



Supporting Isolated, Emerging, and Returning Jewish Communities around the Globe

KULANU

“All of Us”



Image from the 1739 Copenhagen Haggadah, Man holding Matzah, by Philip Isaac Levy, Hamburg. Story on page 8.

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Remembering Sandy Leeder, z”l

By Molly Levine, Kulanu Deputy Director



Sandy in the village of Mapakomhere, Zimbabwe where he spent Passover, 2012

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of our beloved and esteemed board member Sandy Leeder’s passing on Friday, February 4, 2022, in Tzfat, Israel. Sandy served on Kulanu’s board for many years and was a strong supporter of the Jewish people worldwide. His love and spirit will live on in all those he touched. We send our condolences to his children Akiva, Shoshana, Shira, and Asher, his grandchildren,

and to his devoted partner Rae Fishman.

Sandy Leeder (Jan. 24, 1943 – Feb. 4, 2022) was the Kulanu coordinator for the Lemba of Zimbabwe, as well as Kulanu’s treasurer for many years. He lived in Tzfat, Israel, and retired from 30 years in the real estate development business where he specialized in tax and partnership accounting. He had a BA in Mathematics from Harpur College, SUNY, and had an MBA in Finance from Columbia University. During his US Peace Corps service from 1967 to 1969, Sandy lived with the Hausa and Fulani people in Niger, where he worked as an agricultural extension agent for a peanut cooperative. In 1983 he participated in a secret American Association for

Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ) operation that smuggled Ethiopian Beta Israel refugees out of Sudan to Israel. Thereafter, he served on the board of the AAEJ until it ceased in 1992 after Operation Solomon. He was a board member of the San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education for 8 years. Sandy visited various Jewish communities in Africa, including the Lemba in South Africa and Zimbabwe, Beta Israel and Beta Avraham in Ethiopia, and Igbo Jews in Nigeria.

Sandy’s heroic rescue of Ethiopians in Sudan took place in the spring of 1983, before Operation Moses. Pictured on this page is the van he rode in with many Ethiopians being taken across the Sudanese desert at night to get to the coast where they were taken to Israel. Read the story from the Summer 2021 Kulanu Magazine here: bit.ly/SandyLeeder.

You can also hear about the rescue in Sandy’s own words in a November 2020 Zoom session. Along with two Ethiopian participants, Sandy tells a tale of escape. We also hear from Tesfey Aderajew, a translator, who accompanied Sandy across the Sudan, and from Dvora Zina-Zer, a child during the rescue, who is now writing her doctoral thesis on the American Association for Ethiopian Jews. Watch the recorded Zoom session here: bit.ly/SudanRescueBackstory.

In 2012, Sandy spent Passover in Zimbabwe. Read his journal as he shares details of his experience and his perspective here: bit.ly/SandyPassover2012.

We welcome you to learn more about Sandy’s incredible life on this memorial page at kulanu.org/sandy-leeder.

We know that Sandy’s memory will always be a blessing in the lives of all whom he cared for and loved, including *all of us* at Kulanu. *



The van Sandy rode in rescuing Ethiopians in Sudan, spring 1983

The Kulanu Collection:

Our Partner Communities' Stories in Film

By Keshi Taryan-Kigel, Multimedia Manager at Kulanu

Keshi earned her BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. She curates Kulanu's photography collection and creates weekly graphics for Kulanu's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms. Keshi is also a portrait and wildlife artist.

Worldwide Jewish communities observe Judaism through their practices, along with the religion's universal customs and traditions. From Debra Gonsker Vinik and David Vinik's *Yearning to Belong* filmed in Uganda in 2002 to Dani Rotstein's *Xueta Island* filmed in Majorca, Spain in late 2021, the documentaries listed at kulanu.org/films display the diversity among our partner communities. These films bring viewers closer to the sights and sounds of far-away lands, almost as if one is right there in the community itself, feeling the rhythm of the music, even imagining the scent of the food as it cooks, the heat of the sun shining down, the feeling of oneness with others of the same faith on the other side of our planet.

Xueta Island



Screenshot from *Xueta Island*: "If we have passed through all the protocols that determine the conversion of a Jew, then don't come and tell me that I am not Jewish."

Dani Rotstein's documentary *Xueta Island* explores the history of Majorca's little-known Xueta (pronounced "chuetas") community. As descendants of Jews who suffered persecution

during the Inquisition through the late 1600s, most of the Xuetas adopted Catholicism centuries ago and refuse to accept or learn about their Jewish roots. Rotstein acknowledges the dispute between those wanting to convert to Judaism and those who prefer to avoid their history. His purpose is to share the Xueta's history in the hopes of influencing a more tolerant and accepting future for the community's families who were marginalized and disdained in the past.

Journey to Judaism: the Story of Madagascar



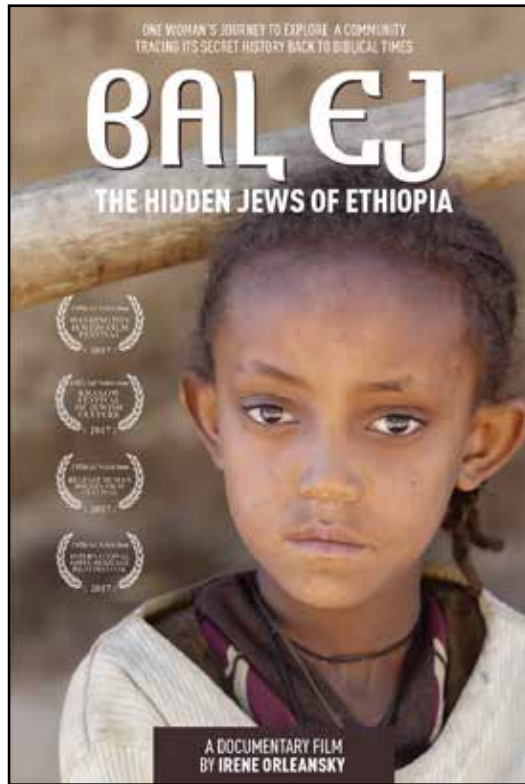
Shabbat celebration in *Journey to Judaism: the Story of Madagascar*

Joshua Kristal and Shneur Menaker's *Journey to Judaism: the Story of Madagascar* focuses on the newly emerging Jewish community in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. Kulanu was introduced to the community in 2013 and, upon being asked, brought a beit din of three rabbis to oversee more than 100 conversions in 2016. Kulanu invited filmmakers Joshua and Shneur to accompany the rabbis. The documentary captures what it meant for the people belonging to this community to become Jewish after searching for their purpose and finding it in Judaism.

