

Voice from the field:

“I work, therefore I am!” - Project SAWA for promoting business initiatives among Bedouin women in the Negev¹

SMADAR NOY

“We [at Project SAWA] believe that every woman has the innate right to this opportunity and that each and every woman, at the time and pace that is right for her, could have business ideas We do not care whether she is young or old, whether or not she has work experience, or whether or not she is educated. More than 85% of the women in the program have no formal education and some do not even know how to read or write. But we believe in them. Bedouin women are intelligent and strong. This is their heritage –though since the establishment of the State of Israel and with the changes that have been forced upon Bedouins in general and Bedouin women in particular, this heritage has been covered in dust and sand. But if we push this dust aside just a bit, these women rediscover their strengths, find they are empowered once again and begin to initiate and promote new ideas. We are there just to give them a small push – to believe in them and to think about their initiatives together with them and to help them with initial information and planning. After that they continue to progress on their own using their own resources” [Dr. Nuzha Allassad Alhuzeel, June 2013].

Project SAWA (“Together” in Arabic) was established and designed to promote and support business initiatives among Bedouin women living in recognised and unrecognised localities in the Negev². The program is geared mainly towards married women (often from polygamous families) and mothers with limited formal education, and who usually also live in conditions of abject poverty.

The program, inspired by the Microcredit project established in Bangladesh in 1976 by economist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, has been active in

Israel since 2006. The project offers small loans to women with feasible business ideas. Thanks to the impressive success of Project SAWA in the Negev, it is today also being implemented among the Arab population in other localities.

The director of the program and its leader since its inception in the centre and in the south of Israel is Dr. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzeel. Dr. Alhuzeel holds a doctorate in Social Work, and is on the faculty of the School of Social Work at Sapir Academic College. I interviewed Dr. Alhuzeel in June 2013. The interview was intended to provide information about the program and, in particular, to shed light on the complex socio-economic and cultural contexts in which the program must operate. Its purpose was also to describe the significance of Project SAWA for those participating in the program, and to report on the changes it is bringing about in their personal lives and their surroundings.

The beginning: Establishing project SAWA in the Negev

I began by asking Nuzha how the project began. She told me that the idea for the project was first raised by Hagit Rubinstein, Manager of Micro-Businesses Area at the Koret Foundation.³

"I understood that this project had major potential for change, and that the change would not only be in the women's economic status but rather in their self-perception, their emotional condition, their health and certainly in their status in the family and in society in general."

A considerable number of Bedouin women belong to the poorest population sectors in Israel (Miaari, 2012). Since the promulgation of the Compulsory Education Law 1949, the number of years of schooling among Bedouin women has risen. Despite this, Bedouin women still have a very low rate of representation in the workforce, and a great many of them are supported by welfare institutions.⁴ The severe poverty in which these women live further underscores the significance of the SAWA business initiatives project.

How does the microfinancing project work for the Bedouin women in the Negev?

I asked Nuzha to tell me how the project works.

Nuzha:

"We simply come to a village and go from door to door. We tell the women about the project and leave a card with a contact phone number. This gives each woman a chance to think about the idea and let it develop. When she decides the project is of interest to her and she wants to pursue it, she calls us. When a woman calls

us, we meet with her and explain the conditions to her – that she has to have an idea and should try to find a group of up to four women she knows and trusts. Only then do we get started. We set up a meeting to get to know the group and we tell them about the program and its terms and conditions. After that we meet frequently with the women in the group and brainstorm about what interests them. Together we slowly formulate their business ideas and of course help them plan a budget. After that they receive a loan from the Foundation to set up the business, and we continue to give them personal and business advice and support. Each group progresses at its own rate until it is ready to spread its wings and fly.”

Smadar: How do you select candidates for the project?

Nuzha:

“We have no preliminary criteria. We just go from door to door and ask if we can come in and tell them about the project. The literature includes various and sundry criteria, but we felt it was important not to do any sort of screening. We believe that each and every woman is entitled to such an opportunity.”

The belief in women and in their ability to make the right decisions and to initiate business projects is the major motif of Project SAWA, and of Yunus’s original Microcredit project (e.g., Yunus, 2009: 36). The assumption is that a business initiative proposed by the woman herself will be most suited to the needs relevant to her surroundings and life situation, as well as to her capabilities, her strengths, her ambitions and her dreams. An initiative of this nature will also make a woman feel committed and personally responsible both to the project and to the group.

