Immigrant Youth in Israel – the Current Situation

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Executive Summary

Between 1990 and 2007, some 300,000 children and youth (aged 0–17) made aliya to Israel (Kosher et al., 2009*). In 2008, there were 60,000 immigrants aged 12-17 in Israel – around 9% of all youth of this age group in the country. Almost 70% of all immigrant youth in Israel are from the former Soviet Union (FSU), 12% are from Ethiopia and the remainder are from other – mainly Western – countries.

The immigrants from each of these various countries came to Israel due to a variety of different circumstances:

- Following the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1989, Israel absorbed more than one million immigrants from the FSU. This is a very diverse group, but among their main reasons for coming, these immigrants wished to ensure their children’s future (Leshem, 2003*; Rosenbaum-Tamari, 2004*).
- The Ethiopian-Israeli community numbers 120,000 individuals (including those born in Israel and Ethiopia). As from 1974, a series of upheavals in the Ethiopian regime worsened the situation for the Jews, prompting three main waves of aliya: 1977-1984, Operation Moses in 1984 and Operation Solomon in 1991. Most of the immigrants were inspired by religious and Zionist motives (Ulman, 2005a, 2005b*; Ben Ezer, 2007*; Galim, 2010*).
- Since 1990, some 25,000 immigrants have made aliya from South America, the vast majority (20,000) from Argentina in 2002, following the devastating effects of the economic crisis for the middle classes (Amit, 2008*).
- Over the past two decades, some 22,000 immigrants have arrived from France, most of them for religious reasons or due to growing anti-Semitism in France (Gindin et al., 2009*).
- Some 40,000 immigrants have made aliya from Anglophone countries, most of them from 1995-1997: from the United States (27,500), the UK (7,500) and Canada (3,000), and the remainder from elsewhere. For many, the move to Israel was inspired by their wish to live in the Jewish state (Amit, 2008*).

The two immigrant groups that have attracted the most academic attention in general – particularly when it comes to studies of immigrant youth – are those from the FSU and Ethiopia. However, the comprehensive studies were conducted over a decade ago (Noam et al, 1998*: Lifshitz et al. 1998*) and most of the more recent studies have focused on specific topics such as identity, risk behavior and so forth (see for example Edelstein & Bar-Hamburger, 2003*; Zaslaski & Horowitz, 2007*; Tartakovsky, 2009) and, therefore, do not fulfill the need for comprehensive data. Studies focusing on the entire population of youth in Israel (e.g., Health Behaviors in School-Aged Children, see Harel et al., 2003*) are inappropriate for examining issues specific to immigrant youth or immigrant groups in general.

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*Please note, all references marked with "*" are in Hebrew. 
Additional data on immigrants from the FSU and Ethiopia has been gathered in studies that examined the characteristics and needs of target populations of various services, e.g., the Service for Girls and Young Women at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services (Kahan-Strawczynski et al. 2005*) and Kidum Noar for Youth Advancement at the Ministry of Education (Kahan-Strawczynski et al, 1999*), in evaluation studies of programs for immigrant youth such as From Risk to Opportunity (Kahan-Strawczynski et al., 2008*) and the Ethiopian National Project (Cohen-Navot et al., 2008) and studies about specific population groups, e.g., immigrant youth from the Caucasus (Ellenbogen-Frankovits et al., 2004). However, these data concern only those registered with services or programs and do not represent the entire population of immigrant youth. As can be seen, until the present study, there was no comprehensive, up-to-date picture of the current situation regarding immigrant youth from the FSU or Ethiopia or indeed from anywhere else (i.e., French, English and Spanish speaking). The absence of information is particularly remarkable, given service providers' awareness that immigrants of different origins have particular characteristics that require special attention and knowledge.

Consequently, at the joint initiative of the Social Service and the Research Division of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, in late 2008, the Engelberg Center for Children and Youth at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute began a comprehensive study of immigrant youth. The study was conducted under the supervision of an inter-organizational steering committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and other ministries, voluntary organizations working with immigrants, immigrant organizations and experts from academia. The committee was involved in drafting the study questionnaire. The study findings were presented to the committee, which also served as a discussion forum.

The study goal was to provide extensive, up-to-date information about immigrant youth from different countries, which will serve as a basis on which to plan policy, services and programs and for adapting existing services and activities to meet this population's needs. The study findings are presented in this report.

The study focuses on the following: Characteristics of immigrant youth and their families; languages – proficiency in Hebrew and mother tongue; scholastic performance and perception of school; relationship with peer group; after-school activities; work patterns; patterns of risk behavior and physical/ emotional distress; relationship with parents; contact with counseling and other services for youth; identity patterns; assessment of integration process; sense of general well-being; and attitudes towards military/national service.

The data were collected from immigrants aged 12-17 who arrived in Israel between 1991 and 2006, classified according to five groups of origin: French-speaking countries, English-speaking countries, Spanish-speaking countries, the FSU, and Ethiopia. The study also included another group: youth born in Israel, whose parents made aliya from Ethiopia up to and including 1990. Altogether 680 telephone interviews were conducted, constituting an 85% response rate from the sample.
In addition to the steering committee, the findings have also been presented to the Minister of Immigrant Absorption and senior Ministry staff as well as to participants at a special interministerial seminar. The findings were discussed in both these forums.

A further stage of the study is planned. It will include two new groups: (1) A group of youth whose parents immigrated from the FSU, but who were themselves born in Israel; and (2) for comparison, a group of Israeli-born Jewish youth whose parents were also born in Israel. The two groups of Ethiopian-Israelis (those born in Ethiopia and the Israeli-born children of immigrants) will also be expanded in this stage.