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Bal Ej: The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia



Movie poster for *Bal Ej: The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia*

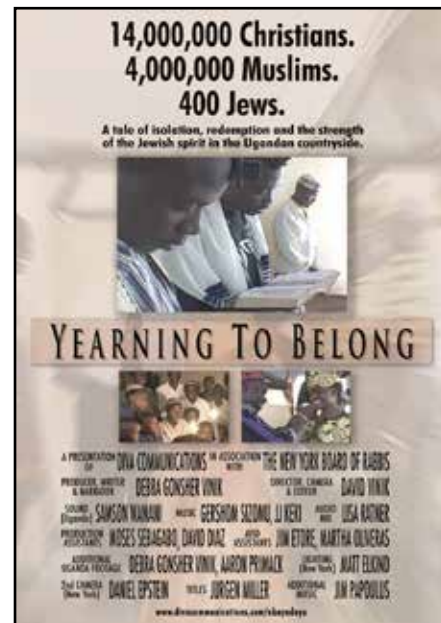
In her film *Bal Ej: The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia*, filmmaker Irene Orleansky discovers and explores a sect of secret Jews in Ethiopia. Among the community members are many craftsmen known for their skills as artisans. The community's Orthodox Christian neighbors have persecuted them, slandering them as evil-eyed and hyena-people, depriving them of basic rights such as ownership of land. Without land, they have made their livelihoods doing crafts, including pottery, weaving, and iron-smithing. To this day, fearing persecution, they outwardly present themselves as Christians and practice Judaism in strict secrecy. The synagogues are hidden deep in the mountains and had never before been visited by strangers. Some of their ancient traditions trace back to biblical times and have been completely forgotten by the rest of the world. The film lifts the curtain that kept this community hidden for hundreds of years and reveals the history, customs, and culture of this remarkable community for the world to see.

Los Nuevos Judíos de Guatemala



An impassioned Rebeca Orantes in *Los Nuevos Judíos de Guatemala*
Jeff Cipin's *Los Nuevos Judíos de Guatemala* explores the Adat Israel Reform congregation's behind-the-scenes events. The 2019 documentary features 18 members of the congregation undergoing conversions and shares their passionate reasons for becoming Jewish.

Yearning to Belong



Yearning to Belong movie poster

Kulanu invited David and Debra Gonsheer Vinik to accompany a beit din to Uganda in 2002. In their film *Yearning to Belong*, they share the Abayudaya community's history and Judaic traditions, along with their struggles for acceptance. This was the first Kulanu-related film, and it is rich in the music of the community and images of life in Africa. As in

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many of these films, the community members' passionate devotion to Judaism is very moving. The documentary, which has been shown at numerous film festivals, allows viewers to experience the sights and sounds of this extraordinary Jewish community in rural Africa.

Re-Emerging: the Jews of Nigeria



Screenshot from *Re-Emerging: the Jews of Nigeria* trailer

Jeff Lieberman's *Re-Emerging: the Jews of Nigeria* explores the Igbo community's history and dedication to Judaism. According to their oral history, their ancestors emigrated south from the land of Israel. In the terrible days of the slave trade, untold numbers of Igbo were shipped across the Atlantic to North America. Today, many Black Americans in Virginia—and everywhere throughout the United States—remain unaware of their Igbo roots. In Nigeria, a re-emerging community practices Judaism but continues to face opposition to their beliefs from Christian and Muslim neighbors.

Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana



Screenshot from *Re-Emerging: the Jews of Nigeria* trailer

In her popular film *Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana*, Gabrielle Zilkha tells the story of

how the small rural Sefwi Wiawso community decided to convert to Judaism based on their belief that their ancestry goes back to one of the ten lost tribes of Israel. They discovered that some of their traditions were similar to Jewish practices, thus influencing their desire to convert. Zilkha's documentary provides a look into the Sefwi Wiawso's struggles due to their population size compared to their neighbors. But the community's dedication and devotion to Judaism persists.



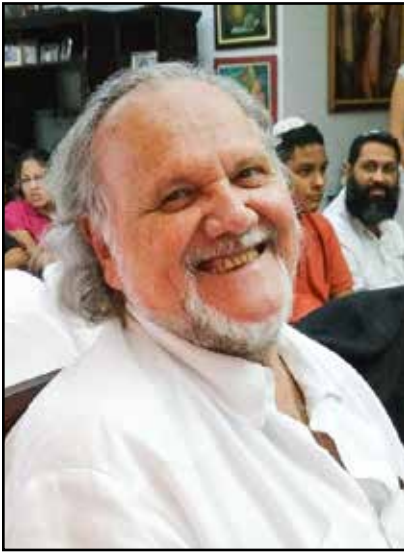
Kulanu Assists...

To help our partner communities become better known by people around the world, Kulanu encourages filmmakers to make films about these communities. Over the years, we have helped with small grants, provided advice and contacts to filmmakers, shared articles, photos, and videos about communities, organized showings of films with panel discussions and “after-parties,” and wrote about films on our website and through social networking. We list these films on our website at kulanu.org/films and provide the details so individuals can view them. Organizations can also book them for group programs.

Kulanu is grateful to the skilled filmmakers whose documentaries have informed, captivated, and inspired audiences around the world. Their films have introduced people around the world to Kulanu's partner communities, and incidentally, introduced Kulanu to a broader public. We thank them for their interest, dedication, daring (at times), and talent. We look forward to supporting, publicizing, and being amazed and charmed by more documentaries in the future. *

Remembering Kurt Eduardo Preiss, z”l

By Judi Kloper, Kulanu board member



Shavuot celebrated at Kurt and Veronica's home, June 2016

It is a tradition in Judaism that when someone dies, we say, “May his memory be for a blessing.” According to Jewish teachings, it is now up to the deceased’s loved ones to keep that person’s grace and goodness alive by speaking his name and carrying on his legacy. When Kurt Preiss, President

of Congregacion Israelita de Nicaragua (CIN), passed away on March 19, 2022, he left a great legacy for the Jews of Nicaragua to carry on.

