



## **NCJW's Israel Program Update 2016-2017**

NCJW supports progressive grassroots, advocacy and education projects throughout Israel that work to improve the lives of women, children, and families. NCJW has been a leading organization in supporting Israel for more than 70 years, helping to lay the foundation for important social change efforts.

We are now witnessing the evolution of Israeli society as more and more women demand fair and equal rights amidst serious challenges to those rights. NCJW has long been committed to advancing women's status in Israel by helping women develop a stronger voice at all levels of society. Today, strategic efforts like the Israel Granting Program (IGP) and NCJW's advocacy and coalition work continue in a spirit of education and empowerment.

### **Israel Grant Recipients (IGP) for 2017**

In July of 2017, NCJW announced grants to nine Israeli organizations whose work is focused on women's empowerment, gender equality, and strengthening civil society in Israel. In addition, three scholarships were awarded to students at the NCJW Women and Gender Studies Program at Tel Aviv University.

#### **The 2017 grantees are:**

##### **Women Wage Peace: Israeli Salad – Inclusive Dialogue among Women from Different Communities:**

WWP is a fast-growing grassroots non-partisan women's movement with the goal of bringing about the resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict in a non-violent manner. WWP aims to achieve a political agreement by galvanizing the Israeli public, training women to be advocates, and influencing politicians. The Israeli Salad project develops inclusive dialogue, reaching out to women from geographically and ethnically marginalized communities who have been largely left out of conversations about peace and security.

**NCJW Women and Gender Studies Program at Tel Aviv University (TAU):** Development of an Alumni Association. NCJW helped found the first Women and Gender Studies program in Israel – at Tel Aviv University; in 2001, the first students were enrolled in the BA program; the MA program soon followed. Now, NCJW is helping the program create its first alumni association. The network of graduates will support each other professionally, disseminate the fruits of their learning to the larger society, support scholarships and attract new students to the program.

**NCJW Israel Women's Forum Tel Aviv University :** The Forum was established more than 25 years ago to connect members of academia interested in the newly forming field of gender studies. This year the Forum is focused on raising awareness about gender issues among STEM faculty who have remained largely outside the gender studies field.

**NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education (RIFIE):** Training Bedouin Women for the Workforce as Educators in the Pre-School Sector. This project empowers Bedouin Israeli mothers who wish to work outside the home by training them for paraprofessional work and placement in the early childhood education sector in their communities, benefiting their own families financially and helping children throughout the community.

**Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance (JOH):** NCJW's grant will support the organization's work meeting the specific needs of members of the transgender community, who are too often excluded from programs and services. The grant will also support Open House education efforts in which transgender activists present tolerance programs in high schools in order to increase understanding and fight discrimination.

**Israel Hofsheet – Strengthening Equal Rights in Israel by Promoting Marriage Alternatives:** This grant will help Israel Hofsheet's legal department assist couples of all types enter into common-law marriages – a growing trend. These common-law marriages are recognized by almost all institutions in Israel and allow couples to avoid the Israeli Rabbinat. The long-term goal is to break the Ultra-Orthodox monopoly over personal status issues in Israel and to establish civil marriage as an option for all.

**Hillel—The Right to Choose: Support for Ex-Haredi Single Mothers and Children.** The project will serve roughly 70 single-mothers who have left ultra-Orthodox communities (Yotzim) and approximately 130 children. Leaving their communities, participants possess no secular education, job training or vocational skills. Some may have suffered abuse and all face financial distress. The grant supports employment and educational programming, housing subsidies, social and cultural programs for women and children, and single mother legal aid.

**Isha L'Isha – Haifa Feminist Center: Fighting Against Trafficking in Women and Prostitution project.** Our grant allows Isha L'Isha to continue running a hotline, offer job training services and a mentorship program for victims of sex trafficking and prostitution, and support “fun” days for women and children in need of a respite. 62% of women in prostitution are single mothers. Employment training is developed specifically for this vulnerable population and directly benefits the children by improving women's economic mobility. Isha L'Isha was an early pioneer in leading the fight against trafficking; now they will widen their mission to study women-without-status: refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, undocumented Arab women married to citizens, and migrant workers.

**JWF Collaborative Grant:** NCJW is part of a collaborative Israel grant with 15 Jewish Women's Funds from throughout the U.S. Through a group decision-making process, the Funds have decided to support organizations in Israel which are working on the topic of women and employment, in particular the challenging issue of temporary contracted workers.

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The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.