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**RESILIENCE SERIES**  
**BEDOUINS IN THE OCCUPIED  
PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**

**MARCH 2017**

UNDP/PAPP's Resilience Series is a series of reports highlighting practical solutions to Palestinian development challenges in line with the Transformative Resilience Framework.

For more information on the Transformative Resilience Framework, visit: [www.developmentmonitor.ps](http://www.developmentmonitor.ps)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bedouins and herder communities are among the most vulnerable in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Forcibly displaced from the Negev Desert, most Bedouins today are located in Area C and greater Jerusalem, where they face a complex matrix of humanitarian and development challenges.

A semi-nomadic people, Bedouins suffer the brunt of the occupation, are isolated from mainstream Palestinian society, and have increasingly faced an erosion of their traditional way of life and its potential for survival. It is difficult for them to access state services or the justice system. They also suffer from restrictions on freedom of movement, forced displacement due to the construction and expansion of illegal settlements, restrictive zoning and planning regimes, land confiscation, the denial of building permits, house demolitions, and a lack of law enforcement in response to settler violence.

Already geographically marginalised, Bedouins live in areas that are often without proper road access and are isolated by checkpoints, severing them from essential services and

markets, and hampering income generation and the need to graze livestock. These emergent humanitarian concerns are extremely damaging to the Bedouin quality and way of life, and undermine the potential for sustainable development for Bedouin communities.

The potential for Bedouin communities to develop sustainable livelihoods has been effectively limited. They face difficulties in access to basic commodities such as water and electricity, limited access to justice, poor opportunities for decent work, and vast social disruption. Marginalised groups such as women and youth struggle with even greater vulnerabilities among Bedouin communities.

In line with UNDP/PAPP's mandate, this report will look at the humanitarian concerns that Bedouins face, with a focus on their impact on development goals, and concentrate on practical solutions to these challenges, grounded in our own Transformative Resilience Framework.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Utilising the Transformative Resilience approach, this report recommends immediate action to end the suffering faced by Bedouin communities, and instead bolster their resilience to better cope, adapt, and ultimately *transform* from the current situation:

1. Provide portable renewable energy sources, such as light-weight solar panels, to improve access to energy.
2. Establish a water cooperative, run by the Government of Palestine, to manage water needs for Bedouins.
3. Facilitate mini-buses to the community at a reduced cost, to connect remote towns with the closest education and health access points
4. Build links between young doctors and Bedouin communities, for youth to gain experience in their chosen field and for Bedouins to be provided with free healthcare.
5. Establish environmentally-friendly and mobile community spaces, to help fill service gaps and increase community cohesion.

6. Develop flexible educational measures to adapt education to the Bedouin way of life and decrease drop-out rates.
7. Establish a cash assistance programme for Bedouin communities, without conditions attached to allow Bedouins to regain agency over their own lives.
8. Establish specific programmes for women's economic empowerment.
9. Establish new means of developing sustainable livelihoods, by taking into account the Bedouin way of life and utilising their existing expertise and community structure.
10. Provide scholarships for young Bedouins in subjects where technical expertise is required among Bedouin communities.
11. Develop a clear advocacy strategy in collaboration between the State of Palestine, UN agencies, and national and international civil society, to put pressure on the Government of Israel to end the restrictive policies that directly impact the livelihoods of Bedouins.
12. Establish a funding mechanism for Bedouins that includes a focus on legal support, advocacy and campaigning, and research.



# INTRODUCTION



Bedouin and herder communities are among the most vulnerable in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Bedouins total approximately 40,000 people and 5,000 families in the West Bank, of which 2,000 live in refugee camps and 3,000 in Area C.<sup>1</sup> Most Bedouins are originally from the Negev Desert, from which they were forcibly displaced or fled during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The social structure of Bedouin communities is comprised of three large

confederations: Al Tayaha, Al Azazmeh, and Al Tarabeen, to which 92 tribes are linked. The major tribes in the West Bank are: the Jahaleen, Ka'abneh, Rashaydeh, Ram-adeen, 'Azazme, Communities of Sawarka, Arenat and Amareen.<sup>2</sup> See map (left) of where Bedouin communities are located around the West Bank.

In 1931, 89% of Bedouins in the Negev were dependent on agriculture, while only 10% lived exclusively from livestock. Traditionally Bedouins have been semi-nomadic, but have always had a strong connection to the land, which was the main source of their livelihoods, and remains central to Bedouin history, tradition, and culture.<sup>3</sup> "The Bedouins' historical attachment to the land challenges the ill-founded assumption that they are nomads without roots who do not reside permanently in any place, without attachment to land, or territorial perception of individual ownership."<sup>4</sup>

After the 1993 Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into Area A (fully administered by the State of Palestine), B (Palestinian civil administration and Israeli security control) and Area C (62% of the West Bank and fully administered by Israel, with the Palestinian government responsible for some civil matters, such as health and education). Israel retains control over all building and planning in Area C. As a result, Bedouins lack conditions for sustainable development and the space for their human development opportunities is very limited. This is worsened by the State of Palestine's lack of jurisdiction over this area and inability to intervene meaningfully. In short, due to their semi-nomadic lifestyle and residency mostly in Area C and greater Jerusalem, Bedouins suffer

the brunt of the occupation, are isolated from mainstream Palestinian society, and have increasingly faced threats to their traditional way of life and its potential for survival. It is difficult for them to access state services or the justice system. They

**"Bedouins and herder communities are among the most vulnerable in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)."**

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also suffer from restrictions on freedom of movement, forced displacement due to the construction and expansion of illegal settlements, restrictive zoning and planning regimes, land confiscation, the denial of building permits, house demolitions, and a lack of law enforcement in response to settler violence.<sup>5</sup>

This report focuses on the illegal and discriminatory measures that Bedouins in the West Bank, and particularly in Area C, face under occupation. However, it is worth noting that Bedouins that remain in the Israeli Negev are also impacted by similar discriminatory policies.





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## CHALLENGES

The policies of the Israeli authorities in Area C introduce complex challenges for the Bedouins in those areas, affecting every aspect of their livelihoods from basic services to employment prospects. The aforementioned challenges make it particularly difficult for the traditional Bedouin way of life to continue, forcing them into further poverty.<sup>6</sup>

Already geographically marginalised, Bedouins live in areas that are often without proper road access and are isolated by checkpoints, severing them from essential services and markets, and hampering income generation and the need to graze livestock. These emergent humanitarian concerns are extremely damaging to the Bedouin quality and way of life, and undermine the potential for sustainable development for Bedouin communities. In line with UNDP/PAPP's mandate, this report will look at the humanitarian concerns that Bedouins face, with a focus on their impact on development goals, and concentrate on practical solutions to these challenges, grounded in our own Transformative Resilience Framework.



