



**American Jewish World Service (AJWS)** is an international development organization motivated by Judaism's imperative to pursue justice. AJWS is dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease among the people of the developing world regardless of race, religion or nationality. AJWS fosters civil society, sustainable development and human rights for all people, while promoting the values and responsibilities of global citizenship within the Jewish community.

Established in 1985 by a group of rabbis, community leaders, businesspeople and scholars, AJWS is one of America's fastest growing Jewish nonprofits. Over the past four years, its annual budget has grown from \$17.4 million to \$30.6 million, and it has cultivated a network of more than 100,000 activists passionate about advancing social justice around the world.

AJWS has also been widely recognized for its high-quality management and efficiency. For seven consecutive years, Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of more than 5,300 nonprofits, awarded AJWS its highest possible rating: four stars.

The AJWS core program focuses on grantmaking to grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the developing world; operating several life-changing international volunteer service programs; advocating for human rights in the public policy arena; and, through development of a wide range of educational resources, engaging the American Jewish community to think critically about its role in global society.

## **Grants**

The backbone of AJWS's work is the long-term partnerships it creates with grassroots organizations in the developing world. AJWS's grantmaking supports organizations that undertake a holistic, local approach to community development. These groups—working within and often led by the communities that they serve—design and implement projects that promote economic justice, education and healthcare for all, and sustainable agriculture. Most of the initiatives that AJWS supports also strengthen civil society and/or promote women's empowerment.

Fundamentally, AJWS's grantmaking links human rights and sustainable development. In 2008, AJWS made 488 grants totaling \$13.1 million to community-based NGOs in 36 countries.

## **Volunteer Service**

AJWS's volunteer service programs are designed to increase the impact of its grantmaking and create a cadre of passionate leaders in the global and social justice movements. Each year, more than 500 volunteers of all ages contribute to the work of AJWS's project partners in Africa, Asia and

the Americas, advancing the quality of life in developing communities and learning about global activism, grassroots development and Jewish traditions of social justice.

AJWS operates five distinct volunteer programs. These include:

- **Volunteer Corps**, which places professional Jewish women and men on two-month to one-year volunteer assignments with local NGOs in developing countries
- **Volunteer Summer**, a year-long program of service and study, beginning with a seven-week assignment where participants, ages 16 to 24, volunteer with an AJWS partner organization
- **World Partners Fellowship**, an intensive ten-month volunteer service opportunity in India or Central America awarded to recent Jewish college graduates and young professionals
- **Alternative Breaks**, which offers one- to three-week service opportunities to college students in partnership with campus-based organizations such as Hillel
- **Rabbinical Students' Delegations**, ten to fourteen-day trips for interdenominational groups of rabbinical students to live and work alongside AJWS grantees, explore Jewish texts and theology and learn about grassroots development.

## **Advocacy**

In recent years, AJWS has led and collaborated in multiple grassroots campaigns advocating for human rights, education, healthcare and economic development. Most prominent among these is AJWS's highly visible Darfur campaign, which has united the Jewish community's efforts to advocate for an end to the genocide in Sudan. Its newest initiative, Just Aid: Foreign Assistance Reform NOW, advocates for the U.S. government to reform the outdated, inefficient and misguided system for distributing foreign assistance.

AJWS's efforts have contributed to the following successes:

### **As part of its Darfur advocacy and as a founding member of the Save Darfur Coalition:**

- The enactment of the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act (SADA). The law prohibits federal government contracts with companies invested in Sudan's oil, mineral and weapons sectors and provides a safe haven for states that have enacted their own Sudan divestment policies. The House of Representatives and Senate passed versions of the bill in the fall of 2007 and President Bush signed it into law on December 31st of that year.
- The Obama administration's appointment of a full-time special envoy to Sudan, General J. Scott Gration, to focus on ending the genocide in Darfur.

### **As an active lobbyist as part of the Global Action for Children Coalition:**

- The passage by Congress of the Assistance for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act, which includes funding for school food programs, access to basic education through the elimination of school fees and the protection of inheritance rights for children.

### **As a primary funder of the Movement of Haitian and Dominican-Haitian Women (MUDHA):**

- An international human rights victory by AJWS project partner, MUDHA, against the government of the

Dominican Republic in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. As a result of this victory, Haitian-born children in the Dominican Republic now have a right to birth certificates and education.

## **Education**

AJWS's educational work encourages critical thinking about global issues and promotes meaningful and active engagement by North American Jews in Tikkun Olam—repairing the world.

The education initiative focuses on the production of resources, including:

- **On1Foot.org**, an online, open-source database of Jewish social justice texts designed to help educators build source-sheets directly from the site.
- **Dvar Tzedek** and **Chag v'Chesed**, Torah commentaries and holiday readings exploring social justice themes
- **From the Sources**, a teaching resource designed to help rabbis and educators facilitate text study with students and congregants
- **Global Justice Book and Film Forum**, literary and film guides designed to enable educators to run programs on a variety of global justice issues

For more information on AJWS, please contact Josh Berkman at **212-792-2893** or **[jberkman@ajws.org](mailto:jberkman@ajws.org)**.