

Education as a Tool for Control vs. Development Among Indigenous Peoples: The Case of Bedouin Arabs in Israel

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ABSTRACT: *In the last few decades, indigenous education movements characterized by indigenous control over the content, quality and delivery of educational services have developed around the world. They are also characterized by interculturality based on equipping their students with the knowledge and skills they need to function and develop in their own culture as well as in other cultural settings in the same sociopolitical framework. In this paper, I will discuss the case of the Negev Bedouin, who constitute a part of the indigenous Palestinian Arab people and who came under the control of the state of Israel in 1948. As with other indigenous minorities, education maintains the potential either to be an impediment or a key to their development.*

In this paper, I will briefly describe the changes the Bedouin have undergone since the establishment of the state of Israel and then discuss the structure of the educational system and ways in which it has affected the development of the Negev Bedouin. Finally I will discuss what must be done to transform the educational system into a tool for serving and strengthening the community and I will then suggest a number of educational strategies for development.

We should transform the Bedouins into an urban proletariat - in industry, services, construction, and agriculture. 88% of the Israeli population are not farmers, let the Bedouins be like them. Indeed, this will be a radical move which means that the Bedouin would not live on his land with his herds, but would become an urban person who comes home in the afternoon and puts his slippers on. His children would be accustomed to a father who wears trousers, does not carry a Shabaria [the traditional Bedouin knife] and does not search for vermin in public. The children would go to school with their hair properly combed. This would be a revolution, but it may be fixed within two generations. Without coercion but with governmental direction...this phenomenon of the Bedouins will disappear.

(Moshe Dayan, Ha'Aretz interview, 13 July 1963)

Two material practices are at the forefront of Israeli policies concerning the Negev: mass transfer of the Negev's indigenous Bedouin population to planned townships and a corresponding registration of the Negev lands as state property.... The Negev is conceived as vacuum domicilium - an empty space that is yet to be redeemed, and the Bedouin, in turn, are conceived of as representing a defeated culture in its last stage of total disappearance from Israel's historical scenery.

(Ronen Shamir, *Law and Society Review*, 30(2): 232, 1996)

Introduction

The term 'indigenous' is used to refer to peoples who inhabited a country prior to the formation of a state by immigrant settlers (e.g. in the Americas and Oceania), or after the abolition of colonialism (in Africa and Asia). One of the most widely used definitions of the term was offered by the Chairperson of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Population, Erica-Irene Daes, which designates certain peoples as indigenous because:

- they are descendents of groups which were in the territory of the country prior to the arrival of other groups of different cultures or ethnic origins;
- they are isolated or separated from other segments of the country's population and have preserved the customs and traditions of their ancestors; and
- they are placed under a State structure, even if only formally, which incorporates national, social and cultural characteristics alien to theirs (See www.IWGIA.org).

According to the Martínez Cobo Report for the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination of Minorities (Cobo, 1986/7), indigenous communities, peoples and nations maintain historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed in their territories and consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories. They presently form non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and ethnic identities as the basis for their continued existence as peoples.

According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the importance of indigenous peoples' self-identification is crucial. Based on the above definitions, at least 350 million people worldwide are considered to be indigenous. They confront a core of common issues, since most of them, despite their prior rights, have had their territories, lands and resources taken from them,

or are threatened with their loss. They have cultures and economies distinct from those of the dominant society, most of which are also threatened (See www.IWGIA.org).

Given the layers of contention surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the indigenous aspect of the Palestinian struggle has tended to be overlooked. This was perhaps aided by the European-based Zionist movement to establish a Jewish state in the land of Palestine, which characterized Palestine as 'a land without people, for a people without a land' (Masalha, 1997). The attempt to nullify the existence of a people pre-dating the Zionist settlers is another experience that Palestinians share with other indigenous peoples, most notably the Aborigines of Australia and the British colonizers who declared Australia to be *terra nullius* (an empty land, not owned by anyone) (Anderson, 2000; see also Howitt and Yengoyan articles in this issue). Though the Jews represented a minority fleeing persecution in Europe, their settlement in the British-controlled territory of Palestine and establishment there of 'a Jewish state,' resulted in the on-going displacement, dispossession and delegitimization of the indigenous Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the land.

Background

The Negev Bedouin are among the indigenous Palestinian Arabs who remained in Israel after 1948 and who are today a minority group of Israeli citizens. They have inhabited the Negev desert since the 5th century C.E. (Maddrell, 1990), and were traditionally organized into nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes which lived by raising sheep and engaging in seasonal agriculture.