Kurt was born in June 1946 in Colombia, South America, where his parents had settled after escaping the Holocaust in Germany. Soon after Kurt was born, his family moved to Honduras where Kurt grew up. His parents were concerned about his Jewish education, so he (and other

young Jews from Honduras) were sent to New York City to attend Yeshiva Heichal Hatorah. Kurt eventually lived in Los Angeles for several years where he studied engineering.

In 1962, at about age 20, Kurt immigrated to Nicaragua where he became a significant businessman. At that time in Nicaragua, most Jews of Central or Eastern European heritage maintained an established Jewish community in Managua, the capital. A synagogue was located in Managua, but during the revolution of the late 1970s-early 1980s, the synagogue, the Jewish cemetery, and even people’s property and businesses, including Kurt’s, were confiscated by the government. In 1979, many members of the Jewish community fled Nicaragua. It was estimated that there were, before they fled, 36 Jewish families that belonged to the synagogue. For several years, Kurt remained in exile in Miami, as did numerous other Nicaraguan Jews.

After returning to Nicaragua in 1991, Kurt established a leather tanning and leather goods business. Eventually, he opened a leather goods shop located in Granada which sold, among many things, beautiful purses, briefcases, and



Kurt with his wife, Veronica, during Kulanu's 2nd beit din visit, January 2014



Kurt Preiss and his wife Veronica (back row, 2nd and 3rd from left) and CIN members welcome Judi Kloper to Nicaragua for her six month stay. They are standing in front of Kurt and Veronica's shop, Exopiel. November 2015

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Kurt Preiss: *continued from previous page*

even shoes, all made right there and which were popular with the tourists in that Nicaraguan city.

As he settled back into life in Nicaragua, Kurt, together with Gerald Smith, a Jewish gentleman who was originally from England, reignited the Jewish community, called Congregacion Israelita de Nicaragua (CIN). They worked diligently to gather together those Jews who were now living in Nicaragua and the descendants of those CIN members from the pre-war period. Joining in this endeavor to reinvigorate the Jewish community was Carlos Perez who served as a teacher and spiritual guide. Luis Rene Urbina Bravo, a member of CIN, wrote about Kurt's and Gerald Smith's commitment to their Jewish community (translated from Spanish by Cindy Zimpfer):

We would like to nominate two great, devout, solid, Jewish men who fought to unite all of the Jewish descendants of the CIN since 1948 and also to integrate new members, opening doors to new conversations—I am referring to Gerald Smith and Kurt Preiss, two strongholds who maintained unity and grew Congregacion Israelita de Nicaragua. We had the privilege of having two presidents of the highest caliber – Gerald Smith, a serious Englishman who thought twice before speaking, and Kurt Preiss, a Colombian from Barranquilla with a joy of speaking and being and who graciously opened his house for parties . . . We deeply remember both men and their wives because they were part of our family during both sad and happy times. They were always there providing guidance, sharing their happy times with our happy

moments . . . Kurt and his wife, Veronica, established a significant precedent. Not only did they welcome the new members of CIN but they were also active in promoting conversions, conducting weddings and b'nai mitzvah, and celebrating all the Jewish holidays with the splendor each deserved. Because of them, many of us benefitted, and without their help, CIN could not have survived this period because of certain limitations. Their vision was always one of fostering Judaism with people who had a desire for its soul.

As I write this tribute to Kurt, I realize that I am leaving much unsaid. But I will share this small story. In November 2015, I traveled to Nicaragua to live for six months after being introduced to Kurt via email. (You can see my photo essay on page 22 of the Fall 2016 Kulanu magazine bit.ly/Fall2016Kulanu.) I was warmly welcomed by him and Veronica as one of their tenants at their home, La Fortaleza, just outside of Granada. In my first thirty minutes with Kurt after arriving, I learned about the Nicaraguan Jews who are bnei anusim, those whose ancestors suffered during the Inquisition, as well as those who came to Nicaragua escaping the pogroms of Eastern Europe and the Holocaust. The very next day, Kurt and Veronica arranged a welcome party where I was embraced by the children and adults of CIN. Kurt encouraged me to share whatever I could, which led to lessons, games, and songs for the children on Sundays as well as celebrating holidays and getting together just for fun, including members surprising me for my birthday. I felt such a sense of belonging and of family with everyone in CIN, thanks to Kurt and Veronica. It's my hope that Kurt's dedication to the Jewish community in Nicaragua will be a legacy that its members continue.

May Kurt's memory be a blessing in the lives of those whom he loved and who loved him, and especially in the lives of the members of Congregacion Israelita de Nicaragua.

To learn more about the Nicaraguan Jewish community and about Kurt Preiss, please see kulanu.org/communities/nicaragua. *



Shavuot, Kurt on left, Luis Rene Urbina Bravo on right in back, Gerald Smith in back in blue talis, May 2015

Matzah: More Than Just a Few Crumbs

Article and photos by Ari Greenspan

Dr. Ari Greenspan has been a dentist, a mohel, and a shochet for the past 30 years. He studied at Yeshiva University under the famed Rabbi Soloveitchik, and has worked for more than 30 years on collecting mesorot (ancient Jewish traditions) from far-flung Jewish communities around the globe. He is a frequent contributor to Mishpacha magazine and writes extensively for other journals. Dr. Greenspan has been producing Judaic art for 25 years, enjoying wood, metal, and glass media.

As the Jews were leaving Egypt approximately 3,300 years ago, in their haste to leave the bondage and slavery of Pharaoh, the dough that they mixed did not have time to rise before it was baked. With that, the holiday of Passover took form.

Mix some flour and water and bake it within 18 minutes, say the rabbis of the Talmud close to 2000 years ago. Presto, you have unleavened bread — the matzah that so uniquely identifies

the holiday. But of course nothing is ever so simple. In fact, matzah is one of the few utterly Jewish icons left. Jews, wherever they were in whatever time period, no matter who they were, always were concerned about procuring or baking matzah for Passover. And not just any matzah would do. They wanted, when possible, kosher for Passover matzah.

The flour used for the matzot at the seder, the festive holiday meal and service, must come from one of the five grains mentioned in the Bible, commonly identified today as wheat, spelt, barley, oats, and rye. From the moment it is cut, the grains must be “watched” — in the language of the Talmud — so they do not get wet and begin to leaven. Even today, the matzot used for the fulfillment of the commandment of eating matzah at the seder are protected from any water until the moment of mixing. The water itself, according to tradition, should be drawn from a spring and must not be warm, for this might hasten the chemical reaction of the leavening process. Thus, the water is drawn the evening before the baking and stored indoors in a cool room. It even has a special name, *mayim she’lanu*, meaning water that rested overnight. So central was the matzah to the Jewish people that many medieval-illuminated manuscripts (manuscripts from a thousand years ago, often detailed with gold leaf and colorful hand-painted images) show scenes of the matzah and the processes leading up to its baking.



