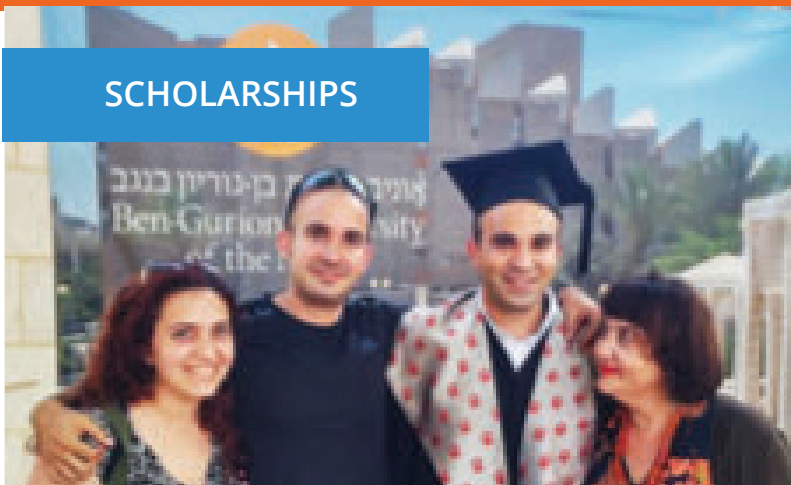


# 2019

Annual Report



Empowering extraordinary young Israelis from underserved backgrounds to reach their highest potential, igniting positive change in Israeli society.



SCHOLARSHIPS



LEADERSHIP TRAINING



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS



ALUMNI ORGANIZATION – FAMILY FOR LIFE



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## *From ISEF's President*

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Dear friends,

It gives me great pleasure to share this report with you, as ISEF marks its 42nd year supporting higher education for bright young Israelis from immigrant and underserved communities.

This past year, we empowered 424 BA, MA, PhD and postdoc students from Israel's periphery--most the first in their families to pursue degrees! This included 120 new STEM degree candidates in our pioneering **Science Builds the Nation Partnership** with the Prime Minister's Office. Our "brain trust" of 53 PhD students in Israel—a record!—along with our 16

International Fellows pursuing MD, PhD, and postdoctoral research at places like Harvard and Stanford, are all doing ground-breaking work that reinvigorates my faith in Israel's bright future.

What makes ISEF stand apart from other scholarship programs for marginalized students is our **emphasis on excellence**, our supportive **family atmosphere**, and our **holistic approach** to developing the whole person through leadership training and hands-on volunteering.

**These are the elements behind ISEF's unparalleled success rate – retaining over 97% of our students.**

The ultimate proof of ISEF's value is that, long after they've graduated, **thousands of our alumni stay involved with ISEF**. Year after year, these busy professionals share their journeys to success and guide ISEF's newest grads forward, to grad school or to a first career position.

This is a watershed year for ISEF: after 42 years of inspired leadership, ISEF's co-founder and Chairwoman Emerita **Nina Weiner** is leaving New York and making aliyah to Israel. We know we can count on her continued passionate involvement with ISEF's family of supporters, students, and alumni, and wish her great success as she embarks on her next exciting chapter!

With all the changes, ISEF remains true to its founding vision: that higher education holds the key to transforming young Israelis' lives from lack of opportunity to productivity. **Educating Israel's young people is the single most vital task all who care for Israel can undertake, and I thank you for your continuing support for ISEF's deserving students.**

Carlos Benaim  
President



*President Carlos Benaim congratulates an outstanding young pupil in ISEF's Luna and Selim Benardete Bridge to College Project in Nesher, a struggling town in Israel's North.*



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## *From ISEF's Co-Founder*

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Dear friends,

I write to you on the eve of my aliyah. While it is bittersweet to part from so many long-time friends and family in New York, I am excited to return to Israel—which has kept a major place in my heart—and its people, whom I admire for their courage, sense of purpose, and joie de vivre. For 42 years, I have devoted myself to ensuring that every bright young Israeli, no matter their background, has an equal chance at a good education and a good life. Now I'll have the privilege of witnessing the fruits of my labors.

