

# Ethiopian National Project Annual Activity Report

*Highlights in Brief: September 2007- August 2008*

*Presented by Dr. Nigist Mengesha, Director-General  
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*As tiny scales join to form a strong coat of  
mail, so little donations combine to form a  
large total of good.*

*Talmud: Baba Bathra, 9b*

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# ENP, A World of Difference

*The Ethiopian National Project understands the many unmet needs of the Ethiopian-Israeli community, and the processes required to ensure that these needs are most effectively and comprehensively addressed.*

*This report provides an overview of the many achievements, as well as challenges, of ENP in 2007-8.*

The Ethiopian National Project (ENP) is a unique endeavor that unites organizations assisting the Ethiopian-Israeli community, in true cooperation and partnership with the Ethiopian community in Israel itself. ENP is a partnership between world Jewry - the United Jewish Communities of North America (UJC,) the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI,) the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Israel (JDC-Israel) and Keren Hayesod - representatives of Ethiopian Jewish Community Organizations and the Government of Israel.

The thriving, successful partnership that is ENP operated in 27 cities throughout Israel in 2007-8. ENP's fourth year of programs reached over 7,500 students and their families. Hundreds more parents and leaders also directly benefited from ENP's work in the field.

Members of the Ethiopian-Israeli community expressed a sense of "ownership" of ENP, and a feeling that they can and are making an impact through ENP. Their sense of achievement has increased with program implementation in the field. Further adding to this feeling of impact is the awareness that a cadre of Ethiopian-Israeli professionals have joined other experts in their fields to provide the required services, and that a growing number of Ethiopian-Israeli representatives on local steering committees now join mayors and other senior municipal officials.

Evaluations by Myers-JDC-Brookdale and Branco-Weiss Institutes reveal that ENP's Scholastic Assistance program is likely to make a dramatic affect in just a few years in the rate of quality matriculation achievement, improved tracking placement of students and, ultimately, elite faculty university acceptance. In fact, formal statistical analyses reveal that after only one year of participation, a dramatic difference is already being witnessed. A comprehensive 2008 Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute survey on ENP's Youth Outreach Centers, the second in just four years, reveals high satisfaction and efficacy of the program.

More and more Federations joined ENP's fold in support of its critical work, which, as you will read within, is making a world of difference.

ENP's goal: to ensure full and true integration of the Ethiopian community in Israel. Day by day, step by step, child by child, family by family, city by city, ENP is achieving this goal.

# Challenges: Select Facts and Figures

A report from the Prime Minister's Office that was released in 2008 with the most recent statistics regarding the Ethiopian community in Israel stressed the importance of implementing ENP's programs.

- Approximately 110,000 Ethiopian immigrants are living in Israel today. Of these, 31% were born in Israel.
- Approximately 50% of Ethiopian immigrants are 19 and younger. About 28% are six and younger. 15,000 are between 20-35.
- Approximately 8,800 Ethiopian immigrants live in 27 absorption centers. 25% of Ethiopian immigrant families live in approximately 15 neighborhoods.
- Unemployment for Ethiopian men and women, aged 18-35, is 20.6% and 18.3%, respectively.
- 68% of Ethiopian immigrants live below the poverty line (as compared to 21% of immigrants from the former USSR).

The challenge of extricating the Ethiopian-Israeli community from poverty is one that belongs to all of Israel, as well as to the Jewish community worldwide.



*“A community is too heavy for anyone to carry alone.”*

*Midrash, Deut. Rabbah 1:10*

# Thanks from the Field

Over the past four years, Federations have offered the support necessary to ensure the implementation of ENP's programs. For this, Ethiopian-Israeli youth are extremely grateful, and for this, they express their thanks, as in the letter below, just one of many:

*Firstly, we would like to thank you for your donation to the Ethiopian National Project and your help in ensuring its success. We want you to know that all that you and the staff of ENP does on our behalf helps us to progress and succeed. We really enjoy the Scholastic Assistance program and it is a lot of fun for us. The help we receive in our studies through ENP helps us to advance in our studies, and on a social level, it helps us become a part of Israeli society. The project provides us with lots of fun activities. For example, last week we had a magician who made us laugh and surprised us. We also had a really interesting and entertaining lecture that we all enjoyed a lot. In addition, we also have a volunteer, a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student, that volunteers with ENP in our school and gives us seminars once or twice a week. In this seminar, we learn about group cooperation and it really unites us. We learn so many new and interesting things that we cannot write about everything. We have courses in hip hop and interesting trips. On Passover, we went on a trip in the mountains of Jerusalem and we met students from all over the country that participate in ENP's programs. It was an unforgettable experience to sleep outside in the wilderness, away from our homes and to meet new students. We think we have already expressed how much we enjoy the program and we really hope that it will continue next year, and in the coming years. The fun we have and our studies that advance us are all thanks to you, and to our teachers.*

