



Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues

**COVID-19 Emergency Response Needs in Israel's Arab Society:
Examples in Five Areas**

March 31, 2020

As a more comprehensive mapping of needs and initiatives for the Coronavirus crisis response in Arab society develops, please find in the interim a preliminary breakdown of major areas of intervention, and related list of examples for each:

- 1. National:** Support coordination between state and local government, civil society and private sector to implement a more effective response in Arab society (i.e. Initial poor communication of health guidelines in Arabic is one of many examples of misalignment; currently, establishment of testing sites in Arab localities in cooperation with local officials is another). Currently this effort is anchored in the [Situation Room being established](#) by the National Council for Arab Mayors.
- 1. Local Authorities:** Many Arab local authorities are weak and need support accessing national resources and information, addressing cash flow challenges, developing digital and remote working capabilities, increasing emergency response capacities (i.e. collecting data, informing residents, enforcing guidelines, identifying local needs, coordinating civil society organizations and volunteers, establishing hotlines for residents, understanding and conveying national regulations and guidelines,) and planning for recovery the 'day after.'
- 2. Specific Needs on the Ground:** For example: provision of food and supplies; lack of medical infrastructure and testing; social and psychological welfare including expected rise in domestic violence; focus on special population groups (elderly, youth-at-risk, students, unemployed, day laborers / informal workforce, small-business owners); support for medical professionals (i.e. frameworks for their children, protection protocols).
- 3. Education:** Digital gaps limiting access for Arab students (hardware, software, internet, training); available content in in Arabic; see Abraham Initiatives [position paper on digital gaps for education.](#))
- 4. Negev Bedouin:** Roughly 260,000 Bedouin citizens living in recognized and unrecognized villages comprise some of Israel's most disadvantaged communities. With unrecognized villages lacking basic infrastructure such as water and electricity, informing, enforcing and adhering to hygiene and social distancing guidelines is even more challenging and presents even greater risk and urgency than in Arab society at large. See [related article in Haaretz by AJEEC-NISPED co-directors.](#)

For questions or more information [contact the Task Force.](#)