# HUMANITARIAN & PROTECTION

Bedouin communities face severe humanitarian threats that challenge the sustainability of Bedouin communities: the constant risk of forced displacement, home and other infrastructure demolition, the threat of violence from settlers, and limited freedom of movement. Forced displacement has led to Bedouin communities having to relocate to areas where inadequate space hampers herder-grazer activity, and prevents Bedouins from accessing decent livelihoods. Since UNDP/PAPP's report *Bedouins in the Occupied Palestinian Territory of 2013*, it is concerning to say that the situation for Bedouin has in most cases stagnated, if not worsened. The 2016 demolition rate was the highest since records began,<sup>7</sup> with an estimated 870 Palestinian structures demolished in Area C in 2016, as compared to 453 in 2015 – almost double.<sup>8</sup> In most cases, the reason cited for demolition was due to the lack of a valid Israeli-issued construction permit, which are almost impossible to obtain.



Economist.com

In August 2016, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Piper, warned that many Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank are facing a heightened risk of forcible transfer.<sup>8</sup> In February 2017, Israel ordered the demolition of an entire West Bank Bedouin village, Khan al-Ahmar, which was established in 1950 after their displacement from the Negev, including 40 homes and an elementary school, an unusual and alarming move.<sup>10</sup> While individual structures regularly face the threat of demolition, the demolition of an entire village suggests an increasing disregard for international community efforts to advocate against these demolitions and forced evictions of already vulnerable communities. These measures seriously impact future development prospects. For example,



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the demolition of the elementary school in Khan al-Ahmar will make the necessary education of children and youth from the area all but impossible. Khan al-Ahmar is one of the many Bedouin villages located in the controversial proposed “E1 corridor,” an enormous settlement which would link occupied Jerusalem with the mega settlement, Maale Adumim. While construction on the E1 corridor is currently stalled, Israeli authorities plan to build thousands of homes for settlements in E1, which would effectively divide the West Bank and make the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state - as envisaged by the two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict -al-

most impossible.<sup>11</sup> This would prove disastrous for the Palestinian people as a whole, and the eighteen Bedouin tribes that reside within this E1 corridor<sup>12</sup> (see map left).

The result is that Bedouin communities are under constant threat of demolition, unable to develop sustainable livelihoods, have complex humanitarian concerns, and face limited development potential. It is clear that the risk of demolition and forced displacement for Bedouins is increasing, however, this has also meant that their developmental potential is decreasing.



# DEVELOPMENT

The complex humanitarian and development challenges that Bedouins face limit their ability to access decent livelihoods. This includes discriminatory planning and zoning restrictions in Area C; the resulting breakdown of the Bedouin way of life and a change in their traditional culture, traditions, and practices; limited access to land; limited economic opportunity; poor access to resources, such as water and electricity; limited public services, such as education and health; high rates of food insecurity and poverty; obscured and poor access to justice; and finally, gender inequality. Together, these highly complex challenges cause a very constrained development environment, which has left Bedouin communities extremely vulnerable to external threats or unexpected shocks.



# ACCESS TO BASIC COMMODITIES



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## Electricity

Access to electricity in the West Bank is particularly scarce for Bedouin Communities. Out of the 157 Bedouin/herder communities in Area C, 118 communities are not connected to the main electrical grid, which means that 41 per cent do not have a source of electricity. Some communities have no choice but to use environmentally-unfriendly and expensive generators, a financial burden that many communities are not able to bear. Furthermore, Bedouin communities

have limited access to waste disposal and sewage networks.<sup>13</sup> While many international organisations have donated renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, to Bedouin communities, these have previously failed to be of use to Bedouins, because they are too heavy or not portable.

In tandem, as the majority of Bedouin communities are based in Area C and therefore subject to construction restrictions, many international NGOs, such as the EU, have adopted a policy



of applying for a permit, but going ahead with construction anyway if a response is not forthcoming. This has led to much donor-funded infrastructure being demolished by Israeli forces. For example, in 2016, 25 solar panels provided to Khan al-Ahmar, were confiscated a number of weeks after being installed.<sup>14</sup> This is detrimental to both Bedouin livelihoods and the environment, and disincentivises international organisations from intervention. In contrast, Israeli environmental activists are helping neighbouring settlements adopt the widespread use of solar energy. This is one of many ways that Bedouin communities are disadvantaged and discriminated under occupation practices.

### Water

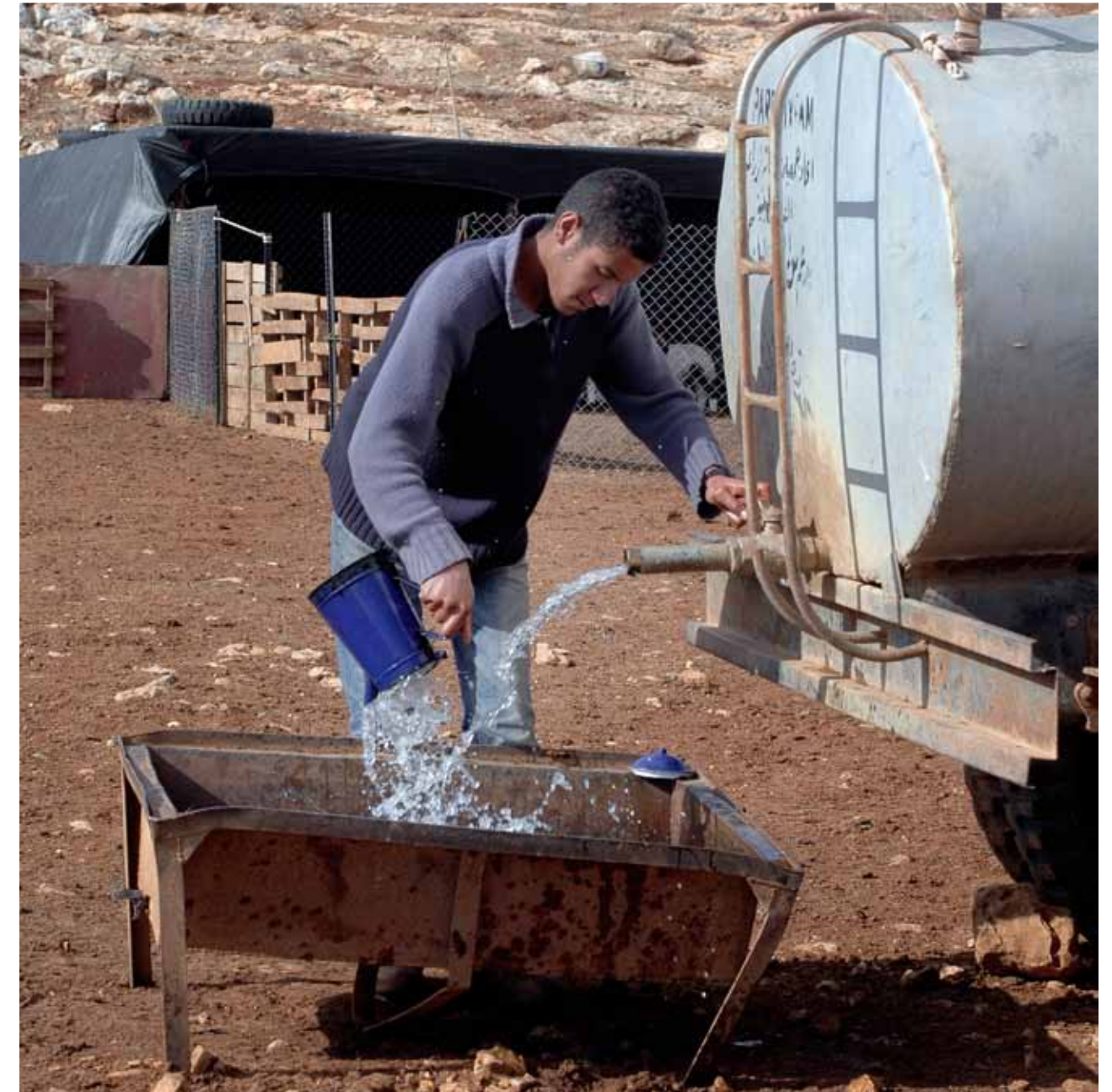
Due to poor access to water and electricity, Bedouins, although traditionally agriculturists, are now unable to farm effectively, and about 55 per cent are food insecure. With an average monthly income of 1000 NIS, some Bedouin families have to spend up to 60 per cent of their total household income on food expenditures.<sup>15</sup> The limited produce that is grown cannot be stored for long due to the lack of electricity and may be spoiled before reaching the required market. This is worsened by freedom of movement restrictions, such as checkpoints, divided roads, settlements, and so on. The inability of Bedouin communities to access basic commodities leaves them vulnerable. Contrary to popular belief, water is not, and has not been, scarce in the region, which historically contained three main sources of natural fresh water – the Jordan River, the Mountain Aquifer, and the

