

**THE NEGEV INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIES OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT  
(R.A.)**

**AMUTA NO. 580359073**

**NARRATIVE REPORT FOR YEAR 2009**

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**In accordance with item 37a of the Law of Amutot (not-for-profit associations) 1980, the members of the Executive Committee of the Amuta are pleased to submit this account of the activities of the Amuta as detailed in the third addition to that law.**

Name of the Amuta: **Negev institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (R.A.)**

Amuta Number: **580359073**

The mission of the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development, established in 1998, is the advancement of peace and development. The key focus of interest of the Institute is the civil society, the voluntary and non-governmental groups and organizations that fulfill a key function in the resolution of conflicts and the advancement of processes of sustainable human development, on the assumption that there is little chance of maintaining a stable peace unless it is combined with a parallel and incremental process of the provision of basic human needs.

The Negev Institute serves as a center for education, training, guidance and project development in societies in transition from conflict to conflict resolution; from rigid economic systems and authoritarian regimes to free market economics and democracy; from poverty and dependency to independence and socio-economic progress and from marginalized minorities to active minorities shouldering responsibility for their own lives.

The Negev Institute's activities extend over a wide range: the local Israeli level, with special focus on the Negev; the regional, Middle Eastern level and the international level, with focus on countries in process of development.

### **The Negev Institute conducts programs in the following areas:**

1. ***Training and Education:*** courses, seminars and workshops for leaders, activist teachers and trainers from civil society and governmental organizations.
2. ***Projects:*** initiation, planning, supervision and evaluation of operational projects focused on selected areas of interest, both in the nearby geographic area and further afield.
3. ***Consultancy:*** the Negev Institute offers consultancy services and guidance to public and private institutions.

### **THE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE NEGEV INSTITUTE'S THREE DIVISIONS:**

#### ***The Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation (AJEEC):***

AJEEC's concern is with the advancement of equality in all areas of life through the empowerment of the Arab community in Israel, and the fostering of active cooperation between Arabs and Jews in Israel. AJEEC develops programs in the areas of education,

leadership training, enhancement of employment opportunities for different groups in the community and more.

### ***The International Division:***

The Institute conducts training programs and projects with organizations in developing countries in the areas of small and medium enterprises, cooperation and peace and development. These areas include topics relevant to sustainable human development, leadership, socio-economic empowerment, democracy and the civil society.

### ***The Middle East Division:***

The Institute plans and implements social and economic projects in full partnership with N.G.O.s in Palestine and Arab countries striving for peace and cooperation. The Negev Institute's approach is rooted in the belief that joint activities at the ground level of 'people-to-people' are the key to exerting a positive influence on events in the region.

## **1. The Main Activities Conducted in the Year 2009:**

### **The International Division**

From its beginnings, the Institute has been engaged in processes of empowerment and economic development by fostering and supporting the development of both privately and cooperatively owned small businesses. This activity is based on our understanding of the critical role played by small and medium enterprises in the process of individual and community empowerment and as an essential tool for sustainable human development under present world conditions. The Israeli experience demonstrates the importance of cooperatives and small businesses in rural development and the abolition of poverty.

In 2009 the International Division continued to establish new partnerships and strengthen existent partnerships. Activities included courses and workshops, both in Israel and abroad. The Division conducted two short courses on the topic of "The Abolition of Rural Poverty", drawing on the extensive Israeli experience in rural development. One course was designed especially to meet the needs of rural development in Sri Lanka. Among the participants were a regional Minister of Cooperatives and numerous other senior government officials. Participants in the second course included directors of cooperatives and government officials from a number of African and Asian countries.

Two additional courses were conducted in partnership with MASHAV. One of these was designed for senior officials in the office of the president of Kenya. These officials – designated "chiefs" in the local language – are responsible for coordination of rural development activities in the country. The second course, conducted in partnership with

MASHAV and the Swedish Cooperative Center, was designed to enhance the business administration capacities of directors of cooperatives in East Africa.

We continued our cooperation with senior officials of the *African National Congress* (ANC) in South Africa. Together with the *Israel-South Africa Forum*, we conducted a workshop for South African leaders, among them Ministers of Agriculture and heads of other regional government ministries. The aim of these workshops was to expose these leaders to the Israel experience of development.