Prior to 1948, estimates of the Bedouin Arab population in the Negev ranged from 65,000 to 90,000 (Falah, 1989; Maddrell, 1990). During the course and aftermath of the 1948 war, the vast majority of the Negev Bedouin fled or were expelled and became refugees in the surrounding Arab countries/territories (i.e. the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, etc.); thus, by 1952 only about 11,000 remained in the Negev (Falah, 1989; Marx, 1967; Masalha, 1997). The Israeli authorities took control of most of the land in the Negev, so the Bedouin who remained in the Negev lost the freedom to move around with their herds and cultivate their lands (Lustick, 1980). Twelve of the 19 tribes were removed from their lands and the whole population was confined to a specially-designated Restricted Area (*seig*) in the northeastern Negev, representing only 10% of the territory they controlled before 1948 (Falah, 1989; Lustick, 1980; Marx, 1967). Furthermore, they were placed under a military administration until 1966, as were all other Arabs in Israel, which meant that they could not return to and cultivate their lands, they were isolated from the Arab population in other parts of Israel and they needed special permits to leave their designated sections of the Restricted Area to look for jobs, education, markets, etc. (Marx, 1967). The restrictions imposed by the Israeli government represented a form of forced sedentarization which virtually ended their nomadic and semi-nomadic way of

life.

The Military Administration over Arabs in Israel was lifted in 1966 and the Negev Bedouin were then brought into greater contact with Israeli society. Since they had lost their lands and traditional livelihood, the vast majority of the Bedouin became dependent on working in the Jewish sector, primarily as unskilled laborers (Abu-Saad, 1991).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the government developed plans for the resettlement of the entire Negev Bedouin population into seven urban-style towns (Tel-Sheva, Rahat, Arara, Kseifa, Segev Shalom, Hura and Lakiya). The government rationale for establishing these towns was to "modernize the Bedouin" and enable more efficient provision of services and it used this provision of services (i.e. running water, electricity, health clinics, modern schools, etc.) as an incentive to attract Bedouin to the towns. However, the transfer of the Bedouin to urban settlements also coincided with other government aims for the 'development' of the Negev. As one Jewish Israeli commentator stated:

The transfer has a triple purpose: 1. to redress the ratio between Jews and Arabs in underpopulated areas; 2. to provide land for [Jewish] settlement and development programmes; 3. to release more beduin manpower for labour in the Jewish economy. (quoted in Maddrell, 1990, p. 8)

The towns were designed as dormitory towns, filled with neighborhoods divided into $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre lots. Aside from the provision of basic services (water, electricity, telephone hook-up, schools and clinics), the towns lacked the essential characteristics of urbanization. Unlike the neighboring urban settlements in the Jewish sector, the Bedouin towns had no internal sources of employment; nor did they have internal or external public transportation networks to facilitate access to work in other towns. The Bedouin towns also lacked banks, post offices, sewage systems, public libraries, recreational and cultural centers (with the exception of the largest town, Rahat, of over 30,000 inhabitants, which has one bank and one post office) (Abu-Saad, 1995; Ben-David, 1993; McDowall, 1994).

This urban settlement program represents an even more radical departure from the Bedouins' traditional way of life than the earlier forced sedentarism, as it completely stripped them of their land base and the ability to maintain their traditional economic pursuits to any meaningful extent. The move to the towns has been resisted by all those in a position to do so. However, some Bedouin, who were removed from the lands they owned early after Israel's establishment and saw them turned from 'closed military zones' into part of the large landholdings of Jewish kibbutzim and moshavim, gave up hope of ever being allowed to return to their own lands. In the face of pressures applied by the government to remove the Bedouin from their 'illegal squatting on government

land', many of these Bedouin moved to the government-planned towns. In other cases, such as that of Tel Al-Mileh, where more recent land confiscations took place, Bedouin were removed directly from their lands to the government planned urban townships (Maddrell, 1990).

Despite all of the factors converging to transfer the Bedouin to the townships, as of 1999 only 50% of the Negev Bedouin population of 120,000 lived in the planned towns, while 50% continued to live in unrecognized villages (*Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*, 1999). Most of the Bedouin living in unrecognized villages are still living on their own lands and were never displaced by the Israeli government because their lands were in the territory designated as the 'Restricted Area' for the Bedouin in the 1950s.

The government continues to place numerous pressures on the inhabitants of unrecognized villages in an effort to coerce them into moving to the government-planned towns (Maddrell, 1990; *Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*, 1999). The unrecognized (i.e. not government planned, ergo illegal) settlements are denied services such as paved roads, public transportation, electricity (and in many cases running water), rubbish disposal, telephone service, community health facilities, etc. Bedouin in the unrecognized villages are also denied licenses for building any sort of permanent housing. All forms of housing (except for tents) are considered illegal and are subject to heavy fines and demolition proceedings (Maddrell, 1990). From 1992-1998, a total of 1,298 buildings were demolished and 869,850 NIS (approximately \$220,000) in fines were paid, due to the 'illegal' status of these buildings (*Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*, 1999).