Coastal Aquifer.<sup>16</sup> In the West Bank, under the policies of the Oslo Accords, 80% of the water pumped from the Mountain Aquifer was allocated to Israel and only 20% to the Palestinians;<sup>17</sup> this has now shrunk to approximately 13%.<sup>18</sup>

While this was meant to be an interim agreement, this remains in place 22 years later, with the result that Palestinian water allocation remains capped at 1995 levels, despite a doubling in population size.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Palestinian inability to access sufficient water is due to political rather than environmental reasons, although this will be exacerbated by the ravages of climate change. Projections forecast significant warming (larger than global annual mean warming by 2.2-5.1°C), and a substantial decrease in annual rainfall (a drop of 10% by 2020 and 20% by 2050).<sup>20</sup> Were Palestinians to have full control over their own water resources, it would be possible to mitigate the effects of climate change. However, if the current status quo continues, Israel will continue to divert water resources to Israeli settlers, to the detriment of Palestinians. Increasing desertification also requires climate change coping mechanisms including efficient water use and storage, otherwise its impact on agriculture will be disastrous.

Israelis, including settlers, have access to 300 litres per day per person, in contrast to West Bank residents who have just 70 litres per day, below the WHO's recommended minimum of 100 litres.<sup>21</sup> The situation for Bedouins is even starker. On average, Bedouins consume just 20 litres of water per day, one-fifth of the recommended minimum, and almost 25 times less than nearby settlers.<sup>22</sup> In many areas, Bedouins have no access to clean water sources, and

“Palestinian inability to access sufficient water is due to political rather than environmental reasons, although this will be exacerbated by the ravages of climate change.”



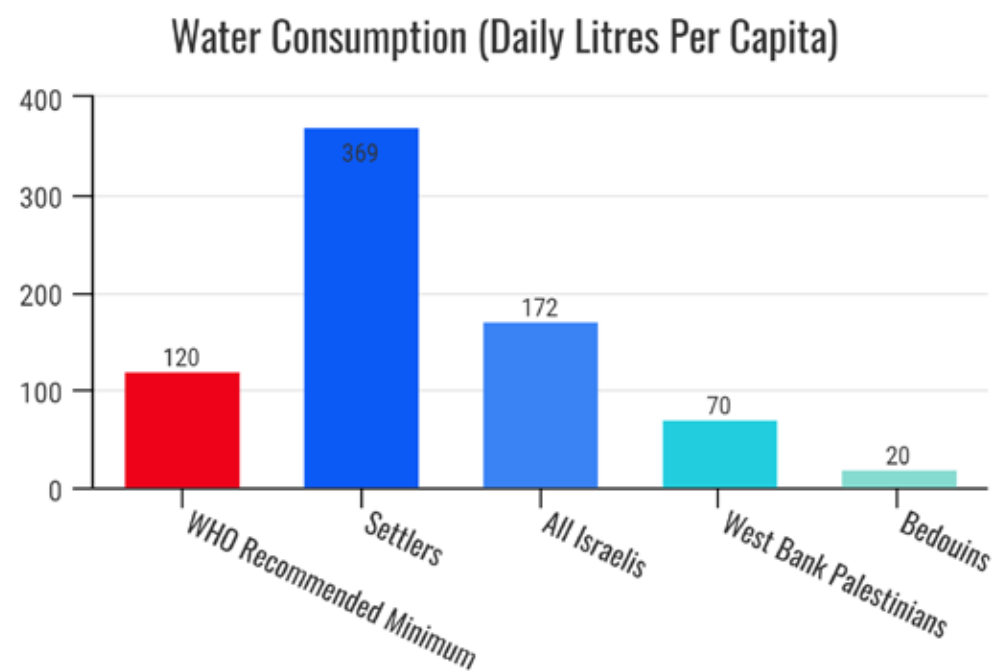
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“On average, Bedouins consume 20 litres of water per day, one-fifth of the recommended minimum, and almost 25 times less than nearby settlers.”

are forced to buy expensive water from the Israeli water tanker operator, Mekorot. A tank of water usually costs about 10 times the price per cubic meter of mains water, plus the cost of transportation.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Mekorot routinely reduces the Palestinian supply, sometimes by as much as 50 per cent, during the summer months to meet Israeli settlement demand, to the detriment of Palestinians.<sup>24</sup> Although a Joint Water Committee (JWC) was formed under Oslo II to coordinate all water management, the consensus system allows Israel to veto any proposal.<sup>25</sup> Resultantly, only half of Palestinian proposals for construction or rehabilitation of water infrastructure were approved between 1995 and 2008, in comparison to 100 per cent of Israeli proposals.<sup>26</sup>

In 2016 and 2017, parts of water pipelines funded by international NGOs that supplied Bedouin communities in the Jordan Valley and in the Tubas region were destroyed.<sup>27</sup> The destruction of existing or



under-construction water infrastructure by Israeli forces is extremely damaging to Bedouin communities who already have such inadequate access to water. Mobility restrictions that limit Bedouin access to public services such as health and education hinder developmental progress.

#### Education/Health

Education in Bedouin communities is insufficient. In comparison to extremely high education rates among the rest of the Palestinian population (approximately 97%<sup>28</sup>), Bedouins face a relatively high rate of illiteracy, especially among women.

