

Ofanim Association

Assessment Report Outcomes and Results For the 2009 Activity Year

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Summary

The Ofanim Association has been in operation for a number of years in Israel's geographic and social periphery, working to provide equal opportunities in education through enrichment activities for children in grades 3 to 6. It's unique nature lies in making knowledge and interactive resources more accessible to the children, using three social inclusive mechanisms: (1) Bringing Ofanim's mobile labs to the actual localities (2) Opening up the activities to all the children in the locality, in the appropriate age groups, and without screening them and (3) Significantly subsidizing the cost of the course. Ofanim works with quality personnel – university students, with knowledge in the content fields and both background and experience working with children and youth.

Ofanim has conducted internal evaluations with regard to its training, since its inception. In the 2008-2009 year of activity, the Association contacted an external institution in order to strengthen its internal evaluation system and to conduct an external unconditional evaluation with regard to the satisfaction of participants in the activities and their parents and the impact of the activities on the participants.

In order to conduct the evaluation, quantitative and qualitative information was gathered from a number of sources:

1. Feedback from the participants in the activities at the end of the year of activity, using closed questionnaires;
2. The attitudes of the participants regarding subjects associated with the Association's goals and a comparison between the attitudes at the beginning of the year of activity and the end of the year, using closed-ended questionnaires;
3. A personal assessment by the parents of the participants using a closed feedback questionnaire administered at the closing events for parents and children;
4. The class instructors' personal assessments of the class participants, using a closed ended questionnaire;

5. Identifying needs in a focused manner using a sample of students who completed the activities and obtaining their personal assessment, using a structured telephone survey;
6. Personal assessments of the education department managers and school principals at the regional councils that provide a large volume of the Association's activity;
7. Focus groups with the class instructors at the end of the year of activity.

The findings regarding the satisfaction of the participants in the activities are very positive and indicate that the participants had a positive experience, both in terms of the process of participating in the activities and in terms of the benefits they received from the class.

In terms of the process:

- Atmosphere in the class
- Enjoyed being with his/her peers
- Interest it inspired in them
- Convenience of working in a bus (mobile lab)

In terms of the benefits to the participants:

- The participants report that they were maximizing their potential in the activity.
- They acquired new knowledge
- They learned how to execute things
- The participation in the activities helped them in their studies
- Thanks to the activities, they now like studying to a large or very large degree.

Almost all of them are interested in continuing to attend Ofanim activities and will recommend them to other children.

To avoid a bias of retroactive memory, attitude questionnaires were handed out to the participants both at the start and end of the year. They were asked to report their feelings and perceptions while completing the questionnaires (present). The comparative findings between the two self reporting dates of the respondents regarding **their attitudes** support the satisfaction findings and reinforce them. The improvement in

the rankings the participants gave for the different indices indicates that the association has a significant influence on the participants in a vast majority of the indices and aspects examined.

These include the indices of :

Self perception -

- Self image
- Sense of self competency

Skills -

- Ability to make decisions and solve problems
- Perseverance
- Team work skills (moderate improvement)

Attitude Toward Education -

- Motivation to succeed in their studies
- Positive attitude toward education as a key to their future education

In addition, the findings indicate that, at the end of the year, the respondents perceptions of Ofanim's activity as accessible and socially inclusive were strengthened, as this is reflected in the increase in the number of respondents who consider the Ofanim activities as suitable for everyone (and not only those who are excellent or weak students).

The parents' opinions support the participants' findings. The parents were very satisfied with the participation of their children in the activity. This was primarily due to the pleasure experience by the child in the activity and the deep commitment displayed by the child toward the activity; but also, it was also due to the results the children brought home and the discourse that ensued at home regarding the child's experience, the knowledge and results he brought home.

Concurrently, the parents reported that they identify a great change in their children as a result of their children's participation in the activity, primarily in the increase of their general curiosity. Half of them mentioned 2-3 types of changes including, in decreasing

order, self confidence, the things the child does in his/her free time and the desire for and interest in his studies. One respondent mentioned that he sees an improvement in his child's scholastic achievements.

Almost all of the parents are interested in their children continuing to participate in Ofanim activities in the future. Some wish to expand the subjects of the courses.

