

Officially Out of Order:

The Education System in Silwan

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Introduction

As an educator, I've been exposed to the two faces of the education system in East Jerusalem for a decade. On one hand, I am exposed to severe neglect and discrimination in budgets by the Israeli authorities. On the other, I see the neighborhood activists' and teaching staff's inspiring dedication and commitment to provide our children with the education they deserve.

Providing an education is sacred work that offers teachers and parents the privilege of accompanying children on their journey of self-discovery, both inwardly and outwardly. We do our best to ensure that schools provide the best conditions possible for our children to learn, develop interpersonal skills and a faith in their ability to navigate their lives in accordance with their dreams and wishes.

One would expect that the Municipality of Jerusalem and the Ministry of Education would support our praiseworthy mission and thus fulfill their obligation to provide an adequate education for the Palestinian population of Jerusalem. But to our great frustration, we must struggle to mobilize them into action. This is true for basic issues such as safety and maintenance, as well as large scale systemic issues like a critical shortage of classrooms.

As a result, my educational duty and that of my colleagues isn't limited to the "pure" act of teaching within the schools' borders. Time and again we have discovered that in order to realize our mission properly, we must embark on a struggle to draw attention to the disgraceful conditions in which our children are forced to study. Organizing strikes, working with the media and appealing to the court system are skills that I have been forced to acquire throughout my years as an educator.

This report is another one of our efforts to demand the right for adequate educational conditions for our children.

Fares Hales

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A. Background

This report will review the condition of the educational infrastructure in the neighborhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem and demonstrate how statistics indicating the state of the educational system in East Jerusalem as a whole manifest in the lives of children and their parents. This report was written alongside Ir Amim's and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel's annual surveillance report, published this August¹, and it serves as a case study for understanding the stories behind the statistics.

The neighborhood of Silwan is located to the southwest of the Old City. The residents of Silwan consider their neighborhood to include the areas of Wadi Hilweh, Ras al Amud, Wadi Kadum, Bir Ayyub, A-Shayakh and Ein al-Luza. According to statistics from the Jerusalem institute for Israel Studies, as of 2008, 33,000 people reside in the neighborhood, of which 12,000 are school age².

Despite conditions being relatively better than in other neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, Silwan's educational system exemplifies the infrastructural neglect prevalent in all of East Jerusalem. It is therefore instructive to start with a general review of the education system in East Jerusalem and then direct our sights to the specific case of Silwan.

The East Jerusalem education system has suffered from severe neglect for forty five years. Annual surveillance reports by Ir Amim and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) describe a harsh and unchanging reality in which municipal schools in East Jerusalem can only absorb half of the children in the compulsory education age group³. A quarter of these students attend recognized but unofficial educational institutions and most of the remaining students attend private schools. As a result, most parents of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem are forced to assume exorbitant expenses for their children to attend an unofficial institution operating without supervision of its quality standards, in lieu of the education the State is mandated to provide. The joint report by Ir Amim and ACRI, published alongside this report, exposes the absence of any organized information elucidating the scale of the phenomenon, leaving only estimates of between 2,800—24,000 Palestinian children in Jerusalem who are not registered in schools.

According to the State Comptroller's report, in 2008 the East Jerusalem education system suffered from a shortage of 1,000 classrooms⁴. Following repeated appeals by Ir Amim, ACRI and Al-Maqdese for Society Development MSD⁵, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the Municipality and the Ministry of Education to create 645 classrooms in East Jerusalem over

¹ Ir Amim and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, ""Failed Grade, 2012""

² According to statistics by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and the Central Bureau of Statistics for 2011 (delivered by direct correspondence)

³ See footnote 1, from which most of the data appearing in this introduction is taken

⁴ State Comptroller report 59B, May 2009

⁵ Partial ruling, given on August 29, 2001, as part of High Court of Justice 5185/01, Badria vs. Jerusalem Municipality; High Court of Justice 5373/08 Abu Leved and others vs. the Minister of Education and others (yet published) given on February 6, 2011

the period of 200—2011. Despite the Court's ruling, the number of classrooms created until today (a year since the Court's deadline) stands at only 320. Over half the classrooms in official schools in East Jerusalem (723 of 1,399) are defined by the Jerusalem Educational Administration (MANHI) as below standard. Many schools have no basic resources such as libraries, laboratories or gymnasiums. Other essential infrastructure, such as cooling and heating systems, are far from satisfactory.

