



## Women's Crisis Shelter

### 2018 Annual Activity Report

The Women's Crisis Shelter, that operates a multi-cultural shelter for battered women and their children, continued its ongoing activities in 2018.

During this year, sixty-one women and sixty-one children were treated at the Shelter. In addition, four additional women with their six children resided at the Transitional Dwelling operated by the Shelter.

The Shelter and the transitional dwelling were full most days of the year.

#### Who were the Shelter's women residents?

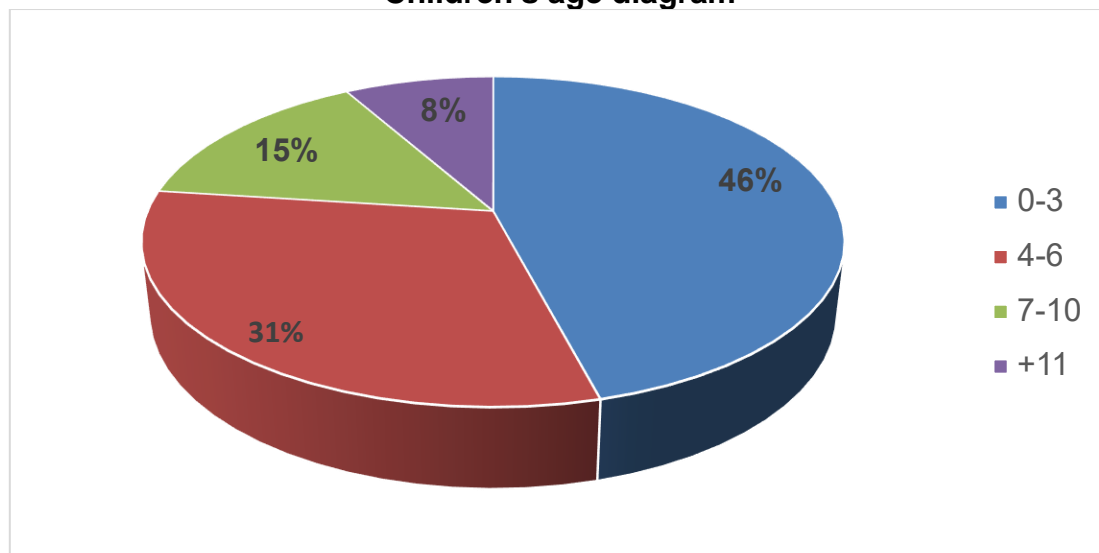
- a. The women were 18-60 years old. 30% of the women were aged 18-25 years old, 61% were 26-40 years old. There was an increase in the number of young women who resided at the shelter. Most of them were Arab.
- b. Among the Shelter's residents, 40 women (66%) were Israeli Arabs, 2 (3%) veteran Jews, 4 (7%) Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia, 5 (8%) immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and another 6 women (16%) lacking Israeli citizenship.
- c. A large number of the women (51%) had only elementary school or partial elementary school education; 21% of the women had a high school education. Only three women reported about having studied after high school.
- d. Twenty-eight women (46%) resided at the Shelter without children. Twenty of them were mothers who chose or had to escape to the Shelter without their children. The Shelter's staff established communication channels between the mothers and their children.
- e. Five women were diagnosed with special psychiatric needs before entering the Shelter. They were treated with psychiatric medicines and psychiatric consultations during their stay in the Shelter.
- f. Four women arrived pregnant to the Shelter. During their stay, one of them, a mother for three other children, had an early birth. The Shelter staff supported them during the few months of the infant's hospitalization. Two women chose to undergo an abortion, and another pregnant woman stayed in the Shelter and gave birth of a healthy baby boy at the beginning of 2019.
- g. Twenty-six women (43%) resided at the Shelter for a period of less than one month and another eight women (13%) resided at the Shelter less than two months.
- h. Nineteen women (31%) resided at the Shelter for a period of two-to-six months, and eight women (13%) had to reside at the Shelter more than six months.

**We are proud that most of the women, who were treated by the Shelter two months or more, chose to leave the Shelter for a non-violent environment, and we hope that they will not be victims in the future.**

An analysis of these women's destinations on departure shows that 55% of the women chose independent lives in the community, 14% chose to depart to non-violent friends or family, 18% of the women returned to their homes and to their abusers after signing a legal agreement with their abusers (who were committed to end the violence), and the others continue their residence in the Shelter or in the transitional dwelling during 2019.

The Shelter treated sixty-one resident children. The children received specialized treatment, which included emotional support, educational support and enrichment activities.

**Children's age diagram**



2018 data shows a stabilization of the tendency of the last few years toward increasing numbers of toddlers under the age of three.

