

# **Do We Really Mean It?**

*Field Observations from the Ethiopian Israeli Community*

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**Study funded by and conducted on behalf of the  
United Jewish Communities (UJC)**

**April 2008**

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## Executive Summary

The successful integration of Ethiopian Israelis remains in doubt. Two images are projected. One image is of an Israeli-born and/or educated generation which has made significant gains. The other is of an immigrant generation characterized by illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and communal dependency. In truth neither of these views reflects reality.

The images are consistent with conventional wisdom and expectations for immigrant integration. What they do is divert attention from the needs of the Ethiopian Israel community. While the Israeli-born or educated generation is slowly making progress, a great deal of institutional support is still needed. The immigrant generation suffers even more from the stereotype that has led to lower expectations and thus less willingness to support necessary programs.

Accepting conventional wisdom is permitting us to close our eyes to the failure to integrate the immigrant generation. The concomitant loss of the traditional Ethiopian Jewish social-cultural and communal frameworks has been traumatic. Mothers and fathers strive to understand and parent their children. Children struggle in school and with their identity. The community has become dependent.

Save for a minority of Ethiopian Israeli youth who successfully integrate into Israeli society, the failure to integrate the immigrant generation and its consequences weighs heavily on the majority. The well-intended, numerous supplementary programs for Ethiopian Israeli children and youth cannot replace what has been lost.

Challenging conventional wisdom will create the opportunity for a positive outcome. Support for traditional customs, practices and social-communal frameworks will facilitate mutual respect and sharing of social-cultural concepts. Investing in their parents will benefit the children as well as the community. Leadership and community development will provide the basis for a sense of confidence and value, to take responsibility. Real collaboration, planning and integration will enable Ethiopian Israelis, families and communities to succeed.

**Introduction\***

Israel and world Jewry have taken great pride in the aliyah of Ethiopian Jewry. We share in the heroic stories of “operations” Moses and Solomon, the trek of thousands through the desert and clandestine flights from North Africa. We wept at the image of white-robed men, women and children arriving in Israel. The images of Ethiopian Israeli youth achieving success in education, joining IDF combat units and reaching high rank, and success in academic study have brought joy to our hearts and a compelling case for the donors to our campaigns.

***“We must look at the bleak reality that the vast majority of Ethiopian Israelis face in their daily existence.”***

In our celebration of the aliyah and many achievements, we must look at the bleak reality that the vast majority of Ethiopian Israelis face in their daily existence. In our zeal to integrate Ethiopian Israelis, not unlike that experienced by earlier waves of immigrant groups, we created obstacles to their integration rather than ways to ameliorate the barriers in place for all new immigrants. Current policies and practices that were designed in good faith to facilitate integration, have frustrated, emasculated and denigrated the people and their culture. Good faith is not enough to overcome blindness to who Ethiopian Israelis are and what their culture is.

The denial of religious and socio-cultural traditions embodied in the kessim and shmageleh has precluded using their customs, practices and social-communal frameworks to aid in integrating Ethiopian Israelis into Israeli society. In not relating to their family structure and practices and accepting their intellectual and cultural illiteracy, we have severely limited their ability to provide for their families and meaningfully participate in the lives of their children. The children are estranged from their parents, struggling in school and finding their way between the two cultures. Through their own choice

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\* Acknowledgement and high praise is given to the primary field interviewer, Reuven Genn, MSW and to the ENP coordinators who organized the community visits. In the writing of the report, Professor Harris Chaiklin, PhD, was an invaluable resource. The support and encouragement of Doron Krakow and Nigist Mengesha, PhD, were critical to this study being undertaken.

and unfulfilled public policy, Ethiopian Israelis settled in largely segregated communities to live in small, dilapidated apartments in low income neighborhoods to be served by under-resourced and ill-equipped municipal services.

The lack of skills training, employment readiness and preparation combined with racism has resulted in high rates of unemployment and under-employment. The patronizing approach to service delivery and community has denied them self-determination and from taking responsibility.

The prescription to address these challenges should be found within them. The challenges were identified and explored with the Ethiopian Israeli community and those working in the field. This report is the result of visiting fifteen<sup>1</sup> communities with high concentrations of Ethiopian Israelis over a 6 month period. Individual and group interviews<sup>2</sup> were conducted with the range of persons from the community or serving the Ethiopian Israeli community. Approximately 130 persons were interviewed in the course of the study. Available data was collected and analyzed. Program and service venues were visited and observed. Conclusions were derived from the content analysis of the interviews, secondary data analysis and field observations.

The study was funded by and conducted on behalf of the United Jewish Communities (UJC).

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<sup>1</sup> Haifa, Pardess Chana, Hadera, Netanya, Gedera, Lod, Rehovot, Ashkelon, Jerusalem, Kiryat Gat, Beit Shemesh, Kiryat Malachi, Beersheva, Kiryat Bialik.

<sup>2</sup> Including Ethiopian community activists, steering committee members, women's groups, youth, municipal representatives and officials, the representatives to the National body of Ethiopian Representatives, Amuta directors and members, religious group members, kessim and rabbis, Ethiopian professionals working in the community including mediators, mayors and assistant mayors, directors of local municipal departments, ENP rakazim, community center directors, Fidel staff, Directors and staff of Mokdei Klita, service provider professionals.

**Religious and Cultural Tradition and Practice**

The disregard and diminution of the “traditional tools” of religion and culture creates an emotional and cultural void for the individual, family and community. The loss of this critical framework on individual and communal identity, self-esteem and confidence is realized in the struggle to successfully deal with the stress and strain of immigration and integration.

***“The disregard and diminution of the 'traditional tools' of religion and culture creates an emotional and cultural void for the individual, family and community.”***

The religious and cultural traditions and practices of Ethiopian Israelis are centuries-old with a distinct liturgical language and literature, unique holiday and religious-communal leadership of their elders. Ethiopian Jews follow the Torah and Ethiopian Jewish texts written in the liturgical language, Ge'ez, with the guidance of kessim, their religious leaders. The religious-cultural traditions are manifested in Jewish life-cycle events characterized by the full attendance of the larger extended family. They are recognizably Jewish but different enough from Rabbinic Judaism and practice in Israel and of questionable origin to some, resulting in the lack of formal religious recognition and tension from without and within the community.

A holiday that is unique to Ethiopian Jews, Sigd, celebrates the giving of the Torah and the days of the return from exile from Babylonia to Jerusalem through major local and national community events. Unable to obtain formal religious status, the State is planning to recognize the holiday by law as a national “cultural” holiday.

Without formal recognition and support, there is a challenge to the continuity of this unique Ethiopian Jewish language, knowledge and practice. For the generation who learned this tradition, the ability to live and pass on these customs and practices has been severely constrained.

Kessim have no formal religious standing or official recognition. The kessim do not receive government support as do rabbis nor do they enjoy the status

they once held in Ethiopia. If a community should seek the voluntary services of a kes, one may not be available as they are not resident in every community.

There are few frameworks within which to pass on the Ge`ez liturgical language along with the customs and traditions. Those among the Israeli-raised and born generations who are learning Jewish practice are doing so in the modern Israeli religious framework. The language/liturgy/tradition gap found between the elders and younger generation results in frequent disputes over which tradition should prevail between and within community congregations.

In an informal meeting with a kes, dressed in traditional flowing white robe and turban-like head covering, the kes reported on his inability to find a framework from which to teach the customs and traditions. He projected an impression of isolation and indicated that he had no resources and there was scant community interest. Whether the kessim are necessary for successful integration or their time is passing, a way should be found to treat them with dignity in this transition, and more thought and care should be given to the implications.

Most communities have multiple congregations that are usually divided along traditional Ge`ez liturgy-based elders and Hebrew-liturgy or modern Israeli religious practice. Few have adequate facilities in which to pray. The congregations compete for scarce resources and/or the support of the municipality or private donors to build a synagogue. The division leads to disputes that serve to impede the development of the community and its institutions. For example, an "...old youth center facility was designated for community life-cycle events, and is being used, but because of community disputes (traditional or modern) the center is not being developed."

Among the few exceptions is Beersheva. On Erev Shabbat, two prominent Kessim participate between Mincha and Maariv, leading services in Ge'ez. Kabbalat Shabbat is conducted together and the Drashot are delivered on a weekly rotating basis. During holidays, Kessim bring in the tradition and are used as advisors and teachers, enhancing their status. However, they do not have the authority or ability to act; they do not assume a leadership role in the community.

The Beersheva synagogue with its traditional Ethiopian design is specific to the Ethiopian Israeli community and built with Diaspora funding. The few Ethiopian Israeli-specific synagogues have been funded from this source. In this synagogue there is a "...community center connected which offers nursery and kindergarten; a special tradition room where Kessim explain customs along with an historical film and art. Shmagaleh have space to receive people."

The situation has been complicated by the recent and continuing influx of Felash Mura. Veteran Ethiopian Israelis and communities are generally not welcoming of the Felash Mura. Coming without Ethiopian Jewish tradition and practice, the Felash Mura are being educated in modern Hebrew, Rabbinic tradition and practice. Moreover, the lack of access to Ethiopian Israeli rabbis (trained and available, but lack funded positions in Felash Mura communities) and the struggle to find welcoming congregations or space to form one of their own is a source of frustration. Jerusalem, for example, has become the home for a significant number of Felash Mura who are living in four Jerusalem neighborhoods, none of which has a rabbi or synagogue specific to the community. One community worker commented that "...with no support from municipality; they were seeking guidance but there was no traditional Ethiopian Jewish religious leadership, creating a further obstacle to their connection to Judaism and the country."

