



Equality and Integration of the Arab Citizens in the Misgav Region: A Report from Sikkuy-Misgav

September 2001

Preface

The terrible events of October 2000 symbolized for us – Jewish Israeli citizens and residents of the Misgav Region – an existential watershed. When the demonstrations were over and things went back to what passes for normal, many of us began to feel that assumptions and conventions in place over the last 50 years are no longer valid. Almost instantaneously, we have entered a new era in the common life of Jews and Arabs in the State of Israel – and here in the Galilee.

In November 2000, we gathered for the first time, a group of about 40 Jewish residents of Misgav who wanted to work together to remedy the existing civic inequality. We called ourselves “The Third Article” – after the article in Israel’s Declaration of independence which guarantees “absolute civic equality” for all citizens of the state.

Our goal, as an activist group, was formulated as follows:

“In the State of Israel, Arab citizens are discriminated against. This contradicts the declared values of the state, as anchored in law. As citizens of the state and residents of Misgav who view equal rights and civic partnership as cornerstones of democracy, we must put this matter on the public agenda and act to bring about its remediation in our area.”

Subsequently, we decided to join Sikkuy, which is working on the national level for the same goal, so as to avail ourselves of its support and experience. In light of this decision, we renamed ourselves “Sikkuy in Misgav,” but the underlying idea remains unchanged: to make civic equality, as a value, the focal point of our activism as a

group of ordinary citizens. The principal target population for our efforts is the Jewish public and its emissaries in the establishment. The prime modality of action will be to effect a change in people's awareness and consciousness. During the ten months of the group's existence thus far, this is how we have operated:

1. We have publicized our position in local newspapers through dozens of letters and articles.
2. We have disseminated statistical data and information to the media about the situation of our Arab neighbors with respect to various aspects of their lives.
3. We have taken positions publicly on events that have taken place: On Land Day, we held a demonstration of solidarity with the demand for equality; we circulated a platform to area communities calling for affirmative action by the government vis-a-vis Arab citizens; we worked, and encouraged others to work, toward a resolution of the issue of the army camp adjacent to Sakhnin.
4. We put on the public agenda our demand that the regional council act more decisively in eliminating the gaps between Jews and Arabs resident in its jurisdiction, using budgetary and other means; we are maintaining an ongoing connection with the head of the council and key council members and staff.
5. We have set up regular group meetings including reading and discussion with concerned scholars like Dr. Asad Ghana'em, Dr. Danny Rabinovitch, and Dr. Ilan Pappé; representatives of the area's Bedouin communities; and neighboring activist groups.

Through these and similar activities, we hope to forge a suitable niche for the group as an influential voice in the public discourse in our community.

We have delineated for ourselves two principal spheres of activism:

1. Advocacy for the Bedouin community in Misgav, comprising about a third of the region's residents: The Bedouin, collectively, are severely disadvantaged in terms of basic living conditions as a result of longstanding government policy. We see our role as trying to influence the public sector in the region, broadly speaking, to work to close existing disparities in standard of living and quality of life.
2. Improving relations with neighboring Arab municipal authorities in the Misgav vicinity: The lesson, in our view, of last October's rupture is the necessity for a change in the nature of the relationship – from one of hostile estrangement to one of neighbors and of partners in a fair division of resources, for the benefit of all residents of the region.

About a year after we began working, we're still at the very beginning of the road. The reality we wish to change has struck very deep roots. The attempt to change direction demands determination and perseverance. Though this report, the first that we have made, addresses only a partial selection from the spectrum of existing problems, it can serve as an incentive to others who, like us, refuse to accept a continuation of the disparities between the lives of Jewish and Arab citizens, of the gap between the vision portrayed in the Declaration of Independence and the reality portrayed by the findings of this report.

We believe that all of us, citizens of the State of Israel and residents of the Misgav region, deserve a better future. We believe in our power, as citizens of a democratic state, to shape the society in which we live. We call on all who share these beliefs to come join us.

Sikkuy-Misgav
Regional activists for civil equality



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Introduction

Although Jewish settlement in the Misgav region began during the 1950s and 1960s (Carmiel, Yodfat, Segev), the settlement wave of the 1980s and the establishment of the Misgav Regional Council reshaped the face of the region. Since then, the city of Carmiel has grown substantially, and the Jewish *mitzpim* have become bona fide towns. Early on, this process inaugurated a still-widening disparity between the municipal infrastructure and services enjoyed by the Jewish residents and those enjoyed by the Arab residents in the region – both Arabs living within the Misgav region's actual jurisdiction, and Arab “neighbors” living in the near vicinity of that jurisdiction. This disparity is the issue that the Sikkuy-Misgav group was formed to address, and is also the focus of our first report. At this writing, 52,000 Jews reside in Carmiel and the Misgav region as a whole; 210,000 Arabs reside in 22 villages, large and small, adjacent to the area of Misgav's jurisdiction; and 5,300 Bedouin Arabs live within the regional boundaries.

Among the array of issues involving inequality between Jews and Arabs, we have selected several areas with respect to which this lack of parity is especially marked: **education; infrastructure; areas of jurisdiction; place of residence and earnings level; and public buildings and community facilities serving the residents.**

This report admittedly touches only partially on the various aspects of inequality between Jewish and Arab residents in the Misgav region. We make no pretension to cover everything here, nor to present the exhaustive, professional treatment that each subtopic deserves. For various reasons, moreover, we have not been able to gather and present here a great many statistics relating to the city of Carmiel, although we feel sure that such data as is included can give a sense of the larger picture, and we hope to round out that picture in future reports.

Since in this document we could not include all 22 Arab communities in the Misgav vicinity, we have randomly chosen eight of them: Majd al-Krum, Kaboul, Sha'ab, Dir Hanna, Nahaf, Dir al-Asad, Arrabe and the city of Sakhnin. We believe that the existing reality in these communities effectively illustrates the situation obtaining in the region's Arab communities in general.

A semantic clarification: In this report, "Arabs" or "the Arabs" means citizens of the Arab communities included in the study. The term "Bedouin Arabs" includes the Bedouin Arabs who are resident the boundaries of the Misgav regio. The report is based mainly on research conducted by Itzik Gershoni, research which – despite being very basic, complicated, and Sisyphean – we view as only an introductory survey to a more comprehensive examination of the reality in the Misgav region.

We regret that, in the circumstances, we are unable to cthis introduction with the usual wish that the reader "enjoy the report." We do hope, however, that you will read it carefully and we will be glad to have any feedback you may care to provide that can help us give a more complete or clearer picture, or in any other way improve the reports to follow .

Shalom (Shuli) Dichter
Editor



Education

The compulsory education law in Israel applies to children and youth from the age of kindergarten through the end of 9th grade. Preschool is funded by the state only for communities in the lower socioeconomic strata, designated levels 1 and 2. The socioeconomic ranking is set by the National Insurance Institute with assistance from the Central Bureau of Statistics. All the Arab communities included in this study are in levels 1 and 2, hence they all receive the full budget allocation for preschools. The Misgav Regional Council, on the other hand, does not receive payment from the Ministry of Education for preschools and must collect payment from parents for this.

The Bedouin Arab villages under the regional council are classed automatically in a higher socioeconomic stratum (level 8) along with the regional council area as a whole. By dint of great effort, the education department of the council was able to persuade the Ministry of Education to recognize the Bedouin localities as distressed communities, enabling them to receive the full budgetary allocation for their preschools. There is, however, one catch: Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education has authorized free preschools for the Bedouin Arab population, the funds were not found to build preschools for these children. Consequently, in the existing (compulsory schooling) kindergartens (other than in Wadi a-Salameh), the preschoolers are admitted to the kindergartens for 5-year-olds so long as there is room. An investigation we made in the field showed that in each of the following localities – Husniyyeh, Arab a-Na'im, West C'maneh and East C'maneh – there are 10-15 children of preschool age who are not in school. The city of Carmiel is at level 6, but national priorities dictate that its residents receive funding from the Ministry of Education for preschool education.

Standard / substandard classrooms and kindergartens

In this section, we will examine the breakdown of classrooms that meet / do not meet state standards (for kindergarteners and up) in the Arab and the Jewish communities of Misgav. We will also address the standards set by the Ministry of Education in light of the reality with which they are supposed to deal. These standards specify the minimum number of classrooms, other special-use rooms, and auxiliary classrooms; the minimum size of each classroom or other room, including the area for the principal's office, the nurse's office and the (bomb) shelter; and the area for all aspects of sport. A designation as standard or substandard for classrooms and kindergartens, as detailed in the data that follow, indicates those which do / do not meet the minimum size requirements set by the Ministry of Education.

