-5).
- There was a **clear increase** in the aspirations and academic perception, from 2.8 to 3.9 (scale of 1-5).

## 5. Rate of enlistment to the IDF and Sherut Leumi among those eligible for service within the program, in comparison to Israel in general

- 96.0% of the males eligible for service enlisted in the IDF or completing the enlistment process by August 2010.
- 74.5% of the females eligible for service enlisted in the IDF or completing the enlistment process by August 2010.
- In Israel (2008) – 74.2% of all the males eligible for service, enlisted in the IDF<sup>6</sup> and 53.6% of the females eligible for service enlisted in the IDF<sup>7</sup>.
- The IDF enlistment rate among males who are 2008/9 “Start” program graduates, is 21.8% greater than the male enlistment rate in Israel (2008).
- The IDF enlistment rate among females who are Tafnit “Start” program graduates, is 20.9% greater than the female enlistment rate in Israel (2008).

**Graph 1 – Rate of IDF enlistment among program graduates and those eligible for service according to gender, as compared to Israel**



<sup>6</sup> Bamahane, 2009, No.10, [http://dover.idf.il/IDF/News\\_Channels/bamahana/09/10/04.htm](http://dover.idf.il/IDF/News_Channels/bamahana/09/10/04.htm) [in Hebrew]

<sup>7</sup> IDF Press Releases. (2009). *Special report: Women serving in the IDF*. p.12. <http://dover.idf.il/IDF/dover.woman.pdf> [in Hebrew]



### Total (males and females) enlisting in the IDF or volunteering for Sherut Leumi, from those eligible for service, according to schools<sup>8</sup>

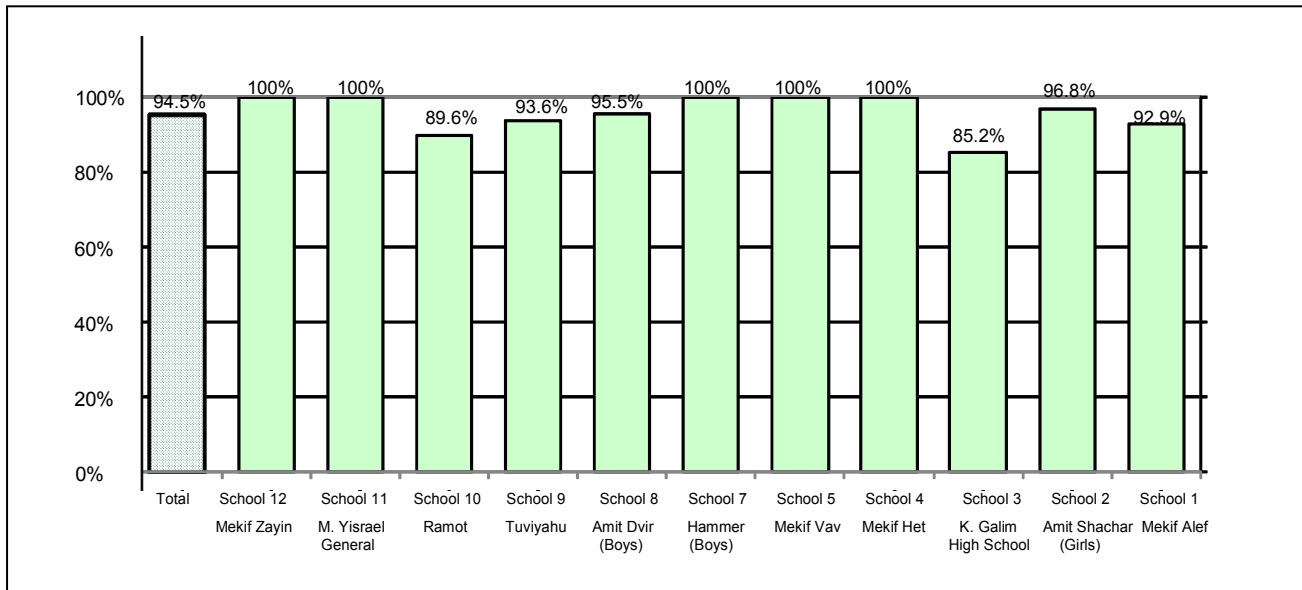
- 96.0% of the males, 12<sup>th</sup> grade program graduates and eligible for service – enlisted in the IDF.
- 94.5% of the females, 12<sup>th</sup> grade program graduates and eligible for service – enlisted in the IDF and volunteered for Sherut Leumi.
- 95.4% of the males and females, 12<sup>th</sup> grade program graduates – enlisted in the IDF and volunteered for Sherut Leumi.