For example: I'll be living in Tel Aviv, near Sourasky Medical Center—whose CEO is an ISEF alumnus. I'll visit the universities and see myriads of ISEF faces, not just among students, but among leading faculty. With your support, ISEF has transformed the landscape of higher education in Israel, making it more reflective of Israel's incredible human diversity.

I'll also visit with our graduates who are now physicians, scientists, teachers, attorneys, entrepreneurs, philosophers, social workers, college presidents, NGO founders--and meet not just their children, but for some of our earliest graduates, their grandchildren!

When I look at all that we have achieved together, the results are far more outstanding than I ever dreamed possible. Yet many thousands more underserved youth in Israel's periphery remain to be reached. I plan to continue my deep involvement in shaping ISEF's growth and direction as we approach our jubilee year in 2027!!

Words cannot express my gratitude to each of you, for your unwavering friendship and generosity to ISEF's students through the years. I'm in the ISEF family for life, and I'm counting on you being with us as we embark on a new era under the wise leadership of President Carlos Benaim and our devoted board members. I am deeply thankful for the knowledge that ISEF's future is in such capable hands.

This isn't good-bye, but rather, "l'hitra'ot." I look forward to seeing you when you next visit Israel! I cannot wait to introduce you to some of the wonderful Israelis whose lives have been transformed by your constant generosity.

With much affection and gratitude,

Nina A. Weiner  
Chairwoman Emerita

# Highlights

## Science Builds the Nation

Our major partnership with the Prime Minister's Office supported over 120 STEM degree candidates from the periphery; this year, 200!



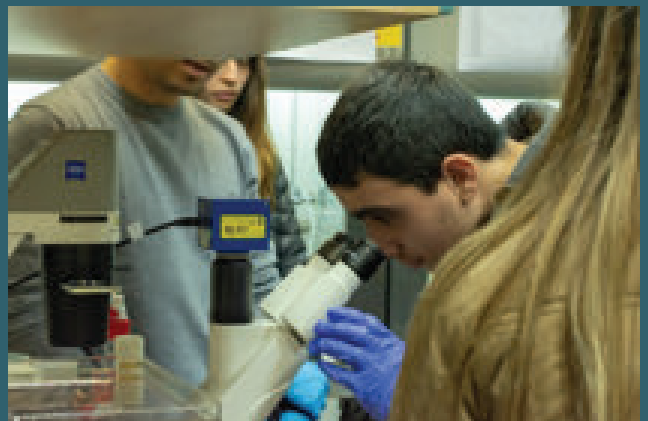
## Building Social Capital for Our Graduates

Personal connections are key to jump-start new grads' careers. ISEF's new Career Placement Coordinator is building a wide network for them to tap into!

Successful ISEF Alumni in a wide range of professions meet with and guide new ISEF grads. Hot job opportunities are shared in real time through social media.

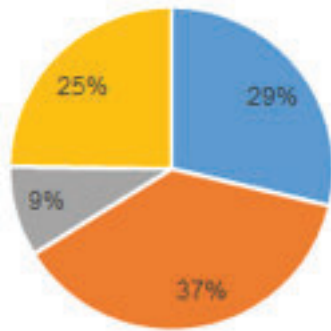
## Mentoring At-Risk Teens

ISEF's Bridge to College Projects are having measurable impact on vulnerable high school youth from Israel's marginalized communities. 85% of project enrollees succeeded in earning their high school diploma—a major advance over the national average of 69%. (Graduation rates in marginalized communities are even lower—40-50%.) This visionary project is supported by **the Luna and Selim Benardete Bridge to College Fund**.

