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ENGELBERG CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Ethiopian National Project: Scholastic Assistance Program

New Findings about Program Impacts on High School Performance of Ethiopian-Israeli Students

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Summary of the Main Impacts of the ENP Scholastic Assistance Program

New findings for the 2010 school year reveal highly significant and growing impacts of the program. As in previous reports, the achievements are measured by the success in matriculation exams based on data from the Ministry of Education. These exams are taken in Israel at the end of high school and used to measure the level of achievement of high school students and also serve as the basis for the determination of eligibility for higher education.

The impacts of the program are assessed through several analyses in order to validate the results:

- One analysis focuses on schools in which the students were exposed for at least 3 years to the ENP program, and examines the changes in the gaps between Ethiopian-Israeli program participants and non-Ethiopian students, at the same schools:
 - Over the period 2008-2010 there was a very significant improvement among Ethiopian-Israeli students participating in the program, while non-Ethiopians students made no progress over this period so that the gaps were dramatically reduced
 - **Eligibility for matriculation certificate:** Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli participants increased from 49% to 62% and thus the gap declined from 20 to 7 percentage points.
 - **Eligibility for matriculation certificate that meets university admission criteria:** Percentage eligible for academic matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli participants increased from 29% to 44% and thus the gap declined from 31 to 14 percentage points.
- The second analysis compares the same program participants with a group of non-participant Ethiopian-Israeli students who have similar demographic characteristics and come from schools in which the Ethiopian-Israeli students had similar achievements prior to the program:
 - Over the period 2008-2010 the participant group improved significantly while the comparison group even declined somewhat rather than improving
 - **Eligibility for matriculation certificate:** after 3 years, the percentage of eligibility was 62% for program participants vs. 42% for the comparison group, an advantage of 20 percentage points
 - **Eligibility for matriculation certificate that meets university admission criteria:** after 3 years, the percentage of eligibility was 44% for program participants vs. 27% for the comparison group, an advantage of 17 percentage points
- A further analysis revealed that when comparing Ethiopian-Israeli participants to non-participants who had similar achievements in primary school the program made the biggest impact on the weakest students

1. The Ethiopian National Project and the 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 among them being the scholastic assistance program, which is the subject of this report.

The ENP scholastic assistance program is provided to Ethiopian-Israeli students in junior high and high schools, and is aimed at improving their achievements in matriculation exams and at reducing the dropout rate among these students; it does so by providing interventions addressing scholastic, emotional and social needs.

The extent of the participation in the program reached its peak in 2007/8. In that year, the scholastic assistance program was implemented in 26 localities, and some 6,700 students in grades 7 through 12 participated. Since 2008/9 there has been a decline in the total number of participants, due to a significant decrease in the funding available to the program. Still, in 2011/12 the program was implemented in 19 localities and some 3,800 students participated, so it remains the largest single intervention program for Ethiopian-Israeli secondary school students. It reaches some 22% of all Ethiopian-Israeli students from grades 7 to 12.

The ENP has been accompanied by an 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.

The main focus of this report is on the achievements of the students. As in previous reports, the achievements are measured by the success in matriculation exams based on data from the Ministry of Education. These exams are taken in Israel at the end of high school and used to measure the level of achievement of high school students and also serve as the basis for the determination of eligibility for higher education. For the first time we are able to present data for schools at which the twelfth graders have participated in the program for at least three years (2008-2010)¹. This is significant because it is expected that the longer the students participate in the program, the greater the impact. Overall, the findings are very positive and indicate an improvement in many of the indicators over time.

The study findings have been disseminated and discussed with those implementing and funding the program, and they serve as the basis for improving the program and continuing its dissemination.

¹ The Ministry of Education makes matriculation data available for research purposes some sixteen months after the exams. Therefore, we are not yet able to provide findings for 2011.

2. Main findings with respect to the achievements on matriculation exams

We first present in section 2.1 the achievements of the participants in 2009/10 as compared to those of their non-participating Ethiopian-Israeli peers and of Jewish students in Israel. We then present in section 2.2 an attempt to examine the extent to which these achievements reflect the impact of the program.

