

# Quarterly Resilience Index Western Negev

**September 2024**



**One year mark of the October 7th terror attack**

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## Executive summary

### General background:

Since October 7, 2023, the State of Israel has been in a severe and ongoing crisis with significant consequences for the resilience of both the general population and the population of the Western Negev, which was more severely affected by the events of October 7. A research team consisting of representatives of several organizations - New Land Now, Indicate, and senior researchers in the field of resilience from Tel Aviv University and Tel Hai Academic College - joined efforts in assessing the level of resilience and coping mechanisms among the public in Western Negev.

### Method:

The research was conducted using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative study collected information from a sample of 503 people from the Western Negev population, using a structured questionnaire distributed through social networks, 'word of mouth', volunteers who worked in the communities, and an Internet panel company.

The quantitative data collection was carried out between August 28 and September 8, 2024. The qualitative study tracked and analyzed the discourse that developed on main social media networks during July, August, and September 2024.

The presentation of the data in the current report integrates data and insights from the two types of research, in a way that illuminates different facets of resilience and varied coping indices among the population of Western Negev, in a demographic segmentation according to the types of communities: Western Negev cities; kibbutzim, moshavim, and residential communities; and, Bedouin communities. 12 variables were examined: National (societal) resilience, community resilience, individual resilience, hope, morale, stress symptoms, post-traumatic stress symptoms, perceived threats, sense of danger, social cohesion, and attitudes towards the education infrastructure and employment - livelihood.

### The main findings:



## ► **National Resilience:**

The level of national resilience of the kibbutzim/moshavim's population is similar to that of the Bedouin communities' populace and is significantly lower than that of the urban residents. The national resilience of the urban population is the highest among the three types of communities. The discourse on social networks reveals that the background for the lower resilience is different among the two types of communities. An 'anti-establishment' tendency has developed in recent months among the Bedouin community, derived from a feeling that the residents "fall between the cracks" of Israeli authorities. The closing of ranks within the Bedouin sector is clearly evident in situations of friction with the state, such as in the demolition of Abu Kef family home in Umm Batin, where many Bedouins barricaded themselves in the house intended for demolition, burning tires and disrupting order. The anti-establishment tendency is also reflected in the attitude toward the Bedouins who serve in the IDF, towards whom it is claimed that the state exploits them without granting them recognition or equal rights. Further joint efforts among Bedouins can be seen in their efforts to collect donations for the residents of Gaza, which was seen as the only step that the Bedouins could take for the benefit of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, it is evident in the social networks that the upcoming marking of the year to the events of October 7th has led to a manifested lack of trust in the State among the kibbutzim/moshavim's populace. This trend was, to some extent, expected due to the flood of memories of the events, yet it was intensified against the background of the severe controversy surrounding the holding of a state ceremony. Additionally, the current discourse regarding the hostages, as well as the return of the bodies of those who were abducted alive, has taken a substantial place in the discourse within the kibbutzim and moshavim. Many have emphasized that their return is a crucial condition for restoring trust in both the political and military systems.

## ► **Community Resilience:**

The level of community resilience in the kibbutzim/moshavim is distinctly higher compared to the cities and the Bedouin populations. The level of community resilience of the Bedouin population is the lowest among the three types of communities and even in absolute terms (compared to the general population assessed in a parallel study). The discourse in the social networks reveals that as the marking of a year from the October 7th events approaches, it is evident that the mayors continue to act with determination to establish the narrative of urban heroism, focusing on commemorating the fallen and highlighting the stories of courage, as well as emphasizing the shared destiny with the nearby communities. Additionally, the efforts of the authorities to provide the residents a sense of security and maximal preparedness to cope with emergency situations stand out, despite the growing frustration of the residents with the lack of protected spaces in the cities, especially in educational settings.

## ➤ **Individual resilience:**

The level of individual resilience of the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim and the residents of the cities is similar and relatively high; Individual resilience is lower among the Bedouin population. The level of individual resilience of the population of the Western Negev is similar to that of the general population in Israel (assessed in a parallel study) and reflects that during an ongoing emergency situation, a process of "normalizing" the emergency has emerged, while a new emergency routine has been created, which allows the individual to continue functioning as much as possible.

## ➤ **Mental health (stress symptoms and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms):**

Stress levels (anxiety and depression symptoms) and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms are relatively high among all populations in Western Negev. Still, the urban residents expressed a lower level of stress compared to the other two types of communities. The residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim and the urban residents expressed moderate levels of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, with no difference between them. Although the issue of stress symptoms emerged in the study as more significant among the Bedouins and residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim, the discourse on this issue on social networks was more prominent among the urban residents. Since the outbreak of the war to date, the issue of mental support has occupied a relatively central place in the discourse among urban residents. Many expressed frustrations over the fact that while financial aid in the form of tax benefits and property tax concessions has been given to some of the population, in the mental health realm many remain without adequate solutions. Some residents report that they are forced to travel outside the city to receive mental health support, due to long waiting times and lack of therapists. This is even though resilience centers do operate, both in Sderot and Ofakim, in cooperation with the local municipalities, which are supposed to provide a wide-ranging mental response to the residents. The discourse surrounding the lack of response to mental health needs is particularly prominent in Ofakim and then Netivot, whose residents feel that they have not yet received proper recognition from the state for the trauma they experienced and, therefore, do not receive financial support for the treatment. One of the hypotheses regarding the lack of discourse in the Bedouin communities is related to cultural norms, according to which mental difficulties are not discussed within the social discourse since referral to mental health services is not accepted in these communities.

### ➤ **Hope and morale:**

The level of hope in the cities was high compared to the other two types of communities. Similarly, the respondents from the cities expressed greater morale compared to the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim. The level of hope was found in many previous studies, as well as in the current study, to be an important predictor of resilience - both individual and national. Accordingly, a systemic investment in building and preserving hope is important and essential.

### ➤ **Perceived security:**

The sense of danger among the population of the Western Negev is relatively high. When considering the ranking of various threats, the political threat and the threat of violence in Israeli society were seen as the most threatening factors, even more than the threat of war in the various fronts. No substantial differences were found in the sense of danger between the different types of communities. However, the residents of the cities perceive most of the threats as lower compared to the residents of the other types of communities. Of all the community types, the Bedouin residents perceive the threat of violence within Israeli society as the most threatening to them specifically. The findings from the discourse on the network demonstrate the differences in the nature of the concerns that arise among the residents of the different communities. In the kibbutzim and moshavim, the return of the residents from the hotels to the permanent and temporary communities provoked mixed reactions. While in the communities that were severely affected and remained evacuated, a process of demolition and reconstruction began that inspired hope, among the communities that were forced to return, fears arose concerning life under threat and the normalization of life in the shadow of war. Criticism directed against the Tkuma directorate for its conduct and severance from the needs of the residents, and against the IDF for its inability to provide real security, even today after long months of fighting, is evident. Many of the residents are still undecided about their future in the area; Some define the return as a "trial period" due to insecurity and fear. Among the residents of the Bedouin communities, the public figure who receives the greatest attention is Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, who is seen as the head of the "Ben Gvir Police" mechanism - which serves him by harassing Bedouin society. On the one hand, the police's inability to deal with the wave of crime and violence sweeping the Negev indicates, according to the residents, the reluctance of its leader to attend to the residents' safety. On the other hand, the worsening of the homes demolition policy, led by the minister, is seen as a tool to suppress the Bedouin society, while taking advantage of the war in Gaza for this purpose. The lack of trust in the police leads to the growth of conspiratorial claims towards the activities of the police and the expression of doubt in everything related to its activities.

## ➤ **Social cohesion in the country:**

Social cohesion is the respondents' assessment of their perception of the sense of belonging and the relationship between populations in the State of Israel (as a whole). The level of perceived social cohesion in the entire sample was moderate. In addition, the social cohesion in the cities was assessed to be higher compared to the kibbutzim/moshavim.

## ➤ **Education:**

The level of satisfaction with the education system is low among all respondents. No significant differences were found in the level of satisfaction according to the division into the different types of communities. Apparently, the reasons for the dissatisfaction are not the same in all the communities, as appears from the discourse. In the kibbutzim/moshavim, the preparations for the start of the school year, and especially the location of the schools, were identified as a highly influential factor in the return of the residents and their stay in the region, even beyond the 7-km line. A loud campaign was conducted on the network in the Eshkol Regional Council about the lack of hinterland schools, but similar criticism was also expressed in the neighboring councils. The campaign and discourse on the networks in general reveal that not only the final decisions, but also the conduct of the councils and the Ministry of Education towards the residents, especially in Eshkol, deepened the lack of trust in the establishment and the feeling of alienation, despite the return of most of the residents to their homes. Conversely, in the cities there was criticism against the informal education and the differences in the means of protection in the schools. The arguments raised in the Bedouin population regarding the issue of education do appear on the networks, but they are unrelated to the war.

## ➤ **Livelihood:**

A significant negative effect on livelihood was identified among the kibbutzim/moshavim population. However, this population also reported receiving the greatest support from the state. In the cities, the reported negative effect on livelihoods was lower, but simultaneously, less aid from the state was reported compared to the kibbutzim. The residents of the Bedouin communities reported that they have experienced the most significant economic upheaval due to the war, but they feel that they receive the least assistance from the state. Accordingly, they report that the second issue that threatens them the most (after the violence in the society) is the economic situation. In line with these findings, the economic discourse also increases more strongly among the residents of the cities and the Bedouins and less among the kibbutzim/moshavim. Among the residents of the cities, the inflation, increased property tax and informal educational settings, along with the high unemployment rates are especially frustrating.

In Ofakim and Netivot in particular, allegations are heard that express dissatisfaction with their non-inclusion in the grants provided by "Tkuma directorate", and in Sderot there are claims that the grants are being transferred to the municipality instead of to the residents themselves. At the same time, the high unemployment rates are a significant source of concern and there is criticism of the municipal policy that focuses on building new neighborhoods instead of supporting residents who have lost their source of livelihood. This, despite the municipalities' local initiatives to improve the employment situation such as dedicated job fairs. Among the Bedouins, the war did create significant consequences, as expressed on the networks. Before the war, the economy of the Bedouin communities in the south, and especially in Rahat, relied heavily on Palestinian laborers from the West Bank. After the cancellation of the entry permits following October 7, their livelihood was significantly affected, with a sharp increase in the costs of hiring laborers and contractors who reported economic instability. In addition, the war further damaged the economy of the Negev, especially in light of budget cuts for the Arab society. In response, calls began to support Bedouin businesses and to boycott Jewish businesses in Be'er Sheva, in an attempt to preserve the local economy.

### **Housing:**

This topic is reviewed only in the discourse on the networks. Differences were evident in the issues that arose between the different types of communities. In the kibbutzim/moshavim, concerns are raised simultaneously with the hope to return to live in the communities, as well as anger at the Tkuma directorate that is exerting pressure to return to an area that is still unsafe. In the cities, the discourse on housing refers mainly to the expansion of the cities, which some residents see as a blessing, while others express fear of possible damage to the old residents. In contrast to the expanding construction in the cities, in the Bedouin communities, the discourse on housing focuses on the demolition of houses, which increased when Minister Ben-Gvir took office. This topic raises additional political issues. The discourse differences between the different types of communities indicate the varied challenges facing each population and require the provision of adapted solutions for each problem.

### **Evacuated versus non-evacuated communities:**

This topic was reviewed, a priori, only in the quantitative study. It was found that people from communities that were evacuated expressed less positive coping indices and increased negative coping indices compared to those from communities that were not evacuated. Although there is no way to know whether the people themselves were evacuated or not (this question has not been investigated), it can nevertheless be concluded that evacuating communities for an extended period of time makes the resilience and mental coping of the residents of an evacuated community more difficult (whether they were evacuated themselves or not).

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## Conclusions:

The results of the integrated research carried out using two different research methods, quantitative (research questionnaire) and qualitative (network discourse) on the one-year marking of the war, present a challenging situation among the different types of residents of the Western Negev.

In addition to the findings that present relatively low levels of individual and national resilience compared to the general population (the findings of the current study were compared to data from another study conducted during the same period), differences were identified between the types of communities, where national resilience, hope, morale and a sense of social cohesion are higher among the residents of the cities, while community resilience is higher in the kibbutzim/moshavim. The levels of stress and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms among all types of communities were quite high, especially among the kibbutzim/moshavim and Bedouins, as was the sense of danger, which was at a relatively high level.

A number of topics point to the need to monitor each type of community separately and also to the unique contribution of combining the data from both types of research. The perceived threats were ranked differently among the varied types of communities. A more comprehensive review of the discourse on the networks presents evidence of this in the discourse. Furthermore, while satisfaction with the education system is low to moderate in all communities, analysis of the network discourse helps to understand that the causes of dissatisfaction are different in each type of community. Similarly, the livelihood difficulties alongside the support provided by the state, as well as the issue of housing and the way in which it is expressed in the discourse on the networks, point to different patterns between the varied types of communities.

Integrated, these findings point to the fact that each population should be provided with solutions that suit it specifically. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of reviewing the subject by classifying it according to the different types of communities, using diverse research methods. These enable the integration of data and insights that could not be reached without connecting the two different methods of data collection.

## Introduction

### Partners:

#### ➤ **New Land Now**

"New Land Now" is a non-profit organization, which began operating immediately after October 7, following the "Black Sabbath". The organization relies on continuous data collection from the field purposed to create a situational report, and insights, as well as initiating and guiding projects for the rehabilitation of the Western Negev. All the projects arise from the needs and challenges identified in the field. New Land collects data through different and diverse means, inter alia through active involvement in the communities, direct dialogue with residents, community involvement events and joint activities with other relevant associations.

The specific areas include, to date, initiatives in the fields of resilience - from the individual to the community, and further activities are planned in the fields of education and employment.

#### ➤ **Indicate**

Indicate Inc. specializes in conducting in-depth research among different population groups in Israel through monitoring and in-depth analysis of the discourse on the networks, conducting surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews and more. Based on its monitoring and collection capabilities, Indicate provides research services, strategic consulting, and communication consulting to leading organizations in Israel and abroad while specializing in working with unique sectors and communities. Indicate is led by experts with proven experience in areas such as public policy, governance, communications, new media, and marketing.

Indicate's unique experience in working with the various sectors in Israel is based on many years of familiarity with various communities that speak different languages (Arabic, Russian, Amharic, Yiddish, etc.), and with the unique needs and challenges of each community.

#### ➤ **Tel Aviv University and Tel Hai Academic College**

ResWell (Multi-National Resilience and Wellbeing Research Collaboration) at Tel Aviv University works to promote research, support policy design, and disseminate knowledge in the fields of resilience and well-being. ResWell brings together leading researchers from Tel Aviv University and Tel Hai College and from more than 20 countries in the world, which regularly examine various crisis situations and publish insights about the ways in which individuals, communities and societies can deal more effectively with diverse challenges and strengthen their resilience capabilities.

ResWell 's ongoing research efforts have led to the development of evidence-based strategies to support the resilience of communities in Israel and worldwide, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the ongoing "Iron Swords" war.

## General background:

Resilience is defined as the capacity to successfully cope with a crisis, recover from it and return to functioning at a level similar to the pre-crisis level or even strengthen beyond that. Resilience can be examined at the individual level (individual resilience), the community level (community resilience) and the level of the society as a whole (national or societal resilience). The severe crisis in the State of Israel in general, and in the Western Negev in particular, began with the events of October 7, 2023, and continues, due to the ongoing war, to this day. The crisis has significant consequences on the resilience of the population, and therefore, continuous monitoring of the level of resilience and coping mechanisms of the public is required. This monitoring will be useful in identifying the fluctuating needs and examining the effectiveness of the intervention and rehabilitation programs designed to restore normalcy in the civilian system. For this purpose, we have initiated a longitudinal study that will periodically monitor the level of resilience among the population of the Western Negev region. The report presents the findings of a study carried out while combining quantitative and qualitative research methods: The quantitative research was carried out using a structured questionnaire that was distributed to a sample of the population in Western Negev almost a year after the outbreak of the war. The measurement was carried out for approximately three weeks, which started on August 28 and ended on September 8, 2024. The qualitative research was carried out by monitoring and analyzing the discourse on social networks during July, August and September 2024. The data presentation in the current report combines the data and insights from the two types of research, in a way that illuminates different facets of resilience and the varied coping measures among the population of the Western Negev, in a demographic segmentation according to the type of communities: Western Negev cities; kibbutzim, moshavim, and residential communities; and Bedouin communities.