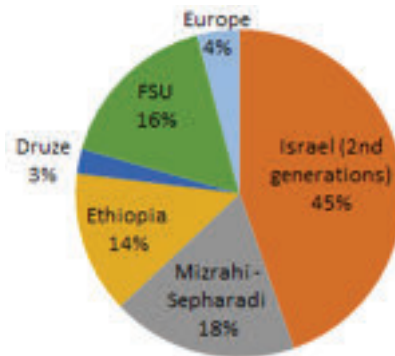


# ISEF's Students in Israel – A Snapshot

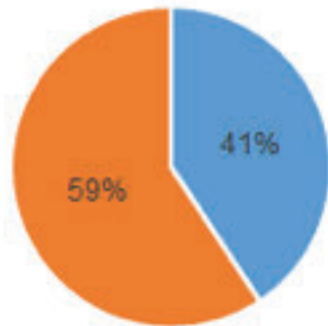
408 students on 18 campuses: 320 BA, 35 MA, and 53 PhD candidates



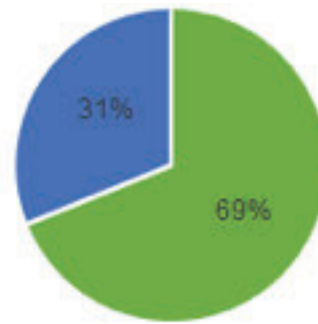
66% hail from the Negev and the Galilee –far from Israel's center



ISEF's diverse students mirror the changing face of Israel's marginalized communities.



Almost 60% are women—many from communities where women don't traditionally get educated



Nearly 70% pursue degrees at Israel's research universities.

## Where They Study

Our Institutional Partners

Bar-Ilan University  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev  
Haifa University  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya  
Open University of Israel  
Technion-Israel Institute of Technology  
Tel Aviv University  
Weizmann Institute of Science

Afeka College of Engineering  
Azrieli College of Engineering  
Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design  
Holon Institute of Technology  
Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance  
Max Stern Jezreel Valley College  
ORT-Braude College of Engineering  
Sami Shamoon College of Engineering  
Sapir College, Netivot



# Investing in Human Capital for Maximum Impact



Professor Eitan Yaakobi, The Technion

*B.A., M.Sc., The Technion; Ph.D., UC San Diego; Postdoc, Cal Tech.  
ISEF support from B.A. through Postdoc.  
International Marconi Society Young Scholar Award, 2009.  
Intel Ph.D. Fellowship, 2011.  
Associate Professor, Computer Science.*

Prof. Eitan Yaakobi is a pioneer in information and coding theory and data storage—especially impressive for the son of immigrants sent to live in Kiryat Shmonah on the Lebanon border. He writes:

**My parents never had the chance to get an education.** My father, an immigrant from Iran, had to go to work at age 15 to help support his many siblings. He became a taxi driver. My mother had to leave school after 10th grade because her mother died; she worked as a home health aide. **Seeing me earn my Ph.D., win the Marconi Award, and become a professor is the fulfillment of their most cherished dreams.**

Kiryat Shmonah is a distant development town, and **no one in its schools had ever encouraged me, or anyone else, to reach for more than the minimum.** But in 11th grade I saw a poster for a national math contest, which opened the door to a different world where I had the good fortune to encounter ISEF.

When I won the 2009 Marconi Society Young Scholar Award, the Israeli media were surprised that someone from Kiryat Shmonah had won, and even more surprised by my parents' lack of schooling. **I hope that one day, people will no longer be surprised when students from places like Kiryat Shmonah win awards.** But I could not have won that award, I could not have done my postdoc at Cal Tech, and I could not now be part of the Technion faculty, without the tremendous support of my birth family and my ISEF family.

**I believe my success is proof that many others could follow a similar path, if they got the right encouragement.** I was lucky to have the constant help and support of ISEF over the long years of my training. But there are many others like me who don't get the same opportunities, just for lack of funds. They also deserve help such as ISEF gives.

