

Resources and External Relations

During the past year, the Resources and External Relations Unit focused on fundraising for various projects under the umbrella of the ACCESS project, which aims to reduce gaps in Israeli society by making higher education accessible to all. Donations were doubled in the past year, making a range of new projects widely available, with a focus on populations with special needs.

Fundraising in Israel

This year's donations came from a wide variety of sources, including the business sector, leading commercial companies, foundations, and families wishing to commemorate a loved one through scholarships to students. The Israeli Friends of the OUI is currently being re-launched, and alumni who would like to give back are being approached.

ACCESS Project in Ofakim

A new study center was established this year in Ofakim, sponsored by the Peamei Tikvah Foundation, together with the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit Organization, an NPO which engages in social action in this southern town. A new study center was established this year in the town's youth center, allowing groups of local students to begin studying education and psychology with study grants from the fund. The youth center staff and Reconnaissance Unit Organization also help the students find employment.

Guy Shkury Memorial Foundation – Increasing Student Retention

Students who are having difficulty completing degree studies, despite having completed a major part of their requirements, are the focus of the Student Retention Unit. The Guy Shkury Memorial Fund was established this year to help identify such students. Guy himself was an OUI *magna cum laude* graduate from the Department of Economics and Management. The fund awards a full scholarship to students who are having difficulty completing their degrees, pending successful completion of their studies. A ceremony held in New York City on March 21 to launch the scholarship fund was attended by the University Chancellor, President of the Supreme Court (ret.), Justice Dorit Beinisch; real estate entrepreneur Shimon Shkury; OUI graduate Dr. Gilat Kohl (now a post-doctoral student at Princeton University); and New York real estate industry leaders.

Academic and Financial Aid Grants

Grants for Arabic-speaking and ultra-Orthodox students

Major funds were raised during the year towards grants for Arabic-speaking and ultra-Orthodox students. The Goldberg Family Foundation, the Jewish Federations of North America's Social Venture Fund, and a number of private donors made several projects a reality for these two target populations. The projects included preparatory workshops in core subjects, learning skills workshops, personal assistance, and financial aid grants.

Financial aid scholarships

More than 4,000 grants were distributed this year to students in need of financial aid. This was made possible, thanks to the generosity of a large number of donors from Israel, the US, Europe, and around the world. The American Friends of the Open University has been highly successful in raising the funds for financial aid grants. This year, a significant donation from the David and Inez Myers Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio will enable several grants to be awarded over the next five years.

Academia in High School

The Academia in High School program, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, allows outstanding high school students to begin academic studies while still in school. A generous donation from Mrs. Ingeborg Rennert, President of the American Friends, made it possible to distribute scholarships to high school students from all parts of Israel.

Operation Protective Edge: Everyone on Board

Operation Protective Edge required a special effort to help students whose studies were disrupted by the hostilities. Students who were called up for IDF reserve duty, and those living in the South had special difficulties to contend with. A system was put into place to help the affected students, including special examination dates, extra tutorials, and various other forms of academic and financial assistance. Many donors from Israel and abroad stepped up to help out at this difficult time with aid and grants.

Aid Project for Holocaust Survivors

In a project initiated by the student union, and supported by software entrepreneur Mr. Marius Nacht, students belonging to the union volunteer to meet with, and provide help to, Holocaust survivors. Special relationships develop through this project and the connection provides considerable help to the elderly recipients. In appreciation of their activities, the students are awarded grants.

Goldberg Family Foundation Outstanding Researchers Prize

Thanks to generous donations from the Goldberg Family Foundation, an annual competition will be held, beginning this year, for outstanding researchers at the OUI Publishing House. Each year, one winner will be awarded a prize. Researchers from all over the country will be invited to take part in the competition, and a specially appointed committee will select the outstanding research project to be published by the OUI.

American Friends of OUI Annual Gala Dinner

Over four hundred prominent business people attended this year's annual gala dinner, which was held in New York in October. The Open University Chancellor, President of the Supreme Court (ret.), Justice Dorit Beinisch, was the keynote speaker, together with the new OUI President, Prof. Kobi Metzger. Kim and Larry Heyman, and Ms. Nina Rosenwald were guests of honor at the event, which raised over \$800,000 for OUI scholarships.



From left to right: Boaz Nol, Dorit Beinisch, Kobi Metzger, Nicole Menaged, Ingeborg Rennert