

**JEWISH COMMUNITY
OF ESTONIA**

OCTOBER 2023



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



Prepared for:
BALTIC JEWISH FORUM

Estonia: realities of vulnerable groups wellbeing in 2024

Estonian welfare system continues to provide very limited support to families in dire financial condition. Rapidly growing prices for basic goods and utilities significantly surpass any reported salaries and state allowances increase, which negatively impacts the target group of this project – single parent Jewish families.

The economic situation in Estonia remains challenging. 2023 has seen electricity costs finally decrease to tolerable thresholds, and overall inflation cool down, but Estonian food inflation remains one of the highest in the euro area at 12.9%

(<https://tradingeconomics.com/estonia/food-inflation>). Consumer price index has continued to increase throughout 2023, reaching an all-time high of 293.57 points in June 2023 and maintaining this level as of August 2023. (<https://tradingeconomics.com/estonia/consumer-price-index-cpi>).

Despite the increase of minimum salary in Estonia in 2023 to 725 euros, it is still very low, and doesn't rise above relative poverty level. According to Statistics Estonia, 22.8% of Estonia's population lived at risk of poverty and 1.4% in absolute poverty in 2021. Compared with 2020, the share of people living at risk of poverty rose 2.2%, which demonstrates insufficiency of our welfare system, which is unable to provide adequate benefits for over one-fifth of the country's population.

The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic further devastated income levels of disadvantaged groups, as it became much more difficult to find and maintain work in rapidly deteriorating economic conditions. The aftershocks of the pandemic are felt to this day, as people who lost their job find it increasingly difficult to find an adequate replacement.

Project target group - the least protected members of the society

Inadequate welfare system naturally causes people who are unable to work full-time or are forced to take sick leave to become a risk group. Single parent families belong to one of the least protected groups of the population. Being a single parent even with one child is a huge challenge, as one faces the responsibility to support all family's living expenses including basic needs, such as food, rent and utilities cost, clothes, children's education and entertainment. Additionally, the lone parent must provide for his (or, most commonly, her) children's non-material needs, communication, nurture, psychological wellbeing. Considering gender-pay gap in Estonia (Estonia's gender pay gap, for years the highest in the EU, is now the second highest. At 21% it is way above the EU average (13%) and the fact that single-parent families are in the vast majority of cases families with mothers only, we can confidently identify these families as those who need urgent support.

The Community Jewish Family Service program's main goal was always to help families with Jewish children achieve an adequate quality of life, a level of wellbeing where they would feel secure and stable. The program criteria are based on the concept of a minimum 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 adults with minimum salaries and one child, where a minimum income standard for one family member is counted. The calculation formula also includes family expenses for the apartment (rent, utilities, and mortgage). Most of the families in the program are below this standard, so they receive monthly support that fills the gap, such as food and utilities. This is considered as basic support for the neediest.

In 2024 20 families with 27 children are planned to be included in the project.

Project description: better life quality for Jewish children

The project "Building a better life for the Jewish single parent families in Estonia", supported by the Baltic Jewish Forum for many subsequent years, remains one of the cornerstones of our Children in Need program. The 2024 target group consists of 20 single-parent families with 27 children.

The main area of planned allocated financial support in 2024 will be children's nutritional care. Participating families will be supplied with monthly allocations to their supermarket food card, which enables them to buy kosher style food in a chain of supermarkets across Estonia. Additional nutrition will help participating families provide their children with necessary nutrition and help children with allergies get proper food.

Another important goal of the project is to reduce the financial strain of utilities bills, which are very significant in Estonia, especially during cold weather months. Select children with special needs and developmental risks will also be provided with educational and developmental classes.

Sports classes will have priority as physical development is vital for every growing child. Active participation in group sports activities help negate

the lasting consequences of COVID-19 restrictions, which kept children locked in their homes with minimal physical and social activity for many months.

Integration into Jewish community and culture is also vital for children of all ages. 2024 project includes family subsidies for attending Jewish children camps, as we consider it to be an essential part of building community spirit and cultivating the sense of belonging to Jewish values.

Developmental classes for children with special needs will also help them integrate into Community life.

Detailed breakdown of planned allocations sorted by families and allocation areas:

N	Family	Kids	Type of support	Amount	
1	Viktoria Temina	David, age 13	nutritional care	720,00 €	
	mother		classes	650,00 €	
			integration	300,00 €	
		Gabriel, age 13	nutritional care	720,00 €	
			classes	200,00 €	
			integration	300,00 €	
2	Maria Zeltzer	Eric, age 8	classes	300,00 €	
	mother		integration	300,00 €	
3	Irina Blyumson	Devid, age 14	integration	300,00 €	
	mother				
4	Irina Bauer	Aleksandr, age 17	nutritional care	600,00 €	
	mother				
5	Irina Eidelkind	Sofia, age 11	nutritional care	600,00 €	
			mother	classes	500,00 €
				integration	300,00 €
6	Inna Guraltchuk	Jaroslav, age 15	nutritional care	680,00 €	
			mother	classes	680,00 €
				integration	300,00 €
7	Mirjam Zautina	Jakov, age 15	nutritional care	1000,00	
			mother		
8	Alla Grabko	Darja, age 17	nutritional care	800,00 €	
			mother		
9	Julia Pritsko	Rosanna, age 15	nutritional care	700,00 €	
			mother	classes	800,00 €

			integration	400,00 €
10	Jekaterina Burmatskaja	Ksenia, age 15	nutritional care	600,00 €
	mother		psychological rehabilitation	600,00 €
			integration	400,00 €
11	Alsu Valieva	Kamilla, age 17	nutritional care	600,00 €
	mother		classes	300,00 €
		Hanna, age 12	nutritional care	600,00 €
			classes	300,00 €
		Mikael, age 10	classes	200,00 €
			nutritional care	200,00 €
12	Ekaterina Tilinina	Petr, age 10	nutritional care	600,00 €
	mother		integration	400,00 €
			classes	400,00 €
13	Jelena Krõman	Anna, age 12	nutritional care	600,00 €
	mother		integration	300,00 €
			classes	950,00 €
14	Inna Elkind	Tali, age 11	nutritional care	600,00 €
	mother		classes	300,00 €
			integration	300,00 €
15	Sidorova Anna	Daria, age 16	integration	300,00 €
	mother	Amira, age 13	integration	300,00 €
16	Feigman Maria	Rebecca, age 17	nutritional care	600,00 €
	mother		integration	350,00 €
			classes	300,00 €
		Benjamin, age 9	integration	350,00 €
			classes	700,00 €
		Leja, age 6	integration	300,00 €
			nutritional care	300,00 €

			classes	400,00 €
17	Alehodzina Adel	Veniamin, age 10	nutritional care	1000,00 €
	mother		integration	300,00 €
			classes	400,00 €
18	Julia Ferman	Karina, age 15	integration	300,00 €
	mother			
19	Zinovjeva Jekaterina	Matvei, age 5	classes	400,00 €
	mother		integration	300,00 €
20	Seleznjova Tatajana	Rustam, age 13	nutritional care	500,00 €
			classes	400,00 €
		Rusalina, age 11	classes	500,00 €
				27400,00 €
			Grant administration	2500,00 €
			Total cost:	29900,00 €