

# The Arab Population in Israel: Facts & Figures 2012

מאירס - ג'זינט - מכון ברוקדייל  
MYERS - JDC - BROOKDALE INSTITUTE  
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Facts and Figures provides basic data on Arab-Israelis with regard to demography, education, employment, socio-economic status, and health, including comparisons between the Arab-Israeli and Jewish Israeli population.

## Total population

In 2010, Israel had 1.57 million Arab-Israeli citizens, representing 20% of the country's total population.

## Age structure

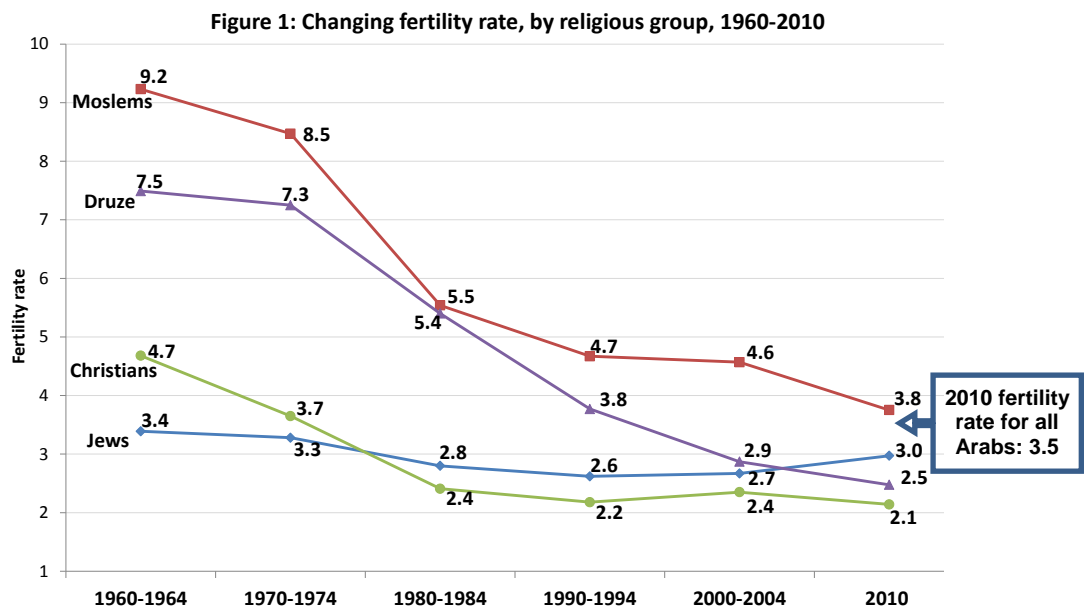
Nearly half of all Arab-Israelis in 2010 were younger than age 19, as compared with only about one-third of Jewish Israelis.

## Religious composition

As of 2010, 82% of Arab-Israelis were Muslim (including the Bedouin). Other religious groups included Christians (10%) and Druze (8%).

## Fertility rates

Fertility rates have declined over the past 50 years among all Arab groups, and the gaps between Arabs and Jews are no longer that large—3.5 children among Arabs and 3.0 children among Jews in 2010. Of note is that the fertility rate of both Druze and Christian Arabs is now below the rate for Jews.



Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011

## Family size

Despite the decline in fertility, Arab-Israeli families are still considerably larger, with 11% of Arab-Israeli families having 5 children or more, compared with only 3% of Jewish households (2010).



## EDUCATION

There have been significant improvements in the educational levels among Arab-Israelis, but the gaps between Arabs and Jews are still large.

