



The Ethiopian National Project: Scholastic Assistance Program (SPACE)

Continued Follow-up of Program Impacts on the High School Performance of Ethiopian-Israeli Students, 2016

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1. The Ethiopian National Project and SPACE Scholastic Assistance Program

The Ethiopian National Project (ENP) was established in 2004 with the goal of enabling Ethiopian-Israeli youth to fulfill their potential and increase their chances of social mobility and future integration into the labor market. The project comprises a variety of interventions, the most significant being the ENP SPACE scholastic assistance program, which is the subject of this report.

The ENP SPACE program (School Performance and Community Empowerment) is offered to Ethiopian-Israeli students in junior high and high schools, and is aimed at improving their achievements on matriculation exams; it addresses scholastic, emotional and social difficulties and provides interventions.

The ENP program has been accompanied by extensive, ongoing evaluation since its inception. In previous reports, we have presented evaluation findings about implementation of the program, satisfaction of students and school principals with the program, and their assessment of its contribution. We found that the principals and students were very satisfied with the implementation of the program, and that most of them felt that the program contributed to a great or very great extent to the promotion of the students, both in scholastic and social-emotional aspects.

In this document, we will present the achievements of participants in the SPACE program in 2016, as reflected in their success on national matriculation exams. Consistent with the findings of previous years – the findings from 2016 show a significant impact of the program on the achievements of its participants.

The study findings are disseminated and discussed with the implementers and funders of the program and will serve as the basis for further improvement and continued dissemination.

2. Main Findings

Characteristics of 12th-grade ENP program participants in 2016:

- ◆ 367 12th-graders participated in the program
- ◆ 60% of all Ethiopian-Israeli students at schools offering the program
- ◆ 12% of all Ethiopian-Israeli 12th-graders
- ◆ 59% attended schools that had been in the program for 6 years, since 2011 (20 schools)
- ◆ 32% were boys
- ◆ 65% were Israeli-born

2.1 Achievements of ENP SPACE Participants – 2016

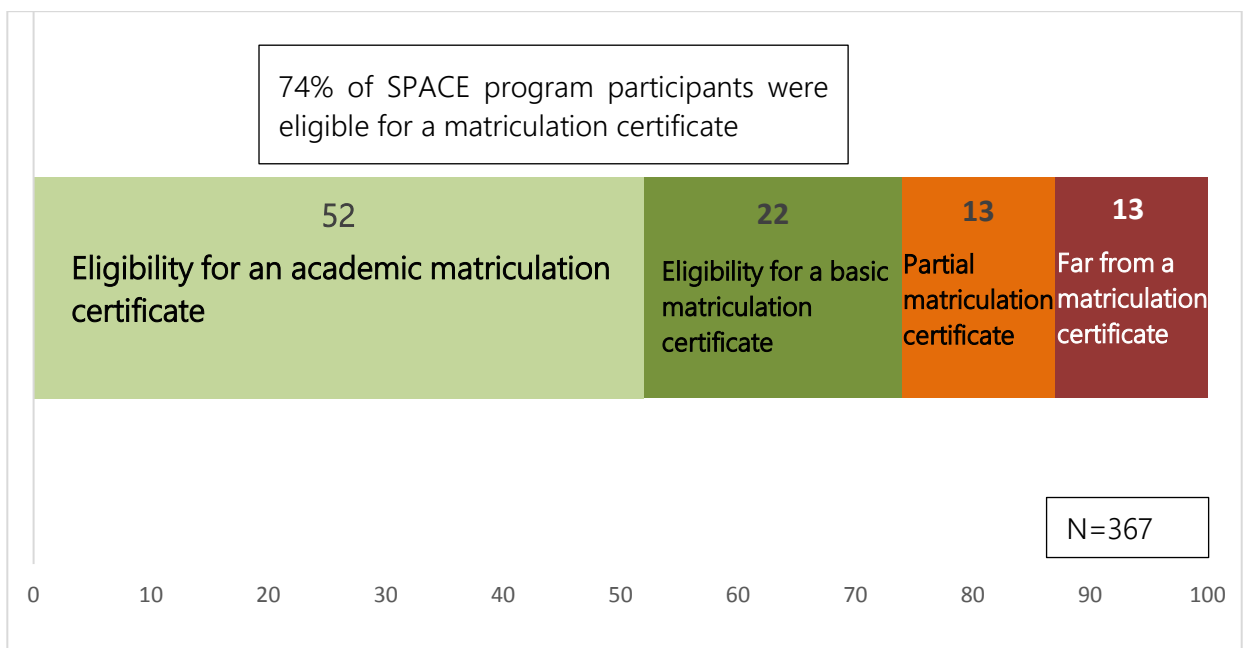
A number of measures were selected to represent different levels of success on the matriculation exams:

