



קרן היסוד KEREN HAYESOD
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STATUS REPORT



NITZANA EDUCATIONAL ECO-VILLAGE IN THE NEGEV

RENOVATING THE NEVE MIDBAR SCHOOL FOR BEDOUIN YOUTH

Presented to Keren Hayesod Switzerland

February 2024

We are pleased to present a status report on the renovation of the Neve Midbar School, an innovative project to enable Bedouin youth to graduate from high school and continue to acquire the necessary skills for their full integration into Israeli society.

The Nitzana Village was founded in the late 1908s by the legendary politician and social activist Arie (Lova) Eliav, whose concept for Nitzana was "a school to teach respect for humanity and its place in developing the arid wilderness." Since its founding, Nitzana has initiated several programs for teenagers, including, for example, a pre-military academy where future soldiers can spend six months before they start their army service, and a home for about 200 teenagers from Ukraine and Russia who fled in the wake of the Russian invasion.

The idea of extending the program to include Bedouin youngsters is based on the idea of closing the gap between Jewish society and Bedouin society in the Negev. While many Bedouin are active in mainstream Israeli society, for example serving in the army and even studying at the University of the Negev in Be'er Sheva, most Bedouin youth grow up in their villages having little contact with their Israeli peers. The Neve Midbar (literally a Desert Home) boarding school for youngsters of high school age from the Bedouin villages in the Negev region, enables the Bedouin teenagers to study the same subjects as their Jewish peers and to interact with the various high school groups studying in Nitzana, all with the aim of fostering coexistence in the Negev and in Israeli society in general.

Work completed until now:

- The flooring and the cladding of the walls has been completed (except for the learning centre which will be completed in the coming week).
- The electrical work has been completed, except for electricity points for the projectors.
- All the aluminium window frames have been installed.
- Doors for the storerooms have been ordered.
- Painting and decorative acrylic plastering will be completed in the coming week.
- The classroom doors have been installed, including safety devices.
- The exterior cladding has been completed, except for the mashrabiya, a traditional architectural element in the Islamic world consisting of projecting bay windows enclosed with carved wood latticework.
- All the welding work has been completed.
- The air conditioning work has been completed.

Regarding the second stage, the necessary documentation is being assembled for obtaining the building permit. Enclosed please find the architect's simulations for this stage of the project. The building permit is expected to be issued by May this year.



Architect's simulation of Stage 2 of the Neve Midbar School for Bedouin Youth



All photographs courtesy of Amigour.

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