

coming home

Elias Taka

"I came to Israel from Ethiopia with my grandmother. I was only six years old at the time, but I integrated quite easily – I learned Hebrew in school, made friends and got good grades. I always knew that education was important and would propel me toward a successful future."



הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל
Jewish Agency for Israel





Cost:
Jewish Agency
supported Atidim
programs range from
\$9,000 – \$17,000
annually for one
student.

Elias Taka (19) was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 1992, after the Operation Solomon rescue mission, Elias made aliyah with his grandmother. His father, an agriculturalist, and his mother stayed in Ethiopia, where they still live today.

Elias and his grandmother lived in a Jewish Agency Absorption Center in Kfar Saba, and two years later they moved to Netanya. They had a large extended family in Israel, but Elias missed his parents dearly. "Despite my longing for my family, I was a child when we came and I was able to adjust fairly easily to this completely new country and culture. It was more difficult for my grandmother, but we were fortunate to live with other new immigrants from Ethiopia."

During his teens, Elias attended the highly esteemed Boyer High School in Jerusalem. "I really enjoyed my time at Boyer," says Elias. "I learned a lot scholastically, but I also gained a lot of self-awareness and confidence."

Today, Elias is a participant in Atidim. Atidim proactively identifies the top 30 percent of youth from low-income and periphery communities and offers them equal access to higher education. The program has had unprecedented success, ensuring that talented young people from lower socio-economic areas are able to finance their studies, continue through a high level of military service, and go back to serve their communities as leaders who strengthen and develop the potential in these areas. The Jewish Agency is a partner in this important educational initiative that is changing the landscape of Israeli society.

Benny Landa, one of Israel's foremost businessmen, succinctly sums up the Atidim in Industry Program, "Atidim develops what would have been wasted potential of some of the most talented youth in the country and changes their lives. These young people, were it not for their background, would have been considered the most promising people in Israel. Atidim allows them to fulfill their potential and contribute fully to Israeli society."