### Dropping out of high school

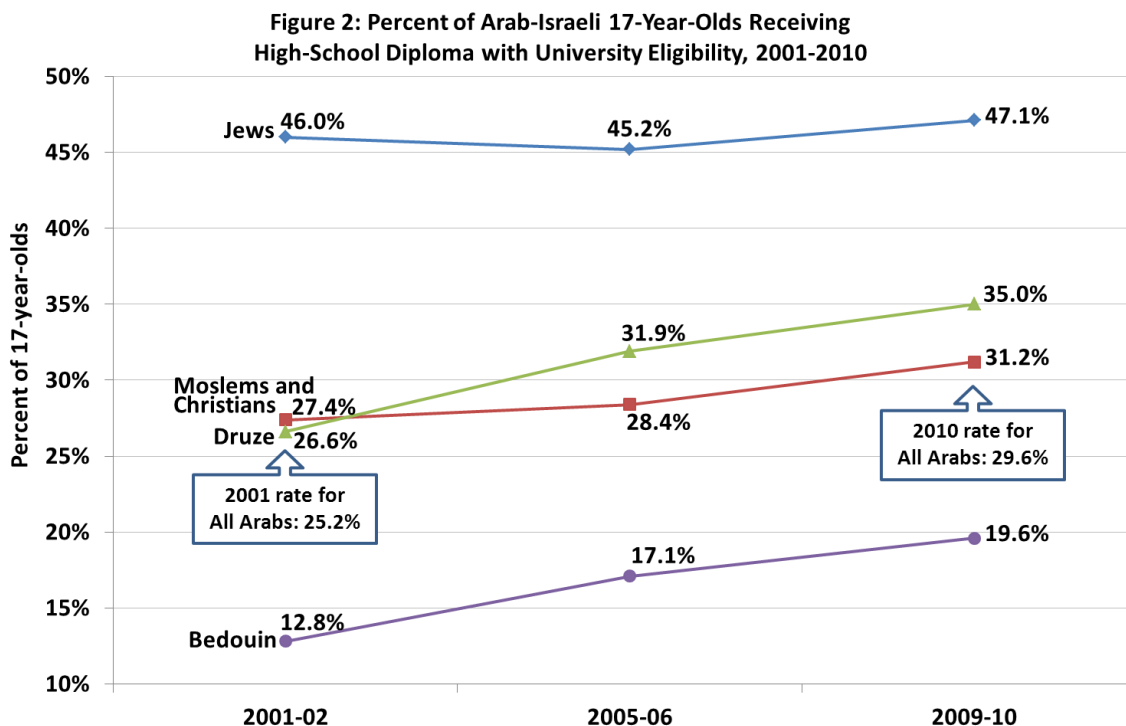
Dropout rates among Arab-Israeli students continue to be far above the rates of Jewish students. In 2009, by age 17, 16% of Arab-Israeli students had dropped out of school versus 8% of Jewish students. This makes them ineligible for most existing vocational training programs, and reduces their employment prospects considerably.

### University-bound

In Israel, high school students take a series of matriculation exams known as *bagrutot*. These exams are the primary basis for acceptance into higher education. The rates of passing are therefore an important indicator of long-term educational and economic advancement.

Between 2001 and 2010, there was a steady improvement in university-eligible matriculation rates among all Arab-Israeli 17-year olds, from 25% to just under 30%. This improvement was evident in all groups, but the most significant improvement was among the Bedouin, although they remain below the other groups.

These improvements notwithstanding, university-eligible matriculation rates are still well below those of Jewish students.



Source: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analysis of data from the Ministry of Education, Examinations Division and Data Processing Administration, "Matriculation Exams Data 2009", Jerusalem 2010.



## Years of education

Arab-Israeli education levels have improved dramatically over the past two decades. This increase happened both among those completing high school only and those continuing to some level of post-secondary education.

The most rapid educational progress is found among Arab-Israeli women, who have surpassed the educational levels of men. In 1990, only 8% of Arab-Israeli women had 13+ years of education, compared with 27% in 2010.

Despite these improvements, important gaps persist between Arab-Israelis and Jews at the lower and higher education levels.

