



Ethiopian National Project: Impact and Opportunity

End Year Update

November 2013

Due to the ongoing financial and conceptual support of over 60 Jewish Federations throughout North America, ENP's Scholastic Assistance Program and Youth Outreach Centers are transforming the lives of thousands of children of the Ethiopian-Israeli community all over Israel. This report is an end-of-the-year summary that describes ENP's successes, its ongoing process of evaluation and program improvement, and its plans for the future.

The Ethiopian National Project – Improving Children's Lives

The Ethiopian National Project for the Ethiopian Community in Israel (ENP) has a clear mission: to provide scholastic and social assistance to Ethiopian-Israeli youth between the ages of 13 and 18 throughout Israel.

ENP is a unique partnership of organizations dedicated to advancing the scholastic and social achievements of Ethiopian-Israeli youth. ENP's programs operate in 27 communities throughout Israel, in the form of two key initiatives:

- **ENP Scholastic Assistance Programs**, delivering supplementary hours of academic assistance to students in small groups. Scholastic Assistance addresses students' social and personal barriers to academic achievement, and is designed and implemented according to the individual needs of each child in the program.

Scholastic Assistance Programs operate in more than 100 schools throughout Israel, working to improve children's grades, increase the percentage of community students who graduate from high school, reduce drop-out rates, and ease the transition from junior high to high school.

- **ENP Youth Outreach Centers**, providing a safe, positive haven for at-risk Ethiopian-Israeli youth while offering a range of enriching, extra-curricular activities for all community children. ENP's Youth Outreach Centers are staffed by teams of professionals and trained volunteers, and are open during after school hours. As is the case with the Scholastic Assistance Programs, they cater to youth from the ages of 13 to 18.

These initiatives are complimented by additional programs that are part of a holistic package designed to meet the needs of the community, including empowerment programs, parent workshops, and educational and social mediator programs.



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The National Project for the Ethiopian Community in Israel Ltd (PBC)
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Following is a summary of ENP's achievements for the 2012-13 scholastic year:

- ENP operated its programs in 27 different communities throughout Israel, from Beit She'an in the north to Beersheva in the south, and everywhere in between.
- 3,998 students were given direct, focused scholastic assistance after school.
- 142 gifted students received special academic enrichment to prepare them for the "Atidim" (future) program that combines academic studies and military service.
- 305 at-risk, lower-achieving teenagers participated in special, remedial scholastic program in vocational technological schools.
- 12 high-achieving medical students were awarded scholarships to continue their studies at Israeli medical schools.
- 19 Youth Outreach Centers opened their doors to more than 1,800 teenagers throughout the country, providing them with a warm and supportive atmosphere and confidence-building seminars and activities, after school and into the evening.

Scholastic Assistance - Boosting Performance at School

ENP Scholastic Assistance is a holistic program that provides supplementary hours of educational support to students in grades 7-12 to strengthen their academic achievements.

As in past years, ENP's Scholastic Assistance Programs were conducted throughout Israel. In 2012-13, the Scholastic Assistance Program was offered in 24 Israeli communities, within more than 100 schools throughout the country. The program served a total of 4,445 students throughout the year. ENP contracted four professional implementing organizations to plan, develop, implement and conduct Scholastic Assistance classes. They are:

- Branco-Weiss
- Edusystems
- Israel Association of Community Centers (IACC,)
- ORT Israel

Students receive intensive support in small groups (maximum of eight students per group), at the end of the regular school day and focus on improving proficiency in math, English, Hebrew and other subjects crucial to success in the matriculation exams. Learning in small groups enables highly effective, personalized study sessions that emphasize building self-esteem and improving study skills.

Alongside the academic component, a range of enriching and empowering extra-curricular activities are offered to help the students overcome social and personal barriers to success.

Goals and Measures of Success

- **Matriculation:** Increase the number of students matriculating and improve the level of achievement in these exams.
- **Academic Achievement:** Improve academic achievement in the years leading up to matriculation.
- **Dropout Rates:** Reduce the numbers dropping out of normative, educational frameworks and the extent of hidden dropouts.
- **Self-confidence:** Strengthen students' motivation to study and self-confidence in their abilities.

Youth Outreach Centers: A Nurturing Second Home

ENP's Youth Outreach Centers provide a supportive second home to Ethiopian-Israeli youngsters, giving them a place to go to after school that allows them respite from the pressures of school and home life. The team of trained counselors and volunteers who staff the Center, many drawn from the Ethiopian-Israeli community itself, function in a manner analogous to the well-known American program "Big Brother Big Sister."





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During regular, after-school hours of operation, a range of staff - including coordinators, counselors, volunteers, soldiers and Israeli National service personnel - are present and on location at the Center. The staff is expected to behave as role models for the youths who come to meet their friends and participate in the Center's activities. Furthermore, the staff is required to ensure that each student has access to an individual counselor. Staff members are chosen for their ability to identify with their charges, to be able to discuss problems and offer friendly advice on a wide range of issues and challenges that face Ethiopian-Israeli youth.