Table 1: Standard & substandard classrooms, kindergarten through 12th grade, in Arab communities (in absolute numbers)

Village/Town:	Majd al-Krum	Kaboul	Sha'ab	Dir Hanna	Sakhnin	Nahaf	Dir al-Asad	Arrabe	Total
No. standard	38	65	29	73	126	77	69	141	618
No. substandard	66	21	24	7	94	20	8	37	277
% substandard	63.5	24.4	45.3	8.8	42.7	20.6	10.4	20.8	30.9

source: Data from the local councils listed in the table.

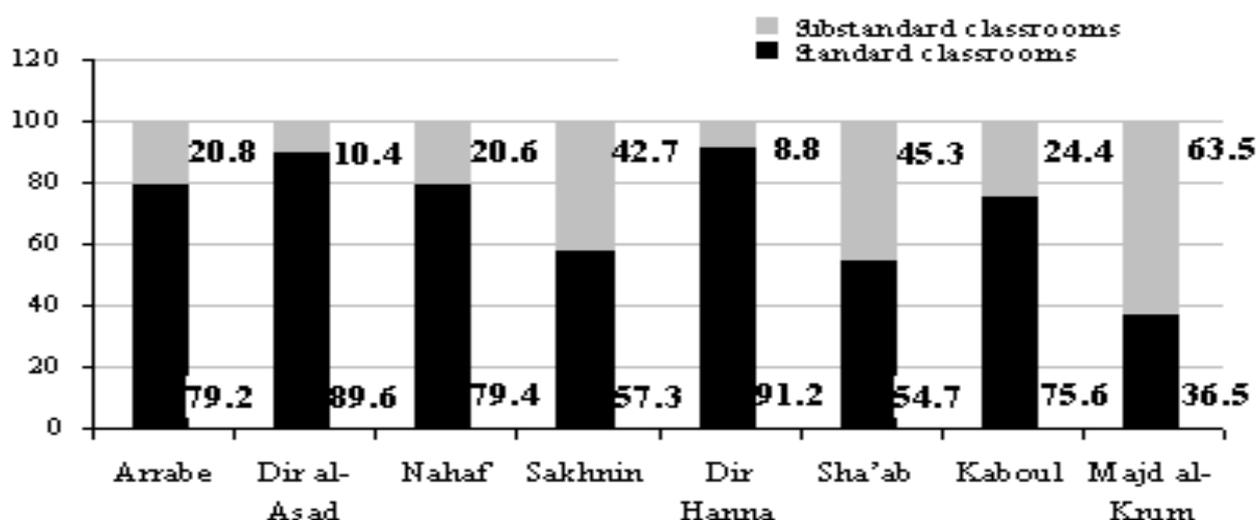
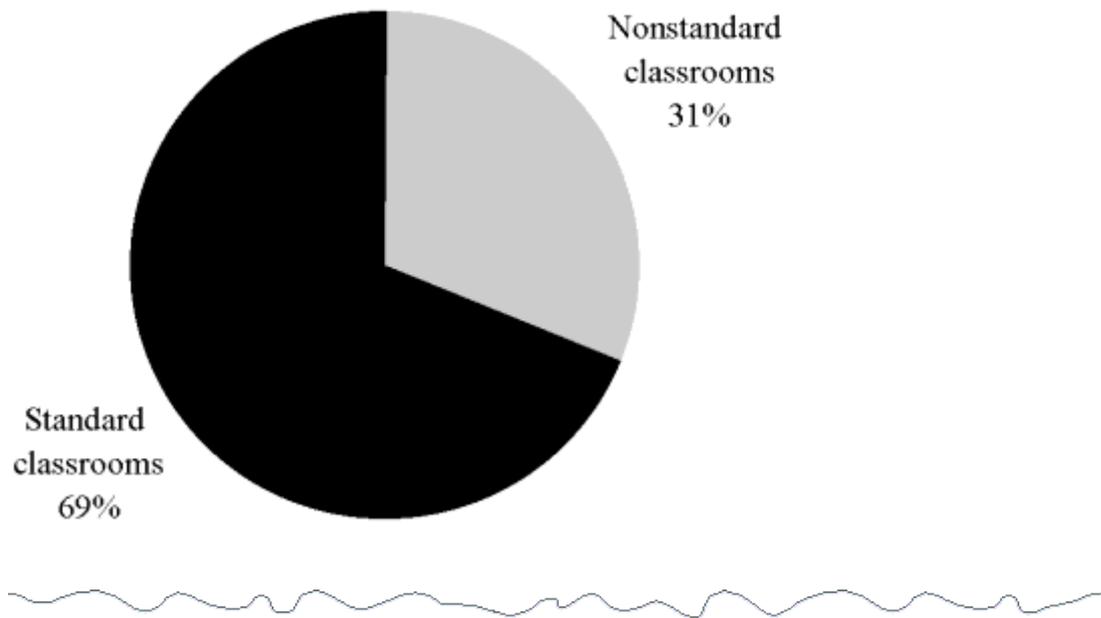


Diagram 1: Breakdown of standard and substandard classrooms (%)

1. In Majd al-Krum, the percentage of substandard classrooms is highest (63.5%) of all towns surveyed.
2. Likewise in Sha'ab and Sakhnin, the percentage of substandard classrooms is markedly high (45.3% and 42.7% respectively).
3. In Dir Hanna, the proportion of substandard classrooms is the lowest of all the towns surveyed (8.8%).
4. Overall, **30.9% of the classrooms in Arab towns are substandard** (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2: Overall breakdown – standard and substandard classrooms in the Arab localities



"Population density" in education

- Expert Opinion -

Importance of physical space for kindergarten and elementary students
(4 through 12 years of age)

Standards for space and density for educational institutions are based on a clear, well-defined educational rationale. For children in kindergarten, the importance of space comes from the unique developmental needs of that age group. Children from four to five are dynamic and active creatures; they move around a lot in space as a response to their need for self-expression, as well as to vent stress. Ample open space contributes to peace of mind, a calm atmosphere in the kindergarten and better development of the children. Physical density, on the other hand, works in an obverse manner – it "encourages" tensions and friction and retards individual development.

Kindergarten is a time of sensory learning and experience gained mainly through playing with and making things, hence the importance of an adjacent yard for play where the children can be exposed to a range of play equipment and games. A well-equipped yard provides challenging experiences that contribute to the child's individual development and complement the activities that take place indoors.

The importance of physical space does not lessen with the transition to the elementary school environment. Children from 6 to 12 also express themselves to a great extent through movement. The learning process evolves gradually from play

and crafts to a more theoretical process, which also requires a comfortable physical space: the pedagogical approach long accepted here encourages learning in groups. This promotes cognitive and social learning in tandem, and is thought preferable to frontal instruction. Learning in groups demands more space than that required for frontal lectures with students sitting in straight rows. Group learning cannot take place without adequate space.

The number of children per classroom is an important variable, comprising one of the accepted yardsticks of quality for an educational system. Israel, with a standard of 40 children per classroom, cannot take pride in a high rank relative to other Western countries. Obviously the more children there are in a classroom, the less individual attention the teacher can give each child, and the teacher's efforts are distracted from teaching in favor of control. Thus the number of children per class is a critical datum in any educational system. Its importance is particularly critical during the early years, when the foundations for a child's learning skills are being established.

In conclusion: Physical space makes a direct contribution to educational quality. The aim of the educational system, in its various phases, is socialization, learning, and personal growth. These demand certain conditions, and among the most basic of these is adequate physical space.

David Netzer, Educator
Lecturer, Oranim Teachers College



Kindergartens & preschools

The area of a standard kindergarten or preschool, based on Ministry of Education standards, is 125 square meters (m²). The ministry also demands a certain allocation of space by function, within the facility. The ministry pays for a kindergarten only when it has at least 11 children, and the standard maximum number of children per kindergarten is 35. When we speak of a classroom or kindergarten that is substandard, we mean a building the size of which does not meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education standard.

