



SHIN
The Israeli Movement
for Women's Equal Representation



2013-2014 REPORT

The purpose of the 2013/2014 project was to develop and expand the framework of the Young Women's Parliament, established about three years ago. This platform enhances young women's understanding that they share many common interests, albeit their divergent backgrounds (Jewish, Arabs, Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, privileged, disadvantaged, well-educated, poorly-educated etc.).

The CRT funding for 2013-2014 was used for two purposes: 1. Founding a group of active girls, involved in the community and engaged in the Young Women's Parliament. 2. The transportation of Arab girls from Jisr Al Zarka and Fureidis to the Young Women Parliament's events.



Girls from Jisr Al Zarka, socializing with girls from Bat Yam, before the Parliament session starts

GROUP SESSIONS WITH TEEN GIRLS IN JISR AL ZARKA (FEBRUARY-OCTOBER 2014)

Main Goals:

* Empower girls, raising their self-consciousness and awareness concerning their abilities;

- * Encourage commitment to the community;
- * Provide skills for initiating social change;
- * Improve the relationships among the girls and with their families, providing tools to deal with conflicts;
- * Develop critical thinking, familiarizing the girls with different models of leadership.

Group Description:

The group was facilitated by Hunaida Amash. The group started with 15 girls from Jisr Al Zarka aged 14-18. As a result of their studies for matriculation exams, only 10 girls continued their participation in the group after the 8th session.

The two hour meetings took place once a week, between February and October 2014.



Girls from the empowerment group in Jisr Al Zarka

Some of the girls were highly ambitious and revealed leadership potential. Some suffered from various difficulties. As the intimacy in the group developed, the girls opened up and shared their difficulties and some talked about suffering from domestic violence.

Main topics of group meetings:

- * Personal identity
- * I and my family-relationships within the family
- * Mother-daughter relationships and their influence on the development of personal identity
- Gender and inequality within the family and in society and their implications.
- * Sexual harassment at school
- * Relationships with boys
- * Interpersonal communication skills and assertiveness
- * Personal vision with regard to equal opportunities for girls
- * Improving girls' ability to cope with stress in their lives

- * Self-esteem and body image
- * Sexual education
- * Career planning, providing information about professional training and academic studies
- * Safe and effective use of social networks
- * The social and economic situation of Jissr and its prospects for change

Significant changes reported by the girls:

Participating in the group's meetings increased the girls' self confidence and the power to make changes in their life, like resisting violence against them; refusing boyfriends' pressures to leave school; resisting demands to function as the family cleaner. In the meetings, the girls were encouraged to talk about sexual problems and harassment. The discussions in the meetings developed in the girls the comprehension and critical attitude concerning social structures, gender discrimination, girls' solidarity and mutual support. The girls emphasized the value of the exposure to information and activities related to their village, the statistics, the economic situation, the history of the village and the families living there, its natural resources, women's situation. This made them feel proud, connecting them to their roots and strengthening their feeling of belonging to the village.

THE 10TH GATHERING OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT (JUNE 2014)

The 10th gathering of the Young Women's Parliament took place in Bat Yam, in June 2014, and was hosted by the vice mayor of Bat Yam, Esther Peron and organized by Anat Livnat, the mayor's advisor on women's issues.

The topic of the discussion was: "Who's Responsible for Girls' Safety?" They focused on the absence of the physical and the sexual sense of security that girls experience in school and in the public sphere at large. The discussants raised the question: what do the educational and welfare system do with regard to girls' insecurity? The event opened with a play, performed by the girls, which discussed the tension between telling



The representatives from Kfar Saba, Bat Yam and Jissr on the panel. (Second from left: Esther Piron, vice mayor in Bat Yam)

the truth and covering up, how much should one reveal; how much do girls dare to tell; what does the media bring up to the public awareness. The play presented ongoing physical and mental assault of girls by publicizing their pictures on the nets without their knowledge or approval. It illustrated the impact of these violent acts on daily life of girls and their families.

Following the play, a panel of girls from Bat Yam, Kfar Saba, Jisser Al Zarka and Petach Tikva discussed their experiences and insights with regard to the harm inflicted on girls' bodies and dignity. By their side were a few adult women, a journalist, the vice mayor, and the head of local PTA.

A girl from Bat Yam on the panel said: "this can happen to any one of us and we don't really know how to deal with this." Another girl from Bat Yam said: "the play stressed how vulnerable we are and that we can do very little about it. The internet poses a potential threat that scares us, as so easily we can find ourselves there humiliated."

Girls from Jisser Al Zarka shared their fears of daily sexual assaults in the school and in the village as well as on the internet. A girl from Kfar Saba told about the group's activity, promoting messages of gender equality in issues that are important for girls.

The head of the national pupils' council reported that the council is focussing on introducing lessons on sexual education into schools.



The representative from Jisr speaks on the panel

Plans for the Future

In 2015, four events of the Young Women's Parliament will take place in various places in Israel. One of the events is planned to take place in the Knesset and one in an Arab village. A 2 day workshop, preparing the event in the Knesset, will take place. Girl-activists from Jewish and Arab places will participate in the workshop and in the other events.