

# 2021 Annual Report

NACOEJ: 39 Years of Critical Education, Aid, and Advocacy for Ethiopian Jews



# Mission Statement

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) is a non-profit organization founded in 1982 with four mandates:

- To help Ethiopian Jews survive in Ethiopia.
- To assist them in reaching Israel.
- To aid in the absorption of Ethiopian Jews into Israeli society.
- To help preserve their unique and ancient Jewish culture.



This report covers the 2020-2021 academic year and the 2020 financial year.

# From the President and the Executive Director



**Peter Halasz**  
President

**W**e are living through remarkable times. On the one hand, our family in Ethiopia is suffering through drought, COVID, famine and civil war; on the other, 3,000 will be brought to Israel pursuant to the Israeli government's recent resolution (11,000

Ethiopian Jews will remain, and will need our help, including food, medicine and education). On the one hand, our community in Israel is facing numerous problems; on the other the community now has a minister in the Israeli government. Our programs in Israel support the education of Ethiopian Israeli youths in a bid for a better future for the community and Israel. We can be proud that NACOEJ has had a leading part in all of the good news while it contends with the bad.

Although some Ethiopian Jews have been killed, kidnapped or drafted recently, we have saved lives in Ethiopia through our food and other programs. But of course the emergency remains in Ethiopia. It is worth noting that the impact on our community is even grimmer than it is for other Ethiopians. Jobless now, many Jews face eviction even from their rented hovels. If forced to evacuate Gondar, their neighbors can shelter with family in other provinces while Jews, whose families are already in Israel, have nowhere to go.

Many organizations recently celebrated the anniversary of Operation Solomon, but NACOEJ isn't just celebrating—we, together with our sister organization Struggle to Save Ethiopian Jewry, are actually doing the work today—not just talking about history. If you want to help Ethiopian Jews, NACOEJ together with SSEJ are the only organizations that do this in Ethiopia, and one of the biggest US groups in Israel.

**I**n Ethiopia we have seen hunger turn to starvation and peace turn to bloody civil war. But with the steadfast partnership of our loyal supporters, we have managed not only to continue to feed hundreds of malnourished Jewish children and pregnant and nursing mothers, but we have taken in many more who need us now.

And we have provided distributions of tons of teff grain, enough to feed every Jewish family in Gondar and Addis for four months.

At first, this cost us \$150,000 per distribution. Now with rampant inflation, it costs over \$180,000. As you read this, war permitting, another distribution may be taking place.

In Israel, where education is our work, the pandemic and the war with Hamas have brought about many school closings. We have met the challenges by giving the children Ipads and teaching their parents to help them use them.

In light of bad reports of Ethiopian children failing in high school, we have opened more Limudiah programs in elementary schools and are expanding them to higher grades to assure entry to good high schools, and preparation to do well in them – a path to higher education and good futures.

We also have in place and in planning new education programs for new immigrants and outstanding adults.

As grain in Ethiopia is costly but life-saving, so education in Israel is costly, but life changing. If we can help this generation of children to grow up in Israel with the skills for success, we can help lift up the whole community of Ethiopian Israelis who now live in poverty in the land of their dreams.

And if we keep working together, even in bad times, NACOEJ can help make their dreams come true.



**Barbara Ribakove**  
Founder and Executive Director



## Update from Ethiopia

The past year has been heartbreaking for the entire world. To date, Covid-19 has tragically taken the lives of nearly 5,000,000 people around the globe. For thousands of Jews still in Ethiopia, the fight against this disease is complicated by their terrible living conditions, malnutrition, and lack of access to doctors, hospitals, even, in many places, clean water.

The lifeline of help and hope that NACOEJ provides for these suffering families continues to be a matter of life and death, especially since their lives are even more endangered now by a bloody civil war.

### **Community Food Distribution & Ongoing Feeding Program**

With the help of our supporters, and our close partnership with our sister organization, SSEJ, 266,200 pounds of life-sustaining teff grain were

distributed to around 2500 Jewish families in Gondar and over 600 families in Addis Ababa for the High Holidays 2020. Several additional food distributions have taken place since then, including before and after Passover (the Ethiopian Jews do not use teff to make matzah).

The ongoing feeding programs which started several years ago in Gondar provide food for hundreds of severely malnourished Jewish children under age 5 and malnourished pregnant and nursing Jewish mothers, both extremely vulnerable populations.

