



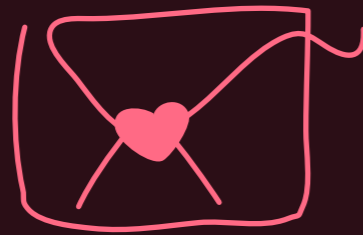
Photo by Debbie Hill, originally for One Magazine.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Kuchinate
African Refugee Women's
Collective in Tel Aviv

קוצינטה
קולקטיב פליטות
אפריקאיות בתל אביב

A MESSAGE from the FOUNDING DIRECTORS of Kuchinate



Dear Friends,

We finish 2020 with a sense of great pride; for the resilience of the Kuchinate community in persevering, we rallied our spirits, focused our energies and persevered despite the global pandemic that could potentially have crushed us. **No one in our community lost their home and no one went hungry.** As a result of such economic resilience, we were able to achieve an overall sense of well-being, security and stability and many members of our community were even able to think about and work on helping others in the wider community.

Each and every one of you, our supporters in your many ways, is part of this miracle, and we cannot thank you enough for your care, enthusiasm and support. **Resilience can only flourish in an enabling and supportive environment,** and you have all been essential to the success of this environment, in the many ways you have supported us during this year of crisis and uncertainty.

Kuchinate is extremely proud to report some key highlights and achievements of 2020 in the following Annual Report. We hope this will give you some insight as to the initiative and creativity cultivated by our women during this challenging year.

The interaction of all of us together as community artisans, staff, volunteers, board, donors, supporters, customers, and partners,

helps us to dynamically move onwards and upwards. In 2021, our goal is to achieve well-being, strength, and resilience to as many of the most vulnerable women in the African asylum-seeking community as possible. We hope and pray to continue to have you with us on this journey, and look forward to working, collaborating, innovating, and creating in a safe and compassionate environment as we meet the challenges of 2021.

We thank G-d for his blessings, and from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for your friendship, kindness, support, and generosity.

With love and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and peaceful 2021!

Sister Aziza and Diddy

(Sister Azezet Habtezghi Kidane & Dr. Diddy Mymin Kahn)