As such, they are expected to have the patience and listening skills necessary to intervene in minor issues, while being able to identify and flag those that require additional intensive intervention by their superiors.

Following are specific criteria for measuring the success of the Youth Outreach Centers:

- The number and variety of activities offered at the Center
- The consistent and regular participation of as many youth as possible in the activities
- Positive, smart choices on the part of 12th graders planning for their future beyond high school
- Evidence of increased responsibility on the part of the Center youth in the operations of the Center itself.

Community Empowerment

While the core efforts of ENP are dedicated to improving the social and scholastic performance of Ethiopian-Israeli children, an important adjunct goal is empowering the community through special programs and seminars for adults. Towards this end, ENP conducts Community Empowerment programming for adults to enable them to develop the leadership skills necessary to represent the community in a variety of decision making forums.

Parental Empowerment

In 2012-2013, ENP conducted a special training seminar in the community of Ramle. Twenty-two parents of children in ENP's programs participated. The goals of the program were:

- Establishment of awareness and understanding among parents to enable them to be activists and community leaders in order to improve their effectiveness and contribution to local school and governing forums.
- Acquisition of the tools and skills necessary for active participation in the steering committees of community and national projects.
- Articulation of community needs so that they can be placed on the agenda of school and municipal authorities.



Professional School Mediators

Over time, Israeli government and school officials have identified the need for specially-trained school mediators to help school staff handle the problems, challenges and accomplishments of children from the Ethiopian-Israeli community. ENP took up the challenge and conducted a special program for developing school mediators.

The program was implemented in three communities: Hadera, Netanya, and Petach Tikvah. Participants met weekly, and were given intensive briefings on Ethiopian-Jewish history, the makeup and functioning of the Israeli school system and municipal government, and the personal dynamics of a typical Ethiopian-Israeli family.

Armed with these new skills, program participants are working with local schools, with the goal of providing a bridge between school staff, the students and their parents.

Independent Program Evaluation

A critical part of ENP's model for offering services to the Ethiopian-Israeli community is the idea of periodic external review of programming to highlight strengths and weaknesses, spot problem areas, and provide benchmark data to be used in doing a better job. Already, the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute began conducted in-depth evaluations from the time of ENP's inception in 2004.

Tracking the Success of the Scholastic Assistance Program

In a study released year that covered ENP's performance for the years 2008-2010, Brookdale made the following observations:

"...study findings show that the program has had a major impact on the eligibility for a matriculation certificate among the Ethiopian-Israeli participants and the gap was almost eliminated. There was also a very significant impact on eligibility for matriculation certificate meeting university admission criteria where the gap was dramatically reduced. This is in addition to the program's contribution to the wellbeing of the students and their scholastic achievements throughout junior high and high school that was found in earlier reports."

Brookdale focused on two factors, indicators that measure the success of children who participated in ENP's program in comparison to children who did not participate in the program. The indicators are:

- number of children eligible for a standard school matriculation certificate
- number of children eligible for an advanced academic matriculation certificate

The percentage eligible for a matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli participants increased from 49% to 62%. In contrast, the non-Ethiopian students did not improve, and thus the gap declined from 20 to 7 percentage points. (See Figure 1a).

The percentage eligible for an academic matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli participants increased from 29% to 44%. In contrast, the non-Ethiopian students did not improve, and thus the gap declined from 31 to 14 percentage points. (See Figure 1b).

Figure 1a: Matriculation

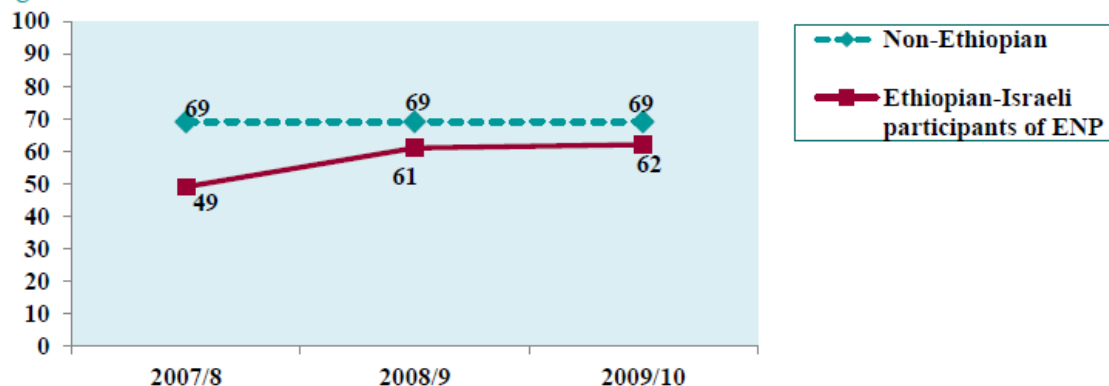
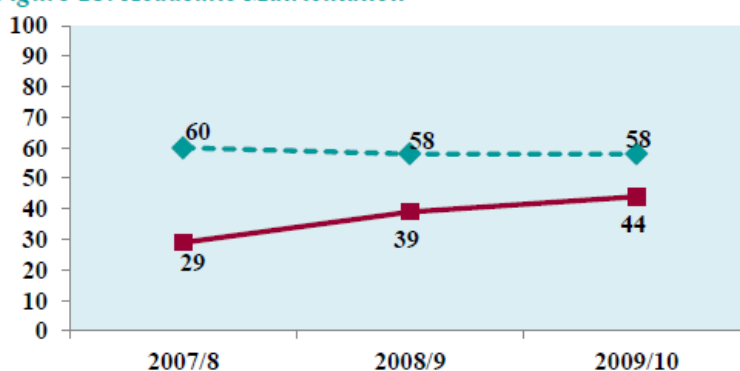


