



Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute



State of Israel
Ministry of Immigrant Absorption

Follow-Up on Key Indicators of the Nationwide Situation of the Ethiopian-Israeli Population

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The report was prepared as part of an examination by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption on the situation of the Ethiopian-Israeli community and how it is being absorbed in Israel

Report No. 2
RR-560-10





Related Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute Publications

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Executive Summary

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute was asked by the director-general of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption to examine the various programs and projects aimed at immigrants from Ethiopia, the contribution of these to the integration of Ethiopian-Israelis in Israel, and the immigrants' sense of belonging. The range of activities was reviewed with the accent on outcomes.

The Institute was also asked to examine the Ministry's emphases as reflected by the investment of resources in programs and various topics against emerging trends among the Ethiopian-Israeli population.

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the emerging trends among Ethiopian-Israelis in recent years with respect to employment, income, housing, education, social services and quality of life.

1. Demographic Characteristics (special analysis of population data by the Central Bureau of Statistics – CBS)

- ♦ ***The Ethiopian-Israeli population is young.*** In 2007, there were 115,919 Ethiopian-Israelis living in Israel (immigrants and the offspring of immigrants). The population is characterized by a young median age relative to Israel's general Jewish population: 84% were below the age of 44 and some 47% were below the age of 19.
- ♦ ***The rate of native-born Ethiopian-Israelis is on the increase.*** The percentage of native-born Ethiopian-Israelis was 32% in 2007.

2. Level of Education (special analysis of population data by the CBS)

Improvement in the level of education and narrowing of gaps between Ethiopian-Israelis and the general Jewish population aged 22-64 in the past decade although considerable gaps remain:

- ♦ ***Upward trend in level of education.*** The percentage of graduates of grades 0-8 decreased in the past decade, 1995/96-2005/06, from 76% to 57%. The percentage of graduates of 12 grades rose from 11.5% to 23%. The percentage of graduates of 13+ grades rose from 5.5% to 14%.
- ♦ ***Wide education gaps remain between the Ethiopian-Israeli population aged 22-64 and the general Jewish population.*** In 2005/06, the percentage of graduates of eight years of school or less was 57% among Ethiopian-Israelis and 5.5% among the general Jewish population. The percentage of graduates of 12 years of school was 23% versus 28% among the general Jewish population, and the percentage of graduates of 13+ years of school was only 14% versus 56% respectively. These gaps are smaller than in 1995/96 due to the more rapid trend of increase in the level of education among Ethiopian-Israelis.

- ♦ ***Narrowing gaps in the level of education between men and women in the past decade due to more rapid improvement among woman.*** In 2005/06, there was a higher percentage of women than men with only 0-8 years of school (62% versus 52% respectively). On the other hand, a higher percentage of women had 13+ years of school (15% versus 12% respectively).

3. Employment

There are three dimensions to exploring the status of employment: the rate of participation in the labor force (those employed or actively looking for work), the rate of employment (actual employees) and the rate of unemployment (job-searchers as a percentage of the participants in the labor force). We will focus primarily on the employment rate and the variables influencing it although we will also provide a general picture of the participation and unemployment rates.

3.1 Characteristics of the Labor Force (Ages 22-64)

The Ethiopian-Israeli population of working age is relatively young and now boasts a greater number of years in Israel (special analysis of data of the CBS manpower survey). In 2006/07 high percentages of the Ethiopian-Israeli labor force were aged 22-44 (73% versus 61% among the general Jewish population). Some 66% of the labor force have been in Israel more than 15 years; 16% of the labor force have been in Israel less than six years, but this percentage has decreased significantly in the past decade.

3.2 Participation and Unemployment Rates (special analysis for the CBS manpower survey)

A significant gap in the participation rate and a very large gap in the unemployment rate:

- ♦ ***The participation rate*** was 64% versus 78% among the general Jewish population. There were differences between men and women – 60% versus 68% respectively.
- ♦ ***The unemployment rate among Ethiopian-Israelis in 2006/07*** was 14% compared with 7% among the general Jewish population.

3.3 Employment Rate (special analysis for the CBS manpower survey)

There were gaps in the rates of employment between Ethiopian-Israelis and the general Jewish population. These gaps are widening among men and narrowing among women.