Co-Founders and Directors



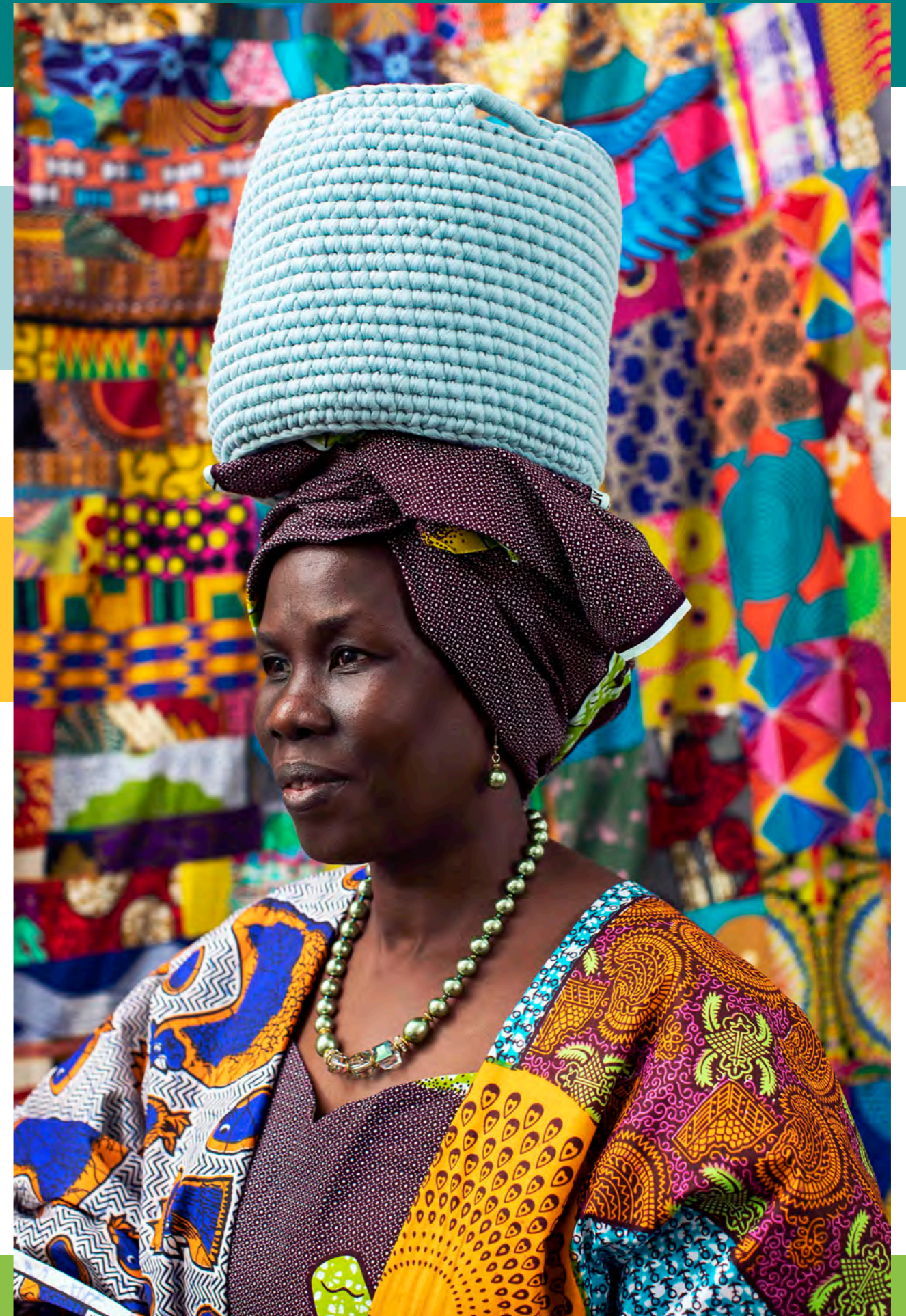
Photo by Debbie Hill



Kuchinate's Goal

is to achieve **resilience** and **well-being** through a holistic approach which includes **economic empowerment, psycho-social and community support, vocational training and public advocacy** through different modes of art.

Kuchinate takes pride in using this unique approach to strengthen, **uplift and empower hundreds** of the most vulnerable women within the African asylum-seeking community.



Lena photographed by Michael Topyol



Brkti photograph by Michael Topyol

Empowering Kuchinate Women



236
women

Active members in the collective



107
artisans

Receive a steady income through Kuchinate



8
managers

At Kuchinate are asylum seeking women



43
new members

Joined during the COVID-19 period



New members: 43 new women asked to join during the COVID-19 period, and immediately received psychosocial support. They continue to come on a weekly basis for this support and guidance, and the hope is that they will soon learn how to make our products, and be able to receive a salary.

The global pandemic had a catastrophic effect on the asylum seeking community, with thousands losing their jobs and having no safety net to fall back on.

At Kuchinate, many of our women lost their part-time jobs, plunging them into insecurity and fear.

Thousands of customers supported the women by buying our products, enabling them to keep working and producing.

Without your support we wouldn't have been able to increase the salaries and offer income to all of our women in 2020!

To hear the stories of Kuchinate women Selam Gonots, Lina Jak Agolon, Asmeret Haray and Eden Gebre told in their own words, watch our videos here: [Strings of Hope](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RBaOnQ3Z3I&t=103s>

video by Dekel Eizenberg



Psychosocial Pivoting during the Pandemic

The holistic approach of Kuchinate was developed to combine the resilience building and therapeutic effect of handiwork within an open and culturally appropriate social therapeutic setting in the studio, together with the creation of income-generating products that express African pride and cultural beauty. All this contributes to the overall well being and mental health of our women.