In addition to the lack of synagogues and rabbis, the communities also lack venues to hold the large family and communal gatherings associated with weddings and funerals. Central to the religious and cultural traditions, the inability to properly hold these events is another source of major frustration and an obstacle to the experience being one that the next generation will want to continue. It is the exceptional community that does not feel the frustration reflected below. For example, in one community there was "...no central meeting place for the community to gather to focus on issues, share traditions and celebrate events; therefore, the community is "shut-in" and unable to function the way that it used to."

To repair the situation before irretrievable loss, we can look to the Beersheva experience for a model. Awarding dignity and a substantive role to kessim and providing space for ritual practice and celebrations supports cultural continuity and the framework for re-building identity, self-esteem and confidence. For all and particularly the Felash Mura, municipalities need to

fund Ethiopian Israeli rabbinic positions and make space available for new congregations.

### **Shmagaleh**

Reluctance to recognize and utilize shmagaleh is another lost opportunity. Second in stature to the kessim, the shmagaluch are elders of the community whose authority is based on their wisdom and experience. The role of the Shmagaleh continues to be the resolution of family, communal and personal issues. In some communities, the shmagaluch are playing a critical role through formal municipal auspices, usually attached or in conjunction with the welfare office. However, their role is more often informal and lacking the financial support of the municipality or full integration with the services delivered to the Ethiopian Israeli community. In many cases they are simply not even given regular space to meet those seeking their assistance. Among the challenges facing the conventional delivery of public services is the need for cultural understanding and sensitivity. The oft-sighted example is family violence or spousal abuse. The shmagaleh offer a ready and experienced resource.

***A proven asset, the simple solution is to follow the example of those municipalities that have integrated the shmagaleh into the service delivery options of public institutions dealing with personal and family issues.***

There has been a lack of flexibility in the government authorized and institutionalized religious framework and a lack of understanding the consequences of ignoring or diminishing the religious and cultural traditions. This has served to create additional impediments to an already difficult integration into Israeli society.

There are too few examples of national and local initiatives that reflect recognition of the need to facilitate the continuity of tradition and practice. Learning from these positive examples, governmental and non-governmental organizations need to work with the many religious and culturally focused amutot and/or local leadership within the Ethiopian Israeli community to address the needs according to their priorities.

## Family

The integrity of the Ethiopian immigrant family has been under stress in all facets of its relationship with Israeli society. Among the many obstacles that militate against successful family integration are the lack of fit between a patriarchal tradition and Israel's child-centered culture, employment and related financial challenges, language and cultural illiteracy, inadequate housing, and early policy which directed Ethiopian immigrant youth to residential schools.

A microcosm of the Ethiopian Israeli experience and demography is found in an 8 city study with combined Ethiopian Israeli population totaling almost 15,000. Ethiopian Israeli families are large, averaging between 4.4 and 6.2 members. Twenty to 45% of the families have seven or more members. Seventeen to 28% of the families are single-parent families, and account for 20% to 33% of all families with children.<sup>3</sup> This family structure reflects the high birth rate typical of a folk society.

## Violence

With a few infamous exceptions, the physical violence that exists in the Ethiopian Israeli community is manifested primarily within families. The relative frequency of these events, in particular spousal abuse, has resulted in violence becoming part of the public image of the community.

Even though the numbers are small, spousal murder and abuse have increased. These are the kind of events that the media emphasizes because readers and viewers respond to them. A Jerusalem Post story noted, "Over the last decade, that ratio has been approximately one in four. In the last two years, it's gone up to almost one in three - in 2006, five of the 16 women murdered in domestic disputes were Ethiopian immigrants; in 2005, it was four of 12." And, ... "of Ethiopian immigrants staying in battered women's shelters across the country - 78 out of 688 women, or 11 percent, as of the end of 2005."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Judith King, Ravit Efrati and Noga Netzer, Selected Findings from Surveys of Ethiopian Immigrants in Eight Cities: The Neighborhood Centers Project, Meyers-JDC Brookdale Institute, May 2004, page 2.

<sup>4</sup> "The Education of Ethiopian Wives", Jerusalem Post, February 8, 2007

Spousal abuse and/or violence have raised sufficient concern to produce prevention initiatives. Spousal abuse was not unknown in Ethiopia, in fact, as reported in the same article, it was euphemistically known as “education”<sup>5</sup>. What is surprising is that with these numbers, why known preventative and treatment programs have not been implemented.

A variety of personal security issues confront the Ethiopian Israeli community on a daily basis. Among these are:

- Tension between local youth and others which occasionally becomes violent.
- Women are vulnerable to physical attacks and have a high anxiety in public since women have been attacked by young Arab men.
- There are problems with Bedouin and Arabs coming into communities with drugs and prostitution.
- As effective entry into Israel society is delayed, there is increasing substance abuse and prostitution.

A number of interventions are being attempted. There are communities working with the police which form community patrols that defuse problems before police intervention is required. This informal, community-based intervention also reduces the probability of police records for young men. In one city, there is a violence prevention course with a social worker responsible for addressing the problem in the larger community. In another location, a program intervention is being undertaken with professionals employed by Bahalatchin (NGO) through the ENP, and trained by Bar Ilan University in the prevention of family violence.

In seeking understanding of these phenomena, it is necessary to take account of Ethiopian Israeli family culture and the limited ability of parents to manage spousal relations and their children in the context of Israeli society.

## **Parents**

Community professionals consider parents to be limited in their ability to help their children. These limitations are, in large part, difficulties with everyday life demands. This concerns employment, level of income and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

housing. None of these are adequate and parents are overwhelmed. In such situations they are neither a good spouse nor good parents. Moreover, children of working parents are frequently without supervision or a framework.

***These are things these families cannot be expected to improve by bootstrapping themselves. Either the resources are provided or the problems will continue. Portraying these families as hapless and hopeless and responsible for their condition reflects an abandoning of the philosophy of in-gathering.***

There are many non-working parents who are limited by being unable to read and write. This is greater in the more veteran communities where there is limited interaction with other parts of Israeli society. In the survey of Ethiopian Israelis in 8 cities, almost 45% of adults were not literate.<sup>6</sup> Women in all of the cities were less proficient in reading and writing Hebrew than the men.<sup>7</sup> This hinders their ability to help their children in school and sows the seeds for family dissension.

The Felash Mura are the newest immigrants. They continue to arrive at a rate of 300 per month. While coping with the challenges a new immigrant faces, especially from a third world society, they also deal with the questioning of their status as Jews. The government of Israel's intention to close its operations in Ethiopia and end the immigration has served to exacerbate the anxiety for their families.

There are unique cultural and group-specific issues within the community that increase the pressure on families. Felash Mura are frequently "mixed" families with one partner a convert. They often have family remaining in Ethiopia to whom they provide financial support and from whom they suffer the emotional pressure from delayed family reunification.

The status of men and particularly fathers presents a different challenge. In Ethiopia the family is fathered-centered. In Israel the society is child-focused and mothers quickly adapt to this as they utilize Israeli services.

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<sup>6</sup> Judith King, Ravit Efrati and Noga Netzer, Selected Findings from Surveys of Ethiopian Immigrants in Eight Cities: The Neighborhood Centers Project, Meyers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, May 2004, page 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, page 3.

Fathers already struggling with the loss of status and the pressures of language, employment and income, find themselves becoming further emotionally isolated. Combined with the loss of the traditional religious-cultural framework, this is a potent and potentially lethal combination.

The physical contrast between immigrant parents and their children is dramatic. Parents appear weathered and burdened. Mothers are dressed in multiple layers of loose-fitting garb, fathers in jacket and slacks with some form of hat, both moving slowly and speaking in hushed voices. The physically vigorous children are dressed in the latest age-appropriate fashion and display the loud and boisterous behavior of Israeli youth.

There is recognition for the need to invest in parents; however, there is a mixture of the lack of a return on current intervention or apparent inability to deliver effective interventions. For the newest immigrants, the absorption centers are reported to reflect a lack of investment today. The need for cultural activity, especially in the homes to strengthen parents has many limitations including language. Many lack of knowledge of what exists and how to access the system. There are a disproportionate number of Ethiopian Israeli families with open public assistance files.<sup>8</sup>

These challenges are great for two parent families; consider the burden for those among the high percentage of single parent Ethiopian Israeli families.

***“At a minimum, the literacy of parents must become a priority. The ability to work, support families and to participate in the lives of their children all hinge on literacy.”***

At a minimum, the literacy of parents must become a priority. The ability to work, support families and to participate in the lives of their children all hinge on literacy. Mediators will facilitate the parents understanding and use of services and programs available to them and their families. Shmagaleh will provide the culturally acceptable framework for husbands and wives to address their problems.

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<sup>8</sup> 32,447 Ethiopian Israelis registered with social service departments in 2006, Society and Welfare, Statistical Abstracts of Israel 2007, Central Bureau of Statistics, page 349.

## **Housing**

An important factor in understanding the degree of integration into Israeli society is the size, quality and location of housing. A high percentage of Ethiopian Israelis have purchased homes (apartments), but not all the purchases have been beneficial and there are many examples of buying inadequate or poorly located dwellings. In such cases, they are frequently unable to sell their homes as in one example where they were close to Arab neighborhoods.

A number of the problematic neighborhoods have been included in government renewal projects, but these initiatives have worked to improve a small portion of buildings not the larger neighborhood. Moreover, with the real challenge of small apartments and large families, the improvements are only cosmetic. The situation of the family is worsened as well by living in run down neighborhoods with poor services and schools, and high incidence of substance abuse and vandalism.

This housing reality was created by the preferences of new immigrants and unimplemented immigrant absorption policy. The policy was to disperse the immigrants to avoid their over-concentration in neighborhoods and/or cities. However, the immigrants' preference to stay together combined with insufficient housing stock and inadequate mortgage financing resulted in high concentrations in problematic neighborhoods, in apartments that were too small and in poor condition.

