negev coexistence forum



2014
annual report



message from the director

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Negev Coexistence Forum, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for your continued support in 2014. With the Prawer-Begin-Shamir plan shelved but quickly gaining traction on the ground, demolitions and arrests persisted in the Negev-Naqab. In fact, from the data we collected, we learned that the majority of demolitions took place in planned towns and recognized villages, with 78% carried out by Bedouins themselves under threat of monetary penalty by the local enforcement authorities.

To challenge government's harmful policies and practices, we continued to engage Bedouin and Jewish Israelis in a joint struggle by a variety of means. We trained Bedouin communities in visual literacy so that they may be able to document human rights abuses in their midst. We stood side-by-side with Bedouin communities and Jewish activists in protests and demonstrations. We led dozens of tours and held a number of events with Bedouin, Israeli and international groups to raise awareness on the plight of Bedouins, to create opportunities for positive encounters, and to motivate participants to action. We performed empirical research and visually documented human rights abuses in the Negev-Naqab, thereafter publishing our findings in several position papers and reports. We participated in the Expert Mechanism for the rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) in Geneva and met with several members of the European Parliament. Our advocacy efforts were also initiated locally, when we met with a number of foreign diplomats in Israel and reached out to Israeli politicians and ministers.

We believe that our work played an important role in generating change in public opinion and policy, and we will remain diligent and true to our mission in 2015.

Sincerely,

Haia Noach

Haia Noach

Executive Director

forward

The discriminatory State policy toward the Arab-Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab is exemplified in several Government plans listed below. Together with negative public opinion, they represent the greatest threat to the rights of Arab-Bedouin communities and coexistence in the Negev-Naqab.

prawer-begin-shamir plan — The plan was approved in 2011 and later shelved in 2013. Nevertheless, implementation of its drastic measures continues on the ground. Agricultural Minister Shamir has set out to use legal procedures to dispossess Arab-Bedouins of their land. Since they are often unable to provide proof of land ownership, or that which they do possess is deemed invalid, all of the cases brought before the courts have been rejected.

economic development — This plan is linked to an investment of 1.2 billion NIS to develop the infrastructure of the Negev-Naqab. The plan reveals that part of the money would go to fund the maintenance of a special police unit that is tasked with evicting Bedouin citizens from their villages ("Yoav Unit").

metropolitan plan — This 20-year development plan singles out a 'Search Area', of about 210,000 dunams, within which villages may be recognized. There is no guarantee of recognition even if the village lies within these parameters, as exemplified by 18 villages excluded from the map. It was further revealed that the 'Search Area' will be reduced by 30% in the coming years.

roads — Large numbers of Arab-Bedouin will be displaced due to extension of Route 6, upgrade of Route 31, and building of Road 31A. These actions will lead directly to demolitions and confiscation of land in both recognized and unrecognized villages.

forests — Cumulatively, more than 55,000 dunams are earmarked for forestation by the Jewish National Fund (JNF), to create the *Destiny Forest* and the *Yatir Fore*st, and to expand the *God TV Forest*. A large proportion of this territory is located on disputed Bedouin land.

military firing zones, military bases & industrial zones — Over 60 percent of the Negev-Naqab is currently declared as a military firing and/ or industrial zone. This area is likely to increase in the future to accommodate the growing army and development demands, leading directly to destruction of Arab-Bedouin villages.

planning of new jewish villages — At least 12 new Jewish settlements are approved for construction in the Negev-Naqab, ranging in projected population size from 1,500 to 100,000. Many of these localities are planned on the sites of Arab-Bedouin villages, while others intend to displace them altogether. For example, the unrecognized village of Umm al-Hiran will be replaced by a Jewish settlement named Hiran. Another dozen Jewish villages are being planned by 2035.

alternative master plan — In response to the lack of clarity, vision and justice embodied in the PBP, the Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages (RCUV), Planners for Planning Rights—Bimkom, and Sidreh—feminist organization, have jointly produced a blue print for bi-national coexistence called "The Alternative Master Plan". This Plan offers a feasible solution to recognition of unrecognized villages and presents a clear vision of equality in planning that is based on coexistence and not competition. This Plan was presented to the government and to date has received no reply.

