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Domestic Challenges: Lessons from Israel

**Part II: Integrating Israel's
Ethiopian immigrants: shared Israeli and
UK approaches to community cohesion**



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Introduction

Britain and Israel are both countries with high levels of immigration. They have relied on large numbers of new arrivals for the past half century to support their economies and fill job vacancies. The Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon David Miliband MP, described Britain last year as a global hub, financially, culturally and politically.ⁱ As an open society with a free market economy Britain has long attracted migrant labour of all skill levels to its shores from across the world. Israel, almost entirely comprised of immigrants, has also attracted migrants with the prospects that its economy offers. It has proactively sought high levels of sustained immigration as a state-building exercise, promoting its high standard of living to encourage Jewish people throughout the world to immigrate to Israel.

Both the UK and Israel continue to face the practical implications of providing a home to people of diverse cultures and varying levels of education and training. As the UK and Israel are likely to remain countries of immigration for the foreseeable future, there is value in sharing their experiences. This paper will provide an overview of the policies that Israel has enacted to integrate immigrants from across the world into their society, with a particular focus on programmes aimed at the approximately 80,000 Ethiopian immigrants that have arrived in Israel since 1980. The UK suffers from higher unemployment amongst ethnic minorities compared to people of White British origin, partly as a result of intergenerational poverty caused by past failures to accommodate and integrate non-English speaking migrants into the UK economy. As a result the Labour Government has introduced policies to more greatly encourage learning of the English language, engender community cohesion and develop education methods tailored to the needs of children who do not use English as their first language. The example of Ethiopian migrants in Israel will therefore provide insights into shared policy approaches, reinforcing the current direction of UK policy.

A brief history of immigration to Israel

Israel is a country with a very high proportion of immigrants. Approximately half of all Israel's citizens today were born outside of the country. Between the first significant migrations in 1892 and Israel's creation in 1948, some 650,000 Jews immigrated to the British Mandate of Palestine. Over the next three years a further 687,000 Jewish people immigrated to Israel, largely from Germany, Austria, Italy, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Libya, Yemen and Iraq, more than doubling Israel's pre-independence Jewish population. The largest waves of immigration since then have been the approximately 1 million arrivals from North Africa and Asia in the 1950s, '60s and '70s and approximately 700,000 immigrants from the Former Soviet Union who arrived in Israel between 1989 and 1995.ⁱⁱ Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics estimates the country's population today at 7.3 million, with the total number of Jewish immigrants between 1919 and 2008 to the land now home to Israel to be over 3.3 million.

Unlike in the UK, where the issue of immigration has remained politically contentious throughout the post-war period, immigration is one of Israel's most sacred cultural values. Israel has a set of immigration laws known as the Law of Return specifically for people determined by the State to be of Jewish origin. This policy has its origins in Israel being established as the world's only Jewish state, created in the wake of the Holocaust to provide a home for Jewish people across the world fleeing persecution. Whilst the UK's current citizenship policies favour those with the highest skill levels, Israel's citizenship policies are, as a result of the Law of Return, focused upon applicants with Jewish roots, enabling people with varying levels of skills, education and wealth to immigrate there.

Whilst the Israeli Government's immigration policy is favourable towards Jews and their kin, individuals with no Jewish connection can also obtain Israeli citizenship through a naturalisation process. The Law of Citizenship is supervised by the Ministry of Interior and recognises three main

tracks for naturalisation: 1) a general route in which applicants with the intention of settling in Israel can gain citizenship, demonstrating a knowledge of Hebrew and renouncing their former citizenship; 2) the marriage route, which enables spouses of Israeli citizens to gain citizenship after four and half years of marriage and residence; and 3) a special route by which the Ministry of the Interior can grant citizenship on a personal basis to individuals in recognition of their important contribution to either the welfare of the country or the Jewish people. In addition, according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics' figures for 2008, there are just over 100,000 foreign workers living in Israel with work permits. Their main countries of origin are Thailand (30%), the Philippines (25%), Romania (12%) and China (10%).