A recommendation to address these conditions is found in the approved but unbudgeted National Program, to "assist the young layer to reach an appropriate dwelling place". One unintended consequence of this approach is that it will take some of the strongest elements out of an already struggling community.

With major financial and social implications, a comprehensive solution remains illusive. Large apartments in newer neighborhoods or enlarging existing apartments are expensive and disruptive solutions. Moving Ethiopian Israeli families to new neighborhoods is unsettling and will rouse the new neighbors. This reality demands the immediate improvement of the conditions of the existing housing and neighborhoods in more than a cosmetic way.

## Education

The primary investment in Ethiopian Israelis is the education of children and youth. Ethiopian Israelis are benefiting but significant gaps remain in their elementary grade test results and high school matriculation achievement. This segment will explore the policies, practices and interventions that were and are intended to address the problem but are found to be perpetuating them.

### Religious and Secular

Among the more significant government education policies for Ethiopian Israelis is that the children have been sent to religious public schools in the cities in which they live. Although no longer exclusive on a community-by-community basis, this policy has resulted in the large majority of Ethiopian Israeli students being educated through the religious public school system.

There are communities in which 90% of students are attending religious schools and others in which the majority of students are in the “secular” or general public school system. A recent reporting of education ministry data showed 18,000 Ethiopian Israeli students of whom 39% were attending secular public schools.<sup>9</sup>

The religious school system was considered and is still thought to be under-resourced in general and ill-prepared specific to Ethiopian Israelis. Questions have been raised whether there are too many Ethiopian Israeli children in the religious school system. Should they not be allowed and encouraged to matriculate in both school systems to further integration?

The reality of the relative merits of the two systems is complex and nuanced. In one city, the religious high school offers better options and relates more positively than the secular high school which, for example, will simply choose not to list a person for Bagrut if they feel that he/she will not do well. Special needs are not handled by the secular high school. The exception that this religious school reflects means that each situation should be judged on its merits.

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<sup>9</sup> “Ethiopian activist: Integration failed, separate schools needed”, Jerusalem Post, March 23, 2008.

The basic challenge is to keep children in school because the high attrition rate forecloses ease of movement into Israeli society. Attrition from the lower to the higher grades is a phenomenon that is shared in religious and secular schools. In one community, of the 27 children who began there are 5 remaining in the religious school and in the secular school from 19 children who began 7 remain. Understanding and investment in solving this problem will have continuing benefit in saved service costs.

The Felash Mura are reported to experience a mixed reception by schools. In one recent and highly publicized example, students in a Haredi school in Petach Tikvah were segregated from the main student population. In another community, some religious schools initially made problems for Felash Mura children, claiming that the families left, but one school accepted 150 children. Now these schools are seeking Felash Mura children due to the budget incentive of extra-funding that comes with olim children. Secular schools will likely see growth in this population, when Felash Mura families complete the conversion process, many send their children to secular schools.

The implications and relative merits of these policies and emerging realities remain largely unexamined and thus unclear whether they will benefit the community.

### **Proportion of Population**

Government education policy intended to be consistent with immigrant dispersion policy, established the maximum proportion of Ethiopian Israeli students at no more than 25% of a school population. This policy has produced positive and negative results. Needed neighborhood schools have been closed. Children spend impossibly long days being bussed outside of their neighborhoods. The policy has also allowed parents to elect to send their children to non-religious public schools.

This policy did not pose a significant problem in some larger communities as the Ethiopian Israelis are a small proportion of the total student population. In one city system, of the 20,784 students between the ages 3 to 18 enrolled in municipal educational frameworks, there are 784 Ethiopian-Israeli elementary school students and 177 Ethiopian-Israeli pre-school students. Among high school age, there are 174 Ethiopian-Israeli students

attending 6 high schools in grades 7 to 12, plus 79 students from the nearby absorption center. 80% or 152 of the city's Ethiopian-Israeli high school students are concentrated in two religious high schools with 1500 students.

“According to Education Ministry figures, 30 elementary schools, 8 of which are secular public schools, have 50% or more Ethiopian students. In 88 other schools, the rate is between 25 to 50%.”<sup>10</sup>

Bussing of children living in urban centers does not appear to be pervasive across the country. Where bussing does exist, the burden falls on the families and their children. The experience in Kiryat Moshe, Rehovot serves as an example in which the children were bussed each day to 13 different schools. The neighborhood school had been closed for being overpopulated with Ethiopian Israelis. On the corner at 7AM and dropped off late in the afternoon, the children were exhausted and the parents out-of-touch with the school and teachers. Today, the re-opened neighborhood school offers an alternative to bussing with an exemption from the 25% policy.

The rationale for re-opening the school was that the students were not succeeding in school nor were they being integrated. Moreover, as modeled in North America, with an enlightened approach and necessary investment, disproportionate numbers of one group does not determine success or failure. A significant proportion of Ethiopian Israeli students in a school provide the opportunity to address their needs.

There are individual communities and school experiences that are not reflected in the survey data. Enrolment by neighborhood has been eliminated for Ethiopian Israelis, however, there are examples of “good” schools that have limited their registration.

Another example is found in a different communal and school context. FIDEL, Keren Moriah and CEI-PEA<sup>11</sup> are partnering in a project to create a network in existing Netanya schools based on the Kiryat Moshe model. The focus is on 1) cultural sensitivity and knowledge, 2) teaching skills specific

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Keren Moriah is a Washington, D.C.-based foundation active in promoting civil rights, social justice and democracy in Israel. The Center for Educational Innovation-Public Education Association is a New York City-based nonprofit organization that creates successful public schools and educational program.

to this population, 3) responding to needs of the children, and 4) reaching out to the community.

To date, government has extended program funding provided to schools with Ethiopian Israelis beyond the regular immigrant program policy framework. However, the majority of Ethiopian Israeli children are now born in Israel and the termination of the aliyah of the Felash Mura should result in reduced government funding. This base funding reduction should make the ENP and other special program funding that much more significant.

## **Residential**

In the initial phases of Ethiopian aliyah, residential schools were a preferred and often necessary option. The first large scale aliyah, Operation Moses, was characterized in part by the arrival of individual olim rather than intact olim families. Operation Solomon, however, saw aliyah by family units. The unintended negative consequences of separating children from their parents and community became apparent. The impetus for residential school enrollment has continued to diminish. However, the numbers remain material and the need for investment continues. For example, there is a need for mediators in residential schools.

One implication for more children staying in the community rather than residential schools is that increased educational input is required for the upper grades. Also as one community found, there was no municipal support system for residential school drop-outs. They are trying to address their needs at the youth center but this is an inadequate replacement for needed public services.

## **Mediators**

***“Despite their proven role in helping to bridge the cultural-communication gap, there are relatively few mediators across the spectrum of public services.”***

The challenge of understanding the family’s cultural and few Ethiopian Israeli teachers led to the introduction of mediators. Trained to work in public institutions, primarily schools, in order to mediate between the

professionals and their clients, mediators have become an integral part of many program and service interventions. Despite their proven role in helping to bridge the cultural-communication gap, there are relatively few mediators across the spectrum of public services. These examples reflect the situation found in the communities:

- School has a mediator, 3 days a week, needs more.
- Employment mediator for each of the schools.
- 3 mediators sponsored by Steering Committee plus those from PACT, however, no one is working with them as a group.
- 11 mediators supported by ENP, Steering Committee and PACT.
  - Shared between Comprehensive School and Tech School.
  - Good relationship with principal and cooperation with counselors, teachers and parents.
  - ENP coordinator helpful in resolving problems.
  - Communication with chair of Steering Committee as well as with local professionals.

Schools have not integrated teachers from Ethiopian Israeli community which continues to have an impact on communication and contact. There is a need for more Ethiopian Israeli personnel in education as well as other fields and programs.

### **Special Programs**

The inability of government and public education services to address the needs of Ethiopian Israeli children and close the gaps between them and the general student population has produced a variety of special supplementary programs.

Examples of these programs include:

- ENP sponsorship of 80 afternoon study groups operated by ORT.
- Municipality funded PELEH program through MATNAS.
- SPACE in girls school, 50 students, and boys school, 20 students.
- A mentoring program which is a joint effort of Seminar Hakibbutzim, Machon Le'Democratia

- The introduction of a long school day for all students in elementary schools with an enrichment program.
- Community center “chugim” with substantial subsidy. This represents the first time that there has been a social-cultural framework for all age groups.
- Maxam has been contracted to provide education services for youth 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> and Branco Weiss has remaining youth.
- Hila is a two-track program to complete high school or vocational path, through Kidum Noar.
- Afternoon study program, Beit Zipporah, with 396 students
- Branco Weiss program, Tigbor and Atidim.

On an individual program basis, the children benefit from the attention and the content. However, what emerges is a patchwork of programs and services determined by a variety of factors. The absence of an effective coordinating and integrating entity has resulted in gaps, duplication, and an inefficient and ineffective use of resources. With the exception of programs delivered to more than one community and/or neighborhood (i.e., PACT, PACT+, SPACE), there is limited sharing, collaboration and integration. Moreover, these are not core or publicly mandated programs so the funding is temporary.

***“The absence of an effective coordinating and integrating entity has resulted in gaps, duplication, and an inefficient and ineffective use of resources.”***

There are examples in which efforts are being made to formulate comprehensive, capacity-building and long-term solutions to the educational challenges:

- Kiryat Moshe neighborhood school, named for Yona Bogala a pioneering Ethiopian Israeli educator, has now been formally recognized as a separate school with its own number and identity. The school is now in its third year with 100 children in five classes.
- Haifa Shiluvim program developed with Boston (Mass.) and coordinated by municipal education department with community input

through ENP coordinator. Shiluvim allows the community be heard and brings the possibility of investment in the community

- Netanya—FIDEL, Keren Moriah and CEI-PEA are partnering in a project to create a network in existing schools based on the Kiryat Moshe model, described earlier in this chapter.

