



State Comptroller of Israel | Local Government
Audit Report | 2023

Social Audit

The Services Provided by the Local Authorities to Persons with Disabilities – Center Versus Periphery



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Background

In 2020, about 1.6 million persons with disabilities lived in Israel, about 17% of the total population (about 9.2 million). The Disability Administration, operating in the Ministry of Welfare since 2017, provides services to persons with disabilities to promote their well-being, allow them to optimally develop, and help them integrate as equals in the community. The social services departments, in the local authorities provide services to residents who live within the local authority's jurisdiction and are the main and direct body with which the disabled person and his family contact. The Disability Administration is responsible, among other things, for regulating and unifying the disability services provided by the social services departments, supervising the social workers, improving their work, and training them. This report addresses the local authorities' services to persons with disabilities. It examines the disparities in the provision of services between the various authorities, emphasizing the center versus the periphery¹.

1 The terms "center" versus "periphery" in this report express disparities in different areas: disparities arising from the periphery cluster; Disparities between geographic districts; Disparities between services provided by authorities with different municipal status – municipality vs. local council vs. regional council; Disparities arising from the socio-economic cluster and disparities arising from belonging to different sectors of the population – population from the Jewish secular and Jewish state-religious sector, the Arab sector, the Bedouin sector and the ultra-orthodox sector.



Key Figures

about 1.6 million

persons with disabilities lived in Israel in 2020 – about 17% of the total population (about 9.2 million)

10%–38%

the disability cases rate out of all the cases handled by the examined local authorities' social services departments compared to 36% – 56% – their financial expenses rate in welfare in those authorities

NIS 3.3 billion

the Ministry of Welfare budget for the local authorities in 2020 for treating and providing services to persons with disabilities

39%

of the local authorities did not fully meet the goals of adequate representation of persons with disabilities among their employees in 2019–2021 (I.e., at least 5% of the local authority's employees are persons with significant disabilities)

0

inspection reports on behalf of the Ministry of Welfare in community settings in **El-Kassum** in 2019–2021

about 90%

of the local authorities send six months to three years toddlers to a rehabilitation daycare center in a nearby local authority

only 23%


of the local authorities reported in the questionnaire that they can provide all services to their residents with disabilities

7-fold

the gap between the average staffed positions of disability social workers in the high periphery clusters authorities (20 positions), compared to the low clusters' ones (3 positions)



Audit Actions


 From April to December 2022, the State Comptroller's Office examined the local authorities' services to persons with disabilities and their families, emphasizing the disparities between the center and the periphery in providing services. An in-depth audit was conducted in the municipalities of **Ofakim**, **Bnei Brak**, **Ramat HaSharon**, the **Kfar Kanna** Local Authority, and the **El-Kassum** and **Hof HaCarmel** Regional Councils.


The audit includes a questionnaire sent to 71 local authorities and four online focus groups², with the participation of persons with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities from local authorities in the center of the country and the periphery, and brothers and sisters of persons with disabilities.

Completion examinations were carried out at the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and its districts, the Ministry of Transport and Road Safety, the Ministry of Justice – the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Privacy Protection Authority, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of National Security – the Israel National Authority for Community Safety and at the National Insurance Institute.

Key Findings




 **Disparities Between Central and Peripheral Authorities** – the various services for persons with disabilities and the personnel in the peripheral authorities are limited compared to the central authorities. In the peripheral authorities, the number of social clubs is small, trips through said clubs are partially realized, and most do not have a professional integrating factor in disability.


 **The Social Work Regulations** – since the establishment of the Disability Administration, the Ministry of Welfare has not adapted the provisions of the Social Work


² A focus group is a qualitative data collection research tool based on a conversation with participants representing a population. The conversation is led by a facilitator. From the group's discussions, information can be gathered about feelings about examining different situations and more. The focus group meetings were defined as the main question from which one can learn about "The manner in which the local authorities' treatment of people with disabilities is perceived, with an emphasis on leisure, social life and integration". The questions addressed to the participants were predetermined and were almost identical in all groups. The focus group meetings were held in June 2022. In each group, between seven and ten participants participated in a guided group discussion that lasted about two hours. The meetings with the focus groups were conducted with the assistance of an external company whose area of expertise is public participation procedures.




