

# **Immigrants' Social Entrepreneurship**



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## Background

- The idea of social entrepreneurship, can serve as an intellectual springboard studying actions taken by immigrant groups in their incorporation efforts in the host country.
- Many studies describe how through the use of self-help activities, immigrants are establishing small enterprises, developing community organizations, building and maintaining educational frameworks focusing on the education of children.



## **Ethiopian Community In Israel**

- The Jewish Ethiopian community in Israel includes 105,000 people.
- This is, in fact, the smallest ethnic community in Israel.
- However, it has unique characteristics that manifest themselves in almost any comparison with the rest of Israel's population, including other immigrants.



# heritage





# Ethiopian Community Uniqueness

- There are two major differences:
  - First, the traditional character of the Ethiopian community, as compared to the modern and individualistic character of the veteran Israeli society, as well as the immigrants from the former Soviet Union.
  - Second, the totally different mentality and the crisis that the family and the community experience as a result of the transition.



# History Of Ethiopian Immigration

- The community immigrated to Israel in two major waves:
  - Operation Moshe (84)
  - Operation Shlomo (91), majority of the community
- The Community suffered from cultural differences, lack of human capital, economic capital and lack of openness to their integration, from the settling organizations.
- As a result, most Ethiopians found themselves concentrated in the worst neighborhoods in the periphery of the country.
- Consequently this led to poverty, lack of occupational opportunities and poor quality of life, education, teachers etc.



# MAXSAM Organization

- The name of the organization presented today is MAXSAM.
- The meaning of the name in Amharic language is “the process of making honey by the bee”.
- It is located in the town of Hadera, which is located in the center of the country. The town’s population is approximately 83,000 citizens.
- As of July 2006, 28,990 immigrants lived in Hadera, with that constitute 35.4% of the towns population. 31.5% of the immigrants are of Ethiopian origin.





# The Early Days





## **MAXSAM Background**

- In 1991 David and friends decided to found an organization whose goal will be to help educate the children in the community.
- The group constituted of 9 friends, most of whom were parents already, and who could not see the situation of the children any more - roaming the streets and engaging in delinquency.
- Their activity was based around several students who went to the children's homes (who were in 5th-9th grades) and acted as "big brothers"



## **MAXSAM Background Continued.**

- In 1996 they decided to open an after school program in an abandoned public bomb shelter.
- The place opened in 1997 and got renovated in 1999.
- The renovation and reopening created a new energy and helped in fund raising' which allowed the opening of two more centers in 2000 and two more in 2004.
- All the 5 study centers are located in neighborhoods that the majority of their inhabitants are Ethiopians.



# A Day In The Life Of MAXSAM





## Organization's Activities

- 450 students participate in the different programs from kindergarten to 9th grade and each of them gets a hot meal every day.
- The children learn in small groups subjects such as Math and English, and enrichment classes such as Art and Music. In addition, they cultivate the communities culture – traditions, holidays and Amharic.
- 300 children participated in the yearly summer camp.
- Every year the children pass a test that indicates their advancement and they are in constant contact with the schools.
- Special attention is given to the relations with parents.
- All board members are volunteers and meet once a week.



## Relations With Local Government

- After 3 years of complete estrangement, the city council has agreed to at least pay rent, electricity and gas for two of the centers.
- Lack of internal unity has prevented the community, in the last two elections, from getting representatives in city council
- In the last election David founded his own party, but was 18 votes short to enter the city council. Had the community been united it could have voted David in, with considerable power and make him deputy mayor.
- The mayor that could not ignore David's power and seriousness, sent him a letter inviting him to be the mayor's advisor for Ethiopian affairs.



## David And The Mayor Of Hadera





# Achievements

- Today MAXSAM is an organized system.
- It provides all the children within the area MAXSAM operates in, an important alternative to the dangers presented by the street (drugs, crime etc.)
- Children in the community can apply into any school of their choice and if rejected the file is handled by David.
- The number of children attending high school has increased dramatically.
- The tradition of sending the kids going to boarding schools was stopped.
- Less criminal records are reported.
- MAXSAM received a contract to work in Junior high





## Conclusion

- Social entrepreneurship, is the only resource left in the hands of society, in a world driven by privatization and governments, that constantly decrease their services.
- When asked if MAXSAM will be needed in 10 years time, the reply was, yes as long as the skin color won't change.
- It is too bad, that the lesson that is learned in every economy studies that “the entrepreneur is the leverage to growth” has not yet been internalized by the social sphere.
- It is important to see how the individual with the limited resources is the catalyst for social change.