

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The five sections of this report address various matters involving the work of government ministries, and one, the concluding section, deals mainly with developing the citizens' ability to deal with inequality:

The Ministry of Education still practices structural discrimination toward Arab students, despite inauguration of a Five-Year Plan for improvement.<sup>1</sup> The plan did not fundamentally alter the gap between Jewish children and Arab children, and certainly did not repair the damage accumulated since the founding of the state due to the gap between the Arab school system and the Jewish school system. This chapter provides detailed current data on the gap in the allocation of classroom hours, gaps in improving the quality of instruction, on dropout rates, and also on the beginnings of improvement in attaining bagrut (matriculation). Next year, we will examine the impact of implementation of the Shoshani Report on the allocation of class hours among students.

Of the issues within the purview of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, we chose to focus on the inequality in daycare facilities for Jewish children and Arab children. Our report this year provides significant data, including the fact that only 2% of the daycare facilities in Israel today are designated for Arab children. We also made various other comparisons relevant to the question of daycare facilities. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' struggle to retain its control over daycare facilities nationwide only emphasizes its importance (a budget of NIS 450 million a year = approximately \$100 million) and significance to the general public.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade initiates the creation of new industrial zones pursuant to geographically related national population policy and bears complete responsibility for their establishment, from emplacement of infrastructure through marketing commercial space to the businessmen. Industrial zones provide considerable commercial tax income, a crucial counterbalancing factor for less affluent communities with relatively low residential property tax income. The additional income makes possible many basic services that would otherwise be under-funded, particularly social welfare and education. In the pages that follow, we provide detailed data from the Ministry of Industry and Trade demonstrating that Arab localities receive only a very small share of this resource, despite their much greater need for it.

The issue of fair representation has been under ongoing scrutiny by Sikkuy for more than four years, with a focus on increasing employment in the civil service. For the last year, this project has been run in conjunction with the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development and with support from The Abraham Fund Initiatives. The overview provided in this year's report is a

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<sup>1</sup> The Shoshani Commission was appointed by the Minister of Education and headed by Dr. Shimshon Shoshani. Its report identified many inconsistencies, inequalities and lack of transparency in the allocation of government funds to the different elementary school tracks (religious, secular, Arab etc.). Its recommendations for establishing universal criteria for funding were adopted by the Ministry of Education and are currently being implemented.

continuation of last year's results (in "The Sikkuy Report 2001-2002", available at [www.sikkuy.org.il](http://www.sikkuy.org.il)). This is one of the few subjects for which data is freely and easily obtainable, in this case from the Civil Service Administration itself. The achievements, on the other hand, are meager. Statistics and commentary are found in the section by Attorney Ali Haider, who directs the program.

The article by Prof. Ismael Abu-Sa'ad on urbanization of the Bedouin in the Negev reviews the failed attempt by the state to control population dispersal in the Negev, and its implications. Here, too, it seems that the sizeable gap between the way the state treats Jews and the way it treats Arabs makes it very difficult to discern anything good about these efforts.

We are pleased to include a guest article on planning rights by members of the Jerusalem-based NGO, Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights ([www.bimkom.org](http://www.bimkom.org)). Shmuel Groag, an architect, and Shuli Hartman, an anthropologist, base their article on their important survey of the issue of land as a resource and who benefits from it. This issue is among the root causes of the problems between the state and the Arab citizens living in Israel. After reviewing the unequal manner in which the state allocates space for Jews and for Arabs in Israel, the authors place the matter of planning rights squarely at the center of this debate.

As the preface to this report points out, it was extremely difficult this year to obtain data from government ministries. Hence, some of the data used is necessarily from 2001-2002. In addition, for the discussion of education and social welfare, and even when current data is given, we have included data from previous years to demonstrate multi-year trends. Most of the data on the work of these two ministries was obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics and from ministry websites, and only occasionally from the ministries themselves. Following the review of each ministry, we point to action that could change the situation.

We view the Arab minority in Israel as a unique group toward which the government has a responsibility to behave fairly, by treating its members as full partners in the state.

We trust that you will find this report useful and welcome your comments.

***The Editors***