In the following section, we present the main findings relating to the topics examined, noting significant differences between the different groups of origin.

**Main Findings**

**Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Youth and their Families**

The youth:

- Average age of respondents interviewed: 15.3
- Average number of years in Israel: 10.1. The Spanish and French speakers have been less time in the country: on average, 7 years. In contrast, FSU immigrants have been in the country for an average of 10.5 years; English speakers and Ethiopian Israelis have been in Israel for 9.5 years on average.
- Most of the respondents made aliyah at a young age – 5.2 on average. The Spanish and French speakers were older: 7.0 and 8.2, respectively, on average.

The families:

- Immigrants from the FSU have small families with an average of 2 children; most of the parents have a post-high-school education; in the vast majority of families, the head of the household\(^1\) works; about a quarter of the youth live in single-parent families.
- In contrast, Ethiopian Israelis\(^2\) tend to have large families, with over 6 children on average; the head of household works in 53% of the families of youth born in Ethiopia and 62% of Israeli-born youth; none of the mothers and almost none of the fathers has a post-high-school education.
- Immigrants from Western countries (French, English, and Spanish speakers) have relatively large families with an average of 4.5 children. The average among Spanish-speaking families is 3.5. Most of the English-speaking parents have a post-high-school education

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\(^1\) Some heads of immigrant households are women. For convenience, we use the masculine pronoun throughout this report.

\(^2\) The term Ethiopian Israelis is used throughout this report to indicate both groups – those born in Ethiopia and those born in Israel.
(over 80%), compared with two-thirds of the Spanish-speaking parents and half of the French-speaking parents; in the vast majority of families, the head of household works.

- The vast majority (85%–98%) of Ethiopian-Israeli, French-speaking and English-speaking families define themselves as traditional or religiously observant, compared with 13% of immigrants from the FSU and 44% of Spanish-speaking families.

**Language: Hebrew and Mother Tongue**

One of the main measures of integration is command of the new language and the ability to study successfully in it. At the same time, studies have shown that a good level of literacy in the mother tongue has a positive effect on scholastic success in the new language. Respondents were asked which language they spoke at home with their parents; they were asked to assess their proficiency in various aspects of the Hebrew language and their mother tongue. They were also asked how much importance they and their parents attached to preserving their mother tongue.

About half of all the respondents and the immigrants from the FSU speak their mother tongue only or a combination of their mother tongue and Hebrew when at home with their parents. Most of the Spanish and French speakers speak only their mother tongue at home. In contrast, all the Ethiopian-Israelis born in Israel speak to their parents in Hebrew (either solely Hebrew or a mixture of Hebrew and mother tongue). As expected, the longer the immigrants have been in the country, the more they speak Hebrew and the less they speak only their mother tongue.

Various aspects of respondents' command of Hebrew and their mother tongue were examined, such as comprehension, articulacy, reading and writing. Respondents were asked to assess how proficient they were each of the language skills. We created a summary measure for Hebrew proficiency – respondents who reported they "had no difficulty at all" in 6-9 of the 9 aspects examined and a measure for proficiency in their mother tongue – respondents stating they had a good command of 4-6 of the 6 aspects examined.

Over 80% of all respondents have a good command of Hebrew. However, a lower percentage was found among those from the Western countries – around 65%. Among those who had been in the country for 2-5 years, the percentage was particularly low, compared with those who had been here longer: 34% vs. 84%, respectively.

Great variation among groups of different origins was found regarding command of mother tongue, with respondents reporting proficiency as follows: 74% of English speakers, 50% of Spanish and French speakers, and 29% or less among immigrants from the FSU and Ethiopia. Over 50% of those who immigrated at age 7+ have a good command, compared with 20% who arrived at up to the age of 6.

A high percentage of respondents in all groups, except FSU immigrants, reported that it was important for them to keep up their mother tongue – 80%-90% vs. 57% of youth from the FSU. However, 74% of the latter believed that their parents thought it very important for them to
preserve it. This discrepancy between what respondents from the FSU themselves felt about maintaining their mother tongue and what they thought their parents felt about it was not found in any other group.

As noted, a relatively low percentage of respondents from the FSU are proficient in their mother tongue. It should, however, be remembered that the youth in this group have been in the country for a very long time (over 10 years, on average), having arrived at a very young age (under 5, on average). Furthermore, it is possible that the disparity reflects cultural differences when it comes to a subjective assessment of the various aspects of language proficiency.

**Scholastic Performance and Perception of School**

School is one of the main agents of socialization for youth in any society. It is a place where students acquire literacy, social skills and a formal education. School also plays an important role in forming students' self-perception and self-esteem and in shaping different behaviors (Richman & Bowen, 1997). Many issues were examined within the school context: Characteristics of the students – scholastic status, difficulties with studies and obtaining assistance; students' perception of the school and the teachers' attitudes; parents' involvement; and the students' scholastic aspirations for the future.

Almost all the respondents (99%) are studying:

◆ About a third of them are at junior-high school and two-thirds at high school.
◆ About two-thirds of twelfth graders are at regular high schools and one-third at vocational schools.
◆ Fifteen percent of all students had been absent from school on three or more days during the month before the interview for reasons other than illness or vacation. Among the French speakers, the percentage was higher (24%).
◆ Fourteen percent of all the students, regardless of their origin, reported that at some time, other students had not wanted to spend time with them at school and they had been left on their own.