From conversations held with various administrative officials in the Municipality, it appears that following the High Court of Justice's ruling, officials at the Municipality have been diligently attempting to resolve the severe shortage of classrooms in East Jerusalem. An organized database has been created to chart the deficit of standard level classrooms in detail, efforts are being made to locate land for the establishment of new schools and relevant government offices have been allocating funds for their construction.

However, the gap between the needs recognized by the Municipality and the results of their efforts is tremendous. According to the Municipality's data, there are currently 1,100 classrooms missing across East Jerusalem while the rate of classroom construction remains steady at a few dozen per year. Even if all the land identified by the Municipality for the construction of schools was actually utilized for this purpose, the Municipality would not be able to add more than a few hundred classrooms in East Jerusalem.

What is the reason for the shortage of land the Municipality has been able to locate for the construction of schools for the Palestinian population? Is there actually a shortage of free plots in the city?

As the Silwan case study shows, although there are appropriate plots within Palestinian neighborhoods, the Municipality chooses to allocate them for various initiatives that are completely unrelated to residents' needs. In this report we will consider the gap between the efforts made to construct schools in East Jerusalem and the priorities set by political elements within the Municipality who severely compromise these efforts' chances of success.

Our aim is to focus on Silwan and to describe, in detail, the direct results of the educational discrimination the residents of East Jerusalem endure. It is more difficult to remain indifferent when exposed to the systemic failures of the educational system and the deterioration of its physical infrastructures through the prism of a single school and the community it serves. Through specific, detailed descriptions within the context of the broader phenomenon, we can best understand the severity of the failure of the Silwan educational system and schools across East Jerusalem.

It is important to note that Silwan is not the most extreme case scenario in East Jerusalem. The condition of the educational facilities in this neighborhood is relatively good compared to other neighborhoods. Though hard to imagine, there are neighborhoods in East Jerusalem where conditions exceed the level of severity described throughout this report.

B. The Shortage of Classrooms in Silwan

The municipal system in Silwan can absorb less than half the students in the neighborhood

There are approximately 12,000 school aged children living in Silwan. There are currently eight official municipal schools that serve 4,603 students and another two recognized but unofficial schools attended by 478 students⁶. In total there are 5,081 students participating in the municipal education system. This means that only 42% of the 12,000 children in Silwan benefit from the municipal education system and from schools in close proximity to their homes. There are also two private schools in the neighborhood, which are attended by 481 students⁷.

Until a year ago there was not one single high school in Silwan. In September 2010, the first municipal high school for girls was opened in Silwan and this coming December the construction of the first municipal high school for boys is expected to be completed.

Shortage of schools in the neighborhood: Hours on the Road or Thousands of Shekels for Private School

There is no room in the municipal education system in Silwan for 6,900 children comprising 58% of the student population in the neighborhood. A minority of these students are registered in private schools in the neighborhood while more than 6,400 children were forced to study outside of Silwan during the passing school year. Attending schools outside the neighborhood requires commuting to schools located far from home in other parts of East Jerusalem. The commute can take up to an hour and a half in each direction. According to the executive notice issued by the Ministry of Education, the Municipality is obligated to provide transportation for a student whose house is located further than 3 km from the school they attend⁸. In reality, the Municipality only provides transportation to children who attend special needs education institutions. Therefore, thousands of students are forced to use inefficient public transportation and incur considerable expenses⁹ to get to school.

“My son attends the 9th grade. When he reached the 7th grade we were told there was no room for him in the Silwan junior high school and therefore we were forced to register him at a school in Shuafat. We are not rich and I am forced to give him 40 NIS every day for school transportation and food.

⁶ The municipal schools consist of the mixed municipal primary school in Silwan; the municipal primary school for boys in Silwan; the new municipal school in Silwan; El-Amud municipal primary school for girls; the mixed municipal primary school in Ras al Amud; the municipal junior high school for boys in Ras al-Amud; the municipal junior high school for girls in Ras al-Amud; and the municipal high school for girls in Ras al-Amud. Recognized but unofficial schools include Al-Haia Al-Jadida primary schools and Al-Haia high school for girls.

⁷ Private schools operated by UNRWA (1), the Wakf (1) and private foundations (3).

