

## Quarterly Narrative Progress Report on CMM Grants

**Implementing Organization:** S.H.I.N – The Israeli Movement for Equal Representation of Women.

**Program name:** Young Women Parliament

**Quarter #:** 1      **Period of report:** October – December 2015

### 1. Major activities and accomplishments during this period.

Referring to your performance progress monitoring plan, please describe actual activities and outcomes during this period and compare them with the targets indicated in the implementation plan.

Two coordinators, Jewish (Rachel Levi-Hertz) and Arab (Hunaida Assaf), and 8 facilitators (4 Arab and 4 Jewish) have been recruited (Rachel facilitates 2 groups, in Krar Saba and in Hertzliya). A preparation workshop, in which the coordinators, facilitators and SHIN activists participated, took place before the activity began. In this workshop, the project's agenda, the expectations, the timetable of activities and the first "all participants" event in Hertzliya were discussed. Two more meetings in which SHIN members and the coordinators participated took place later on, in which the ongoing activity and the lesson from the event in Hertzliya were analyzed and the planned seminar in Jerusalem was discussed. **All 11 groups** (2 in Kfar Saba and 2 in Bat Yam) **advanced according to the plan.**

During this period we have established our activity in five Jewish municipalities: Ofakim, Lod, Bat Yam, Hertzliya and Kfar Saba and four Arab towns: Fureidis, Jisser-A Zarka, Tira and Yarqa.

#### **The activity in the Jewish towns**

**The activity of girls leadership in Bat Yam and Kfar Saba** started years ago and is running successfully by the city's municipality. In October we have started the co-operation with the 2015-2016 YWP program by recruiting a new group of girls from grade 10 from various high schools in Kfar Saba, integrating them with the girls from the older leadership group. The integration was successful and over 30 girls are now involved in the YWP's activities in the city. The group has formed the following aims for the 2015-2016 activity:

- continuing the voluntary activity with Bat Mitzva girls in elementary school in town, by delivering workshops on various topics related to gender
- continuing the voluntary activity with girls at risk in town.
- hosting YWP event of March.
- Starting to work on short films as means for raising gender awareness with regard to social networks.

- creating cooperation with the YWP group in the neighbor Arab town Tira.

**The activity in Hertzliya** is a co-operation with Hertzelia's municipality. It started during October 2015 with recruitment of new girls to the program. Today 18 girls participate in the program. Apart from the efforts of getting the girls to know each other, the two first months were dedicated to preparing the YWP event of December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 in the Eight's Star Youth Community Center in Hertzliya. The girls chose "Otherness" as the main topic of the event, intending to expose the tough experiences related to the various identities of girls participating in the project. The topic was led conspicuously by two girls who were chosen later to take part in the "Creativity for peace" summer camp. They were eager to promote the discourse between Jewish and Arab girls in their town. Meanwhile, the girls started to work on a photography exhibition "Taking pictures of myself", which was chosen to be launched in the main celebration of the international women's day in Hertzliya.

**The activity in Lod** : In this town, that is characterized by mixed population of Jewish and Arab residents, a group of 15 Jewish and Arab girls at risk from the "warm house" program in town was added to the project through cooperation with the *Rashi Fund*. The group includes Jewish and Arab girls. The local group meetings have focused on stereotypes and gender concepts. At the same time a meeting with Rachel Levi-Hertz and Esther Hertzog took place, with the purpose of convincing the girls to join the leadership seminar at February 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> in Jerusalem, which raised various objections because of the security situation and Arab-Jewish relationships. Following the meeting the local facilitator focused in her next meetings with the girls on different identities, towards the coming event in Hertzliya and the February seminar in Jerusalem.

**The activity in Ofakim**: The town is located in the Southern periphery of the country and which suffers from employment and image problems. The group in town was opened up through cooperation with veterans from the army high general command who volunteer to promote youth in development towns. During October, girls were recruited to the group and the activities were aimed at socializing and getting the girls to know each other. Some socio-cultural difficulties were faced especially with regard to the motivation of meeting and knowing other girls (Jewish and Arab). Also they expressed reservation concerning the situation in their town, as being unchangeable. Therefore a few significant meetings were devoted to issues of identity, trying to encourage the girls' motivation and interest in taking part in these activities. The group consists now of 20 girls.

**The activity in Bat Yam**: This city has developed extensive girls' activities some 8 years before years the Project started there and was a leading partner in establishing the YWP in 2010. Two groups have been formed in Bat Yam, one consists of 16 girls in 10<sup>th</sup> grade (paid by the Project) and another group of 16 girls in 7<sup>th</sup> grade (paid by the municipality). The groups in Bat Yam were recruited during November. Much work was carried out to achieve cooperation with the chosen school. The groups' meetings started with acquainting the girls

to each other, discussing gender identities and stereotypes. In this case, too, the reservations towards interacting with other groups were handled well by the facilitator.

