
Toward an Israeli Culture of Teen Philanthropy: *Assessing Magshimim,* Honeycomb's Teen Philanthropy Program in Israel

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Introduction

Honeycomb is dedicated to strengthening Jewish engagement and identity by supporting and elevating the field of Jewish youth philanthropy. To that end, Honeycomb develops youth philanthropy curricula, trains youth professionals, and provides them with resources and networking opportunities.

Honeycomb's programs introduce teens to a Jewish lens to philanthropy by means of a grantmaking curriculum that guides teens through the philanthropic process, from mission statement development to grantmaking decisions. Through Honeycomb's support, guidance, and resources, youth philanthropy programs teach teen participants about their communities and local nonprofit organizations, about relevant social justice issues, and about the process of evaluating proposals in order to ultimately allocate funds raised to a chosen organization or cause.

In 2018, Honeycomb partnered with the Israeli Association of Community Centers (IACC) to develop and scale a teen philanthropy program in community centers across Israel, which was named *Magshimim*, from the Hebrew word meaning "to fulfill a dream."¹ In the 2022–2023 school year, the *Magshimim* program operated in 15 community centers across the country, bringing together more than 800 teens from diverse communities to learn about and address key issues in Israeli society. Each of these centers runs between one to four groups of *Magshimim*.

Research Questions

To assess the success of implementing *Magshimim* in Israel, Honeycomb sought to learn the following:

1. How was the IACC able to translate the Honeycomb model into the Israeli context, and what obstacles it would have to overcome if it is to scale or continue offering the programs?
2. What do participating teens gain in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward philanthropy and their Jewish identity?
3. How does the program impact the community centers and the wider local community?

¹ Established in 1969, IACC currently runs 180 community centers spread across Israel, known as Cultural Centers for Youth and Sports (or, by the acronym in Hebrew, Matnas). *Magshimim* is a multiyear program (teens participate in the program for the entire school year and often throughout the summer as well). The teen participants are, predominantly, from disadvantaged socioeconomic communities.

Methodology

To answer these questions, the Rosov Consulting team conducted a mixed methods study, including quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. A survey for teens was administered in two points in time to *Magshimim* participants, to capture their knowledge of and attitudes toward Jewish identity and philanthropy and assess growth in their fundraising and grantmaking skills. Survey respondents came from three groups: (Group 1) participants who only recently joined the program, (Group 2) participants who completed their first year in the program, and (Group 3) participants who completed two or three years in the program. A shorter version of the survey was administered to a comparison group (Group 4) made of teens who expressed interest in joining *Magshimim* but did not participate in the program (they participated in information sessions on the various programs offered by their community centers).

In addition to the surveys, we interviewed eight center directors, nine counselors, and 15 teen participants predominantly from 11th and 12th grades, from a total of 13 centers. We asked them about their experience with the program from their vantage point. A final interview was conducted with the program director Adi Romem, with whom the research team was also in ongoing communication throughout this study.

Demographics

Interview data suggest that most *Magshimim* participants come from low- to medium-income households and economically disadvantaged families, including three groups of teens who are considered “at risk” because they face various challenges in their lives, such as mental health, family problems, or involvement in risky behaviors.

Some of the groups have distinctive characteristics: In one of the groups, most teens are from the Ethiopian community; in another group, most teens are children of immigrants from the former Soviet Union; in another group, most teens identify as LGBTQ+.

In terms of their religious affiliation, a third of the teens who responded to the survey identified as *dati* (Orthodox), another third as *masorti* (traditional), and the last third identified as *hiloni* (secular/culturally Jewish).² (See Appendix for a more detailed breakdown of demographic characteristics of the centers.)

² These Hebrew terms represent the common way that Israeli characterize themselves in relation to Jewish religion. Distinct from denominational identity, which is more common in other countries, this typology refers primarily to the level of religious observance: *dati* people being most observant, and *hiloni* people being least observant.

Key Findings

Impact on Participants

Participants gained profound knowledge and skills in various domains. Both interviews and surveys indicate that *Magshimim*'s long-term participants gained profound knowledge and skills, in particular when compared to new participants and nonparticipants.

Knowledge: *Magshimim* teens gained invaluable knowledge about nonprofit organizations—both in terms of the breadth of organizations that exist in Israel as well as their missions and needs. *Magshimim* teens who have participated in the program for two or three years are nearly twice as likely to understand to a large extent how nonprofits and foundations work. In contrast, none of the nonparticipants have that same understanding.

Empowerment: Long-term *Magshimim* participants feel more empowered and aware of their community's needs than new participants. Those who have not participated in *Magshimim* do not feel empowered, to a large extent, to make a difference, nor are they aware, to a large extent, of the social challenges facing their communities.

Leadership skills: Long-term participants were more likely than new participants to report strong leadership skills. The biggest difference between the two groups was in their comfort leading a group and standing in front of an audience. In contrast, a very small percentage of nonparticipants felt confident in these leadership skills.

Philanthropic skills: Long-term participants are nearly twice as likely as new participants to attest to their ability to fundraise for social initiatives and conduct research on different organizations (for the purpose of donating). Again, none of the nonparticipants felt as confident regarding their fundraising abilities.

Participants gained more positive attitudes toward philanthropy and Jewish giving. Teens' attitudes toward philanthropy, in the form of volunteering or fundraising, have improved considerably, as have their understanding of the intersection between giving and their Jewish identity.

***Magshimim* teens were enthusiastic about fundraising and grantmaking.** Many of the teen groups expressed passion for fundraising and volunteering as ways to connect with people in their community who need their support. The passion for both fundraising and volunteering grows the longer they participate in the program.

***Magshimim* teens connect philanthropy with Jewish values.** The majority of *Magshimim* participants see a clear connection between giving and Jewish identity, which stands in stark comparison to nonparticipants, only a small fraction of whom make this connection.

Impact on the Community

Positive impact on the community centers. Many community center directors reported that the resources associated with running the *Magshimim* program boosted the community centers and attracted new teens to the program.

Positive impact on the broader community. Interviewees believe the program made a positive change to their community, as the majority of contributions and donations went to local causes. Center directors and counselors talked about the ripple effects of the program on the teens’ families as well as the broader community.

Positive impact on teens at risk. Some interviewees also mentioned an especially positive impact on at-risk participants, as the program provided an outlet for their energies and a platform to channel them away from potential negative behaviors.

Program Implementation

Five models of philanthropic giving. Based on our interviews, we identified five models of philanthropic engagement that *Magshimim* teens utilized throughout the 2022–2023 program year. The models include: (1) Fundraising, (2) Establishing social ventures, (3) Direct service volunteering, (4) Collecting donations, and (5) Indirect giving through American-Israeli collaboration. Most centers have implemented a variety of these models throughout the year.

Gradual adoption of the concept of fundraising. 2022–2023 marked a shift in the program’s maturity. All *Magshimim* groups engaged in fundraising activities; some centers doing so quite intensively. Although this year seems to have brought a beginning of a cultural shift among the leadership of *Magshimim*, there is still more work to be done to break stigmas regarding fundraising and to establish a more positive attitude.

