



## **Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues**

January 6 - 9, 2008

### **Study Trip Report**

#### *Background – Task Force Mission*

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues is a coalition of over seventy North American Jewish organizations, foundations and private philanthropists. It is headed by a Steering Committee comprised of the Alfred and Hanna Fromm Fund, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, the Anti-Defamation League, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, New Israel Fund, and UJA-Federation of New York.

Members of the Task Force are committed to the welfare of Israel and support the Jewish state's right to a secure and peaceful existence. They are proud of the democratic, sovereign state of the Jewish people and support the article in Israel's Declaration of Independence that promises social and political equality for all its inhabitants, Jews and Arabs alike.

The Arab citizens of Israel represent approximately 20% of the population, one of every five Israelis, 1.2 million members of Israeli society. In accordance with the official recommendations of the Or Commission, an Israeli board of inquiry convened after the violent events in 2000, the Government pledged to make elimination of inequality and discrimination between Jewish and Arab citizens a top national priority. This Task Force aims to generate awareness among the North American Jewish and Israeli public to advance civic equality in Israel so that , where Israeli Jews and Arabs can contribute, participate and benefit as full citizens.

The Task Force focuses on keeping the American Jewish community informed on majority/minority relations in Israel; increasing awareness of economic, educational and social service weaknesses facing Israeli Arab communities and, in certain cases, leveraging financial resources to provide effective solutions; supporting Task Force members with a mandate to advocate on behalf of civic equality and working with Israeli organizations to strengthen civil society activity, including the strengthening of Jewish and Arab leadership.

Jewish tradition and our democratic beliefs charge us with this challenge for the future of Israel and the Jewish people. Because of its strong support for the State of Israel and concern for Israel's long-term security and welfare, North American Jewry seeks to do its part to make civic equality in Israel a priority for the Jewish people. We pledge ourselves to furthering this objective within the ability of our respective organizational missions.

*Study Trip - Executive Summary*

Trip Leaders: Brian Lurie, Jeff Solomon and Jessica Balaban

From January 6 - 9, 2008, seventy representatives from Canada, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States participated in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues second study trip to Israel.

The trip was planned through the lenses of a grant-maker, and provided insight on how to fashion grant-making strategies in order to have the greatest impact. We had the rare opportunity to collectively advance our knowledge on Israeli Arab issues; explore areas of funding collaboration, investments and partnerships; and understand what each other's philanthropic dollars are focused on and how to leverage them.

In the course of an odyssey that took us from Northern Israel to the Bedouin community in the Negev, we met with committed NGOs, top academics and key Israeli government officials. We immersed ourselves in Task Force civic priorities of education; economic development; social services and leadership development and had the unique opportunity to engage in conversation on the current climate of Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel, including pending policy/legislation and the sharpening, omnipresent topic of national identity. We explored regional complexities, met with inspiring educators, volunteers, students and women and also had the opportunity to meet with Israeli Arab investors and discuss a myriad of perspectives on investment; philanthropy and community development.

This report may read like the glass is half full. Indeed, the situation is in great need of attention, the discrepancies are vast and we were exposed to them during this immersion experience. Simply put by Israeli Judge Theodore Or (<http://www.iataskforce.org/officialsummation.html>), the issues facing the Arab sector are "the most sensitive and important domestic issue facing Israel today."

However, the glass is not empty. Jewish philanthropy, in partnership with Israel, has built on Israel's tremendous accomplishments and contributions to global society over the last 60 years and many of the goals of Israel's founders have been wonderfully realized. The government is continuing to make changes to strengthen majority/minority relations in Israel. We were also exposed to outstanding Israelis, Jewish and Arab, working toward a more vibrant and secure future. We are aware that most of what needs to be done must come from within the State of Israel and must be led by the Israeli government. We, as philanthropists, have a significant role too. In fact, echoed throughout the trip was an affirmation that world Jewry and philanthropy play, and should play, a central role in this arena. The very essence of the philanthropic goals of many of the trip participants is to help fulfill the dreams of Israel's founders -- this includes the pledge of social and political equality for all her citizens.

The following post-trip report summarizes the chronological flow of our experience. We met with many people and heard a variety of perspectives. This report aims to capture salient issues, facts and findings. Opinions expressed by the multitude of speakers are not necessarily those of the Task Force.

**Learn more @ [www.IAtaskforce.org](http://www.IAtaskforce.org).**

## January 6th - Opening Dinner and Reception

**Jeff Solomon, Task Force Foundation Forum Chair/President of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and Brian Lurie, Task Force Co-Chair chaired the evening.**

**Isaac Herzog, Minister of Welfare and Social Services,** welcomed Task Force trip participants to Israel. He expressed his belief that minority relations are a major issue for the well-being of the state of Israel and discussed the challenges facing Israel's Arabs.

- **Funding challenges in Israeli Arab communities:**
  - **The situation:** Most Arab local councils do not have the money to meet the needs of their residents. Under Israel's current system, the government's budget provides 75% of funding for social programs, while the local municipality has to cover the remaining 25%. If the 25% cannot be met, no funding is provided.
  - **Analysis:** Minister Herzog sees this system as partially responsible for the large gaps between Jews and Arabs in Israel. He believes the government should demand less matching funds from municipalities that are unable to pay and should help develop social welfare infrastructure when necessary. Mr. Herzog cited the Schmidt Plan as an effective policy that is making a difference in low-income municipalities.
- **Income / employment:** Minister Herzog saw the low income and high rates of poverty as a critical issue in the Arab sector and assigns top priority to the empowerment of Arab women and finding new places of work for both men and women. Empowering women, he believes, is the key to real change in Israeli Arab society, especially in the Bedouin community in the Negev. One area where he sees room for job growth for Arabs is in the national security services.

**Shawki Khatib, Chairman of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee,** spoke about the history and current status of Arabs in Israel.

- **History:** Mr. Khatib stated that from the start Arabs in Israel decided to be citizens of the State while being an indigenous collective. He believes that while the Arabs who remained after 1948 accepted the State, the State did not accept them and views them as a problem that must be managed. Now, Mr. Khatib sees two opposing realities in Israel. On the one hand, Arabs face poverty and despair, and on the other, Jews enjoy prosperity. He sees this as the result of 60 years of decisions and policies by Israel. The impact has been demeaning for Arab citizens, but Mr. Khatib believes these things can be changed. He told Task Force participants the situation is not all black and that he sees many in Jewish society that want to change this reality and some business men have good intentions to deal with unemployment.
- **Pressing issues:**
  - Working to change the reality of minority relations in Israel through the efforts of committed individuals and legal channels.
  - Israeli Arabs are citizens of the State of Israel and their citizenship is not in question.

- Moving from negotiation and dialogue to real action. He explained that dialogue does not bring change in real life; rather, it leads to frustration. Mr. Khatib thinks dialogue needs to lead to change, or else we risk a real explosion. He sees dialogue as a tool not only for times of crisis, but also as a preventative measure.
- **Solutions:**
  - Mr. Khatib suggested that we create a large-size project that will be economically based to deal with the economic gaps and unemployment.
  - He believes that we have the ability to affect Jewish-Arab dialogue, the leadership of the State and to voice the necessity to focus on economic empowerment programs.

**Rabbi Michael Melchoir, Chairman of the Knesset Committee on Education, Culture and Sports and Co-Chair of the Knesset Jewish-Arab Caucus**, opened his remarks by citing the Torah portion for the week, which focused on the exodus from Egypt. Rabbi Melchoir said the chapter teaches us an important lesson about living in another country and being mistreated. Rabbi Melchoir believes we have forgotten about this important lesson and something has gone wrong on the way.

- **Equality in the State of Israel:** Rabbi Melchoir spoke of the Zionist movement and stated his belief that discriminatory policy towards another people cannot be part of this ideology - not as democratic state and not as a Jewish state. The Jewish people have a responsibility for this issue. He challenged the group - if you care about the Jewish state, you have to involve yourselves with the justice and equality of this state.
- **Equality in education:** Discrimination in the Israeli education system in Israel has resulted in the following facts:
  - 10,000 Arab academics are unemployed
  - Funds for Jewish school-aged children are five times more than what is allocated for Arab children (not including teacher salaries).
- **Equality in philanthropy:** Rabbi Melchoir believes that funds received from the US Jewish community are important to the future of Israel, but warned that funding may only worsen Jewish-Arab inequality in Israel if Israeli Arabs do not share in it. Melchior envisages a three-way bridge in which the State of Israel, the Arab minority and the Jewish Diaspora community work together as an attainable and desirable goal.