- ♦ ***The employment rate*** was 55% among Ethiopian-Israelis aged 22-64 in 2006/07 versus 72% among the general Jewish population.
- ♦ ***Differences between men and women:*** Among men, the employment rate was 60% versus 75% among the general Jewish population; among women, it was 50.5% versus 70.1% among all Jewish women.
- ♦ ***Employment rates show an upward trend*** owing to a dramatic increase in the employment rates of women. Between 1995/96 and 2006/07 the employment rate rose from 41% to 55%. Nevertheless, the overall upward trend in the employment rate masks a considerable difference between women and men: the employment rate of men decreased by about 3

percentage points from 1995/96 (a decrease of almost 10 percentage points between 1995/96 and 2005/06 and an increase of some 6 percentage points in 2006/07) whereas among women, there was an increase of almost 30 percentage points in the employment rate. This trend narrowed the gap in the employment rate between women and men from about 40 percentage points to only about 10.

- ♦ ***Young people:*** In the 22-44 age group since 1995/96, there has been relative stability in the employment rates of men and a great improvement in the employment rates of women (from 28% to 58%). During this period, the gender gap among young people narrowed from 40 to 11 percentage points. The employment rate of young Ethiopian men was 70% in 2006/7 – very similar to the employment rate among all young Jewish men, which was 74%. The gap among women was larger and stood at 58% versus 74%.
- ♦ ***Decrease in the employment rate of older men.*** The decrease in the employment rate of older men since 1995/96 was concentrated in the 44-65 age group and showed a sharp decline from 54% to 31%.
- ♦ ***The employment rate rises with the number of years in the country.*** In 2006/07, the men's employment rate ranged from 43% among those in the country 0-6 years to some 72% among those in the country 15-22 years. Among women, the employment rate ranged from 30% to 54% respectively.
- ♦ ***The employment rate rises with the number of years of schooling.*** Between 1995/6 and 2006/7 the employment rate fell for the group with 0-11 years of schooling. For those with 12 and 13+ years of school, the data for 1995/96 were not clear-cut. If we look at the trends for 1999/2000, we will find a rise among those with 12 years of schooling, and from 2002/03, there was a significant rise among those with 13+ years of school. Among women, there was improvement for all levels of education.
- ♦ ***Very small gaps between Ethiopian-Israelis and the overall Jewish population within each level of education.*** An examination of the employment rates in all education groups in 2006/7 revealed that the gaps between Ethiopians and the overall Jewish population were very small for most education levels, particularly among women. This means that most of the gaps in the employment rates between Ethiopians and the general Jewish population derived from the gap in the level of education. Additional analyses carried out by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute revealed that this finding was stronger for the years 2007-2009 (Habib and Wolde-Tsadick, 2010).
- ♦ ***High rate of unskilled workers:*** In the analysis by occupation for 2006/07, a high percentage of Ethiopian-Israelis were employed in unskilled labor (37%) versus the percentage among the general Jewish population (7%). On the other hand, the percentage of Ethiopian-Israelis employed in academic, liberal or managerial professions was conspicuously low (10% versus 40% among the general Jewish population).
- ♦ ***High rates of job satisfaction.*** Among the employed, some 75% reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs compared with 85% among the general Jewish population (special analysis of data for the CBS social survey).

3.4 Income and Poverty (Income Survey 2005, special analyses)

There were income gaps and a high incidence of poverty, especially among children:

- ♦ **Income gaps.** The average disposable income of Ethiopian-Israelis was far below the national average (NIS 1,994 versus an average of NIS about 4,000 in 2005).
- ♦ **The incidence of poverty among immigrants from Ethiopia was very high.** In 2005, 52% of the families were poor versus 17% among immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and 14% among longstanding Israelis.
- ♦ **The incidence of poverty was even higher among Ethiopian-Israeli children,** standing at 65% versus 15% for immigrants from the FSU and 23% for non-immigrant Jewish Israelis.
- ♦ **Low standard of living.** The Ruppin Index of immigrant integration into society according to standard of living is comprised of income variables, the ability to cover expenses, consumption, housing crowdedness, and satisfaction with the financial situation. According to this index, in 2007, the standard of living of immigrants from Ethiopia was the lowest of all the groups examined (Amit, Chachashvili, 2007).

4. Housing

Overcrowding and residential concentrations in weak socio-economic areas:

- ♦ **The living space of immigrants from Ethiopia** was crowded compared with other immigrant groups and non-immigrant Jewish Israelis: in 2005, the number of rooms per capita for Ethiopian-Israelis was 0.75 whereas for all other Jewish groups, it was more than one room per capita – with an average of 1.2 (Semionov et al., 2007).
- ♦ **Most Ethiopian-Israelis (65%) owned the homes they lived in** (Semionov and Swirsky, 2002). This was similar to the rate among the general population – 70% (CBS, 2002).
- ♦ **Geographic distribution.** In 2008, Ethiopian-Israelis lived in a number of relatively large concentrations in a few localities, primarily in the central region, in the south and in Haifa. Some 70% were concentrated in 17 localities – mostly of a medium or low socio-economic cluster (special analyses of data from the CBS Statistical Abstract, 2009).