The “White Night” as a transformative experience. Dubbed as “transformative” and a “special experience,” the “White Night” event is an annual, all-night fundraising event in which the teens are exposed to various nonprofit organizations, their missions, and initiatives. The White Night sparked the teens’ motivation to continue learning from leading nonprofit organizations in Israel about their fundraising and grantmaking work and ways to engage with them. It also presented an opportunity for teens to share their own fundraising initiatives and grantmaking processes with each other. Sharing ideas, practices, challenges, and successes inspired participants, in particular those with less fundraising experience, to embark on their own initiative as they could better envision the process from beginning to end.

Personal Impact

The impact of *Magshimim* on the teens was notable in terms of the newfound knowledge they have gained, the skills they have acquired, as well as their positive attitudes toward philanthropy and their Jewish identity.

Increased Awareness of Social Issues and Nonprofit Organizations

Center directors, counselors, and teens all spoke about the teens' increased awareness of social justice issues within their communities as a consequence of their participation in *Magshimim*. As noted earlier, the initial months of the program were devoted to conversations about their communities' needs and to learning about different social justice organizations, reaching the apex of conversations and learning during the White Night. Teens described the ways *Magshimim* helped them gain perspective on life and made them more aware of the needs of their communities:

I am more patient and caring. We are busy looking out for others and less focused on ourselves. Before, I used to mainly see myself. I think this year has been the most meaningful in my life. —Teen

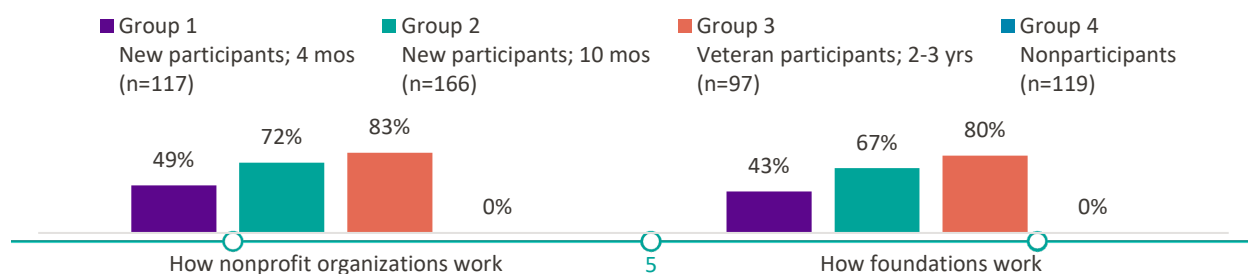
We have had conversations with elderly people who feel a great sense of loneliness. We heard their stories—about their families, about themselves, and about what weighs on their hearts. It taught me to look at people, including those who often go unnoticed, and to listen to them. —Teen

The program made me think that I want to give more of myself to society. I give something and don't get anything in return, but the act itself makes me feel good. It's something that changed my perspective, and it changes my perception of the army, for example. Today I want to do good things for other people without getting anything in return, and I want to do something important in the army. —Teen

Magshimim teens also gained invaluable knowledge about nonprofit organizations—both in terms of the breadth of organizations that exist in Israel as well as their missions and needs. Some teen groups participated in training sessions related to fundraising as well as related to the type of volunteer work they have engaged in, such as home renovations and fire safety.

The role of *Magshimim* in conveying to teens how nonprofit organizations and foundations work becomes very clear in Figure 1. *Magshimim* teens' confidence in understanding the work of nonprofits and foundations increases the further along they are in the program. Teens who have not participated in the program do not demonstrate that deep understanding of these basic philanthropic concepts.

Figure 1: Understanding How Nonprofit Organizations and Foundations Work, To A Large Extent*



* Percentage choosing the top point ('to a large extent') on a four-point scale in response to the question "To what extent do you understand the following?"

Empowering Teens from Marginalized Communities

In *Magshimim*, teens have the freedom and flexibility to choose social issues they want to focus on and are encouraged to engage socially and philanthropically in creative ways. They ultimately decide where their money will go to, and often can specify the way they want the organization to use their money.

Through the program, teens develop skills in a number of areas, including leadership, fundraising, budget planning, effective communication, and relationship-building. Being part of a group provides them with a platform to express their opinions, ideas, and concerns, fostering a sense of agency and understanding that their voice matters.

Voice and agency are particularly crucial to *Magshimim's* teens, most of whom come from Israel's periphery or marginalized communities. The teens leveraged their firsthand, intimate understanding of their communities' needs and were encouraged to become agents of change. Experiencing success in the form of raising hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of shekels, and giving the money they raised to an organization that supports causes that they deeply care about is an empowering experience.

[I learned] how to approach people in a way that will make them listen and donate money. We are in the periphery, and we need to learn how to get people with financial difficulties to donate, and how to give them meaning that they have done something good. —Teen

Yes. [I gained skills of] communication with people who are different from me, who are older than me. For example, I need to talk to the principal of the school and to other officials. The program changed the way I look at things. It taught me how to pay attention to people and see if they need help. There are many people who do not have a financial base and need help. I joined the club because "I had to," but after that I saw how many benefits I have from my participation. —Teen

The program gave me a lot of motivation and taught me things like how to use my social networks, how to talk to nonprofit organizations—things that are not always known at my age. —Teen

*One of the most special things about *Magshimim* is that the name of the program captures its concept. The project is meant to allow us to dream and make our dreams come true. Many volunteering activities have a glass ceiling, things that prevent us from doing what we plan to do, mostly due to budget issues. *Magshimim* provides us with many resources; we can dream what we want to happen and they support us in making it happen; there are no barriers. —Teen*

For some low-income community centers, the fundraising aspect of the program is not so easy to implement. Asking their community to give money to donate to a nonprofit organization is a delicate

issue, and volunteering feels like a more direct way for them to give to their community. As one of the directors shared:

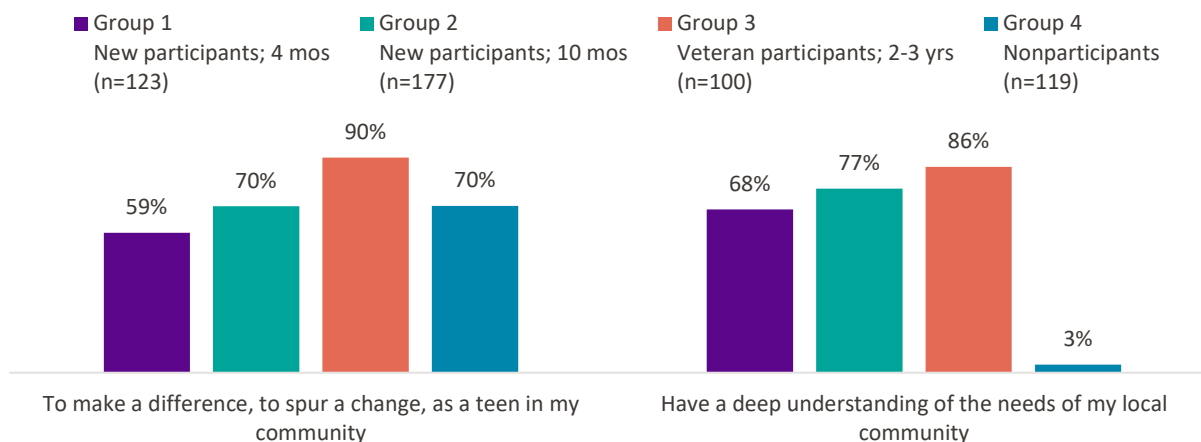
The population here is financially distressed; many teens come from low-income families. It is easier for them to give their time to the community, rather than asking [them to raise] money. —Center Director

