

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality is publishing a report on the topic of accessibility of government, commercial and public service in Bedouin communities in the Negev, and on the topic of employment of Arab government workers in the Negev. In light of the claims being made by the government, that moving to permanent settlements will provide these services at a high level to the Bedouin population, the report will focus this year on the availability of these services in the government planned townships. The report paints a sad picture. In all of the Bedouin communities that were examined, except for the city of Rahat, there is no employment office despite the fact that employments levels are particularly low. Likewise in not a single one of the communities, except for Rahat where partial services exist, there is no service, not even partial, of the Ministry of Interior. In terms of National Insurance services improvements have been made since last years report, and a mobile office has begun to arrive two days a week in additional communities. In addition to this, we can see that although in a number of Jewish settlements there are a smaller number of residents (among them Yerucham and Mitzpe Ramon) there is a permanent branch of National Insurance available to them. There is not a single office of Public Housing or Housing Assistance in any of the Arab communities. Likewise, according to the regulations defined by the Ministry of Construction and Housing regarding assistance grants for rent, not a single Arabic community in the Negev, except for Rahat, was included in the list of communities eligible for this assistance. All of the Jewish settlements that were sampled, and also more established Jewish settlements not sampled in this report (Lehavim, for example) appear on this list.

In terms of access to public transport it appears that there is some improvement in the number of communities which have bus lines servicing them, and in addition of this, the number of busses available is less than that of Jewish settlements in the Negev, and in the Abu Basma regional council there is no public transport whatsoever. In terms of telephone service there have been small improvements in some of the communities, for example in Rahat. On the other hand, in the Abu Basma Regional Council there is no phone infrastructure whatsoever, in Lakia there are still two neighborhoods without infrastructure, and in Tel Sheva there is infrastructure that is not functional and because of this the residents have no access to telephone service. In terms of banking services we can see that except for in Rahat, where this is one bank branch and one express branch, and in Hura where there is an express branch, there are no bank branches in any of the Bedouin communities.

Family health stations exist in most of the communities that were sampled. It is worrying to see that in El Said, Tarabin, and Kuhla family health stations are not operating, which necessitates those requiring their services to travel to other communities. This reality creates situations where women who are unable to get to family health stations outside of their community are forced to give up on the usage of the services of these stations and their children are not able to receive any of the treatment and monitoring that they need.

In terms of employment of Arab workers in the government sector, in a conversation with the commissioner of freedom of information at the Civil Service Commission there has been no significant change. This data is saddening and worrying since 2010 was pinpointed as the target year for a situation where 10% of government employees would be Arab.