

Message from the Co-Executive Directors

These policy papers were published at the height of a civil struggle for social justice in Israel. This struggle – which was unprecedented in its scope, the public discourse that it has stimulated, its desire to create significant change in Israel and, particularly, its call to reduce the disparities in Israeli society –has succeeded in raising public awareness of the inequality among various groups in Israeli society.

Sikkuy, a civil society organization shared by Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, plays a prominent role in the struggle for equality between Israel's Arab and Jewish citizens. We believe that equality between all the state's citizens must be a fundamental principle in every democratic society and country. Therefore, among our other activities, we concentrate on bringing about change in government policy toward Arab citizens. To this end, we have developed an innovative model entitled "From Barriers to Opportunities" in order to identify barriers to equality and recommend practical policies to remove them. Since the model was published in August 2010, Sikkuy's Equality Policy Department has been implementing it successfully in varied policy fields. The chosen policy fields are those in which we have a strong ability to influence government policy and those in which there is marked inequality between Jews and Arabs.

This publication contains the summaries of three policy papers, published in 2011, in which we used the barriers mapping model for three issues:

- The allocation of the Welfare Ministry's budget and social worker positions to social services departments in Arab local authorities.
- The marketing of state-owned land in Arab communities for development and construction.
- Land registration in the Arab society in Israel.

The first paper deals with the Welfare Ministry's budget and the portion of it used for social services in the local authorities. For a long time, Sikkuy has warned of severe inequality in the allocation Welfare Ministry budgets to Arab communities. But until now, we have not been able to examine the unequal allocations, and more important, the precise factors that cause it. Using detailed data given to us by the Welfare Ministry and the barriers mapping model, we have identified, for the first time, the factors that prevent the equal allocation of social worker positions and welfare resources to Arab communities.

The second and third papers, which deal with the subject of land, map the barriers and the factors that delay or prevent the registration of ownership of privately owned land in Arab communities and the barriers that delay or prevent the marketing of public land for housing in Arab communities.

The subject of land has been at the core of the conflict between the Arab citizens and the state throughout Israel's history. In many cases, this conflict has found expression in

discriminatory land policies and plans that deliberately ignored the development needs in Arab communities and frequently took active measures to restrict the development of the Arab communities both spatially and economically.

The policy papers presented here deal with land issues in which the state and Arab society have a strong common interest that is recognized by both by Arab leaders and the government.

The papers present the barriers to a policy of equality in these areas. The removal of these barriers will help significantly to alleviate the housing development shortage in the Arab communities, which stems from an acute shortage of available land for development.

The three policy papers expose the deep causes of the unequal policy in the fields under study. This is an unprecedented achievement in the study of government policy toward Arab citizens.

These policy papers do more than merely describe and analyze the situation. **They also include detailed, practical policy recommendations for equal allocations. We call upon the relevant government ministries, together with other governmental agencies, to take the required measures immediately to allocate state resources equitably.** We also call upon the heads of the Arab local authorities to take steps to remove the barriers that we found in their areas of responsibility. The policy recommendations in these papers could very well be an outline for closing the gaps in the fields under study.

These three policy papers were presented at Sikkuy conferences that took place in July and September 2011 with the participation of the highest levels of the government ministries and the Arab local governments. These studies, which proved the importance and effectiveness of the “From Barriers to Opportunities” model, constitute a basis for the work of the Equality Policy Department for change in government policy toward Arab citizens. **We are pleased to note that between the publication of this study in September 2011 and its publication in English in March 2012, various government ministries have already adopted some of its recommendations.** In 2012, the Equality Policy Department will continue advocating for policy change in the fields that were researched and will also use the Barriers Mapping model to analyze additional policy areas.

These studies were conducted as part of a complex process that requires teamwork, knowledge of multidisciplinary research, expertise and determination.

We wish to thank Michal Belikoff, Ruth Sar-Shalom, Hagit Naali-Joseph, Ruth Weinschenk-Vennor and Maha Abu Saleh, who conducted the research and, with creativity and determination, succeeded in discovering all the deep causes of the inequality and wrote their excellent papers.

We also wish to thank the directors of the Equality Policy Department, Ruth Weinschenk-Vennor and Amjad Shbita, for their important contribution to these papers and for their work with government ministries for policy change.