Despite these pressures, Bedouin remain on their lands (which the government, however, considers state lands) to prevent their *de facto*, as well as their *de jure*, confiscation. Most of these Bedouin depend, at least in part, on the traditional occupations of herding, agriculture and the processing of animal products to supplement or provide their incomes, but this is also restricted by the government. Herd sizes and grazing areas are very tightly controlled and a special police unit patrols and confiscates flocks found in violation of regulations. Very few Bedouin can subsist entirely on the traditional sources of livelihood and therefore also seek out paid employment in the larger Israeli economy.

In spite of the government's stated aim of 'improving and modernizing' the lives of the Negev Bedouin through its resettlement program, the Negev Bedouin community has the lowest socio-economic status of any group of Israeli citizens. Compared to the Israeli average, they have twice as many children and only approximately half the monthly income. The average Bedouin family size is 8-10 persons, and 54% of the community is under the age of 14 (*Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*, 1999). Their annual birth rate is 5.0% (*Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 1996), which is one of the highest in the world. The unemployment rate among Negev Bedouin is estimated at 55% of the total workforce, of which 30% are men and 80% are women (Shapira and Hellerman,

1998). Those Bedouin who are employed are concentrated in low-status, low-paying occupations such as construction, driving and unskilled labor (Maddrell, 1990; Shapira and Hellerman, 1998).

Development of the Educational System

Education has become a basic prerequisite for the Bedouins' successful adaptation to the changes they have undergone, given their need for partial or complete integration into the Israeli economy for their subsistence. The Israeli educational system, however, represents a new organization in Bedouin Arab society. Traditionally, most of Bedouin education was not formalized, but rather acquired through actual observation and participation in the process of day-to-day life. There was no defined curriculum to be artificially acquired, nor were there any unnecessary drills (Jamali, 1934). Instead, the informal system of education they developed was very efficient in preparing Bedouin youth for the life they were to lead as adults. History was passed on orally, as were moral and religious values, through poets, respected elders and storytellers.

In addition to this broad-based informal education, there were limited opportunities available to boys for obtaining formal education. The most common of these were the traditional Muslim schools called Kuttab that usually functioned in a tent around the Sheikh's residence. Modest fees were charged for attending these schools and the services were not utilized by all, but rather by the boys whose labor could be spared and whose fathers/parents saw value in formal education. Classes usually included about 20 boys between the ages of 5 and 12, who were taught to memorize the whole Quran by sheer repetition. In addition, they learned reading, writing and the precepts of Islam. The curriculum was primarily religious and moral in content, though later some arithmetic was added. The Kuttab teachers (called Khatib) were elderly males who were literate and known for their orthodox piety. The teachers lived as permanent guests of the tribe to which they were attached and would migrate along with the tribe. They usually lived in the guest section of the Sheikh's tent where they were provided with food, shelter and coffee (Tibawi, 1956).

In addition to these traditional forms of education, a few Western-style schools were established in the Negev Desert during the period of colonial British rule from 1918-1948. These were boarding schools which used a standard Western curriculum including math, science, reading, writing (in Arabic) and English. The vast majority of the Bedouin had no exposure to these schools, since usually only the sons of the tribal sheikhs had access to such educational opportunities (Berman 1967; Tibawi, 1956).

Thus, prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, there were several forms of education available to Bedouin children. All children received an informal education that was very well suited to preparing them for the roles they were to take on as adults; and for most Bedouin, this was the only form of education considered essential for their future. Some boys also received a traditional Muslim (Kuttab) education that helped reinforce the religious mores

of the society, in addition to providing them with basic literacy and math skills. With the advent of colonial rule, western-style schools were also introduced for the sons of the tribal elite who represented the future leadership of the society.

The Bedouin's traditional forms of education were severely disrupted by the changes that occurred in the process and aftermath of the establishment of the state of Israel (e.g. radical reduction of the Bedouin population, loss of lands, transfer to 'restricted areas' and implementation of military administration). The formal schools were closed or rendered inaccessible when the Bedouin population was moved to the restricted area (Maddrell, 1990). In addition, the loss of land and restricted mobility greatly reduced the viability of the informal education that had prepared Bedouin children to take on their adult roles in the work of herding and agriculture. Nor was the education provided in the Kuttab schools sufficient to prepare Bedouin youth for integration into the modern, industrialized Israeli labor market.

Under the new Israeli government, a law was passed in 1949 making education compulsory and mandating that every child receive free elementary schooling (from the ages of six to thirteen). The state was obliged to provide trained teachers, salaries and facilities. It was also responsible for curricula (Abu-Saad, 1991; Al-Haj, 1995). However, the new Israeli institutions were busy with the absorption of Jewish immigrants and thus, inevitably, schools for Arabs were not a priority (Maddrell, 1990). This was especially true for the Negev Bedouin population which was relatively widely-dispersed. For most of the Negev Bedouin tribes, a whole generation had no access to formal education (Maddrell, 1990). In addition, all Arab schools in Israel which had to be supplied with books in Arabic, suffered from a constant lack of teaching materials and textbooks for the first two decades of Israeli rule. Therefore, even the minority who did have access to schools, received a very poor quality of education (Swirski, 1990, 1999).

