

NEET Among Young Arabs in Israel

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Research Summary



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What is NEET?

NEET stands for “Not in Education, Employment, or Training.” It is a state of not belonging to any setting, be it workplace or academic. The rate of NEET or idleness among young people in Israel aged 15 to 29 is 28 percent – one of the highest among OECD countries. Idleness is particularly common among Arab citizens of Israel.



Idleness among all young people in Israel



Idleness among young Arabs in Israel

Thirty-seven percent of Arabs between 19 and 23 years of age are not in any official framework whatsoever. In other words, they are in a state of idleness. Moreover, one out of every two young Arab women and one in every four young Arab men describes themselves as idle.

This study gauges the rate of inaction among Arab youth in Israel, analyzes the factors that tend to predict idle behavior, and examines what young Arabs suggest should be done to help them break out of this cycle.

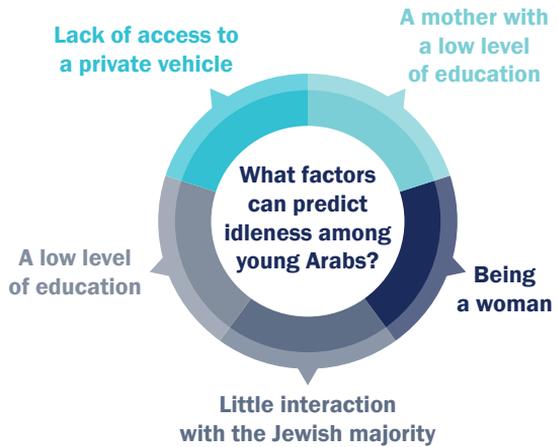
The Findings

1. Thirty-seven percent of the participants in the study reported they were idle.

2. Some 51.6 percent of the inactive respondents have not found jobs even though they are doing everything possible to find work.

3. Individual characteristics such as gender, education, and mother's education can be predictors of NEET. The chance of being idle is higher among women, people with a low level of education, and people whose mothers had a low level of education.

4. The lack of access to private vehicles and little interaction with the Jewish majority (as characterized by frequent trips to Jewish communities and fluency in Hebrew) are predictors of NEET. The chances that idle people will have access to a private vehicle, apply for a job with a Jewish employer, or commute regularly to Jewish communities are low as compared with those of their counterparts who are working or studying.



Why is the rate of NEET so high, particularly among young Arabs?

Immediately after graduating high school, young Arab citizens must cope with the transition from school to the job market or higher education, without being adequately prepared for adulthood. By the age of 18, they must make their own way, without the basic skills required for either joining the job market or entering higher-education.

This study examines the obstacles that Arab young people in Israel face during the stage in life when they are supposed to enter the job market or begin their studies. The working assumption is that if young people are in a state of idleness, they will not be able to successfully integrate into the job market as adults.

The unique obstacles that young Arabs in Israel face result from the fact that they are members of an ethnic and national minority. Their reality is characterized by limited opportunities, discrimination in many spheres, living in peripheral regions, little access to public transportation between Arab residential communities and employment zones, and a dearth of child-care settings for small children (which would enable more women to go to work).

What should be done to encourage greater industriousness among young Arabs?

- 1.** We recommend that job placement centers like those that exist in Jewish communities be opened in Arab cities. Such centers will provide a solution for a broad spectrum of needs among young Arabs by both directing them toward interviews for suitable jobs and preparing them for these interviews. The centers will also assist young Arabs in their job search, provide academic counseling for those interested, and teach them vital skills such as computer literacy.
- 2.** We recommend bolstering Hebrew language studies in Arab schools at all levels, from primary through high school, with an emphasis on conversational and practical Hebrew.

Why is it important to address the issue of idleness among young Arab citizens of Israel?

There can be no doubt that the lack of integration among young Arab people in the Israeli job market has negative economic and social ramifications. Putting our recommendations into practice will increase the Arab population's participation in the job market. It will also increase the rates in which Arab women participate in the job market, a group whose rate of idleness is even more severe than that of the rest of the population.

Increasing participation and integration among young Arab men and women in the Israeli job market, as well as in higher education and vocational training programs, may well strengthen their feeling of belonging to the country, and thus contribute to the social and economic resilience of Israeli society in general, and Arab society in particular. In addition, the integration of young Arab men and women can serve as a catalyst for economic growth. It is therefore imperative that reducing idleness among young Arab people become a national and economic priority of the first order.

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Dr. Sami Miaari is a lecturer in the Department of Labor Studies at Tel Aviv University. His areas of research are the economy of labor, the economy of conflict, the economic costs of political conflicts, inequality, economic migration, discrimination against minority groups, and applied economics.

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