

2022 Annual Report



NACOEJ: 40 Years of Critical Education, Aid,
and Advocacy for Ethiopian Jews



NACOEJ AT 40: Looking Back...



Barbara Ribakove
Founder and Executive Director

As I write this, we are nearing the end of our fortieth year, conceived in high hopes of saving the lives of Ethiopian Jews, of bringing whole families – even whole villages – to the Jerusalem of their two thousand-year dreams, and seeing them all in the Promised Land, healthy, happy, and prospering.

I want to say right away that we have not (yet) made these dreams come true for all Ethiopian Jews on both sides of the Red Sea – but neither have we failed. As this year comes to an end, we can look to Mishnah Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) where we learn that although we may not complete a work of good deeds we have undertaken, we are not allowed to abandon it. Or, as a woman of valor in our time has put it: “The act of striving is in itself the only way to keep faith with life.” *

As I write to you, there are still thousands of Jews in Ethiopia – but there are now at least 155,000 in Israel, more than half of them born there in freedom.

There are still Jewish children in Ethiopia slowly dying of malnutrition and untreated illnesses – but children under age five (the most dangerous years) who come to our feeding programs now live and can hope for a full life in Israel.

Does this mean that every Ethiopian-Jewish child who dreams in her mother’s arms of “Jerusalem” will soon be there? I wish I could say with certainty that this dream – the dream of two thousand years – will be fulfilled, but there is no certainty. There are still wars to be fought, plagues and restrictions to be mastered in Ethiopia, and – let us be honest – even some restrictions to be overcome before being allowed to enter Israel.

But all that is why NACOEJ was born, and has endured, and worked, and had our wonderful successes and our heartbreaking failures but is still keeping faith with life and the Jewish people. We do not give up. We are now forty years old, and with your help and the warm hearts of our thousands of donors, we shall see more and more of our people come home.

So please look with pride at our forty years of service and look with hope at the years yet to come. As long as NACOEJ is needed, and you are with us, we’ll be there.

Barbara Ribakove

*Madeleine K. Albright



President's Message



Peter Halasz
President

Although recent news concerning the agreement between Ethiopian Armed Forces and Tigray Forces gives us reason for hope, our family in Ethiopia continues to face drought, famine, unemployment, inflation and the aftermath of Covid.

Even after 3,000 Ethiopian Jews were allowed to make Aliyah, 13,500 Ethiopian Jews remain in Ethiopia, and will need our help, including food, medicine and education.

NACOEJ together with its sister organization, Struggle to Save Ethiopian Jewry, are the only groups that provide this lifesaving aid in Ethiopia. Meanwhile, our programs in Israel support the education of Ethiopian Israeli youths to provide a better future for the community and Israel.

I will be blunt: this vital work requires money. And few are providing it. We will not be able to do the job without your help now.

We, together with SSEJ, are doing the work today. If you want to help Ethiopian Jews—whether in Ethiopia or in Israel—NACOEJ together with SSEJ are the only organizations that do this in Ethiopia, and NACOEJ is the biggest US group doing so in Israel.

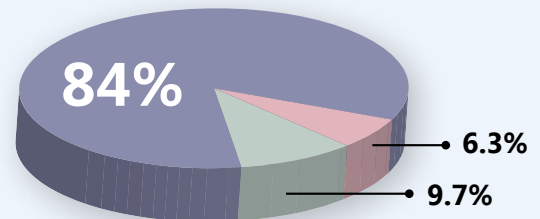
Ethiopian Jews need your help. NACOEJ needs your help, and we need it now. I urge you to work with us, through financial support and through joining us as volunteers in this time of crisis and opportunity. Please contact us and we'll tell you how.

Our Donors

We deeply appreciate the loyalty and dedication of our wonderful donors to the Ethiopian-Jewish community through good times and bad. We are profoundly grateful to each and every one of them.

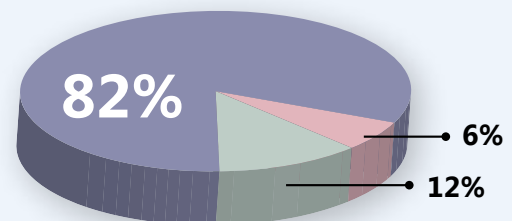
How Donor Contributions were Spent

Program.....	84.0%
Fundraising	9.7%
Admin.....	6.3%



Sources of Funding

Individuals	82%
Israel Dept. of Education & Municipalities.....	12%
Foundations & Synagogues.....	6%



The Year in Ethiopia

“The death rate for children under five in Ethiopia is 5.7%. For those in the NACOEJ Feeding Program, it has been zero.”