78% of the children were under the age of six. Children over age three, attended the kindergarten in the Shelter premises. Children under the age of three did not have a formal educational framework – and they stayed all day in the Shelter premises – most of the time under the supervision of their mothers. That situation caused difficulties for the women to integrate into the work cycle, to get treatment, to receive outside services (from lawyers, doctors, banks, etc.) and even to manage the Shelter's household.

In September 2018, the Shelter established a framework for keeping and treating babies and toddlers for a few hours a day. It seems that the existence of this framework enables mothers to dedicate more time toward treating themselves.

During the period of their residence at the Women's Crisis Shelter, the women and children received a roof above their heads, food and clothing, and a variety of services and activities whose goals are to care for the women and children,

and to aid the women in choosing a non-violent life for themselves and their children.

### **Empowerment for Independence Project**

This project includes a variety of activities whose goal is to provide emotional support for the women, to restore their self-esteem and thus give them practical tools for dealing with independent life.

The activities in this project in 2018 included: Individual therapy (at least once a week for each woman); Individual utilization of women's rights in different institutions; group therapy; individual parental guidance; private Hebrew lessons – for a few women; empowerment and enrichment workshops (including martial arts workshops, beauty and care workshops, cooking and baking workshops, arts and crafts workshops, home-budget management, and more); accompaniment of women in the process of entering the workforce; trips to nature and fun-days (with the children); breakfasts outdoors (for women and their therapists) and more.

During their stay in the Shelter, nineteen women worked, mainly at cleaning and housekeeping positions.

The treatment that women received at the Shelter was enlarged during 2018. The Shelter's team was enlarged by the addition of a personal counselor who provided the women with assistance, support and guidance in daily life routines, and by a psychiatrist to consult and treat women with special psychiatric needs.

It is important to mention that the project's staff emphasized individual custom-made support and help for the women in a variety of aspects, as they approached independence, leaving the shelter, and afterwards.

### **Amendment to the guaranteed minimum income law**

During 2017, the Knesset legislated an amendment to the guaranteed minimum income law. The amendment states that a women who resides in a battered women's shelter is entitled to ask for a minimum income allowance – even if she did not get this allowance before her arrival to a shelter.

This amendment came into force in June 2017, and had an immediate positive influence on the women's economic condition.

During 2018, twenty-four of the Shelter residents were eligible to receive minimum income allowance – and our staff helped them to utilize this right.

### **Children's Treatment, Education and Enrichment Project**

This project provides a range of services at the shelter for the children who have been affected by exposure to violence in their homes. Some of these children have been exposed to violence against their mothers; some have personally experienced physical and even sexual abuse.

The project's activities included: activating a kindergarten in the shelter's premises; treatment by a social worker for children above 5 years (by an experienced social worker); continuous workshops once a week during the school year (pet workshop, rhythm-music workshop, creative workshop, and a nature workshop); an educational framework held during the summer and school holidays; a learning center in the shelter; accompaniment of the children

to appropriate educational frameworks; parties for birthdays and holidays; daily after-school activities; excursions to children's theatre and films; visits to the zoo and circus; trips to a swimming pool and the Mediterranean Sea; trips and outings and more.

Additionally, each mother received individualized parenting guidance and the women's group therapy sessions discussed many parenting issues.

### **At a summer activity**



### **Transitional Dwelling Project**

The residence of women and their children in the transitional dwelling represents a stage in the transition from protected life in the shelter to totally independent lives. During 2018, four women with their six children resided in the transitional dwelling. All of the women worked for their living.

### **Legal Consultation and Representation Project**

During 2018, thirty-two of the women residing in the shelter used legal representation services; most of them received services from the Shelter's lawyer.

Other women residents received legal consultation from the Shelter's lawyer. Additionally, during this year, our lawyer continued, within the framework of the project, to represent many women who resided in the shelter in the past, and whose legal issues have not yet been resolved.

In most cases women, after complicated procedures, succeed in utilizing their legal rights that derive from their relationships – including custody, alimony, property division, etc.

## Thanks

This year the Shelter has benefitted from great support from the community. Organizations, foundations, companies and individuals chose to support the Shelter's activities by donating equipment, services, goods, activities and funds.

Additionally, approximately 50 students, pupils at the Leo Baeck Education Center, a few retirees and national service volunteers chose to volunteer in the Shelter. Their contribution to our activities is very much appreciated.

We take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to what is done for battered women and their children:

- The Shelter's dedicated staff
- The Ministry of Social Affairs that supports our activities – professionally and financially
- The Steering Committee
- The Board of Directors
- The donors from all walks of life – foundations, companies, and individuals
- The volunteers who give their souls to the children

**Your continuous support is vital to our activities!**

