

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Lift-Off - Secondary Space Education (2)

Author: Ms. Asia Katz
Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd., Israel, asiak@rafael.co.il

Ms. Danna Linn Barnett
Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd., Israel, dannal@gmail.com

TELEM BAMOT - ENCOURAGING YOUNG GIRLS TO LEARN TECHNOLOGICAL STUDIES

Abstract

Encouraging young girls to choose science and technological studies in high school has been the subject of several educational programs in Israel. BAMOT, (girls to study technological subjects, in Hebrew) is a program which has been successfully running for 8 years in several programs in RAFAEL. The aim is to show the girls that it is possible to choose "manly" subjects like science and mathematics and still be able to have a "normal" family life by introducing young girls to women engineers, scientists and technicians at their work place. The program include several days distributed over the year in which the girls come to RAFAEL and hear lectures from the different scientists and engineers about space, chemistry and other technologies, visit the clean rooms and laboratories, see the work environment, and listen to the concerns and questions of the young girls.

In TELEM BAMOT, a subset of the BAMOT programs, we have focused on religious girls, who are in 9th grade. We reach out to girls who are not at the top of their class, but rather those who need the extra encouragement and inspiration to feel that anything is possible. About half of the girls are new immigrants from Ethiopia. The others have learning disabilities or difficulties, such as ADD, ADHD, etc. These girls feel the challenges of studying and not always believe in themselves or in their possibilities. We introduce the girls to secular and religious women whose path to their current engineering position has not been always simple and easy. Each of the participating engineer or technician shares a personal story where success grew out of failure. In addition, the women address the issue of balancing a career and family life, in order to dispel the belief that it is not possible to have a career in science and technology and a big family.

The program includes two focused days, the first dedicated to chemistry and optics and the second is about space and scientific measurements. During their visit we want to show the girls the different possibilities and open their eyes to a variety of subjects, not usually introduced to them before. We want to inspire and make them believe that is it possible to aim to study science and technological subjects, despite their current challenges. So far, we have received very positive feedbacks and we hope to expand the program in the future.