

# OUR IMPACT

## Overseas Stories:

## In Mumbai, Investing in Young Leaders



India's 5,000-member Jewish community may be small but it's robust and vibrant—visitors to this community can spend time with the elderly residents of the Bayiti old age home; learn how to dance Bollywood-style with children from the city's slums at the JDC-supported Evelyn Peters JCC; and meet with young community activists through JDC's Jewish Youth Pioneers program, a multi-faceted initiative for young Indian Jews designed to engage Jews of all ages in enjoyable, educational, and innovative community activities.

One of JYP's offerings includes winter camp, where college-age students engage in activities like text study, leadership development, river rafting, and more. Nikita, a camp participant, spoke with enthusiasm as she described the success of the recent Khai Fest, an event JYP organizes each year for Chanukah. "My involvement in JYP provides me with a sense of belonging," she said, "and an unparalleled opportunity to use my creative talents for the benefit of the larger Jewish community."

But the winter camp is an especially meaningful and important experience for the college students who participate, explained Salome Abraham, JDC's program manager in India. Even though India is largely free of anti-Semitism and fiercely proud of its multiethnic heritage, the camp represented the first time many

of the participants were able to spend a weekend outside the city bonding with Jews their own age.

"It provides a space for them to relax and have fun with their Jewish peers, form personal connections, and make new friends. It gives them a chance to nurture and develop their Jewish identities," Abraham said. "And most importantly, they gain confidence in their leadership skills, which benefits the entire Jewish community."

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