## General methodology:

The quantitative research is based on a structured questionnaire that was distributed anonymously between August 28 and September 8, 2024 to the population of the Western Negev, among residents of kibbutzim, moshavim, cities, and Bedouin communities. Beyond the demographic characteristics of the respondents, 11 variables were examined: National (societal) resilience, community resilience, individual resilience, hope, morale, stress symptoms, post-traumatic stress symptoms, perceived threats, sense of danger, social cohesion, and attitudes towards community education infrastructure. In light of the importance of the issue of employment-livelihood, individual questions were added on this topic. The findings are presented both in relation to the entire sample and divided into the three types of communities - kibbutzim/moshavim; cities and towns; and Bedouin communities. In order to monitor fluctuations and changes in the level of resilience over time, and in order to weigh the various variables collected, a 'holistic resilience index' was formulated. For the purpose of deciding on the topics to be included in this index and the relative weight of each component, a modified Delphi process (a method for achieving consensus among experts) was carried out with the participation of 13 officials from different spheres:

Category	1. national (societal)	2. individual resilience	3. community resilience	4. hope	5. morale	6. social cohesion	7. sense of danger	total
percent of experts that recommend the inclusion of the category in the 'holistic resilience index' following 3 modified Delphi cycles	83%	100%	100%	92%	75%	77%	75%	
weighted average of each category, based on content experts following 3 modified Delphi cycles	14%	18%	18%	15%	11%	15%	9%	100%

### Results of the modified Delphi process to develop the 'holistic resilience index'

People working in the field, in academia, and in government. Following three cycles, the 'Holistic Resilience Index' was designed and it includes 7 variables (out of the total of the 11 variables listed above, as well as the issue of employment/livelihood), with varied relative weights.

In the study of social networks only visible sources were used, focusing on popular social networks (X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) and classifying them into three sub-regions according to the nature of the population: Rural community (kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities), the cities of the Western Negev, and the Bedouin population in Rahat, Lakia and the Bedouin recognized and unrecognized settlements.

The research categories in the social networks often coincide with the quantitative research - national resilience, community resilience, mental health and stress, perceived security, social cohesion, education, economy, and employment. Some of the subjects were examined only on the basis of one research method, such as housing, which was examined only through social networks, or individual resilience, which was examined only in the quantitative study. The integrative view through mixed research methods facilitates not only an expansive understanding of the level of resilience but also an in-depth identification of the discourse topics and the public's sentiments in relation to it. Hence, the situation report consolidated through the research is extremely broad and contributes to a deep understanding of the needs of the population in Western Negev.

Furthermore, continuous monitoring makes it possible to examine the effectiveness of the various projects carried out in Western Negev with the aim of rehabilitating the communities and enabling the residents to form a new 'routine.' In each type of population, social media accounts of significant figures in the local discourse (mayors, council members, social activists, etc.) were monitored; local groups and pages (councils, recruits, associations, etc.); and reports and leaflets on behalf of the councils, the Tkuma directorate and other organizations. In each of these, the emphasis is not only on the content but mainly on the sentiment expressed "between the lines." A particularly prominent weight is given to the sentiment in the reactions of the web surfers and residents of the Western Negev. In some cases, articles from news websites were also used, but this was only done with the aim of focusing on articles that quoted the residents of the Western Negev.

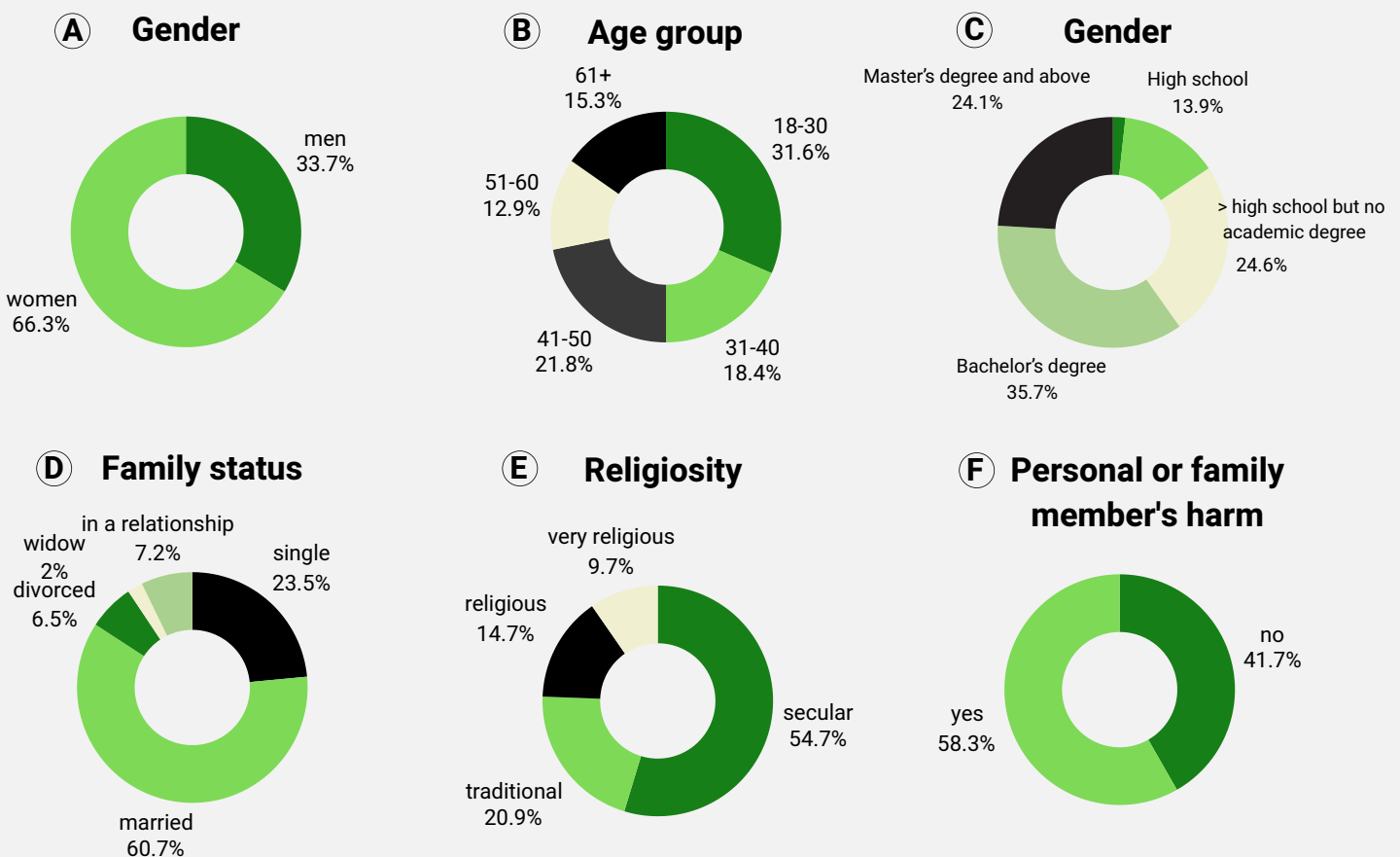
Most of the report's recommendations were phrased to enable the independent implementation by foundations and organizations, local implementation by city and regional councils, or implementation from middle ranks (and up) in governmental offices and philanthropic bodies. Due to the understanding that reality requires not only long-term processes, but also actions that can be implemented within periods of weeks to months, the recommendations were drawn to facilitate implementation in varied time frames.

In order to examine the effect of such actions, we aim to conduct a longitudinal study. In the proposed continuing studies, we will periodically examine every few months the situation in the communities of the Western Negev, using the two research methods. The findings of the longitudinal study will help to evaluate the interventions that are being implemented and assist in their precision and adjustment so that they are more effective and beneficial. Furthermore, the ongoing research could raise additional or new needs that were not raised in the current research.

## Demographic distribution of respondents to the quantitative questionnaire

503 respondents from the Western Negev participated in the study, of which 279 (55.5%) were residents of both kibbutzim and moshavim, 164 (32.6%) were residents of cities or towns, and 60 (11.9%) were residents of communities from the Bedouin diaspora. The figure shows the distribution of respondents in the entire sample according to the demographic characteristics that were examined. A greater percentage of women responded compared to men; The largest part is of a relatively young group (ages 18-30), people with a bachelor's degree, married people, and secular individuals, but people of all ages, levels of education, family status and levels of religiosity are represented.

A large percentage of the respondents (58%) reported that they, or a member of their immediate family, were harmed during the war. For technical reasons, some of the questions were not answered by all respondents. The findings in the report are based on the respondents who referred to each index.



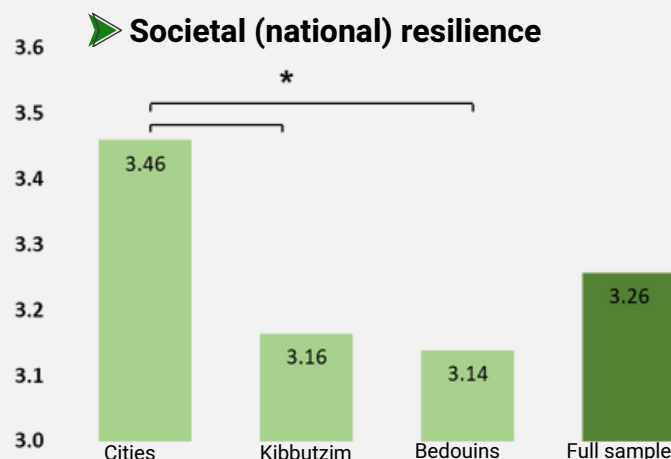
**Distribution of all respondents in the sample: A. By gender; B. By age; C. By education level; D. by marital status; E. By level of religiosity; F. By personal harm or harm caused to a first-degree family member.**

## Research findings (quantitative and qualitative)

### ➤ National resilience (trust)

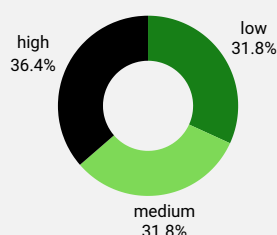
#### Quantitative research

National resilience reflects the resilience of a society or country experiencing a crisis situation. The National Resilience Index (Includes 16 items) is based on four main components (identified in a factor analysis): "Trust in the government and its leader"; "Social integration (solidarity)"; "Attachment to the country (patriotism)"; and "Trust in the state institutions" (the Knesset, the judiciary, the IDF, the police, etc.). The scale ranges between 1 and 6, where the higher the index, the higher the national resilience. The figure shows that the average national resilience level of the full sample was moderate (3.26 out of a maximum score of 6). For comparison purposes: In a parallel study of the entire Jewish Israeli population (August 2024) a higher average level of national resilience was found (3.59). Significant differences were found in the national resilience averages according to the type of community. The lowest level was reported in the Bedouin communities, close to it and without a significant difference in the kibbutzim and moshavim. A significantly higher level of national resilience compared to the others was found among the urban population. The figure presenting the distribution by type of community shows that a higher percentage of urban residents (48%) compared to the other two types of communities (kibbutzim: 32%, Bedouins: 36%) reported a higher level of national resilience. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the factors that explain national resilience. The analysis revealed that higher levels of community resilience, hope, morale, perception of social cohesion, satisfaction with the education system, and support for the government correlated with higher national resilience. Conversely, a lower sense of danger also correlated with higher national resilience. The model explained 51% of the variance.

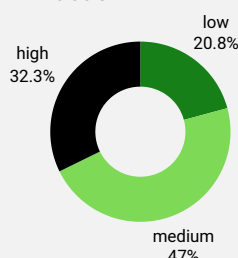


National resilience average by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.

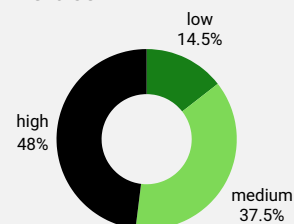
**A Societal resilience - Bedouins**



**B Societal resilience - Kibbutzim**



**C Societal resilience - Cities**



National resilience distributions by type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

## Discourse on the networks

### Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities

Three trends of decrease in trust were noted among the residents of the moshavim and kibbutzim. The first trend was expressed in the ongoing discourse concerning the 'hostages deal' and the weekly demonstrations for this purpose. Although this trend already appeared at the beginning of the war, as the one-year mark of the disaster approaches, the feeling of mistrust increases. A second trend concerns the initiative of the "Beactive" (KUMU) organization to stage an alternative national memorial ceremony, which took a prominent place in the discourse. It is not yet clear what the ceremony will look like and how successful it will be, but the discourse on the networks so far reveals that it arouses a positive sentiment, in contrast to the state ceremony, which marks a further decrease in trust. The third trend concerns the need to take responsibility, or as many residents claim: "Recognition of abandonment".

Along with a number of influential residents on the networks who often posted concerning the subject, a significant part of the discourse arose in response to the publications of social organizations that have sprung up in the past year. They represent various population groups in the Western Negev and express sharp criticism against the government, such as the "Habaita" organization.

Online responses: "10 is the new fail! Failed leaders who do nothing for 10 months, torpedoing deals for 10 months and especially fail each and every day for 10 months to bring back our friends who are languishing in the captivity of Hamas!"

### Western Negev cities

In the three cities, a sense of distrust in the establishment stands out for various reasons. Among Ofakim and Netivot, the trust crisis stems from the fact that they are not included in the "Tkuma Region" and therefore do not receive solutions from the "Tkuma directorate". The "Heroism grant" approved by the government, inter alia, for the residents of Ofakim, provoked a certain positive discourse, but the municipalities of Netivot and Ofakim did not withdraw the High Court Appeal which they submitted with the aim of recognizing all the residents of the city as "victims of hostilities" and the need to include them in the solutions provided by "Tkuma directorate".

Among the residents of Ofakim and Netivot there is still a sense of discrimination due to their exclusion from the framework of "Tkuma Region", which causes frustration and a sense of discrimination among the residents.

Responses on the network: "What about an investigation to understand the conduct of the municipality and its leader, on whose watch dozens of the city's residents were murdered? Don't the residents deserve to understand whether the municipality conducted itself properly in the years and months before the massacre, as well as during the massacre itself?"

### **Rahat and the Bedouin diaspora**

The first weeks of the war caused many in Bedouin society to expect and hope that now, after the severe damage they suffered on October 7, the state authorities would work to reduce the gaps between them and the Jewish population. As time passed, this expectation was falsified and replaced by a sense of deep distrust in the state and its institutions.

The lack of trust is expressed in a variety of ways, but it stands out mainly in issues related to the helplessness of the security mechanisms in the fight against the rising crime in Arab society.

Most of the criticism is directed personally at Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, as well as at the "Ben Gvir Police". It can be seen that these feelings, which prevailed among the Bedouins even before the war, lead to the casting of doubt on almost everything related to the police. In mid-August, for example, it was announced that three young residents of Tel Sheva were arrested by the police and the General Security Services after it was suspected that they were planning to carry out attacks against Israeli soldiers, this in light of the war in Gaza, and quite a few web surfers claimed that "the police accused the detainees of a crime they did not commit." Similar claims were heard regarding the arrest of a specialist doctor from Soroka who is suspected of pledging allegiance to ISIS after October 7.