Twenty-five percent of the respondents reported having difficulties in at least 3 subjects and 16% had failed in 3 or more subjects on their last report cards. The scholastic status of students, by group of origin, is as follows:

◆ The best scholastic results were found among students from the FSU: Only 19% have difficulty in 3 or more subjects. They have been students in Israel for longer than the other groups, having immigrated at a younger age, and they have the highest rate of Hebrew proficiency.
◆ The groups with the most learning difficulties are the Spanish and French speakers: Over 40% of them reported difficulties in 3 or more subjects. This may be due to their weak command of Hebrew.
◆ A third of the English speakers reported difficulties in 3 or more subjects.
Similarly, a third of the Ethiopian Israelis reported difficulties in 3 or more subjects. Furthermore, a quarter of them failed in 3 or more subjects (the highest percentage of all the groups).

It is commonly believed that scholastic achievements improve with the length of time students have been in Israel. However, no differences were found between Israeli-born Ethiopian Israelis and those born in Ethiopia.

Among all respondents, the rate of students who failed 3 or more subjects on their last report card declined as the length of time in the country increased – from 27% of respondents with 2-5 years in Israel to 10% among those who had been in the country 13 or more years.

Respondents experienced greater difficulties in language-oriented subjects, such as literature and Bible studies; and in mathematics.

About half of all the students – and over two-thirds of those born in Ethiopia – receive scholastic assistance. Of all those receiving assistance, about 50% receive public assistance (through the school or another public program), while some 50% receive assistance from a friend or relative or from a private teacher. While the Ethiopian Israelis receive assistance mainly through their schools or other public programs that are implemented during or after school hours, English speakers and immigrants from the FSU are mostly helped by relatives and friends or by private teachers. The subjects in which the greatest assistance is given are mathematics and English. Among the students who failed in 3 subjects or more, about a third (36%) were not receiving any assistance at all, but about 60% would like scholastic assistance (or additional assistance among those already receiving some).

Some 40% want scholastic assistance (or additional assistance, if they are already receiving assistance) – 59%-69% of Ethiopian Israelis and Spanish speakers, vs. 26%-39% of FSU immigrants and English and French speakers.

A high percentage of students feel a sense of belonging at school, but only half of them reported that they really liked it. The percentage of those who really like school is higher among those from the Western countries than those of other origins; the Israeli-born Ethiopian Israelis and Spanish speakers feel less affiliation to their schools.

Most of the students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school staff:

- Over 80% agree that the teachers treat them fairly and 65% feel that the school staff cares or cares greatly about their scholastic and social integration and believe there is someone to turn to in times of need. However, 13% of all respondents, regardless of their group of origin, reported that they had been humiliated or insulted at least once by a member of the school staff due to their origin.

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Ethiopian Israelis show more signs of difficulty than other groups, in their perception of school and of the school staff. For example, they feel to a lesser extent that there is "someone to turn to" at school and a higher percentage of them than other groups feel alienation at school.

A third of the students expressed at least one aspect of alienation from school according to a summary measure that included: absence from school on 3 or more days in the previous month; failure in 3 or more subjects on the most recent report card; a sense of alienation from school. Here, too, the rate was higher among Israeli-born Ethiopians (almost half) and among French speakers (to a similar extent).

The findings reveal that the students' parents are very involved in their school: Some 80% reported that their parents participate at parents' meetings; a similar percentage feel their parents encourage them to do well at school; 63% feel that their parents are prepared to help them if they have problems at school.

- The percentage of French speakers reporting parental involvement at school is particularly high.
- Immigrants from the FSU and the English speakers perceive their parents to be less involved.
- Some of the immigrant parents may have different ideas about involvement at school or may be unfamiliar with the school system in Israel and may therefore not initiate contact.

About three-quarters of the high-school students aspire to further education (academic or other). The percentage is particularly high among English speakers (91%) and particularly low among Ethiopian Israelis (43% among those born in Israel and 59% among those born in Ethiopia). Less than 50% of the students from all the groups whose mothers have a low education hope to pursue their education beyond high school, compared with over 90% of students whose mothers have a post-high-school education.

**Relationship with Peer Group**

For adolescents, integration into the society of their peers is crucial during puberty. The peer group has a great influence on other areas of life and on the sense of personal well-being. In this context, we examined the following: Sense of loneliness; experiences of humiliation and insulting attitudes due to their origin; number of students in their class and among all their friends who belong to the same group of origin.

- No widespread evidence of feelings of loneliness was found: Only 6% said they often or very often feel lonely, and there were no differences according to origin, length of time in Israel, age or gender. In contrast, 33% of the respondents reported that they had at least once been humiliated or insulted by other youths due to their origin, regardless of which group they belonged to.

Many immigrants go to schools where there is a large concentration of immigrant youth from the same group of origin. About 40% are in classes in which over a third of the
students are of the same origin (first- or second-generation immigrants). Nevertheless, the percentage varies from one group to another: It is particularly high among FSU immigrants (49%). In contrast, a high percentage of the Spanish and French speakers have no one else in their class who speaks their language (64% and 47%, respectively), compared with only 5% of immigrants from the FSU. The percentage for Ethiopian Israelis is between that of FSU immigrants and French and Spanish speakers: About a third of Ethiopian Israelis are in classes in which over one-third of the students are Ethiopian Israelis and a fifth are in classes where they are the only one.

- Larger percentages of FSU immigrants (49%) and Ethiopian Israelis (71% of those born in Ethiopia and 54% of those born in Israel) reported that most or all of their friends are of the same origin, than did immigrants from Western countries: English speakers – 31%, Spanish speakers – 21% and French speakers – 19%.

**Informal Education and Recreational Activities**

Informal education and recreational activities give youth the opportunity to develop life skills and to meet and interact with their peers. Such activities may be structured or unstructured; they are held in a range of venues and may be for individuals or groups; they may be characterized by normative or non-normative behaviors. We asked respondents about the way they spend their free time, including structured after-school activities and unstructured activities, such as Israeli cultural activities and the use of computer and Internet.