2.1 Achievements of program participants – 2009/10

In presenting the achievements we use several measures to represent different levels of success on the matriculation exams:

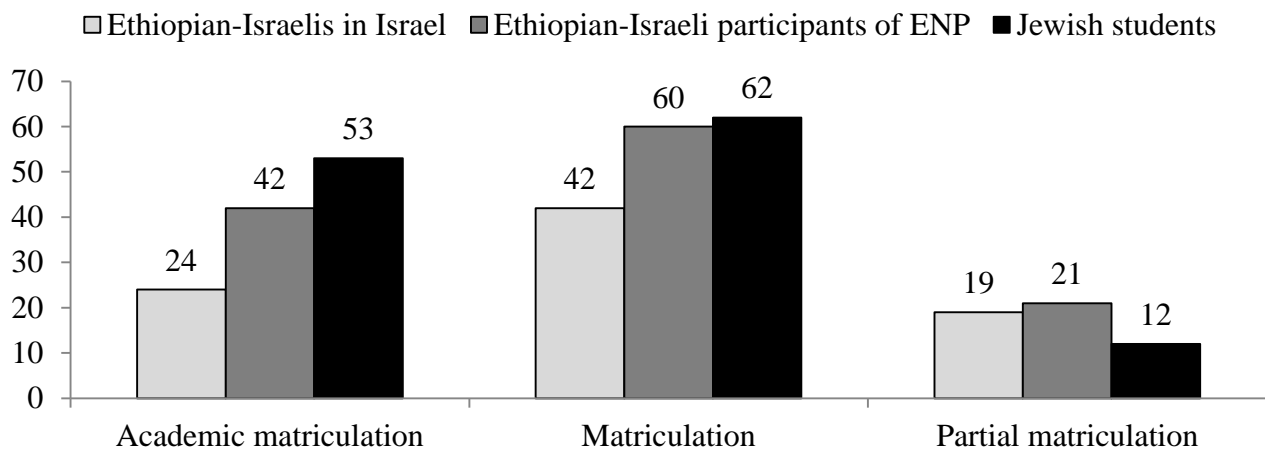
- Eligibility for partial matriculation certificate - which enables admission to advanced professional studies
- Eligibility for matriculation certificate
- Eligibility for matriculation certificate with a high level of English (academic matriculation) - a pre-requisite for universities

As presented in Figure 1:

- The achievements of participating Ethiopian-Israeli students were much higher than those of their non-participating Ethiopian-Israeli peers, and were almost as high as those of Jewish students in Israel.
- Sixty percent of the participants achieved matriculation certificates (compared with 61% of Jewish students in Israel). This includes 42% percent who achieved academic matriculation (compared with 53% of Jewish students in Israel).
- An additional 21% achieved partial matriculation certificates.

The achievements of the girls who participated in the program were especially impressive: 68% of them achieved matriculation certificates and 49% achieved academic matriculation.

Figure 1: The Achievements of Participants on Matriculation Exams in Comparison with Ethiopian-Israeli Students and Students in Hebrew-Speaking Schools in Israel, 2010 (in Percentages)



2.2 Program's Contribution to Improved Matriculation Results

As we saw, the achievements of the program participants were much better than those of the non-participants. However, in order to estimate to what extent those higher achievements reflect the impact of the program we carried out two analyses that enable us to estimate the program impact:

1. One is a comparison of the progress of the Ethiopian-Israeli students in the program with that of the **non-Ethiopian** students at the **same schools**. This comparison can be used to separate the program's impact from that of other factors affecting the education system as a whole, and these schools in particular, such as changes in the level of exams, national reforms or changes in school staff.
2. The second is a comparison of the progress of the Ethiopian-Israeli students in the program with that of **Ethiopian-Israeli** students with **similar characteristics in similar schools**, who did not participate in the program. This comparison enables us to separate the program's impact from other factors affecting the achievements of Israeli-Ethiopian students nationally.

