



As 2021 draws to a close, we wanted to let you know what the Bimkom team has been working on in the past months, and the issues we'll be taking with us into the new year – a year in which Bimkom will, as always, be striving for real planning rights for all. ***Many thanks to all our friends, supporter, and donors who help make this all happen!***

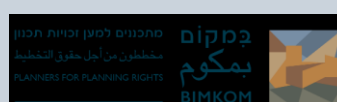
In October, Bimkom held a successful conference: Human Rights and Ethics of Planning Cultural Landscapes in Israel/Palestine. Current and former staff and board members of Bimkom led tours and discussions, and spoke with experts in the field of planning about cultural landscapes and how they can be planned, designed, developed – and also preserved. We touched on issues of the conflict between political and bureaucratic management of the landscape and those living on and making use of the land. Some 200 people attended in person, on Zoom and via Facebook. You can see videos of the talks and lectures (in Hebrew) [here](#).

Bedouin Communities in the Negev

Rachme, Hashem Zaneh and Abde villages have finally been granted formal recognition! Bimkom has had a significant role over the years in pressuring for this recognition, and is now stepping in to assist the communities in ensuring that plans will take into account their needs, their culture and their own vision for the future.

We continue to advocate for recognition for all villages, with a current focus on those in the Beer Sheva Valley. We are accompanying the newly-formed inter-village council in advancing a solution for these communities, including a possible new local authority to provide a municipal framework for them.

We're also challenging plans that ignore or harm the Bedouin population – such as a train line without a single stop in a Bedouin town or village, and forestry and nature plans exactly where Bedouin residents live.



A majority of Bimkom's funding is from foreign state entities.

Palestinian East Jerusalem

During the course of 2021 the State of Israel began Settlement of Land Rights procedures in East Jerusalem, but in an underhanded fashion to further its own interests and not to benefit the Palestinian residents. Bimkom is carrying out in-depth analysis of the procedures, and in early 2022 will publish a detailed rights brochure. Bimkom provided input in reacting to plans which allow much-needed commercial and employment development, but do not respond to the desperate lack of housing in East Jerusalem. This too will carry forward into 2022.



And just in December 2021, we launched a new partnership with fellow NGO Ir Amim, to challenge the establishment to provide adequate and implementable planning solutions for the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, with a focus on two very different cases: the lack of planning - and therefore the imminent threat of demolitions - in al-Walajah (see more [here](#)), and the important new planning tools (many inspired by Bimkom's ideas) found in the new outline plan for al-Isawiyyah, which will allow land-owners to regularize their homes, and increase building of residences and public spaces – as long as the authorities remain flexible and work with the residents to ensure the implementation and adaptability of these tools. We'll also look for ways to expand and improve the plan.

Women's project

We've completed a year of our project: "Increasing the role of marginalised women in gender sensitive spatial planning and development". Women from a number of Bedouin villages have been participating in seminars to empower them to take an active role in the planning of their space, women from the Old City of Akko have begun a similar process, and we will be beginning seminars in Wadi Nisnas in



Haifa and in the newly-recognized village of Rahme. We've also begun a series of lectures for Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) women students, bringing issues of gender and human rights into their understanding of their future careers in architecture and planning, and are planning a session on these topics for Bedouin young women and men in the young leadership program of the Desert Stars Academy.

Arab Localities

Bimkom, together with Adalah and local leaders are acting against the proposed Giv'ot Alonim Nature Reserve which will harm a number of Arab localities as it will take over lands onto which these localities should be able to expand, will block access to grazing lands, and may force the displacement of residents. We also began a dialogue with the Nature and Parks Authority about the problematic issues of the reserve.

We provide assistance, advice and accompaniment to a number of Arab local authorities in planning issues such as the need to expand boundaries and increase housing. We objected to an unrealistic plan for the town of Ein Rafa, and many of our claims were accepted, such that the plan was changed.

We are beginning to explore ways to become involved in planning issues in the mixed towns of Akko, Haifa and Jaffa.

Area C Palestinian communities

Bimkom continues to support communities in their struggle to retain their lands and homes – such as the villages which Israel is threatening to expel from lands declared firing zones – and to be able to build and develop: After years of ongoing planning and legal action, Dkeika is expected to receive a statutory plan which will recognize the village in situ and will prevent forcible transfer and demolition of the community.



We've also been expanding our database of mobile pastoral communities in Area C, giving a voice to small herder communities and their needs. You can see it here.

We've been working with Palestinian communities against expansion of settlements and recognition of outposts which take over their land, and limit their freedom of movement and access to resources: In tandem with 115 residents we submitted objections to the new settlement in the sensitive area known as E1, which would harm the existing Bedouin communities in this area and restrict Palestinian movement between the north and south of the West Bank; and against the establishment of or expansion of other Israeli interests on Palestinian land.

Bimkom is additionally carrying out local and international advocacy to raise awareness of the harmful nature of Israeli spatial policies in Area C, and to propose solutions which preserve the rights of the Palestinian population.

Urbanism and planning policies

Bimkom representatives participated in a series of roundtables on the subject of integrating social concepts into planning at all levels. We also initiated a discussion with the Israel Planners Association of the importance of retaining a social representative in the planning committees. We continue to follow developments in terms of national planning policies and to react when we perceive that new laws or plans limit the rights of citizens and residents, or their ability to react and object to plans that affect them. We seek a planning regime which is democratic, pluralistic, and equitable.

Wishing you and yours much health and happiness as we head into 2022.



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