**Photo: Prof. Yaakobi shares his path to success with ISEF's 2019-2020 scholars in Haifa, November 1, 2019.**



# Key Program Features

## Tuition Scholarships

This year, **408 ISEF scholars pursued degrees on 18 university and college campuses in Israel.** 320 undergraduates received partner funding from their institutions and Israel's Council on Higher Education. 120 studied for STEM degrees in ISEF's "Science Builds the Nation" partnership with the Prime Minister's Office, including many of ISEF's 88 Master's, Ph.D., and postdoc candidates.

ISEF's reputation attracts thousands of applicants, and **acceptance rates are under 10%.** Students are chosen based on:

- socio-economic disadvantage
- academic record
- completion of military or national service, and
- prior community involvement

Second-stage applicants attend group evaluation workshops; the most promising have personal interviews.



## Advanced Degree Initiatives

Advanced degrees are increasingly essential for top positions in Israel.

ISEF's Advanced Degree Initiative helps undergrads understand how advanced degrees improve their career prospects and shows them how to balance family and work with advanced research. ISEF's 53 PhD students met with our BA and MA students, sharing experiences and showing an advanced degree isn't out of reach.

## International Fellows Program

ISEF's proactive support for advanced training extends outside Israel. **The ISEF International Fellows Program awarded support grants to 16 outstanding students pursuing MD, PhD, and postdoctoral training at top international institutions from Harvard to Stanford.**

Graduates of the International Fellows Program are today college presidents and professors, heads of hospitals, ground-breaking cancer researchers, and founders of major NGOs.

**ISEF's sustained investment in human capital development—from BA to PhD and postdoc—achieves real results. ISEF's advanced degree alumni hold top positions throughout Israel's economy, diversifying every sector and shattering old notions of what immigrants can achieve.**



# Key Program Features (cont'd)

## Safety Net

First-generation students often struggle with feeling they “don’t belong.” Their families and communities may doubt the value of earning degrees, particularly for women from traditional homes. **Today 60% of ISEF’s students are women, including some who are the very first in their communities to study.**

ISEF provides a strong safety net. Emergency financial aid, new laptops, counseling, professional tutoring—all are provided on an as-needed basis. Above all, ISEF serves as a second family, creating strong bonds between staff, student leaders, and newer students.

## Leadership Training Programs

Twice each month, ISEF’s veteran student leaders run group meetings of ISEF students that explore identity and other current social issues. Empowering students to take charge of these meetings develops their leadership capacities. In spring, ISEF’s National Student Convention gathers all 408 ISEF students for an intense weekend of discussions, workshops, and fun.

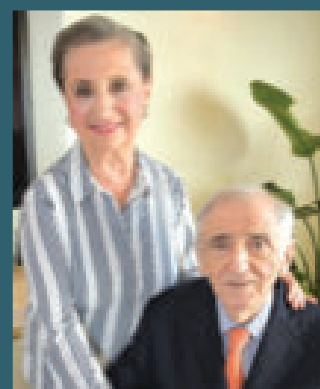
**This program forges a strong sense of belonging and powers ISEF’s extraordinary results-- 97% get their degrees, and 25% go on for advanced degrees!**

## Community Service Projects



**ISEF students devote four hours a week to tutoring and mentoring over 3,600 at-risk youth enrolled in ISEF projects all over Israel.** They lead group workshops and tour nearby campuses to help these teens see a BA as an attainable goal. ISEF students, themselves from marginalized homes, are ideal role models.

ISEF is deeply grateful to **Luna and Selim Benardete** for creating the **Luna and Selim Benardete Bridge to College Fund** that underwrites intensive interventions targeting at-risk youngsters in five cities. Other partners in ISEF’s community service projects include the Council on Higher Education, municipalities, and major NGOs.



# Exciting Year at ISEF New York



*Rony Zarom (c) with fellow honoree Nina Weiner and ISEF Fellow Dr. Talia Schwartz-Meyri.*



*Joseph Aiken*

**Record Gala for ISEF:** Hundreds of guests, including ISEF co-founder **Lily Safra**, loyal board members, and many new friends, flocked to ISEF's 42nd Annual Gala in New York on May 9, 2019, to honor Israeli entrepreneur **Rony Zarom**, founder of Unistream; Young Leader **Joseph Aiken**; and ISEF co-founder **Nina Weiner** for her lifelong devotion to ISEF's mission. The young and enthusiastic crowd raised a record \$1 million for ISEF's programs.