*Thank you for everything.*

*With love and great admiration,*

*Fenta, Aschaela, Batchen, Muzan, and Tekula*

# ENP 2008 at a Glance

In 2007-8:

- ENP operated in 27 cities, including: Afula, Arad, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Beersheva, Bet Shean, Bet Shemesh, Gedera, Hadera, Haifa, Jerusalem, Kiryat Bialik, Kiryat Gat, Kiryat Malachi, Kiryat Motzkin, Kiryat Yam, Lod, Migdal Haemek, Nazareth Illit, Netanya, Pardes Hanna, Petach Tikva, Ramla, Rehovot, Sderot, Tirat Hacarmel and Yokneam.
- 6,757 students received scholastic assistance in 120 schools
- 712 above-average achievers in 68 schools participated in ENP-Atidim
- 4,260 Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers benefited from the work of 29 educational and social mediators.
- 28 Youth Outreach Centers were operating, reaching over 3,300 youth
- Over 1,100 tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders participated in Preparation for Army programs.
- 278 teenagers and their parents participated in Alcohol and Drug Addiction Prevention programs
- 57 Parents Workshops were held throughout the country
- 325 students received university scholarships. Each recipient made a commitment to give back to the community, and a project coordinator is working with each to explore volunteer opportunities.
- 858 leaders have participated in leadership training programs
- Nine Ethiopian-Israeli social workers were integrated into Domestic Violence Prevention centers, and city-wide violence prevention programs were held



# ENP Scholastic Assistance

In Israel today, the majority of Ethiopian immigrant families live in low-income areas. In such neighborhoods, local schools cannot provide enrichment and sometimes even basic educational support. Many of these families lack the financial and educational options that their Israeli peers in better-off families or cities can afford. Yet such support is critical: 74% of junior high school students are at a below average level in Hebrew, mathematics, English and science. It is no surprise, then, that most Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers never make it to university. They either do not graduate from high school, or their achievements in the critical “bagrut” (matriculation examinations) are sub-par. They do not fulfill the requirements for acceptance to an institution of higher learning. They are in effect handicapped at the very start of their adult lives, and their opportunities for social mobility are severely constrained.

ENP's Scholastic Assistance program promotes the integration of Ethiopian-Israeli students in junior and senior high schools and helps them pass their matriculation exams. It focuses on three main spheres: scholastic, social and personal. In the scholastic domain, the program focuses on improving the students' achievements and thus reducing the dropout rate at the end of ninth grade, increasing the proportion of students assigned to the higher levels and to the academic tracks and increasing the number of high-school graduates whose matriculation certificate satisfies university entrance requirements. In the social and personal realms, the program aims to increase students' motivation to learn, strengthen students' sense of personnel capacity, expand their sense of belonging to their community, and develop their unique identities. The program also provides a lunchtime meal that for some is as critical as the scholastic assistance they are provided.

## In Facts and Figures...

***In 2007-8, 6,757 Ethiopian-Israeli students participated in ENP's Scholastic Assistance program.***

The change taking place in the lives of Ethiopian-Israeli youth as a result of ENP's Scholastic Assistance is astounding. The November 2008 evaluation report from the Branco Weiss Institute, one of the implementers of the Scholastic Assistance program, reveals the progress being made. The Branco-Weiss survey reports:

- 73% of graduating students who participated in the Scholastic Assistance program are eligible for matriculation certificates, an 11% increase since 2005-6, and compared to 41% national Ethiopian average of 12<sup>th</sup> graders eligible for matriculation certificates.
- 37% of graduating students are eligible for a quality matriculation certificate that ensures acceptance into university, a 10% increase since 2005-6, and compared to 19% national Ethiopian average.
- 24% increase in students in matriculation tracks by the end of 9th grade