Another low-income center director emphasized the empowering nature of the program:

Teens get a lot of practical training and tips on how to handle time challenges, management skills, how to bring an idea to implementation, how to delegate, how to make presentations, how to work in teams. We brainstorm together. Teens feel that even though they are not millionaires, they are able to bring change to the community. —Center Director

Figure 2 shows that *Magshimim*'s teens feel more empowered and aware of their local environment and their community needs the longer they participate in the program. Interestingly, the sense of empowerment – that one *could* make a difference in one's community – is not unique to *Magshimim* teens. Many teens who did not participate in *Magshimim* feel that they could (in theory) make a difference in their communities. But they lack the tools to do so. For example, they do not have the awareness of the social challenges facing their communities, which *Magshimim* participants have (and more so the more they participate).

Figure 2: Sense of Empowerment and Understanding of Local Needs, to a Large Extent*



* Percentage choosing the top point ('to a large extent') on a four-point scale in response to the question "To what extent are you able to do the following?"

Philanthropic and Leadership Skills

Philanthropic Skills

Center directors, counselors, and teens reported that *Magshimim* introduced them to the concept of fundraising, which was novel to them. Teens developed their financial literacy and financial skills (such as preparing budgets and comparing costs), networking, advertising, strategic planning, and data-informed decisions.

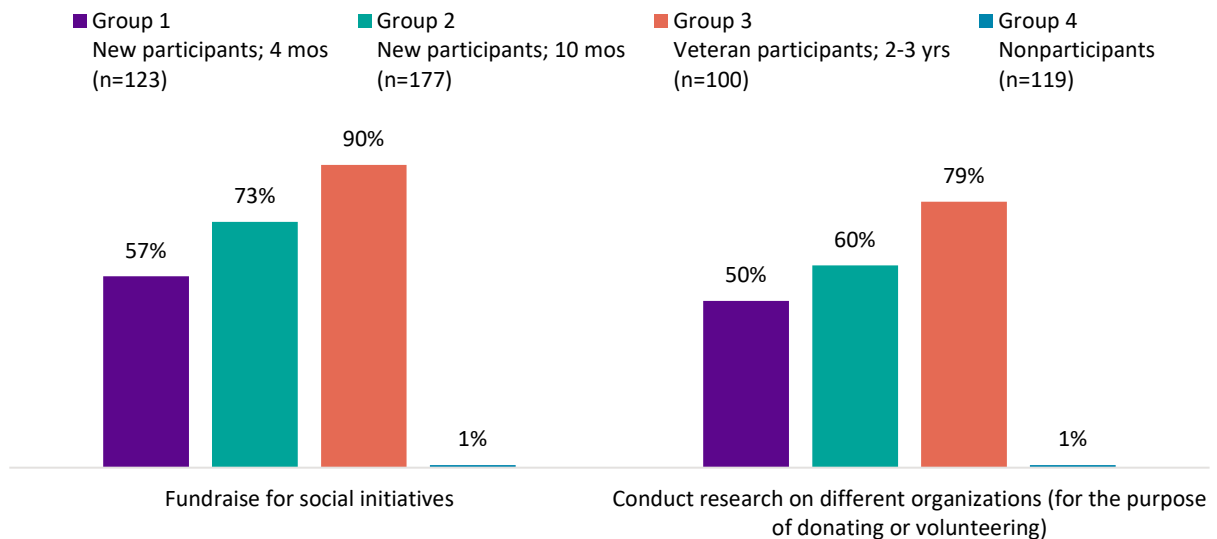
The program gives the teens a central place. Most programs for teens aim to give them something, but I haven't seen a program that develops [fundraising and] leadership skills better than Magshimim. You know, we are not the richest Matnas, but if they came to me and told me "we need money for this and that," I would try to get it to them. But in this program, they come to me and say: "we need this and that to raise money." They create the budget together on their own. And this is a rare thing. This is not taught/discussed among many families. —Center Director

It's nice to see how they are acquiring [financial literacy]. In some cases, it would be faster for me to take the initiative ... I could just pick up the phone, collect three quotes, and choose the cheapest. ... But here, they are doing everything on their own. —Center Director

They learn how to present the program and recruit people. For example, there is a bar in the neighborhood where they wanted to organize an event. They had to talk to the owners, explain to them what their initiative is about, and why they should support it. —Counselor

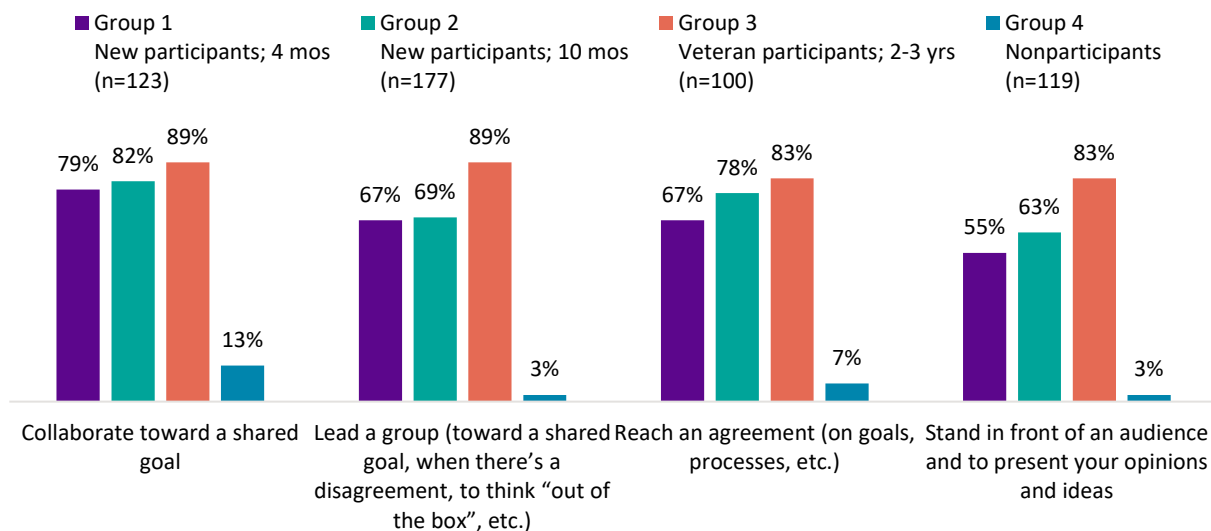
Figures 3 and 4 show the attitudes teens hold regarding fundraising and leadership skills. The overall trend is clear: teens in their second and third year of the program report more positive attitudes than teens who are in their first year of the program. The difference between *Magshimim's* participants and nonparticipants is stark. Teen participants were also asked about the top three skills that they gained from their participation in *Magshimim*. The full list of skills and percentages of teens who selected them can be found in the Appendix.

