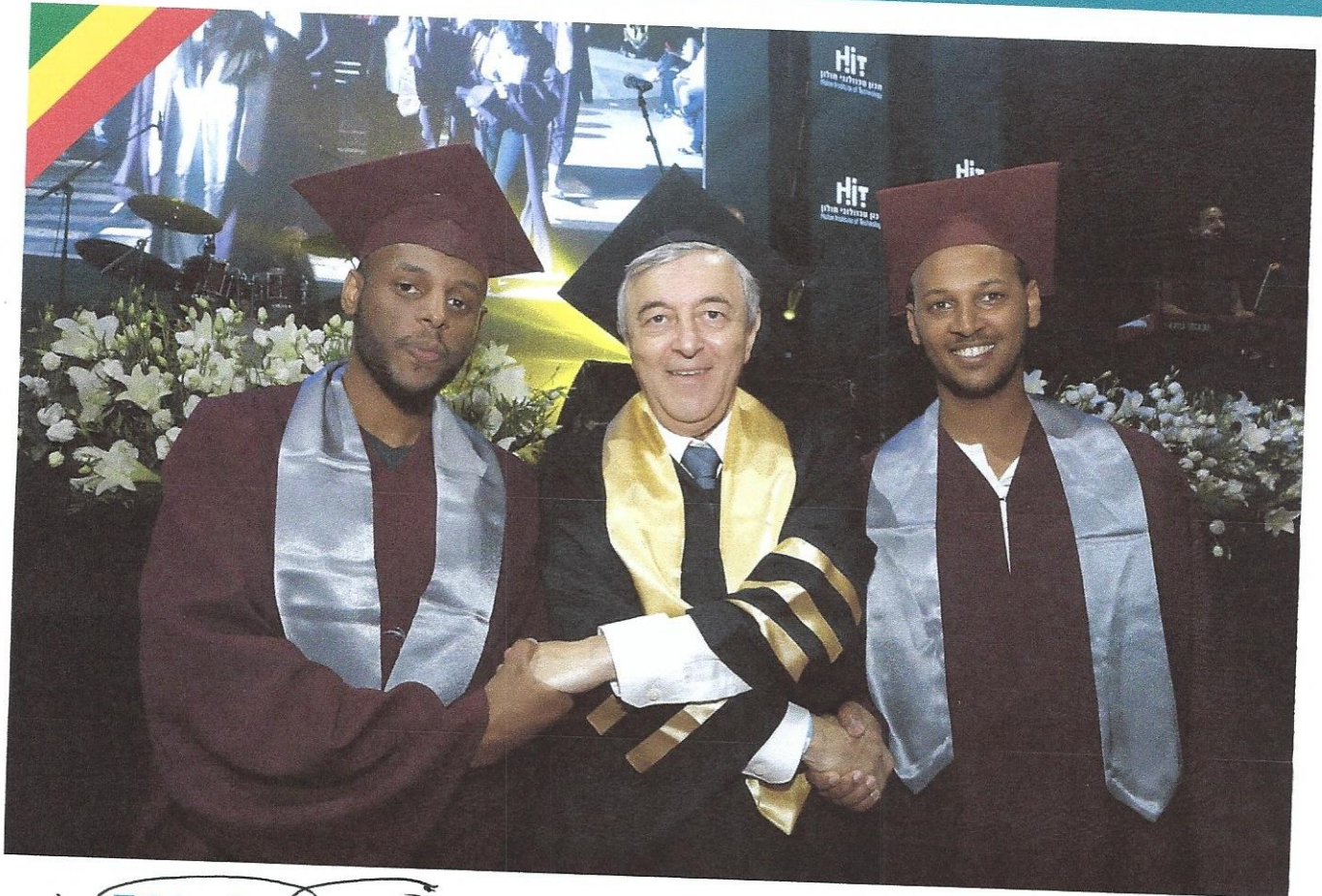


A Proposal to Support Ethiopian-Israeli Students at HIT Changing Israel's Social Landscape

The Boxenbaum - Neba Foundation



Ethiopian Israelis in Higher Education: Narrowing the Gap

The plight of Ethiopian Jewry in Israel is one that has inspired hope and despair, joy and sorrow, triumph and adversity. The overwhelming emotion that gripped the country upon the arrival of the Beta Israel community all too soon brought out both the best and the worst in Israeli society. The challenges facing this 144,000-strong community are still significant, and the social inequity is indisputable.