⁸ Students from kindergarten to the fourth grade are eligible for transportation if they reside further than 2km from the school to which they are assigned.

⁹ Public transportation in East Jerusalem is inefficient and suffers from systemic discrimination. For example, due to lack of government subsidization there is no provision of monthly passes, combined tickets or discounted student tickets.

Every day he must catch the bus at 6:00 AM in the morning in order to reach the school before 7:45 AM. The teachers don't care that he lives far away and give him trouble if he is late. He returns home tired in the afternoons and I can see that he is troubled and having a hard time. I am unacquainted with the children he studies with and don't know who they are. I feel as though just as I commute to work every day he also goes to work each morning. He has no childlike joy. He asked me once why we can't move closer to the school. I explained that it was too expensive".

Testimony of a parent, resident of Silwan¹⁰.

The shortage of classrooms in the municipal school system forces some students to register at private schools that charge tuition. The private schools in Silwan charge an average of 2,000 NIS a year. At other private schools in East Jerusalem (where, as mentioned, hundreds of children from Silwan are forced to study), tuition may run as high as 15,000 NIS a year¹¹.

Often the quality of private schools—and recognized but unofficial schools— is substandard compared to municipal schools. Contrary to the commonly held image of a private school, in East Jerusalem private schools and recognized but unofficial schools are not elitist institutions offering an improved curriculum and learning conditions. More often than not, precisely the opposite is true. These schools are often created by private foundations, operate with minimal supervision and in the absence of quality standards, charge excessive tuition and fail to provide competent teachers and properly maintain their buildings. It becomes apparent why half the students in East Jerusalem not being able to attend official schools can be seen as a crisis.



Commitment and Initiative by Silwan's Educational Staff in the Face of Neglect by the Authorities

The primary explanation for the inability of schools in Silwan to absorb more students lies in the shortage of classrooms. In East

¹⁰ The interviewee preferred to remain nameless.

¹¹ See the article on this matter broadcast as part of the "Jerusalem News Room" program by Hot channel 3,

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151004254537978¬if_t=video_tag

Jerusalem there is no shortage of teachers to fill existing classrooms; moreover, the Ministry of Education has additional funding allocated to pay for more teacher salaries in accordance with natural population growth. The fact that schools utilize every inch of available space to accommodate students, including areas that are inadequate for classrooms, testifies to the problem of space rather than a teacher shortage being the critical problem. School headmasters are left to find creative solutions to address this dearth of space. For example, one of the primary schools decided to direct 6th graders to a remote school in order to admit more 1st graders, for whom it would be even more difficult to reach the remote location. These types of "solutions" are temporary in nature and do not offer acceptable long term solutions.

Because schools are obliged to take on many more students than they have the capacity to accommodate, learning conditions are less acceptable than what would be expected. Due to the shortage of schools, large spaces are divided in two and teachers' lounges, laboratories, art rooms and even bomb shelters are transformed into classrooms. For example, the Ras al-Amud Junior High School was established in 2009 with 12 classrooms. Today the school operates 29 classrooms. Seven of those additional classrooms were opened in an old building nearby that formerly served as a school. Ten additional classrooms are located in the new building, in shelters or at the expense of laboratory space. Even the teacher's lounge was reduced to half its original size in order to create additional learning spaces.

The initiative and efforts made by Silwan's educational staff to identify solutions for as many students as possible indicates both their motivation and their capacity to provide a quality education for their students, given the proper conditions. Their commitment demonstrates that the primary cause of the schools' substandard conditions is the authorities' failure to provide an adequate number of properly maintained educational facilities. The result: Even students who are able to attend schools in their neighborhood do not go to school in an appropriate learning environment.

