

# Report: Arab households twice as likely to be in poverty

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26.5 % of Jewish homes are under the poverty line as opposed to 60.6% of Arab households, according to "Sikkuy."

Arab households are more than twice as likely to be under the poverty line in Israel than their Jewish counterparts, according to a report issued on Tuesday.

The Equality between Jewish and Arab Citizens of Israel index released by Sikkuy – the Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality, found that 26.5 % of Jewish homes are poor as opposed to 60.6% of Arab households, part of what it says is an continued, widening gap in social indicators between the two sectors in recent years.

The report covered the years 2004- 2008 and examined five central areas: education, health, welfare, employment, and housing.

Among the more glaring indicators, the report found that there are on average 351 clients for every social worker in the Jewish sector, as opposed to 522 in the Arab sector.

In schools, the report found that there are on average 24.7 children per classroom in Jewish elementary schools and 28.9 per class in the Arab sector.

The report also states that the inequality begins long before elementary school, with the infant mortality rate among Arabs being double that of Jews, at 7.7 per 1,000 births, as opposed to 3.3 per 1,000 births among Jews.

Ron Gerlitz, co-executive director of Sikkuy, said that the findings indicate that instead of parceling out state projects in the millions of shekels to help the Arab sector, what's needed is to "invest billions of shekels in order to bring the sector to the same level as that of Jews.

"We need a system of equal allocation of resources and the push should be towards reaching equality across both sectors," he said.

Gerlitz said that the gaps are increasing largely because one side is stronger and receives greater resources and so will continue to grow stronger than its counterpart.