**Table 2 – Distribution of total IDF enlistment and volunteering for Sherut Leumi**

Locality	School	Inspectorate	Program graduates (excl. Al-noor School)	Eligible for service			Enlisted or completed enlistment process		Sherut Leumi		Enlisted in IDF and Sherut Leumi					
				Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Male and Female			
				N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	%	N	%	N
Beer Sheva	Meikif Aleph	State	28	15	13	28	14	11	0	1	14	93.3%	12	92.3%	26	92.9%
Bet Shemesh	Shachar (girls)	S. Religious	31	0	31	31	0	10	0	20	0	-	30	96.8%	30	96.8%
Kfar Galim	K. Galim high school	Rural	28	18	9	27	16	7	0	0	16	88.9%	7	77.8%	23	85.2%
Beer Sheva	Mekif Het	State	26	14	11	25	14	9	0	2	14	100%	11	100%	25	100%
Beer Sheva	Mekif Vav	State	47	26	20	46	26	17	0	3	26	100%	20	100%	46	100%
Bat Yam	Hammer (boys)	S. Religious	18	18	0	18	18	0	0	0	18	100%	0	-	18	100%
Bet Shemesh	Dvir (boys)	S. Religious	22	22	0	22	21	0	0	0	21	95.5%	0	-	21	95.5%
Beer Sheva	Tuviyahu	State	48	28	19	47	25	17	0	2	25	89.3%	19	100%	44	93.6%
Bat Yam	Ramot	State	48	30	18	48	29	13	0	1	29	96.7%	14	77.8%	43	89.6%
Mikve Yisrael	General	Rural	11	4	6	10	4	6	0	0	4	100%	6	100%	10	100%
Beer Sheva	Mekif Zayin	State	45	26	18	44	26	18	0	0	26	100%	18	100%	44	100%
<b>Total</b>			<b>352</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>94.5%</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>95.4%</b>

<sup>8</sup> Excluding 47 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates from the Al-noor School in Hura, who are from the Bedouin sector and **are not** obligated to enlist in the security services (not eligible for service).