One of the responses summarizes the essence of Ofanim: "We were very pleased that we could afford to have our child attend such a class, thanks to its reasonable cost. It is important that the children make advances in the field of technology....Thank you."

School principals who were interviewed also considered the enrichment classes to have a great potential impact on the child – **"Sometimes an instructor in the class has a bigger impact on the child's world than the teacher in the classroom. The volunteer nature of the class creates a wider base for trust between the student and the instructor, in comparison to the student and the teacher."** Among the influences mentioned by the respondents are strong social skills and talents; the children participating in the classes exhibit a broader knowledge of the world, in comparison to others; a higher level of self confidence; they display more positive behavior and exhibit better scholastic achievements. The respondents positively mention the low dropout rate from Ofanim classes, in contrast to other enrichment classes.

Education department managers and school principals interviewed for this evaluation also reported a very positive opinion of the Association and its work. In their opinion, the activity offered by Ofanim acts as a central channel for enrichment in the fields in which the Association is engaged. In one of the regional councils, it provides an afternoon enrichment framework for about one fourth of the children in the regional council, who participate in Ofanim classes. In the other regional council, there is an existing science enrichment center; however, Ofanim's unique characteristics are expressed in two aspects – the fact that Ofanim classes are open to everyone and not only for outstanding students; and secondly, the classes are held in the actual localities, without the need to transport the children to and from the science center. In general,

the council's decentralized structure makes the service more expensive and more difficult to provide to each locality separately. From this standpoint, Ofanim solves the two central problems – by providing accessibility for everyone and a substantial subsidy.

Those interviewed consider Ofanim's activity as contributing significantly to their environment. They report that there is a very good relationship with the Association with regard to a number of aspects:

- (1) On a council level – As part of the systemic organization
- (2) On a school level – As part of coordinating organizational aspects, introducing the parents to the Association's activity, letting the children out to participate in special event days, as well as sending reports regarding the organization of the classes at the school, in order to update them regarding the content, about what is happening in the class and regarding specific participants (which enables us to relate to their experience and achievements in school as well).

Their impressions of Ofanim's organization and its team are very positive: "Effective relationship. They do not bother us with unnecessary committee meetings," "Quality people, they assume responsibility, think big, the program runs without a hitch, very organized and structured."

In terms of the **older students** – in grades 7-8, who participated in the Ofanim classes during the past two years (2007-2008 and 2008-2009), it appears that the Association has made a positive name for itself among the youth, which has enabled it to continue to work in these localities and to also develop its services for different target populations. The opinions regarding the Ofanim classes are very positive both in terms of the experience and in terms of the benefits to the participants. The vast majority will recommend Ofanim classes to their friends and would have taken part if it had been open to their age group. The fact is that in addition to the positive opinion toward Ofanim, the youth recommended improving different aspects indicates that the sample was not biased and it strengthens the impact of the positive opinion.

As mentioned above, the youth are interested in continuing activity of Ofanim, although half of them already participate in afternoon leisure activities. This indicates their

positive experience with Ofanim and the trust they have in the Association. Of note are the different directions raised by the respondents – continuing the classes, with an emphasis on computers, on one hand, and expanding the field of activity – both through classes and in other formats, that might be more appropriate to teenagers.