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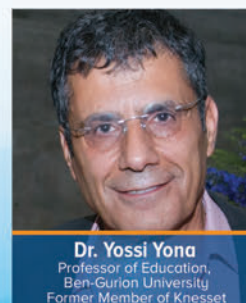
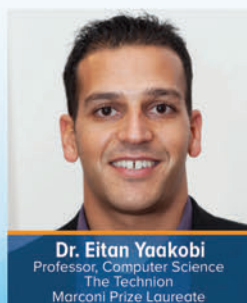
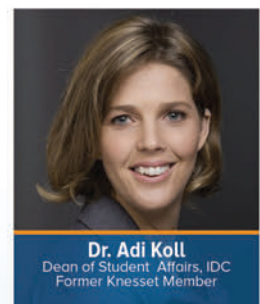
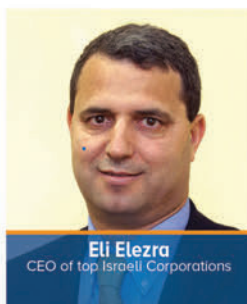
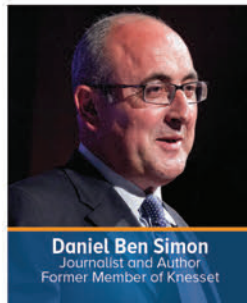
*ISEF Alumni Dr. Avishai Benish, guest speaker Daniel Ben-Simon, Law Prof. Yifat Biton, ISEF Fellows Adam Yoseph and Dr. Michael Goldenshluger, and ISEF VP Avi Abergel.*

## The May 9 Gala crowned an event season that featured:

- A reception at the home of Israel's Consul-General Ambassador **Dani Dayan**, featuring celebrated author, former MK and ISEF alumnus **Daniel Ben-Simon** on Moroccan Jewry;
  - An Iraqi cultural evening at the home of ISEF Board Member **David Dangoor**, with distinguished guest speakers **Abraham Sofaer** and **Maurice Shohet** and Iraqi cuisine;
  - A Finance Round Table featuring ISEF VPs and top tax experts **Avi Abergel** and **Michael Vaknin** discussing the altered tax landscape.
-

# Our Alumni Are a Force for Change!

More than 5,000 ISEF grads are active members of ISEF's Alumni Association – proof of ISEF's crucial role in their lives



## LEADERS, INNOVATORS, AND EDUCATORS

**Alumni include:** College presidents, Members of Knesset, heads of hospitals, surgeons, scientists, professors, engineers and entrepreneurs, architects, legal experts, and heads of NGOs improving life for all Israelis.



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### ASSETS

	2018	2017
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$371,603	\$740,911
Investments (fair value)	4,829,307	4,423,155
Accounts receivable	202,983	121,071
Pledges receivable	144,763	14,324
Property and equipment (net)	32,753	34,965
Other assets	4,060	4,060
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$5,585,469</b>	<b>\$5,338,486</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

#### Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$ 62,187	\$ 123,973
Accrued expenses	52,571	45,376
Note payable related parties	290,000	290,000
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>404,758</b>	<b>459,349</b>

#### Net assets

Unrestricted	229,420	367,867
Temporarily restricted	172,707	71,851
Permanently restricted	4,778,584	4,439,419
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>5,180,711</b>	<b>4,879,137</b>

<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$5,585,469</b>	<b>\$5,338,486</b>
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### TOTAL REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT

