



Brief Facts - The Alternative Poverty Report 2013

Latet's Alternative Poverty Reports aims to demonstrate the personal and physical side of poverty and the poor, those who hide behind the dry figures and statistical data published by government institutes. The Alternative Poverty Report indicates trends in poverty and nutritional insecurity and reflects the current reality, as revealed by Latet, which operates throughout Israel in collaboration with 150 local NGO's and aid organizations.

As opposed to official reports, the Alternative Poverty Reports wishes to demonstrate the challenges and the meaning of struggling with poverty, ranging across areas of life. The Report allows readers to appreciate poverty from a different angle, by reflecting the reality and challenges which people in need must face. By applying a broad overview, analysis of trends and allowing the voices of aid recipients to be heard, the report successfully presents an in depth analysis of life in poverty in Israel, beyond a narrow statistical analysis, which doesn't reflect the humane facet of poverty, differentiating it from other reports.

The Alternative Poverty Report consists of three unique studies which reflect the **Profile of the Poor** being supported by welfare providing organizations, **Trends in Poverty** in food NGOs, and the **Perception of Poverty** within the general public. The comprehensive research illustrates a reliable and up-to-date image of life in poverty, and the elaborate essence of life in poverty in 2013 Israel, a year characterized by a rise of spending cuts, resulting in the deteriorating situation of disadvantaged and low-income populations in Israel.

There are two main objectives underlying the Alternative Poverty Report: The first is to expose the Israeli population, which knows poverty only from a distance, primarily through media channels and common perceptions or prejudices, in the most direct and authentic way, to the human implications of life in poverty, and mainly to expose to the difficult barriers stemming from a policy which neutralizes the ability of people living in poverty to escape from it. The second is to apply pressure on decision makers in the Israeli government to fulfill their role as fully responsible for the welfare of the citizens by virtue of being their representatives and to act in a consistent and thorough manner to solve problems of poverty and social gaps, by forming an adequate plan and investing the necessary resources.



Latet's Alternative Poverty Report is emphasizing economic cutbacks:

- **50% of the parents in aid-recipient families reported that their children went whole days without eating**
- **50% of the children's of aid-recipient families nutrition is based on carbohydrates, 37% of the children are getting their main nutrition from bread and spreads, 9% of the children under the age of 18 were forced to steal food in order to overcome their food deficiency, 12% of the children were forced to collect food from the floor or from garbage cans, 64% of the aid recipients were compelled to choose between purchasing food products or other basic necessities.**
- **Employment and poverty: There was an increase in the number of workers among the aid recipient families: 46% work as opposed to 39% in 2012, this is a steady increase of 27.7% in the past five years. In one fifth of the families both partners worked. 50% of the unemployed aid-recipients are unable to go out to work due to health limitations.**
- **45% of the general public is fearful of declining into economic distress, which is a total increase of 32% from 2012 (34%).**
- **29% of the children of aid-recipient families dropped out of school. One out of every five parents is forced to send at least one child to boarding school as a result of economic distress. One quarter (25%) of the minors in needy families are forced to work in order to help provide for the family. 78% of the aid recipients reported that their children did not take part in social activities in school, as opposed to 69% in 2012.**
- **67% of the aid recipients are not capable of paying for medications and medical treatments, a total increase of 6%.**
- **95% of the elderly reported that their allowance does not enable them to live with dignity, 83% are not capable of financing nursing services to maintain their health.**
- **67% of the aid-recipient families stated that the economic policies exacerbated their situation, 14% reported that they were especially hit because of the increase in Value Added Tax, 10% indicated the cut in child allowances as the cause that exacerbated their distress.**
- **96% of the aid recipients are forced to forgo essential services and products, 22% of them on a permanent basis.**

On Monday, 16.12.13, Latet's Alternative Poverty Report was displayed at the National Conference of the Food Charities. Meir Cohen, the Minister of Welfare and Social Services, participated in the conference, he is presented the governmental plan for establishing a national project for nutritional security, as per the Finance Minister's commitment to allocating 200 million NIS to address the problem.

The Alternative Poverty Report contains unique and up-to-date research, which is based on integration between the findings in the profile of the aid recipients, poverty trends from the field, and the public's perceptions of the subject. The findings were collected during the second half of the year, and therefore they reflect the de facto poverty situation for the year 2013. The report will exhibit, among other aspects, the implications of the economic policies that came into effect this year, among them the increase of value added tax and the cut in child allowances.



Gilles Darmon, Chairman and Eran Weintrob, Executive Director of Latet: “Our expectation is that the Finance and Welfare Minister’s commitment to allocate 200 million NIS to address the lack of nutritional security will be implemented immediately and that the funds will finally reach the field, to provide relief to the distress of tens of thousands of families that need that money so desperately. This is a test of leadership for the Finance Minister against the Treasury officials, for the Welfare Minister against the whole system, and for the ability of both of them to implement policies. If the subject goes into effect, it will be no less than a historical milestone for the Israeli government claiming responsibility towards crystallizing a national plan for reducing poverty. On the other hand, repeated victory for the Treasury officials’ bureaucracy, will this time force us to embark on a public fight for the handling of poverty and for the image of Israeli society.”



