



## Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues

### GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION 922 UPDATE

#### **Implementation Status of “Etgarim”: The Program for Informal Education in Arab Society<sup>1</sup>**

December 2018

Increasing the involvement of Arab children and youth in programs of informal education is a primary focus of [Government Resolution 922 \(GR-922\)](#), the historic five-year economic development plan for Israel’s Arab society. Informal education, encompassing a wide range of educational and social extracurricular activities, is regarded in Israel as an important part of childhood and adolescence, helping to build social, academic and leadership skills; enhancing access to higher education and employment opportunities; and involving children, youth, and adults in community activities.

Arab society has had little access to the diverse informal education offerings in Israel, and limited involvement in the field prior to GR-922. This lack of opportunity is regarded as having contributed to the [sizeable educational, social and, ultimately, economic gaps](#) between Israel’s Arab minority and Jewish majority.

In a 2017 briefing paper, [Informal Education in Israel's Arab Society: From an Overlooked Field to a Government Priority](#), the Task Force described informal education gaps in Arab society, and outlined provisions made within GR-922 to address them. GR-922 allocates NIS 650 million for informal education in Arab society over its five-year term, representing 25 percent of the total government budget for informal education. In parallel, the Youth and Society Administration of the Ministry of Education established a centralized program, “Etgarim,” to coordinate, develop and implement informal education in Arab communities using the GR-922 budget.

With the first two years of Etgarim dedicated to planning and initial implementation, 2018-2019 will mark the first year in which budget distribution and national and local implementation of Etgarim will be conducted in full alignment with the academic year.

This update serves as a follow-up to the 2017 Task Force paper, outlining the progress and challenges of Etgarim implementation to date. It includes insights into new informal education programs, expansion and regulation of programs that preceded Etgarim, participation rates and targets for the future, and capacity building to support informal education in Arab society.

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<sup>1</sup> We extend our gratitude to Head of the Arab Society Department at the Youth and Society Administration **Galal Safadi** for providing information, data, and consultation toward this update.

## **ETGARIM OVERVIEW**

Major barriers to informal education opportunities for Israel's Arab youth include lack of infrastructure and qualified personnel in Arab municipalities, limited government funding for programs in Arab communities, few offerings developed specifically for Arab youth, and little awareness within Arab society about the value of informal education.

Etgarim's mandate is to increase the number of informal education opportunities and improve their quality, regulate all programs for which it provides funding, recruit and train staff, help develop infrastructure in Arab towns and cities to support local activities, develop content and programs designed specifically for Arab youth, and increase awareness in Arab communities about informal education.

At the local level, Etgarim expands access to programs for Arab communities, oversees their implementation, and enhances local capacity to support them. At the national level, Etgarim works to bring nationwide programs and organizations into Arab communities throughout the country, and develop central government capacities to support informal education in Arab society

The target demographic for Etgarim are Arab children and youth ages 8-18. As of July 2018, a reported **129,000** Arabs within this age range participate in informal education programs supported and approved by Etgarim. This accounts for nearly half the target population of approximately 300,000 children and youth.

### **Budget Allocation**

The five-year Etgarim budget of **NIS 650 million** is allocated annually in **NIS 130 million** increments. More than half of this annual budget, **NIS 70 million**, is distributed directly to the 67 Arab local authorities on a per-capita basis, upon submission and approval of an annual work plan. The municipalities may use this budget to provide regulated, approved programming to their communities. As of October 2018, all but three local authorities are on track to receive Etgarim budgeting for the 2018-2019 school year.

The remaining annual budget of **NIS 60 million** goes toward developing national Etgarim frameworks and programs, closing budgeting gaps between informal education programs in Jewish and Arab society, promoting Arab participation in national programs, and building an Arab professional network and infrastructure for informal education.

## **ETGARIM ON THE LOCAL LEVEL**

Since its launch in 2015, Etgarim has established regulations and standards for informal education programs in Arab municipalities. For the first time, this enables quality control of programs for Arab youth and the ability to track participation rates and fields of interest. Etgarim has created a database of 371 approved programs to date provided by educational organizations, which municipalities can select and implement using their Etgarim budgets. This online database, entitled the "Green Track,"<sup>2</sup> includes **enrichment programs** for grades **3-6** (sports, music & art, science & technology, academics, swimming, and other special interest activities), and **youth programs** for grades **7-12** (long-term programs in areas such as leadership development, community engagement, and employment skills).