The data prompt a question as to why the phenomenon of substandard (undersized) classrooms and kindergartens is so widespread in the Arab localities (144, as opposed to zero in Jewish localities, as shown in Table 2). The survey we conducted provided the following answer: the substandard kindergartens/classrooms in Arab localities that we investigated are in fact rooms within private homes which serve as a site for study and other educational activities in the morning hours while family members are engaged in their ordinary routine (cleaning, cooking, etc.). These rooms are rented by the local councils to serve as kindergartens or classrooms. In these localities, kindergartens planned and constructed as such have not yet been built. The table below shows data for classrooms/kindergartens in the localities examined.

Table 2: Standard and substandard kindergartens and average no. children per kindergarten

	No. standard kindergartens	No. substandard kindergartens	Total no. kindergartens	Total no. children	Average no. children per kindergarten
Misgav region:	50	--	50	1,056	21
Arab localities:	58	144	202	6,684	33.1

1. All the kindergartens in Misgav meet ministry standards, compared with 28.7% of kindergartens in Arab localities.
2. **71.3% of kindergartens in the Arab localities surveyed are substandard.**
3. Since the substandard kindergartens are rented rooms in private homes, only an isolated few meet the ministry size requirement of 125 m².
4. Of the kindergartens in our sample, 60% are between 60 and 80 m², and 10% are 80 to 100 m² in size.

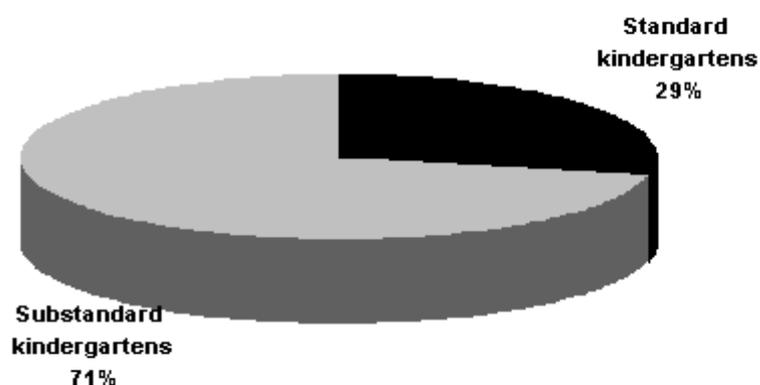


Diagram 3: Standard and substandard kindergartens in the Arab localities (%)

Table 3: Density in kindergartens – m² per child

	area in square meters	average no. of children attending	“Activity area” (m ² per child)
Misgav region*	125 m ² (standard)	21	5.95
Arab localities	125 m ² (standard)	33.1	3.8
Arab localities	80 m ² (substandard)	33.1	2.4
Arab localities	60 m ² (substandard)	33.1	1.8

* including Bedouin

Source: Data from the education departments of the localities surveyed.

The picture within the boundaries of the regional council’s jurisdiction is not uniform. A comparison of Bedouin Arab children and Jewish children reveals the following data:

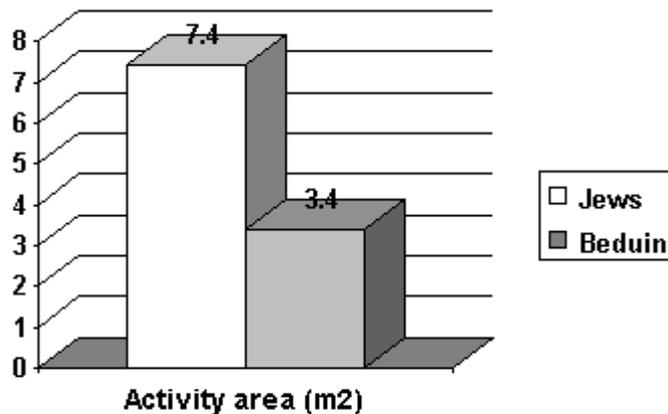
Table 4: “Activity area” in kindergartens – in Bedouin Arab and Jewish localities in Misgav

	No. localities	No. kindergartens	No. children	Avg. no. children per kindergarten	“Activity area” (m ² per child)
Jews	28	39	656	16.8	7.4
Bedouin	6	11	400	36.4	3.4
Total	34	50	1,056	21.1	

*Source: Education Department, Misgav Regional Council

The data from Table 4 show that in Misgav, the kindergartens in Bedouin Arab localities are more than twice as crowded (x 2.16) as those in Jewish localities.

Diagram 4: "Activity area" per child (m²)



While a Jewish child in the Misgav region has an "activity area" of 7.4 m² in kindergarten, some 60% of the Arab children make do with an area of between 1.8 m² and 2.4 m². Only 28.7% of all children in the Arab kindergartens attend a facility that meets ministry standards, and even in those the density is close to the maximum permitted. In these kindergartens, the Bedouin child receives half (53%) the space that his Jewish counterpart receives.

1. The "activity space" of a Jewish child is hundreds of percentage points greater (x 3.3) than that of an Arab child in a kindergarten of 50 m².
2. About 60% of the kindergartens in the Misgav region have air conditioning, whereas none of the Arab kindergartens has air conditioning.
3. The play yard in Arab localities is minimal, and generally has no gym equipment because the kindergarten is actually a rented room in a private home.

The data depict severe crowding in Arab kindergartens, leading to physical friction among the children. In such a situation, the teacher cannot create separate areas for crafts, for particular games, etc., and is unable to provide the individual attention a child needs and deserves.

As we have seen, many kindergartens in Arab localities function in rented rooms within private homes. Similarly, many classrooms are located in such rooms, although this involves a significant further difficulty, as these rooms must be in homes near the school. Since this factor drastically reduces the availability of potential rooms, the education departments in many localities are obliged to rent very small rooms as classrooms. In the Arab localities surveyed, it was found that not only are classrooms very crowded (relative to those in Jewish localities), but the rooms themselves – rented rooms in people's houses – are in some cases only 40 m², 35 m² or even (in many cases) 30 m².

Elementary schools

Table 5 details the requirements set forth in the Ministry of Education standards for elementary school buildings. Note that, based on these requirements, the number of children in a school has no influence on the basic components required, except for the number and aggregate area in square meters of regular classrooms (homerooms / core studies rooms). In other words, the standards for components like a library, special education classrooms, and so forth are set per school, irrespective of school population.

Table 5: Standard for classrooms / other rooms directly serving elementary school students

Type of room	Quantity	Size in m ²	Total m ²
Regular classrooms	dep. on no. pupils	49	dep. on no. pupils
Special ed. classrooms	2	36	72
Auxiliary rooms	2	24	48
Auxiliary rooms	1	30	30
Library / study hall	1	20	20
Science room	1	70	70
Technology rooms	2	60	120

* Source: Ministry of Education, Educational System Development Administration

Table 6: Standards for rooms serving the students indirectly (auxiliary rooms)

Room	Area in m ²
Teachers' room	30
Principal's office	12
Service room	20
Nurse's office	12
Administrative office	24

Counseling room	8
Total	106 m ²

* Source: Min. of Education, Educational System Development Admin.

Additional standard requirements relate to the area of the school grounds, including a long jump area, a 75-meter running track and a standard 18m x 30m basketball court.

Here are the figures for the city of Sakhnin:

1. Substandard classrooms in elementary schools comprise 42.7% of the total (vs. an average of 30.9% for all the Arab localities; see Table 1).
2. Sakhnin grade schools average **33** students per classroom (a bit less than the average for all the Arab elementary schools, **33.4** per classroom – see Table 8).

Table 7: Below standard: no. of auxiliary rooms in Sakhnin elementary schools

	Standard number	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
No. students		737	753	686	525	514
Special education	2	-	-	-	-	-
Auxiliary rooms	3	-	-	-	-	-
Library	1	1		1		1
Science room	1	1	1	1		
Technology rms.	2	-	-	-	-	-
Computers, total				37	20	
Sports fields/courts			1		1 non-standard	under construct.

* School E is in a new, standard building, but only 2/3 is finished; 1/3 of the students have no classrooms and must study in auxiliary rooms. Completion is slated for 2001-02.

Source: Education Department, City of Sakhnin.

Table 7 shows the tremendous inferiority in the level of school buildings in Sakhnin, whether in relation to the Ministry of Education standards or in comparison to the schools in Misgav. The table shows an almost complete absence of auxiliary school rooms in Sakhnin. One can see, for instance, that only two schools have any computers. This situation precludes subdividing classes (for, e.g., enrichment activities). The dearth of auxiliary rooms precludes the use of stationary equipment (computers, video, lab equipment), and the absence of this equipment has an obviously negative impact on basic conditions for instruction.