Eating matzah baked in Ethiopia in 2022



Sharing matzah in Ethiopia in 2022

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History of Making Matzah

Even *when* to bake the matzah was often an important concern. For much of Jewish history, the custom was to bake the matzah on the afternoon of *erev Pesach*. This custom was so deeply entrenched that in an 11th century text, *Ma'ase ha'Geomin*, the shocking story is recorded of an incidence when a person baked his matzah on the morning of *erev Pesach*, and the majority of rabbinic authorities wanted to prohibit him from using those matzot for the seder. However, *Ma'ase Geonim* reports that two of the leading rabbis from Magence, while agreeing that one should not do such a thing, permitted the matzah post-facto. The practice of baking on Passover eve is still observed by some people today and is often accompanied by joyous singing.

For all those thousands of years, matzah was made by hand. The flour was measured, the water drawn, a timer set for 18 minutes. Then, with excitement, noise, song, and camaraderie,

the dough was mixed for the sake of the mitzvah, rolled into circles, perforated to let the steam escape so that it did not swell into a pita, and finally put into a hot oven to bake. Each Jewish subculture made their Passover breads slightly differently. The Jews of the Arab world made soft, thick, pita-like matzot in their local ovens. The dough was slapped on the wall of the furnace and plucked off the side when brown, before it fell into the glowing embers below. The Iranian matzot were huge, close to a meter in diameter. The Iraqis marked theirs with one, two, or three “pinches” to identify the three matzot used during the seder ceremony. The Ashkenazim of Eastern Europe made a thin cracker-like round matzah that was crunchy all week. The soft matzot of the Sephardim turned stale and were baked fresh daily.

With the Industrial Revolution, hundreds of thousands of Jews migrated from the hinterland to the growing cities of Europe. No longer could the small local bakeries making matzot by hand supply the huge demand in the large cities. Thus, around 1850, a matzah machine was invented. This contraption allowed much more dough to be mixed at once. Later versions even mechanized the rolling and perforating process. Acerbic rabbinic debate about the suitability of mechanization ensued, but the wheels of progress could not be slowed. By the turn of the century, huge matzah companies in the USA like Manichewitz, Horowitz Margareten, and Streits had made matzah a household word and their matzot was acceptable to all but the most rigorous of rabbis. Manichewitz actually patented the conveyor belt oven that is today standard in many commercial bakeries of all sorts.

The history of the people of Israel unfortunately is replete with falsehoods that caused suffering at the hands of antisemites, one of the most wicked concerning matzot. Among the most vile and widespread lies is that of the “blood libel.” It started in England in 1144 with little William of Norwich. The young lad went missing and when his body was found, it had been mutilated. A

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Matzah baked by Yemenite Jews in Abu Dhabi, 2022

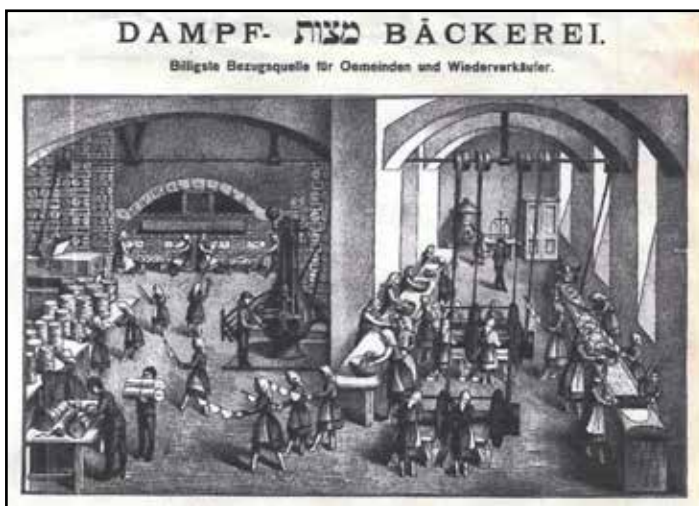
rumor started that the Jews had killed him for his blood which, so the accusation went, was needed to make the ritual matzot. A mob frenzy occurred and Jews were killed. Despite Vatican pronouncements to the contrary, this libel spread and continued to be used throughout the ages, often resulting in a killing frenzy if it was not stopped soon enough. Lest you think this is from days and places far away, know that such an accusation occurred in upstate New York in 1928, is still rife in the Muslim world, and even appeared in 2007 in Ukraine.

Due to the fact that without matzah many Jews would be close to starvation during the week of Passover, there was always a need to help the poor and destitute who could not afford to buy it. Also, during times of famine or strife it could be hard to come by. Charities that distribute matzah were and still are necessary in the Jewish community. The Joint Distribution Committee helped provide matzah for many destitute and displaced people after World Wars I and II, and continues through today, shipping matzot to Russia, Bulgaria, and Cuba, and other places.

A group of Jews who had particular difficulty obtaining matzah were the *anusim* (Jews forced to convert during the Inquisition) of Spanish and Portuguese descent who immigrated to the New World. Over the years, they developed various

means of baking matzah that would not result in the cruel arm of the Inquisition punishing them. Anusim in New Spain (now known as Mexico), found a unique solution to the problem of matzah baking: they found a form of bread that predated the arrival of Europeans to the New World — the tortilla, a type of thin, unleavened flat bread made from finely ground maize or wheat flour. In fact, this was the type of bread eaten in Texas and Mexico during the Christian holiday of Lent, which corresponds to Pesach. Christians began to call this bread *Pan de Semitas*, Semitic Bread. Although there were several reports of matzah being baked in Mexico, for the most part the anusim there would eat tortillas for the eight days of Pesach as a way of avoiding bread with yeast.

Today, many of the smaller Jewish communities import their matzah from larger centers, including Israel, the USA, Britain, and France. This was not always the case and small communities had to arrange their own production, sometimes leading to anomalous situations. One of the smallest communities is New Zealand and in 1890, the non-kosher Aulsebrook Biscuit Company in Christchurch began baking matzah that was delivered to such places as Wellington for Passover. When the local supervisor of the Aulsebrook matzah production left, concern was raised about the reliability of the matzot and, indeed, in 1892 biscuit pieces were discovered in the matzah!