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, its immigration absorption policies have shifted from being centred on direct government interventions to being market led. For those arriving in the 1950s, the Israeli government took an active hand in guiding integration. They built and established new towns and factories to provide homes and employment, mainly in the Galilee in the north of the country and the Negev region in the west.ⁱⁱⁱ It was with the arrival of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union that the government altered its policy direction away from direct control of absorption to utilising market forces. Under the current system, immigrants are provided with a sum of money, known as an "Absorption Basket", to cover their expenses for their first six months in Israel as well as for their housing expenses for a year.^{iv} Immigrants may spend this money as they see fit, accessing the market to cater for their needs. New immigrants are exempt from paying customs duties on newly purchased electrical appliances that they bring with them and do not pay tax on their first new car purchased in Israel. They are also entitled to attend free Hebrew language learning courses which include 500 learning hours over five months. Courses for adults are currently conducted in Government run centres throughout the country, known as ulpan, whilst children learn the language at school. The Government is, however, considering closing its ulpan in favour

of a voucher scheme, whereby the private sector would be funded by the state to provide Hebrew classes to new immigrants.^v

A brief history of immigration to the UK

The UK's immigration policies have also changed during the post-World War II period. Early policies of openness and direct government intervention have given way to the current market led policies, in which immigrants attracted to Britain for social and economic reasons, are encouraged to prove the value they bring to the country before gaining citizenship. The immediate period of openness after World War II was both economic and culturally motivated. Britain needed cheap and plentiful supplies of labour to aid its post-war economic recovery and it looked towards its former empire to perform this role. The British Nationality Act of 1948 granted all Commonwealth citizens free entry into Britain, with citizens of the West Indies and the Indian Subcontinent actively encouraged to immigrate and settle in the UK. London Transport, for example, opened recruitment offices in Barbados in 1956 and Trinidad and Jamaica in 1966. The scheme, known as Direct Recruitment, operated until 1970. The Home Office has estimated that the net intake of immigrants from January 1955 to June 1962 was around 472,000, approximately 63,000 per year, rising to 75,000 a year in the 1960s.^{vi} Unlike Israel, however, Britain has not historically provided additional benefits to immigrants, although this is now increasingly happening in the form of language courses for non-English speakers and Government funds to aid community cohesion.

The current period of relative openness has been encouraged by globalisation and the related increased movement of people throughout the world. Whilst Britain's ageing population means that the country needs migrants to fill employment vacancies, it also has an outward looking economy that relies on being able to attract highly skilled people and businesses to settle in the UK. An estimated 577,000 people arrived to live in the UK for at least a year in 2007

alone.^{vii} In the same year 124,855 people were granted settlement (indefinite leave to remain), 27 percent from Africa, 23 percent from the Indian sub-continent, 9 percent from the Middle East, 23 percent from the remainder of Asia, 8 percent from North and South America, 7 percent from Europe and 3 percent from Oceania (Islands of the Pacific Ocean, Australia and New Zealand).^{viii}

Israel's Ethiopian immigrants: a short history

Whilst Israel faces issues of high unemployment amongst particular groups of immigrants, in general it has enjoyed great success in achieving high employment rates amongst recent arrivals. Whilst the immigrants of the 1990s, predominantly from the Former Soviet Union, experienced high rates of worklessness during their first few years in the country, by 2006 they had lower average unemployment rates than Israel's citizens of pre-1990. In 2006, immigrants of 1990 and afterwards had an unemployment rate of 7.25 percent compared to 8.75 percent for those who gained Israeli citizenship prior to 1990.^{ix} Israel has, however, not been as successful in integrating a particular group of immigrants into its economy and society: the circa 80,000 Ethiopian immigrants that have arrived in the country since the early 1980s under the Law of Return. According to Bank of Israel's figures for 2006 almost half of the Ethiopian immigrants of working age were unemployed and the average income amongst those who did find a job was 50% less than the national average.^x To overcome high levels of unemployment and poverty amongst this group, a series of new pilot projects have been enacted. These new policies demonstrate a degree of similarity to those of the UK's Labour Government for overcoming the problems of intergenerational unemployment and poverty amongst new immigrant communities, which are explored later in the paper.

Like the UK, Israel faces challenges when it comes to accommodating and integrating people of different cultures into its society. It should not be assumed that those immigrants who arrive in Israel under the Law of Return are culturally

homogenous, nor that the country they are arriving in is culturally cohesive. 76 percent of Israel is Jewish and yet Israel's Jewish citizens originate from all across the world. The remaining 23 percent of the population is comprised of Arab Muslims, Christians, Druze and Samaritans. As an example of the diversity of those gaining Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return, almost a third of Israel's immigrants from the Former Soviet Union do not define themselves as Jewish.^{xi} In addition, the likelihood that new immigrants will be able to speak Hebrew, Israel's most commonly spoken language, is slimmer than the likelihood of immigrants to Britain being able to speak English. In order to demonstrate how the Israeli Government is addressing the problems of intergenerational poverty associated with poor immigrant integration, the following section will explore Israel's policies towards its Ethiopian immigrants, who have required a range of specific government policies to aid their integration into the economy.