Due to the stress and economic pressure of the pandemic, we offered a range of additional formats for support and advice, such as monthly “buna talks” (coffee talks) to small groups of women and daily contact during lockdowns over the phone to map the needs of the women.



“Hotline for support” was opened by the psychosocial staff during lockdowns and we worked around the clock on the telephone providing crisis intervention, support and advice to over 100 women.



Stress management groups are offered on a weekly basis



Social work intervention with open door policy and “drop in” system is offered in the studio



Videoclips about coping with Covid-19 and stress management were disseminated to the whole community via whatsapp in collaboration with partner organisations



Psychosocial support for the whole collective is provided on an ongoing basis



Children's club: Our after school program provided 20 children with extra curricular activities such as art, yoga, health education, storytelling and support with schoolwork (moved successfully to Zoom during lockdowns).



Michal Zimri and Tsaga Gbrwlde - Photo by Miriam Alster



Diddy Mymin, Sister Aziza and Fanus Hagos photo by Debbie Hill, originally for One Magazine



The pandemic face-mask quickly became our bestseller, generating 39% of our online revenue.



Joan Ewan photo by Michael Topyol

Usually workshops, coffee-ceremonies, and events held in the studio are important sources of income. After the Covid-19 restrictions came into place, we shifted our focus to e-commerce and online sales. We started to design and create a new line of diverse products made from colorful African fabric, such as bags, masks, pillows and tablecloths, that would be light enough to ship and appeal to a new and wider audience. The pandemic face-mask quickly became our bestseller, generating 39% of our online revenue.



Joan Ewan photo by Michael Topyol

Economic Pivoting During the Pandemic



Revenue: despite Covid-19, we increased our revenue by 16.5 % compared to 2019

Sewing: professional sewing classes were provided for 20 women. They created a new line of products. The generous donations of sewing machines from donors enabled the women to work from home during lockdowns.

Trainings: professional training was provided for all women of the collective by the asylum seeking managers in basic and advanced crochet techniques, embroidery, candle making, books making, rag carpet making, doll making and accessories (such as bracelets and keyrings).

Classes: we started to offer classes for the women, such as English and computer skills.