The analysis was carried out for the 28 schools which participated in the program for at least 3 years, and examined the changes in the differences between participating students and comparison groups over the period 2008-2010. A growing difference between program participants and non-participants, and a reduction in the gap between program participants and non-Ethiopian students, are both indicators of the growing impact of the program over the years.

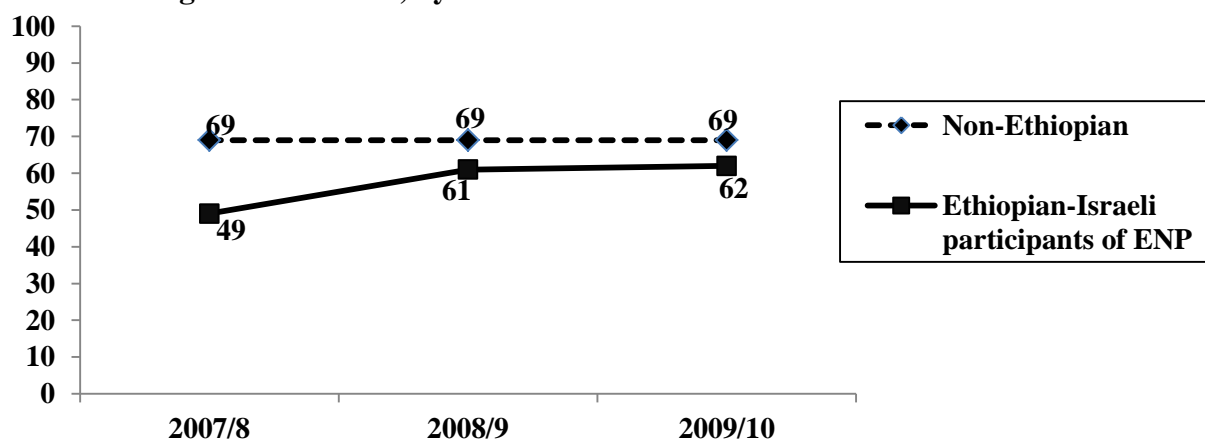
It is important to note that even at schools without the program, immigrant students may receive assistance from other programs. Our comparison, therefore, is of the added value of the ENP program as opposed to whatever form of other assistance may exist in comparison schools.

1. *Changes in the Achievement Gap between Ethiopian-Israeli 12th Graders and Non-Ethiopian Students, in the Same Schools, between 2007/8 – 2009/10*

In the 28 schools participating in the program since 2008, the achievements of the non-Ethiopian students have not changed over the years, while by contrast there was a significant improvement in the achievements of the program participants. The improvement grew over time as the number of years of exposure to the program increased. Thus the gap between the Ethiopian-Israeli and non-Ethiopian students was significantly reduced (see Figures 2 and 3)²:

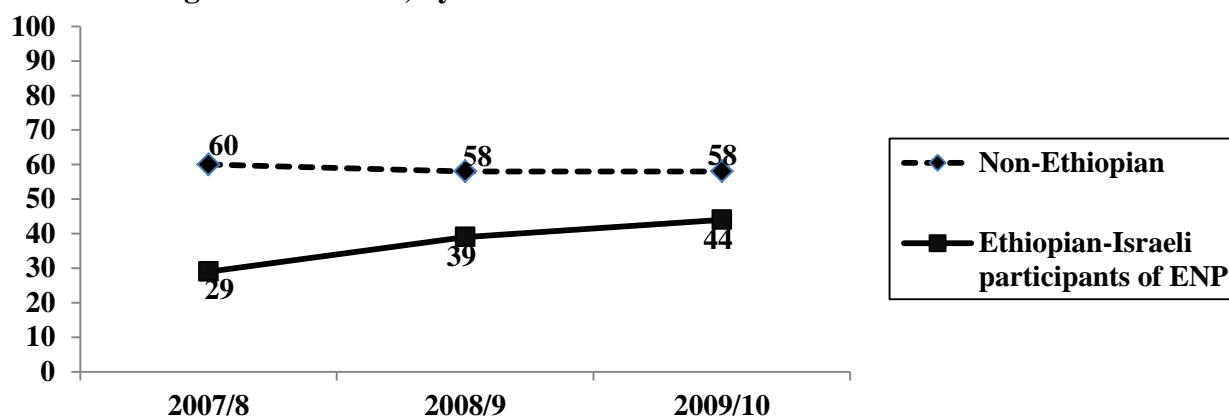
- Percentage eligible for matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli participants increased from 49% to 62% and thus the gap declined from 20 to 7 percentage points.
- Percentage eligible for academic matriculation certificate among Ethiopian-Israeli participants increased from 29% to 44% and thus the gap declined from 31 to 14 percentage points.

