



The SPACE Program of the Ethiopian National Project for Integrating Ethiopian Israeli Pupils in the Educational System

Initial Indications for Evaluating the Impact of
the Program, Run by the Branco Weiss Institute



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* Cognitive resources or "states of minds," according to the cognitive coaching theory, as developed by Arthur L. Costa and Robert J. Garmston, in *Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools* (Norwood MA: Christopher-Gordon, 2002).

Main Findings

The Branco Weiss Institute, with funding from and in cooperation with the staff of the Ethiopian National Project, the education departments of local authorities, and schools, operates a program to help Ethiopian immigrant pupils integrate in their schools, succeed in academic high schools, and do better on their matriculation exams.

During June-August 2009 the program tutors gathered data from the schools about the matriculation scores of pupils completing twelfth grade at the end of 2008, according to the Education Ministry's reports to the schools. A number of encouraging trends emerged from the data:

1. The matriculation scores of program graduates in 2005/6–2007/8 were significantly higher than those of Ethiopian Israeli pupils nationwide completing twelfth grade during this period.
 - Over half (60%) of the program graduates were eligible for a full matriculation certificate, compared with 37% of Ethiopian Israeli pupils nationwide.
 - Thirty-two percent of the program graduates in 2007/8 earned an academic matriculation certificate that satisfies university entrance requirements, compared with 20% of Ethiopian Israeli pupils nationwide.
 - About 15% of the program graduates had participated in the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence. Almost all the graduates of this program (85%) earned a matriculation certificate, and 72% of them earned results that meet university entrance requirements!
2. The percent of program graduates eligible for a full matriculation certificate in 2005/6–2007/8—about 58% (or 60% including ENP-Atidim)—approximated the corresponding figure for the Israeli Jews as a whole (60%).
 - In contrast, the percent of program graduates who met university entrance requirements (32%, or 39% including the graduates of ENP-Atidim) was lower than the corresponding percent of Israeli Jews (53%).
3. In most of the localities where the program is operating, a similar percent of program graduates earned eligibility for a full matriculation certificate as among the local Jewish population as a whole. However, in most cases a higher percent of the local Jewish population as a whole met university entrance requirements.

In view of the increasing number of Ethiopian Israelis enrolled in the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence, the program staff is faced with a weaker pupil population, and must cope with a particularly challenging group.

This report presents findings in the behavioral and personal domains for the first time:

- With regard to scholastic behavior,¹ most of the program participants reported a strong commitment to investing in their studies. The great majority participated in class, brought the requisite equipment to class, and enjoyed investing in their studies. A lower percentage of pupils reported that they do homework regularly (58%).
- In self-evaluations of their progress, most of the program participants reported that they made “great progress” or “very great progress” during the year. A very high proportion (some 70–80%) reported improvement in their self-image, and a slightly lower proportion reported progress in interpersonal relations, in their ability to ask for help, and in perseverance. About half of the pupils reported significant progress in class participation, in the clarity of their vision for the future, in internal locus of control, and in adopting a proactive approach to their studies.

¹ Scholastic behavior relates to various aspects of the pupil's behavior that facilitate their learning: i.e., motivation, responsibility, internal locus control, study materials and equipments etc.

1. Background

Education Ministry data over the years indicate substantial gaps between Ethiopian Israeli pupils and pupils from veteran Israeli populations in their matriculation exam scores, rate of matriculation-certificate eligibility, and the quality of the certificates, (i.e., whether they satisfy the threshold requirements for admission to colleges and universities).

Program goals: The program is designed to help Ethiopian Israeli pupils integrate in their junior high and high schools, and succeed on their matriculation exams. The program staff focuses on three main areas:

- Scholastic domain: improving the achievements of Ethiopian Israeli pupils, reducing the number of dropouts after ninth grade, and increasing the number of pupils who are placed in advanced tracks and programs for academic excellence.
- Social and emotional domain: increasing the pupils' motivation to learn, reinforcing their sense of their individual capacity and of being part of their surroundings and community, and consolidating their individual identities.