Several years after the establishment of the State of Israel, emissaries of the Jewish Agency established contact with Beta Israel, a secluded Jewish community that was concentrated in a remote rural area in northern Ethiopia. Beta Israel members have kept Jewish traditions for centuries and researchers traced their origins to ancient Jewish tribes. In 1975, the Israeli Government decided to officially define Beta Israel as Jewish, eligible to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return. In the early 1980's, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin ordered Mossad to carry out a secret operation (Operation Moses) to bring Ethiopian Jews to Israel via Sudan. Operation Moses brought some 8,000 Beta Israel Jews to Israel until 1985 when the operation was terminated after details of it were leaked to the international press. On the 24 May 1991, in a successful one-day military operation (Operation Solomon), Israeli forces airlifted the remaining 15,000 Beta Israel from the Israeli Embassy compound in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Israel.

Waiting with the Beta Israel were some 3,000 other Ethiopians belonging to the Falash-Mura community whose ancestors converted from Judaism to Christianity between the 16th and

19th century. In 1992 a ministerial committee appointed by the Government of Yitzhak Rabin decided to allow family reunions of Ethiopian Jews whose Falash-Mura relatives remained in Ethiopia. The 3,000 Falash-Mura waiting in Ethiopia were gradually brought to Israel and were soon followed by further Falash-Mura wishing to immigrate. In total, some 80,000 immigrants from Ethiopia have arrived in Israel since 1980.^{xii} Most of the immigrants originated from rural areas in Ethiopia, arriving without any financial means and poorly equipped to cope with the challenges of modern life in Israel. Many lacked basic reading and writing skills and over 40 percent had a level of education equivalent to primary school standard or lower. Taking this into account, the Israeli authorities offered the Ethiopian immigrants public assistance far in excess of the assistance offered to other immigrant communities.

Israel's Ethiopian immigrants: policies of integration

On their arrival, the Beta Israel immigrants to Israel were only eligible for the "Absorption Basket," including Hebrew language lessons, at first. Their continuing integration into Israeli society, like all other immigrant groups, continues to be administered by the Government Ministry of Immigrant Absorption (MOIA) and the Jewish Agency. The MOIA is formally responsible for facilitating all immigrants' integration into Israeli society. It oversees most government assistance provided to new immigrants and initiates statutes, research and any other measures it finds suitable to perform this role. The Jewish Agency was established in 1929 and after Israel's establishment in 1948, became a partnership between the main Israeli political parties and Jewish communities all over the world.

It was understood by Rabin's Government that the newly arrived Ethiopian migrants would need greater assistance than the provision of the "Absorption Basket" and more MOIA and Jewish Agency attention than was afforded to other immigrants. Furthermore, previous immigrants arriving in Israel also received the help of Israel's

various Immigrant Associations. These associations are organised according to the immigrants' country of origin and manned mostly by volunteers who speak the immigrants' mother tongue. The first Ethiopian immigrants had no such social infrastructure. Today, however, Ethiopian Jews are represented by a number of bodies that seek to provide them with support and aid their integration: Almayya, the Association for the Advancement of the Ethiopian Family; Bahalachin, the Ethiopian Jews Cultural Centre; Fidel, the Association for Education and Integration for Ethiopian Jews; Maksam, a network of five neighbourhood centres founded by Ethiopian volunteers in Hadera to help Ethiopian-Israeli children integrate into mainstream Israeli society; the Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ); and the United Ethiopian Jewish Organization (UEJO).

In response to their increased need, immigrants from Ethiopia were provided with additional government benefits on top of those that most immigrants receive. Chief amongst these benefits was the use of public 'Absorption Centres'. Ethiopian immigrants were entitled to stay up to two years from their arrival in these housing centres, owned by the State and the Jewish Agency. During this period the immigrants learned Hebrew and acquired basic skills to help them integrate into Israeli society and its employment market. Furthermore, in order to encourage the immigrants to leave the public centres after two years and establish homes of their own, the Israeli Ministry for Housing offered the Ethiopian immigrants generous mortgages of up to 350,000 New Israeli Shekels per family (approximately £60,000). Taking into consideration the fact that most the Ethiopian immigrants had no regular source of income, up to 90 percent of the mortgages was given in the form of grants and the rest as a loan. In its annual report for 2006 looking back at the period 1991 to 2005, the Bank of Israel estimated that each of the circa 80,000 Ethiopian immigrants had received an average of 400,000 New Israeli Shekels (approximately £65,000) in State financial support.^{xiii}

