

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Aim Higher: The Feuerstein Academic Integration Program for Young Adults of Ethiopian Origin and the Socio-economic Periphery

Year: 2025

Name of the Program: Aim Higher - The Feuerstein Institute's Academic Integration Program

Year of activity: 2025 (The program has existed since 2010)

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Number of active participants in the program: 376 students

Since 2010, 809 students have successfully entered academic institutions. Their contribution is reflected in the evaluation section (attached Deloitte, 2023) of this Activity Report

Aim Higher Program – Activity Report

1. Give the actual state of the program (where the program stands as of the date of the activity report)

In the 2022-2025 academic year, 100 students were accepted into the Feuerstein Academic Aim Higher program to various higher educational institutions nationwide. Currently, the program has 376 active students and included in this number are the students of the 2022-2025 cohort now in their 3rd year, and presently studying in 11 academic institutions: Ariel, Ben Gurion, Bar Ilan University, Haifa University, Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, Braude College, Laniado, Achva, Ruppin and the Institute of Technology.

While there are Aim Higher students in a variety of learning tracks, the preferred fields of study include Nursing, Computer Science, Law, and Medicine. The dropout rate remains

exceptionally low at just 6%, compared to the national average of 12% (Deloitte,2023). Feuerstein-trained professionals continue to provide personalized support, enabling high retention and academic success. The Feuerstein Method, a unique approach to cognitive development that measures cognitive potential and learning propensity, is increasingly recognized by educational institutions, ensuring the program's ongoing integration and sustainability.

2. The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.

After being called up to reserve duty in the wake of the **Iron Swords War** and the **Am KaLavi conflict**, many of our students face the profound effects of a long, protracted war—PTSD, academic disruption, and financial strain. Our staff remains in close contact with these students, offering daily support as they reintegrate into civilian life and resume their studies with stability and hope.

Despite these challenges, our students continue to achieve exceptional results, and their resilience and academic success serve as a testament to the effectiveness of our approach.

Breaking long-standing cultural and financial barriers, university admissions are based on matriculation grades, the Feuerstein Learning Propensity Assessment Device (LPAD), a dynamic tool that measures cognitive potential, and recommendation reports issued by the Feuerstein Institute.

The program continues to hold multiple strategic meetings with universities, resulting in formal agreements in which institutions, such as the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, have agreed to share financial responsibility and hence remain committed to opening their academic year to students assessed by Feuerstein.

Throughout the year, our staff participated in dozens of university open days, youth fairs and groups, zoom conferences, national conferences where government representatives attend, and where all participants create think-tank type discussions to drive Ethiopian and Periphery academic interest and enrollment, attempting to reach hundreds of potential students and encouraging them to pursue higher education through alternative pathways. The aim is to increase the percentage of students who belong to the first-generation group in higher education institutions. This fact underscores the great appreciation and understanding that our program provides an appropriate solution for Ethiopian-Israeli students and the broader peripheral community, and is the only program that allows for focused screening to examine learning potential while providing personalized guidance to students who participate in the program.

3. The Evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future)

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem has been admitting Feuerstein candidates for the last three years without the Psychometric exam, to all prestigious courses, except for Medicine. To be accepted to the Faculty of Medicine, a Psychometric exam is still required. For example, last year, Ethiopian-Israeli candidates and students from Israel's socio-economic periphery were admitted to other top-tier universities, such as the University of Bar Ilan and Haifa University, to prestigious courses without taking the psychometric test. Regardless, all students in these institutions must take the Psychometric exam for Medicine.

At this stage, we are in the midst of recruiting a new cohort for the 2025-2026 school year. Currently, recruitment for the 2025–2028 cohort is underway, with approximately 200 candidates having been screened and awaiting acceptance to various Academic Institutions.

4. Provisional Guidelines for the Advancement of the Program in the Next Year

The Aim Higher Program will prioritize post-war recovery by offering targeted academic and emotional support for students affected by trauma and instability. Efforts to expand recruitment will intensify, focusing on Ethiopian-Israelis and marginalized periphery communities through university open days, youth fairs run by local NGOs, and government collaboration. Retention and graduation will remain central goals, supported by personalized mentoring and cognitive tools. Strengthening ties with top universities is a key objective to institutionalize the Feuerstein Method as an official admissions path. Creating access and expanding opportunities to elite academic tracks will continue to be pursued. In parallel, graduate support will grow through career placement services and alumni networking. These efforts, sustained through philanthropic and academic partnerships, will ensure the program continues to foster inclusion, promote excellence, and transform lives.