profile

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) was established in 1997 by a group of Arab and Jewish residents of the Negev-Naqab who were alarmed by the government's discriminatory policies and practices towards its Arab-Bedouin citizens. Since its establishment, the organization has provided a framework for Jewish-Arab joint struggle toward civil equality, mutual tolerance and coexistence. The NCF is unique in being the only Arab-Jewish organization that remains focused solely on the specific problems confronting the Negev-Naqab. Resulting from 16 years of hard work, the NCF has received a number of awards in recognition of its work, such as the Miriam Fligelman Levy Cross Cultural Prize and the Emil Greenzweig Prize for Human Rights. On several occasions, it was singled out as an exceptional organization able to implement participatory initiatives that increase empathy and understanding between the Bedouin and the Jewish communities.

vision

to enable and ensure that all citizens of the Negev-Naqab live with dignity and equality in peaceful coexistence

منتدى التعايش السلمي في النقب من أجل ألمساواه ألمدنية
פורום דו קיום בנגב לשוויון אזרחי
Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality

mission

to eliminate civil, economic, social and cultural discrimination practiced by the State of Israel toward its Bedouin citizens in the Negev-Naqab by providing the framework for a joint struggle for equality

core values

1. shared leadership
2. arab-jewish coexistence
3. grassroots movement
4. cultural sensitivity
5. building alliances

goals

I. to safeguard and promote the civil rights of Bedouin communities in the Negev-Naqab from harmful and unfair policies by the state of Israel

II. to encourage Bedouin communities to take the lead in the struggle for their own rights and to promote genuine coexistence between Bedouin and Jewish communities

III. to develop the organizational capacity for an adequate response to the changing realities on the ground

2014 highlights

9,048 website visitors
3,348 returning visitors
5,700 new visitors

2,190 followers
724 new followers

72 tours
705 participants

498 English followers
113 Hebrew followers
12 Arabic followers

12 solidarity visits
220 people

20 press releases
22 news articles
5,000 est. reach

26 Jewish-Arab encounters
660 participants

7 reports

4 unrecognized villages
8 human rights workshops
81 Bedouin participants

994 local subscribers
316 int'l subscribers

4 unrecognized villages
24 visual literacy workshops
24 Bedouin participants

2 int'l advocacy missions

project objectives

This public relations and advocacy project pursues three strategic objectives:

1. to place political pressure on the state of Israel to change its policies towards Bedouins by involving local and international stakeholders;

2. to deliver an expert analysis on violations of human rights in the context of national and international law; and

3. to raise awareness among local and international publics on this issue.

The following quote from a participant in our awareness raising tour gives a sense of our effectiveness:

"...We very much enjoyed your talk with us at Hasham Zana, which was excellent. The tour you led, combined with the talk we had with the people there, was very informative. In fact, one of our participant [name omitted] has followed up with us about how enlightening his experience was. Again, on behalf of Partners for Progressive Israel and our participants, thank you!" **– Nathan Hersh, Managing Director, Partners for Progressive Israel**

