ASSAF 2025 Annual Activity Report

Drone Course, ASSAF Youth Club

Dear friends, supporters and partners,

Photography: Tal Shahar

I am proud to share with you this summary of the activities and main achievements of ASSAF during the year 2025 - a moving, complex and challenging year, but also a year of deep commitment, unwavering determination, and human solidarity.

This year was marked by ongoing war, escalation with Iran, and political and social upheaval in Israel. In parallel with the security-related and emotional events that affected Israeli society as a whole, the damage to democracy deepened and the policies regarding refugees and asylum seekers worsened. This reality accompanied our work throughout the year.

ASSAF continued to ensure immediate humanitarian response, individual support and protection of rights for the refugee and asylum seekers community living in Israel without a definitive status, without rights and without a safety net. In 2025, we continued to assist families who were directly affected by the consequences of the war, through individual support, access to information, and aiding them in dealing with complex bureaucratic systems. Following a public and legal battle, the State was forced to present a designated compensation plan for asylum seekers and refugees who reside in Sderot and the Gaza Strip and were affected during the war. During the year, we supported approximately 80 families in submitting applications for compensation, investing significant resources in personal support and in a struggle for recognition of their fundamental entitlement to compensation. As of the end of 2025, the compensation had not yet been transferred, and the legal process is still ongoing.

During the escalation with Iran, ASSAF provided a broad response to the needs of the asylum seekers' and refugees' communities: making security guidelines accessible in various languages, mediating with the authorities, assisting with evacuation, and affording psychosocial support to people who experienced deep re-traumatization. For many in the community, these events caused retraumatization of experience of war, persecution, torture, and human trafficking that they endured before arriving in Israel.

The harsh social reality that the refugee community faces was also revealed in heartbreaking data: a joint study by ASSAF and the Adva Center found that 85% of the refugees and asylum seekers in Israel suffer from food insecurity, most of whom live in severe poverty, a figure that reflects ongoing policies of refusal to provide a social safety net and of persistent systematic exclusion. This data serves ASSAF as a key tool in working with decision-makers, partners and donors, and in the fight for long-term policy change.

The year 2025 was characterized by a significant escalation of legislative and policy attacks against refugees and asylum seekers. We acted, through fieldwork with the community, partnerships with human rights organizations, professional monitoring, and public advocacy action, in both the public and the legal arenas, against legislative initiatives that threaten fundamental rights, including moves to expand deportation options and reduce judicial review. We did so in order to protect both the refugees and the principles of democracy itself. In the field of health, we continued to battle against the reduction of access to health services, as well as attempts to deny developmental treatments to autistic statusless children; the implementation of those measures was postponed, but the struggle continues.

Along with the difficulties, we were witness to deep solidarity and dedication to a shared human destiny. The choice to protect refugees and asylum seekers is not only a moral choice, but is part of the struggle to determine the ethical and democratic character of Israeli society. A state that was built on the principles of refuge and security is committed to preserving human rights as a moral and legal foundation. The decisions made today will affect not only the fate of refugees and asylum seekers, but also the norms and values on which Israeli society as a whole will be based.

The support and joint efforts of our volunteers, donors and partners was a decisive factor that enabled us to continue to stand by the community and act in partnership with it, in direct work, in the legal arena and in the public sphere, out of a commitment to human rights, human dignity and the responsibility of the State.

Tali Ehrenthal,
MSW, ASSAF Executive Director

Strengthening personal and community resilience alongside policy change

ASSAF's theory of change guides the work of the organization's staff and volunteers. The theory is based on a close integration of two complementary levels of activity: direct psychosocial work with the community, and public advocacy action for policy change. These two levels constitute the core of ASSAF's work. Together they address the structural and social barriers that prevent refugees and asylum seekers from integrating into Israeli society, while preserving their dignity and rights.

The main goal is to help asylum seekers cope with the challenging reality of life in Israel, alleviate daily hardships, strengthen personal, family and community resilience, and at the same time work to change discriminatory policies that push the refugee and asylum seeker community to the social margins.

As part of the psychosocial support, our teams work with the members of the community to build personal programs that are tailored to the unique needs of each individual and family, while being culturally and gender-sensitive and taking into account their life circumstances. This support includes a multi-system intervention that combines support talks, individual therapy, support groups, the realization and accessibility of rights, and humanitarian assistance. The work is carried out in collaboration with other organizations and professional entities, so as to ensure a holistic and comprehensive response.

Based on our direct connection with the community and the ongoing mapping of needs and gaps in protection, the ASSAF Public Advocacy Department works in close partnership with the Psychosocial Department to promote advocacy and the realization of rights, and to bring about policy change, along with raising public awareness. Achievements resulting from changes in policy are made available to the community through various means and are conveyed directly to applicants by way of the staff and volunteers.

These are the main issues that we promoted during the past year:

1/ A project to reduce poverty and increase food security among refugees and asylum seekers in Israel

❝ They used to be uncomfortable when asked to come and get food. When I suggested it they said - no thanks, no need. Now, even when I'm on vacation, they ask me when they can come to get some?" (Ukraine Coordinator, ASSAF)

More than two decades of neglect and exclusion have led asylum seekers and refugees in Israel to deep poverty and high vulnerability, which worsened significantly as a result of the war and a sharp increase in the cost of living, which have brought many families and individuals to a humanitarian crisis.

A first-of-its-kind study conducted by the ASSAF team in collaboration with the Adva Center indicates the scope and depth of the crisis: 85% of the asylum seekers and refugees community in Israel suffer from food insecurity, more than half of them are below the poverty line, between 50% and 70% of their income is directed towards housing, and many - adults and children - do not have health insurance. These findings place the refugee community as one of the most vulnerable and transparent populations in Israel and emphasize the urgent need for complementary responses to existing public policies.

To address these challenges, ASSAF operates an integrative humanitarian project, which serves as a temporary solution until institutional welfare measures are secured and refugees' rights are recognized. The project focuses on immediately reducing food insecurity and poverty, stabilizing basic living conditions, and expanding the safety net to include high-risk populations, including families without income, single-parent families (mainly single women), survivors of torture and trafficking, people with disabilities, and families with children with special needs.

The main areas of activity include emergency grants and financial assistance in crisis situations, rental support and eviction prevention, urgent humanitarian assistance, food vouchers, distribution of food packages, baby equipment, and operation of a rescued fruit and vegetable market. In addition, the organization affords supplementary community services, including an open space for women and their children and a youth club, that provide emotional support, food, and strengthening of personal and community resilience.

The project is based on the concept that meeting basic needs is a necessary condition for stability, risk reduction, and integration into long-term therapeutic and rehabilitation processes. These basic services contribute, first, to the reduction of inequality and prevention of deterioration into emergency situations; second, to building a foundation for sustainable change in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and they constitute a central pillar of ASSAF's work to promote human rights and refugee rights in Israel.

Fruit and Vegetable Market - A New ASSAF Initiative

❝ You don't understand how important this is. Last week I went to the supermarket to buy vegetables, but I didn't buy anything. When I left, I cried, because I couldn't buy anything, nothing. I was ashamed. I went to the Hatikva Market and bought a little bit, just onions and cabbage, because I didn't have enough money. Your market, you don't understand how happy I am when I leave there ..." An ASSAF applicant shares her experiences from a visit to the ASSAF market with her social worker.

In June 2025, we launched a new initiative with the main goal of addressing the food insecurity among refugee and asylum-seeking communities, which was revealed in its full severity in a study we conducted with the Adva Institute.

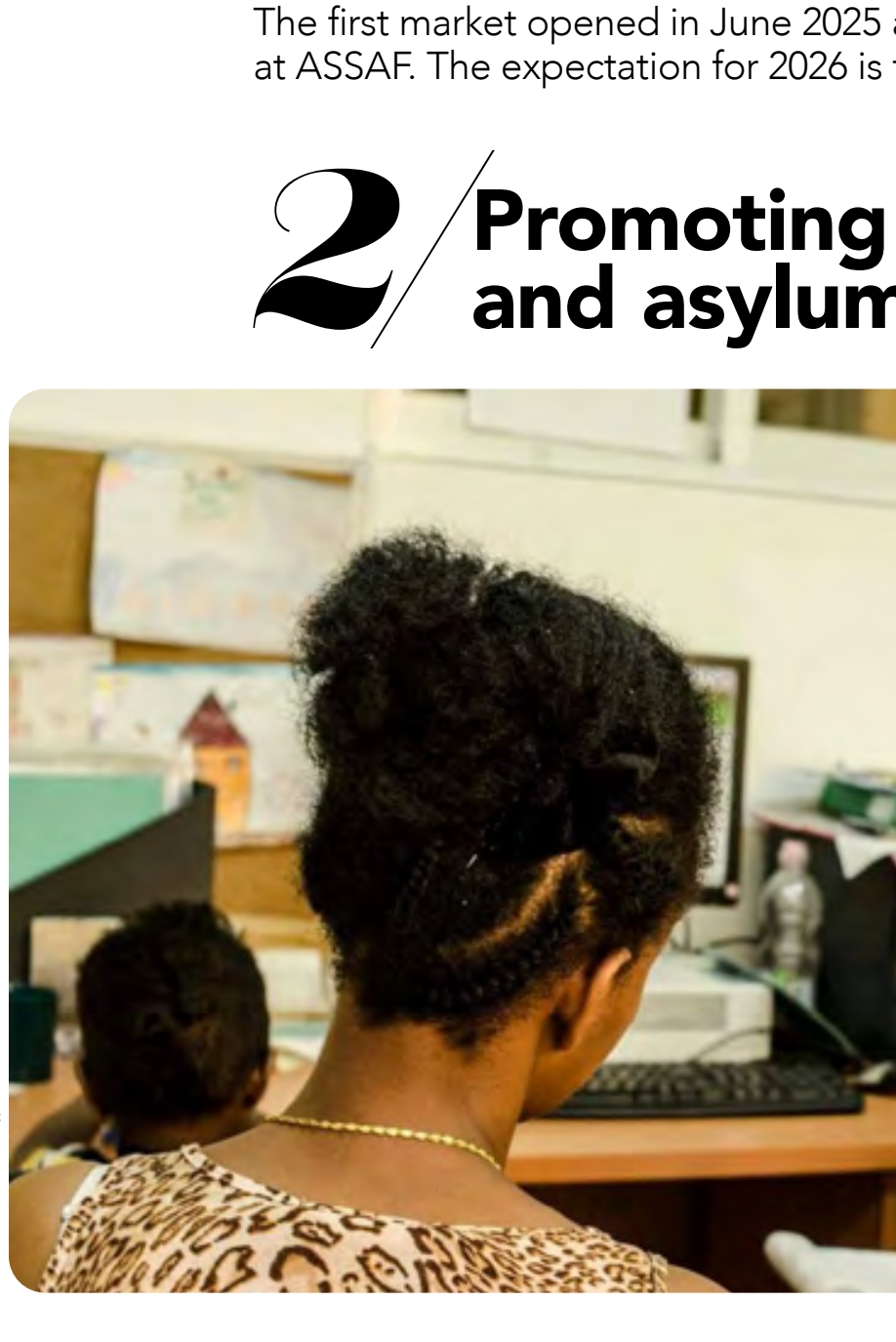
Food insecurity is not only manifested in a lack of food, but also in the lack of access to a diverse and healthy diet. When fruits and vegetables become too expensive, families are forced to give them up, resulting in nutritional deficiencies that can affect children's development and the health of adults. At the same time, the prices of fruits and vegetables continue to rise, while large quantities of fresh, high-quality produce are thrown away as part of the marketing process. This phenomenon precipitates the waste of precious natural resources and exacerbates the climate crisis.

