

NCJW's Signature Grant for 2013

WePower-Yedid

In Israel of 2013, only 6 women are Mayors, out of 265 municipalities, and only 376 are councilwomen, out of 3,132. This disproportionate distribution of social and political power carries significant implications for women's social status and for Israeli society as a whole. Women-related issues and other social concerns do not receive adequate public attention, thus further reinforcing women's marginalization and exclusion from the public sphere. The purpose of '**Promote Women's Vote**' is to encourage women's civic engagement and participation in the democratic process, by educating communities and getting out women's vote to better address their needs, on Municipal Election Day in November, 2013. WePower, established in 2000 is a non-partisan Israeli NGO, promoting women's leadership, gender integration and equality at all levels of Israeli society. YEDID is the largest national organization in Israel that empowers Israelis to break the cycle of poverty through free individual legal and social rights assistance, community education initiatives, grassroots organizing for social responsibility and national advocacy for policy change. WePower and Yedid together believe that this collaboration, specifically geared towards the municipal elections in October 2013, is necessary to mainstreaming gender equality and women's issues as part of both organizations' efforts to create a better civil society for all of Israel's citizens.

NCJW's Continuing Grants for 2013

ADVA Center is a social policy research institute that works to promote equality for all of Israel's citizens. The purposes of this project '**Intervening on the Local Level to Develop Women's Leadership and to Mainstream Gender**' ,are to increase women's political and economic power and participation (1) by providing training for women that will widen their horizons and develop their leadership skills, (2) by providing a concrete focus for their participation in local government: gender mainstreaming of local programming and budgeting, and (3) by assisting groups of Jewish and Arab women residing in low-income and peripheral localities. This project creates a model for action on the local level designed to promote more gender-responsive service provision and funding. In November 2012, Adva began working with the first women's group, in Beer Sheba, in cooperation with Itach-Maaki: Women Lawyers for Social Justice. Itach-Maaki – Women Lawyers for Social Justice is a non-profit organization that aims to create social change by using the law to address the needs and rights of women from the social, economic and geographic periphery of Israel.

The Israel Gay Youth Organization (IGY) IGY is a non-profit organization that supports, encourages and guides Israel's LGBTQ youth, while simultaneously creating a strong, resilient network of young, self-assured LGBTQ leaders. Israel Gay Youth (IGY) was established in 2002 by the Israeli national LGBT Association to serve Israel's growing population of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. Since IGY's inception, it has blossomed into the largest gay youth organization in Israel. IGY operates vibrant youth centers in more than 22 cities and towns throughout Israel, from Kiryat Shmonah to Beer Sheva, serving over 1,500 Israeli youth each year. Following the tragic shooting at the Tel Aviv LGBTQ youth activity in August 2009, many community activists and professionals called for the launching of '**The Gay-Straight Alliance**' groups in Israeli public schools. Each group succeeds in creating a safe space to empower students to talk and learn about LGBTQ gender and sexuality related issues, their own lives and emotions, and other topics relevant to their lives.

Israel Hofshit (Israel BEFREE), founded in 2009, is the only national Israeli grassroots movement whose mission is promoting democracy, freedom of religion and Jewish pluralism in Israel. Israel Hofshit impacts public perception and participation by mobilizing all those who seek to keep Israeli society diverse, equal and free. This project, '**Mobilizing the Israeli Public to Combat Gender Segregation**' involves organizing a network of community activists composed of thousands of Israelis-- of all backgrounds, to take action to

advance pluralism, counter religious extremism and gender segregation by working to ensure that elected officials make these issues a high priority for their upcoming terms. Israel Hofshit has over 20,000 activists who use a two-tiered approach to impact public perception through a social media communications strategy and high-standard viral videos, combined with grassroots field activities in major cities and towns throughout Israel.

The Jewish Women's Collaborative International Fund (JWCIF) is comprised of seventeen Jewish Women's Foundations/Funds of North America and Israel who have joined forces to help fund the '**Bringing Women to the Fore**' project, now called **Shutafot** (Partners) which implements a new, innovative model of action. This model includes 8 Israeli feminist organizations who have joined together for a sustainable, long-term partnership, for the purpose of creating a new public agenda that will focus on the rights of women in all spheres of life, promote legislation benefitting women, prevent the implementation of policies harmful to women, and create the basis for a broad solidarity among women's organizations and between these organizations and the women serving in the Knesset, other decision makers, diverse groups of women throughout the country, and media.

The NCJW Women Studies Forum at Tel Aviv University is a volunteer association of faculty and students working to advance research and analysis in feminist studies and acts as a bridge between academia and the community at large. **The Teenage Girls Leading for Rights Program**, an initiative of the Forum in cooperation with Itach-Maaki – Women Lawyers for Social Justice was created out of an acknowledgement that there is hardly any feminist legal work being carried out on issues of teenage girls. In this context, the project is the first of its kind, aiming to foster positive, feminist and activist leadership amongst teenage girls that will bring about social change on issues that are relevant to their lives. This project will be modeled after the Itach program "Women Legal Leaders," which has fostered the successful development of adult women leaders for rights from some of the most disenfranchised communities in the Haifa region. Similarly, this program will work with teenage girls who have leadership potential to facilitate their visions for change on issues that impact them and their peers.

Turning the Tables is a social initiative to enable women who have broken out of the cycle of prostitution to live a productive and independent life. This project, '**Turning the Tables Initiative**' is housed in a fashion design studio, where women receive vocational training and, eventually, earn a livelihood. The program is aimed at economical and professional empowering of women who exit the destructive cycle of drug abuse, prostitution, imprisonment and street life. In Israel there are approximately 15,000 adult women and teenage boys and girls in the cycle of prostitution. Many of them have been trafficked from other countries especially from African countries involved in civil war such as Eritrea and Sudan. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the fact that this target community needs specialized help in rehabilitation. Turning the Tables is a feminist organization and the first and only one to address this issue in Israel.