



## Report of CSOs in Israel

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# Summary

This report deals with the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework and opportunity to recover from Covid-19 crisis that has affected the world over the past year. The report focuses on monitoring the implementation of three goals in Israel: Gender Equality; Climate Change and Ending Poverty; and the activities of CSOs in these areas.

The pandemic illustrated how unpredictable events can occur and disrupt world order; How a phenomenon that is seemingly taking place far away on another continent, can reach us and paralyze our daily lives. Moreover, it highlights the fact that even when all of mankind is exposed to natural disasters and pandemics, there are, nevertheless, those who are more equal than others. All of this is happening at a time when scientists and international organizations have been warning from crises related to climate change and ecological collapse and its relation to health disasters, such as pandemics.

The pandemic not only illustrated the common challenges faced by all human beings and the need to find global solutions, but also revealed the extent to which such crises are fundamentally social, economic and political. The level of vulnerability or resilience of populations is greatly affected by a situation of inequality in access to rights and resources, and therefore factors such as status, gender, access to public services, technology, social solidarity etc. affect the fate of people differently.

In recent decades, since the privatization process of Israel's social welfare services began, social organizations in Israel have become significant players in the provision of welfare, health and education services. During the Covid-19 crisis, many CSOs experienced an increase in the volume of their needed services, while others dealt with reduction in income and government funding, which greatly impeded their ability to continue providing social services.

## **How did the country deal with the crisis? Did it fill the void? And which policy recommendations do CSOs believe the state should adopt?**

Israel's poverty rate, according to the National Insurance Institute, is expected to rise from 18% to 19.4% in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis and the poverty rates among the ultra-Orthodox, Arabs and single-parent families is expected to rise even higher.

In Israel, as in the rest of the world, the crisis has pushed more people, including the middle-class, into the cycle of poverty, particularly women, migrants, people without civil status and other disadvantaged populations. Single, divorced and widowed women who run a household on their own, as well as women with a double or triple disadvantage, such as asylum seekers, are more exposed to the danger of poverty and living below the poverty line. Migrants and populations without civil status in Israel have been particularly vulnerable, since in addition to the challenges they face in regularizing their status, many of them have found themselves without a source of livelihood following the Covid-19 outbreak.

Data and reports around the world indicate that the crisis has negatively affected women and adolescent girls, due to imposed lockdowns and restrictions on their freedom of movement: an increase in the number of women who have been fired or forced to take unpaid leave; an increase in cases of gender based violence and domestic violence; under-representation of women in decision-making positions; an unequal division of care work related to children and household tasks; and the risk of losing their livelihood.

**In light of the many years of activity of Israel's CSOs in the area of gender equality, one would assume that when the state makes political decisions aimed at dealing with and / or overcoming the crisis, it would specifically pay attention to gender inequalities, especially to women who suffer from violence and poverty, and at the very least ensure fair representation of these populations.**

However, in fact, an opposite reality was revealed: CSOs have had to once again knock on the doors of government ministries to remind the state of its commitment to gender equality and basic needs. The Covid-19 crisis has exposed the weakness of Israel's systems in dealing with issues such as poverty, unemployment and violence against women caused by the pandemic; in protecting vulnerable populations; and in addressing intersectional goals and identities. The government ministries responsible for implementing the SDGs withdrew from that responsibility during the Covid-19 crisis.

**The underlying argument in this report is that the state should adopt SDGs as a framework that will allow it to better recover from the Covid-19 crisis, not to return to the status quo prior to the outbreak, but rather build back better or fairer leaving no one behind.**

The strength of the SDGs lies in the fact that they offer holistic solutions to the problems and challenges currently facing the human race, that will serve as a roadmap for a better future that will strengthen the resilience of particularly vulnerable populations to cope with crises we may face in the future (climate, food and health).

A close analysis of SDGs shows that the goals are intertwined. The success of certain goals is essential to ensure the achievement of other goals. As such, in order to achieve the goals by 2030, much of the work needs to focus on the

intersectional spaces between the goals, which requires the adoption of a holistic and systemic approach that combine different processes to make a whole. The intersectional approach recognizes that people have different identities, needs and priorities as well as changing abilities over time, in a way that affects their resilience and ability to deal with different situations and hazards.

**We believe that the SDGs are more needed than ever before and can serve as an ethical, practical and measurable global and regional roadmap. The State of Israel, which has ratified the goals and is committed to promoting them, can benefit from implementing them.**

Now, precisely in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, when we are faced with the challenge of 'recovering better' and building a healthier, safer, fairer and more prosperous world, this effort is needed more than ever. And the sooner the better.

This report is part of the work of the Coalition of CSOs for the Implementation of Agenda 2030 in Israel, led by Itach Maaki - Women Lawyers for Social Justice, Heschel Center for Sustainability and Civil Leadership - the umbrella organization of Civil Society, in partnership and support of the Heinrich Bell Foundation. The Coalition has been working for three years to incorporate the values and language of the SDGs into the activities of CSOs in Israel to influence policy.

**מנהיגות  
אזרחית**  
ארגון הגג של המגזר השלישי

ע"ר  
משטטניות למען ערך חברתי  
حقوقيات من أجل العدالة الاجتماعية  
Women Lawyers for Social Justice

מֵעֵל  
מֵעֵל

**HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
TEL AVIV**

**השל**  
מרכז השל לקיימות  
Heschel Sustainability Center  
مركز هيشل للاستدامة