Besides the skeptical attitude towards state institutions, the feeling of mistrust also takes root following unusual events between Bedouins and Jews. The most prominent among them was the attack on four women and a toddler from Rahat, members of the Ja'ar family, after they accidentally entered the 'Givat Ronan' outpost. As published, the women were saved from a potential lynch and managed to escape until the army arrived on the scene. In the days that followed, a series of senior officials in the Israeli political system and establishment visited their home. The reactions on the network were mixed, and while some web surfers praised the arrival of those senior officials, others claimed that it was a cynical act and called not to allow such visits.

Responses on the network: "Incrimination has become as easy as drinking water, Ben Gvir police."

### **Insights**

The quantitative research suggests that national resilience in the cities is greatly and significantly higher compared to the other two types of communities and it seems to be approaching the level of national resilience in the general population of the country (according to data from August 2024). Various predictors were found in the current study to be the most significant regarding national resilience (in order of their influence): The perceived social cohesion, hope, level of support for the government, sense of danger, community resilience, and satisfaction with the education system. These components likely differ between the populations in the cities, kibbutzim/moshavim, and Bedouin communities.

As for the discourse on social networks, it can be seen that the events of October 7 and the continuation of the war in Gaza intensified among all populations feelings that existed before, even if to a different extent. Thus, for example, in the cities of Ofakim and Netivot, people were outraged at their exclusion from the "Tkuma Region," which strengthened the sense of deprivation among them, but at a limited scope.

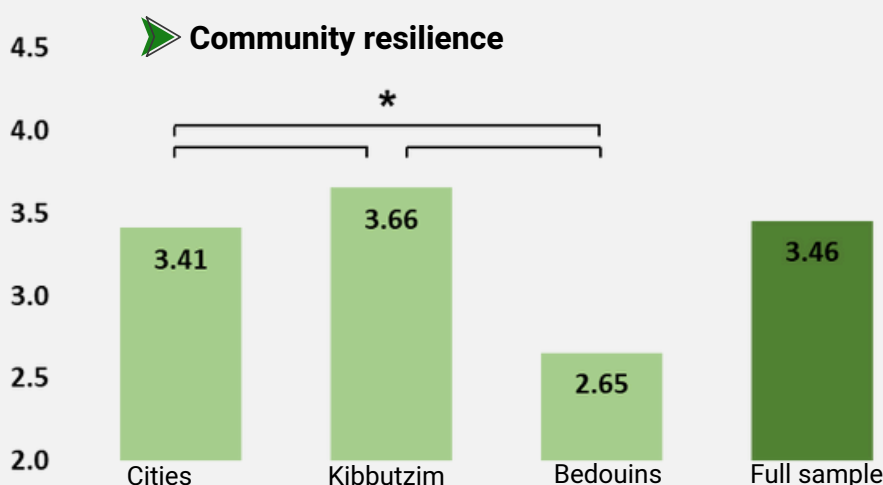
A more significant effect was seen in the networks among the Bedouin society and among the moshavim and kibbutzim populations - where there seems to be a low level of public trust in state institutions. Among the Bedouin society, building demolitions, arrests, and violent attacks increased distrust in the police, a sentiment that existed even before. At the same time, currently, harsh criticisms against Minister Ben Gvir have been raised, and many allegations have been made of intentional harassment by law enforcement agencies against the Bedouins.

In the moshavim and kibbutzim they protested against the lack of "recognition of abandonment" - which was manifested in protests against the government, by holding an alternative memorial ceremony, etc. At the same time, the longer the war continues without the return of the hostages, and the longer the effort on the part of Tkuma Directorate and the government offices to return the residents of the moshavim and kibbutzim to their homes, the feeling takes root that the government does not intend to act on the issue, and instead efforts are being made to acculturate the residents to a new reality. The public's trust in the state authorities and the government is an essential and central element in the reconstruction process of the Western Negev, and therefore special resources must be invested in its improvement. In addition, as the results of both types of research show, improving public trust requires acting in a differential manner with each and every community, after an accurate mapping of the relevant issues. At the same time, although the voting patterns for the government and the issue of bringing back the hostages among the varied population groups cannot be ignored, and they stand out in their differences and probably affect the sense of trust, their importance cannot be overstated as there are many measures that can positively affect trust.

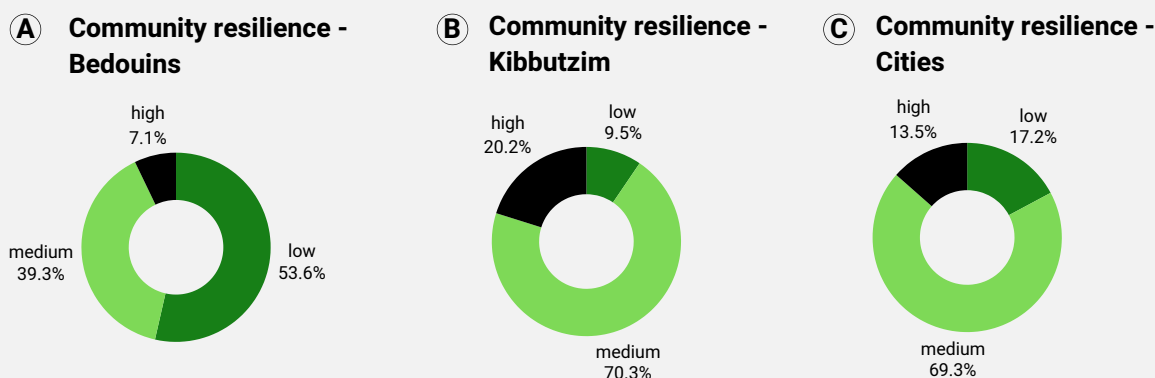
## ➤ Community resilience

### Quantitative research

Community resilience refers to the capacity of a local community to recover from a crisis and return to daily life as quickly as possible. A community is a locality that is subject to one municipal authority. The index consists of five key factors: Community leadership, collective efficacy, emergency preparedness, attachment to the place, and social trust. The index includes 10 items with a scale ranging from 1 to 5; the higher the index, the higher the community resilience. The figure shows that the average community resilience level of the full sample was medium-high (3.46 out of a maximum score of 5). For comparison, In a parallel study conducted on the entire Jewish Israeli population (August 2024), a similar average level of community resilience was found (3.45). The differences between the types of communities were significant. The lowest level of community resilience was reported by respondents from Bedouin communities. Respondents from the kibbutzim/moshavim community reported the highest level of community resilience and the level of community resilience among city residents was moderate. The figure presenting the distribution by type of community shows that a relatively high percentage of the Bedouin communities (54%) reported low community resilience, compared to a lower percentage in the other two types of communities (17% in cities; and 10% in kibbutzim/moshavim).



Average community resilience by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.



Community resilience level distributions by type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

## Discourse on the networks

### **Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities**

In most of the communities, there have been, in the past few months, many publications about events aimed at strengthening the sense of community. For example, the bar mitzvah celebrations at Kibbutz Beeri were, for many, a point that illustrated, on the one hand, the deep rift in the community and on the other hand, the importance the community sees in rehabilitating the youth and residents in general.

The residents referred to the feeling of belonging to the community as a fundamental element of their identity and a very significant factor in their ability to rehabilitate or in their desire to return to live in the communities. Even in communities where a significant portion of the residents decided not to join the temporary housing solutions, or to return with the community to the permanent housing solutions, most of the responses on the network were containing and free of criticism.

Responses on the network: "We thought that a community is people who live in the same place, and we discovered that at Nir Yitzhak, the community is love and a sense of belonging, even if apart for a period or forever, everyone knows where home is"

### **Western Negev cities**

It is evident that the mayors continue to act with determination to establish the urban heroism narrative, while focusing on commemorating the fallen and highlighting the stories of courage, especially in preparation for the upcoming annual memorial events. In this framework, the mayors emphasize the number of casualties, the heroic acts of the residents and the police, and the shared fate with the nearby communities. For example: A commemoration site is planned in Sderot with 31 monuments, as the number of those who were killed in the city. In Ofakim, there will be a memorial race for the city's fallen, and a commemorative path will be built in the area of the terrorists' infiltration; in Netivot, a special 'appreciation evening' was held for reservists who live in the city. Another central narrative that the mayors want to emphasize is the efforts of the community to support nearby communities. For example, Netivot municipality published a list of local businesses that provide discounts to residents of Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha staying in the city.

At the same time, in Sderot, it was possible to identify a feeling among some residents that "the grants stay with the mayor" and do not reach the residents eventually or are not invested in a way that meets the needs of the residents. Another topic of discussion in Sderot is the desire of some residents to hold an investigation into the functioning of the local leadership on October 7.

### **Rahat and the Bedouin diaspora**

The question of community resilience among the Bedouin population in the Negev consists of several aspects, but it can be said that in general the sense of community belonging is strengthened whenever there is friction between the Bedouins and the state authorities. If we take as an example the demolition of the house of the Abu Kaf family in Umm Batin, one can see how many of the residents of the area gathered from the morning hours near the house and tried to disrupt the demolition activity, set tires on fire and barricaded themselves in the house. These scenes, which were published on the networks, attracted reactions by many web surfers who praised the young people for standing side by side. On the other hand, others argued that if the Bedouins were more united, the police would not have been able to carry out the demolition. At the same time, due to the difficult internal situation of the Bedouin society, which is reflected, inter alia, in the increase in cases of violence and crime, disputes often arise about its communal nature.

It can be said that two opposing vectors are at work among this population: A vector of consolidation against the state authorities, and especially against the police, and A vector of disintegration when it comes to clan conflicts and the violence of criminal organizations.

Responses on the network: "When we'll act together we will see a change. The Ethiopians have brought the country to a halt with their protests, and this is not even their land. We, do nothing, although this country is ours. Wake up people!"

## **Insights**

The cooperative communities (the kibbutzim and to a certain extent also the moshavim) are characterized by organized community structures and a strong community life. This element helps in the recovery process, despite the severe crisis. Strengthening the communities also in Bedouin cities and villages requires investment in the creation and strengthening of community mechanisms, including the empowerment of local authorities, as an essential step in the reconstruction process.

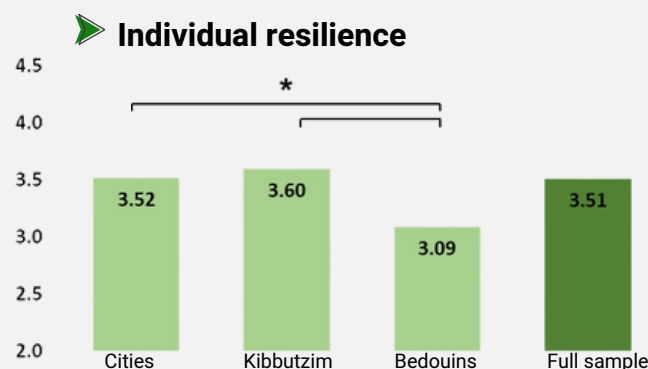
The Bedouin population demonstrates lower community resilience than the Jewish population. Consideration should be given to strengthening community resilience in the Bedouin communities. In contrast to the Jewish population, among the Bedouins, the decisions of the government and the conduct of state institutions have a decisive effect in two areas: The fight against crime and violence, and the regulation or demolition of illegal construction in the Negev. At the same time, it is important to note that the Bedouin population as a tribal society faces internal socio-cultural barriers that do not directly relate to the conduct of state institutions, and challenge the sense of belonging to a broad community defined by place of residence.

Besides the importance of the sense of belonging to a community in each and every locality, in the case of the communities of the Western Negev there is a special significance to creating a shared geographical affinity that is supra-sectoral. Namely, strengthening the sense of belonging to the region. Such an effort, which already exists to some extent among the moshavim and kibbutzim and the cities, can have a positive effect on community resilience.

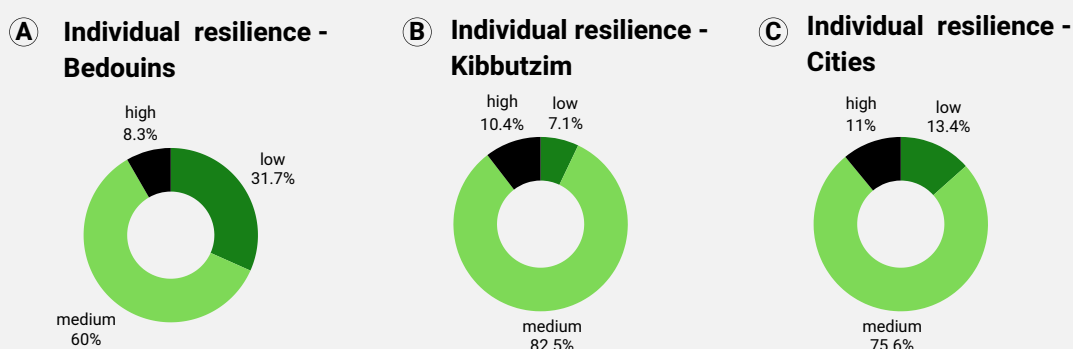
## ➤ Individual resilience

### Quantitative research

Individual resilience refers to the ability of a person (individual) to successfully deal with a crisis or disaster, recover and return to function at a level similar to the pre-crisis, as quickly as possible. The index consists of four main factors: Stress tolerance; adapting to change; optimism/sense of security; and trust in natural instinct. The index includes 10 items, and the scale ranges between 1 and 5; the higher the index, the higher the individual resilience. The figure shows that the average individual resilience of the full sample was medium-high (3.5 out of a maximum score of 5). For comparison : In a parallel study of the entire Israeli Jewish population , carried out in parallel (in August 2024), a slightly higher average level of individual resilience was found (3.67). Significant differences were found in the averages of individual resilience depending on the type of community. The lowest level of individual resilience was reported by respondents from Bedouin communities (the difference between the level of individual resilience in kibbutzim and moshavim as well as in cities was significantly lower compared to the Bedouin communities). No significant differences were found between the levels of individual resilience of residents in kibbutzim/moshavim compared to residents in the cities. The figure shows the distribution of individual resilience by type of community. It can be seen that a relatively high percentage of respondents from Bedouin communities (32%) reported low individual resilience, compared to respondents from the other two types of communities (13% in the cities and 7% in the kibbutzim/moshavim, respectively). Since correlations between the different types of resilience (individual, community, national) were found in previous studies, the correlations between the three types of resilience were also examined in the current study and were found to be weak, but significant.



Average individual resilience by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.



Distributions of individual resilience levels by type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

## Quantitative questionnaire insights

The quantitative questionnaire presents a medium-high level of individual resilience, similar to that of the general population (from a parallel study). These findings suggest that during an ongoing emergency, there is a process of "normalizing" the emergency and a new emergency routine is created, that allows the individual to continue functioning as much as possible.

The correlations between the three types of resilience that were found to be significant (although relatively weak), may indicate that the stronger ties that characterize the community of the kibbutzim and moshavim (relatively high community resilience) are also related to the strengthening of individual resilience. Alternatively, the low community resilience in the Bedouin communities may be linked to lower individual resilience within these communities.

## ➤ Mental health and stress

### Quantitative research

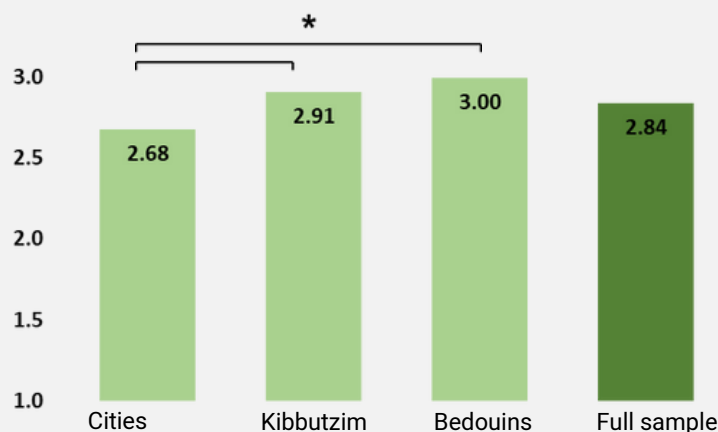
Stress symptoms (anxiety and depression) are a common index for examining the human response to crisis and stress situations. The index consists of 8 items that include a description of stress symptoms and are accompanied by the question of to what extent a person has suffered from them in the past month. The scale ranges between 1 and 5, where a higher index indicates a higher level of stress.

