

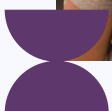


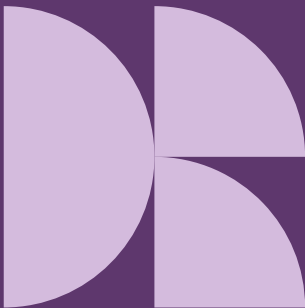
# WUSTE TSEGA



2023-2024

## ANNUAL REPORT





# TO OUR PARTNERS

With gratitude and enthusiasm, we present the Annual Report for Wuste Tsega, the Center for Culturally Adapted Psychotherapy. Wuste Tsega is an organization dedicated to providing diagnosis, therapy, guidance, and counseling for individuals suffering from trauma and distress, primarily from the Ethiopian Israeli community. We integrate traditional and western psychotherapy interventions to help those in need, and our focus is on promoting healing within culturally diverse communities. Thanks to our supporters, we have achieved significant milestones and expanded our reach to impact the lives of many, including preventing many unnecessary hospitalizations.



# Activities in 2023

## Clinics and Patient Care

Throughout 2023, Wuste Tsega operated four culturally adapted psychotherapy clinics in Hadera, Lod, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, where our dedicated team of professionals provides exceptional care. The Hadera clinic, located in Wuste Tsega's offices in Hadera, operates full-time, while the other three clinics operate part-time.

The clinics are staffed by six therapists, led by Yeshitu Shmuel, who is a certified clinical social worker and the Wuste Tsega founder and director. Yeshitu also supervises the other therapists. Since January 2023, over 150 individuals have sought treatment at our clinics.

## Training Course in Culturally Adapted Therapy

Wuste Tsega's first therapist training course commenced in February 2023. Fifteen professionals from across the country attended weekly classes for 18 weeks at the "Hive" in Lod. The instructors included leading professors from social sciences, traditional healers, and mental health service providers, along with intensive guidance and training by Wuste Tsega's director, Yeshitu Shmuel. Upon completion of the course in August 2023, certificates were awarded to participants at a moving ceremony held at the Wuste Tsega Center in Hadera. Graduates of the course will utilize the tools acquired in various professional settings, helping to avoid misdiagnosis that leads to unnecessary hospitalizations in mental health institutions.





## Second Annual Wuste Tsega Academic Conference

In May 2023, we held our second annual conference on the theme of "The Silent Trauma: Second Generation Trauma among Ethiopian Immigrants who were in Sudan," in collaboration with the Rupin Academic Center. This topic has not yet received serious attention in governmental institutions or the media and also, due to the intense trauma it evokes, has not been addressed in the public discourse of the Ethiopian-Israeli community. This year's conference focused on the trauma of the second generation. Over 100 participants attended the conference, including immigrants who came to Israel through Sudan and shared their stories, along with psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, academics, anthropologists, welfare workers, and others.



## Lectures, Workshops, and Collaborations

Throughout 2023, Wuste Tzege Director Yeshitu Shmuel conducted lectures and workshops on culturally adapted therapy for diverse professional audiences.

Wuste Tsega collaborated with the Jewish Agency, the Villa Project in Lod, and the Pre-Army Academy "Derech Avot," referring individuals in need to our clinics. Additionally, Wuste Tsega provided culturally adapted psychiatric evaluations for the public defender's office and community courts. Students from Tel Aviv University and Rupin Academic Center were introduced to Wuste Tsega's methods through lectures on campus.

## Staff

To meet the growing need for the center's services, we recruited new employees and expanded our administrative staff team from the three original positions we began with to now include a professional director, project manager, administrative manager, treatment coordinator, and resource developer.



## Since October 7th - First Response

Since the outbreak of the war, Wuste Tsega experienced a surge in demand for its services, assisting evacuees, injured individuals, soldiers, and civilians facing trauma. Support was provided through various means:

**1. Psychotherapeutic Treatments:** Continued treatment routines for patients amidst wartime. We recognize the importance of maintaining treatment routines during this time. Our therapists reported increased anxiety among patients due to the war.

**2. Hotline:** Wuste Tsega was one of the first centers in the country to launch a hotline offering initial psychological assistance, emphasizing Ethiopian immigrants and addressing unique challenges faced by displaced individuals. The service was provided in Hebrew and Amharic.

**3. Weekly Training:** Conducted by Director Yeshutu Shmuel, featuring experts on trauma and stress management, delivered via Zoom to crisis therapists.

**4. Specialized Course:** Focused on culturally adapted therapy for crisis and trauma situations, combining theory with experiential learning and integrating traditional approaches for the Ethiopian community.

**5. Organizational Collaboration:** Formed partnerships with social organizations, participated in meetings with Ethiopian Jewish Association, collaborated with The Simlai Foundation and WIX for website establishment, and strengthened ties with Olim Beyahad Organization to reach affected communities directly.





# Wuste Tsega & Community Outreach

**1. Among the lectures we conducted:** On September 11th, 2023, Yeshitu delivered a lecture at the Haneetah Reception Center in Haifa on the topic of mental health in Israel - reducing fear and stigma. Penina Aynao, a therapist at the center, presented our activities to the residents of Netanya; Uri Ingdao, a volunteer at the center, presented our activities to the residents of Afula; Tzchilo Abay, a volunteer at the center, delivered a lecture at a hotel in Jerusalem for Ethiopian evacuees. Presently, additional visits are being arranged in other communities, as well as initiating treatment for Ethiopian immigrants in the communities we visited, in accordance with the need and ongoing dialogue with welfare and immigration authorities and community representatives in each city. Soon we will announce a free lecture to the general public on the topic of the Sigd holiday.