Alternative Poverty Report 2013

Main Findings

Nutritional Security

- Most of the nutrition of 50% of the aid-recipient families children is based on carbohydrates, 37% of the children are getting their main nutrition from bread and spreads. 60% of the parents reported that during the past year they were required to make cutbacks in the composition of their children's meals, due to their distress. 55% stated that the thing the children lacked the most, out of all the essential needs, was nutritious food.
- 50% of the parents reported that their children went whole days without eating because of the lack of food. 16% claimed that this happened often.
- 9% of the children under the age of 18 were forced to steal food in order to overcome their deficiency of food. 12% of the children were forced to collect food from the floor or from garbage cans. 5% of the children from aid-recipient families were compelled to beg for food.
- 70% of the aid recipient adults reported that during the past year they sometimes didn't eat for a whole day because of their distress.
- 69% of the aid recipients live with nutritional insecurity (in spite of assistance from charitable organizations) – they, and their families, don't have the minimal food required for basic and proper existence, as opposed to only 7% of the general public.
- 64% of the aid recipients were compelled to choose between purchasing food products or other basic necessities. 22% percent of them are compelled to make regular concessions, 42% cope with concessions made often.
- 61% of the charitable organizations reported an increase in requests for support for children in the past year. 88% of the charitable organizations indicated that the most required type of support needed for children was for food.
- 37% of the children from aid-recipient families receive a daily meal through the school food program. 63% of the children don't receive a hot meal in the school program.
- About one third (31%) of the aid recipients do not receive food aid from charitable organizations because of the difficulty in helping all applicants. This is an increase of 11% in comparison to 2012. 79% of the charitable organizations reported that in 2013 there was an increase in the average rate of 24% in applications by the needy for assistance in food, in comparison to 65% of the charitable organizations that reported an increase in 2012.
- 57% of the aid recipients reported that most of the food that they consume arrives thanks to the support they receive from a charitable organization. 15% are dependent on the aid as their sole source of food.



- 88% of the aid recipients reported that had they not received food from a charitable organization, they would be forced to remain hungry. 8% admitted that without this support, they would be reduced to begging or stealing their food (3%).
- About one third (29%) of the general public reported that the economic cutbacks in 2013 forced them to consume less basic food products. 41% of the aid-recipient families reported that the deterioration in their condition is due to the economic cutbacks.
- The average expense for food stands at 2,232 NIS and constitutes 33% of the total family expenses.

Education

- One quarter (25%) of the minors in needy families are forced to work in order to help provide for the family.
- 78% of the aid recipients reported that their children did not participate in social activities in school as compared to 69% in 2012.
- 29% of the aid-recipient families reported that one (or more) of their children dropped out of school. Every fifth parent was forced to send at least one child to boarding school as a result of financial distress.
- One fifth (22%) of the parents receiving aid were forced to send their children to boarding school as a result of financial distress.
- 75% of the families are unable to purchase all of the books and study materials their children require, as compared to 62% last year, an increase of 21%. One quarter (24%) of the parents cited that this was the thing they lacked most.
- 29% of the children have no access to extracurricular activities and private lessons for the purpose of assistance and fulfilling academic and personal achievements due to their parents' financial distress.
- 36% of the parents in the general public reported that economic cutbacks in 2013 and rising prices forced them to reduce extracurricular and recreational activities for themselves and their children to a minimum.

Employment

- 46% of the aid recipients work. There has been a steady rise, at a rate of 27.7% in the past five years, of working aid recipients. Among one fifth (22%) of the families, both spouses work.
- 35% of the aid recipients stated their low income and their difficulty in finding work as the main factors for their financial distress.



- 50% of the unemployed aid recipients cannot work because of health restrictions.
- 83% of the unemployed aid recipients would prefer to go out to work at a salary equaling their allowance if this was possible.
- About one fourth (26%) of the employed aid recipients do not receive social benefits at all as compared to 9% of the general public, and 34% only receive partial benefits as compared to 6% of the workers in the general public.
- 74% of the aid recipients did not receive professional or occupational training, which could have helped them relieve their financial distress and gain economic independence.
- 17% of the aid recipients do not work because of their inability to finance an arrangement for their children. This reality forces at least one of the parents to work part time or stay with the children at home and not go out to work.
- 70% of the aid recipients live in continued poverty and have not worked for three years. 11% lost their jobs in 2013.

