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CAN SCHOOL EDUCATE FOR CHANGING THE WORLD? THE STORY OF "EIN KAREM HIGH SCHOOL"

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Abstract

Many in the post-primary schooling system are sceptical when it comes to the possibility of making a substantial change in a school that is subject to standardized examinations and the endless chase after better grades. Many claims that in a relativist and teleprocessed world, enabling the shattering of the time and place union, it would be unlikely that schools would still hold a place. Many demonstrate disbelief in the capability and will by teachers to change the existing system and most certainly in the school's capability to instil values. There are many in the education system that are apprehensive of the criticism coming from teachers, supervisors and so on and prefer to refrain from attempting to introduce a change within the formal system. The story we have to tell you claims that it is possible. The experimental Ein Karem regional school is a comprehensive six-year high school located in Jerusalem, Israel. The school's motto is "From Awareness to Action"; the school has developed and adopted a pedagogic approach using initiative-driven and project-based learning within the formal curriculum, alongside social initiatives interwoven into school life; and it developed a unique high school certification program for social entrepreneurship, which encourages students to take a stance and initiate projects aimed at reducing the social injustices surrounding them.

1. Introduction

The experimental Ein Karem regional school is a comprehensive six-year high school located in the Jerusalem are in Israel. It is a regional public school, in other words, on that does not screen its students. 700 students in 30 classes, ranging from seventh to twelfth grade, attend the school. The school hosts students from the boarding school, coming from all over the country, and students from 20 communities from around the area.

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8 years ago, Prof. Roni Aviram, a professor in the department of Education in Ben Gurion University, published his book "Navigating Through the Storm: Reinventing Education for Postmodern Democracies" (2010)

The main claim Prof. Aviram is making in his book is: A postmodern storm is rattling the foundations of the modern world, including those of the education system, a system that is clearly based on modern fundamentals. This means that a gulf is continuously and rapidly opening up between the system and the reality within which it operates. This abyss turns the education system into one that is socially and economically dysfunctional, leading to increasingly growing performance problems" (Aviram, 2010),

We live in a world characterized by alienation and apathy. Schools have the right and responsibility to develop and direct their scholastic worldview towards the optimal desirable world. A desirable world is one in which human beings are committed to each other, strive to prevent injustice, combat apathy, and foster social solidarity. School is part of the world around it, and the school curriculum therefore incorporates issues and experiences from the surrounding environment. What do we need for tomorrow's world? What are the characteristics of the world in which we live?

Our response is stated below. The school's motto is "From Awareness to Action"; the school has developed and adopted a pedagogic approach using initiative-driven and project-based learning within the formal curriculum, alongside social initiatives interwoven into school life; and it developed a unique high school certification program for social entrepreneurship, which encourages students to take a stance and initiate projects aimed at reducing the social injustices surrounding them.

1.1. The story of a school

The experimental program, **"From Awareness to Action"**, is a pedagogic way to route the social indifference and develop an inner sense of capability to make things better and lead to a real change in the reality surrounding the school. This is done by pedagogic tools involving enterprise-related studying

as part of the formal curriculum, theoretical and practical familiarity with actual social issues, personal involvement in social enterprises that intertwine life within and out of school as well as a unique matriculation program guiding the students in taking a stand and executing a social project from scratch with the intention of diminishing social injustice surrounding them.

The program was initiated with the background of the team's perception that global events cannot be ignored: a global environmental crisis, an international economic crisis with an impact on hundreds of thousands of people in the first, second and third worlds, a diminishing of the sense of personal and economic security, the social unrest that broke out in Israel in 2011, an atmosphere of disrespect towards citizens, offenses towards foreigners, elderly and women, poverty and housing hardships, lack of a sense of employment security, ridiculously low wages to young people, etc. Quite often, in face of the **tidal** waves of change and crises, schoolteachers encountered expressions of indifference by youngsters.

2.   Problem Statement

Schools curriculum focus mainly on subject matters and do not prepare students to for the real world, especially to take a stance and make a difference.

The gap between school's curriculum and the world surrounding us is growing every day.

In a Postmodern world that is defined by relativism school cannot ignore the necessity to deal with moral issues

3.   Research Questions

- How can we make the school curriculum different?
- Can we educate at school solidarity and the motivation to make a change?
- Will it affect the wellbeing of the students?