Figure 3: Fundraising Skills – The ability to Do the Following, to a Large Extent*



* Percentage choosing the top point ('to a large extent') on a four-point scale in response to the question "To what extent are you able to do the following?"

Figure 4: Leadership Skills – The Ability to Do the Following, to a Large Extent *



* Percentage choosing the top point ('to a large extent') on a four-point scale in response to the question "To what extent are you able to do the following?"

Attitudes Toward Philanthropy and Jewish Identity

Understanding Philanthropy

Many centers began their teen engagement through volunteer work, as they felt that they had to ease in the concept of philanthropy to make it more digestible. While discussing with teens issues related to social justice, teens often brainstormed areas in which they would like to volunteer and make a difference. By the end of the 2022–2023 all centers were able to incorporate new forms of philanthropy, as they learned about nonprofit organizations, foundations, and fundraising techniques.

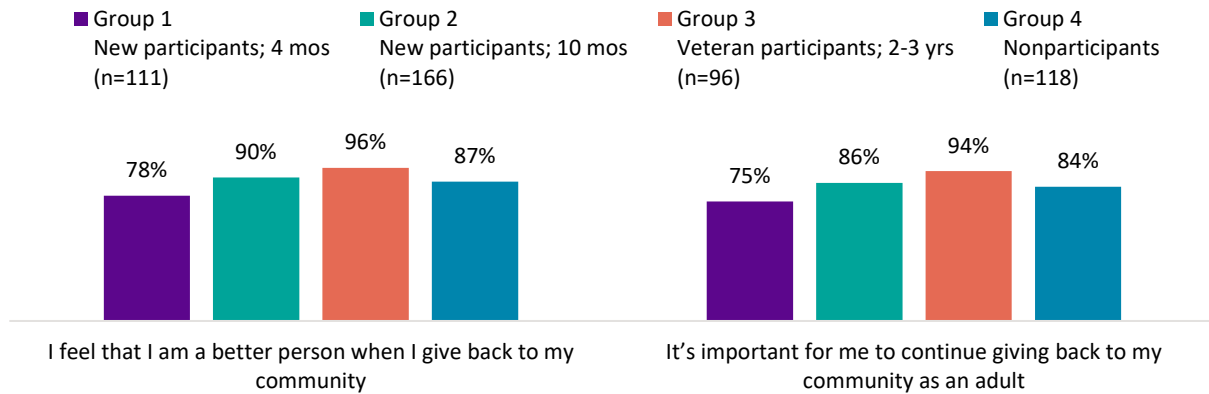
I have participated in one other fundraising initiative. In Magshimim, I am more mature and understand the meaning of why I donate. Here they taught us and explained the meaning of fundraising. It gives me an understanding of how good people are and that they want to help; it also teaches us how donations are a positive thing that allows us to create different projects and help people. —Teen

I learned what philanthropy is and how common it is in the US. I learned about the meaning of charity in Judaism. —Teen

From Figure 5 we can learn that for the majority of teens (including *Magshimim*'s participants and nonparticipants), giving to their community makes them feel like a better person and that it is an important value for them. This attitude is most prevalent among those who have participated in *Magshimim* for two to three years. Interestingly it is higher among nonparticipants (Group 4) versus those who are in the beginning of their first year in the program (Group 1). Perhaps teens in the beginning of the program, although motivated, are made aware of the challenges of volunteer work and philanthropy compared to those who express interest but have not necessarily engaged in the work. Another hypothesis is that many teens join *Magshimim* as part of the mandatory high school community service requirement. In the interviews, nearly half of teens mentioned that they joined *Magshimim* to

fulfill their “personal commitment” requirement, but that they stayed for another year or two because it was fulfilling, and they enjoyed the work and their peers.

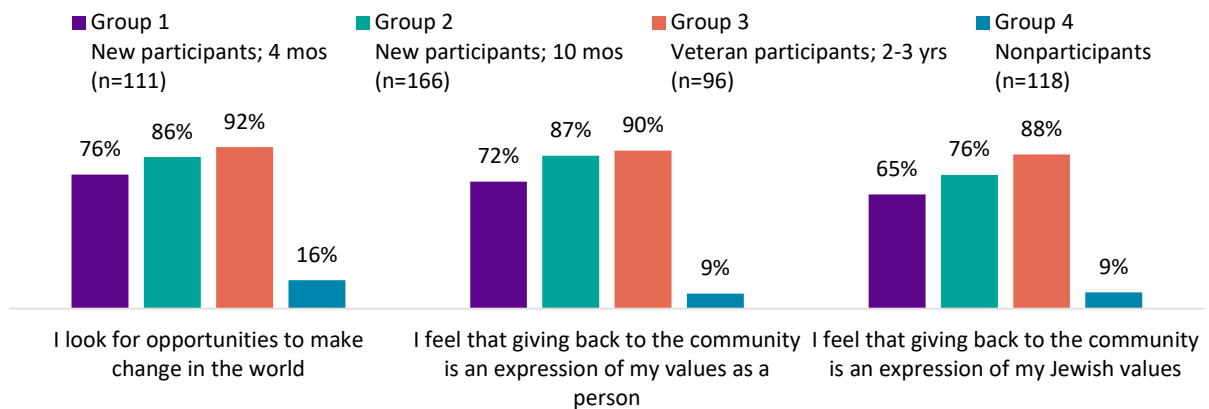
Figure 5: Attitudes Toward Philanthropy, To A Large Extent*



* Percentage choosing the top point (‘strongly agree’) on a five-point scale in response to the question “To what extent do you agree with the following statements?”

Whereas Figure 5 shows that giving back to the community is an important value that *all* teens surveyed share, Figure 6 shows that practical knowledge is gained uniquely from *Magshimim*. The program provides a framework to make the teens’ ideas and values come true. *Magshimim*’s participants—and to a larger extent long-term participants—know how to look for opportunities to bring positive change and when they do so they feel that it is part of their identity and Jewish identity.