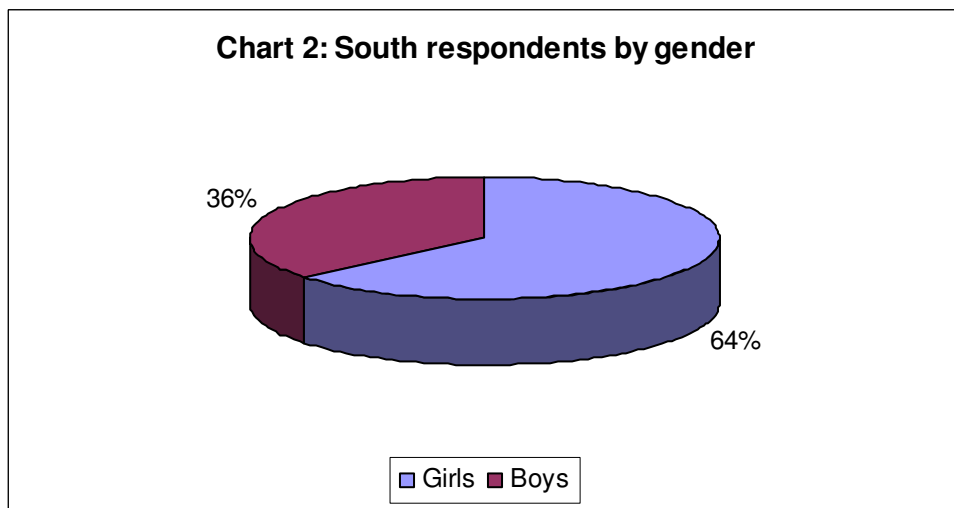
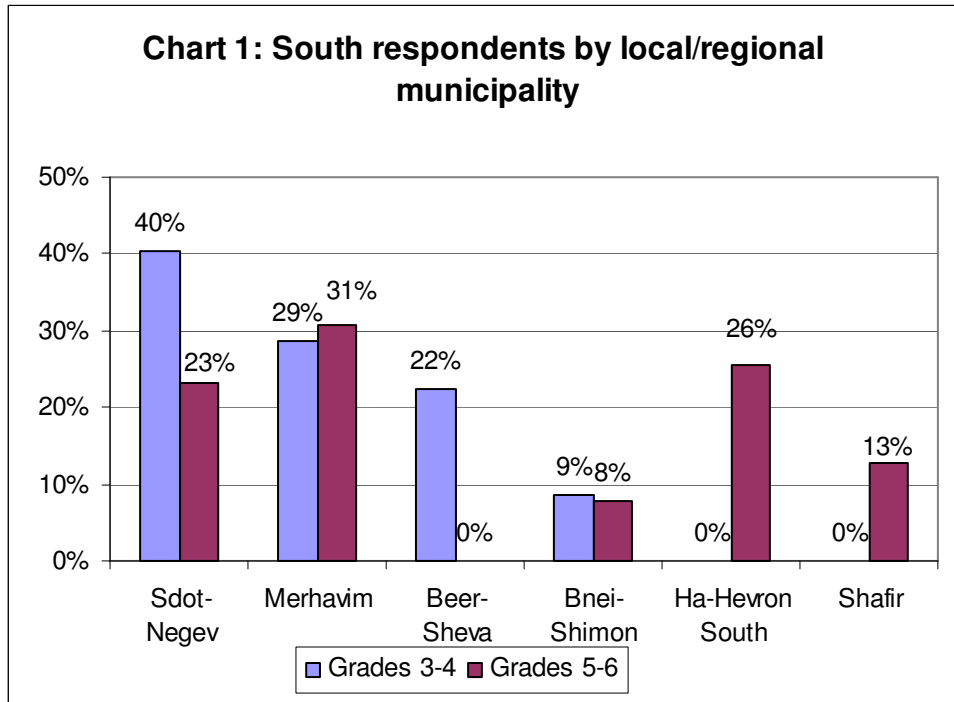
In summation, it appears that the findings from the various information sources which indicate that the positive experience provided by Ofanim to the children in southern Israel are consistent with those in northern Israel, and as such, validate one another. In the actual report, there is a more precise distinction between the variables that influence the experience and its influences according to age group, sex, area of residence, type of class, etc. This information is likely to be of great help to Ofanim in developing the activity in the future and in creating different types of services for those customers and for additional customers as well.