- ◆ Eligibility for a partial matriculation certificate – which enables registration for some professional courses and makes it easier to meet the requirements for a full matriculation certificate in the future
- ◆ Eligibility for a matriculation certificate:
 - A basic matriculation certificate
 - An academic matriculation certificate that meets university prerequisites – i.e., a basic certificate with the addition of a high level of English

The achievements of ENP program participants in 2016 are presented in Figure 1:

- ◆ 74% of the ENP program participants received matriculation certificates. Most – 52%, were eligible for an academic matriculation certificate
- ◆ An additional 13% of the ENP program participants received a partial certificate and were quite close to receiving a full matriculation certificate.

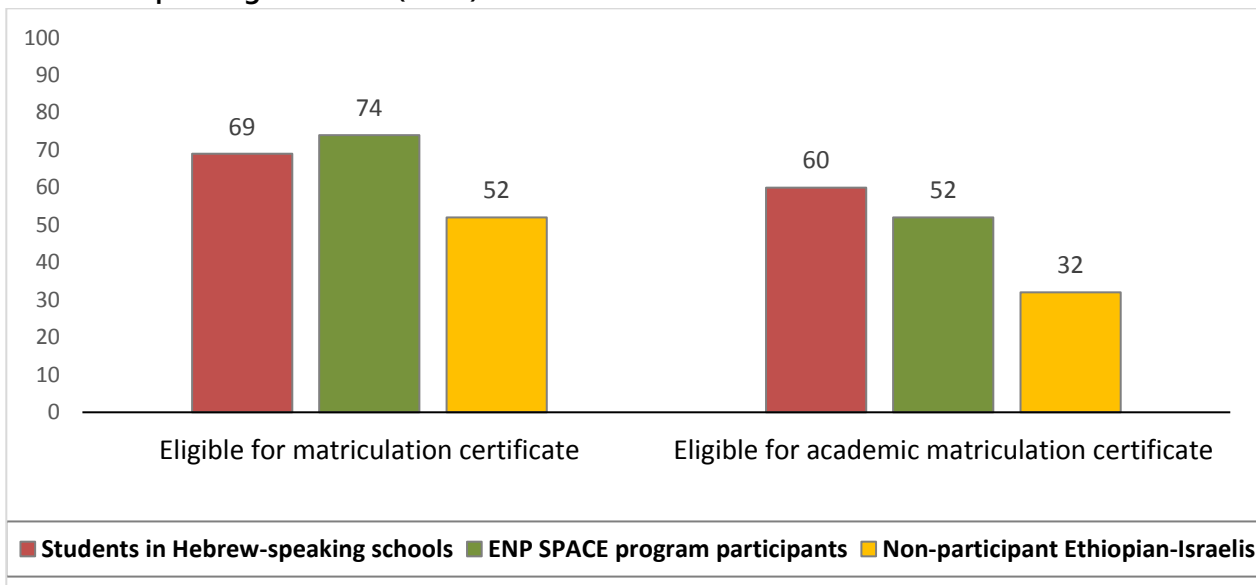
Figure 1: Percentage of 12th-Graders at Various Levels of Achievement on Matriculation Exams among ENP SPACE Participants (2016)



The achievements of ENP program participants in 2016 were much higher than those of all Ethiopian-Israeli students in Israel. This year, ENP SPACE students achieved better results in obtaining a matriculation certificate than the total students in Hebrew-speaking schools (74% versus 69% – see Figure 2), and the gap in the percentage eligible for academic matriculation certificate was small (52% versus 60% – see Figure 2).

- ◆ The achievements of girl participants in 2016 were better than of non-participant Ethiopian-Israeli girls. The percentage of girl participants eligible for matriculation was even higher than of the total girls in Hebrew-speaking schools (78% versus 70%), and the gap in the percentage eligible for academic matriculation certificate was small (55% versus 60%).
- ◆ The achievements of boy participants in 2016 were better than of non-participant Ethiopian-Israeli boys. The percentage of participants eligible for matriculation was close to that of the total boys in Hebrew-speaking schools (65% versus 69%), although a gap remained in the percentage eligible for university registration (45% versus 59%).