Another problem in the Arab communities, as reflected in the schools of Sakhnin, is the fact that staff rooms (the rooms used by the counselor, the teaching staff, the principal, the janitorial/maintenance equipment, the secretaries and the school nurse), which should come to 106 m² pschool, in the best cases reach 50-60 m². In practical terms, this means that the rooms used by the principal, the secretaries, and the teachers (staff room) are extremely overcrowded, with people sitting almost one on top of another. These conditions directly affect the entire staff's ability to function and do their jobs properly. Frequently a school is obliged to "convert" a classroom for temporary use by , which exacerbates the already intolerable overcrowding in cla.

The Misgav elementary schools, which we surveyed for this report, are Misgav Central, Har Sh'chanya, Har Gilon, and Salameh Elementary. Each of these schools meets all ministry standards in terms of room size and quantity of rooms, including auxiliary rooms (staff room, etc. – see Table 6).

Table 8: Average number of students per classroom in Misgav elementary schools

Locality	No. students	No. classrooms	Avg. no. students per classroom
Misgav (Jews)*	1,392	52	26.8
Misgav (Salameh)	450	13	34.6
total, misgav schools	1,842	65	29.7
Majd al-Krum	1,626	48	33.9

Kaboul	1,260	39	32.3
Sha'ab	1,000	30	33.3
Dir Hanna	1,148	36	31.9
Sakhnin	3,173	96	33
Nahaf	1,586	46	34.5
Dir al-Asad	1,260	36	35
Arrabe	2,572	77	33.4
total, arab schools	13,625	408	33.4

* Includes Har Gilon, Misgav Central and Har Sh'chanya.

Source: Education departments in the local councils surveyed.

The tremendous crowding in Sakhnin results from a combination of small-sized classrooms and the large number of children in each class. In Sakhnin, 30% of elementary school students study in classes of less than 30 – 40 m² (when the ministry standard is 49 m²). If we define each child's individual "activity area" in the classroom as the total classroom area divided by the number of students, the activity area for 30% of students in Sakhnin is **1.06 m²** (35:33) per child, compared with **1.64 m²** (49:27.7) for a child in the Misgav schools.

In other words, the crowding in some of the Arab homeroom / core studies classrooms is more than 60% greater than that in the Misgav schools. In the best case, the density differential is about 5%.

This, unfortunately, is not the end of the story. In Tables 5 and 6 we saw that each school, in addition to its regular classrooms, is supposed to have another 360 m² of auxiliary class space and another 106 m² of other space. As noted, in the Arab schools where these standards are not met, there is a "space drain" whereby classrooms are put to other uses by the staff, further exacerbating the actual density for students. Table 9 shows the very constricted "activity areas" that Sakhnin students enjoy.

Table 9: "Activity area" per student

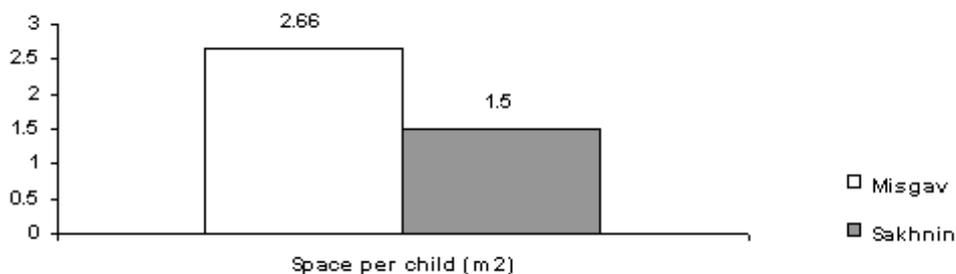
Place (school) *	No. students	Classroom & other area	"Activity area" in m ² per student
Misgav	458	1299	2.8
Sakhnin	449	1250	2.8
Gilon	485	1250	2.6
Misgav / Jews	1,392	3,729	2.7
Salameh	450	1,103	2.5
Misgav total	1,842	4,902	2.66
Sakhnin	2,659	4,118	1.55

* The calculations exclude the Moreshet school which is moving to a new building in 2001-02.

**The calculations exclude Elementary School E in Sakhnin because the new building is slated for completion in 2001-02, and revised data is not yet available.

Source: Education departments in the localities listed.

Diagram 5: "Activity area" per student – Sakhnin vs. Misgav



As seen in Diagram 5, a Jewish child enjoys an "activity area" that is 77% larger than that of an Arab child.



Sports facilities

Playing fields and sports facilities are a critical component in a child's educational universe. Most of the students' physical activity takes place in designated sports areas, thus crowding on jungle gyms and playing fields has a tremendous negative effect on the activity and the child.

1. In Misgav schools (grades 1-12), there are 1,820 students in 61 classrooms.
2. In Sakhnin schools (grades 1-6 only), there are 3,173 students in 96 classrooms.

In the Misgav region, we find the following school sports facilities:

1. 1 small gym
2. 1 outdoor play area with jungle gym, etc.
3. 1 large **air conditioned** gym
4. 1 track & field area with long jump, high jump, short running track (100 m)
5. 2 covered basketball courts
6. 2 open-air basketball / tennis courts
7. 1 nonstandard volleyball court
8. 3 tennis courts
9. 1 soccer field
10. 1 large parking lot (north of the town club) which also serves high school athletes for medium-distance running practice.
11. 1 swimming pool (serving 11th & 12th grades for swimming lessons).

Some of the above facilities belong to the Misgav community center and all are available for use by the 1,820 students of the Misgav school.

1. The Har Sh'chanya school has all required sports facilities, a covered basketball court, and an improvised gym in a basement.
2. The Har Gilon school has standard facilities but no gym.

For the sake of comparison, below is the "list" of sports facilities serving the 3,173 students of Sakhnin, who study in five elementary schools:

- 1 standard basketball court
- 1 nonstandard basketball court

These two courts serve the students from the Sakhnin elementary schools for all their sports and games.

In practice, three Sakhnin schools have no sports facilities, courts, or fields at all (see Table 8). The school yard serves as the field for physical education lessons, and is the only place where the students can run around and play games.



Air conditioners

Air conditioners today are a basic amenity in Israeli classrooms. The absence of air conditioning, combined with the exceptional overcrowding, creates very difficult conditions for learning. The data below speak for themselves:

1. In all 96 elementary school classrooms in Sakhnin, there is not a single air conditioner.
2. In all 109 elementary school classrooms in Misgav (1-12), there are now air conditioners (since the last 11 non-air-conditioned classrooms were air conditioned recently).

Computers

It would be hard imagine the working world today without computers, hence computers are also part of the learning environment in the new millennium. Essentially the only way for students to acquire the computer literacy they need is through individual computer use. This experience is made possible in many schools throughout Israel, on the understanding that availability of computers in schools is a prerequisite for the acquisition of computer skills and literacy.

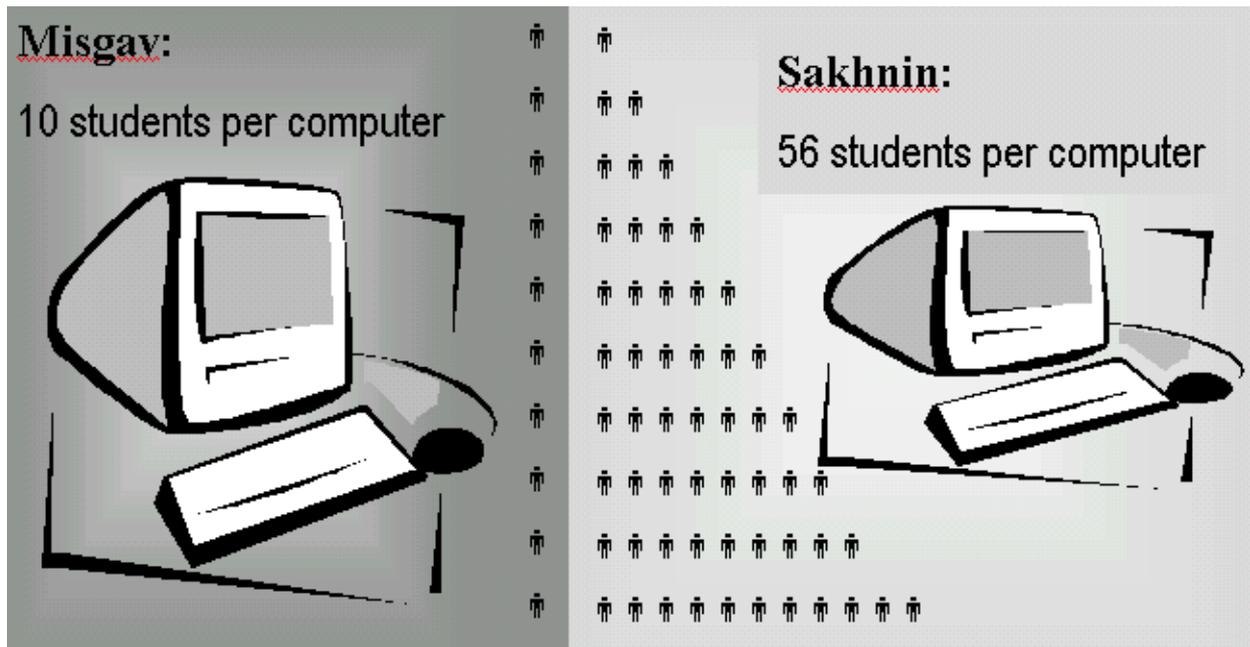
Table 10: No. of students per computer (in absolute numbers)