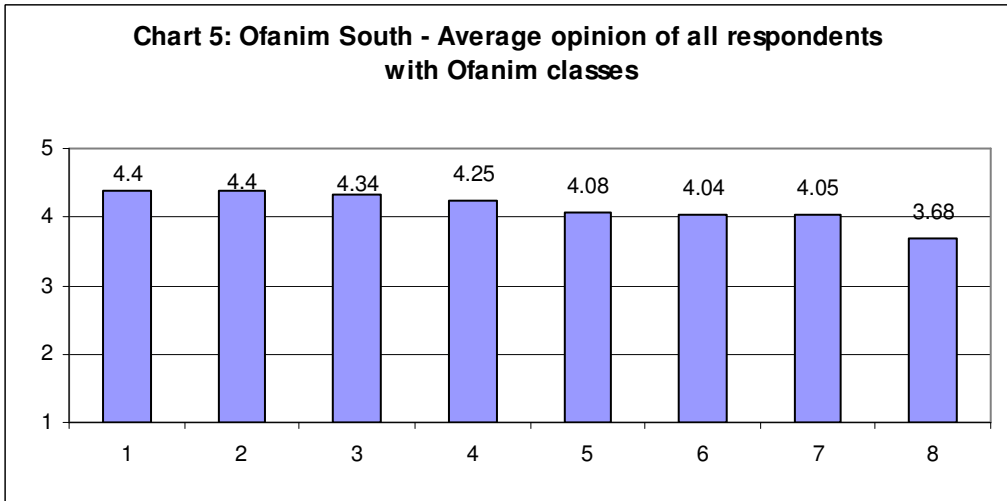
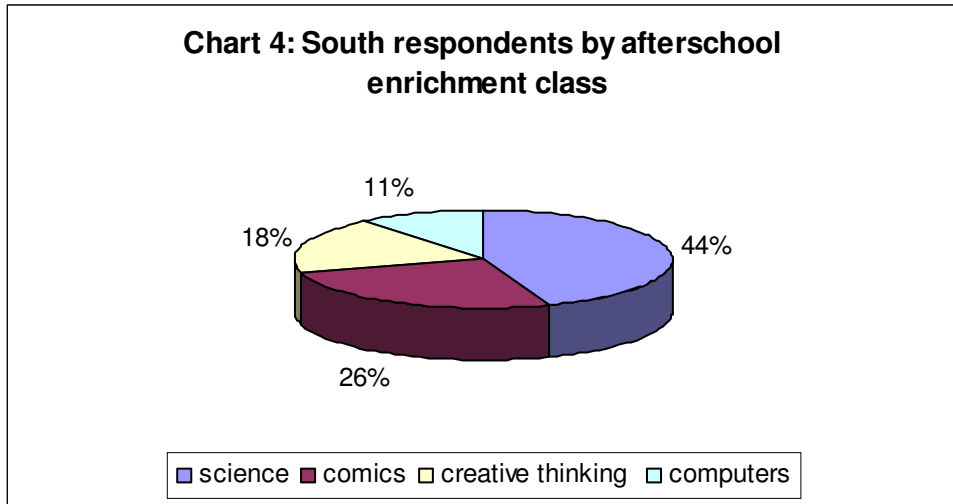
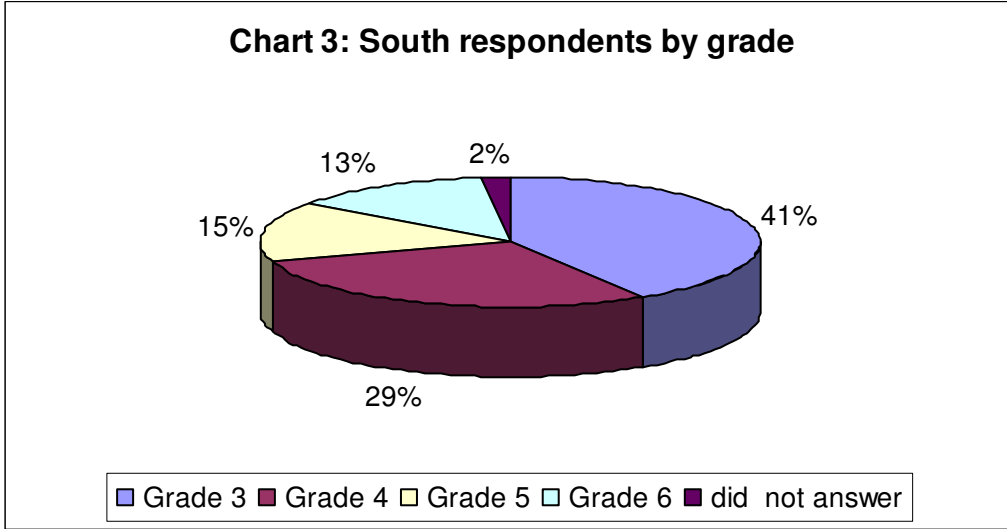
The professional literature on the value of volunteer enrichment classes, offered during the afternoon hours, outside the walls of school is sparse and the literature that does exist raises doubts as to the ability of these frameworks to influence scholastic achievement; **however, it does indicate the value of the activity with regard to the children's emotional and social aspects, which subsequently are likely to impact the scholastic behavior and achievement.**