**Dr. Aaron Back, Director of the Ford Foundation Israel Fund**, wished the group well on their journey and expressed his hopes for them to have a meaningful experience. The Ford Foundation Israel Fund provided the Task Force with a grant to subsidize the cost for foundation endowment professionals to participate on the trip. Dr. Back's brief comments concluded with a quote from Kahlil Gibran - "If you only see what light reveals, and hear only what sound announces, then in truth, you don't see nor do you hear. So, listen to what is left unsaid."

**January 7, 2008**

**Professor Elie Rekhess, Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and Director of the Konrad Adenauer Program on Jewish-Arab Cooperation in Israel, Tel Aviv University,** provided a historical overview and offered perspectives on national, political and identity issues.

- **A brief history of the Israeli Arab community in three major phases:**
  - **1) 1948 – 1966:** After the establishment of the State of Israel, there were diametrically opposed ideas in Israel: Arabs are citizens, but Arabs are a strategic threat. Arabs were granted citizenship, but military rule was applied in Arab communities, accompanied by harsh security measures.
  - **2) 1967 – 1993:** A period of “Palestinization” of the Arab community in Israel. Military rule was lifted in 1966 and the nationalistic Palestinian and Islamic movements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip influenced Israeli Arab identity and action.
  - **3) 1993 – Present:** In the early nineties, peace agreements between Israel and the PLO met many of the political aspirations of Israeli Arabs, and Israelis Jews began to recognize the place of Israeli Arabs in Palestinian nationhood. Israeli Arabs, however, realizing that the agreements do not change their status in Israel, began to reconsider their national status and question what it means to be a national minority in Israel.
  - This includes addressing:
    - The socioeconomic gaps facing the Arab minority
    - Its virtual exclusion from the political process
    - Their national status, their self-image and the autonomy of a minority in Israel
  - Dr. Rekhess believes that a discussion on how to address these issues is important, but views efforts to undermine Israel’s status as a Jewish and democratic state as unacceptable to the majority of Jews.

**Steps towards equality:**

- Israel must work to close the economic and educational gaps between Jews and Arabs. Dr. Rekhess advocates the implementation of the Or Commission’s recommendations, which would include improved land rights, addressing the issues of the Bedouin in the Negev and the inclusion of Arabs in political, economic and social institutions.
- **Question from the group: “Are there any civil rights leaders in Israel capable of leading this struggle in a way to what Martin Luther King did in the United States?”** Dr. Rekhess says no leader currently fits this mold, and argued that leadership

and leaders are not manufactured. He believes that leaders in the Israeli Arab community will eventually emerge out of the following sources:

- A crisis situation
  - **NGOs** – NGOs play a major role in improving Arab-Jewish relations and are filling the gap created by government neglect.
  - **International community** – The Israeli Arab issue has become internationalized and there is increasing involvement of global players.
- **Jewish involvement:** In Dr. Rekness's view, relations with the Arab minority is the most important issue facing Israel's future. He believes that Western Jewry's effort to become more involved is extremely important, perhaps one of the most important developments, and has the potential to change the way Israel relates to the issue.

**Mohammad Darawshe, Director of External Relations for The Abraham Fund Initiatives,** opened by wishing the group *sabah alkhair*, which means “good morning” in Arabic, and noted that most Israeli and Diaspora Jews do not know that Arabic is an official language in Israel. Mr. Darawshe discussed the current situation in Israel and expressed the importance of building a shared society for Jews and Arabs.

- **A shared society:** Mr. Darawshe believes Israeli Arabs and Jews have to develop a society that is based upon principles of social cohesion and equality. He views this as an issue deserving major strategic attention. He believes the business sector and the Israeli government can continue the work NGOs have started to improve minority relations in Israel.
- **Barriers to equality:** Mr. Darawshe believes different perspectives play a role in the misunderstanding.
  - **Jewish Perspective:** Many Jews in Israel say they cannot trust Arabs, and that the Arabs have to demonstrate their goodwill before being granted equal rights.
  - **Arab Perspective:** Many Arabs believe that in order to achieve coexistence in Israel, Arabs must first be granted equal rights.
- **Future Vision documents:** The Future Vision documents drew a distinction between the government's relations with the Palestinians in the territories and its relations with its Arab citizenry. At the same time, the demand for equality threatened the status quo of the Jewish majority's dominance in Israel. Mr. Darawshe's explained that, in the past, Israeli Arabs felt they should be grateful for receiving basic services. Now they realize they are entitled to more than just services – they want to be partners in governance.
- **Role of philanthropy:** Mr. Darawshe believes that the Task Force and the Or Commission have brought this issue to the surface but there is still a lot of work to do. He asked the participants not to recycle old, ineffective programs, but to work and consult with those already working on the ground. He is cautious of the term “coexistence” and “coexistence programs,” and believes this is a topic that should be addressed strategically and carefully. He noted that programs which introduce Jewish and Arab children briefly often do more harm than good. The programs may surface the problems and issues facing minority relations in Israel, and the children take home the problems and issues to their family without proper perspective or growth.

- **Three Key Issues:** Mr. Darawshe believes it is essential to develop and implement a framework with the Israeli government that works to create an Israel that is inclusive of all its citizens. He views the following three issues as key to the future of minority relations in Israel.
  - **Land rights:** Although the Arab citizens comprise 20% of the population, they own 2.7% of the land in Israel.
  - **Economic status:** The poverty rate in the Arab sector currently stands at nearly 60% and is rising. Economic ventures must be established in Arab communities. Money from abroad is not able to solve this issue alone – the active participation of the government is essential.
  - **Government legitimacy in the Arab sector:** Since Israel is a state for the Jewish people, it lacks legitimacy in the Arab sector. Arab-Jewish relations in Israel are a litmus test for Israeli relations with Arab countries in the region. Mr. Darawshe fears that the next domestic clashes may be around the corner and that in order to prevent them, everyone must work together.

Following the presentations by Dr. Rekhess and Mr. Darawshe, the delegation traveled to **Kibbutz Ma'anit** and **Um al Fahm** and in the **Wadi Ara** region.

At **Kibbutz Ma'anit (Narbata)**, **Shuli Dichter, Co-Executive Director** of the Israeli NGO **Sikkuy**, spoke about the modern history of Jewish settlement in the region, the relationships between neighboring Jewish and Arab communities since 1948 and why the gaps between Israeli Jews and Arabs are politically deep.

- **Jewish settlement:** Narbata (now Kibbutz Ma'anit) was an ancient Jewish village during the Roman era. Kibbutz Ma'anit was founded in 1942 by Hashomer Hatzair, and the Polish and Czech immigrants who moved here felt a connection to the land. Katzir, a Jewish town near Um al-Fahm, was established in 1982. Unlike its Arab neighbors, Katzir is a planned community, built with Jewish Agency aid as part of Israel's development programs.
- **Relations with Arab neighbors:**
  - **History:** Kibbutzim in the area were built during the 1936-39 riots to serve as a “wedge” between Arab communities in the south and Wadi Ara. Despite the fact that these kibbutzim were initially set up for strategic purposes, some of them have opened up to neighboring Arab towns.
  - **Evolution of relations:** Mr. Dichter told the story of an American cultural attaché from the United States Embassy who visited Kibbutz Metzger, which is in the region and has maintained good relations with its Arab neighbors. The attaché asked about the kibbutz's economic relationship with its Arab neighbors. The secretary of the kibbutz said it was more closely connected to central Israel and not to its Arab neighbors. It became clear to Mr. Dichter at that time that the kibbutz was still acting like a security “wedge” rather than promoting the cooperation needed for regional relationships to evolve.
- **Prospects for equality:** In response to a question about the feasibility of achieving Arab-Jewish equality in Israel, Mr. Dichter responded that the best prospects for equality can

be achieved in the free market economy: entrepreneurs, jobs, etc. Achieving equality in government controlled fields is a greater challenge.

- **Types of industrial parks and their importance:**
  - **Local** – The government offers incentives to manufacturers to set up shop in one area where they can receive services needed to maintain their businesses and control pollution. Revenue from this industrial park is then used to fund local government services.
  - **Regional** – Serves an entire region and the revenue from this industrial park is given to the municipality in which the park is located.
  - Industrial parks provide much needed employment and income to municipalities and regions. There have been no industrial parks established within the jurisdiction of an Arab town, though there have been steps towards this goal, including shared industrial zones.
  
- **Current initiatives to strengthen Israeli Arab communities:**
  - Arab municipalities across Israel rank low on the government's social-economic scale. In 1994, the Ministry of Interior began including Arab cities in a government initiative to improve the quality of life. By 2004, the Arab sector was to have met the same standards as the Jewish sector but there are still gaps. In 2008, the government measured an equality rate of 85%.
  - Sikkuy developed a Jewish-Arab Mayors Forum in which mayors in the Wadi Ara area develop joint employment, tourism and environment initiatives. Important achievements of the forum include:
    - In relation to the new Route 6, an agreement to create two joint Arab-Jewish industrial areas has been reached.
    - The establishment of a non-profit organization that promotes local tourism
    - An agreement between local authorities and public institutions to cooperate in caring for the environment in Wadi Ara.