human rights campaign

human rights campaign



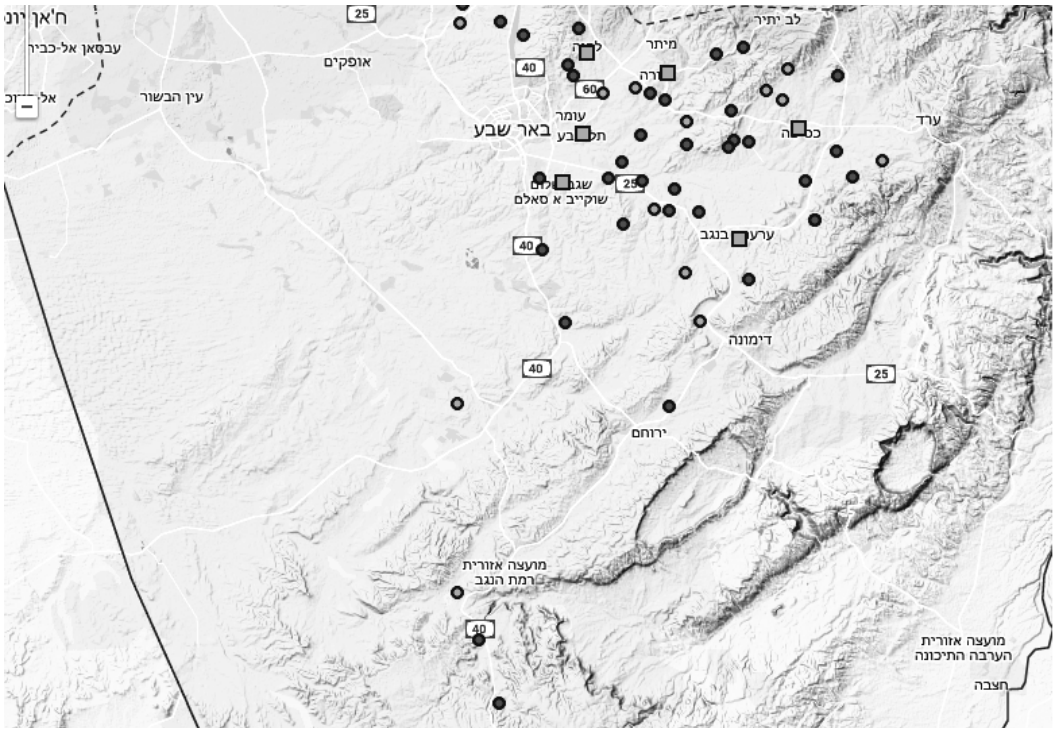
narrative documentation

We maintained a full online record of home demolitions to monitor and document ongoing violations of civil and human rights in the Negev-Naqab. The database was updated frequently and meticulously to ensure an accurate account of demolitions, and subsequently to publish the annual Home Demolition Policy report. As a result, production of publications exceeded all expectations. Through empirical research and comprehensive record keeping we successfully issued reports and position papers on a range of subjects, including house demolitions, freedom of speech, racism, and access to education and water:

1. **2014 House Demolition Policy**
2. **State Negligence of Pre-School Education**
3. **Day of Rage: Deprivation of Freedom of Speech**
4. **Thirsty for (the Right) to Water**
5. **Between Discrimination and Abandonment**
6. **US Department of State 2014 Human Rights Report**
7. **UN Shadow Report**

The reports were widely disseminated among government ministries, Parliament (Knesset) members and partner organizations, while our findings were used for awareness raising work.

human rights campaign



visual documentation

We built a body of visual evidence unmatched by any other organization in the field. Our exclusive **mapping initiative** records location, history, and living conditions of unrecognized and recognized villages to counteract the State's refusal to acknowledge their existence. The map is near completion and includes **26 unrecognized and 11 recognized Bedouin villages** to date.

We worked diligently to compile visual evidence (photographs and videos) depicting human rights abuses in the Bedouin villages, including demolitions and lack of access to basic services. In 2015, we will introduce a public and user-friendly database of visual archives to provide evidence for court cases and awareness-raising. These materials will be made available to media and fellow human rights activists/organizations toward furthering the Bedouin cause. Thousands of archived materials will be stored in the database.

human rights campaign



awareness raising

We launched a robust awareness raising campaign targeting local and international stakeholders, including the general public, special interest groups, foreign diplomats, local government representatives, and others. This has been one of our greatest accomplishments that is well-supported with evidence-based empirical research. The variety of tools allowed for a range of successful outcomes, among which are changed perceptions and strengthened networks of people and organizations dedicated to the rights of Bedouins. Awareness raising activities generated greater participation in solidarity events as well as increased involvement in advocacy work locally and internationally. Through tours, solidarity visits and Jewish-Arab encounters, we engaged **1,574 individuals and increased their knowledge of issues facing the Bedouins in the Negev-Naqab**. We reached an additional **13,171 individuals through our website, social media and newsletter**, as well as an estimated **5,000 individuals through media work**. In total, a remarkable **19,500+ individuals were directly and indirectly impacted by our awareness raising work**.



