

The Socio-Economic Development Plan for the Bedouin Population in the Negev: 2017-2021 (Government Resolution 2397) A Comprehensive Evaluation – Interim Report

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This study was part of a multi-faceted research program for the Government of Israel's five-year plan to promote the well-being of the Bedouin in the Negev, carried out in cooperation with the Department for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin Society in the Negev



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The report was commissioned by the Department for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin Society in the Negev at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and funded with its assistance

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Jerusalem | September 2021



About the research program of the five-year plan for the Bedouin in the Negev

The research program was jointly funded by the Department for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin Society in the Negev and the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. It spanned 3.5 years and includes an array of topical studies including education, children with disabilities, employment, and local government, as well as cross-cutting studies evaluating the five-year plan work programs; the values, strengths, and challenges of the Bedouin population and their leaders; key indicators of the health, economic, and social well-being of the Bedouin population; and an integrative assessment of the five-year program.

The research program was carried out as a cooperative effort between the Department for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin in the Negev and the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (MJB). The Department led the choice of issues to be studied and provided feedback on the research. MJB coordinated the research program and was responsible for the quality of the studies.

Abstract

This report deals with the mapping of the five-year plan for the Bedouin population in the Negev for 2017-2021 (pursuant to Government Resolution 2397) (hereinafter: the five-year plan) and specifically with identification of its key components and their interrelations. The five-year plan discussed in this report is the second consecutive government plan that allocates resources to the Bedouin population, which is ranked in the lowest socio-economic cluster in Israel. The five-year plan is intended to reduce the gaps between the Bedouin population in the Negev and the general population in Israel and to promote the integration of the Negev Bedouin population in Israeli society and economy through the allocation of an incremental budget and the designation of funds from other sources as well as by the development of work plans in various areas.

The five-year plan is a complex plan in terms of the diverse areas of life addressed by the plan and the large number of government bodies involved in its implementation. The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is conducting an extensive evaluation study of the five-year plan, comprising 15 studies that address various areas of life. In addition to these studies, a comprehensive evaluation study of the five-year plan has been conducted. Its goal is to comprehensively examine the five-year plan, using research methods adapted to complex interventions, inter alia, by integrating the various studies conducted thus far.

This report presents the first stage of the comprehensive evaluation study: mapping the five-year plan while examining the broad picture and the ways used to promote the Bedouin population in the Negev in diverse areas: k-12 education (both formal and informal); higher education; employment; the performance of the Bedouin local authorities; infrastructure development; social welfare; and society and health. The mapping also enables the examination of the interrelationships between the various areas addressed by the five-year plan.

As part of the mapping, logic models were developed for the five-year plan and for each of main intervention areas addressed by the plan. The models were helpful in generating detailed insights and recommendations for each of the addressed areas. This report presents the main insights regarding each of the areas as well as significant general insights gained in the mapping process. The study team believes that discussion of these insights and issues could be helpful in establishing systematic strategies for the five-year plan and in identifying comprehensively addressed areas versus areas not yet fully addressed. Such thinking strategies could be helpful not only in evaluating the five-year plan for 2017-2021 but also – and especially – as a tool for developing the next five-year plan for 2022-2026.

The general insights gained in the mapping process are:

- The development of a coordinated solution for Bedouin youth who find it difficult to keep a job or persist in studies should be considered along with the related issues of k-12 education, higher education, professional training, employment, and integration in the community.
- Options should be considered for creating a structured mechanism for public participation of the Bedouin in the development and implementation of the next five-year plan, this, with regard to both the key issues addressed by the plan and its mode of operation and implementation.
- Areas of activity should be identified in which the Bedouin population could be mobilized to actively further the achievement of commonly agreed goals (for instance, prevention of violence or protection of the environment).
- While a comprehensive response has been provided in the field of education, in general, and in its various related areas (formal education, including pedagogy and teacher training, and informal education), in particular, it is largely based on existing programs. Given the diverse challenges in this field, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, a comprehensive multi-year plan should be considered to address the unique needs of the Negev Bedouin population that would take account of the various aspects of the field of education: the quality of teaching, dropout rates among the Negev Bedouin students, their achievements in the matriculation exams, and post-secondary school education guidance.