

## **The Department of Public Policy**

### **Research accomplishments during 2017**

#### **Professor Dan Ben-David**

Over the past year, Professor Dan Ben-David's research findings were cited on the floor of the Knesset and in committees by both members of the coalition and members of the opposition.

During this period, Professor Ben-David gave 35 personal briefings on the basis of his policy research to leaders in the national and municipal political arenas and in the NGO sector. These include:

- Finance Minister Moshe Kachlon
- Labor Party leader Avi Gabbay
- Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid
- National Economic Council in the Prime Minister's Office
- Director General of the Ministry of Education, Michal Cohen and the ministry's senior staff
- MKs from different parties
- Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat
- Mayor of Tel-Aviv, Ron Huldai
- Bank of Israel Governor Karnit Flug and Nathan Sussman, head of Bank's research department.
- Former prime minister Ehud Barak
- Retired generals Bogi Yaalon, Benny Gantz and Gabi Ashkenazi
- Leading economists at the World Bank and IMF, including World Bank Chief Economist, Paul Romer and the IMF mission to Israel
- Senior staff of the Israeli embassy in Washington
- Senior staffs from foreign embassies in Israel
- Ram Shefa, head of Israel Student's Union, and Union's top leadership
- Jerry Silverman, president of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and the presidents of other major American NGO's such as the United Way, Red Cross, etc.

In addition to the personal briefings, last year Professor Ben-David was invited to give 52 lectures on his research findings to a range of organizations in Israel and abroad. He wrote 9 articles that were published in the Haaretz oped pages last year. There were 140 additional articles and media mentions written by others over the course of the year that cited his work – including several front page articles in newspapers and lead articles on news websites. These included pieces in leading foreign press such as the NY Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, LA Times, ABC News and the feature article on Israel's economy in The Economist magazine's special report on Israel.

#### **Dr. Ram Fishman**

In 2017, Dr. Fishman completed five new academic papers, now under review. Two papers have been published. The first one establishes the connection between heat, drought and crime in India on a scale not previously attempted, and presents novel evidence regarding causal mechanisms. The other is the first paper to empirically demonstrate how water scarcity will limit the scope of smallholder agriculture and its ability to adapt to climate change. Fishman has also developed a major new initiative with a leading Indian, TATA foundation to embark on a scientific process of understanding and overcoming barriers to the diffusion of advanced Israeli technologies to smallholder farmers in India. As part of this initiative, a first batch of six TAU students spent six weeks over the summer doing field research in India under his guidance, and the program is set to expand. Dr. Fishman has also embarked on an

academic collaboration with ICIPE, a research institute based in Kenya, on the diffusion of sustainable pest control technologies which involves collaborative fieldwork.

#### **Dr. Ravit Hananel**

Dr. Hananel continues to be a leading Israeli scholar in Urban studies, and has done research on the spatial allocation of public resources, and the relationship between politics, space and society. Specifically, Hananel focuses on the relationship between decision-making in public institutions and questions about distributive justice and social equality. She has published results in leading peer-reviewed academic journals. 2016-2017 was a particularly productive year for Dr. Hananel with five publications in *Urban Studies*, *Israel Affairs* *Transport Policy* and *Cities*. In 2015, she published with Prof. Rachelle Alterman a book called *National Land Ownership and Policy in Israel: The values and considerations guiding Israel's national land policy* (in Hebrew). This book constitutes the first empirical study to examine comprehensively the decisions factor underlying Israel's land policy since the mid-1960s.

Dr. Hananel received a major grant in 2017 from Israel's Science Ministry to study current housing policies. During the past year she organized a national conference on the issue of emergency planning programs by the government, with wide media coverage and participation by dozens of Israeli mayors.

#### **Dr. Dorit Kerret**

In the past year Dr. Kerret won two grants for international workshops – one workshop is funded by the Israel Science Foundation and was based on a grant that she received jointly with Prof. Tammie Ronen and Dr. Hod Orkabi regarding environmental education and positive psychology. The ISF workshop will be held in May at Tel-Aviv University. It follows up on a conference funded by TAU-FUB grant, held in June this year in TAU. As a follow up on the TAU-FUB grant collaborative practical classes were held both in FUB by Prof. Nina Kolleck and in TAU by Dr. Dorit Kerret. The students worked on bridging academic knowledge to field agents in the field of sustainable campuses. Among the projects students designed a “green wall” in TAU that was made of recycled materials and based on hydroponic vegetation, helped the “green daycare” at TAU to established science based education programs for toddlers and designed a solar panel plan for the TAU campus. The projects were designed in collaboration with Yehudit Lev, head of Tel Aviv University's environmental unit.