international advocacy

We strengthened our local and international networks and increased the numbers policy makers sympathetic to our work. In 2014, **40 diplomats joined our guided tours**, which included policy briefings and hearing personal testimonies of Bedouin representatives. Feedback from guided tours was visibly positive. Diplomats expressed an interest in receiving ongoing updates and pledged to return to the Negev-Naqab. Many asked us to keep them informed of international advocacy efforts where they could potentially reinforce our efforts. We also organized two international advocacy. In July, our Board member and respected Bedouin community representative and activist, Khalil Alamour, **joined the 7th Session of the Expert Mechanism for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva**. In October, Mr. Alamour went to Brussles, where he met with representatives of the European Parliament, and then to Geneva, where he **joined the 112th Session of the Human Rights Committee and its review of Israel**, presenting our joint paper with Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, on the issues facing the Bedouin community. Mr. Alamour also had the pleasure of engaging on that topic with the new UN Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz.

project objectives

This community leadership and mobilization project pursues three strategic objectives:

1. to encourage independence and confidence in the power of grassroots movements;

2. to provide training and to cultivate skills for public engagement and advocacy; and

3. to enable mutual exchange of views between diverse communities and individuals and to alter negative perceptions of the other.

The following quote from a participant in our visual literacy workshop gives a sense of our effectiveness:

"The most beautiful thing that happened in my life was that I started taking pictures. It's an amazing feeling, one that makes me dive into many words and meanings. I see my life through pictures and observe it closely." **Bedouin woman participant of the visual literacy workshop**

human rights defenders



human rights workshops

Together with our partner, Adalah, we administered human rights workshops in the unrecognized Bedouin villages to teach residents about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to prepare them for public engagement and advocacy for their own rights. In villages of Wadi al Naam, Al Zarurah, Al Qrein, and Atir, **81 individuals**, some of them members of the village committee, learned about human rights and their implication for the issues facing the indigenous Bedouin communities in the Negev-Naqab. They also learned about the concept of documenting human rights abuses and received a basic visual literacy training. Participants were instructed by Khalil Alamour, several legal interns from Adalah organization, as well as the NCF visual literacy team. Many participants expressed an interest continuing work with the Human Rights Defenders Network project. Of these 81 individuals, some remained as dedicated activists within the community, participating regularly in demonstrations and vigils and meeting with various groups to raise awareness on the issues facing their community.

human rights defenders



visual literacy workshops

We held visual literacy workshops within the unrecognized villages. At least **24 Bedouin women were recruited, trained in photography techniques and human rights**. They received the donation of a still camera and were guided through the development of their own photography portfolio. All participants shared a common theme – revealing human rights abuses in the unrecognized villages through depiction of daily life and conditions on the ground. Their work culminated into a wonderful photography exhibit, which was held in commemoration of Human Rights Day in December 2014. Additionally, we assisted participants in putting together memory books of different unrecognized villages, with narrative descriptions and personalized messages. The village books were printed and handed out to all project participants as gifts, and shared with other participants in the Human Rights Day event.

During the winter holiday we held our annual photography workshop for Bedouin children in the village of Rakhameh in cooperation with numerous professional volunteer photographers. During this 10-day workshop, **15 Bedouin children learned photography techniques and received cameras** with which they can document their lives in the Bedouin villages.