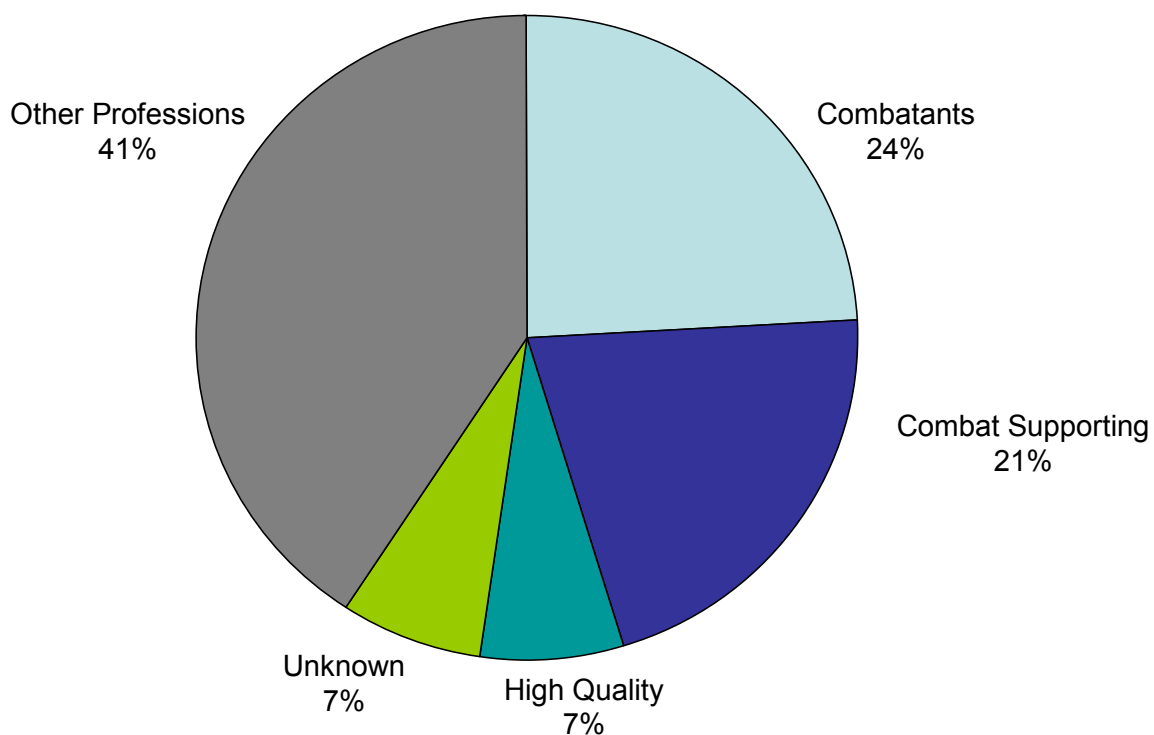
**Graph 2 – Total (male and female) distribution of IDF enlistment and volunteering for Sherut Leumi, according to school**



### 6. Males enlisted in the IDF according to type of military duty

- 24.4% of the males enlisting in the IDF were appointed to combat positions (Table 7)
- 21.2% of the males enlisting in the IDF were appointed to combat supporting positions (Table 7)
- 6.7% of the males enlisting in the IDF were appointed to high quality positions (Table 7)
- 40.9% of the males enlisting in the IDF were appointed to other positions (Table 7)
- The details about the duties of the 6.7% of the males enlisting in the IDF are unknown.