German steam-powered matzah baker, 19th century



Image from a Venice Haggadah, 1609

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Matzah: *continued from previous page*

In Israel, it is not only people who eat matzah. When Passover comes around, even the zoo animals are fed matzah. Because no one may own any leavened products, the diet of the zoo animals must be adjusted to remove all bread and crackers. The gorillas at the Ramat Gan Safari are accustomed to eating a slice of bread with cream cheese every morning, but come Passover, that bread is replaced with matzah. It is not only the gorillas — all of the primates and most of the ruminants receive some.

Jews in the military are sometimes challenged to find matzah during Passover. Chaplains the world over and through every campaign of the last 200 years have provided for their needs. One can find matzah everywhere from aircraft carriers to tanks. The Israeli army in particular makes matzah, wine, and all the provisions for a seder available to every soldier.

Kulanu Communities

Our partner communities face the difficulty every year of trying to obtain matzot. In principle, it is easy — just order online and get it shipped. However, in practice that is not the case. First, for the vast majority of the people, the costs associated with that are completely out of their reach. Even if they could somehow afford it, in many countries the taxes, import duties, and corruption make it close to impossible to arrange.

As a result, I have often tried to teach people how to bake matzah. In the bottom right photo, I am showing those in the Igbo community of Nigeria how to bake matzah. There was no clean surface to work on so I suggested cutting some banana leaves. The excitement and 18 minute time limitation is beautifully captured by the expressions and body postures of the three men baking.

The imagery of the matzah is one of slavery turning to freedom. The dry simple fare of the slave was eaten to remind us from whence we came. It also heralds for us the freedom that was to be. Kulanu strives to help bring that spiritual freedom to communities around the globe. ✱



Kids at play during the matzah baking in Gondar, Ethiopia, 2022



Ari Greenspan in Puti, Uganda making matzah using an improvised oven, 2011



Matzah baking in Nigeria, 2016, using a banana leaf

Changing the Lives of Deaf Children in Uganda

Originally written in 2012 by Judy Manelis, updated by Laura Wetzler and Barbara Vinick

Photos by Lorne Mallin

In 2008, Laura Wetzler, then Kulanu's extraordinary coordinator for the Abayudaya Jewish community, visited the economically impoverished village of Namutumba during her yearly stay in Uganda. She encountered, within that Jewish community, six hearing-impaired children, ages four to fifteen, for the first time. These children had never attended school; their communication skills were limited to a few signs recognizable only by family members.

In her article published in Kulanu Magazine in 2012, Judy Manelis recounted the history of Kulanu's and Laura's involvement with these deaf children:

Although Laura had visited the village before, she had no knowledge that these children existed. As in many societies with little or no experience meeting people with disabilities and superstitious about the reasons for [disabilities], families had kept the children hidden, fearful of exposing them to possible ridicule or bullying by others.

As Laura reported, the six youngsters had never met other deaf children or adults and "were vulnerable and withdrawn."

Laura could not and would not leave these six children to a life of isolation and dependency. The children needed the opportunity to attend school, develop some practical

skills, and attend vocational training classes so they could achieve some level of economic security and independence. Just as important was giving them the self-confidence to communicate with others and to enable them to integrate more fully into the life of their community.

The article portrays Laura's search for a school able to address the special needs of these children. Two Abayudaya students studying counseling at the local university helped in her exploration. She was also fortunate to obtain valuable support from Hedy Cohen, a dear long-time friend of Kulanu. A former educator of the deaf from Illinois, Hedy would spend five or six weeks in the Abayudaya community every year, working on health-related issues. Finally, after searching throughout southeast Uganda, they discovered the Kavule Parents' School for the Deaf outside of Mbale, the main city of the area, founded and directed by Sam Katue.

Laura drafted a proposal and budget for a program to pay for tuition and boarding expenses for the six Abayudaya children, transportation, medical needs, and parental visits. Dr. Liz Feldman, a family physician in Chicago, came to the rescue with funding of \$2800 a year with the help of her congregation. As Judy Manelis wrote in her article:

Dr. Feldman's mother-in-law had learned about the Abayudaya community while watching a [documentary] on television entitled *Yearning to Belong* about the



The six Abayudaya children from Namutumba who attended Kavule Parents School for the Deaf, 2009



Students at the Kavule Parents School for the Deaf in class, 2009

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Abayudaya community's conversion to Judaism. It was just the kind of story she thought her daughter-in-law would enjoy. She was right. When she saw the film, Dr. Feldman noted a name and number at the bottom of the screen for people who might want to help the community. The name was Laura Wetzler. Liz called and was referred to Hedy Cohen who, miraculously, lived only a few blocks away from Dr. Feldman [in Evanston, Illinois].

Liz Feldman's support for the program for the deaf Abayudaya children went even further. On Facebook she noticed an organization, World of Children, that gave out yearly humanitarian awards to people who had made a difference in the lives of children. Dr. Feldman nominated the Kavule school's founder Sam Kateu. In 2009 he was awarded \$50,000 to pay for improvements to the school. Moreover, as the article reported, "World of Children arranged for the Canadian-based Ryan's Well, a former recipient of their

humanitarian award, to donate a well costing \$14,000 that brought fresh water to the school."

Because children in poor families in Uganda sometimes have to take turns going to school, there is often age diversity in classrooms. Therefore, it was not unusual that the original six children at the Kevule School were in mixed-age classes according to their individual needs. They made great progress. In 2012, Laura reported:

[The children] are communicating in the official sign language of the deaf used in Uganda, as well as in written English. They are connecting for the first time with people outside of their families. They are blossoming. And they know they are not alone . . . The children are now more outgoing and happier and have hopes of facing adulthood with real life skills.

Since 2012, the Abayudaya deaf education program has continued with the help of generous donors, including a crucial contribution of \$10,000 from one couple who read the original article. Three students have completed the program, and two new deaf students have entered school. Now, as of 2022, five students are currently enrolled: two in elementary school, two in secondary school, and one in vocational training. Very recently, Laura sent an update: "The students that have been through our program are working in their own small businesses and as tradespeople earning their own living. But more importantly, they are thriving in their English literacy and math skills, in their ability to communicate, and in their confidence. They are better integrated into the hearing world using English, and they are members of a vibrant deaf social culture using Uganda Sign Language. The world is open to them, thanks to their education."

