



Radzyner Law School Raises the Bar in Street Law Clinic

IDC Herzliya is used to groups of visitors touring the campus, but this was one of the more unusual delegations to arrive. Fifteen prisoners from the Maasiyahu prison came to campus to take part in a seminar with 24 law students as part of the Radzyner School of Law's Street Law Clinic. The seminar was the initiative of second-year law students **Dana Avidan**, **Or Haziz** and **Idan Portnoy**, and arose out of their work with the clinic in the prison's rehabilitation division.

"Our main goal in this assignment was to empower the prisoners and show them a supportive environment that would serve their interests, as well as the social interest," Avidan said. "Moreover, we tried to show the other students from the clinic that every person deserves

School's Dr. **Lior Zemer** on legal interpretations in court proceedings.

Students in the Street Law Clinic follow the motto that knowledge is power, and that legal knowledge is necessary, especially for disem-

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"Each population that the clinic works with has its own challenges, but working with convicted criminals is for sure one of the most challenging ones," Portnoy said. "The moral challenge that each one of us felt is huge, and at the beginning of the process we wondered if they deserved our support. But after a few encounters with the prisoners, that question vanished, and the feeling that we were doing something valuable began. Since that moment we have felt a huge commitment to them. The legal lessons that we prepare and teach are just a small part of our job. Our supportive environment is important. In a place where everyone has given up, we are stepping in, and we are joining the Israel Prison Service in their rehabilitation and education process, by trying to make them feel they are not alone in



Students and prisoners discuss a legal case with Prof. Amnon Rubinstein, a former minister of Education and renowned professor of law.

a second chance, and that we, as clinic members, have a duty to help them."

The seminar had three parts. In the first, the prisoners and students were divided into small groups and given a legal case to solve together. At the end, a prisoner from each group presented their legal conclusions. "We were surprised by the knowledge the prisoners showed, and how they developed their linguistic skills," Haziz said. He said students had approached the organizers after the seminar and said, "They [the prisoners] know the material in tort law better than we do; I wish they could do the exams instead of me."

The second part of the seminar was a tour of IDC, and the third was a lecture by the Radzyner

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powered populations, to access the courts and the legal system. In addition to theoretical lessons, the students are divided into nine teams that work with at-risk youth, prisoners or crime victims. The students meet their groups once a week and study legal issues affecting them. After a year, the members of the group participate in a mock trial in front of staff, lawyers and judges.

this world. We believe that gives them the power to go in a normative direction.

"We never thought we would have such an experience and learn such a lesson in sensitivity and human nature. We can feel the influence that we have on the prisoners and the difference it makes. Some even told us that they want to do academic studies now. We wish for those prisoners to have that supportive environment when they finish their time in prison, and that should be all of our responsibility as a society."

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