About half of all the respondents had taken part in at least one of the following after-school activities: youth club, afternoon classes, youth movement or voluntary activity outside of school. The percentage was particularly high among English speakers (over two-thirds).

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents always have money for recreational activities and about 59% usually do. Higher percentages of immigrants from the FSU and English and French speakers reported always having money (29%-40%), compared to very low percentages among the Ethiopian Israelis and Spanish speakers (10%-20%).

Recreational activities give immigrant youth the chance to sample Israeli culture and improve their command of Hebrew. We created a summary measure that included respondents who reported that they extensively or moderately consumed at least 2 of the following 3 forms of Israeli culture: reading books and newspapers, watching Israeli TV channels, listening to Israeli music. According to this measure, 74% of all respondents reported that they sample Israeli culture in Hebrew extensively or moderately, while lower rates were found among English speakers (57%) and French speakers (64%). As noted above, both groups reported much difficulty with Hebrew proficiency.

The great majority of respondents have a computer at home with Internet access: upwards of 93% of immigrants from the Western countries and Israeli-born Ethiopian Israelis have a computer
and 88% have Internet, in contrast with some 80% of FSU immigrants and Ethiopian-born Israelis who reported having a computer and 75% who have Internet at home.

On average, the respondents use their computers 2.5 hours a day. The rate is higher among those from Western countries and Ethiopian-born Israelis (2.7-2.8 hours a day on average). It is lower among FSU immigrants and Israeli-born Ethiopian Israelis (2.4 and 2.2 hours on average, respectively)

Patterns of Paid Work
The workplace offers immigrant youth an additional opportunity to become acquainted with Israeli society and to achieve personal goals, although the combination of work and school may be detrimental to scholastic performance.

A quarter of the respondents are working – in either temporary or permanent jobs. The highest percentage found was among English speakers (38%) and the lowest among Ethiopian-born youth (12%) and French speakers (14%). As expected, the percentages are higher among the older respondents: 37% of respondents aged 16-17 are working, vs. 14% of those aged 12-15. Only 19% of the students with jobs reported that their schoolwork suffered, i.e., they may have missed school, not done their homework or not studied for exams.

Risk Behavior and Physical/Emotional Distress
The processes of migration, particularly among youth, have the potential to undermine self-confidence and to aggravate a sense of social alienation, which could lead to risk behaviors. The respondents were asked about their involvement in various risk situations and behaviors, such as getting into fights, smoking and drinking. They were also asked about various physical and emotional symptoms. As noted, the data were collected through telephone interviews and a degree of under-reporting is to be expected.

Thirteen percent of all the respondents had been involved in a fight 3 or more times in the previous year – some 20% of Ethiopian Israelis compared with 8%-12% of the remainder. Ethiopian Israelis feel much less safe: 35% of those born in Ethiopia and 44% of those born in Israel feel unsafe in at least one of the following situations: school, the neighborhood, the locality, compared with 13%-23% of the remainder.

About half of all the youth had been cursed or insulted at least once in the previous year; a fifth had been robbed; and a fifth had been beaten, slapped or shoved.

Fourteen percent of the respondents regularly smoke cigarettes or other forms of tobacco: 19% of FSU immigrants vs. negligible percentages from the other groups. Nineteen percent smoke water pipes; the percentages are similar among FSU and Western immigrants and lower among Ethiopian Israelis (9% of those born in Ethiopia and 14% of those born in Israel).
High percentages of indirect exposure to alcohol were reported: 61% have friends who drink; the percentage is higher among FSU immigrants, Spanish speakers and Israeli-born Ethiopians and lower among immigrants born in Ethiopia and English and French speakers. As expected, the percentages of those who drink alcohol themselves are lower. About a quarter are in the habit of drinking at least once a week, while a quarter of the respondents have been drunk at least once in their lives – the percentages were similar among FSU immigrants, Spanish speakers and English speakers. Lower rates were reported among Ethiopian-Israelis and French speakers (12%-14%).

Half of all the respondents reported experiencing symptoms of emotional distress, such as anger, sadness and difficulty falling asleep at least once a week. The percentages were higher among French and English speakers (almost two-thirds). About a third of all respondents suffered from physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches and dizziness at least once a week. Here, too, the percentages were higher among French and English speakers (around 40%), while they were lower among Ethiopian Israelis (24%).

**Relationship with Parents**
Adolescents who have close, supportive relationships with their parents tend to be in better physical and mental health, to demonstrate less antisocial behavior and to cope better with problems. In this study, we examined the respondents' relationships with their parents in various ways, including creating two summary measures: (1) A measure of positive relationships with parents, including positive responses to 4 or 5 of the 5 items making up the measure, e.g., agreement with the statements "If I have problems at school, my parents are prepared to help me" and "When I have a problem, I tell my parents"; and (2) A measure of parents' knowledge about the respondents' lives as reported by the respondents. This measure included respondents who reported that their parents knew about 4 or 5 of the 5 issues examined, e.g., what they do in their free time and who their friends are and how they spend their money. In addition, they were asked how easy or difficult it is for them to speak with their parents about things that trouble them, and whether their parents understand what is troubling them.

The first measure reveals that about three-quarters of the respondents have a positive relationship with their parents. Moreover, similar percentages feel that their parents understand what bothers them to a great or very great extent and it is easy or very easy for them to talk to their parents about things that bother them. The second measure reveals that two-thirds believe that their parents know a lot about their lives. In most of the items, the Ethiopian Israelis, particularly those born in Israel, reported a less close relationship with their parents and the French speakers, a stronger relationship. Female respondents (as opposed to male) aged 12-15 (as opposed to 16-17) have a stronger relationship with their parents.