**Table 1: Years of Education among Arab-Israeli and Jewish Men and Women, Aged 18-64, 1990-2010**

<b>Arab-Israeli women</b>		
<u>Years of education</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010</u>
0 to 12 years	92%	73%
13+ years	8%	27%
<b>Jewish women</b>		
<u>Years of education</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010</u>
0 to 12 years	77%	42%
13+ years	33%	58%
<b>Arab-Israeli men</b>		
<u>Years of education</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010</u>
0 to 12 years	86%	75%
13+ years	14%	25%
<b>Jewish men</b>		
<u>Years of education</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010</u>
0 to 12 years	66%	48%
13+ years	34%	52%

Source: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys



## EMPLOYMENT

### Arab-Israeli women

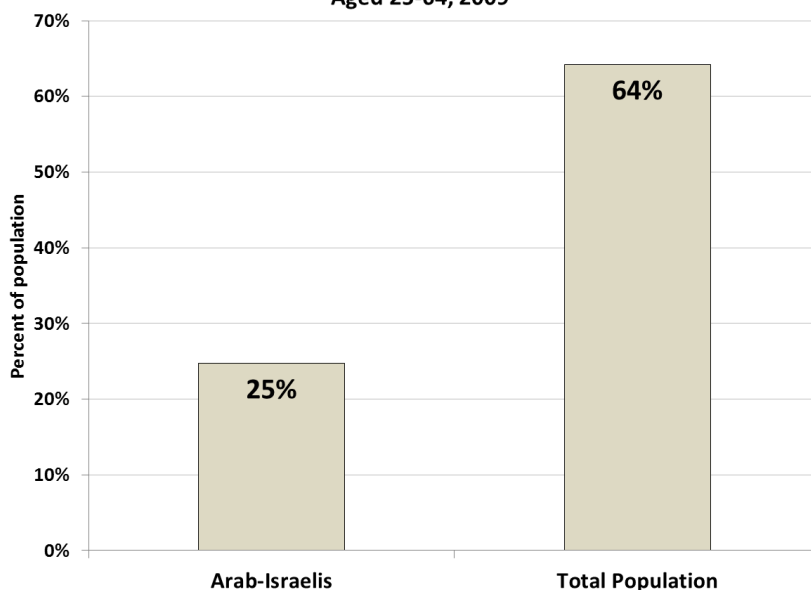
The most significant employment gap is between Arab-Israeli and Jewish women.

- Even though employment rates for Arab-Israeli women have increased since 1997, only 25% of Arab-Israeli women of working age were employed in 2009, compared with 64% among Jewish women.
- In 2008, 36% of working-age Arab-Israeli women worked only part time, and the majority preferred to find full-time employment.
- Those with higher education integrate into the workforce. In 2010, 77% of women with 13+ years of education were employed or studying, compared with only 7% of women with less than 8 years of education.
- There is significant untapped potential. Of particular note is that in 2010 over half of Arab-Israeli women age 18 to 24 were neither working nor studying. 85% of these women had completed high school and only 30% had children.

In general, young Arab-Israeli women have unique, additional disadvantages that impede on their integration into the workforce.

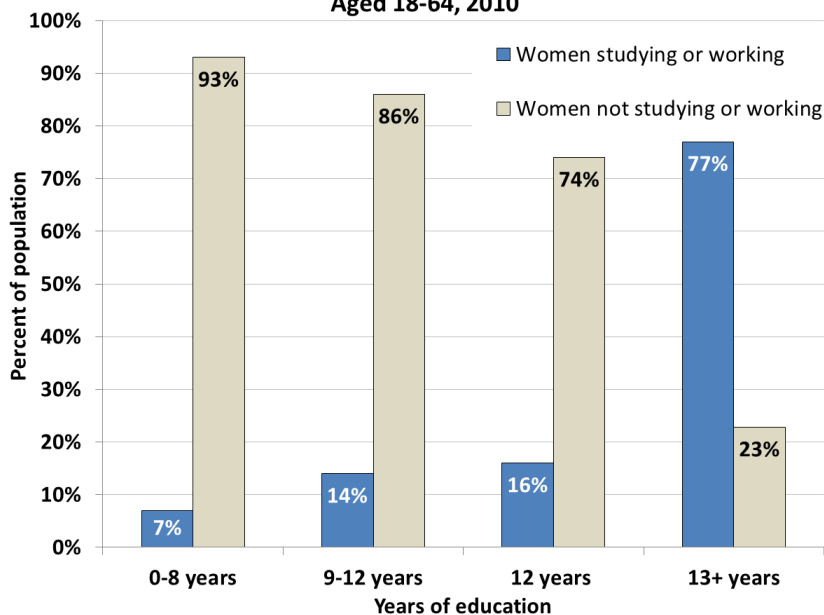
- **Language.** A significant percentage of young Arab-Israeli women do not speak or write well in Hebrew—even among those who