human rights defenders



demonstrations & vigils

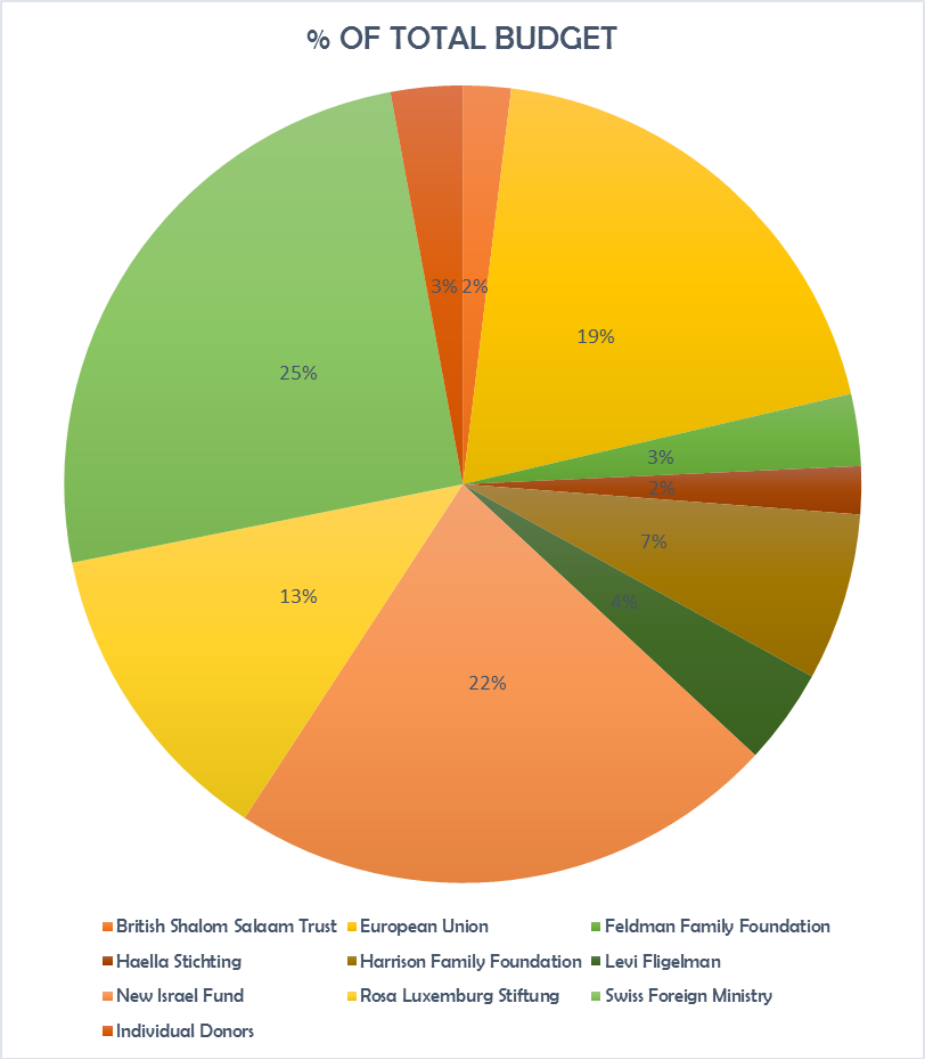
We attended demonstrations and vigils to bear witness to arrests and demolitions and to offer support to Arab and Jewish activists. Weekly vigils for the Bedouin village of Al Araqib were held at the Lehavim junction throughout the year with our staff and volunteers standing side-by-side with the Bedouin residents. Also, we made our presence at the monthly vigils for the Bedouin town of Rahat. Throughout the year, a number of other demonstrations were held in the Negev-Naqab and around the country, and our team made its greatest effort to always join and to be productive. We advertised demonstrations and vigils on social media, helped with logistical arrangements and brought media attention. Through years of continued involvement and on-the-ground displays of solidarity, the Bedouin community has come to see the NCF as a true partner in the struggle to gain their equal rights as citizens of Israel.