To deal with this reality and create real change, we initiated the ASSAF Fruit and Vegetable Distribution Market - a project that provides access to fresh and healthy food for the community, reduces food waste, and contributes to addressing both food insecurity and the climate crisis.

How does it work? The wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Tzrifin operates at night. Once every two weeks, ASSAF volunteers gather at sunrise, which is when the market closes, and the collection process begins. They fill their vehicles with crates of fruit and vegetables and drive to the ASSAF market location. Here, the sorting team begins the operation: sorting, washing, and cutting the rescued goods, making sure that only the ones most suitable and fit for consumption reach the stands. The market itself, colorful and beautiful, awaits its public, with volunteers who know how to guide and help. All of this is done in an upbeat and pleasant atmosphere where you can also meet and talk. This is not about giving in secret - this is a community event centered on the basic right to a healthy diet, and the autonomous ability of each person to choose which foods they want to eat, so that they will suit their sensitivities and dietary preferences.

The first market opened in June 2025 and by December 2025 we had opened seven such markets at ASSAF. The expectation for 2026 is to expand the market to additional beneficiaries.

2/ Promoting the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking women



Illustrative image

As of 2025, refugee and asylum-seeking women in Israel are at a particularly high level of vulnerability. Although women constitute only about 22% of the African refugee population, they constitute 63% of the applicants for assistance at ASSAF, a discrepancy that indicates the depth of gender-based vulnerability and the urgent need to expand dedicated, sensitive and adapted responses.

Many of the women experienced torture, sexual abuse and human trafficking during their journey to Israel. They live in Israel without legal status, without social protections and without sufficient access to welfare and health services. This reality pushes many women, especially single mothers and sole breadwinners, into deep poverty, food insecurity and social isolation, and increases their and their children's exposure to exploitation and gender-based violence.

The ongoing security and economic crisis has exacerbated the situation of refugee and asylum-seeking women, who have been excluded from assistance mechanisms during times of crisis. Data from our joint research project, conducted with the Adva Center (2025), indicate particularly high rates of poverty and food insecurity among the refugee and asylum-seeking community, with women experiencing poverty at almost double the rate of men. For many of them, life in Israel is conducted outside the "social contract," without recognition, security, or institutional support networks for them and their children. In this reality, we at ASSAF work to promote the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking women through an integrative, gender-sensitive, and trauma-aware approach that combines direct assistance with systemic change. We provide individual support that includes assistance in realizing rights, mediation, and support with welfare, health, housing, and violence protection agencies, alongside humanitarian assistance that enables immediate stabilization and prevents deterioration into risky situations. At the same time, we operate therapeutic and community-based services for women, including individual emotional therapy, resilience groups, support networks, and safe community spaces, which strengthen a sense of belonging and control.

The daily encounter with the community members allows for the collection of knowledge from the field, which has been documented in the report "Refugee Women in Israel" (written by Hadar Aviel, ASSAF's Public Policy Coordinator) which we published, and which constitutes a foundation for data-based work to promote policy change.

Through personal stories, the report shows how the human, social and professional potential of women asylum seekers and refugees is eroded under a reality of poverty, physical and mental strain, and a lack of certainty and outlook. However, it emphasizes that these women are not just victims of policy, they can be a significant factor in strengthening communities, promoting social change and building a more just and equal society. Our efforts to promote the rights of women refugees and asylum seekers rely on a combination of recognition and professional knowledge: we are a non-profit organization with a leadership composed of a majority of women, integrating women asylum seekers in professional teams, and ensuring the planning and implementation of culturally sensitive and impactful solutions. Insights that emerge from our direct work with women are fed into our broad advocacy activity, within the framework of which we work to promote recognition, rights and protection for women refugees and asylum seekers at a systemic level. By connecting immediate responses to existential needs with ongoing action for policy change, we work to reduce gender-based vulnerability, strengthen personal and community resilience, realize rights, and ensure a dignified and secure existence for women refugees and asylum seekers in Israel.

> ❝ As part of the project I meet single women, women who have survived domestic violence, women who are dealing with the loss of a spouse or children, and more, who face an impossible reality with immense strength.
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> One of the complex cases I accompanied this year was that of an asylum seeker whose children's father was paying the rent for the apartment that she lived in with her children, until a dispute broke out between them and he changed the lock on the apartment, leaving her homeless. In addition, she had to deal with a lawsuit from the landlord, who claimed that she had not paid him for several months, and demanded that she compensate him for the expenses of vacating the apartment. The lawsuit was initially conducted in court without the applicant's knowledge, and the judge ruled that she had to pay the landlord several thousand shekel, while she was dealing with significant financial hardship. In addition to the meetings that we held for emotional support, I contacted the Reichman University Legal Clinic for Housing Issues, and together with them we gathered the necessary evidence and filed a request to cancel the court verdict. After some time, we were informed that the application was accepted and the verdict was overturned. The applicant was extremely happy and said that she felt that God was protecting her through her relationship with us. This achievement enabled her to rebuild her life and to free herself from the abusive relationship with the children's father."
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> Tahel Weber, social worker, Coordinator of Support Program for Vulnerable Refugees, ASSAF. She accompanies applicants from the asylum seeker and refugee community for individual treatment and leads resilience groups.

> ❝ The advocacy and support center and the reception hours are a "doorway" to ASSAF. We provide information and guidance to asylum seekers and refugees regarding welfare, health, education, status, dealing with the authorities and intervention in high-risk cases that require immediate treatment. The Center also serves as an address for support, assistance and guidance for community members, who find in the Center's volunteers an "empathic listening ear." Inquiries that are not resolved within the reception hours are forwarded for in-depth treatment (follow-up) by a social worker and a team of volunteers, who continue to pursue solutions by contacting private, public and business entities.
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> As part of the project, this year we accompanied A., who described how the reality of her life had pushed her into a cycle of survival prostitution. Her mental state was difficult: she spoke of despair and helplessness, and began to share suicidal thoughts with the team. During the year, we accompanied A., provided her with emotional and material support and facilitated connections for her with outside sources of aid, such as assistance from an association that helps rehabilitate people in prostitution, and in providing psychiatric treatment to stabilize her condition."
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> Fishale Gebreamlak and social worker Talia Hartman are co-directors of ASSAF's Advocacy and Support Center.

3/ The Fight to Defend Democracy

❝ The past year was one of the most difficult and complex that the struggle for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Israel has known. After two years of ongoing war, amidst a reality of fragmentation, pain, loss, and a continuous state of emergency, public attention became limited and polarized, and the ability to address issues of human rights, equality and social justice became more complex, challenging and difficult than ever. Pointedly under the cover of war and emergency, politicians promoted harsher measures towards the refugee and asylum-seeking community: legislation, policies and statements that seek to deepen exclusion, harm rights and take advantage of the erosion of public attention to expand a reality of discrimination.

ASSAF's Public Advocacy Department operated within this reality. Faced with overload, public fatigue and a hostile political climate, the members of the Department continued to work with dedication, perseverance and deep commitment, with a clear understanding: Despair is not a work plan, our struggle today is more important than ever.

