

ALMA

PRE-MILITARY ACADEMY FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP



ALMA DEVELOPS ISRAEL BY DEVELOPING CONFIDENT ISRAELI WOMEN

WHY

PRE-ARMY LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR WOMEN?

In Israel, the IDF unit in which one serves sets a young person on a path for years to come. Just as attending a reputable university in the States can lead to better career opportunities, increase social status, and provide a prestigious resume line for the rest of one's life, so too **the prestige of one's IDF service can either open doors for many years, or, in the case of low-level positions, shut those doors forever.**

Young women from Israel's cultural and geographic sidelines – the ones who lack the confidence, networking opportunities, or education to apply for prestigious units – are likely to take the least-challenging roles the IDF offers – and lose an important chance to improve their social standing. Their lack of opportunities in the IDF translates into a lack of opportunities far into the future – and missed potential for the IDF and for Israeli society.

By providing Israeli girls with six months of studies, hiking, volunteer service, physical training, and more self-confidence, **Alma paves their way into some of the most prestigious army units available.** Alma advocates for them directly to the IDF, providing the IDF with a stronger base of new soldiers, substantially raising the girls' chances of desirable assignments, and **changing their trajectories for a lifetime.**

In just six months, Alma students develop their self-esteem and poise through intellectual enrichment, physical training, and giving back. Based in Ofakim in the heart of the Negev, Alma's program emphasizes self-discipline, teamwork, and critical thinking:

HOW

- Gender studies course on feminist thought and women in Israeli society
- Course on Israeli history
- Trips to important religious and historical sites
- Monthly week-long camping and hiking trips: Negev, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, Golan, Kinneret-to-Mediterranean, Judea and Samaria, a week-long survival trek, and a 2-week extended hike
- Meetings with accomplished female role models, including businesswomen, politicians, high-ranking IDF officers, artists, religious leaders, and professionals
- 3 sports trainings each week and training to run 10K
- Introduction to progressive Judaism, and a Shabbat in an ultra-Orthodox community
- Courses in personal finances, life coaching, drama, and yoga
- "Army Week," including visits to army bases, a simulation of army life, and meetings with high-ranking women in the IDF
- Volunteer service in local non-profits in Ofakim, such as nursing homes, schools, and centers for music and art – raising local quality of life
- Full cooperation with the IDF's human resources unit, working together with Alma to place alumnae into challenging, prestigious army roles

– Winner of the Moscowitz Prize for Zionism

– Winner of the Contest for Educational Initiatives, sponsored by Calcalist and the City of Bat Yam

“ This dream turned into our reality. We had everything – true bounty. Not the kind of bounty that comes with a soft bed and gourmet meals. We had the bounty that comes with spirit. Bounty that comes with learning, growing, and uplifting yourself. ”

– Racheli Barabi, Netanya

“ I grew up in a residential Youth Village for high-risk children. At Alma, on Chanukah, we were packing food baskets for needy families, and I just started to cry. When I was growing up, my family was always on the receiving end of those packages. I was just thrilled to be the one packing and delivering them now. ”

– D., Be'er Sheva

WORDS FROM OUR ALUMNAE

“ After Alma, I went into basic training for the IDF. The soldier who slept in the bunk next to me saw my sweatshirt, with the name of the Youth Village where I grew up. She asked me what kind of job I'd had there. She assumed I'd been a volunteer member of the staff. It didn't occur to her that I might have once been an at-risk teenager who lived in a Youth Village. I have Alma to thank for that. ”

– Hagar, Jerusalem (currently training to become an IDF Officer)

“ When I graduated from high school, I was slated to serve in an IDF warehouse, taking care of supplies. The director of Alma convinced the IDF that I'm too talented, and they saw how much more confident I was now – and I pushed the fact that I speak fluent French. Today, instead of working in a warehouse, I'm serving with the Foreign Relations branch together with UN forces in the Golan. ”

– Keren, Netanya

ALMA BY THE NUMBERS

18 girls served in the first cohort of **2013-14**,

of whom **6** grew up in Youth Villages for At-Risk Youth

17 went on to IDF units that had previously been out of their reach, including:

5
to the
Education
Corps

3 to the Officer's
Course and
1 to the Commander's
Course

2 to Combat
Units and
1 to the Medic's
Course

2 to Human
Resources and
1 to Computer
Programming

2 to a new
high-level unit
for Ethiopian
immigrants

20 girls in the second cohort of **2014-15**,
building teamwork among diverse young women:

14 girls from secular backgrounds and **6** girls from religious backgrounds
representing **14** Israeli cities and regional councils
including a mix of honors students and remedial students

Planned for **2016**:
2 Alma locations totaling **40** young women