In recent years, however, it has become clear that these efforts have been insufficient. Ethiopian

immigrants are still encountering significant difficulties. As well as high levels of adult unemployment, difficulties faced by Ethiopian young people are also of concern. 72 percent of children from Ethiopian families live in households below the poverty line; high school drop-out rates for Ethiopian youth are double that of the general population;^{xiv} only a third of Ethiopians are admitted into university in comparison to 83 percent of native Israelis; and a third of Ethiopian young people have reported being exposed to alcohol, drug abuse and violence.^{xv} In addition to these problems, the Government found that the special housing policy for the Ethiopian immigrants has had adverse effects. The Ministry of Housing funded mortgages have led to the creation of several neighbourhoods populated overwhelmingly by Ethiopians, as this is where housing was most affordable. These residential areas have become pockets of high unemployment, poverty and youth disadvantage. Such geographically concentrated problems threaten to stigmatise Israel's Ethiopian citizens and damage the ethos behind the Law of Return.

Targeted policies to aid integration

Faced with this reality the Israeli authorities, with the help of the United Jewish Communities-Federations of North America (UJC - an international think tank and advocacy organisation that attempts to identify and solve problems faced by the Jewish community), recently pursued two projects aimed at promoting better integration amongst the immigrants from Ethiopia and their children: the Ethiopian National Project (ENP), in 2003 and The Five-Year Governmental Plan. These programmes are attempts to learn from the lessons of earlier policy setbacks.

The Ethiopian National Project

The ENP is a partnership between the Government of Israel and a number of national

and international Jewish advocacy groups: the UJC; representatives of Ethiopian Jewish Community Organisations; the Jewish Agency; the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Israel; and the United Israel Appeal. The ENP aims to achieve a comprehensive approach to the integration of Israel's Ethiopian citizens, with investment in educational programmes for schoolchildren aged 13 to 18 taking the highest priority. The ENP began as a pilot in 2003 in six regions: Netanya, Rechovot, Lod, Hadera, Be'er Sheva and Kiryat Gat. In 2004, the project chose specific programmes with which to begin its work, training various grassroots Ethiopian organisations how to advocate for their own needs and to positively affect school governance in their own towns. These projects were implemented in 2005. Since 2005 the ENP has expanded markedly from 32 to 120 schools; and from 1,300 to 8,000 of Israel's 16,000 Ethiopian schoolchildren.^{xvi}

The main goals of the ENP are to:

- Improve the quality of teaching received by Ethiopian students;
- Improve Ethiopian student's results in school leaving (matriculation) exams, essential for being admitted into university; and
- Increase students' participation and achievement in English and mathematics, essential for achieving high matriculation results.

The main programmes of the ENP are:

- SPACE (School Programme and Community Empowerment)

o Additional school tuition

Although most pupils in schools today have either come to Israel at a very young age or were born there, some thirty percent were reported to have substantial difficulties in understanding mainstream textbooks. The ENP provides complementary after-school hours lessons in small groups of five to six

pupils. The lessons are taught by qualified teachers, usually from the pupils' own school, with the purpose of rehearsing and clarifying the material previously learnt during school hours. Each of the 8,000 pupils taking part in the programme receives, on average, an additional four learning hours per week. The extra assistance is aimed at both improving education attainment levels for Ethiopian students as well as the quality of teaching provided to those students.

o **Encouraging parents' involvement in their children's education**

School headteachers have noted that many of their Ethiopian pupils suffer from low ambition and self-esteem as well as a shortage in basic needs such as food and clothing. These problems were attributed in part to unmet emotional needs as well as a lack of sufficient parental educational and financial support. Headteachers also noted that Ethiopian parents tended to shy away from meeting their children's teachers and avoided visiting schools altogether. The ENP aims to increase parents' involvement by opening support groups. In the 120 participating schools, school consultants and special facilitators for the Ethiopian community have been charged with establishing regular contact between the parents' groups and the teachers.

• **Post school-hours activities**

In response to data indicating that two-thirds of Ethiopian youth did not take part in any organised post-school activity, the project operates seven community centres for Ethiopian youth offering afternoon activities for those aged 12 to 18. Operated by qualified instructors from the Ethiopian community the centres are open up to five days a week in the afternoon and evening. They offer a space for spending leisure time; activities such as computer clubs, sports, arts and crafts, music and games; personal development workshops including preparation for military service; and assistance with schoolwork. Several organisations were selected to operate the centres: Fidel (four centres), the Foundation for the Development of Hadera, the

ALMAYA-Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews, and the Community Centre of Gedera. Two of the centres receive all of their funding from the Ethiopian National Project whilst the remaining five are co-funded by the local authorities and other agencies.