During the entire process, the women are given business and personal support and advice. I asked Nuzha to tell me who served as the business advisors/consultants. Are they women with business education and knowledge?

Nuzha:

“Not exactly. At the beginning we did select educated women for this job, usually young women with bachelor’s degrees. But we quickly realised this was not a suitable choice, as did the young women themselves. This is hard work that requires a great deal of investment. We realised that the most appropriate women for this job were those able to understand and get close to the women in the project: women who themselves had experienced financial difficulties in the past, who are older, past their twenties and even their thirties, who are married with children. What is important is that they be able to and want to work with these women, and also capable of understanding and supporting them, that they be willing to devote many hours to this and that they themselves be ready to learn. The consultants go through ongoing training. Today we

employ seven full-time consultants. They earn a respectable salary and they all are terrific, amazing.”

Smadar: What is involved in the work of these consultants?

Nuzha:

“Each of the seven consultants is assigned a number of localities and provides support to the women entrepreneurs in her localities throughout the process, beginning with the group brainstorming stage as they slowly formulate their business ideas. After the initial loan is granted, the support they provide is more individual. . . . the ties between the business consultants and the women are very close, sometimes even intimate. Some of the women wait eagerly for the consultants to arrive, tell them everything and share everything with them, as if they are part of a family of sorts. I sometimes tell them that they need to step back, that this is too much . . . but [she chuckles as she goes on] there really is nothing to do about this, this is how it is, and I’m like this as well. This is part of our nature and the nature of the program. Apparently it cannot be any different. The personal touch, the mutual respect and the trust among us are extremely important.”

Bedouin women initiate businesses

Smadar: What sorts of business initiatives do the women start?

Nuzha:

“There’s a wide variety of business initiatives, ranging from manufacturing and marketing products to providing services. Here are some examples: producing homemade food products such as pita bread and pickled vegetables, preparing wood for heating, sewing and handicrafts, marketing household goods, clothing and scarves, setting up boutiques and bridal salons, setting up home daycare centres, and others as well.”

Smadar: What motivates the women to choose a particular business initiative?

Nuzha:

“There are numerous and sundry motivations. But usually the women choose things they are familiar with from their lives and know the basics about. Naturally, the initiatives are suited to the women’s way of life and to the needs of their surroundings. Even in the case of initiatives that appear to be quite modest and ‘natural’ – such as preparing and marketing pickled vegetables or other food products – the process is not at all simple because it requires that the women not only want to do it but also that they believe in their own abilities, feelings the women are very distanced from at first. Some of them actually ask things like

‘Who would want to eat my pickles?’ or ‘Who would come and buy something from me?’”

Smadar: Can you give an example of a woman who dared to dream and do something about it?

Nuzha:

“A woman from Segev Shalom told us that she had always dreamed of being a childcare worker and of opening a daycare centre for young children, but because she is illiterate she did not think she could realise this dream. ‘Why not?’ I asked her. ‘How will I be able to read stories to the children?’ she answered. ‘Tell them stories, just like you did with your own children,’ I told her. Today she runs an exemplary daycare centre. Women bring their children to her and trust her completely. She is happy and can make a living and help her family!”

I asked Nuzha to tell me about other initiatives. She told me about a group of women from Kuseife, whose business idea was to raise flocks of sheep and goats in order to prepare and sell cheeses.

“We knew almost nothing about this. They were the ones who researched the topic and learned about it and taught us about it. . . . and today there are fifty women who formed an association and went through the process together, although each has her own business. Even today, when they want to learn something new but don’t know how to do so, they come to us. We try to act as mediators between them and the appropriate places. For example, they recently asked us again and again to help them organise a professional course for producing additional types of cheeses.”

Another business initiative involved setting up a sewing business:

“Sewing businesses usually start very small -- simple sewing repairs in the neighbourhood, things the woman already knows how to do for her family. The assistance we give in such cases mainly involves giving a loan to purchase a sewing machine. But in several cases, the women in the neighbourhood and the village were very pleased with the repair work and asked the woman to sew them articles of clothing, dresses and even special dresses such as bridal gowns. The woman experiences a sense of success because the women in the village or the neighbourhood believe in her and trust her. She then consults with her husband about whether it would be worthwhile to take a professional sewing course, and he usually agrees because he also sees the fruits of her labour. She then calls us and we find a course for her. The course is outside the village, usually in the city, and her husband drives her there and waits for her. In the course she acquires

professional skills and know-how that she then implements. Other women see that she is succeeding and that things are good for her, and they also want to learn. They then come to us, and we in turn go back to the woman and suggest that she offer a course for them. And she goes ahead and does it. After that more women want to join in, even from other villages. At this point we feel it is important to step back a bit so that she can begin organising the courses herself because she is already running things on her own."