The figure shows that the average stress level of the total sample was medium-low (2.84 out of a maximum score of 5). For comparison: In a parallel study of the entire Israeli Jewish population (from August 2024), a lower average stress level was found (2.25).

Significant differences were found in the stress averages as per the type of community, where the residents of the cities reported a significantly lower level of stress compared to the other two groups.

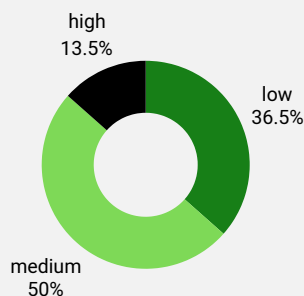
Large proportions of respondents from all three groups reported high and moderate symptoms of stress (63%, 64% and 54%, in Bedouin communities, in kibbutzim/moshavim and cities, respectively).

#### ➤ Distress symptoms

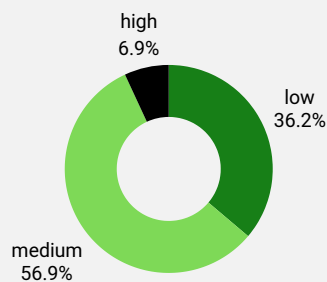


Average levels of stress symptoms by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.

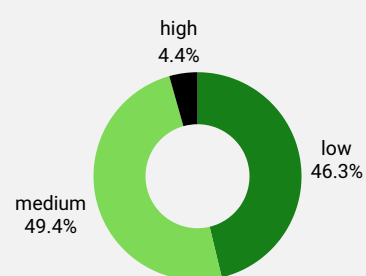
#### A Distress symptoms - Bedouins



#### B Distress symptoms - Kibbutzim



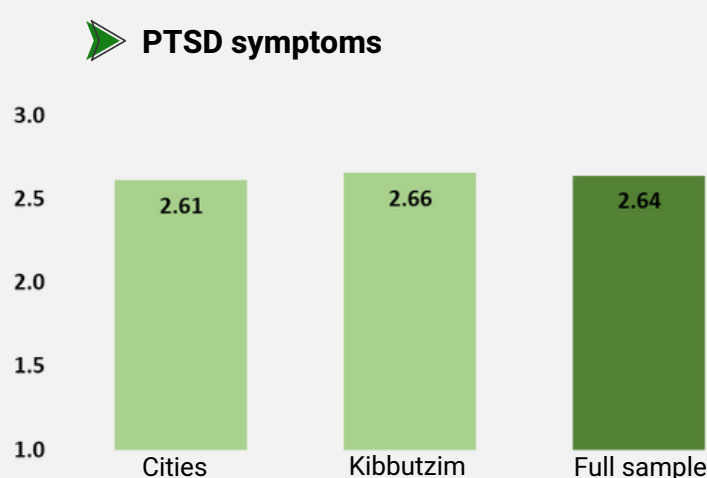
#### C Distress symptoms - Cities



Distributions of the level of stress symptoms as per the type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

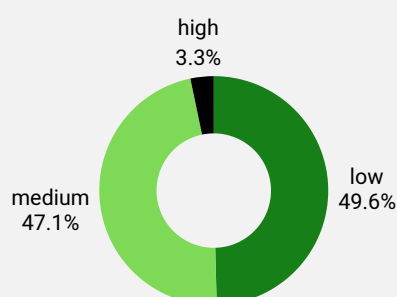
The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) constitute a persistent stress response to a traumatic event that includes changes in cognitions and moods, re-experiencing the trauma [intrusiveness of the event], avoidance and increased physiological arousal. The scale included 10 items, and ranges from 1 to 5; the higher the index, the higher the level of PTSD symptoms. The index was measured only among the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim and the cities.

The figure presents that the average level of PTSD symptoms in the entire sample was medium-low (2.6 out of a maximum score of 5). A small difference was found between the respondents from the two types of communities, but it was not significant.

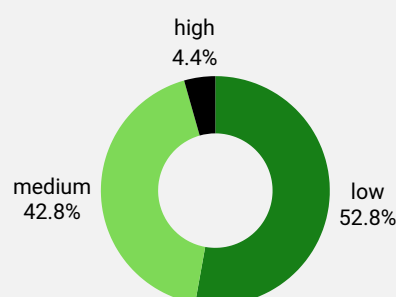


**Average levels of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms by type of community.**  
There is no significant difference between the types of communities.

**(A) PTSD symptoms - Kibbutzim**



**(B) PTSD symptoms - Cities**



**Distributions of the levels of PTSD symptoms as per the type of community: A. Kibbutzim / moshavim; B. Cities.**

## Discourse on the networks

### **Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities**

Reference to the mental state of the residents of the Western Negev had a relatively marginal scope in the discourse and appeared mainly in posts relating to two core issues - housing and education. In the area of housing, many residents described the emotional trauma that overwhelms them during visits to their place of residence or the lack of preparedness because they are still in a "survival mode." In education, on the one hand, the decision of the Tkuma Directorate from July to expand the budget set for the emotional care of students in the Western Negev in general, and trauma victims in particular, was raised, but it did not provoke a significant internal discussion. On the other hand, following the discourse during previous months, it was possible to identify in the networks an increase in the need for psychological aid at the same time as the search for treatment personnel continued.

In the limited discourse that has been published concerning the treatment of hostages who have been released from captivity, a positive sentiment has emerged, and it is claimed that they are receiving the therapeutic envelope that they need. Simultaneously, some have emphasized that the returning of the remaining hostages is a fundamental prerequisite for their emotional rehabilitation.

It is important to note that while all the posts across the networks served as a platform for sharing mental health challenges at both individual or community level in general terms, they did not address the phenomenon or discuss treatment methods.

The places where the issue of mental health came up as an issue in itself were in publications on behalf of the regional councils that reported an improvement in the resilience centers and encouraged the residents to seek solutions, or in "wanted" ads that have been looking for months for care workers for the communities in the Western Negev and the temporary housing centers.

Responses on the network: [About the media interviews]: "Until I found the psychologist, this was my treatment. To tell the story of the community through me, was to empty myself of something, to take it out. I realized that I had to take it out not in the form of anger, because I was afraid of losing control".

### **Western Negev cities**

Since the outbreak of the war to date, the issue of mental response occupies a central place in the public discourse among the residents of the cities, after the discourse on economic and employment issues. Many posts express frustration that, although there is financial support through tax benefits and property tax relief for some of the population, many still lack adequate mental health resources. Many residents report that they are forced to go out of town to receive mental health care, due to long waiting times and a severe shortage of therapists.

This is despite the fact that there are resilience centers operating both in Sderot and in Ofakim, in cooperation with the local municipalities that are supposed to provide a wide-ranging mental response to the residents.

Furthermore, some residents claim that the trauma even worsened in the months after the war due to the frequent alarms that significantly affected their sense of security and due to the lack of continuous treatment that led to deterioration in their mental state.

The discussion surrounding the lack of psychological support is particularly prominent among the residents of Ofakim, and then among the residents of Netivot. These residents feel that they have not yet received proper recognition from the state for the trauma they experienced as a result of not being included in the solutions provided by the Tkuma Directorate. As a result, many of them do not receive support for mental health care, despite their claim that they suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Responses on the network: "People in Sderot mainly deal with ongoing trauma since October 7 that only intensified and they are forced to travel outside the city to receive mental health treatments"; "Although we were granted tax benefits and property tax reliefs, there is no one to mend the mental injury."

## Insights

Significant gaps emerged in the discourse between the different types of communities: In the moshavim and kibbutzim, mental health hardly came up as a specific topic but rather as a description of the trauma experience revolving around sensitive issues such as housing or security. There were also those who wrote that they were in the midst of the trauma and were not yet ready to start a therapeutic process. In the cities, many residents complained about the lack of treatment and reported that in order to receive treatment, they had to leave the cities and finance the cost of treatment out of their own pockets due to the lack of recognition from the Tkuma Directorate. In Rahat, the topic remains distinctly minimal in the discourse. These results are different from the results of the quantitative questionnaire, from which it appears that the most severe level of stress and distress was reported among the Bedouins, and the lowest level was reported among the residents of the cities. It is possible that the differences identified according to the two research methods stem from cultural and social differences, such as, for example, that among the Bedouin population, it is not customary to discuss the need to receive mental health support (nor do they turn to formal settings for receiving such treatment). Alternatively, in the cities, the operation of resilience centers and the treatment of stress victims have been common for many years. In light of this, the residents of the cities do not hesitate to report the need for treatment, even though it is possible that, in practice, the level of symptoms they experience is lower than that reported by the Bedouin residents. These results require in-depth research aimed at establishing the relationship between the discourse on the network and the residents' reports in the questionnaires. Such future research could also contribute to monitoring and identifying an increase in stress phenomena in real-time.

One way or another, the widespread level of stress (anxiety and depression) identified in the three research groups, almost a year after the start of the war, requires the development of mechanisms that will help the population to successfully deal with the ongoing crisis. As for post-traumatic stress disorder, which has been assessed in the cities, the kibbutzim and the moshavim, it is vital to diagnose a broad population, understand patient needs, and deliver prompt and effective treatment for those at high risk of PTSD, particularly given the ongoing war. Such treatment will reduce the number of people who will develop symptoms and be affected by them over time. Since it is not possible to provide the required response on the basis of the professional manpower resources available in the field of resilience and mental health, alternative models must be developed that will enable the provision of support based on other/additional/alternative factors in the community, including civil society bodies.

As for the discourse patterns on the networks, in each of the communities, the discourse patterns indicate not only how the residents perceive the response from the state but also the nature of the communities. For example, in the Bedouin population, the lack of discourse stems not only from socio-cultural perceptions regarding mental health but also from a gap in the fundamental concept of citizen-state relations and the citizen's expectations from the state. In the moshavim and kibbutzim, some degree of indifference is evident in the discourse on the subject, which indicates burnout and long-term normalization of living with stress phenomena. Similar to the cities, the discourse on the network is flooded with a deeper sentiment - a feeling of neglect and deprivation on the part of the state.

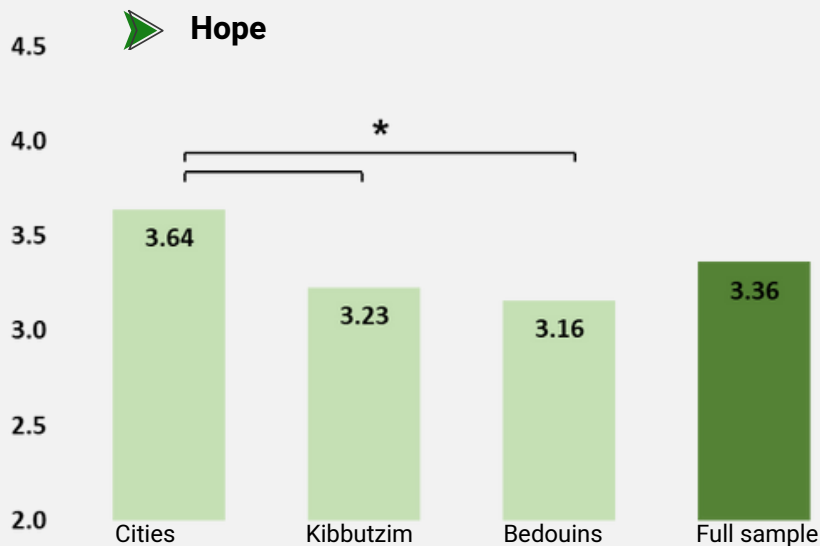
## ➤ Hope and morale

### Quantitative research

Hope refers to the expectation for a better future, meaning that an improvement in the situation is expected ahead. Many studies suggest that hope is very important to an individual's capacity to cope with difficulties and suffering. This index includes 5 items on a scale ranging from 1 to 5; the higher the index, the higher the level of hope.

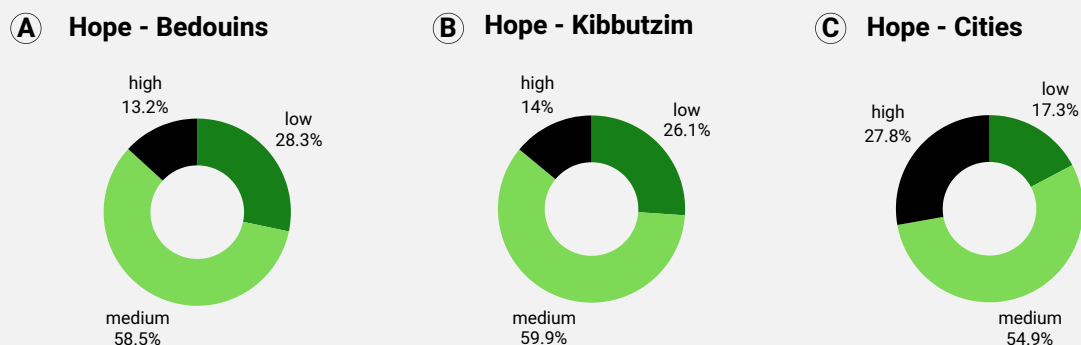
The figure shows that the average level of hope of the total sample was medium-high (3.36 out of a maximum score of 5). For comparison : In a parallel study conducted on the entire Israeli Jewish population (August 2024), a higher level of hope was found (3.58).

Significant differences were found in the hope averages per the type of community. The level of hope in the cities was significantly higher compared to the other two types of communities, which did not differ between them.



**Hope averages by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.**

The figure shows the distribution of the level of hope by type of community. It can be seen that a relatively high percentage of the cities (28%) reported a high level of hope, compared to the other two types of communities (14% in the kibbutzim/moshavim and 13% in the Bedouin communities).



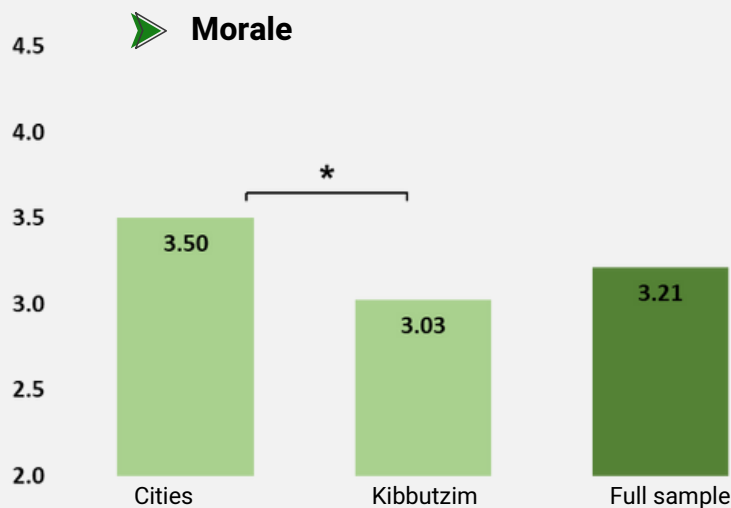
**Distributions of the levels of hope as per the type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.**

Morale refers to the current mood of the individual, family members, close friends, and community residents. Morale was measured in the current study only among the kibbutzim/moshavim and the cities. The index consisted of 4 items on a scale ranging between 1 and 5; the higher the index, the higher the level of morale.