These programs are continuing without pause as the children's brain development, before and after birth, and their vulnerability to death by disease (malaria, measles, etc.) are very much at risk.

Today, prices of food in Ethiopia have risen over 15%, making the situation even more desperate than before. ■

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Ref NO. H.B.I.R.I. 00297/13

Date 7/11/2021

**TO NORTH AMERICA CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY (NACOEJ)**

**Subject: letter of thanks and appreciation for the assistance**

We are the beta-Israel community waiting to reach our holy land- the land of Israel for many years. We would like to thank you for the assistance provided to us recently.

History will not forget you and we will always remember who was by our side in those days.

The Jewish community in Gondar does not have the opportunity to survive this difficult period without the assistance you provide to the community in Gondar and we hope that your help will continue in the future

Thousands of family also received Teff in March and it is very vital and important during this difficult period (corona period) and we see the assistance have given us as saving lives and for that all thank you wholeheartedly involved.

We call this period the most difficult time for us because there is almost no evidence that we can work and gate money to support our family's and see that there are brothers who tell us to be strong .we are with you, it is encouraging and shows the famous sentence "All Israel guarantees each other" takes place. You do it and we are proud to be a part of this people.

Thank you again and continue to be by our side and continue to support us.

With best regards

The beta Israel community leaders

Gondar Ethiopia

CC: Struggle To Save Ethiopian Jewry

Source of hope



  
Zemene Wubie Bekel  
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General Manager

# NACOEJ/Limudiah Intensive Education for Ethiopian-Israeli School Children

The Limudiah hires experienced teachers who provide ten weekly hours of intensive education in reading, math and study skills to children in grades 1-6. It begins in first grade so that children can achieve early academic success and takes place in the children's schools so our teachers can work closely with homeroom teachers and school administrators. Grade level groups have no more than 8 students per teacher, and materials are tailored to individual needs.

During the difficult 2020-2021 year, with schools in Israel closing and opening in an endless cycle, the Limudiah continued to operate, when necessary, via long-distance learning. We made sure that every Ethiopian child in our program had a tablet and internet service at home.



## Teaming Up With NACOEJ-Sponsored College Students

Tapping into our cadre of college students from the NACOEJ college sponsorship program, 84 students were matched with Limudiah families to successfully help them learn how to use the devices. (Interestingly, a side benefit of online learning was that parents were drawn into the lessons and were able to participate more fully in their children's education.)

## Seminar for School Coordinators

In December 2020 we held a seminar for the Limudiah Coordinators. After a presentation by David Mihret, NACOEJ-Israel Director, Ruti Shmueli, an advisor for the advancement of the Ethiopian community in the Elementary School Department of the Ministry of Education, lectured on learning strategies, ways and methods of how to approach text, analyze and understand it, and how to reinforce students' positive feelings regarding their abilities and capacity. Following the lecture various materials on teaching methods were handed out. ■

### 2020-2021 Limudiah Programs: 302 students ■ 8 schools ■ 3 communities

#### Bat Yam

#### 58 students

Ben Gurion School: 16  
Harel School: 22  
Yitzhak Sadeh School: 18

#### Lod

#### 228 students

HaMeiri School: 56  
HaMa'apilim School: 56  
Levi Eshkol School: 38  
Rambam School: 74

#### Rishon Lezion

#### 22 students

Yeshurun School: 22



## NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program

The NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program enables Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers to attend good local high schools. Basic tuition is covered by the Israeli government, but schools charge additional fees which are often beyond the means of Ethiopian families. Here is a beautiful letter:

### Just the Facts

2020-2021 School Year

- **67** sponsors participated in the High School program
- **218** students were sponsored
- **32** schools in xx Israeli cities participated
- **33** of our students graduated
- **Hundreds** of students still need sponsors.

From: Yohana Negusa  
To: My Sponsors

Hi, it's Yohana. I am in the AMIT high school in Rehovot. This year I am taking: the 5-unit English class, the 4-unit math class, and the 5-unit accelerated classes in Bible, Jewish Law, physics, and literature.

In my free time, I love volunteering at the library where I help them with whatever they need. I help kids with their homework, fix problems with the printer, wrap books, replace books, work on the computer, and more. I love interacting with other people at the library.

I hope to be a doctor, where I will also help people. A few days ago, I received my report card for the first half of the year, and I'm very happy because I got high marks. It proves to me that my hard work is surely paying off.