School	No. students	No. computers	Students per computer
Misgav (all primary schools)	1,483	145	10.2
Sakhnin (all primary schools)	3,173	57	55.6

Source: Sakhnin & Misgav Education Departments

Access to daily experience, with instruction, in the use of computers is the ABC of basic education in our day, and undoubtedly a prerequisite for future employment. Diagram 6, below, is self-explanatory, and all that remains is to add, with regret, that the long lines in front of the computer workstations at the Sakhnin elementary schools presage similarly long lines at the employment bureau in Skahnin.

Diagram 6: Waiting in line: number of students per computer (elementary schools)



Education in Carmiel

The city of Carmiel is located at the heart of the Misgav Regional Council's jurisdiction. Carmiel has 41,000 residents, and serves as the regional center.

Due to the compressed timetable for this study, we were unable to obtain detailed data from the city. Nonetheless, we looked at a sample of elementary schools in the city, and discovered that not only do all of them meet all Ministry of Education standards, the average number of students per class is in the 23-28 range. We found that 80% of the classes are air conditioned and that every school has a gym, sports fields and sports facilities.

Lacking detailed, comparable data, we offer a clear overview of the Carmiel educational system from the city's own informational brochure:

"The educational system in Carmiel is one of the most advanced by national standards. The city's education institutions are housed in structures equipped with the best learning accessories, with a special emphasis on preschools, some of which offer a long school day. Carmiel today has three comprehensive high schools, one religious high school, three junior high schools, a center for vocational training, an international technical college, a community centers network, ten elementary schools, a religious elementary school, an independent school, a school for gifted students, an agricultural farm/school, kindergartens and daycare centers. The city devotes itself assiduously to the welfare of the school system. Among other things, this is reflected in: individual instruction, a pedagogic center, dental care from first grade onward, meals for kindergartens and after-school centers, movement lessons for kindergartens and lower grades, and a music instruction program for grades two

through five. Services are available from [voluntary organizations for children with special needs of various kinds].”

The educational system in Carmiel appears to be a good one, which could be a fair model for creating similar systems elsewhere. In the context of the present report, we suggest that the investment in the Carmiel educational system resembles that made in the Misgav educational system. Hence clearly the gap between a Carmiel education and that offered in the surrounding Arab villages is enormous. As noted in the Introduction, we plan to continue to investigate various aspects of the existing reality in Carmiel.

Conclusion

The choice of Sakhnin as a “representative” Arab locality for purposes of comparing the education Jewish children receive and that received by Arab children in the Misgav region was not a requirement, obviously. We could have focused on any other Arab community (among the eight we surveyed), and insofar as we know the choice of an different community would not significantly have changed the findings with respect to the quality of school buildings, density, learning conditions, and degree to which Ministry of Education standards are met / not met.

Dir Hanna is unusual among the Arab communities examined, and can serve as an encouraging example of partial success in the long and tiresome struggle revolving around the demand for equality in the allocation of government budget resources. Nonetheless, in Dir Hanna there are also instances of kindergartens housed in buildings that don't meet ministry standards; widespread crowding in the schools; and few air conditioners (in only 2% of classrooms). One should note that the relative (and limited) improvement in the Dir Hanna educational system is a trend that has been apparent over the last 4-5 years, during which a number of new schools have been built. In the remaining Arab localities, 6 new schools have been built during this period, only slightly reducing the tremendous pressure for space and the severe crowding in classrooms. In general, if this survey had been conducted two years ago, the data would have been much worse.

In all the departments of education in all the Arab local councils, we heard extremely serious grievances with respect to the Ministry of Education. We saw documentation relating to repeated requests for new kindergartens, requests which were simply not addressed by the ministry over periods of four and five years. We saw repeated written requests by heads of local education departments for meetings with senior ministry officials, to which no response whatever was forthcoming.

We learned that there have been a number of rulings, both in district courts and in Israel's supreme court, against the Ministry of Education involving school buildings it has not constructed in these communities. The response of the Ministry of Education in this matter is that “a gap of 50 years cannot be closed in a day...”

Recently, several Arab local councils (among them, Kaboul and Sakhnin) have appealed to the supreme court (1079/01) concerning opening special education classes, and the supreme court has assisted them in the matter.

The overcrowding and the state of the buildings themselves are, as noted, key factors negatively influencing the quality of learning and of social life at school and in the classroom. And yet, many of the educators with whom we met during the survey stated that the absence of sports facilities in the Arab schools is an even greater problem, perhaps the worst problem they face. That's because after-school activities are an important part of a child's and young person's development – a time for playing games, engaging in sports, “letting off steam” and having fun. The wealth of sports facilities, fields, courts, and gyms in the Jewish schools and community centers of Misgav only sharpens the sense of discrimination and oppression that Arab children and families already feel.



Infrastructures

The question of infrastructures is perceived, and rightly so, as the central question in the matter of the unequal allocation of state resources as between Jews and Arabs. The situation of the Arab communities in Misgav resembles that of other Arab localities throughout the country.

At the end of the 1960s, the military administration that governed Arab localities in Israel from 1948 onward was dismantled and ordinary civilian local councils were constituted in Arab villages and towns. From then on, through the decade of the 1970s, there was a long, tedious quest for the provision of services and installation of infrastructures. During that period, most Arab communities were connected with the national water and electricity supply, and later to Bezeq, the national phone company. Progress on sewage and drainage systems, what there was of it, was slower. Various government plans for the development of infrastructure bore witness to good intentions, but the priority they were accorded on the national agenda was not, to put it mildly, helpful in obtaining budgetary backing for implementation. These “external” problems were often joined to problems of internal organization within the communities themselves. The outcome, in any event, was that the Arab localities in the Galilee remained far behind and far away from national infrastructures.

With the start of intensive Jewish settlement in the Galilee during the 1980s, Arab residents were hopeful that this process would result in improved infrastructures for the existing Arab communities in the region. But the work that was done was done for the Jewish communities only. In certain instances, the Arab communities benefited (in the sense of increased mobility) from new roads paved for the benefit of others, but that was and remains true only in a very limited sense. For example, the road to Eshchar, paved during the 1980s, improved (or more accurately created)

access to Arab a-Na'im, but only this year (2001) were the 900 meters paved that connect the road to the village itself – and even that was partially paid for by the residents. Progress with infrastructures has been extremely slow. In the absence of appropriate government allocations (and sometimes also due to flawed functioning on the part of the Arab local councils), the citizens in Arab communities were left high and dry, cut off from the convenience of infrastructures serving their Jewish neighbors.

These data, though preliminary, serve to illustrate the conspicuous inferiority of the physical infrastructures and public buildings in Arab towns. In our next report, this subject will be treated at greater length. Meanwhile, even at this point the disparity between the infrastructures in Arab localities and the size and requirements of the Arab population is already evident.

