



FOSTERING THE BEDOUIN LEADERS OF TOMORROW

BGU's mission to realize the potential of the Negev begins by reaching out to its diverse communities and welcoming a wide range of students through its gates. Over the past decade, the number of Bedouin students enrolled at BGU has been steadily increasing. Over two thirds of them are the first in their families to acquire higher education. Bedouin students face a range of particular challenges to their success in academia, from language barriers to financial constraints, lack of access to technological resources, familial pressures, and culture shock. They also tend to be younger than the general student population and predominantly women (over 75%).

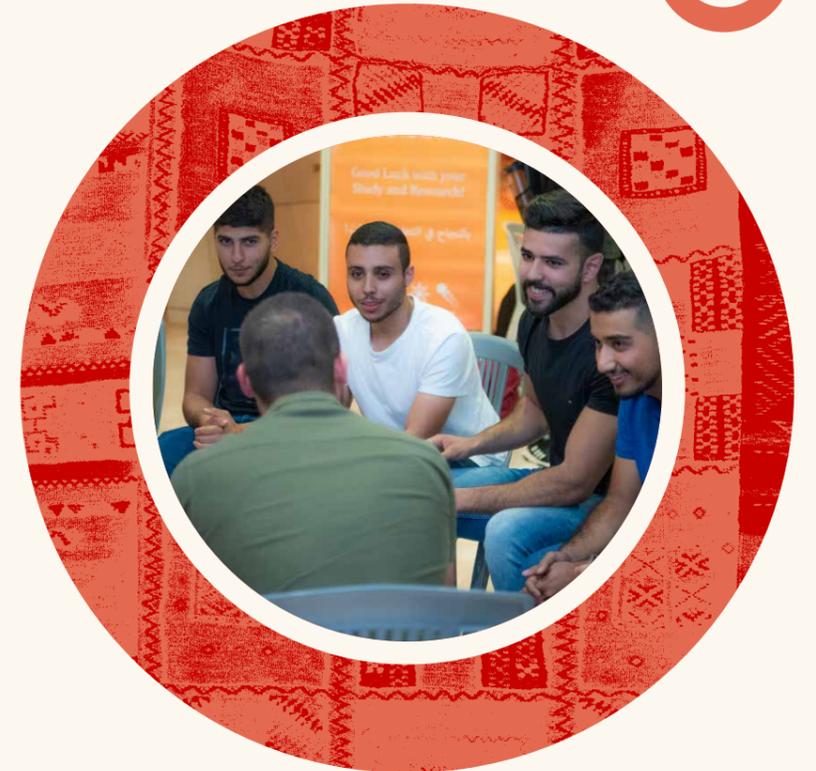
BGU has developed a range of programs and initiatives to help Bedouin students thrive and successfully navigate their academic degrees. Initiatives include financial support, an affirmative admissions process, and dedicated staff at the Dean of Students Office who offer specialized programs, dropout-prevention and career workshops, social events, counseling services, and academic enrichment.

After graduation, Bedouin students become powerful role models in their communities. They become leaders and agents of change, helping to chart a better future for the Negev and the world.



OUTREACH TO THE BEDOUIN COMMUNITY

The Drop in the Desert Program, an initiative of the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research in Sde Boker, exposes high school students from the Bedouin community to science. They work together with scientists and graduate students from the Institute, gaining experience in lab work and field studies in a subject that is vital – water.



“They are inspired to hear that someone from their own background, who has experienced similar difficulties, has been successful in a challenging field like computer science.”

Rim Al-Asam, a doctoral student in Computer Science, with her father, who works in the University's postal unit. Rim meets with Bedouin high school students to encourage them to dare to dream large.

DEAN OF STUDENTS PROGRAMS

“A STEP AHEAD” PROGRAMS

Short programs aimed at first-year Arab and Bedouin students, providing the essential tools for academic success and for dealing with unfamiliar cultural surroundings (time management, technological resources, learning strategies, intensive Hebrew and English workshops, and more), to ensure that their entrance into academia proceeds smoothly.

“GATEWAY TO ACADEMIA” PROGRAM

Students in this flagship program begin with a year of preparatory studies that improve Hebrew language skills, teach the use of academic tools, and more. They are guided by a dedicated coordinator at the Dean of Students Office and are assigned individual mentors from among University faculty members.