In Umm al Fahm, **Ali Haider, Co-Executive Director of Sikkuy, and Mohammad Rabah, Director of Equality for the Environment**, provided participants with a historical background of Umm al-Fahm and detailed the municipality's infrastructure:

- **History and growth:** The Umm al-Fahm area can trace its roots back 4000 years, when the region had connections to Egyptian culture. It has grown rapidly since the establishment of the State of Israel. In 1986, it was granted the status of a formal city and a municipality was established. Umm al-Fahm's 45,000 Muslim residents are divided into four families, with each family having approximately 12,000 family members.
- **Economic situation:** Despite the municipality's low budget, there has been a surge of infrastructure development over the past ten years. Sewage and water systems were installed 12 years ago, but government funding for infrastructure projects is hard to obtain. Taxes do not provide sufficient revenue to the city. When Israel was established, the state confiscated neighboring lands and residents lost a major portion of their source of income from agriculture. Before 1948, Arabs owned 143,000 dunams of land in the area; they now own 26,000 dunams.

- **Employment opportunities:** More than 85% of the women and more than 20% of the men are unemployed. Jobs must be created for both men and women, especially in the tourism and environment industries. Mr. Rabah expressed a need for an industrial zone in the city, and pointed out that not a single industrial park has been established within the jurisdiction of an Arab town.

At the **Umm al-Fahm Art Gallery**, **Said Abu-Shakra**, its **founder** and **director**, discussed the history of the gallery, its importance to the community and prospects for the first **Israeli Arab Museum of Art**.

- **History:** The idea for creating the art gallery in Umm al-Fahm was met with strong local opposition and no government support or funding. People said that there was no chance for a gallery, that there was no interest in art and that people were only interested in food and work. Some local residents and artists, however, wanted to bring quality contemporary art to the city and exhibit original Arab and Palestinian art. Thanks to the relentless efforts of local residents and artists, the gallery was built in 1996. Together, they were able to overcome the lack of local qualified professionals, resources and infrastructure.
- The gallery has become an important social and cultural meeting place. School tours and creative workshops are held for children and there is a wide variety of art classes.
- **The first Israeli Arab Museum of Art:** More than 130 artists and architects are competing to design a contemporary art museum in Umm al-Fahm. The future art museum is looking for an Arab and Jewish management team and will serve as a bridge between two cultures and a center for dialogue.

From Umm al Fahm, the participants traveled to **Nazareth** to participate in a high level meeting on approaches to economic and business development in the Arab sector. It was hosted by the **Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development (CJAED)** and its **Director, Helmi Kittani**.

Following is a summary of the presentations and panels.

- **Mr. Kittani** said that since its establishment in 1988, CJAED has worked to advance business and economic development through programs that promote equal economic opportunity, shared society and increased prosperity for all citizens of Israel. To achieve this, the center develops Jewish-Arab business partnerships and initiatives to help Jewish and Arab women and men reach their full economic and social potential. This includes:
  - The first Jewish-Arab incubator for bio-technology in Nazareth, which can serve as a model for working together throughout the country
  - Development of two joint Jewish-Arab industrial zones, which will include the municipalities of Meggido, Yokneam and Carmel in the north and Rosh Ha'ayin and Kfar Kassem in central Israel
  - Working with the private sector, developing businesses near Arab towns that can provide new jobs for the inhabitants
  - Providing job training so that unemployed Arabs become more attractive to potential employers
  - Development of more than 3,000 small businesses owned by women, generating 5,000 new jobs total

- Initiation of two masters programs with the University of Haifa to bring Jews and Arabs together to work on business initiatives. The program has resulted in 150 graduates and works to promote the basic idea that Arab and Jewish municipalities would benefit from working together.
  - Eighty new engineers hired for high-tech jobs at CJAED's most recent job fair in Haifa
- **Basher Abdel Raziq, Deputy Mayor, Nazareth:** Deputy Mayor Raziq emphasized the importance of promoting economic initiatives in Nazareth, Israel's largest Arab city, towards the goal of a shared and equal society. He noted that the Arab sector has the highest rate of poverty in Israel and the Arab local authorities are the poorest and most neglected. He believes that the problem does not stem from bad management alone. Nazareth has no land reserves and needs new economic centers in the old city as well as industrial zones. In the Galilee, 90% of industrial zones are under the jurisdiction of Jewish authorities, 6% are under mixed management, and only 4% are under the jurisdiction of Arab municipalities. Through economic cooperation, he believes individual wealth will increase and the Arab community in Israel will begin to feel empowered. Deputy Mayor Raziq's key thoughts regarding change include:
    - In Nazareth, the revitalization of the old market to boost tourism
    - New industrial zones to create jobs and improve the quality of life in Arab communities
    - The development of employment opportunities for Arab women
    - Israel needs fair economic development policies at the government level
  - **Eytan Biderman, Chair, Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development:** Mr. Biderman detailed his 20 years of experience promoting Arab-Jewish economic cooperation and said his work in Arab communities is in support of the Jewish state. He believes his time in America taught him important lessons about the civil rights movement, and he was proud to learn more about the role American Jews played in this process.

He believes that the Jewish sector has missed many opportunities to achieve a more just society by failing to integrate Arabs into the economy. He says that the fact that 20% of Israel's population are left out of the society and the economy weakens Israel. He noted that help provided to Israel by American and European Jewish communities has ultimately increased the gaps between Jews and Arabs, and future assistance from Western Jewish communities has to be carefully managed to fix the problem. Mr. Biderman encouraged participants to make their feelings known in the public debate in Israel and to work on opportunities in the business arena that can have significant impact.

The panel entitled "**Approaches to Economic and Business Development in the Arab Sector,**" offered insight on funding initiatives in Arab communities.

- **Patsy Landa, social investor, The Landa Fund for Equal Opportunity:** Ms. Landa described her philanthropic work as promoting shared citizenship and equal opportunities in Israel through *investment*, not *giving*. The Landa Fund is motivated by its concern for a Jewish state and believes equal opportunity for minorities is essential for Israel's future. Grants include support for educational initiatives throughout Israel. Ms. Landa believes that in order to ensure systematic and sustainable impact, challenges facing Israel's minority need

to be tackled by both Israeli and Western philanthropy on the grassroots and governmental level.

- **Grassroots:** In terms of grassroots work, Ms. Landa believes there is no better way for groups to get to know each other than by talking. She described growing up in Canada, where students are required to learn French. Ms. Landa said this helped Anglo-Canadians relate better to the French minority, and believes that if the Arabic language were compulsory in Israel, Jews would have a better understanding of Arabs. She cited the work of Merchavim in this field. Similarly, Ms. Landa believes that if more Arabs learned Hebrew, it would improve Jewish-Arab relations and the economic status of their community.
  - **Government:** Ms. Landa strongly believes that regardless of how generous philanthropy is, it is no match for the resources and influence of the Israeli government, which is the most important partner in this struggle. She said Sikkuy had significant influence on government policy in specific areas. Additionally, Merchavim successfully works with the Education Ministry to find employment for Arab teachers in areas other than Arabic.
  - **Key thoughts for philanthropy:** Equal opportunity for minorities is essential for Israel's future. Ms. Landa emphasized that one cannot allow Arab citizens to be left behind; it is a matter of survival for the State. Ms. Landa believes Israeli and American philanthropy are partners in this issue and they should continue to focus their efforts on it.
- **Dov Lautman, Chairman of Delta Galil Textiles / Founder of The Lautman Foundation:** Mr. Lautman discussed his work with the Arab population in Galilee and his over 40 years of working with the Arab minority. He mentioned his own organization, Delta Galil Textiles, and how Arabs achieved managerial positions based on merit.

He detailed the work of his new program which operates on the assumption that Arab university graduates need more help finding work in their field and require more support to ensure their success in the workplace.

Mr. Lautman spoke of the work of a new government advisory organization he is chairing, the Prime Minister's Arab-Israeli Economic Development Agency, Kav Mashve, which assists those interested in making effective investments in Arab communities and Arab companies. The effectiveness of this agency will be measured and analyzed after more work has been done.

- **Professor Yossi Tamir, Director of JDC's TEVET Employment Initiative:** Professor Tamir explained how JDC is trying to help Israel's most vulnerable populations, including Arabs, by providing them with the soft-skills needed to become employable. There are many barriers facing Arabs entering the job market: poor education, bigoted employers and co-workers, cultural barriers, foreign workers, etc. Israel currently has a robust economy, with a strong stock exchange and currency. However, the successes have not trickled down to the Arab sector.
  - **Key statistics:**
    - 50% of all unemployed young adults in Israel are Arabs
    - 60% of children in the Arab sector are under the poverty line

- 70% of non-Jews who are working in part-time jobs are doing so because they have no other option
- **TEVET's solutions:**
  - **Training:** A new approach to training, which features language and computer skills, and basic skills needed to become employable, but prioritizes job placement and providing key on-the-job training
  - **Women's empowerment and small business initiatives:** Breaking down barriers for women, while maintaining respect for cultures is a key goal. Through initiatives like providing Arab women with microfinance loans for small businesses and training to be kindergarten teachers, Arab women can become part of the workforce.