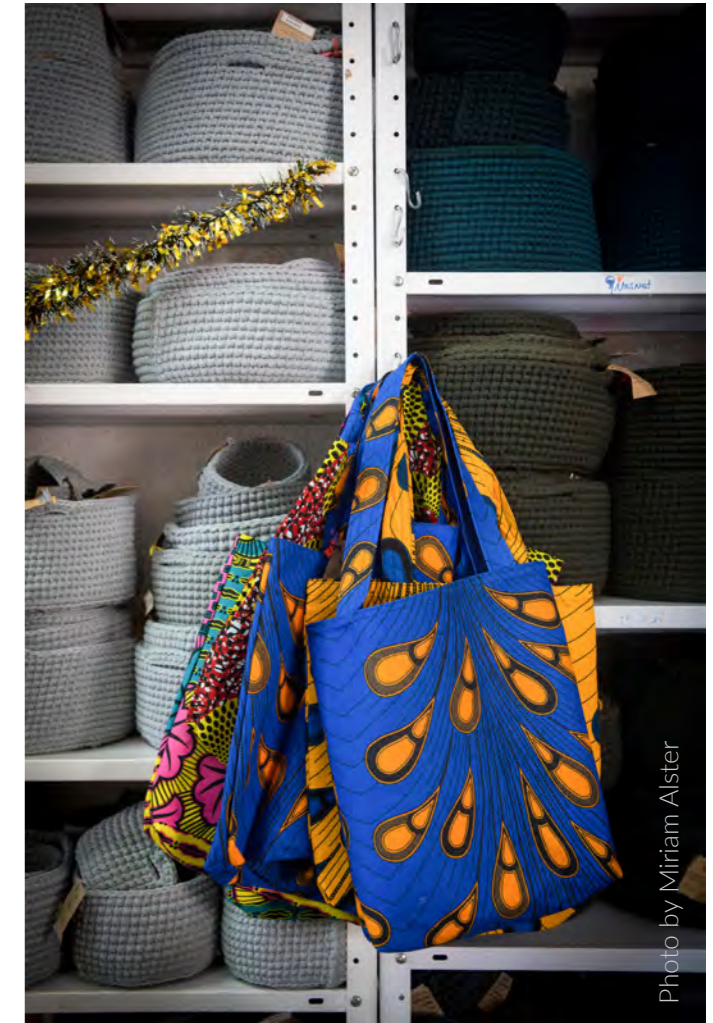


Photo by Miriam Alster



Asmeret Haray & Brhena Gebrihiwe, photo by Miriam Alster

Art & Kuchinate



The summer exhibition at Rikstolvan (Sweden) was named **"Ambiguity"** and curated by our board president Sandra Weil. It was about escape and oppression, hope and resistance. Kuchinate women proudly told their stories through masks and baskets, alongside the iconic Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, and Swedish artists Britta Marakatt-Labba and Marian Silva.

In June and July we hosted **"Portrait of a Woman"**, an exhibition in honor of "International Refugee Day". The women of Kuchinate were portrayed in professional photographs by Miri Davidovitz and Michael Topyol that celebrated the beauty and dignity of African art and culture.

In September until the end of the year, we hosted **"Intertwined Journeys"**, a collection of works by Israeli artists that relate and respond



^ Viewer at the *Portrait of a Woman* exhibition
 < Elham Rokni, *Om Dahiboun*, 2017, mixed media on paper

to the African asylum-seeking community and the experience of refuge. The exhibition was curated by our Chair of Board Sandra Weil, and contributed to by artists David Adika, Anat Nina Bar Natan, Michal Cederbaum & Noam Dover, Zoya Cherkassky, Daniel Landau, Hila Laviv, Galia Hili Pasternak, Elham Rokni, Daniel Silver, Lilach Shahar & Gil Yefman.

From October to December we were invited to contribute to the installation **"Bodies of work"** in the Design Museum Holon, showing huge crochet baskets in a collaboration between artist Gil Yefman and members of Kuchinate collective Selemwit Hagos, Achberet Abraha, Zerifea Wolde and Dolshi Kidane.

One of the most successful socially empowering activities that Kuchinate has developed is art collaborations with established artists in Israel and abroad. These collaborations embody the essence of what Kuchinate is, and does: **community based** psychosocial support through community art activities; personal and community **resilience and capacity building** by developing artistic and artisanal skills; **economic and social empowerment** through making and selling beautiful products; social advocacy and **participation in a wider social context** by working alongside well known and influential artists and participating in high profile exhibitions and creating high profile public-social installations.



Meroni: Remember Sinai

In 2020, the exhibitions in the center of Tel Aviv were widely covered by the media and attracted new customers and visitors. The concept combined art and the sale of Kuchinate products in the pop-up shop, and was managed by women of the collective. We would like to thank **Sandra Weil** for her dedication, the **Cederbaum sisters** for generously offering the exhibition space for the last six months, and all artists who supported the struggle of the refugee community in Israel in such a beautiful and personal manner!

Media and Outreach

London: Diddy and Sister Aziza traveled to the United Kingdom to hold our first-ever Kuchinate fundraising event in London. Jill Kowal and Jordi Sera graciously hosted us in their home, where they met supporters, old and new, and shared the story of Kuchinate.

Diddy and Aziza were honored to meet with the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, for a discussion of Human Trafficking in the UK and Israel

Events: We held our **second-annual Rosh Hashanah celebration** (this year on Zoom due to the pandemic). With honoring Sandra Weil during the event, we continued our

tradition of honoring women who have made an exceptional contribution to improve the situation of refugees. 120 people from around the world joined our live streaming event and over 2,000 people have watched the recording of the event on Facebook.