Program participants: Between 2005/6 and 2007/8 the number of pupils participating in the program increased. Thus while in the 2005/6 school year some 2,800 pupils attended the program, in the 2007/8 school year some 4,000 pupils in grades 7–12 participated. The program operated in ten selected localities with a high concentration of Ethiopian Israeli pupils: Afula, Hadera, Netanya, Lod, Ashdod, Ashqelon, Qiryat Malachi, Qiryat Gat, Sederot, and Beer Sheba. In some of these towns the program has been running for 3½ years; in others, for only 2½ years.

Main program components: The program is based on various inputs in the scholastic domain and in the personal and social domain, at the level of the entire town and of the individual school, and seeks to produce pedagogical continuity from grade 7 through grade 12. The program personnel—youth tutors and municipal and pedagogical tutors—work both with the participating pupils and with the teachers of the tutoring groups as well.

The program includes several unique components that are consistent with the spirit of the Ethiopian National Project:

- (1) Granting preference to employing Ethiopian Israeli youth tutors to work with the participating Ethiopian Israeli pupils. These tutors serve as models for the pupils. They act to make the pupils' voices heard in the schools and to prevent discrimination while encouraging the Ethiopian Israeli parents to get involved in their children's education, and strengthening the ties between these parents and the school staff.
- (2) Investing intensively in training the tutors and expanding the tutors' toolbox. Tutors are trained to work one-on-one with pupils in order to increase their motivation to learn, reinforce their sense of their individual capacity and of being part of their surroundings and community, and help consolidate their individual identities.

- (3) Expanding the toolbox of the teachers of the tutoring groups to help them cope with the challenges of working in small groups with pupils who experience academic and emotional difficulties.
- (4) Individual scholastic mapping of program pupils at main junctures in the school year.
- Identifying program pupils who have the potential for academic excellence and transferring them into programs for academic excellence (ENP-Atidim).
 - Identifying at-risk pupils and supporting them more intensively, in order to prevent them from deteriorating scholastically and emotionally.

2. Tracking the Program's Impact

The Branco Weiss Institute's Evaluation Unit tracks the achievements of program pupils in keeping with two main objectives:

- (1) To improve and adjust the Institute's working strategy in order to increase the program's effectiveness
- (2) To identify the achievements of participating pupils in the scholastic and personal-emotional domains.

This report presents the matriculation exam results of pupils who participated in the program in 2005–2008. The pupils' achievements were examined against the backdrop of two main trends:

- The placement of greater numbers of program pupils in matriculation-track classes after grade 9
- The assignment of pupils to the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence in grades 8 and 9.

In addition, the report presents selected findings concerning other aspects of pupils' progress in the personal and behavioral domains (scholastic behavior and cognitive resources), along with the pupils' feedback about various components of the program.

2.1 The assignment of program pupils to matriculation-track classes (Table 1)

One of the program's most important achievements is the increase in the percent of pupils studying in matriculation-track classes together with a reduction in the percent of pupils studying in non-matriculation-track classes:

- The most significant increase was in the percent of pupils assigned to "regular matriculation" [*mabar*] classes—from 10% in 2005/6 to 41% in 2008/9. These are classes that prepare pupils for a full matriculation certificate. The pupils in these classes begin from a weak starting-point scholastically, and they are assigned to classes where they receive intensive extra help. The classes have a small number of pupils, which enables pupils to receive individual attention tailored to their needs, and increases their chances of earning a matriculation certificate.
- This trend has led to an increase in the percent of pupils in matriculation-track classes and to a decrease in the percent of pupils in non-matriculation-track classes (*Hakhven* and other classes) from 34% in 2005/6 to only 11% in 2008/9!
- There was also a slight decrease in the percent of pupils who transferred to other schools, from 12% in 2005/6 to 10% in 2008/9.

Table 1: Distribution of pupils who completed grade 9, by class assignment in grade 10 and population group, 2005/6–2008/9 (percent)

School year	Population group	Academic class	Mabar class	Hakhven class	Other class	Transferred elsewhere
2005/6						
	Program pupils	43	10	17	17	12
	All pupils in the grade	68	10	4	12	6
2006/7						
	Program pupils	51	26	6	5	12
	All pupils in the grade	59	15	10	7	9
2007/8						
	Program pupils	41	36	4	5	14
	All pupils in the grade	61	24	6	6	3
2008/9						
	Program pupils	38	41	9	2	10
	All pupils in the grade	67	18	5	4	6

Note that the program staff grapples with a particularly difficult challenge, given the fact that fewer program pupils are being assigned to non-academic classes.