At the same time, there was little interest in the new Israeli schools among the Negev Bedouin tribes, many of which had been promised they would be allowed to return to their lands and former way of life (Maddrell, 1990). In 1956, there were only 350 Bedouin students enrolled in schools, out of a population of 2,000 school-age children. By the end of the school year, only 220 students were still attending school (representing a 37% dropout rate within one year) and all of these were boys (Swirski, 1990; Visitz, 1957). During the period of the Military Administration, students who wished to obtain a high school education had to attend schools in the northern Arab villages because there were no high schools for Arabs in the Negev. It was only feasible for a few students to pursue this option because of the high cost and the difficulties in obtaining a permit to leave their area.

Thus, for the Negev Bedouin, education basically suffered a regression during this period. Traditional education was either disrupted or lost its efficacy for preparing Bedouin children for adult life in their new context. The Israeli government was slow in establishing public schools for the Bedouin and the

Bedouin themselves initially showed very little interest in this new form of education, since its relevance was not immediately apparent to them.

After the military administration over Arabs was lifted in 1966, several developments led to increased demands for formal education from the Bedouin community. First, as the Bedouin were more extensively exposed to modern Jewish society and became involved in its economy, the importance of formal education became more apparent to them. Second, they were able to have more contact with the Arab villages and towns in other parts of Israel, in which the educational system was better established. Furthermore, following the War of 1967, when the Negev Bedouin were able to visit their relatives who had gone to the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the first time since 1948, they found that many of their counterparts were educated and had become teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc. while they, for the most part, had had only had limited access to education, and the vast majority of them had remained illiterate (Abu-Saad, 1991). Since many women had also attended school in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, intermarriage between these two previously separated segments of the Bedouin community resulted in educated women coming to live in the Negev. These contacts had a tremendous impact on the dynamics of the Negev Bedouin community and led them to send their children, girls and boys, to school in greater numbers (Abu-Saad, 1997, Abu-Saad *et al*, 1998).

As the demand for education grew, the Israeli government opened more schools and free education became more available to the Bedouin community. However, the value and viability of this education were gravely affected by a number of policy considerations that took precedence over the goal of providing Bedouin students with the knowledge and skills they required in order to function successfully in the broader socio-economic context of Israeli society and an increasingly globalized economy.

Politics, Segregation and the State Educational System in Israel

The Israeli state's educational system is subdivided into a Jewish system (which is also divided into a number of subsystems e.g. secular schools, religious schools, etc.) and an Arab system. These subdivisions give the system an appearance of educational pluralism, while, in fact, the division of the schools into subsystems serves quite a different purpose. Each system contains different students, different teachers and a different educational content (Swirski, 1999). In the Israeli educational hierarchy, secular Jewish schools, which primarily serve students of European or American origin (Ashkenazis), form the highest tier. The Arab system forms the lowest tier, with the Negev Bedouin schools ranking the lowest in that system. Schools in the higher tiers of the educational hierarchy (e.g. kibbutz schools, secular schools serving affluent Ashkenazi communities) provide their students with 'high status knowledge' and 'cultural capital' that translate into better future socio-economic opportunities. Schools in the lower tiers of the educational hierarchy (e.g. schools for the Arab community) provide their students only with partial, restricted and elementary

knowledge, which places a limit on their future socio-economic opportunities, and maintains the society's current socio-economic inequalities (Swirski, 1990, 1999). An examination of the structure of the educational system, from the level of goals and curriculum, to buildings, facilities and staff, reveals the considerable impact it has on keeping Arabs, in general and the Bedouin, in particular, in their 'proper' place in the social, economic and political hierarchy.

Aims, Goals and Curriculum

The Bedouin schools are part of the Arab educational system, which differs from the Jewish educational system/sub-systems on the level of aims, goals and curricula. Despite the fact that Israeli society is heterogeneous, due not only to the existence of the Jewish and Arabic cultures, but also to the existence of a variety of Jewish groups who immigrated from different countries, its educational system has remained monocultural, rather than multicultural (Mar'i, 1978; Al-Haj, 1995). The aim of multicultural education is to equip people of one culture with the knowledge and skills needed to function in their own culture, as well as in other cultural settings within the same sociopolitical framework (Aikman, 1996; Mar'i, 1978). However, an examination of the educational hierarchy, teaching staff and curriculum in the Jewish educational system reveals a definite bias toward Western, European (Ashkenazi) culture over that of non-Western, North African and Middle Eastern (Mizrachi) Jewish culture. The curriculum in Jewish schools tends to overlook the culture, history and contributions of Mizrachi and other non-Western Jewish groups and to largely ignore, or provide only minimal exposure to Arabic language and culture.

