

- **Name of the study:** The "Sparks" project – Evaluation of the implementation phase of the initiatives
- **Year:** 2022
- **Type of research:** Evaluation research
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- **Research Authority:** 'Michlol' unit, Shalem Fund.

Abstract

This study was carried out by 'Michlol'- the Evaluation and Measurement Unit of the Shalem Fund

Background

The 'Sparks' project was developed with the aim of training entrepreneurs from the local and regional authorities to develop new initiatives for the benefit of the integration of people with disabilities in the community, in the fields of marketing, education and information. The entrepreneurship training phase was led by teams from the "Rothschild Cube" and the Shalem Foundation.

The goals of the evaluation focused mainly on examining the participants' satisfaction with the training, the content and tools, the guidance and accompaniment, the learning environment, the meeting schedules, the tour and the launch event. Another goal was to examine the participants' sense of ability to perform various actions in the entrepreneurship process, to examine the collaborations that were created, as well as to examine the participants' perception of the venture's contribution to the field of advocacy.

Methodology

23 women out of the 26 participating in the entrepreneurship training program participated in the assessment. The participants were given an online questionnaire at the last session of the training (and a short supplement to the questionnaire was given after the tour and the launch event). The questionnaire was developed for the needs of the current evaluation by 'Michlol' unit and the other partners, and consisted of open and closed questions that provided information regarding the goals of the evaluation that were formulated.

Findings

About 17 of the 23 respondents came with an initial idea for the initiative and already at the beginning of the program saw its suitability to the spirit of the initiative. 87% stated that they

were active and involved in the training program to a great or very great extent. Satisfaction with the training program was found to be high and sometimes even very high in most of the tested parameters. In general, 96% of the participants stated that they were satisfied with the training to a great or great extent.

In the aspect of guidance and accompaniment, the ratings ranged from 4.17 to 4.43 (on a measurement scale of 1 to 5), a finding indicating very high satisfaction. In the aspect of acquiring knowledge and providing tools in the training, the ratings ranged from 3.96 to 4.22. It is evident that the participants contributed significantly from the program, and that the thoughts about the projects accompanied them even beyond the training hours. It was also found that they feel capable of carrying out most of the steps in building a venture, while a lower capability was observed in the area of measuring and evaluating the venture and in the area of resource mobilization.

The findings show that the program is well structured in terms of meeting schedules and also meets a goal in terms of developing ventures that may contribute to the field of advocacy. A great deal of satisfaction was observed in the aspect of the tour and the launch event. It is evident that such and other collaborations have begun between the entrepreneurs and parties inside and outside the Authority.

Challenges and difficulties described by the participants, as well as suggestions for improvement are detailed in the body of the findings.

Insights and recommendations

A variety of insights and recommendations are detailed in the evaluation report, the main ones being:

- This is a unique and important program, despite the difference and gap between small and large authorities. The conceptual change and the high level of awareness of the participants is the most significant contribution of the program at this stage.
- There is room for adding content and enriching it with additional workshops with an emphasis on raising resources in the authorities, marketing and advertising, building a budget/business plan and measuring and evaluating the program.
- There is a place to coordinate expectations regarding the magnitude of the project against the budget approved for it, in order to create a sense of success among female entrepreneurs.
- An entire fund team will be responsible for keeping in touch with the entrepreneurs
- A follow-up questionnaire will be compiled that will be sent to the entrepreneurs in about a year in order to evaluate the implementation of the initiatives and their implementation.

Keywords

Shalem Fund study, Sparks project, training, entrepreneurship, information, authorities, developmental intellectual disabilities

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