Impact of business initiatives on the surroundings and on gendered relations:

Smadar: How does the project influence the women's surroundings?

Nuzha explained that a considerable number of the women participating in the project had never been outside their village:

"Some of them had never even been to Rahat. The men did not allow them to leave the village. Today, because of their business, they go outside the village. This too is part of the process. They go to another village to study, and after that they go to the city to choose merchandise. True, some still are always accompanied by a man from their family and some go only with our consultant, but eventually their husbands learn to trust them and they go on their own. Some even have gotten drivers licenses."

From what Nuzha said, it is clear that the women's business initiatives have had a far-reaching impact on gendered relations within the family. I asked her to tell me more about this topic. Bedouin society is traditional and conservative, and the notion of women's business initiatives could be seen as a threat, particularly to women's modesty. Nuzha pointed out that there are still many people, primarily [though not only] men, who refuse to hear about the idea of women's business initiatives. "When we come to a particular locality, some people still have responses like this: 'My wife has food and water and she doesn't need anything else, thank you.'"

Smadar: "As the leaders of the program, how do you cope with the conservative Bedouin society and with the view that women's business initiatives are a threat to traditional social values?"

Nuzha:

"If we want the project to work, we have no choice – they [the men in the family, and mainly the husband] must also want it. In fact, we even ask the woman to get her husband to agree and ask for the husband's phone numbers and talk to him

and explain he is also part of the project. If the husbands do not agree, we cannot proceed. We give up and leave. But there have been many cases in which the husband refused, and after some time went by the woman got back to us because her husband decided he was willing to listen and even to support his wife after he checked things out and saw that the project was succeeding and improving the entire family's financial situation."

Many studies have found that men are willing to support their wives in going to work outside the home – even though this behaviour is thought to contradict the prevailing social values – when the wives' work is seen as a means of upward mobility for the entire family (e.g., Guendelman & Perez-Itriago, 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Trager, 1984; Tienda, Leif & Back, 1984; Khazzoom, 2002).

"The men usually benefit from the change. It brings in money and brings about a change in the woman that is positive, and often this helps in the couple's relationship and in relations within the family."

Nuzha stated that the men undergo a long, slow and complex process of change. At first, they express a lack of faith and raise objections. Slowly, they become willing to enter into this in a small way; after that, they consent to help and support and some even give their agreement for their wives to expand the project.

Nuzha also made this point:

"No attempts should be made to accelerate this process. The risk is not only that the project will fail but also that it will cause the family to crumble, and the one who will suffer from this is the woman. This suffering is liable to endanger her already weak position as a woman in the home, in the family and in the community."

Nuzha stated that the program advisors always ask the woman's husband for permission for his wife to participate in the program. She also indicated that the decision to ask the husbands for permission was not easy for the program's leaders:

"This decision to seek the husband's permission and involvement was not an easy one for us. Who, in fact, is he to decide for her? But we have no choice. Even if the woman lives on her own we ask for the phone number of a man in her family and seek his permission. We also never ever say that this is a project to empower the woman or to make her independent. We say something entirely different – that this is a project that can help improve the family's income."

According to research literature examining the lives of Bedouin women, despite the common perception that modernisation and relocation to permanent settlements have led to an improvement in the status of Bedouin women, these changes have in many

ways actually weakened their position and status in Bedouin society. One of the first and most important such studies was conducted by anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1990), who examined the impact of relocating the Bedouin population to permanent settlements under pressure exerted by the Egyptian government, particularly Bedouin women from the Awlad Ali tribe living in the desert west of Alexandria and up to the Egyptian-Libyan border. In her study, Abu-Lughod showed that during the tribe's nomadic period, women played an important role in the family finances and were mobile within tribal boundaries. After the tribe was relocated to permanent settlements, the women lost their role in supporting the family (for example, by herding sheep and goats) and were no longer allowed to move around outside their homes.