Figure 2: Percentage Eligible for Matriculation Certificates among Ethiopian-Israeli ENP Participants and Non-Ethiopian 12th Graders in 28 Schools that Participated in the Program since 2008, by Year



² A similar picture is found when we look at the gaps between all Ethiopian-Israeli students in the 28 schools (both participants and non-participants) and non-Ethiopian students: between 2008 and 2010, the gaps were narrowed by 48% in eligibility for matriculation certificate, and by 37% in eligibility for academic matriculation certificate.

Figure 3: Percentage Eligible for Academic Matriculation Certificates among Ethiopian-Israeli ENP Participants and Non-Ethiopian 12th Graders in 28 Schools Participating in the Program since 2008, by Year



2008: 330 participants, 4,512 non-Ethiopian students

2009: 406 participants, 4,221 non-Ethiopian students

2010: 407 participants, 4,341 non-Ethiopian students

2. *Changes in the Achievement Difference between Program Participants and non-Participant Ethiopian-Israeli 12th Graders with Similar Characteristics, between 2007/8 – 2009/10*

The second analysis of the impact of the program examined the difference between the achievements of program participants and those of non-participant Ethiopian-Israeli students, with similar characteristics and from schools in which the Ethiopian-Israeli students had similar achievements prior to the program. Using the Ministry of Education data on all secondary schools in the system, we created a comparison group, in which each participating student was matched to a non-participating student from a school without the program³.

As we see in Figures 4 and 5, we found a significant increase over time in the program impact on the percentage of those eligible for both matriculation certificates and academic matriculation certificates:

- In 2008, there was no significant difference between the participant and non-participant students
- In 2009, the achievement differences, in favor of program participants, were 13 percentage points for matriculation certificate eligibility and 6 percentage points for eligibility for academic matriculation certificate

³ The matched student was similar to the participating student in the following characteristics:

- Student characteristics: country of birth (Israel/Ethiopia), gender
- School characteristics:
 - State or State Religious school
 - The percentage of students eligible for matriculation certificates among non-Ethiopian school students, in the year of the analysis (2008, 2009 or 2010)
 - The percentage of students eligible for matriculation certificates among Ethiopian-Israeli school students in 2005, prior to the implementation of the program.

- In 2010, after 3 years in the program, the advantages of the participants in the program were as follows:
 - **Eligibility for matriculation certificate:** the percentage of eligibility was 62% for program participants vs. 42% for the comparison group, an advantage of 20 percentage points
 - **Eligibility for matriculation certificate that meets university admission criteria:** the percentage of eligibility was 44% for program participants vs. 27% for the comparison group, an advantage of 17 percentage points

Figure 4: Percentage Eligible for Matriculation Certificates among 12th Graders in the Program in 28 Schools Participating in the Program since 2008, and in the Comparison Group, by Year