Figure 2: Percentage of 12th-Graders at Various Levels of Achievement in Matriculation Exams among ENP SPACE Participants, Total Ethiopian-Israeli Students, and Total Hebrew-Speaking Students (2016)



2.2 The Contribution of the ENP SPACE to Improved Matriculation Results

To estimate the extent to which the higher achievements reflect the impact of the program, we isolated the program impact using a comparison group of *Ethiopian-Israeli* students with *similar characteristics* in *similar schools* who did not participate in the program¹. This analysis enables us to separate the program impact from other factors affecting the achievements of Ethiopian-Israeli students, and therefore estimate what would have happened if students were not participating in the program. In addition, we examined the program impact on students with different characteristics – boys versus girls, immigrants versus Israeli-born and students with lower versus higher previous scholastic level.

¹ Matched students were similar to participant students in the following characteristics:

- ◆ Student characteristics: country of birth (Israel/Ethiopia), gender, mother's education
- ◆ School characteristics: school stream (State or State Religious school), the percentage of students eligible for an academic matriculation certificate among non-Ethiopian students in 2016.

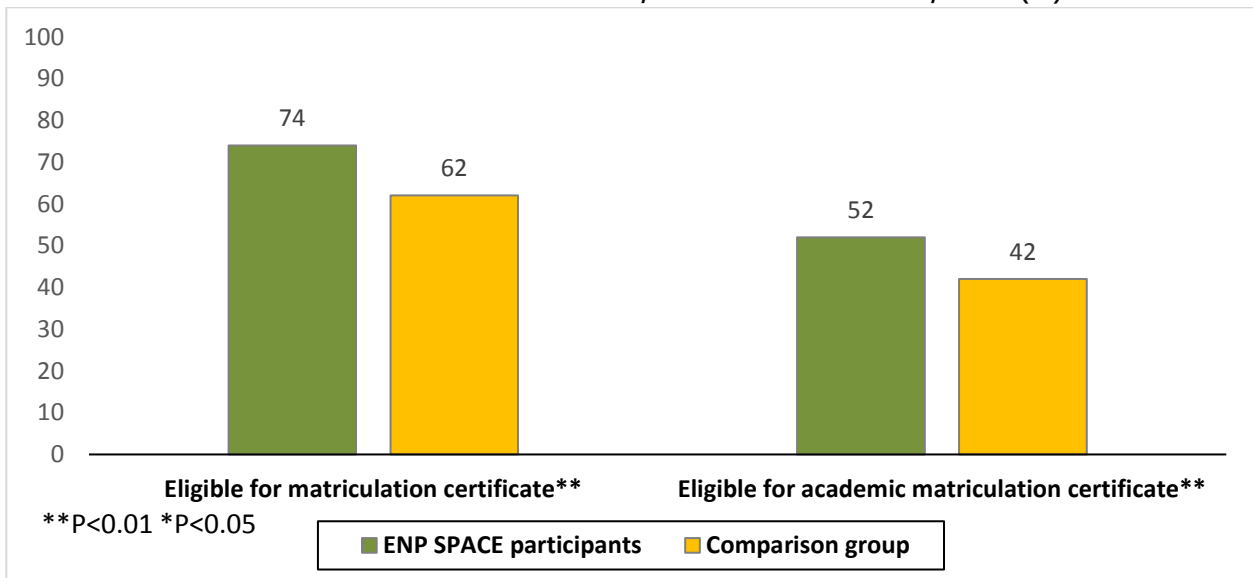
Program Impact on Achievements of ENP SPACE Participants versus Ethiopian-Israeli Students with Similar Characteristics, from Similar Schools

Based on data from the Ministry of Education, we created a comparison group in which each participating student was matched to a non-participating student from a school without the program. Note that this was not a comparison with students lacking all special support; some members of the comparison group participated in other programs, especially in recent years.

In Figure 3 we see that ENP SPACE participants had:

- ◆ A significant advantage in eligibility for a matriculation certificate (a gap of 12 percentage points, advantage² of 18%)
- ◆ A significant advantage in the percentage of students achieving an academic matriculation certificate (a gap of 10 percentage points, advantage of 24%).