The findings detailed in this report confirm what we know from the literature and reinforce it. **Ofanim enables and fosters a change in the personal and social experience of children living in outlying regions and plays a part in reducing the ensuing inequality in opportunities available to these children.** The experience offered by Ofanim classes has an impact on the participants' outlook; and therefore, we can assume that it contributes to their development and helps shape their futures.

We have no doubt, that Ofanim's internal learning process and expanding the internal assessment system will strengthen the Association – both in terms of defining goals and objectives in the field and in terms of improving its work processes. As such, it may be

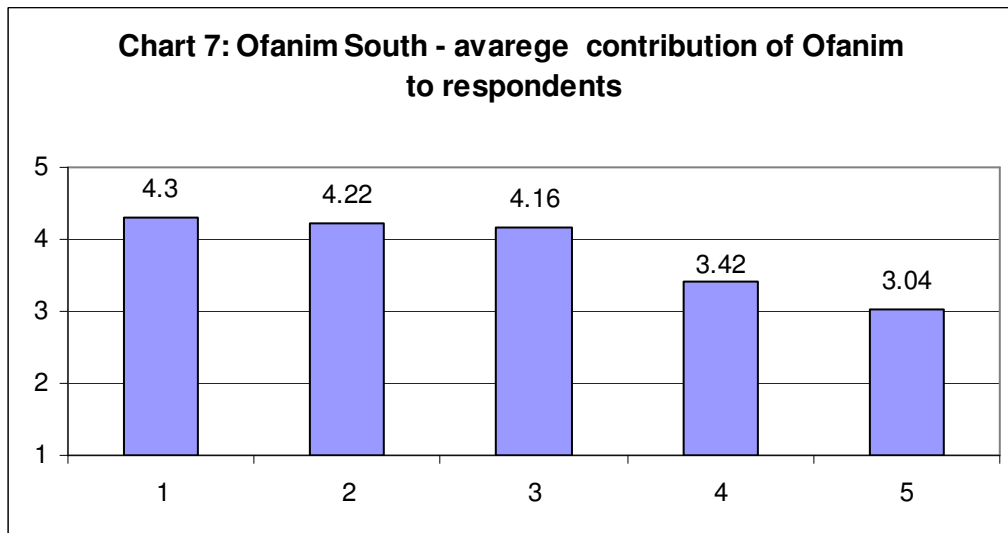
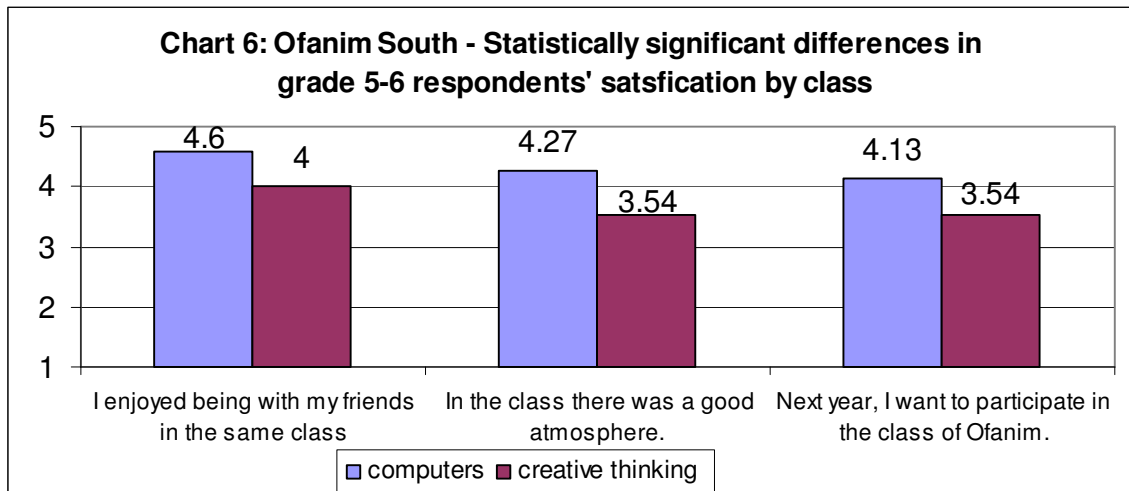
assumed that not only the Association will be strengthened; its effectiveness in working with the direct clients – the class participants - will also improve as will its impact on the environment – parents, schools and the education departments.





