

# MONITOR REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT DECISION 3790 FOR INVESTMENT IN EAST JERUSALEM

MARCH 2020 QUARTER - EMPLOYMENT

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As we finish this report, we are in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to its ramifications for public health, each day we are witness to serious *economic* ramifications, with increasing damage to Israeli and Palestinian society. The unemployment rate is on a rapid upward climb.

We are busy providing responses to urgent requests from the public. The National Insurance Institute and the Israeli Employment Service have stopped receiving the public, and their services are not available on-line in Arabic. In East Jerusalem, thousands are likely to be left without a source of income. WAC-MAAN has begun to operate a hot line to help a huge number of fired or furloughed workers to register remotely for benefits.

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## I. Introduction

Government Decision 3790 to Reduce Socio-Economic Gaps and for Economic Development in East Jerusalem was approved on May 13, 2018, almost two years ago. The Decision provides for socioeconomic investment in East Jerusalem (henceforth EJ), with a budget of approximately 2.1. billion NIS (ca. 540 million Euro) over a five-year period. It includes six main areas of operation: education (primary, secondary and higher); economy and employment; transportation; improvement of service to the public and quality of life (recreational infrastructures, water and sewage infrastructures); health; and land registration.

Two previous reports have been issued as part of Ir Amim's monitoring of the Government Decision:

- Monitor Report, May 2019
- Monitor Report, September 2019

From this point onward, the monitoring project will be carried out as a joint project of Ir Amim and WAC-MAAN (henceforth WAC). This is the first report issued as part of this partnership.

A month after the issuance of the September 2019 Monitor Report, the Ongoing Commission of the Office of Jerusalem and Heritage published a status document (henceforth: the Status Document) describing the extent of the Decision's implementation during its first working year. This was a necessary and positive first step of transparency, and we look forward to seeing regular and frequent publications on the subject.

**This quarterly monitoring report focuses on the area of employment in the Government Decision.** It presents the main obstacles to employment that have been identified in EJ in recent years, and it analyzes, in view of them, the aspects of investment that were chosen and the actual progress. We are familiar with the progress thanks to our own activity on the ground and from various publications. We will analyze the progress both in terms of budget allocation and in terms of its realization, and we will also relate to the effect the plan has had.

In the Government Decision, employment interfaces with other areas of the Decision, which affect solutions and possibilities. For example, in **welfare**: an increase in the number of day care centers that will enable parents, particularly mothers, to go out to work; in **economics and commerce**: incentives to businesses willing to employ women residents of EJ, plus the development of business and commercial areas; in **transportation**: public transportation that connects the east and west parts of the city, making present lines more efficient and accessible, while also imbedding the Rav-Kav arrangement (City Transportation

Pass). This will enable workers who do not own cars to reach their jobs easily and at a reasonable cost.

## **2. Poverty and the Employment Rate in East Jerusalem**

In 2017, 77.5 % of Arab residents of Jerusalem were living in poverty, compared to 24.7% of Jewish residents.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the poverty rate in Jerusalem among the Palestinian population was more than three times higher than among the Jews in the city. While the poverty rate among the Jewish population in Jerusalem decreased in 2017 by 3.3%, as compared to the previous year, the poverty rate among the Arab population increased by 1.3%. Among Arab children, the poverty rate increased by 3.8%. In total, 82% of Arab children in the city live below the poverty line as opposed to 36.1% of Jewish children.<sup>2</sup>

The low rate of participation in the job market by East Jerusalemites, especially women, is a major reason for the high poverty rates, as well as the depth of the poverty. As of 2017 in EJ, only 27% of women of working age (25-64) and 81% of the men participated in the job market – as compared to 80% of Jewish women and 75% of Jewish men in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