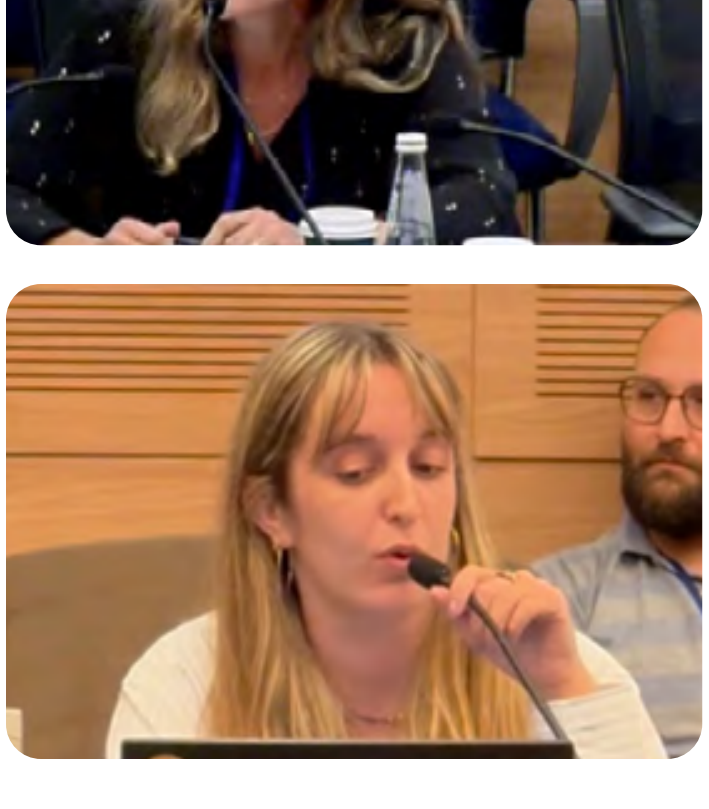
This year we led and participated in major public and legal struggles - for example: in the parliamentary arena - we opposed the law expelling "regime supporters" and fought against the promotion of the Basic Law: Immigration. In the legal arena -with partner organizations we fought against segregation in education in Tel Aviv-Yafo, in favor of providing compensation to the victims of October 7 from the community, and in favor of ensuring health insurance and complementary treatments for statusless children. This year in particular sharpened our understanding that the struggles for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers are directly connected to the broader struggle for the democratic character of Israeli society - a connection that has become a central axis in our work.

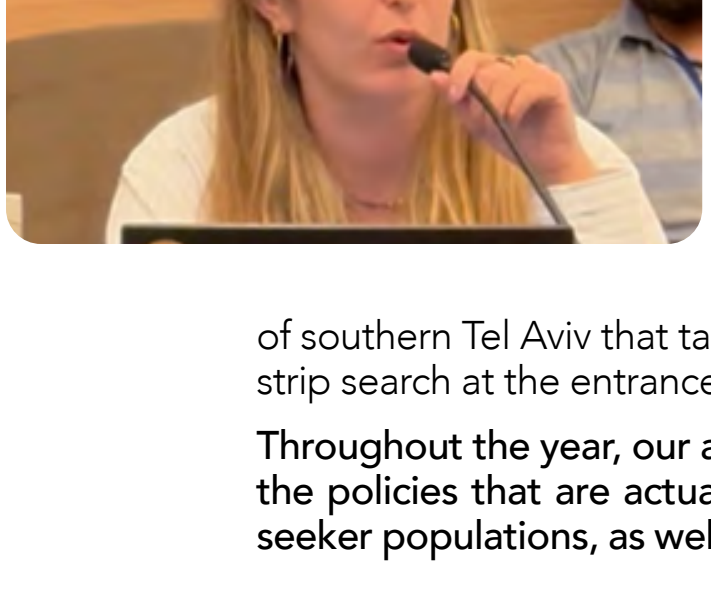
Gilad Palombo, Public Advocacy Director

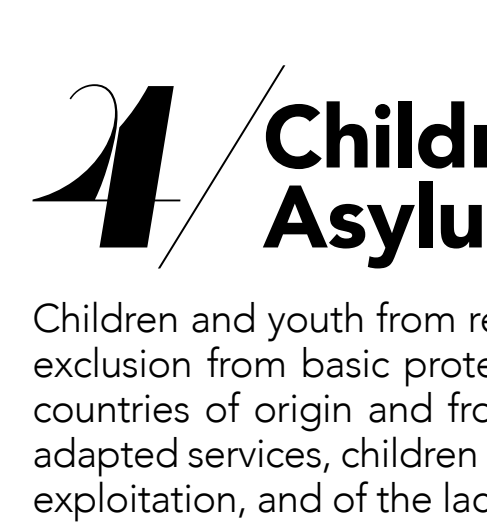
ASSAF Participation in Knesset Committees

The professional presence of ASSAF representatives in the Knesset committees makes sure that the voices of those who are not represented to be heard, as well as the presentation of factual, legal, well-founded and humanitarian information, as part of the attempt to stop harmful legislation. At the same time, this participation allows for the documentation, publication and dissemination of what is happening in the relevant committees to the general public, in order to raise public awareness of what is happening far from their eyes. Despite the hostility that characterizes the current Knesset, there are a number of Members of the Knesset who are attentive to the refugee issue and work with us in partnership.

In 2025, ASSAF representatives participated in 30 discussions in Knesset committees, including the Special Committee on Foreign Workers, the Internal Affairs Committee, the Special Committee on Young Israelis, the Special Committee for the Rights of the Child, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, the Immigration and Absorption Committee, and the Labor and Welfare Committee.







Here are a few examples:

In January, we participated in a discussion in the Special Committee on Foreign Workers, which discussed the issue of "infiltrators" in the city of Eilat. The discussion became a platform for blatant and humiliating incitement against the refugee population, instead of focusing on substantive solutions. Harsh statements by the Knesset Member Eliyahu Revivo, the Chairman of the Special Committee at that time, reflected a broad trend of delegitimization and refusal to take responsibility for the results of years of Government policy of neglect and exclusion. Gilad Palombo, Director of ASSAF's Public Advocacy Department, made it clear, before leaving the meeting in protest, that the underlying problems stem from a lack of fair examination of asylum applications and the avoidance of providing basic rights, and that the only solution lies in a legal and fair determination of the status of refugees.

In February, a discussion in the Special Committee on Young Israelis dealing with social mobility was attended by Attorney Shahar Mandil, a policy promoter who collaborates with the Refugee Forum organizations. Attorney Mandil presented how structural barriers and deliberate policies prevent young refugees from progressing, despite their personal potential and possible contribution to Israeli society.

In May, in the Internal Affairs Committee, Attorney Mandil exposed the disparities between statements and reality in a bill that dealt with the expulsion of "infiltrators." It was emphasized that this was a populist initiative that did not seek to solve a real problem, but rather to deepen incitement, instead of implementing existing law and reviewing asylum applications in an individual and fair manner.

In July, ASSAF executive director Tali Ehrenthal participated in a discussion in the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee that dealt with the Basic Law: Immigration. In her remarks, she warned that this was a move that threatened basic democratic principles, using refugees and immigrants as a means to violate fundamental rights. It was clarified that while the violation of those rights was expected to begin with defenseless populations, it would expand to the whole of society. The discussion was accompanied by attempts to silence and slander, which illustrated the challenging public climate in which ASSAF operates.

In November, ASSAF representatives participated in two major discussions: one in the Special Committee on Young Israelis, where Gilad Palombo presented data regarding the critical importance of continuing to budget safe frameworks for statusless toddlers; and the other in the Labor and Welfare Committee, which dealt with the rights of people with disabilities. The discussion focused on out-of-home housing arrangements for people with disabilities who, according to the law, are supposed to live in the community but, in reality, do not. ASSAF social worker Yudit Ilani presented the severe disparities between the provisions of the law and the reality for asylum seekers with disabilities, and shared some of the terrible difficulties they are forced to face. "Do not remain indifferent to the suffering of others!"

In December, social worker Noa Nivron, ASSAF's Youth Manager, participated in the Special Committee on Foreign Workers discussion that dealt with the children of refugees and asylum seekers. In the discussion, Noa presented the difficulties faced by young people, with an emphasis on the increased police enforcement in the neighborhoods of southern Tel Aviv that targets youth. In that framework, she shared a case in which a policewoman detained children and subjected them to a strip search at the entrance to a club, without reason and contrary to the law.

Throughout the year, our activities in the Knesset focused on protecting human rights and exposing the disparities between declarations and the policies that are actually being implemented. This was done while emphasizing the State's responsibility towards refugee and asylum-seeker populations, as well as a clear understanding that this is not only a moral struggle, but an issue of broad social and democratic interest.

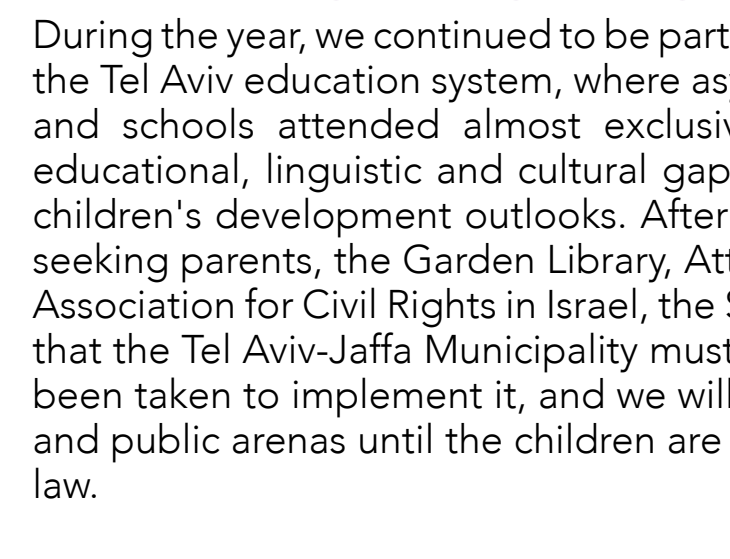
4/ Children and Youth from Asylum-seeking Families

Children and youth from refugee and asylum-seeking families in Israel live in a reality of ongoing instability and uncertainty, deep poverty and exclusion from basic protection mechanisms. Many of them carry with them experiences of trauma, loss and disconnection both from their countries of origin and from the possibility of experiencing safe and stable childhoods and adulthood. In the absence of status, rights and adapted services, children and youth are at increased risk of emotional harm, dropping out of educational frameworks, exposure to violence and exploitation, and of the lack of developmental, personal, occupational horizons, and more.

