

CITIZENS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2021



אזרחים למען הסביבה
مواطنون من أجل البيئة
Citizens For the Environment



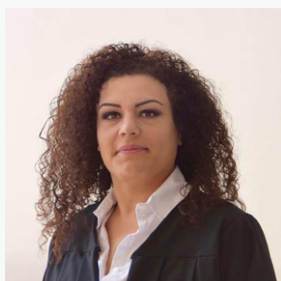
DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Looking back at 2021, we will undoubtedly call it the "Climate Change Year". Despite the challenges and after intensive efforts, environmental and climate issues have come to the forefront, despite data and research informing warnings and calls for action from environmental organizations having been around for years. It was a critical year not only in terms of public awareness of environmental issues but also due to the reports and the attention given by the media to these issues. Unfortunately, the number and intensity of environmental disasters that the world witnessed in the period of 2021 increased.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC), which received wide media coverage, presented a bleak picture about the future of the planet.

Environmental and climate change issues have not been overlooked in the Arab community in Israel. Citizens for the Environment has seen a noticeable increase in the Arab media coverage of these issues. Moreover, we have noticed a significant improvement in the levels of awareness among the Arab public.

Four years ago, we decided to make a strategic change. We focused our activities on raising awareness and increasing environmental engagement to help ensure the realization of the right to a healthy environment for the Arab citizens in Israel. This was supported by reaching new levels of engagement in 2021, and as a result CFE is now the central address on environmental issues in the Arab community for the public (including residents, Arabic and Hebrew media, civil society organizations), and for the government and national environmental organizations. In short, the year 2021 became a turning point in which the Arab community began to work for a sustainable healthy environment.



JAMILA HARDAL WAKIM

Citizens for the Environment, General Director

2021 IN NUMBERS



7

Legal proceedings
against polluting
bodies



90

community activists
gained greater skills,
tools and knowledge
to mobilize their
communities



30

complaints from citizens
on environmental issues
were handled



10

Policy papers and
policy
recommendations



63 Arab Local authorities
convened the Environment
Public Committees



We presented the
environmental concerns of
the Arab community in 6
national forums



We published 60
environmental media
items in Arabic
language media

OUR STRATEGY

At CFE we believe that in order to address, the climate change and environmental hazards, we need a *comprehensive and inclusive* approach that addresses the environmental crisis and climate change at three levels, these being:

1. Local community level: CFE works with local communities to actively engage in addressing environmental and climate crisis.
2. Local Arab Authorities: It is imperative to work with local authorities and local communities. Therefore, we collaborate with local authorities to increase their operational capacities to tackle environmental hazards and climate change and strengthen the role of Environment Public Committees and increase public participation.
3. National government: We need to make sure national decision makers address the impact of environmental hazards in Arab communities in Israel, and works to prevent such hazards in the first place.

OUR MISSION

CFE envisions a just, and resilient society where all residents enjoy and have access to a clean and healthy environment, can make informed decisions on sustainable resource use, and take climate safeguarding actions for the well-being and quality of life of this and future generations.



Baladi " My Town"

This project was launched in 2019 to actively engage and mobilize Arab local communities in addressing environmental issues and the climate crisis in their communities. The project focuses on providing community activists with the skills and knowledge to mobilize their communities and map environmental hazards, while we also support the struggle of community members and provide them with legal tools to hold the local authorities accountable.

Since 2019, we have reached six Arab localities (Kaboul, Mgar, Jish, Touran, Isfiah, and Haifa), and in 2021 we developed activities to achieve the following:

- 1- 40 Arab activists participated the project in Isfiah and Touran.
- 2- The Environment Protection Committee EPC's were activated in Touran and Isfiah localities.
- 3- In Isfiah, the activist successfully advocated for the allocation of 200,000 NIS to fund community environmental activities.
- 4- Second hand shop



Second-Hand Shop

In November 2021, a group of women activists who participated in the Baladi Project, opened the first second-hand shop in Isfiah. Although the idea of clothes recycling is new to their community, the women believe that this shop is the first step in promoting environment friendly behaviors among their community members. CEF will continue accompanying the group in promoting this project and other environmental projects the activists are planning



Introduction to Environmental Activism

In August 2021, we launched our new course "*Introduction to Activism in the Arab Community*". The course is an initial introduction to the world of sustainability, environmental activism, and the principles for leading change. Combining knowledge, practice, and peer learning, it provides tools for leading change processes to improve environmental realities, so raising community resilience and integration within the environmental movement. Participants of the course are members from several Arab localities including Nazareth, Haifa and the Galilee.