## **3. Employment of Women in East Jerusalem**

The Government Decision focuses on the situation of women who are residents of EJ and encourages their participation in the work force. The economy and employment chapter of Government Decision 3790 presents the integration of EJ residents in the program known as Employment Circles as a central goal, with a particular emphasis on the integration of women. In 2018, the year the Government Decision was published, 27% of the women of EJ participated in the employment market and 24.5% of them were actually employed.<sup>4</sup>

In the years preceding the Decision, there was a consistent and significant increase in the participation of EJ women in the job market, including the number of women actually employed, as set forth in The Statistical Yearbook for 2019, published by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research.<sup>5</sup> According to it, the percentage of EJ women between the ages of 25-64 participating in the job market increased from 22% in 2016 to 27% in 2017, while the percentage of EJ women who were actually employed increased from 20% in 2016 to 24.5% in 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, [The Statistical Yearbook for 2019](#).

<sup>2</sup> The National Insurance Institute, Research and Planning Office, [DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL GAPS – 2017 ANNUAL REPORT](#), Dec. 2018.

<sup>3</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, [The Statistical Yearbook for 2019](#).

<sup>5</sup> The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, [The Statistical Yearbook for 2019](#).

The target set by the Government in Decision 3790 is an increase in employment of EJ women between the ages of 25 to 64 to at least 75% of the rate of employment of Arab women in Israel by the year 2023, the end of the five-year period covered by the Decision. As of the time the Decision was published, 40% of Arab women in Israel were employed. Therefore, the target rate of employment of EJ women can be estimated at approximately 30%.<sup>6</sup>

However, it is important to note that the increase in the employment rate of EJ women is not concomitant with a decrease in the poverty rate. According to existing data, the situation is quite the opposite – the rate of people living below the poverty line was 74.95% in 2016, with an increase to 77.5% in 2017. In other words, EJ women may find themselves employed at a higher rate, yet at the same time they may be poorer.<sup>7</sup>

It may be assumed that the main reason that the poverty rate has not decreased with the increase in the employment rate of EJ women can be attributed to the fact that many of these women are employed in low-paying and part-time positions, often with deleterious working conditions, with no potential for advance or upward socio-economic mobility. Therefore, it is not sufficient to increase the employment rate of EJ women. There must be an effort to integrate these women in positions that offer them fair salaries and conditions, giving them the opportunity to improve their own economic situation and that of their families.

#### **4. Employment as part of the Government Decision – Areas of Investment and Implementation Factors**

The total direct investment in the area of employment as part of the Government Decision (including allocation of the designated budget of the Jerusalem Municipality) is 232 million NIS, divided between seven main channels:

- **Expansion of welfare and employment services** with an emphasis on programs to encourage employment of women, to prevent youth from dropping out of school and entering situations where they are at risk and to extract the population from poverty – 75 million NIS.
- **Building day care centers** – 50 million NIS.
- **Employment counseling center** - 35 million NIS.
- **A program to encourage employment of young women** – 26.5 million NIS.
- **Tools for human resource development from the budget of the Branch for Vocational Training** - 15 million NIS.

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<sup>6</sup> It bears noting that this is one of the only sections of the Government Decision that establishes a quantitative goal in the Decision itself.

<sup>7</sup> The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, [The Statistical Yearbook for 2019](#).

- **Expansion of the Employment Circles program** - 10.5 million NIS.
- **Incentives for employers to employ women** – 20 million NIS (under the section of ‘Economy and Commerce’ in the Economy and Employment chapter).