ASSAF's work with children and youth is designed to provide a response to this reality through our Youth Club, which provides psychosocial support, the creation of safe and stable group spaces, and the strengthening of personal and community resilience. At the same time, ASSAF works to protect the rights of children and youth. The work combines individual, group and community responses, alongside public and systemic advocacy, from a perspective that sees children and youth as individuals with rights, voice and ability, and not just a population at risk.

Early Childhood

The right to a safe, equitable and inclusive education is a cornerstone of children's development and their ability to integrate into society. For refugee and asylum-seeking children in Israel, this right is systematically violated from an early age and throughout the entire course of their lives, creating deep disparities and ongoing exclusion. ASSAF works constantly to prevent these violations and to promote the rights of statusless children and youth, through legal, public and parliamentary means.

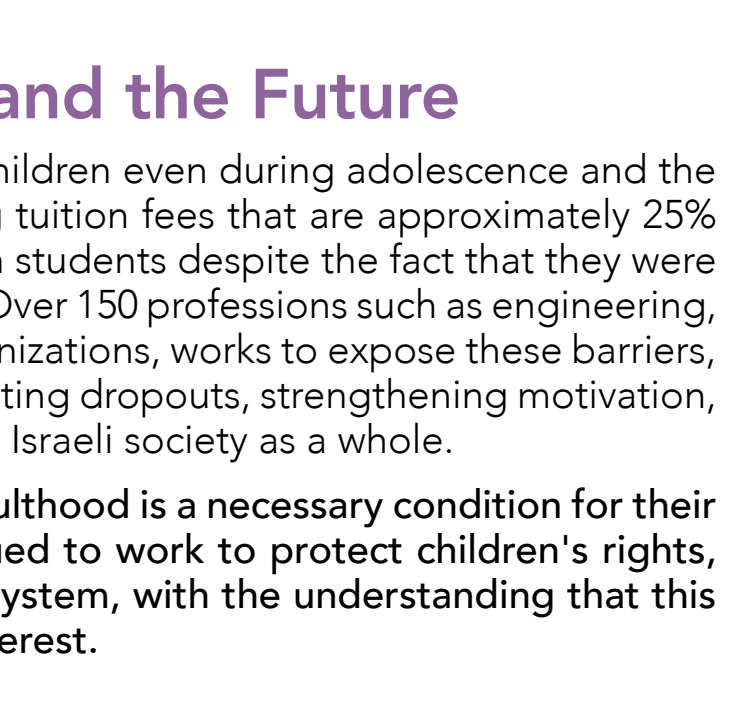


Illustrative image

In 2025, we continued to act against the Ministry of Health's decision to stop subsidizing treatments that foster statusless autistic children, while continuing to subsidize children with status. This is a serious blow to children from the most disadvantaged populations in Israel, who need continuous and specialized treatment for their proper development. ASSAF is a partner in an ongoing legal process in this concern, which at this stage enables the continuation of treatment, but without a commitment to financing it in the future. Together with partner organizations, we are working to ensure that the children's status will not serve as a pretext for trampling on rights and further discrimination. At the same time, we worked in partnership with other organizations opposite Government and Knesset officials concerning a threat to the continued operation of UNITAF frameworks, which provide a supervised and safe response to toddlers without status, due to the failure to transfer budgets. Closing these frameworks could push young children into piratical and life-threatening frameworks. After a public and parliamentary struggle, funding for the frameworks was guaranteed only for 2025. We continue to work together with our partners to promote a new Government decision that will ensure continuity of treatment and stability for these vital and life-saving frameworks.

School Age: Fighting Segregation in Tel Aviv-Jaffa

During the year, we continued to be part of the fight against the segregation that currently exists in the Tel Aviv education system, where asylum-seeking children are sent to separate kindergartens and schools attended almost exclusively by statusless children. This segregation deepens educational, linguistic and cultural gaps, harms social integration and significantly narrows the children's development outlooks. After years of legal struggle led by the leadership of asylum-seeking parents, the Garden Library, Attorney Haran Reichman and Attorney Tal Hassin from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Supreme Court ruled that this is an unacceptable practice that the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality must act to correct. Despite the ruling, no real steps have yet been taken to implement it, and we will continue to work together with our partners in the legal and public arenas until the children are integrated into equal educational frameworks as per the law.



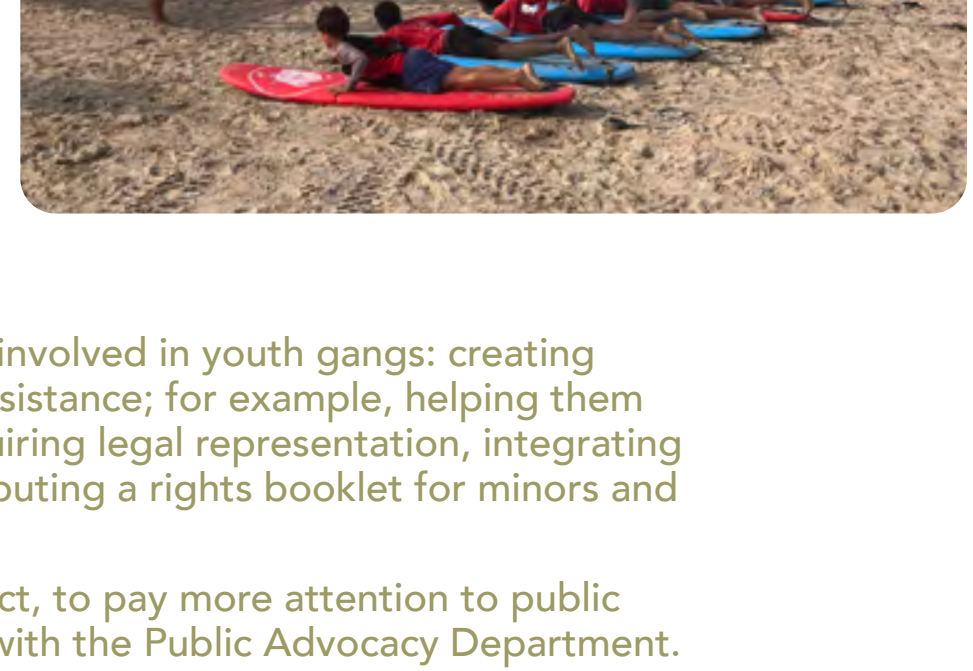
Participants in the petition and the Refugee Community Forum led by the Garden Library

Adolescents and Young Adults: Barriers to Education and the Future

The vulnerabilities and disparities in the education system continue to intensify and accompany children even during adolescence and the transition to adulthood. Young asylum seekers encounter significant structured barriers, including tuition fees that are approximately 25% higher than those of Israeli citizens in institutions of higher education, their classification as foreign students despite the fact that they were born in Israel, and an almost complete blockage of professions that require government licensing. Over 150 professions such as engineering, teaching, registered nurses - and other required professions. ASSAF, in partnership with other organizations, works to expose these barriers, promote policy changes, and provide individual assistance to young people, with the aim of preventing dropouts, strengthening motivation, and enabling an employment and social outlook for these young adults that will also contribute to Israeli society as a whole.

The full integration of asylum-seeker children in the education system from early childhood to adulthood is a necessary condition for their personal development and for strengthening social cohesion in Israel. During 2025, we continued to work to protect children's rights, prevent discrimination and exclusion, and promote an equitable, safe, and inclusive education system, with the understanding that this is not only a fundamental right of the children themselves, but also an issue of primary social interest.

The ASSAF Youth Club



❝ In 2025 our Youth Club continued to be a significant, safe and open space for young youth from the asylum seeker and refugee community in Israel, aged 12-19. Throughout the year, there was ongoing activity that included evening activities twice a week with a hot meal, along with lectures, various workshops, summer activities and educational and social content. For example, a lecture by Tachlowini Melake Gabriyesos, a young man from the community, an athlete and Olympic sprinter who came to tell the youth the story of his journey to Israel, his connection to sports and his competition in two Olympics; workshops on safe and healthy sexuality, and self-defense for girls; various summer activities such as go-karting, paintball, and more. In the shadow of the the Iran-Israel military conflict that began about two weeks before the end of the school year, the Club team was required to deal with significant challenges: in addition to caring for the safety of the boys and girls and maintaining telephone contact with them, we helped them and their families, whether by assisting with relocation from the affected area or by providing humanitarian aid. We also held accessible Zoom meetings for the various refugee and asylum-seeker communities in Israel regarding ways for them to protect themselves physically and mentally during emergency situations. In parallel with all this, we were able to prepare the summer activity plan and set events and attractions that enhanced the summer vacation and were significant for the youth, especially during this period.

Another significant challenge was working with youth involved in youth gangs: creating initial contact, building trust, and providing tailored assistance; for example, helping them connect with the public defender's office in cases requiring legal representation, integrating law students into the Youth Club, preparing and distributing a rights booklet for minors and young people, and more.

During this year, we were required, as an ASSAF project, to pay more attention to public activities that concern youth, while working together with the Public Advocacy Department. There were also quite a few successes, including participating in a Knesset debate, an interview with a newspaper 'Haaretz', publishing a position paper and representing the youth and our work with them in various and varied arenas. During the year, there were also changes in the Youth Club team, with the addition of the new Club counselor, Roy Sarig, and significant changes among the team of veteran volunteers.

Despite the challenges, we conclude a year rich in successes and progress on the personal level of the youth, such as a graduate of the Youth Club who began academic studies at Ben Gurion University with a combined degree in politics and government and African studies; as well as various successes in group and cross-disciplinary work, within and outside the Club."