The Five-Year Governmental Plan

In 2007 the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and the MOIA assigned an inter-ministerial committee with the task of drafting a comprehensive plan for "assistance in the absorption of immigrants from Ethiopia and their integration into Israeli society." In January 2008 the committee, headed by the director-general of the Prime Minister's office, presented the Government with the outline of the plan, expected to cost a total of 869 million New Israeli Shekels (approximately £142 million). The plan was approved in February although no spending has yet taken place. In response to an Israeli High Court petition by a number of Ethiopian organisations in September over the lack of progress, Erez Halfon, director-general of the MOIA, said that he and Eli Aflalo, Minister of the MOIA, were committed to ensuring spending would begin in 2009. Although the specific details of the plan are not yet public, its main recommendations are the following:

• **Housing**

The plan recommends offering government subsidised mortgages to young couples, mostly Israeli-born children of Ethiopian immigrants, to enable them to purchase homes outside of the mainly Ethiopian neighbourhoods.

• **Zoning and urban regeneration**

The plan targets 16 residential areas across Israel with the highest concentrations of Ethiopian-Israelis. Each zone is allotted a regeneration budget divided between the different services. Roughly a third of the zone's regeneration budget is designated for financing educational projects, another third is for welfare programmes and the final third is for projects such as home refurbishment and social activities.

- **Higher education**

The plan aims to significantly increase the number of graduate and post graduate students amongst Ethiopians aged 20 to 35, particularly in engineering and science degrees. This will be achieved through the distribution of grants and fellowships.

- **Supervision and oversight**

The plan recommends creating a new central governmental body to oversee all the different forms of aid given to the Ethiopian community by different governmental bodies as well as by non-governmental organisations. The aim is to minimise double-giving and maximise efficiency. A new research institute will provide this body with professional counselling as well as ongoing research to examine the effectiveness of the measures taken.

UK policies for aiding the integration of immigrants

It is in an environment of unprecedented global movement of people that the UK's current immigration policies have been introduced. The new Points Based System, being rolled-out across 2008 and 2009, separates those applying to immigrate to the UK into five tiers, based upon their skill levels. Only the most highly skilled migrants arriving on Tier 1 and Tier 2 will be eligible to progress to probationary citizenship and ultimately permanent residence or full citizenship.

With large numbers of immigrants entering the UK for significant periods of time it is vital that British citizenship policies are able to encourage integration and a sense of economic, community and political involvement amongst new arrivals, to ensure that their contribution to the country is maximised. It is therefore important that the UK's policies attract immigrants with suitable skills to permanently settle in the country. The Home Office Green Paper *The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps in Reforming the Immigration System*, published in 2008, sets out how the Government aims to achieve this. Policies proposed in the Green Paper are intended to encourage immigrants to

demonstrate a 'visible and substantial' contribution to Britain as they go down the path to citizenship. This contribution will be assessed upon immigrants' level of English literacy; their economic self-sufficiency; whether they abide by the law; and how far they 'participate in the British way of life,' demonstrated via involvement in voluntary and community work.

The challenges faced in the UK, however, are not only around the integration of the highly-skilled. Firstly, despite the policy proposals outlined above a future focus upon skills and qualifications will not mean that all immigrants granted settlement have these attributes. Of the 124,855 settlement approval decisions in 2007, 66 percent were to reunite husbands, wives, children and other dependents with people already granted settlement. Secondly, the UK will also continue to be challenged by the outcomes of past immigration policies. Since the predominant aim of immigration in the aftermath of World War II was to attract large amounts of cheap labour, there was a much lesser focus on language skills compared to today. This has put those immigrants and their children at a disadvantage. Evidence suggests that fluency in English increases the chance that an ethnic minority immigrant in the UK is employed by about 22 percent and raises their likely earnings by 18 to 20 percent.^{xvii}

A lack of focus upon language skills in the past has resulted in high rates of long-term unemployment amongst immigrants long settled in the country, creating intergenerational worklessness in ethnic minority communities. As was highlighted in the first paper of this series *The evolution and future of the New Deal in Israel and the UK*, unemployment rates amongst the UK's ethnic minorities remain stubbornly high. The Office of National Statistics' most recent *Focus on Ethnicity and Religion*, published October 2006, showed high levels of unemployment amongst UK-born ethnic minorities. In both the 16-24 and 25-39 age groups, unemployment rates among UK-born men and women from the Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups were more than twice as high as those of White British men and women.