A new development in 2009 was the establishment of a partnership with ACFSMC- the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives – the organization responsible for the implementation of rural development policies in China. After the signing of an MOI between the ACFSMC and the Negev Institute, the International Division organized two-week-long workshops in China, in which 150 directors of cooperatives took part. In these workshops we highlighted the Israeli experience in the area of cooperatives and its relevance to rural development in China. In addition, we hosted a delegation of ACFSMC representatives at a five-day workshop in Israel.

## **The Middle East Division**

The Middle East Division strives to promote conditions furthering dynamic human development and peace in the region, through a variety of programs and activities:

### **Project “Joint Ventures for Peace”**

Project “Joint Ventures for Peace” was developed in partnership with a Palestinian Women’s Organization in the West Bank, with the support of the Canadian government. This 12-month project began in March 2009, with the participation of 20 Palestinian and 20 Israeli artisans, businesswomen and professionals.

The main aim of the project was the establishment of joint business initiatives of Palestinian and Israeli women providing both with additional sources of income, while at the same time fostering dialogue combined with joint endeavor. By the end of 2009, 8 joint meetings of Palestinian and Israeli women had taken place, as well as joint business counseling sessions. As an outcome of these activities, 10 joint products were developed, that are being marketed under the label of “Joint Peace Initiatives”.

### **The Center for Women’s Empowerment and Employment**

This 18-month project, supported by the Belgian government, began in September 2009. The project aims to advance the personal empowerment and the socio-economic situation of Palestinian women, by the establishment of a Center for Women’s Empowerment and Employment. The Center will include a sewing and a catering enterprise as well as additional initiatives, with the intent that enhanced economic development will also further peace in the region.

30 Palestinian women are participating in this project, some receiving training in fashion design and sewing, some in catering and a few in business administration and marketing.

### **Course in Sheep Breeding and Production of Milk Products (continued)**

The aim of this course is the advancement of the socio-economic status of West Bank Palestinian women and their empowerment by means of the establishment of a dairy in ElAzariyah. 10 women from the villages of ElAzariyah, Beit Kahal and Halhul , participants in the initial course on sheep breeding are participating in this advanced course in the production of milk products.

## **AJEEC – The Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation**

AJEEC strives to advance cooperation between Arabs and Jews based on equality and empowerment of the Arab minority: equality in all areas of life: economy, education, health, housing – and no less, inclusion in the main areas of focus of political, bureaucratic and legal power.

AJEEC focuses on three central issues facing the Arab and the Jewish community in Israel:

- a. The achievement of actual, as well as legal, equality in all areas of life: the economy, education, health, housing and more – and no less, participation in the centers of political, bureaucratic and institutional power.
- b. The promotion of the economic, social and political empowerment of Israeli Palestinians, enabling them to achieve equality actually and effectively.
- c. Cooperation between Arabs and Jews based on equality and empowerment of the minority that lives and works within the state and the society shaped by the Jewish majority. Joint efforts will make it possible to lay the foundation for the development of a true democracy in Israel and foster the advancement of both populations.

AJEEC initiates educational and training programs, develops and operated projects and conducts a wide range of community and other programs in order to advance the above-stated aims, within the framework of three departments: the Early Childhood Department, the Department for Economic Development and the 'Volunteer Tent'.

### **The Early Childhood Department**

The Early Childhood Department's approach is one of empowerment, centered on the child and promoting the active involvement of parents in their children's upbringing and education.

In traditional Arab Bedouin society, the mother always functioned as the primary educator of her children, preparing them to take their place in the life of the community. With the attrition of traditional culture and of traditional social functions, women found themselves ill-equipped to raise and prepare their children to compete effectively in today's modern and urbanized society.

### **'Parents as Partners'**

The flagship program of the Early Childhood department is the 'Parents as Partners' program, a holistic, community-based early childhood education program. The program is designed to meet the needs of mothers and their children from birth to age 3. The program fosters the development of an identity aligned with the life style and traditions of the Arab Bedouin community. The program combines elements rooted in the customs and traditions of the community with scientific modern knowledge regarding early childhood development and education.

Following on the successful initial stage of the program, in the course of which 9 "Home of the Mother and the Child" daycare centers for 1 to 3 year olds were established in 6 'unrecognized' Bedouin villages in the Negev, a second stage of the program was initiated in 2007. A new cadre of 24 women from the target communities of Laqiya, Hura, Abu Kaf, UmMatnan, Elsayed and ElAtrash was trained as certified early childhood caregivers and educators. This stage of the program culminated in the establishment of 12 new "Home of the Mother and the Child" centers. By September 2010, a total of 21 daycare centers will be in operation, serving 330 children aged 1 to 3 and providing employment for 42 women.