The intervention of an external partner with resources and non-institutional focus has enabled governmental and nongovernmental organizations to coalesce and collaborate in a meaningful way. In Kiryat Moshe, Rehovot and Netanya, the Moriah Foundation and the Center for Educational Innovation and in Haifa, the Boston (CJP) Jewish federation, were the sources of this critical intervention.

## Parents

Ethiopian Israeli parents are reported to be absent from the formal education process of their children, as a function of their Hebrew language and/or cultural literacy, time and access to the school and teachers, as well as the challenges of immigrant parents and children. There is recognition that this issue needs to be addressed.

There is a lack of communication between parents and children, lack of parental involvement and lack of understanding of their children's issues. There is a dialectic found in the father-at-the-center traditional Ethiopian family versus child-centered Israeli family. Internal family or parent-child dialogue was not part of traditional culture. Twenty-four to 59% of fathers are unable to read or write in Hebrew.<sup>12</sup>

Parental apathy is the norm but when they become involved there is often found to be an over-reaction. The "institutional" focus of most NGOs serves to produce apathy. Not only the families but also the agency personnel must change. Unless parents are able to function as parents the chances for the success of any program are diminished. Kids drop out and go to work because they don't have money for basic necessities like glasses. 42 to 66% of children live in families with neither parent employed.<sup>13</sup> While field

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<sup>12</sup> Judith King, Ravit Efrati and Noga Netzer, Selected Findings from Surveys of Ethiopian Immigrants in Eight Cities: The Neighborhood Centers Project, Meyers-JDC Brookdale Institute, May 2004, page 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, page 12.

reports say that parents do not participate in school events, parents self-reporting indicated that they attend school events and meet with teachers.<sup>14</sup> Apparently different definitions of participation may be operating.

To address parent-child issues, parent groups have been introduced and are a fast growing part of educational interventions. Haifa and Pardess Chana reported holding parents groups with a positive to the intention of connecting parents, students and school. Fidel, an NGO supporting Ethiopian Israeli education, has been operating groups for many years with 60 parents groups this year.

Thirty to 50 year old Ethiopian Israelis have little or no organized activity and are those with children who need the support. As parents become more aware of the need for support and availability of services, there is greater parental involvement, but work still must be done. Parental involvement remains the weak link in the youth programs. Workshops for parents of program participants are thought to be important to help insure and strengthen successes. However, there is a lack of data to evaluate the impact of these groups beyond the self-reporting of participants and leaders.

***“Language barriers are only part of the problem, concept and culture are equally or even more important.”***

Among the challenges facing professionals who are working with parents and children is to find the time for the necessary depth of engagement with them as well as to better understand the obstacles to communication. They need to take the time to explain why, its importance, and provide the opportunity for the parents to speak. This investment of time in a series of meetings with open discussion will allow the development of personal relationships and a mutual understanding of cultures.

Language barriers are only part of the problem, concept and culture are equally or even more important. For example, public institutions and professionals are not part of many Ethiopian Israelis’ social-cultural experience. They do not understand how to relate to professionals and institutions even when language is not an issue.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, page 17.

The complexity of the obstacles to the successful education of Ethiopian Israeli children is daunting. Relating to multiple institutions and professionals is confusing to anyone. A simplified approach is needed. It requires learning from the bottom-up. Through collaboration and the integration of resources and planning, a comprehensive and culturally-aware set of interventions can be designed.

## Employment

The successive waves of Ethiopian aliyah should be reflected in the employment data as Ethiopian Israelis become educated and acculturated and their Israel-born offspring come of age. One would anticipate increasing participation in the work force and quality of employment.

General trends among Ethiopian Israelis comparing 2003-04 to 1995-96 data<sup>15</sup> shows a decrease from 54% to 45% in employment for men ages 18 to 64, and an increase for women from 24% to 34% in the same age range. The decrease in the men's rate was ascribed to lower demand for unskilled labor and the increase for women to the increase in those seeking employment. The unemployment rate for men increases dramatically with age and it is reasonable to assume a similar pattern for women.

Decreasing Ethiopian Israeli employment for men and increasing for women reveals unemployment as a major element delaying full entrance into Israeli society. The increase in women's employment is an indication of a further change in traditional Ethiopian family culture. For older cohorts, it is likely that this trend will continue and a new strain will result from Ethiopian Israeli women becoming increasingly integrated into society while the proportion of men remains stagnant. Such a change in family power structure does not auger well for the success of overall programs. Special attention must be paid to developing programs for men so that they have parity in family roles.

Israel's economy has been growing and employment rising. Optimism was found in some communities where there were increasing numbers of high school and university graduates. This would seem to bode well for the future but this doesn't deal with the community's immediate needs.

Access to and readiness for employment is a function of age, gender and/or year of aliyah, as well as proximity and availability of jobs and programs. Among the positive factors in optimistic communities were that people are actively seeking work rather than relying on social services and a relatively high level of employment.

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<sup>15</sup> Abrham Wolde-Tsadick, *Ethiopian Integration – Education and Employment: New Findings in Brief*, May 13, 2007, Meyers- Brookdale Institute, pages 7-8.

## **Older Population**

Unemployment is a particularly vexing problem for older Ethiopian Israelis. The combination of poor language facility, limited work skills, sparse investment in training programs, plus the prejudices connected with age and race identifies where a major effort is needed. The men are the heads of their families and communities. Without them the integration of the rest of the community is much more costly and difficult.

There is a need to develop language programs and skill training for older people that will allow them to obtain employment. Finding employment will also need to be addressed through an assessment of labor needs and training programs developed to meet these needs. Employment creation through frameworks characterized as “cottage” industries can provide piece-work opportunities for older people.

Another problem is that many who had status and skill in Ethiopia need to be legitimized and strengthened. One reported example is a 50 year old, trained nurse who made aliyah in 2001 and is unable to find employment in her profession.

## **Unskilled Population**

Employment for those with modest or marginal work skills requires that they be protected on the job. They are at the mercy of the employer who exploits workers while staying within the letter of the labor law. There are reports of employees who work on special contract, are fired every 9 months and then rehired after 3 months.

Seasonal and part-time employment, such as agriculture, is a significant portion of available employment opportunities. Prominent examples of low and un-skilled employment are those who are cleaning and providing security for public institutions. The majority of Ethiopian-Israelis are employed in minimum wage jobs; 18 NIS (US\$5) per hour.

## **Young and Academically-trained Population**

For younger people, the main issues are accessibility and under-employment. Those living in geographically peripheral communities

struggle with the lack of access to appropriate and well-paying jobs. Academically-trained Ethiopian Israelis are experiencing difficulty in finding work in the professions and/or at the levels for which they were trained. In those fields or programs in which they can find employment, there are seldom ladders for professional advancement or development. These phenomena are thought to be a function of discrimination and the lack of personal/professional networks.

Among the professions, employment access obstacles experienced by Ethiopian Israeli law school graduates became a public issue. To address the problem, an initiative has been undertaken by a consortium of governmental, non-governmental and professional organizations to provide summer law firm experience to law students. As employment is largely a function of access through personal/professional networking, the program expectation is that early admission into the network will gain access to entry level employment at the completion of their studies.

Another example is the use of affirmative action in government ministries and non-governmental organizations. There has also been public discussion of industry pro-actively seeking Ethiopian Israeli professionals. However, these initiatives remain isolated examples and are not inadequate to address the problem facing university graduates and professionals. Failure to effectively integrate this group will trickle down and exacerbate all the other problems that this community will present to Israeli society.

A poignant personal example was given by an employment counselor who is working outside of his professional training and unsuccessfully seeking access to his field.

To gain access to government employment opportunities, hiring needs to be freed from politics with a requirement for open processes and combined with training provided for test taking and interview skills. For business development initiatives, young people need the experience that internships provide.

Language and presentation skills are reported to be necessary but missing from the skill set of Ethiopian Israeli youth. Oral presentation and debate should become a part of the school curriculum. As well, the general lack of vocational training programs for those who are not best-suited or choose not

to pursue an academic professional course is an ongoing issue for Ethiopian Israelis and the general population.

For those who are not in school, the lack of regular availability of social skills and job training and preparation courses, as well as insufficient local employment specialists and enabling resources remains an issue.

### **Enabling Strategies and Services**

In the communities, the employment coordinators in the Mokdei Klitah are struggling with limited resources to meet these challenges. National policy and initiatives are insufficient with a lack of programs to help people obtain employment or specific job training courses through the Mokdei Klitah. The coordinators develop contacts with employers, training courses, and a database of those needing work. They do outreach to olim who have few skills. In one example, the coordinator had 60 monthly requests for assistance of which he can manage to work with 10. The coordinators also work with private manpower companies on issues of employers abusing the workers.

As noted, a labor market survey that is up-to-date will allow for training to meet specific job needs and shortages. The key will be flexibility as the market changes over time and sometimes rapidly. To respond to the survey findings, a variety of initiatives may be valuable. For example, women need the opportunity to work which may be facilitated through micro-banking and working hours when their children are in school. Developing partnerships with other groups can produce courses such as those for bus drivers; Egged runs the course and absorbs the best students. For the 30+ age group to participate in training and re-training, financial assistance is necessary during the term of the course.

To complement the market survey, a “talent bank” may facilitate the matching of people to market demand. With more students in higher education, they may benefit from the establishment of a coordinator who will identify talented students as well as promote scholarships and fellowships.

From the reality of local communal politics, there was an example of an Ethiopian Israeli municipal counselor’s position that allowed for assisting

community members to gain access to jobs within the municipality as the larger community displayed willingness to “share-the-pie”.