Laura ended with "In order to expand this program, \$5,000 per year is needed, and a multi-year pledge would be helpful in planning. Please be in touch at kulanu.org/contact if you can help. Thank you!" *



Six Abayudaya children who have attended the Kavule Parents School for the Deaf holding their Hebrew alphabet cards, 2009

Planning & Planting for Kulanu's Future



By Lili Kaufmann

Lili is a Kulanu board member and serves as the chair of Kulanu's legacy giving initiative. She is a founding member of the National Lion of Judah Endowment program and co-chair with her husband of their synagogue's Grinspoon Life and Legacy campaign. Lily resides in Florida.

For the past 25 years, Kulanu has helped our partner communities around the globe to grow and succeed, just as our organization itself has continued to grow and succeed. Thanks to our wonderful donors, Kulanu has expanded its outreach and our ability to meet the needs of more communities in every corner of the world. We want to continue our help for the next 25 years and beyond. How can we be sure that we will be able to do that? The answer is a legacy fund that will ensure that Kulanu's work of strengthening the Jewish world will continue into the future. Your letter of intention for a legacy gift will enable us to plan our financial future and be assured that Kulanu will continue to thrive.

Our tradition teaches us to plant for the future as our forefathers have done for us. The leadership of Kulanu is engaged in an effort to build a legacy fund which will enable Kulanu to continue assisting isolated, emerging, and returning Jewish communities for years to come. To that



end, the Kulanu board overwhelmingly endorsed this effort with their own commitments to leave a legacy gift to Kulanu as part of their after-lifetime giving.

Lynne Elson, z"l, Marvin Wolf, z"l, and Max Amichai Heppner were three trailblazers in making legacy gifts to Kulanu.

Lynne Elson was 85 years old when she first visited the Abayudaya community in Uganda. She felt so connected to the community that she returned to teach and work with them. Upon her passing, she decided to turn her love for her adopted community into a legacy, leaving Kulanu a gift of \$32,000.

Kulanu board member Rabbi Barbara Aiello wrote of her friendship with **Marvin Wolf**, whom she met in a physical therapy clinic office in Sarasota, Florida. Whenever they lunched together, they spoke about Kulanu, our partner communities, and her congregation in southern Italy. "I love the work that Kulanu does. Especially that Harriet! She's Kulanu's 'balabusta (manager extraordinaire),' for sure," he told her. When Marvin passed



Lynne Elson, z"l, an 85-year old volunteer and former Mitzvah Tour participant, teaching Hebrew at Hadassah Primary School in Uganda, 2007



Marvin Wolf, z"l, in Cuba

continued on next page

Legacy Planning: *continued from previous page*

away in 2021, Kulanu, including our balabusta, were very grateful to receive a \$40,000 donation from his charitable trust, plus one-third of his IRA which was another approximately \$15,000.



Max Amichai Heppner, who named Kulanu to receive funds from a trust upon his death

Amichai Heppner has designated Kulanu as a beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust originally created by his mother. The beneficiaries of the trust, including Kulanu, will receive funds that are left in the trust when he is deceased. The share assigned to Kulanu is currently worth about \$30,000. Amichai wrote:

In her last years of life, I worked with my mother to find the best way to pass on her legacy after her death. With the help of a financial advisor, we set up a charitable remainder trust, among other approaches. The funds in the trust don't incur an inheritance tax. The original donor (my mom) and the next generation (me, an only child) get monthly payouts, which are set by the manager of the trust – in our case, a bank with a trust department. The payouts vary from year to year, depending on how the market affects the funds from the trust that the managing company invests, with advice from me and my financial advisor.

We studied my mother's record of charitable donations and I reviewed my own preferences, which led me to select beneficiaries of the trust. These beneficiaries will share the proceeds of the trust, which will be liquidated when I die. I had the option to have the trust continue after I die, which would have made the most sense if my heirs wanted to stretch out the payments over several years. That option would seem most attractive if the heirs wanted to keep the trust going by

adding further contributions. My heirs preferred to just let the trust dissolve upon my death.

I feel closest to charitable organizations like Kulanu that connect people, and my selections reflect this. My late mother and I both are Holocaust survivors and, of course, are distressed beyond words at the murder of so many Jewish people. In my own work with Kulanu I discovered many separated communities that want to join the Jewish mainstream, and I want to encourage us in the mainstream to welcome this opportunity to regain our numbers. Those in the know told me that there are potentially far more than six million anusim just in the former Spanish colonies in America. So with Kulanu, I am able to help deserving people, those who are glad to reach out to us, and at the same time strengthen the Jewish people worldwide. I personally think we should encourage these "separated" communities to develop their own style of Judaism with our help. And Kulanu helps us, as members, to connect personally with members of separated communities to expand our own knowledge of what it can mean to be actively and exuberantly Jewish.

We Welcome YOU as a Legacy Donor

The endowment leadership is now looking to you, our committed donors, to say "*Hineni*, I am here." If you have already included Kulanu in your estate or retirement plan, please let us know so we can welcome you as a legacy donor. If you would like to support Kulanu's efforts in perpetuity, please complete the Letter of Intent. You can mail the form on the next page to Kulanu, use the online version at kulanu.org/intent, or contact Lili Kaufmann at kulanu.org/contact to discuss this. Kulanu is grateful for ANY amount of a legacy gift. We appreciate our donors' faith that our work with Jewish communities around the world is valuable and must continue.



continued on next page



KULANU LEGACY FUND

PLANNING AND PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE

The Talmud says, "As my ancestors planted for me, so do I plant for those who will come after me."

Commit to helping secure the future of Kulanu and global Jewish communities by completing this form.

Letter of Intent Form

DONOR(S) INFORMATION

Name(s) :

Address :

City : State :

Zip Code : Cell Phone:

Other Phone: Date of Birth : / /

Email(s):

I/We prefer to be contacted: ☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ Text ☐ Postal mail

COMMITMENT

☐ I/We have already committed to a legacy gift and it is legally documented.

☐ Today, I/we make a/our commitment and will legally formalize it within the next ____ months.

GIFT INFORMATION

☐ Gift in Will or Trust ☐ Cash

☐ Beneficiary of Retirement Plan ☐ Beneficiary of Donor Advised Fund

☐ Beneficiary of Life Insurance Policy ☐ Other: _____

The value of my gift will be \$ _____ or _____ %.