Due to Bedouin isolation from population centres, the cost to reach necessary schools or hospitals can be obstructive. 84% of families cannot afford transportation costs to send their children to school.<sup>29</sup> Poor environmental conditions and educational quality deter Bedouins from accessing education. In many cases, this results in families ending education for girls at a young age as a means of saving money,<sup>30</sup> meaning that literacy rates for women are even lower than men. No doubt this also reduces the employment potential for women as compared to men, and reduces their chances of decent livelihoods. In parallel, health provision in Bedouin communities is also ill-equipped. Many communities lack well-equipped health centres, with few resident physicians or nurses. Hospitals are often distant and roads are poor, meaning that there is limited access to emergency care. Access to more specialised healthcare such as psychosocial support is virtually impossible, due to both physical inaccessibility and the high cost.

#### Work/Employability

Bedouins traditionally rely on agriculture and livestock. Work is constrained to farming and herding, or in some areas, working in nearby settlements, enduring poor working conditions, low pay and a lack of job security or insurance. Endangerment by settlers' attacks on herds and roads strikes fear in Bedouins, especially women, which discourages Bedouins from travelling for potential employment. The high competition among Palestinian and Israeli farmers in Area C creates a particularly difficult situation for the Bedouins. Although there are reasonable rates of higher education within some Bedouin communities, this is dampened by low employment prospects in the area. Bedouins are now forced to buy fodder and tanked water, which in turn raises the prices of meat and dairy products, and makes Bedouin products less competitive on the market. As a result, 84% of the Bedouin and Palestinian herders are receiving some kind of assistance from national or international organizations.<sup>31</sup>

Youth unemployment is rife in Area C and among Bedouin communities. Young Bedouins have reported that finding a job

“84% of the Bedouin and Palestinian herders are receiving some kind of assistance from national or international organizations.”



is difficult. Employment frequently goes to less isolated residents, there is a disparity between their skills and the available jobs, which decreases opportunity, and transport challenges and the cost of rent combined with low-paid work makes employment unsustainable. These challenges affect Bedouins of all ages, but are more obstructive for youth, who have the highest unemployment rates in Palestine.<sup>32</sup>

“These challenges affect Bedouins of all ages, but are more obstructive for youth, who have the highest unemployment rates in Palestine.”



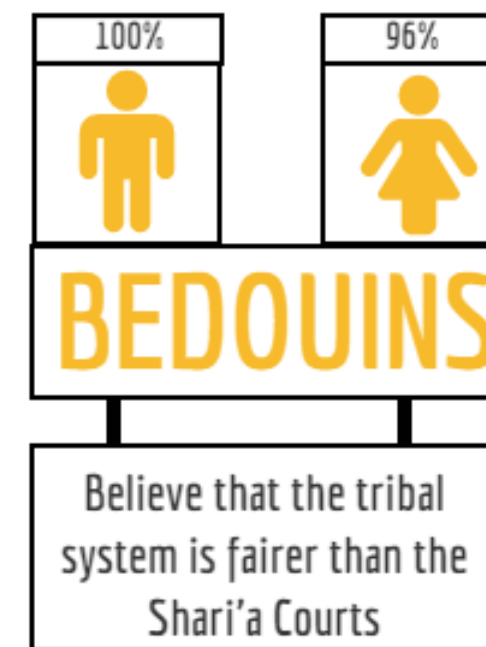
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### Access to Justice

The traditional representative mechanisms embodied in the Clan Council were dramatically challenged as a result of the Bedouins' expulsion from their original lands. The clans and tribes were divided into smaller social units and many clans lost their direct contact with their leaders, which provoked the dissolution of traditional leadership and decision-making mechanisms. Bedouins are left underrepresented and fragmented within Palestinian society, amidst discussions on state building, democracy and the creation of a Palestinian state. Not recognised as a minority or a displaced indigenous group by the Palestinian government, the voice of the Bedouins is not being heard by decision-makers. Rather, their voice has been reduced to some representatives of individual communities advocating for basic assistance, instead of focusing on the rights and the future of the Bedouins as a distinct group.<sup>33</sup>

Sharek Youth Forum (SYF) recently undertook a study on access to justice for Bedouin communities, with a focus on women.<sup>34</sup> Out of the total 390 Bedouins surveyed, 100 per cent of male and 96 per cent of female respondents believe that the tribal system is fairer and more equitable than Palestinian Shari'a courts. This sug-

“There are overwhelmingly negative perceptions and distrust among Bedouins towards the Shari'a justice system.”



gests that respondents in general choose not to rest to the Shari'a Court System. It also indicates a lack of knowledge and experience in the Shari'a legal system.

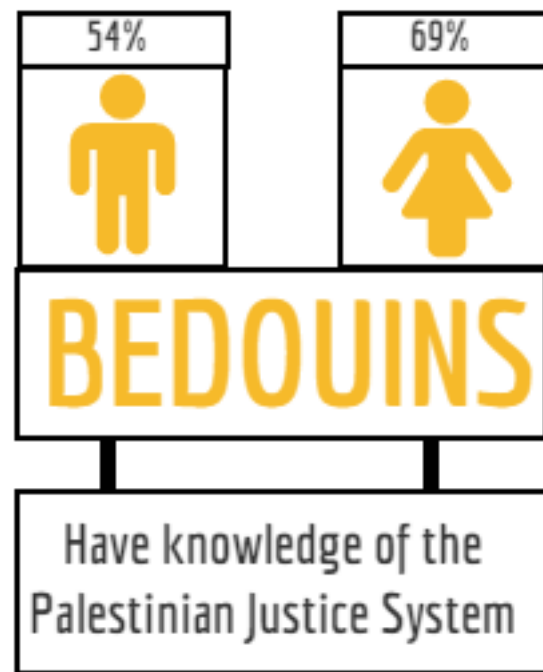
Only 54 per cent of men and 69 per cent of women responded positively to having knowledge of the system, with the main source of this knowledge being friends and acquaintances (89% men; 73% women). When asked about actual experience with litigation in the Palestinian justice system only 14 per cent of the total respondents said that they had taken legal action in the Shari'a courts in the past.

In general, most Bedouins prefer their own customary law system, *Urf*, which handles disputes based on traditional oral customs. *Urf* is the Islamic equivalent of common law. This indicates that although Bedouin respondents had strong opinions about the lack of fairness and equity in the Shari'a courts when compared to the tribal system, most Bedouins do not have actual



experience with navigating the system. Of the small number of respondents with experience in using the Palestinian Justice System, the majority, 77 per cent, indicated that this was related to marriage or divorce issues, the rest were related to property, discrimination, or other issues.

The SYF report suggests that there are overwhelmingly negative perceptions and distrust among Bedouins towards the Shari'a justice system, as well as clear knowledge gaps in understanding their jurisdictional authority. Most Bedouin prefer to use their internal informal justice system. It is critical to provide legal education to Bedouin men and women, in order to increase understanding and willingness to use the Palestinian justice system. This is particularly important for women, who face higher rates of gender-based violence in Bedouin society than mainstream Palestinian society.