Graph 3 – Males enlisting in the IDF according to type of military duty

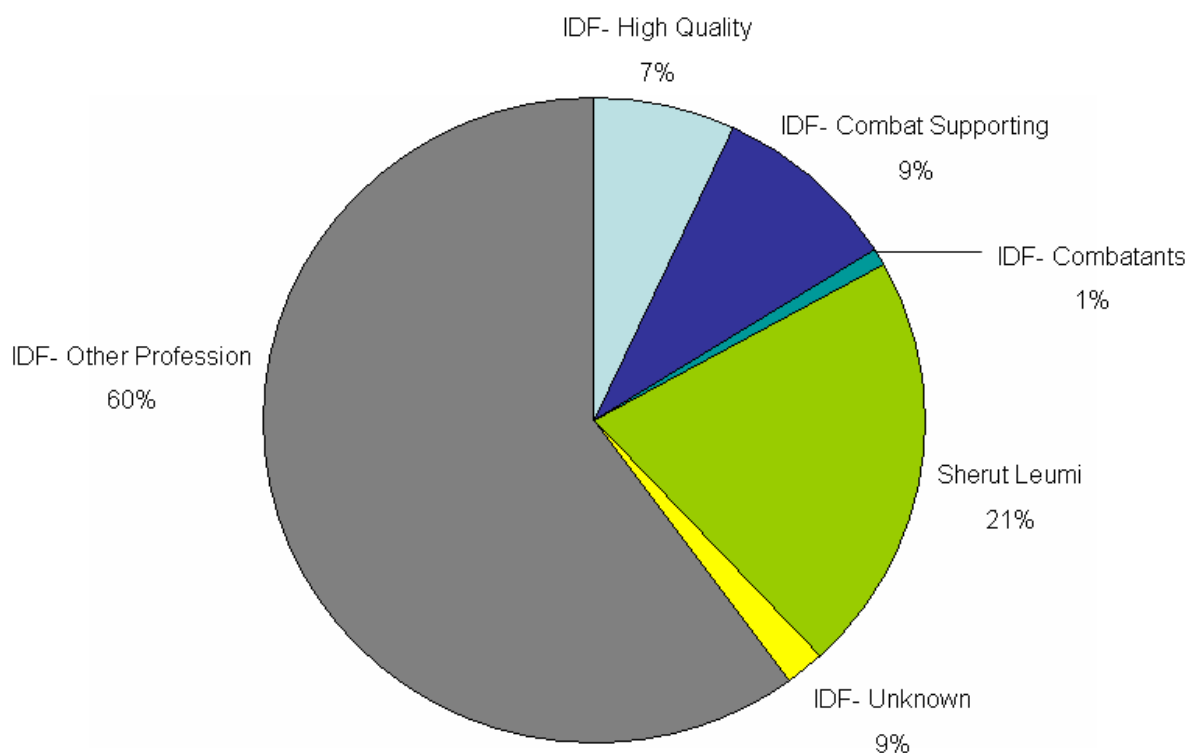


7. **Females enlisted in the IDF and volunteered for Sherut Leumi, according to type of military duty**

137 12<sup>th</sup> grade female graduates in the 2008/9 Tafnit “Start” Program enlisted in the IDF (Table 7) or Sherut Leumi, in accordance with the following breakdown:

- 0.7% of these females were appointed in the IDF to combat positions (Table 8)
- 9.5% of these females were appointed in the IDF to combat supporting positions (Table 8)
- 7.3% of these females were appointed in the IDF to high quality positions (Table 8)
- 59.9% of these females were appointed in the IDF to other positions (Table 8)
- 21.2% of these females volunteered for Sherut Leumi (Table 8)
- The details about the duties of the 1.5% of the females enlisting in the IDF are unknown (Table 8)

**Graph 4 – Females volunteering for Sherut Leumi and enlisting in the IDF, according to type of military duty**



8.

## Conclusions

- A. The assumption that despite the starting conditions of the students in the program (before joining it at the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade), the program graduates' rates of IDF enlistment will be similar to those usual in Israel, was strengthened. Even more so, the IDF enlistment rate among 2008/9 male graduates of the Tafnit "Start" program, was 21.8% **higher** than that of males in Israel (2008) and the IDF enlistment rate among 2008/9 female graduates of the Tafnit "Start" program, was 20.9% **higher** than that of females in Israel (2008), and all this despite not carrying out specific activities for IDF enlistment preparation within the program. The comparison of IDF enlistment rates among Tafnit "Start" program graduates is biased against the program graduates, since they were youth at-risk of dropout before joining the program, as shown in the report.
- B. The findings show that the program, as it is operated, succeeds in contributing to the channeling of its graduates into the first normative social framework they encounter, as program graduates and citizens.

## Appendix 1 –

### Tafnit Matriculation Program, Prevention of Dropout – “Start” – Summary

Nissim (Max) Cohen

With the goal of preventing students from dropping out of school and raising the percentage of students eligible for matriculation, and as part of the policy of the Rashi Foundation- the Foundation and its partners, the Ministry of Education, the Shaha"r Division and the Education Departments in participating local authorities established the Tafnit "Start" program , operated in middle schools and high schools in the periphery among students who are at-risk and have the status of "hidden" dropouts. The program operates and is based on the principles of narrowing gaps and on the "Tafnit – Rashi Foundation accelerated learning method", developed by Nissim Cohen, an educational sociologist (Cohen, N. 1994<sup>9</sup>, 1998<sup>10</sup>, 1998<sup>11</sup>, 2005<sup>12</sup>).

The program is run by the school staff, who are trained for it by the Tafnit Program's staff of instructors . The program extends over around three and a half academic years (from the middle of 9<sup>th</sup> grade until the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade), and around 50 ninth graders from each school are accepted to it (in small schools, around 30), most of the students having at least seven failing grades in their school report at the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and an average grade of less than 54, before participating in the program.

