

July, 2015 / Tammuz, 5775

My Very Dear Friends - Shalom ,

This long overdue letter is again about the Ethiopian protest in the streets of Tel Aviv. I feel I owe it to you to relate to it, having been repeatedly asked for my opinion.

At this juncture in Israel's existence, with no shortage of external threats, the outcry of young Ethiopian-Israelis is one crisis we could definitely do without. Our core mission has been and continues to be – raising young immigrants to be self-confident, well-rounded, and proud of their heritage. At the same time, we do our best to show Israel what a great asset this community is to society, while even a smidgeon of racism is unacceptable.



So what are we and our graduates doing about it? Only last Monday, nearly 1000 professionals assembled at the Tel Aviv national theater to brainstorm about the pressing unsolved social issues. The conference was initiated and chaired by our graduate, deputy mayor of Tel Aviv – Ethiopian-born Mehretta Baruch (in picture, top right). On my way out, after having presented our model, I bumped into young Ethiopian protesters con-



- fronting police. "Can such an outburst of emotion really make the difference in the long run?" I truly wondered, thinking how in contrast, our Young Leadership program (the Mechina) has just put together a totally different demonstration in the heart of Tel Aviv (video clip, left). The street dance of our kids drew public attention to the Ethiopian community being not a threat to public peace, but a perfect example of solidarity and young camaraderie.

Since the arrival of the first Ethiopian immigrants in the 80's, we have exemplified through our joint work how things must be done. The results speak for themselves – the constructive proactivity of our graduates, versus the bitterness of those who were left behind. The generation that we have raised indeed is not standing idle: like Mehretta, they are the promise, and their clear strong voices must replace the racket coming from the streets.

From our side, we continue to do our utmost so that our effective educational model is adapted far and wide, to the point that our impact on society is unmistakable.

Thank you for being with us in our ongoing effort to make Israel what it should be,

Wishing you a peaceful and enjoyable summer,

Chaim Fei