### **Welfare Assistance**

There are a disproportionate number of Ethiopian Israelis receiving government financial assistance and on file with local welfare departments. However, anecdotal reports show that people are actively seeking work rather than relying on social services. For the highly touted Wisconsin Plan, at least in one community, it was reported that 200 were registered, but most have left the program.<sup>16</sup>

As the data indicates, unemployment is a major element delaying the full entrance of the Ethiopian Israeli community into Israeli society. A cohort-specific set of national and local strategies must be developed to address the different training, preparation and access needs.

***“Unemployment is a major element delaying the full entrance of the Ethiopian Israeli community into Israeli society.”***

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<sup>16</sup> 12,851 Ethiopian Israelis between the ages of 25 to 64 who are registered with social service departments; Society and Welfare, Statistical Abstract of Israel 2007, Central Bureau of Statistics, page 349.

## Community Services and Programs

The social history of the State of Israel is one of successive waves of immigrants primarily from the East and Middle East. As a polyglot nation, its almost 60 different languages speak to an immigrant experience that is never easy. Israel has a lot of experience with populations that are difficult to integrate.

During its foundation years, Israel absorbed Yemenites who had been living in the fifteenth century and survivors of the Holocaust devastated by their experience. The next ingathering came when North African Jews were compelled to leave their countries followed by the largest immigration with the opening of the former Soviet Union.

In this social-historical context, the Ethiopian aliyah is not unique. Moreover, the Ethiopian aliyah has occurred in stages over an extended period which should have allowed professionals working in absorption and their public institutions to learn and adjust to the particular needs and issues.

This chapter examines the particular burdens experienced by Ethiopian Israelis with governmental and non-governmental services, raises issues that funders and providers should consider and decisions that need to be made to advance the integration of the community. Otherwise, the victim will be blamed for the failure.

### **Moked Klitah**

Ethiopian Jews arrived in significant numbers to Israel in 1981 and 1991. Since 1998 there has been a continuing modest flow, currently 300 Felash Mura are arriving monthly which may soon end.

The majority of the communities have a Moked Klitah (absorption services center) which is a newly developed intervention that is usually co-sponsored/managed by the Ministry of Absorption and the local municipality to facilitate the integration of recent immigrants. The number of recent immigrants is small and concentrated in a few locations. Accordingly, the Moked Klitah also addresses the ongoing needs of the veteran Ethiopian Israeli population.

The fully functioning Moked Klitah works with adults, families, youth and seniors with needs concerning empowerment, informal education, employment and training, information, and the connection to and between institutions and organizations.

The implementation of this ambitious agenda is constrained by the resources available to the Moked Klitah and is limited to the staff positions and extremely modest program budgets. These resources do not provide a sufficient base to coalesce and coordinate the activities of governmental and non-governmental organizations. This reality places great emphasis on the ability and the personal skills of the professionals in the Moked Klitah to negotiate the politics to effectively develop coalitions to address the needs.

In this sense the Ethiopian aliyah is different and it is not just money. The prior absorption processes occurred in far more challenging economic times for the country with limited resources but they were buoyed by the idea that this was of national importance and priority. There is not the same sense of urgency today.

The Ministry of Finance argues that the government has made the aliyah and integration of Ethiopian Jews a priority. The investment is calculated to be \$100,000 for each oleh in the form of services and financial assistance. The recent cross-ministerial initiative to produce a new “national plan” reflects the failure to achieve a return on this investment.

## **Youth Center**

To address the needs of youth, there are many governmental and non-governmental programs and services both general and specific to Ethiopian Israeli youth. However, the community as well as the municipality have limited control or influence on the priority for the use of these resources. This lack of control or influence has significant implications for priority setting as well as the focus and integration of these interventions.

## Context

The sponsorship and/or funding of youth centers is a mix of municipalities or partnerships between municipalities, public and private foundations and

non-governmental organizations such as the Community Center Corporation and the Ethiopian National Project. The management of youth centers and the programs varies from the local municipality, Community Center Corporation, FIDEL, Kidum Noar and local amutot.

There is an absence of facilities and programs located in or near to the neighborhoods and the program resources are insufficient to address the wider in-need population. Ethiopian Israeli youth see themselves being unwelcome in community centers and most are uncomfortable in these social situations. Reluctant to enter the larger community youth settings and activities, they may also lack the funds necessary to pay the membership or activity fees. In response, Ethiopian Israeli-specific youth centers have been developed.

***“Integration may work best but only if it is mutually defined and respectful so that it will be attractive to the immigrants.”***

This response presents a double-edged sword since participation is a necessary part of successful integration. Segregated facilities or group-specific programs may well delay accomplishing the goal. Integration may work best but only if it is mutually defined and respectful so that it will be attractive to the immigrants. A push-pull phenomenon can be identified as the immigrants seek to integrate into an Israeli society that is prepared to accept them but on its terms. Moreover, defacto segregated housing and/or neighborhoods create conditions and situations that result in an imposed and artificial integration.

### Operation

The funding for youth centers is usually specific to youth in grades 7 through 12, support for staff and a range of programs. There are different combinations of funding, managing and operating “partners”. Foundations and donors may provide capital and/or operating funds, municipalities and community centers provide facilities and basic support, and the ENP provides program-specific funding operated by several NGO providers as well as local amutot.

With the variety of combinations and different approaches to operating policy it is hard to discern a pattern of operation and services. The ENP policy of no program fees for its Ethiopian Israeli-specific programs has varying implications. For example, some programs charge on a sliding scale or charge a symbolic fee. In one community center with a mixed group of youngsters, the introduction of an Ethiopian-Israeli specific initiative created conflict. In the resulting compromise, the activities were developed for the Ethiopian-Israeli community but open to the community with a symbolic fee. The youth struggle with the perception of “miskenim” or being under-privileged which is reinforced by Ethiopian-only programs.

### Focus

Lack of facilities, modest program resources and targeted intervention approaches have led to mixed results. There are frequently no activities other than the modest program offered through the youth/community center. Many programs seek out participants rather than work with the target group to develop and tailor programs, limiting their impact.

Too often, the programs are focused on the same children or category of youth. This avoids dealing with important problems. For example, the 18+ age group presents a challenge with few if any interventions. Many youth are not entering the IDF due to police records and there is a need for programs to complete education. In some locations, where programs are limited to youth in seventh to twelfth grade, there are scarce opportunities to work with children in first to sixth grade who need afternoon enrichment. There are instances of multiple overlapping interventions in which some families are over-cared for and others receive nothing.

Youth need to be engaged on a personal level. There are many activity groups or clubs but the need is to address individual, social needs. Street workers would be an asset along with creating a warm and secure, attractive setting, to become a center for mutual aid.

## Facilities

As there is no real physical “hang-out” in many cities, the youth center becomes the location for all age groups. Older or young adults also use the centers and there may be one center for two neighborhoods. Location, size and multiple usage of the facility all have an impact on the atmosphere of the center evident in the following examples. This reality also serves to reinforce the significance of trained professional staff.

The tone of a youth center is determined by one or more groups and factors. In one center the tone was set by a large group of twelfth grade students participating in a program, which posed a challenge to the comfort of other age groups. In another, the center was located at the edge of the city. There were problems with drop-outs and Bedouin involvement with the girls.

A new more central location finds youth still somewhat afraid but coming. In a centrally located center, close proximity to school and synagogues has resulted in less vandalism and “hanging out”. For a neighborhood without a youth center, there is a bomb shelter that functions as a scouts meeting place which the youth are able to use if they join the scouts.

The majority of youth centers particularly those in the neighborhoods are small, in poor condition and shared with other programs. The staff work to decorate and maximize the use of the space, but the nature and interests of youth poses a challenge to administering multiple, simultaneous programs. Larger, better-equipped and maintained youth centers are in community centers that are usually not close to the community.

Other things contribute to the challenges of delivering effective programming. One neighborhood youth center is a good example of the general deficits that were found. The lack of landscaping and external building maintenance gives the impression that the communal bomb shelter which serves as the youth center is a derelict building. The adjacent asphalt basketball court is in a similar state of disrepair. Entering through a small ante-chamber with washrooms, there is one large room with chairs scattered about, with a sofa and tables. The interior walls are discolored from use and sparsely covered with posters.

Youth of various ages wander in-and-out to the blare of rap music and the banter between individuals and small groups over the din. In the midst of this chaos, the group leaders interact with the youth, hold a meeting or run an activity. Conversations are constantly interrupted by the door to the large room opening, the curious venturing in to see what is happening.

The small size and poor physical condition limit effectiveness. However, the staff persevere and those youth who can be reached and choose to come benefit from the centers.

### Staffing and Program

The staff plays many roles that include coordinator, sports and group leaders, treatment, and outreach. In addition to the professional staff, there are young women from the IDF and national service. In some cases, the staff is responsible for all youth activity in the city in addition to their focus on Ethiopian Israeli youth.

The center directors are generally Ethiopian Israeli and the education directors with exceptions are non-Ethiopian Israelis. The staff members are professionals with academic degrees who work on short-term or annual contracts. Among the implications for contract work and new interventions outside of an organizations core staff infrastructure is the absence of a professional development and career framework. The work conditions are poor and the time and human demands are great but dedication and commitment are high as evidenced in their willingness to work in the difficult conditions.

Here are examples from among the youth centers reflecting on program participation, range and reach:

- 60 to 80 daily youth visitors.
- Offering chugim for 50 youth age 15 to 18 and another group age 18 to 22.
- 150 families with 50-60 regular youth participants, seventh to twelfth grade; the younger children come in earlier.
- 140 youth, approximately 50/50 boys and girls, seventh to twelfth grade, sixth grade allowed for the first 2 hours.
- 75 kids in program from among 350 who need assistance.