**Patterns of Applying for Advice and Support**
Seeking help is a means of coping with problems through the support of another person in order to alleviate or solve them. The respondents were asked about applying for support or advice and their relationship with formal counselors.
The great majority apply for advice (formal or informal) when they need it. The study reveals that:

- Parents were found to be the most common source. This finding is consistent with other studies of youth in Israel. Israeli-born Ethiopians turn to their parents less than the other groups. As noted, they reported less close relationships with their parents.

- Friends are the next source of support. This pattern is particularly evident among French and English speakers and FSU immigrants and less noticeable among Spanish speakers and Ethiopian Israelis.

- Although 18% of the respondents have at some time felt the need to seek professional advice, only a small percentage have sought formal counseling, e.g., school counselor, homeroom teacher or social worker, at their own initiative.

- Forty percent of the respondents have been in the past – or are at present – in contact with a professional counselor – the percentage is higher among Ethiopian Israelis and Spanish speakers and lower among FSU immigrants and French and English speakers. The most common counselor is the school counselor. Importantly, in most cases the initiative came from a professional and not from the respondent (e.g., the youth probation service, truancy officer or the school counselor).

**Identity**

Migration involves a transition from one culture to another. One of the most important expressions of this transition is the re-shaping of personal and group identity. In order to ascertain how they feel about each separate aspect of their identity, the respondents were asked three separate questions: To what extent do they feel Israeli, do they feel Jewish, and do they identify with their group of origin.

About three-quarters of them, irrespective of group of origin, feel Israeli to a great extent or very great extent. As expected, the longer the respondents have been in Israel, the more they feel Israeli to a great or very great extent – from 57% of respondents who have been in the country 2-5 years to 88% of those who have been here for 13 or more years.

The great majority of French and English speakers and Ethiopian Israelis feel Jewish to a great or very great extent, compared with a lower percentage of Spanish speakers and an even lower percentage of FSU immigrants. This finding is consistent with the degree of religious observance in the family as reported by the respondents: a high percentage of traditional and religious families were found among the French and English speakers and the Ethiopian Israelis, while the percentage is lower among FSU immigrants and Spanish speakers. It is important to remember that a quarter of the FSU immigrants are not officially registered as Jewish.

The vast majority of Ethiopian Israelis feel they belong to their group of origin (99% of those born in Ethiopia and 86% of those born in Israel). High – albeit lower – percentages were found among the other groups (68%-78%). The younger the respondents arrived in Israel, the less they
identify with their group of origin: 65% of those who arrived at age 0-3, vs. 89% of those who arrived at age 10-15.

Almost half of the respondents identify themselves to a great or very great extent as concomitantly Israeli, Jewish and belonging to their group of origin. The percentages are highest among Ethiopian Israelis – 71% among those born in Ethiopia and 62% of those born in Israel. The percentage is lowest among FSU immigrants – 35%.

Assessment of Integration Process
The current study included questions examining the respondents' perceptions of the process of integration and their feelings about being in Israel.

Most of the respondents are satisfied with most aspects of their integration in Israel that were examined. The highest rates of satisfaction were found among English and French speakers and Ethiopian-born Israelis (approximately 90%) and the lowest among Spanish speakers and FSU immigrants (75%).

About 75% of the respondents feel to a great or very great extent that Israel is their home. The highest percentage was found among English speakers, and the lowest among Spanish speakers and FSU immigrants. The reason for this may have to do with the fact that these two groups feel less Jewish than the other groups.

The study examined several factors that could affect satisfaction with integration and the feeling that Israel is home for the immigrant youth, while controlling for background variables (gender, age, origin and length of time in Israel). Two multivariate analyses were conducted using a logistic regression model that included variables representing various aspects of the respondents' lives: Number of breadwinners in the family (to indicate the level of family income); School variables – sense of belonging, sense there is "someone to turn to" in times of need, and scholastic success; Sense of personal safety; Sense of loneliness; Origin of friends; Relations with parents; Hebrew proficiency.

In the analysis of satisfaction with the integration process, two areas were found to have a significant positive effect: The sense of belonging in school and the absence of a sense (or only a minimal sense) of loneliness or social rejection, both of which increased the respondents' satisfaction with their integration in Israel. Interestingly, variables such as the number of breadwinners in the family, scholastic success, the sense of having "someone to turn to" at school, friends' origin, the sense of personal safety and command of Hebrew were not found to have a significant independent effect. It is surprising that scholastic success and the sense of personal safety were not found to have any effect.

The findings of the second multivariate analysis – the feeling that Israel is home – reveal that several areas of life have the significant independent effect that was expected: All three aspects of school life (sense of belonging, sense there is "someone to turn to" in times of need, and scholastic success) and the sense of personal safety contribute to the feeling that Israel is home.
Interestingly, too, having a large number of friends of other origins was also found to have a positive effect. No significant effect was found for the following: Number of breadwinners in the family, sense of loneliness or social rejection, and command of Hebrew.

With regard to the findings of these two multivariate analyses, it is possible that "the number of breadwinners in the family" is not sufficiently sensitive to the families' financial situation. The effect of Hebrew proficiency may also be canceled out when controlling for social and school-based variables, which are affected by the extent of Hebrew proficiency.

**Sense of Personal Well-Being**

A sense of personal well-being is very important because it affects many areas of life, especially during adolescence, the period when patterns of behavior are formed (Molcho, 1998*). A positive outlook on life gives adolescents a solid foundation on which to get through this period, enhancing their ability to withstand the temptations of risk behavior and to experience adolescence as a positive event (Harel et al., 2002*). The respondents' perception of their lives was examined using two measures: (1) Satisfaction with life – this measure was made up of the average percentages of respondents who reported that they frequently or almost always liked the way things worked out for them, felt their lives were successful, felt they had a good life, felt good about what happened to them; (2) Wish to change their lives – this was also made up of the average percentages of respondents who reported that they frequently or almost always wanted to change many things in their lives and would have wanted their lives to be different.