Regulations to the Ministry's new outlook, according to which an adjustment will be made to the services provided to persons with disabilities based on their functioning, needs, and desires and not according to the medical diagnosis of the type of disability. The provisions' unsuitability imposes a burden on the person with a disability and his family members. It increases their bureaucratic burden in locating and receiving an adapted service.

 **The Priorities of the Local Authority** – most of the examined local authorities – **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum** (except for **Hof HaCarmel**) – did not formulate a general policy and work plans based on advance planning including measurable, achievable goals, for the integration of particular communities and persons with disabilities, and the provision of services. In all the six examined authorities, no integrating factor is responsible for coordinating care for persons with disabilities. In **Kfar Kanna** and **El-Kassum**, the authority's website is inaccessible under the Service Accessibility Adjustments Regulations. About 42% of the local authorities that responded to the questionnaire indicated that their employees had not undergone training or further education in providing services to persons with disabilities.

 **Adequate Representation** – in 2021, about 26% of the local authorities in Israel, where most of the residents are Jewish, did not meet the goal of adequate personnel representation in full, and among local authorities where the majority of residents are non-Jews – 62% of them did not meet the above goal in full.

 **The Organizational Structures of the Social Services Departments in the Local Authorities** – even though the Ministry of Welfare stated that there is a need for consistency between the Ministry's policy and the organizational structures of the social services departments in the local authorities, it did not change its instructions in this regard: it did not define the role of the disability social worker. It did not adapt the role to the Ministry's new outlook according to which care and services should be provided according to the person's functioning and not the type of disability. In **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna**, and **Hof HaCarmel** Local Authorities, the treatment of persons with disabilities is done within the framework of a family case and according to the person's level of functioning, while in **El-Kassum**, the organizational structure of the social services department was not adapted to the Disability Administration's stance and the social worker treats a specified disability (mental-developmental disability) and does not provide services to all persons with disabilities at the social services departments.

 **Staffing of Disability Social Worker Positions and Their Workloads** – there are considerable differences between the authorities in employing social workers dedicated to treating disabilities – 78% of the local authorities ranked in a high periphery cluster employ social workers who deal only with disabilities, compared to 15% of authorities



ranked in a low peripherality cluster. Furthermore, designated social workers who handle disabilities in the authorities ranked in a low peripheral cluster do so in addition to handling other areas. The workload of the two designated social workers in **El-Kassum** is unusually considerable (887 cases per full-time social worker) compared to the workload of the social workers in the other authorities examined (175 cases or less).

Locating Eligible Persons with Disabilities and Exhaustion of Rights – the social services departments in the examined local authorities keep data only on people they treat and known to them, and not on all persons with disabilities who live within the jurisdiction of each local authority, and who may be entitled to the services of the social services department. The authorities did not consider reaching out to other public bodies, holding information regarding their residents entitled to the services of the social services department, and did not check whether such information could be transferred according to privacy protection laws. The response of the local authorities in general and the social services departments in particular – both in the examined authorities and in the authorities that responded to the questionnaire – was made as a response to inquiries, not as an initiative. The social services department directors and social workers dealing with the disability cases that were referred to them are not free to expand the circle of those who are eligible and exhaust the rights of the people who did not turn to the social services department on their own initiative.

