



Siraj NGO Fall Update

October 2018

Siraj – Advancing Hi-Tech in the Bedouin Community (Siraj NGO) strives to integrate the Bedouin society into Israel's hi-tech sector, in order to increase economic prosperity and decrease polarization between the Bedouin community and the general Israeli society. The Siraj NGO launched its active operations in 2018. Our major milestones to date include:

- Recruited an impactful board of directors headed by Aharon Fogel, a legendary Director General of Israel's Ministry of Finance in the 1990's, and now a senior figure in Israel's financial sector.
- Completed the first rendition of its Job Training Program with four participants. Three of the program graduates will be hired by Siraj Ltd., doubling the size of the company's R&D team and keeping both the company and the NGO on-target for their growth plans.
- Reached hundreds of Bedouin high school students through meetups and visits, bringing them up-close with the opportunities that a career in hi-tech offers.
- Built organizational capacity by hiring a Candidate and Community Coordinator (see below) who will significantly expand our efforts to engage with high school and college/university students.

In 2019 Siraj will continue to expand its capacity by hiring a CEO who will push forward efforts to (1) secure major government support; (2) build relationships and collaborations with partner organizations, with a focus on engaging university and high school students. In addition to running a second cohort of the job training program and continuing to hold community outreach events, Siraj also plans to operate a tech training course in partnership with another NGO.

We are happy to share updates about our recent activities:

First Graduates of Siraj's Job Training Program



Siraj's highly selective job training program is designed for candidates who lack the technical knowledge to be hired by Siraj Technologies Ltd. or other tech companies, but who demonstrate significant potential. The individually tailored program is designed to bring participants up to speed on Siraj Ltd.'s technologies and methodologies, and to hone teamwork and soft skills. It includes one-on-one in person and virtual training as well as self-study time. By program's end participants design a system that mirrors that of Siraj Ltd.'s current products. The program's first cohort graduated 3 out of 4 participants in September. All 3 graduates were hired by Siraj Ltd., and the fourth participant will be well-positioned to work at Siraj or another tech company in the future. ***This number of graduates is exactly aligned with Siraj's growth targets, allowing us to plan confidently to expand Siraj Ltd.'s team to 16 engineers by the end of 2019.***



Community Outreach

October Tech Meetup



Approximately 90 teens and young people attended Siraj's latest tech meetup, held at WeWork Be'er Sheva on October 8. Geared at high school students, the event focused on game development and featured a talk by software engineer Amir Hayek. Siraj's meetups aim to bring quality, technology-focused lectures and workshops to the Bedouin community, allowing Bedouin youth to sense what a career in tech might be like. ***Overall, Siraj's tech meetups reached hundreds of Bedouin teens in 2018.***

School Visits

To drum up interest for upcoming meetups, and to build relationships with Bedouin youth, Siraj NGO staff and Siraj Technologies Ltd. engineers regularly visit Bedouin high school computer classrooms. Such a visit took place ahead of the October meetup. Pictured here is Candidate & Community Coordinator Refaa Azbarga speaking to 12th graders at the Ahd High School for Science in Hura, which serves students from recognized and unrecognized Bedouin villages.



New Siraj Team Member: Refaa Azbarga, Candidate and Community Coordinator



Ms. Azbarga will lead Siraj's candidate and community outreach, including recruitment of participants for Siraj's programs, as well as its community-wide events and meetups. She is a math teacher and thus well-connected to the Bedouin school system. She has also worked as a web developer and QA Engineer. Ms. Azbarga holds a BS in Software Engineering from the Sami Shamoon College of Engineering and is a graduate of Appleseeds Academy and IT Works' Android development courses.

Siraj in the News

- ["Within a decade, hundreds of Bedouins will study and work in hi-tech."](#)
Makor Rishon, September 27, 2018 (Hebrew)
- ["Bedouin youth think hi-tech is not for them; we are here to change that."](#)
Geektime, September 8, 2018 (Hebrew)
- ["Israeli Tech Veteran Giora Yaron Wants to Bring Israel's Bedouins Into the Tech Fold"](#)
Calcalist, May 18, 2018 (English)