The findings reveal that most of the respondents (82%) frequently or almost always feel satisfied with their lives and a slightly smaller percentage (78%) do not want to change their lives. No statistically significant differences in these two measures were found by group of origin or length of time in Israel.

To examine the factors affecting satisfaction, a multivariate analysis was conducted using a logistic regression model. Several factors representing various aspects of the respondents' lives that could affect their satisfaction with life were examined, while controlling for background variables (gender, age, origin and length of time in Israel). The findings of the analysis show that almost all the variables entered into the model have the expected effect on satisfaction with life: absence of loneliness; sense of personal safety; good relations with parents; 2 of the 3 school measures (scholastic success and a sense of belonging) all increase satisfaction with life.

There is considerable similarity between the variables found to have an effect on satisfaction with life and the sense that Israel is home. Hebrew proficiency and the number of breadwinners in the family were not found to have an effect. As we presumed in the earlier multivariate analyses, it is possible that the effect of Hebrew proficiency is canceled out when controlling for social and school-based variables, which are affected by Hebrew proficiency. It is also possible that the number of breadwinners in the family is not sufficiently sensitive to the families' financial situation. The origin of their friends was not found to have an effect.
Preparing for Military/National Service

Immigrants' wishes to perform military or National Service are a key measure of their sense of belonging and integration in Israeli society. Only youths aged 16-17 were asked about this issue. We asked them whether they intended and wanted to serve in the IDF (males) and in the IDF or National Service (females).

The great majority of respondents intend to serve in the IDF or National Service: 84% of the male respondents intend to serve in the IDF and 94% of the females intend serve (73% in the IDF, 12% in National Service and the remaining 9% are undecided). The percentage of respondents who want to serve in the IDF is lower than the percentage of those who intend to do so, but nonetheless represents the majority: 63% of the male respondents and 58% of the females reported that they want to serve in the IDF to a great or very great extent – i.e., that it is something they want rather than have to do.

A considerable proportion of the respondents lack information about military service – 24% of the male respondents and 36% of the females. Similar percentages reported they were apprehensive about enlisting and many would like some preparation – 54% of the male respondents and 73% of the females. Note that a relatively high percentage of the female respondents (59%) lack information about National Service.

Summary Measure of Negative Behaviors and Patterns

It is particularly important to examine the extent to which immigrant youth are in risk –and multiple risk – situations and to identify and characterize them. To do so, we built a summary measure of different behaviors and risk situations, including 11 areas: No breadwinner in the family; truancy; failure in school work; negative perception of teachers' attitudes; participation in risk behavior (violence, alcohol and criminal behavior); social rejection; rejection based on their origin; difficult relationship with parents (hereinafter "risk areas").

The findings reveal:

- Twenty-eight percent of all respondents are not characterized by any risk area: 38% among English speakers, compared with 10% among Ethiopian Israelis. In contrast, 44% are characterized by 2 or more risk areas: Some 57% of Ethiopian Israelis, compared with 40% among immigrants from Western countries and 45% of FSU immigrants. About a sixth of the youth (14%) are characterized by 4 or more areas. Surprisingly, no differences were found according to gender, age or length of time in Israel.
- Youth at high risk are characterized by several family characteristics: One-parent families; head of household does not work; and the mother has high-school education or lower.
- The percentage of respondents who are (or have been) in contact with professionals increases concomitantly with the number of risk areas: from 30% of youths who are not characterized by any risk areas to 58% of youths characterized by 4 or more. In other words,
youths with needs of various kinds do indeed receive more services. Nevertheless, note that 42% are not in contact with therapists.

- As the number of risk areas increases, the percentage of youth satisfied with their lives declines (from 93% among youth characterized by no risk area to 70% among those characterized by 4 or more risk areas) and the percentage of youth who wish to change their lives increases (from 13% to 42%, respectively).

- As the number of risk areas increases, there is a decline in the percentage of respondents who feel Israeli to a great or very great extent, who would repeat their decision to make aliyah, and who feel that Israel is their home. In other words, the measures of successful integration decline as the number of risk areas increases.

Programmatic Directions
The multivariate analysis shows that reporting positive responses about various aspects of their lives (e.g., school, relationships with parents, social relations with peers etc.) has a considerable positive effect on the respondents' overall perception about their lives and their integration in Israel. These findings and other additional study findings indicate the need to specifically address a number of issues that affect the integration and well-being of the youth.

1. Perception of School
The findings revealed that feeling good at school, e.g., having a sense of belonging and the feeling that there is someone to turn to when there are problems, has a positive impact on satisfaction with life and the integration process and the feeling of being at home in Israel. This illustrates the need to increase school staff's awareness of the immigrants' needs and make them more accessible so that they can be a source of support when needed.

2. Scholastic Assistance
The findings reveal that large percentages of immigrant youth are currently receiving scholastic assistance. However, a significant proportion of those receiving assistance believe that what they are receiving is insufficient and would like more. This gap between what is needed and what is provided illustrates the need to examine the quality and effectiveness of the scholastic assistance that has already been given and the extent to which it meets the immigrants' needs. Moreover, the findings reveal that about a third of the respondents who failed in 3 or more subjects did not receive any assistance and that respondents not receiving assistance feel they need it. In light of this, it is necessary to examine the possibility of broadening the provision of assistance.

