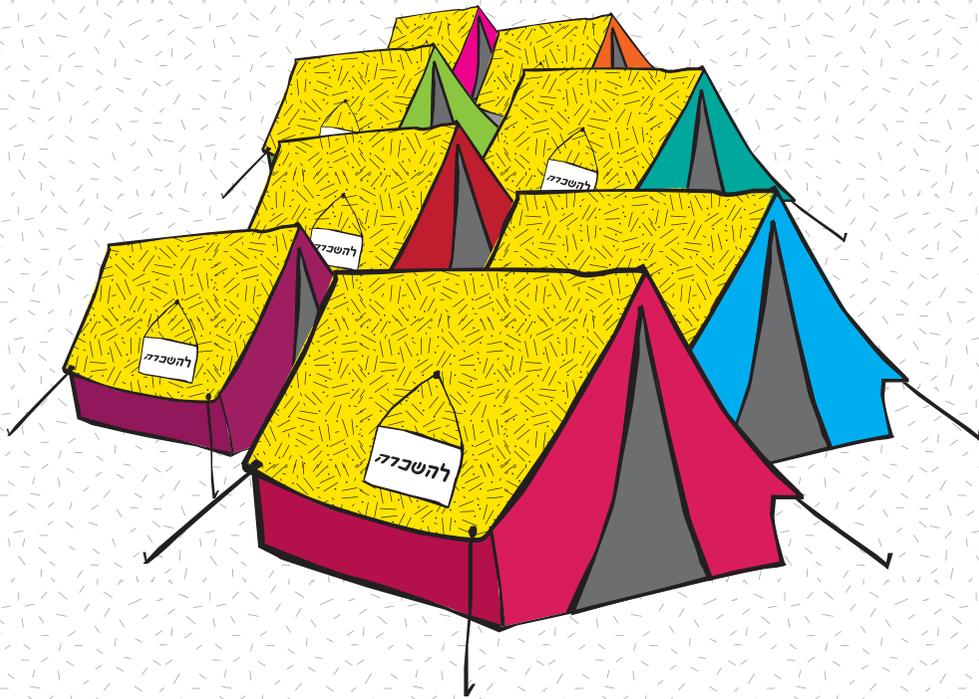




10 Key Points for Promoting Social Housing Policy



Presented as food for thought by the Coalition for Affordable Housing Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) • Technion Community Planning Lab • Bimkom - Planners for Planning Rights • The Association for Distributive Justice • Human Rights in Society – Legal Clinic of the University of Haifa • Movement for Decent Living • Itach – Women Lawyers for Social Justice • Shatil

Housing is not just a necessity, it is a basic human right with critical impact on our lives. Availability of affordable housing will determine whether we can live in an environment that includes good education for our children, good services and jobs. It will determine whether we spend too much money to ensure that we have a place to live, a price that will come at the expense of dental care or in some cases even food.

Housing policy will determine how our society will look - whether we will be a polarized society or an equal one. Without a social perspective on housing – we will not have a diverse society but a segregated one. This is the recipe for deep societal crisis, including the divides between center and periphery, different cities and neighborhoods.

What can be done?

1 Do not segregate luxury neighborhoods from poor ones, but rather strive for a social mix

The Problem: The government currently advances different solutions for different sectors that allow for the segregation of groups and the exclusion of weak sectors.

The Solution: Do not segregate luxury neighborhoods from poor ones, but rather strive for a social mix in every single neighborhood across the country.

2 Anchor the right to housing in legislation, not ad-hoc solutions

The Problem: The right to suitable housing is not anchored in any Basic Law, leaving housing rights in the hands of internal protocols and administrative decisions made by the Israel Lands Authority and Housing Ministry that are not transparent.

The Solution: Do not falter - anchor the right to housing in a Basic Law that guarantees the social right to housing and is backed by appropriated budgets.

