



Sustainable Change

A long-term survey among graduates of the Mifne Employment Advancement Program and conclusions at the end of a Coronavirus year

June 2021



As part of our ongoing short-term and long-term measurement and evaluation practices, Be-Atzmi contacts graduates of its programs and assesses their employment status through an analysis of interviews and a structured questionnaire. Their present status is then compared with their status upon graduation from the program.

Between November 2020 and January 2021, we contacted graduates of the Mifne Employment Advancement Program, who had participated in it two to three-and-a-half years earlier. We set out to examine whether they managed to sustain the personal and employment-related change they made at the end of the program, and how they got through the year of COVID-19 which had such an adverse impact on the job market.

The purpose of the survey was to examine whether the tools they acquired during the program helped them cope with the crisis, whether the employment resilience we sought to develop did in fact materialize, and how the effectiveness of Be-Atzmi's employment programs is sustained over time. The results were conclusive: the tools and skills that the graduates acquired during the program, coupled with the meaningful change process and increase in their employment resilience, continued to have a long-term impact. Graduates managed to hold on to their jobs and even advance themselves, despite an employment crisis of unusual magnitude that afflicted the economy.

The Mifne Program for Economic Empowerment and Employment Advancement was developed by Be-Atzmi as a holistic model that builds employment resilience in its broadest sense - resilience that enables participants not only to integrate into gainful employment, but also to make a fundamental change in their lives. The program is offered nationwide and 72% of its participants are women.

The unique combination of personal empowerment, acquisition of practical tools for employment integration and household financial management, knowledge about the job market and rights' maximization, and above all the belief that change is made by the individual himself or herself - proved to be the building blocks of employment resilience which helped our graduates get through the crisis.

The Israeli job market at the time the survey was conducted

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic at the beginning of 2020 engendered a global health crisis and a threat of unusual proportions, impacting the lives of people worldwide. The condition of the job market quickly reached a low that had not been witnessed for many years.

The devastating effects of the crisis were especially felt among those that lack vocational training or higher education. The industries that were most affected were those whose employees mainly come from excluded and low-opportunity population groups - such as retail and the hospitality industry. Temp workers, contract workers and occasional employees found themselves with no source of income. As always, disenfranchised workers were the first ones out and the last ones to come back, if at all.



The unemployment rate increased fourfold



Hundreds of thousands of jobs were eliminated



70% of those who were fired were women



Businesses put a halt to staff recruitments



There were 16 times more unemployed persons than available positions



Disposable income declined



Entire industries came to a halt



Positions were reduced to part-time



Hundreds of thousands of people were furloughed

By the end of 2020, it became apparent that not only had many people lost their jobs - but also that reintegration into the job market would be more difficult than ever before. Most affected were members of underprivileged groups, who are more dependent on well-functioning public services, suffer from limited mobility that is dependent on public transportation, and for the most part have limited access to online goods and services.

In view of this difficult reality, the impressive success of Mifne graduates in maintaining, and even improving, their employment status stands out even more.

Be-Atzmi's employment resilience model had already proven to improve the personal and work-related wellbeing of program participants during and at the end of their participation in the program. This survey now shows that this improvement is sustained over time, including in times of crisis and unexpected difficulties. Our graduates' employment status at this point in time, which is one of the most difficult in recent decades, is impressive compared to the economy as a whole, and especially impressive when compared to population groups with a similar profile to theirs.



Long-term measurement and evaluation data collected from graduates of the Mifne Employment Advancement Program after one year of the pandemic



24% of graduates upgraded their employment



Pay increase stems both from an increase in the number of hours graduates work and an increase in their hourly wages



60% of program graduates reported that they make regular use of the household financial management tools they acquired during the program



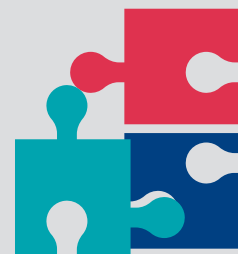
62% of graduates are employed (despite the pandemic)



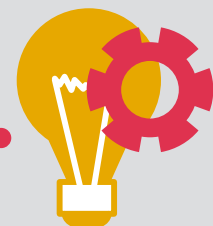
76% of graduates reported a positive impact on their families and interest their children took in their employment change



Employed graduates continued to increase their pay



80% of the graduates reported a high level of self-efficacy - faith in themselves and in their ability to deal with challenges



75% of graduates reported a high level of proactivity in the job market - taking initiative and steps to advance themselves

* The survey included graduates of the Mifne program between June 2017 and October 2018 in the following cities: Jerusalem, Akko, Ramle, Petah Tikva, Upper Nazareth (Nof HaGalil), Afula, Ashdod and Kiryat Gat. Out of the 272 graduates, c. 70% completed the questionnaire. The results were compared to their results upon graduation, which were already considerably higher than when they started the program.

We found that the Mifne program had a comprehensive and long-term effect on its participants' integration and advancement in the job market

After participants complete the program and embark on an independent path, we see that the long-term effects of the employment mentoring they received are sustained. For two or more years after graduation, participants continue to be proactive in advancing themselves to better jobs and employment opportunities. Their stronger employment resilience contributes to a quicker recovery after employment-related crises. Successful coping with these crises further boosts self-esteem and faith in one's abilities and makes it easier to cope with future difficulties.

The measurement and evaluation system under which this follow-up was conducted enables us to see how our program graduates are managing, in general and during this unique period in particular, to understand the reality they cope with in the long-run, and the value of the process they underwent. The follow-up underscores the importance of the tools and skills we provided to our participants, in particular the investment we made in strengthening their employment resilience.

We hope that the employment resilience, success and ability to cope with the Coronavirus crisis displayed by our graduates in this past year helped not only them and members of their immediate households, but also inspired wider circles of people in their surroundings. We applaud their choice to undertake this process of multifaceted change and personal growth, and their adherence to the new self they created.

We extend our deep thanks to our supporters and partners, whose backing and faith in us make it possible to run this important program:

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Be-Atzmi is a social change organization dedicated for over 25 years to advancing employment among excluded and underprivileged population groups. The variety of projects and programs developed and run by our organization, designed to reduce poverty and narrow social gaps in Israel, open up a new future for our participants, their families and the communities they live in.

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