In a House of Commons debate on community cohesion in March 2007, the then Minister for

Housing, the Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP, laid out the Government's plans for expanding English language tuition for immigrants. She described English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses as vital for improving race equality, asserting that an "inability to communicate in a common language can lead to lost opportunities, division, misunderstanding and isolation." Since 2001 Government spending on ESOL courses has tripled, and is now at just under £300m, provided by the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills. This funding has helped 2 million people improve their English language skills since 2001. The Government is currently investigating how to focus these resources increasingly on the unemployed and those that intend to permanently settle in the country.^{xviii}

On 4 January 2008 the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the Rt Hon John Denham MP, announced a consultation to determine how to proceed. He said that he wanted ESOL funding in the future to be channelled towards immigrants who intend to settle in the UK permanently and where the Government believes it will make a difference to the community, setting out a number of groups to be targeted: immigrants that expected to stay for a long time; mothers with children under the age of 16; parents and carers of children with 'multiple and complex problems'; people with minimal or no literacy in their own language; and people without a secondary education. This consultation closed on 4 April and whilst the results have not yet been published, the Secretary of State for Innovation and Skills has announced that the consultation feedback supports the Government's position. In April he said that the majority of the consultation submissions call on ESOL funding to be more specifically targeted to foster community cohesion and integration, with local authorities playing a more substantial role in determining the areas of the country that require the most support.

The UK's various Government policies for engendering social cohesion and good race relations are coordinated by the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Cohesion Directorate. The Cohesion Directorate works closely with the Equality and Human

Rights Commission (EHRC), created in October 2007 to work to "eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society."^{xix} This directorate brings together the many different Government departments which operate policies and programmes to improve community cohesion and English language skills amongst those who have a different first language.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has established an Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit to provide support to Local Authorities and schools to help them to improve school results amongst ethnic minority pupils. A 2008 DCSF study of educational attainment at age 16 showed the mean results in English, mathematics and science for Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Black African pupils together was substantially below the mean for White British pupils.^{xx} To counteract this disparity, the Minority Achievement Unit runs a range of targeted programmes of support through its Aiming High strategy, launched in 2003. A key focus of Aiming High is improving education resources for pupils that do not use English as their first language. There has been a 35 percent increase of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) since 1997. There are approximately 686,000 EAL pupils in this country and 200 different languages and dialects spoken by pupils in the UK.^{xxi} The strategy now provides EAL consultants for the 21 Local Education Authorities who are deemed to require the greatest assistance. The consultants work with schools in those areas to assist them in the teaching of English to those for whom it is not their first language. In addition, extra financial resources are provided to schools with large proportions of EAL pupils.

Connecting Communities Plus (CC+), funded by the DCLG, is another Government programme for fostering community cohesion. It is a system of grant funding totalling £15 million, for organisations that deliver projects and services to promote race equality and foster strong community relations. CC+ has been operated by A4e since 2006, a private company that helps

people and organisations access training, employment and advice. A4e allocate funding to national and local organisations and provide advice and support for all those receiving CC+ grants.

The Migration Impact Forum (MIF), jointly chaired by the Home Office and the DCLG, is also involved in the process of determining where public resources are being stretched by high levels of immigration. Established in June 2007 as part of the Home Office's reform of the immigration regime, the MIF brings together experts from local government, health, education, the police and criminal justice system, the voluntary sector, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to discuss with Government Ministers the wider social impacts of migration. Ministers use the MIF's evidence to determine where services in the UK are being stretched, where additional resources are required and what general 'hurdles' new immigrants will have to cross to be given permission to settle in the country.

Shared approaches in the UK and Israel

Israel's new approaches to integrating its Ethiopian immigrants and their children into its society share characteristics with current British policies. Like Israel, the UK is directing extra resources into English tuition for immigrants that intend to stay in the country; the UK is providing additional funding for the education of children for whom English is not their first language; and the UK is also investing in projects to bring communities together and engender social cohesion.

Additional school tuition and parental involvement

Like the additional schooling for Ethiopian migrants provided by the ENP, the DCSF's Aiming High strategy allows for expertise in teaching EAL children to be targeted at specific

geographical areas. Since a poor level of English has such a substantial impact upon levels of employment and pay, further resources could be expended upon EAL pupils. This work is funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, which has increased from £162 million in 2004-05 to £179 million in 2007-08. It is due to increase to £207 million by 2010-11.^{xxii} Also like the Israeli ENP, Aiming High is investigating ways in which to increase the involvement of ethnic minority parents to take a greater role in their children's education.