Studies of Bedouin society in the Negev reveal a similar situation resulting from government enforced "modernisation" since the 1960s, mainly through the relocation of the population to permanent settlements. This relocation inflicted severe damage to their lifestyle, to the social structure and particularly to the status of Bedouin women. Before the relocation to municipal townships, women's work constituted an essential source in maintaining the household because the women were responsible for providing the basic means of existence (water, wood for heating, cooking, tent weaving, children's education, pasture lands). The process of urbanisation deprived them of a considerable portion of these tasks. But at the same time, urbanisation did not bring with it the fruits of modernisation. The master plans for these new townships only allocated small areas for the development of industrial zones (*Negev Bedouin Statistical Data Book*, 2010: 91). Moreover, women leaving the locality – whether to pursue a higher education⁵ or to work – is not compatible with religious and social traditions. Likewise, this is not easy from a practical perspective, considering the lack of public transportation. In addition, some of the criteria according to which these permanent townships were planned were out of touch with the Bedouin culture, and thus further contributed to the impaired status of Bedouin women. According to feminist geographer Tovi Fenster, the planning of these townships included the creation of public spaces shared by a number of tribes. The result of this oversight was that women are forbidden to move freely in these spaces (Fenster, 2010, in Abu-Rabia-Queder & Weiner-Levy, 2010). Thus, the roles of women became limited to their two traditional domestic roles: giving birth to and taking care of the children (Kressel, 1986; Dinero, 1997 in Kark et al., 2009).

Nuzha noted additional and major damage caused to women by the changes in Bedouin society resulting from the relocation to permanent settlements and the weakening of traditional institutions: the lack of a source of protection and support for women.

"The tribal institution has been considerably weakened. In the past, the tribe and

the community were of critical importance. Each tribe had its sheikh who served as a leader with traditional authority and traditional legitimacy. The members of the tribe would unquestionably heed his instructions. It was understood that one of his roles was to prevent violence and to protect the members of the tribe against violence – even the violence of husbands toward their wives. Today the tribal nature of Bedouin society is falling apart. This collapse is related mainly to the relocation to permanent localities, but also to the separation between and among the tribes in the wake of the establishment of the State of Israel and the setting of borders in the south. What happened in effect was that the family and clan system suffered serious dislocation and began to break down. In today's reality of small families and the severance of family and clan ties, after marriage many women no longer have the support of a strong family of origin that is nearby and can protect them, for example from a husband with violent tendencies. Such a woman finds herself alone, all by herself in a village populated by members of her husband's clan, a place that she may never again leave until she dies. She has no social, physical or material system of support. In the past a husband could never get away with beating his wife without anyone else paying attention. Today, even in our neighbourhood here in Rahat there are women whose husbands beat them and everyone sees and hears but no one does anything. I have often registered complaints with the police about this type of violence, and I am even willing to testify about it in court. Yet what always happens is that when the police come to the woman's home and see her bruises, she says nothing out of fear or else says that she just fell down, and the police leave. In such a case the woman is actually right. If she complains, the only one who will be hurt is her. Where will she go? If she has no way to get to her family of origin because she does not live near them or because the family lives in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, there is no one to protect and defend her. Many women find themselves alone, isolated, and their status is extremely fragile."

A picture similar to Nuzha's depiction of Bedouin women who are protected neither by traditional networks nor by the institutions of the modern state also emerges in the pioneering work of Arab sociologist Manar Hassan. Hassan examined the murder of women in Arab society for the sake of "family honour" (1999).

Smadar: Can you give other examples of men's reactions to the project?

"One of the women, who is married to a very religious man, wanted to set up a business to sell elegant clothing to religious women. She knew that her husband would object to her working and even to her taking out a loan. So she began on a very small scale, with a shelf in her closet where she placed a bit of merchandise. The religious women liked these articles of clothing very much. With time [and

after she had enough income to expand] she suggested to her husband that he build her a room or a shed adjacent to their house where she could sell her merchandise. That was also very successful, and her business increased. Then she convinced her husband that it was a shame that only women from their neighbourhood could purchase her merchandise and that perhaps she should move to a store or a stall in the market. No way did her husband agree to this, to his wife standing in the market!! Then she suggested that their son, who was already 18 years old, should sell the clothes in the market. To that her husband agreed. She gradually began to join her son and her husband accepted her presence in the store with her son. Eventually her son began complaining that only women entered the store and that he felt uncomfortable and ashamed to spend his time there and he was also bored. He left the store, leaving the woman to operate her lovely boutique, and they all now accept this."