Public Participation – the Ministry of Welfare and the examined local authorities did not conduct needs and satisfaction surveys among people with disabilities and their families. There are only six "centers for independent living" – most of them in prominent local authorities and the center of the country, and only two of them in the periphery – and these are operated by persons with disabilities for the preparation and training for independent living; The "Accessible Community" program, to promote equal opportunities by increasing accessibility and integration in the community, operates in only 21% of the authorities that responded to the questionnaire; In the examined Arab authorities – **Kfar Kanna** and **El-Kassum** – there are no parent groups for children with disabilities. The examined authorities (except for **Ofakim**) did not establish official forums and roundtables for persons with disabilities, and none of the authorities have representation for persons with disabilities and their family members or for dedicated associations in the forums that discuss their matters. Therefore, the relevant segment of the public does not participate in the authority's decision-making process on issues that directly concern it.

Regional Cooperation – the examined local authorities cooperate with nearby authorities to provide services. In the region of **Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, and Hof HaCarmel**, there is no cluster of authorities, **Kfar Kanna** is a member of a regional cluster and receives employment and recreational services from it. **Ofakim** is a member of a regional cluster and participates in a forum dealing with services for persons with disabilities; **El-kassum** is also a member of a regional cluster. However, these two local authorities do not provide social affairs services in cooperation with the regional clusters.



Welfare and Recreation Services for Persons with Disabilities and Their Families – the questionnaire raised that only 23% of the local authorities reported that they can provide all services to their residents with disabilities. Moreover, the ability of the authorities with a low and medium peripheral cluster to provide their residents with disabilities the services they need is lower than that of the authorities with a high peripheral cluster. Regarding the implementation of a recreational service of the package tour intended for adults and minors with disabilities and their families, it was found that 79% of those who used this service are persons with disabilities who live in the districts of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and the center, and the rest are people who live in districts far from the center of the country – the South and Haifa and North Districts – only 21%. In the examined local authorities – **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum, and Hof HaCarmel** – the recreational activities for adults are few, and there is no deliberate inclusion of adults aged 18 and over in ongoing recreational activities within the community by the Ministry of Welfare or by the local authorities. Budget barriers, barriers to skilled and competent personnel to lead the activity, barriers of geographical deployment, lack of transportation, physical accessibility, and more were raised. In addition, in these authorities, there are few dedicated recreation and welfare services for parents and siblings of persons with disabilities. In **Kfar Kanna** and **El-Kassum** there are few recreation services for minors. It was also found that there is a disparity between the districts in the number of social clubs for adults with disabilities; for example, the number of frameworks in Tel Aviv and the Center District is 127, compared to only 34 in the South District.





Funding Transportation for Recreation Services – **Ofakim, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum, and Hof HaCarmel**, ranked in a low peripheral cluster, face great difficulty in financing transportation for recreation services and almost do not finance it. **Bnei Brak** partially finances the transportation by burdening service providers with the cost.

Rehabilitative Day Care Centers – in three examined authorities, which are ranked in a low peripheral cluster – **Ofakim, El-Kassum** and **Kfar Kanna** – there are no rehabilitative day care centers, and the 58 toddlers who are in a rehabilitative setting (**Ofakim** – 20, **El-Kassum** – 30, **Kfar Kanna** – 8) travel every day a distance that may reach 70 km to the daycare center and back to their home.

Professional Auxiliary Services³ – the number of auxiliary service recipients in the examined authorities is low – in **Ofakim** – 11; In **Bnei Brak** – 152; In **Ramat HaSharon** – 4; In **Kfar Kanna** – 2; In **El-Kassum** – 7; In **Hof HaCarmel** – 15; And so is the number of hours they receive (less than 20 hours a month). The local authorities indicated difficulty locating and recruiting workers, among other things, due to the low wages.

3 The professional auxiliary service is designed to help families or individuals who are in dire straits, temporarily or permanently, in the personal, family, financial and social aspect.





