

## Exploring the New Philanthropic Model of Social Investment

The Jewish Funders Network (JFN) is an international organization dedicated to advancing the quality and growth of Jewish philanthropy. JFN's membership includes independent philanthropists, foundation trustees and foundation professionals. Within the framework of the 2012 JFN International Conference in Tel Aviv, which took place during the week of March 19<sup>th</sup>, IVN and the Dualis Social Venture Fund were proud to be amongst the small number of organizations chosen to arrange and lead site visits and study trips for JFN members. The trip provided an amazing opportunity to showcase a number of the IVN and Dualis supported social businesses in the south.

The day began with a visit to the Duroos Learning Center\* in the Bedouin town of Rahat, offering English and mathematics courses as well as support for matriculation examinations and preparation for university entrance exams – all in Arabic. Duroos' current co-investors are IVN, the Tsadik Foundation and the Ness Fund. The results of this Center are phenomenal and Duroos is leveling the playing field considerably for young Bedouins wishing to enter every strata of Israeli society. The founder of Duroos, Fadi El Obra, spoke of the challenge in trying to find the balance between the social and business goals. He also spoke of the difficulty in finding investors for the social business sector in general and the Bedouin sector in particular.

The next stop on the trip was to Sha'ar HaNegev High School. The only one of its kind in Israel, the school is based on the High Tech High model created in San Diego, allowing for a public, integrative, qualitative and equal education.

A tasty lunch was had by all at the Ringelblum Café\*\* in Beer Sheva, a social business in partnership with Dualis and IVN. The Ringelblum Café is a restaurant that employs at-risk teenagers, both in the kitchen and as wait staff. The participants were served up not just a delicious meal, but were also given the opportunity to meet face to face the teenagers whose lives are changing as a result of this extraordinary venture.

After lunch, the group was introduced to the Eden Association. Eden improves the lives of vulnerable women, special needs and at-risk children and teenagers in the Negev. Eden's newest initiative is Cinderella\*\*\*, a unique social business which empowers women through employment and education in the Negev. Cinderella's current co-investors are IVN, the Tsadik Foundation and the Ness Fund. Cinderella is living up to its fairytale name, in that it enables women to break the cycle of being victimized and take control of their lives and futures.

The action-packed day was amazing. The participants were not just enthusiastic regarding what they had seen and heard, but also voiced an understanding and commitment to this emerging world of social businesses and the new model of social investment.

**\*Duroos Learning Center** - Dismayed by the lack of education facilities in his impoverished local area, 25 year old Fadi El Obra from Rahat, the largest Bedouin town in Israel, set up Duroos Learning Center in 2008 to bridge the gap between what was available and what should be available to all children and adults everywhere. Duroos teaches students from 3 years old to adults, offering English and mathematics courses as well as help with matriculation examinations (bagrut) and preparation for university entrance exams – in Arabic. The pioneering Center, which employs only local residents, has become vital to the community, and has been such a great success that 5 additional branches have opened since in the outlying Bedouin villages.

In 2009/10 Duroos employed 22 people, all local residents of the Bedouin villages. By 2010/11, 28 people were employed. In 2010, the revenue exceeded that of 2009 by 20% and in 2011, the revenue exceeded that of 2010 by an additional 10%. As for academic accomplishment, the average

psychometric grade (university entrance exam equivalent to SAT) for Duroos participants is 530, versus an average of 456 in the general Arab population and 564 in the Jewish population. These results are phenomenal and level the playing field considerably for young Bedouins wishing to enter the world of higher education.

**\*\* The Ringelblum Café** is a social business that was established in 2009 by NGO Tor Hamidbar, with the assistance from the city of Beer Sheva, in order to respond to the needs of at-risk youth in Beer Sheva. Located in the impoverished “Daled” neighborhood, the menu offers a wide variety of appetizers, salads, sandwiches, pasta and more. However, Ringelblum does more than serve up café fare. Ringelblum employs at-risk teenagers, both in the kitchen and as wait staff. This year-long paid training process helps youth get back on their feet, with the aim of enlisting them in the IDF and joining the workforce. A social worker, employed at the restaurant, helps bridge the gaps between tough ‘teenhood’ and the food service. Dropouts and other teens who slip through the cracks, aged 16-18, can work at Ringelblum. The Café provides the participants with experience and the practical skills and tools necessary to enter the workforce and become self sufficient.

**\*\*\*Cinderella** is a program to empower women through employment and education in the Negev. All over Israel there are domestic help service companies that exploit socio-economically disadvantaged women who have no employment prospects due to lack of mobility, education, language and more. These women are terribly underpaid, receive no social benefits, have no accident insurance coverage and are treated like cattle. Because of their weakened situation, these women do not have the ability to stand up for their basic rights. Cinderella, under the umbrella of NGO Eden, intends on changing this reality in the Negev. Cinderella is an employment and educational opportunity for all of those women who are being exploited.

As a domestic help service company, Cinderella provides safe transportation, pays a fair wage, and provides social benefits & insurance to its employees. Cinderella employees work four days a week and on the fifth day they learn a profession, in accordance with training programs and courses offered by the Ministry of Industry, Trade & Labor. Cinderella plans on truly changing the social landscape of the Negev. Together we shall develop a strategic model which can be replicated, allowing the venture and its impact to be felt and scaled throughout the country.