**Oren Magnezi, Founding Director of the Prime Minister Office's Agency for Economic Development of the Arab Sector**, noted that, as someone who grew up in an American Jewish community, it does not surprise him to see so many Americans working on behalf of Israel's minority. He encouraged those who are questioned by donors as to why American Jews should care about this issue to talk about Dov Lautman and Patsy Landa, philanthropists who have done such impressive work in this arena.

The Arab-Israeli Economic Development Agency was created to oversee other government agencies working in the Arab sector. Mr. Magnezi's agency focuses on helping women and academically trained individuals find employment, promoting private equity investment projects and ensuring that Arab businesses have the resources they need to succeed. Mr. Magnezi assured participants that the government is intervening to promote investments and is not working to replace the important work of NGOs. The agency has developed an advisory board, headed by Dov Lautman, which will consist of 10 Arabs and 10 Jews who are leaders in their industries. The agency is planning a conference in June 2008 that will focus on improvement in the areas of education, personal security and the economy.

The panel, entitled "**Integration of Arab Professionals into Appropriate Employment,**" included:

- Professor Daoud Bshouty, the Technion
- Ronen Kochler, Check Point
- Smadar Nehab, Tsofen
- Irit Tamir, Kav Mashveh

The panelists noted that more Arabs are studying technology than ever before. Banking was noted as a field of interest, though they deal with discrimination in this area. Arabs in the field of medicine, however, suffer very little discrimination, and have generally been successful in Israel.

At the Technion, Arab enrollment has risen from 200 two years ago, to 300 last year and 420 this year, when it was 23.5% of the total new enrollment. Next year, the Technion hopes to enroll 500 Arab students. Four Arab professors are on the faculty.

There are many organizations working to help with this problem. Kav Mashveh helps Arab students get their CVs into the hands of companies and finds jobs for qualified students.

Similarly, Tsofen seeks to both reach out to potential employers in the Galilee and groom young Israeli Arab students to compete for jobs in the real world.

The panel entitled “**Economic Development and Joint Employment Zones,**” included:

- Kaid Abu-Ayyash, businessman
- Rajah Badran, Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development
- Prof. Rasem Khamaisi, University of Hifa
- Prof. Itzhak Schnell, Tel Aviv University
- Yishai Sorek, Ministry for the Development of the Negev and Galilee
- Tamin Yassin, businessman

Panelists emphasized the importance of the American Jewish community in encouraging economic development and the establishment of joint Arab-Jewish employment zones in Arab communities. They noted that businesses in central Israel will likely play the biggest role in promoting economic development in northern and southern Arab communities. They suggested that subsidies should be provided to businesses in order to encourage them to hire Arab workers and that providing vocational training for Arabs is key to the success of joint industrial zones. Government representatives emphasized that Negev and Upper Galilee development hinges on the inclusion of the Arab sector. The panelists agreed that ultimately everyone will benefit from greater Arab integration into the Israeli economy and that all involved must join to influence government policies.

The final panel entitled “**Women in Business and the Economy Workshop,**” included:

- Alona Abt, co-owner and CEO of HOP! TV Channel
- Galia Albin, businesswoman
- Kiram Baloum, Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development
- Miriam Dagan, Givat Haviva
- MK Nadia Hilou
- Rogette Inawi, businesswoman
- Dr. Miri Lerner, Tel Aviv-Yafo Academic College's Management School

The panelists described academic issues relating to Israeli Arab women in the business sector and different types of entrepreneurship. They noted that family businesses play a significant role in the Arab sector's economy. Some panelists said that one of the major issues is that people who want jobs do not have proper information about the job market. Other panelists noted the importance of working within the culture of the Arab community to stimulate economic development. To this end, Israeli Arab women need family management courses and assistance in navigating the Israeli social service system.

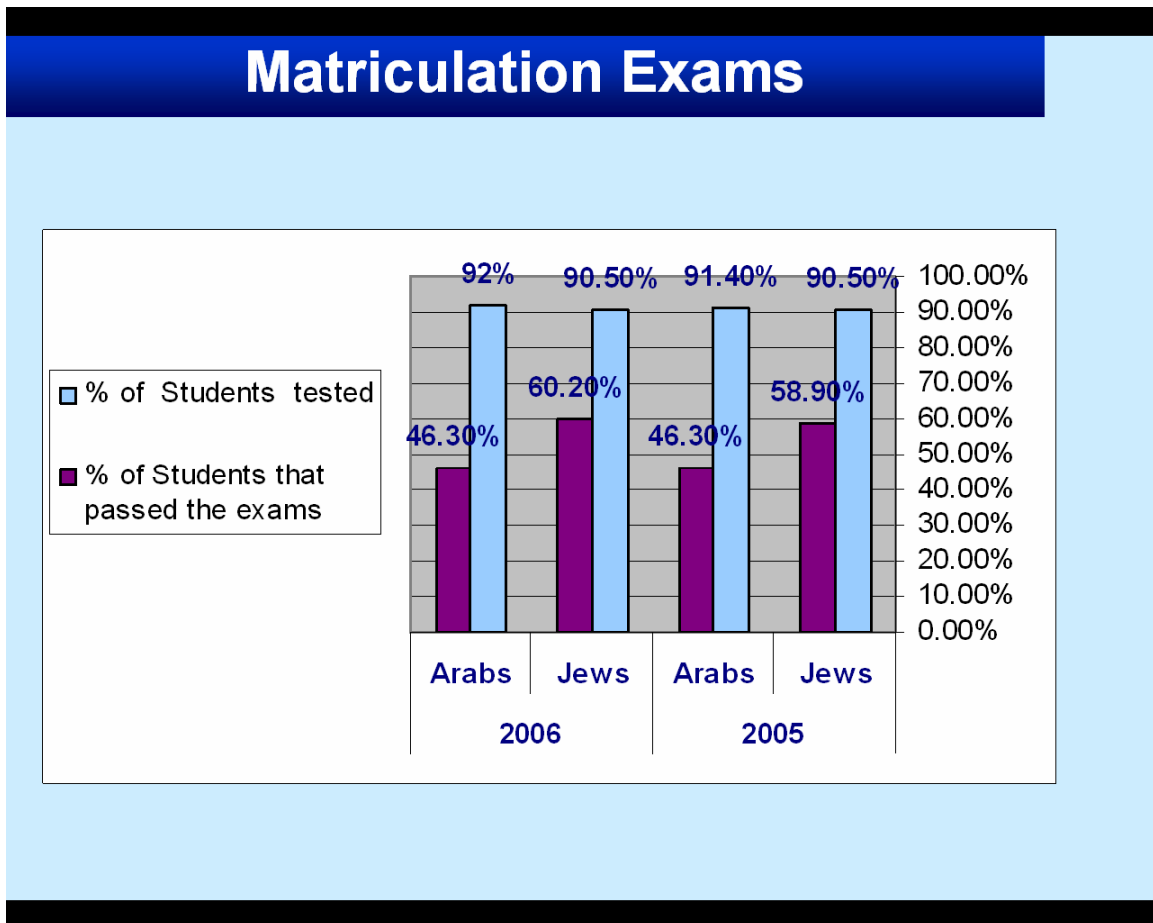
January 8, 2008

Shlomit Amichai, Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Education, provided an overview of the Israeli education system, particularly as it related to the Arabs.

