

**JEWISH COMMUNITY
OF ESTONIA**

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BUILDING A BETTER LIFE FOR THE JEWISH SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES IN ESTONIA



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Estonia today: the other side of developing economics

Estonia today represents itself as a rapidly developing EU country. After the crisis of 2008 Estonia was the fastest among the Baltic countries to recover its economics, also it was the first to enter the Euro zone in 2011. However the economic growth was and still is more oriented on foreign policy within the EU and leaves many gaps in the social system inside the country.

The minimal salary in Estonia in 2015 is 390 euros, which is abnormally close to the relative poverty level of 358 euros per person. At the same time an absolute poverty level is considered to be 205 euros per person, whereas a living wage established by the state government, which is a base for the state dotation, is 90 euros per person. These are just a few examples of contradictions in the state social system.

Project target group - the least protected members of the society

As a result of weak social system people who are at least temporarily not able to work become a risk group. In that sense we can consider families with children and only one parent one of the least protected layers of population. The state dotation for a child changed for the first time since 2000 this year and became 45 euros per child instead of 19 euros that were stable during previous 15 year period. Of course there is no need to tell that the cost of living has grown a lot more within these 15 years. According to the research in 2014 around 16% of young families experienced difficulties paying for rent and utility bills. Being a single parent even with one child is a huge challenge, as one faces the responsibility to earn for family's living including the basic needs, such as food, apartment rent and utilities cost, clothes, plus the kids' education and entertainment.

The Community Jewish Family Service program's goal was always to help families with Jewish children reach a level of living where they would feel secure and stable. The program criteria are based on a concept of a minimal income standard, which is a model of a family able to cover their basic needs. A model is based on a hypothetical family that consists of two grownups with minimal salaries and one child, where a minimal income standard for one family member is counted. The counting formula also includes family expenses for the apartment (rent, utilities, and mortgage), so there is a pure balance per family member in the end. Most of the families in the program are below this standard, so they get monthly support that fills the gap, such as food, utilities and clothes, pampers etc. This is considered as support on a basic level for the neediest.

Project description: better life quality for Jewish children

The concept described above doesn't meet all the needs of the young Jewish families. That is why we would like to propose a project that would go deeper into the individual needs of the members of the program. There are about 20 single parent families registered in the program now. Second group which we propose to support in frames of this project are families with chronically ill children. All together the target group consists of about 30-35 children from about 25 families. Every child due to environmental conditions or individual health conditions claims for more personal approach which demands more investments. The idea of this project is to provide the families with specific additional nutrition support beyond the basic level that the program catered for so far.

The needs in specific additional nutrition support are based on the fact that there are children allergic for gluten, lactose or suffering from lack of vitamins; children with allergies; children with diabetes etc. The additional nutrition would help the family to provide the child with everything that is needed for healthy growing. During the autumn and early winter period when the risks for health are always higher, the children will get nutritious food that helps to strengthen the immune system.

After analyses of families' financial statuses, all potential clients of the program were divided to 3 groups by the monthly income per member of the family. This data along with monthly allocations to each family are presented in the table below.

Monthly income per one member of the family	Aprox. number of families in the group	Monthly allocation for additional nutrition	Monthly budget need (about)
≤ 100 €	5	85 – 100 €	450 €
100 -160 €	10	70 €	700 €
160 -200 €	10	50 €	500 €
		Total monthly budget need (about):	1650 €

The families will be supplied with additional monthly dotation to food card, which enables them to by kosher style food in chain of supermarkets across Estonia. apart from that it is planned to supply each family with vitamins set for the winter period.

Total budget of the project of about 8,500 euro was counted for the period of January – June 2015.