Housing

A Joseph Roundtree study of the 1991 and 2001 Censuses found that the negative effect on job prospects caused by living in deprived areas was particularly significant for ethnic minorities, compared to White British people residing in the same areas. Conversely, this means that reducing deprivation in local areas has a disproportionately large benefit for people from ethnic minority communities.^{xxiii} This reinforces the argument for the continued targeting of resources at specific areas, such as that provided by the DCLG's CC+ and other national and local bodies. In total the Government intends to spend £50 million on such projects over the next three years.^{xxiv}

The Israeli Five-Year Governmental Plan for addressing deprivation amongst Ethiopian immigrants proposes a set of regeneration policies for the 16 residential areas across Israel with the highest concentrations of Ethiopian immigrants. With large portions of that money to be spent by the residents themselves to improve their housing, the Israeli Government hopes to engender a greater degree of autonomy amongst Ethiopians over their own communities. UK policies that allow for local control over spending on housing and services already exist, but could be expanded further to engender residents' sense of ownership of and engagement with their community.

Supervision and oversight

The Israeli Five-Year Governmental Plan proposes the creation of a central government body and a new research institute to monitor and devise policies for addressing deprivation amongst the Ethiopian community. The UK currently has a range of bodies that perform a similar role for its new immigrants: The EHRC, deriving its powers from the Equality Act 2006, acts as a watchdog to ensure that public and private bodies are abiding by the law in regards to equality legislation; the DCLG has a major role to play in initiating legislation and administering programmes for fostering community cohesion; the DCSF's Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit, amongst other things, targets resources at EAL pupils; the DIUS provides funding for ESOL courses; and the Home Office, through the MIF, monitors the effects of immigration upon local public services. These various strands of Government policy are coordinated by the DCLG's Cohesion Directorate, with the Government's overall aims laid out in the strategy document *Managing the Impacts of Migration: A Cross-Government Approach* of June 2008. No one on the Cohesion Directorate, however, has direct responsibility for overseeing the enactment of the policies in this document, with immigration split between the Cohesion and Faith Division, Preventing Extremism Division and the Race Equality and Diversity Division. The DCLG could consider creating an immigration division within the directorate to maximise its ability to aid the Government in meeting these objectives.

Conclusion

Whilst Israel's immigration policies have a strong religious dimension this has not sheltered policy makers from the challenges of accommodating and aiding the integration of new immigrants. In some respects the religious dimension to its immigration laws means that Israel is more prone to immigrants with low levels of education and skills than the UK is. Being a country with very high levels of immigration, Israel has been developing its policies of integration since its founding in 1948. At first these policies were

government-led, with the State providing housing and jobs for new immigrants. More recently the State moved to a market driven policy in which immigrants are given financial resources with which to organise their own consumption and housing needs. In the case of Israel's Ethiopian immigrants, the State has provided additional benefits to the usual financial resources given to other immigrant communities.

In some ways the extra resources for Ethiopian migrants represent a shift back to Israel's past policies of direct provision. The proposed Five-Year Government plan, however, demonstrates that whilst the State intends to take a more substantial role in guiding the integration of Ethiopian immigrants into society and the economy, it hopes to do this in the most targeted and streamlined way possible. Whilst the Israeli government's past control of immigration absorption applied to all new immigrants, the proposed policies, as well as the pilots already underway, are targeted and financially based. Efforts to improve the physical structure of the communities in which Ethiopians live, raise university admissions for young Ethiopians and encourage the development of more ethnically diverse communities so that Ethiopians are not concentrated in the poorest areas, are all proposed to be achieved through the provision of loans and grants. The state does not propose to build and allocate new housing as it once did, but aims to increase the economic and social tools at the disposal of Ethiopian immigrants and their children so that they can achieve this for themselves.

Whilst assessing the effectiveness of Israel's policy pilots for Ethiopian immigrants is premature, preliminary data offers some positive results. A recent study showed that in 2006 half of Ethiopian pupils taking part in the project passed their secondary schools leaving exam, whilst the rate of success amongst Ethiopian pupils not included in the scheme was just over a third.^{xv} The survey also found that two-thirds of headteachers of schools participating in the ENP programme felt it greatly improved their pupils' self-esteem and achievements. 79 percent said they were very satisfied that the programme has been implemented at their school; 77 percent said that

most or all of the participating students' needs are met; 71 percent said that that the programme was contributing to their students' progress "to a great extent"; and 49 percent said that the programme led to an improvement in the quality of teaching received by Ethiopian-Israeli students. A much lower percentage, however, reported that the programme had increased parental involvement in the school: only 25 percent of the headteachers said that the programme had greatly influenced the parent-school relationship and 53 percent reported little or no contribution in this area."^{xvii}