Social worker Noa Nivron MSW, Director of the Youth Department and the ASSAF Youth Club

Photos from the Youth Club activities in the summer of 2025

5/ Support for refugees from Ukraine

❝ This is the third time that war has caught up with refugees from Ukraine. But this time, Iranian missiles and drones recreated, almost exactly, the same reality that civilians in Ukraine have been living in for three and a half years: nights in shelters, entire buildings and streets destroyed, and the constant tension in anticipation of the next missile strike. Unfortunately, this time, an entire family of Ukrainian refugees perished under the rubble. Like many Israelis, the Ukrainian community in Israel also feels helpless and defenseless again."

(ASSAF Ukrainian Refugee Coordinator, June 25)

As of 2025, approximately 23,000 asylum seekers from Ukraine are residing in Israel, most of them women and their children. They are residing here legally and are protected by group protection from deportation due to the danger to their lives that they would face in their country of origin.

The year 2025 marks the fourth year that refugees from Ukraine have been in Israel. In the past two years, they have found themselves once again in a war. Dealing with another war in their place of refuge has intensified their already vulnerable situation. Groups that are already weakened, more vulnerable in emergencies and crises, and who are not included in State aid mechanisms, are in real danger of falling into poverty, severe food insecurity, street living, and even survival prostitution and human trafficking. This reality is translated into numbers: **A study on poverty and food insecurity among refugees in Israel conducted by the ASSAF and the Adva Institute shows that 79% of them live in poverty. In addition, only about 30% of them live in food security, about 50% in moderate food insecurity, and approximately 20% in severe food insecurity. It also shows that about 65% of respondents forgo medical treatment due to their financial situation, and only about 56% of women have health insurance.**

ASSAF has worked **to make reliable and up-to-date information accessible and to provide humanitarian assistance and initial support to refugees,** while creating a safe and linguistically accessible space for them. Making information and rights accessible allows the refugees to understand the existing systems and exercise their rights. At the same time, the organization provides **individual support that includes support conversations,** working with family and community, advocacy, and contacting government and social institutions. Alongside direct assistance, ASSAF also works on the public level to **promote policy changes and refugee rights**, through participation in Knesset debates, working with State authorities, writing and distributing reports, and producing media and informational activities for the general public.

Below are a few examples:

- In 2025, ASSAF provided individual support and care to 145 refugee families from Ukraine.
- Providing humanitarian assistance such as food packages, fruits and vegetables, winter equipment, baby equipment and financial assistance in emergencies.
- Translation into Ukrainian and distribution of alerts and updates from the Home Front Command, the IDF and other official sources.
- Providing emotional support and counseling to Ukrainian refugees in Bat Yam after an Iranian missile hit their neighborhood.
- Providing ongoing advice regarding visas, group protection and medical insurance.
- Connecting refugees to supportive community events by distributing tickets to holiday events.
- Continuous contact with the Ukrainian Embassy and partner organizations such as Physicians for Human Rights, the National Health Fund, banks and more.

ASSAF continues its efforts opposite State authorities to renew and expand the assistance provided to Ukrainian refugees to afford them protection, dignity, and a safe life.

> ❝ V. (52) arrived in Israel in August 2022 with her elderly parents to join her daughter and granddaughter in Bat Yam. Since then, she has been single-handedly responsible for caring for a family dealing with complex medical and bureaucratic difficulties: a daughter without legal status, a grandson who is confined to a wheelchair and needs frequent medical treatment, a father who suffered a stroke and has been hospitalized for an extended period, and a mother with mobility and vision limitations. The burden of care prevents her from integrating into work in Israel, and her income from remote work is insufficient. The expiration of her driver's license has exacerbated her mobility difficulties, and despite repeated attempts to renew her license with the help of ASSAF, those efforts have not yet been successful. We accompanied V. and provided her with humanitarian assistance, including food, equipment, and modest financial support, which allowed the family to meet acute-immediate needs and maintain a continuous regime of medical treatments. This assistance is expected to end in the coming months, while the family's needs remain significant."
>
> Hanna Katz, ASSAF's Ukraine Refugees Coordinator

6/ Spaces of healing, belonging and resilience: individual support and group work

❝ 2025 was a particularly challenging year. The war and its consequences continued to have a profound impact on the lives of all of us. For refugees and asylum seekers, this means a radicalization of long-standing policy characterized by a lack of recognition and ongoing violation of basic rights. Economic and emotional distress, nutritional insecurity and lack of access to welfare mechanisms have deepened alongside a rising cost of living and reduced employment opportunities. At the same time, developments in the international arena, including a dramatic reduction in the assistance and protection systems for refugees, have also reduced the resources available in Israel and deepened helplessness. In addition, the Government's policies in Israel have continued to reduce the democratic arena, impair the rights of the most vulnerable and deepen uncertainty, while lessening the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to live in security and dignity.

Faced with this unimaginable political and social reality "ASSAF's Psychosocial Department operated with a deep commitment to protecting human and refugee rights. The dedicated team provided financial support where possible, individual and group psychological support and guidance, a listening ear in crisis situations, and persistently asserted the realization of rights opposite the authorities. Beyond the immediate response, the team's work was based on a value-based approach that sees human rights as universal rights, and on a daily insistence to fight for the right to security, dignity, and a humanitarian existence for every man and woman living in Israel."

Zameret Herschco, Director of the Psychosocial Department

Open Space

In 2025, the Open Space initiative continued to take shape and stabilize. During the year, a total of 47 participants participated. The open space was opened in December 2023 as a community initiative, led by a social worker and community mediator, as a direct response to the needs that arose from the community against the backdrop of ongoing distress that was exacerbated by the war. The space is an informal, safe and supportive place, allowing community members to come, stay, share and support each other and the team, while strengthening personal and community resilience and alleviating loneliness.

Once a week on Wednesday afternoons, a group of women and children from the refugee community gathers to spend time pleasantly together. Regular activities such as Bonah ceremonies (making coffee), knitting and henna body painting are held in the open space, and meaningful conversations arise about the consequences of the war, the return of the abductees and memories of torture in Sinai; conversations about the meaning of religion, the connection or lack of connection to religious traditions, difficulties in parenting or the difficulties surrounding raising children themselves as single parents. Other women shared how they were struggling with financial dependence on their partners and coping with various health problems. Mutual support and encouragement from each other was evident.

Aster Nuguse leads the open space partnership and acts as a community mediator

Social worker Talia Hartman: ❝ A woman who came to the space after several years of not being in contact with ASSAF told us that recently, around the time of the return of the abductees, memories of Sinai began to surface in her and she stopped working. She said that she could not sleep at night, described constant anxiety and stress, tried not to leave the house unless necessary, and was mainly busy taking care of her 11-year-old son, and worried about his future. In the open space, she connected with another woman and shared what she was going through and was able to receive support from her. At the end of the evening, she told us that the space allowed her to take a break from her thoughts, and how much she had missed connecting with others recently. In addition, we suggested that she contact us and come for individual counseling in reception hours, while continuing to participate in the open space. Another woman who regularly comes was unable to come several times because she had undergone surgery. This is a woman who usually does not talk much, but her presence is very noticeable in the space. The week before the surgery, she shared with several women concerning her illness and the surgery she was supposed to undergo. In the weeks that she was not there, the women were very concerned about her. Two of them went to visit her and made sure to call her. The woman told us how much their concern gave her strength when she was in the hospital."

This year, a permanent group of women was formed, and new applicants joined, including women who reconnected with ASSAF after a long break. The space allows for the creation of connections, mutual support and a sense of belonging, and in some cases even serves as a gateway to renewing individual counseling. The stories of concern and mutual guidance between the women illustrate the development of a supportive community network, which gives strength and meaning to its members even outside the space itself.

Living with Cancer - Women's Resilience Group

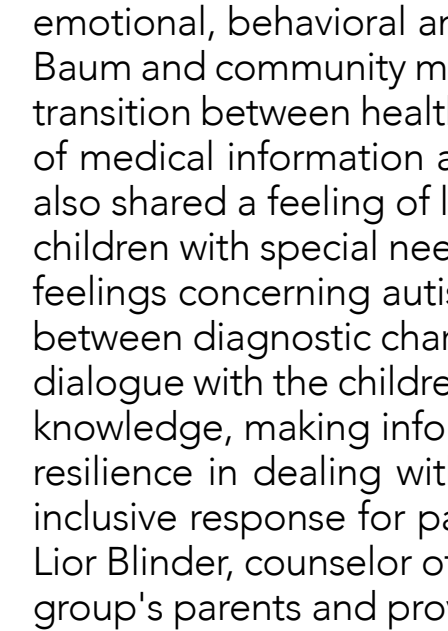
The first support group in the asylum seeker community - "Living with Cancer", opened in December 2024 and continued into 2025. The group was attended by 7 women and was led by social worker Yudit Ilani from ASSAF, volunteer therapist Mor Avraham, and community mediator Aster Nuguse.

The group provides an important space for participants, some of whom are young mothers, who are dealing not only with the physical and emotional toll of cancer and its treatments, but also with the challenges of living as refugees in Israel. In order to maintain their eligibility for health insurance and access to oncology treatment, these women are forced to continue working in difficult physical jobs such as cleaning. This cruel paradox places an additional burden on their already fragile physical and emotional state. The group meeting was a rare and safe place where they could talk about side effects and body image, without shame or fear of judgment. One participant shared that it was the only place where she felt comfortable removing her headscarf in the presence of others. To allow the women to fully participate in the group, a volunteer babysitter cared for their children during the sessions. The group served as a safe, inviting, and empowering space, allowing participants to address their unique challenges individually and collectively.

Comments from social worker Yudit Ilani at the end of the group - "For many women, the group was the only place where they could talk freely and openly. And, to be honest, to laugh too. How strong these women are!"