#### **Dr. Nimrod Rosler**

Dr. Rosler serves as the academic adviser of the Evans Program for Conflict Resolution and Mediation. As part of his role, he supported building the foundation for the first cycle of research students in the program. During the past year he published two articles in leading journals of the field on barriers to resolving peacefully the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on the surprising effect of viewing your own group and empathic feelings and attitudes towards a rival group. In addition, he created together with Dr. Masi Noor from Keele University in the UK a first of its kind inter-disciplinary group of scholars from around the world that will examine the role of conflict-related diaspora communities in building peace. The group will meet twice this year in Keele University and in Tel Aviv University.

#### **Professor Alon Tal**

Professor Tal assumed the position of department chairman in January 2017. Since that time, he has initiated a curriculum reform, updating of the department's academic program to include applied capstone seminars for second year students, as well as required courses in Program Evaluation and Public Policy Ethics. During 2017, Tal's most recent book: *The Land is Full: Addressing Overpopulation in Israel*, was published by Yale University Press with the Hebrew edition published by the Ha'Kibbutz Ha' Meuhad Press. The book won the prestigious “Haichen Award” as the best Israeli book on a geopolitical topic for 2017. *The Lands is Full* appears to have generated considerable public discussion: it was reviewed in the

journal *Foreign Affairs* and most local newspapers, and has led to eleven appearances by Professor Tal on Israeli National Television, presenting his views on demographic policy and related topics. Tal was also asked to brief the National Council for Economics in the Prime Minister's Office, the staff of the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Finance Ministry about demographic policy. Since arriving at Tel Aviv University, Professor Tal has also published ten articles in peer reviewed journals as well as two book chapters on a range of environmental policy issues including environmental taxation, transportation policy, sustainable agriculture, wastewater recycling and river restoration. In 2017, he received a major grant from Israel's Ministry of Energy to study planning policy for wind-turbines.

#### **Dr. Amos Zahavi**

In 2017, Dr. Zehavi was a visiting professor at the University of Toronto during an academic sabbatical. In these months, he conducted research on distribution sensitive innovation policies in OECD countries under the auspices of the Innovation Policy Lab (IPL) of the Munk School of Global Affairs. Dr. Zehavi is currently writing a book on this topic. His work is generously supported by a gift from the Canadian Friends of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Science Foundation (grant # 959/15).

At the IPL, he led a research team that studied how innovation policy is employed, across different countries, to better integrate People With Disabilities into the labor market. This report was published with the funding and sponsorship of Global Affairs Canada (The Canadian Foreign Office). In addition, Dr. Zehavi serves as a co- Principal Investigator for a project run by the Toronto Brookfield Institute (where he is a research fellow) entitled "Adapting to a Changing Labour Market". Finally, the Canadian Lupina Foundation has also commissioned from him a research paper titled: "Technological Innovation, The Low-Educated and Decent Living in an Age of Social and Economic Turbulence".

In 2017, Zehavi published two academic articles:

1. Amos Zehavi (2017) "Religionization from the bottom up: Religiosity Trends and Institutional Change Mechanisms in Israeli Public Services" *Politics & Religion*
2. Amos Zehavi and Dan Breznitz (2017) "Distribution Sensitive Innovation Policies: Conceptualization and Empirical Examples" *Research Policy*, 46(1)

#### **Ophir Pines-Paz and the Institute for Local Government**

Tel Aviv University Institute for Local Government has emerged as the country's leading think tank and training center, focused on improving governance, professional integrity, services and policies at municipal governments in Israel. The Institute operates in conjunction with the Department of Public Policy under the leadership of former Minister of Interior and parliamentarian, Ophir Pines-Paz. Its central objective is to develop and professionalize the current and future core of senior local leadership, with the goal of bettering the lives of Israel's citizens in cities and towns across the country. The past year was rich with activity as it provided a diverse range of research and training initiatives. A special education program was offered to empower newly elected city council members, as well as a course designed for senior managers of the Tel Aviv Municipality. The Institute also initiated the *International Forum of Coastal Cities*, which strives to design sustainable policies for cities around the Mediterranean located on the shoreline. The Institute also helped launch an initiative to promote *Children and Youth Friend Cities* throughout Israeli and has been involved as an advisor for the annual National Conference on Local Government. It also started a Smart Cities program with the Tel Aviv Municipality.

The centerpiece of the Institute's training capacity is its graduate students: this year, fifteen senior Masters from local government are attending TAU's Public Policy Department's Executive program. As part of its research arm, the Institute sponsored a highly-publicized study by faculty member, Ravit Hananel, assessing the new type of agreements between the Central and Local Governments to dramatically expand housing ("Heskemei Gag"). In addition, a research team was assembled, that was overseen by TAU public policy professor, Gila Menachem, that for the first time created criteria for characterizing a cost-effective basket of services that all local government in Israel should provide. The Institute has had a successful start in its capital campaign, with the goal of generating a million dollars to endow the center in the memory of the late great Tel Aviv Mayer, Shlomo "Chich"

Lahat. Support for the Institute will provide it with the autonomy and more robust economic capacity to undertake ambitious, long-term programs and reach a greater number of local leaders in its mission of upgrading the quality of local government in Israel.