Key:

- 1 I loved the class of Ofanim
- 2 I enjoyed being with my friends in the same class
- 3 The class was interesting.
- 4 It was comfortable for me to do the work of the class while riding the bus.
- 5 I will tell other children that it is desirable to participate in the class of Ofanim.
- 6 Next year, I want to participate in the class of Ofanim.
- 7 In the class there was a good atmosphere.
- 8 Compared to other things, I preferred the course of Ofanim.



Key:

- 1 In the class I felt that I am doing things that I am good at.
- 2 In the class I learned topics that were new to me.
- 3 In the class I learned how to do things.

- 4 The class helped me in my studies.
- 5 Thanks to the class, I love to learn more.

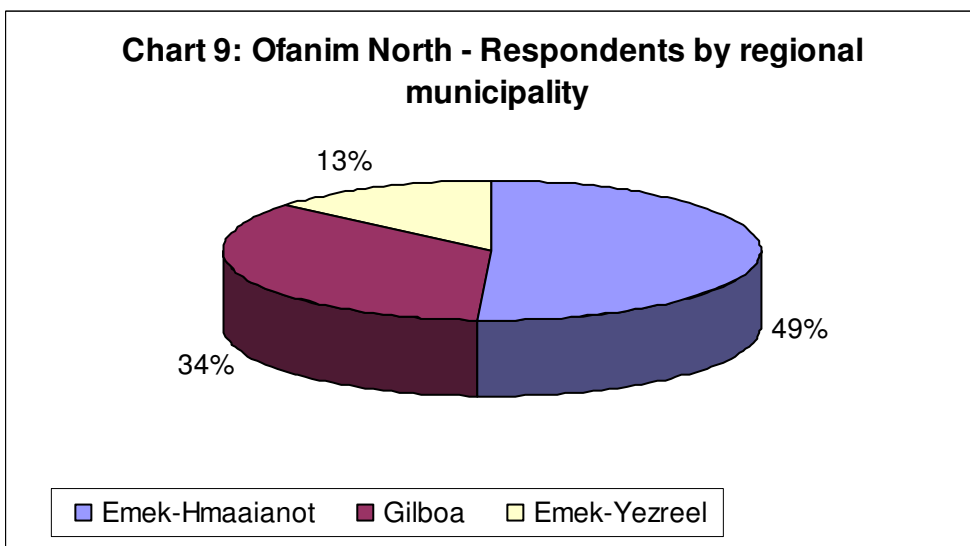
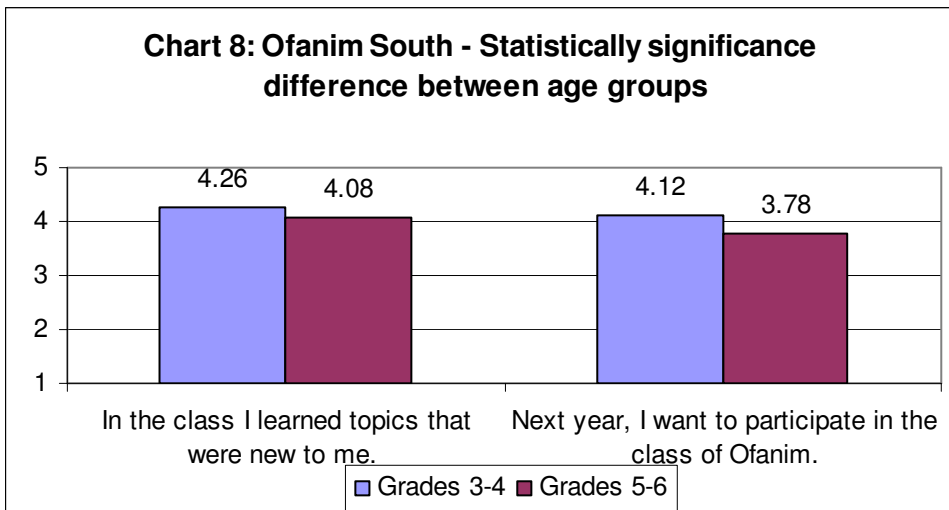