For the 59,000 who are children to parents born in Ethiopia, however, the situation is gradually improving.

According to a report by the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, while Ethiopian-Israeli students approach higher education with lower achievements than their Israeli peers in both matriculation and psychometric exams, the general consensus is that there has been considerable improvement among Ethiopian Israelis and the gaps have narrowed in recent years. **Between 2001-2016, university-eligible matriculation rates more than doubled for Ethiopian-Israelis, from 15% to 34%**, although this is only half of similar rates in remaining Jewish student populations.

Ethiopian-Israelis and STEM studies: Still An Uphill Battle

While the results of these achievements are encouraging, they still demonstrate a trend which, unless addressed, will continuously impact Ethiopian-Israelis on their career path and wage ladder. The vast majority of Ethiopian-Israeli academic students have chosen specializations in Education, Social Sciences and Social Work. Indeed, 43% of Ethiopian male and 62% of Ethiopian female students are pursuing degrees in the 'helping professions'.

While noble in deed, the fact is that only 23% of these men and 8% of these female students have chosen majors in one of the STEM subjects – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The implication of this decision can be seen in their wage scales – employment in the 'helping professions' which are primarily in the public sector yields a far lower income than in the hi-tech fields and private sector, particularly as salaries of **all** academic Ethiopians are still significantly lower than their remaining Jewish counterparts.

Ethiopian Students at the HIT – Holon Institute of Technology: An Investment in Success

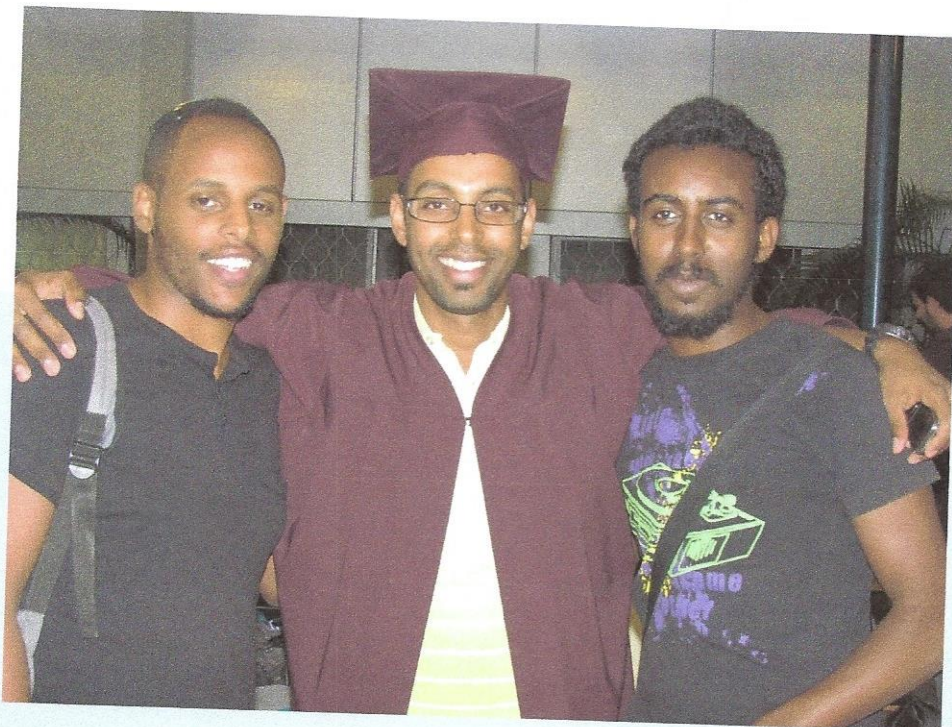
With accessibility to higher education a priority agenda item, HIT has made a concerted effort to engage Ethiopian-Israelis in their STEM-driven B.Sc degree programs in engineering, management technology, design (B.Design), instructional technology and information sciences – professions in high demand

in the private sector. The decision not to require psychometric exams as part of their admission criteria has helped ease the way, and HIT takes great pride in the hundreds of Ethiopian students who have earned their Bachelor of Science degree in its hallowed halls over the years.