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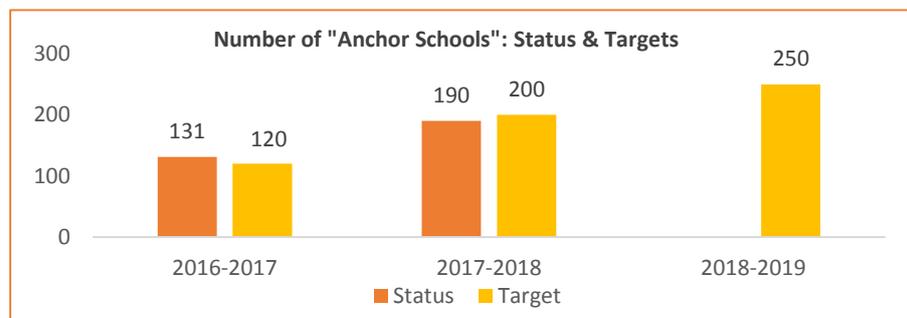
<sup>2</sup> The "green track" for enrichment and youth programs in Arab society is included in the [Ministry of Education External Educational Programs](#) database (in Hebrew) through the Etgarim filter.

- **Achievements:** All municipalities using Etgarim budgets have implemented Green Track programs. Participation has been substantial: As of summer 2018, enrichment programs engaged 34,333 children, and youth programs engaged 29,943 teenagers. Participation is expected to rise in 2018-2019, with an enrichment programs target of 52,000 children and youth programs target of 42,000 teens.
- **Challenges:** Municipal leaders and professionals in the field state that Arab communities are in need of more Arab-led programs run by educators fluent in Arabic and familiar with the cultural sensibilities of Arab children and youth, and that further professionalization of existing program providers in Arab society is still needed. Such professionalization can elevate the quality of educational activities in Arab communities, and assist smaller organizations not yet included in the Etgarim "Green Track" to meet criteria and offer services through the program.

### Local Infrastructure Development

One of the primary barriers to informal education in Arab society has been the lack of physical infrastructure in Arab localities such as designated buildings for educational activities, facilities for sports and arts, and playing fields and shaded outdoor areas. Etgarim has invested in developing local infrastructure through several channels:

- **"School as an anchor in the community":** This framework was established by Etgarim for municipalities without sufficient infrastructure for activities. Select schools in certain communities remain open after hours and host extracurricular activities chosen by the local Youth Department and approved and budgeted through Etgarim.
  - **Achievements:** Etgarim established 131 "anchor schools" in 2016-2017, and reached 190 schools in 2017-2018. The target is for a total of 250 anchor schools to be established by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year.



- **Construction & renovations:** In 2016-2017, Etgarim invested a portion of its budgetary surplus (estimated at roughly NIS 34 million – approximately NIS 500,000 per municipality) in renovating and constructing indoor and outdoor spaces based on local needs. This includes renovating classrooms, erecting portable classrooms, building decks and pathways, purchasing furniture, constructing roofing and more.
  - **Achievements:** As of 2018, such infrastructure projects are approved, significantly underway, or completed in 65 out of 67 Arab municipalities. In 2018-2019, an additional budgetary surplus of roughly NIS 30 million will be invested in roofing outdoor areas to enable activity in case of heat or rain. Localities with sufficient outdoor roofing may submit requests for alternative infrastructure development.

- **Music conservatories:** Etgarim currently supports five music conservatories for Arab children and youth, only one of which existed prior to the program in the Arab city of Shefa-'Amr. Additional conservatories have been established through the program in the Arab town of Qalansawe, and three in the mixed cities of Haifa, Akko, and Ma'alot Tarshiha.