The same is true of Arab education in Israel. Despite the fact that Arabic is the medium of instruction in Arab schools, the Arab educational system does not represent, in the words of Freeland (1996: 182), an example of "indigenous control over education and true interculturality." The Arab educational system has been, and continues to be, directed by members of the Jewish majority and governed by a set of political criteria of which Arabs have no part in formulating (Al Haj, 1995; Mar'i, 1978; Said *et al*, 1987; Swirski, 1999). The 1953 Law of State Education specified the following aims for education in Israel:

to base education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and the Jewish people, on practice in agricultural work and handicraft, on pioneer training and on striving for a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance, and love of mankind (Mar'i, 1978: 50).

No parallel aims have ever been set forth for the education of Arabs in Israel, though in the 1970s and 1980s some attempts were made by committees directed by Jewish educators (Al-Haj, 1995). Instead, the general and specific curricular goals that have been developed for Arab education tend to blur rather

than enhance the formation of an Arab identity. The overall aims of the educational system, as well as specific curricular goals, require Arabs to learn about Jewish values and culture and the results of this can be seen clearly in the government-sponsored curriculum for primary and secondary schools (Al-Haj, 1995; Mar'i 1978, 1985; Peres, Ehrlich and Yuval-Davis, 1970). Arab students are required to spend many classhours in the study of Jewish culture and history and the Hebrew language (and in total, more than they spend on Arabic literature and history). However, the basic goal of Jewish studies in Arab education is not the development of cultural competence in Jewish Israeli society as much as it is to make Arabs understand and sympathize with Jewish/Zionist causes and blur their own national identity in Israel (Al-Haj, 1995; Mar'i 1978, 1985; Swirski, 1999). In reaction to this unbalanced curriculum, Rashid Hussein, an Israeli Arab intellectual issued the following warning in 1957:

It is a known fact that he who has no self-respect will not respect others. He who has no national feeling cannot respect other nationalities. If the Arab student is hindered from learning about his people, his nationality and his homeland in school, he will compensate for the lack in his home and on the street. He will eagerly accept anything he hears from other people or reads in the newspaper, and this may lead him into a wrong and distorted view of nationalism. The school, which has deprived him of something in which everyone takes pride, will be regarded by him as an enemy. Instead of learning in school the meaning of nationalism imbued with humanism, he will absorb only a distorted version. What will the school have achieved? What kind of generation of Arab youth will it have educated? Instead of educating its students to believe in fraternity and peace and to believe in the sincerity of its teachers, the school will bring forth a bewildered and confused generation, which looks at the facts in a distorted manner, and considers other nations to be their enemies; a generation filled with inferiority complexes, feelings of abasement, unable to take pride in its youth, in its homeland and its nationality (1957: 46).

Hussein's warning went unheeded, however. In the 1970s, a group of Jewish Israeli researchers, Peres, Ehrlich and Yuval-Davis, addressed the same issues. They criticized the curriculum imposed upon Arab schools by the Ministry of Education for attempting to instill patriotic sentiments in Arab students through the study of Jewish history and pointed out the absurdity of the expectation that the "Arab pupil ... serve the state not because the latter is important to *him* and fulfills *his* needs, but because it is important to the Jewish people" (Peres, Ehrlich and Yuval-Davis, 1970: 34).

Nevertheless, this lack of attention towards Arab culture and its contemporary political concerns in particular, has incessantly been maintained in the curriculum for Arab schools. Nor does the curriculum deal with the particular

social, cultural and educational needs of Negev Bedouin as they are being transformed into an urbanized population within a modern, Westernized, hi-tech economy. This lack of emphasis on the contemporary social and political concerns of Arabs lessens the relevance of the educational experience for Arab students to the point of seriously estranging them from school (Brown, 1986; Mar'i, 1978).

In 1978, the late Arab educator and researcher, Sami Mar'i described the status of Arab education within the Israeli state school system in the following terms which, unfortunately, still provide an accurate description some 20 years later:

Arab education is a victim of Israeli pluralism not only in that it is directed and managed by the majority, but it is also a tool by which the whole minority is manipulated....[It] is not only an example of the Israeli pluralism by which Arabs are denied power, it is also a means through which the lack of power can be maintained and perpetuated. Arab citizens are marginal, if not outsiders....The Arab Education Department is directed by members of the Jewish majority, and curricula are decided upon by the authorities with little, if any, participation of Arabs. Arab participation does not exceed writing or translating books and materials according to carefully specified guidelines, nor does it extend beyond implementing the majority's policies. (Mar'i, 1978: 180).