We also thank the high-ranking officials from the Welfare Ministry, the Housing Ministry and the Justice Ministry, as well as the representatives of the Arab local authorities, who assisted by providing information and attended meetings in which the findings were presented and discussions held about their implications.

We hope that these studies will provide readers with a deeper understanding of the situation and lead to a more equitable distribution of the state's resources to its Arab citizens.

Sincerely,

Ron Gerlitz and Ali Haider, Adv.

Co-Executive Directors, Sikkuy

Introduction – Policy Research as an Integral Part of the Work of Sikkuy’s Equality Policy Department

Following is a collection of summaries of policy papers that Sikkuy’s Equality Policy Department published over the past year. These papers are a basis for the work of the Equality Policy Department for changes in government policy toward Arab citizens. **The results of all the studies were presented to the highest levels of the relevant ministries: the Welfare Ministry, the Justice Ministry, the Finance Ministry and the Housing Ministry.**

Sikkuy also initiated joint meetings between government ministries and the Arab local authorities regarding the research findings in order to work together to find ways to implement the studies’ policy recommendations. **It should be emphasized that the work to implement the recommendations is the heart of the Equality Policy Department’s work for change in government policy.** The policy papers were published in their entirety both in Hebrew and in Arabic. We felt it was necessary to provide summaries in English in order to acquaint English speakers with the research findings and the process of policy change that Sikkuy spearheads.

Israel’s Arab citizens – who number approximately 1.2 million – comprise approximately 16 percent of the state’s population.¹ Most of the Arab population lives in Arab communities scattered throughout the country, most of them in the north. The Central Bureau of Statistics ranks Israeli local authorities in 10 socioeconomic clusters. Approximately 80 percent of the Arab local authorities in Israel live in communities that are ranked in the lowest three socioeconomic clusters, as compared with only 14 percent of the residents of the Jewish and mixed local authorities.

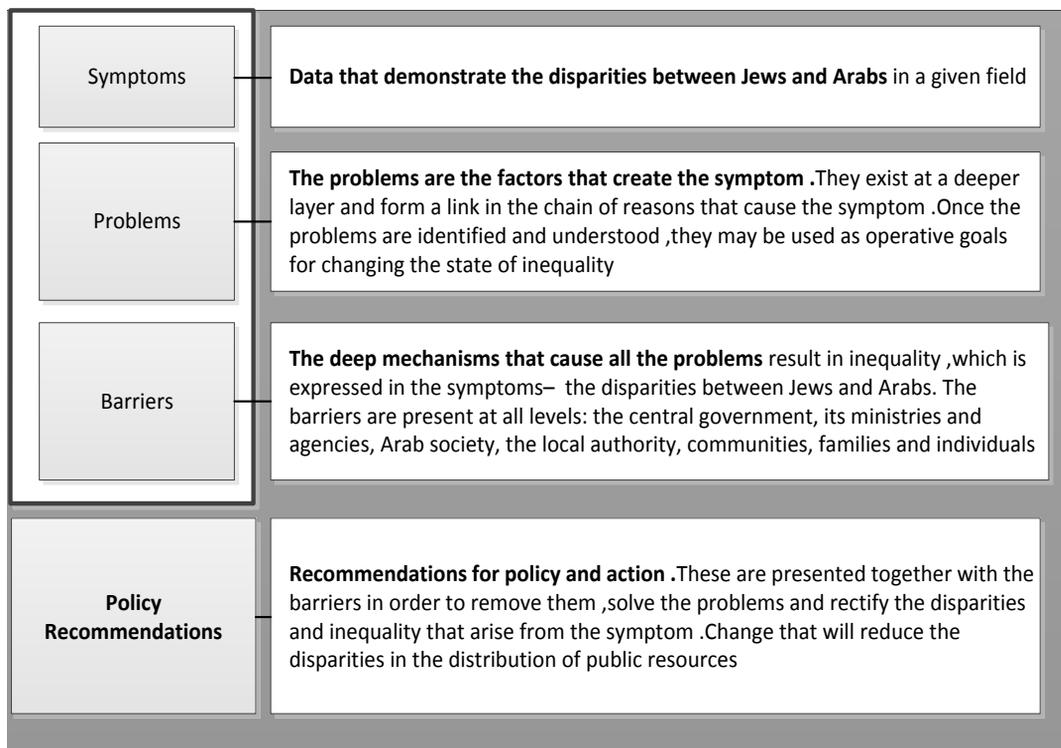
Since Israel’s establishment, the Arab population has endured discrimination and inequality in the allocation of the state’s resources. Such discrimination and inequality give rise to socioeconomic disparities between the country’s two population groups. In turn, these disparities, together with their accompanying feeling of deprivation, threaten social and political stability in Israel, which faces an ongoing national conflict as well. The elimination of the disparities in equal sharing of resources between Jews and Arabs in Israel is an essential condition for progress toward the internal stability of Israeli society. It is also an essential condition for alleviating the conflict between Israel and its neighbors, since disparities, inequality and discrimination fuel the conflict.

