



The Ethiopian National Project
 פרויקט הלאומי של עולי אתיופיה

Ethiopian National Project E-News

Dear Friend,

"In each generation a person should see himself as if he personally had come out of Egypt." (Passover Seder)

It's not so easy for most of us to actually re-experience the redemption from slavery over the course of the Passover Seder.

Yet for Ethiopian-Israelis, reliving the exodus from Egypt is much less of a challenge. Their own miraculous exodus from Ethiopia and Aliyah to Israel is still fresh in their minds. In the mid-1980s, 7,000 reached Israel through Operation Moses after having walked for weeks through desert and wilderness to reach Sudan, where they lived in refugee camps until finally being airlifted to Jerusalem. In 1991, 14,000 more came to Israel through Operation Solomon, the magical 36-hour airlift.

Yet the journey isn't over. Global Jewry shares not only the pride of having brought this Jewish community to Israel; but also the responsibility of ensuring its success once they arrive. **There is much work to be done to ensure that the Ethiopian-Israeli community's dream of returning to the Promised Land is truly fulfilled:** 68% of Ethiopian-Israelis currently live below the poverty line. ENP aims to turn around the fortunes of the Ethiopian community in Israel through preventative measures, focusing on education. Yet this requires the active commitment of the partners that created ENP to ensure its continued ability to make a major impact.

By investing in today's youth, together we can secure the future of the next generation of Ethiopian-Israelis. We call on you to join us in this effort.

Wishing you a *Chag Sameach* - Happy Passover,

Dr. Nigist Mengesha

Passover 2010

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Bridging the Gap: ENP's Scholastic Assistance Program

A key indication of success in Israel is whether ninth-grade students transfer to high schools where they will work towards their matriculation, or whether they are "tracked out" to lower-performing schools, which do not offer the matriculation track.

In Israel today, not enough Ethiopian-Israelis are being integrated into matriculation tracks. But ENP is making a big dent in these statistics. A recent study on the ENP Scholastic Assistance Program in Gedera (funded generously by the UJA Federation of New York) shows

that in Gedera alone:

The percentage of junior high school students being accepted into high-performing high schools over the past four years has risen dramatically, from 44% to 82%.

In 2008-2009, only 3% of Ethiopian-Israeli ninth-grade students were "tracked out" to low-performing boarding schools, in contrast to over 50% of ninth-grade students in 2006.

ENP's Scholastic Assistance Program offers supplementary hours of educational support for students in grades seven through twelve. Students receive tutors, personal learning plans, and extracurricular social and cultural activities. Through the program, students are able to improve their academic achievement, stay within the normative educational frameworks, and build their self-confidence and motivation.

[Click here to read the latest evaluation of ENP Scholastic Assistance Programs nationwide.](#)

Rediscovering Strength

Last Passover, at the top of Masada, the historic fortress in the Judean Desert, 800 Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers gathered to watch the sunrise. As the sun rose over the desert, it brought to light all they had worked to achieve. [Click here](#) to read about how these teenagers rediscovered their strength on the top of Masada.



Ethiopian Youth: In Their Own Words

"I used to be shy. But here I've opened up more, I talk more. I feel like they're all my siblings here; a family, a big family."

The critical stage of adolescence - ages 12 through 18 - is a period during which alarmingly high numbers of Ethiopian-Israeli children become "at risk": at risk of dropping out of school, partaking in criminal behavior, using drugs or alcohol, and existing on the fringes of Israeli society.

To address this situation, ENP runs 24 **youth outreach centers** across Israel that provide a safe space for Ethiopian-Israeli youth to create community and build their self-esteem. The centers provide critically-needed programs and staff, while best utilizing resources and knowledge and meeting the most pressing needs of the local population. [Visit our webpage](#) to watch videos of Ethiopian youth as they discuss their experiences at the youth centers and in Israel.

Celebrate Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah... with the Mitzvah of Tzedakah!

Dr. Nigist Mengesha made an unusual stop on her way to a two-week series of Federation visits: to a Charlotte synagogue to attend the ceremony of Adelaide, a young Bat Mitzvah who adopted ENP as her mitzvah project. "It was a wonderful opportunity to attend the celebration of a young woman who shares a passion for ENP. She will certainly be a leader one day, and her dedication to ENP is unmistakable," said Dr. Mengesha.

"Adelaide's clear commitment to Tikkun Olam, her thirst for knowledge and her love of good is not only truly admirable, but trendsetting, for all to follow her lead, grown ups and children alike," said Grace Rodnitzki, ENP's Director of International Relations. [Read Grace's speech to Adelaide's friends and family, made during this special occasion.](#)

ENP welcomes B'nei Mitzvahs who wish to make a difference in Israel through ENP, and will work with the celebrants to sculpt the giving opportunities. Contact ENP for a Mitzvah Project.

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