### **The activity in the Arab villages and town**

1. Despite many efforts to open the project in 5 locales, we managed to establish it in only 4 villages: Yarka, Faradis, Jisser A-Zarka and Tira. The activity is based in high schools. An important consideration was the aim of having divergent and representative groups in the Palestinian society. Unfortunately we did not succeed to include a school with a majority of Christian pupils. It is our intention to achieve this goal in the near future.
2. Local facilitators were chosen. They were interviewed.
3. A workshop for the facilitators was prepared and facilitated by the two coordinators.
4. Several meetings of preparing, marketing and establishing the project in the villages and schools, with school directors, school councilors and other relevant persons.
5. A selection process of girls, candidates to participate in the project took place, according to pre-conceived criteria. 10 grade girls were accepted with the intention that they will be part of the project for the next couple of years. Also the fact that the girls are committed to hours of volunteering as part of their participation in the YWP. It was assumed that this will encourage their ongoing participation as well as their commitment to community activity, that is associated with the YWP's agenda.
6. Number of participants: in Faradis (high school): 16 girls; in Jisser A-Zarka (high school) 16 girls; in Tira the groups consists of girls from 2 schools in the town and the activity takes place in the community center; In Yarka (science high school) 15 girls from various Druze villages in the region.

### **The activity of the 4 groups started in November 2015, according to the following targets:**

- establishing and stabilizing the groups.
- presenting the topics of the activity and its aims. Constructing cooperation within the schools, to ensure smooth activity.
- preparing the girls to the event in Hertzliya.
- Including an Arab girl (from Tira) in the girls' panel in the event in Hertzliya and proposing a participant for the adults' panel.
- bi-weekly meetings of 3 hours each took place
- the girls in Faradis started to prepare activities for the women's international day and mother's day.
- in Yarka the girls started planning the all participants event, which will take place in their village in May.

- the group initiated cooperation with a parallel group in the neighboring village of Sava.
- the group in Tira organized a meeting with the vice mayor in Tira and with parents (including fathers), school councilors and the girls themselves. They presented the Project's future vision relating to the activity in town and did well in associating the political leadership with the Project.
- Meetings of the coordinator (Hunaida) and SHIN's head (Esther) with local figures, school principals, school councilors, Project facilitators in all 4 villages that participate in the Project (and one that did not join it) took place in December. These meetings were intended to achieve cooperation, gain relevant insights from local leading figures as well as overcoming objections (such as with regard to girls sleeping outdoors).

The local groups' meetings take place as planned (3 hours bi-weekly or 1.5 hours weekly). The most significant event in this period was the first YWP "all participant" event that took place in Hertzliya in December 23rd, in which about 200 girls participated. Two panels were organized: 1) Women from various spheres of activity, who presented role models for girls. 2) Girls who represent courage and perseverance told their personal stories which inspired the audience. The Arab media covered the event and many pictures were published on Facebook: Women Parliament Facebook and other personal facebook pages of the coordinators, facilitators and girls. There were thousands of entrances.

## **2. Describe any challenges that you have faced during this period.**

What were the challenges and how have you responded to them?

A major challenge was the recruiting of Arab girls to the project. The first step facing this difficulty was entering High schools and talking with principals and councilors in the schools and turning to a mayor's councilor on women's issues in one of the villages. In all cases the facilitators were recruited from the school staff, and that enabled the welcoming of the project.

However, as much as we tried to reach the participation of 5 Arab locales in the project we managed to reach only 4 places. Therefore we decided to carry on with the ones that suited the program and where a suitable facilitator was found, and re-consider this situation at a later stage. There is a good chance that a group of girls from the regional council of Mate Asher (of Jewish and Arab girls) will join the project later on.

Organizing the first "all participant" event, which took place in Hertzliya, entailed a significant challenge. It required the preparation of a special program; gaining the

participation of the town dignitaries, prominent and outstanding figures for the panels; raising the necessary budget from the local authorities; Providing refreshments; Receiving parents' permissions (which was especially difficult in the Arab locales; Providing transportation for 150 girls from 8 places (beside the 50 from Hertzliya); Overcoming the reservations and fears of girls from both groups, because of the security situation. This event was a conspicuous success thanks to the coordinators' efficiency, devotion and social competence. It also appears that the facilitators did an excellent work with the girls, in some cases facing objections from the school authorities and parents. Not less important was the well organized transportation which was arranged by SHIN's director, Sarin Angel.

Another challenge is the language. It appears that the fact that the Jewish girls (and adults) do not know Arabic causes difficulties in encounters among them as well as difficulty in organizing programs intended for common events. This impediment is seriously taken into account and in planning future activities it will take a central place (as for instance less speeches and lectures and more interactive activities will consist the programs).