Thank you so much for sponsoring me. I really appreciate it because it means I can feel more relaxed and focus on school...Yohana ■



## NACOEJ/Barney & Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student (AAS) College Sponsorship Program

The AAS program pairs NACOEJ sponsors with Ethiopian-Israeli college students, helping them with rent, food, transportation and books. (The government covers tuition.) This letter from is from a student to his sponsor.



Dear Sponsor... My name is Maoz Inbaram. I am 26 years old. I live in Bat-Yam near Tel-Aviv. My parents made 'aliya' from Ethiopia in the early 80s'...I have amazing siblings - a sister and brother and an amazing grandmother.

I did my military service in Golani. It taught me a lot and made me readier to start my life. Now I study social work at Ashkelon College.

It's meaningful and I will be able to help people around me. I volunteer at 'Ale' organization where I help an amazing family with two little kids.

Thank you for allowing me to get the education I always wanted and do what I love. It means the world to me, and I will be forever grateful. I hope your family and community are doing well, and that you are having a good and healthy year.

Sincerely Yours, Maoz Inbaram ■

### Just the Facts

2020-2021 School Year

- **69** AAS sponsors helped support **218** students, **99** in universities, **117** in colleges, and **2** in nursing schools.
- **22** sponsored students graduated during the first semester. **83** graduated during the second semester this summer.
- **16** sponsored students are working on masters degrees

# New & Noteworthy Projects in Israel

## Training Future Leaders in Education

In partnership with the Religious Education Council through its high school regulator, Mr. Boaz Colombus, NACOEJ pioneered a yearlong leadership program in which 18 outstanding Ethiopian Israelis with MA degrees and at least three years of educational/teaching experience participated. The goal was to help them assume leadership roles in the educational sector and serve as role models for Ethiopian-Israeli children.

Daat College in Tel Aviv conducted the training, which included hosting courses, creating content, and helping secure recognition as a continuing education program. Meetings took place once a month at Daat College. The program included an in-depth visit to Yemin Orde, a boarding school with a large percentage of Ethiopian-Israeli students and innovative educational methodologies for at-risk youth. The group also met in Jerusalem with the head of the state-religious division of the Department of Education and with Rabbi Ralph Almo, an Ethiopian Israeli who heads the AMIT middle school in Netanya.

## Digital Literacy Parent's Workshop – Kiryat Malachi

The city of Kiryat Malachi is a poor community, with a high percentage of Ethiopians. NACOEJ partnered with the city and the National Insurance Institute of Israel to institute a new program to

meet the community's urgent need for educational assistance.

As in the Limudiah Program, NACOEJ funded and distributed tablets to 80 middle school students in Kiryat Malachi so they could keep up with online classes. The mayor of Kiryat Malachi pledged another 40 tablets for families not part of the Ethiopian community, which enabled schools to run integrated programs.

The families received private training on how to use and operate the tablets from students and national service volunteers, followed by ten small-group workshops, in which families were given information and skills that will make it possible for them to use the tablets effectively. NACOEJ designed and presented two of the ten workshops for parents, about digital literacy, and adolescence, respectively.

## Ashkelon Distribution

The week before Passover 2021 NACOEJ received a gift card of NIS 10,000 from the Matanel Foundation meant for Ethiopian families, which, after consultation, NACOEJ decided to distribute in Ashkelon, a southern town with a large percentage of Ethiopians. The Director of the Ashkelon Social Services Department, together with a representative of the Ethiopian community in Ashkelon, provided a list of the 25 families most in need, who each received gift cards in the amount of NIS 400. ■





# Donors

To our wonderful donors, we deeply appreciate your loyalty and dedication to the Ethiopian-Jewish community through good times and bad. We are profoundly grateful to each and every one of you and regret that we do not have space to name everyone. We hope that you and yours remain healthy and strong.