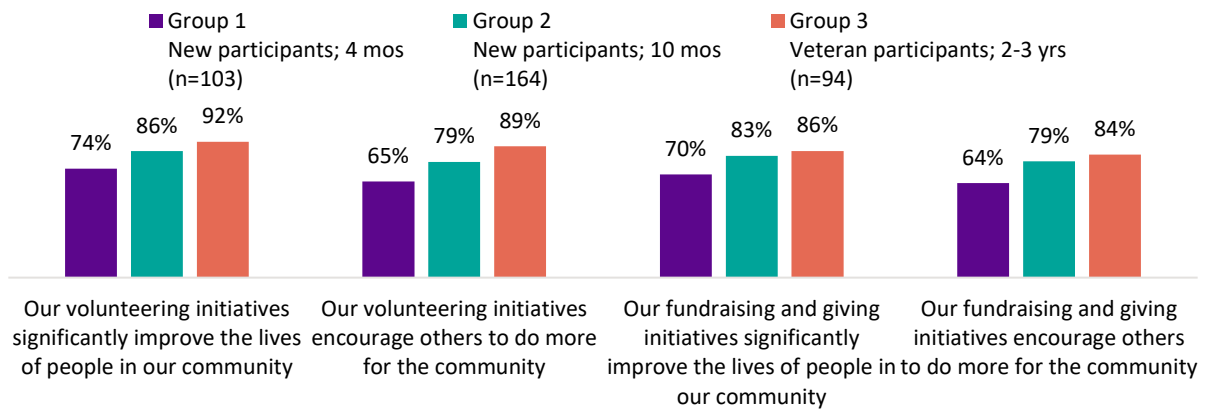
Figure 6: Attitudes Toward Philanthropy Values, To A Large Extent*



* Percentage choosing the top point (‘strongly agree’) on a five-point scale in response to the question “To what extent do you agree with the following statements?”

Even though many of the teen groups warmed up to and embraced philanthropy, volunteering remains important to them and a way to directly connect with people who need support. Figure 7 shows that *Magshimim* teens feel equally passionate about volunteering *and* fundraising. The passion grows as they are more immersed in the program. It is highly likely that those who remain in the program are those who are the most committed to its work and model.

Figure 7: Attitudes Toward Teens’ Philanthropic Initiatives*



* Percentage choosing the top point ('strongly agree') on a five-point scale in response to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"

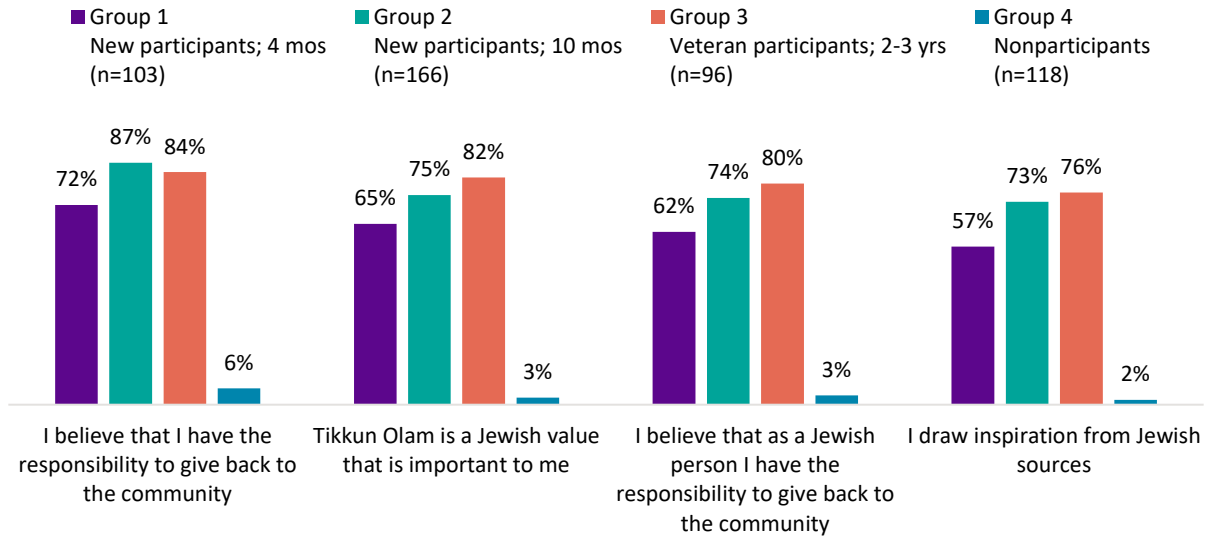
Jewish Identity

Some interviewees recalled conversations early in the program about the intersection between giving and Jewish identity and values such as Tikkun Olam. A few interviewees mentioned that some conversations and external speakers talked about giving in the context of Zionism. *Magshimim* participants have internalized the idea of giving from a Jewish lens, as shown in Figure 8. *Magshimim* participants have substantially more positive attitudes toward Jewish identity and giving in comparison to nonparticipant teens.

I was trying to incorporate Jewish values in the program. Not only giving, but Jewish Giving [Tzedakah]. —Counselor

My school focuses on Judaism enrichment, so for me and for my school friends who are also in the group it's a lot about the link of the program to Jewish values. It also adds value to me and I love it. —Teen

Figure 8: Attitudes Toward Jewish Identity and Giving*



* Percentage choosing the top point ('strongly agree') on a five-point scale in response to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"

Impact on the Community

Interviewees reported that the program had a positive impact on their community, as the majority of contributions and donations went to local causes. Center directors and counselors talked about the ripple effects of the program on the teens' families as well as the broader community.

The program has an effect on the community for sure. They don't necessarily know the name of the program, but they know that "our" teens are doing something; they see the results. We are not a big city, so people know each other, and it's important that they see that teens are doing something meaningful, not just hanging out on the streets. And it's important for the younger siblings to see what their older siblings are doing, with the hope that they will want to participate in the future. —Center Director

Parents report that teens are growing a lot on a personal level thanks to Magshimim. For example, they helped fundraise for the summer camp for families in need. And people see this happening, it is important. It is a long-term effect I think. —Counselor

The program is very special for us as a small town. Everybody knows everyone here, and our teens have a real potential to change something here. I've been at this Matnas for five years. Before Magshimim it was not as pleasant and nice as it is now. —Counselor

There is a feeling of self-confidence and self-efficacy, and belief that when they come together as a group, they can bring positive change. A nice anecdote: we recently held a day trip for the Magshimim teens, in which they collected trash along a hiking trail near the town. It is a nice feeling in itself. But even more so, two weeks later someone from the town came back from that trail and said: "That is so great that you've cleaned the trail. Next week I'll go with my grandchildren and show them this example." The fact that the community notices the things we do gives us a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and continued belief that we can make a difference. —Counselor

Some interviewees also mentioned the positive impact of the program on the community of teens, in particular, in centers serving teens at risk. They appreciated the approach to leveraging teens' energies to help with social justice issues, alongside the skills they gain, which reduces their involvement in problematic behaviors.

There are statistics that show that the municipality received less complaints [about teens] during vacation times, when schools are closed. That is a fact. Parents also contact me and say: "Thank you! My son just started helping at home; before Magshimim he didn't even put the dirty dishes in the dishwasher." People and parents see us. —Center Director

Many center directors, counselors, and teens were grateful for the funds that this program provides them with, and for the flexibility that it offers the teens from selecting the social cause to be involved in, to the means of engagement, and ultimate donation. These added resources seem to boost the community centers that host *Magshimim* and attract new teens to the program.

