



**State of Israel
Ministry of Social Affairs and Services
Division for Personal and Social Services
Service for the Aged**

**National Report of Israel on Follow-up
to the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy
(RIS)
of the Madrid International Plan of Action on
Ageing (MIPAA)**

**Programme for Care for the Elderly in the
State of Israel: Major areas for intervention**

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A. Involvement and partnership with the elderly

The Ministry of Social Affairs considers it extremely important to cooperate with the elderly in many spheres, such as setting legislative policy and planning and providing services to the elderly. Activities take place on several levels: the ministerial level, local authorities level and specific and local services.

There are several modes for establishing partnerships with the elderly:

1. Partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs

There is a joint committee for administering the Service for the Aged and representatives of NGOs of the elderly **for the development of community-based services**, and for the representatives of local authorities. The Committee meets at least twice a year. Issues are raised by Third Sector representatives or by Service for the Aged representatives, and are brought up for joint discussion and decision-making. Examples of issues discussed are the structuring of the basket of services, allocating budget for the services, work procedures, setting criteria for operating the services and more.

2. Joint activities working for legislation:

Preparing the Sheltered Housing Law

A joint committee, formed of representatives of nonprofit associations of residents of sheltered housing and representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs, has jointly prepared a draft law including criteria and standards for the operation of sheltered housing in Israel, ensuring elder rights, including financial investments in sheltered housing.

3. Preparation of the national program for paid employment of the elderly

A joint committee composed of representatives of the Amal Association, an NPO of the elderly working to promote programs for paid employment of the elderly in Israel, representatives of the Service for the Aged and of additional nonprofit associations, has been working in partnership to introduce a national program to prepare a nationwide program of employment frameworks with pay for the elderly. The program includes revisions to existing laws to provide proper payment for the elderly, which will facilitate competitive conditions with other populations, locating suitable work for the elderly and development of additional workplaces throughout the country.

4. Promoting a positive image of the elderly

Each year, agencies and NPOs of the elderly and representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs plan a national programme of events for Senior Citizens Month. Programming includes one-day conferences and explanatory sessions, ceremonies and events for the general population, professionals, and the elderly themselves, focusing on raising national awareness of the contribution by the elderly to society in the past and present and describing their involvement and influence on various spheres along with their unique problematic aspects.

Programme partners are the media, including the radio, reporting on examples of activities by the elderly on their own behalf and working for the community.

Local partnerships

1. Advisory council of elders on the municipal level

Some local governments in Israel maintain an advisory council of elders alongside of their municipal council. The Tel Aviv municipal council has a representation of the pensioners' faction **sitting on the Council**. Every issue of urban planning or services for the elderly is discussed jointly with the advisory council, including the opening of new clubhouses, community development, and the like.

2. Development and establishment of eldercare centres and Supportive Communities

Most local and regional councils in Israel have a community development plan for supportive communities and community centers as well as additional focal points for social activities, planned jointly by social workers in each local government's division of social services together with representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and representatives of the local NGO working for the elderly, which usually includes elderly volunteers.

Future trends

- Continuing integration of the elderly in discussions and committees involved in planning services, legislation, setting standards for service provision for this population.
- Training the elderly and supporting them, while maintaining their involvement in the various Ministry and local authorities' activities benefiting the elderly population.

B. Addressing poverty and the financial situation

Approximately 20% of all elderly in Israel are poor, i.e., living under the poverty line, which is measured as half of the median income in the country.

Over the past year, the State of Israel has been working to minimize poverty among the elderly as follows:

A. Raising the level of income for the elderly

1. About one-third of the elderly are receiving supplementary income payments for low-income individuals from the National Insurance institute. These are elderly with no source of income of their own, who have no savings, pension or property. This year, the allocation paid to these elderly has been increased to bring some of the elderly over the poverty line.

2. Development of employment projects for the elderly

The Ministry of Social Affairs, in partnership with additional ministries, nonprofit associations and local authorities, has developed a programme for paid employment for low-income elderly who wish to work. Programmes include developing special employment frameworks for the elderly, types of work suitable for the elderly, and integrating 65+ workers in easy jobs in various plants.

