



## MJB Data Snapshot: Young Adults in Israel and Ethiopian-Israeli Young Adults

Historically, the transition to adulthood among youth and young adults has had three milestones: (1) completing of studies, (2) securing employment, (3) finding a partner and building a family.

In the past, this transition was shorter. Today, however, it is a longer process, with all three milestones happening at a later age.

In Israel, participation in the army or national service and the prevalence of combining post-secondary education with employment makes the transition to adulthood more challenging.

There is a significant percentage of young adults for whom the transition is much more difficult, as demonstrated by a recent MJB national survey of young adults. These young adults neither work nor study. They are not pursuing higher education, and most have no vocational training.

Only in the last decade has the need to focus on this age group and to develop a range of services to facilitate their transition been recognized internationally and in Israel.

In addition, several populations in Israel face a unique set of circumstances that pose obstacles to their transition: Arab-Israelis, Haredim, people with disabilities, and Ethiopian-Israelis.

### Young Adults in Israel: At a Glance

- ◆ 2.1 million Israelis ages 18-35 (26% of all Israelis) in 2013
- ◆ 1.6 million Israelis ages 22-35 of whom an estimated:
  - 21% are Arab
  - 10% are Haredim
  - 16% immigrated since 1990
  - 50% are married
  - 20% have 3 or more children

### Young Ethiopian-Israeli Adults: At a Glance

- ◆ 31,400 Ethiopian-Israelis ages 22-35 (25% of all Ethiopians in Israel) (2011)
- ◆ 38% are married (average 2009-2011)
- ◆ 22% have with 3 or more children (average 2009-2011)
- ◆ 27% immigrated since 2000
- ◆ 17% born in Israel, 83% born in Ethiopia

For young Ethiopian-Israeli adults, the transition to adulthood is a more complex process, characterized by successes and on-going challenges.

Recent educational trends are encouraging and there has been a dramatic increase in employment rates. Civil engagement is growing at all levels. Nevertheless, large educational gaps with the wider Israeli population continue to translate into lower quality employment, lower wages, and reduced economic opportunities.

These difficulties are faced both by the significant

percentage of young adults whose families have immigrated in the past two decades and by those whose families immigrated earlier and who were born in Israel. Although on some key indicators there is progress from the first to the second generation, on others there is stagnation or decline.

Therefore, there is a clear need to continue efforts to expand the opportunities for young Ethiopian-Israeli adults, and to further reduce the gaps with the non-immigrant Jewish population.



## Education

- ◆ In 2013, 28% of Ethiopian-Israeli students graduated high school with a university-eligible matriculation diploma, up from 15% in 2001. Despite this improvement, the rate is far below that of other Jewish students (57%).
- ◆ Only 11% of young Ethiopian-Israelis ages 22-35 have a post-secondary degree or certificate, compared with 42% of all Jews in the same age group (average 2009-2011). Today, women and men have similar rates. However, women are now far exceeding men in completing high school with the requirements eligible to enter higher education.
- ◆ Significant numbers of Ethiopian-Israelis participate in “second chance” preparatory programs for higher education but only 27% of them in fact continue on to higher education, compared with 41% of non-Ethiopian-Israelis (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.

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## Employment (data reported as 2009-11 average except where noted, all ages 22-35)

- ◆ In the last decade, employment rates among women have risen dramatically, and have continued to improve among men, rapidly closing the gaps with the general Jewish population.
- ◆ 65% of young Ethiopian-Israelis are employed, compared with 72% of all Jews.
- ◆ However, 30% of young Ethiopian-Israeli adults are neither studying nor working, far above the rate of 19% for all young Jewish adults.
- ◆ There are large gaps in the quality of employment. Only 11% of employed Ethiopian-Israeli young adults work in academic, managerial, technical, or professional positions, versus 39% of all Jews of the same age. At the same time, 26% work in unskilled positions, compared with only 4% of all Jews.
- ◆ Ethiopian-Israelis earn an average hourly wage that is 60% of wages 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.
  - Here, as well, their hourly wages are only 60% of those of all Jews with academic degrees.

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## Poverty

- ◆ The gaps in education, wages, and family size translate into major gaps in economic status between Ethiopian-Israeli families and other Jewish families.
- ◆ Poverty rates have declined somewhat over the decade, but remain very high: 39% of Ethiopian-Israeli families lived in poverty versus 14% of all Jewish families in 2011. Most are working poor families.
- ◆ The recent dramatic increases in housing costs have particularly affected young Ethiopian-Israeli families and are not reflected in this poverty data.

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## Risk behaviors

There is no readily available data on risk behaviors among Ethiopian-Israeli young adults. There is, however, extensive data that shows that Ethiopian youth have higher rates of risk behaviors such as alcohol use and delinquency, and are over-represented in all the special social services to address these difficulties. A new MJB survey has shown that risk behaviors are higher among second-generation Ethiopian-Israelis. Moreover, although Ethiopian-Israeli young adults have high rates of enlistment in the army, they have much more difficulty completing their army service.

**Sources:** Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analyses of Central Bureau of Statistics data; special MJB surveys of the Ethiopian-Israeli population; and MJB studies of immigrant youth.