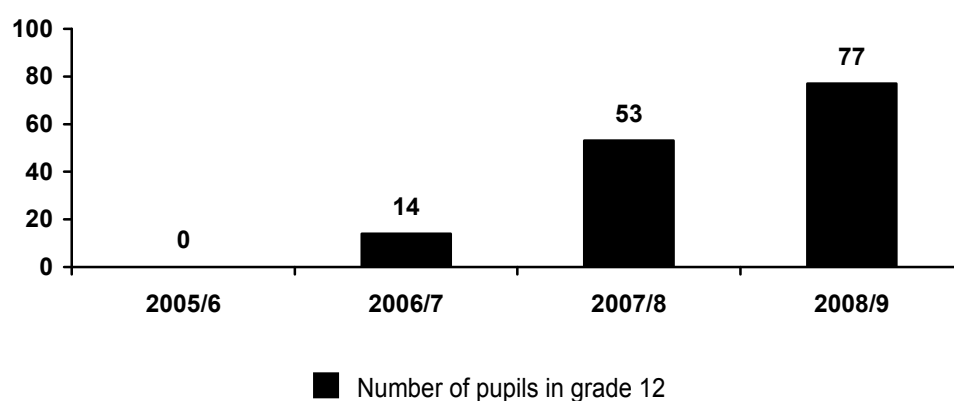
- This trend relates to all pupils in a given grade, in the schools that participating pupils attend.
- This trend accelerated in 2007/8 and 2008/9, due to the transfer of some pupils to the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence.

2.2 The transfer of twelfth-grade pupils from SPACE to the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence (Fig. 1)

In evaluating the program's achievements, we should take into account the new trend of assigning high-achieving Ethiopian Israeli pupils to the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence. All of these pupils earn a full matriculation certificate. The twelfth grade Ethiopian Israelis were integrated into the program gradually.

- In the 2005/6 school year there were no twelfth-graders in the program.
- In the 2006/7 school year, 14 twelfth-graders studied in the ENP-Atidim program, all in Ashdod.
- In the 2007/8 school year, 53 twelfth-graders studied in the ENP-Atidim program, in Ashdod, Ashqelon, and Hadera.
- In the 2008/9 school year, 77 twelfth-graders studied in the ENP-Atidim program, in Beer Sheba, Qiryat Gat, Ashdod, Ashqelon, Rishon le-Ziyyon, and Afula.

Figure 1: Increase in the number of Ethiopian Israeli pupils who studied in the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence in 2005–2009



The gradual integration of Ethiopian Israeli pupils into the ENP-Atidim program indicates that the Ethiopian National Project for Scholastic Advancement is building a base of high-achieving pupils who can then be placed in the program for excellence.

2.3 The matriculation exam scores of pupils in the SPACE and ENP-Atidim programs, end-2006 to end-2008 (Tables 2 and 3)

In order to evaluate the program's achievements and improve its operational methods, in January-April of every year Branco Weiss Institute tutors gather information about the scores of high school seniors in the program on the matriculation exams.

The schools transmit the information to the tutors on the basis of the data the Education Ministry transmits to the schools about the number of pupils who are eligible for a full matriculation certificate.

Eligibility for a full matriculation certificate: The following picture emerges from the data the tutors received from the schools at the end of October 2008 regarding the scores of the pupils in SPACE in 2005–2008 (table 2):

- According to the Education Ministry’s report to the schools, in the 2005/6 school year 54% of program pupils were eligible for a full matriculation certificate.
- In the 2007/8 school year, 58% of the program pupils were eligible for a full matriculation certificate.

Table 2: Matriculation exam results of SPACE pupils, 2005–2008, as mapped by tutors according to Ministry of Education nationwide data (percent)*

Year	No. of program pupils	% of those eligible for a full matriculation certificate	% of those who met university entrance requirements
2005/6	**257	54	**
2006/7	***312	55	31
2007/8	****440	58	27

* The number of pupils for whom the tutors received data by the end of October 2008. It was not always possible to exclude those pupils who did not participate in the program. Includes program pupils in Beer Sheba, Ashqelon, Ashdod, and Lod.