Table 11: Status of infrastructures in the Arab villages

Town / infrastructure	Kaboul	Sha'ab	Dir Hanna	Sakhnin	Nahaf	Dir al-Asad	Majd al-Krum
Drainage	Partial	15%	none	10%	none (exc. main road)	15%	70%
Cable TV	None	undergrnd	undergrnd	overhead	70% ovhd	90% ovrhd	20% ovrhd
Telephone	Overhead	overhead	overhead	95% ovhd	70% ovhd	overhead	overhead
Electricity	90% overhead	overhead	95% overhead	95% overhead	overhead	90% overhead	overhead
Sewers	30% *	in place*	80%	60%	80%	70%	80%

Source: Engineering Departments of the localities surveyed * without end-point treatment

Drainage infrastructures are absent in the Arab localities surveyed, although with regard to sewer systems there is some indication of an improvement. Aside from Kaboul, where only 30% of the houses are attached to the sewer system, three villages have 80% of their homes connected, two others have 60% and 70% respectively, and in Sha'ab the sewer system is completely in place. In contrast, the major portion of the connections for electricity, telephone and cable TV are overhead.

Table 12: Publibuildings and facilities

Locality / Public building	Kaboul	Sha'ab	Dir Hanna	Sakhnin	Nahaf	Dir al-Asad	Majd al-Krum
Mother & child clinic	2	1 R	2 (1 R)	4 (2 R)	2 (1 R)	2 (R)	1
Community center	none	none	1 (R)	none	youth ctr	none	1
Gymnasium	none	under constr.	2, in schools	none	none	none (1 planned)	1
Soccer field	1 + TR	1 + TR	1	1	1 + TR	none	TR
Swimming pool				1		1	

R = rented building or rented quarters; TR = training area

1. Half the mother & child clinics in the Arab communities are located in rented quarters.
2. A community center in a building built for that purpose exists only in Majd al-Krum.
3. All the villages have a soccer field except Dir al-Asad.

The only infrastructure that serves a basic social purpose and exists in nearly all the villages surveyed is a soccer field. If we take a more careful look at this subject, however, we'll find that in Jewish towns of the same size, the soccer field facilities are closer to what can be described as a stadium. The gap is particularly conspicuous in the case of Sakhnin, whose municipal soccer team plays in the national league but cannot train properly nor host games in a suitable fashion. The lack of community centers for leisure activities for young people and adults leads, one may reasonably assume, to harsh consequences for the social fabric of the community, in terms of social tensions and an absence of community activism. All these are likely to lead, in the end, to higher incidences of crime. Alienation and dissociation from the wider Israeli reality are another natural consequence.

The use of rented quarters in privately owned buildings for public services (resembling the phenomenon described in the previous section, on education) is very common in the Arab localities. A notable example is the mother and child clinics. This highlights a distortion in the administrative functioning in the local councils, which by law are required to provide services but cannot do so in an appropriate manner, i.e., in public buildings suitably equipped or preferably planned in advance for the purpose, as is customary in the Jewish sector. Hence the Arab local councils are forced to use alternative sites, mainly private homes, which are not

suitable for the purpose. This dependence on private buildings creates another problem for the council, because the economic distress that leads a family to rent out a private home makes the council dependent on interested parties, for whom serving the public is not necessarily a primary focus.

No less conspicuous is the near-total absence of swimming pools, a most attractive leisure venue (in communities that have them) during the long Israeli summer. No swimming pool in their town means that Arab children and adults do not learn how to swim, or learn very superficially. The tragic consequences are reported every summer in the newspapers, when there are many deaths by drowning among Arab families vacationing at the Sea of Galilee or on Israel's Mediterranean beaches.

Cable TV infrastructure also shows a huge gap between Jewish towns and Arab towns. Today it's hard to find a Jewish locality without an underground cable television network. In Arab towns, on the other hand, there are many instances of overhead cable networks (see Table 11).

In the realm of infrastructures, one may point to a certain improvement in Arab towns, though both the pace at which the deficiencies are addressed and the investment of resources are far from satisfactory. This is most conspicuous when the data are compared with the data for Jewish towns.



A positive instance of improvement in the area of infrastructures is that of the Bedouin Arab village of Demeideh, which is located within the Misgav regional jurisdiction. Demeideh is one of the unrecognized Arab villages in Misgav. After a long and exhausting struggle led by village residents, Demeideh (together with other villages in the Haifa and Northern districts) won recognition during the first half of the 1990s. The announcement of official recognition did not, it turns out, guarantee a suitable policy with respect to the allocation of resources enabling these localities to establish themselves properly. Permission was granted for the preparation of a master plan for Demeideh in 1993, but approval took a long time and the plan did not go into effect until five years later (in November 1998). In 1999, construction began on permanent housing and in January of 2001 work began on infrastructures.

This came about thanks to the joint efforts of the Misgav Regional Council, which took on the task of leading the planning process for these Bedouin communities, with all the bureaucratic, political, organizational and cultural problems involved, and an activist and stubborn local leadership. The impressive progress made at Demeideh is certainly an outstanding instance of cooperation between determined community leadership that refuses to be deterred, and a regional council that has invested and continues to invest its best efforts, talents and resources to see that the process continues to move ahead.



Areas of jurisdiction

Based on the Planning and Building Law (1965), the Planning and Building Commissions operate in the framework of the Planning Authority, which is part of the Interior Ministry. Planning operates in four strata: (1) a national council for planning and building; (2) six district commissions; (3) appeals committees operating in the districts; and (4) about 130 local planning and building commissions, congruent with local municipal or regional governance authorities. The district commissions and the national council generally are the forum for discussions of master plans, which define land use on various levels of detail intended to articulate the needs of residents. Members at the two highest levels – the national council and the district commissions – are named by the government (openings are not posted) and are not answerable to the local community. Accountability to the community is supposed to be manifest via the local commissions, composed of members of the local council and other representatives of the municipal authority.

The local commission includes representatives of the public from the community, and its chair is someone from the local council and accountable to it, typically the council head. Most of the Arab localities fall under regional commissions, although from the standpoint of population size, some deserve their own local commissions (which is what happens with the Jewish communities). In many of the Arab regional commissions, the commission's head is named by the Ministry of the Interior and is not a local resident. In general this means that the commissions are run by Jews. (Thus, for example, the regional commission with which the city of Sakhnin is associated: the chair of the commission and the commission's engineer are not residents of the city.) In other words, the local/regional commission that is meant to reflect the needs and interests of the community actually functions as an external committee.

This situation is not just a simple bureaucratic "mishap." The problem is structural, and is the main source of the foot-dragging on approving master plans. The commission, in the last analysis, compels an Arab locality to accept the commission's idea of a master plan because non-acceptance of a master plan can lead to the razing of houses (built without legal permits in the absence of an approved master plan, and later incorporated into the plan) and/or to heavy fines for illegal construction, and naturally can also prevent the homeowner from connecting his home to the basic service infrastructure systems like electricity and water.

Israel's land use policy, since the founding of the state, has striven to delimit Arab communities and prevent their expansion. This policy is intended to prevent the Arab communities and their residents from "gaining control of state lands," which until 1948 were a natural part of "village lands" (see Table 13 below). One prevalent method for implementing this policy has been to constitute regiocouncils all over the country. In contrast to other types of municipal authorities, the regional council is meant mainly to control the land and to protect national lands as green areas and natural resources. On the Misgav regional map, for example, one may see quite

easily that the Arab communities are “encircled” by areas under the regional council’s jurisdiction.

The Misgav regional council was constituted at a relatively late stage of the state’s development (in 1981). The precursor to establishment of the Misgav regional council may be seen in Table 13, in the difference between the land areas designated “village lands” until the 1970s, and the areas under the jurisdiction of the municipal authorities today. The land areas at the disposal of the Arab communities for their own use (either as “village lands” or under their jurisdiction) were reduced during this period by 55% (an average figure for the villages we surveyed).

The plan for look-out communities (*mitzpim* – see Footnote 3), which encompasses most of the Jewish residential settlement in Misgav, is not a regional plan in the ordinary sense. It was conceived as a strategic plan to set up dozens of residential points in the Galilee over a short period of time and with minimal investment, so as to preserve state lands. Subsequent plans continued this line, and even intensified it. They are conspicuous for a planning approach that ignores the place of the Arab communities (which are mentioned in the plans as marginal notes) and bases itself on Jewish towns only, meaning Haifa, Carmiel, and the Haifa satellite towns (the *Krayot*).

