



# The Human Dignity Task Force

## Fellows:

**Pnina Tamano–Shata** | lawyer, journalist, and a leader in the Ethiopian Israeli community. First female Ethiopian Israeli member of the Knesset.

**Rabbi Avi Novis–Deutsch** | Dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary Bet Midrash, where future Masorti rabbis, educators, and activists for religious pluralism engage intensively in the study of Jewish sources.

**Sigal Peretz Yahalomi** | CEO of the Association for the Habilitation of the Intellectually Disabled (Akim). Founded in 1951 and serving 34,000 children and adults and their family members, Akim is one of Israel's leading organizations serving people with disabilities.

---

Our initiative seeks to illuminate the dark places of racism and discrimination, aiming to create an available address for individuals and minority groups who face exclusion. We strive to instill human dignity values in the streets of Israel.

This initiative will provide a sympathetic ear to those who have been hurt, and provide infrastructure and leadership in order to take responsibility as a community.

For example, picture Bracha, who lives in Petach Tikva and wants to register her child for kindergarten. But the only kindergarten in her neighborhood is segregated for Ethiopian children only.

Hagit also suffers exclusion when the bus driver in her neighborhood refuses repeatedly to let her ride the bus. Hagit is a woman with intellectual disability.

Karim and his friends from Nazareth didn't get to enter an amusement park because they are Arabic.

Right now Bracha, Hagit and Karim are alone. When Dignity Task Force starts operating in their cities they can call on us.

Their emotional needs will be addressed; volunteers from the dignity task force will talk with the education department in the municipality, with the bus company, and the owner of the park, trying to understand the issues, and teach new ways of working together, and preventing reoccurrence of exclusionary behavior. If needed – Bracha, Hagit and Karim will be provided with legal aid. Local leadership – recruited by members –

will be involved for supporting them, and media presence will be leveraged.

Our vision is to create a local, community-based Human Dignity Task Force. It will be a bottom up process of engaging local advocacy and social groups to act together against exclusion and discrimination.

The Task Force will adopt and replicate the advocacy model that lobbies for people with intellectual disabilities operated locally by the Akim Israel NGO all over Israel for the past nine years.

The innovative ingredient in the Dignity Task Force is bringing together volunteers from varied groups in Israeli society to advocate for one another.

## What are the main tasks of Dignity Task Force?

- Training for cultural competence and skills.
- Publicizing its activity and contact details.
- Receiving public calls for action.
- Providing moral, communal support.
- Providing legal support when needed.
- Creating media buzz in favor of inclusion.

The Task Force will empower both victims and witnesses of this kind of violence, and serve as role models and builders of systems through which anyone who is willing will be able to promote inclusive norms, as inclusive community is a stronger, better community.