

The Reform Plan – Reform of the Local Social Service System, 1975-1988

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This article describes and analyzes the reform of local social service departments in Israel during the late 1970's. It also discusses lessons that can be learned from this process and which can be applied to similar changes in the future.

The reform was initiated in the 1970's because of a general sense that the social services were not adequately providing for the needs of the population and that the system was in need of change. The late Welfare Minister Michael Chazani appointed two professional committees in order to propose a reform of the municipal social service departments. These committees submitted their recommendations to the minister in December 1975. The major changes resulting from the committee recommendations were: the separation between material assistance and social care, the establishment of neighborhood teams, the establishment of specific units for populations with special needs and the appointment of professionals responsible for strategic planning and data collection.

The reform was introduced first as a pilot in a number of communities and was disseminated to the social service departments nationwide. Most of the objectives of the reform have been achieved and we continue to bear witness to the positive outcomes and effects that these changes have had on the system until today.

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