The figure presents that the morale level of the entire sample was medium-high (3.21 out of a maximum score of 5). For comparison: In a parallel study conducted on the entire Israeli Jewish population (August 2024) a slightly higher level of morale was found (3.44).

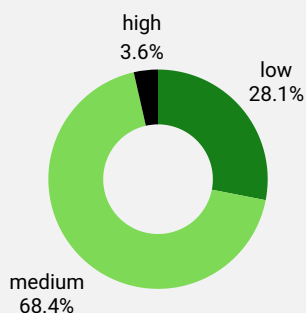
The residents of the cities expressed a significantly higher level of morale than the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim.

The figure presenting the distribution of the level of morale by type of community indicates that a relatively high percentage of respondents from the kibbutzim/moshavim (28%) reported a low level of morale, compared to only 12% of the respondents from the cities. At the same time, 13% of the respondents in the cities reported a high level of morale, while only 4% of the respondents in the kibbutzim/moshavim reported this.

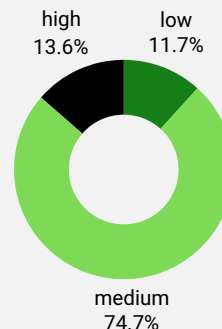


Average morale by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.

(A) Morale - Kibbutzim



(B) Morale - Cities



Distributions of the level of morale as per the type of community: A. Kibbutzim / moshavim; B. Cities.

## Insights

The level of hope was found in many previous studies to be the most important factor in predicting the level of resilience, both individual and national. This study also showed that hope is a clear predictor of national and individual resilience. Previous studies also presented that there is a negative association between the level of hope and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Systemic investment, both on behalf of government bodies and on behalf of civil society bodies, is required in order to build and preserve hope.

The level of morale reflects the current state of mind of the population (while hope reflects the perception of the future). The relatively low level of morale among residents of kibbutzim/moshavim compared to the city dwellers (and compared to the general population in a parallel study), most likely reflects varying levels certainty about the expected actions. While many urban residents have already returned to their homes, or chose not to return after being allowed, the situation is less clear for some kibbutzim and moshavim. For these communities, it remains uncertain if or when they will be able to return to their homes and rebuild their lives.

## ➤ Sense of security

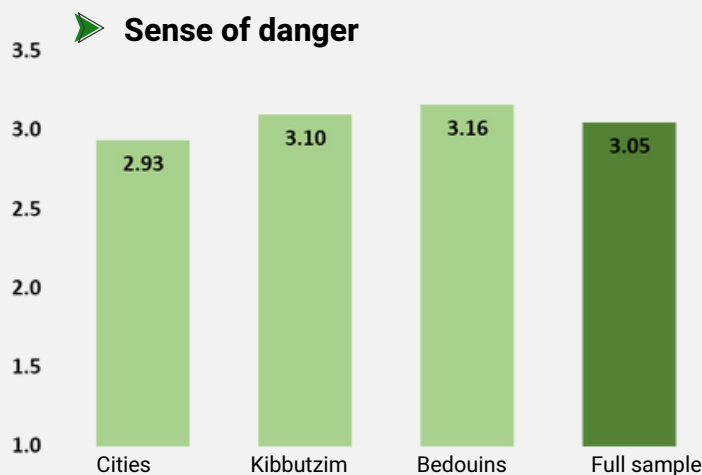
### Quantitative research

Sense of danger is an indication of the degree to which the individual feels danger to his life, his family and his friends as a result of perceived threats (both external and internal). Studies indicate that in the same situation and under similar threats, people perceive varied levels of danger. The index consists of 7 items; the scale ranges between 1 and 5; the higher the index, the higher the sense of danger.

The figure presents that the level of sense of danger of the entire sample was medium-high (3.05 out of a maximum score of 5). For comparison: In a parallel study of the entire Israeli Jewish population (from August 2024) a lower average level of sense of danger was found (2.59).

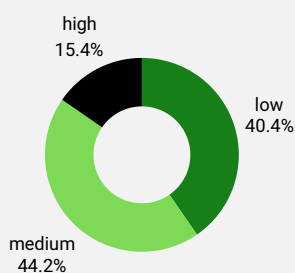
There were no significant differences in the average sense of danger by type of community.

The figure presenting the distribution of the level of sense of danger by type of community, indicates that a relatively large percentage of the Bedouin communities (15%) reported a high sense of danger, compared to the other two types of community (8% in the kibbutzim/moshavim and 10% in the cities). In addition, large percentages of respondents from the three types of communities reported a moderate sense of danger (53% in the cities, 60% in the kibbutzim and 44% in the Bedouin communities).

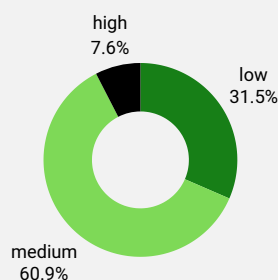


Average sense of danger by type of community. There are no significant differences.

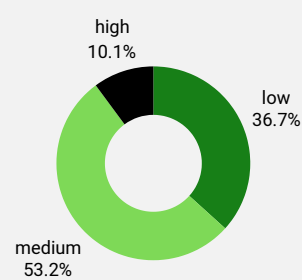
**A Sense of danger - Bedouins**



**B Sense of danger - Kibbutzim**



**C Sense of danger - Cities**

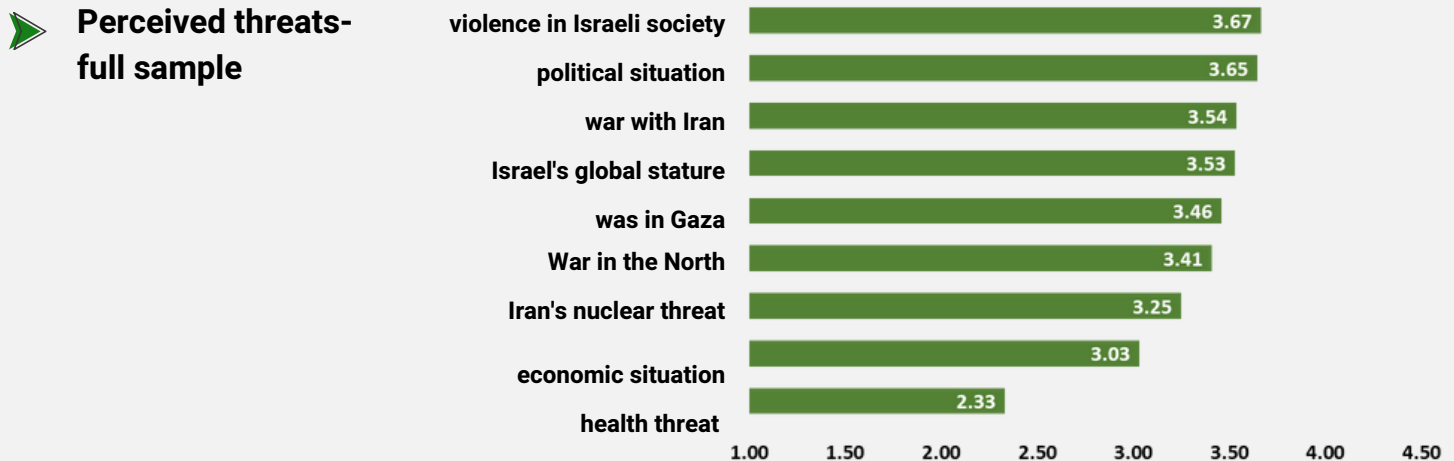


Distributions of the sense of danger as per the type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

Perceived threats examines the extent to which various emergency scenarios are perceived by respondents as personally threatening. The scale ranges between 1 and 5; the higher it is, the greater the threat.

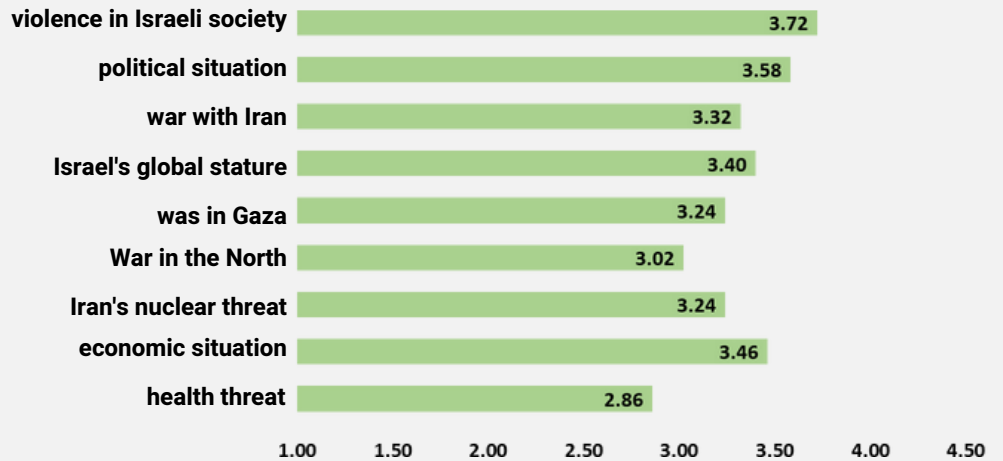
The figure showing the threats by order of the intensity of the threat in the entire sample, indicates that although the country is in an ongoing state of war in several arenas, of all the threats examined, "violence in Israeli society" and "the political situation in the country" were ranked as the most threatening. The other threats were ranked at a lower level, including even the health threat and received an average of 2.33, which reflects a medium-low threat.

Significant differences were found between the community types concerning all perceived threats, except for the "Iranian nuclear threat". The figure showing the perceived threats by community indicates that the Bedouin reported a significantly higher "health threat" and "economic threat" compared to the other populations. In the kibbutzim/moshavim, respondents reported "the war in Gaza", "the war in the north" and "the status of the State of Israel in the world" as graver than the others. In addition, they perceived the threat of "war against Iran" and "violence in Israeli society" as a significantly higher threat, compared to the residents of the cities. Finally, clear differences were observed between all types of communities in relation to the "political situation," which was perceived to be higher among the kibbutzim/moshavim population, then the Bedouin community population, and finally, the urban population.

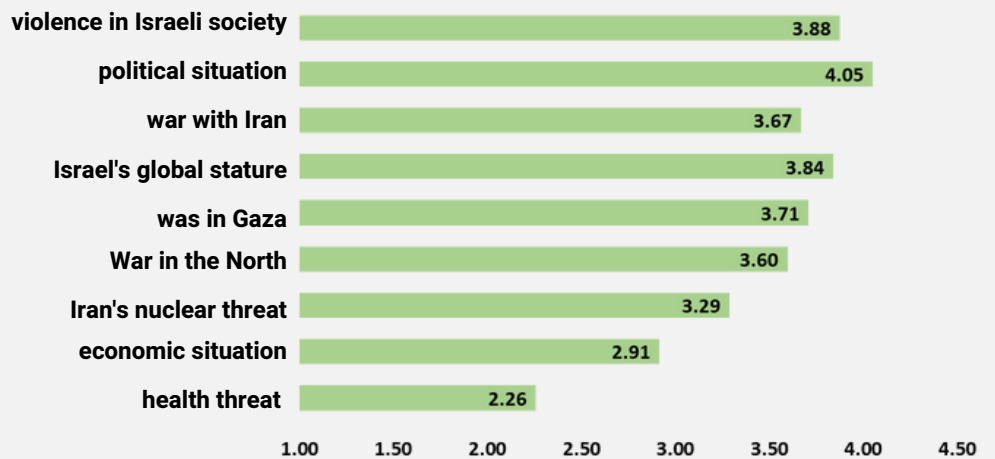


Average perceived threats in the entire sample, ranked from top to bottom as per the intensity of the threat.

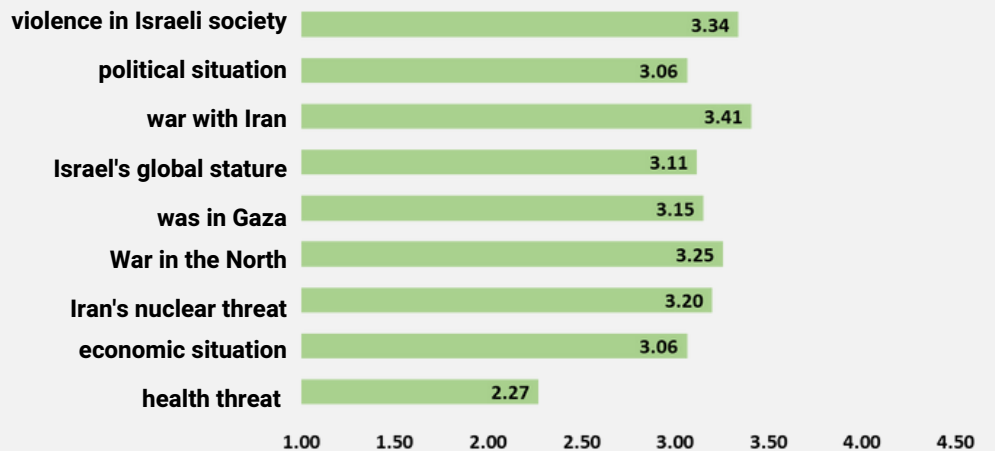
### A Perceived threats- Bedouins



### B Perceived threats- Kibbutzim



### C Perceived threats- Cities



Average perceived threats by type of community, ranked from top to bottom as per the intensity of the threat in :  
A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

## Discourse on the networks

### Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities

The lack of a sense of security, as described by the residents, stems from three main factors: The first is the continuation of the war. Many of the residents see the return to their place of residence during the war as a mechanism that normalizes an unbearable reality and compares it to the many years of normalization of the residents' situation in terms of the missile launching routine. The second factor is the absence of clear goals for concluding the war. In the medium to long term, once the war is resolved, residents remain uncertain about the reality they will face beyond their immediate circles: Who will rule? Who will hold weapons? The lack of clarity on these issues makes it difficult for the residents to believe that a different security reality awaits them and raises fears of a renewed adoption of 'containment' conception by the military and political systems. The third factor arises naturally from the trauma of October 7, 2023, and from the trauma overflow upon the upcoming October 7, 2024. Many of the residents describe a complete loss of trust in the army, a fundamental component of the sense of security in life in the Western Negev. At the same time, the presentation of the military investigation into the Battle of Beerli was described by quite a few residents as a first step to restoring trust, mainly due to the conviction of the army's intention to "acknowledge the neglect" and conduct an in-depth investigation. However, there have been complaints about focusing on tactical events and ignoring the overall picture. In general, there is still a long way to go in restoring trust in the army, mainly due to the residents' expectation of the resignation of senior army officers as an act of taking responsibility, and due to the tension that has arisen between the residents and the new division commander Barak Hiram against the background of the incident at Pessi's house and his statements in the media. Responses on the network: "Nothing has changed there in the past ten months. There are still penetration attempts, there are still alarms, interceptions and explosions"; "The burning pain that will accompany us throughout our lives due to the personal death experiences cannot be repaired. But the trust and the sense of security must be restored."

### Western Negev cities

The main discourse on the subject continues along the same lines since the beginning of the war, and it deals with the need to increase protection in the cities in order to restore the sense of security to the residents - in public buildings in general, and particularly in educational buildings.

Against the background of the reduction in the residents' sense of security, the efforts of the mayors to convey to the residents a sense of security and maximal preparedness to cope with emergency situations are evident. In Netivot they diligently held emergency preparedness drills, in Sderot they joined a number of civil initiatives whose purpose was to ensure the preparedness of unique populations in the city, and in Ofakim as well they are working to build a promenade for pedestrians only in the area where terrorists infiltrated the city, in order to prevent vehicles from entering the city again. In some cases, there was even a discourse that engaged in rejecting a deal for the return of the hostages for security reasons. This, as a counter-reaction to publications in favor of a deal from among the rural community.