### **The 'Educational Activity Centers' and Playgrounds Project**

The aim of this project is to provide safe and enriching activities for the children in 'unrecognized' villages during leisure hours. Two such "Educational Activity Centers" were established in the villages of Ghaser Elser and Hashem Zaneh, following a survey of the needs and desires of children in unrecognized villages for leisure time activities. Each of the Activity Centers provides three activity frameworks: a program for pre-school children, training, enrichment and empowerment activities for mothers, and a program of social initiatives for school-age children and youth. This program of activities was carried out in both Centers throughout 2009. In addition, 3 special activity camps were organized for all the school children during the winter, spring and summer school breaks, with a special focus on ecology and preservation of the environment. During 2010, the project will come to an end and both Centers will become the property and responsibility of the communities. A "Home of the Mother and the Child" daycare center will be established in each of the villages and the after-school enrichment program for older children will continue.

### **The Early Childhood Resource and Training Center**

AJEEC's Early Childhood Resource and Training Center was established in 2009, after an initial period of preparation in 2008. The Center, which develops early childhood

educational resources in Arabic and provides professional training in this field, was established in order to meet the lack of, and need for training materials and educational resources based on and relevant to the content world and culture of Negev Arab Bedouin society and its young children. Among the Center's initial activities was the production of a variety of training manuals and the design of a family literacy program for parents, focused on the first years of the child's life, which was implemented in NISPED-AJEEC's 21 early childhood frameworks. This year, the literacy program will reach a further 14 groups of mothers and children. A Family Literacy Resource and Training Kit in Arabic will be published in the fall of 2010, which will facilitate the further dissemination of this important program.

### **Health Promotion for Pregnant Women and Infants**

This project was developed in partnership with the department of Epidemiology at the Ben Gurion University Medical School, with NISPED-AJEEC responsible for community outreach. The project comes to grips with the many factors that lead to the high rates of infant mortality in Negev Arab Bedouin society. Within the framework of the project, 18 young women were trained as health promoters, who in 2009 worked with 20 groups of women. The project provides groups of women with knowledge and instruction in a variety of health issues and encourages them to themselves become active health promoters in their communities. Among the activities organized by groups of village women participating in the project was lobbying for a bus stop at their village (a successful operation, which now makes the health services and hospital in Beer Sheva accessible!), and organization of a village-wide 'Good Nutrition Day'. A crucial element of the program was the establishment of a forum of religious leaders and imams to promote awareness of critical health issues in the community. 17 imams are participating in this forum, which plays an important role in raising the level of general community awareness.

In 2010 the program plans to reach out to additional groups of women, work with groups of youth, establish a web-site, and continue its fruitful interaction with the community's religious leaders.

### **The Department for Economic Development**

With the heightened level of development of the country on the one hand, and the widening socio-economic gaps within Israeli society on the other, the question arises: how can one effectively extend assistance to the weak sections of the economy, so as to enable them to become part of the process of economic development? No less, how is it possible to turn this question into one of the important challenges to be met by the nation's decision-makers? The Arab-Bedouin population of the Negev, which makes up one-fourth of the entire population of the Negev, is by all criteria one of the weakest, if not **the weakest**, in the country.

The Department for Economic Development conducts economic initiatives in the Arab-Bedouin community, as a key element of community development, with the aim of:

- a. Enhancing employment among the Bedouin population of the Negev;
- b. Raising awareness of the potential inherent in the establishment of small businesses as a lever for economic development and empowerment;
- c. Creating a model cooperative management of small businesses – a model promoting enhancing community strength and well-being;
- d. Organizing and institutionalizing businessmen and businesswomen as an influential force for economic and social development.

Among the department's activities in 2009:

#### **Training Program for Sports Counselors**

Recent years have seen an increase in the demand for organized sports activities for women in the Negev Arab Bedouin community. This led us to train a group of women as sports counselors, specialized as trainers for pre-natal and post-natal women and as gym instructors. In 2009, 17 women completed the training course conducted at the Kaye Teachers' Training College in Beer Sheva. Several of the graduates found employment as sports counselors in the community centers of Tel Sheva, Kseife and Arara. The training program was funded by the Department of Vocational Training of TAMAT, the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labor.

