



For the past three decades, Citizens for the Environment has guided, trained and supported Israelis who wish to protect both people and nature from environmental hazards. We do this by raising public awareness on environmental issues, publishing information and explanatory materials, conducting surveys, commissioning reports, influencing decision-makers on policy, championing legislation on environmental issues, increasing enforcement, ensuring environmental rights are upheld, and guiding grassroots organisations who wish to tackle environmental hazards in their respective part of the country. Citizens for the Environment is a partnership between members of the Arab and Jewish communities.

Our Impact in 2019

❖ Promoting eco-activism and grassroots activities

The Baladi Program: Encouraging members of the Arab community to tackle local environmental issues

Launched in 2019, the program is designed to create local action groups who develop models of cooperation between residents and their local council. We first launch a collaborative process of fact-finding, brainstorming, discussion and site visits, and then go on to create a local action plan with the residents. The Baladi Program was launched in Maghar, Jadeidi-Makr (where it was discontinued), and in Jish.

Additionally, we concluded a collaborative project alongside Green Horizons and the *Halom Hadash* ("New Dream") initiative for schoolchildren in Tur'an. This project included hosting talks and workshops, going on trips, and building a bench in the school playground from recycled materials.

[images from talks and resident meetings]

❖ Enforcing a Civil Environment

- **We responded to dozens of complaints from residents on a range of environmental hazards in villages and towns, among them were:**
Hurfeish, Yanuh Jat, Sajur, Rama, Yafa, Kafr Manda, Na'ura, Gilboa Regional Council, Abu Snan, Nazareth, Peki'in, Yarka, Shfar'am, Afula, Deir Al-Asad, Hosen and Shlomi. Our support includes mapping the hazards, contacting local councils, demanding data and initiating legal proceedings where necessary.

- **We guided a number of residents' groups on local and national campaigns, among them were:**

Residents of Evron, in resolving refuse issues around the perimeter of the kibbutz;
Residents of Kfar Masaryk in their negotiations with the Hod Plada factory;
Residents of Kibbutz Merhavia in their campaign against the Shibolet Dagan factory in Afula; action committees combatting asbestos damage in Netanya and Nahariya; an action committee struggling against the construction of wind turbines in Kfar Vradim; a Jish residents' action committee in Jish disputing the expansion of a landfill.

We steered and assisted a number of residents' groups tackling refuse fires in various parts of the country. We undertook site visits to document and map the hazards, organized site visits for both members of the Israeli Knesset and journalists, and ensured the findings were submitted to the subcommittee on refuse fires led by MK Yael German (under the Internal Affairs and Environment Committee).

- **We initiated legal action against several local councils, including:**
 - Submitting an administrative appeal against the local council in Sajur for failing to remove illegal landfill sites, and preventing refuse fires within the town. The Haifa district court approved a settlement whereby the council committed to cleaning the sites by the end of February 2020 and to regulating waste removal in the village by the end of 2020.
 - Submitting a request for contempt of court against Shfar'am municipality for failing to enforce existing regulations against local slaughterhouses that were a source of significant environmental hazards. The hazards were removed following an administrative appeal that we oversaw during the year. Following the request to find the municipality in contempt of court, the slaughterhouse put to rights its violations and received a business licence.
- **We Embarked on Several Class Action Suits, among them:**
 - A class action suit against the large factories in the Haifa Bay area: following years of investigations into the industrial pollution in the Haifa Bay area, including a series of detailed reports entitled "Industrial Silence", we worked with a team of lawyers and experts to submit a request for approval of a mass tort class action lawsuit (submitted on 16.7.19) against 30 industrial facilities in the Haifa Bay, demanding compensation for sufferers of lung cancer or Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma owing to the excessive pollution arising from these factories.
 - We participated in preparing the class action lawsuit against the Strauss ice cream factory in Akko following an ammonia leak from the facility. We later signed on as a party to the case.
 - We continued the mediation process in the class action suit we filed against Compost Shluchot for spreading untreated fertilizer, polluting the soil and causing environmental odours, as well as the lawsuit we filed against Israel Railways following the bromine leak in the south, and the class action lawsuit against the Shibolet Dagan factory, which we joined. We also arranged for resident representatives to tour the Shibolet Dagan factory with us, to gauge to what extent the factory had met their commitment to remove the environmental odours between by the end of 2019.

❖ Impacting policy, as well as circulating information and explanatory materials

- Ahead of the March 2019 general elections, we participated in an election panel of environmental action groups, together with candidates from the bigger parties and members of the public. Prior to the elections, we published a comparison of the party manifestos on environmental issues (in conjunction with the Society for the Protection of Nature) and met with a number of candidates and MKs. We also took them on visits to highlight the environmental reality in the villages and towns of the north.
- We participated in a working process involving dozens of organisations (led by Women Lawyers for Social Justice) who came together to prepare a collaborative policy paper aimed at implementing the UN's global targets. We helped organise the 2019 Climate Conference, and participated in the round-table that formulated recommendations for the Israel 2050 decarbonisation program.
- We published a range of data and news items via Arabic media sources, took part in a large number of interviews and featured in articles. In early 2019 we were informed that Radio Al-Shams had named Citizens for the Environment CEO person of the year for 2018, and this in recognition of her crucial role in raising awareness of environmental issues within Arab society.
- We added comments to a number of different policy documents and law proposals, including: a memorandum on the air pollution ordinances on burning refuse, responses to the "Issues in Environmental Regulation" document which proposed limiting the authority of the Environment Ministry under the guise of "streamlining regulations" and writing joint letters on the subject to the Prime Minister and the European Union (in conjunction with other environmental groups).
- We participated in a panel on the economic impact of climate change, which was organized as part of the *Calcalist* newspaper's annual forecast conference.