Co-sharing expenses of local municipalities provides a tough challenge as we have not turned to them before starting the program and they are committed to an annual budget. However, we managed to get some of the municipalities' agreement to participate financially, mainly of Jewish municipalities (Herzliya, Kfar Saba and Bat Yam). All of the municipalities involved in the project are hosting the "all participants" events (and cover all the expenses). We intend to meet with all municipalities' general directors to ask them to include their share in the project (especially for transportation).

The distances between the various locales of the Project (Ofakim in the South and Yarka in the North) poses another challenge, organizational and financial. We are proud of the fact that we succeeded to include places in the periphery (both geographical and social), but this puts a serious burden on the administrative and financial management of the Project.

A long-distance challenge is broadening the outreach and scope of the YWP as well as mainstreaming its ideas and activities into the public system (educational, community, political). We would like to see, not in the very far future, many more groups of girls in many other Jewish and Arab locales, join the project. We expect that the girls involved in the project at present and later on will become involved in local public life, in various spheres. To make progress toward that direction we intend to meet with influential officials in the ministry of education, in the center of local municipalities and in the offices of the community and cultural centers.

### **3. Significant observations.**

Please share success stories or other meaningful insights from this period.

- The professionalism and commitment of the coordinators appears to be extremely central to the Project's success. Both coordinators, Rachel and Hunaida expose

outstanding leadership skills, sensitivity to the facilitators' difficulties and efforts, problem solving capabilities and more.

- An impressive and significant opening "all participants" event, which hosted 200 girls from all parts of the country. Following this event initial connections among girls from the various groups were formed. A Whatsup group of Jewish and Arab girls from various places was formed. This achievement gains special value because of the high tensions at present that influence both communities the Jewish and the Arab.
- The groups initiated activities in line with gender and social equality and advanced them in their towns. Among these are: making video pieces relating to self-awareness; initiating workshops of raising gender awareness and young girls' empowerment; volunteering in their towns, etc.
- The steering committee appears to be an important means for planning the Project's activities and for examining the outcomes. Although some tensions were experienced in the beginning with regard to issues like: balancing of events (in Jewish versus Arab locales); the expectations from the coordinators to carry out all the activities according to the proposed project to USAID, which seemed too demanding with regard to the timetable. However, the group's work becomes more effective, more affective and even inspiring.

#### **4. Organizational issues.**

Changes/issues with program staff or administration.

- Recruiting facilitators: in some places it was difficult to find a suitable person, because of personal problems. This caused us to open only 4 groups in the Arab locales.
- Receiving monthly reports from coordinators and facilitators is sometimes slow and partial.
- The facilitators claim that their payment is too low. It is possible that the financial plan was not accurate regarding this issue. It seems that the time needed for recruitment of facilitators and communities was not taken into account in the budget proposal. However, the fact that although all facilitators are professional and used to be paid better, agreed to comply with the payment, indicates their commitment to the Project's agenda and the girls they are facilitating.

#### **5. Communications.**

How has the program been publicized? Please provide links or copies of any relevant communications or media items (including social media)/

Interviews in Aunar's program on Radio Kol Hashalom with girls from Hertzliya and from Yarka, who participated in the Seminar, which took place in February in

Jerusalem (the links and summaries have been published on Women's Parliament Facebook).

<http://pod.icast.co.il/da798d99-6c8b-4290-8ecd-ad8eff0f87a4>

<http://www.icast.co.il/PlayerWin.aspx>

About the seminar In Yaara Di-Sgani's blog in Saloona

<http://saloon.co.il/.../%D7%9B%D7%A0%D7%A1%D7%AA-%D7%A0%D7%>

An article about the YWP in Tira and the local girls' participation in the seminar – in a local paper.

<http://eltira.com/archives/117793>

## **6. Activities planned for next reporting period.**

Please indicate upcoming activities; don't forget to include dates

Activities planned (and implemented) during January-March 2016

- A 2 days leadership seminar in Jerusalem (21-22 February): on the first day gender awareness activity, self protection and body awareness workshops. On the second day - a visit to the Knesset, meetings with three female MPs and girls' presentations of activities and impact in the various places of the Project.
- a workshop of "Spoken-Word" for girls from Kfar Saba and Tira.
- Opening of the exhibition of "Connected girls" in Hertzliya on "Photographing myself" As part of the municipality opening event of International Women's Day 2016.
- An "all participants" event in Kfar Saba, March 28th, 2016. The subject: "girls break silence – saying 'no'".

**Pictures from the first "all participants" event in Hertzliya (the subject of the event:  
"Turning difference into success")**



Jewish and Arab girls in the auditorium of the Eighth Star before the event started







Two girls from Tira with Ohud, their facilitator (on the right)



Girls from Arab villages before the event started



Girls from the YWP in Kfar Saba present their planned activities in the town to the members in a town's council meeting