Figure 1b: Academic Matriculation



These factors illustrate clearly the improvements generated by participation in ENP's Scholastic Assistance Program.

ENP Youth Outreach Centers

The Brookdale Institute conducted a comprehensive review of ENP's nationwide Youth Outreach Center operations in 2012. They arrived at the following conclusions:

"... the evaluation study showed that the youth centers play an important part in the general package of services offered by the ENP to Ethiopian Israelis: they meet the goal of providing a high-standard, normative response to the needs of youth to fill their free time. They also provide opportunities for personal growth, a stronger social circle, self-empowerment and enrichment. Moreover, they are a focus of leadership activity; leadership groups formed at all the centers and are involved in center work, affording participants experiences that foster empowerment and responsibility."



As part of their research, Brookdale conducted extensive interviews with students who attend Youth Outreach Centers, of different ages and in different localities. Among Brookdale's findings:

- 65% of the students surveyed noted that the centers contribute to a large or very large extent to their self-confidence and broaden their social circle.
- 56% noted that they had made new friends at the centers.
- 70% said they felt that they could turn to the center with a problem;
- 68% said that they are helped at the center to see or think about life differently.
- Most of the youth are satisfied with the time they spend at the centers (83%).
- They feel that they do things there that interest (78%) and are important to them (73%).
- Most of the youth (82%) felt that the counselors understand them.
- More than half (58%) felt that the counselors relate to them personally to a large or very large extent;
- an additional 22% cited a moderate extent.

Connections with Diaspora Communities

ENP views the development and empowerment of the Ethiopian-Israeli community as an objective that brings benefits to all of Israeli society. In the words of Raviv Zoller, ENP Cochairman in Israel:

"In my role as Chairman of the Ethiopian National Project (ENP), I have become a great believer in the promise of the Ethiopian-Israeli community for affecting positive change on the nature and fabric of all of the State of Israel, its people and economy."

Furthermore, ENP works to keep world Jewry involved in the process. Scores of missions – Jewish Federations, Youth Groups, Birthright Trips, and more – visit ENP Youth Outreach Centers and Scholastic Assistance Program classes throughout Israel.



In addition, ENP offers extensive Volunteer and Internship opportunities to people of all ages and nationalities who want to help in the remarkable process of bringing the Ethiopian-Israeli community into its rightful place as full participants and even leaders in Israeli society.

Last year, more than 30 men and women from places as varied as the US, Australia, England, Holland, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Argentina and more spent hundreds of person-hours at ENP locations performing valuable work that helped ENP achieve its goals. Their tasks included: accompanying children on field trips, teaching English, performing valuable office work at ENP's Jerusalem headquarters, and assisting ENP staff with mission visits.



Perhaps the most critical indicator of the success of ENP's Volunteer and Internship program is the fact that several of our volunteers chose to return to Israel and volunteer with ENP for additional opportunities to work with the community!

Expanding Upon ENP's Successes

ENP continues its efforts to meet the three-year, \$1 million Challenge Grant that was offered to the organization through the generous decision of the David and Inez Myers Foundation of Cleveland. The Myers Foundation is requesting that the partners that support ENP – Jewish communities throughout the world and the Israeli Government – provide equal funding that will enable ENP to continue and expand its vital programs.

ENP's current budget is approximately NIS 22 million per year, with funds derived from the Government of Israel and Jewish Federations through elective, supplemental giving. The Governmental funding, nine million NIS annually, is equally divided among the Ministries of Immigration, Education and Finance. ENP is prepared to expand its activities to include younger children of 10 years old and above.

Accordingly, ENP's proposed budget will be increased by an additional 10 million dollars per year in order to reach all Ethiopian-Israeli children of these ages. ENP's leadership has sculpted a plan to include 12,000 children in ENP's programs in the 2014-15 school year. An additional \$10 million - \$5 million from the Government of Israel and \$5 million from North American Jewry - is required to turn the plan into reality.

ENP thanks all those who play a part in this critically-important endeavor, and looks forward to future, continued success, together.



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