3. Improved Hebrew Proficiency
About a third of the respondents from Western countries (particularly the French and English speakers) do not have full command of Hebrew (self-report), which sometimes hampers them from playing an active role in class and achieving good scholastic results. Higher percentages in both groups of Ethiopian Israelis reported they had a good command of Hebrew. However, some studies indicate that Ethiopian Israelis have difficulty with Hebrew and there would therefore appear to be under-reporting in the current study. In light of the above, there appears to be a need
to provide more help with Hebrew, particularly to immigrants from Western countries and Ethiopian Israelis.

4. Increased Parental Participation in their Children's Lives
The study found that most of the respondents have good relations with their parents, as reflected, for example, in the fact that the parents help them with school when necessary and they, in turn, can go to their parents with problems. However, the findings regarding Ethiopian Israelis, particularly those born in Israel, indicate difficulties in their relations with the parents: the percentage of Israeli-born Ethiopians who reported that their parents know about their lives and understand what bothers them was the lowest of all the groups. Hence, there is room for improvement in parent-child communication, particularly among this latter group, to increase the parents' awareness of different aspects of their children's lives: scholastic status, social status and recreational situation, risk behaviors, etc.

5. Social Interaction
The study findings reveal that despite the length of time they have been in the country, the FSU immigrants and both groups of Ethiopian Israelis socialize mainly with members of their own group of origin. The findings differ for immigrants from Western countries, a large proportion of whom have friends of other origins, not only those who share their mother tongue. There is, therefore, a need for activities both within and outside of the education system that enable interpersonal interaction and acquaintance among youth from different groups of origin, including non-immigrant Israelis, which will give the immigrants a chance to get to know Israeli society and the Israeli context and at the same time maintain their own cultures. Such activities would also give non-immigrants opportunities to get to know the immigrants and their cultures.

6. Participation in Afternoon Activities
The findings show that most of the groups have a low participation rate in afternoon activities such as afternoon classes, youth movements and volunteer activities, apart from the English speakers, who participate in relatively large percentages in all activities. This highlights the need to examine ways of increasing the participation of immigrant youth in afternoon activities by adapting the existing activities to meet the needs and preferences of the various immigrant groups and developing additional recreational frameworks.

7. Attention to Risk Behaviors
Youth involved in risk behavior require particular attention. The findings about heavy alcohol consumption illustrate that the issue is of paramount importance, particularly among FSU immigrants and Spanish and English speakers. Among Ethiopian Israelis, attention should be paid to the involvement in fights and the sense of personal insecurity they experience. It is also important to identify youth characterized by a large number of risk behaviors or negative patterns, in light of the study findings that 44% of the respondents are characterized by 2 or more such areas and 14%, by 4 or more. These youth need a comprehensive response that involves a continuum of treatment and cooperation among various professionals.
8. Preparation for Military or National Service
Most of the respondents want and intend to perform military or National Service. The study findings show that a considerable percentage of the respondents did not have sufficient information about military and National Service, or had no information at all. Many respondents expressed interest in participating in activities to prepare them for the IDF. These findings show that there is a need to strengthen channels of information about military and National Service as well as to advise the youth about the various preparatory courses and sources of information, the goal being that the information will reduce apprehension about the IDF and increase motivation to serve.

9. Israeli-born Ethiopians
The Ethiopian-Israelis who were born in Israel have exceptionally numerous needs. In many areas, not only is the situation better for immigrant youth from other countries, it is better too for Ethiopian Israelis who were born in Ethiopia. This demonstrates the need to deepen understanding and knowledge of the needs of this group in order to improve their situation in the various areas of life examined in this study.

10. Expanding the Study
The differential analysis of the various groups illustrates and highlights the importance of understanding the unique needs and characteristics of each. In the follow-up study, now in the planning stages, we will also examine Israeli-born youth whose parents immigrated from the FSU (second-generation FSU immigrants), who were not included in the present study. In light of the findings about Ethiopian Israelis, we will also broaden the sample for this group, in order to examine their needs more deeply and explore the differences between those born in Israel and those born in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the follow-up study will include a group of non-immigrant Jewish youth in order to compare immigrant youth with Israeli-born youth.
Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1
   1.1 Background 1
   1.2 Reasons for Aliya 1
   1.3 Youth Undergoing Integration Process 1
   1.4 Data on Immigrant Youth 2

2. Study Goals 3

3. Study Population and Method of Data Collection 3
   3.1 Study Population 3
   3.2 Sampling Process 4
   3.3 Method of Data Collection 5

4. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents and their Families 7
   4.1 Personal Characteristics of Respondents 7
   4.2 Characteristics of Respondents' Families 8
   4.3 Religious Identity 10

5. Proficiency in Hebrew and Mother Tongue 11
   5.1 Language Spoken at Home with Parents 11
   5.2 Hebrew Proficiency 12
   5.3 Mother Tongue Proficiency 13

6. Scholastic Performance and Respondents' Perception of School 15
   6.1 Respondents' Schooling and Characteristics of School 17
   6.2 Scholastic Status 18
   6.3 Scholastic Assistance Received and Need for Assistance 20
   6.4 Students' Feelings in School 22
   6.5 Risk Measures in School 26
   6.6 Students' Perception of their Parents' Involvement in School 27
   6.7 Scholastic Aspirations 28

7. Social Relations with Peers 30

8. Informal Education and Recreational Activities 33
   8.1 Patterns of Participation in Informal Activities 34
   8.2 Patterns of Recreational Activities 35