4.   Purpose of the Study

The school's motto is "From Awareness to Action"; the school has developed and adopted a pedagogic approach using initiative-driven and project-based learning within the formal curriculum, alongside social initiatives interwoven into school life; and it developed a unique high school certification program for social entrepreneurship, which encourages students to take a stance and initiate projects aimed at reducing the social injustices surrounding

5.   Research Methods

5.1.   Project based learning

The school places an emphasis on ground breaking pedagogy that combines social entrepreneurship with PBL (Project Based Learning.) Today's learners will be encountering a future world of uncertainty and rapid change. The education system must prepare them accordingly. As noted at the outset, the realities of the twenty-first century make it essential that students develop autonomous learning capabilities and the ability to define goals for themselves, as well as the path to achieving these goals through the effective use of rapidly changing relevant knowledge. This definition is the essence of perspective underpinning project-

based learning. Through PBL, the student learns to plan and construct solutions to real-world problems. PBL optimizes development in four areas of utmost importance in the twenty-first century:

- Critical thinking;
- Communication;
- Collaboration; and
- Creativity

These are supplemented by the constructivist principle that learning should foster the ability to transfer knowledge acquired from one discipline to another discipline (Scott, 2015). The ability to solve real-world problems can be cultivated through group projects that require in-depth investigation, personal as well as individual responsibility for the product and its various components, and control and oversight of work by various groups, with the aim of providing an optimal, comprehensive solution. In addition, encouraging learners to manage the learning process by themselves at their own pace, with the aim of presenting their achievements and solutions to the problem, fosters their abilities to cope with future problems (Punie, 2007). Studies on project-based learning approaches have shown that students taught through action-based learning perform as well as or better than students who have been educated using conventional learning approaches. However, when twenty-first century competencies were measured, learners who were taught through PBL significantly outperformed those who were educated using conventional approaches (Punie, 2007) This learning method is based on active learning and on linking the pedagogy with the reality found out of the classroom (in accordance with the vision of the experiment.) Using this method within the formal curriculum, students are required to work as teams, planning and executing a practical project, providing a solution for issues that are relevant to the study subject, which they have detected.

This learning method strengthens the sense of self-capability, enhances leadership and social responsibility, and connects the curriculum with the reality that lies out of school, encourages experiential and societal learning as well as imparts communicative skills, enhancing facilities such as negotiation, cooperation and presentation.

At the same time, the outputs of this learning involve widening horizons and being acquainted with the Israeli social reality and bureaucracy as well as reflect a wider in-depth understanding of the project and the expertise required for its execution. This way, students employ their inner motivation to learn in a significant way.

> With project-based learning, teachers generate an educational atmosphere that
> is adjusted to the spirit of the time, mounting social, value related and contextual
> challenges we face in the world around us. Learning is conducted using pedagogic
> tools including experiencing surrounding a main theme, employment of
> independent thinking, creativity, patience in taking steps towards an output,
> expression of the students' personal strengths and passing the learning baton to the
> students. (McLoughlin & Lee, 2008, p. 15).

The leading principle, in constructing the projects, is that they are based on a real need and that may be of use to someone. Another tenet is the one of Transparent Walls, or in other words, learning is not

limited to school grounds. (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, pp. 114-115). This way, for instance, following a meeting with the author Etgar Keret, children who learned of writing short stories wrote, published and sold two original books. A class that studies Geography during the Nepal earthquake prepared a campaign promoting preparedness to natural disasters put together information systems and launched the campaign in its respective community. Students who studied in history lessons about the immigration waves prior to and after the founding of the country issued a stamp for each such wave by way of the Israeli Philatelic Service. At the end of the schooling year, the stamps were affixed on the school's certificates. A class that studied the scriptures started a chain of theological study centres in their respective places of residence.

5.2. Social entrepreneurship

"Social responsibility" – a guiding super-value in school activity

This value could be interpreted as an integration of the sense of belonging within the level of consciousness and of involvement and entrepreneurship in the practical level. Social responsibility is manifested in the level of consciousness by the student's sense of belonging, namely that he is not an island in the world and part of various circles - environmental in general and human in particular. In the practical level, the student is involved in the circles of his belonging, or in other words, he acts by his own disposition as part of the circles of his belonging in order to contribute, introduce improvements and overcome problems. In this context, the central concept is "Social Entrepreneurship." Entrepreneurship can be described as a concerted action to change reality. The entrepreneur is an individual who acts for changing a given reality. For that end, he directs an organized and skilled educational and reflective process, following stages such as interest and curiosity, identification of problems and pitfalls, definition of personal will, definition of objectives, formulation of a full-scale operative program and its execution. An entrepreneurial project is one with an impact that last even after the entrepreneur completes his or her own enterprising activity. As mentioned, the type of entrepreneurship to be promoted by the school will be Social Entrepreneurship, or in other words, an entrepreneurial feat of an individual within a collective (whatever it may be - class, age group, school, neighbourhood, community, the natural surrounding and so on) and for his or her own good. The school will setup for its students learning processes that generate an extensive contact between the school and the world outside - introducing the real work into the school's realm (content, issues, dilemmas, people, organizations, and the likes) and projecting the school (its students, the faculty and parents) into the real world to learn and operate within it.