The area is directed by the **Designated Subsidiary Taskforce for Economy and Employment**, as set forth in the Decision itself. The team is headed by the Director General of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services. Other members of the team are the Director of Budgets in the Ministry of Finance, the Director General of the Ministry of Economy and Industry, the Director General of the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage or an employee of that ministry and the Director General of the Jerusalem Municipality or an employee of the municipality. The team was required to submit a plan for support of business and physical development of commercial centers and areas of commerce in the EJ neighborhoods by September 13, 2018. According to the annual status document for 2019 of the Jerusalem and Heritage Ministry, the team convenes once every calendar quarter.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Status Document from March, 2019, the team convened for the purpose of presenting mapping of the work plan and examination of potential connections between the various entities involved. In September, 2019, the team convened in order to formulate the targets and indices in the various sections of the Government Decision and to make them more precise, while focusing on familiarity with the positions and voices from the EJ population. A task force for public participation in the Government Decision, under the auspices of the East Jerusalem Development Company is also an active participant in the employment team. Additionally, a smaller task force convenes with respect to the section regarding encouragement of employment in order to approve plans for encouragement of employment in Hebrew and improvement of Hebrew language instruction, promotion of a course for engineering and programs in the schools (supplement to the Asda’a program – a package of programs tailored for employment potential which is carried out in the schools with an emphasis on empowerment for female adolescents).<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, as of present, the work outcomes of the task forces in the area of employment have only been partially published in the Status Document and the complete work plan relating to all of the sections of the employment chapter has not been presented.

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<sup>8</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 32.

## **5. Employment as part of the Government Decision – Analysis and Status of Implementation**

### **5.1. Investment as part of the Chapter on Employment – section 2(a) of the Government Decision**

According to the reports of the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage regarding implementation of the Decision, allocation of funds designated for the area of employment for 2018 and 2019 is 67.9 million NIS (16 million NIS was allocated for 2018 and 51.9 million NIS for 2019). The more significant amounts of funding were provided to the programs for extracting from poverty, encouraging employment and preventing youth from dropping out of school and entering situations of risk.<sup>10</sup>

#### **5.1.1. Section 2(a)(1) of the Decision – Operation of the Center for Employment Counseling**

**Budget:** 35 million NIS, a designated supplemental budget from the Ministry of Finance.

The Government Decision instructs the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services to operate an employment counseling center that will deal with counseling and placement of employees from EJ. The Decision relates to the Rayan Center, which was established in 2014, within the purview of Government Decision 1775 ‘for increase of personal safety and socio-economic development in Jerusalem for the good of all of its residents.’ The center provides a program including studies and employment training – including Hebrew and computer courses, preparation for the employment market and for evaluation centers, exposure to positions, placement and accompaniment during the period of employment.

**Target:** The Decision sets a target of 1,500 new participants in the Rayan Center each year, 70% of them women. According to the statistics presented in the Status Document, in the first half of 2019, 784 people participated in the Rayan Center's programs, but there is no indication of how many of them were new participants. Women accounted for 72% of the total number of active participants in the program, but only 65% of the new participants.

**Employment Placement:** According to the data in the status document published by the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage, the program placed 496

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<sup>10</sup> The response of the Budgets Department of the Ministry of Finance to Ir Amim's freedom of information request, October 22, 2019.

participants in jobs in the course of 2019, 301 women and 171 men.<sup>11</sup> In other words, 63% of the participants in the program during the first quarter of 2019 found employment, and of those, 60% were women. Fifteen percent of the women who found employment did so through direct placement by the Rayan Center and the remaining 85% were placed indirectly, finding their own jobs after participating in one of the Rayan Center programs. Out of the men who found employment 14% did so through direct placement and 86% through indirect placement.<sup>12</sup>

**Quality of Placement:** Sixty-two percent of the women who found employment as part of the Rayan Center programs earn up to 5,300 NIS per month (the minimum wage for a full-time job), 12.6% earn between 5,301 and 7,500 NIS, and only 0.66% earn more than 7,500 NIS per month (20% declined to respond to the question).<sup>13</sup> Of the men who found employment as part of the Rayan Center programs, 40.3% earn up to 5,300 NIS per month, 26.9% earn between 5,301 and 7,500 NIS and 4.67% earn over 7,500 NIS (18% refused to respond to the question).<sup>14</sup>

These figures demonstrate that a significant majority of the women who found jobs earn minimum wage (5,300 NIS) or less, and less than one percent of them found jobs with salaries approaching the average salary. These figures are consistent with the reality seen from work on the ground, which suggests that the minimum wage defined by law has, in effect, become the maximum wage for many Palestinian women from EJ. For the men as well, we see that it is difficult to find work with pay that exceeds the 5,300 NIS minimum wage, yet the percentage of men who do so is significantly higher than the percentage of women.