*“For wisdom shall come to your heart and  
knowledge shall delight your soul.”*

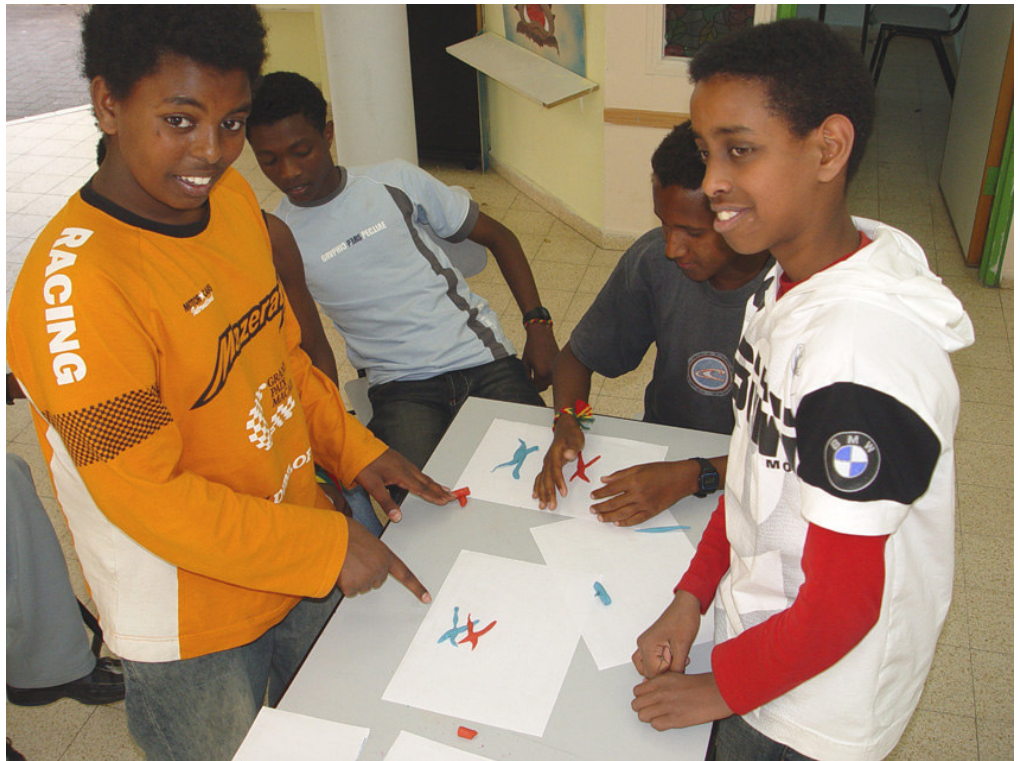
*Proverbs 20:10*

## Sharing the Story...

### ENP Scholastic Assistance Overcomes the Israeli High School Strike

In October, immediately following the High Holidays, Israeli high schools began a strike that did not end until the very end of December. The strike affected 600,000 high-school students. Without action on the part of ENP, the strike would have been especially disastrous for Ethiopian-Israeli students, who are often weaker students.

Throughout the strike, ENP's staff was in constant contact with the principals of the schools, as well as with the students. ENP staff contacted students who were not coming to school during the strike via telephone and encouraged them to attend their Scholastic Assistance



study groups. In addition, ENP took advantage of the lack of regular school hours to expand the social component of the Scholastic Assistance program that tends to the social needs and personal development of students, including self esteem and leadership skills. ENP planned a variety of creative programs and activities that aimed to sustain relationships with the students, as well as increase the attendance rates of the study groups while the strike was going on. Over the course of the strike, ENP staff was in contact with students' parents, made home visits and visited Youth Outreach Centers in the afternoon hours in order to maintain a connection with students. Throughout the duration of the strike, ENP made every effort to ensure that its students would not fall behind in their studies as a result of the strike and attempted to maximize the time to help students develop in the social and personal realms.

# ENP-Atidim for High Achievers

The ENP-Atidim initiative provides comprehensive scholastic intervention and enrichment activities for the top one-third of Ethiopian junior and high school students so they can compete competitively on Israel's matriculation exams and discover their talents and strengths.

## In Facts and Figures...

*In 2007-8, 712 Ethiopian-Israeli high achievers in 64 schools participated in ENP-Atidim.*

The change taking place in the lives of Ethiopian-Israeli youth as a result of ENP-Atidim is astounding. According to the latest statistics from the Branco Weiss Institute, the number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in Science Tracks, Math Tracks, English Tracks, and those taking the Psychometric Exam have increased significantly from 2005 until now.

- The number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in Science Tracks increased from 43% in 2005-6 to 65% in 2006-7
- The number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in higher Math Tracks increased from 0% in 2005-6 to 17% in 2006-7
- The number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in higher English Tracks increased from 25% in 2005-6 to 43% in 2006-7.
- The number of Ethiopian-Israeli students taking the Psychometric Exam increased from 0% in 2005-6 to 25% in 2006-7 to 30% in 2007-8

## Sharing the Story... Lilach

Lilach had a reputation for being quiet and introverted. Her teachers were vaguely aware that she had personal problems at home and attributed her quietness and lack of friends to her family issues. Last year, Lilach joined the ENP-Atidim program and with much work, her ENP teachers have peeled away the layers of a quiet, introverted girl to discover a curious, bright intellectual young woman. As it turns out, Lilach is extremely intelligent; her smarts were hidden under the guise of introversiion. Today, Lilach is a social butterfly who has realized that her smarts are a tool that she can use to express herself. No one would guess that the girl who is excitedly yelling out the answers in the class, even if she is not sure if the answer is right, was once sitting quietly in the corner. Thanks to ENP, Lilach has transformed into a self-confident young women who has dreams and plans for the future.