Chart 11: Ofanim Nortn - respondents by grade

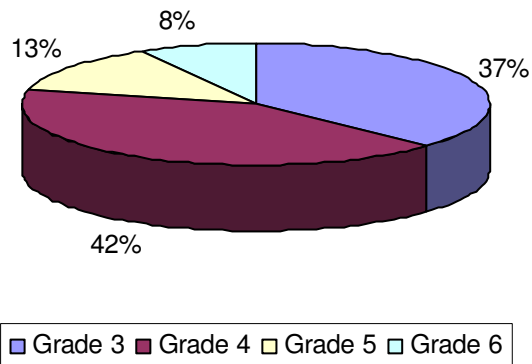
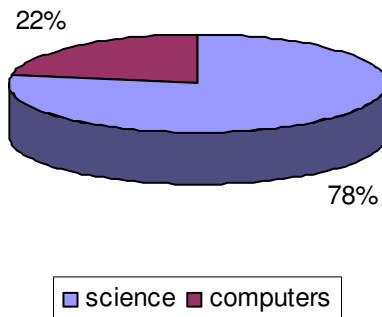
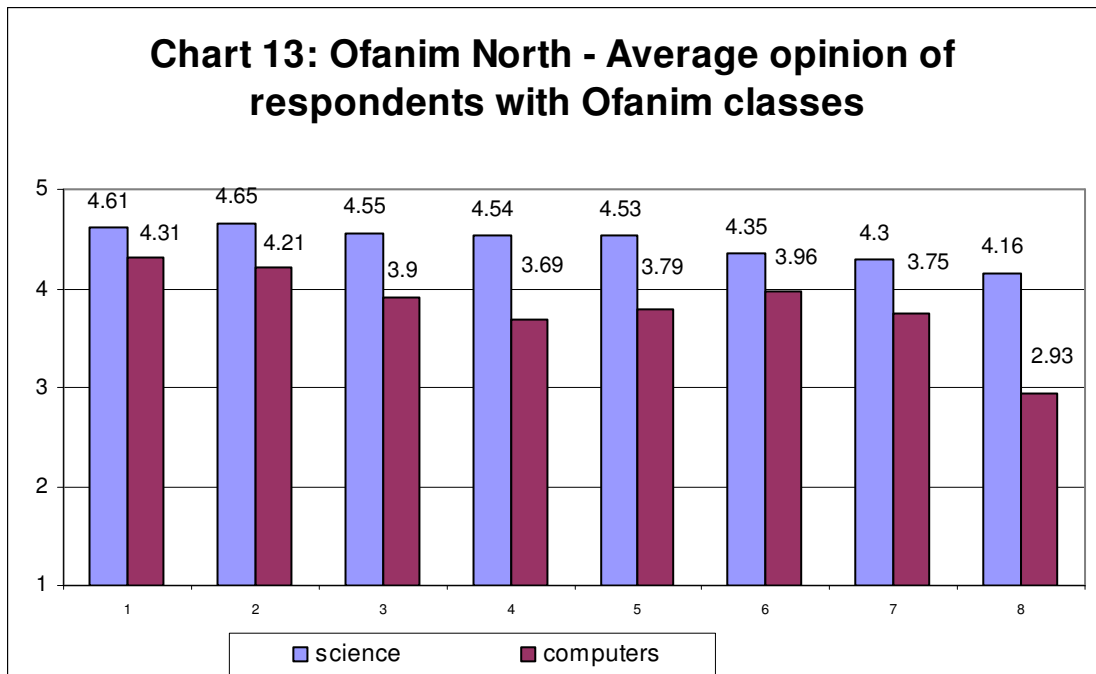