**"Bedouins are left underrepresented and fragmented within Palestinian society, amidst discussions on state building, democracy and the creation of a Palestinian state."**

**Social Disruption**

A combination of socio-economic, political, and humanitarian factors has led to irrevocable social disruption within Bedouin communities. Bedouin traditions have been eroded since their expulsion from their ancestral lands in the Negev. Instead, they find themselves in a situation where they have no recognised land and are forced to share scarce resources with other clans, tribes, and local Palestinian herders. This is leading to social tension and a lack of traditional leadership.

In May 2011, representatives from Palestinian Bedouin Communities presented their concerns at the 10th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. They stated that as refugees, tribes and clans that normally would not have lived side by side, suddenly are forced to share the same well or live metres apart, creating new types of social friction and significantly altering gender roles. This friction between social groups continues to intensify as the already limited land available continues to fragment and shrink under the practices and policies of the occupation.<sup>35</sup>



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**Vulnerable Groups**

Although Bedouins are an extremely vulnerable group in the oPt, young people and women, otherwise marginalised, are especially vulnerable within Bedouin communities.

Bedouins live in extended families, with a relatively high percentage of second marriages. The resultantly large families create more people to care for, meaning they can scarcely fulfill their basic needs, creating an increased burden on women as caretakers. This leads to the early involvement of young girls in caretaking, marginalising their education, self-development, and often resulting in early marriage. Active involvement of women in decision-making is low.

In the complex matrix created by the challenges to mobility, work, education, and family, barriers for young people are also particularly high.

Young men enjoy better mobility, but are weighed down by unsafe roads, insecure job prospects, and increased unemployment due to seasonal work. As men, their higher social stature in their communities provides male youth with more choices and options than their female counterparts, however, they lack the ability to engage with their own community and advocate for their rights.

Young women are even more challenged by existing gender roles, which relegate young girls to the role of caretaker. They often marry young, and are unable to continue their education beyond primary school. They are encouraged to remain at home, and their skills are rarely used to



their full potential. Young Bedouins therefore have little scope to enhance their education, build their employability skills, and to escape traditional gender roles under

a tribal system, which also privileges the elderly, and allows little or limited space for change and critical decision making.

## THE ROAD TO RESILIENCE

The ability of individuals, households, communities, and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover, and transform from shocks and crises.



# TRANSFORMATIVE RESILIENCE

Grounded in the Transformative Resilience Framework, for the remainder of this document we seek to consider practical solutions to solve both the humanitarian and development challenges faced by Bedouins in the West Bank.

Since 1948, the very nature of Bedouin lives and their continuing ability to adapt to changing conditions under occupation and environmental change, demonstrates an acquired resilience. We seek not to impose a new mode of “being resilient” on these individuals and communities, but instead, will try to provide the support necessary to 1) prevent this resilience from being eroded, and 2) strengthen this resilience further.

Our approach is grounded in the notion that developing resilience is a process, and it is how you get there that is important, rather than the arrival at an artificial threshold. Based on our Transformative Resilience Framework, the figure lays out the three critical stages, while also recognising that this is a simplification and in reality there are myriad stages in between. “When resilience is limited to learning to “cope” with the challenges at hand, this leads to eroding resilience over time. This is because individuals and communities are forced to repeatedly absorb shocks, but without mitigating measures to offset their repercussions. To manage

adversity successfully, one must begin by “overcoming” the hardships, i.e. adapting to the changing circumstances. Finally, to truly become resilient, communities must “grow” from the experiences of hardship, and strengthen themselves to become better able to deal with future challenges. In a nutshell, they must transform.”<sup>36</sup> Our approach encourages a focus on dealing with the root causes of a problem, rather than merely the symptoms. A flexible approach is a resilient approach. Only by pushing boundaries and taking risks can new and

“A flexible approach is a resilient approach.”

innovative solutions be found. This must be taken hand-in-hand with a long-term commitment to change, and a willingness to accept that mistakes will undoubtedly be made to really move forward that must be learned from.

The transformative approach to resilience is critical to seeing sustainable change within Bedouin communities. This is especially because Bedouins face concurrent humanitarian and development challenges, unsurprising under protracted occupation. Collaboration between humanitarian and development actors using resilience as a link is critical to ensuring the efficacy of our interventions. Most importantly, all interventions must ensure real community ownership among Bedouins, to ensure they are consulted throughout the entire process of intervention – from conceptualisation and planning to implementation and evaluation.



# RESILIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Our solutions to the challenges faced by Bedouins are grounded in transformative resilience, taking not a humanitarian or development approach, but a third way. This approach takes the most successful elements from humanitarian and development solutions to Palestinian challenges, and reconsiders them through a transformative lens. In this way, these examples are by nature innovative, because they seek solutions outside of the aid programming norm. The resilience of Bedouin and herder communities will be strengthened to sustain their livelihoods and to remain on their lands. This will also assist in protecting broad swathes of West Bank land, which are vital for a sustainable, contiguous State of Palestine.

As with the majority of challenges facing Palestinians, the end to the occupation and the establishment of an independ-

ent, democratic Palestinian State is the only long-term sustainable solution. To achieve this, in the medium-term it is critical to take action to advocate for the end to occupation, while also improving the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, such as Bedouins. The rights of indigenous groups are upheld in international human rights treaties, and therefore require due consideration.

The transformative resilience approach will take a three-pronged approach to seek genuine change. These are: access to services, economic empowerment, and protection. These three focus areas take into account the main priorities requested by communities, the restrictions imposed by the reality of the occupation, and the specific cultural characteristics of the target population.





# ACCESS TO SERVICES

## **Renewable Energy Sources**

The aforementioned challenges in accessing electricity and the environmental concerns that accompany climate change and pollution are difficult to tackle. The traditional development approach might be to build energy infrastructure in Area C, which is accessible to Bedouins. However, under movement and zoning restrictions, this is virtually impossible and any built infrastructure is likely to be demolished. Moreover, a traditional humanitarian approach may be to subsidise the cost of energy, or provide short-term fuel sources, such as petrol generators. However, this is both unsustainable and environmentally damaging.

**“Israeli control over water resources has meant that communities are forced to pay extortionate prices for tanked water.”**

In contrast, the transformative resilience approach encourages the provision of renewable energy sources that can allay both of these challenges. While solar panels have previously been provided to

Bedouin communities, a critical innovation is to ensure that these are portable and light-weight, in order to be in line with the Bedouin semi-nomadic lifestyle. These would provide a family unit or community with basic electricity capacity for elemental lighting or the use or charging of simple electronic devices. For larger power capacity, bigger solar panel installations should be provided to the community with which they will be able to run larger electric appliances, such as a fridge. This will help Bedouin farmers to store agricultural products so they can be kept fresh before being sold. As this requires a bigger investment, each community should be provided with one unit, where possible, and this will be the shared source of energy for productive activities in the community. These panels will also be developed in a way that they are easy to transport.