-  **Services that are not Adapted to the Characteristics of the Different Populations** – not all programs of the Ministry of Welfare are adapted to all populations, especially the ultra-orthodox and the Arab population. Thus, for example, online activities are irrelevant for the ultra-orthodox population. Finding counselors and therapists familiar with social and language codes is challenging. Some populations do not use services where there is no gender segregation.
-  **Management of Information About Persons with Disabilities** – not all the information systems of the Disability Administration are adapted to the Ministry's new concept – there are information systems that manage information according to the type of disability, for example, a system for managing the entitlements of the visually impaired and hard of hearing, a collection system for persons with intellectual-developmental disabilities, a separate collection system for people on the autistic spectrum and more. On top of that, there are no interfaces⁴ between specific systems and other systems. Among the examined authorities, **Bnei Brak** makes the best and most extensive use of the computer system (use of the "Task Management" module). **Ramat HaSharon, Hof HaCarmel**, and **El-Kassum** use the systems moderately (all documents are documented in files). **Ofakim** and **Kfar Kanna** do not use the computer systems regularly (there is no regular update of the files throughout the year).
-  **Transfer of Information Between Public Bodies and the Social Services Departments and Between Local Authorities Departments** – information about persons with disabilities is not orderly transferred between public bodies and the social services departments, as well as between the various departments of the authorities. Data about the same population are found in separate databases in the various departments of the same local authority, and each department is required to collect the information on its own.
-  **Data on Victims of Crimes who are Persons with Disabilities** – the Ministry of Welfare did not collect general data and did not direct the local authorities to collect and provide it with general information about the cases of violence in which persons with disabilities are harmed to form an extensive systemic situation report to outline policy (except for cases where reporting obligations apply, where consultation obligations apply and where an obligation to appoint a special investigator under the law applies). The Ministry of Welfare does not have a complete and updated database. The general data available to the Ministry of Welfare are the data of the special investigations carried out by the Ministry, which are partial and missing. The Ministry of Welfare data for 2021 raise that Haifa and the North District had the highest number of reports of victims of crime (230) compared to the other districts (between 147 and 207 in the other four districts); however, there is no documentation of examining the reasons for the disparity in the reporting rates between the districts. It was raised that the Ministry was not prepared to optimally contend with prevention and outreach actions, the detection of the


4 Communication and transfer of information between separate computer systems.



cases, and their treatment in cases of violence in which persons with disabilities are harmed.

 **Adherence to the Prevention of Employment of Sex Offenders Law as Part of Engagements for the Provision of Services** – the tenders and agreements for the provision of services in the Ministry of Welfare and **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, El-Kassum** and **Hof HaCarmel** – do not fully comply with the requirements of the law and are not regularly reviewed by the Ministry's supervision. In the tenders, the bidders were not required to provide the tenderer (the Ministry of Welfare or the local authority, respectively) with police certificates regarding the absence of convictions for sexual offenses for all employees or job applicants at the institution.

 **Programs in the Sexual-Social Field** – in the Arab examined authorities – **Kfar Kanna** and **El-Kassum** – as well as in **Bnei Brak**, there is a lack of guidance and treatment in the sexual-social field, and awareness of the importance of the matter must increase, and the phenomena of silencing, exclusion, and shame must be minimized.

 **Supervision of Community Frameworks by the Ministry of Welfare** – in 2019–2021, no supervision reports were found on community frameworks in **El-Kassum**. It was found that the frequency of supervision in the social services departments and frameworks in the North District and the South District is low compared to the Central District (one annual visit on average in the South District and 0.8 on average in the North District, compared to 2.5 annual visits on average in the Central District).



The Work of the Social Workers in the Social Services Departments – the State Comptroller's Office impression, through its conversations and the audit it conducted, that the social workers in the social services departments in the examined authorities are dedicated to their work. Despite the complexity of the job, the heavy workload, and the difficulties they face every day, they are willing to work for the population under their care and do their work with great sensitivity.

Hof HaCarmel formulated an overall stance of integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community within the Council's general activity, with the participation of people without disabilities, without differentiation, consistent with the concept of the Disability Administration in the Ministry of Welfare and also established a steering committee for the topic of persons with disabilities.