** Includes program pupils in Beer Sheba, Ashqelon, Ashdod, Lod, and Netanya.

*** Includes program pupils in Beer Sheba, Ashqelon, Ashdod, Lod, Netanya, and Hadera. Does not include the pupils in *Ofek*, except for 46 pupils from Hadera.

**** Five pupils on the Institute’s enrollment list are missing here (three pupils in Beer Sheba, one pupil in Ashqelon, and one pupil in Ashdod).

If we add the number of pupils in SPACE who were eligible for a matriculation certificate to the number of pupils in ENP-Atidim who were eligible, it emerges that there was an improvement of six percentage points among program pupils in the rate of matriculation-certificate eligibility—from 54% in 2005/6 to 60% in 2007/8. During this period there was no significant change in the countrywide eligibility rate.²

² For a distribution of eligibility rate by locality, see Appendix A.

Table 3: Matriculation exam results of Ethiopian National Project pupils (SPACE and ENP-Atidim), 2007/8 school year, as mapped by tutors according to nationwide Education Ministry data (percent)*

Programs	No. of program pupils	% of those eligible for full matriculation certificate	% of those who met university entrance requirements
Graduates of SPACE	440	58	27
Graduates of ENP-Atidim	48	85	72
Total number of pupils in both programs	488	60	32

* In 2005/6 only 14 pupils studied in ENP-Atidim in Ashdod. The report for the 2007/8 graduates refers to 48 pupils about whom the schools transmitted data to us. The data for five pupils are missing.

Those who met university entrance requirements: Thirty-one percent of the program graduates satisfied the threshold requirements for admission to universities in 2006/7. This rate did not change significantly in 2007/8 (32% of the pupils in both programs together).

2.3.1 Comparison of the achievements of program pupils and those of Ethiopian Israeli pupils nationwide (Table 4)

A comparison between the matriculation exam scores of program graduates and the scores of Ethiopian Israeli pupils nationwide indicates that in the 2007/8 school year the achievements of program pupils significantly exceeded the national norm for Ethiopian Israelis (Table 4):

- The rate of matriculation-certificate eligibility among program pupils was 60%, compared with 37% among Ethiopian Israeli pupils as a whole.
- In addition, 32% of program pupils satisfied university entrance requirements, compared with 20% of Ethiopian Israeli pupils as a whole.

Table 4: High-school graduates eligible for a full matriculation certificate and those who met university entrance requirements, 2007/8 school year (percent)

Population group	% eligible for matriculation certificate	% who met university entrance requirements
Graduates of SPACE and ENP-Atidim	60	32
National average of Ethiopian Israelis*	37	20
National average of Israeli Jews	60	53

* On the basis of the most recent data published for 2005.

* On the basis of the most recent data published by the Education Ministry for the 2008/9 school year.

Note that only a small percent of all Ethiopian Israeli pupils studied in one of the Branco Weiss Institute programs in 2005/6, 2006/7, and 2007/8.³

- In 2005/6, 230 Ethiopian Israeli high school seniors, about 11% of all Ethiopian Israeli pupils in that grade, studied in a Branco Weiss program.
- In 2006/7, 310 Ethiopian Israeli high school seniors, about 14% of all Ethiopian Israeli pupils in that grade, studied in a Branco Weiss program.
- In 2007/8, 490 Ethiopian Israeli high school seniors, about 23% of all Ethiopian Israeli pupils in that grade, studied in a Branco Weiss program.

2.3.2 Comparison of the achievements of program pupils and those of Jewish pupils nationwide (Table 4)

A comparison of the program graduates' scores on the matriculation exams with the scores earned by the general population around the country and in the localities in which the program operated indicated the following:

- In the 2007/8 school year, the eligibility rate for a full matriculation certificate among program graduates was similar to the corresponding rate among the Jewish population in Israel: 58% (or 60% including the graduates of ENP-Atidim) and 60% respectively.
- In the same year the percent of program graduates who met university entrance requirements was lower than the corresponding percent among Israeli Jews in general, at 27% (or 32% including the graduates of ENP-Atidim) and 53% respectively.