As noted, the physical capacity of the facilities, the limited professional staffing and modest program resources present great challenges to addressing social/identity needs and the variety of interests of the youth and children.

Despite the lack or control of resources, the youth centers offer a variety of activities:

- Junior Achievement.
- After school program for drop-outs.
- Rapping group with Jeremy.
- Computers, photography, IDF prep., Weizmann Inst. Science group.
- Sports, chugim, Amharic, outdoor activity, civics, computers.
- Outreach two days a week in the neighborhood.
- Summer employment with a payment of NIS 200.
- Youth leadership groups and councils.

The football league in one community has become a positive factor in the lives of the children, families and schools. There are 12 volunteer coaches and the program is supported by the community center, municipality and Ministry of Education. 100+ children in seven groups meet twice weekly for practice and hold a bi-monthly tournament which parents attend. Cooperation with the schools with interaction between program, parents and school, provides leverage on participants to remain in school. The program director (one-half time position) who initiated the league would like to expand the program to include enrichment.

***“The football league in one community has become a positive factor in the lives of the children, families and schools.”***

The practice is an impressive scene as the youngsters and their coaches take over the cement block sports field in an open area adjacent to a neighborhood school. Each team practices in their section of the larger sports field, conducting drills in constant motion. The youth respond positively to the coaches and quickly carry out the drills. The enjoyment is obvious throughout the practice even when they begin to tire of the routine and push for a game.

## Families, Community and Problematic Youth

The programs offered by the youth centers are similar from community-to-community. The activities occupy the youth in a supervised environment and allow for relationships to develop with the staff. The challenge is to find the time to address individual needs in the midst of operating and administering the centers and programs, and the chaotic atmosphere of a youth center. It is noteworthy that parents visit the centers to check on their children as well as participate in parents and women's groups. The impact of the youth centers and involvement of parents can be seen in these reports from the field:

- Despite significant problems with youth the introduction of the youth center has improved the situation.
- Situation has deteriorated as there are no activities for kids and the MATNAS is not working due to lack of resources.
- Strong neighborhood committee with neighborhood watch in conjunction with police.
- Vandalism and violence has dropped dramatically.
- Not an Ethiopian Israeli-friendly community; example the lack of interaction between youth. Created youth workshop to provide tools for the youth to cope with their situation.

The issues of youth violence, substance abuse and crime<sup>17</sup> are present with prevalence and gravity varying by community. Kiryat Moshe, Rehovot has become infamous from successive incidents of youth violence both individual and gang related. The ability of the community to organize and coalesce with the police is reported to be a factor in addressing these issues in general and specific to youth, although it appears with mixed results.

The minority of youth who drop out<sup>18</sup> of the educational, employment and military frameworks pose an immediate challenge when they remain or

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<sup>17</sup> Ethiopian Israeli minors (under 18) with police files; 139 in 1996, 470 in 2000 and 900 in 2005. Compared to all Israeli youth, increase of 197% for same period and to Russian youth increase of 254%, to increase of 647% for Ethiopian Israeli youth. Source Myers-JDC-Brookdale using Ministry of Police sources, March 26, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Estimates for 2002, 22% of Ethiopians aged 17 were not in schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, to about 8% of all 17 year-old Jewish youth; 2003, 16% for Ethiopians as compared to 7% for all Jews; 2004, 12% for 17 year-old Ethiopians and 4% for all 17 year-old Jewish youth; 2005, 12% for 17 year-old Ethiopians and 5% for all 17 year-old. Abrham Wolde-Tsadick, Ethiopian Integration – Education and Employment: New Findings in Brief, May 13, 2007, Meyers- Brookdale Institute, page 2.

return to the community and have nothing productive to occupy or sustain them. These youth in turn impact those on the margin (particularly those characterized as “hidden dropouts”) and the atmosphere in the community. There do not appear to be any successful interventions.

In summary, the financial constraints of the main program interventions such as the ENP preclude a comprehensive approach to youth. Moreover, the dividing of the age groups among the different governmental (ministries and municipalities) and non-governmental (ENP, PACT, PACT+, NACOEJ, Sacta, Keren Karev) organizations services and programs (Yedid, Branco Weiss, Matnasim, Amutot) and the inability to coalesce and integrate or even coordinate their efforts present a major obstacle to a strategic and comprehensive approach.

A minority of Ethiopian Israeli youth will succeed in achieving a university-level matriculation, completion of military service, higher education and a career with substantial income. The majority, however, will struggle to attain the economic and emotional resources for personal achievement that serve as the basis for successful families.

***In addition to the individual and communal angst, the inability to integrate Ethiopian Israelis will impact the economy, social fabric and image of Israel through the creation of a substantial underclass.***

### **Senior Center and Programs**

Among the services and programs reported to be available for seniors include centers specific to the elderly, Bayit Cham (warm house), senior programs and clubs within community centers and a senior garden. However, the paucity of such examples in all but a few communities reflects there was little emphasis on the concerns and needs of the elderly.

With the priority and resources focused on youth and families, the elderly rely on existing public services. However, the lack of proximity to the services and programs, and the culture and language barriers largely precludes their participation in these municipal services.

Without neighborhood-based programs, that are free and with transportation, as well as some language facility, the elderly are left alone. There has been

some development of cottage industries and/or cooperatives for production and sale of traditional handcrafts, providing an opportunity primarily for women to become productive and generate income.

Not treating the elderly with dignity and honor also impacts the youth as they see the denigration of the elderly who are an important element of their Ethiopian cultural tradition.

### **Legal Aid**

With the exception of Tebeka's (Center for Legal Aid and Advocacy) four community centers (Tel Aviv, Rehovot, Netanya and Haifa), there is limited formal legal aid accessible to Ethiopian Israelis. Moreover, during the period in which large numbers of olim were purchasing apartments, there was little or no legal assistance available to them. For many, this lack of assistance resulted in poorly written or even fraudulent agreements, questionable ownership and loss of limited funds.

Haifa's Ethiopian Israeli community provides a unique example which through the Boston-Haifa partnership has a full-time legal aid service with a lawyer from the community. In other communities, legal aid was found to be available on a voluntary basis and in a community center-funded legal advocate for employment issues.

A non-governmental organization, Tebeka's reach continues to be limited to its ability to raise annual operating funds. So the pervasive property, employment and civil rights issues remain largely unattended.

## **Young Communities (Garin)**

A concept and program for which there is precedent and nostalgia, the young community is being slowly introduced into Ethiopian Israeli communities. There are 20 young communities that have been established around the country with their leadership gathering for monthly meetings. Among the few specific to Ethiopian Israelis, the initial and most advanced community setting is in Kiryat Gat.

A kind of a “garin” (seed), the Kiryat Gat group seeks to build community in the context of successful young people leaving the community due to lack of opportunity. As expressed by the community’s spiritual and organizational leader, “We came back to our parents’ place”. In two years of activity, there are 13 families, 27 members and 29 children. The group is located in a neighborhood in which more than 1,300 Ethiopian Israelis are living.

The Oran Foundation is the main support for this “young” community. Among the initiatives are neighborhood enhancement together with JDC and a project with National Service women to help youth with their studies and self-esteem. The group is seeking to develop partnerships with different organizations operating in the neighborhood.

Among the goals is the creation of a Holistic Center which responds to all community needs (from within). There are four focuses of activity: National Service Women, Volunteers, Community Center, and Spiritual Center. The two guiding principles are work with others and in what is not being addressed by others.

## **Funders and Providers; Relationship, Interaction and the Implications**

Adding to the resources as well as the challenge to addressing the needs of the Ethiopian Israeli community are the many “partners” to the endeavor.

### Funders

- Government of Israel
- Sacta Rashi
- Keren Moriah
- Oran Foundation
- Azrieli Foundation

- Weinberg Foundation
- Dutch funding sources
- Keren Karev
- Jewish Agency for Israel
- Joint Distribution Committee
- UJC and individual federations

New York	Miami	Chicago	Cleveland
Toronto	Washington	Los Angeles	Palm Beach
Detroit	Minneapolis	Philadelphia	Atlanta
Cincinnati	Hartford	Pittsburgh	Jacksonville
Palm Springs	Indianapolis	St. Louis	

The funding of programs and services to the Ethiopian Israeli community is complex. High among the reasons for this complexity are the funding organizations, the sources of their funds and to whom they are accountable.

- Government: annual tax revenues and accountable to the public.
- Foundations: capital or annual investment income from private, existing body of funds and accountable to the foundation directors (generally family-based).
- JDC and JAFI: share annual allocation from UJC/federations and accountable to their directors who also represent the federations (also Keren Hayesod for JAFI).
- Federations: annual campaign revenues from individual donors and accountable to their directors who represent the donors.

Some funders have also become providers or choose to work exclusively through one approach and/or with one provider. Becoming an advocate for a specific approach, program or service often creates obstacles to cooperation, coordination and integration.

The role and relationship of government with foundations and federations and the JDC and JAFI, is another complicating factor. The role of government has been to establish and act on public policies such as the education and housing/mortgage policy for new immigrants. Periodically, the government determines a “crisis situation” and the need for a call to action, which was the impetus for the Ethiopian National Project and most

recently “The National Program for Improving the Ethiopian Immigrant Integration in the Israeli Society”.<sup>19</sup>

Coalition government and the politically-driven allocation of ministries militate against comprehensive approaches to the challenges posed by Ethiopian Israelis. The inability to work constructively in the normal course of business has produced special inter-ministerial committees and the periodic introduction of these cross-ministry national programs. However, as seen in the example of the ENP established in 2002, the initiative did not receive any government funding until 2006 and the financial provision was far below the original commitment. The National Plan was released in June 2007 and has yet to receive funding.