Figure 3: Program Impact: Comparison of ENP SPACE Participants and Ethiopian-Israeli Students with Similar Characteristics, from Similar Schools, 2016 (%)



Program Impact on the Achievements of Different Groups of Students

(1) Impact on the achievement of participating boys and girls

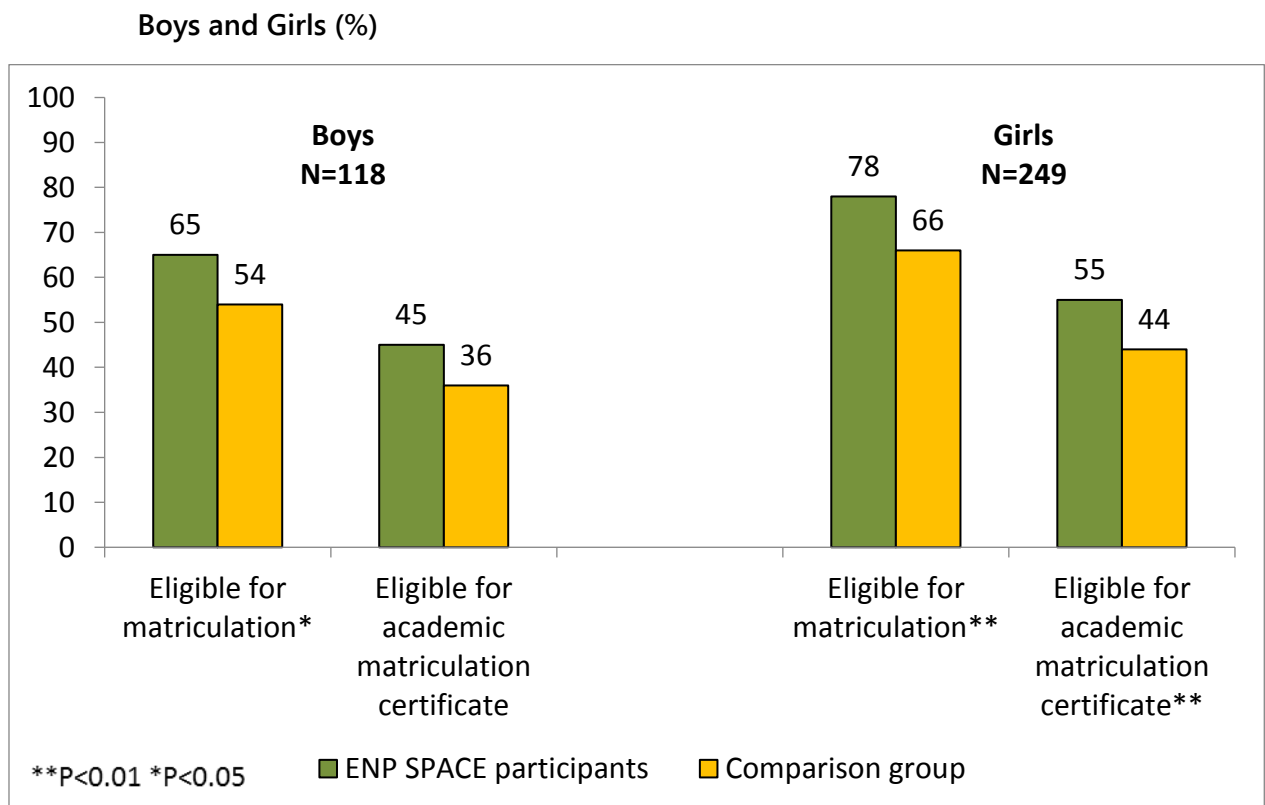
Most of the program participants were girls (68%) and their scholastic achievements, both in this year and throughout the program's implementation, were higher than those of the boys. Accordingly, we examined whether the program impacted differentially on participating boys and girls (versus boys and girls with similar characteristics, in similar schools who did not participate in the program).

² Advantage: The gap (in percentage points) between the participant group and the comparison group divided by percentage of the comparison group

In Figure 4 we see that:

- ◆ Participant boys and girls both showed a significant advantage in eligibility for a matriculation certificate (for girls: a gap of 12 percentage, advantage of 18%. for boys: a gap of 11 percentage points, advantage of 20%).
- ◆ For girls, there was a significant advantage in the percentage achieving an academic matriculation certificate (a gap of 11 percentage points, advantage of 25%). The gap for boys was not statistically significant.