When, for example, one of the plans discusses the need for a city to provide services to surrounding communities, Carmiel is mentioned as a city that does not fulfill that need (due to lack of convenient road access) – but neighboring Sakhnin is not even mentioned as a city that could, after suitable development, play such a role in the future.

The land area at the disposal of an Arab community in Israel today is 64% smaller (the figure is a national average) than its “village lands” area during the period of the British mandate, i.e. before 1948. Given natural population increase on the one hand, and the reduction in living space for the community on the other, the proportion of built-up area within the jurisdiction of Arab towns is now (again in terms of a national average) 16 times what it was, and population density is 11 times what it was.

Other instruments for controlling land development and allocation are public bodies like the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Construction and Housing and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund (*Keren Kayemet L’Yisrael*, or *KKL*) are particularly prominent examples of entities that initiate and carry out planning on a broad scale. The development trends in these entities are skewed very markedly in favor of the Jewish population.

The next table is based on a number of definitions that require some clarification:

“Village land area”: This is the land area that the Turkish regime, and after it the British mandatory authority, defined as the village’s “environs,” serving it both for agriculture and pasturage. Before the founding of the State of Israel, some of these lands were officially registered in the names of their owners, and some remained under the High Commissioner. There were two reasons for this: (a) Registering land was a long, difficult process, and when the British left the country, many of these

processes were halted, either at that point or later on; and (b) the ordinary farmer lacked education and relevant knowledge of the complex registration process and was indifferent to bureaucratic necessities and procedures.

All the village lands, in any case, were in use by the village. Delineating of village boundaries under the British was intended mainly to prevent a given village from encroaching on the lands of its neighbors, as well as to give the farmers – whose families had been working the land for dozens or hundreds of years – legal title to their lands, despite the fact that an official registration and documentation were lacking.

“Village area”: This is the area that the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) recognized as the village’s land area, before there was a designation of “area of municipal jurisdiction.” In practice, the local authority operated in an area nearly the size of the one in which it functions today.

Area of jurisdiction: This is the area in which local government can effect its plans for the growth and development of the community. The authority is not authorized to plan construction and development within the area of its jurisdiction on land designated NMP (National Master Plan) land under special categories like a scenic landscape, national park, nature preserve or archeological site.

Within the area of its jurisdiction, local government collects taxes and must provide the various services a local authority owes its residents, from connection to the national infrastructures (electricity, water, sewer system) to garbage collection.

Each such authority has an interest in expanding the locality or localities under its jurisdiction, to build neighborhoods, establish industrial parks and recreational areas and create jobs for the community. This is how it increases its income from residential and business taxes collected. This is very clearly not the situation in the Arab communities in our sample.

Master plan: This is the plan that precisely defines the area in which building and development is permitted within the area of jurisdiction of a given local government. A plan goes into effect when approved by the local planning and building commission and by the regional planning and building commission.

Table 13: Arab local councils – areas of jurisdiction

Community	No. of residents	“Village land area” through 1948 (dunams)	“Village area* through the end of the 1970s (dunams)	Current area of jurisdiction (dunams)	Current master plan area (dunams)	m ² per person in current master plan area

Kaboul	8,600	8,000	8,000	7,000	2,030	240
Sha'ab	5,300	18,000	23,000	2,300	613	115
Dir Hanna	7,300	16,000	16,000	8,900	1,160	158
Sakhnin	23,000	68,000	68,000	9,700	4,400	191
Nahaf	8,8000	15,600	15,600	4,900	1,000	113
Dir al-Asad	8,9000	15,000	6,000	4,300	1,000	112
Majd al-Krum	11,000	20,000	16,000	9,300	1,400	127
Arrabe	17,300	45,000	33,000	8,350	3,800	219
Misgav region	15,000			176,000		
Carmiel	47,000			23,000	21,500	524

Note: * In the case of some of the Arab communities, the area was reduced during the 1960s and again at the beginning of the 1980s.

The data in the columns headed “village land area” and “village area” are approximate, with up to a 10% margin of error (in number of dunams). Nonetheless, the overall picture is clear: a continual shrinkage in the village’s area. This trend has reduced some of the villages to the point of severe distress, with not a single square meter available for planning and building. The situation cannot change without an increase in the area of jurisdiction that would enable a concomitant expansion of the local master plan.

About a quarter of the area of jurisdiction of Arab communities throughout the country are state lands, and the rest are private land. Only **20%** of these state lands has been designated till now for use (building) by residents of the communities where the land is located. Examining the breakdown of that 20% reveals that more than 70% of the allocation of such lands are for Bedouin and Druse localities.

The table below (Table 14) provides an additional perspective on the hardship caused to Arab communities due to their location adjacent to the neighboring Misgav region. Ostensibly there is no problem with the existence of private lands in the jurisdictional area of a neighboring municipal authority. But due to the overall policy of separating Arabs from their privately owned land, and the policy of encircling Arab communities to prevent their expansion, the private property belonging to Arab citizens that is located within the jurisdictional area of the adjacent council becomes all but useless. In the best case, the land may be used for small-scale agriculture. The main hardship to which Arab citizens are subject – lack of land to build homes for the younger generation – cannot be ameliorated via such properties, which are “imprisoned” within the neighboring regional jurisdiction.

Table 14: Private (registered) land within the jurisdictional area of the Misgav regional council

Community	Area (dunams)		Community	Area (dunams)
Kaboul	110		Nahaf	?
Sha'ab	1,400		Dir al-Asad	2,000
Dir Hanna	3,500		Arrabe	3,000
Sakhnin	16,500		Majd al-Krum	4,000

This data, too, has a 10% margin of error, because the private lands are divided among hundreds of residents and counting the areas on a map is a very complicated task. We used the lowest estimate.

In the Misgav regional jurisdiction, most if not all of the land zoned for residential building is state land, and is therefore designated for allocation to Jewish residents. In any case, the land is located within Jewish communities. The remaining land is zoned as open land under various designations (national park, nature preserve, etc.) intended to prevent any building whatever. These areas often border the “blue line,” meaning the boundary of the master plan for an Arab community. An Arab citizen who has private land adjacent to the blue line of his own community but outside its boundary – i.e., within the Misgav jurisdiction – must request a building permit through the Misgav regional council. This process demands, first of all, a request for rezoning, followed by the process of planning the house and the infrastructure.

It's almost superfluous to explain how complicated and full of pitfalls this process is, since the Arab applicant is required to request that the Jewish local governing authority permit him to build on a plot located outside the master plan boundaries of the Arab community, on land falling under the municipal authority set up with the aim of preventing expansion of the Arab community. Hence, having already said that building permits for residents **within** the master plan boundaries of their villages are very difficult to obtain, the prospects that an Arab resident will receive a building permit within the Misgav regional jurisdiction are virtually nil.



Place of residence & income level

The average income in a town should be indicative of both the state of the job market available to residents and their economic situation. The concept of “economic capacity” also implies the potential participation by residents in contributing to the resources that constitute the foundation for public activity in the community. Thus a low earning level suggests, for instance, that the potential property tax income is also low.

Absent a sufficient contribution by government for education, local government generally fills the gap by levying additional sums from parents and other sources. This is impossible in the Arab communities we surveyed, as Diagram 7 makes all too clear.

As the data in Table 7 demonstrate, the average income in Carmiel is not that different from that of the Arab communities, but the Carmiel educational system is far superior, similar to that of Misgav. In Carmiel, government and other budgets “close the gap” between the demands of a quality educational system and the limited economic capacity of local parents to contribute. Since a good education increases the chances for higher income later on, there’s a good chance that the next generation in Carmiel will escape the vocational hardships experienced by their parents – thanks to government investment in education, plus the existence of an industrial park to which city residents have easy access.