**Program goal** – preventing actual and hidden dropout for these students, and helping them acquire a complete matriculation certificate by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade, which will allow status mobility, integration into normative society, and the possibility of academic studies.

#### **Basic assumptions**

- A. Aside from a tiny number of exceptions to the rule, **everyone is able to succeed in school and achieve impressive results**. The cognitive ability needed for academic success in school is within the capability of anyone who is not mentally retarded. There are some children who need more help than others and/or a different approach and/or a different rate of studying, however, in one way or another every child is able to succeed at school. Assumptions like these also form the basis of T. Seizer's program (see S. Sharan, Shachar, H., & Levin, T., 1988<sup>13</sup>) and H. Levin (1997<sup>14</sup>) and others.
- B. Every September thousands of students excitedly begin studying in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, with excitement, motivation and enthusiasm on the part of the student, their parents and siblings. The excitement carries with it immense expectations from the school – expectations for academic success, happiness, acquiring knowledge, self-fulfillment,

exhausting cognitive potential and carving out a future path of success through academic achievement in school. However, as we know, for some students and their parents **the dreams and hopes are shattered within a few weeks or months**.

**Some of the students begin to amass failures in their studies** – the failures are usually public, daily, and expressed through various tests and/or examinations (even if they are informal), in several school subjects. These failures are often recorded as marks or written evaluations, also in the report cards presented to the parents, so recently filled with such hope.

Despite this, students who have not yet mastered basic skills will graduate to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades and beyond, with some of them continuing to accumulate failures at various rates of consistency. **The system tends to call these students “underachievers” or other alternate names**. These children, due to the

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, N. (1994). The matriculation project – Beit Dagan, an implementation model for reduction of school dropout and increase in the number of those acquiring a matriculation certificate. In *From Disconnection to Integration*, 6, 49-66. Ministry of Education and Culture. Retrieved from <http://noar.education.gov.il/main/upload/docs/nituk6f.doc> [in Hebrew]

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, N. (1998). *The matriculation project using the study campaign method*. Ministry of Education and Culture. [in Hebrew], Cohen, N. (1998). *The study campaign method (Accelerated narrowing of the gaps)*. Ministry of Education and Culture. [in Hebrew]

<sup>11</sup> Cohen, N. (1998), "Ome'itz For Matriculation", *Accelerated Academic Class – Increasing Learning Success as tool to prevent dropout from school*" Ministry of Education [in Hebrew]

<sup>12</sup> Cohen, N. (2005). *The Tafnit “Start” Program, an accelerated study class, a structural change, a growing track*. The Rashi Foundation and Ministry of Education. [in Hebrew]

<sup>13</sup> Sharan S, Shachar C & Levine, T. (1988). Reorganization of the schedule in high schools, the Atlas Project. In *The innovative school: organization and instruction*. (197-203). Tel Aviv: Ramot. [in Hebrew]

<sup>14</sup> Levine, H. (1997). Accelerated schools – background, philosophy, and principles. In E. Paldi, *Education and the challenge of time*. (132-141). Tel Aviv: Ramot. [in Hebrew].



ongoing continuity of failures, form a subjective, false, and failing opinion, according to which their chances of achieving impressive results are slim. This subjective, false and failing outlook is developed over years of being unsuccessful again and again, and is reinforced with each additional “failure”. This “false awareness” is passed on in waves to classmates, peers, parents, teaching staff, school management and others. In this way **an interactional-symbolic process develops, outside the control of the “under-achiever”, working as a “vicious circle” reinforced by every additional failure, and leading to lack of motivation and despair.**

In most cases, as a result, these students are channeled into low-level groups in junior high schools and inferior study tracks (in high schools) with low-grade curricula, lacking relevant future and continuous orientation, and “broadcasting” low expectations and with “slow” teaching.

For these reasons and due to the increasing lack of motivation, **the scholastic discrepancy between the “under-achiever” and the “successful pupils” grows larger and larger until it is virtually unbridgeable, without the use of unique and complex methods** (for example, in our experience, the academic gap between the ‘C’ and ‘A’ groups in mathematics in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade is usually more than one year’s study and often far greater; this is without measuring gaps in other academic subjects).