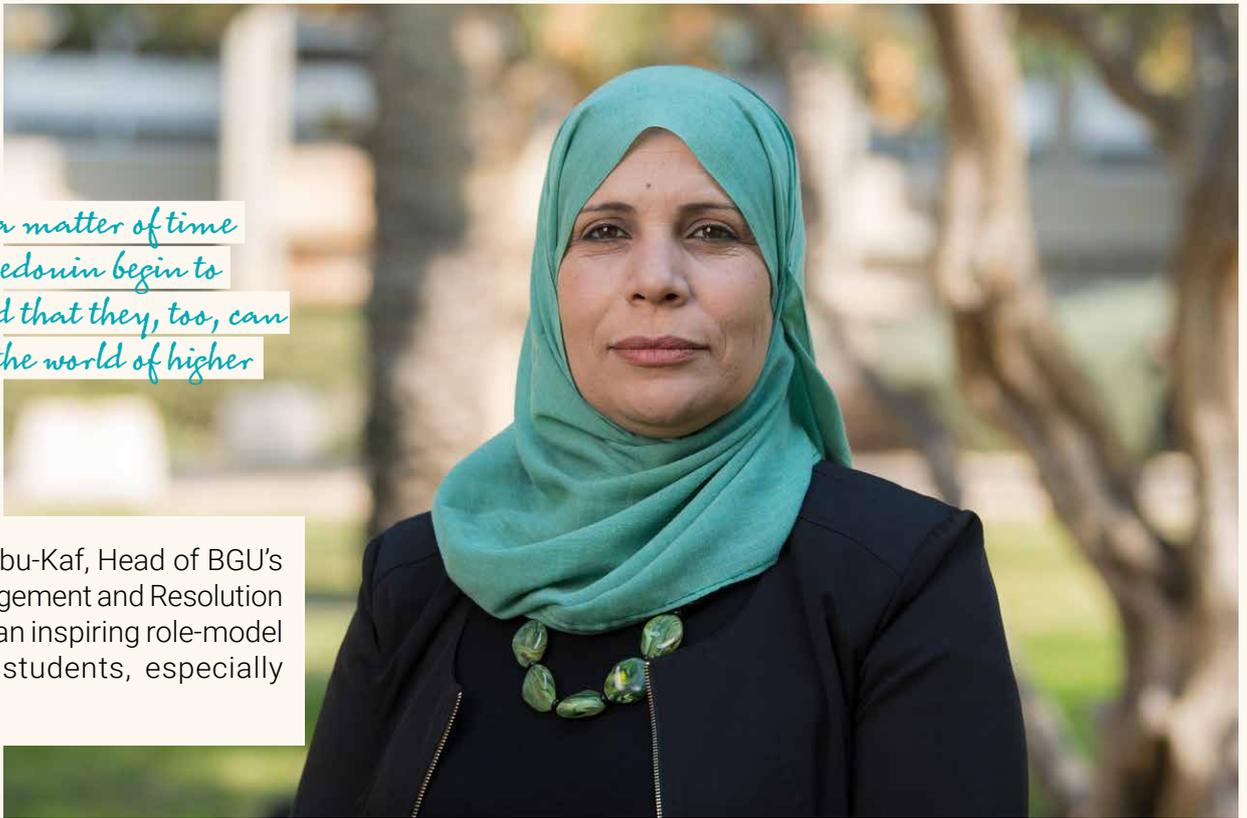
THE ROBERT H. ARNOW CENTER FOR WOMEN BEDOUIN STUDENTS

Recognizing that Bedouin women studying at BGU face specific cultural pressures, a language barrier, and logistical complications, BGU created a special student center serving women Bedouin students. It serves as a home away from home, a place where they can relax and feel safe between classes, with space for study and group work, as well as empowerment workshops, women's health lectures, and social activities.



"It is only a matter of time until the Bedouin begin to understand that they, too, can succeed in the world of higher education"

– Dr. Sarah Abu-Kaf, Head of BGU's Conflict Management and Resolution Program and an inspiring role-model for Bedouin students, especially women.



BGU RESEARCH TRANSFORMS BEDOUIN HEALTH OUTCOMES

BGU's Genetics Institute, operated jointly with Soroka University Medical Center, has been instrumental in reducing infant mortality among Bedouins by 30% over the last decade. The Institute offers Bedouin premarital carrier testing and pre-natal screening for over 70 genetic disorders, many of which were discovered at the Institute. After identifying the genetic disorders, the Institute also develops cures for them.



Graduates of BGU's special Baccalaureate in Nursing program for Bedouins, which includes full scholarships, a preparatory semester, and mentoring.

