

SHARED CITIES

Leveraging the potential of mixed cities as shared cities



JEWISH-ARAB PARTNERSHIP IN MIXED CITIES

In 2018, Israel's municipal elections resulted in Jewish-Arab coalitions in every mixed city council (cities with over 10% Arab population: Haifa, Acre, Lod, Ramle, Upper Nazareth, Ma'alot-Tarshiha, and Jaffa). This unprecedented political partnership creates a unique opportunity to transform these communities from mixed cities to become shared cities. It is a chance to improve the situation of Arab citizens in mixed cities and bettering Jewish-Arab relations as well as challenge the status quo of national politics and prove that Jewish-Arab political partnerships are not only possible, but beneficial.



TRANSFORMING MIXED CITIES INTO SHARED CITIES

The Shared Cities Initiative aims to support the development of Israel's mixed cities as shared, inclusive, and egalitarian spaces through the following approaches:

- **Municipality Capacity Building:** First and foremost, our goal is to foster effective joint governance within mixed city municipalities. To achieve this, we will offer cultural competency training and Arabic courses for Jewish elected council members, as well as middle-senior level professional staff. We will also map the needs of the newly elected Arab council members in an effort to translate their political power into tangible achievements. Simultaneously, we plan to provide all council members with a forum to exchange ideas and knowledge.
- **Knesset shared cities caucus:** Immediately after the next Knesset convenes, we will establish a shared cities caucus. We are currently identifying potential Knesset members who could lead and participate. Thus far, we have approached MK Sami Abu-Shehadeh (Balad) who holds the portfolio of mixed cities at the Joint List, and he has expressed interest in leading the caucus alongside a Jewish MK.
- **Best practices research:** This year, we administered the first state-wide survey on intergroup attitudes among Jewish and Arab residents in Israel's mixed cities. We will present our findings to the mayors of mixed cities in individual meetings, as well as publicly at our first annual conference.
- **Annual Shared Cities Conference:** This annual conference will be hosted in a different mixed city each year and will focus on best practices and policy recommendations for better governance of mixed cities. The first conference is scheduled for December 2020, in Acre.
- **Shared society study missions:** In addition to our survey research, we are also studying models for mixed cities and cooperation around the world. As part of this effort, we are planning annual study missions to other intercultural cities. The first delegation will be to Belfast, Northern Ireland, in October 2020, comprising 14 elected representatives, one Arab and one Jewish from each mixed city. These trips will provide representatives with a unique opportunity to learn from shared society experts about effective partnership and community work.