Yet Nuzha also reported that not every story is a success:

"We had one woman whose business was to prepare pickled vegetables and sell them to grocery stores. She would prepare her merchandise and then walk around the neighbourhood on foot and sell them to the stores. The business thrived. We then suggested that she get a driver's license so she could sell her wares in other neighbourhoods. That proved to be a mistake. Her husband became alarmed by that and announced he was stopping her involvement in the project and returning the loans immediately. Either he was afraid of his wife's success or he was jealous of her. There is no way of knowing. I hope she comes back to the project."

Smadar: Is the project succeeding from the business perspective?

Nuzha:

"The number of loans granted is constantly on the rise, and today 500 to 600 loans are granted each month. Since we began, there have been very few cases in which a woman who received a loan did not then try to promote her business. Even in those cases, it was actually someone else who pressured the woman to take the money or to ask for the loan and then stole it from her. Today, most projects involving women's business initiatives in Bedouin localities are the result of Project SAWA. We are changing the business landscape and paving the way for more and more women to change the belief that only men belong in the business world."

The expansion of the project to the Nazareth region provides further evidence of its success, as do the findings of an evaluative study conducted by Naama Bar-On (2009) three years after the project began. Bar-On examined the success of the project from its inception through 2009, using quantitative research as well as qualitative interviews with 64 women who had taken part in the project. The research findings indicated

that around 1,200 loans had been granted under the auspices of Project SAWA at an average of 4,500 shekels per loan, totaling around 4 million shekels, with a low bad debt rate of 2.5%.⁶

The evaluation of the project with respect to business outcomes is encouraging. The program reached the relevant target population – women who are usually poor (in 55% of the cases, the husband does not provide any support) and with many children (an average of seven); most without any formal education or professional training and living within a complex family situation (for example, around 40% are part of polygamous households). Over the course of less than three years, around 1,000 women have participated in the program, which helped create 700 new sources of income, many of which are ongoing and thriving. The figures also showed a relatively low income: around 20% of the women reported a monthly income of less than 1,000 shekels, 50% reported earnings of between 1,000 and 2,000 shekels, and the rest earned over 3,000 shekels per month.

Nuzha referred to difficulties created by requirements of government offices and government officials. These officials want to see “success on the ground.” From their perspective, such success is reflected in the number of women reporting income from the business and therefore renouncing their income support benefits. Nuzha explained:

“They [government officials] expect that the women participating in the project will register their business within a year or two and will give up their income support benefits. These women have no thoughts of keeping these benefits to themselves in order to “exploit” the government. The officials are mistaken in thinking that if these women do not register their business they are in effect trying to ‘steal from the state.’ This type of thinking is doing these women a grave injustice. What do these officials think – that initiatives that bring in maybe a thousand shekels per month and have no assurance of continuing to do so will make them relinquish their benefits? The women would rather close the business. They need time, they need this security, they need to see that the business is stable, that it is developing, that it really does bring in a steady income. Only now, six years after we started, am I finally seeing a number of women who have registered their businesses and relinquished the benefits. From the woman’s perspective and from ours as well, such a step is quite symbolic. It is the ultimate expression of the belief that she has really succeeded, that she sees a future, and that the future is not only for the business but for herself as well.”

This experience of empowerment described by Nuzha also emerges in the interviews Bar-On (2009) conducted with the project participants. The majority

of the women (94%) expressed satisfaction with the program and experienced it as a success. Most stated that they managed to establish relatively active businesses, and 88% perceived of their businesses as successful. Similarly, the interviews showed that 83% of the participants reported that the program had improved their lives and/or the lives of their families. Many of the interviewees also stated that Project SAWA was what motivated them to think about and to develop the idea of setting up a business. They described the program as enhancing their self-confidence, their sense of independence and their experience of supporting the family. In addition, many of the women stated that they developed the business as something that supported rather than competed with their family life. The researcher added that 94% of the interviewees had a clear picture of the future with respect to themselves, primarily in terms of their continued business and professional development and less in terms of happiness and family growth. These women also had a positive picture of the future for their daughters with respect to self-fulfilment through study or work. Nuzha summarised this as follows:

“As I see it, projects such as ours offer a great deal of hope for reinstating a sense of power, respect, faith and a zest for life to Bedouin women. It is not only a chance to increase the family’s income but rather a process of transformation from a life experience of isolation and helplessness to one of meaning, creativity and achievement, of learning and significance. And also of health – even physical health. Take the case of one woman who lived in one of the most miserable villages, of course unrecognised, that had no water and other infrastructures, no clinic, nothing. When we first met her she looked like she was buried in the sand. She appeared extremely ill and really old. She mentioned something about “seventy something” and I thought she was around 70 years old, though what she was really saying was that she was born in nineteen seventy something. We asked her to tell us a bit about herself. What she told us was devoid of any hope – I have a chronic illness [asthma], I live on welfare. It was as if she was saying – I am nothing. Gradually she came up with the idea of raising sheep because that was something she knew. But eventually she also began selling clothes from her home, and today, after around five or six years, she has a well-run boutique where she sells merchandise made by local seamstresses. She also opened a store for auto fluids and auto parts where her husband works. Today she looks entirely different. It’s amazing to see how she dresses and how she talks. And today she is healthy as well. She’s no longer sick! But such things do not happen quickly, and I’m sorry to say they don’t happen

to everyone. But they do give women faith in themselves, and meaning to their lives and a sense of identity. One of the women even said the following to me: ‘I work, therefore I am!’ The change this woman underwent is not merely technical – it applies to everything. So while we are not bringing about a revolution all at once, what we are doing is truly revolutionary.”

NOTE

- 1 I would like to thank Dr. Inbal Cicurel, for her good and useful advices. I am grateful to Dr. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzeel, who shared with me her experience, thoughts and insights as the founder and manager of SAWA project.
- 2 Unrecognised localities are officially not recognised by the government of Israel and therefore are usually denied all forms of basic infrastructure and are not allowed to build or develop in any way.
- 3 Koret Israel Economic Development Funds (KIEDF) was established in Israel in 1994 upon the initiative of the Koret Foundation of San Francisco “to demonstrate that philanthropic funds could be used efficiently to stimulate economic development and employment opportunity in the private sector in Israel” (from the KIEDF home page: <http://www.kiedf.org/home/>).
- 4 For more on the socioeconomic status of Bedouin women in Israel, see: Miaari, 2012; Habib, 2010; National Insurance Institute, Research and Planning Administration, Extent of Poverty and Social Gaps – Annual Report for 2009 (Jerusalem, 2010); Statistical Abstract of Israel 60, 2009: The Arab Population in Israel, 5.
- 5 Recent studies suggest that a quiet revolution is taking place with respect to the education of Bedouin women, with education becoming increasingly important among them. See, for example: Ahmed-Kassem, 2002, 2008; Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008; Trager & Davidson, 2002 in Kark, Galilee & Feuerstein, 2009; Pessate-Schubert, 2005.
- 6 A bad debt rate of 2.5% is considered very low. The founder of the micro-credit model, Prof. Yunus, also reported high rates of conforming to the debt conditions. Yunus stressed that despite the commercial-banking system’s continuing lack of faith in the poor, it is precisely those who are poor who pay back their debts (Yunus, 2009).

