**ASSAF - AID ORGANIZATION FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ISRAEL - ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS**

The ASSAF aid organization provides psychosocial and humanitarian support for refugees and asylum seekers residing in Israel. ASSAF also works to increase public awareness of the plight of asylum seekers and to promote their cause with local government authorities.

Thousands of asylum seekers currently reside in Israel without regulated status, without work permits, and without access to health and welfare services. They live under the constant threat of being incarcerated for indefinite periods in detention centers in the desert. The State of Israel, which is a signatory to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), is breaching its obligations under the Convention and implementing harsh policies against asylum seekers , depriving them of basic human rights and hope for the future.

The ASSAF aid organization has been working since 2007 to advance and protect the rights of asylum seekers in view of Israel’s harsh policies. ASSAF’s team is made up of dedicated employees and volunteers who run various aid programs aimed at the asylum seeking community.

**THE ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT CENTER**

The Advocacy and Support Center is a unique program in Israel, providing information, guidance and emotional support for asylum seekers in various areas: legal status, employment, welfare, education, health, etc. The center’s personal approach offers asylum seekers a haven where they are met with sympathy and attention, receive assistance, or are directed to relevant authorities and organizations.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**

ASSAF’s psychosocial support system is made up of social work professionals and volunteer therapists. The team provides emotional and social support and aid to individuals and families whose social plight is exacerbated by their lack of status and rights. ASSAF’s professional therapist and volunteers work together with the asylum seekers to formulate a support plant to help them cope with the realities of life in Israel. The multidisciplinary approach includes providing individual therapy and support sessions, leading support groups, educating asylum seekers on their rights and options, and more.

ASSAF operates a number of programs that focus on groups within the asylum seeking community struggling with especially severe circumstances:

* **Victims of Torture Camps and Human Trafficking** - The program provides group and individual therapy for victims suffering severe physical and emotional trauma, identifies victims that might qualify to be officially recognized by the authorities as victims of Human Trafficking, submits requests to the authorities to recognize them as such, and ensures they are granted the full extent of their rights.
* **Work Accident Victims** - The program provides support and guidance on a group and individual basis. In addition, it ensures access to medical and rehabilitative benefits and legal guidance. On the community level, the project seeks to educate asylum seekers on workers’ rights and work accidents.
* **HIV Carriers and AIDS Patients -** As part of the program, professional staff and volunteers provide personal support, train community mediators, and host workshops and community outreach.
* **Unaccompanied Minors -** Hundreds of young asylum seekers living in Israel today arrived as minors, unaccompanied by adults or family members, enduring the journey to Israel on their own. Upon arriving in Israel, they were absorbed into the education system thanks to Israel’s legal obligation to defend the rights of minors. However, as soon as they turn 18, they lose these advantages. The program offers support and guidance to these youths, in both individual and group sessions, and aids their struggle to be officially recognized as refugees in order to be granted the rights they deserve.

**THE YOUTH CLUB**

For two evenings every week ASSAF’s offices are transformed into an active and lively youth club. Catering to boys and girls aged 9-19, the club offers activities suited to their unique circumstances. It provides the youths with a protective and supportive framework that includes varied educational activities, hot meals, and leisure activities including enrichment and study groups, a soccer club, movie screenings, games, and PC and Internet use.

**HUMANITARIAN AID**

The organization provides humanitarian aid that ranges from supplying financial aid to those in desperate need to distributing dry foods.

**ADVOCACY AND POLICY CHANGE**

In addition to direct aid through its psychosocial programs, ASSAF is endeavoring to change official policies in Israel. ASSAF’s team takes part in discussions at Israel’s parliament, is in contact with various municipal and national authorities, and writes and circulates policy papers. ASSAF works to raise awareness within the Israeli public through social media campaigns, traditional media, and lectures aimed at the general public and professionals in the field. ASSAF’s advocacy work is based on extensive data collected through our various programs that we operate in close collaboration with the asylum seeking community.

**SUPPORTING ASSAF**

The ASSAF aid organization is a registered non-profit organization (no. 580474955) whose services are provided free of charge. ASSAF’s activities are made possible thanks to generous donations and the daily dedicated efforts of dozens of volunteers.

**TO DONATE:**

Donations to ASSAF are tax deductible in Israel and the United States. We invite you to support ASSAF’s important work by giving a donation in one of the following ways:

* **Checks:** Checks made out to ASSAF aid organization can be mailed to 52 Golomb Street, Tel Aviv, 6617141
* **Bank Transfers:** To Discount Bank, Branch 014, Account Number: 70818985

IBAN: IL410110140000070818985    SWIFT BIC  IDBLILITXXX

* **Credit Cards:** Secure donations (either one-time or on a regular monthly basis) can be made through the ASSAF website: http://assaf.org.il

**To Volunteer at ASSAF:**

The wide variety of volunteer opportunities at ASSAF offer challenging and gratifying work and a multicultural encounter with a fascinating and unique community.

For details on activities and volunteering, please contact:

**assafaid@gmail.com**