We've been trying to do these things for years, but we didn't have the resources, and now we do thanks to Magshimim. Money is important for doing activities, and through the

activities we can raise more funds. We used our power and the knowledge we gained over the years to influence social networks as well. ... I can't describe how much this empowered us and the impact it had on people's hearts. I can't describe the feeling that you've been doing something for years, and that we finally managed to achieve all the things we have wanted. —Teen

Our group has always existed, but the addition of Magshimim gave us significant resources and added motivation. It also enabled more youth to join the activity. The addition of resources is significant, it allowed us to deal with the activities themselves and not with technical issues. —Teen

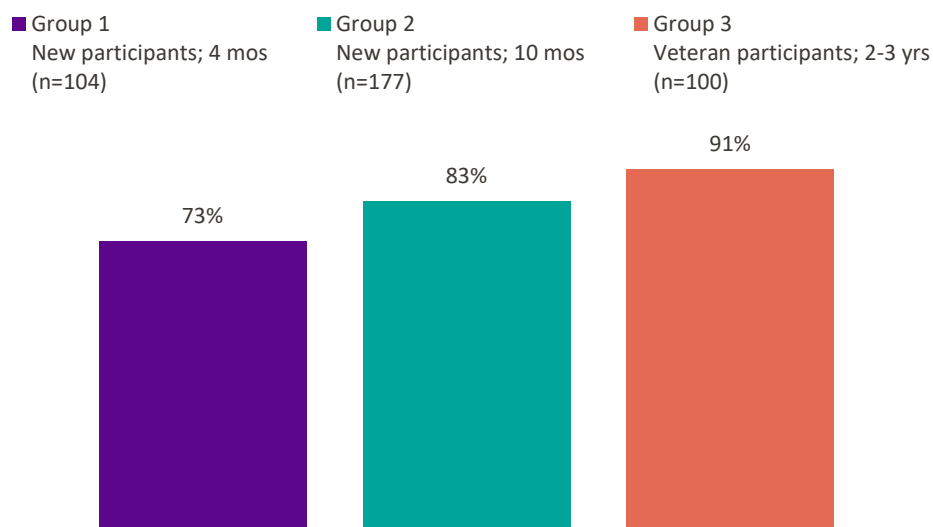
I like it that the program has a lot of flexibility, and that it is very relevant to our Matnas. But within this framework, teens could decide what to do and how to contribute to the community, they have a lot of freedom for decisions and initiatives. —Center Director

The program allows a lot of freedom from the funders, lots of flexibility. Both for us, the staff, and for teens. We know that they [funders] trust us, we are not limited strictly to each shekel. That is very important, and we are grateful that we could give teens this space to make informed decisions.

—Center Director

Figure 9 speaks to the fact that families of long-term Magshimim teens are more involved in the program and support their teens, in comparison to families of teen participants who are new to the program.

Figure 9: Parents Encourage Their Teens Participation or are also Involved Themselves in Supporting Magshimim's Initiatives*



* Percentage choosing "my parents encourage my participation" or "my parents are involved themselves in supporting Magshimim" in response to the question "To what extent are your parents involved in your participation in Magshimim?"

From Honeycomb to Magshimim: Bringing Philanthropy to Israeli Teens

In this section we describe how *Magshimim* evolved over the years as it grappled with how to translate the Honeycomb model into the Israeli context. The focus, though, is on the implementation of the program in 2022–2023 and the changes that were incorporated based on learning from prior years. We also describe some of the challenges that arose.

Program Structure

Program History and Evolution

Magshimim went through multiple iterations in the four years it has been operating in Israel. The first few years were characterized by a mixed interpretation of the program’s goals. Some centers internalized the concept of fundraising and were able to raise funds for a cause that they agreed upon, whereas other centers were not quite able to act upon it and focused more on robust direct service volunteer projects. In 2021–2022 Adi Romem, in collaboration with Honeycomb, organized a White Night³ conference for all teens, where teens were introduced to various nonprofit organizations and their missions. By the end of the night, teens directed funds donated by a number of Israeli companies to two of the multiple nonprofit organizations that presented their work.

Yet, the concept of fundraising was not immediately embraced, because of Israel’s strong culture of volunteerism and national service. As Israel is becoming more affluent, it is experiencing recent growth in local philanthropy. However, a Taub Center report found that donations among Israelis are still quite concentrated within a small subset of the population that includes wealthy Israelis, those employed in real estate or nonprofit organizations, and immigrants from America and Europe.⁴

Against the backdrop of Israel’s slow, but steady, change in philanthropy culture, the program has matured in 2022–2023. All *Magshimim*’s groups were engaged in fundraising activities at least once throughout the year, in addition to their community work initiatives.

Program Implementation: School Year 2022–2023

In 2022–2023, *Magshimim* had 30 teen groups (in grades 9–12) in 15 community centers across Israel. Whereas the program was implemented differently in each center, the overall structure follows a similar curriculum adopted from the Honeycomb program and adapted to Israeli teens and culture.

Every year begins with a few sessions discussing a myriad of social issues, using an adapted version of Honeycomb’s Jewish Philanthropy deck of cards (that was introduced in fall 2022). With the support of their counselors (those who directly interact with the teens and lead the *Magshimim* groups), the teens explore various justice issues and the intersection between giving and Jewish/Zionist values. They are directed to select one or two social themes for the year to focus their attention on. As one teen explained:

³ White Night is the Hebrew expression for an all-nighter. The *Magshimim* White Night Conference begins at dusk and ends at dawn.

⁴ Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, “Philanthropy in Israel: An Updated Picture,” December 2017, <https://www.taubcenter.org.il/en/research/philanthropy-in-israel-an-updated-picture/>.

We start a social activity with a social value; we learn about leadership, for example. Sometimes the counselors lead the activity and sometimes someone from outside comes to give a talk. After that, we work on the project that has been decided upon. —Teen

Two new additions to the 2022–2023 version of *Magshimim* were: (1) In addition to addressing local social issues that teens tend to engage with (such as racism, discrimination, and poverty, as it manifests in their community), they were strongly encouraged to select an additional social issue that is broader and affects populations beyond their community (such as women’s rights and environmental justice). The rationale was to challenge the teens to think about the needs of other populations and communities in addition to those of their own local community. (2) All participating centers and groups were obligated to hold at least one fundraiser throughout the year.

*In the US it works the reverse—you first collect money and then decide where it goes. It was not so easy to explain to teens, but now it works well. We held seminars about how to talk to people, how to communicate an idea or ask. Philanthropy is not so natural to Israel. Before *Magshimim* all the fundraising looked absolutely different. It was mostly about volunteering, like donating food. With *Magshimim* we learned a different approach to fundraising. It helped the teens, the counselors, and the Matnas to see it differently. We are now able to set goals for ourselves, although the process is different. The teens feel that even though they are not billionaires they are able to bring change to the community. I went through this process with the teens. —Counselor*

A component that has not changed much in *Magshimim*’s programming is the engagement in direct service volunteer work. Most teen groups were engaged in some kind of volunteer work in their respective communities, whether collecting food for families in need, cleaning beaches and trails, or light home renovations for seniors. Volunteer work is not only deeply ingrained in Israeli culture and aligned to teens’ interests, but it is also perceived as a step toward fundraising activities. The extent of fundraising work has increased from year to year and has peaked in 2022–2023 due to the clear requirement posed at the beginning of the program year.