The ingredient to success? Highly personalized attention.

Above and beyond the huge remedial support package provided by the Institute – special pre-academic program in mathematics, professional English programs, individual tutoring and specialized group tutorials, diagnostics, psychological counseling and coaching, and notwithstanding the full financial

support received from government agencies for many, the progress of each and every Ethiopian student is carefully monitored by dedicated staff in the Dean of Students office, who strategically intervene in real time when difficulties are detected.



a significantly high

As a result, HIT has one of the largest number of Ethiopians studying for B.Sc degrees in STEM subjects than any other academic institution in Israel - university and college alike

Spread by word of mouth throughout the community, you can often see several siblings, cousins and other relatives at various stages of their degree studies on campus. It is gratifying to see these students flourishing intellectually, professionally, and socially.

The table below provides an overview of HIT Ethiopian-Israeli students, *for Academic Year 2018/9*

Faculty/Year	*Engineering	*Technology Management	**Computer Science	*Design	Total
Year 1	10	1	10	1	
Spring Semester	5		1		28
Year 2	3	3	3	1	10
Year 3	13	1	6	1	21
Year 4	8	3	--	1	12
***Years 5 + 6	2	1	8	1	12
TOTAL	41	9	28	5	83

- * 4 year program
- ** 3 year program
- *** supplementary years

last year

Of the 78 students majoring in Technology, *last year* 13 are women (about 18%), which is more than double the national average.

Since many of these students must work in order to support their studies and family, *at age 28* more than half are 28 and above, which disqualifies them from receiving government subsidies of up to NIS22K per annum.

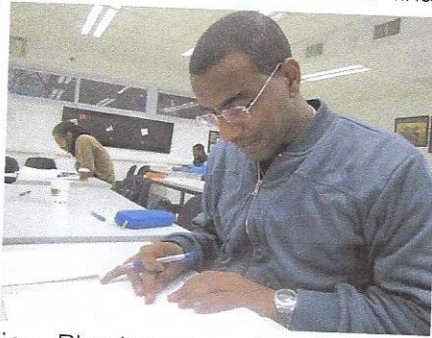


Academic Performance: Tenacity and Perseverance is the Key

Acceptance to a degree program is only one step in the journey of a student. How that student performs along the way is wrought with many challenges, and Ethiopian students face more than their fair share on their path to academic success.

At HIT, only 9 students accepted to degree programs matriculated with 4 or 5 units in math, and in order to improve their chances for acceptance, the majority had to participate in specialized pre-academic programs in Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science.

While scholarship support has in at least half the cases set aside the worry of paying tuition and fees, it does not mitigate the cultural and social difficulties these student face, particularly as regards their level of math and language proficiency, socio-economic status and home environment. Consider, for example,



that Ethiopian Israeli IDF Veterans, all of whom receive the usual financial grant from the army upon their completion of service, feel obligated to use these funds to help their families rather than apply these sums toward their studies.

At HIT, we celebrate the success stories, like those of Binyamin Yamtza (Computer Science) Yaakov Adgoecho (Electrical Engineering) Adiel Sanbata (Management Technology) three students who received the President's Award of Distinction this year with grades of 94 and 96.

Perhaps the most telling and touching story is that of Rachel Adago, who is eternally grateful that with the never-ending support of the Student Accessibility Center, she succeeded in overcoming all the challenges that stood in the way of her completion of a B.Sc in Computer Science. In her own words, she relates:

They took me in hand from the first year, and were always there for me with each challenge that I faced. I felt that they saved me from drowning in a fierce storm of fear and emotions. Group and private lessons helped me through the most difficult times, and even when I thought I couldn't go any further, they gave me the tools, assistance and attention to get through it all. They made it possible for me to weather these three intensive and difficult years. The knowledge that you have to whom to turn to when things are tough, that you have people on your side who believe in you and your capabilities, gave me the motivation I needed to make every effort to succeed.