**Accompaniment and follow-up over time:** The program provides accompaniment for the participants who find employment over time and examines their working conditions after placement. This enables more comprehensive follow-up and evaluation of the program's achievements, and sheds light on the challenges that the program participants encounter in their efforts to integrate into the work force. This is distinguished from the other programs that assist in placement, guidance and encouraging employment.

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<sup>11</sup> The gap between the total number of placements in jobs and the numbers of placements split by gender and type of the placement are due to a lack in some of the reports (according to the Status Document).

<sup>12</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> The average salary for the relevant time period was 10,501 ILS. The Central Bureau for Statistics, October, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 33.

### 5.1.2. Section 2(a)(2) of the Decision – the Employment Circles Program

**Budget:** 10.5 million NIS (out of which 3 million NIS is a supplemental budget).

The Government Decision seeks to expand the scope of the Employment Circles and additional employment tools in EJ that will be selected in partnership with the Budgets Department of the Ministry of Finance and in consultation with the Administration for Employment of Populations of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services.

The Employment Circles program is a placement program that combines training and continuing education, both in groups and individually, alongside focused activity with a placement coordinator in the employment bureau. The program has been operating since March, 2014 in an experimental format and its objective is promotion of the integration in suitable jobs of those who receive supplemental income assistance, in order to prevent their sliding into deep unemployment and dependence upon government benefits.<sup>15</sup> The program is administered by the director of the local employment office, and is under his supervision and the supervision of the directors of the program in the districts and the district directors. Among the tools offered as part of the program are personal training, workshops for how to look for work, guided work, Hebrew language studies geared for employment purposes, computer classes, etc.

**Target:** The decision sets a target of 1,200 EJ residents participating annually in the Employment Circles program (and in additional employment programs, if such are developed), with 70% of the participants being women.<sup>16</sup> According to the data presented in the October 2019 Status Document, as of the date of publication, 829 seekers of employment participated in the program in 2019, of whom 65% were women. In terms of the percentage of placement from among the program participants, the status document points to 58% placement – out of whom approximately 50% were direct placements, through the employment office or the Employment Circles program and the other approximately 50% were indirect placements that occurred independently upon completion of the program or in the course of participation in it. About 70% of the female participants in the program found work, as opposed to only 36.9% of the male participants.

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<sup>15</sup> [Placement Program – Employment Circles](#), an update from July 3<sup>rd</sup>. 2016

<sup>16</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 33.

## Difficulties and Obstacles:

### A. Lack of Indices of Quality of Placement

There is a lack of indices to examine the quality of the placements, work conditions and the degree of suitability of the work to the participants. According to the information we have, the program participants do not receive on-going accompaniment after the placement, and for this reason the follow-up and information gathering regarding the work conditions, characteristics of the position and employee continuity is stopped at this stage. In the Status Document as well, the column relating to the average salary in the placement targets contains no data.

### B. Lack of Training Targets and Placement for those who have not Completed 12 Years of Study

The Employment Circles program does not include defined placement targets for those who have not completed 12 years of schooling, and it is clear from the outcomes presented in the status document that it indeed does not address the needs of this group.<sup>17</sup> The school drop-out rate in EJ is far higher both than the national average and the rate in the Arab sector nationally. Between the ninth and the twelfth grades, the drop-out rate in EJ was 26.5% (2015-2018),<sup>18</sup> and reaches its highest level between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades – 11% drop-out rate in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 13% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>19</sup> To this, must be added the drop-outs from among the ‘invisible children’ – about 26,000 children and youth who do not study in any educational framework known to the Israeli authorities and who do not appear in the data of the Jerusalem education administration.<sup>20</sup> This large group of the EJ youth later suffers from a greater difficulty in finding work and therefore there is a greater probability that they will be unemployed and dependent upon government benefits. In order to integrate this group into the work force, suitable placement programs must be structured for those who only completed nine years of school.