When Does It Click?

The idea of fundraising sinks in at different times for different groups. According to Adi Romem, “it really clicks when the teens actually engage in fundraising on their own.” Some groups understand the concept early on and begin their fundraising campaigns in the fall. Other groups struggle to grasp its potential impact, especially in comparison to direct volunteer service, where the impact is often visible and immediate. Yet other groups, especially teens at risk, struggle to “dream big” and imagine a successful fundraising campaign.

There are two main structural and programmatic motivators for teens to engage—or increase their engagement—in fundraising initiatives:

Oversized Check Photos – When groups complete their fundraising event(s) and donate money to an organization of their choice,⁵ they are encouraged to take a photo with an oversized check and the

⁵ Donations are technically made through the community centers.

amount of their donation and post it on the *Magshimim* social media channel(s). This, according to Adi, is a big motivator for other groups.

White Night – The most recent annual national all-night fundraising event occurred in December 2022. Several nonprofit organizations introduced their work and mission to the teens and shared ideas they could implement in their communities. Many of the interviewees mentioned the White Night as a transformative experience, when they met other teens across Israel who participate in the program and learned from each other and from the nonprofit organizations about the work they do, and ultimately decided which of the organizations would receive donation funds. This experience made a deep impact on the teens in shaping their understanding of philanthropic engagement.

What is important is that it is a national program, which operates under a similar framework across Israel. We could learn from each other and stay connected. My staff was puzzled by this program until we all met for the White Night event in Netanya [December 2022]. It became much more clear what this program is all about once all centers came together. —Center Director

The White Night opened the world to my teens. They have formed life-long friendships from the White Night event. My Matnas was not the same thing before Magshimim as it is after. —Center Director

I really liked the White Night event, it's an opportunity to meet teenagers like me, with similar interests and values. When I was little it was hard for me to find people like me. ... If we want to raise money, they will provide us with an introductory course. They are open to the crazy ideas we have. We learned to talk to many nonprofit organizations, especially during the White Night. They help us find organizations relevant to the topics we have chosen. If we have an idea we can expand it out. —Teen

Five Models of Giving

Analysis of interview data uncovered five models of implementing *Magshimim* as a philanthropical engagement program. These models are not mutually exclusive, and most centers implemented two or more of these models throughout the year.

Model 1: Fundraising. Teens raised funds by conducting concerts, shows, and sales of baked goods and secondhand clothes. At the end of their fundraising event or at the end of the year, profits were donated to organizations based on a selection process implemented by the teen participants. Their grantmaking decisions were sometimes reached through consensus after conversing as a group and debating, and at other times, decisions were achieved through voting. This model has been implemented in the majority of centers. One counselor explained:

At our Matnas all the groups are engaged 80% in making decisions (what to do, where to donate etc.). The content is mostly led by me and other madrichim. I won't do anything they are not ready for or not in love with. The decision where to donate the money they do on their own 100%. We have democratic elections, etc. —Counselor

Model 2: Social Ventures. Teens founded social enterprises that benefited their community, and the profits were donated to an organization that was selected by the teens. Approximately one-third of the centers have started various social ventures such as a “birthday rooms” (where families can celebrate their children’s birthdays at low cost), summer camps for children with disabilities, or the sale of magnets for small businesses. In these centers, the teens “sell” their product or service at a low, attractive cost, and the profits go to an organization that was chosen based on a process introduced by *Magshimim* counselors.

One of our groups worked on summer day camp planning. Families pay some reduced fee for their children’s participation and the revenue was donated following the teens selection process. Our second group has various initiatives including printing and selling magnets to small businesses and coordinating Birthday Rooms. —Counselor

Model 3: Direct Service Volunteering. Teens volunteer and directly engage with the community they are serving. Most centers engage in volunteer work, either as a response to their community needs or as a way to increase awareness of local social needs, especially among new teen participants. Volunteer work included collecting food donations for families in need, small renovations in homes of people in need, volunteering at a senior center, making sandwiches for children, and cleaning a hiking trail. The center directors and counselors believe that this is an important step on the path to fundraising engagements.

*The idea of fundraising is foreign to Israelis. But the “community” component is very well known. So we’ve tried to start with that—helping the community as an entry point for our teens to this program.
—Center Director*

Model 4: Collecting Donations. Teens collected donations from individuals, businesses, or other organizations to support a specific charitable cause or nonprofit organization. Often, they selected a cause based on a personal acquaintance with an organization or a person in need. A teen shared how they came to support a soldier with a complicated life story and how their fundraising throughout the year was dedicated to this specific cause.

For example, we are now raising money to support a soldier who ... has no family support. We collected donations in the mall and in other places. We earned a nice amount. Donations during this period are every day. Yesterday ... we opened a stand for lottery tickets, and we donated the profits to the soldier.⁶ We decide on the project according to what is most needed and urgent in the city. —Teen

Model 5: Indirect Giving through American-Israeli Collaboration. One group of teens participated in an initiative in which they conducted a series of online meetings with teens participating in a parallel Honeycomb program in the United States. The American teens were expected to contribute 20% of the funds they raise to an Israeli nonprofit organization, and the Israeli teens were tasked to help them choose the organization. Through conversations, the teens learned about prominent social issues in the United States and Israel and realized that issues that are a top concern for the American teens (like gun

⁶ The money raised was donated to a nonprofit organization that supports “lone soldiers” who lack family support.

control, abortion rights, and gay rights) are not pressing issues in the Israeli context. These conversations, according to Adi, helped the American teens better understand the social issues that Israelis are facing, discover new Israeli nonprofits, and narrow down their choices to three organizations. Once the three were selected, the Israeli teens visited and researched them and ultimately shared their own recommendations with the American teens. This initiative yielded a decision generated by the cooperation between the American and Israeli groups to donate the money to the nonprofit recommended by the Israeli teens. Although this is not a fundraising initiative of *Magshimim* per se, it is an indirect way of helping American teens make grantmaking decisions in a more informed way, and concurrently, exposing Israeli teens to American peers who are more versed in fundraising practices.