- C. **The false subjective opinion that the “unsuccessful” pupil is caught up in, contradicts the school’s demands from him to fulfill his role as a pupil and achieve high grades. Due to this contradiction the “under-achiever” develops cognitive-dissonance, which is often only escaped by rationalizations,** also expressed by non-conforming behavior or declarations that study is unnecessary or similar, hidden dropout, and in some cases, because of profit-loss calculations (see Boudon, R., 1973<sup>15</sup>), also actual school dropout, which occurs particularly in low groups and tracks, mainly during the transfer from 9th to 10th grade. In this way the low group becomes a “storehouse” for future dropouts and even a “storehouse” **for turning to social deviation, as an alternative** and illegitimate channel for unfulfilled success at school, and achieving legitimate goals (Merton<sup>16</sup>, R., 1984) and as a “formation – reaction” mechanism (according to Cohen, A.<sup>17</sup>, 1967) expressing anger, estrangement and revenge at the system, and explaining the behavior of those belonging to the “criminal subculture” (ibid, 1967).

**On an individual level,** accumulating failures already during the initial stages of education, followed later by placement into low-grade groups and tracks is **depressing and frustrating**, with long term negative repercussions on the student’s subjective belief as to his ability (and the way others perceive it) and on his future status and employment, and due to the lack of upward mobility to higher groups, even seals his fate at a young age. This depression is also, additionally, suffered by the student’s parents, who often blame themselves for the failure.

**On a social level,** we cannot ignore the ever-increasing academic gaps from one generation to the next, and **the existing overlap between failure at school and ethnic origin** among the second generation as well (see Nahon, Y., 1987) which is the seeming trend for the third generation in Israel too. In addition there is an existing overlap between socioeconomic background and geographic region (periphery or central Israel) and scholastic achievements at school. These overlaps cause damage to population sectors with low socioeconomic backgrounds, to schools in the periphery, to social solidarity and to the required meritocratic nature of schools.

- D. In accordance with research findings (see Horn, K.G., 1990<sup>18</sup>) we can conclude that the reasons for lack of academic success (often resulting in school dropout) **are not principally cognitive**, but: **sociological, cultural, psychosocial, systemic, and organizational.**  
**They can be roughly divided into two groups:**

1. **Internal independent school variables** – such as the school building, labeled tracks and groups resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies, “shallow” irrelevant curricula without challenging future orientation, and low expectations that crush students’ existing cognitive potential and lead to

<sup>15</sup> Boudon, R. (1973). *Education, opportunity, and social mobility*. (216-219). N.Y. Wiley.

<sup>16</sup> Merton, R. (1984). Social deviation. In *Man in society, introduction to sociology*, Unit 2. (25-33). The Open University. [in Hebrew]

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, A. (1967). Delinquent boys, the culture of the gang. *Megamot*, 9(1), 19-42. [in Hebrew].

<sup>18</sup> Horn, K.G. (1990) *The limits and potential of school education*. Jerusalem: Academon. [in Hebrew]



“failures”. Similarly, the “anonymity” pointed out by Seizer (see also S. Sharan, Shachar, H., & Levin, T., 1988)<sup>19</sup> and others.

2. **External independent school variables** – reasons the school often regards as ones over which they have no control, such as the effect of the residential environment, lack of support by other significant people, lack of positive models for imitation, emotional reasons due to the student’s personality or life circumstances etc.