## **ETGARIM ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

Prior to Etgarim, there was no mechanism to ensure that Arab youth were able to participate in national, government-supported informal education programs at rates proportional to their demographic representation and comparable to their Jewish counterparts. Therefore, a significant portion of Etgarim's budget is devoted to expanding existing national programs into Arab society, as well as developing new programs geared to Arab youth.<sup>3</sup>

### **Expansion of Existing Programs into Arab Society**

**Youth Movements:** One of Israel's leading frameworks for informal education are traditional youth movements, which are government-regulated and supported by a Ministry of Education budget. Prior to Etgarim, this budget did not designate funds specifically for youth movement activity in Arab society. Historically, Arab youth have participated at less than half the rate of Jewish youth in these programs.<sup>4</sup>

- **Achievements:** Etgarim has added funding to the national youth movement budget in order to ensure that 20 percent of the entire budget is designated for Arab society, in proportion to the Arab population of Israel. As of 2018, Arab participation in youth movements has grown to 24,000 from about 19,000 in 2015, with the target for 2019 set at 32,500.
- **Challenges:** Arab "youth organizations," a sub-category of youth movements that allows smaller young leadership programs to access government funding, were initially meant to receive budgets through Etgarim as well, but these additional funds are currently suspended due to internal reasons within the Ministry of Education and their allocation is yet to be determined. For this reason and others, participation in youth organizations has dropped in the past year, from nearly 18,000 in 2017 to roughly 14,500 in 2018, as some organizations that had anticipated Etgarim budgets now have funding challenges.

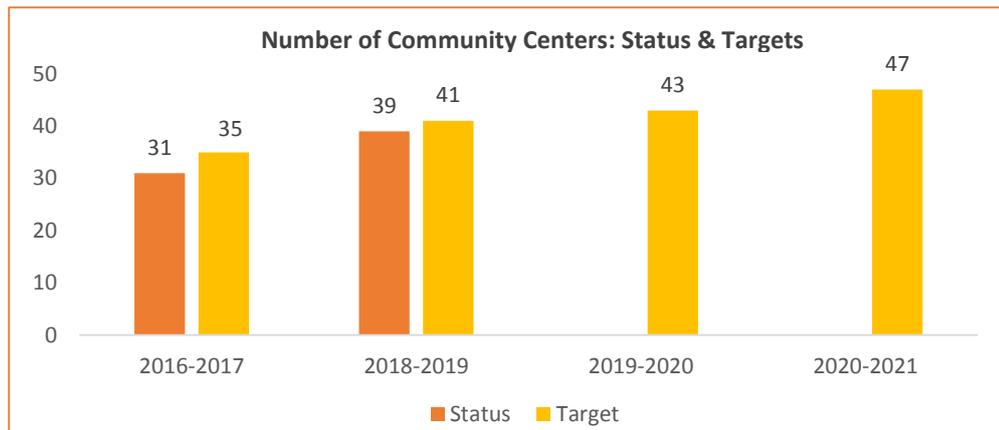
**Israel Association of Community Centers:** Government-supported community centers provide a wide range of informal education activities. They are among the major providers of informal education in Israel with 700 locations nationwide. Until 2016, only 37 percent of Arab municipalities had community centers (a total of 25), compared to 70 percent of Jewish ones. Etgarim allocates yearly funding toward establishing additional centers in Arab communities, with the goal of reaching 47 centers by 2021.

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<sup>3</sup> Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, *Informal Education in Arab Society*, July 2017, p. 13.

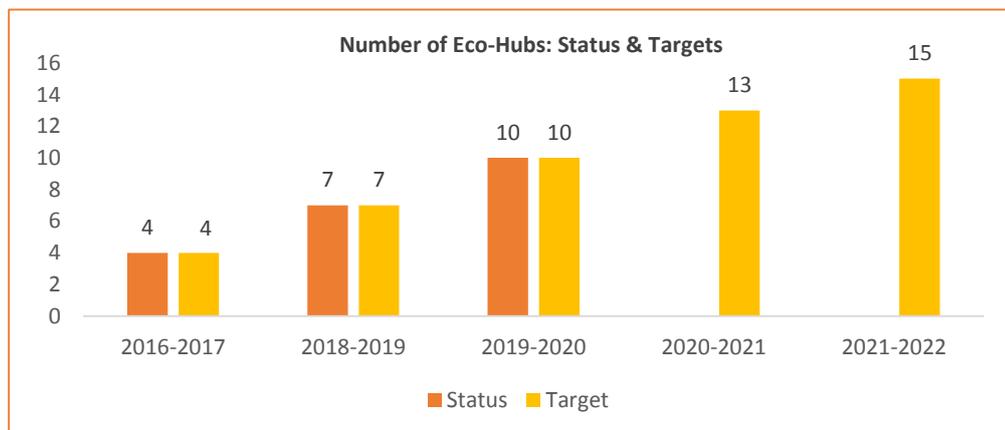
<sup>4</sup> Approximately 30 percent of eligible Jewish youth have historically participated in youth movements.