C. Lost Children

Thousands of children in East Jerusalem are not registered in any learning institution¹². There are no exact statistics on the number of children in Silwan who have dropped out of the educational system, contrary to what is mandated under the Compulsory Education Law. Salim Siam from the legal department at the Wadi Hilweh Information Center in Silwan describes the widespread dropout phenomenon in the neighborhood:

"In our neighborhood (Wadi Hilweh), there are 5,000 residents, of which 2,500 are children. Despite this fact, there is no municipal school in the neighborhood and the only school belongs to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and holds only 300 students. The rest of the children must attend schools in other areas of Silwan or in distant neighborhoods of the city. Many families remove their children from school as a result of financial stress. They cannot afford the tuition in private schools and even expenses for transportation and learning materials are hard to bear. However, education is like bread and water; one

¹² For details on partial statistics in this area and assessments regarding the scope of dropouts, see the Ir Amim and Civil Rights Association's report 2012.

cannot survive without it. An ongoing cycle is created. Parents who received no education cannot help their children in their school work and have no money to pay private tutors. Oftentimes they tell themselves that it's all right that their children don't attend school because the boys will work instead and help with the family's livelihood and the girls will marry and become homemakers in any case. However, these children will grow up and become poor and uneducated parents who cannot support their own children's education. In this reality it is not surprising to see phenomena such as violence, crime and drugs crop up. We identify children who have dropped out of school and speak with their families to convince them to return. We try to assist with afterschool classes and by handing out school bags and other learning equipment at the beginning of the year. But this should not be my job. Why doesn't the Municipality take care of these things?"

Indeed, the Municipality does not take adequate responsibility for reducing the dropout rate and has no statistics on either the scope of the problem or plans for its reduction. Not only does the Municipality not take responsibility; according to workers at Wadi Hilweh's Information Center, they are harassed because of their efforts to address the problem.

D. When Failure is the Result of Policy

In Silwan, as in the rest of East Jerusalem, massive Jewish building initiatives are promoted at the expense of classrooms.

Conversations with administrative officials in the Jerusalem Municipality, and with the Deputy Mayor and Arab education supervisor Mr. Josef (Pepe) Alalu, paint a seemingly encouraging picture. It appears that as a result of the appeals to the High Court of Justice and its ruling last February, there are many efforts being made by professionals in the Municipality to construct new classrooms in East Jerusalem. A detailed mapping was conducted to determine the number of classrooms needed in Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem and appropriate plots were identified for the construction of schools. In addition, a committee of relevant officials within the Municipality meets once a month to advance educational solutions in East Jerusalem. Ir Amim was also told that the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Education are funding the expropriation of real estate for the construction of schools.

Results of these efforts can already be seen in Silwan. In 2009 a junior high school for boys was opened in Ras al-Amud with 12 classrooms and a year later a high school for girls was opened in Ras al-Amud with 24 classrooms. By the end of 2012, the construction of a high school for boys with 24 classrooms is expected to be completed. In addition, the Municipality is about to complete renovation of a building that previously served as a school in the Amal private network. This school will serve as a municipal primary school for girls, providing them with 9 classrooms. These developments constitute a meaningful change from previous years and a noteworthy improvement for the students who will attend these schools.

Nonetheless, the addition of these classrooms is still a far cry from resolving the actual need for appropriate learning facilities in Silwan. There are a total of 140 classrooms in municipal schools in Silwan. According to statistics provided by the Municipality itself, this is less than

half the classrooms needed and an additional 181 classrooms would be required to fill the gap. However, it appears that beyond the 33 classrooms expected to open in Silwan in the coming months, there are no additional construction projects anticipated in the neighborhood and surrounding areas in the foreseeable future.

As previously mentioned, officials in the Municipality and MANHI report great efforts being made to locate real estate adequate for construction of schools in the neighborhood. According to these reports, the location of identified plots often involves considerable logistical challenges for construction (and substantial financial investment) due to the lack of preferable alternatives. Despite its efforts, the Municipality has been unable to locate real estate for the construction of schools beyond those mentioned above.

Is it true there are no available plots?

An inquiry into the construction plans currently being advanced in Silwan reveals that there are fields that could have been allocated to alleviate the extreme demand for educational structures. Instead, these plots are designated for initiatives that 1) promote tourist development that does not serve the residents of the neighborhood and 2) advance a right-wing settler ideology designed to consolidate an Israeli presence in neighborhoods like Silwan and weaken their native Palestinian populations.

One example is the mixed primary school in Silwan. The school includes two medium sized adjacent structures that have served as schools since the beginning of the previous century. These outdated buildings might have been demolished and replaced with modern school buildings. Instead, eight years ago, one of them was taken away from the school. Part of the building was converted into a police station and part now serves the Israel Antiquities Authority, which has an excavation project in nearby Beit Mayan, in the Ir David National Park. The project is managed by the Elad settler organization, which has a well recognized agenda to consolidate Israel's hold over Silwan. Thus, land that once served the educational needs of the neighborhood's residents—and which could have been naturally developed to house a new school—has instead been converted to support activities that are antithetical to residents' needs and inflame existing tensions in the neighborhood.