Media: Kuchinate received favorable media coverage by several local and international media outlets including AT Magazine, Ha'aretz, Global Sisters, Times of Israel, Yedioth Achronot, Calcalist, Forward, Asia News, Luxiders Magazine, Tablet Magazine, Jewish Renaissance and One Magazine.

DAGENS NYHETER.



Hela världens väv ryms i Järrestad



HAARETZ



New Photo Exhibition Puts Focus on Tel Aviv's African Women

A new photography exhibition shows the women of a close-knit community wearing textiles they wove themselves, but great sadness hides behind their proud smiles

Naama Riba | 22.06.2020

Photo of Chrissy Ewan by: Michael Topyol

Highlights of 2020

Work from home: We enabled 96 women to work from home and continue to support their families during the lockdowns due to the global pandemic.

Emergency Response: Food insecurity and homelessness were prevented thanks to the extremely generous and timely donations of foundations and private donors who supplied funds for emergency distribution of basic needs.

Dozens of our volunteers distributed medicine, food vouchers, arts and crafts, and vital information on health guidelines during lockdown periods to the women of our collective.



Tagra Bahta photo by Debbie Hill, originally for One Magazine.

Growth: We welcomed 8 new members of staff at Kuchinate this year; half were asylum seekers. These positions included a Director of Finance, Studio manager, Director of Development, Manager of Educational Programing, Manager of Production and Quality control, and two Managers of Product Development.

Campaigns: We ran several successful campaigns, including the "Donate a Doll" campaign, in which 224 dolls were created by Kuchinate women and distributed to the children of South Tel Aviv.

Resettlement: 4 of our women were successfully resettled to America just before the pandemic began.



Brhena Gebrihwet photo by Debbie Hill, originally for One Magazine.

THANK YOU!

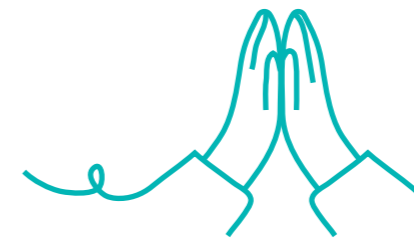
We would like to give immense thanks to our donors:

- ▶ Manos Unidas
- ▶ UNVFVT
- ▶ UNHCR
- ▶ Tel Aviv Foundation
- ▶ Agiamondo
- ▶ Parrochio Cattolica di Losone in Switzerland
- ▶ Pontifical Mission Middle East
- ▶ Healing Across the Divides
- ▶ Dan David Foundation
- ▶ The Clore Foundation
- ▶ Holyland Christian Society
- ▶ Centro Missionario Diocesano Trento,
- ▶ ATZUM- Justice Works
- ▶ The Robert Weil Family Foundation
- ▶ Philip King Charitable Trust
- ▶ Comboni Sisters
- ▶ Cuore Amico
- ▶ The Shawna Goodman and Todd Sone Family Foundation
- ▶ Frank Family Foundation
- ▶ The Good People Fund
- ▶ The Righteous Crowd
- ▶ The Alight Foundation
- ▶ Kavod: A Tzedakah Collective
- ▶ Keren Briyah
- ▶ Thomases Family Endowment of the
- ▶ Youngstown Ohio Jewish Federation
- ▶ Starfield Hurwitz Fund
- ▶ San Diego Federation
- ▶ All generous private donors and supporters who prefer to remain anonymous and everyone who supported us through Israel Gives, My Israel, The New Israel Fund and the Good People Fund!

We would also like to thank our refugee partner organizations for the wonderful work that they do in the legal, education, health, employment, food insecurity, children and family spheres, and the volunteer groups who give in kind donations to members of our community.

We are very grateful to all supporters, volunteers, members of the board, private donors, and foundations who supported us, gave us their time, and contributed to our success this year.

We could not have done it without you!



**የመስጊድ
THANK YOU
תודה**

**Thank you for helping the women survive in 2020.
We hope for your friendship and continued support
for their struggle also in 2021!**

**To make a gift online, please go to www.kuchinate.com
For further information contact
Rebecca de Vries at rebecca@kuchinate.com**