2.3.3 Comparison of program graduates' achievements and those of Jewish pupils in general, by locality (Table 5)

Table 5, which compares the program graduates' achievements to the achievements of the general population in the communities in which the program operated indicates the following:

- In most of the towns (seven out of ten) the program graduates earned eligibility for a full matriculation certificate at a similar or higher rate than the rest of the population. Note that in Ashqelon, Ashdod, Netanya, and Lod, the eligibility rate of program graduates was significantly higher than that of the rest of the population.
- In Hadera, Sederot, and Afula, the eligibility rate of program graduates was significantly lower than that of the rest of the population.

³ According to the Ministry of Education, there were approximately 2,310 Ethiopian Israeli twelfth-graders in each of these years.

Table 5: Eligibility of pupils completing twelfth grade for a full matriculation certificate and the proportion of those who met university entrance requirements in the 2006/7 school year, by locality (percent)

Town	No. of program participants	% eligible for a full matriculation certificate		% who met university entrance requirements	
		Program graduates	Pupils completing twelfth grade, Israeli Jewish sector*	Program graduates	Pupils completing twelfth grade, Israeli Jewish sector**
Beer Sheba	47	51	59	43	46
Ashkelon	50	72	62	54	36
Ashdod	108	73	56	55	46
Lod	24	71	44	46	36
Netanya	99	66	56	23	46
Hadera	29	28	44	10	46
Qiryat Gat	45	62	60	11	36
Sederot	15	47	79	no data	36
Afula	58	34	59	no data	46
Rishon Leziyyon	11	82	57	55	60

* On the basis of the most recent data published for the 2006/7 school year (2009). The Education Ministry data includes the winter exam period after the end of grade 12.

** Education Ministry data according to social cluster, as of the 2005/6 school year (2006).

A higher proportion of the general Jewish population satisfied university entrance requirements than did program graduates, but the trend is not uniform. In some towns the program graduates did as well as or better than the local Jewish population, while in three localities (Netanya, Hadera, and Qiryat Gat) the percent of program graduates who met university entrance requirements was significantly lower than that of the general population.

3. Selected Findings Related to the Behavioral and Personal domains⁴

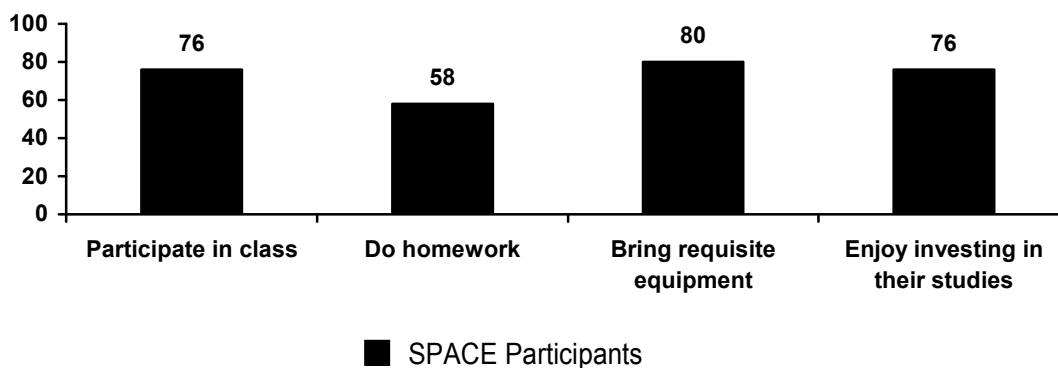
The program participants filled out questionnaires concerning how they function and how much they have progressed in the behavioral and personal domains. Most pupils, it emerges, function very well in these areas.

3.1 Program pupils' level of performance in the behavioral and personal domains (Figs. 2 and 3)

Various aspects of their scholastic behavior help pupils cope with the academic challenges they face.

- Most of the program participants report that they are very committed to investing in their studies from a behavioral standpoint. The great majority participate in their classes, bring the requisite equipment to class, and enjoy investing in their studies (Fig. 2).
- A smaller percent of the pupils report that they do homework regularly (58%).