Another example is the Kedem compound¹³, a plan submitted to the municipal planning and building authorities by Elad. This plan proposes the construction of a 5 story building on an area known as the Givati Parking Lot, located at the entrance to Silwan. Elad—the same organization that operates the adjacent Ir David site—intends to house their offices in the building and to operate it as a visitors' center. The plan has garnered the support of the Municipality, with the Mayor taking the untraditional step of attending the District Committee for Planning and Construction's discussion of the plan in order to publically declare his support. Naturally, the plan is strongly opposed by the neighborhood's residents and there are multiple reasons to demand its cancellation. In the context of this report, and in light of Municipality officials' claims that there is a shortage of appropriate land in Silwan

¹³ Plan 13542 was authorized by the regional committee on February of this year and until the day this report was written, has not been published for opposition.

for the construction of schools, one must question the Mayor's exuberant support of this project.

Many similar examples exist across East Jerusalem, some of them referenced in the annual surveillance report published by Ir Amim and ACRI. These plans, both inside and outside of Silwan¹⁴, are being developed at the expense of residents' basic human needs and are particularly detrimental to their basic right to an education. The contrast between the work and goodwill shown by the officials in the Municipality and the policies upheld by their political counterparts makes it clear that the shortage of classrooms in East Jerusalem cannot be treated simply as a building problem but must be understood as a broader political issue. Because Israeli authorities chose to annex territories in East Jerusalem, the responsibility to respond to the needs of the Palestinian community in the city lies on their shoulders. Resolution of the educational needs in Silwan, and in East Jerusalem in general, cannot be severed from the political question of the collective status of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Without a serious change of policy recognizing the rights of the Palestinian community in the city, there will be no way to eliminate the neglect and discrimination prevalent in East Jerusalem's education system.

E. Existing Schools – Unacceptable Infrastructure Conditions

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, over half the classrooms in East Jerusalem have been defined as below standard by the Municipality. In Silwan, conditions are considerably better, with only 15 of the 140 classrooms in its municipal schools receiving this designation. Even so, an inspection of the conditions within the learning institutions reveals extreme overcrowding, safety violations and other deficiencies impairing children's right to a sound education.

¹⁴ See: "the giant and his garden – the king's garden plan in El-Bustan", Ir Amim report May 2012 and "Plan 13542, Kedem lot/Givati parking lot: 20 meters from the wall, private hands and one exclusive story", Ir Amim report, May 2012.



A branch of the mixed municipal primary school in Silwan

- A branch of the "mixed municipal primary school" in Silwan is located in a small structure dated from the previous century that lacks an appropriate recreational space outside the classroom for the children. Teachers sit in a "teacher's lounge"—in reality, a packed entrance between the two classrooms. This building has no gym, library or art room.
- A similar situation exists in the "Wadi Kadum Municipal Primary School" which, for the past eight years, has been located in caravans that become unbearably hot during the summer months. Air conditioners purchased to cool the rooms were stolen and not replaced. Here, too, there is no teacher's lounge, gym or appropriate area for recess. According to the Municipality, the plot on which the caravans are located is currently being expropriated. Once this process is completed, the planning process for a permanent school structure can be initiated. The process is expected to last several years.
- Three additional schools in Silwan are located in rented structures¹⁵. These buildings were constructed as residences and are unsuitable to house schools. They are multi-story buildings with corridors too narrow to allow for the presence and movement of hundreds of students and their teachers.



Steps leading to a school in Silwan

¹⁵ Ras El-Amud primary girls school, Silwan primary girls school and Alchaia Aljadida primary school.

These buildings were not designed with courtyards to accommodate recess for the children. Some of the classrooms are located in small and unventilated rooms and there are no areas available for the teachers' lounge, gym or library. An extreme example is the Ras al-Amud girls' school. In addition to experiencing the aforementioned problems, the school is divided into two buildings separated by a distance of 500 meters. Teachers must run in between the buildings during all seasons of the year, in the heat and in the pouring rain.