Throughout the years, the school students deal with social entrepreneurships. This is increasingly growing during the school years and is part of the students' school life. Following is a table summarizes the dealings and activity made in this area in each academic year (Table 01).

Table 01. The dealings and activity made in each academic year

Methodological stage	Grade	Translation of the principles to year-round student activity	
		From Awareness (first semester)	To Action (second semester)
Comprehending the concepts of Communal Identity and impartation to the community	7th	The students will be exposed to the four identity circles (personal, familial, Israeli-Jewish and communal) and learn about the Ein Karen community with all its complexities.	The students should be exposed to supportive activity within the community by way of an imparting activity by their age group.
Exposure to the concepts of Leadership and Individual Leadership and their interpretation to the concept of Social Leadership	8th	The students will learn of leaders and of the principles of leadership and personal leadership, discover the concept Social Need and detects imparities in their own environment.	The students will be exposed to the Israeli society's social needs, detect such a need and plan an age-group initiative as part of the school activity. The activity will be carried out.
From detection of a social need to social class entrepreneurship	9th	Students will get thoroughly acquainted with the concepts Social Need and Social Entrepreneurship and will form activity designed to detect and select a singular social need to focus on in class.	The student will put together a class work plan in order to promote the social entrepreneurship and would hold activities in school or within the community for the end of its execution.
Linking personal commitment to the social entrepreneurship model	10th	The students will learn of the imparities in the Israeli society (using the approved matriculation program) and proceed towards exposure to the concepts of social need and social entrepreneurship through three in-depth learning days throughout the year.	The students will implement their personal commitment within the social entrepreneurship from the previous year or as part of a new one and will continue being active in the community.
The team stage: A unique matriculation course of social entrepreneurship	11th	The course students will maintain a team process of selecting a social area of activity, study the subject in depth and formulate a detailed action plan for execution till the end of the school year.	All the students will continue to fulfil their personal commitment duty of social activity. The course students will plan a team project.
	12th	The students will continue to expose themselves to advanced content, following the approved matriculation curriculum.	The course students will put the social entrepreneurship into actual implementation and will present their achievements before a panel of examiners at the end of the year.

5.3. Halev (AIL) center - The Anti-Indifference League

The Halev centre, the Anti-Indifference League (AIL), was founded in 2013. The centre has set its aim on encouraging students to be more active and involved socially, using informal pedagogic tools within the formal educational institute. The centre attempts to combine the necessity of bringing together and connecting youngsters with the realm of social involvement, concern and solidarity with the existence of a providing, enabling and accessible framework with the school. The AIL centre offers students an open and homey physical structure, eye-level meetings with teachers and social content relevant to them. All these intertwine harmoniously within the Israeli public- s c h o o l structure and agenda. In practice, the AIL centre wishes to physically and pedagogically introduce the informal education into the formal educational system.

The centre resides in a classroom that is located in the middle of school, hence creating clear visibility of the place and of the centre's activity. The mere central nature of the centre is a statement of its significance within the overall school framework. The centre is equipped in such a way that enables varied social activities, including a round table, newspaper and magazine reading place, computers, audio-visual means, comfortable seating, "Coffee and Deed" corner, team workstations, etc.

Every student may attend the centre totally voluntarily. The centre is always lively and packed with students. The place can host some 40 to 50 students.

The **AIL** centre is a "home" for varied activities: Personal tutoring, Mediation, Student Council, Halev (AIL hour) - a group of students that initiates, constructs and gives class tutoring to their own classes once a month. These lessons would combine content from Jewish sources with contemporary contexts, Tours and enrichment activities outside of school, school paper that deals with social and political issues.

5.4. Personal Education

In order to strengthen the discourse and personal acquaintance with the students from 7th to 12th grade, they are given additional hours with the class tutor and personal holistic guidance on every aspect - academic, social, emotional and at home.

Every class tutor is given three weekly hours with the additional of individual hours that are dedicated only to the core class (and not to the specialization course.)

6. Findings

During the years in which the experiment took place, the number of students in school has grown by 50%. The students express significantly higher satisfaction. The academic accomplishments doubled themselves and our students graduate and enter the military, aiming to a commanding position, while there is an increasingly growing trend to volunteer for a year prior to the military service.

7. Conclusion

It is possible to chance a school curriculum to a better one' if we do so the students starts to see the world and themselves in a different way. This year, a comprehensive study is being made to examine characteristics of positive psychology in school. Do we really prepare our children for the "Good life", as defined by Prof. Roni Aviram and Prof. Seligman?

Follow up articles to this one will discuss the experiment and its results.

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