Municipal governments have an even greater challenge as they have limited revenue generating capacity and few discretionary funds. Without the ministries, institutional and private donors, municipalities must rely upon their chronically under-resourced service and program infrastructure. With limited resources with which to partner or leverage, municipalities are hard-pressed to say no or to insist on priorities and the coordination and integration of new interventions.

Foundations generally have a narrow focus and priority for the use of their funds. Moreover, as with the federations, a critical element to their entry is matching funds. Foundations are short-term program and/or project funders, reticent to commit to extended multi-year funding.

Federations operate within two funding frameworks, through UJC or national collective responsibility and on an individual federation or elective basis. The funds are largely generated from the annual campaign, periodic special campaigns and to a lesser extent from donor designated contributions. In each case, the challenge is extended multi-year funding.

***“There are important non-financial influences that federations bring to the community.”***

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<sup>19</sup> “Third of Israelis so poor they must forgo some essential foods”, Ha’aretz, March 31, 2008 reflects the problem of having too many (500) helping agencies that are not coordinated preventing comprehensive and fair coverage.

The extent to which the individual federations/communities are actively involved in the initiative and Ethiopian Israeli community is reported to be critical to the continuity of funding. There are important non-financial influences that federations bring to the community. This influence opens the opportunity for the local community to become more involved. This enables the community to achieve a higher level of activity and organization, and to have a substantive not a supplicant relationship with municipal and national government offices. There needs to be an engagement and meaningful role for the local Ethiopian Israeli community in defining its needs and priorities.

The plethora of funding sources driven by unique institutional imperatives makes it difficult to achieve a common agenda. With this number of sources, one would anticipate a coalescing of funders specific to the Ethiopian Israeli community. Two prominent examples are JDC (PACT, PACT+, Ofek, Atzmaut and more) and ENP-SPACE. However, they are focused on different age groups and interventions, with a history of difficult relationship and communication. If there is a will it should be possible to develop a comprehensive plan that respects the rights of each organization and does not subject them to the whim of one or more powerful funder.

### Providers

Here is an inventory of many of the funders and providers delivering program and service interventions:

- ENP—ORT, Almaya, Yedid, Tzionei Yisrael, Shatil, Achareit Haderech, FIDEL, Branco Weiss, Adler Institute, Maxam.
- JDC— PACT and PACT+; Ofek L'Bagrut; Atzmaut; Eshet Chayil
- Jewish Agency for Israel—Youth Futures, Atidim, absorption centers, youth villages.
- WIZO.
- Atidim—advancement of exceptional students.
- Welfare Dept.—mediators and community workers.
- Shatil—leadership development.
- Keren Karev—educational mediators.
- Weisel Foundation—Beit Zipporah
- Youth Advancement (Kidum Noar)
- ELEM—youth-at-risk

- Sacta Rashi—Tafnit—after-school programs.
- Almaya (Beersheva-based amutah)—variety of community services.
- NACOEJ—after-school programs.
- Tebeka—legal aid.
- Young Communities (Oran).

### Interaction and Implications

What is unfortunate is that there is no integration and coordination around a master plan. This results in a duplication of services in some communities and no services in others.

***The relative abundance of programs, moreover, hides the inability of the providers to build a comprehensive and integrated approach, or a collaborative one between governmental and non-governmental sectors.***

The governmental sector is active through the ministries of education, housing, absorption, labor and welfare, and the departments of the respective municipalities. The housing ministry is struggling to address the challenges of Ethiopian Israeli neighborhoods that are found in low socio-economic communities in the center and periphery of the country that were created by the inability to implement the government's original housing policy and the subsequent need for renewal.

Education policy has continued to send Ethiopian Israeli children to the public religious school system which is chronically under-resourced and ill-prepared for the task. The immigrant absorption services and program are delivered through under-resourced Mokdei Klitah.

Government financial assistance is provided to a disproportionate number of Ethiopian Israelis, together with the Ministry of Welfare's efforts to address family violence, substance abuse and youth-at-risk. Labor policies are ineffective in addressing unemployment and under-employment which are exacerbated by illiteracy in both Amharic and Hebrew in older age cohorts.

The ministries have been unable to act in a comprehensive, integrated manner, or in collaboration with municipalities. The municipalities are struggling with inadequate public services and modest discretionary funds to address special needs. The lack of a public or publicly-funded pre-school system and the under-funding of the Community Center Corporation result in weak and unreliable public infrastructure for children, youth and families.

The recent initiative of the PMO produced a new National Plan that is essentially re-visiting existing policies and interventions with little promise for transforming the situation or the funding to introduce this limited initiative.

Non-governmental sector providers have their own institutional imperative and orientation which creates a competitive, proprietary atmosphere and set of relationships. These obstacles to collaboration and cooperation among non-governmental and between non-governmental and governmental have resulted in gaps in programs and service and the continuity of care. Priority setting and intervention is determined by the individual funders and their providers, not by or with the local community, its subsequent oversight or evaluation.

Reports from the communities describe many programs without any relationship between them or integration. One example is a family with four children each in a different program framework. Many groups and official bodies come into the community, operate their programs and leave with limited impact or increase in community capacity.

In another example, the understanding was that the local community's priorities for services would be critical. In the end, the NGO decided to go only with youth as the priority and the community activists were disappointed. The decisions and budgets were made at the national level.

There is a shared sense that the communities' priorities are ignored and that it is a waste of time to plan as their work is ignored. The community has no input into the selection of programs and providers. The top down approach is pervasive and high among the reasons why community members are apathetic.

A bottom-up, community building approach is needed to respond to the failure of policy, a failure of nerve, lack of resources, and the underlying prejudice that is subverting positive efforts and the ability of Ethiopian Israelis.

## Governance

Dealing with national and local governance features prominently among the challenges facing the Ethiopian Israeli community. These relationships shape the community's opportunity and ability to govern itself and the entities formed to address the needs and to represent the community in governmental and non-governmental settings. This chapter explores community governance in the life and work of Ethiopian Israelis and its implications for addressing the community's needs.

The staffing of national and local governmental bodies designed to help the Ethiopian Israeli community is generally composed of ministry and municipal professionals and Ethiopian Israeli community professionals. The two groups have different agendas focused on their respective institutional and/or communal priorities. For ministries and municipalities, the institutional priorities are framed by annual budgets and longer term policy and programs. The Ethiopian Israeli community representation focuses on their local community's priorities and in some cases their own institutional priorities, as well as bringing a sense of urgency. The question is whether and where do these priorities fit together or where do they clash, and who has the power to decide?

The traditional way of planning is that resources determine and influence priorities on a descending scale from national, municipal to community. Two successive national initiatives to address the needs of the Ethiopian Israeli community serve to illustrate. The initial national plan, the Ethiopian National Project (ENP), and its governance are traditional. The ENP has five governing elements; these include representatives from the Ethiopian Community, government of Israel, Joint Distribution Committee, Jewish Agency for Israel and United Jewish Communities. The one volunteer leader on the ENP Board was the co-chair from the North American community.

The first major problem was to secure senior professional leadership from someone within and acceptable to the Ethiopian Israeli community. It was necessary to go before the Supreme Court. With its governance dominated by the government and major non-government organizations, the ENP was starved of funding. Government funding was forthcoming after 4 years and

along with UJC or North American federation funding was dramatically below the promised amount.

In the most recent government initiative, the Director General of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) convened a group of senior professionals from the different ministries. There was input from the Ethiopian Israeli community and non-governmental organizations. The resulting "national plan" reflected the short-term planning window and the influence from the ministries on the PMO's planning staff. The plan serves as another example of government's "top-down" and centralized approach. A five year plan, the management and implementation are through the ministries.

The components of the governing structure are presented separately:

**Steering Committees** (representation, coordination, priority setting)

Among the shared and frequently problematic elements of the majority of steering committees are the following:

- Mayor or deputy Mayor as chair.
- Membership composed primarily of municipal professionals with representation (usually a small minority of the committee) from the local Ethiopian Israeli community.
- Meet three times a year.
- Modest input into priorities and decision-making.
- Primary function is reporting.

While each community has elements specific to it, in general mayors are pre-occupied with larger municipal issues and unable to dedicate attention and priority to the Ethiopian Israeli community and the steering committee. In many cases, the steering committees meet irregularly, are not active or still in formation. The Ethiopian Israeli local community leadership selection process for the few seats on the steering committee frequently results in negative competition and bitterness within the community. Too often, this results in steering committees being form without substance.

This was not always the case. In a few cities there was significant, proportionately elected representation from neighborhood leadership that reflected the community's perspective on needs and priorities.

The expectations for steering committees are that they will provide the opportunity for input into determining needs and intervention priorities. This frequently does not happen, so there is disappointment, frustration and apathy. For communities with local non-profit organizations, amutot, the expectation of funding for their own initiatives is seldom realized.

The modest discretionary funding available is controlled by Israeli and Diaspora foundations and non-governmental organizations with which they deliver or buy programs according to their sense of priority and perception of efficacy. In principle, the steering committees seek to prioritize and coordinate intervention for the many funders and providers operating in the field. Due to the lack of municipal financial leverage and priority, the extent to which the steering committees are able to engage or to coalesce the independent foundations and NGOs, as well as ministries is highly limited. The resulting interventions are generally not comprehensive, integrated, or collaborative nor do they reflect local Ethiopian Israeli priorities.

The tradition and assumption is that the Mayor or deputy Mayor must be the chair in order to have an impact. For the most part, however, the data shows that the Mayors and steering committees are ineffective.