*“Lead me to a rock that is too high for me.”*  
*Psalms, 61:3*

# ENP School Mediators

ENP's School Mediator program introduces into the schools Ethiopian-Israeli mediators who specialize in the disciplines of education, social work, and cultural mediation. The mediators are placed in schools with large concentrations of Ethiopian-Israeli students, where they encourage and enable greater parental involvement, while also providing the student with an ally and enhancing the child-parent relationship. Through home visits and personal conferences the mediators continuously engage families in their children's studies. In addition, parents are involved in other activities, such as cultural meetings and celebrations. The mediator also serves as a resource for the entire school, explaining misunderstood cultural differences and preventing these distinctions from impacting negatively on students. Mediators can direct the relevant professionals to the specific difficulties facing teenagers, and make sure that successful responses are implemented. With the expertise of these mediators, greater support and understanding is fostered within the existing educational and social service infrastructure.

***In 2007-8, 30 ENP School Mediators changed the lives of 4,260 students in 54 schools in 21 cities.***

## Sharing the Story... Tegest

Tegest's story is a poignant one that encapsulates the effect that the School Mediators are have. Tegest (name has been changed) cut off contact and connection with her father, stopped coming home from school and was attempting to hurt herself. Tegest's mother told an ENP School Mediator about the problems her daughter was having, and even shared the issues with her group at her ENP Parent Workshop. The School Mediator built a specific plan-of-action for Tegest and her parents to help resolve the issues. The relationship between Tegest and her parents slowly improved, and after a while Tegest contacted her father and renewed their relationship. Today, Tegest is doing well and her mother continues to share the progress of her daughter with the other parents in the Parents Workshops she attends.



# ENP Parents Workshops

The road to Israel was very lengthy and fraught with trauma, tragedy and family separation for many Ethiopian families as they moved from the villages to either the Sudan or Adis Ababa and then only later to Israel. Most of these adults then faced the very difficult transition from an agrarian, rural and traditional culture to that of a modern, industrialized society. Today, the majority of adult Ethiopians have a limited knowledge of even basic Hebrew and only a small percentage have sufficient knowledge to support their children's education and social integration. In fact, most adult Ethiopians are illiterate in their own language or have very limited education. Indeed, difficulties can arise in communication with their younger children who often do not share a common language with their parents. These factors, coupled with the fact that the majority of Ethiopian families live under the poverty line and are highly concentrated in poorer localities and neighborhoods with poorer and more limited services result in deep concern about the consequences for the next generation.

ENP's SPACE Parent Workshops program encourages and enables parents to become involved with their children's education by providing parents with the basic skills and information necessary to take responsibility for their children's education. It equips parents with knowledge about the Israeli school system so that they can step in when intervention is required, and increases parental awareness of their rights and obligations within the educational system. The program also reinforces the parents' role as an educator and teacher of their native language, heritage, and Ethiopian culture.

Such support of parents can sometimes be the component that determines the success or failure of an effort directed towards children. ENP's Parent Workshops program encourages and enables parents to become involved with their children's education by providing parents with the basic skills and information necessary to take responsibility for their children's education.

## In Facts and Figures...

### *In 2007-8, 829 parents participated in 57 Parent Workshops.*

ENP strives to maximize parental involvement and encourages parents to play an active role in their child's future. The effect of the Parents Workshops resonates and impacts other ENP programs.

For example, in a partnership between the Scholastic Assistance program and the Parents Workshops in Netanya, there are student advisors in schools with ENP Scholastic Assistance who specialize in involving parents in their children's education. The goal of this specialization is to strengthen the position of the parent in the lives of their children so that the parents can help their children achieve academically, emotionally, socially and personally. To realize this goal, a series of workshops was planned for the parents in order to equip them with the knowledge they need. Every school has two parents groups, each of which has 15 participants. The student advisors attend each of the workshops with the parents, and the students were present at two of the workshops. In advance of the joint parent-child workshops, the student advisors led two preparation workshops for the students. At the joint workshops, the students sat with their parents and worked on developing their familial relationships. They learned in detail about their parents' journey from Ethiopia to Israel, discussed the topic of parental respect and worked on bridging the gaps that exist between parents and children. At the end of the series of workshops, there was a ceremony for the parents where they received certificates for their participation in the program.