REFERENCES

- Abu-Lughod, L. (1990). The romance of resistance: Tracing transformations of power through Bedouin women. *American Ethnologist*, 17(1), 41-55.
- Abu-Rabia-Queder, S. (2005). Coping with marginality – Three generations of Bedouin women in the Negev. In H. Dahan-Kalev, N. Yanay & N. Berkovitch, (Eds.), *Women of the South, space, periphery, gender* (pp. 86-108). Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press [in Hebrew].
- Abu-Rabia-Queder, S. (2006). Between tradition and modernization: Understanding the problem of female Bedouin dropout. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27(1), 3-17.
- Abu-Rabia-Queder, S. (2007). Permission to rebel: Arab Bedouin women's changing negotiation of social roles. *Feminist Studies* 33(1), 161-187.
- Abu-Rabia-Queder, S. (2008). *Excluded and loved: The story of educated Bedouin women*. Jerusalem: Magnes. [Hebrew]
- Ahmed-Kassem, F. (2002). Making a breakthrough, paying a price. *Panim*, 22 <http://www.itu.org.il/?CategoryID=521&ArticleID=1597> [Hebrew]
- Ahmed-Kassem, F. (2008). Identity and education of Bedouin women: Establishing and breaking down tribal and institutional identities. In B. Roded & I. Efrati (Eds.), *Women and gender in the Twentieth century Middle East* (pp. 178-201). Jerusalem: Magnes. [Hebrew]
- Bar-On, N. (2009). *SAWA: Koret Foundation microfinancing project in the Bedouin sector – evaluation findings*. Retrieved on July 17, 2013 from <http://kiedf.org/home/resources/SAWAEvaluation-Hebrew.pdf>. [Hebrew]
- Central Bureau of Statistics (2009). *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009 – No. 60*. Retrieved on July 27, 2013 from http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/shnatonh_new.htm?CYear=2009&Vol=60. [Hebrew]
- Dinero, S. C., (1997). Female role change and male response in the post-nomadic urban environment: The case of the Israeli Negev Bedouin. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 28(3), 248-260.
- Fenster, T. (2010). The self and the other in spatial-planning research on Bedouin women in the Negev: The personal journey and the journey of the planning discipline. In S. Abu-Rabia, Queder & N. Weiner-Levy (Eds.), *Palestinian women in Israel: Identity, power relations and coping*. Jerusalem: Van-Leer Press and HaKibbutz Hameuchad. [Hebrew]
- Gharrah, R. (2012). (Ed.) *Arab society in Israel (5) Population, society, economy*.

- Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute. Retrieved on July 27, 2013 from <http://www.vanleer.org.il/he/node/1108> [Hebrew]
- Guendelman, S. & Perez-Itriago, A. (1987). Double lives: The changing role of women in seasonal migration. *Women's Studies*, 13, 249-271.
- Habib, J., King, J., Ben Shoham, A., Wolde-Tsadick, A., & Lasky, K. (2010). Labour market and socio-economic outcomes of the Arab-Israeli population. OECD Social, employment and migration. Working paper 102. <http://www.oecd.org/els/>.
- Hassan, M. (1999). The politics of respect: Patriarchy, government and the murder of woman for the sake of national honour. In: D. Izraeli, A. Friedman, H. Dahan-Kalev, S. Fogel-Bijaoui, H. Herzog, M. Hasan, H. Naveh, (Eds.), *Gender, sex, politics* (pp. 107-166). Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz Hameuchad. [Hebrew]
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994). *Gender transitions: Mexican experiences of immigration*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Khazzoom, A. (2002). Becoming minority, evaluating gender: Iraqi Jewish women in the 1950s, Mizrahi perspectives on Israeli society. In Y. Shenhav, H. Hever & P. Motzafi-Haller (Eds.), *Mizrahim in Israel: A critical observation into Israel's ethnicity*. Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute and HaKibbutz Hameuchad [in Hebrew].
- Koret Economic Development funds: <http://kiedf.org/home/hebrew/index.html>
- Kressel, G. M. (1986). Latent payments and gains Implied in the confinement of women to the household setting: The case of reproduction among the Negev Bedouin. *Social Science Research*, 4(1), 51-64.
- Miaari, S. (2012). *Arab women in the labour Market: Empirical implications and policy orientation*. Policy Paper, The Galilee Society – The Arab National Society for Health Research & Services.
- National Insurance Institute (2010). Research and planning administration, *Extent of poverty and social gaps* – Annual report for 2009. Jerusalem: National Insurance Institute.
- Pessate-Schubert, A. (2005). I go out and feel out the world, I see things more clearly: Women, higher education and Bedouin society in the Negev. *Megamot*, 43, 659-681. [Hebrew]
- Tienda, M., Leif, J. & Back, R.L. (1984). Immigration, gender and the process of occupational change in the United States, 1970-80. *International Migration Review*, 18(4), 1021-1044.
- Trager, G. & Ishai, D. (2002). Positions on work among Bedouin women in the south. *Adam ve'Avodah*, 10(2), 46-57. [Hebrew]
- Trager, L. (1984). Family strategies and the migration of women: Migrants to Dagupan

Voice from the field: "I work, therefore I am!"

City, Philippines. *International Migration Review*, 18(4), 1264-1277.

Yunus, M. (2009). *A world without poverty*. Tel Aviv: Ahuzat Bayit. [Hebrew]