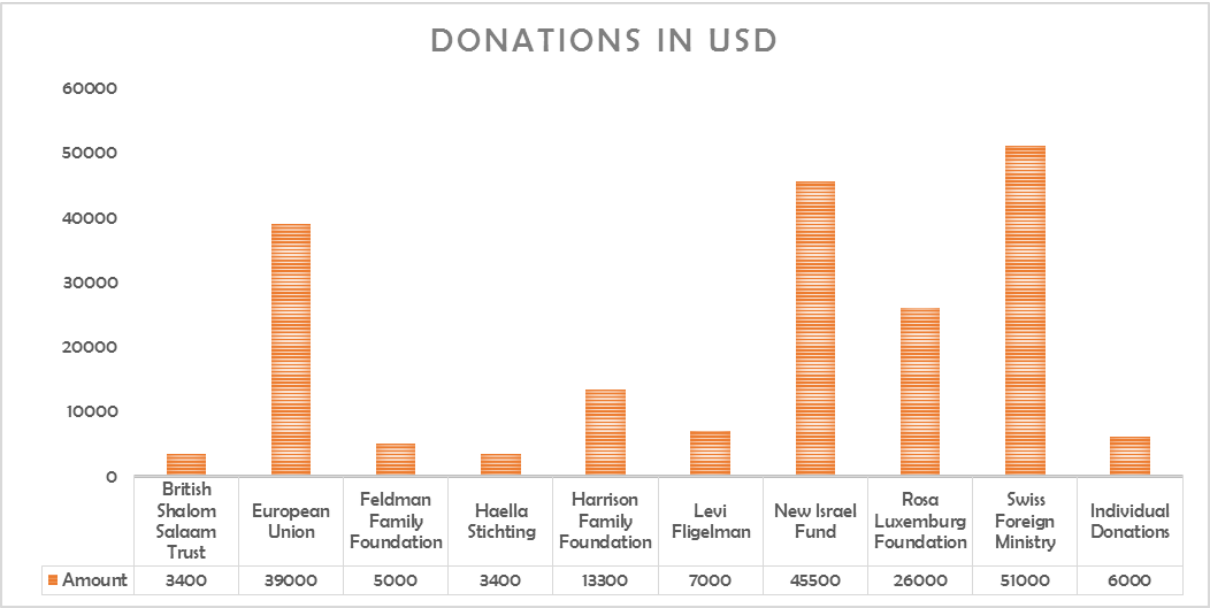


Arab– Jewish coexistence

We organized encounters to promote Arab-Jewish coexistence through the work of our Arab-Jewish Community Center. The Center, called "Multaqa-Mifgash", meaning "meeting" in Arabic and Hebrew respectively, operates from our office located in a shelter donated by the Beer Sheva municipality. It utilizes arts and culture to promote dialogue and tolerance and to bring Arabs and Jewish communities together. Over the years, the Center has showcased a number of events including, but not limited to, conferences and seminars, Arabic language courses, musical performances, encounters between Jewish and Arabs, political film screenings and the joint celebration of religious holidays. In the past year, the Center held **26 encounter events**, engaging **660 Jewish and Arab participants** in dialogue on challenging subjects and offering an opportunity to learn about one another. Among others, the events focused on establishing Bedouin history in the Negev-Naqab, the role of collective memory in conflict (Naqba), Israel's policies toward the Bedouin, and joint celebrations of religious holidays.

total budget $199,100





donors & income

staff

haia noach | executive director
michal rotem | deputy director
ratb abu krinat | deputy director
yosra abu kaf | visual documentation coordinator
aisha ziadna | advocacy coordinator
ofer dagan | awareness raising coordinator
kessem adiv | awareness raising coordinator
ori tarabulus | researcher
yossi megaiten | community organizer
silvia boarini | resource development coordinator
dijana mujkanovic | resource development coordinator
danit tzamit | administrative coordinator
mirit ashkenazi | administrative coordinator
doaa zborgah | translator

board

professor avner ben-amos
khalil alamour
rachel naparstek
yehudit keshet
yaacov manor
dr. yones aburabia
adel gafeer
attn. sana ibn bari

partners

bedouin villages | wadi al naam, al arakib, umm al hiran, asir, rachmeh, kashem zaneh, abdeh, bir hadej, abu tlul, and others.

israeli nonprofit organizations | the regional council for the unrecognized villages, association for civil right in Israel, adalah—legal center for the arab minority in israel, physicians for human rights, rabbis for human rights, bimkom—planners for planning rights, and etc.

international organizations | amnesty international uk, jewish alliance for change, jews for just peace in palestine, photo philanthropy, telos group.

networks | recognition forum

donate

To make a tax-deductible online donation, please visit the Israel Gives website. Search NGO # 580327005.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

To make a donation by mail, please make checks payable to: "Negev Coexistence Forum" and send to:

Negev Coexistence Forum
POB 130
8496500 Omer
Israel

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

For tax-deductible donations from the USA and the UK, please make checks payable to "New Israel Fund" and marked as "donor advice to the Negev Coexistence Forum" and send to:

New Israel Fund
330 Seventh Ave. 11th fl.
New York, NY 10001
United States

or:

New Israel Fund
26 Enford Street
London W1H 1DW
United Kingdom

"We, at the Israel Office of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, are impressed and moved by the work of the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, the devotion and determination of director, Haia Noach, and the other team members, their unfailing solidarity with the Bedouin communities in the Naqab. With rather modest means, the Forum manages to integrate between grassroots work with the Bedouin communities, including children and women, outreach to the Israeli public and international advocacy activities. We find in the Forum a source of invaluable information, an open door for interested visitors, and a source of inspiration. We truly look forward to developing our cooperation in the next years."

Thank you for your continued support!!!



negev coexistence forum

POB 130, 8496500 Omer, Israel | +972 50 770 1118
info@dukium.org | www.dukium.org