Figure 4: The Impact on the Achievements of ENP SPACE Participants (2016) –



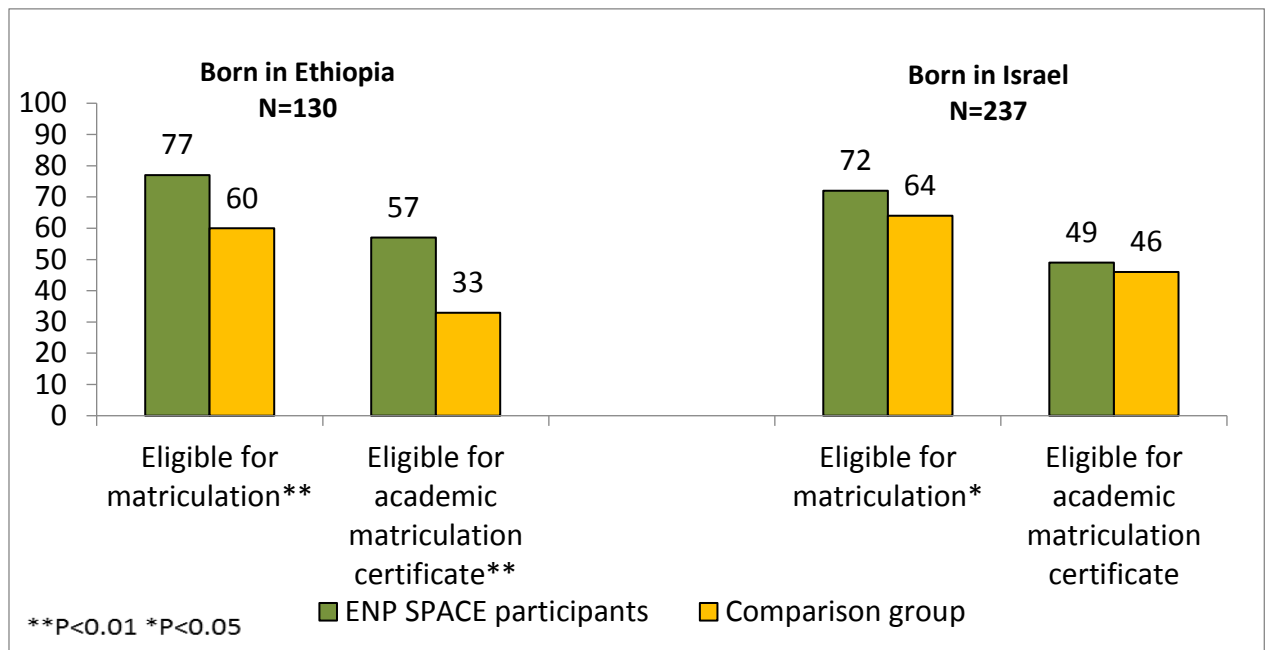
(2) Impact on the achievement of immigrant and Israeli-born participants

Most of the program participants in 2016 were born in Israel (65%). In 2016, the achievements of participants born in Ethiopia were higher than of the Israeli-born. Accordingly, we examined whether the program impacted differentially on Israeli-born students versus participants that were born in Ethiopia (versus students with similar characteristics in similar schools who did not participate in the program).

In Figure 5 we see that:

- ◆ Both Ethiopian-born and Israeli-born ENP SPACE participants showed a significant advantage in eligibility for a matriculation certificate, but the advantage for Ethiopian-born participants was higher (students who were born in Ethiopia: gap of 17 percentage points, advantage of 28%. students born in Israel: gap of 8 percentage points, advantage of 13%).
- ◆ Ethiopian-born students showed a significant advantage in the percentage achieving an academic matriculation certificate (a gap of 24 percentage points, advantage of 73%).

Figure 5: The Impact on the Achievements of ENP SPACE Participants (2016) – Ethiopian-Born and Israeli-Born (%)



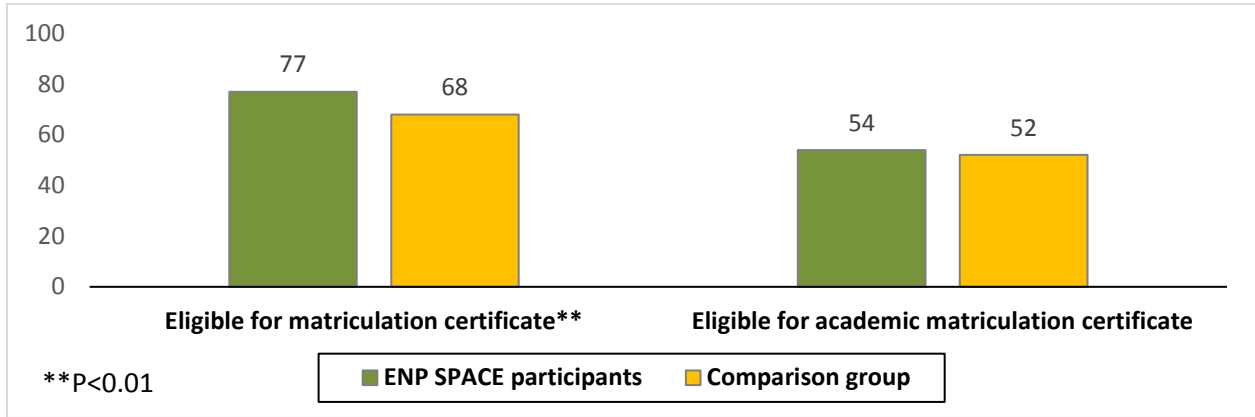
(3) Impact on the achievement of students with higher and lower previous academic level