Britain's new Points Based System for immigration will allow the Government to better influence which immigrants with which skills are able to enter and permanently settle in the UK. A focus upon skills throughout the new immigration system means that Britain is less susceptible than Israel to large waves of low skilled immigrants. The policies proposed in the Home Office Green Paper *The Path to Citizenship* would also mean that all those intending to settle in the UK in the future will have an increased responsibility to become proficient in English and take an active role in their communities. Despite this, however, the UK will continue to face policy challenges. A lack of focus on English language skills in the past has led to unemployment amongst immigrants, as well as intergenerational worklessness and poverty amongst ethnic minorities. In addition, a focus on highly skilled migrants in the future will not give the Government complete control over migrants' skill levels since a high proportion of applications for settlement will continue to be approved to enable family reunification.

This challenge means that both Governments should continue to invest in projects specifically targeted at those communities and individuals that require additional help to fulfil their potential. Like the Israeli Government, key priorities for the British Government are to ensure that all immigrants become proficient in English, are well housed, find employment and are actively involved in their communities and their children's schools. The British Government should also continue to allocate additional resources to the children of immigrants for whom English is not their first language, so as to reduce ethnic divisions in school achievement and employment levels.

Whilst Israel's immigration policies have been enacted since 1948 to enable the construction of a new state, Britain's policies continue to be focused upon the needs of the national economy, albeit in an increasingly precise manner. Despite these differences, whether immigrants settle in either country for economic or social reasons, it is vital that their integration and proficiency in the domestic language remains a key policy objective in both the UK and Israel.

- i Rt David Miliband MP; Waking up to the new world order in *The New Statesman*; 19 July 2007
- ii Gabriel Lipshitz and Frank-Josef Kempar; *Immigrant Absorption: The spatial experiences in Germany and Israel*; April 1999
- iii Gabriel Lipshitz and Frank-Josef Kempar; *Immigrant Absorption: The spatial experiences in Germany and Israel*; April 1999
- iv Singles are entitled to about 15,000 ILS (approximately £2,500 GBP) couples are entitled to about 30,000 NIS (approximately 5,000 GBP) plus some 10,000 NIS (approximately 1,666 GBP) for every child. Immigrants receive the first payment at the airport and the rest is paid in seven monthly payments paid directly to their bank accounts.
- v Haaretz; Gov't planning to close most ulpans, privatize Hebrew studies; 21 December 2007
- vi Home Office; Control of Immigration: statistics UK; 1999
- vii National Statistics Online; Migration; as viewed on 19 November 2008
- viii Home Office; Control of Immigration: statistics UK; 2007
- ix Central Bureau of Statistics; Israeli Labour Force Survey; 2006
- x Bank of Israel; Annual Report 2006; p.171
- xi Central Bureau of Statistics; *Israel in Figures*; 2007. Note that since most of the non-Jewish immigrants didn't declare to have any positive religious identification, the CBS chose to include them under a default definition of "Jews and Others."
- xii Central Bureau of Statistics; *Israel in Figures*; 2007
- xiii Bank of Israel; Annual report 2006; p.171
- xiv New Israel Fund; *Integration of Ethiopian Israelis*; as viewed on 1 December 2008
- xv Bank of Israel; Annual report 2006; p.172
- xvi Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute; *The Ethiopian National Project: An Evaluation Study of the SPACE Program – Scholastic Assistance, Youth Centres 2005-2007*; October 2007
- xvii Christian Dustmann and Francesca Fabbri in the *Economic Journal*; *Language proficiency and labour market performance – the experience of immigrants to the UK*; July 2003
- xviii Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP, House of Commons Hansard; 23 March 2007 www.equalityhumanrights.com; as viewed 27 November 2008
- xx Department for Children, Schools and Families; *Minority Ethnic Pupils in the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*; 2008
- xxi Department for Children, Schools and Families; *Ethnic Minority Achievement Newsletter*; Summer 2007
- xxii Department for Communities and Local Government; *Managing the Impacts of Migration: A Cross-Government Approach*; June 2008
- xxiii Joseph Rowntree; *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: dynamics and diversity*; April 2007
- xxiv Department for Communities and Local Government; *Managing the Impacts of Migration: A Cross-Government Approach*; June 2008
- xxv According to Dr. Mryam Cohen-Navot, a senior researcher at Engelberg Center for Children and Youth at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute.
- xxvi Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute; *The Ethiopian National Project: An Evaluation Study of the SPACE Program – Scholastic Assistance, Youth Centres 2005-2007*; October 2007

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