#### **Training Program in Fashion Design and Production**

In 2008, 20 women completed their vocational training in fashion design and sewing. This course was organized in response to increasing demand for traditional garments in the Negev. In 2009 a joint sewing enterprise was established by a group of course graduates in the town of Tel Sheva. The women began by preparing samples of items for sale, and began receiving their first orders. The group is receiving ongoing professional mentoring and guidance as they navigate the first stages of developing their enterprise.

#### **The Single Mothers' Catering Enterprise**

11 single mothers (widows, divorcees and women whose husbands took second or third wives and left them without sources of support for their children) from the township of Hura were trained as caterers in 2005-6, in preparation for the establishment of a catering enterprise in the town. Today the enterprise provides hot meals for some 2,000 school children, within the framework of the national nutrition program for primary schools, and is expanding its facilities so as to provide 3,000 meals daily. This initiative was made possible by the generous support of the UJA- Jewish Federation of New York, the Embassy of the Netherlands, the Levi Lassen Foundation and others. During its first years of operation, the enterprise is being managed by a 'Public Benefit Company' established specifically for this purpose, until the women caterers themselves are ready to take over the management of the enterprise as a cooperative.



### **'Tasyeda' – Education for Entrepreneurship**

This is the first project of its kind to be conducted for the Arab Bedouin population of the Negev. Four intermediary schools (in Tel Sheva, Kseife, Laqiya and ElHawashle) were selected as initial sites for the project, with 25 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders from each school participating in the 2009-10 school year. The program aims to provide them with knowledge and tools and exposure to the world of industry and production. The principals of the four participating schools expressed great interest in continuing their schools' participation in in the coming year, when the project will be expanded to 10 schools.

#### ***Project aims:***

1. Establishment of an ongoing system of cooperation with the Manufacturers' Association and exploitation of this system for the further introduction of prestigious programs into the Negev Arab Bedouin society.
2. Exposure of Arab Bedouin pupils to the world of industry and to new ways of thinking.
3. 'Upgrading' the educational system and encouraging it to promote projects in the field of industry for young pupils.

### **Computerized Graphic Design**

This program trained 20 young Arab Bedouin men and women in the field of computerized graphic design and website construction. The program aimed to provide them with the necessary skills to find employment or to establish their enterprises in this field. In addition to the professional training the trainees participated in workshops on personal and community empowerment and in basic skills required for establishing a small business.

Training was conducted at the ETGAR College over a six –month period and concluded in the spring of 2010. Those participants who completed the course and submitted final projects successfully received certification from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor.

### **The 'Volunteer Tent'**

Volunteerism is one of the basic values of Arab society. One of the primary aims of AJEEC's Negev Arab-Bedouin Volunteer Center – 'The Volunteer Tent' - is the provision of opportunities for the community's young women and men to develop their own potential and to contribute to the development and welfare of their communities. The 'Volunteer Tent' conducts a number of major programs: the Student Volunteer Program, the Arab-Jewish Volunteer Year Program, the TALIAH Community Volunteer Year Program, the Alriyadiah Youth Movement, "Young Leaders for Change" and the Program for Arab Children in Beer Sheva.

### **The Student Volunteer Program**

Some 200 Arab Bedouin students, recipients of partial scholarships from the university and the colleges at which the study, 'give back' to the community as volunteers in the Volunteer Tent's educational and social enrichment programs throughout the Bedouin townships and

villages in the Negev. In this manner the program strengthens and fosters the development of the values of volunteerism and community responsibility in the Arab Bedouin community, while developing informal educational programs for Arab Bedouin children in both the established townships and the 'unrecognized' villages.

In 2009, 182 student volunteers ran 35 discrete programs, benefiting some 2,300 children and youth.

### **The Arab-Jewish Volunteer Year Program**

Volunteerism, community responsibility and mutual aid are essential elements of a healthy civil society. In the Negev, civil society, both Jewish and Arab, is in a state of crisis. This situation obligates us to strive to build a healthy civil society based on the collective efforts of citizens. We are convinced that joint Arab-Jewish volunteer activity can contribute significantly to bringing these different populations closer together. Joint efforts to improve the quality of life, combined with acceptance and tolerance of differences empower and provide distinct advantages. The Arab-Jewish Volunteer Year Program provides a model of joint activity of young Jews and Arabs, which brings the two communities closer together and enhances understanding and empathy while contributing to the building of a civil society based on equality and cooperation in the Negev.