- **Overview:**

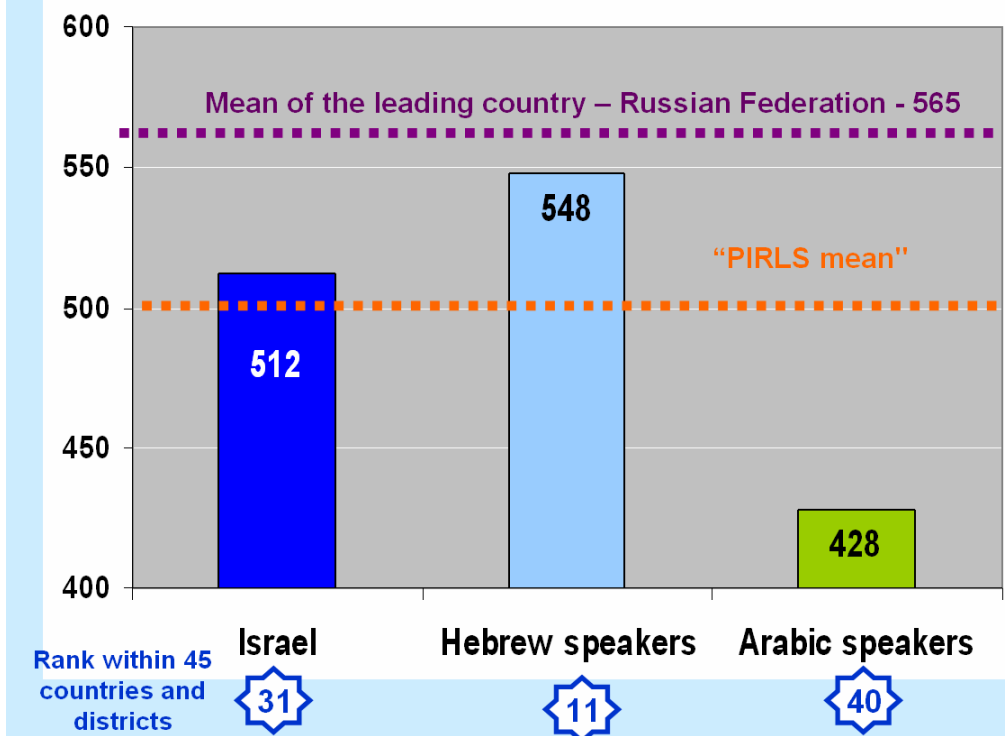
- 18.88% of schoolchildren are Arab, 5.09% are Bedouins, 2.28% are Druze and 73.75% are Jews

In 2006, 60.2% of Jewish students passed their matriculation exams, compared to 46.3% of Arab students. Ms. Amichai used the slide below to represent this disparity graphically.



- In recent Israeli and international standardized exams, the Israeli Arab population scored significantly lower than the Jewish population and below international averages. The slide below shows Jewish and Arab scores on the 2006 internationally administered PIRLS exam, which is given to fourth grade students as a test of reading literacy in their mother's language.

## Mean achievements and rank of Israel – PIRLS 2006



- **Language and cultural differences:**

- Arab students use ‘spoken’ Arabic at home, but in school they are taught ‘literary’ Arabic.
- It is difficult for Arab teachers in an Arab school to teach Hebrew, a language which is not their mother tongue. The Ministry of Education has assembled experts, including Israeli Arab and Jordanian academics, to look into how to address this problem.
- Jewish children learn Arabic in the eight and ninth grade curriculum. Ms. Amichai observed that it does not work well and the students do not favor this course. The Ministry of Education continues to promote it because of its importance.

- **The Ministry of Education’s plan:**

- **Early-childhood education:** Ms. Amichai spoke of a new program, “New Beginnings,” which works to identify the weakest kindergarten students in both the Jewish and Arab sector. One-third of the communities targeted are Arab communities.
- **Making curriculum relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century:** Less emphasis on memorizing facts and more emphasis on “getting the picture and learning how to learn.”
- **Smaller classes:** There is an average of 35 – 40 students in each class in Israel, with Arab classrooms generally at the higher end. The aim is to reduce the number to 32 within the next 10 years

- **Teachers:** The Ministry recognizes the urgent need for an investment in teacher training. Teachers in Arab schools are paid the same salaries as teachers in Jewish schools, which helps attract and retain talented instructors.
- **The role of philanthropy in the education system:** In terms of current successes, Ms. Amichai noted the contributions made by the Joint Distribution Committee and the Everett Foundation in the Druze community in promoting informal education in collaboration with government. She also mentioned a San Francisco Federation program that works with Israeli Arab parents and students, which she said would be a dream program for all Arab villages.
- **In terms of future funding, Ms. Amichai suggested:**
  - Teachers training
  - After-school programs that focus on achievement and excellence
  - Purchasing new equipment, particularly computers and lab equipment

After Ms. Amichai's presentation, the **Israel Arab Focus Group of the Forum of Foundations in Israel** convened to **discuss philanthropic initiatives in the Israeli Arab community and the role of Arab NGOs.**

Following the roundtable discussions, **Jeff Solomon, Chair, Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues Foundation Forum / President, The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and Don Futterman, Chair, Israel Arab Focus Group of the Israeli Foundation Forum / Program Director, Moriah Fund** stated that the purpose of the meeting is to share experience and knowledge and have greater impact in Israel.

Two foundation case studies were presented.

### **Case Study 1: Funding Media Projects as a Vehicle to Promote Social Change**

**Howard Sohn, Vice Chair and Executive of the Fohs Foundation,** spoke about what motivated the Foundation in determining its grants guidelines.

- A sense that a growing minority that is socio-economically disadvantaged is likely to be destabilizing to Israel
- A short term solution will not solve the problem
- Equal opportunity and a culture of mutual respect are key

**Goal:** The integration of Israeli Jewish and Arab societies, while maintaining cultural identity, through the medium of the Israeli media.

- **Fohs supported media-centric initiatives:**
  - **Duet** – A dual-language quarterly publication that focuses on Arab-Jewish relations. The challenge is that it is hard to gauge effect and readership. Some articles appear biased to readers, yet it does represent a range of readers. Duet is produced by the Citizens Accord Forum.
  - **Arab Journalist Workshop** – Aims to provide entrance opportunities for Arabs seeking entry in the journalism profession. Approximately 20 – 25 Arab

participants are involved in the *Haaretz* / Ben Gurion sponsored program. Placing Arab participants in media professions has proven a significant challenge.

- **Support for Sesame Street/HOP Channel** – Educational television programming targeting for ages three to nine, featuring Arab and Jewish actors, and focusing on mutual respect in a shared society. The Fohs Foundation viewed the first year of funding as a great success and believes this is a good example of playing a small, significant role in a large program.
  - **Documentaries** – The Fohs Foundation is currently supporting a series entitled “The Sector,” which will be a five-part series on the Arabs in Israel. The Fohs Foundation contributes to the cost of production, which is approximately \$80,000 per episode. A past example of a Fohs Foundation supported documentary is “Sons of Sakhnin.”
  - **“Avoda Aravit”** – Israeli Arab focused sitcom airing on Keshet Channel 2. The sitcom has received positive reviews and the Fohs Foundation views it as a success.
  - **Agenda** – Provides general support for this non-profit center working to reprioritize and reframe social change issues within the Israeli public debate and mainstream media.
  - **Sikkuy media and advocacy program** – Provides support for Sikkuy’s media outreach campaign
- **Conclusion:** In Israel, there is an important role for funding initiatives. Fohs encourages funders to think about the role of the media in effecting social change.

## **Case Study 2: Establishing the Sir Charles Clore Jewish-Arab Community Center in the Wolfson neighborhood of Akko**

### **Kay Weinberger, Trustee of the Clore Israel Foundation**

- **Focus of the Clore Israel Foundation:** A mandate to bridge gaps in society, including the health, social welfare, culture, leisure, support for minorities and education of Jews and Arabs.
- **The Clore Israel Foundation philosophy in regards to Israeli Arabs:** Aims to provide equal access to opportunities for all of Israel’s citizens. The Foundation is not involved in basic coexistence projects, which it believes are less measurable and more transitory, but prefers to fund projects that support a local Arab or mixed community, including community centers and sports projects, while encouraging organic coexistence between neighbors.
- **The situation in Akko:** Akko (Acre) is one of Israel’s seven mixed cities. Though Jews and Arabs go to different schools, they live in same neighborhoods, shop in each other’s shops, and were relatively unaffected by the two Intifadas. The economy was and is in bad shape, weakened by the more well-to-do moving to neighboring towns.
- **The Wolfson neighborhood:**
  - **Background:** In 1989, the Wolfson neighborhood, where the community center project operates, was a poor place with no greenery around. The neighborhood had approximately 1,600 residents – 45% Jewish and 55% Arab, with mostly positive relations between the two groups.