**This situation is not “a twist of fate”  
The school management and teaching staff, with various techniques, can change it.**

### E. Basic components of the method and operational methods<sup>20</sup>

As we have already written, in order to release the students who the school has failed with and are in danger of actual dropout, from repression, and to significantly progress to

appreciably raise their academic success according to universal criteria, we need to act in the following, unconventional way:

1. We need to change and overturn the “fallacious awareness” which holds the student captive (along with his parents, teachers, the school management, his peer group, and the group of students he belongs to), and because of which he cannot reach impressive achievements.  
By operating rejuvenated study processes (preferably in the “basic” subjects which are considered “difficult”, such as math), which lead these students to a chain of successes and high achievements according to universal criteria (such as matriculation examinations, standardized tests) within relatively short amounts of time, accompanied by relatively great effort by the student, and operating an inner “control focus” process, a chain of real academic successes, and a dialogue in which the connection between effort and success is made clear to the student.  
The success achieved in a comparatively short amount of time provides the first layer that is fact, forming an infrastructure of new awareness which differs from previous beliefs.
2. The operating process must provide a holistic, structural response to the school’s internal variables, which explain lack of academic success. Activities such as challenging, relevant curricula, which can help us achieve upward mobility relative to the school’s hidden and revealed structure (sets, tracks) with full and genuine support from the school management and its teachers. This operating process creates a challenging and relevant goal for the student, and transmits high expectations to him.
3. The operating process must provide a holistic, structural response to the school’s external variables, which explain the school’s lack of success, such as small study groups, providing an emotional response to the students’ needs through a leader (coordinator) who develops a deep emotional bond with the student and can provide a figure to identify with, and serves as a “significant other” and address for any problem or issue. A “diffuse” relationship (as opposed to specific) of the study staff with every student.  
To make this possible, we must focus on a relatively small number of subjects, and a relatively small number of students, for the study staff to teach.  
The parents are partners, agree to the entire process and are active within it. The learning process is in groups, by opening a study group which serves as a social group that is supportive regarding study, and positively competes in its influence in relation to the peer group (where the norms are sometimes the opposite of the suggested process). All of this in a respectful way and with acceptance of cultural pluralism.
4. Due to the great academic gaps which these students have accumulated, the rejuvenated learning process aimed at challenging, relevant, and leading goals, serves to narrow the large academic gap which can be measured as several years of school study. Therefore, it would seem the only way to close this gap is **accelerated study** of a **relatively large amount of material, in a relatively short amount of time. This**

<sup>19</sup> Sharan, S., Shachar, H. and Levin, T. (1999). “The Innovative School: Organization and Instruction”. Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey

<sup>20</sup> All rights to the “Accelerated narrowing of the gaps” method are reserved to Nissim (Max) Cohen MA, method developer





**doesn't mean fast study. We mean study that is more effective than usual, with more time devoted to it, in a shorter period of time than usual.** For this reason there is learning in the afternoons and evenings and on vacation days. The study process includes beginning individual and group motivational processes, before and during learning, drama, non-routine activities, change of study environment, concentration on a limited number of subjects.

***Operating all of these four essential components in their entirety, comprises accelerated learning creating a synergetic, unusual, flow of rejuvenated study, which gradually becomes more powerful and allows for more effective study than usual, even with students who did not believe in their ability to succeed.***

Additional pedagogical principles translated into daily actions in school:

- Determination and consequence-oriented thinking
- A chain of study successes for every student at every study session
- Staff commitment and responsibility to the results
- Constant individual follow-up
- Teamwork
- Increasing opportunities for success

## F. Structure

The components of the method have been organizationally and pedagogically translated into a holistic “structural change”, operating in the program classes run by the school staff and under its responsibility:

- **Small study groups** – a teacher for each study group, with an average size of 17 students.
- **The program is led by the coordinator – homeroom teacher** – who is employed for more hours than usual, for no more than 32 students.
- **Group talks** – every morning and at the end of each day of study, as well as during study hours after regular school hours.
- **Individual talks** – with each student, and visits to each student's home.
- **Integration of circles of all the “significant others”** (parents' meetings).
- **Three types of subjects studied** – in accordance with the following division:
  1. **Matriculation subjects.**
  2. **Obligatory subjects** (subjects studied in accordance with the school's decision, such as Judaism or democracy, as well as obligatory subjects decided on by the program management, such as preparation for the IDF and National Service in 12<sup>th</sup> grade).
  3. **Optional subjects** (according to the student's choice – usually directed to their areas of strength).
- **Accelerated semestrial learning** – the school year is divided into two, and the obligatory matriculation subjects (14 units) are studied on a semester basis.
- The reinforced subject for matriculation is studied in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The obligatory and optional subjects are studied in the usual way for that school.

