

Urban Renewal in the Arab Settlements in Israel

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After decades of discrimination in budgets and land resources, the historical core of Arab localities and the older neighborhoods now faces many physical challenges. These include poorly functioning infrastructures, a lack of public parks, a severe shortage of public facilities, chronic housing shortages, poor public transportation, lack of connections to newer neighborhoods, and others. In recent years, urban renewal in Israel has become synonymous with the Clearance and Rebuilding program and the National Outline Plan 38. These, however, have not produced effective solutions. In this article, we challenge the boundaries of the discourse to describe alternative tools enabling renewal of the old fabric of these towns. To develop tools appropriate to local residents' needs and social characteristics, we first identified the key physical challenges faced by older Arab neighborhoods and analyzed the planning and development barriers to their potential renewal. We next defined goals that address the relevant challenges and barriers, and developed four alternative tools for their renewal. We believe that these tools, with encouragement of more in-depth thinking at government ministries to develop and promote mechanisms supporting successful urban renewal in Arab towns, will produce significant progress in reducing the spatial inequality currently facing Arab towns and will pave the way toward improved quality of life for their residents.

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