Responses on the network: "Why haven't more buildings been built for supervised daycare centers when you know for years that many babies are left without a place in the supervised daycare centers? Now, put aside the supervision (and everything it entails - a pedagogical program, occupational therapist and speech therapist visits, subsidies), S-H-E-L-T-E-R-I-N-G. How is it possible that not all the helpless babies in such a large city get a fully shielded daycare center?"

### **Rahat and the Bedouin diaspora**

The death of the 12 children and boys in Majdal Shams sparked an intense discussion regarding the Bedouin society's preparedness for an emergency. On the network, the Bedouin residents of the Negev expressed their concerns about the lack of shelter infrastructure, particularly in the unrecognized villages. The responses were dominated by feelings of anger and pain, and it was claimed that the state invests many resources in demolishing houses instead of shielding them. Web surfers from Rahat complained that their city does not have one single public shelter, in contrast to "every moshav or kibbutz" in the area, and the steps taken by the Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority in the Negev to build shelters were seen as "too little and too late."

Apart from the fear of missile and rocket attacks, feelings of insecurity arose among the residents also in face of the tension between them and the Jewish population, especially after the attack on the women of the Jaar family who accidentally entered 'Givat Ronan' settlement. "The current period is one of the most difficult periods that Bedouin society in the Negev has known in regard to relations with Jewish society, mainly because of the spread of hatred and fear on the part of Minister Ben Gvir," claimed the former mayor of Rahat in relation to that case.

Responses on the network: "We have nothing left but Allah and the sewer pipes we are hiding in; as far as the state is concerned, we are just numbers"

## **Insights**

The research questionnaire shows that regardless of the different types of communities, a relatively large proportion of respondents feel moderate or high feelings of danger. These findings should cause concern, since the feelings of danger are related to the person's ability to cope with the situation in which he is placed. Sense of danger is largely related to the information that is communicated to the public, including the ways in which it is communicated. Reliable and direct communication with the public is likely crucial to reducing the sense of danger. Public participation in coping mechanisms and strengthening trust in the state's ability to meet the population's needs can also contribute significantly to reducing the sense of danger.

With regard to the perceived threats examined - the most significant threat identified is the violence within Israeli society (refers mainly to the murders within the Arab communities, but the impact is wider than in these communities alone).

After that, the threat from the political situation can be seen. In most types of perceived threats, the kibbutzim's populace feels more threatened than the other two groups, often to a significant degree. Regarding the economic and health threat, the people of the Bedouin communities express a higher level of perceived threat than the other two groups. The of perceived threats is not the same among the different populations, and hence, the response and reference to it must also be differential and adapted to the specific society they are aimed at. The discourse on the networks indicates that the decrease in the sense of security is still evident among all the residents of the Western Negev in a supra-sectoral manner, even if it is expressed differently in the discourse patterns. There is a need to focus on the variability that exists between the cities of the Western Negev and the kibbutzim/moshavim. In the cities, the search for renewing the sense of security stands out, both by the municipal institutions and by the residents. Both city officials and residents emphasize the importance of emergency preparedness, referencing drills conducted by security units. Accordingly, it seems that the cities are trying to speed up the recovery from the deep decrease in the sense of security since October 7. Conversely, in the moshavim and kibbutzim, any institutional discourse about restoring security or preparedness for a future event, is met with aggressive counter-reactions of distrust in the army and the state, and the growing feeling that "we are being put to sleep." This feeling that echoes in the discourse is confirmed by the findings of the quantitative study, which show that the people of the kibbutzim feel more threatened than the other two groups by most of the examined threats.

As a general conclusion: The difference in discourse and the significant diversities in the perceived threats in the various communities, make it clear that the restoration of security can perhaps be solved in a uniform manner for all the communities of the Western Negev with the military operation, but the restoration of the sense of security will have to be built differentially for each and every community.

## ➤ State social cohesion

### Quantitative research

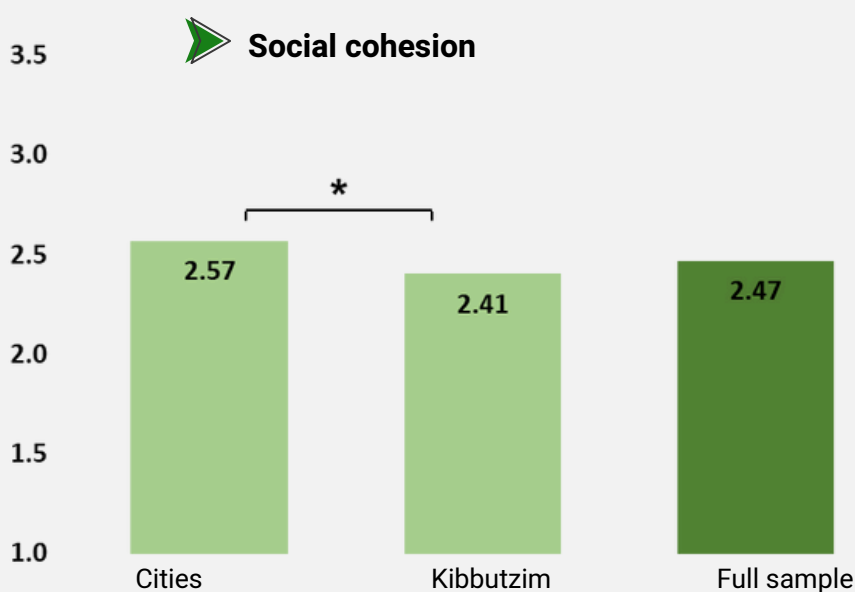
Social cohesion refers to the respondents' assessment of their perception of the social integration and the relationship between populations in the State of Israel (as a whole). The index is based on three items ("social cohesion in Israel, despite the differences of opinion, is high", "the disputes between different sections in Israeli population are getting smaller and smaller" and "there is a broad agreement between the sections in the population that the State of Israel is Jewish and democratic"). The scale ranges between 1 and 5; the higher the index, the higher the perception of social cohesion. The index was assessed among the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim and the cities only.

The figure presents that the average level of perception of social cohesion in the entire sample was moderate (about 2.5 out of a maximum score of 5).

For comparison : In a parallel study conducted on the entire Jewish population (August 2024) a slightly higher level of social cohesion was found (2.60).

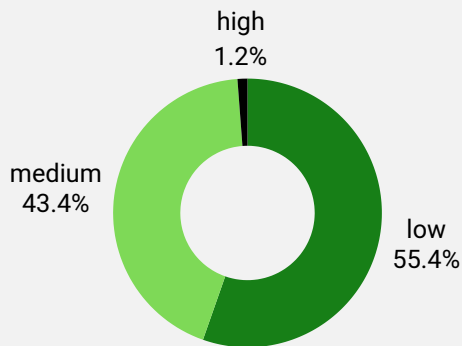
There was a significant difference between the community types. In cities, social cohesion was regarded as higher compared to the kibbutzim/moshavim; A numerically small difference, but significant, was found.

The figure presents the distribution of the level of social cohesion as per the type of community. It can be seen that a high percentage of respondents from both types of communities perceive the level of social cohesion as low (46% and 55%, in the cities and kibbutzim/moshavim, respectively). At the same time, a larger percentage of the city's population perceives the level of social cohesion as high (4% compared to a single percentage in the kibbutzim/moshavim) or moderate (50% compared to 44% in the kibbutzim/moshavim).

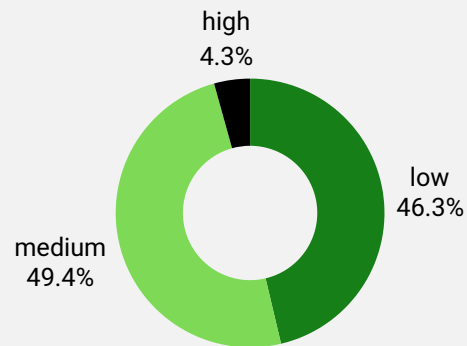


Average perception of social cohesion by type of community. \* - Significant differences between paired comparisons.

(A) Social cohesion- Kibbutzim



(B) Social cohesion - Cities



Distribution of the level of perception of social cohesion as per the type of community: A. Kibbutzim / moshavim; B. Cities.

## Discourse on the networks

### Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities

Leaving the temporary residence in hotels and cities sparked a wave of gratitude towards the hosts and strengthened the feeling of belonging to a broad and all-Israeli social framework. Furthermore, many initiatives by commercial companies or civil society organizations helped residents transition back to their homes or temporary housing. These initiatives bolstered trust and enhanced the sense of cohesion. These solidarity phenomena were common at the beginning of the war, but as the months passed, they somewhat faded, and their return now emphasized the gap between trust in civil society and distrust in the establishment.

Responses on the network: "When we arrived at the apartments in Netivot and discovered the products that were waiting for us, it warmed our hearts and gave us the feeling that someone cares about us. Your support during this time means more to us than can be described. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

### Rahat and the Bedouin diaspora

In recent months, sharp criticism has been directed against the large number of Bedouins who serve in the IDF, both by Bedouin web surfers and web surfers from the West Bank, who claim that the state institutions take advantage of the Bedouin soldiers without 'returning the favor'. "It will not help you to serve in their army, you will always be third-class citizens," wrote one of the web surfers, and others noted that the Bedouin soldiers "do not protect their brothers but kill children in Gaza."

Alongside the intra-Bedouin tensions in issues related to belonging to Israel, it was recently possible to note expressions of social solidarity that go against common sentiments in Jewish Israeli society. The campaign to collect donations for the residents of Gaza, in which food and aid products were collected in the Bedouin communities for the benefit of the residents of Gaza, evoked great pride and a sense of togetherness, which was seen as the only way to express solidarity with the residents of the Gaza Strip.

The sense of cohesion beyond being Israeli is also reflected in the opposition to Minister Ben Gvir, who demanded that the Israeli citizenship of all those involved in the fundraising operation be revoked, with many of the web surfers calling him "fascist and racist" and claim that his words only increase the involvement of the residents of the Negev in the campaign to collect donations.

Responses on the network: "By actions and not by words, our Negev proved that we are one people with one concern and one destiny. Artificial geographical borders will not divide us, political differences will not separate us and the color of the identity card will certainly not determine our identity."

## Insights

The quantitative questionnaire indicates that one year after the start of the war, many of the Jewish residents of the Western Negev (about half of the current sample) perceive the level of social cohesion as low, and this is true both for the urban residents and for the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim.

The findings of the discourse on the networks in the cities indicated a feeling of gratitude in relation to the help they received from communities in Israel. However, it was emphasized that this discourse arose mainly at the beginning of the war. This finding is not in conflict with the findings of the quantitative questionnaire, as the data from a longitudinal study with five repeated measurements on the general Jewish population presents that the sense of social cohesion was extremely high at the beginning of the war and steeply decreased as it continued from about 4 (out of 5) to 2.60 after 10 months of measurement.

The finding regarding the Jewish residents should, without a doubt, turn on 'a red light' for the decision-makers, as the concept of social cohesion is critical for the recovery of the Israeli society at large, and of the affected communities in particular. So should the ability to cope with both the war and the challenges facing the state and the population. The slogan of the war "Together we will win," requires strengthening the concept of social cohesion between the various parts of the population and between them and the governing bodies.

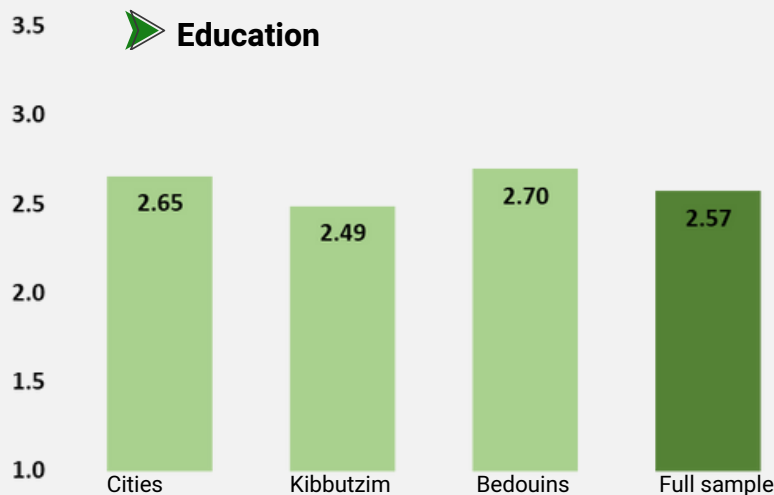
As for the issue of social cohesion among the Bedouin population, which was examined only on the networks, it is worth emphasizing that the Bedouins have a complex identity. When certain politicians or government bodies act in a way that is perceived as an attempt to suppress distinctly non-Israeli elements of identity, such as in propositions against the fundraising campaign for Gaza, it is possible to identify on the networks a counter reaction of renouncing the element of Israeli identity.

## ➤ Education

### Quantitative research

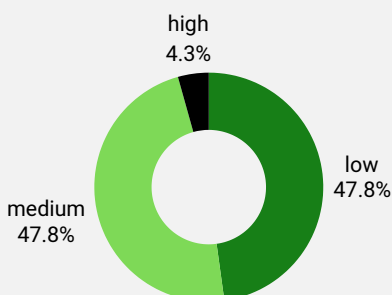
The respondents were asked two questions regarding their perception of the educational infrastructure currently available to their children ("To what extent is the educational response [formal and informal] satisfactory?" and "To what extent are the conditions intended for the education system [such as safety, location, etc.] satisfactory?"). The scale ranges between 1 and 5; the higher the index, the more positive the perception towards the educational response. The figure shows that the average satisfaction with the education system in the entire sample was medium-low (2.6 out of a maximum score of 5). A small difference was found in relation to the types of community; The level of satisfaction of the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim was the lowest, but this difference was not significant in relation to the residents of the Bedouin cities and communities.

Most residents in the three types of communities express low or moderate satisfaction with the education system and the solutions it offers at this time - in all types of communities; 96% expressed low or moderate satisfaction.

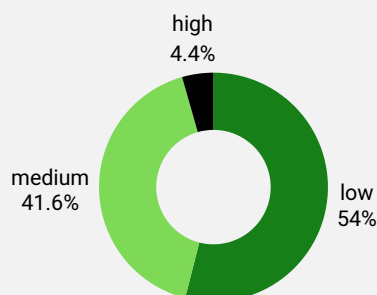


Average satisfaction with the education system by type of community. There are no significant differences.

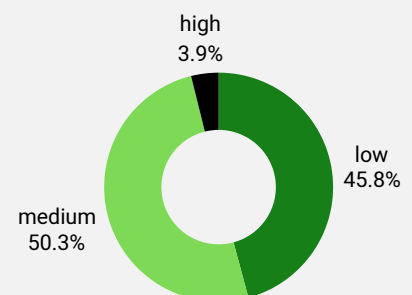
Ⓐ Education- Bedouins



Ⓑ Education- Kibbutzim



Ⓒ Education- Cities



Education distributions by type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

## Discourse on the networks

### Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities

The issue of the schools formed the bulk of the discourse on the networks in recent months. Similar to the criticism regarding housing, many residents raised claims of two types: The first type refers to the nature of the decisions made, in which many voices of parents are heard claiming that the Ministry of Education and the regional councils are looking to present a 'return to normalcy' with minimal investment. It is thus claimed that therefore, they are not looking for suitable alternatives to the existing institutions, which are located relatively close to the border. The second type of allegations concern the conduct of the Ministry of Education and communications with the parents, which left the families in uncertainty for many months and created a feeling of disregard on the part of the establishment - mainly around the Ministry's decision not to establish the school in Orim. The bulk of the discourse was raised in the "Eshkol" regional council, but similar claims were also raised in "Sha'ar Hanegev" and the regional councils farther from the border, but in a more limited manner. The main focal point of the discourse in the field of education was, as mentioned, the "Eshkol" regional council, where already, at the end of May, a network and media campaign for the establishment of a school that is not near the risk zone was launched, as part of which several demonstrations were also held. As time passed, the momentum waned, and although it was evident from the discourse that many of the parents chose to send their children to the council's schools, among many a very negative sentiment was formed in relation to the council and the government offices. At times, in addition to the tension between the parents and the institution, the school choice dilemma also created tension between groups of parents or between parents and their children. Another prominent trend was the reference to the educational functionaries, in which one could see on the one hand a positive sentiment regarding the appointment of new principals to some schools, and on the other hand, the lack of teachers, informal education staff and kindergarten personnel in the communities was also prominent - this trend has continued since the beginning of the war.