**2. Media:** Yeshitu was interviewed by "The Hottest Place in Hell" - an Israeli online news site focusing on social issues, welfare, human rights, law, and politics - about Wuste Tsega's emergency activities; Uri Ingdao, a volunteer at the center, spoke on Radio Kan in Amharic to present the hotline's activities.

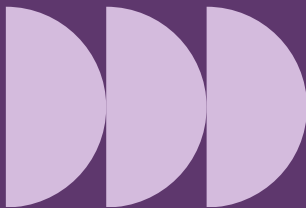
**3. Translation:** Our translation team continues to translate terms from the field of therapy from Hebrew to Amharic.





# RESPONSES

Our community outreach efforts, including educational lectures on alternative therapies, have proven highly effective. Following these lectures, a significant number of attendees expressed interest in therapy and have since taken steps to seek treatment. This highlights the impact of raising awareness about diverse therapeutic options, as it empowers individuals to find the approach best suited to their needs and cultural background.



A mother who tragically lost her son on October 7th had a deeply negative experience with a therapist assigned by the Ministry of Defense. This soured her view of therapy and discouraged her children from seeking help. However, after participating in one of our group sessions, she was struck by the profound impact of our culturally attuned approach. This newfound trust led her to embrace therapy at our center, opening a door to healing not only for herself but potentially for her family as well.

After enduring the unimaginable loss of her husband and children during their journey to Israel, a woman found herself uprooted and alone. She returned to Ethiopia but faced further hardship, ultimately leading her back to Israel. The recent war and subsequent evacuations triggered past traumas, causing intense anxiety and an overprotective stance towards her remaining children. Through our group therapy sessions, specifically designed to address her unique cultural background and life experiences, she found a safe space to process her grief. This breakthrough led her to seek individualized treatment at our center, marking a significant step on her path to healing.

A young man struggling with financial hardship found his situation worsened by the recent war, leading to a dependence on alcohol. Our therapists spent two months counseling his family, fostering a united front to reach out to him. With the unwavering support of his sister and cousin, alongside the guidance of our therapists, he agreed to enter a carefully chosen rehabilitation center to confront his addiction. Today, he continues his journey to recovery through therapy at our center, celebrating his newfound sobriety and employment.

# PERSONAL STORIES

A young veteran, grappling with isolation and distrust after his military service, initially resisted all offers of support. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, our therapists reached out to his concerned mother, providing her with tools and education about our culturally sensitive approach. This collaborative effort eventually led the veteran to embrace therapy, a pivotal decision that empowered him to re-enter civilian life and actively pursue employment opportunities.



# Resilience during Crisis

Wuste Tzega's "Resilience During Crisis" program is a comprehensive mental health intervention designed to address the unique needs of the Ethiopian Jewish community in southern Israel as a result of the ongoing war. The program includes three main components:

1. Public Lectures: lectures on mental health tailored to address culturally specific concerns, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking behaviors.
2. Individual Therapy: therapy sessions providing personalized, trauma-informed care to 60 individuals affected by recent conflicts.
3. Group Therapy: group therapy sessions, fostering peer support and creating safe spaces for shared experiences and healing.

Our project, "Resilience During Crisis" aims to provide culturally tailored mental health therapy, counseling, and psychoeducation through public lectures, individual therapy sessions, and group therapy. This initiative leverages our established trust within the community and enables us to deliver effective, tailored support during this critical time.







# Goals for 2024

Since October 2023, our dedicated team, in close collaboration with organizations and hotels hosting evacuees, offers personalized counseling and support to individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The absence of telephone response services or specific counseling for institutions serving the Ethiopian-Israeli population emphasizes the critical role of Wuste Tsega in providing immediate and culturally sensitive assistance.

Beyond this immediate response, we recognize the importance of a healthy transition from emergency response to long-term recovery. Wuste Tsega aims not only to provide immediate relief but also to lay the groundwork for sustained mental health support. This includes disseminating culturally and linguistically sensitive marketing materials, organizing workshops on culturally adapted therapy for professionals, conducting workshops for evacuees, and compensating dedicated professionals staffing the emergency hotline and clinics. Establishing a broad and professional infrastructure is vital to ensuring a healthy and effective transition from emergency intervention to long-term recovery, nurturing the welfare and resilience of the Ethiopian community in Israel.

The strategies set forth by Wuste Tsega include a multidimensional approach to bridging gaps in the mental health system:

1. Recruiting and training additional therapists.
2. Opening an additional clinic in Nes Ziona in collaboration with Beit Ingida - providing treatment for addicts.
3. Continuing workshop efforts and educational initiatives.
4. Collaborating with health funds and other relevant stakeholders: We have initiated partnerships with Beit Ingida, Beit Haim, and Ma'azen for addicts, with cultural sensitivity, and cooperation with Olim B'yachad promoting academic integration for Ethiopian community members in employment. Additionally, we are forming collaborations with local authorities, welfare departments, and government offices.

Through these strategies, Wuste Tsega aims not only to provide immediate assistance but also to contribute to the long-term mental well-being of Ethiopian-speaking Jews in Israel and other minorities in the country.



# THANK YOU



None of this would have been possible without the generosity and compassion of our donors.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, which has enabled us to heal lives and empower individuals to overcome trauma and distress. As we strive to build a more resilient and empathetic society, we are excited about the possibilities the future holds for Wuste Tsega.

## INQUIRIES & INFORMATION

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