Key Recommendations

- 💡 It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare update the provisions of the Social Work Regulations regarding the treatment of persons with disabilities and adapt them to the Ministry's new policy and the concept of the Disability Administration.
- 💡 It is recommended that the **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna, and El-Kassum** define a clear authority policy regarding services for persons with disabilities. It is recommended that the Ministries of Welfare and Interior consider establishing a professional disability integrating factor in the local authorities.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare complete the change of the organizational structures in the social services departments and the process in which it began to define the position of a disability social worker. It is recommended that the **El-Kassum** Council consult with the Ministry of Welfare regarding the adjustment of the organizational structure of its social services department and examine with the Ministry whether it is necessary to increase the scope of the position of the Disability Coordinator.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare work in cooperation with all the examined local authorities – **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum, and Hof HaCarmel** – to increase the number of positions of social workers in the social services departments and in particular in **Ofakim, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum and Hof HaCarmel**. All this is to reduce the burden placed on the social workers treating persons with disabilities.
- 💡 It is recommended that the examined local authorities – **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum, and Hof HaCarmel** – consider pooling the information in their possession on rights and services for persons with disabilities and transfer it to them, in an orderly, adapted and service-focused manner, increasing the exhaustion of the rights of those entitled. It is also recommended that the examined authorities consider ways to expand the initiative to locate eligible persons who are not recognized and expand the circles of exercising rights.
- 💡 It is recommended that the examined local authorities – **Ofakim, Bnei Brak, Ramat HaSharon, Kfar Kanna, El-Kassum and Hof HaCarmel** – in conjunction with the Ministry of Welfare, consider ways to increase public involvement and participation in the integration of the population of persons with disabilities in the community, among other things, through needs and satisfaction surveys, encouraging initiatives and programs in which persons with disabilities participate in training, parent leadership groups and authority forums for persons with disabilities.
- 💡 It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare promote, within the framework of the partnership agreement signed in 2021, the activity of the regional clusters in social services, including the services for persons with disabilities, transportation services, the



establishment of employment frameworks and recreational frameworks, which will suit the needs required by the authorities. It is also recommended that the Ministries of Welfare, Interior, and Finance expand their cooperation and encourage the authorities to participate in cluster activities through incentives. The Ministry of Welfare should increase the development of services, the pool of responses in the community, and the quality of responses in the recreation for adults. It is recommended that the **Kfar Kanna** and **El-Kassum** Local Authorities expand the recreational activities intended for children with disabilities.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare consider adding transportation funding for recreational and community activities while setting criteria such as distance from the activity location and the number of participants. It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare address the large number of toddlers with disabilities who travel daily to a nearby local authority for a stay in a rehabilitation daycare center and consider encouraging the authorities to build daycare centers within their jurisdictions and assist them with the matter. It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare, in cooperation with the relevant local authorities representing different populations, find solutions adjusting the programs to all populations and thus allow all residents to receive the services in an equal manner, with the distribution of budgets according to an equitable key, considering the cultures of the different populations.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare adapt all the information systems on persons with disabilities to the Ministry's new concept and enable an interface between the systems themselves and between the local authorities, the districts, and the headquarters to optimize the work of all the parties involved and use them for the intelligent management of the information in the systems. It is recommended that the examined authorities, particularly **Ofakim** and **Kfar Kanna**, extensively use the computer system as a work tool to update the files regularly and record all documents.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare and the Disability Administration, in cooperation with the social services departments in the local authorities, map out all the required interfaces between them and between public bodies that hold information on persons with disabilities. It is recommended that the examined authorities operate through the information transfer committees to obtain the required information on the population that receives service under the provisions of the law and its regulations.