The online meeting series encountered some challenges but concluded with a sense of accomplishment and growth. As one teen who participated in these meetings described them:

In the first meeting with the Americans, we tried to explain ourselves and found it a little difficult. Later on, I learned to improve, to speak slowly, and to listen. —Teen

Program Challenges

As mentioned in the introduction, fundraising is a concept that is new to Israel, though it has gained some popularity in recent years, predominantly among wealthier populations. Given this context, *Magshimim* came a long way from being introduced in community centers in which most teen programs focused on volunteer work, to offering a new approach to philanthropy in which tens of thousands of shekels were raised and donated to nonprofit organizations. Some of the challenges of the program, though, are related to the difficulty of changing preexisting, ingrained ways of thinking. Three challenges are particularly worth mentioning:

1. **Cultural shift takes time.** Although this year seems to have brought a beginning of a cultural shift among the leadership of *Magshimim*, there is still more work to do to break stigmas around fundraising among teens. The teens, coming mostly from low-income communities, have no models to imitate. This means that the implementation process takes time and is different among the centers.
2. **The grantmaking process needs to be further clarified.** As the program evolved, many *Magshimim* groups became more familiar with how fundraising works, and the centers established a stable practice and routine of raising funds. The mechanics of *grantmaking*, however, can be further solidified and finetuned as the program matures. Increasing opportunities for teens to be exposed to the grantmaking process—through collaboration with other teens such as the American Jewish teens, or through regional and national gatherings—can help solidify this aspect of the program.
3. ***Magshimim* leadership needs more staffing.** Whereas the center director and counselor interviewees felt that they were supported by the program's leadership, as the program grows the leadership will need additional support managing and guiding the various centers across the country.

Conclusion

Honeycomb, through its partnership with the Israeli Association of Community Centers which led to the creation of the *Magshimim* program, introduces Israeli youth to philanthropy as a Jewishly informed means of becoming a better Israeli and world citizen. The findings of the evaluation demonstrate that *Magshimim's* impact on participants is considerable. Long-term participants gain profound knowledge of the Israeli philanthropic ecosystem. Participating teens develop skills in a number of areas, including leadership, fundraising, budget planning, effective communication, and relationship building. The program empowers teens to be agents of change and to find their own voice. Voice and agency are particularly crucial to *Magshimim's* teens, most of whom come from Israel's peripheral communities. Finally, *Magshimim* delivers this impact through a Jewish lens, evidenced by the fact that participants associate giving and making the world a better place with Jewish values, such as Tikkun Olam.

Magshimim's impact goes beyond the participating teens, to the communities where the program is implemented. Participating community centers are able to boost recruitment and attract new teens to the program. Participants' families, who witness the younger generation's philanthropic engagement become inspired to get involved. And the broader communities benefit as well, as the majority of contributions and donations go to local causes.

It took the centers running *Magshimim* a number of years to fully embrace the concept of fundraising and grantmaking, the 2022–2023 program year marking a shift in the program's maturity. Various models of fundraising were employed to allow flexibility in program implementation, and support teens' creativity, enthusiasm, and commitment to the needs of their communities. Coming together annually to participate in the White Night event made an especially deep impact on the teens in shaping their understanding of philanthropic engagement. There is more work to be done; and the mechanics of grantmaking in particular can be further solidified and finetuned as the program matures. But the potential of the program to shape the lives of Israeli youth is clear, as is *Magshimim's* potential to grow its impact as the program expands.

Appendix

Magshimim Community Centers' Demographics

This table shows the makeup of the program's participants, broken down by income and religious affiliation. It also notes the centers that joined in 2022–2023.

Table 1: Breakdown of Magshimim's Center's Demographics

Number of Centers	Center Types	New Centers in 2022–2023
3 centers	Teens at risk (one of which included teens mostly from families from the former Soviet Union)	
8 centers	Low- to middle-income communities <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ one of the groups comprised of teens mostly from the Ethiopian community○ one of the groups comprised of teens from the LGBTQ+ community	Two new centers
2 centers	Middle- to high-income communities	One new center
2 centers	Teens from religious (Bnei Akiva) communities	One new center; it dismantled before the end of the 2022–2023 year

Teen Demographics

Based on the survey, approximately one-third of *Magshimim* participants identified as secular, another third as *masorti*, and the last third as religious (*dati*). Among nonparticipants, the breakdown was similar, with a slightly higher percentage of teens identified as secular. Approximately 50% of *Magshimim*'s participants are not members of another youth movement, compared to a third of non-*Magshimim* teens who are not members of another youth movement.

Other demographics from the survey show that the majority of teens who are in their first year of the program are in 9th and 10th grades, and the majority of teens in their second and third year are in 11th and 12th grades. The participants split quite evenly between girls and boys. A small fraction of teens lived at some point in their lives in the United States.⁷

⁷ It seems like the percentage of teens whose families lived in the United States may be closer to 7% than 15%. First, since teens in their first year of the program were surveyed in two points in time, there is a substantial overlap of teens who responded to both surveys. So, it would make sense that the percentage of those who lived in the US is similar. Second, based on our conversation with Adi Romem, her impression is that there are very few teens whose family lived in the US.

Table 2: Teen Demographics

	Group 1 New participants; 4 mos	Group 2 New participants; 10 mos	Group 3 Veteran participants; 2- 3 yrs	Group 4 Nonparticipants
n	123	178	100	119
9th & 10th	71%	76%	33%	64%
11th & 12th	29%	24%	67%	36%
Girls	46%	50%	50%	42%
Boys	46%	41%	45%	31%
Lived in the US	15%	7%	7%	1%
Not a member of a youth movement	49%	60%	53%	33%
Secular	33%	41%	35%	46%
Masorti	33%	31%	34%	28%
Religious (Dati)	29%	23%	27%	26%
Haredi	3%	0%	1%	0%
Other	3%	5%	3%	0%

Top Three Skills Gained Following Participation in *Magshimim*

Teen participants were also asked to rank the top three skills that they gained from their participation in *Magshimim*. “Collaborate toward a shared goal” was at the top of the list for all three groups. It is apparent that the groups work together to achieve their goals and that the collaborative culture is sustained throughout the years, and is one of the attractions of the program for new participants. It is illuminating that making a difference to spur a change in the community—was selected by 39% as the top three skills by teens in groups 2 and 3. It appears that the more seasoned teens believe that they can make a difference, having engaged multiple times in fundraising activities.

The skill that was selected by the fewest teens was “Conduct research on different organizations (for the purpose of donating or volunteering). Notwithstanding, 17% of Group 3 versus 4% of Group 1 selected that skill as one of their top three that they have gained from participation in *Magshimim*. This is something that needs to be better understood, whether teens misunderstood the term “conduct research” or do not feel they focused on this skill this past year.

Table 3: The Three Top Skills that *Magshimim* Helped You Strengthen the Most, By Group

	Group 1 New participants; 4 mos	Group 2 New participants; 10 mos	Group 3 Veteran participants; 2-3 yrs
n	123	177	100
Collaborate toward a shared goal	42%	56%	46%
To make a difference, to spur a change, as a teen in my community	21%	39%	39%
Lead a group (toward a shared goal, when there's a disagreement, to think "out of the box," etc.)	23%	28%	39%
Have a deep understanding of the needs of my local community	23%	40%	33%
Fundraise for organizations that are aligned with my values	14%	22%	32%
Fundraise for social initiatives	24%	26%	28%
Reach an agreement (on goals, processes, etc.)	28%	29%	25%
Stand in front of an audience and present your opinions and ideas	15%	22%	22%
Conduct research on different organizations (for the purpose of donating or volunteering)	4%	13%	17%