Together with SSEJ, our partner organization, we are currently the only providers of assistance to the Ethiopian-Jewish community in Gondar City and Addis Ababa. SSEJ manages much of the work on the ground and NACOEJ provides lifesaving food and educates the American public about the issue.

In the past year, Covid-19, war, and the worst drought in 40 years have created a critical situation where food is scarce and extremely expensive. War in Ukraine is affecting the price of sunflower oil in Africa. Rentals in Addis are getting higher. There is no work. Jews who were largely living off remittances from family members in Israel lost that source of support due to Covid-related unemployment and inflation in Israel.

The drought conditions in Ethiopia have led to a 20% increase in cases of "severe acute malnutrition" in children, according to the UN's children's fund, UNICEF. Feb 18, 2022.

A few years ago, NACOEJ and SSEJ established a program to provide daily meals to clinically malnourished Jewish children under the age of five and to malnourished pregnant and nursing mothers.

The devastating, irreversible consequences to young children suffering from chronic malnutrition are detailed in medical literature.

Due to the severity of the present drought and subsequent famine we are now up to 1250 children and 200 mothers in our program.

NACOEJ also continues its annual provision of food for 1800 Jewish children in summer camp.

In 2021, NACOEJ provided close to a million and a half dollars for distributions of tons of grain to the entire community in Gondar City and Addis Ababa (about 14,000 Jews).

So many people tell us how the Teff distributions saved their lives, how they had nothing to eat, no jobs, and their relatives in Israel had stopped sending money because they were struggling economically.



NACOEJ/Limudiah Intensive Education for Ethiopian-Israeli School Children

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



2021-2022 Limudiah Programs: 282 students ■ 12 schools ■ 6 cities

Beit Shemesh	30 students Uziel
Bat Yam	71 students Ben Gurion School: 14 Harel School: 30 Yitzhak Sadeh School: 27
Kiryat Ekron	23 students Ohel Meir
Jerusalem	20 students Reishit
Lod	118 students HaMeiri School: 56 HaMaapilim -30 Levi Eshkol -15 Noam Hameiri - 28 Noam Neriya - 8 Rambam -37
Rishon Lezion	20 students Yeshurun School



NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program

The NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program enables Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers to take full advantage of educational opportunities in their schools. Basic tuition is covered by the Israeli government, but schools charge additional fees which are often beyond the means of Ethiopian families. While the children cannot by law be left out of the activities, the schools bill the parents for money they do not have.

Further, better quality schools with higher expenses may not accept Ethiopian students, knowing that they cannot afford these extra costs. The NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program provides these crucial funds, allowing more students to study on a full matriculation track. ■

Preparing for High School in Jerusalem and Lod

Jerusalem: Historically, we have concentrated on the lowest grades in the Limudiah Program. However, as Ethiopian high school students continue to do poorly, we decided to experiment with an intensive program to prepare students for the transition to middle school.

Students' grades from the second half of 5th grade and the first half of 6th grade affect their academic track in terms of the type of school that will accept them. High-quality public schools consider student grades and their academic track – whether they will be placed in regular or honors classes and which math and English groups.

We started this program in Jerusalem because there are several outstanding high schools there for which we want to prepare Limudiah students. As always, we start programs small.

Ethiopian students with high academic potential are chosen. We identified and taught twenty 4th–6th grade Ethiopian-Israeli students who fit these criteria in Jerusalem.

Lod: In a few school districts and towns in Israel, elementary school continues through eighth grade (no middle school), after which students go to high school. This is true for the city of Lod, where we have run the Limudiah Program the longest.

This year NACOEJ worked with eight motivated eighth grade students with educational potential in one Lod school to offer them help with core subjects (math, English, and language) in small groups.

The goal was to make it possible for students to choose and integrate into high quality high schools with classes that lead to high quality matriculation exams.

Towards the end of summer vacation the students received reinforcement in math with Dr. Tero-Worke, an Ethiopian teacher who served as a model of success and prepared the students for high school.

Already, four out of eight students from the group were accepted to the Atid Science High School, a prestigious high school. We plan to continue this eighth-grade project and to serve as a source of educational support to last years' students in their new school.