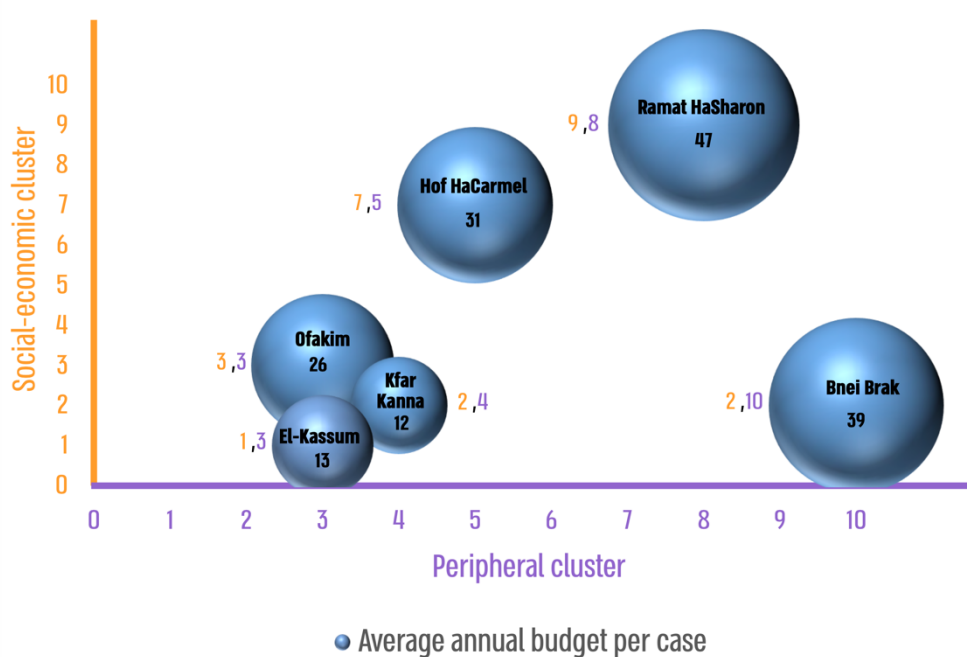


It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare map the data it needs regarding the protection of persons with disabilities with an emphasis on the phenomenon of violence against persons with disabilities, collect it to assess the phenomenon and to contend with it optimally – all for policy formulation, prevention, information, detection, treatment, and enforcement.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Welfare tighten the supervision over the social services departments and the frameworks in the community according to the mix of occupation document.

The Average Annual Budget per Disabilities Cases in the Examined Local Authorities, 2020 (in NIS thousands)



According to the data of the audited financial statements of the local authorities for 2020 and the data of the Ministry of Welfare, it is processed by the State Comptroller's Office.



Statements by Parents and Siblings of Persons with Disabilities on Protection

MY SON WAS A **VICTIM OF ASSAULT AND RAPE**, AND THE AUTHORITIES, OF COURSE, IGNORED HIM. A SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR IS NEEDED. THE POLICE SUMMONED A SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR EIGHT MONTHS AFTER [THE INJURY]. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW THE INVESTIGATORS KNEW; THEY COULDN'T CARE LESS. EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SHOULD HAVE PROVIDED PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT, BUT AN APPOINTMENT IS NEEDED. **SO, THEY WILL GIVE HIM PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY IN TWO YEARS, AND HE IS SUFFERING FROM POST-TRAUMA...** I AM NOT READY TO PUT HIM IN AN INSTITUTION EVEN THOUGH THEY KEEP RECOMMENDING IT BECAUSE OF ALL THE VIOLENCE **AND EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN THESE INSTITUTIONS.**

I SUFFERED FROM BULLYING AND OSTRACIZING. THEY PUT INSECTS IN MY SHIRT. **PHYSICAL AND VERBAL ABUSE...** THERE IS A ONE-DIMENSIONALITY OF "YOU ARE DISABLED." STILL, WHEN IT COMES TO OTHER THINGS... THINGS UNRELATED TO DISABILITY, THE SAME COMPASSION IS NOT THERE, THE SAME UNDERSTANDING... THE WORLD OF RECREATION, ON BEHALF OF THE AUTHORITY, COULD HAVE CONNECTED ME **SO THAT I WOULD NOT BE BULLIED.** HAVING A VISIBLE DISABILITY **DESTROYED ME.**

