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The Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem: survey as a tool for planning activism

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The Palestinian neighborhoods of eastern Jerusalem are marked by a state of "under-planning", which is characterized by prohibition of construction in wide areas. Though most of these neighborhoods have an approved Outline Plan, the plans do not fit residents' needs and are not implemented. Consequently, and also as a result of other difficulties in obtaining building permits, the residents turn to improvised solutions of informal construction, in spite of the constant threat of demolition. In an attempt to address this trap, Bimkom carried out over the last years a comprehensive planning survey of East Jerusalem neighborhoods, as a tool for providing planning assistance. The information in the survey was collected over several years through meetings with residents, independent research, and analysis of hundreds of plans. The aim of the survey is to offer a base for more responsive and flexible statutory planning in these neighborhoods that includes ways of integrating and including the existing situation in the area. The survey provides a platform for an approach that combines the local logic of the built environment with the institutional logic that directs the planning agencies.

Sari Kronish graduated in architecture at Columbia University, New York, and is coordinating partner for E.Jerusalem activities in Bimkom. Previously she worked in the private sector in Israel and abroad, was involved in diverse projects, and worked as urban-community planner for one of the community administrations in Jerusalem.