And like Rachel, there are many, many more stories of success thanks to the dedicated efforts of the HIT team.

Financial Support for Ethiopian Students from Year 5 and Beyond The Difference Between Success and Failure

Together with these successes are the vast majority of Ethiopian students who find it more difficult to complete all their requirements within the 3- (Computer Science) or 4- year time frame (Engineering, Technology Management, Design). Trying to combine work and family, **80% of our Ethiopian-Israeli students require an additional year or two to complete their degrees. This time extension is not funded by any current sources of support, which only provide**

financial assistance within the context of the 3-4 year degree program and up to age 28. At present, there are 12 students who have had to extend the number of years to earn their degrees, and 47 over the age of 28. Some 22 students have submitted requests for assistance with living subsidies. In essence, these Ethiopian-Israeli students are left to fend for themselves financially, a fact which further delays – or actually deters them – from completing a degree.

Forging a New Generation of Ethiopian Israeli Technologists: An Opportunity for Social Entrepreneurship at its Best

It is for this reason that HIT-Holon Institute of Technology is seeking support from individuals and organizations who understand the need to prepare Ethiopian students for careers in technology and design and who are willing to provide the much-needed financial assistance to make degree completion a reality.

For the current academic year, we require full scholarship support for 40 students in the amount of up to NIS22,000 (about USD\$6,300) each which would cover full tuition, living stipend and personalized academic/cultural/social support package per annum.

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Financial Support for Israeli-Ethiopian Students: The Difference Between Success and Failure

The financial plight of Israeli-Ethiopian students is one of the single most important factors impacting their ability to be among the first in their generations to earn a college degree.

The Israeli government has addressed this challenge admirably over the years, and while there were certain lakunae which plagued the program, all in all, it made a huge difference.

With the launch of a new scholarship scheme (the Marom program) this year, however, we have identified **three groups which do not qualify for support**: (a) Students who have had to extend their studies beyond the degree time framework (3 years for Computer Science, 4 years for Engineering) – a common problem due to the fact that most students need to work to support their families and this negatively impacts on the amount of time they can invest in their studies; (b) Students from sophomore year and beyond who have ‘aged out’ of the system at 28; and (c) new freshman students who do not qualify for government assistance due to the competitiveness of the new governmental scheme, which provides **only 600 scholarships** for ALL of Israel’s higher education institutions.

At HIT, we have identified 29 students who will not be eligible for government support during during Academic Year 2019/20– 29 students who have no means to pay tuition, living subsidies, transportation, professional english courses; 29 students who, without assistance, will be unable to afford the cost of their studies and frozen out of the higher education system.

The Boxenbaum-Neta Foundation and HIT: Shattering the Glass Ceiling in Technology & Design

It is for this reason that HIT- The Holon Institute of Technology, is seeking multi-year support from The Boxenbaum-Neta Foundation to fund scholarships for 5 Israeli-Ethiopian students who are ineligible for support over the next 3 years. This would amount to NIS 100,000 per annum, or a total of NIS 300 over a period of 3 years.

With the new academic year soon upon us, we see the support of these time-sensitive. Israel needs hi-tech specialists to sustain its status as a technology-driven nation.

We believe that the Boxenbaum-Neta Foundation, with its inspired social action and technology agenda – and HIT, with its top-ranked programs of technology studies together with in-depth and hands-on remedial assistance, can make significant inroads into resolving this problem.

Rarely is there an opportunity to change the face of Israeli society as the partnership being proposed herein. Over a relatively short period of time, HIT is forging the next generation of Israeli-Ethiopian engineers, managers, instructional technologists, data and computer scientists, designers – all of who will find professional careers with huge mobility potential in the hi-tech industrial sector. This ability to move up the success ladder holds the key to the best possible integration of Israeli-Ethiopians into society, and hence, ensure ultimately that the economic gaps between the community and the rest of the country will less and disappear over time.

We would like to work closely with the Boxenbaum-Neta Foundation to become joint agents of social change, for the benefit of the Israeli-Ethiopian community, and all Am Israel.