ENP realizes that true change will result from change at home. By working in cooperation with the parents, ENP expects to achieve large measures of success.

## Sharing the Stories... Hiwot and Berhanu

Hiwot was a single mother with one son who was 12 years old named Berhanu. All throughout his schooling, Berhanu had been frustrated that his mother was not more supported or interested in his education, but the explanation for that went deeper because Hiwot was illiterate. Her understanding of her son's homework or class load was limited, but Berhanu's frustration grew all the more. Berhanu had been attending ENP's Youth Outreach Center in Tirat Hacarmel for a few months, when he saw advertisements for parents workshops. He told his mom about it, and because she could sense that it would mean a lot to Berhanu if she went, she did. Parents workshops are very helpful tools for Ethiopian-Israeli parents to learn and get great advice about how best to integrate into new Israeli society, and how to help their children all along the way. At the workshop, Hiwot learned of the importance of asking questions about her son's schooling and to ask if he had completed his homework. The very next day when Berhanu came home from school, Hiwot surprised him by being engaged about what he had done that day, and Berhanu was incredibly grateful to the ENP for the encouraging support and advice that they had not only showed him, but now his mother as well.



# ENP IDF Preparation

IDF Preparation trains young Ethiopian-Israelis so that their transition into the army from high school is a positive one for both the youngster and the IDF. It takes into account the cultural barriers that these youth face, and provides them the basic tools necessary for success in their army service and in life. It offers them role models, helps them sculpt their own newfound Israeli identities, and increases their leadership ability.

IDF Preparation teaches participants about the structure and function of the army, provides participants with a familiarity of army options and an awareness of soldier rights. IDF Preparation also assists those participants with police records and other issues that prevent them from being recruited into the army. Training is intended to develop the participants' leadership skills so that, once in the army, they will advance to higher positions.

## In Facts and Figures...

***In 2007-8, 1,100 youth (61 groups) participated in ENP's IDF Preparation program.***

The Ministry of Immigrant Absorption reported in 2007 that currently:

- About 3,500 Ethiopian-Israeli soldiers are serving in the IDF
- The enlistment rate of Ethiopian-Israelis to the IDF is:
  - 90% for boys (72% native Israelis)
  - 69% for girls (58% native Israelis)
- The percent of soldiers who enlist to elite combat units- 40% (at the beginning of their service)

Yet there are many challenges:

- Discharge from the army before the completion of service- 24% of Ethiopian-Israelis are discharged before they complete their army service
- Prison- 16% of Ethiopian-Israeli soldiers were imprisoned at least once over the course of their army service
- Education- 10% have only 10 years of schooling
- Assistance with personal affairs- 36% are eligible for help with personal affairs
- Army Service- increase percentage of commanders and officers who are placed in significant jobs

Through intensive preparation such as that offered by ENP in its IDF preparation program, many of these challenges can be addressed prior to recruitment.

## Sharing the Stories... Sanveto

Sanveto Autivgi is the counselor for the IDF Preparation group in Netanya. He is an Ethiopian-Israeli himself who served in the elite Haruv unit which specializes in undercover military operations. In Sanveto's words: "This program turns the youth into leaders; it teaches them how to work as a team. From navigating, to field training and exercises to leadership, the program equips the youth with the tools they will need in the army. At the conclusion of the program, these youth are transformed."



# ENP Youth Outreach Centers

ENP's Youth Outreach Centers work with 13-18 year old Ethiopian-Israeli youth who are at risk. This important model is designed to be open from late afternoon into the late evening and to provide an accessible, neighborhood Center that includes a variety of youth-determined extra-curricular activities, a computer laboratory and positive role models.

Staff at ENP Youth Outreach Centers report how impressed they are with the continuing development and blossoming maturity of the youth. As a result of their participation at the Center, the youth view themselves as capable of taking responsibility for themselves and their actions and making decisions about their futures. When they have problems at home or at school, the youth come to Center to help find a solution. ENP Youth Outreach Centers are unequivocally a very positive force and influence in the lives of Ethiopian-Israeli youth.