**Accelerated learning also beyond regular school hours** – as part of the accelerated learning, there is study in the afternoons and evenings, as well as concentrated study days and study marathons, some of which are held outside the school.

## **Appendix 2**

Letter from Lt. Col. Haim Cohen – Lt. Commanding Officer Magen Division – IDF,  
about the data for enlistment to the IDF in the “Start” Program 2008/9 report.

### **Office of the Magen Division Commanding Officer**

<b>Magen</b>	<b>Division</b>
<b><u>Office of the Commanding Officer</u></b>	
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>0304-3552</b>
<b>Fax:</b>	<b>0304-6221</b>
<b>No.</b>	<b>1403</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>July</b>
	<b>2010</b>

Mr. Elie Elalouf – General Director, the Rashi Foundation  
Chief Education Officer – Brigadier General Eli Shermeister

Mr. Nissim Cohen, Director of Tafnit Program, the Rashi Foundation

#### **Re: IDF enlistment statistics among Tafnit Program 2008/9 graduates**

1. I wish to thank the Rashi Foundation and the Ministry of Education for operating the Tafnit “Start” Program which accepts at-risk youth and brings them to eligibility for a matriculation certificate. Similarly, I would like to thank you for the cooperation between the program management and the Education and Youth Corps, Magen Division.
2. I wish to congratulate Tafnit “Start” for the high enlistment rates among the 2008/9 program graduates (the male enlistment rate is 96% of program graduates, and the female rate is 75%).
3. As part of our continued cooperation, and in accordance with your request, the encoded enlistment data has been forwarded to you.
4. I studied the report before its publication, and I confirm that the enlistment data appearing there correspond with that which I transferred (the recruits are divided into types of military professions according to our recommendation).
5. I wish the program much success, and hope to continue with our fruitful partnership.
6. Yours truly,

Haim Cohen, Lt. Col.

Lt. Commanding Officer Magen Division



1  
שמור

## לשכת מפקד מערך מג"ן



מג"ן	מעריך
תמפקד	לשכת
0304-3552	טל':
0304-6221	פקס:
1403	שוטף
חתיש"ע	א' באב
2010	ביולי 12

מר אלי אלאוף- מנכ"ל קרן רש"י  
קצין חינוך ראשי- תא"ל אלי שרמיסטר

לכבי מר ניסים כהן- מנהל תוכנית "תפנית" קרן רש"י

### הנדון: נתוני הגיוס לצה"ל בקרב בוגרי תוכנית "תפנית" בשנת תשס"ט

1. אני מברך את קרן רש"י ומשרד החינוך על הפעלת התוכנית "תפנית- סטארט" שמקבלת אליה נוער בסיכון ומובילה אותם לרכישת תעודת בגרות. כמו כן, מברך על שיתוף הפעולה בין הנהלת התוכנית לחיל החינוך והנוער, מערך מג"ן.
2. אני מברך את "תפנית- סטארט" על שיעורי הגיוס הגבוהים של בוגרי התוכנית לשנת תשס"ט (שיעור גיוס בנים 96% מקרב בוגרי התוכנית ושיעור גיוס בנות של 75% מקרב בנות התוכנית).
3. בהמשך לשיתוף הפעולה ולבקשתכם הועברו אליכם באופן מוצפן נתוני הגיוס.
4. עיינתי בדו"ח טרם פרסומו ואני מאשר כי כלל נתוני הגיוס המופיעים בו תואמים את הנתונים שהועברו על ידי הח"מ (קיימת חלוקה של המתגייסים בחתאם למאפייני אשכולות המקצוע הצבאיים עליהם המלצנו).
5. אני מאחל בהצלחה לתוכנית ומקווה להמשך שיתוף פעולה פורה,
6. בברכה,

חיים כהן, סגן מפקד מערך מג"ן  
סא"ל



1403 שמור

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