- **Early programs:** In the mid 1980's, many foundations began investing in the Wolfson neighborhood, notably the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, which sought to empower local residents with the formation of the Association for Jewish Arab Community and Education in Akko. The organization operated many educational programs in bomb shelters and local storefronts, but it became apparent that that some kind of centralized location was needed.
- **The project:**
  - The Clore Israel Foundation was asked to assist in setting up a community center on top of the bomb shelters. The foundation has supported this project for 20 years in three different ways:
    - Built the three-story community center, which provides additional classrooms, seminar rooms, office space and a hall to be used for community events
    - Provided assistance for youth workers salaries, computers and furniture
    - Provided help with additional operation and overhead costs, though this is not common Clore Israel Foundation practice. This commitment was made to encourage further investment from other funders.
  - **Highlights of the program:**
    - Recently, volunteer counselors, both Jewish and Arab, participated in an international youth program called the Duke of Edinburgh Award. One participant from Akko, a 17 year-old Arab camp counselor who grew up participating in community center programs, won the highest recognition from the program and was awarded a gold medal by Prince Edward on a recent trip to Israel.
    - The community maintains the center beautifully, painting and decorating during the summer time.
    - The center has shown it can adapt quickly to changing circumstances. In the Second Lebanon War, the community served as a bomb shelter for the community and was recognized by many as the best bomb shelter in the city.
    - The center receives significant contributions from the philanthropic community.
  - **Problems faced:**
    - There are fewer Jews in the Wolfson neighborhood now than 20 years ago, which changes the scope of the project. The center now focuses less on co-existence programs.
    - There is a reluctance among Jewish youth to mix with Arab youth
    - The consistent failure of the Akko municipality to provide support has left the Foundation feeling frustrated
  - **Overall benefits:** The center is a source of great pride and is a huge bonus for the many residents of Akko.

Trip participants spent time interacting with 50 members of the Israeli Foundation Forum discussing:

- Programs funded by their respective organization
- What went right and what went wrong
- What was viewed as a success and what did not meet expectations
- What the advantages and disadvantages were
- Any general lessons learned

Following the Israeli Foundation Forum session, participants traveled to **Sakhnin**.

Representatives of **Neighbors for Joint Development in the Galilee**, **Daniel Kahana** and **Mustafa Abu Roomi**, both **urban planners** and **architects**, described the regional complexities facing the region. From where the group stood, with a view of the **Sakhnin** and **Beit Netofa Valleys**, the geographical proximity of the Arab and Jewish villages came into focus. Neighbors for Joint Development in the Galilee, whose members are mainly Jewish and Arab urban planners and architects, works to establish and provide answers to the needs of all populations without regard to ethnicity and religion. It involves Jewish and Arab residents of neighboring communities in planning how to get to know each other better and cooperate on joint projects for the benefit of the culture and economy as a whole.

- **The current situation in the Galilee:** Jews and Arabs live together in the north. Arabs work in Jewish villages. Jews buy goods from Arabs. Jews and Arabs use the same roads, water, sewage facilities, etc. The Sakhnin Valley includes three large Arab villages – Dir Hanna, Arabeh and Sakhnin. The Jewish population in the north is declining, due to a low birth-rate and migration to other areas of Israel. While the majority of Jews can, and do, move from place to place throughout Israel, Arabs tend to stay in one village their entire life. The Jewish communities and outposts, or *mitzpim*, established in the area were seen as strategic investments and have received significantly more investment from the government in terms of infrastructure. Recently, the government built new schools in Arab communities in the area but there is still a lot of work to do.
- **Misgav:** The Misgav Region Council has 30,000 residents: 10,000 Arabs and 20,000 Jews. The Arabs have title to 10,000 dunams of land and the Jews hold 200,000 dunams. The lack of sufficient land for Arab needs causes many problems. There is a pressing need for industrial areas in the Arab sector.

**Ruth Ben Dov** and **Ali Abu Salah**, also of **Neighbors for Joint Development in the Galilee**, spoke about the agricultural issues facing the Arabs in the area.

- **Agriculture:** Mr. Abu Salah noted that 80% of the agricultural land in the Natufa Valley, which floods every winter, is owned by Arab citizens, and the other 20% was taken by the government in 1948. Water from the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret) is channeled through the Valley to the Negev. The land in the valley, which is famous for its watermelons, needs irrigation, but the farmers are not permitted to tap into National Water Carrier. A plan to drain the flooded parts of the valley for irrigation has been rejected by environmental groups, leaving the Arab farmers to look for other water sources.

The group then traveled to **Sakhnin**, where participants were welcomed by the Mayor, **Muhammad Bashir**.

- **Arabs in Israel:** Mayor Bashir believes the establishment of a Palestinian state is essential and is proud of the Arab MKs and Minister Majadele, who he believes can help make this a reality. He said he is committed to his Israeli citizenship and believes in cooperation between Jews and Arabs.
- **Sakhnin and Arab municipalities:** Mayor Bashir stated that though Arabs make up 20% of the population, they receive only four percent of government allocations. Sakhnin's population of 27,000 suffers from many of the same problems as other Arab communities. The unemployment rate is 13-14%, compared to the national average of 15% in the Arab sector. Mayor Bashir noted the main problems are land and space. In 1948, Sakhnin had 70,000 dunams of land; today the municipal area is only 9,600 dunams. In 2004, Sakhnin applied for permission to expand its jurisdiction, but was granted little additional land.
- **Roles of philanthropy:** Sakhnin has benefited from the work of NGOs, such as Givat Haviva, which helped put up a bilingual school in the town. Mayor Bashir believes funders can have a greater impact by bringing Sakhnin's pressing needs to the attention of the government and by working with the municipality to develop new cultural centers, theaters, clinics and hospital emergency rooms.

**A group of educators, students and professionals from Sakhnin** offered their insights into both the Sakhnin and Israeli Arab education systems. Speakers included **Ghazi Abu Ria, a writer and teacher in Sakhnin; Salua Abu Ria, a school principal; Nabia Abu Slah, Chairman, Arab Education Supervision Committee; Amira Musa, CEO, El Amer; Nagua Seid Ahmed, student; and Camal Zvidat, Principal, El Najah elementary school**

- **Israeli education system:** The speakers said that the situation in Sakhnin is a microcosm of what is happening in Israel, and that there are serious problems with the Israeli education system.
- **Students Challenged:** The speakers explained that Arab students experience many difficulties at the university level.
  - The Arab teaching method is very different from Jewish teaching method. The Arab method is one of "parroting," rather than understanding and questioning.
  - Most Arab students learn only Arabic until they are 18 years old, and often do not learn Hebrew. This presents a problem in the universities.
  - Many Arab students feel as if there is a low ceiling preventing them from entering many professions. Therefore, many Arabs go to independent professions that do not require being part of an institution or to pass any entry exams.
  - The speakers noted the prevailing belief that to get a good job you have to serve in the Israeli Army. The school is considering promoting National Service, but already encourages volunteerism.

In Sakhnin, **Ze'ev Hayut, CEO of the Israeli NGO Tzafona**, spoke about the work Tzafona does to promote education and economic development in Israeli Arab communities. Tzafona was established in June 2006 by the Jewish Agency for Israel, and private entrepreneurs in order to advance northern Israel economically and socially. According to a government decision of March 2005, Tzafona was to dedicate itself to turning northern Israel into an advanced, well-established, competitive and economically sound region that offers a high quality of life that would entice residents of the north to remain and at the same time, attract new residents.

- **Education:** Tzafona seeks to establish informal education programs in Arab communities and to strengthen the relationship between Israeli institutions of higher learning potential Arab students. It regards the establishment of science and technological focused centers of education in Arab communities as a major key to economic development, providing marketable skills for students to bring to potential employers. Tzafona often reaches out to potential employers to recommend participants in its training programs.
- **Tzafona Loan Fund:** Offers loans to small and mid-size businesses and entrepreneurs operating in the north. Between 30 and 50% of the loans have gone to Israeli Arabs. Tzofen also works to provide job training and promote the businesses they invest in.

The group traveled was welcomed at the **Misgav Community Center** by Ron Shani, Mayor of Misgav, **Liat Bleher, the Director; Omer Naor, Director of the Center's Youth/Education Department and Oren Azar, Director, Misgav Musical Center.**

- **Misgav background:**
  - The Misgav Regional Council comprises 35 villages, most of them Jewish.
  - There are six Arab villages, each with about 150-200 families.
  - Bedouins comprise a third of the Council's population of 20,000.
  - The Bedouin community of Salame has the highest number of volunteers in the Israeli Army of any Bedouin village.
  - Unemployment is 7% in Misgav, compared to 13-14% in nearby Sakhnin
  - In most of the mixed villages in Misgav, the Jewish neighborhoods are more developed than the Arab ones.
- **Misgav Community Center:** The goal of the center is to lead cultural and leisure activities for the whole population of Misgav. The center adapts the activities to the needs of the population, which often means different activities for Jews and Bedouin.
- **Misgav music program:** Oren Azar noted some of the questions one must ask when directing a music program at a multi-cultural, bilingual school: is the conductor going to be an Arab or a Jew? Will they sing songs in Hebrew or Arabic?

\* Since our meeting in Misgav, *Haaretz* reported that Mohammed Abu Dauf, Chairman of the Bedouin town of Dmeide, had been elected to serve as Deputy Chairman of the Misgav Regional Council, the first time a Bedouin has been elected to the position since Misgav's inception. ("Bedouin councilman elected to Misgav Regional Council for first time," *Haaretz*, February 5, 2008)

From Sakhnin, the group traveled to the Druze village of **Usifiya**, where participants enjoyed a traditional Druze dinner and were welcomed by **Shuki Hasson**, a Druze resident currently serving in the Israeli Army. He spoke about his experience.