Reform efforts have repeatedly failed to bring about change, since none of the recommendations of the many committees appointed by the government to study or improve the Arab educational system have ever had any binding power (Al-Haj, 1995, 1996). To give some recent examples, during the Rabin government (1992-1996), the Minister of Education was from a 'left-of-center' political party. In 1994, he appointed a committee of leading Arab educators to develop a plan for restructuring and improving Arab Education. The plan was submitted to the Minister in early 1996 and was never heard of again, it was neither implemented nor used as a basis for further discussion, revision and work. In 1997, the subsequent Minister of Education (from a 'right-of-center' political party) appointed an investigatory committee to study Bedouin Arab schools in the Negev and present recommendations for improving their education. The report which was submitted to the Ministry of Education in 1998, contained a detailed 5-year plan for improving the schools' material and human resources, as well as suggestions for making the curriculum and educational content more relevant. Again, the recommendations were neither accepted nor implemented by the Ministry of Education. In the administration elected in 1999, the Minister of Education was again from a 'left-of-center' party. He appointed a loyal Bedouin party member to serve as his advisor for Bedouin education, whose only apparent function was to sign letters saying, "there are no funds for implementing these reforms in the current school year".

Infrastructure and Staffing as Political Tools

In addition to problems with the aims, goals and curriculum of the educational system, the Bedouin schools have inadequate physical and human resources, both of which have been used as tools for furthering governmental policy objectives other than education. With regard to physical resources in the Negev Bedouin school system, facilities and equipment are insufficient and, in some cases, altogether lacking, especially in schools located in the unrecognized villages. The schools in the planned towns, which include elementary, middle and all of the high schools, are classified as permanent. Most, though not all of these schools, are housed in modern buildings and have basic amenities such as electricity and indoor plumbing. However they do not have sufficient laboratories, libraries, sports facilities or teaching materials. In addition, the schools are overcrowded since the developers have not kept up with the population growth and increasing rates of enrollment. According to the Katz report (1998) which was submitted to the Minister in 1998, 730 new classrooms were needed in the course of the following five school years in the schools in the government-planned towns just to keep up with the growing number of students in the towns themselves. (The needs for the population in unrecognized villages were left unspecified due to uncertainty as to whether government policy would necessitate increased transportation services or more school buildings in unrecognized villages.) As mentioned above, the Ministry of Education has not allocated funds for implementing this plan.

There are twelve elementary schools located in unrecognized villages, the majority of which were established before the government built the seven planned towns. Since government policy now calls for concentrating the whole Negev Bedouin population into these towns, the Ministry of Education classifies the schools dispersed throughout the areas of unauthorized settlement as 'temporary' (*Statistical Yearbook of the Negev Bedouin*, 1999). As such, these schools have not expanded, they have substandard services and equipment and they are poorly maintained (Abu-Saad, 1997). They lack indoor plumbing and only in 1998 were they supplied with generator-powered electricity (despite the fact that many of these schools are situated near power lines) after a long struggle by the Bedouin community which culminated in an Israeli High Court decision ordering the Ministry of Education to supply these schools with electricity (*Ha'Aretz*, Aug. 24, 1998).

This situation is part of an official policy to encourage the Bedouin Arabs to move to the government-planned settlements (Personal interview with Officials of the Ministry of Interior, March, 1980; Maddrell, 1990; Meir, 1986). An education official stated that:

the government is reluctant to develop schools for temporary settlements because they want the beduin to move to permanent areas. The beduin tend to move when the schools are relocated.

If they don't then the children simply don't go to school. (quoted in Maddrell, 1990: 16)

According to law, the government is responsible for providing Bedouin children with an education; however, it has subordinated this responsibility to its goal of concentrating the Bedouin Arab population in designated settlements. The educational infrastructure continues to be used for this purpose up to the present time. In the 1999-2000 school year, approximately 6000 Bedouin elementary, middle and high school students from unrecognized villages were required to travel great distances daily (some up to 100 kilometers one-way) on overcrowded buses to attend school (Arbeli, 1999). A nine year-old boy, who gets up at 5 am, walks two kilometers to the bus stop and then rides on the bus for an hour and a half (one-way), described some of the difficulties of his commute to school:

The most difficult time is the winter because our mother wakes us up when it is still dark outside. When it's very cold and raining, we rush as fast as we can to the bus stop, but if we're even a little bit late, the bus doesn't wait for us.

These policies continue to take their toll on student retention, especially for girls. Traditionally, females were restricted to the world of the extended family and took responsibility for many aspects of the household economy (i.e. herding; milking and processing milk products; making the animal hair and wool into carpets, tents, mattresses and pillows; harvesting crops; etc.). In addition, they were (and continue to be) considered the "bearers of the family honor" and thus their families preferred not to risk their reputations by allowing them to travel alone and mix with males from other tribes (Abu-Saad *et al*, 1998; Maddrell, 1990). Therefore, there has been much more reluctance among the Bedouin over sending their daughters to school than over sending their sons, especially when the schools are far away.