Men's Support Group in the "Vulnerable" Project

On January 25, a group of Eritrean men whose friend was murdered amid violence in the community was opened. The uniqueness of this group lies in the fact that it is a group of men who, on their own initiative, approached ASSAF with a request to create a space that would allow them to process the trauma that they experienced. The group was led by ASSAF social worker Tahel Weber, Orit Rubin as a volunteer therapist, and Tsaga Abraha as a community mediator. The group met 10 times with 8 participants. In the beginning, difficulties of lack of trust, disparities in expectations, and an overflow of acute daily hardships arose, along with exposure to the fact that some participants were dealing with injuries, physical disabilities, and lack of employment as a result of the violence in the community. Gradually, a safer space was built, using simple physical-emotional tools that allowed participants to identify burdens and share their difficulties and sources of resilience. The meetings revealed that for many, not only the murder of a friend but also the sequence of violent events and their ongoing consequences are at the center of their coping.



A 'pressure gauge' that the group used to mark where they were at the beginning and end of a meeting.

Later, the meetings focused on processing a collective life story through work with cards, through which experiences of being torn from their country of origin and family, feelings of injustice, instability and of being trapped in the reality of life in Israel emerged, alongside hope and a desire to restore control and meaning to their lives. The symbolic work in the group allowed for the safe expression of complex experiences and strengthened the personal and group resilience of the participants. By way of a video in Tigrinya dealing with the topic of stress and ways to cope with it, the participants shared how stress manifests itself in their bodies and minds, and a discourse was created about stress and ways to cope with it. Another significant discourse that emerged in the group was about masculinity and the rupture in male identity upon arriving in Israel, against a background of cultural and occupational disparities that caused feelings of loss of value and control.

Parents' Group for Children with Special Needs

Believe on yourself

At the end of April 2025, a group was opened at ASSAF for parents of children dealing with developmental, verbal, emotional, behavioral and autism difficulties, led by social worker Tahel Weber, practical training student Danielle Baum and community mediator, Fishale Gebreamlak. The group raised significant systemic difficulties, primarily the transition between health services following the adoption of new health regulations, which disrupted the continuity of medical information and required children to once again undergo complex diagnostic processes. The parents also shared a feeling of lack of response from the welfare and health systems, alongside their coping as parents of children with special needs and as asylum seekers. The subsequent meetings focused on processing attitudes and feelings concerning autism, and on making culturally adapted knowledge accessible, while addressing disparities between diagnostic characteristics and the cultural context. In addition, tools were provided to facilitate emotional dialogue with the children and to enhance parental strengths. The group served as a safe support space for sharing knowledge, making information accessible for learning, and strengthening the parents' sense of competence and resilience in dealing with the challenges of parenting. This group also emphasized the need for a tailored and inclusive response for parents and their children. One of the meetings featured a lecture by social worker (MSW) Lior Blinder, counselor of parents with children on the autistic spectrum. The lecture was tailored specifically for the group's parents and provided accessible and in-depth knowledge about autism, alongside practical tools for daily coping, which contributed to reducing stress and deepening the understanding of the children's behaviors. The relatively small group allowed for personal counseling to be provided to parents according to the unique needs of their children. At the closing meeting, the parents shared a sense of empowerment, the importance of meeting with other parents, and jointly dealing with judgment from the environment. The group closed leaving the participants with a sense of purpose and equipped with practical tools for the future.

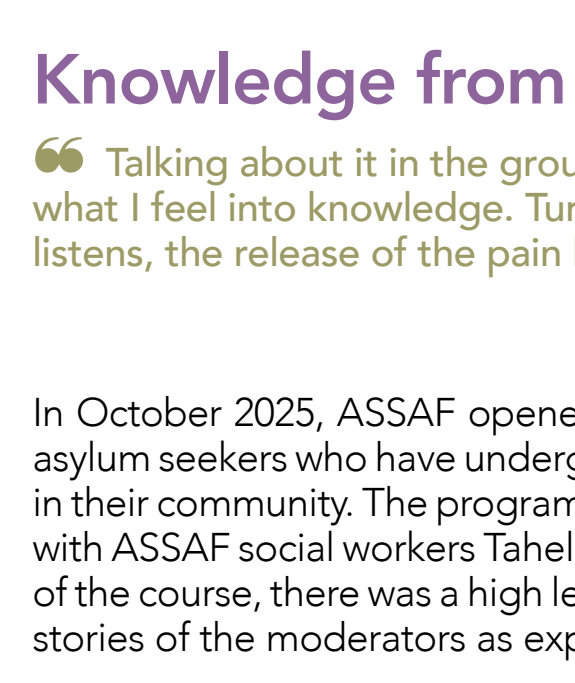
> ❝ Asylum seekers with disabilities are a particularly vulnerable group. While many, due to their disabilities, are unable to work, they are not eligible for a national insurance pension and rehabilitation. As a result, many of them are left without any source of income. In addition, most of them do not have health insurance, precisely when they are in an extremely challenging situation and need medical services more than anything else. Furthermore, family members must take on the care of their relatives, a situation that requires a lot of time and emotional energy, daily, and all year round. And when a son or daughter must be cared for for many hours every day, there is less time to go out to work in order to support the family, and the family's financial situation also deteriorates. A. is the mother of a one-year-old baby with Down syndrome who is hard of hearing. The baby also suffers from another rare disease, for which there is no cure, and is often hospitalized. A. stays with her for many hours, entire days, in intensive care, which prevents her from working and caring "properly" for the other young children in the family. Until the baby was born, both parents worked and the family was quite well off. Since the birth of the baby, A. has been unable to work. The father also lost his job, because when A. is in the hospital with the little one, the father must take care of the other children - take them to and from daycare, prepare food, be with them when they are sick, and more. The parents love the baby very much, but the other children sometimes have hard feelings because the little one "stole their mother" who is constantly running around with her.
>
> In addition to the support, emotional counseling, and humanitarian assistance provided to the family, after a long and difficult struggle, we managed to integrate their baby into a rehabilitation center where she will receive physiotherapy, treatment by a speech therapist, and more."
>
> Social worker Yudit Ilani, Persons with Disabilities field coordinator and an instructor for social work students.

Knowledge from experience

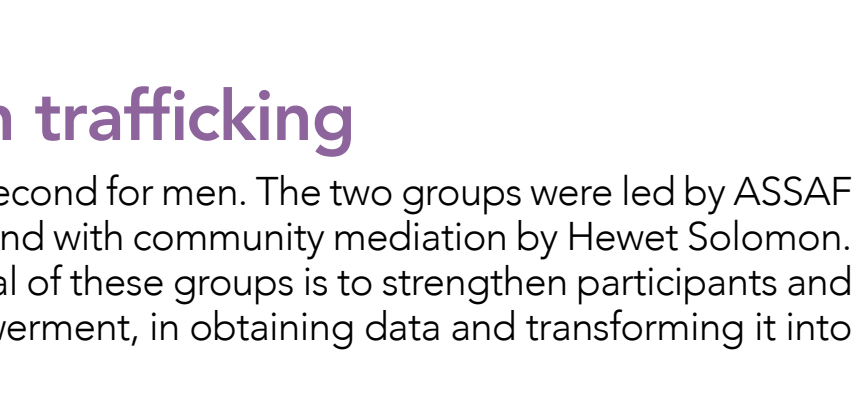
❝ Talking about it in the group was painful, but also healing, it reduced the pain or suffering, seeing that I am similar to others. Turning what I feel into knowledge. Turning suffering into knowledge. Remembering the severe suffering, but when there is someone here who listens, the release of the pain helps and heals. Also hearing from others who are dealing with the same things."

A., participant in the "Knowledge from Experience" course.

In October 2025, ASSAF opened the "Knowledge from Experience" course, which will continue into 2026. The goal of this course is to teach asylum seekers who have undergone a rehabilitation process to use their personal experience to help others and provide mental health assistance in their community. The program is led, in partnership with the 'Yozma Derech Halev' organization, by Silvia Cohen Gadol and Raviv Rize, together with ASSAF social workers Tahel Weber, and with the mediation of Terhas (Titi) Ebraha. The group consisted of 6 participants. From the beginning of the course, there was a high level of involvement, curiosity and exceptional openness on the part of the participants, who showed interest in the stories of the moderators as expert colleagues and as those who cope with mental health themselves, and in the meaning of "knowledge from experience". During the course, the participants dealt with the central concepts of crisis, recovery and growth, while perceiving recovery as the ability to lead a meaningful life even in the face of difficulty. Issues of social stigma and self-stigma were discussed, as well as the unique power of peer support and the ability to be present for another person, even when there is no immediate solution.



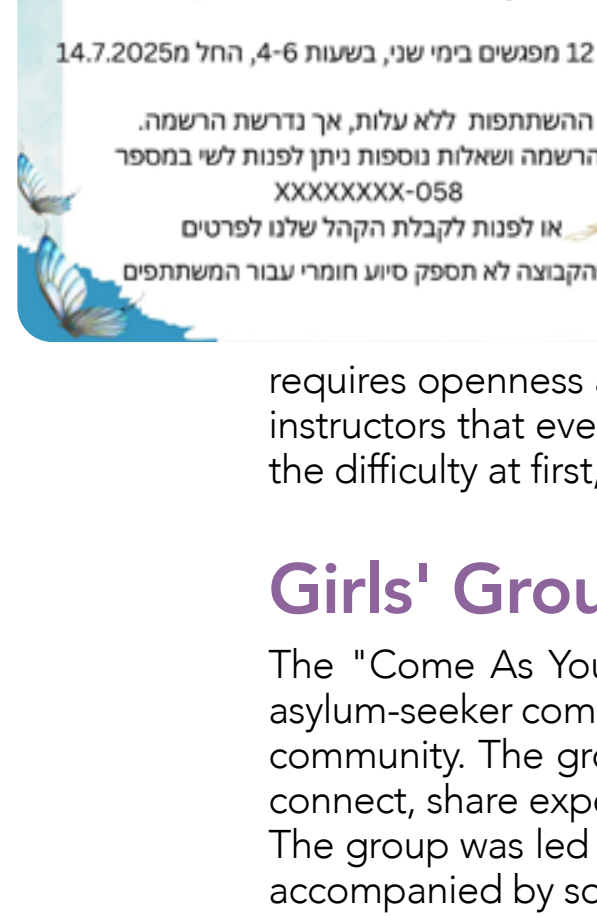
At the same time, the course was accompanied by work on the "Tree of Life" project, through which each participant built their life story to enable them to later retrieve it and use it when supporting another person. The stories were built by comparing a person to a tree. Each session dealt with a different part of the tree, during which the participants drew the part and answered questions relating to it. For example, when dealing with roots, the participants talked about their past, childhood memories of life in Eritrea and the journey to Israel. During the course, the participants shared significant life experiences and testified to the deep personal impact of the group, from making therapeutic decisions, to strengthening a sense of value and competence, and up to a sense of belonging and a place of refuge. An important organizational insight also emerged from the process: knowledge from experience is not only intended to help others in the community, but also as a significant tool for intergenerational transmission, especially for children and young people dealing with crises, discrimination and racism.