With thanks to a generous donation, the Ethiopian National Project's (ENP) Youth Outreach Centers, spanning across Israel, are broadening Ethiopian-Israeli youngsters' horizons through the gift of reading: ten ENP Youth Outreach Centers in Israel received libraries this year. Reading is an essential tool in life and these libraries fill a critical void in the lives of Ethiopian-Israeli youth, helping to prepare them for their academic future and more. The libraries consist of books that contribute to the youth's knowledge in many different areas and inspire their souls. Teenagers visit the ENP libraries every weekday and are able to take the books home to share with their families. Since acquiring the libraries, one of the Center participants' favorite activities is now reading and learning about their Ethiopian heritage.

## In Facts and Figures...

### *3,036 youth attended ENP's 28 Youth Outreach Centers in 2007-8.*

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute completed a second major study of ENP's Youth Outreach Centers and reported its findings in its November 2008 report. Its summary encapsulates the positive results:

"The youth centers are an important part of the holistic support provided to youth by ENP program designed to advance Ethiopian-Israeli youth in all areas of life. The youth centers began operating in 2005 and by 2008 there were 24 (*sic*) centers operating throughout Israel.

The youth centers provide a response to all Ethiopian-Israeli youth residing in the cities in which they operate. Most of the youth attending the centers (91%) are Ethiopian-Israelis. The average age of the youth attending the centers is 15.31. The percentage of boys attending the center (60%) is higher than that of girls (40%).

The centers offer opportunities for enrichment, recreation and support for Ethiopian-Israeli youth. Most of the youth (73%) do not attend any other after-school framework and most (68%) have never participated in such a framework previously. The youth tend to visit the centers frequently, 3.6 days a week on average, and to spend a long time there: 3.4 hours on average each time. Most (69%) of the youth who visited the centers in 2008 have been attending for over a year, which indicates perseverance over time.

The youth centers provide participants with a normative framework where they can spend the after-school hours and pass their leisure time freely, thus preventing loitering which could lead to risk behaviors. In addition, the centers offer courses and extracurricular activities, workshops for personal development and leadership development, organized social activities and outings, and informal help with homework. Some of the centers offer structured activities with the youth's parents. In addition, the centers seek to identify youth with complex problems requiring professional support, and to refer them to appropriate services.

The youth's appreciation of the centers' activities and impact on their life was high in the past, and has remained high over the years. Satisfaction with the way the centers operate is expressed in the young people's feeling that they have something to do at the centers, i.e., that the activities interest them and that they do things that are important to them. They reported that, thanks to the centers, they have a friendly, comfortable place to go after school.

A large majority of the youth reported that they feel that the counselors understand them. About half reported that the counselors relate to them personally and share with them decisions about activities at the center. In addition, many of the youth reported that they have been helped to view issues differently and to deal with their problems more appropriately, and that the youth center is a place where they can turn to a caring adult for support. This aspect of the youth centers' work has grown stronger over the years that the centers have been in operation. Many of the youths also noted that the centers have helped them to enhance their self-confidence, improve their problem-solving skills, think differently about life and widen their social circle."

**(Brookdale, 2008)**



### Sharing the Stories... Daniel

Daniel was a 16 year old boy living in Kiryat Yam, who was, what most would describe as mischievous and wild to an unhealthy extent. He attended one of the Youth Outreach Centers in his neighborhood, but instead of listening to any of the ENP staff or engaging nicely with other peers, he would start fights, run around constantly, break every rule, and even beat up on his own brother. He had also, due to this behavior, left his boarding school, and entered the work force. He would work until 2 pm, and then come to the center. The ENP staff saw that he was not responding to any soft rules or nice words, but since he enjoyed coming to the center, and the need for it in his neighborhood was so great, they wanted to find a way to help him calm down so that he could keep coming. They decided to give him an ultimatum, if he was willing to meet with the staff regularly and listen to their rules, then he could keep coming. His behavior, after only a few short weeks of intensive work with the ENP staff improved dramatically, and with their encouragement of how important education was, he decided to go back to school. The wild behavior has been eradicated, and though school takes up most of his time because he is so motivated, he still comes to the center every once in a while, and is always welcomed with open arms.

# ENP Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Workshops

Alcohol abuse is prevalent within the Ethiopian-Israeli community, and the challenges many youth face, including the gap between parent and child, difficulties in school and a feeling of isolation spur them on to use alcohol and drugs as a means for escape.

In partnership with a variety of ministries (Welfare, Education, Immigration) and agencies, and together with the highly experienced Efshar organization, ENP has launched a nation-wide series of workshops to prevent alcohol and drug abuse.

ENP's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention program is comprised of 26 workshops: 15 for youth, 7 for parents (which commence after the youths' ninth meeting) and 3 parent-youth workshops. Facilitators include two professionals, one an expert in substance abuse, and the second a facilitator from the Ethiopian-Israeli community. Facilitators receive professional accompaniment and participate in three intense training days.