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<sup>17</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> State Comptroller, [Development and Strengthening of Jerusalem’s Status – Part 2](#), June 2019, p. 341.

<sup>19</sup> Response of the Jerusalem municipality to Ir Amim’s freedom of information request, from August 13, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Ir Amim, [State of Education in East Jerusalem: 2019 Report – Collapsing Infrastructure](#), August, 2019.

## **C. Threat of Cancelling Benefits and Non-Provision of Adequate Tools**

From complaints of participants in the program it transpires that they are often accused of not wanting to work, and they are under constant threat that they will be denied their benefits on the grounds of 'lack of cooperation.' There are also complaints that the workshops do not provide sufficient tools for entry into the work force. Most of these complaints come from women who have not completed 12 years of schooling, and who, it would seem, the program does not regard as having potential for being integrated into the work force, but they are nonetheless sent to it.

### **5.1.3. Section 2(a)(3) of the Decision – Plans to Encourage Employment**

**Budget:** 26.5 million NIS (of which 10 million NIS are a designated supplementary budget).

The Government Decision imposes on the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services, upon consultation with the Employment Service, and after hearing the Jerusalem Municipality and additional relevant entities, to prepare a plan to encourage employment, with emphasis on employment for young women. Some of content that needs to be examined includes Hebrew instruction, education and technology, training, change of profession and professional placement.

The Status Document demonstrates that in 2019, the principal implementation in this area was divided between preparatory programs for learning Hebrew and the Asada program – a package of programs carried out in the schools with an emphasis on empowerment of teenage girls headed for employment.

The language obstacle is a significant barrier for EJ residents when trying to enter the Israeli workforce, and the preparatory programs for studying Hebrew are consequently a very desirable product. However, from the Status Document it transpires that the program is only partially realized, in terms of the performance targets, as well as exploitation of the budget. Out of a budget of 4.5 million NIS for 2019 that was divided among three courses of 500, 700 and 232 hours of study, only 12.7% was distributed. Of 28 preparatory programs slated to open, only eight were actually opened, and only 179 students participated in them, about 70% of them women.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 36.

## Difficulties and Obstacles:

### A. Limitation of the Target Population

Reports from the field, as well as notices of registration for courses, show that the proposed programs for Hebrew studies are only available to and appropriate for those who have completed more than nine years of schooling. As set forth above, the school drop-out rate in EJ is very high and between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, 26.5% of the total number of students drop out. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the drop-out rate reaches 11%.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, this limitation bars a significant segment of the population from participating in the programs.

### B. The Absence of Publicity and Accessibility of Information

It would seem that the various courses and frameworks are not adequately publicized. Many women are unaware of the existing offerings of courses. From their reports, it transpires that even employees of the Employment Office are not aware of the existence of the programs and they do not refer those looking for work to them, even when they ask about the possibility of registering for Hebrew courses. A broad publication of the courses, making the employment office employees aware of them and directing them to provide information about the offered courses is a mandatory first step.

#### **5.1.4. Section 2(a)(5)-(6) of the Decision – Increasing the Number of Daycare Centers in East Jerusalem**

**Budget:** 50 million NIS (maximum designated supplemental budget, subject to implementation of the necessary expropriation of land).

A lack of supervised early childhood frameworks is one of the central obstacles for women considering entering the workforce. The early childhood (ages newborn to 4) population in EJ numbers 40,000, however only two percent of these children are in supervised frameworks. This contrasts with 24% in Israel.<sup>23</sup>

**Target/Planning:** According to the Status Document, there is a plan to build 44 daycare classrooms in 13 centers between 2019 and 2021 in the neighborhoods of Beit Hanina, Sur Baher, Issawiyeh, A-Tur, Shuafat, Silwan, Jabel Mukaber and Beit

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<sup>22</sup> State Comptroller, Development and Strengthening of Jerusalem's Status – Part 2, June 2019, p. 341.

