



MJB Data Snapshot: The Socio-economic and Employment Situation of Young Ethiopian-Israeli Adults

Findings show that the integration of Ethiopians into Israeli society is a complex process with both successes and on-going challenges. There is a clear need to continue efforts to address the difficulties facing them and to reduce the persistent gaps with the non-immigrant Jewish population.

The challenges of employment are intertwined with the challenges of educational achievements. Recent trends educational trends among young Ethiopian-Israeli adults are encouraging. Nevertheless, large educational gaps continue to translate into lower quality employment, lower wages, and reduced economic opportunities.

- ◆ In 2011, 31,400 Ethiopian-Israelis were ages 22-35, representing 25% of all Ethiopians in Israel. By contrast, only 20% of the larger Jewish population was between 22 and 35.
- ◆ The 22-35 age group represented 46% of the Ethiopian-Israeli working-age population (ages 18-to-64).
- ◆ Young Ethiopian-Israelis marry later: 38% of young Ethiopian-Israelis are married, compared with 50% of all Jews. (Average 2009-2011)
- ◆ 22% of all young Ethiopian-Israeli women have 3 or more children, compared with 14% of all Jewish women. (Average 2009-2011)
- ◆ 27% of young Ethiopian-Israeli adults immigrated to Israel since 2000.

Education

- ◆ Only 11% of Ethiopian-Israeli adults between ages 22 and 35 have post-secondary education, compared with 42% of all Jews in the same age group. This percentage will increase in the years ahead. (Average 2009-2011)
- ◆ Despite improvements in recent years, Ethiopian-Israeli students continue to graduate high school with a university-eligible matriculation diploma at rates far below other Jews. In 2010, 24% received a diploma good enough for higher education, up from 15% in 2001. By comparison, in 2010 54% of all Jewish students received a quality matriculation diploma.
- ◆ A significant number of Ethiopian-Israelis participate in "second chance" preparatory programs for higher education. Nonetheless, the rate of graduates continuing to higher education is much lower than non-Ethiopian-Israeli graduates (27% vs. 41% in 2008).
- ◆ A growing number of Ethiopian-Israelis are completing academic degrees. In 2010, 326 Ethiopian-Israelis received a BA, up from only 90 in 2000. In that same period, MA graduates rose from 5 to 47.
- ◆ In 2010, 63% of Ethiopian BA recipients completed their studies in academic and teachers colleges. The rest completed their studies in universities.
- ◆ Between 2000-2010, the most common fields of studies among Ethiopian BA students were social science, followed by education, business, and management.
- ◆ Ethiopian-Israeli women are receiving postsecondary degrees at rates similar to those of men.

Employment (data reported as 2009-2011 average, except where noted)

- ◆ 66% of all Ethiopian-Israeli adults are employed, versus 75% among the larger Jewish population.
- ◆ Among young adults ages 22-35, 65% of Ethiopian-Israelis are employed, compared with 72% of all Jews.
- ◆ In the last decade, employment rates among women have risen dramatically, and have continued to improve among men, rapidly closing the gaps with the larger Jewish population.
- ◆ 30% of young Ethiopian-Israeli adults are neither studying nor working, far above the rate of 19% for all Jews.
- ◆ There are large gaps in the quality of employment. Only 11% of employed young Ethiopian-Israeli adults work in academic, managerial, technical, or professional positions, versus 39% of all Jews. At the same time, 26% of this population works in unskilled positions, compared with only 4% of all Jews.
- ◆ Ethiopian-Israelis earn an average hourly wage that is 60% of that of all Jews.
- ◆ Occupational and wage gaps are large even among those with academic degrees. 34% of Ethiopian-Israelis with academic degrees work in academic or managerial fields, versus 54% of all Jews with academic degrees. They earn hourly wages that are only 60% of those of all Jews with academic degrees.
- ◆ 36% of Ethiopian-Israeli families of all ages are poor, compared with 14% of all Jewish families.

Policy and program implications

1. Young Ethiopian-Israeli adults have made tremendous strides in integrating into employment, matching the employment rates of other Jews at all educational levels.
2. The biggest challenge is reducing large gaps in the quality of employment as reflected in wages and occupations at all levels.
3. A very high percentage of those working in unskilled jobs could benefit from efforts to upgrade their jobs.
4. For the large number not continuing to higher education, the development of alternative opportunities for vocational training and post-secondary education is an important challenge.
5. Education significantly increases the likelihood of employment, as well as the wage level and quality of occupation.
6. There are improvements in the educational levels of the younger generation, which is graduating high school with a university-eligible matriculation diploma at higher rates and many are attending “second-chance” preparatory programs. Thus, there is a need to ensure that more young Ethiopian-Israeli adults realize their growing potential to successfully pursue higher education, thereby enhancing employment and earning capacities.
7. There are also increases in the numbers graduating from higher education, although the overall rate continues to be much lower than the general Jewish population.
8. Nonetheless, even among young Ethiopian-Israeli adults with higher education, there is a persistent gap in occupational status and wages. Closing these gaps requires efforts to improve the quality of their higher educational achievements to integrate into better jobs. For many, this could involve channeling into fields of study with better opportunities or retraining those with academic degrees.

Sources:

1. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analyses of Central Bureau of Statistics Income and Labor Force Surveys. Data reported as annual averages for 2009 to 2011.
2. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analyses of Central Bureau of Statistics Higher Educational data.
3. D. Ben-Rabi, R. Baruj-Kovarsky, and V. Konstantinov. 2013. *Ethiopian National Project: Evaluation of the Impact of the Scholastic Assistance Program on Achievements, 2008-2010*. Jerusalem: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute.
4. King, J., N. Fischman, and A. Wolde-Tsadick. 2012. *Survey of Immigrants from Ethiopia who have Lived in Israel for 20 Years or More*. Jerusalem: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute.



The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is Israel's leading center for applied research on social policy and services, serving Israel, the Jewish world, and the international community. The Institute is an independent, non-profit partnership between the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Government of Israel, and the David and Inez Myers Foundation. To learn more about the Institute, visit www.jdc.org.il/brookdale.