- **Achievements:** Thus far, 14 new community centers have been established with the support of Etgarim, for a total of 39 in Arab communities as of summer 2018.



**Eco-Community Hubs by the [Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel \(SPNI\)](#):** This nationwide framework provides environmental education throughout Israel but had no presence in Arab society prior to Etgarim.

- **Achievements:** To date, 10 new eco-hubs have been established in Arab society with Etgarim support, each serving roughly seven surrounding Arab localities. Etgarim aims to establish a total of 15 eco-hubs by 2021.



### New National Program

**Gap-Year Leadership Institutes:** As part of Etgarim, a new regulation was established by the Ministry of Education for "leadership institutes" in Arab society, gap-year programs for Arabs ages 18-21 that promote social leadership through personal empowerment, education, and volunteerism. These institutes are established and operated by civil society organizations with support from Etgarim.

Modeled as an alternative to pre-IDF educational programs ("mechinot"), the institutes aim to cultivate a cadre of young Arab leaders who will make a positive impact on their communities and Israeli society. Participation is fully subsidized, including programming five days a week and room and board (with exceptions when cultural sensitivities preclude living away from home). Participants are selected based on leadership potential and engage in numerous activities in various areas during the yearlong programs.

- **Achievements:** Since 2017, three leadership institutes have been established: ["Sanabel" in Wadi-Ara, operated by Ajyal](#) (Arab division of Ha'shomer Ha'tzair Youth Movement), ["BridgeTech," operated by AJEEC-NISPED](#) in the Negev, and the [leadership incubator operated by Desert Stars](#) in the Negev. Each institute implements the basic components described below through its own unique programming and educational/experiential emphases.
  - **Personal empowerment and leadership:** Group activities geared toward building teamwork and developing individual strengths.
  - **Preparation for citizenship in Israeli society, professional/academic orientation:** 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, Hebrew and English courses, exposure to academic and employment fields, psychometrics and matriculation exams preparation, higher education preparation.
  - **Educational enrichment:** The study of subjects such as Arab tradition and heritage, Israeli heritage, philosophy, democracy and citizenship, government and politics, globalization, issues relating to Arab society in shared space, and Israeli society as a whole.
  - **Community engagement:** Volunteer projects.
  - **Social entrepreneurship in Arab society:** Guided project implementation for social change, development of capacities for identifying needs, establishing goals and work plans, thinking creatively, teamwork, innovation, collaboration, and evaluation.
- **Challenges:**
  - **Matching Resources:** Organizations wishing to establish Leadership Institutes must match a significant portion of the funding provided by the government. However, few entities in Israel's Arab society are currently equipped to meet this government matching requirement. The intensive programming and advanced education level of the Leadership Institutes requires extensive resources, including boarding, transportation, educators, and materials. Due to the matching requirement, the number of institutes has remained limited despite Etgarim's willingness to expand this program. Funding constraints also limits current institutes' ability to increase the number of youth they can accept.

### **National Programs in Cooperation with Schools**

**Identity-Building Trips in Israel:** Field trips throughout the year aim to increase students' connection and familiarity with the Israeli state, landscape, and population through educational tours to numerous sites (in areas including the upper Galilee, Negev, Golan Heights, and Judean Desert) and encounters with different communities (such as Bedouin and Druze). The trips are intended to foster leadership skills and social contribution and include participant-led volunteer projects. The program launched in September 2018, with 500 students from six schools in northern Israel. The goal is to engage 2,500 students in the program by 2020.

**Program for Higher Education and Career Advancement:** The program will work to develop academic and employment skills through group activities and job fairs, one-on-one

counseling, and tours of academic institutions and work sites. Hebrew and psychometrics courses will also be offered to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. In its first year, the program will be led by 40 staff of the Ministry of Education, who were trained in July 2018. As of October 2018, students from 120 schools in the north and central regions will participate this academic year.

**Music Classes in Arab schools:** In the 2016-2017 school year, Etgarim launched a program for music education classes in Arab schools nationwide. As of July 2018, the music program is in 37 schools in 23 localities.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR INFORMAL EDUCATION**

With the establishment of Etgarim came the need to develop infrastructure for informal education in Arab society, from the central government to the local level. The Department of Arab Society ("the Department") at the Youth and Society Administration was established as the government headquarters for Etgarim and now comprises 15 regional supervisors and the Department Director.<sup>5</sup> At the local level, Etgarim requires municipalities to create a Youth Department and develop and submit yearly work plans to receive government budgets for informal education. Prior, fewer than 45 Arab localities had Youth Departments, and most Arab municipalities had limited professional capacities and resources to develop and implement informal education.