## ***In 2007-8, over 278 youth-at-risk participated in ENP's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Workshops.***

In Kiryat Gat, a group of 15 girls, aged 15-17, participated in the Alcohol and Drug Prevention Workshops. Several of the female participants also participated last year; they felt that the workshop had such a significant impact in their lives that they asked to continue with the group in the 2007-8 year. The group leaders succeeded in creating a circle of trust within the group and a forum in which the girls felt safe expressing their deepest feelings, concerns and fears. The girls discussed issues such as peer pressure, self-image, hopes and dreams, and learning to recognize their strengths and capabilities. In questionnaires filled out by the girls, 90% said that they would recommend the group to their friends and 80% said that the topics discussed in the meetings were very interesting and relevant to their lives.

Several quotes from the feedback questionnaires:

- ✓ "I learned a lot of new things about myself."
- ✓ "I learned to be a better listener and hear other girls talk about their problems."
- ✓ "I felt really comfortable with all of the girls and could openly talk about any topic."

The group leaders deem a group a tremendous success. They succeeded in creating a forum for the girls where they felt safe and secure talking about topics that they to not express or address elsewhere. One unanimous sentiment expressed by the girls: they were very disappointed that the group was ending and hoped that a new one would open up soon.

# ENP Leadership Development

A community is as strong as its leadership. The Ethiopian community in Israel has great potential to be strong – if provided the appropriate tools. ENP's Leadership Development Program develops and trains Ethiopian-Israeli activists and grassroots leaders, including local steering committee members and activists, organization representatives and national ENP leaders. The program thus prepares community members to become leaders and increase the involvement of the Ethiopian-Israelis in their own absorption, bringing about a change from within. ENP's Municipal Leadership Development Program forms a high-potential nationwide group of immigrant activists who are empowered to advance their community.



*To date, 858 leaders have completed ENP's Leadership Development training.*

# ENP University Scholarships

The number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in universities, colleges and other higher education establishments is growing, yet many have financial hardship. This causes talented students to drop out and not complete their studies. While government assistance is available through the student authority, many students are ineligible due to eligibility limitations placed on age and the number of years of continuous study. Of the students that are eligible to receive tuition fees, many cannot afford living expenses, schoolbooks, and other necessities to enable them to continue studying. The

The ENP University Scholarship program provides scholarships to Ethiopian-Israelis who do not meet the criteria of the Student Authority, providing supplementary assistance to students in particularly challenging fields, such as sciences, engineering and technology, and enhances the number of Ethiopians who successfully complete their degrees.

In March, nearly 300 of the 325 university scholarship recipients attended ENP's scholarship award ceremony in Rehovot. The ceremony was a moving and important experience for all, and a show of the strength and growing success of the Ethiopian-Israeli community.

***325 university students received scholarships in 2007-8.***

## Sharing the Stories... Racheli

The impact of the scholarships on the lives of students is illustrated by a letter received by ENP in May 2008 from "Trendsetter" scholarship recipient Racheli Armias from Hadera who is in her third year of Business Administration studies at Ruppin College:

"As a child, I was infected with polio... About a month ago I attended the ENP scholarships awards ceremony, which was very exciting. I wanted to express my thanks to you. Your help has given me the strength to continue in my studies, despite the health, family and economic difficulties that I grapple with. My challenges are great, yet unlike other Ethiopian-Israelis, I do not qualify for scholarships or subsidies and I independently finance my tuition. When you came into the picture and offered me a helping hand, it gave me the incredible feeling that people care about my personal difficulties and view my successes as their own successes as well."

# ENP Domestic Violence Prevention

Five of 12 spousal murders in Israel in 2006 were of Ethiopian-Israeli woman, in a community that comprises only 1.2% of the population. To deal with the challenge, ENP created the ENP Domestic Violence Prevention Program. ENP's Domestic Violence Prevention comprehensively addresses the disturbing issue of domestic violence by providing social workers, training and utilizing traditional mediators, and creating men's groups whose graduates serve as initiators of change among their peers; city wide round tables and prevention activities are also included in this critical initiative.

Goals of the program include:

- Exposing the Ethiopian-Israeli population to knowledge and information about the phenomenon of domestic violence in a cultural context.
- Equipping the Ethiopian-Israeli population with the tools for working with children, parents and children, as well as the entire family unit.
- Integrating therapy-welfare means with cultural approaches, in cooperation with Ethiopian community leaders such as *Kessim*, Ethiopian spiritual leaders, and *shmagaleh*, Ethiopian elders.
- Building a works system based on partnership between city-wide factors, governmental offices, and the community itself by creating a "round tables."