> ❝ My project includes identifying victims of torture, working with each individual by way of linguistic and cultural mediation and the provision of tools for self-regulation, transferring knowledge about post-trauma and dealing with it, and exercising rights. It also includes working with the applicant's environment, from the family to the authorities, to improve the situation and increase resilience and coping skills, along with submitting applications to the Ministry of Justice for recognition as victims of torture and/or trafficking. In addition, beyond individual treatment, the project also organizes resilience groups for women and men.
>
> One of the women applicants in the project is K., a torture survivor from Eritrea, married with a daughter, who remained in Eritrea as a baby, and 3 children who were born in Israel. K. is dealing with severe post-traumatic stress disorder and depression that greatly affects her daily functioning, as she sometimes goes into crying fits and has difficulty getting out of bed. As part of the project, we worked together on additional tools for conduct and communication with the Ichilov clinic, where she receives medication. Several years ago, her eldest daughter reached adulthood and followed a path similar to that of her mother. She fled from Eritrea to Sudan. K. is constantly worried about her daughter's safety, afraid that she will be imprisoned and hurt like K. herself was hurt. During our relationship with K., there have been periods when her daughter was missing and it was unknown what happened to her, and periods when K. knows where her daughter is, but also knows that the place is not safe. Thus, beyond the difficulty in dealing with her own trauma, K., like many others, also has to deal with another generation that is going through the same things that she went through, with all the fears and worries that are involved. She hopes to receive a recognized status, so that she can leave Israel and meet her daughter and still be able to return to Israel and be with the other children who were born and raised here."
>
> Social worker Shay Laadan, ASSAF Coordinator of support for Torture Survivors

Support groups for survivors of torture and human trafficking

In 2025, two groups for survivors of torture and trafficking were formed, one for women and a second for men. The two groups were led by ASSAF social worker Shay Laadan. The women's group was moderated by Ophir Netzer, a volunteer and with community mediation by Hewet Solomon. The men's group was moderated by Dr. Opher Caspi and mediated by Aster Nuguse. The goal of these groups is to strengthen participants and improve their skills in dealing with past traumas using tools for personal and collective empowerment, in obtaining data and transforming it into applied knowledge, and with learning and strengthening resilience skills.



א.ס.ף ASSAF

קבוצת חוסן לגברים

קבוצה חדשה נפתחת ואנחנו מזמינים אותך להצטרף אלינו!

הרבה פליטים שעברו בסיני שרדו אירועים קשים שמשפיעים עדיין על הגוף והנפש.

בקבוצה תקבל:

1. מקום בטוח לדבר על איך שאתה מרגיש.
2. כלים להתמודדות מאנשי מקצוע.
3. מידע על זכויות שמגיעות לך, גם בארגונים אחרים.
4. להיפגש, לדבר וללמוד מגברים שעברו דברים דומים.

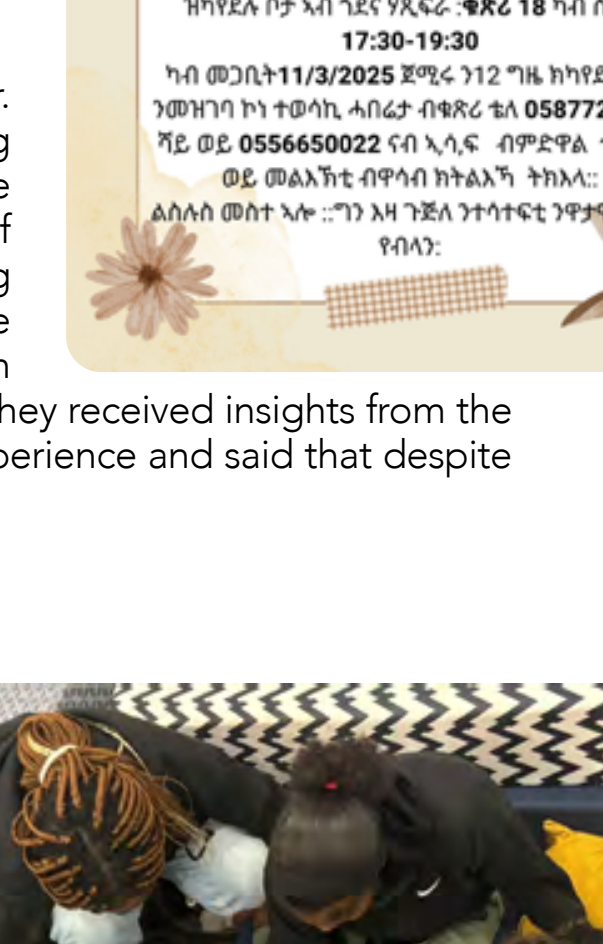
את הקבוצה ינחו עו"ס שי לעדן רכזת פרויקט נפגעי עינויים, ד"ר עופר כספי ומגשרת לשפה הטיגרינית.

המפגשים יתקיימו במשרדינו בדרום תל אביב, גולומב 52.

יתקיימו 12 מפגשים בימי שני, בשעות 4-6, החל מ14.7.2025

ההשתתפות ללא עלות, אך נדרשת הרשמה.
להרשמה ושאלות נוספות ניתן לפנות לשי במספר
XXXXXXXX-058
או לפנות לקבלת הקהל שלנו לפרטים

*הקבוצה לא תספק סיוע חומרי עבור המשתתפים



In both groups, supportive and culturally appropriate spaces were created where participants could process trauma and strengthen coping skills. The meetings were structured and combined guided discussions, experiential exercises, grounding and relaxation techniques, and reflective work with letters from fictional characters – "Ecabert" (for women) and "Abraham" (for men) whose stories reflected the participants' experiences. These activities allowed for safe emotional exploration alongside learning practical tools for dealing with daily stress and trauma-related symptoms.

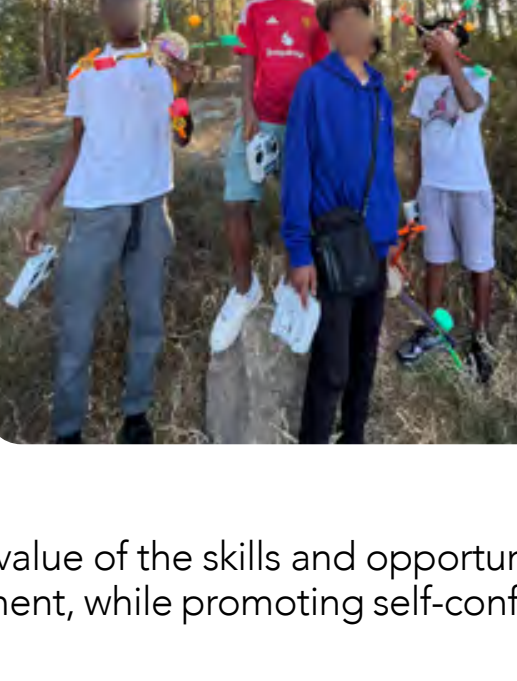
The women's group 9 women participated in the group and 12 meetings were held. The group opened in the shadow of the war with Iran, the impact of which accompanied the meetings. During the meetings, the women received tools for dealing with stress and trauma - breathing, physical awareness, mindfulness work, and awareness of 'what is happening to you' to increase resilience in times of crisis. The women said that the tools they received helped them cope with the war aftermath. The group consolidated and planned to go on together to an English course at the end of the meetings.

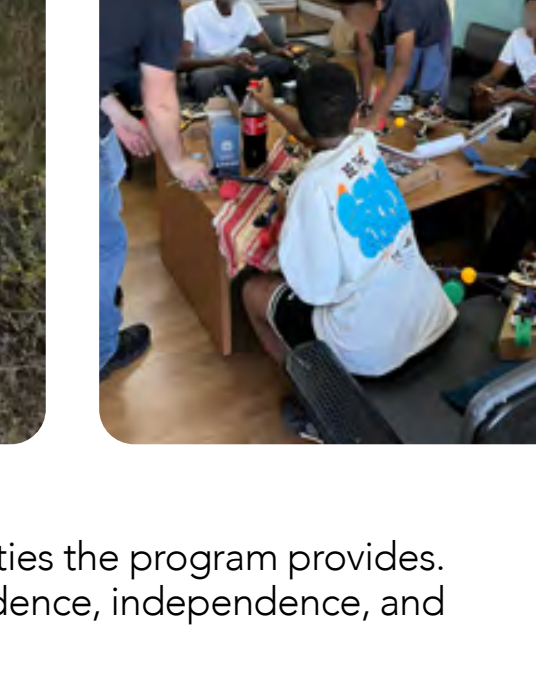
The men's group 7 men participated in the group and 12 meetings were held. Dr. Opher Caspi brought to the group content from Buddhist philosophy concerning compassion and dealing with emotions. He introduced new ways of looking at the world that opened up new opportunities and taught the participants different ways of thinking through which they learned more options for coping. The concluding meeting of this group was particularly significant. The group participated in a 'Dialogue in the Dark,' an activity conducted by blind people in the dark. During the activity, which requires openness and trust, the participants made use of the tools of conduct that they received in the group. They received insights from the instructors that even a life with a disability can be rich and fulfilling. Group members shared the power of the experience and said that despite the difficulty at first, the experience was interesting and enriching for them.

