

# **Executive Summaries of Studies Pertaining to the Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan for the Bedouin Population in the Negev for 2017-2021 – Knowledge Base for the Subsequent Five-Year Plan**

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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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## 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

Government Resolution 2397 (hereinafter: the Resolution) on the five-year socio-economic development plan for the Bedouin population in the Negev for 2017-2021 aimed to reduce gaps between the Negev Bedouin population and the general population in Israel. The Resolution focused on four core areas: education and social services, economy and employment, infrastructure development, and the empowerment of local authorities. Twelve government ministries and several statutory authorities were partners to the Resolution and its implementation. The Department for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin Society in the Negev at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs (hereinafter: the Department) was in charge of implementing the Resolution.

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is conducting a comprehensive study of the five-year plan set forth in the Resolution. The study examines the implementation of the five-year plan and the impact of the plan – of each of its parts and of the plan as a whole – and offers recommendations for actions required to maintain, modify, or improve the design and implementation of the upcoming five-year plan for 2022-2026. The study is based on the collection and pooling of information from multiple sources, the use of various research methods, and the adoption of an implementation-oriented approach, including the suggestion of strategies for policy development.

This report regarding the knowledge base for the upcoming five-year plan for 2022-2026 is designed to present a comprehensive up-to-date picture of the core areas addressed by the Resolution and thereby, to provide the basis for the development of the upcoming five-year plan. The report includes summaries of the in-depth studies of the five-year plan for 2017-2021, classified by sets of topics.

## **The first set of studies presents a comprehensive picture of the Bedouin population in the Negev:**

1. A study of the quality-of-life measures for the Bedouin population in the Negev, designed to provide a dashboard for monitoring the status of the target population in key life domains: education; employment; health; personal security; civic engagement and governance; housing and infrastructure; personal and social well-being; and information and communication technologies. The study examined the latest data on gaps between the Bedouin population in the Negev and other population groups (Jews in the South, Jews residing elsewhere in Israel, Arabs residing elsewhere in Israel, and the general population) in each of these life domains as reflected by the relevant measures, as well as the trends over the last ten years.
2. A study of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Negev Bedouin population, which was especially hard hit by the pandemic, given the pre-pandemic gaps between it and the general population. The study

mapped the main life domains impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, identified the direction and intensity of the impact in each of these domains, detected inhibiting and promoting factors affecting the way the Negev Bedouin population responded to the situation, and suggested strategies for the provision of solutions to the problems created in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The second set of studies provides a cross-sectional analysis of the structural dimensions of the five-year plan with reference to both the planning and implementation aspects and the outcomes and evaluation aspects:**

1. A study of the general model of the five-year plan, mapping the plan as a whole and its components, analyzing the interrelations between the components, describing the action mechanisms underlying the plan, and identifying the key elements at the base of the plan.
2. A systemic examination of the formulation and implementation processes of the work plans developed and submitted by the government ministries that were partners to the Resolution and comprised in a work plan book published by the Department.
3. A study designed to present a complementary perspective by a detailed examination of the outputs of each work plan, its objectives, and the measures defined in the work plan book in the following domains: k-12 education; higher education; employment; social welfare services; and the empowerment of local authorities. The measures were mapped and analyzed according to their relevance to the specific domains as well as according to their accuracy, clarity, and transparency. Based on the findings of the analysis, recommendations were made for improving the existing measures and for devising new ones.
4. A study presenting interim findings of the evaluation of the program for empowering the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev. The study highlighted the role of these authorities as a key element in the five-year plan and indicated the conflicting nature of the two main objectives of the plan – the utilization of budgets for the improvement of services for the residents, on the one hand, and the enhancement of the local authorities' independent (administrative and organizational) capabilities, on the other hand.

**The third set of studies pertains to the education system in the Bedouin population in the Negev and to school-age children with disabilities:**

1. A study of the widespread phenomenon of school dropout in the Negev Bedouin population, both overt and hidden. The study examined the personal and community factors related to school dropout, the gender differences in dropout rates, and the interventions likely to reduce the phenomenon.

2. A study of eligibility rates for a matriculation certificate among Bedouin students in the Negev. The study reviewed the achievements of the Negev Bedouin students in the matriculation exams compared with the achievements of other population groups in Israel, mapped the plans aimed at increasing eligibility rates for a matriculation certificate among the Negev Bedouin students, and examined the barriers they face to improving their achievements in the matriculation exams and meeting minimum academic admission requirements.
3. A study related to the quality of teaching in the Bedouin schools in the Negev – one of the key factors affecting both school dropout and the eligibility for a matriculation certificate, reviewed in the aforementioned studies. The study focused on the development of a model for the evaluation of the quality of teaching in the Bedouin schools in the Negev and examined the quality of teaching in selected schools.
4. A study of children with disabilities in the Negev Bedouin population. The study examined the needs, responses, and lacunae in the services for children with disabilities in the domains of health, education, and social welfare, both in routine times and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The fourth set of studies pertains to the employment of the Bedouin population in the Negev and to initiatives for reducing poverty:**

1. A study of employment patterns and barriers to employment in the Bedouin population in the Negev. Given the gaps between the latter and the general population in Israel – in employment rates, employee wages, and the basic resources required for integration in the labor market – the study focused on the opportunities and challenges for the promotion of quality employment in the Negev Bedouin population. It also highlighted structural and cultural barriers unique to Bedouin men and Bedouin women.
2. An evaluation study of the Grow Tunnels Project for Food Security – a project designed to develop business entrepreneurship in the field of agriculture in order to support financially distressed families cared for by social services departments in increasing their income and improving their socio-economic status. The study was based on the "learning from successes" paradigm. It examined how to adopt the model implemented in the Grow Tunnels Project in order to increase goal fulfillment of more complex programs designed to strengthen disadvantaged communities, particularly among the Bedouin population in the Negev.

**The summary section** of this report presents recommendations based on the key issues addressed from various perspectives in each of the aforementioned in-depth studies. The issues concern the following areas: k-12 education; higher education; economy and employment; children with disabilities; the program for empowering the local authorities; other issues requiring attention (e.g., personal security, communication infrastructures, and

at-risk youth); cross-sectional issues related to the implementation of the five-year plan, specifically, improving the set of work plans and the associated objectives and measures, strengthening the coordination between the stakeholders involved in the five-year plan, and promoting the Bedouin public participation in the plan development and implementation; and other issues recommended for inclusion in the five-year plan for 2022-2026.

While the recommendations are based on the in-depth studies of the five-year plan for 2017-2021, their implementation calls for a thorough examination and fine-tuning in collaboration with the Department for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin Society in the Negev and the various stakeholders. Yet, the added value of the presentation of a comprehensive picture of the core areas addressed by the five-year plan for 2017-2021, the practical recommendations suggested, and the thorough discussions conducted with the various stakeholders concerned is already evident in the groundwork laid for the planning of the five-year plan for 2022-2026. The authors of this report and the in-depth study teams maintain that the recommendations and action strategies offered can contribute significantly to effective implementation and impact.