Furthermore, communities could pay a small tariff towards the energy they receive to ensure their ownership and care over these panels, and to cover future maintenance costs. These will go into a bank account managed by a third party or a committee within the community. When maintenance is needed, it will be covered by the revenues generated through user payments, and also help cover expenses for new batteries or other equipment.

## **Access to Water**

Simple humanitarian or development approaches to increasing Bedouin access to water, critical to their livelihoods, are not working. Access to affordable and consistent water is a constant challenge for communities living in Area C. Israeli control over water resources has meant that communities are forced to pay extortionate

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**“While solar panels have previously been provided to Bedouin communities, a critical innovation is to ensure that these are portable and light-weight, in order to be in line with the Bedouin semi-nomadic lifestyle.”**



prices for tanked water, which often does not provide enough to serve all of their water needs.

Development actors may conduct rehabilitation of water sources like wells and springs, but this fails to take into account the likelihood of these being seized by Israeli settlers or the government. These also do not provide a systematic approach to ensure that all communities within Area C have equitable access to water. Similarly, humanitarian actors may take on the burden of funding or subsidising water tankers, even though this can only ever be a short-term and unsustainable solution. The humanitarian approach allows communities to 'cope' with the existing situation, but they cannot overcome the limited access to water. Therefore, another solution is required to build water resilience.

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"The distance to the nearest clinic is 8 km and the nearest elementary school is 6 km. This has a large impact especially on the education of girls, as many of them are unable to complete their education due to the inaccessibility of safe, secure, and affordable transport."

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A transformative resilience approach provides a systemic solution that helps all communities in Area C access water at an affordable price. Although it will be impossible to provide water at an equal rate with Area A communities, it would be possible to significantly reduce costs and help households who are often forced to spend as much as half their monthly expenditure on water.

The solution therefore would be to establish a Government of Palestine institution, in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government and the Water Authority, in order to regulate water deliveries to the entirety of Area C. By establishing an independent institution to manage this process, it would be possible for the institution to purchase their water from the nearest provider and then disseminate this water to planned water collection points. Donor communities could provide assistance in purchasing equipment or providing the Water Distribution Authority with budget support, in order to ensure reasonable access to water.

No permanent infrastructure would have to be established that would be under threat of demolition. Instead, the current situation of communities purchasing water from the Israeli company, Mekorot, would be regularised. Any profit made by the Institution would be re-invested back into these communities, in order to assist in other water needs, such as WASH infrastructure, irrigation for small farmers, rehabilitation of local springs, and establishment of solar panels to heat water, when needed. By providing a solution that is institutionalised into the Government of Palestine, Area C communities will also feel less isolated and fragmented from the rest

of Palestine. This will also resolve existing protection and access concerns, by ensuring that the water is coordinated to be delivered from the nearest provider, at an affordable price that can be paid by local communities.

### **Transportation**

Accessing service delivery centres is a fundamental need for isolated Bedouin communities, and 84 per cent of them find transportation costs unaffordable. On average, the distance to the nearest clinic is 8 km and the nearest elementary school is 6 km. This has a large impact especially on the education of girls, as many of them are unable to complete their education due to the inaccessibility of safe, secure, and affordable transport.<sup>37</sup>

A critical intervention would be to facilitate

minibuses at a reduced cost connecting extremely remote communities with the closest education and health access points, especially for children. To ensure sustainability, community members can pay a small monthly amount, which would go towards a transportation fund, out of which the driver would be paid. Another option is for the community itself to select the beneficiary of the vehicle, who provides services to school students and others, who can then utilise the vehicle for private purposes when off-duty and would receive a monthly stipend. This would help increase employability through the development of a new business opportunity, reduce school drop-out rates, and increase access to health-care. The provision of a bus could also help in transporting goods for sale to local markets in the West Bank.



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Another intervention would be to build links between young doctors and nurses at university and Bedouin communities. Young doctors and nurses could be encouraged to undertake a visit to Bedouin communities in Area C to gain experience in their chosen field, give back to the vulnerable in the community, and provide free check-ups. Each visit could be supervised by a licensed doctor willing to give back to the community through occasional pro bono visits. This would also assist in building new linkages between youth, Bedouin communities, and the larger society. One serious barrier to Bedouin livelihoods has been the breakdown of community and social cohesion. The violent architecture of the occupation has succeeded in fragmenting Bedouin and herder communities in Area C, through discriminatory and restrictive policies that manifest as a complex web of checkpoints, divided roads, military outposts, settlements, and so on. The psychological impact of scarring the Palestinian landscape is particularly enhanced for groups such as Bedouins, who have a strong historical-cultural connection to the land, and depend on their access to land and freedom of movement for their livelihoods.

With this stifled at every turn, the social composition of Bedouin society has changed, and as such, it is important to develop opportunities to enhance social cohesion among Bedouins, and develop linkages with the rest of Palestinian society. Community cohesion and psychological welfare are critical elements of building resilience, especially transformative resilience, which asks community members to rely on their social networks to find the strength to make required change, im-

prove their livelihoods, and transform for the better. While in the long-term, this will most likely be for the best, it is important to recognise that periods of transition are difficult and require strong internal support networks.

### ***Community Spaces for Community Cohesion***

An opportunity to increase community cohesion is through the establishment of community spaces. These could include community centres, kindergartens, schools, mobile libraries, art/culture centres, and playgrounds. In order to ensure these are not demolished, they can be constructed out of recycled materials, such as glass bottles, rubber tires, etc., as well as natural materials, such as mud, clay, and straw. If this is difficult, mobile units could be established instead, which can be assembled and collapsed when needed. A final option is a traditional tent, which is portable in the

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“The violent architecture of the occupation has succeeded in fragmenting Bedouin and herder communities in Area C, through discriminatory and restrictive policies that manifest as a complex web of checkpoints, divided roads, military outposts, settlements, and so on.”

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same manner as the rest of community possessions.

These community spaces would also help to fill service gaps within vulnerable communities, through recreational and informal education for school children unable to go to school or adults wanting to augment their education at a later stage in life, or through providing a space for medical visits (as outlined under ‘transportation’). Community members would themselves be able to assist in the design and construction of these spaces, to ensure they are tailored to community needs. Another means of building social cohesion would be to encourage art installations to repurpose empty spaces as community places. These could be developed using recycled materials and would provide a new focal point for intra and inter community networking. These spaces would be supported with the provision of solar panels.

### ***Alternative Education***

Conventional education does not work effectively in marginalised communities, particularly Bedouin communities in Area C. Many children are unable to access schools for a number of reasons, which can include distance, safety, cost, gender norms, and competing priorities. Education is undoubtedly central to the human development of children and young people, and an inability to access decent education is extremely detrimental.