With an eye toward increasing staffing and professional capacities, the government has established professional training mechanisms, increased communication between local, regional, and national Etgarim staff, and developed processes for data collection and evaluation. For guidance and assistance in these areas, the Department partnered with the **Area for Informal Education at JDC-Ashalim** in 2016 to further expand its professional team and draw on JDC's professional capacities.

- **Achievements:**
  - **Local Youth Departments:** The vast majority of local authorities have appointed YD heads and submitted yearly work plans for the past two years of Etgarim. For 2018-2019, all but three local authorities have appointed Youth Department heads, submitted their yearly work plans, and been approved for budgeting.
  - **Information Infrastructure:** In the 2017-2018 year, municipalities successfully submitted their annual plans for informal education programs with the use of a computerized mapping tool developed by the Area for Informal Education.<sup>6</sup> This has in turn generated comprehensive data on Arab youth participation in informal education, available infrastructure, human resources, and more, which has never been previously available. The data collected through this tool have helped enable this report.
  - **Evaluation:** With the help of JDC-Ashalim, an evaluating body for the Etgarim program was selected in mid-2018. A comprehensive evaluation was launched in September 2018 with a final evaluation report expected by August 2019.

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<sup>5</sup> Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, [Informal Education in Arab Society](#), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p. 13.

- **Professional Development:** Etgarim has established detailed professional development and training protocols for national and regional staff. For instance, municipal Youth Department heads receive ongoing training in developing and implementing yearly work plans using the above-mentioned computerized mapping tool, setting and meeting targets, and building managerial capacities. Coordinators for local programs also receive ongoing training in professional processes such as working with parents, utilizing technological tools, and conducting evaluations; familiarity with Etgarim principles and goals; and creating long-term work plans based on assessed local needs.
- **Challenges:**
  - **Professional Development:** As informal education programs grow and become more diverse, an increasing number of qualified staff from Arab society is needed. According to civil society professionals, an adequate number of educators and the quality of their work will depend on increased recruitment and training. The Cadets for Informal Education program,<sup>7</sup> which was meant to provide training for Arab educators in this field, did not attract a sufficient number of Arab candidates in 2017-2018. A new program for certification in informal education was launched by Beit Berl College in November 2018, intended primarily for Arab candidates with higher education degrees.

## IN SUMMATION

Implementation of Etgarim is in a pivotal place. On the one hand, increased budgets, infrastructure development and expanded programs have already significantly improved professional and infrastructural capacities for informal education in Arab society, and increased rates of participation among Arab children and youth in several extracurricular frameworks. Still, given the size and nature of gaps in this field, there are concerns that current budgets will not improve access at a fast enough rate to meet 2021 targets, and that certain aspects of informal education in Arab society demand further development and attention. The Arab Mayors Forum, which tracks Etgarim implementation and acts as a liaison between municipalities and the central government as part of its work in support of GR-922,<sup>8</sup> has already raised this as a concern in a Knesset conference on the issue in July 2018. The Forum recommended that, within the Etgarim budget, additional funding be allocated for further infrastructure development, transportation, equipment and advertising, more bureaucratic flexibility and efficiency, and educational programs focused on Arab identity and mitigating violence in Arab society.

The full alignment of Etgarim with the academic year in 2018-2019 is expected to improve participation rates as well as the overall quality and organization of Etgarim programs at large. Along with the launch of a year-long professional evaluation in September 2018, this coming

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<sup>7</sup> Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, [Informal Education in Arab Society](#), p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> The Arab Mayors Forum established a steering committee for these purposes upon the launch of GR-922. Its sub-committee on education, including informal education, is coordinated by the [Injaz Center for Professional Arab Local Governance](#) and includes the organizations [Mosawa](#), [Adalah](#), [ACRI](#), and the [Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education](#). For more on the Arab Mayors Forum steering committee see Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, [Government Resolution 922: Economic Development Plan for the Arab Sector](#), p. 6.

year is expected to yield further insights on the needs and potential of informal education in Arab society in general and the Etgarim program in particular.