<sup>23</sup> Yad Hanadiv, The Experience of Raising Young Children and the Relationship to Educational and Childcare Frameworks in East Jerusalem, Feb. 2020.

Safafa. If it meets its targets, the Government Decision will result in a reduce of the classroom shortage to 198.

The response of the Budgets Department to freedom of information requests that we submitted is that as of September, 2019, appropriate property for building daycare centers had not been located for expropriation and thus the section had not been advanced and the actual allocation of funds was prevented by the Ministry of Finance.<sup>24</sup> In the Status Document, it was reported that land was located in 2019, and that expropriation processes were expected this year in Beit Hanina and Sur Baher. Similarly, according to the document, steps were taken to promote the building of 15 daycare rooms, nine in Beit Hanina and six in Sur Baher, however there was no report of the beginning of construction or even of submission of a plan for approval.<sup>25</sup>

## **Difficulties and Obstacles:**

### **A. Lack of Responsiveness to the Demand for Home-Based Childcare**

The program does not allocate resources for establishing supervised home-based childcare, a course that could enable immediate address of the lack of frameworks for young children. Addressing this need is particularly vital in the area of the Shuafat refugee camp and the Kufir Akeb area, areas of Jerusalem beyond the separation barrier, which suffer from a severe lack of frameworks for young children, and where the probability of building structures for nursery schools is low due to the high density inhabitation and the complicated planning situation.

### **B. Lack of Coordination and Inadequacy of Subsidies**

According to the criteria of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services, receipt of a subsidy for the costs of frameworks for young children is conditioned on being employed for 20 hours a week for a single mother or 24 hours a week for a parent who is not a single parent. This threshold condition prevents many mothers, especially those who are in the process of looking for work or combine part-time jobs, each with few hours per week, from receiving a subsidy that would enable them to register their children in educational frameworks. Thus, a vicious cycle has been created in which many women do not find a job with the required number of hours for receiving a subsidy and they thus are unable

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<sup>24</sup> Response of the Budgets Department of the Ministry of Finance to Ir Amim's freedom of information request, Oct. 22, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 46.

to afford a framework for their children that would enable them to find work and to gradually increase their hours so that they could meet the threshold condition for receiving the subsidy.

Additionally, the amount of the subsidy is not sufficient, considering the wages paid to women in the first stages of integrating into the workforce. For example, families entitled to the highest level of subsidy (those in which the per capita income does not exceed 2,100 NIS), given that they are not referred to family-based child care by the social services, must pay 558 NIS for each child per month. A subsidy in this amount is granted only to families in the above income category with three young children, all of whom are in home-based child care arrangements.<sup>26</sup>

### **C. Absence of Access to Information**

All of the information regarding registration processes for nursery schools, the simulators for checking entitlement to a subsidy, etc., exists only in Hebrew. At the initial stage, a translation to Arabic of the content and making it accessible to the public must be advanced.

#### **5.1.5. Section 2(a)(7) of the Decision – Development and Expansion of Welfare and Employment Services Provided in East Jerusalem**

**Budget:** 75 million NIS (of which approximately 60 million is a supplementary designated budget).

The Government Decision imposes upon the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services and the Budgets Department of the Ministry of Finance to formulate a plan for the development and expansion of social and employment services in EJ, with emphasis upon encouraging the employment of women, preventing school drop-outs and risk situations for children and youth and extracting the population from poverty.

The Status Document does not provide information regarding the advance in implementation of this section of the Government Decision, even though this is a significant portion of the budget.

#### **5.1.6. Section 2(a)(8) of the Decision – Development of Human Capital**

**Budget:** 15 million NIS.

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<sup>26</sup> The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services, [Tuition for Non-Profit Daycare Centers for the 2019-2020 School Year](#), Sept., 2019.

