

Excelling at matriculation

No. 7

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Director of the Yeholot Association

The lives of hundreds (472) of young people changed unrecognizably at the end of the last academic year – instead of dropping out of school before finishing high school, they completed it successfully, together with their friends. At the end of junior high school, they failed almost every subject, but 65% of them met the requirements of complete matriculation – higher than the national average which stands at around 50%. The Rashi Foundation's Yeholot Association, and its director, Nissim Cohen, among others, bear responsibility for this achievement. The Association, together with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry welfare services department, and the local authorities, operates programs in the periphery for students on the verge of dropout. According to the Association's figures, not only did most of its participants graduate high school, but 20% of them are currently studying in academia.

Cohen, who developed the “accelerated narrowing the gaps” method which he implements, ascribes the association's achievements to the hard work of the students, the school principals and teachers, and the Ministry of Education. This year, the association will operate programs for around 7,500 participants in over 100 periphery schools.

Israeli students' chances for success are directly related to their parents' economic situation. Cohen, who himself dropped out of the education system, but now holds a master's degree in Educational Sociology, has been working since the 1980s to change the situation. “Every young person can reach good achievements at school,” he argues, “we need to bring him to believe that if he works hard, it will succeed.”

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