## How Donor Contributions are Spent

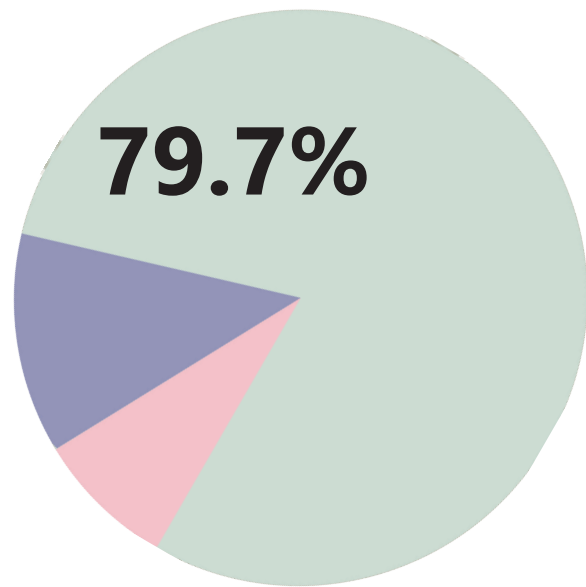
Program:



Fundraising: 12.42%



Management: 7.88%



## Sources of Funding

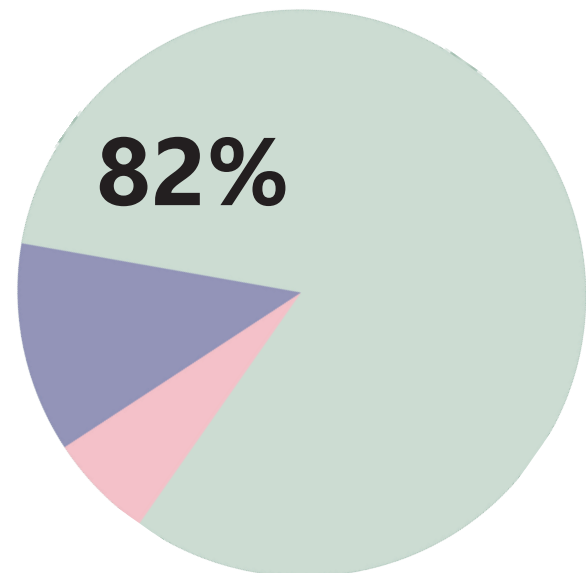
Individuals:



Israel Dept. of Education & Municipalities: 12%



Foundations & Synagogues: 6%



# Statement of Financial Position and Activities

## COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES: YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Without Donor	With Donor	Total
	Restrictions	Restrictions	
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,295,506	\$ 187,346	\$ 1,482,852
Contributions receivable, net	97,625	48,242	145,867
Prepaid expenses	100,391		100,391
Investments	6,688,454		6,688,454
Security deposits	15,553		15,553
Total assets	<u>\$ 8,197,529</u>	<u>\$ 235,588</u>	<u>\$ 8,433,117</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>			
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 137,348		\$ 137,348
Deferred public support	187,346		187,346
Total liabilities	<u>324,694</u>		<u>324,694</u>
Net assets:			
Without donor restrictions	7,872,835		7,872,835
With donor restrictions		235,588	235,588
Total net assets	<u>7,872,835</u>	<u>235,588</u>	<u>8,108,423</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 8,197,529</u>	<u>\$ 235,588</u>	<u>\$ 8,433,117</u>

## COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION: DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Without Donor	With Donor	Total
	Restrictions	Restrictions	
<b>Operating Activities</b>			
Revenues and Other Support:			
Public support	\$ 1,544,180	\$ 677,766	\$ 2,221,946
Sales (net of cost of goods sold of \$75)	550		550
Other income	2,483		2,483
Interest and dividend income	221,961		221,961
Net assets released from restrictions	661,587	(661,587)	
Total revenues and other support	<u>2,430,761</u>	<u>16,179</u>	<u>2,446,940</u>
Expenses:			
Program services:			
Relief in Ethiopia	444,145		444,145
Assistance in Israel	1,175,549		1,175,549
Information and Education - USA	192,928		192,928
Total program services	<u>1,812,622</u>		<u>1,812,622</u>
Supporting services:			
Management and general	179,215		179,215
Fundraising	282,544		282,544
Total supporting services	<u>461,759</u>		<u>461,759</u>
Total expenses	<u>2,274,381</u>		<u>2,274,381</u>
Change in net assets from operations	<u>156,380</u>	<u>16,179</u>	<u>172,559</u>
<b>Nonoperating Activities</b>			
Investment return, net	463,137		463,137
Total nonoperating activities	<u>463,137</u>		<u>463,137</u>
Change in net assets	619,517	16,179	635,696
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>7,253,318</u>	<u>219,409</u>	<u>7,472,727</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 7,872,835</u>	<u>\$ 235,588</u>	<u>\$ 8,108,423</u>

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**NACOEJ: 39 Years of  
Critical Education,  
Aid, and Advocacy for  
Ethiopian Jews**



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