PERMISSION TO LIST

To encourage others to make commitments to the future, I/we permit my/our name to be listed as follows:

☐ I/We wish to remain anonymous at this time.

DATE

/ /

Donor Signature(s)

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To fill out the form online, please visit: <https://www.kulanu.org/intent>

Kulanu Notes

Passover Donations to Partner Communities



This year Kulanu assisted with holiday celebrations for Passover for those in Cameroon (pictured are some children of Beth Yeshourun), Kenya, Pakistan, Suriname, and Zimbabwe. These grants were used to help pay the costs of community seders. To learn more, watch the special online class with Rabbi Dr. Ari Greenspan to learn about matzah baking, laws, and history and see photos of matzah baking around the world at bit.ly/DrAriMatzah.

Nangolo Synagogue

The Abayudaya community in Nangolo, Uganda completed construction of a new synagogue. Joel and Melanie Beattie of Chase NW Roofing (chasenw.com) in Seattle gave and raised about \$12,000, and Kulanu sent \$7,500. The Kahal Kadosh Beit Shalom Congregation held an opening ceremony on Sunday, April 10, 2022. More than a hundred people attended the event. See photos of the construction through the celebration at bit.ly/Uganda22photos.



Nangolo is the home of JJ and Miriam Keki, leaders in the Abayudaya community. In the 1970s, when Idi Amin banned Judaism in Uganda, people in Nangolo prayed in caves. When Idi Amin was overthrown on the eve of Passover, 1979, they held a joyous seder celebration. We share the community's delight that they have their own synagogue now. This photo shows JJ Keki (on left) with Jacob Mulabi, who served as liaison with Kulanu, and Joel Beattie.

Ukrainian Refugees Welcomed in Italy



Rabbi Barbara Aiello, Kulanu's second vice president and community leader of our partner community in Italy, assisted in bringing fourteen mothers and children to safety in her Jewish community from the Polish border with Ukraine. "In Esther's Name—the Ukrainian Refugee Project" brought Jewish, Christian, and secular families to the mountain village that is home to Sinagoga Ner Tamid del Sud.

Read more about their experience and motivation here: bit.ly/Esther-01 and bit.ly/Esther-02.

Ukrainian moms and kids, *In Esther's Name—the Ukrainian Refugee Project*

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Notes: continued from previous page

Grants Sent to Partner Communities

Kulanu recently sent funds to **Kenya** for a latrine, internet access, and a post office box where the community can receive packages.

The Jewish community in Arusha, **Tanzania** completed a *mikvah* (for ritual immersions) with the help of a Kulanu mini-grant, which partially funded the project. The funds were transferred quickly in order to allow for the construction to continue at a very fast pace to ensure that the building would be completed prior to the rainy season. This is especially important since the rain will be collected and stored to be the source of the mikvah water (see photo of its construction).

In addition, Kulanu sent two new laptops to assist a new partner community in **Asia** with their connection to the wider world and online learning. One of these was specifically requested for a woman leader to teach women and girls.

We also sent funds to **Suriname** for community support. In **Zimbabwe**, we also funded operations of the Harare Lemba Synagogue, the unique music program within the synagogue, and an agriculture program to aid the community's self-sufficiency.



Uganda Education Projects



In Uganda, Kulanu provided funds for teachers at Ben David Primary School in Apac, for Hadassah Primary School scholarships, and for an Apac sewing center with a training program. We also continued to pay for the education of deaf children from Namutumba (see p. 12 for more about this program).

Working with Global Village Connect, Kulanu is developing a farm to provide sustainable food to Hadassah Primary School in Mbale, Uganda (pictured). Kulanu is helping fundraisers support a needs-based Aaron Kintu Moses Memorial

Scholarship Fund, in memory of Hadassah School's founding headmaster. This spring, Emunah from Uganda and Dia from Winnipeg are fundraising for the scholarship fund. A matching gift donor has promised to match the first \$5,000 raised by Emunah and Dia. You can help by donating or sharing their appeals: bit.ly/AKMFund.

continued on next page

New Kulanu Video and Matching Gift Fundraiser



Video screenshot of Moshe from Nicaragua who now lives in Spain

This past May, Kulanu released a new short video showcasing our work supporting isolated, emerging, and returning Jewish communities around the globe. This video is featured on the home page of our website, and can be used to introduce Kulanu to various groups by offering a deeper understanding of the work Kulanu does. The seven and a half minute video was debuted as part of a matching gift campaign fundraiser with a goal to raise \$40,000 total for assisting our partner communities around the globe. Take a look at kulanu.org/give to learn more and watch the progress.

Judaica Items Needed

Kulanu donates Judaica items to our partner communities around the globe. Each item is lovingly cared for in its new home. Do you have (or know of a place where we can acquire) any of the following items: tefillin, tallitot, Torah (even a 12-18 inch paper Torah is very appreciated), scrolls (megillah, Book of Ruth), and Tikkun Korim? If so, please visit kulanu.org/ways-to-donate and fill out the form online. If you are traveling to any of the communities we work with, you can help deliver these gifts for Kulanu — it's a great way to connect with a local Jewish community.



Judi Klopfer delivering Judaica items in Erode, India

Welcome Back Mili



Mili Leitner Cohen is originally from the UK, and completed her undergraduate degree in violin performance before encountering Kulanu as part of her PhD studies in Ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago.

Mili worked for Kulanu from 2015-2018 as communications director, and is delighted to return in 2022. Mili studied at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem for three years, including two in the Kollel.

She was the first Orthodox woman employed in a rabbinical role in Australia, and is a qualified *shohetet uvodeket* (Jewish ritual slaughterer). She currently also works for Musica Judaica, the Jewish music journal, as assistant editor, and her research on Jewish liturgy has been published in various academic journals.

continued on next page

Two Conferences Featuring Kulanu Partners



Kulanu was thrilled that two conferences took place in April to discuss isolated, emerging, and returning Jewish communities around the globe: 1. *Contemporary Jewry in Sub-Saharan Africa Symposium, The Voices of Jewish-African Leaders*, and 2. *Distant Relatives: Looking at Emerging Groups and Communities With Affinities to the Jewish People*. Many Kulanu partner communities and friends of Kulanu were featured in both conferences. We are delighted that African Jewry is being spoken about so widely and by so many important international institutions and groups.