In November 2021, and in collaboration with the Association of Cities of Beit Natofeh, activists exhibited their "*photo voice projects*", in which they displayed an environmental message through photography. The photos were taken in collaboration with the community to document issues that are important to them and gain new and insightful ways of how to explore and represent their environment.



In 2021 CFE supported the local struggle of residents in several environmental issues

- Nahariya: We supported the residents struggle to ban the use of asbestos since it poses serious environmental and health hazards.
- Misgav: We supported the residents struggle against the expansion of the Bar Lev industrial zone.
- Nahif: We supported the Popular Committee of Nahif with consultation in their struggle against the illegal waste site within land administered by Sajour Local Authority. Legal proceedings (still ongoing) have been launched against the Local Authority to close the illegal waste sites.
- Horfaish: CFE filed a petition that brought a close to illegal waste sites in Horfaish.



Air Pollution in Haifa Bay

In February 2021, we kicked off the year with the unprecedented ruling of the class action, filed in 2019 against mass exposure to air pollution in Haifa Bay. The ruling set a precedent allowing thousands of residents the possibility of jointly suing polluting factories in Haifa Bay

NEW LGEAL STATUS

On 23 November 2021, the Interior and Environmental Protection Committee approved the addition of Citizens for the Environment to the list of bodies entitled to file lawsuits under the Prevention of Hazards Law. The Environmental Damage Prevention Law of 1992 allows a limited number of bodies, recognized by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, to file civil lawsuits against polluting entities and obtain orders to stop the damage even if the body itself or its members were neither harmed nor likely to be harmed.

The aim is to expand civic enforcement by the public in relation to environmental hazards and to give due weight to the public interest. The civil enforcement proceedings initiated by residents and environmental organizations play an instrumental role in reducing environmental hazards in the face of inadequate government enforcement. These procedures strengthen:

- (i) enforcement in general and help citizens in exercising their right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.
- (ii) implementation of the principle of "the polluter pays" and deterring polluting entities.



Lack of law enforcement in Arab local Authorities

strengthening Environmental Protection in Arab Municipalities

CFE, in collaboration with Lawyers for Good Governance (LGG) and Life and Environment (LE), we carried out the project “Strengthening Environmental Protection in Arab Municipalities” with the aim to strengthen the key role of local authorities in delivering the climate action. During the period of August to December 2021, we conducted a full mapping and sent enquiries to all Arab local authorities requesting the fulfilment of the law by the establishment of environmental committees. The project is in development, and within the next two years, we will work on improving the performance of the Environment Protection Committees (EPCs). This will enable them to develop infrastructure and allocate budgets to address the climate change to meet the needs of their communities while implementing enforcement mechanisms that effectively promote the rights Arab citizens to a clean and healthy environment. To this end, we will target 85 Arab local authorities and implement activities that will include an initial assessment of the key problems and barriers in the work of EPCs in Arab municipalities and identify municipalities where EPCs are not convened as required by law. We successfully activated the EPCs in 63 Localities Arab local authorities.

Knesset work

Advocacy, policy impact and exercising rights lie at the heart of our work. We believe this is vital in order to address the structures and systems at the national and local governance levels that perpetuate climate and environmental issues. This will ensure just and fair solutions that effectively address the impact of climate and environmental hazards in the Arab community. To build our advocacy work in 2021, we carried out the following:

- We held consultation meetings with several MKs, prior to the approval of the state budget.
- We convened a special discussion at the Interior Committee on the environmental situation in Arab localities.
- We participated in a special discussion on the effects of climate change on various sectors and presented the barriers and challenges in Arab society in addressing the climate crisis.



Waste incineration in open areas

In January 2021, and in collaboration with the local council of Jdeideh Al Maker we brought the waste management crisis to the subcommittee on environmental and distributive justice. We continue to support the residents' struggle of the residents of Jdaida Maker, at this stage we are following up on the petition that we filed to the supreme court.

Since 2019, we brought to the shutting down of five major illegal waste sites

THE ENVIRONMENT DAY AT THE KNESSET

In November 2021, CFE took part in activities for Environment Day at the Knesset. We initiated a hearing at the Committee for Arab Community Issues on lessons learned from previous government plans regarding the environmental situation in the Arab community across Israel. Several media outlets covered our activities during the day.





The President Forum

In November 2021, President Yitzhak Herzog announced the establishment of the 'Israeli Climate Forum' under the auspices of the President's House. CFE General Director Mrs. Jamila Hardal Wakem, was appointed as the coordinator of the waste management and consumption reduction cluster by the former KM Dov Hannin. Our CFE colleague Juhaina Bader was appointed as a member of the society and disadvantage population cluster. The forum aims to promote increased government responses to the climate action.