Staffing of the schools is also problematic on several levels. First, the hiring of teachers lies completely (at the elementary and intermediate school levels) or partially (at the high school level) in the hands of the Ministry of Education. Since this is a government office, any Arab who is 'blacklisted' by the security services for political activities which are viewed as unfavorable is banned from obtaining employment in any government agency, including schools. An advisor from the security services participates with the Ministry of Education in the hiring and firing of school teachers. Thus "...a young educated Arab can expect to get and keep a job as a teacher only by staying off the government's blacklist" (Lustick, 1980: 193-94). The refusal to grant a teaching position because of security reasons is a widespread phenomenon in the Arab schools, even at the high school level where the local authority plays a major role in the process of hiring and firing teachers. Potential candidates for teaching

positions are interviewed by a joint professional committee which includes representatives of the local authority and the Ministry of Education. The list of candidates which they select is then sent to the Ministry of Education for final approval. Al-Haj (1995) found that about 10% of the candidates approved by the professional committees were rejected by the Ministry of Education. According to interviews with Arab mayors, usually the true, but unwritten, reason was 'security considerations'. The mayor of one Arab village described his experience as follows:

Every year we send the list (of selected candidates) for approval to the Ministry of Education. But it is very often that some of the candidates are refused to be given a teaching permission. Then the negotiations start with officials of the Ministry of Education, who inform us, in most cases orally, that the refusal is not connected with them but with the security system. (Al-Haj, 1995: 170-71)

Again, the Ministry of Education's responsibility to provide the schools with qualified teachers comes second to other political considerations, such as the security system's mandate of hiring only teachers who, according to their criterion, are 'politically correct,' (e.g. quiescent, uninvolved in Arab student movements or any other struggle for equal rights, etc.) (Al-Haj, 1995, 1996).

While professionally qualified teachers can be turned down because of political reasons, the Bedouin schools suffer from a serious shortage of qualified teachers, with the Ministry of Education reporting that 23% of the teachers lack basic training and credentials (Melitz, 1994; Katz, 1998). According to the Report of the Investigatory Committee on the Bedouin educational system in the Negev (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1998), 978 new teachers have to be trained and hired by 2002.

In addition, approximately 50% of the teachers in the Negev are not local, but come from Arab communities in the central and northern regions of Israel (Abu-Saad, 1997). These teachers are concentrated at the middle and high school levels, since teachers at these levels are required to have a Bachelor's degree and not only a certified Teachers' College education. Teachers from other parts of the country are hired because they have the appropriate qualifications. However, this results in high rates of teacher turn-over because they generally leave the Negev region as soon as teaching positions open up closer to their home communities.

These problems of curriculum, infrastructure and staffing have affected the capacity of the Negev Bedouin schools to retain and educate students. Approximately 55% of Negev Bedouin Arab children drop out before graduating from high school, as compared to 16% and 33% in the Jewish and broader Arab sectors, respectively (Ben-David, 2000; Ministry of Education and Culture, 1999).

To compound the problem of high dropout rates in the Negev Bedouin schools, the success rates of the children who do stay in school and complete the twelfth grade tend to be very low. In the 1997-98 academic year, only 10% of Negev Bedouin high school students passed the matriculation exams (compared to 43% and 27% in the Jewish and broader Arab sectors) a basic requirement for continuing on to higher education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1999). There are approximately two university graduates per 1000 Bedouin, which is far below the Israeli national average of over 100 university graduates per 1000 Israelis (Abu-Saad, 2000). Higher education is broadly recognized as an important tool, particularly for minority groups, for self-development and self-directed integration into the broader society. Despite the fact that faith in education has eroded to some extent in the recent past, it is still expected to play a pivotal role in development. Within education, higher education assumes great significance, for it is through higher education that a community produces the critical mass of 'leader' elements - the entrepreneurs, the intellectuals, the professionals, the managers and political leaders, that it needs for its social and economic development (Gunawardena 1990). Furthermore, with regard to educational reform, many effective models of indigenous intercultural education have been developed by indigenous teachers' associations, indicating that the development of a core of educated people is a great asset to, and perhaps even a prerequisite for, the development of positive models of indigenous intercultural education and community educational involvement (Aikman, 1996; Freeland, 1996). Thus, while it is clear that comprehensive change is needed on all levels of the Bedouin educational system, higher education may well prove to be an important catalyst in initiating the process insofar as a community with more educational capital can *en masse* simply refuse to accept such a substandard educational system and will also possess the professional educational skills to create something better. Major systemic change will remain blocked until the community and its supporters apply enough political pressure to gain a decisive say in the quality, content and curriculum of their schools.

Finally, turning to the discussion of specific strategies for future development, the effort must be at least two-pronged. A number of political changes must be made touching all aspects of the lives of indigenous Palestinian Arabs in Israel in order to facilitate an effective educational change. The changes called for can be briefly summarized as:

1. Allocation of national resources on the basis of equality, regardless of ethnic identity, in all fields of state funding including education and the reallocation of resources to close the socio-economic gaps that have been created and perpetuated since the inception of the State by inequitable funding;
2. Participation of Israeli Arabs in all sectors of national life, including senior government posts, employment opportunities,

- and qualification for state benefits; and
3. Redefinition of the State of Israel from the 'Jewish state' to the state of all its citizens and the extension of full civil and national rights to the indigenous, Palestinian Arab minority.