Scholastic assistance programs may impact differentially on students of varying ability. For half of the participating students, there are GEMS data on their performance in Grade 8 (GEMs are standardized tests, taken by a large nationwide sample of 2nd, 5th and 8th graders each year). For these students, insight can be gained into the program impact even when controlling for previous scholastic achievement. Moreover, the program impact can be examined separately for scholastically weaker and stronger students.

Based on data from the Ministry of Education, we created a comparison group in which each participating student was matched to a non-participating student from a school that did not have the program, based on the aforementioned characteristics with the addition of their GEMS scores from Grade 8.

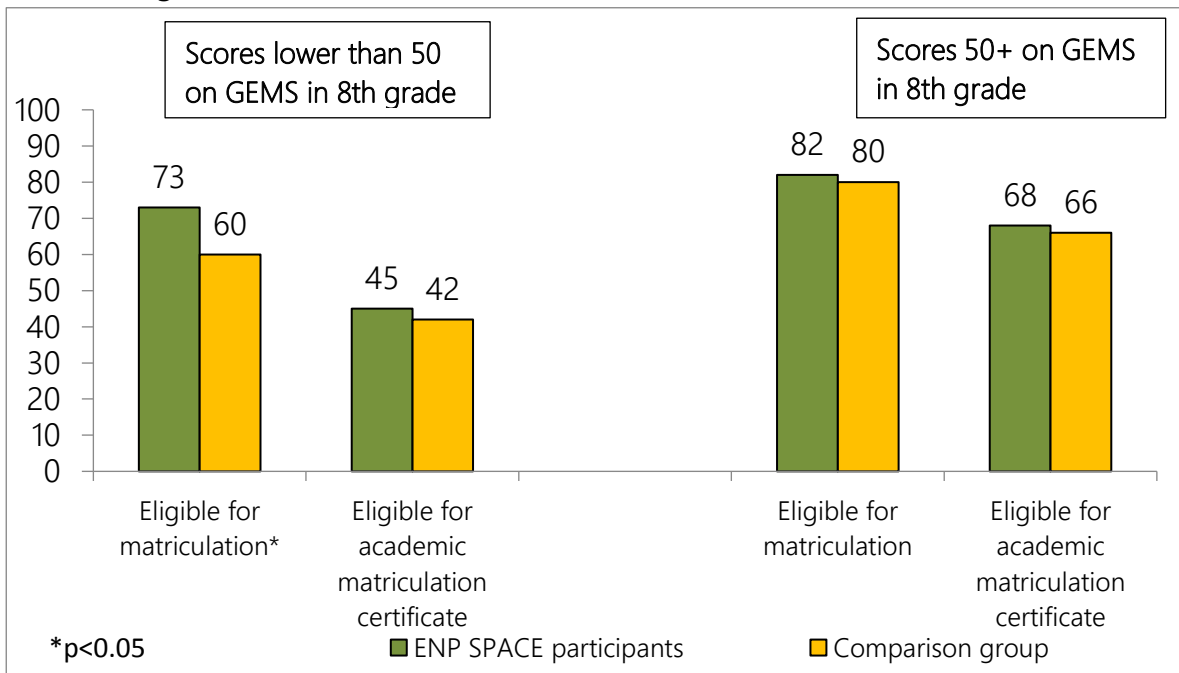
In Figure 6 we can see that when taking into account previous academic level, ENP SPACE participants showed a significant advantage in eligibility for a matriculation certificate (a gap of 9 percentage points, advantage of 13%).