Other Forums Activities in 2021:

CFE presented the environmental situation in the Arab community and represented the voice of the community at other forum roundtables, these being:

- Coalition of Climate Organizations and Climate Law.
- Coalition of Government Relations of Environmental Organizations.
- Engagement with the State Comptroller prior to the publication of the special report on the state's preparedness for climate change.
- Haifa Bay Regional Climate Conference - Participation in the organization and production of the conference from February to July 2021.
- The Environmental Arena, a multi-sectorial meeting platform, to promote environmental and sustainability issues in the Israeli economy.
- Consultation on the Environmental Emissions Registry Methodology PRTR.



VISIBILITY

In 2021, we intensified our presence in the media as a tool to promote change through awareness-raising.

- 1- 4.11.2021: Haaretz online: "Earth to Bennett: Get down to earth, pollution awaits" by Jamila Hardal Wakim, General Director of CFE [Article](#)
- 2- 16.11.2021: Radio Ashams , [interview](#) with Jamela Hardel Wakim, General Director of CFE, on the Knesset Day for the Environment.
- 3- 17.11.2021: Radio Alnas, an [interview](#) with Khalil Khouri intern at CFE on the impact of the fashion industry on the environment
- 4- 23.11.2021: Infospot website: an [article](#) titled "Another organization can take legal action against environmental violations" .
- 5- 6.12.2021: Knooznet [website article](#) – Community Organizer at CFE, report on Second Hand Shop initiative.
- 6- Radio Makan – Report on the Second-Hand Shop Initiative with interview with Juhaina Bader Namarneh, Community Organizer at CFE and Imtiaz Mansour form Asfawiya Ana movement.
- 7- Knozenet site: [article](#) about the course "Introduction to Environmental Movement" .
- 8- Panet news website: article about the course "Introduction to Environmental Movement" .
- 9- [Report](#) on the new status CFE received by the Ministry of Interior Interview.
- 10- Radio Ashams : [Interview](#) with the General director of CFE on "The demands of the environmental organization and the environmental challenges of the Arab community and the national level".
- 11- BokraNet: [article](#) "Responding to the Minster For Environment, Tamar Zanberg : Unfortunately the Minster Plan is similar to "Equal Environment Plan" which proved to be failed.
- 12- The Knesset Channel : [Interview](#) with the General director of CFE, discussing the government resolution " Low Carbon Emission Economy 2050".
- 13- Ashams Radio: [interview](#) with General Director of CFE on the wildfires.
- 14- Haaretz Newspaper and online website: [Opinion](#) by CFE General Director , In response to Prime Minster Bennet speech at the Climate Conference in Glasgow.
- 15- Harretz online : [article](#) about waste burning CFE General Director.
- 16- Arab48 : [Article](#) The climate crisis: about climate change and the readiness of Palestinian Community – Dima Abu Alassal – media coordinator at CFE.
- 17- A series of Facebook live events coordinated by CFE and in Collaboration with Climate experts

Looking forward to 2022

In 2021 we took significant steps towards addressing the climate and environmental issues. In the 2022 we will focus on the following areas.

- Capacity Building: In 2022 we will expand our capacity building training, targeting the following groups:
 1. *Journalists*: We will promote environmental journalism through the establishment of a core group of journalists. One of the major challenges the Arab community facing is the lack of professional and adequate media coverage and contextual environmental information.
 2. *Youth activists*: we will launch the second course of Introduction to Activism, which is aimed at broadening the activist base, which will target youth from different regions of the country.
- Civil enforcement: We will continue our support for the residents struggle and we will follow up on the ongoing legal proceedings.
- Environment Public Committees: We will continue our collaboration with Life and Environment and Lawyers for Good Governance. We will launch the second phase of the project which includes two trainings of the representatives of local Arab authorities in Nazareth, Galilee and the triangle area.
- Advocacy and rights: Advocate with ministries' officials, MKs, and government committees for the advancement of inclusive and just environmental policies, legislations, and laws.
- Government Resolution 550: CFE will continue to collaborate with other civil society organizations through the environment committee of the National Committee of Arab Mayors.

THANK YOU !!

On behalf of our team thank you for your support!

These projects would have not been implemented without the support of our amazing funders and partners. We take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to the foundations, organizations, communities, and individuals who believe in us, and in our work.

**ARKIN FOUNDATION
BERACHA FOUNDATION
SAM AND BELLA SEBBA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
TSADIK FOUNDATION
THE GIMPRICH FAMILY FOUNDATION
YAD HANADIV FOUNDATION**

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