

## Launching Event of the Tsofen High-Tech Center in Nazareth

The launching event of Tsofen's High-Tech center took place on Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, in the Nazareth industrial area. This project, which started its pilot about 6 months ago, has now reached the stage of full scale operation.

The Tsofen launching drew an impressive gathering of more than 120 participants, unified in support of the goal to advance equality of opportunity for the Arab citizens of Israel through massive entrance of Arab engineers into the hi-tech industry and the promotion of Nazareth as a high-tech center.



The participants, half Arab and half Jewish, included prominent members of the high-tech industry, representatives of major high-tech firms in Israel associated with the project as well as representatives of government offices and the municipality, students in the first Tsofen training program, reflected Tsofen's ideals and conceptions.



One of the students, Hamed Salafta, described in detail to the gathering the difficulties that he encountered in a two-year search for work. He described how Tsofen training helped him to overcome all kinds of obstacles and paved the way into his present successful job. Thirty additional graduates were present and able to make the first acquaintance of key people in the profession.

A number of CEO's from companies who are employing or planning to employ Arab university graduates in Nazareth were present, among them Mr. Dudu Bassa of the Sela Group and Mr. Erez Benovich, from MIT (Manpower Information Technology) Ltd. - of the Manpower Group.



"The professional level of the Arab academicians is high, of excellent quality and impressive; this population has a strong potential that can pave the way to a refreshing change in the Israeli economy. Sela has undertaken to employ 50% of the current Tsofen class this coming November," said the Sela group CEO, Mr. Dudu Bassa.

Mr. Erez Benovich, the CEO of MIT said "We are partners with Tsofen since the beginning of 2008, and we plan to open our development center in Tsofen in the coming months. We believe in the social and economic potential of the industry based on Arab and Jewish engineers in Nazareth."

Mr. Hatem Yzbek, a senior director in a leading hardware hi-tech firm, emphasized the unique and important nature of the Tsofen model which leverages the experienced Arab professionals as a support and training network for young job-seekers.



Among those who spoke at the launching: Mr. Raji Mansour, City



Manager of Nazareth, Mr. Avi Lev of the Ministry of Industry, Trade & Labor of the, The Haifa and North region, Ms. Yael Lipman, former CIO of Cellcom, Mr. Eival Gilady, Chairman of the Galil Ma'aravi College, Director of the Portland Trust Israel and the Koret Fund, Mr.

Aiman Saif, Director of the Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab sector.



## On Tsofen:

Tsofen – High Technology Centers, a non-profit organization, was established in order to promote the integration of Arab citizens into the Israeli hi-tech industry. The heart of the Tsofen project is the engagement of Arab academicians and hi-tech personnel with leading hi-tech firms in the country, through the establishment of a software services center in Nazareth. To further this aim Tsofen initiated a training center and established suitable high-tech offices.

The Tsofen Center has been operating only for several months, but is already cooperating with central hi-tech firms in Israel's software industry, among them the Technological Center of the Sela Group, MIT of the Manpower Group, Communitech and others.

The first course of Arab graduates in the exact sciences will end in mid-November, and the second course will begin immediately after.

Tsofen was established in February 2008 by three founders: Yossi Coten-established and managed the Amdocs development center in Sderot, expert in human resources, worked in training and massive placement for the software industry. Sami Saadi-independent accountant and one of the founders of "The Jewish-Arab Technological Village-2002", and Smadar Nehab who serves as the CEO of the organization-formerly held key positions in leading technological firms (such as EFI, Cadence/Verity, Mercury/Conduct). Nehab has rich experience in advancing projects and in the establishment and operation of technological organizations and startups.

The board of Tsofen reflects its goals: it includes Arabs and Jews, hi-tech professionals and prominent members of the community. Among our contributors hi-tech leaders such as Mr. Davidi Gilo and Mr. Benny Landa as well as philanthropic

<http://www.tsofen.org>

funds such as the Portland Fund under the direction of Eival Gilady, the Federation of New York (UJA), the New Israeli Fund and others. Among the members of the board: Mr. Roayat Marie-chief executive officer of the company for technological educational software and the CEO of the Antaki startup; Ms. Yael Lipman, previously CIO of Cellcom and member of the management of Cellcom; Mr. Adi Bildner-Vice President Human Resources at ECI; Dr. Ramzi Halabi-lecturer at the Tel-Aviv University and former mayor of Daliyat el-Carmel; Ms. Sarah Kreimer-the founder of the Jewish-Arab Center for Economic Development; Dr. Dan Avnon-lecturer at the Hebrew University and chair of the Gilo Institute for Democracy and Civic Education; Ms. Aida Thoma-Suliman - Director of the organization Women Against Violence and active in the promotion of employment opportunities for Arab women.

For additional information: Rula Ziadne-Mahameed, [Rula.mahameed@tsofen.org](mailto:Rula.mahameed@tsofen.org) Tel: +972-4-6000500

Smadar Nehab, Tsofen CEO, [smadar.nehab@tsofen.org](mailto:smadar.nehab@tsofen.org)