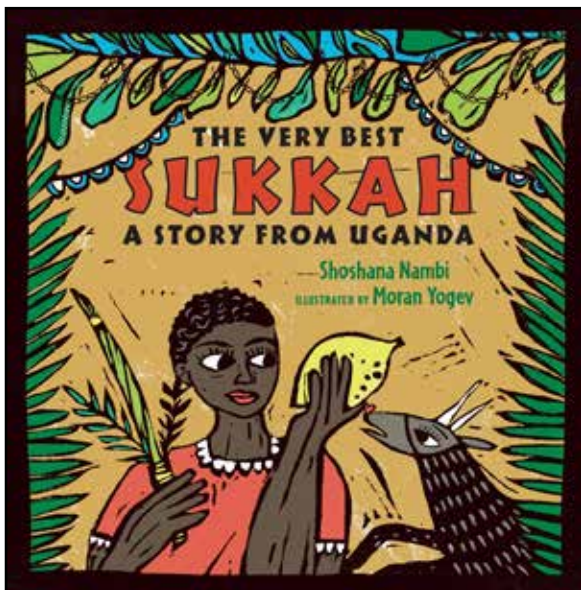
More information can be found here: bit.ly/Partners-Conferences.

A Kulanu Convergence in Boston

Three Kulanu board members and part of the magazine's editorial team had a spontaneous meeting in Boston, MA recently when Judi Kloper was visiting; Barbara Vinick hosted her and Ben Lefkowitz who just received his masters degree from Harvard and is soon to make aliyah to Israel.



The Very Best Sukkah: A Story from Uganda



Shoshana Nambi, a rabbinical student from Uganda studying at Hebrew Union College in New York City, will delight children with her first book about her favorite holiday, Sukkot. In the book, Shoshi and her brothers decorate their sukkah for the Ugandan Abayudan community's annual sukkah contest. While only one sukkah can be the best, everybody wins when neighbors work together.

The book, joyously illustrated by Yoran Mogevev, will be for sale on Sept. 6, just in time for the holidays. You can preorder the book on Amazon (amzn.to/3y7WlHV). Harriet Bograd, Kulanu's president, has already ordered a copy for her grandchildren! *

Thank You, Donors

Donations listed below were received between May 1, 2021 and April 30, 2022. Please contact us at kulanu.org/contact if we have missed your name or contribution and we will list you in a future magazine. *Thank you!*

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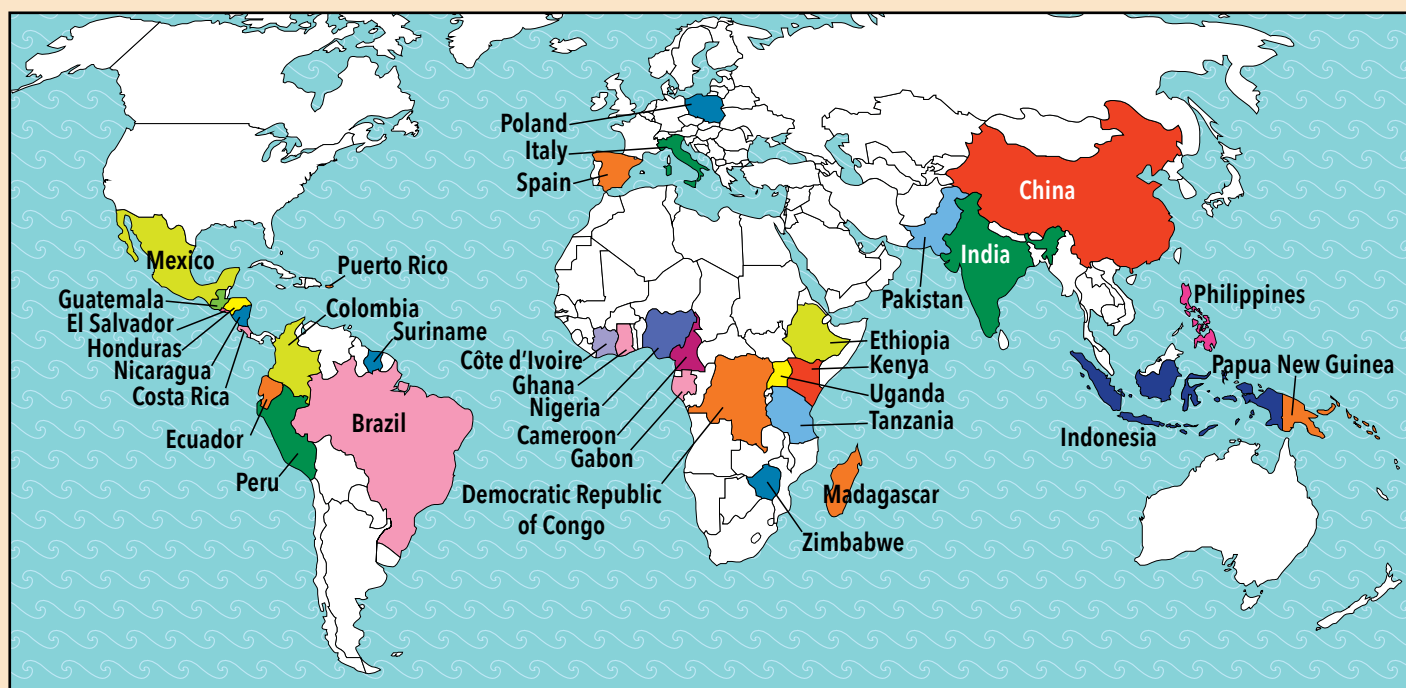
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Where in the World is Kulanu?



Our primary mission at Kulanu is to support isolated, emerging, and developing Jewish communities around the world. We aim to create global networks for our partner communities and strive for their greater recognition by world Jewry.

Some partner communities are returning to their Jewish roots, such as the *bnei anusim*, who were forced to convert to Christianity in Spain and Portugal in the 15th century and some of whom continued to practice Judaism in secret. Today their descendants can be found in our partner communities across the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese-speaking world. Other communities embraced Judaism from scratch, often in complete isolation. Other groups have developed a Jewish practice on their own, such as the *Abayudaya* in Uganda, who have been practicing Judaism for over a century. More still lay claim to their status as a “lost” tribe of Israel, including groups in India and China.

In total, we have connected with communities in more than thirty countries. We invite you to visit the interactive map on our website to explore those with whom we are currently collaborating and to learn about their Jewish practice and everyday life. You can find our interactive map here: kulanu.org/communities.