The development approach to access to education might be to build a school, whereas, the humanitarian approach might be short-term mobile education. In contrast, the transformative resilience approach takes a third way. It seeks alterna-



tive systemic approaches that can change (transform) the situation in the long-term (sustainably). In order to do, alternative models of education are proposed, which change the educational curriculum or educational implementation in these areas.

This can include considering proposals such as: changing the school week from 5 days to 3 shortened days, which would reduce transportation costs and allow young Bedouins to help their families with work, when necessary. Other options include e-education and online learning potential, accelerated learning programs, and adapting the curriculum from Tawjihi onwards to mainstream vocational traineeships and apprenticeships (and still gain a high school certification). If none of these proposals are possible, the government could develop a programme of twinning with other schools, where homestays, online classes, and visits could be arranged, so students would not have to travel every day.

This would mean that security concerns over girls having to travel would be resolved; in situations where parents are discouraged from sending the children to school, because they are needed to help out at home or on family farms, they would be able to do so. By providing a more flexible schedule, drop-out rates would reduce. This would also assist in solving protection and access concerns, by providing new, safe, and secure solutions.



“Education is undoubtedly central to the human development of children and young people, and an inability to access decent education is extremely detrimental.”

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# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

## Cash Assistance

It has been repeatedly shown through development programming worldwide that cash assistance for poor people is an extremely effective way to lift them out of poverty (see right). The thought process is: "Give poor people cash without conditions attached, and it turns out they use it to buy goods and services that improve their lives and increase their future earnings potential."<sup>38</sup> As the people most aware of their own needs, providing poor people with unrestricted cash assistance enables the poor to make the decisions that best suit them to improve their livelihoods in the long-term. In fact, research has shown that cash assistance programmes lead to the same health benefits as food distribution, but also provide additional resources for people to spend on education, medicine, and transport.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, these programmes require less administrative capacity and are therefore less expensive to run on an operational level. Cash also has a multiplier effect, through which local farmers, small enterprises, and markets also benefit. If food is brought from elsewhere, the impact stops "at the people who eat it." In contrast if they buy locally, the local economy also benefits.<sup>40</sup> Fundamentally, this form of assistance transfers not just cash, but agency back to the recipient individuals. Being able to make their own

decisions about what they must invest in – be that education, healthcare, housing, or other needs – is a huge psychological gain and reduces stress and all of its harmful effects. This kind of a programme requires a bottom-up approach that is grounded in community consultation and leadership – a critical element of transformative resilience.

"Providing poor people with unrestricted cash assistance enables the poor to make the decisions that best suit them to improve their livelihoods in the long-term."

Our approach follows UNDP/PAPP programming and lessons learned under the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP), which supports vulnerable families for self-employment and micro-enterprise development as a means to reduce poverty. Micro grants and/or micro loans could be provided to the most vulnerable families, which require livelihood assistance. Apart from the actual investment support provided, selected community members would also receive business development support, technical assistance, and relevant information. Through consultations with Bedouin communities, entrepreneurial ideas have already been put forth by community members, such as the creation of

chicken and cow farms, the purchase of pasteurisation units, and support towards marketing, branding, and packaging of dairy products.

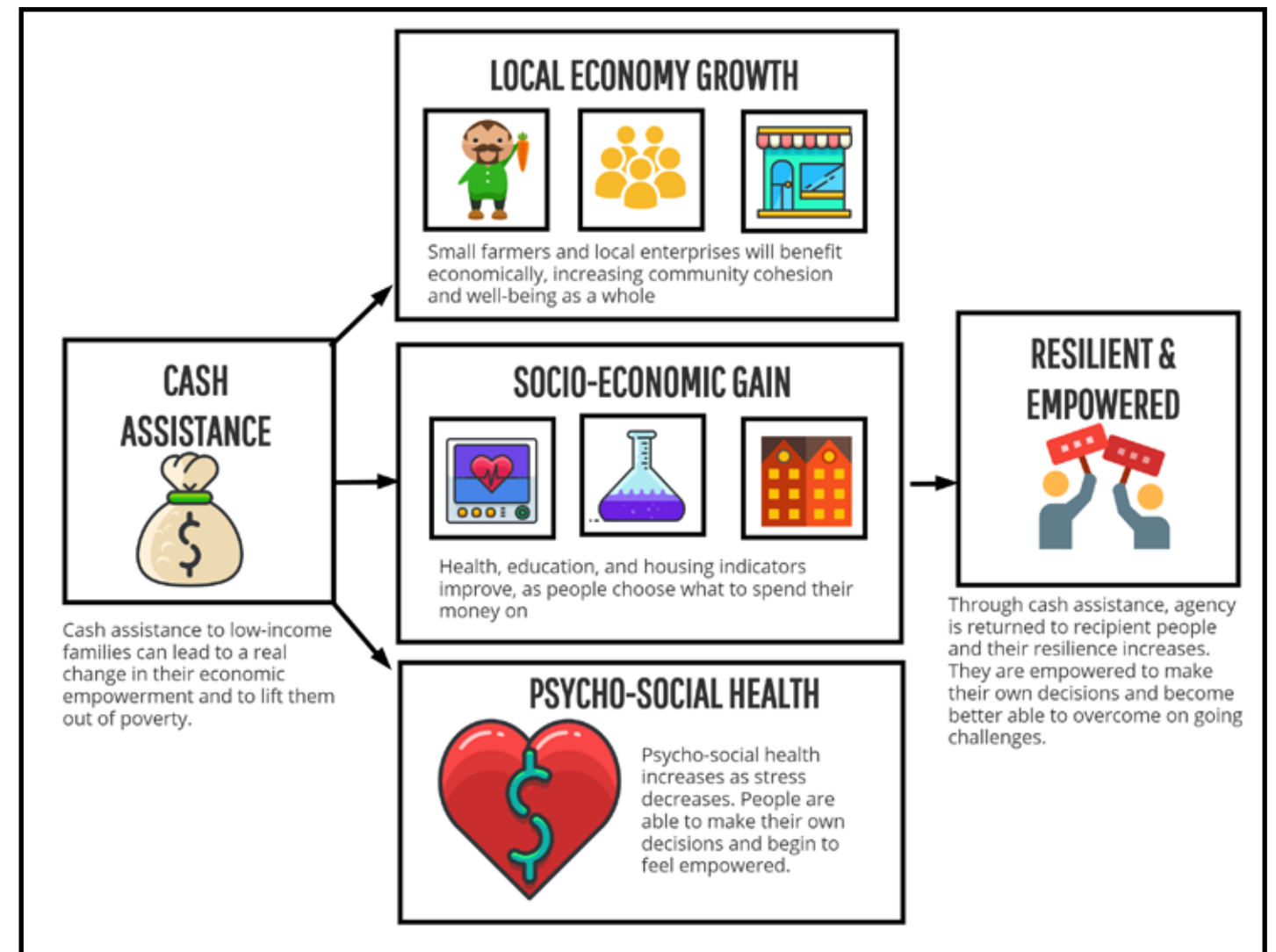
Furthermore, women's economic empowerment is particularly important within Bedouin communities. Although women traditionally remain in the role of care-taker, training women specifically in needed expertise can help lead to their economic independence. Furthermore, women can be supported in traditional areas, such as developing more effective marketing plans for handicraft production

and distribution.