As part of the Government Decision, the Branch for Professional Training of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services was directed to operate tools for development of human capital in EJ, and to allocate NIS 15 million of its budget for that purpose. The target set by the sub-task force is the formulation of a plan to encourage employment, with an emphasis on young women, including designated preparatory programs and professional courses of various kinds. As of October, 2019, out of an annual designated budget of approximately 2.3 million NIS, only about 100,000 NIS has been actually expended.<sup>27</sup>

Since many of the professional training programs are planned for dates later than the date of publication of the Status Document, much data is lacking at this point. However, from the data that were published, it transpires that in four training programs that were opened and reported on, there was a low rate of participation by women – the main target population of this section and of the employment chapter overall.

## **5.2. Commerce and Public Transportation –Investments Outside of the Employment Chapter**

Beyond the employment chapter, the Government Decision seeks to advance two other areas that have direct and substantive impact on the employment market in EJ. The first is the area of economy and commerce and the second is the area of public transportation.

Regarding the **economy and commerce chapter**, encouraging employment over time is conditioned upon the creation of work places, a complex challenge in view of the neglected infrastructure in EJ, which requires an investment of serious efforts and significant budgets. Four of the main subjects in this area – incentives for employers to employ women residents of EJ (target – 60 positions per year); establishment of a business center; development of commercial streets; and a path for advancing hi-tech entrepreneurialism – are all likely to contribute to the promotion of employment.

According to the Status Document, implementation of these channels had not begun as of October, 2019, and the designated budgets had not been spent. The only information published was that discussions and a preliminary drafting of guidelines and procedures are being carried out that would be published later.

**The transportation chapter** includes two elements of great significance for the promotion of employment in EJ – promotion of the Rav Kav arrangement in EJ (The City Pass) and the addition of lines that connect between the east and west

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<sup>27</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 38.

parts of the city. These processes are critical for access of EJ residents, particularly women, to places of work, especially in West Jerusalem. The steering and implementation entities pursuant to the Government Decision recognize the particular importance of the integration of women in employment.<sup>28</sup>

At present, transportation services in EJ are separate and cut off from the transportation system in the west part of the city. Beginning in 2016, private public transportation companies operate in EJ, organized within the East Jerusalem Transportation Association.<sup>29</sup> Many areas are not served by public transportation and the system as a whole is characterized by frequency of service that does not meet the demand of the residents and a lack of infrastructure. Other than the light rail line, there are almost no direct lines from the eastern part of the city to the west.<sup>30</sup>

As of the present, the Rav Kav arrangement, connecting east and west Jerusalem is not implemented. In the present situation, where there is no Rav Kav arrangement for trips in EJ and in the transfer to areas in West Jerusalem, the price of a trip on public transportation in EJ is 5 NIS for a single trip and does not include any discounts. The cost of a trip with use of the Rav Kav, on the other hand, can be as low as 4.75 NIS per trip with transfers within 90 minutes.

The absence of a Rav Kav arrangement or lines that efficiently connect between the two parts of the city constitutes two-fold economic damage to residents of EJ – those who travel to jobs in West Jerusalem must pay the more expensive price for the ride in EJ and the cost of the ride in West Jerusalem through a monthly pass, or accumulated value, without free transfers. Accordingly, this increases the expenses of employers for the travel of their employees from EJ.

The Status Document presents new planning of the lines operating in EJ with the goal of improving the services provided to its residents, including increasing the frequency of the buses and lengthening the hours of operation and improvement of service from the EJ neighborhoods to destinations of high demand in West Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup> Beyond this, there are no reports of progress.