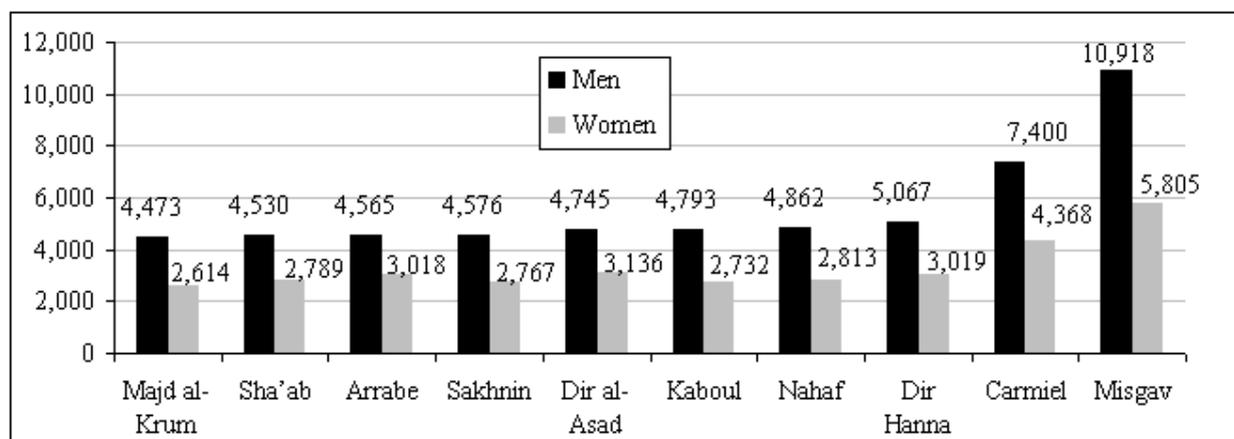
* * *

Diagram 7 shows that the average men’s wage in Majd al-Krum (where the average income is the lowest of the communities surveyed) represents 40.9% of the average men’s wage in the Misgav region. In Dir Hanna (where the average wage is the highest of all the Arab communities surveyed), the average wage is 46.4% of the average wage for Misgav.

With respect to women’s earnings, Table 7 reveals two parallel phenomena:

1. As men’s wages rise, so too does the disparity between the men’s earnings and those of women. Thus, for example, women in Majd al-Krum earn 58.4% of what men earn, while women in Misgav earn only 53.1% of what men in Misgav earn. In both cases women earn relatively less than men, both in the Jewish community and the Arab community. The higher incomes for men in Misgav only lead to a bigger gap. This phenomenon holds true nationally as well.
2. The gap between the lowest earnings level for women (in Majd al-Krum) and the highest (in Misgav) is relatively less than the gap for men. Women in Majd al-Krum earn 45% of what women in Misgav earn, whereas women in Dir al-Asad (with the highest earnings in the Arab towns surveyed) earn 54% of what women in Misgav earn.

Diagram 7: Average wage in NIS per month worked, by place of residence and gender (1988)

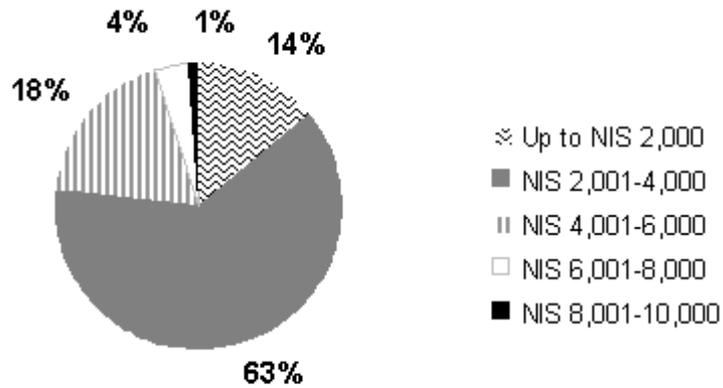


Note: The average earnings per capita in the Misgav region includes Jews and Bedouin. One may reasonably assume that this figure is lower than the average earnings figure for Jews only (data we do not have).

Source: Svirsky, Shlomo & Alon Etkin (2001), Place of Residence and Earnings Level in Israel 1993-1998, Adva Center for Information on Equality and Social Justice.

The data here show a clear relationship between ethnic affiliation and socioeconomic class, and between place of residence and socioeconomic strata in the communities surveyed. One should note that a general treatment of the subject for a given community or region does not reveal the internal disparities between, e.g., neighborhoods within Carmiel or between the various towns in Misgav (Bedouin Arab vs. Jewish towns, kibbutzim vs. community settlements, etc.). As an example, the Arab Bedouin population accounts for about 30% of the population of Misgav. Data from a survey of the village of Wadi a-Salameh in January of 1999, during preparation of the master plan for the village, show that about 77% of the families in the village earn less than NIS 4,000 per month, as may be seen in Diagram 8.

Diagram 8: Breakdown of net family income levels (NIS/month) in Wadi a-Salameh (1999)



Source: Chemensky & Assoc. Consultants (1999), Findings of a Survey in Wadi a-Salameh – A profile of residents, their needs and behavior, a discussion paper for preparation of the master plan for Arab localities.

Table 15: Percentage of wage-earners earning up to the minimum wage** based on 1998 data

Locality	Percentage earning up to minimum wage
Majd al-Krum	49%
Sha'ab	47%
Arrabe	55%
Sakhnin	56%
Dir al-Asad	48%
Kaboul	52%
Nahaf	51%
Dir Hanna	52%
Carmiel	37%
Misgav *	28%

* Combines Jewish and Arab Bedouin population.

** The minimum wage in 1998 was NIS 2,564.

Source: Svirsky, Shlomo & Alon Etkin (2001), Place of Residence and Earnings Level in Israel 1993-1998, Adva Center for Information on Equality and Social Justice.

In 1998 in these Arab communities, the proportion of residents earning the minimum wage or less was 50.3% overall; the range was between 47% (Sha'ab) and 56% (Sakhnin). In Carmiel and Misgav, the proportion of those receiving the minimum wage or less in 1998 was 37% a28% respectively, a fairly low figure relative to Israel as a whole (39.4%).

The picture conveyed is that the employment and wage level among Arab residents of the region is low. Indeed, this picture holds for all the Arab citizens in the country, and the Arab citizens of the Misgav region are no exception. The special social conditions obtaining in the Misgav area since the 1980s, with the advent of Jewish settlement, certainly adds an additional dimension to the hardship that exists in terms of the obvious and constant contrast. When one is obliged to observe it day after day, a spiraling sense of frustration would appear to be unavoidable.

Without appropriate government assistance, and without parity even in the ordinary budget allocations, the impact of this situation on the education of the younger generation is foreordained and decisive. The bleak reality reduces the chance that the next generation can escape the cycle of distress and disadvantage, and imparts an overwhelming feeling that their situation is truly hopeless.



Conclusion / Looking ahead

Reading this report in its entirety is not an easy task for Jewish residents of Misgav. Today, after the events of October 2000, it's clear that this huge disparity and inequality – only a very small measure of which has been detailed in this report – in one fashion or another threatens our future here, Arabs as well as Jews.

When we came to live in Misgav, each for his or her own personal reasons, one thing was promised above all – a good quality of life. It turns out that quality of life involves more than a pleasant house and garden. The surrounding area, immediately adjacent and farther removed, is also part of the picture: the town, the community, and the neighbors. Now is the time when we Jewish residents of Misgav must not forget that our Arab neighbors are citizens of this state – the same state that proposed that we come and settle here. It seems only natural to us that there should be complete equality between Jews and Arabs here.

Civic equality is an aspect of quality of life to which every citizen of the state is entitled. Equality between us and our neighbors is not merely about the quality of life we seek for ourselves. Absolute civic equality between neighbors is a basic existential precondition both for ourselves and for our neighbors. This is wholly in our own self-interest – ethically and practically – hence we have taken upon ourselves the task of changing the norm of discrimination and promoting equality in our region.

The primary burden, however, does not by right belong to us: The government bears primary responsibility to move this issue forward and provide help, intensive help, and quickly. The government of Israel has a responsibility toward Arab citizens – a responsibility it is obligated to actualize; and also toward us, the Jewish residents who came to settle in the Galilee at the urging of the government of Israel. Determined activism to enhance equality between us and our Arab neighbors is a mission of the highest national importance, and is first and foremost the government's job.

The Misgav Regional Council is making tremendous, sincere efforts to advance the wellbeing of Bedouin Arab citizens in its jurisdiction, while working toward better relations with the neighboring Arab local councils. One of our main goals is to help the Regional Council, via public support, to continue and even intensify its struggle with the national government. We are devoutly committed to this aim.

We are not motivated by any sort of masochism or machoism, but by a real commitment, however painful it may sometimes be, and a basic sense of solidarity with our neighbors, who are citizens like us.

The Misgav communities provide a model worthy of emulation by the nation as a whole in many spheres of life. The spiritual, Zionist, and democratic quest to eliminate the disparities in equality of opportunity and quality of life between Jewish and Arab citizens is the worthiest of them all.