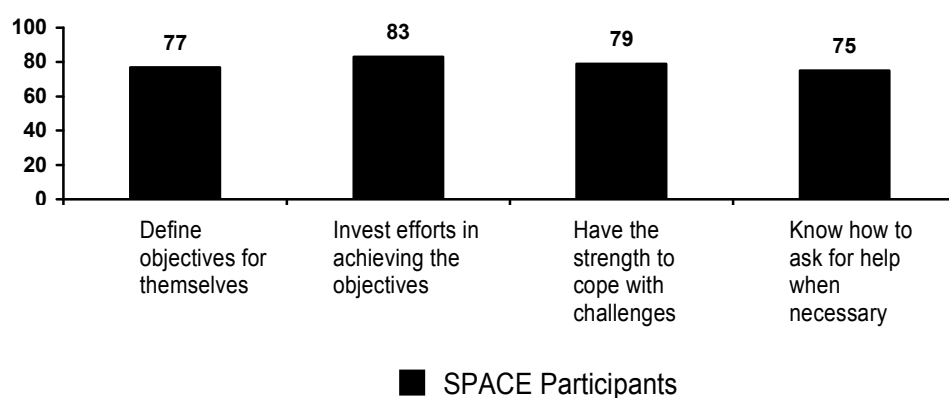
Figure 2: Scholastic performance of program participants, end of 2008/9 school year, self-reported (percent of pupils who responded "accurate" or "very accurate")



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- With regard to personal resources as well, the pupils appear to have acquired attitudes and habits that will help them realize their current and future academic aspirations.
 - Over three-quarters of the pupils report that they define objectives for themselves, invest efforts in attaining them, feel that they have the strength to cope with challenges, and know how to ask for help when necessary (Fig. 3).

⁴ The data presented here relate to the participants in SPACE. At this stage it is not possible to isolate Ethiopian Israeli pupils in the programs for excellence. The data for these programs are even better.

Figure 3: Personal functioning of program participants, end of 2008/9 school year, self-reported (percent of pupils who responded “accurate” or “very accurate”)



These findings are particularly significant in light of the scholarly literature that reports a high correlation between personal and behavioral qualities and the level of scholastic achievement among population groups from weak socio-demographic backgrounds.

3.2 Areas in which participants reported that they felt an improvement (Fig. 4)

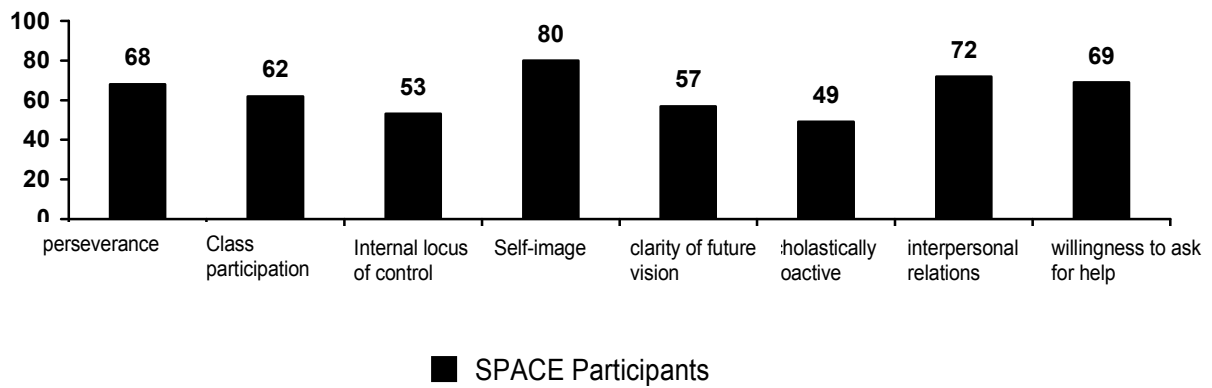
In self-ratings of their progress, most of the program participants reported that they had made “great” or “very great”⁵ progress in various aspects of their cognitive resources (Fig. 4).

- A very high proportion (some 70%–80%) of the participants reported progress in their self-image, and a slightly lower proportion reported progress in interpersonal relations, in their willingness to ask for help, and in perseverance.
- A lower proportion (about half of the pupils) reported significant progress in class participation, in the clarity of their vision of the future, in their internal locus of control, and in being scholastically proactive.

These findings as well underscore the fact that the program has a significant contribution to make in the personal and behavioral domains, by reinforcing the pupils and teaching them habits and approaches that will help them both in their studies and in their future lives (although there are areas in which fewer pupils reported progress).