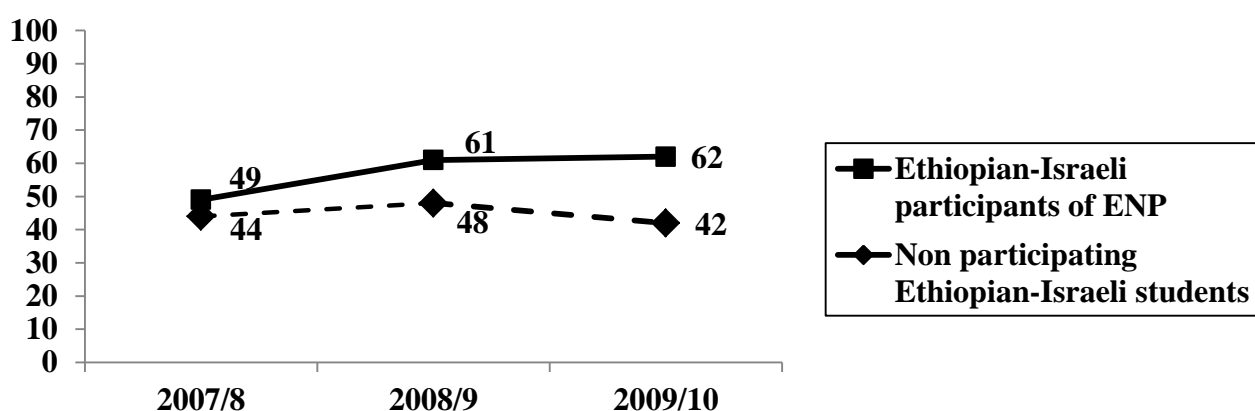
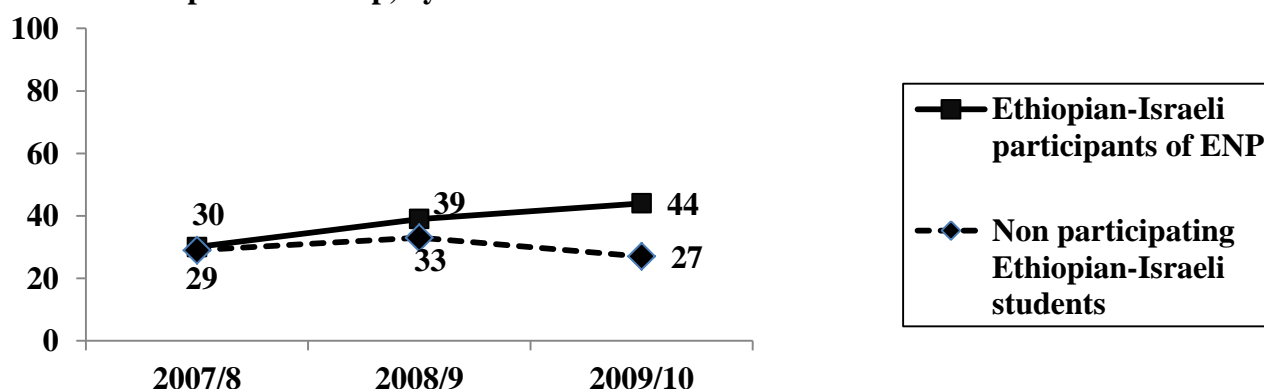


Figure 5: Percentage Eligible for Academic Matriculation Certificates among 12th Graders in the Program in 28 Schools Participating in the Program since 2008, and in the Comparison Group, by Year



2008: 330 participants (74.3% of Ethiopian-Israeli 12th graders in these schools)
 2009: 406 participants (74.2% of Ethiopian-Israeli 12th graders in these schools)
 2010: 407 participants (69.6% of Ethiopian-Israeli 12th graders in these schools)

2.3 Impact on the Achievements of Students with the Lowest Previous Achievements

Scholastic assistance programs can have a differential impact on students with varying levels of scholastic ability. We divided the students into three groups, according to their achievements on national exams taken in 8th grade. Figure 6 shows the impact of the program on the weakest group, who had scored lower than 49 (on a scale of 0-100) on these exams. We examine the average impact over the years 2008-10.

- As expected, the matriculation achievements of these students were much lower than those of the total program participants
- However, the program impact (i.e. the difference, in percentages, between their achievements and those of a comparison group with similar earlier achievements) was greater than the average impact on the total participating group on most measures
- Especially impressive is the impact on eligibility for an academic matriculation certificate – only 6.5% of the comparison group achieved that, compared with over twice that – 13.5% – of program participants

Figure 6: Impact on Students with the Lowest Previous Achievements: Comparison between Participating Students and Students in the Comparison Group: Average Impact, 2008-10, (in Percentages)