Girls' Group at the Youth Club

The "Come As You Are" girls' group provides a unique space for girls from the refugee and asylum-seeker community, who sometimes find themselves isolated as a minority within their own community. The group offers adolescent girls at the Youth Club a safe and supportive space to connect, share experiences and build self-confidence. In 2025, 12 girls participated in the group. The group was led by Noa Shapira, a master's degree student in movement and dance therapy, accompanied by social worker Noa Nivron, director of the Youth Club. The group focuses on the unique challenges of adolescence, and helps girls navigate between two cultures: Israeli society versus the norms and expectations of their communities of origin. As a minority group in the Club, sometimes due to responsibilities at home or restrictions on evening outings, the girls have fewer opportunities for social engagement, which makes this designated space especially important. The group creates a structured and safe environment where they can come together and discuss issues relevant to their lives as teenagers, as asylum seekers, or as individuals facing unique challenges. Throughout the year, workshops were held on self-defense, sexuality education, and other topics designed to promote personal safety, health, and empowerment. Through discussions, and with the support of the group's leaders, participants strengthen their sense of self, develop skills and explore new possibilities. The activities, along with the ongoing meetings, build a sense of trust and support between one another, as well as trust in the group dynamics and framework. The girls' group empowers participants, enabling them to express themselves, support each other, and to make use of the confidence and tools that they have acquired at school, at home, and in the wider community.

Drone Course at the Youth Club





The ASSAF Youth Club's Drone Course is a unique skills development program for youth from the asylum seeker and refugee community The course was launched in 2024 with 8 participants and continued into 2025. Its goal is to expand accessibility to technological education and enrich youngsters in fields that are inaccessible to them. This is an innovative program that is a window into one of the hottest fields in the industry. During the course, theoretical knowledge and practical experience in operating and building drones, as well as in aerial photography, were acquired. Throughout the course, and especially in the practical phase of building and preparing the drones, the participants showed high levels of engagement, and the instructors identified personal growth processes and individual learning alongside the development of technical skills. Subsequently, preparations began for editing and aerial photography studies. At the closing event, participants flew the drones that they themselves built, took aerial photographs of the surrounding area, and brought the drones safely back to their home base, a milestone symbolizing the acquisition of knowledge, independence, and a sense of accomplishment.

Throughout the course, both the youth and their families increasingly recognized the value of the skills and opportunities the program provides. The drone course has fostered technical knowledge, creativity, and personal development, while promoting self-confidence, independence, and practical application of learning in a supportive environment.

7/ Volunteering at ASSAF

A major portion of ASSAF's activities is made possible thanks to an ongoing partnership with dedicated volunteers, who constitute a significant force in expanding the organization's capabilities to provide a response to the needs of the refugee and asylum-seeking communities. Volunteers integrate into all departments of the organization and contribute to a wide range of activities, including the realization of rights, educational and community activities, youth support, translation and editing of materials, and facilitation of support groups. In 2025, 113 volunteers volunteered at ASSAF. Their partnership enables the existence of many of the programs and services and constitutes a significant force multiplier for action.

ASSAF provides volunteers with ongoing professional guidance and training, which deepens their familiarity with issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers and provides tools for sensitive work with populations in vulnerable situations. In addition to contributing to the community, volunteering offers the participants a meaningful human encounter with a complex reality of life, and many testify that it is a formative experience that strengthens a commitment to the values of social justice, human rights, and solidarity.

Through their activities, volunteers are also partners in ASSAF's broader efforts of advocacy and social change: they work against systemic barriers, help raise public awareness of human rights and the situation of refugee and asylum-seeking communities, and contribute to promoting a more equal and inclusive society in Israel. This partnership is a central pillar in ASSAF's ability to advance marginalized communities and bring about lasting social change.

Dorit Kafri - Volunteer in open hours reception, Advocacy and support center

My name is Dorit Kafri, I have been married for 46 years, am a mother of three, and a proud grandmother of five grandchildren. By my professional training, I am a social worker and family therapist. For approximately 30 years, I managed the social service at a center for rehabilitation of the disabled, a job that required a combination of uncompromising professionalism alongside social sensitivity.

Connecting to the Asylum Seeker Community

Eight years ago, I was exposed to the asylum seeker community at a women's center which the community established. There, I volunteered as a social worker and held individual support talks and group work. I joined ASSAF about five years ago. I started by training the team of counselors at the Youth Club, and from there I continued on to the "Follow-up" team - a team that accompanies asylum seekers through the intricacies of Israeli bureaucracy with social services, hospitals, schools and the legal system. Today, I am part of the reception team. As a social worker, it was important for me to return to direct interpersonal contact. In these meetings, we provide support, understanding and embrace, and try to provide a solution to severe economic, mental and emotional distress. I meet people who are dealing with post-traumatic stress (including stress as a result of atrocities perpetrated upon them during their journey through Sinai) and family difficulties, which have greatly intensified since the outbreak of the war.

The challenge and the privilege

The work is not easy. The community of asylum seekers lives without the prospect of citizenship, a fact that leaves them and sometimes us helpless. The State of Israel could have gained a wonderful, courageous and intelligent community if it had chosen to grant them citizenship. Sometimes our hands are tied, but I always try to listen with compassion and help as much as possible. ASSAF for me is a house of light. It is a place of work that is of unparalleled importance, carried out in close cooperation between the team of volunteers, the team of workers, and mediators from the community, without whom our work would not be possible.

One moment of kindness

I remember the case of a single mother of five children who came to us when she was collapsing under financial and emotional difficulties. She entered the room crying and desperate. We talked about the difficulties at home, about ways to regulate daily life and enlist the adult children to help. Mostly, I listened. I mediated for her between the reality of her family and the complex reality in Israel. When we finished, I asked her if I could hug her. She immediately agreed and told me in tears: "I felt like my grandmother was hugging me." For me, it was a great privilege and a moment that distilled the entire essence of my volunteering.

ASSAF in Numbers - Quantitative 2025 Report

- **113** volunteers who dedicated **7,856** volunteer hours worth **910,825** NIS
- **1,919** asylum seekers directly accompanied
- **+15,000** refugees received information
- **145** refugee families from Ukraine received help
- **124** youth visited the Youth Club
- **63%** of the women seek and are treated at ASSAF
- **312** torture survivors and their children had been treated
- **268** single mothers and their children received treatment
- **162** people with medical needs and their family received support
- **267** people with disabilities, chronic illnesses and their family received support
- **29** Individuals without stable housing and homeless people received help
- **54** victims of SGBV in Israel received treatment
- **80** Families from communities along the Gaza border, Israel, were assisted to receive compensation
- **141,697** NIS worth of dry food distributed
- **326,381** NIS financial assistance distributed
- **45,400** NIS worth of computers distributed
- **514,733** NIS worth of humanitarian aid
- **1,583** face-to-face assistance meetings
- **1,415** phone calls with callers
- **1,011** people participated in lectures to raise awareness
- **7** petitions to the court with our participation
- **41** appearances in media publications
- We published **17** position papers and reports
- **111** meetings and collaborations with policymakers
- **30** Knesset committees and collaborations with MKs
- **9** therapeutic groups and spaces **110** participants in groups
- **34,000** visitors to the website in Hebrew and English
- **3,407,382** exposures to posts on Facebook and Instagram in Hebrew
- **178,828** exposures to posts on Facebook Refugees
- We produced and distributed **4** information videos for refugees

ASSAF's Team and the Boards Members

The Team:

Tali Ehrenthal, Social Worker, Executive Director
Hilla Erel, Adv./**Gilad Palombo,** Head of Public Advocacy
Zameret Hershco, Psychosocial Department Director
Mika Foux, Resource Development Director
Revital Biadgo, Volunteer Manager
Hadar Aviel, Public Advocacy Coordinator
Shahar Mandil, Adv., Advocacy and government relations
Gilad Palombo/Yuval Maxic, Public Advocacy and New Media Coordinator
Tal Harari, Community Engagement and Resource Development Manager
Aster Nuguse, Translator and Community Mediator
Hewet Solomon, Translator and Community Mediator
Fishale Gebreamlak/Medhani Habtom, Translator and Community Mediator
Shay Laadan, Social Worker, Coordinator of Support Program for Torture Survivors
Tahel Weber, Social Worker, Coordinator of Support Program for Vulnerable Refugees
Yudit Ilani, Social Worker, Coordinator of Support Project for People with Disabilities
Uliana Driuchkova/Hanna Kats, Coordinator of Support Program for Refugees from Ukraine
Noa Nivron, Social Worker, Youth Manager
Hagai Amitai/Roie Sarig, Youth Club guide
Talia Hartman, Co-director of Advocacy and Support Center – Follow-Up
Hadera Ziraei/Fishale Gebreamlak, Co-director of Advocacy and Support Center- reception hours
Hila Douvdevani/Galit Avni, Office Manager
Yael Keren, Accountant
Nuri Magen/Mai Goldberg, National Service Volunteer
DM - Media, Strategy, PR
113 Volunteers

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For support and volunteering:
assaf.org.il/en

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ASSAF holds a "Midot seal of effectiveness"

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