

- **Name of the study:** Evaluation of the "Spotlight" project
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- **Type of research:** Evaluation research
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Abstract

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

The "Spotlight" project was born from the rationale that exposure, information, and personal recognition reduce concerns and fears, increase empathy, and can contribute to the understanding, inclusion and integration of a variety of populations in society. Exposing the abilities and talents of people with intellectual developmental disabilities, and their visibility in the public-physical and virtual space, bring to light the Israeli society in all its shades. The goals of the project are: *holding a creative, experiential and empowering process of creative students together with a group of people with intellectual developmental disabilities, for the benefit of mutual recognition of personal and group abilities, *promoting social integration and the visibility of people with disabilities in the world of culture and the arts, *revealing the abilities and skills of people with a developmental intellectual disability, *exposing people with a developmental intellectual disability to artistic expressions and higher studies, *creating a joint final product with public visibility. The evaluation combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches and included four populations: the project leaders in the arts schools, the project leaders in the operating organizations, students in the arts schools and service recipients with developmental intellectual disabilities. The findings show high satisfaction with the project, its impact on the students' perception of people with intellectual developmental disabilities, and its overall contribution to both populations in terms of personal growth and social inclusion.

Main findings:

From the students' point of view: of the 42 students who responded to the evaluation questionnaire, 76% are women and 24% men, and most of them are in their first year of study at the Higher School of Art. About 66% of the students participated in this activity

out of choice, and 93% of them participated in almost all the meetings. Also, 57% of them had no prior acquaintance with people with developmental intellectual disabilities. The main reasons that the students indicated for their participation in the program are a desire to meet, study and work with people with disabilities; financial aid and credit points in studies; experience, enjoyment, and personal development; and a desire to volunteer and contribute to the community. The overall satisfaction with the project was high (86% rated the activity as successful to a great or great extent). 79% rated to a great or great extent the program's compliance with their expectations, both in terms of the activity itself, and in terms of working time and joint creation. 88% highly¹ rated the professionalism of the training team. 93% rated highly the respectful attitude given by the team to all participants. While a lower rating was to say that "the conditions in which the activity took place were good and appropriate" (58% rated highly) Most of the students would recommend other students to participate in the program (81% rated it high), and a smaller percentage would be happy to take part in similar activities (72% rated it high). Most of the students reported that the program contributes to both populations (93% rated high) and that it is important to have more programs that integrate people with disabilities in the community (84% rated high). In addition, 88% stated that they would not want to separate the two populations during the activity at all. However, lower ratings were given to the statements according to which the program succeeds in causing the integration of people with disabilities in society (74% high rating) and that a personal relationship is created between them and the person with the disability (72% high rating). A relatively high heterogeneity was observed in the statement according to which the student's felt difficulty in acting together with the people with disabilities. The findings indicate that the program largely moved the students (77% rated it high), and that they enjoyed it (84% rated it high). Most of them reported that the activity was a challenge for them (67% rated it high). The findings show that the program greatly contributed to the students. They found that the educational experience enriched them, influenced them and led them to a change in their awareness and perceptions. In the full report you can find the challenges, difficulties, and a variety of perspectives on the impact of the project from the eyes of the students.

From the point of view of the service recipients: 73 of the 74 respondents (almost 99%) indicated that they wanted and chose the activity, 71 of the 73 (97%) indicated that they enjoyed the activity very much, and 65 of the 66 (98% of the respondents) indicated that they were present at almost all the meetings. In the full report you can find the reasons

High rating = rated "to a large extent" or "to a very large extent" ¹

given by the service recipients for wanting to participate in the program, as well as the activities and aspects that the participants with intellectual developmental disabilities particularly liked and disliked. 70% of the service recipients with a developmental intellectual disability stated that they had no difficulty. There is a clear preference of the recipients of the service to integrate and hold a program together with students without disabilities. 62% of the service recipients stated that they were given the opportunity to choose and take part in decision making. 69 of the 70 respondents stated that they told someone about the activity. and more. 68 of the 70 respondents stated that "yes" they would recommend the project to friends.

From the point of view of the project leaders: (in the art schools and the operating organizations): the project leaders reported that the goals of the project were achieved to a very large extent, as was their report regarding the degree of success of the project (very successful). The leading teams stated that the project succeeded in connecting the two populations (with and without disabilities) in a very good way (13 out of 15 were rated the highest). The examples they cited of integration between the populations (which can be found in the full report) indicate the formation of an infrastructure for openness and familiarity through the regular interactions between the two groups, as well as the empowerment and equality derived from the joint meetings and the professional guidance. They also pointed out the value of exposure to different populations for the benefit of personal growth, and the potential of practicing art as a powerful tool in creating communication. Also, the connection is reflected in the development of a special relationship between the populations through shared experiences and learning.

Both populations had preparatory meetings for the project and the joint meetings. The leaders stated that the preparatory meetings that took place were significant, instructive, and moderately to highly beneficial. The preparation sessions facilitated processing and preparation for the joint sessions. Most of the leading teams stated that the dosage of the joint meetings was appropriate. Most of the carriers stated that the service recipients were given the opportunity to choose during the project. Examining the project disclosure index to the community, it was found that 9 of the 15 initiative leaders resulted in the initiative being disclosed, while 6 reported that the initiative was not disclosed to the public. The challenges faced by the leaders of the project in the schools were varied and they appear in the full report. 14 out of 15 project leaders stated that they would recommend other entities to launch similar initiatives.

Keywords

Spotlight project, community integration, social attitudes and perceptions, advocacy, education and enrichment, developmental intellectual disability, evaluation research

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