I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED. ALL THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO HAVE ABUSED... SO THAT THEY DO NOT OPEN A KINDERGARTEN IN ANOTHER CITY. IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO SEND THE CHILDREN TO A KINDERGARTEN WITH AN ABUSIVE **KINDERGARTEN TEACHER. THIS IS ALSO THE FEAR OF ALL PARENTS.**

FRIENDS WERE NOT READY TO COME TO MY HOUSE... AS A CHILD – GIRLS WOULD COME TO MY HOUSE AND COME STRAIGHT TO MY MOTHER, CRYING TO BE PICKED UP AFTER THEY SAW MY SISTER. THEY WOULD IMMEDIATELY PICK THEM UP... **THERE WERE REQUESTS TO PUT MY SISTER IN [ANOTHER] ROOM.** A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY CAN TARE FAMILIES APART.

THIS DAY-TO-DAY PREOCCUPATION DRIVES THE BRAIN CRAZY, AND IT BRINGS CRISES. 90% OF THOSE AROUND ME ARE DIVORCED. EVERYONE WHO HAS SUCH A CHILD [WITH A DISABILITY] IS DIVORCED. THOSE WHO REMAIN, WHO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP, ARE NOT AT THEIR BEST.

BROKEN PEOPLE WHO ARE TIRED AND LOOKING FOR A BIT OF REST COME TO THE FAMILY CENTER [WELFARE RESPONSE IN THE COMMUNITY].



Statements by Parents and Siblings of Persons with Disabilities on the Recreational Activity

WE ARE NOT READY TO ACCEPT **A LIFE OF EXCLUSION**. WE WANT OUR CHILD TO BE PART OF THE ENVIRONMENT THAT SURROUNDS HIM. **NO APOLOGIES AND NO CONDITIONS**.

I ASKED FOR THE HELP OF A 'PERACH' (NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL IMPACT) STUDENT, WHO WOULD COME ONCE A WEEK TO PLAY WITH THE CHILD FOR AN HOUR OR TWO. THERE ARE VOLUNTEERS, THERE IS A NATIONAL SERVICE, AND THERE ARE A MILLION OPTIONS. BUT **NO ONE THINKS THAT A PARENT OF SUCH A CHILD ALSO NEEDS TIME OFF**. [YOUTH MOVEMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH AND WITHOUT SPECIAL NEEDS] IT IS WONDERFUL, BUT THERE IS A WAITING LIST FOR A YEAR AND A HALF. **DISABLED CHILDREN ARE SUPPOSED TO WAIT A YEAR AND A HALF FOR SOME ASSOCIATIONS TO ACCEPT THEM**.

WE WANTED JOINT EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLASSES, BUT IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET, AND IT'S DEVELOPING TOO SLOWLY AND TOO LITTLE... I CAN TELL YOU THAT IN ONE OF THE CASES, WE TRIED TO BRING A RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY FOR SPECIAL NEEDS, BUT IT FAILED.

WE DID NOT ENCOUNTER AN OPEN DOOR AND OPEN ARMS OF THE MUNICIPALITY. WE FOUGHT VERY HARD AND HAD TO JUSTIFY OUR EXISTENCE AND THE NEED.

FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY, THEY DID AN ACTIVITY FOR THE KINDERGARTENS – I CALLED A WEEK IN ADVANCE TO SAY THAT MY DAUGHTER HAS A WHEELCHAIR AND I NEED AN ADAPTED LOCATION... I HAD TO RAISE MY VOICE... **WHY ISN'T THERE A CLOSED ACCESSIBLE COMPOUND?! LET'S MAKE THE ACTIVITIES THAT ALREADY EXIST ACCESSIBLE TO WHEELCHAIRS. ARE YOU DOING AN ACTIVITY? DON'T PUT HER BEHIND A FENCE SO I CANNOT PLACE HER TO SEE WITH THE WHEELCHAIR. EXTRACURRICULAR CLASS? IT, TOO, SHOULD BE ADAPTED.**

I HAVE NO ONE TO TALK TO ABOUT THIS [ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE DISABILITY]. **I DON'T HAVE A COMMUNITY TO SPEAK WITH ABOUT IT**, BUT I WOULD LIKE THE AUTHORITY TO DO AN ACCESSIBLE ACTIVITY. BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY COMMUNITY CENTER ACTIVITIES, LET THEM DO RELEVANT THINGS. SOCIAL GROUPS PROVIDE A SUITABLE GROUP OF EQUALS".

I DON'T NEED A PARTICULAR AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB. **I NEED A SOCIAL LIFE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**.

IN ONE OF THE CASES WHERE WE TRIED TO BRING A RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY [FOR CHILDREN] WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, IT FAILED. **WE WERE NOT RECEIVED WITH AN OPEN DOOR AT THE MUNICIPALITY. WE FOUGHT HARD** AND HAD TO JUSTIFY OUR EXISTENCE.

THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WILL ALSO INTEGRATE WITH PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES. LET IT BE BOTH. NOT ONLY FOR DISABLED PEOPLE.





Statements by Parents and Siblings of Persons with Disabilities on Accessibility

“A LARGE PART OF THE CITY [WHERE THE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT LIVES] **IS INACCESSIBLE, AND THE SIDEWALKS ARE INACCESSIBLE...** I CAN'T GET TO THE POOL, WHICH IS TWO BLOCKS FROM ME, WITHOUT A CAR BECAUSE THEY CLOSED THE STREET TO A WHEELCHAIR”.

“THERE IS NO INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY, NO INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT I CAN GET.”

“I HAD TO SUBMIT SOME APPLICATION, AND I CALLED THE HOTLINE [OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY]. THEY TOLD ME TO FILL OUT A FORM THROUGH THE WEBSITE [THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WEBSITE]. I EXPLAINED TO THEM THAT THE WEBSITE IS NOT ACCESSIBLE [TO A PARTICIPANT WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, AND THE WEBSITE IS NOT ACCESSIBLE FOR THIS DISABILITY]. I ASKED THEM TO [SEND THE APPLICATION FORM] BY PHONE OR EMAIL, **AND THEY INSISTED – ONLY ON THE WEB-SITE**”.

“AS A DISABLED PERSON, I DON'T FIND MYSELF SOCIALLY. IT'S ALSO A MATTER OF SOCIAL ACCESSIBILITY... YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH YOURSELF”.



Summary

About a fifth of all residents in Israel are persons with disabilities. The audit raised that the actions of the social services departments in all the authorities examined are usually reactive and not proactive. Disparities were found between the examined local authorities, central authorities, and periphery authorities regarding the variety and scope of the services for persons with disabilities and the treating personnel. It was also found that for over five years, the Ministry of Welfare did not adapt the provisions of the Social Work Regulations, the tariffs, the services, and the information systems to the concept for which the Disability Administration was established, according to which the treatment of persons with disabilities will be done based on functioning and not according to the medical diagnosis.

The Ministry of Welfare should expand the services provided to the population of persons with disabilities, adjust the services and tariffs to the Ministry's new concept, and dedicate comprehensive thought to protecting persons with disabilities. It is recommended that the bodies entrusted with the disabilities – including the local authorities and the Ministries of Welfare, Education, and Interior – understand the reasons for the disparities between the authorities and formulate solutions to reduce these gaps. The local authorities should take the initiative and, in cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare, adopt solutions that make the services accessible. These will improve local authorities' services to persons with disabilities and reduce the bureaucratic burden imposed on them and their families.

