



Youth Outreach Centers for At-Risk Teens

The ENP Effect: Realizing the full potential of Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers

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United Jewish Communities

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Some of today's problems cannot wait for tomorrow's solutions

Ethiopian-Israelis face singular and remarkable difficulties, starting with the extraordinary adjustment from life in a predominantly agrarian society to the modern, technology-based society that is today's Israel. After that, the problems just mount.

THE REALITY OF ISRAEL'S ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY

Today, the Ethiopian-Israeli community numbers 110,700—34,600 of whom are native born. Most Ethiopians immigrated with little or no understanding of or experience with formal education. They have, on average, bigger families than the general Israeli population, and there is a higher incidence of single-parent households. Despite government assistance, most Ethiopian-Israelis live in low-income and/or peripheral communities with few job opportunities. The 2007 statistics speak volumes

- *57.4% of working-age Ethiopian-Israelis have an elementary school education or less*
- *Employment is at 52% compared to 71% among general Jewish population*
- *52% of Ethiopian-Israeli households (and 70% of the community) are defined as poor compared to 16% of general Jewish population*

These factors have additionally led to increased drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency and to a significant rise in family violence. If circumstances don't change significantly, 12.3% of Ethiopian-Israel youngsters in school today will not graduate from high school—perpetuating the cycle of despair and poverty.

ENP was formed in 2004 to break this cycle by involving the Ethiopian community itself in developing the path to successful integration.

Together, with municipal partners, each city was mapped to determine what was being addressed, and what wasn't. The result: an obvious, urgent need to work with teenagers – quicker-to-learn, Hebrew-speaking children who were the 'eyes and ears' into the community. But the ENP programs for these teens are not just about educational or social intervention—that is the means to the end. **ENP programs are dedicated to preventing the development of a permanent black underclass in Israel** through ensuring that another whole generation is not lost.

ENP has programs in place to help prevent a permanent black underclass in Israel. The challenge now is ensuring that no youngster is left behind.



Critical intervention to get youth off the streets and on the path to becoming engaged, productive citizens

The Ethiopian National Project provides a range of opportunities to help Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers realize their full potential. Its programs were developed to fill in gaps among existing government and NGO services, as well as to ensure more, and deeper community engagement.

YOUTH OUTREACH CENTERS

ENP Youth Outreach Centers are designed to serve Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers who live in the center's surrounding neighborhood. The centers add an important dimension to the school-based efforts. Together, they provide structure and services in all significant areas of the lives of Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers.

ENP Youth Center staff work to identify and prevent risk behaviors through value-rich educational and recreational activities, such as computer labs, sports, arts and crafts, music and games. The centers promote personal and social development, and make referrals to other community services when appropriate.

Defining At-Risk

In a 2007 poll among Youth Center participants, most teens reported coming from low-income families; 90% come from families with four or more children. One in 10 students is failing at least four of his/her classes; and 72% say they are at least somewhat troubled by issues at school, which is often a precursor to at-risk behaviors outside school. Some additional key findings:

- 37% were encouraged by friends to take part in illegal or dangerous activities
- 34% had been drunk at least once
- 32% know someone who has used drugs
- 7% reported they use drugs
- 33% have been involved in fights
- 11% carry a weapon for self-defense
- 37% reported at least 2 types of high-risk behavior

Juvenile delinquency files on Ethiopian-Israelis have increased six-fold in 9 years. 43% are for violent crimes.



Securing the future of this community through investing in its next generation one life at a time.

THE ENP EFFECT

ENP Youth Outreach Centers literally get kids off the streets into a constructive environment with Ethiopian-Israeli university graduates serving as positive role models. Notwithstanding the disturbing statistics on the previous page, last year the existing network of 28 neighborhood-based centers engaged 2,591 teens. These are young people choosing to step forward—trying to break free from the downward spiral of lives out of control—to find respite from often difficult situations at home and in school.

The combination of the role models that encourage them to “follow the straight path” and the plethora of extra-curricular activities have a powerful impact.

A 2007 survey conducted by the Myers-JDC Brookdale Institute speaks to the impact access to this type of center has:

- 81% of the teens said that they are very satisfied with activities at the centers.
- 67% said that they don't participate in any other after-school program.
- 60% said they have never participated in any other after school program.
- And most importantly, 96% of the Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers who visit ENP-supported Youth Centers have stayed in school. That's The ENP Effect.

In 2007/08, 28 Youth Outreach Centers across Israel provide a framework for after-school recreation and enrichment





With your generous support, every Ethiopian-Israeli at-risk teen will have the opportunity to turn their lives around.

TARGET AUDIENCE

In 2007/08, 28 Youth Outreach Centers across Israel attract 2,591 Ethiopian-Israeli teens. Certain communities, due to the size or multiple neighborhoods of Ethiopian-Israelis—such as Rehovot, Hadera or Beer Sheva—require more than a single center to meet the needs of that specific community.

THE GOAL

Part of a constellation of community-based programs, ENP Youth Outreach Centers are designed to get youth off the streets and on the path to becoming engaged, productive citizens. A critical step in catalyzing change in the Ethiopian-Israeli community. A high priority now is to secure the funding to ensure that each of the 28 existing centers can remain open and operate at full capacity. If centers are forced to close or even have to operate with reduced staff and programs due to lack of funding, more kids simply turn back to the streets—getting into trouble today; crowding Israel’s jails in the future.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Local municipalities where the centers are located provide rent-free physical structures as an in-kind donation. ENP is powered by UJC/Jewish Federations of North America, the Government of Israel, Jewish Agency for Israel, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Keren Hayesod, representatives of Ethiopian Jewish community organizations—and the generous support of private philanthropies.

THE COST

The reality today is that unless additional sources of funding are secured, ALL centers will have to begin operating at far less than their capacity. While the size and needs of each vary, the annual cost to operate one center at full capacity is approximately \$132,000. Your support can help secure the optimal impact and outreach of these life-saving centers... and secure the future of this community.

We are asking you to consider partnering to change the future of this community through life-changing intervention for its most precious resource—its next generation.

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The Jewish federation community has time and again shown how we as a people rise to so many occasions. We live generously, we groom future leaders, we invest in our children, we demand justice for people who cannot advocate for themselves, we fund programs and services and emergency responses, and by our example we create a spirit of giving and hope that other communities only pray they can emulate. You are part of this generous, pluralistic, and big-hearted community that does so much good.