Health

- 64% of parents cannot pay for medications and treatments for their children and 67% of aid recipients cannot pay for medications and essential medical services for themselves (a rise of 6% compared to last year). This is compared to only 17% among the general public.
- 63% of the aid recipients suffer from diseases stemming from malnutrition and stress, as compared to 34% suffering from these diseases among the general public.
- 28% of the aid recipients suffer from weight problems, obesity or malnutrition, as compared to only 2.8% among the general public - 10 times as many! One out of every five (21%) aid recipients suffers from diabetes, as compared to only 3% of the general public.
- 83% of the elderly reported that they are unable to meet the payments for nursing services and/or household help.
- 48% of the elderly reported that they had difficulty maintaining their health because they were unable to pay for medications and required medical services.
- About half (47.8%) of the aid recipients reported they felt the need to receive mental support, but could not do so because of economic distress.



- One third (29%) of the aid recipients that are forced to live without essential services (in order to buy basic food products) reported that over the last year they were forced to live without medications and health services.
- 75% of the aid recipients have basic health insurance. Half (49%) of the aid recipients have no supplemental health insurance from Kupat Cholim. 59% of the parents reported that their children have no supplemental health insurance because of economic distress.
- 27% reported that health problems are the main reason they are in economic distress, since this restricts their earning potential and creates high expenses for medications and necessary health services.
- 17% of the aid recipients have chronic diseases and handicaps.
- 20% of the children up to the age of 12 in aid-recipient families need dental treatment. 62% of the parents whose children had dental treatment reported that the treatment was free as required by law. More than one third (38%) reported that they had to pay for the treatment.
- 23% of the aid recipients reported that they did not receive professional or occupational training for health restrictions.

The Cost of Living and Quality of Life

- 50% of aid recipients and 29% of the general public reported that over the past year their economical situation has deteriorated.
67% of the aid recipients cited that the deterioration in their economic situation stemmed from the economic cutbacks in 2013.
- 45% of the general public fears lapsing into distress, a rise of 32% compared to 2012 (34%).
- Only 5% of the elderly report that their allowance enables them to live with dignity. Their allowance together with income stands at 2714 NIS per single and 4031 NIS per couple. Numerous expenses for health and nursing services among the elderly do not enable them to live and grow old with basic dignity.
- 96% of the aid recipients are compelled to give up essential services and basic products, among them about one fifth (22%) on a permanent basis.
- Half (52%) of the public had to buy less food products this year because of their worsening financial situation. 15% started to work at an additional job or changed their workplace in order to increase their income. 14% of the public took a bank loan to cope with the economic hardship.



- The public believes that the average monthly income required for a family of 4 is 11,938 NIS, while the actual average monthly income among aid recipients is only 4216 NIS.
- 14% of the aid recipients reported that they were forced to beg for alms last year.
- Most (79%) of the general public reported that in the past year more and more people in their immediate environment do not succeed in maintaining the quality of life they were used to in the past and have trouble making it to the end of the month. 72% of the general public cited that in the past year more people in their immediate environment save much less than they did in the past.
- 39% of the aid recipients reported that they were sued in court because of debts. 41% of the aid recipients reported that they had to declare bankruptcy because of debts.
- 47% of the aid recipients had their bank account blocked or seized because of debts. 54% had their electricity or water turned off.
- One out of five (22%) aid recipients reported that they thought more than once about committing suicide because of their economic situation.

Responsibility for Dealing with Poverty

- 41% of the public feels that the most urgent problem for the Israeli government to handle is the problem of poverty and social gaps, and 72% place this problem in first or second place, a decline of 20% in those who believe that security (in third place after education) is the most pressing to handle.
- 41% of the charitable organizations feel that the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services is the main party responsible for support. One out of every five charitable organizations (21%) expects to receive aid from the mayor and 17% expect to receive most of their support from the Ministry of Finance.
- Most of the public believes that the Prime Minister has failed in handling poverty. 63% feel that he does not or almost does not take any action towards finding a solution to the problem. Only 15% believe that he takes a great deal of action.
- One third (31%) of the general public feel that the main reason for poverty in Israel is due to governmental policy.
- 72% of the public feels that the government is responsible for easing poverty and 13% believe that the responsible party is the poor person himself.
- 45% of the general public feels that the new governmental policy will increase the poverty rates and the social gaps. One quarter (24%) believes that the situation will remain static, and one fifth (20%) believes that the policy will improve the poverty situation.



- 31% of the charitable organizations feel that the best way to take action to reduce nutritional insecurity is through financing and providing aid and food distribution. 21% of the charitable organizations named food stamps as the best way and 19% feel that the school nutrition programs should be expanded.
- 39% of the public feels that monetary allowances should be reduced to certain sectors and be transferred to the handling of poverty.
18% support reduction of allowances to the public sector for solving the problem and 14% said that the security budget should be reduced.
Only 10% felt that taxes should be raised.
- 58% of food aid recipients came to a charitable organization via a recommendation from a social worker from the municipal welfare department.
- 48% of aid recipients reported that they are known by and receive service from the welfare department. 32% of aid recipients reported that they are known but do not receive welfare services aside from the recommendation to receive aid from a charitable organization.