With the Mayor or deputy Mayor as Steering Committee chair, the political reality of the community effort becomes apparent. In every city, the Ethiopian Israeli community is a relatively small and politically insignificant constituency. In some of the cities with larger or proportionately larger populations of Ethiopian Israelis, there are now one or more municipal council members from the community. However, in the coalitions that make up the municipal council governments, Ethiopian Israeli counselors and/or the community are not significant. Combined with living in neighborhoods where the neighbors have similarly high needs, the priorities for services to the Ethiopian Israeli community do not become those of the municipality.

## Leadership

The Ethiopian Israeli community leadership and amutot in most communities have limited influence and involvement.

There have been many leadership courses offered on the local level which on a cumulative basis have reached hundreds of Ethiopian Israelis. The graduates of these leadership programs have expectations for joining steering committees and/or municipal committees specific to community services.

The newly trained young leaders or elders from the community seek oversight on the resources and community interventions. The activists generally lack planning and preparation for their participation. When there is a direction and framework for leadership course graduates, there are far more volunteers than there are positions in which to place them. The financial and professional resources needed to sustain their involvement within the community are also lacking. Continuity of support, development of community participation opportunities and succession training and planning are necessary for emerging leadership.

There is a traditional top-down approach of government and non-governmental organizations. Frequently, one member of the Ethiopian Israeli community becomes the representative or voice of the community to the municipality and may even have been appointed by the Mayor. The municipality relies on this individual for consultation and to manage its relationship with the community. Additional impediments include the following:

- Meetings are scheduled during the day when it is difficult to attend except for those who are unemployed or elderly.
- In-fighting between groups; for example, men versus women, with men dominating the leadership and women wanting to become part of community representatives.
- The 30+ age group may wish to be involved in leadership but economic survival takes priority.
- The community representatives see themselves as puppets without any responsibility. They do not trust the process.

***What is needed is to select a cadre of top leadership, mentor them, guarantee that they are appointed to significant positions, and provide support for them until they are experienced enough to fly on their own.***

## **Amutot**

Among the reasons offered for the difficulties experienced in recruiting leadership and the founding of local amutot is that there was no tradition of mutual or communal aid in their agrarian life style in Ethiopia. Despite a few success stories, the challenge in finding the financial resources to support these amutot remains daunting.

The majority of the local amutot are focused on religious or sports activities. The focus of the religious amutot is largely on obtaining or building a facility to house a congregation. The source of significant frustration, the lack of suitable space to hold religious services is an issue that has led to the creation of a number of amutot. On a more positive note, sports amutot are found in a number of communities. Despite the lack of movement in other areas, Kiryat Malachi and Kiryat Moshe, Rehovot are two examples of successful sports amutot. These successes should become the platform for additional community-based initiatives.

Beersheva and Hadera have relatively strong amutot that represent the community and deliver services. In case of Beersheva, Almaya, has gone beyond the local community to deliver programs in other communities. It is not clear why these communities are positive exceptions; size, exceptional leadership, the responsiveness of the larger local community. What they do have in common are that they are large and veteran Ethiopian Israeli communities.

On the national level, there are amutot that have achieved success in their advocacy and service to the Ethiopian Israeli community; IAEJ (advocacy), Tebeka (legal) and FIDEL (education)<sup>20</sup>. Similar to the local amutot, these prominent and important organizations struggle to secure annual funding as they compete for the scarce resources available to address the needs of the

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<sup>20</sup> IAEJ: Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews; Tebeka: Advocacy for Equality and Justice for Ethiopian Israelis, FIDEL: Association for Education and Social Integration for Ethiopian Jews

community. Their success may be attributed to the single-minded professional leadership of their founders and their unique, defined roles and services, as well as being national in scope.

***The interactive and combined efforts of local and national amutot will be an important factor if there is to be successful integration of the Ethiopian Israeli community.***

The strengthening of local communal organizations across the country will benefit the national organizations, enhance the ability to coalesce with politically influential groups in the country, and ultimately to represent the community with government.

## Summary and Conclusions

The time has come to challenge ourselves and the conventional wisdom of immigrant integration. We struggle for answers but refuse to look to the Ethiopian Israeli community to find them. We must be prepared to ask and to listen. If not, our efforts will continue to fail.

Following the conventional wisdom that the first generation of immigrants will struggle but the Israeli-raised or born generation will succeed is a recipe for failed integration. Portraying these families as hapless and hopeless and responsible for their condition reflects an abandoning of the philosophy of in-gathering. The lack of a sense of urgency and the paucity of language and job training programs for this immigrant generation of Ethiopian Israelis demonstrates this prevailing view. Unemployment for a large portion of the first generation is a major element delaying the full entrance of the Ethiopian Israeli community into Israeli society.

We need to take account of the Ethiopian Israeli family in the context of Israeli society to understand the way that Israeli institutions and professionals relate to them. Our institutions and professionals are not shared social-cultural concepts. Ethiopian Israeli professionals are, therefore, essential to inform and mediate between the cultures.

To gain access to employment opportunities, there must be a requirement for open processes combined with training for test taking and interview skills, as well as offering internships in existing businesses. For basic education, oral presentation and debate should become a part of the school curriculum as well as the reintroduction of vocational training as a meaningful option. For those who are not in school, courses in social skills and job training and preparation, as well as increasing the availability of local employment specialists and enabling resources are critical.

Most initiatives are focused on children and youth. On an individual program basis, children benefit from the attention and the content. Children live in families. You cannot feed the children and let the parents starve. The patchwork of programs and services must be replaced with a coordinated and integrated approach to close the gaps and eliminate duplication for an efficient and effective use of resources. Introducing external partners with

resources and non-institutional focus will enable governmental and nongovernmental organizations to coalesce and collaborate in formulating comprehensive, capacity-building and long-term solutions.

The complexity of the obstacles to the successful education of Ethiopian Israeli children is daunting. Relating to multiple institutions and professionals is confusing. A simplified approach is needed. It requires learning from the bottom-up. Through collaboration and the integration of resources and planning, a comprehensive and culturally-aware set of interventions can be designed.

Our goal must be for a majority of Ethiopian Israeli youth to succeed in achieving a full, if not university-level, matriculation, completion of military service, higher and vocational education leading to a career with a reasonable income. With this achievement, the majority should succeed in attaining the economic and emotional security to serve as the basis for successful families. Ethiopian Israelis will then have a positive impact on the economy, social fabric and image of Israel.

The combined efforts of local and national amutot will be important for the successful integration of the Ethiopian Israeli community. The strengthening of local communal organizations across the country will benefit the national organizations, enhancing their ability to coalesce with politically influential groups in the country, and so that the community relates to the government in an effective and responsible way.

National and local initiatives must work in conjunction with local leadership and amutot according to their priorities to facilitate the continuity of tradition and practice, which will foster identification and connection to Judaism and the country. This also is what will provide the emotional and socio-cultural framework for successful individual, family and community development.

We can no longer hide behind the relative abundance of programs, which masks our inability to build a comprehensive, integrated and collaborative model. A bottom-up, community building approach is needed to respond to the failure of policy and nerve, ineffective use of resources, and underlying prejudice that is subverting positive efforts and the ability of Ethiopian Israelis.

## Recommendations

### Customs and Tradition

1. Work with the religious and culturally focused amutot and/or local leadership within the Ethiopian Israeli community
2. Enable continuity of customs and traditions through creation of formal frameworks to support kessim and integration with contemporary practices
3. Fund Ethiopian Israeli rabbinic positions and make space available for new congregations and community events
4. Integrate the shmagaleh into the service delivery options of public institutions

### Coordination and Planning

5. Community-based, coordinated and integrated approach for a less complex and comprehensive service and program framework
6. Build capacity of local leadership, local and national amutot
7. Program and service interventions with and on a community-by-community basis; when possible not Ethiopian Israeli-specific
8. Community-specific consortia; Ethiopian Israelis, municipality, NGOs, business/philanthropic, Diaspora

### Education and Employment

9. Focus on adult literacy
10. Market survey-based employment training, preparation and placement to include training for test taking and interview skills
11. Local employment specialists with enabling resources
12. Internships in existing businesses
13. Open hiring processes
14. Renew vocational education
15. Mediators for schools, public services and programs

### Family and Youth

16. Substantive improvement of the conditions of existing housing and neighborhoods
17. Investment of time to explain why, the importance, and provide the opportunity for the parents to speak
18. Engage youth on a personal level to address individual, social needs

**Lexicon**

- Aliyah—Jewish immigration to Israel
- Almaya—Beersheva-based Ethiopian Israeli community organization
- Amutah—non-profit organization
- Atidim—non-governmental organization focused on higher education
- Bagrut—high school matriculation examination
- Beit Zipporah—Weisel Foundation-sponsored afternoon school supplementary program
- Branco Weiss—non-governmental organization
- Chugim—clubs or activity groups
- Elem—non-governmental organization focused on youth
- ENP—Ethiopian National Project
- Felash Mura—Ethiopian Jews whose ancestors converted to Christianity
- FIDEL—non-governmental organization focused on education for Ethiopian Israelis
- Ge'ez—Ethiopian Jewish liturgical language
- JAFI—Jewish Agency for Israel
- JDC—American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
- Keren Karev—Charles R. Bronfman Foundation
- Kes (Kessim)—religious leader
- MATNAS—Community Center Corporation
- Maxam—Hadera-based Ethiopian Israeli community organization
- Moked Klitah—local absorption services center
- NACOEJ—National Conference on Ethiopian Jewry; advocacy and program
- Olim—Jewish immigrant
- PACT (Parents and Children Together)—JDC-sponsored early childhood program.
- Rakazim—coordinators

Sacta Rashi—French-based family foundation

Shatil—non-governmental organization; advocacy and programs

Shmagaleh (Shmagaluch)—community elder

Sigd—Ethiopian Jewish holiday

SPACE (School priorities and Community Empowerment)—ENP-sponsored

Tigbor—high school age-focused education program

UJC—United Jewish Communities