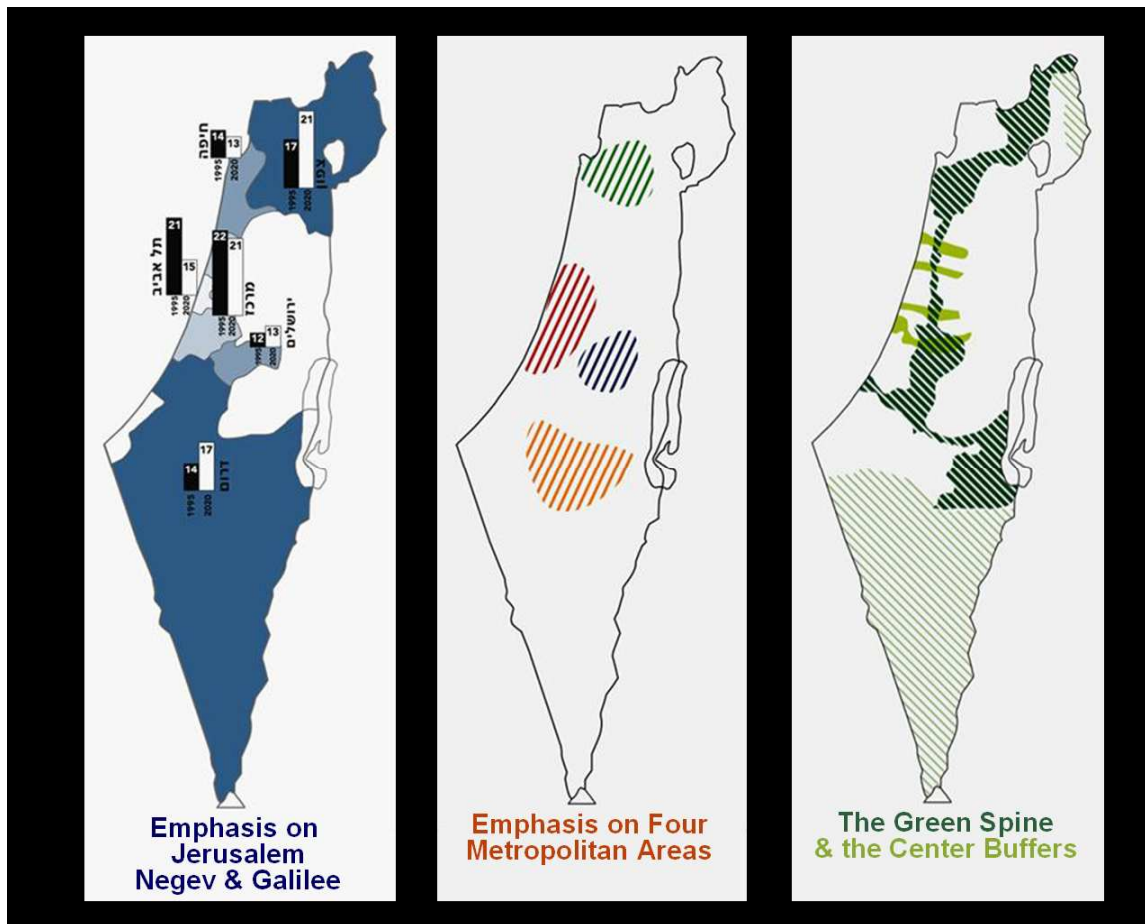
- **Druze in Israel:** Mr. Hasson said that, compared to Israeli Arabs, Druze are more involved with the Jewish community, and attributes this to the high level of Druze enlistment in the Israeli Army. He noted that many call the Druze and Jews "brothers in blood," which he prefers to modify to "brothers in life," as Jews and Druze do not share the same family, but have similar cultural rules and beliefs.

- **Volunteerism and community programs:** The Druze community is increasingly more involved in National Service, with enrollment increasing more than 10% this year. Shuki has seen firsthand the benefits of volunteerism in his community. Before volunteering, he saw many of his peers sitting around doing nothing and promoting negative energy. As a volunteer in the JDC program AMEN, he volunteered in many facets throughout his village and saw how it benefited the community and himself.

January 9, 2008

Shamay Assif, Director of Planning and Administration in the Ministry of the Interior, presented an overview of the challenges facing the Bedouin community in the Negev and offered potential solutions.

- **National plan for development:** A national plan was approved by the government recently, dealing with building, development and preservation throughout Israel. The plan divides the country into three main categories, as seen below in a slide he presented. :
  - 1) Jerusalem, Negev and the Galilee
  - 2) Four different metropolitan areas including Beer Sheva as the core of the Negev's metropolitan area
  - 3) A "Green Spine" and Central Buffers



- **The Bedouin in the Negev:** Mr. Assif presented various facts pertaining to the Bedouin population, detailed in the following slide.

## *Beer Sheva Metropolitan Region/District Master Plan*

### Bedouin population

- ☑ The largest rate of natural population increase in the world - 5.5% per year.
- ☑ Lowest socio-economic conditions in Israel.
  - ☑ High dependency rate, very low participation in the work force.
  - ☑ 50%-60% of the population resides in seven recognized towns.
  - ☑ 40%-50% in unrecognized settlements.
- ☑ New/rehabilitated 12 Abu Bassma suburban/rural settlements are planned/developed to house approx. 30% more.
- ☑ The DOP proposes a process that could lead to solutions for the rest.

DOP = Declaration of Principles

- **Key points – The Ministry of the Interior’s Plan for the Negev:**
  - It calls for the creation of a metropolitan region in the south with Beer Sheva at its center. Objectives of the metropolitan regional plan:
    - Consolidate an identifiable, quality, metropolitan region, with Beer Sheva as its administrative, service, commercial, cultural and image core, and, at the same time, maintain a balance between Beer Sheva and the surrounding settlements
    - Develop the attractiveness of the region and enhancing the quality of life, variety and character
    - Maintain the growth of the metro-region, as needed, to meet the predicted national spillover demand for housing, employment, leisure and tourism, thus relieving the pressure on the congested central and northern region of the country
    - Develop the unique character and environment of the region, its relative advantages, and the competitiveness of its communities, population groups, economic activities, natural resources and landscapes
  - Between 40% and 60% of the Bedouins live in unrecognized villages that do not enjoy government services, such as electricity, running water, and garbage collection. The government justifies its refusal by saying the Bedouins are there

illegally, and says they leave and move into seven Bedouin towns/cities that have been created over the past few decades.

- The Bedouins refuse to move so as not to forfeit their claim to the land. Many do not want to live in urban settings. The plan for the Negev cannot succeed unless the land claims of the Bedouin are resolved.
- **Settling land claims:** The issue of land claims has never been resolved by the government or judicial system, and remains a major barrier in relations between the Jewish community and the Bedouins. The agency assigned to deal with this issue is now the Construction and Housing Authority. The government recognizes the need to deal with this issue, particularly because of the growing Bedouin population.
- **Benefits to the Bedouin community:** The government wants to integrate the Bedouin population into the planning process for the metropolitan region in the Negev. Mr. Assif outlines the benefits to the Bedouin community in the following slide.

*Beer Sheva Metropolitan Region/District Master Plan*

## The Bedouin Settlement in the Negev

*A Comprehensive service and infrastructure systems*  
High quality, and well suited to the changing needs.

*Employment opportunities*  
Rich variety, effective training, excess supply of designated land and infrastructure. Improved accessibility.  
Special opportunities for women.

*Participation and leadership*  
For better response, for consensus building and broad commitment.

*Solid municipal organization*  
Full representation and legitimacy,  
well equipped to supply state of the art services.

*Integration*  
Into the newly created metro-region

Following Mr. Assif's presentation, the group visited **Segev Shalom**, one of seven recognized Bedouin towns in the Negev. Participants were welcomed by **Kher Albaz, Segev Shalom Social Services; Amal El-Sana Alh'jooj, Director, Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation (AJEEC); and Vivian Silver, Executive Director, Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED)**, as well as various Bedouin and Jewish volunteers from the project NISPED-AJEEC project titled "A Year of Community Volunteerism." The hosts detailed the current situation faced by the Bedouins in the Negev, particularly in Segev Shalom, and the importance of volunteerism.

