March 2012

Facts and Figures provides basic data on Arab-Israelis with regard to demography, education, employment, socio-economic status, and health, including comparisons between the Arab-Israeli and Jewish Israeli population.

**Total population**

In 2010, Israel had 1.57 million Arab-Israeli citizens, representing 20% of the country’s total population.

**Age structure**

Nearly half of all Arab-Israelis in 2010 were younger than age 19, as compared with only about one-third of Jewish Israelis.

**Religious composition**

As of 2010, 82% of Arab-Israelis were Muslim (including the Bedouin). Other religious groups included Christians (10%) and Druze (8%).

**Fertility rates**

Fertility rates have declined over the past 50 years among all Arab groups, and the gaps between Arabs and Jews are no longer that large—3.5 children among Arabs and 3.0 children among Jews in 2010. Of note is that the fertility rate of both Druze and Christian Arabs is now below the rate for Jews.

**Family size**

Despite the decline in fertility, Arab-Israeli families are still considerably larger, with 11% of Arab-Israeli families having 5 children or more, compared with only 3% of Jewish households (2010).
EDUCATION

There have been significant improvements in the educational levels among Arab-Israelis, but the gaps between Arabs and Jews are still large.

Dropping out of high school

Dropout rates among Arab-Israeli students continue to be far above the rates of Jewish students. In 2009, by age 17, 16% of Arab-Israeli students had dropped out of school versus 8% of Jewish students. This makes them ineligible for most existing vocational training programs, and reduces their employment prospects considerably.

University-bound

In Israel, high school students take a series of matriculation exams known as bagruyot. These exams are the primary basis for acceptance into higher education. The rates of passing are therefore an important indicator of long-term educational and economic advancement.

Between 2001 and 2010, there was a steady improvement in university-eligible matriculation rates among all Arab-Israeli 17-year olds, from 25% to just under 30%. This improvement was evident in all groups, but the most significant improvement was among the Bedouin, although they remain below the other groups.

These improvements notwithstanding, university-eligible matriculation rates are still well below those of Jewish students.

Figure 2: Percent of Arab-Israeli 17-Year-Olds Receiving
High-School Diploma with University Eligibility, 2001-2010

Years of education

Arab-Israeli education levels have improved dramatically over the past two decades. This increase happened both among those completing high school only and those continuing to some level of post-secondary education.

The most rapid educational progress is found among Arab-Israeli women, who have surpassed the educational levels of men. In 1990, only 8% of Arab-Israeli women had 13+ years of education, compared with 27% in 2010.

Despite these improvements, important gaps persist between Arab-Israelis and Jews at the lower and higher education levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years of education</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab-Israeli women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 12 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13+ years</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 12 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab-Israeli men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 12 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 12 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys
EMPLOYMENT

Arab-Israeli women

The most significant employment gap is between Arab-Israeli and Jewish women.

- Even though employment rates for Arab-Israeli women have increased since 1997, only 25% of Arab-Israeli women of working age were employed in 2009, compared with 64% among Jewish women.

- In 2008, 36% of working-age Arab-Israeli women worked only part time, and the majority preferred to find full-time employment.

- Those with higher education integrate into the workforce. In 2010, 77% of women with 13+ years of education were employed or studying, compared with only 7% of women with less than 8 years of education.

- There is significant untapped potential. Of particular note is that in 2010 over half of Arab-Israeli women age 18 to 24 were neither working nor studying. 85% of these women had completed high school and only 30% had children.

In general, young Arab-Israeli women have unique, additional disadvantages that impede on their integration into the workforce.

- Language. A significant percentage of young Arab-Israeli women do not speak or write well in Hebrew—even among those who
have completed high school. Most Arab-Israelis study in schools in which Arabic is the primary language, and Hebrew is studied as a second language.

- **Technical skills.** The computer background of Arab-Israeli women is much more limited than their Jewish counterparts.

- **Vocational training.** Very few young Arab-Israeli women have participated in any kind of vocational training program.

### Arab-Israeli men

In the early 2000s, the economic recession hit Arab-Israeli men harder than other segments of Israeli society, and their employment levels have not fully recovered.