5. Schooling and Education

5.1 Elementary School and High School

Gaps in scholastic achievements versus improvement in eligibility for a good matriculation certificate:

5.1.1 Achievements in GEMS (Growth and Effectiveness Measures for Schools – *Meitzav*) exams (Kimchi, Ben-Arie and Cohen, 2007).

- ♦ **Gaps in average scores compared with the overall Jewish population.** In 2005, the average mark of Ethiopian-Israeli children in Grade 5 was 74.5% of the average mark of their peers in the general Jewish population of children, and 63% in grade 8.

- ♦ **Widening gaps with age.** The gaps between Ethiopian-Israeli children and the national average in Jewish education widen between grade 5 and grade 8 in all sections of the exam.

5.1.2 Achievements in Matriculation Exams (special analysis of Ministry of Education and CBS data)

- ♦ **Improvement in the percentage of eligibility for matriculation from 2002 to 2004, but a considerable decline subsequently.** In 2007 the percentage of Ethiopian-Israeli pupils eligible for matriculation in the 17-year-old cohort was 32% as opposed to 33% in 2002. Following an upward trend in 2002-2004 (from 33.4% to 38.8%), the percentage of pupils eligible for matriculation decreased in 2006 to 29.6%, and then increased in 2007 to 32.4%.
- ♦ **Decrease in matriculation eligibility at the national level as well.** Since 2004, the percentage of pupils eligible for matriculation in the general Jewish population also decreased although the decrease was smaller than among Ethiopian-Israeli pupils.
- ♦ **An upward trend in eligibility for a good matriculation certificate** (meeting university admissions requirements). The percentage among 17-year-olds rose from 13.8% in 2002 to 17.7% in 2007.
- ♦ **Gaps with respect to the general Jewish population.** The percentage of pupils eligible for matriculation in the general Jewish population in 2007 was 52% in the 17-year-old cohort versus 32% among Ethiopian-Israeli pupils. The gaps were wider with regard to good matriculation diplomas: 46% among the general Jewish population versus 18% among Ethiopian-Israelis. With respect to the general Jewish population, the gaps narrowed from 2002 to 2004, widened in 2006, and narrowed again in 2007. With regard to good matriculation diplomas, there was a slight narrowing of gaps between 2002 and 2007.

5.1.3 Dropout Rates among 17-year-olds

A high dropout rate, but showing a downward trend:

- ♦ **High dropout rate.** An analysis by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute of data from the Ministry of Education and the CBS showed a high dropout rate in 2007 for 17-year-olds in the Ethiopian-Israeli population relative to the general Jewish population (12% versus 7.5% respectively).
- ♦ **There was a decline in the dropout rate** between 2003 and 2007 (from 16% to 12%). This, at a time that the general Jewish population showed an increase in the dropout rate (from 6% to 7.5%). The gaps were thus narrowing considerably.

5.2 Students in Higher Education (Student Administration, Higher Education Council and CBS)

An increase in the number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in higher education institutions from 2001-2007, but a growing gap relative to the general population:

- ♦ **Increase in the number of Ethiopian-Israeli students.** Regarding higher education, the trend showed an increase in the number of Ethiopian-Israeli students (excluding preparatory

courses) between 2001 and 2005: from 1,091 to 1,454. Although in 2006, there was a slight decline, this was followed by an increase and in 2007, there were 1,605 students.

- ♦ ***The percentage of students (excluding preparatory courses) aged 20-29*** rose between 2001 and 2005 (from 7.2% to 7.8%). In 2006 there was a slight decrease (to 7.2%) and in 2007 the percentage rose again to 7.9%. For purposes of comparison, the 20-29 age group in the general population showed a consistent upward trend from 15.8% in 2001 to 19.1% in 2007.
- ♦ ***Students in preparatory courses.*** The number of Ethiopian-Israeli students in preparatory courses in 2007 was some 330, an increase from 2001 (when there were 240) and a decrease from 2005 (when there were 432).

5.3 Youth in Ministry of Education Boarding Schools

High representation of Ethiopian-Israeli youth in boarding schools (Kimchi and Ben-Arie, 2007). Some 29% of the children in boarding schools of the Rural Education and Youth Aliyah Administration are Ethiopian-Israelis. This percentage is much higher than their representation in the Jewish population (3%), especially in comparison to the percentage of FSU youth in boarding schools (7.5%).