In 2009, 32 young women and men in two mixed groups (half of them Jews from throughout the country, half Negev Arab-Bedouin) participated in this program. These recent high-school graduates devoted a year to the building of an Arab-Jewish partnership and to educational activities in the field, running educational enrichment programs for children and youth in both the Arab-Bedouin and the Jewish community, in eight Arab and seven Jewish primary schools. Some 1,000 Arab-Bedouin and 480 Jewish children participated in formal and informal educational enrichment programs conducted by the volunteers. In addition, the volunteers organized special volunteer projects for the entire community in the towns and villages in which they worked, which reached a further 4,000 individuals.

The Jewish volunteers participated in the program within the framework of the 'National Service Year' program as members of the Israeli Scouts Movement, while the Arab Bedouin volunteers in AJEEC's Community Volunteer Year program.

### **The TALİYAH Community Volunteer Year Program**

'TALIYAH' ('pioneering') is a community volunteer program whose aim is the development and empowerment of the Negev Arab-Bedouin community. The program recruits and trains Arab-Bedouin high-school graduates for a year of full-time volunteer activity in their own and other Bedouin communities.

Each year, 15 young women and men are selected for participation in the program, on the basis of their leadership qualities, motivation and communication skills. After several weeks of intensive training, they work together in small teams, conducting a variety of formal and informal educational programs – some designed by the volunteers themselves.

One day weekly they volunteer their services in various institutions such as the Soroka Medical Center, the National Insurance Institute the Child Development Center, and the Maagan Center for Child Cancer Patients in Beer Sheva.

The uniqueness of this program lies in its focus on the development and strengthening of a community's human resources through the recruitment and effective deployment of volunteers from the community itself: in other words, community self-empowerment. In this fashion, the projects builds on the foundation of traditional norms of mutual aid and mutual responsibility – “*elwana*” in Arabic – norms that were deeply rooted in Bedouin society before it was weakened by the disempowering transition from traditional to modern ways of life.

In 2009 15 volunteers organized formal and informal educational enrichment activities in some 10 primary schools and assisted in some 8 community institutions in the \negev, benefiting a total of some 2,450 children and adults.

### **The Alriyadiyah Youth Movement**

*Alriyadiyah* is an Arab youth movement in process of establishment - a pioneering movement in the Negev, unaffiliated with any political party – a framework for informal education. The establishment of an indigenous Arab-Bedouin youth movement was the brain-child of the founders of AJEEC some years ago, which began on a small scale in the town of Rahat in 2004.

In 2009, the movement was operational in Rahat, Arara and Abu Kaf, with special emphasis on the training of a cadre of senior and of junior counselors who would provide the infrastructure for future expansion.

Under consideration at present is the option of cooperation with *AJIEL*, the Arab section of the Hashomer Hatzair Youth Movement, in order to benefit from their guidance and help in setting up our youth movement.

### **“Young Leaders for Change”**

*“Young Leaders for Change”* is a program for leadership training and social involvement of 10<sup>th</sup> grade high school students. Each participating school selects 20 students who participate in 25 workshop sessions throughout the school year, focusing on a broad range of topics of social concern, rights and contributions to the community.

In 2009 the program comprised 17 groups in the towns of Rahat, Kseife, Laqiya and Hura and the villages of Abu Quider and Ghaser Elser. This year pilot groups of 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders also participated in the program. A total of 260 youths participated in the program.

### **The Program for Arab Children in Beer Sheva**

In 2009 this program expanded considerably, offering a variety of different activities for Arab children residing in Beer Sheva: an English language circle, Arabic language circles for children from kindergarten through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (Arab residents of Beer Sheva study primarily in Jewish schools, where they are taught in Hebrew), circles in creative thinking and music, and even calligraphy for adults. The Ministry of Education provided support for these programs.

*An additional program conducted under the aegis of the 'Volunteer Tent' was*

### **The JITLI – AJEEC Center**

The JITLI – AJEEC Center works with Jewish and Arab-Bedouin students from the Bedouin towns of Laqiya and Segev Shalom and kibbutzim from the Shaar Hanegev region, graduates of a multi-cultural leadership development program. The Center engages these students, beneficiaries of student scholarships, in the operation of a variety of volunteer programs. In 2009, 20 Arab and Jewish students participated in the program, which, among other activities, organized an exhibition of camel sculptures designed by Arab and Jewish artists. First exhibited at the Kaye Teachers' College in Beer Sheva, the exhibition was displayed in the Gaza settlements, in Rahat and in the Joe Alon Museum.