Still, the employment gap is not large. In 2009, 71% of Arab-Israeli men aged 25-64 worked, compared with 76% of the broader population of Israeli men.

Employment rates for Arab-Israeli men drop dramatically after age 45, and create major challenges for families where the primary breadwinner is unable to secure sustainable employment.

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**Figure 5: Employment among Total Population and Arab-Israeli Men, Aged 25-64, 2009**

- **Arab-Israelis:** 71%
- **Total Population:** 76%

Source: Bank of Israel Annual Report

**Figure 6: Percent Arab-Israeli Men Studying or Working, by Age, Ages 18-64 (2010)**

- **Men studying or working:**
  - 18-24: 71%
  - 25-34: 77%
  - 35-44: 80%
  - 45-64: 59%

- **Men not studying or working:**
  - 18-24: 29%
  - 25-34: 23%
  - 35-44: 20%
  - 45-64: 41%

Source: Myers-JDC-Brookdale special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys
The Arab Population in Israel: Facts & Figures 2012

Poverty

The gaps in education, employment, and family size have led to major gaps in economic status between Arab-Israelis and Jews.

- In 2010, 53% of Arab-Israeli families lived in poverty (after taxes and transfer payments), compared with only 14% of Jewish families. Poverty rates have steadily worsened since 1997.
- Arab-Israeli families constitute 38% of all poor families, far above their overall proportion in the Israeli population. (Only 14% of all families in Israel are Arab-Israeli.)

Table 2: Poverty among families and children, 2010 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arab-Israeli Families</th>
<th>Jewish Families</th>
<th>Arab-Israeli Children</th>
<th>Jewish Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163,600</td>
<td>433,300</td>
<td>202,000</td>
<td>837,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Self-Assessment of the Economic Situation

A large percentage of Arab-Israelis report that they are unable to meet basic household expenses, such as food, electricity, and telephone.

Table 3: Self-assessed ability to meet basic household expenses, 2009 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arab-Israelis</th>
<th>Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, with little or some difficulty</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, not so well or not at all</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEALTH

Life Expectancy
Life expectancy has increased over the past 10 years among Arab-Israeli men and women. By 2010, life expectancy for Arab-Israeli men had risen to 76.8 years, and 81.2 years for women.

Infant Mortality
Infant mortality rates among the Arab-Israeli population have declined drastically over the years, though the 2010 rate of 6.8 per thousand is still more than double the rate among Jews (2.7 per thousand).

Disability
Disability rates among adult and elderly Arab-Israelis are significantly higher than the rate among Jewish Israelis, especially the rates of those severely disabled. Among children, disability rates are also higher.

Table 4: Rates of disability, 2009 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Arab-Israelis</th>
<th>Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disabled adults</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>603,300</td>
<td>3,134,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of these: Severely disabled</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84,500</td>
<td>156,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled elderly, 75+</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(disabled in personal care)</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>117,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely disabled children</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Various Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute Studies; Myers JDC-Institute special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys
Health Behaviors

Gaps in health behaviors contribute significantly to differences in health status among Arab-Israelis and Jewish Israelis.

Physical activity is much less prevalent overall among Arab-Israelis than it is among Jews, and Arab-Israeli women have very high rates of obesity and diabetes.

Figure 8: Obesity, 2007, Physical Activity and Smoking, 2009 (%)

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- Smokler Center for Health Policy Research
- Center for Research on Disabilities and the Employment of Special Populations
- Center for Research on Aging
- Quality Assurance in the Social Services
- Manpower Evaluation and Social Planning
- Learning from Success and Collaborative Ongoing Learning in Human Services
- Immigrant Absorption
- Arab Population in Israel
- International Cooperation and Exchange
- Middle East Cooperation and Exchange
- Cooperation and Exchange among Jewish Communities

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- Connie and Bert Rabinowitz Fund for Creative Breakthrough Research
- Marshall Weinberg Fund for Professional Collaboration and Development
- Harry Weinrebe Fund for the Advancement of Children

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