⁵ On a scale with four levels: I didn’t progress, I progressed a little, I made great progress, and I made very great progress.

Figure 4: Progress in cognitive resources, by youth village, end of 2008/9 school year, self-reported (percent of the pupils who reported that they had made "great" or "very great" progress)

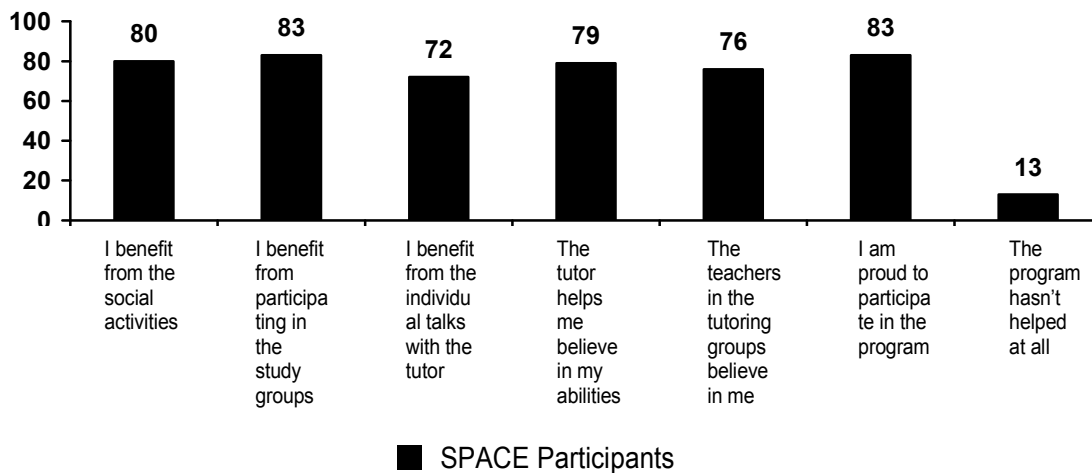


4. Participants' Feedback about Various Components of the Program (Figure 5)

The great majority of the participants report that they benefited from their exposure to various program components (Fig. 5).

- The great majority of the participants (83%) feel that participation in the tutoring groups helps them with their studies, and about three-quarters of them (76%) state that the teachers in the learning groups give them the sense that they believe in the pupils.
- The great majority of the participants report that they benefit from the social activities (80%) and the individual talks with the tutor (72%), and that the tutor helps them have faith in their abilities (79%).
- Only a small number of pupils (13%) say that the program hasn't helped them at all.

Figure 5: Participants' feedback about various components of the program, end of 2008/9 school year, self-reported (percent of the pupils who responded "accurate" or "very accurate")



5. Summary and Challenges for the Future

To sum up, the programs of the Ethiopian National Project have significantly improved the program participants' eligibility rate for a full matriculation certificate, to the point that their achievements almost match those of the general Jewish population in this area.

These achievements are all the more noteworthy in view of the special challenge posed by these pupils, most of whom are assigned to non-academic classes. The program should also be credited with the fact that the number of Ethiopian Israeli pupils who are integrated in the ENP-Atidim Program for Excellence is gradually increasing.

Most of the program participants appear to function on a high level with regard to their scholastic behavior and their cognitive resources. These areas are known to make a significant contribution to high academic achievement, particularly among pupils from a weak socioeconomic background.

The findings point to several main challenges facing the program staff:

In the scholastic domain,

- Increasing the proportion of program graduates who satisfy university entrance requirements
- Maintaining the high achievements of the Program for Excellence, in light of the increase in the number of pupils placed in the program in the 2007/8 school year.

In the personal-behavioral domain,

- Increasing the percent of pupils who do their homework
- Increasing the percent of pupils who are scholastically proactive (initiate learning even when they are not required to), have an internal locus of control (take personal responsibility for failures), and have a clear vision of the future (know what they want to be when they grow up).

Note that in the coming year the program's operating context will be particularly complex, due to several substantive changes in its mode of operations. These include a drastic reduction in the number of youth tutors, who give the pupils individual attention, and a cut in the duration of the program, which will be curtailed towards the end of the school year.