Two main difficulties that prevent progress in the area of transportation that can be identified are one, the lack of a sufficient budget and two, difficulty in arriving at agreements with the companies operating the public transportation system in EJ. With respect to the first, the transcript of the meeting of the Ongoing Commission

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<sup>28</sup> Summary of Deliberations, the Ongoing Commission, Implementation of Decision 3790, Oct. 29, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> [Promotion of Transportation Takes Place in Jerusalem through a Civil Company](#), Jerusalem Institute, 2019, p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>31</sup> [Status Document](#), p. 69.

from October 29, 2019, demonstrates that the approved investment in the transportation cluster in EJ is lower than in clusters in other areas of the country.<sup>32</sup> The second obstacle, the absence of an agreement with the companies operating the buses, presently prevents the implementation of the Rav Kav arrangement. The status document reports about a disconnect with the bus companies in EJ after an effort to promote the subject with them. It appears that the reasons for this are unresolved financial gaps between the operators and the State, and the high degree of financial risk imposed on the operators, inherent to the public transportation model in EJ – many private companies, including small companies, which have greater exposure to financial risks, have signed unstable contracts with unfavorable terms with the municipality, and are required to work under conditions of inadequate and failing infrastructure.

## 6. Conclusion

The promotion of the area of employment in EJ is one of the keys to the exit of the EJ population from a situation of deep poverty in which over 77% of that population lives. As the Government Decision has identified, the employment of EJ women is a route through which significant change could take place, considering that at present only 27% of EJ women are part of the workforce.

The emphasis upon the participation of women in the workforce is discernible in the processes that the plan promotes. Among the projects that were financed and promoted in the first year of implementation in the area of employment are the expansion of the activity of the Rayan Center for employment counseling and placement – which sets a target of 70% of the participants being women; the program for the expansion of the Employment Circles for individualized placement, including training, workshops and focused accompaniment for those who receive supplemental income benefits - which sets the same target that 70% of the participants are women; programs for the encouragement of employment, with an emphasis upon employment of women; and construction of daycare centers that are intended to enable mothers to go out to work. Regarding the Rayan Center and Employment Circles programs, programs that already existed and were provided with budgetary allocations even prior to the Government Decision, but the activities of which have been expanded with increased budgetary allocations – have been relatively more successful in meeting their targets.

However, the data, as well as the reality on the ground, show that placement is in low-paying jobs. These findings are in accord with the data showing an increase in the poverty rate, in spite of an increase in the percentage of employed women in

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<sup>32</sup> Summary of Deliberations, the Ongoing Commission, Implementation of Decision 3790, Oct. 29, 2019.

recent years. We recommend that the sub-task force lead an effort to maximize data collection regarding the placement conditions of women through the various programs operated, a prominent negative element of the Employment Circles program. At the same time that steps are taken to encourage employment, the steering and implementation elements in the area of economy and commerce must promote the creation of additional places of employment, including the development and building of commercial and industrial areas. Regarding the new programs that were promoted as part of the program, including various frameworks for learning Hebrew, the incomplete existing data point to only partial success in meeting the planning targets. As we have described, these failures also stem from a lack of adequate notification and publication to policy figures and to the target population directly, as well as limiting definitions of the target population of the various programs.

If the steering and implementation entities of the Government Decision have the wisdom to address the central obstacles which keep women from employment with fair terms – the lack of convenient and affordable public transportation, the absence of basic higher education and the lack of additional skills needed for the employment market, as well as a lack of good quality frameworks for children – this will have significant positive consequences regarding the rate of participation in the workforce and the economic situation in EJ. It is reasonable to assume that closer work with the grassroots organizations and the residents will promote this.



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Ir Amim is an Israeli nonpartisan organization that deals with the complexity of life in Jerusalem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The organization acts to promote stability, equality and a consensual political future in Jerusalem.

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**WAC - MAAN**

The Workers' Organization WAC is a general workers organization which unites workers in Israel. In addition, the organization unites Palestinian workers who work for Israeli employers in industrial areas in the areas of the settlements. For twenty years the

organization has operated a branch in E1 which assists the residents there to realize their social rights and acts to promote fair employment for women.