

Village Way Methodology Impacts Israel's Military

In an effort to build greater understanding and strengthen the morale of young immigrant soldiers, the Village Way Educational Institute is training Israel Defense Forces (IDF) commanders and officers in the Village Way methodology. Now, military commanders will serve more as “educators” and work to instill a sense of belonging among all soldiers in their unit.

Israel's military offers opportunities to learn new skills, meet a diverse group of new friends and set a positive course for the future, professionally and personally.

Unfortunately, Israel's at-risk youth population often face challenges as new recruits beside the rigors of military service. These challenges can include cultural misunderstandings, language barriers and acceptance within their units.

The Educational Institute's first training started with the IDF's Education Corps “Special Populations” department, which oversees young immigrant

“ I have a soldier in my unit whom everyone has already given up on, including me. After today, I decided not to give up and I will do everything I can to include him and to foster a sense of belonging. ”

—Israel Defense Forces commander following training in the Village Way methodology



IDF commanders attend training in the Village Way methodology.

soldiers, minorities and those with a history of behavioral or mental health issues. Village Way Educational Initiatives is one of a small number of non-profit organizations authorized to operate training sessions across all units in the IDF.

Military commanders as educators

As educators, unit commanders will focus on “ethical fitness,” in which their responsibility extends to building a sense of belonging among all the soldiers in their unit. Cultural diversity is understood to be a positive resource rather than a difficulty to overcome. Commanders learn how encouraging, belonging and embracing diversity will improve their soldiers tactical capabilities. These learning sessions often include a visit to Yemin Orde Youth Village, where the unit leaders learn about the Village's work with diverse populations and the practical applications to their work in the field.

The IDF sees this Village Way training as important and positive. Village Way sessions are incorporated into some of the army's most prestigious training courses for future leaders and those serving as career soldiers, including the Command and Staff College, the Officer Training Base and the Tactical Command College.

Positive Feedback

One IDF commander noted that the positive feedback from participants in our trainings “...keeps coming from all the those who have taken the course. The methodology, implementation and impact this course will have is important as soldiers move up to become senior commanders. Thank you so much for the dedication, and the desire to help us make a change and paying attention to the need.”

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Friends of Yemin Orde

4340 East-West Highway | Suite 202 | Bethesda, Maryland 20814 | 202-237-0286 | info@yeminorde.org | www.yeminorde.org

TAMIR TEMESGEN ZALAW

Tamir Temesgen Zalaw grew up in a small village near Gondar, Ethiopia and made “aliyah” to Israel when he was 15 years old. He, his mother and three brothers lived in a refugee compound in Gondar for eight years before they received government permission to fly to Israel. Tamir’s father passed away when he was five years of age.

In Gondar, with humanitarian assistance from the Jewish Agency for Israel, Tamir attended classes in Hebrew and Jewish learning in preparation for his new life as an Israeli.

In Israel, his family lived in an absorption center in Haifa. “At first it was very hard as I did not understand anybody. I could read and write Hebrew but I could not actually speak it or understand what people were saying,” said Tamir. “I ate only biscuits because I missed the Ethiopian food.”

Yemin Orde welcomed Tamir shortly after his arrival in Israel. “I learned so much at Yemin Orde. I learned how to dream and how to follow my dreams. My teachers also taught me the meaning of life and how to be an independent youth,” Tamir said.

After graduating high school at Yemin Orde, Tamir served three years in the Israel Defense Forces elite paratrooper unit. He then attended Ono Academic College in Israel for his undergraduate degree. He is currently studying for a law degree at Ono and will graduate in the Spring of 2019. Tamir is interested in serving as a prosecutor or an attorney in the social impact field.

Ten years following graduation from Yemin Orde, Tamir remains in contact with Yemin Orde’s staff and returns for special programs or just to visit. He knows Yemin Orde will always be there for him.



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