Figure 6: Comparison of ENP SPACE Participants and Ethiopian-Israeli Students of Similar Characteristics from Similar Schools with Similar Previous Achievements on GEMS at 8th grade, Percentage of 12th-Graders (2016)



We divided the students into two groups, according to their achievements on the GEMS national exams: the weakest group (116 ENP SPACE participants) – had scored lower than 50 (on a scale of 0-100); the strongest group (74 ENP SPACE participants) – had scored 50 or higher. In Figure 7 we see that a significant advantage in eligibility for a matriculation certificate was found for the weakest students (a gap of 13 percentage points, advantage of 22%). No significant advantage was found for the stronger students.

Figure 7: The Impact on the Achievements of ENP SPACE Participants (2016) - Students with Low and High Scores in 8th-Grade GEMS Tests (%)



2.3 Changes over Time in the Achievement of Ethiopian-Israeli Students Nationwide

Since 2006, eligibility for matriculation certificates and eligibility for academic matriculation certificates has broadened among all Ethiopian-Israelis, while the achievements of Hebrew-speaking schools students nationwide have only slightly changed (See Figures 8 and 9). Substantial nationwide differences of achievement remain between Hebrew-speaking schools students and Ethiopian-Israeli students. However, the improvement in achievement of the latter has reduced the gap of eligibility for a matriculation certificate from 26 percentage points in 2006 to 15 percentage points in 2016 and for an academic matriculation certificate the gap was reduced from 34 percentage points in 2006 to 26 percentage points in 2016. The ENP SPACE program, assisting about 12-25% (in different years) of 12th-grade Ethiopian-Israeli students, had a major contribution to this improvement.

Figure 8: Percentage Eligible for Matriculation among ENP SPACE Participants, Ethiopian-Israelis and Hebrew-Speaking Schools 12th-Graders Nationwide, by Year

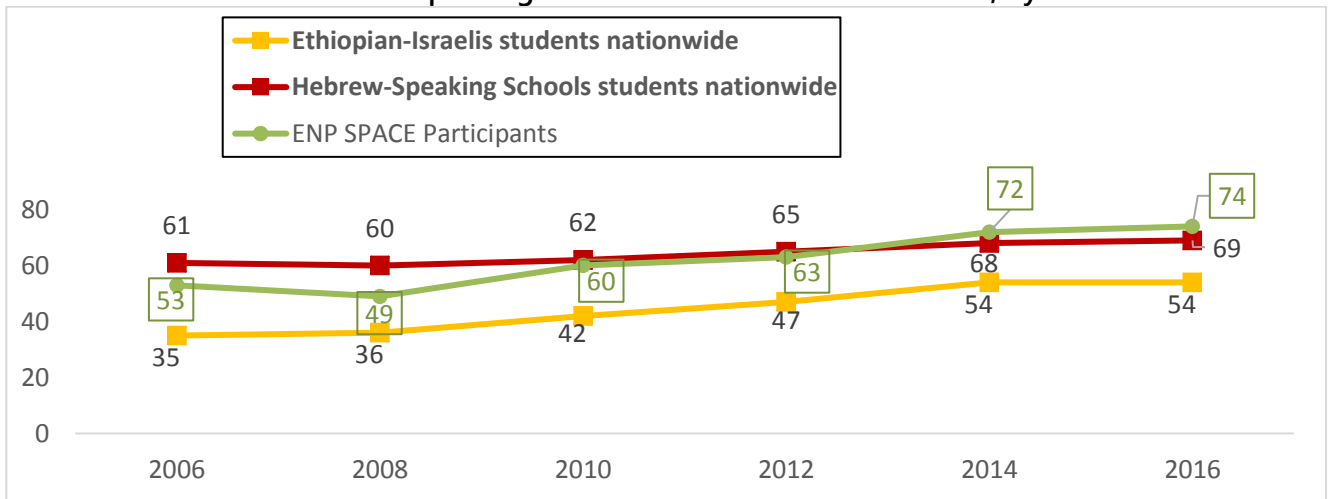
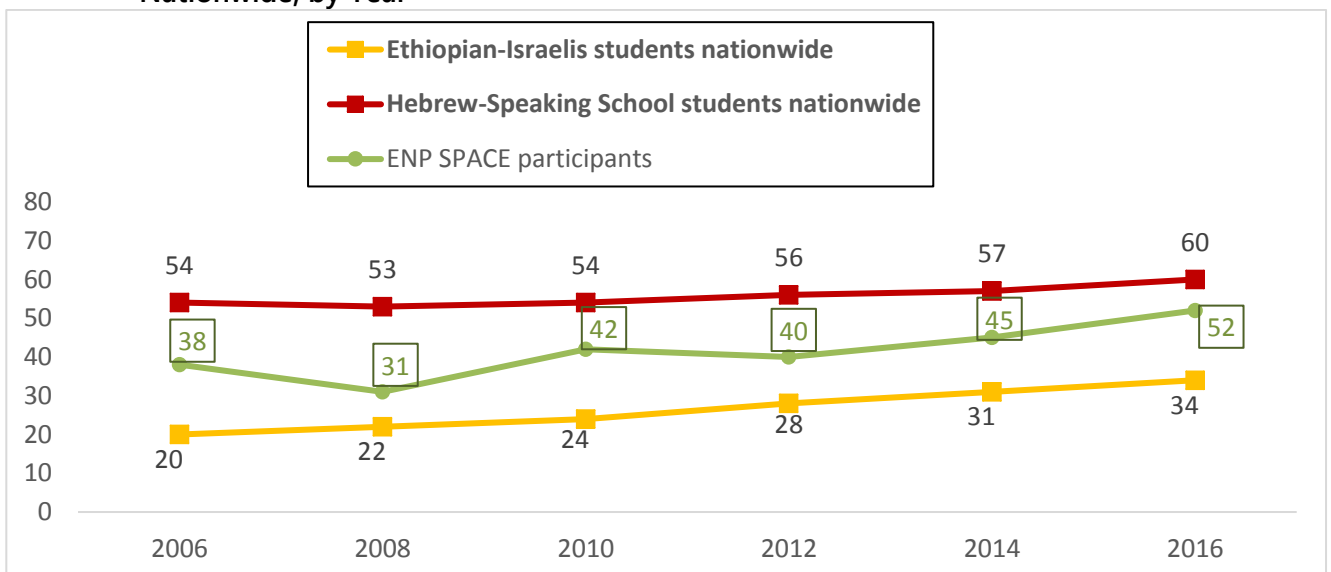