Figure 3: Employment among Total Population and Arab-Israeli Women, Aged 25-64, 2009



Source: Bank of Israel Annual Report

Figure 4: Percent of Arab-Israeli Women Studying or Working, Aged 18-64, 2010



Source: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys

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have completed high school. Most Arab-Israelis study in schools in which Arabic is the primary language, and Hebrew is studied as a second language.

- **Technical skills.** The computer background of Arab-Israeli women is much more limited than their Jewish counterparts.
- **Vocational training.** Very few young Arab-Israeli women have participated in any kind of vocational training program.

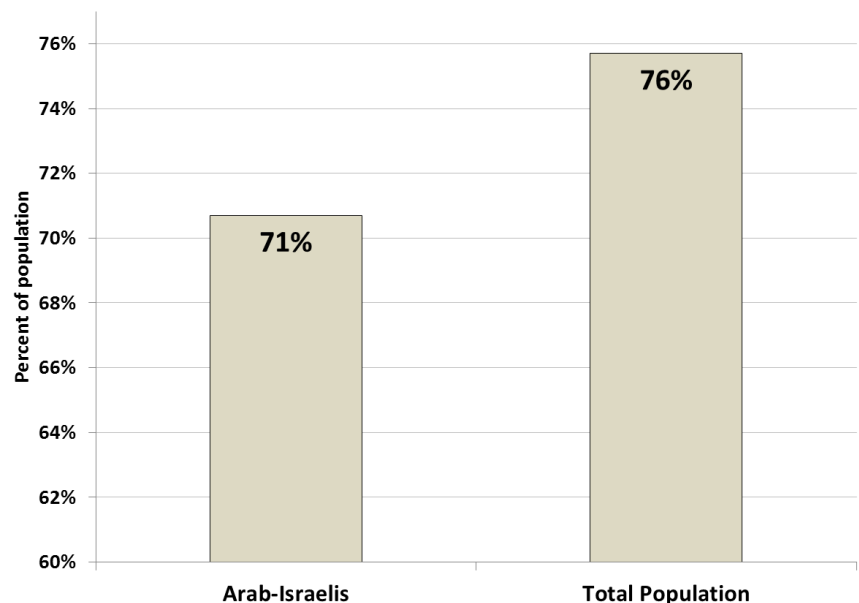
## Arab-Israeli men

In the early 2000s, the economic recession hit Arab-Israeli men harder than other segments of Israeli society, and their employment levels have not fully recovered.

Still, the employment gap is not large. In 2009, 71% of Arab-Israeli men aged 25-64 worked, compared with 76% of the broader population of Israeli men.

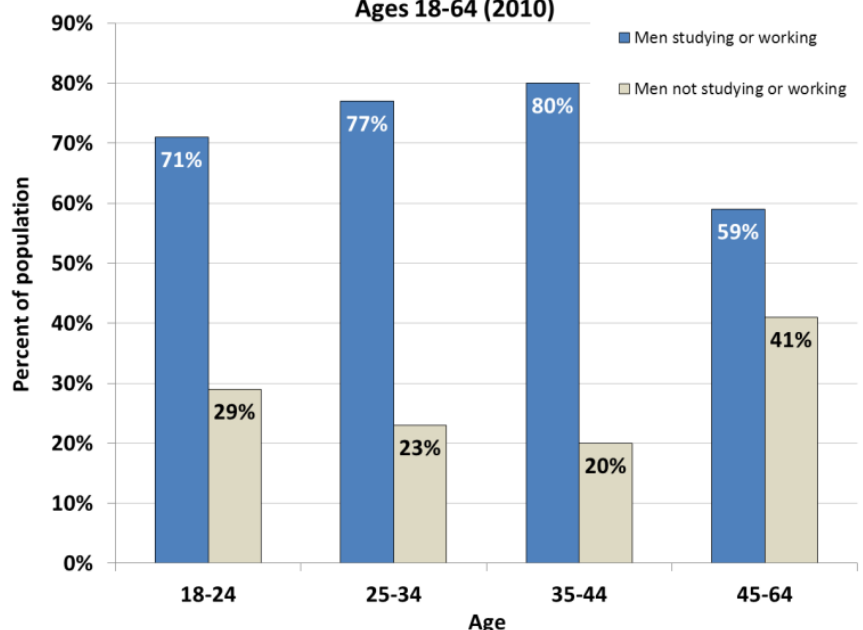
Employment rates for Arab-Israeli men drop dramatically after age 45, and create major challenges for families where the primary breadwinner is unable to secure sustainable employment.

