



Myers JDC
Brookdale

Lamerhak
**Vocational Guidance for
Israelis of Ethiopian Descent
Formative and Summative
Evaluation Study**

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Abstract

Background

The labor market integration of Ethiopian-Israelis is one of Israel's major socioeconomic challenges. The poverty rates in this community are high, with low education levels and a high proportion of community members employed at low wages and in jobs with limited employment horizons. In response, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and JDC-Israel-TEVET developed the Lamerhak ("far and away") program of employment promotion for Israelis of Ethiopian descent. The program's objective is to help members of the community to be employed in jobs that take full advantage of their educational attainments and skills. The program started in 2014, and since 2019 it is being implemented by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. Myers-JDC-Brookdale conducted a formative and summative evaluation study of Lamerhak, including an impact assessment, in the years 2015-2020. The present report summarizes the findings of that evaluation.

Objectives

The study's objectives are to examine the way the program's action model has been implemented; its outcomes with relation to its targets; and its impact on the participants' wages.

Method

Our examination of the program's implementation and outcome was based on an analysis of data from the program's administrative system; in-depth interviews with administrators and field workers, employers and program participants; and a telephone survey of participants. The examination of the program's impact on the participants' wages was based on administrative data provided by the National Insurance Institute.

Results

During the study period, the program focused on tailoring dedicated solutions to its participants so that they would meet participants' needs, developed collaborations with employers to help participants overcome occupational barriers faced by Ethiopian-Israelis and adapted the training provided to its employment promotion coordinators to the local labor environment.

Twenty-eight percent of the participants took part in a training program operated in collaboration with employers. Most participated in short-term courses for occupations with low earning potential, and a minority, mostly men, participated in longer programs providing technological training for occupations with high earning potential.

The examination of the program's outcomes indicated that it had met the main occupational advancement target. Within 18 months of joining the program, 75% of participants advanced on at least one of the advancement indicators – financial improvement, improvement in working conditions, professional improvement, and subjective improvement.

The results of the program's impact assessment show that within 12-18 months after joining the program, the participants' monthly salary increased by an average of NIS 644 (or 10%, $p < .01$). This was due primarily to an average increase of NIS 908 among male participants (or 12.5%, $p < .05$, 12-18 months after joining the program); no impact on women's salary was found.

Summary

The program succeeded in improving the low-quality employment of Ethiopian-Israelis, since its contribution to the participants' salary was substantial and even slightly higher than similar programs worldwide. The findings are also consistent with studies conducted in Israel, whereby the impact of similar programs is mainly on men.

The Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs began implementing the program on a broad scale in 2019. Key challenges include integrating women of Ethiopian descent in quality employment and narrowing the occupational and wage gaps between members of the community and other Jews in Israel.