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

Training Future Leaders in Education

The AAS program pairs NACOEJ sponsors with Ethiopian-Israeli college students, helping them with rent, food, transportation, and books. (The government covers tuition for most Ethiopian students.) Close to 90% of the students who have been accepted into the program have succeeded.

Whereas in the past NACOEJ was able to provide sponsors for almost all Ethiopian-Israeli students in academic institutions, we now fall far short of this goal. This is because so many more Ethiopian Israelis (approximately 2,000 a year) are now studying for academic degrees; 193 students have been sponsored in this academic year.

The AAS program strengthens the Ethiopian-Israeli community by helping motivated young Ethiopian Israelis to achieve educational and professional goals commensurate with their abilities. All donors to this program are integral to creating a strong group of Ethiopian professionals who can be both leaders and models within the community.

Recently, NACOEJ, together with Rising Together (an organization working to increase and improve employment opportunities for Ethiopians in Israel), held a conference for students in the NACOEJ/Barney & Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship program.

Over 130 Students Attend Conference



Over 130 students from all over Israel attended at a venue provided by Bar-Ilan University. The evening began with traditional Ethiopian refreshments, followed by introductory remarks by NACOEJ-Israel Director David Mihret and Avi Yalo, NACOEJ-Israel governing council member.

The conference included an informative panel discussion led by the Deputy Director of Rising Together. The panelists – a representative from the Jewish Agency, the CEO of the startup TRADO, and an educational counselor – were all Ethiopian Israelis.

Afterwards there was a terrific stand-up performance by Berko Zero, who has a BA in communications/marketing/advertising from Ariel University. Born in Ethiopia, Berko immigrated to Israel at age eight.

We received heartwarming and positive feedback following the event.

Update on Leadership Program

NACOEJ began a new Leadership Program called Aleka (Amharic for leading) for Ethiopian Israelis with a master's degree and several years of teaching.

The goal is to train them to fill leadership and management roles in Israel's education system, as there is currently a shortage of Ethiopian Israelis in these positions.

The program has been very well received. This year, thirteen members continued, with seven new participants.

David Mihret, our Israel Director, has a central role in leading the project, monitoring content, leading a steering team, and assessing the impact of the program on the participants.

This year the program was centered at Herzog College, an academic institution that has programs in teacher training. ■

Over 130 Students Attend Conference



Statement of Financial Position and Activities

Combined Statement of Financial Position: December 31, 2021

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<u>ASSETS</u>			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 740,212	\$ 181,008	\$ 921,220
Contributions receivable, net	186,719	50,429	237,148
Prepaid expenses	221,841		221,841
Investments	7,142,271		7,142,271
Security deposits	15,553		15,553
Total assets	\$ 8,306,596	\$ 231,437	\$ 8,538,033
<u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u>			
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 145,593		\$ 145,593
Deferred public support	181,008		181,008
Total liabilities	326,601		326,601
Net assets:			
Without donor restrictions	7,979,995		7,979,995
With donor restrictions		231,437	231,437
Total net assets	7,979,995	231,437	8,211,432
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 8,306,596	\$ 231,437	\$ 8,538,033

Combined Statement of Activities: December 31, 2021

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<u>Operating Activities</u>			
Revenues and Other Support:			
Public support	\$ 1,887,809	\$ 714,386	\$ 2,602,195
Sales (net of cost of goods sold of \$125)	2,075		2,075
Other income	938		938
Interest and dividend income	165,220		165,220
Net assets released from restrictions	718,537	(718,537)	
Total revenues and other support	2,774,579	(4,151)	2,770,428
Expenses:			
Program services:			
Relief in Ethiopia	1,079,877		1,079,877
Assistance in Israel	1,203,618		1,203,618
Information and Education - USA	202,071		202,071
Total program services	2,485,566		2,485,566
Supporting services:			
Management and general	186,135		186,135
Fundraising	286,925		286,925
Total supporting services	473,060		473,060
Total expenses	2,958,626		2,958,626
Change in net assets from operations	(184,047)	(4,151)	(188,198)
<u>Nonoperating Activities</u>			
Investment return, net	291,207		291,207
Total nonoperating activities	291,207		291,207
Change in net assets	107,160	(4,151)	103,009
Net assets, beginning of year	7,872,835	235,588	8,108,423
Net assets, end of year	\$ 7,979,995	\$ 231,437	\$ 8,211,432

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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.



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**NACOEJ: 40 Years of
Critical Education,
Aid, and Advocacy for
Ethiopian Jews**



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