3 Rehabilitate and improve public housing

The Problem: The State has ceased building public housing and continues to sell public housing units to the residents living in them. Revenues from these sales - over NIS 2 billion - have not been invested back in public housing, resulting in a shortage of public housing and their poor physical conditions.

The Solution: Rehabilitate and improve public housing by expanding the supply of public housing apartments for low-income families and keeping up the maintenance of existing apartments.

4 Reinstate the budget for housing assistance

The Problem: The State used to help families purchase or rent apartments, but in the last decade housing assistance budgets have decreased by a drastic 56%.

The Solution: Reinstate the budget for housing assistance that has been slashed over the last decade and anchor the eligibility for assistance in legislation that is backed by budgets and is expanded to reflect the realistic needs of residents in a specific area.

5 Encourage new construction in combination with affordable housing

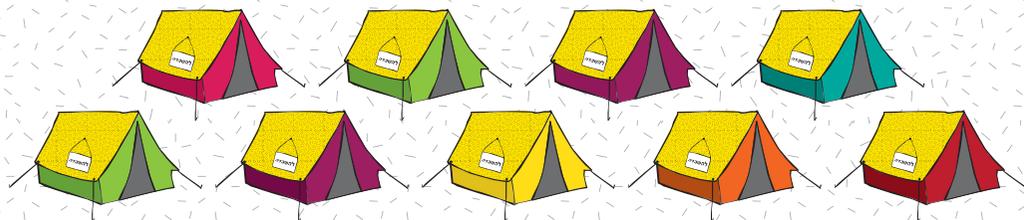
The Problem: Today there is no legal or economic framework that compels entrepreneurs to allocate a portion of housing, built on both public and private land, for discount housing. Without implementing these conditions in the planning process, new construction will primarily include large and luxury apartments that cater only to the upper class.

The Solution: Encourage new construction in combination with affordable housing by enacting legislation that provides incentives for the allocation of affordable housing in new housing projects.

6 For those who cannot afford to purchase a home - create alternatives that enable people to live in long-term rentals

The Problem: It is impossible to live in long-term rentals in Israel due to the lack of legislation that regulates the private rental market. People that rent are used to discriminatory contracts and extreme rent increases each year. As a result they are forced to purchase homes by taking out mortgages that they cannot afford.

The Solution: For those who cannot afford to purchase a home, regulations should be set for the rental market that allow for long-term rentals and provide a framework that prevents extreme increases in rent.



7 Invest in urban renewal while maintaining affordable housing in city centers

The Problem: Most building efforts currently exist in open areas, on the margins of cities, thereby neglecting the expansion of the supply of apartments in the cities while encouraging the destruction of affordable housing in order to build new and expensive projects.

The Solution: Invest in urban renewal while maintaining affordable housing in city centers, so that it will not depend solely on the whims of the free market.

8 Use state land as a social resource, not an economic one

The Problem: The Israel Lands Authority treats public lands as an economic resource and looks to maximize profits on it. With the exception of a few tenders, the ILA markets land to the highest bidder, and in contradiction with the ILA's own laws, it does not allocate land to affordable or public housing.

The Solution: The ILA should be required to utilize state land as a social resource, not an economic one, marketing lands for the betterment of the public where it is most needed.

9 Strengthen planning institutions and make them more efficient, implementing social considerations in the planning process

The Problem: Like other essential social services, the resources of planning institutions have been depleted and there is a severe shortage of human resources.

The Solution: Do not deplete but rather strengthen the planning institutions and make them more efficient, including social considerations in the planning process.

10 Refuse to allow discrimination in housing

The Problem: Discriminatory practices in the housing market in Israel are widespread, which, together with skyrocketing apartment prices, leads to social exclusion and segregation. Israel has no explicit legislation that prohibits discrimination in the sale and renting of apartments and the State even allocates housing resources in a non-equitable manner.

The Solution: The State must refuse to allow discrimination in housing by banning acceptance committees to defined communities, specifically as pertaining to Arab citizens, and promote legislation that protects all people from discrimination in access to housing.