ENP's Domestic Violence Prevention program created a partnership between the leading bodies committed to grappling with the issue of domestic violence and strengthened the national effort being made to stop the phenomenon. Through this partnership, national, professional and community leaders are strengthened to create awareness of the problem within Israeli society and to work towards finding a solution to the problem and strengthening the Ethiopian-Israeli community.

To date, nine Ethiopian-Israeli social workers have treated 159 individual cases and are leading support groups with a total of 360 participants, the majority of whom are male. ENP is working with 45 *shmegleyowich*, traditional Ethiopian mediators, in seven different cities. 194 couples have approached the *shmegleyowich* who work hand-in-hand with ENP social workers to resolve the couples' issues. Sixty-nine of these couples peacefully resolved their issues.

After much hard work and unyielding effort, ENP is exceptionally pleased to report that the vast majority of the Domestic Violence programs are well-underway and are already affecting change. ENP supervisors are overseeing ENP's activities, ensuring the proper and smooth functioning of ENP's programs. The work being carried out by ENP is critical and, literally, lifesaving.



# ENP Public Relations

## Missions and Visits

ENP hosted nearly 70 missions in the period between September 2007 through August 2008, exposing some 1,260 individuals to ENP's work in Israel.

One exceptional highlight was the Nachshon mission from Chicago that ENP hosted in Neot Kedumim in an experience unlike anything ever done before. Tens of mission participants were shepherds for a day. Following this once in a lifetime activity, they heard first-hand accounts of life in Ethiopia and the transition from life in a village to life in a fast-paced, modern society. ENP supervisors provided accounts of how as young shepherds, they developed leadership qualities



which aided their integration into Israel. Now university graduates, each individual chose to serve as a leader and role model in cities throughout Israel, helping the Ethiopian-Israeli community fully integrate. The mission was a unique and exceptional opportunity for all, one that ENP looks forward to repeating for groups in the future.

## Exposure in Israel

In March, ENP hosted a conference entitled "Empowering the Ethiopian-Israeli Community and Preventing Domestic Violence" in Ramla. The conference was attended by over 100 people, including Hanoach Zamir, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Absorption. "It was a day of showcasing the internal strengths and capabilities of the Ethiopian-Israeli community that they use to successfully integrate into Israeli society," said Dr. Nigist Mengesha, ENP Director General. In addition, ENP was a key participant in Bar Ilan University's recent first international conference on Ethiopian Jewry, attended by experts from around the world.

## Reaching Out to Federations, Face to Face

In 2007-8, ENP began an intensive effort to hold as many face to face meetings as possible so as to communicate the urgency of ENP's financial situation and the critical importance of Federation's continued, if not increased, support. Such visits to Federations are outstanding opportunities not only to inform, but to inspire, and are clearly having an impact on the feeling of connection and understanding of the importance of ENP's work.

ENP made intensive Federation visits to the United States in April, June and September of 2008. ENP reached out to tens of Federations, from the east to the west coasts. During the visits, ENP met with key lay leaders and professionals, Israel and Overseas committees, and provided real time updates, including on their respectively-funded communities. In those cities that are not yet funding ENP, ENP sparked interest in their joining ENP's efforts.

All Federations greeted ENP with great interest and excitement. Many noted their belief that as they move to a more donor-designated system, ENP will be a project that will certainly interest donors and which they will be pleased to provide as a funding opportunity.

## Getting the Word Out

Among ENP's highlights in 2007-8 that are aiding in its efforts to spread the word about ENP's work:

- ENP is making an exceptional effort to get the word out in the most effective manner. ENP has benefited from the provision of materials which were expertly designed to help ENP effectively communicate its impact and importance. This support and assistance include large and small brochures, material for the Campaign Chair and Directors mission, and more.
- Of course, ENP had a significant presence during the UJC General Assembly in Nashville in November 2007. In addition to intensive meetings with Federations, ENP had a booth, hosted a well-attended reception, participated in sessions and more.
- ENP acquired the [www.enp.org.il](http://www.enp.org.il) website address, and is in the process of creating a web site that is certain to be of interest to many.

## Towards a Bright Future

As ENP looks towards the future, it sees within its grasp a reality where the vast majority of Ethiopian-Israeli children can obtain quality matriculation certificates, which will enable them to pursue university education and then obtain gainful employment. Those future breadwinners- today's high school students- will then be able to meet the needs of their families and their children, ensuring their families' educational, social and economic needs are addressed.

Such a future will guarantee full integration of the Ethiopian-Israeli community, and ensure their dream of returning to the Promised Land is truly fulfilled.



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