The workplaces include social activities for the elderly as well, such as parties and trips, and some plants even provide hot meals as well as transportation payments. Pay is set according to the type of job, work hours, and up to the level of pay which would still allow the worker to continue to receive NII subsidy. These programs enable the elderly to receive payment for work at the same time that self-image is raised, while leisure time is used efficiently.

At present, about 60 such Ministry-subsidized programmes are in operation.

Future trends

- The Ministry of Social Affairs is continuing to develop additional programmes as well as employment programs for elderly with disabilities. The Service for the Aged has allocated a special budget for the development of these services for the forthcoming years.

B. Subsidizing vital services

- a. Implementing the **Senior Citizens Law** which provides 50% discount to the elderly on **public transportation, television tax, theatrical performances, entrance to national parks**, and exemption or 33% discount on municipal rates for residential property.

- b. **50% discount on pharmaceuticals** for indigent elderly who are receiving minimum income supplements from the National Insurance Institute. Furthermore, there is a ceiling on the monthly payments for vital medications that are part of the basket of pharmaceuticals.
- c. **Hot meals:** The Ministry of Social Affairs is a partner in subsidizing hot meals in the setting of public soup kitchens operated by NGOs. Furthermore, the Ministry's Service for the Aged subsidizes hot meals for elderly housebound and the infirm attending eldercare day centres, who receive breakfast and lunch at the centers or in social clubs.
- d. **Various services:** All of the services supervised and developed by the Ministry are subsidized for elderly individuals who are living from minimum income supplements, for example, Supportive Communities, clubs, eldercare day centres, vacation facilities and old age homes. In addition, the Ministry provides homemaking services, transportation to medical care services, providing supplementary medical equipment for the home, and more.

The elderly pay only a minimum on a sliding scale, with the balance paid by the Ministry and the Local Authority where the elderly person lives to make up the full sum.

Future trends

The Ministry sees itself developing additional services to provide a response for the elderly's daily needs, and subsidizing programmes for indigent elderly.

C. Ensuring quality of life and continued independence

1. Legislation

The State of Israel has passed a number of laws whose goal is to ensure quality of life for all its citizens, **including the elderly**.

These laws include:

The National Health Insurance Law (1995) defines the basket of medical services for all people living in Israel according to state and needs.

The Welfare Services Law (1958) places the responsibility with Local Authorities to develop social services for the welfare of needy citizens, including the elderly, under all circumstances and throughout Israel.

In addition, there are laws specifically directed to the elderly:

Senior Citizens Law (1989) providing unique benefits to the elderly in various spheres.

Supervision of Institutional Residences Law (1965) are regulations on behalf of the elderly which define the conditions for life and care in old age homes.

2. Development and subsidy of services

Israel has a wide spectrum of community-based services, including individual care and home help, clubhouses, daycare centres, Supportive Communities, sheltered housing, as well as a wide range of institutional services for independent, disabled, mentally disabled and nursing elderly who cannot remain in their homes as well as those who wish to live at home.

The government is a partner with various NGOs in the development of various services as needed by the elderly in Israel. Criteria for budget allotments for establishing various services include preferred conditions for poverty-stricken areas. Some of the services are regional, providing a response for the elderly dispersed over a wide geographical area.

Criteria for deductible by the elderly clients of social services is on a sliding scale, favoring the indigent and includes subsidies for the poverty-stricken.

3. Staff development

There are several staff training institutions in Israel for geriatric specialists. Currently, there are courses and in-service training workshops for workers in all spheres of community-based services and institutions. Most of the spheres of work accept workers with experience in working with the elderly and who have undergone basic training courses which are officially recognized by the Ministry in this field. These requirements have even been introduced into the work procedures and regulations.

4. Supervision

Built-in supervision by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health, each in its own sphere of responsibility, for community-based and institutional services provided for the elderly.

Goal of the supervision: An examination of the quality of care provided in the various settings and raising the quality of life.

Community-based frameworks place the emphasis on advancing health and independent life for the elderly.

Future trends

- Continued legislation and setting care standards within the frameworks of healthcare and social services
- Continued training of workers in the aforesaid areas
- Continued development of community-based frameworks which encourage the elderly to be involved and independent