



Driving Education in Israel: Mobile Science and Technology Labs

Ofanim is a social-change NGO founded in 2004 by high-tech entrepreneurs. We provide extracurricular enrichment in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) to children living in peripheral communities in Northern and Southern Israel. **Ofanim developed a unique model to reach children in remote areas by using buses converted into mobile science labs, complete with computers and technology.** Thanks to Ofanim, children in the periphery are exposed to hands on science activities and to the world of technology and computers in a fun and encouraging environment. In addition to the exciting curriculum content, Ofanim's highly trained instructors encourage a love for learning and education, inspiring the children to invest in their studies and aim for higher education. **This year, Ofanim is operating five mobile labs and three mini labs that will reach 1,800 Israeli children in 61 communities.**

Our Mission

Ofanim's mission is to promote educational opportunities for children living in Israel's periphery, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds or do not have access to educational enrichment activities.

Our beneficiaries are elementary school pupils from all sectors of Israeli society—Jewish and Arab, religious and secular, native-born and new immigrants.

Our goals include nurturing the children's critical-thinking skills and igniting their imaginations, developing their social and leadership skills, and motivating them to succeed in school and to pursue higher education in STEM fields. In addition, Ofanim works to build the children's self-confidence by exposing them to valuable role models. Ofanim aims to give every child in the periphery the opportunity to reach his/her potential.



While Israel is a worldwide hub for high tech entrepreneurship and is widely known as the “Start-up Nation”, disadvantaged children living in Israel's northern and southern periphery do not have access to high quality educational or after school activities. Most of them live in small communities that offer few or no opportunities for education enrichment. **Ofanim is the only organization using this unique model to reach children in remote areas and encourage them to aim for higher education and a career in the world of science, medicine, and high tech.**

We invite you to watch this [video](#) that illustrates Ofanim's impact on the children it serves.

Ofanim's Mobile Science and Technology Labs

Our program topics rotate each year, and include six different year-long programs: **Bio - Medicine, the World of Scientists, Computerized Animation, 3D, Robotics, and Gaming.** Ofanim's curriculum materials are developed especially for our activities together with professional pedagogical institutions. Ofanim's instructors are university students, (many of whom are science major students) who



are selected through an intensive interview process and undergo thorough training by Ofanim. In addition to the weekly programs, Ofanim provides experiential field trips to universities and science museums to further enrich the children's experience.

Ofanim's past program evaluations show that over 90% of children report a very high level of satisfaction from participating in the program, as well as a higher sense of self-efficacy. Last year, Ofanim has launched a new external assessment and evaluation program, developed and led by professors from the Technion Institute and Tel Hai College's research institution. The evaluation program includes building an enhanced logical activity model, evaluating our effectiveness, and consolidating long-term assessment tools for internal use. In addition, Ofanim has built a database of program participants to enable us to track program graduates and assess their future matriculation and graduation rates. This new evaluation tool will allow us to better measure our effectiveness in the long term, and adjust our program if necessary.

We recently carried out a survey of 119 program graduates who are currently in 11th or 12th grade.

The results show that 23.5% of the program graduates are preparing to take their final high school math matriculation exam at the highest level, whereas the national average is 8.2% in the North and only 6.9% in the South. At the same time, 58% of the graduates express an interest in pursuing academic professions in STEM fields.

Awards - In 2009, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services awarded Ofanim the Minister's Shield for Outstanding Organizations and Volunteers. In 2011, Midot, a national organization promoting effectiveness in Israel's social-change sector, awarded its Seal of Effectiveness to Ofanim. The award has been renewed and is valid until 2017.

Ofanim is supported by Friends of Ofanim, a 501(c)3; Foundations and private donors; Israeli corporations and local municipalities in the peripheral towns and villages hosting our programs.

*We thank you for your interest in becoming a Friend of Ofanim.
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