For specific strategies in this area, I would refer to those working in the fields of politics, law and community advocacy. The only thing I would add is that a community requires a good measure of economic security or independence in order to unite in an effective political struggle. Currently, the vast majority of Bedouin are dependent on integration into the hi-tech, western Israeli economy, within which they fill the most vulnerable ranks of unskilled labor. Thus, every educational gain they make will improve their economic security and independence and will also add to their political strength.

With regard to specific strategies for development in the area of education, I return to the issue of increasing the number of Bedouin with higher education as a catalyst for bringing about broader community involvement and, eventually, systemic educational reform. Working at the university level, through the Center for Bedouin Studies and Development, a number of educational strategies for development are being implemented. The first is financial and academic support for female Bedouin university students. In the 1993-94 academic year, only four of the 135 Bedouin Arab university graduates and eight of the 163 university students were female. In the 1995-1996 academic year, we began a very small project offering financial and academic support to five Bedouin female university students at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and in return they were required to do community work several hours a week. The Bedouin community is, by and large, quite poor and families tend to invest the limited resources they do have in their sons rather than daughters. Thus, we targeted financial resources specifically for female candidates in order to significantly increase the opportunities for female Bedouin students to attend the university. Secondly, we provided these students with the academic and social support they required in order to succeed at the university. Bedouin students who are admitted to the university often face a number of serious obstacles. Since the language of instruction is Hebrew (the Bedouin students' second language) and much of the reading material is in English (their third language), weak language skills represent a formidable barrier for many of these students. In addition, their high school education, in general, does not provide them with the analytical thinking, research and writing skills they need at the university. Individualized and small group tutoring programs were developed to address these needs. Thirdly, the students were required to become involved in community work four hours a week, through which they provided needed services, such as after school activities with Bedouin kindergarten to twelfth grade pupils, tutoring and assisting students who are at-risk of dropping out of school, teaching literacy courses for illiterate Bedouin women, etc. Through this component of the program, we hoped to provide the community with positive

role models of educated Bedouin women and also increase the awareness and concern of these female students for the problems and developmental needs of their community.

This project has had a positive impact on the community, both in terms of the students providing a role model of university-educated Bedouin women and in terms of providing young women and their families with the hope that they may be able to find the financial support they need for university studies. It is also greatly increasing the number of educated women in the community who will have the tools, as well as the consciousness, to work to improve the quality of their children's education. Since the development and expansion of this financial and academic support program, the number of female Bedouin university students has grown from eight in 1993-94 to 120 in the 2000-2001 academic year, twenty two of whom are doing graduate studies.

A second major educational project of the Bedouin Center, called the Budding Scientists, was aimed at preparing a group of Bedouin high school students to enter the fields of engineering and sciences, in which there are currently almost no Bedouin academics or professionals. In the 1997-98 academic year, when this project was planned, there were 108 Bedouin students at Ben-Gurion University, 81% of whom were in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 11% in the health sciences (primarily nursing and medical laboratory studies), 7% in the Sciences and 2% in Engineering (virtually all of whom in the last two fields attended high school in high quality, private Arab schools in northern Israel). These figures are reflective of the orientation of the Bedouin schools in the Negev. While their very best students succeeded to matriculate and gain acceptance to the university, they were in no way equipped with the 'educational capital' needed to qualify for entrance into the fields of engineering and the natural sciences. The Budding Scientists program was designed to redress this issue by bringing a small group of high school students to the university from the tenth through twelfth grades for additional studies in Mathematics, Physics and English. The goals of the program are: a) to provide them with the knowledge and skills required for admittance to the faculties of natural science and engineering; b) to reduce the psychological barriers of the students as well as the teachers, parents and community toward moving beyond externally imposed limitations and aspiring to study the natural sciences and engineering; and c) to begin preparing a core group of Bedouin scientists, engineers and technological professionals who can play a role in the development of the Bedouin community and more effectively meet the challenges of integration into the technologically oriented Israeli and global economies. The interaction between the high school and the university project staff has resulted in challenging the systemic barriers that automatically exclude Bedouin students from opportunities in these fields. Physics, which previously was not even offered in this high school, is now being taught there, and negotiations are underway for the building of a physics laboratory.

These are two examples of using education as a tool for the development of the Bedouin Arabs in the Negev. While these are admittedly limited efforts in the face of great problems, they are, nevertheless, equipping young people with the skills they require to survive and succeed in their new social, political and economic context. In addition, they are providing Bedouin youth with the economic security and skills they need to reclaim and restructure their own people's future development.

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