9. Paid Employment 39

10. Risk Behaviors and Physical and Emotional Symptoms 41
    10.1 Violence and Sense of Safety 41
    10.2 Smoking 43
    10.3 Alcohol Consumption 44
    10.4 Involvement in Criminal Behavior 46
    10.5 Physical and Emotional Symptoms 46
11. Relationships with Parents 47
12. Patterns of Application for Counseling and Support 50
13. Identity 53
14. Assessment of Integration Process 57
   14.1 Assessment of Integration in Israel 58
   14.2 Satisfaction with Integration Process, Multivariate Analysis 60
   14.3 Feeling that Israel is Home, Multivariate Analysis 62
15. Sense of General Well-being 63
   15.1 Satisfaction with Life, Multivariate Analysis 64
16. Preparing for Military/National Service 65
17. Summary Measure of Negative Behaviors and Patterns 68
18. Specific Needs and Characteristics by Group of Origin 72
   18.1 FSU Immigrants 72
   18.2 Ethiopian Israelis – those Born in Israel and those Born in Ethiopia 74
   18.3 Spanish Speakers 77
   18.4 French Speakers 78
   18.5 English Speakers 79
19. Programmatic Directions 81
Bibliography 84
List of Tables

3. Study Population and Method of Data Collection
   Table 1: Study Population and Sample, by Origin 4

4. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents and their Families
   Table 2: Characteristics of Respondents, by Origin 7
   Table 3: Age on Date of Aliya, by Origin 8
   Table 4: Family Characteristics, by Origin 9
   Table 5: Ownership of Goods, by Origin 10
   Table 6: Patterns of Religious Identity, by Origin 11

5. Proficiency in Hebrew and Mother Tongue
   Table 7: Language Spoken with Parents at Home, by Length of Time in Israel 12
   Table 8: Hebrew Proficiency, by Origin 13
   Table 9: Proficiency in Mother Tongue and Importance of Maintaining Mother Tongue, by Origin 14

6. Scholastic Performance and Respondents' Perception of School
   Table 10: General Characteristics of Respondents' Schools, by Origin 17
   Table 11: Students' Scholastic Status, by Origin 19
   Table 12: Need for Scholastic Assistance, by Origin 22
   Table 13: Students' Perception of School and their Attitudes to the Atmosphere in School, by Origin 23
   Table 14: Students' Perception of School Staff Attitudes toward them, by Origin 24
   Table 15: Measures of Risk in School, by Origin 26
   Table 16: Students' Perception of their Parents' Involvement in School, by Origin 27
   Table 17: Students' Scholastic Aspirations, by Origin 29

7. Social Relations with Peers
   Table 18: Proportion of Immigrants from Same Group of Origin in Class, by Origin 31
   Table 19: Social Relations with Peers, by Origin 33

8. Informal Education and Recreational Activities
   Table 20: Participation in Informal Activities, by Origin 34
   Table 21: Money for Recreational Activities and Entertainment, by Origin 35
   Table 22: Consumption of Israeli Culture in Hebrew, by Origin 36
   Table 23: Use of Computers and Internet, by Origin 38
9. Paid Employment
Table 24: Paid Work, by Origin

10. Risk Behaviors and Physical and Emotional Symptoms
Table 25: Victims of Violent Behavior and Participation in Violent Behavior, by Origin
Table 26: Sense of Personal Safety, by Origin
Table 27: Smoking, by Origin
Table 28: Alcohol Consumption, by Origin
Table 29: Health-risk Behaviors, by Origin

11. Relationships with Parents
Table 30: Relationship with Parents, by Origin

12. Patterns of Application for Counseling and Support
Table 31: Patterns of Seeking Help/Counseling, by Origin

13. Identity
Table 32: Patterns of Socio-cultural Identity, by Length of Time in Israel
Table 33: Profiles of Multidimensional Socio-cultural Identity, by Origin

14. Assessment of Integration Process
Table 34: Assessment of Integration in Israel, by Origin
Table 35: Assessment of Integration in Israel, by Length of Time in Israel
Table 36: Satisfaction with Integration, Logistic Regression Multivariate Analysis
Table 37: Sense that Israel is Home, Logistic Regression Multivariate Analysis

15. Sense of General Well-being
Table 38: Satisfaction with Life and Wish to Change Life, by Origin
Table 39: Satisfaction with Life, Logistic Regression Multivariate Analysis

16. Preparing for Military/National Service
Table 40: Aspects of Enlistment to the IDF and Signing up for National Service, by Gender, Ages 16–17
Table 41: Attitudes to Enlistment to the IDF, by origin, Ages 16–17

17. Summary Measure of Negative Behaviors and Patterns
Table 42: Summary Measure of Risk Situations and Behaviors, by Origin
Table 43: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Immigrant Youth, by Number of Risk Areas
Table 44: Number of Risk Areas among Immigrant Youth, by Sociodemographic Characteristics of their Parents
List of Figures

Figure 1: Language Spoken at Home with Parents, by Origin 12
Figure 2: Recipients of Scholastic Assistance, by Origin 21
Figure 3: Group of Origin of Friends, by Respondents' Origin 32
Figure 4: Summary Measure of Lack of Sense of Safety, by Origin 43
Figure 5: Respondents' Assessment of Parents' Knowledge about their Lives, by Origin 49
Figure 6: Respondents' Currently or Previously in Contact with at Least One Counseling Professional, by Origin 52
Figure 7: Patterns of Socio-Cultural Identity, by Origin 54
Figure 8: Summary Measure of Satisfaction with Integration Process, by Origin 60
Figure 9: Summary Measure of Satisfaction with Integration Process, by Length of Time in Israel 60
Figure 10: Requests for Counseling from Various Sources, by Number of Risk Areas (per Summary Measure of Negative Behaviors and Patterns) 71
Figure 11: Satisfaction with Life and Wish to Change Life, by Summary Measure of Negative Behaviors and Patterns 71
Figure 12: Identity and Integration Measures, by Summary Measure of Negative Behaviors and Patterns 72