- **The Negev and the Bedouin:**

- **Negev:** The Negev is considered by Israelis to be the "backyard periphery" of the country. Even Jews living in Negev are virtually ignored by rest of country.
- **The Bedouin:** Bedouins are a minority in the Israeli-Arab community, a minority within a minority. Even in recognized villages, it's difficult to get services. There are only three established community centers for the entire Bedouin population in Israel.
- Key statistics:
  - Bedouins make up 25% of population in Negev
  - 65% of Bedouins drop out of school
  - 60% of Bedouins are under age 18
  - 43% employment among Bedouin men
  - 42% of people getting welfare benefits in Negev are Bedouins
- **Brief history and current status of the Bedouin in the Negev:** In 1968, the Israeli government offered the Bedouin community a deal: Give up 80% of your land for cash, keep the other 20% of your land area for new homes. Many who took the deal received very little money. Many others rejected the proposal and remained in their homes, which are now unrecognized villages. The government is punishing them for remaining in homes, by not giving them services. Recognized towns are planned according to families or *hamullas*. Therefore, one can build only in the "neutral" space, which does not belong to any family. This means that most of the commercial spaces are built illegally and face risk of being demolished.
- **Three residential possibilities for the nearly 170,000 Bedouins in Negev:**
  - Live in unrecognized villages – there are 35 in the Negev
  - Live in newly recognized villages under the regional council of Abu Basma
  - Live in one of seven recognized villages that were planned by Israeli government in 1960's, the largest being Rahat
- **Segev Shalom:** Segev Shalom has 6,000 residents. The village serves as a “regional service provider,” which means, in addition to residents of the town, another 16,000 receive medical services in the clinics of Segev Shalom.
- **Challenges and solutions:**
  - **Challenges:** The biggest problem facing Segev Shalom and the whole Bedouin community is unemployment. The Bedouin community has lost all the systems it had been accustomed to – economic, social, political – without adopting a new system that works for them. Bedouins were forced to move to urban life and have been unable to adapt.
  - **Solutions:** Bedouins have two options: complain about being victims, or improve the situation. AJEEC works to improve the situation through empowerment, with volunteerism as a primary tool. AJEEC mapped the issue of volunteerism, identified potential volunteers, trained them, and began volunteer programs, including ones that join Bedouin and Jewish volunteers working for and benefiting both communities.

**Saed Elchrumi, Mayor of the Segev Shalom Regional Council:**

- **Challenges in Segev Shalom:**

- The spiritual/religious leaders, or *sheiks*, are gaining more authority in the community as compared to civic and academic leaders
- Transportation is the main barrier to higher education. There are 120 students from Segev Shalom who attend institutions of higher learning, and the local council has to subsidize the students' transportation.
- Mayor Elchrumi identified bureaucracy and instability in the government as major impediments to development, and this instability delays planning and budgeting processes.
- Some special needs projects do not receive government funding, such as informal education frameworks, which puts an additional strain on the municipality.

The group then visited a medical clinic in the unrecognized Bedouin village of **Abu Tlul**. Participants were greeted by **Atiya El Asam, head of Local Committee; Dr. Ilana Belmaker, Head Physician, Ministry of Health, Southern Region; and Dr. Younis Abu Rabiya, the first Bedouin physician and head of the Kupat Holim Medical Clinic.**

- **Health issues in the Bedouin community:** In recent history, health challenges facing the Bedouin in Israel have grown from third world diseases – low iron and vitamin deficiencies – to include heart disease, diabetes and obesity primarily due to a change in lifestyle. Obesity is a major problem in the Bedouin community, especially among women who have fewer activities at home now that Bedouins have settled. Additionally, there is a large problem attributed to genetic diseases in Bedouin communities, because cousins often marry.
- **The work of the medical clinic:** Clinics for Bedouins were built after passage of the Health Insurance Act, which required the government to provide medical care to Bedouins. A total of 2,000 patients visit the clinic in a year, with one or two doctors normally on staff to care for them. The primary caretaker in this clinic is the nurse, not the doctor.
- **The needs of the medical clinic include:**
  - Literacy programs – low adult literacy affects medical care of children
  - Programs to train Bedouin women to work within the community
  - Diet and nutrition training courses
  - Trained Bedouin nurses

Following the meeting in **Abu Tlul**, the group met with community leaders and experts at the **Abu Grinat school**. During lunch, participants broke into small groups to discuss the following topics:

- Social Change – Community Development
- Education
- Employment
- Unrecognized Villages – The Land Issue
- Volunteerism

Participants included:

- Aatef Abu Ajaj, Director of Economic Development Division, NISPED-AJEEC
- Chitam Abu Bader, Volunteer Coordinator, Bedouin Volunteer Tent
- Yousef Abu Jaffer, Finance Department, Rahat Municipality; Director, Association for the Promotion of Health, Education & Welfare
- Sultan Abu Obayed, Co-Director of Shatil, Beer Sheva
- Dr. Sarab Abu Rabiya – Oxford University, International Department of Development Studies
- Dr. Thabet Abu Ras, Director of "Together": The Arab-Jewish Center for Dialogue and Shared Society
- Monira Abu Rimshe, Coordinator, Year of Volunteerism for my Community, NISPED-AJEEC
- Ibrahim Abu Shareb, Director, Bedouin Volunteer Tent – NISPED-AJEEC
- Chader Abu Sheich, Bedouin Businessmen's Forum
- Dr. Nuzha Al Huzayel, Sawa Micro-Loan Program for Bedouin Women, Rahat
- Amal Al Kum – Women's Association in Segev Shalom
- Nadia Alturi – student of Social Work, BGU
- David Bagleiter, Technological College, Beer Sheva
- Ariel Dloomy, Project Director, AJEEC
- Rula El Atauna, Director, Association for Promotion Advanced Education for Bedouin Women
- Safa El Atauna, Student, English Department, Ben-Gurion University
- Kher El Baz, Director, Social Services, Segev Shalom
- H'sein El Refaya, Head of Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages
- Jamal Elkrinawi, Academic Counselor for Arab Students at BGU; Supervisor of Social Work Students
- Jolila Elkranawi, past student of Hebrew Literature; community activist
- Amal Elsana Alh'jooj, Director AJEEC
- Dr. Saleem Jaber, Director of Arab-Bedouin Track, Achva College for Education
- Chana Lasman, Coordinator of Volunteerism, Elka-Joint
- Hedva Radovanitz, New Israel Fund
- Sigal Selach, Tevet – Coordinator of Minorities Division, JDC
- Vivian Silver, Executive Director, NISPED

Following lunch, the participants were addressed by **Mayor Amram Kalagi of the Abu Basma Regional Council**.

- **The Bedouin in the Negev:** One of the biggest challenges for the Negev Bedouin is a lack of leadership. With no leadership, there is no one to negotiate with.
- **Case study – The Bedouin in northern Israel:** In northern Israel, there used to be 50 unrecognized Bedouin settlements. With creativity, Mayor Kalagi and others solved the issues. Today there are no unrecognized villages in North. The current problems can be solved with determination and sustained effort.
- **Case study – Abu Basma:** Mayor Kalagi took the following steps in Abu Basma:
  - **Education:** There is a lack of high schools for Bedouin girls. Abu Basma began building more schools. The new principal went home-by-home telling parents he

will personally be responsible for the girls' well-being. The dropout rate in Abu Basma used to be very high – now Mayor Kalagi says it is at zero. Abu Basma civic leaders also asked ORT to start schools in Abu Basma, with the goal of having ORT guarantee employment for graduates.

- **Employment/Industry:** The civic leaders went to hi-tech companies, including Intel in Kiryat Gat, and asked if they'll hire Bedouins once they're trained. The companies said yes.
- **Leadership:** Mayor Kalagi is working with Ben Gurion University to offer courses to Bedouin that cultivate leadership in the community.
- **“Bedouin Center for Education, Culture, Sports and Leisure in the Negev:”** The Jewish National Fund gave nearly 100 dunams of land for the Bedouin Center for Education, Culture, Sports and Leisure in the Negev. Mayor Kalagi wants to facilitate various community and leisure activities there, including a swimming pool.

During a visit to the **Technical College of Beer Sheva**, the group met with students taking part in the **Abu Basma-Intel Practical Engineers Project**. **The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Technology** partnered with the school to establish a course, aimed at Bedouins. Bedouin comprise 18% of the students. They receive full scholarships, which includes tuition, stipends for cost of living and transportation to and from school.

During a visit to **Sami Shamoon Engineering College in Beer Sheva**, the group met with Bedouin students enrolled in the college. The university offers each Bedouin student NIS 25,000 per year to cover tuition and extra curricular activities. The program for Bedouins begins with a preparatory year, in which the students acquire basic learning skills and close the gaps in English, math and computers. The program aims to turn out up to 100 Bedouin engineers by 2015. Some of the students participating in the discussion mentioned issues such as transportation, lack of basic infrastructure and lack of financial resources, among the factors that make it hard for them to succeed.

**The trip concluded** with dinner and a final debrief in **Herzliya**. Reflections were shared and pledges to translate this new knowledge into action were made. Follow-up for the trip has begun to take place.

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