Figure 5: Employment among Total Population and Arab-Israeli Men, Aged 25-64, 2009



Source: Bank of Israel Annual Report

Figure 6: Percent Arab-Israeli Men Studying or Working, by Age, Ages 18-64 (2010)



Source: Myers-JDC-Brookdale special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys

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## Poverty

The gaps in education, employment, and family size have led to major gaps in economic status between Arab-Israelis and Jews.

- In 2010, 53% of Arab-Israeli families lived in poverty (after taxes and transfer payments), compared with only 14% of Jewish families. Poverty rates have steadily worsened since 1997.
- Arab-Israeli families constitute 38% of all poor families, far above their overall proportion in the Israeli population. (Only 14% of all families in Israel are Arab-Israeli.)

Table 2: Poverty among families and children, 2010 (%)

Arab-Israeli Families	Jewish Families	Arab-Israeli Children	Jewish Children
53%	14%	66%	24%
163,600	433,300	202,000	837,300

Source: National Insurance Institute Annual Report, 2011

## Self-Assessment of the Economic Situation

A large percentage of Arab-Israelis report that they are unable to meet basic household expenses, such as food, electricity, and telephone.

Table 3: Self-assessed ability to meet basic household expenses, 2009 (%)

	Arab-Israelis	Jews
Yes, with little or some difficulty	34%	52%
No, not so well or not at all	66%	47%

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010.



## HEALTH

### Life Expectancy

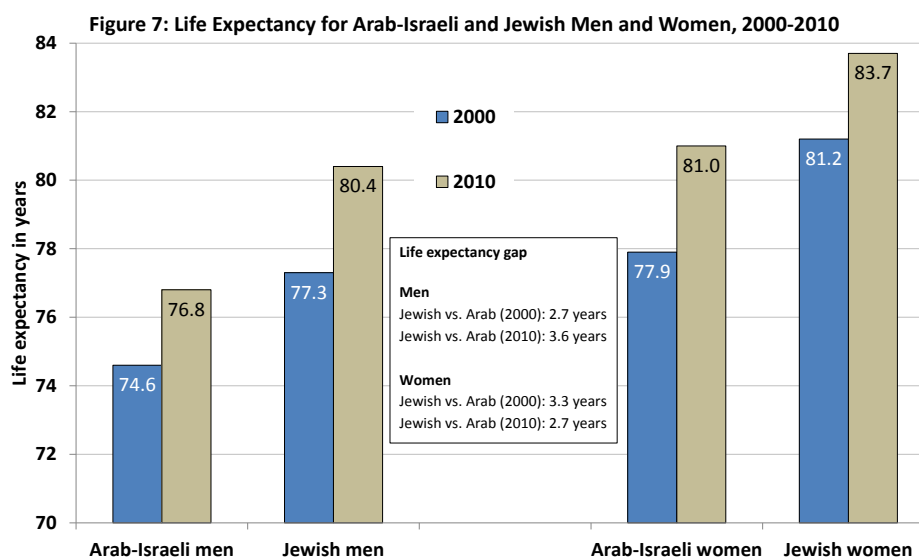
Life expectancy has increased over the past 10 years among Arab-Israeli men and women. By 2010, life expectancy for Arab-Israeli men had risen to 76.8 years, and 81.2 years for women.

### Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rates among the Arab-Israeli population have declined drastically over the years, though the 2010 rate of 6.8 per thousand is still more than double the rate among Jews (2.7 per thousand).

### Disability

Disability rates among adult and elderly Arab-Israelis are significantly higher than the rate among Jewish Israelis, especially the rates of those severely disabled. Among children, disability rates are also higher.



Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011

Table 4: Rates of disability, 2009 (%)

	Arab-Israelis	Jews
Disabled adults	22% 603,300	17% 3,134,200
<i>Of these: Severely disabled</i>	14% 84,500	5% 156,700
Disabled elderly, 75+ (disabled in personal care)	71% 14,400	35% 117,200
Severely disabled children	5%	3%

Sources: Various Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute Studies; Myers JDC-Institute special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force Surveys

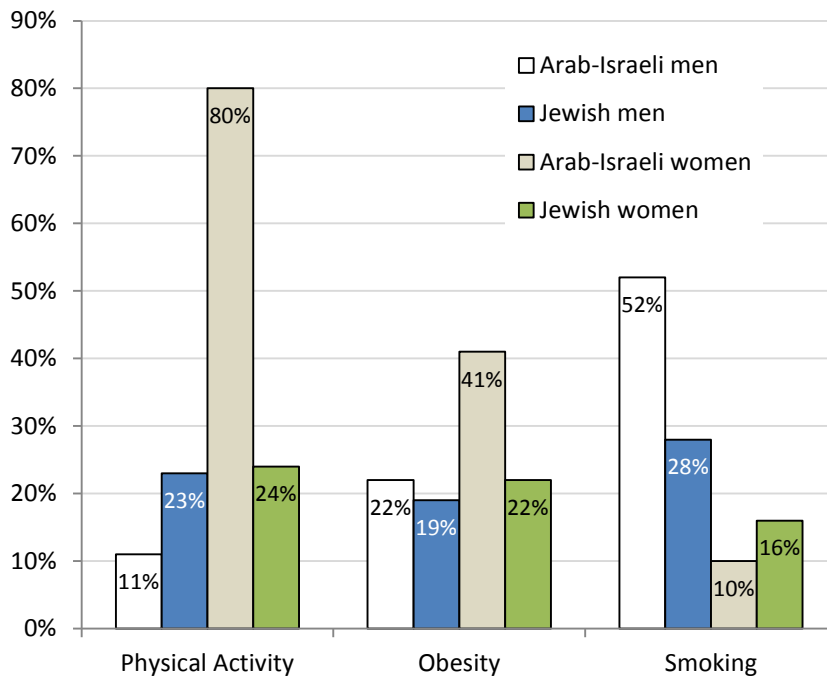


## Health Behaviors

Gaps in health behaviors contribute significantly to differences in health status among Arab-Israelis and Jewish Israelis.

Physical activity is much less prevalent overall among Arab-Israelis than it is among Jews, and Arab-Israeli women have very high rates of obesity and diabetes.

Figure 8: Obesity, 2007, Physical Activity and Smoking, 2009 (%)



Sources: CBS. The Annual Social Survey, 2010. Rosen, B., Elroy, I., Ecker, N., Isma'il, S. Health Promotion Activities in the Israeli Arab Population: To What Extent Are They Culturally Appropriate and What Can Be Done to Make Them More So? Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2008. The Israeli Center for Disease Control, The Minister of Health's report on smoking in Israel 2010.





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- Smokler Center for Health Policy Research
- Center for Research on Disabilities and the Employment of Special Populations
- Center for Research on Aging
- Quality Assurance in the Social Services
- Manpower Evaluation and Social Planning
- Learning from Success and Collaborative Ongoing Learning in Human Services
- Immigrant Absorption
- Arab Population in Israel
- International Cooperation and Exchange
- Middle East Cooperation and Exchange
- Cooperation and Exchange among Jewish Communities

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