## Building Sustainable Livelihoods

While there have been many attempts to assist in the development of better livelihoods for Bedouin communities, these have been largely unsuccessful due to an inability to overcome the systemic challenges facing Bedouins as described in this report.

Humanitarian and development streams of thought would most likely have different





approaches to tackling sustainable livelihoods. A humanitarian approach would likely be short-term provision of resources, including water, cash assistance, food packages, etc. so that Bedouin communities can continue to survive. In parallel, the development approach would be to try to solve the aforementioned challenges through the provision of solar panels, building of water containers, etc. however, these may fail to take into account the nomadic lifestyle of Bedouin communities, by being too cumbersome to be carried with them.

The transformative resilience approach takes into account the needs of the specific community at hand, rather than seeking to apply a standardised approach that may have worked elsewhere. In this case, when trying to assist Bedouins, it is critical to consider their way of life, culture and traditions, and the multitude of restrictions they face in Area C.

One transformative resilience solution focuses on utilising their existing community structure and expertise. As herder communities, Bedouins could sell the milk and other dairy products that they produce to local markets in the West Bank. Donor agencies could assist Bedouins in establishing a milk cooperative in Area A, and establishing a collection or delivery process, where Bedouin communities could drop off their milk and other dairy products to the cooperative to be pasteurised and made safe for human consumption. The cooperative would also be established and run by Bedouins themselves, with a focus on women and youth. Through a social enterprise model, the cooperative would be able to funnel any profits made into the running of the

cooperative, buying animal feed, and into marketing and design. Donor communities could assist Bedouins by training them in financial management, business development, social enterprise models, technical best practices for pasteurising, design and packaging, and developing a marketing strategy to access markets in the West Bank. This would help them become sustainable businesses that could be replicated as demand grows.

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**"The transformative resilience approach would take into account the needs of the specific community at hand, rather than seek to apply a standardised approach that may have worked elsewhere."**

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Bedouin livelihoods could be further augmented through innovative farming techniques such as 'farm in a box.' This smart system is designed to combine drip irrigation, renewable energy, and precision farming in one neat package: a shipping container. This process removes the need for access to an electricity grid, and instead relies on solar power. By using micro drip irrigation, this would limit the amount of water that is required. Furthermore, boxes could be planted in phases to ensure that there is always produce ready for consumption, exchange, or selling. In taking into account the Bedouin way of life, we have further developed this idea by making the containers portable

– they could be constructed on trucks or self-contained on wheels, so they can be attached to existing vehicles. This means that the containers would be able to travel with Bedouin communities whenever and wherever they move. Donor communities can assist through the provision of these containers, including a water collection device and air conditioning to ensure appropriate growth conditions, trucks for access, generators, and solar panels. Further assistance with technical establishment, design and packaging, and marketing would be beneficial. This would only require one-time assistance for Bedouin communities to gain long-term agency over their own livelihoods. The cooperative model described above for dairy products could also work effectively if Bedouin communities were to work together to establish these portable farms, and develop business links with other parts of the West Bank.

### **Scholarships for university education**

Education is critical when utilising a holistic approach to economic empowerment. Reducing barriers to effective education is an important step in ensuring long-term and sustainable economic empowerment. Complementary to the above two interventions, providing full scholarships for young Bedouins (male and female) will assist in long-term economic empowerment. Vulnerable families that would serve to benefit from the technical knowledge and education of their children will be selected, and one child will be provided with a scholarship to a relevant degree or training programme. The fees of the university and transportation costs will be covered, along with a basic stipend for living costs. It will be coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and the different universities to avoid any possible duplication.

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# PROTECTION

## **Legal Protection, Advocacy, and Awareness**

Area C and Greater Jerusalem, home to the majority of Bedouins in the oPt, are critical to a contiguous sustainable State of Palestine. Bedouins are among the most affected by Israeli policies of punitive demolitions, restrictions of movement, forced displacement, checkpoints, the Separation Wall, and settlement expansion.

This is why a clear advocacy strategy in collaboration between UN agencies, the Government of Palestine, national civil society, international NGOs, and Bedouin communities themselves must be developed, to put pressure on the Government of Israel to end the restrictive policies that directly

impact the livelihoods of Bedouins. Diplomatic negotiations are currently stalled, with no clarity on when the situation on the ground might change. Therefore, it is critical to develop protection strategies for those groups who are most directly facing the consequences of the Israeli occupation. These strategies include:

*Legal Support:* Covering the sometimes prohibitive costs for Palestinians to petition Israeli courts to challenge demolition orders, eviction orders, and confiscation of land. Providing pro bono legal assistance is critical to helping Palestinians navigate the complex bureaucracy of the Israeli legal system, where they may lack knowledge and information. If feasible, cases could be filed in other states' courts when directly related to the illegality of settlements and the commercial use of settlement products in these countries.



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*Advocacy and campaigning:* The importance of legal and political advocacy to defend the rights of marginalised Bedouin herder communities cannot be understated. The objective would be to empower Bedouin communities themselves and existing grassroots networks to lead their advocacy work. Training young people to become spokespeople for their own challenges both empowers youth and raises awareness of Bedouin concerns. This can be done through trainings on media (traditional and social), innovative storytelling, and knowledge-building on human rights and international law.

Campaigning must include a dimension of awareness-raising towards Palestinian society. Stereotypes and misconceptions towards Bedouins abound across Palestinian society, concerning Bedouin lifestyles, customs, and traditions. Creating links

between young Bedouins and other Palestinian youth will also be an effective means of breaking down these attitudes.

*Research:* Reliable and extensive data is required on the reality of the situation of Bedouin communities, as little is currently available. This must be conducted with a view to understanding the root causes of problems and sourcing potential solutions from communities themselves. This will also be utilised as an opportunity to more thoroughly explore traditional-culture dimensions within Bedouin tribes. Finally, the international community can put pressure on the State of Palestine to create a specific Ministry for Indigenous Communities, who is already a leader from within the Bedouin community in Palestine. They must also be recognised as protected minority within Palestine's Basic Law.

# CONCLUSION

Bedouin communities remain among the most marginalised in the oPt, directly facing the effects of the occupation. Despite this, not enough programming focus is given to Bedouin due to the difficulties of project implementation in Area C and greater Jerusalem under occupation. However, Bedouins as an indigenous group must be able to live in agency and dignity in keeping with their traditional way of life. Greater links must be established between Bedouin and herder communities and mainstream Palestinian society, to increase social cohesion, improve technical knowledge through two-way knowledge sharing, and foster a more pluralistic and open-minded Palestine. At the same time, the basic needs of Bedouin communities are going unmet: increased access to energy, water, basic facilities, education, healthcare, etc. is critical to building the transformative resilience of Bedouins and improving their access to livelihoods as a whole.



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