6. Social Services

6.1 Many Ethiopian-Israelis are Known to Social Services (Basic Data File, 2006)

- ♦ ***A high percentage of the population are known to social services.*** In 2006, some 60% of Ethiopian-Israelis were known to the social services (17,114 families). Of these, 44% were families with marital problems and children at risk, and 21% were families defined as functioning; i.e., they had no specific social problem and were handled by the social service chiefly due to economic hardship.
- ♦ ***Most Ethiopian-Israeli children belong to families known to the social services.*** Most (some 31,000) Ethiopian-Israeli children belonged to families known to the social services, most came from families with marital problems or children at risk.

6.2 Representation of Ethiopian-Israeli Youth in Various Treatment Frameworks (Kimchi and Ben Arie, 2007)

In services of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services and the Ministry of Education treating youth at risk, various indicators point to the over-representation of Ethiopian-Israeli children in treatment framework:

- ♦ ***Regular attendance:*** In 2006, 13% of all Ethiopian-Israelis were in the care of a truancy officer. The corresponding percentage for FSU pupils was 7%.
- ♦ ***Children in boarding schools for children at risk:*** In 2006, 4.8% of the children in boarding schools for children at risk of the Ministry of Social Services and Social Affairs were Ethiopian-Israelis (special analysis of data from CBS population files) whereas their representation in the general population was approximately 3%.

- ♦ ***The Youth Protection Authority:*** In 2005, 7.5% of all youth aged 12-18 in the care of the Youth Protection Authority were Ethiopian-Israelis (special analysis of data from CBS population files).

6.3 Delinquency

From 1996-2005, the extent of delinquency showed an upward trend according to key indicators of delinquency: number of police files opened, number of minors with a criminal file and number of minors in prison. However, from 2005-07, there was a sharp decline on some of the indicators, which lowered the overall increase for that decade.

- ♦ ***Increase in the number of police files opened for Ethiopian-Israeli minors in 1996-2004. A slight decrease in 2004-05 and a sharp decline between 2005 to 2007:*** (Turan, 2005; Kosher, Ben-Arie and Cohen, 2009). The number of files opened for Ethiopian-Israelis increased by more than six-fold from 1996 to 2005 (from 139 to 900) versus a twofold increase in the general population and an increase of 2.5 times among FSU immigrants. On the other hand, in 2005-07 there was a significant decrease in the number of files, from 900 to 600. Note that while the general number of files among immigrants decreased in these years from 5,000 to 3,524, the proportion of files for Ethiopian-Israelis (some 17%) out of the total number of files remained similar (Appel, 2003; Kosher, Ben-Arie and Cohen, 2009).
- ♦ ***Decrease in the number of Ethiopian-Israeli minors for whom criminal files were opened.*** In 2007, their number was 345, a decrease from 455 in 2004 and 405 in 2005 (Ben-Arie, Zionit and Kimchi, 2001). In 2007, the percentage of Ethiopian-Israeli minors out of all minors under suspicion (2.4%) was similar to their representation in the general population of minors (2.5%), including non-Jews (Analysis of CBS population data).
- ♦ ***A high percentage of Ethiopian-Israeli minors in prison.*** Ethiopian-Israeli minors made up some 10% of all Jewish minors in prison in 2006. (Kimchi, Ben-Arie and Cohen, 2007).
- ♦ ***The representation of Ethiopian-Israeli adult offenders was also high*** (Israel Police, 2006). Firstly, their representation among immigrant offenders (8.5%) was higher than their representation in the general immigrant population (3.7%). In addition, this percentage indicated an upward trend (from 7% in 2004 to 8.5% in 2006).

6.4 Drug and Alcohol Abuse

The data on this topic were partial and not entirely clear. According to the data of the Israel Anti-Drug Authority (Edelstein, 2007) there were high rates of drug and alcohol abuse among Ethiopian-Israeli pupils, though they were lower than among immigrant pupils from the FSU. Among disengaged youth, the rates were higher (Edelstein, 2003).

7. Social Integration (special analysis of the CBS manpower survey, 2005)

Measures of social integration indicate much optimism and a relatively low sense of loneliness, though also a sense that there is nobody to rely on.

- ♦ *Measures of social integration indicated a relatively low sense of loneliness, though also a sense that there is nobody to rely on.* Ethiopian-Israeli immigrants reported a relatively lower sense of loneliness than other immigrant groups and even native Israelis. However, among Ethiopian-Israelis, the proportion of people feeling that they have no one to rely on in times of trouble was significantly higher than among other immigrant groups.
- ♦ *A sense of optimism about the future.* Despite integration difficulties according to the various indicators presented here, most Ethiopian-Israelis feel optimistic about the future.
- ♦ *Much satisfaction with life.* In 2006, 77% of Ethiopian-Israelis reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their lives versus 86% of the general Jewish population.

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