Responses on the network: "The council wants to return us to the old and familiar conception in order to build our resilience. In the meantime, it only manages to nurture our lack of solution. Our children will not study in the council"; "The Ministry of Education, the council, the IDF - all want to normalize the unimaginable reality. I don't want to get used to it, it's not normal to get used to such a thing. No sane person wants to sacrifice their child on the altar."

### Western Negev cities

The issue of the lack of protection in some schools, kindergartens and daycare centers in the cities continues to be at the heart of the discourse on education since the beginning of the war. Many wrote about how the alarms continued for many months after the seventh of October; however, for the children, especially in the informal education frameworks, "there are no shelters within a reasonable distance to run to." A secondary issue that concerns the residents in the field of education is the lack of a sufficient therapeutic and emotional envelope in the kindergartens and the school, despite the prolonged trauma that the children have experienced since the beginning of the war.

The parents claimed that there are significant shortages of caregivers - such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, and more. According to them, although there has been a recent recess in the alarms, the children are still carrying the trauma that has not been treated since the beginning of the war.

Conversely, it should be noted that the opening of the school year as usual in the three cities caused a wave of positive discourse on the networks. The residents stated that they needed a routine for their children that would also allow them to go to work and praised the efforts of the mayors in favor of the move. Responses on the network: "Just a question, what is happening in all the special education kindergartens and the communication kindergartens in Sderot? Why not establish a program that recruits emotional therapists, communication therapists, occupational therapists, and much more? The children enter the kindergartens without a therapeutic envelope and you don't lift a finger to promote it."; last March the State of Israel demanded that we return to Sderot with a lot of praise for the resilience of the Western Negev and promises of recovery budgets. But for a month already, the Israeli government has physically blocked the daycare centers' subsidy as a collective punishment for cutting the subsidy."

Among the Bedouin society, there was indeed a discourse in the field of education, but it was not related to the effects of the war. Certain efforts were made with respect to the connection of schools to the infrastructure, the teachers' union strike, etc.

## Insights

The quantitative research shows that in all types of communities, satisfaction with the education system is low or moderate, and there is no difference between the types of communities in this regard. In the Negev cities and communities, the burning issues are not new. In fact, although there is a difference between the issues that preoccupy each group - the lack of shelters in the educational institutions for the residents of the cities, and the demand for inland schools in the kibbutzim and moshavim - the common denominator is that the issues are known and present in the discourse for many months. The fact that the same are expressed on the network for such a long time and remain emotional and burning emphasizes their great importance for the residents, and at the same time, intensifies feelings of distrust in the state institutions, which are perceived as being unable to meet the basic needs of the residents.

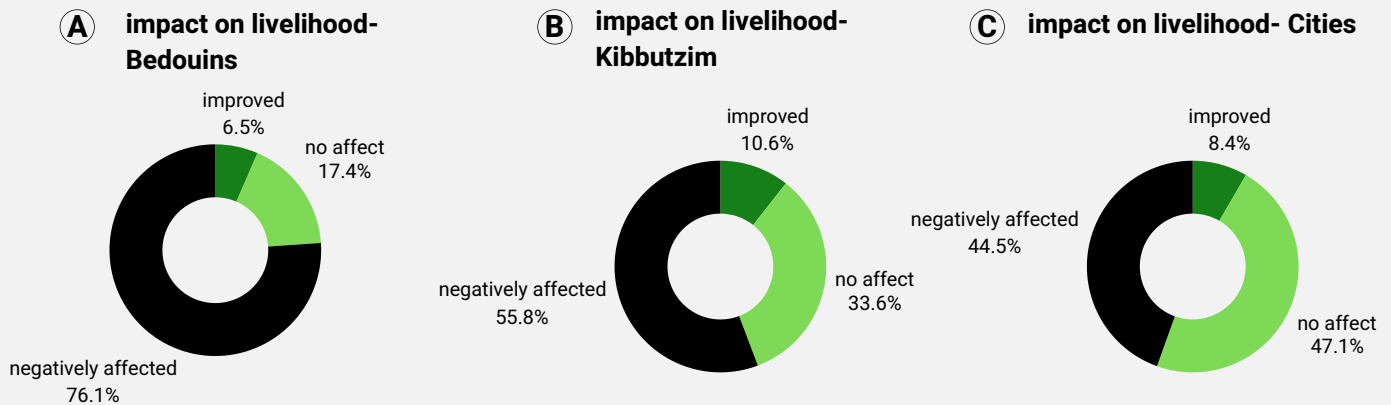
At the same time, in the moshavim and kibbutzim, a unique sentiment arose regarding the education system, according to which the council and the Ministry of Education are using the schools as a tool to normalize life in the shadow of the war, thus enabling the building of a new conception.

Investment in education infrastructure is a critical pillar in the public's capacity to deal with the ongoing crisis. The various struggles going on in the education system, even during the war, weaken the system even more. The proper operation of the education system and the strengthening of students' and parents' trust in the government system, including in the education system, requires the investment of dedicated efforts in obtaining the cooperation of all stakeholders, including the central government, the local government, the faculty of the education system, the parents and the students.

## ➤ Economy and employment

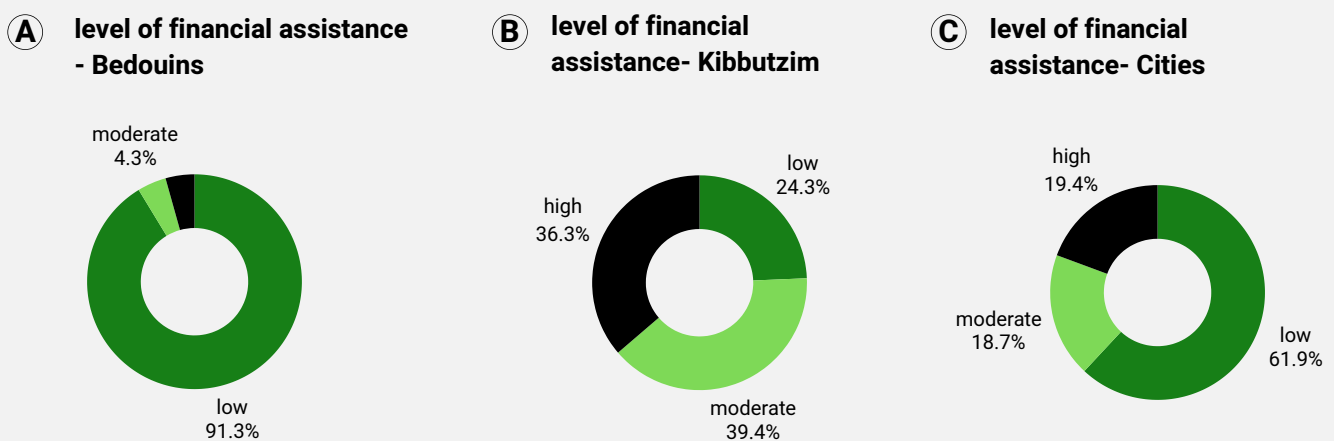
### Quantitative research

The livelihood issue was assessed using two central questions. First question: "To what extent did the war affect the family's livelihood?". The answers were made up of five categories grouped together into three broad categories: "improvement for the better", "no effect" and "harm to livelihood". In the total sample, 54% reported that their livelihood was harmed as a result of the war. The figure shows differences in the distributions as per the type of community: Bedouin communities reported the most significant harm to livelihood (76%). 56% of the residents of the kibbutzim/moshavim reported harm, while in the cities 45% of the respondents reported harm to their livelihood.



The distributions of the impact on the family's livelihood according to the type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

The second question examined: "To what extent did you receive assistance, financially, from the state?" A significant difference was found between the respondents of the different communities. The figure shows that 91% of the Bedouins reported low assistance, in the cities the percentage of those reporting low assistance dropped to 62%, and in the kibbutzim it was only 24%.



Distributions of receiving aid from the state by type of community: A. Bedouin communities; B. kibbutzim / moshavim; C. Cities.

An examination of the association between each of the two questions and all the research variables, indicated a weak, but significant correlation between the questions in relation to the following variables: The greater the impact on livelihoods, the lower the three types of resilience (national, community and individual) and morale, while the symptoms of stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, sense of danger and threats were higher. The higher the financial aid people received, the higher the levels of resilience (national, community, and individual), but along with them, PTSD symptoms increased and morale decreased.

## Discourse on the networks

### Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities

Although it is clear that the war significantly affected employment in the Western Negev in many sectors, the discourse on the networks was mostly positive, and can be divided into three general trends. The first trend was documenting businesses in the Western Negev - factories and small businesses - that have returned to work for the first time since the beginning of the war, presenting them as a symbol of a renewed revival that stems from the ground. A second trend focused on agriculture in the Western Negev, and as part of it, photos and videos of the ongoing work in the fields of the Western Negev appeared, presenting the farmers as civic heroes. The third trend - which stands out mainly in the publications of the councils and communities for many months, but is less present in the current civil discourse - refers to the lack of manpower in the fields of education and paramedical care.

### Western Negev cities

The discourse on economic and employment issues in the three cities - Ofakim, Netivot and Sderot - has remained at high levels since the beginning of the war and focuses on three main aspects: A sense of a lack of sufficient economic aid from the state in all three cities. In Ofakim and Netivot the residents express frustration at their exclusion from the "Tkuma region" which receives support from the "Tkuma directorate"; while in Sderot it was claimed that the financial grants are provided to the municipality and not directly to the residents. It is possible that the apparent provision of one billion shekels from the directorate's budget in favor of Ofakim and Sderot, as well as in favor of the Merhavim regional council, will lead to a change in the discourse on this issue. It is evident that the residents of the cities are bothered by the high unemployment rates. According to them, the mayors invest most of their resources and efforts in building new residential neighborhoods, instead of investing in the existing residents of the city, many of whom remained unemployed as a result of the war (businesses that closed, residents who lost their jobs after long reserve service, etc.). Therefore, the residents request assistance in three key areas: Holding dedicated training that will open doors for the residents to future jobs; assistance and guidance in finding jobs; as well as the establishment of commercial and employment areas in the cities.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in the three cities, initiatives have been made on behalf of the municipality to conduct job fairs with the aim of assisting residents find work.

Another issue that preoccupied the residents, besides the high unemployment rates, is the increase in prices during the war, and in particular, the high costs of supplementary educational services starting from the beginning of the year 2015. For example: To a post published by the municipality of Netivot about the increase in after-school class fees, parents reacted sharply, "What does a parent of 4 children do in an after-school class?" 'Shame, my husband fought and risked his life and this is what we deserve.'

Other responses identified on the network: "First of all, the mayor of Netivot should take care of what is not available! Education, employment, traffic jams, and many other things beyond that!!! It is not the main thing to enhance the city with construction and not to take care of anything!!!! There are a lot of residents who don't have a job"; "Where you can sting, sting. In any event, the residents of Netivot were abandoned financially in this war; Instead of helping the residents, they do the opposite."

The economic discourse was overwhelmingly negative and criticized the conduct of Tkuma Directorate in the economic consequences of the housing plan. Residents who spoke out on the issue claimed that the directorate is using economic pressure levers in order to return the residents to the Western Negev quickly, without considering their emotional and mental state. At the same time, unlike in the previous quarterly, the discourse on the networks about the distribution of resources between the communities of the region and the other communities in the council that are outside the 7 km line, has almost completely disappeared.

Responses on the network: "For the friends from Tkuma who are doing everything to get us back through economic sanctions, I will say that since the seventh of October we have been on a crazy roller coaster ride that will not end in the near future."

### **Rahat and the Bedouin diaspora**

Before the outbreak of the war, the economy of the Bedouin communities in the south, especially in Rahat, relied to a large extent on Palestinian workers and laborers from the West Bank. With the cancellation of entry permits after October 7, many residents of the Negev complained about the severe effects. Many testified that the price of hiring workers, especially in the construction sector, had risen dramatically, and contractors told of companies that went bankrupt and of the instability in the employment sector in the Negev.

Besides the lack of Palestinian workers, the economy of the Negev was severely affected by the war. Several mentions on the web described how the war is shaking the economic stability of the Negev residents and endangering their future, in addition to the government cuts in the budgets intended for the Arab society as a whole. For many of the residents, one of the solutions for the local economic problems is support for Bedouin businesses - including a call to boycott the Jewish business owners in Be'er Sheva. "The least we can do is to boycott Beer Sheva and not enter it," wrote one of the web surfers, and "if we must enter, then not spend even a one penny there." The calls to boycott Be'er Sheva also came up in other mentions on the network.

Responses on the network: "The state should issue work permits to Palestinians within the borders of 1948. This is the only solution there is, there is no other solution'

## Insights

The findings of the quantitative research show that, on the one hand, the most significant economic impact was in the Bedouin communities, and on the other hand, they are the ones who received the least aid from the state. In the analysis of the associations between livelihood and the other variables, a significant relationship emerges between the levels of resilience and stress and between the economic damage and the aid provided by the state. The negative effect is associated with low resilience and increased stress, and financial aid is associated with an increase in resilience on the one hand but also an increase in negative coping indices on the other hand. Although these correlations are relatively weak, they are still statistically significant.

Both among the residents of the cities and among the residents of the moshavim and kibbutzim, it is possible to identify on the networks the preoccupation with the economic challenges. In the cities they are more sensitive concerning inflation and the increase in property tax rates, (especially in Ofakim and Netivot that do not benefit from the solutions of "Tkuma Directorate"). Among the rural communities, the main discourse revolves around the recovery of the agricultural sector in the Eshkol region and the recovery of the industry in the area, which for the residents are a prominent sign of revival and recovery.

Among the Bedouin population, a more significant discourse could be identified on the network, which corresponds to the more serious harm caused to their livelihood and the lower response they received from the state. An examination of the patterns of discourse on the networks clarifies that the more significant harm they experience stems from the characteristics of their employment, such as the fact that the construction industry is a major source of employment (severely harmed due to the cessation of the entry of Palestinian workers from the West Bank), as well as the relatively low socio-economic opening figures compared to the Jewish population.

In general, it is clear that an economic boom in the three regions in the coming year will mark for the residents the success of the activity of Tkuma Directorate in the recovery of the Western Negev and of the municipalities' efforts to assist the residents by occupational guidance and job creation. It can be assumed that the crisis that developed following the events of October 7 and the ongoing war created such extensive and diverse needs that financial aid by itself is insufficient to compensate for the damages. This hypothesis requires further research in order to examine the lasting effect over time of the state's aid on the coping and recovery capacity of the various populations.

## ➤ Housing

### Discourse on the networks

#### Kibbutzim, moshavim and residential communities

After most of the residents of the Western Negev have already returned to their homes, the last few months have been marked by the transition of the residents of the 7 km line communities, from the hotels back to the permanent or temporary localities. In this respect, there was a clear distinction between two trends in the discourse. On the one hand, communities such as Nir Oz, Kfar Aza and Be'eri - where since the residents have nowhere to return and were not required to return - the demolition of the houses began and a reconstruction process began. In these communities, the temporary housing solution also progressed. All of these evoked ambivalent feelings in the tension between the desire to preserve the memory and the aspiration to re-establish the communities. On the other hand, in kibbutzim such as Mefalsim or Nir Am - whose residents were required to return despite being close to the fence - fears arose about life in the shadow of the war and many residents spoke out in relation to Tkuma Directorate, stating that it uses pressure levers against the residents and urge them to return to the Western Negev. At the same time, the division was not always maintained between those who were required to return and those who were not. In Kibbutz Holit, for example, similar criticism was expressed against the directorate in relation to the transition to the temporary housing solution in Revivim.