- A letter recently sent by Silwan's central parent committee to Lara Mubriki, the MANHI representative responsible for the education system in East Jerusalem, demonstrates the absurd lengths parents are forced to go in their search to identify a learning institution for their children. The letter notes that the mixed primary school is asking for permission to admit twice as many students into its first grade class as it is able to absorb. The parent committee is therefore asking for permission to divide the kindergarten rooms located nearby the school in order to create two new classrooms to accommodate more students.
- Most of the schools have either extremely cramped teachers' lounges or none at all. Teachers have no private space where they can work or rest when they are not teaching. Some of the individual work teachers undertake with students is carried out in the hallway instead of in spaces affording the privacy and focus required.
- A letter recently dispatched to the mayor by the Coalition of Parent Committees in Silwan and Abu Tur details the various safety hazards on roads adjacent to the schools. Virtually all schools have entrances and exits located on congested roadways. There are insufficiently wide sidewalks and safety barriers next to schools and no space available for cars to drop off children. The letter to the mayor was sent only after previous appeals to officials failed to produce a response.
- Two schools in Silwan¹⁶ are located beside a mountain slope. Despite continued appeals by the neighborhood parent committee, the Municipality has failed to address potential safety hazards. At the time of this writing, there is nothing more than a metal net stretched below the crumbling mountain slope to protect the school and the students studying within it. At the perimeter of the courtyard of one of these schools it is possible to see a boulder that detached from the crumbling mountain and tore the net. The courtyard also serves as the only entranceway for some of the residences located nearby. As a result, it is not possible to close the courtyard off in order to create a safe space for students and staff.
- In January 2012, following malfunctions in the pipelines in the mixed primary school in Silwan, water infiltrated the school's central electrical box. This highly dangerous power shortage made it impossible to teach on location and the school urgently appealed to the Municipality for repairs. The Municipality failed to take advantage of the winter break to complete the repairs. Only after the parents shut the school down for an additional three days after the end of the vacation did the Municipality remedy this serious safety hazard¹⁷.

Following this bleak survey, it is important to return to the Wadi Hilweh Information Center mentioned earlier and to take note of the impressive educational activities taking place there. Unlike buildings within the school system, the Information Center does have a library, as well as art classes, music classes and sports activities. Close to 500 children participated in the summer camp the center operated during the month before the Ramadan fast. These activities take place only because of the residents' resilience and initiative, in the absence of

¹⁶ The mixed municipal primary school in Silwan and its branch located in another neighborhood

¹⁷ [See the article in Channel 1 News](#)

any funding or support from the Municipality. Beyond managing activities, center instructors serve as vital role models for the neighborhood's children—a source of inspiration and a validation of the possibility of mastering one's own destiny and contributing to the community. These workers receive no support from the Municipality.

F. Summary

Meetings and research conducted during the preparation of this report have revealed a multi-faceted picture of the infrastructure issues within the Silwan educational system. At first exposure to the shocking learning conditions described herein, one is rocked by feelings of extreme anger, astonishment and helplessness. What message is the Jerusalem Municipality sending to the children of East Jerusalem by abandoning them to these intolerable conditions? What motivation can teachers have when they are forced to function in a system that so callously neglects them and their students?

What we have found is that Silwan's educators and social activists do not lack motivation. Far from it, the love and sense of purpose they bring to their work is demonstrated every day and palpable in their eyes as they describe it.

But even the most impressive educational activities cannot compensate for the lack of resources and goodwill on the part of the Israeli authorities. Due to the ongoing policy of neglect in East Jerusalem's education system, the question remains: What vision of the future do the mayor and Minister of Education wish to impart to the Palestinian children who live in Jerusalem and to the general population? What kind of future can the children whose education they have forfeited expect? What is the future of a city in which more than 40% of the students are deprived of an acceptable—if not quality—education?

Much has been said regarding the inherent contradictions within Israeli policy in East Jerusalem. On one hand, Israel has announced its sovereignty over East Jerusalem and on the other, it refuses to fulfill its obligations to the Palestinian population that resides in it. This report illuminates how the results of this contradiction are manifested in the education system in Silwan. Violation of the right to an education has grievous social and economic repercussions on both the individual and the community to which s/he belongs. The cost of the neglect we have described is paid first and foremost by the children of Silwan. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the snow ball created will freeze at the gates of West Jerusalem.