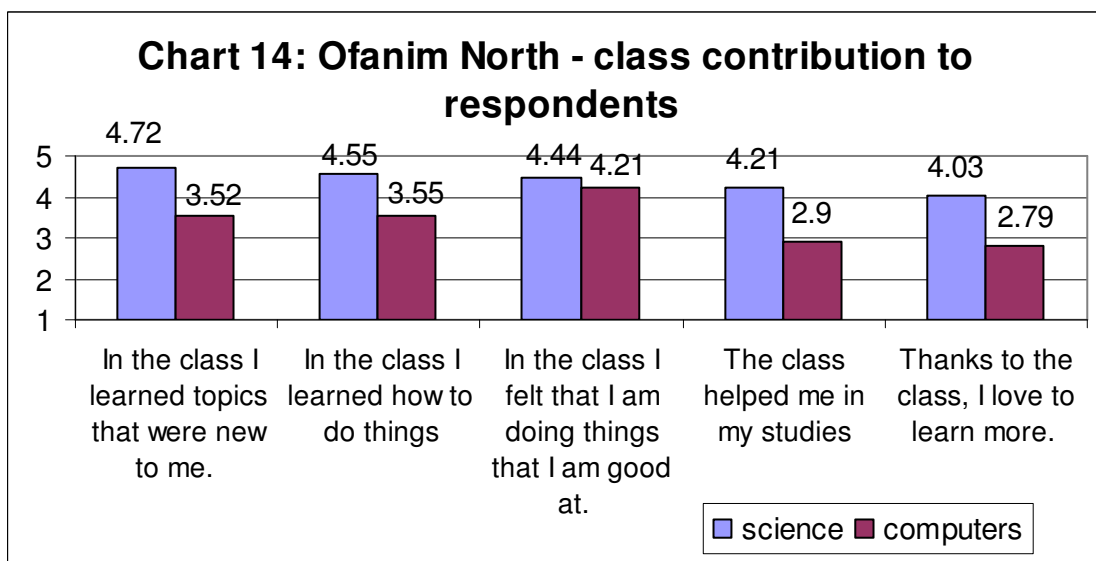
Chart 12: Ofanim North - Respondents by afterschool enrichment class

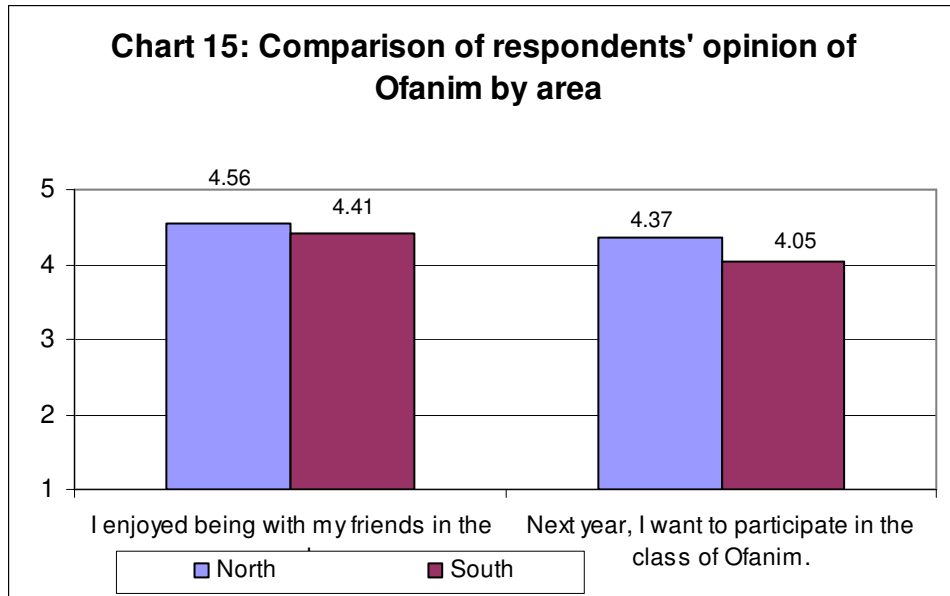




Key:

- 1 I loved the class of Ofanim.
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- 3 The class was interesting.
- 4 It was comfortable for me in the bus.
- 5 Next year, I want to participate in the class of Ofanim.
- 6 In the class there was a good atmosphere.
- 7 I will tell other children that it is desirable to participate in the class of Ofanim.
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