In general, the outline presented by Tkuma directorate for the return of the residents, provoked sharp criticism for its remoteness and lack of understanding of the residents' needs for recovery and return to the communities, as well as a sense of acceleration and fear that the conduct of the directorate could produce negative migration from the Western Negev. The main criticism was aimed against the lack of gradualness and flexibility. Alongside this, complaints were raised about the lack of transparency and cooperation with the residents and the lack of success in meeting the directorate's past promises, especially with regard to schedules.

Another important element was the difficulty of the residents to make a decision regarding their future in the Western Negev communities. This trend was reflected both by families who decided not to return and emphasized that they still do not feel safe, but expressed a future desire to reunite with the community, and by families who returned, but defined it as a "trial period", mainly against the background of feeling insecure and fearful of their mental state.

Responses on the network: "The journey home was forced upon us under the guidelines and decisions of the Israeli government which continues to neglect the residents of the Western Negev adjacent to the fence. Tired of fighting and determined to protect our families and our community, we are coming back."; "Mefalsim and Sha'ar HaNegev is home, but it is important to understand that without the end of the war and the return of the hostages, there will be no resurrection and recovery for the residents and this region."

### **Western Negev cities**

In the three cities, a large-scale construction boom began in recent months and the reactions to it were divided. While some residents expressed support for the expansion projects, which, in their view, indicate recovery from the disaster and growth, many feared that the projects would burden the infrastructure and damage the municipal services provided to the residents, noting that "it is impossible to grow without responding to what the population needs." Further criticism was observed regarding construction, according to which many grants are invested in the construction of public buildings and new housing units instead of providing solutions for the current residents of the cities - both in the field of psychological response to trauma, upgrading old neighborhoods, improving emergency preparedness and more.

Among the residents of Netivot, the fear of the housing expansion in the city was particularly noted, following the signing of the project that is expected to double the number of residents. The project will include 32 thousand new apartments that will be built in two huge neighborhoods in Netivot. The mayor praised the project and said that "the agreement we are signing today is the appropriate Zionist response to our enemies - we will continue to build, grow and develop the Negev."

Responses on the network: "It can be big but it has to be good. It is important that the city grows and develops and we should not be left behind, but it is impossible to grow without thinking. Without planning, without responding to what the population needs. You can't park your car, you can't walk on the sidewalks and more..."

### **Rahat and the Bedouin diaspora**

In recent months there has been a significant increase in the number of house demolitions in the Negev - the result of Minister Itamar Ben Gvir's policy. One of the most tense and publicized demolitions was carried out at the beginning of August at the house of the Abu Kaf family in Umm Batin, when the residents barricaded themselves in one of the houses in order to prevent its demolition. At the scene of the demolition, Knesset members Walid al-Hawashla and Yosef al-Atauna were present, who on several other occasions expressed the distress of the residents of the Negev. "You should know that the government has announced a third front - the Bedouin Arab society in the Negev," Al-Atauna said in a debate held in the Knesset in early July on the trauma of children who were evacuated following the war.

It can be seen that the issue of house demolitions, especially after the clashes in Umm Batin, is linked to other political issues. In a demonstration that took place in mid-August in front of the court in Be'er Sheva, with the participation of Bedouin and Jewish activists, arguments were raised against the house demolition policy along with other slogans such as "Hand in hand, protect the land from the Jews", "From the Negev to Gaza with blessings", "We are be afraid - Israel is a state of terror" and more .

Responses on the network: "One must not think that after our sacrifice on October 7, something will change. We deserve our rights without having to be accountable to anyone to get them, certainly not to die."

## Insights

Unlike other topics, the style of the discourse on the network regarding housing issues varies from region to region and one society to the other. In Bedouin society, the issue took up a significant share of the entire discourse, which was mainly concerned with the worsening of the house demolition policy. This policy is seen as a means to harm Bedouin society while taking advantage of the continuation of the war. Even in the Western Negev kibbutzim and moshavim, the area where the houses were most significantly damaged and which some of their residents have not yet returned to their homes, the issue of housing was at the center of the discussion, and in the networks the residents were outraged by the "detached and inflexible" outline of Tkuma Directorate for their return to their homes. In the cities, on the other hand, there was a relatively limited discourse, which mainly included the residents' concerns about the construction boom in the cities. The differences in discourse testify to the varied challenges facing each population and require the provision of adapted solutions for each problem.

## ➤ Comparison between communities that were evacuated and those that were not evacuated

### Quantitative research

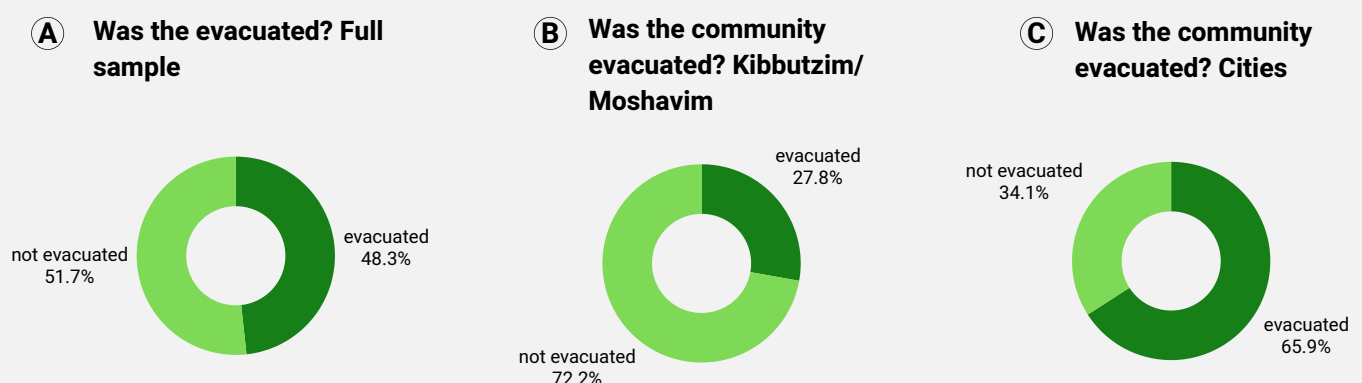
In order to conduct comparisons between evacuees and non-evacuees, external information was used (regarding communities that were evacuated versus those that were not evacuated). In light of this, the findings should be treated as an imprecise assessment. Only the residents of the Jewish communities were included in the analysis since the Bedouin communities were not evacuated at all.

Figure A shows the proportion of the communities evacuated from the total sample; A little more than half of the sample respondents are returned evacuees (52%). Figure B and C show the information by type of community. It can be seen that there is a significant difference: 72% of the respondents in the kibbutzim/moshavim live in communities that have been evacuated, while in the cities it is a much smaller percentage (34%).

To examine whether there was a difference in the assessed variables between people living in the communities that were evacuated and those from the communities that were not evacuated, a t-test analysis was performed for independent samples.

Figure D (shown on the next page) shows that in most of the positive coping indicators - national resilience, hope and morale - people who live in communities that were evacuated show lower levels compared to residents of communities that were not evacuated. Regarding community resilience, the pattern was the opposite, community resilience was higher in the communities that were evacuated.

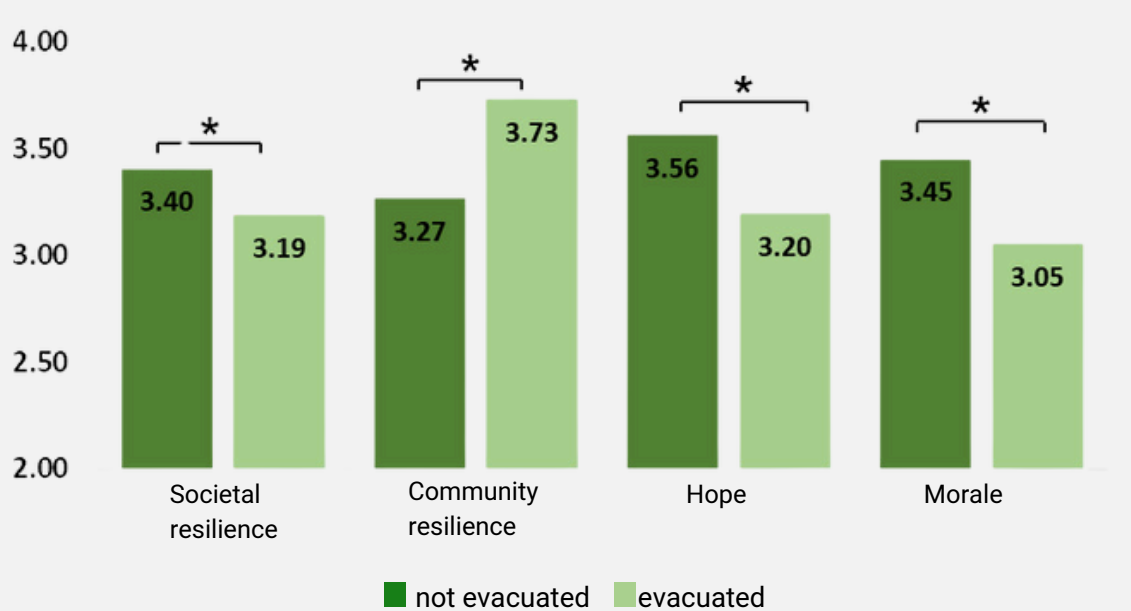
Figure E (shown on the next page) shows a mirror image in terms of the negative coping indices. Stress symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, feelings of danger and perception of threats in the evacuated communities are higher compared to the communities that were not evacuated.



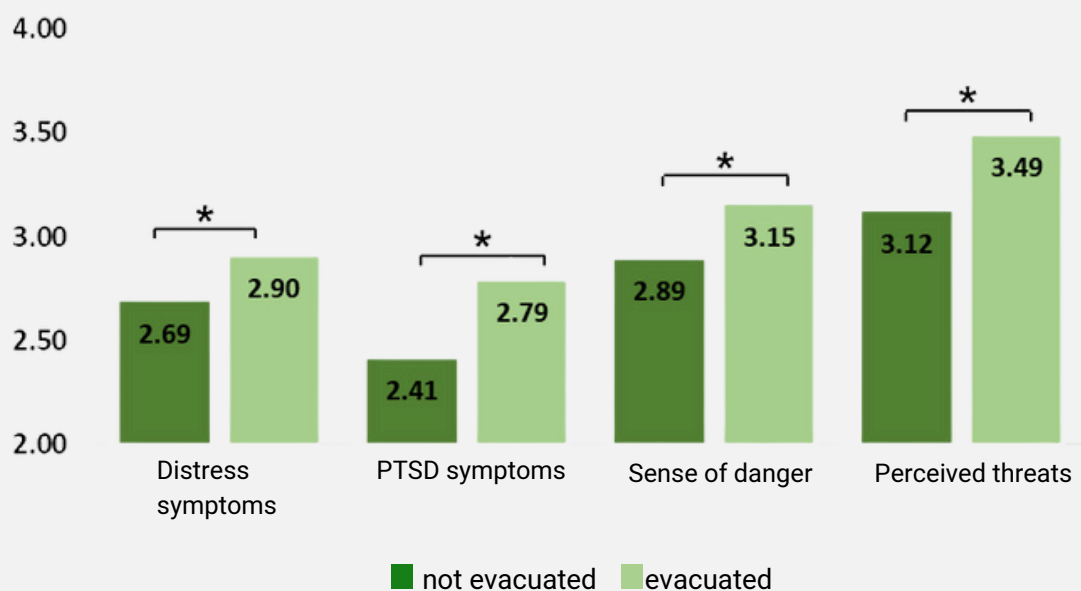
**Distributions belonging to evacuated/non-evacuated communities as per the type of community: A. the entire sample; B. Kibbutzim / Moshavim; C. Cities.**

## Quantitative research

D



E



Comparisons between evacuated communities and communities that were not evacuated: D. in relation to stress symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, sense of danger and perceived threats; E. In relation to national resilience, community resilience, hope and morale. \* - significant paired comparisons.

## Insights from the quantitative research

The finding that people from evacuated communities express higher community resilience seems puzzling, but it can be explained in at least two ways. First, this may imply that the shared fate as evacuees produces increased community activity, which in turn increases the sense of community. Second, it is possible that this is due to the fact that most of the respondents from the evacuated communities come from kibbutzim/moshavim where communality is stronger compared to the cities even in normal times. In addition, some of the residents of the kibbutzim were evacuated together to the same location (hotels, buildings in the cities), and therefore, the community continued to function as a community even after the evacuation. It seems, therefore, that the decision to evacuate together as a community has great value.

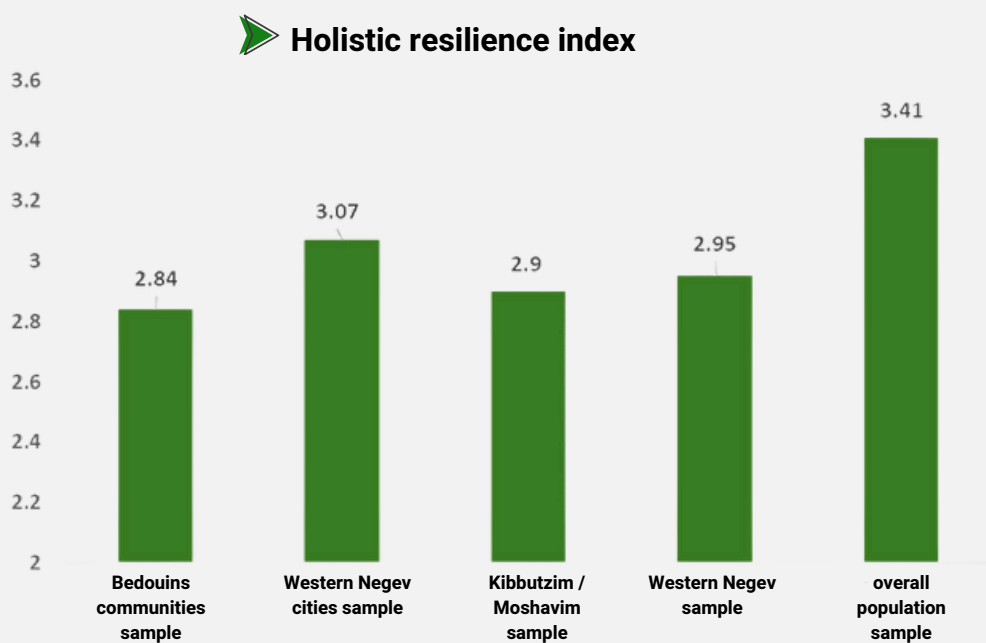
The findings as a whole show that people from communities that were evacuated present fewer positive coping indices and increased negative coping indices compared to those from communities that were not evacuated.

## ➤ Holistic Resilience Index

The holistic resilience index enables a periodic monitoring of the effectiveness of varied interventions that are implemented in the Western Negev region, as part of the rehabilitation efforts. The current index reflects the baseline assessment that was made in September 2024.

The index includes seven categories that were recommended in a modified Delphi process (a technique aimed at achieving consensus among experts) for inclusion in the Holistic Resilience Index, according to the relative weight of each category. The categories include national (societal) resilience, community resilience, individual resilience, hope, morale, social cohesion, and sense of danger.

The Holistic Resilience Index among the Bedouin communities is based on five (out of seven) categories, as morale and social cohesion were not measured in this sample.



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## **Western Negev Quarterly Resilience Index Quarterly report - September 2024**

### **One year mark of October 7 attack**