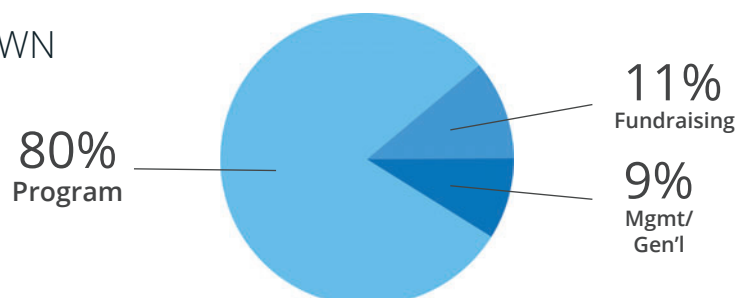
Contributions	\$3,316,162	\$2,991,589
Special events (net of expenses)	470,203	616,361
Interest and dividends	111,660	124,740
Realized/unrealized gain on sale of investments	364,165	506,394
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$4,262,190</b>	<b>\$4,239,084</b>

### OPERATING EXPENSES

Scholarships and Program services	\$3,256,841	\$2,933,619
Support services		
Fundraising	457,158	439,312
Management and general	339,934	359,710
<b>Total support services</b>	<b>797,092</b>	<b>799,022</b>

<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$4,053,933</b>	<b>\$3,732,641</b>
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### EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



ISEF's investment in educating Israel's next generation for excellence is made possible by a leadership grant from

## The Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation

And by the extraordinary generosity of dozens of foundations and corporations, and **our worldwide family of loyal individual supporters**



### MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Anonymous Foundation  
Luna and Selim Benardete Bridge to College Fund  
Robert I. Goldman Foundation  
Ministry of Education, Israel  
Prime Minister's Office, Israel  
Israel National Lottery  
Israel Council on Higher Education

Jewish National Fund  
United Israel Appeal – Canada  
Mel Cutler Foundation  
Elezra Foundation  
Joseph S. and Caroline Gruss Life Monument Fund  
Louis and Harold Price Foundation  
Weininger Foundation  
Yahel Foundation



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Lily Safra**  
President: **Carlos Benaim**  
Chairwoman Emerita: **Nina Weiner**  
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Joseph M. Rose  
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Olivier Sarfati  
Robert Shasha  
Katrin Yaghoubi Sosnick  
Michael Vaknin  
Judy Wolff

*"My parents couldn't support me with my studies, but with ISEF I felt I could literally break down the economic and social barriers, and I succeeded in completing not-easy-at-all studies with huge pride. I grew up in a place where people don't dream big, where even the people who wanted to study didn't always get the chance. The boundaries were clear. That's why I won't ever give up on my success, because I know how hard I worked for it and how lucky I am. I really couldn't have done it without ISEF. You have supported me all the way long, so I would like to say thank you, again, from the bottom of my heart."*

— Rotem A., B.A., Accounting and Economics, Bar-Ilan University



## OUR IMPACT ON ISRAELI SOCIETY

LAST YEAR, WE SUPPORTED

**408**   
**STUDENTS, BA TO PhD**

AT

**18** **ISRAELI  
UNIVERSITIES  
AND COLLEGES**



INCLUDING



**14%**

**ETHIOPIAN ISRAELIS**



**59%**

**WOMEN**



**77%**

**DEGREES IN  
STEM, BUSINESS, & LAW**

**98%** **GRADUATION  
RATE**

**THANKS TO ISEF'S WRAP-  
AROUND SUPPORT AND  
PERSONAL DEVELOP-  
MENT PROGRAMS**

**2,800**   
**AT-RISK TEENS**

**BEING HELPED TO GRAD-  
UATE HIGH SCHOOL AND  
QUALIFY FOR COLLEGE**



**16 INTERNATIONAL  
FELLOWS ABROAD**

**GROUNDBREAKING  
RESEARCHERS IN SCIENCE,  
MEDICINE, AND SOCIETY**



ISRAEL SCHOLARSHIP  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

הקרן הבינלאומית לחינוך

520 8th Avenue, 4th Floor New York, NY 10018  
main 212.683.7772 fax 212.683.7779

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