Figure 9: Percentage Eligible for Academic Matriculation certificate among ENP SPACE Participants, Ethiopian-Israelis and Hebrew-Speaking Schools 12th-Graders Nationwide, by Year



3. Summary

The findings show that the ENP SPACE program has had a significant impact on the eligibility for a matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli students participating in the ENP program.

- ◆ In 2016, the percentage of ENP SPACE participants eligible for matriculation was higher than that of the total students in Hebrew-speaking schools. The percentage of boys eligible for matriculation was virtually identical to that of the total boys in Hebrew-speaking schools; and for girls, it was even higher.
- ◆ The achievement of ENP SPACE participants were higher than those of Ethiopian-Israeli students of similar characteristics, from similar schools, who did not participate in the program. The impact was especially evident for girls, for students who had been born in Ethiopia, and for students with low scholastic achievements in junior high school.
- ◆ In general, the impact on the academic matriculation level was smaller. As noted, higher achievements in English are the key to an academic matriculation certificate. Learning English has still posed a difficulty, resulting in a gap in achieving a matriculation certificate that meets the requirements of university registration.
- ◆ Since 2006, there has been a significant increase in eligibility for matriculation certificates and academic matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israelis nationwide, and the gap between their achievements and those of Hebrew speaking-schools students was significantly reduced. The ENP SPACE program, assisting about 12-25% (in different years) of 12th-grade Ethiopian-Israeli students, had a major contribution to this improvement.



Evaluation Reports on the ENP:

Baruj-Kovarsky, R., Ben-Rabi, D., Konstantinov, V. (2016). **The Ethiopian National Project - Scholastic Assistance Program: Evaluation of the Implementation and Contribution of the Socio-Emotional Support Program in 2014-2015. Summary.** ES-46-16. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. Jerusalem.

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Baruj-Kovarsky, R., Cohen-Navot, M. (2009). **The Ethiopian National Project: Youth Centers 2008 - Second Evaluation.** RR-531-09 Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. Jerusalem.

Cohen-Navot, M., Baruj-Kovarsky, R. (2009). **The Ethiopian National Project: Program for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse 2008. Evaluation Study.** RR-544-09. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. Jerusalem.

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Cohen-Navot, M., Baruj-Kovarsky, R., Levi, D., Konstantinov, V. (2007). **The Ethiopian National Project: An Evaluation Study of the SPACE Program - Scholastic Assistance, Youth Centers 2005-2007. Executive Summary.** ES-27-07. Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. Jerusalem.

Reports and English summaries are also available on the Institute website:
<http://brookdaleheb.jdc.org.il/>