Over the past two decades, Sikkuy has been working to track and expose the disparities and inequalities in the allocation of the state’s resources to Jews and Arabs in every area of public policy. Over the past three years, we have expanded our work by mapping the factors that delay and even prevent equality in various issues and areas of public policy.

¹ The Arab population comprises 20 percent of Israel’s population if we include the residents of East Jerusalem, who do not hold Israeli citizenship.

The “From Barriers to Opportunities” mapping model² includes a comprehensive survey of the current situation and the location of disparities and inequality in the area under study. These disparities and unequal situations are defined as symptoms. The job at the next stage is to locate the factors that gave rise to these symptoms. The model’s fundamental assumption is that the barriers to equality may be found, theoretically, among each of the interested parties and the players, including among decision-makers, the authorities responsible for carrying out the decisions and the recipients (the Arab local authorities and the target population). By means of this model, we are mapping the causes of inequality on two levels: problems – which are the direct causes of inequality – and the barriers that are the deep causes that create the problems. The mapping work helps us to make policy recommendations that are aimed, directly or indirectly (based on strategic and tactical considerations) at dealing with the causes of inequality.

Figure 1: The Components of the Barriers Model



This booklet includes summaries of three policy papers written by the Equality Policy Department during the year 2011. The policy papers deal with two areas of resource allocation: the allocation of welfare budgets and the availability of land for development.

² See the barrier-mapping model on Sikkuy’s website:
<http://www.sikkuy.org.il/english/hasamim/mediniuteng.pdf>

The first paper examines the manner in which the welfare budget is distributed among the social services departments in the Arab local authorities. It also examines the sources of the unequal distribution in the section of the budget that deals with the allocation of social workers and personnel in the local authorities. Approximately half of the Arab population in Israel lives under the poverty line. The difficult economic situation of the Arab local authorities increases their dependence upon government budgets and creates an unfair burden on the personnel who deal with the situation on the ground. The paper proposes methods for ensuring equal distribution of the budget to social services departments in proportion to the number of people in need in each local authority.

Land is the dominant component in the national conflict between both peoples. The national conflict is a significant factor in the State of Israel's land and planning policy in relation to the Arab population. This policy, which influences the conflict directly, have a powerful potential to fuel it and even intensify it. One of the most obvious results of this policy is the severe shortage of available land for development in the Arab communities. This shortage, which is a barrier to the communities' proper development, prevents the residents from enjoying a quality of life equal to that of the rest of Israel's inhabitants.

The second paper lays out the difficulties in marketing state-owned land for construction in the Arab communities. Despite the severe shortage of available land for development, the response to land tenders issued by the state in the Arab communities is very low (approximately 20 percent). The policy paper suggests ways to overcome the barriers to successful marketing, thus providing housing solutions for people in the Arab communities who do not own land and depend on the small supply of public land in their municipal areas.

The third paper, which deals with the registration of ownership of land, maps the causes of the low percentage of private land in the Arab communities for which the process of registration and regularization were carried out for. This is land concerning which there is no argument over its status as private, Arab-owned land. However, the registration of land ownership is a requirement for all landowners who wish to exercise their rights over the land for commercial purposes, for housing or obtaining a construction permit. The paper suggests policy measures that would allow the registration of a large amount of land in the Arab communities – methods that would contribute significantly to the availability of land for development in these communities.