



**FACTS ABOUT JERUSALEM**

**Population:** 172,000  
**Ethnic groups:** Jewish (80%) Others (20%)  
**Languages:** Hebrew, Arabic, English  
**Religion:** Jewish, Muslim, Christian  
**Climate:** Temperate

**T**here is no single way to describe Jerusalem adequately. It is, of course, the modern capital of the State of Israel and the country is largest city. Yet this thriving, metropolis can also boast of a remarkable history stretching back well over three thousand years. It is a city where the first century rubs shoulders with the twenty-first century, each jostling for legitimacy and space, and where picturesque "old" neighborhoods nestle against glistening office towers and high-rise apartments. But Jerusalem is much more than the sum of its landmarks, old and new. It is a city of people, as diverse as the four corners of the globe from whence they came. To Jews, Jerusalem has always been "The Holy City", and it has been revered by Christians and Muslims for centuries. No wonder Jerusalem has such a tremendous impact, both locally and internationally.

In trying to unravel the enigma of this city, the Midrash coyly states "There are seventy names for Jerusalem." Seventy names, each reflecting a different aspect of this city and its residents, today and throughout history.

Jerusalem now has a population of over 600,000. This presents many new challenges to the current municipal service structure. The city's population is far from homogeneous: it is relatively young, with large concentrations of ultra-Orthodox Jews and a sizable non-Jewish population (30%). To accommodate this growing community of Jerusalemites, new neighborhoods must be developed and maintained, while the day-to-day problems of employment and a relatively high level of poverty must

be addressed.

The Municipal services provided to the residents of Jerusalem must constantly evolve, to reflect the changing nature of Jerusalem itself: it is a growing city, both in terms of size and population; new neighborhoods are being built to meet the needs of a heterogeneous population; and these neighborhoods must be provided with the same services extended to the city's veteran neighborhoods. Each of the Municipality's Departments are charged with providing social or physical services to Jerusalem. In addition, certain services are also provided through the various community councils and community centers in the different neighborhoods. The result is an efficient decentralization of services, all under the ultimate auspices of the Municipality.

Jerusalem's unusually diverse population, coupled with on-going demographic developments, necessitates a constant rethinking of the social service network, so that it meets the needs of each sector on a neighborhood level, as well as a municipal one. Exacerbating the complexity of these efforts are certain socio-economic trends, occurring internationally, nationally, and locally. Each of these trends has had its impact on the way municipal services are utilized. Services must constantly be redistributed to encompass the new, peripheral neighborhoods that are emerging. Not only do these neighborhoods require the same basic physical infrastructures, such as water, sewage, public gardens, etc. They must also possess all the necessary social services, as well as new services as they are developed.



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