

# **Young Na'amat**

**A study of values, processes and community  
in ideology and in practice**

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ISBN: 978-965-572-902-3

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## **Acknowledgements**

Young Na'amat would never have come into existence and continued its activities without many partners. We wish to express our gratitude to the steering team that accompanied us on a voluntary basis from the program's first day: Adv. Idit Shaham and Ms. Shari Shilon, that were later joined by Prof. Orly Binyamin, Ms. Maisam Jaljuli and Dr. Hedva Heller.

We thank Na'amat, headed by Na'amat Chairwoman Galia Voloch and her predecessor, Adv. Talia Livni, who supported the project. Thank you to Na'amat's district chairwomen for their ongoing and daily cooperation.

Special thanks to Noga Klinger, Young Na'amat's coordinator in recent years, for her partnership in leading Young Na'amat, for her partnership in developing ideas and for their exemplary implementation.

And especially, thank you to the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation in Israel, which has supported the project from day one, and is our true partner in values and processes. The close and intimate partnership made the foundation's employees true members of our community.

Last but not least, thank you to all the Young Na'amat members and activists, of all ages, that march forward with us in faith, friendship and perseverance. Without them, all this would never have happened.

Ms. Nadia Belkind, a leading company in 2017, helped us in formatting this report, and for this we thank her.

## Introduction

The report we are submitting, entitled **Young Na'amat – A study of values, processes and community**, describes and conceptualizes the **Young Na'amat** project aimed at extending and improving the work on the project itself, and at sharing our experience and knowledge with other organizations seeking to establish and preserve communities on the basis of a shared set of values. Moreover, this report enables us to conceptualize, for ourselves and for others, the activities undertaken over the years, at times intuitively, and at times while confronting various constraints.

The self-determination and values at the foundation of Young Na'amat were formulated in a long, shared and joint process, and were consolidated in the form of an identity card (Appendix A.) The ID, together with a professional stance in terms of a content-process-political oriented group facilitation and the commitment to building a meaningful and beneficial community - these constitute the basis driving the actions and very existence of Young Na'amat. The purpose of this report is to describe how professional values and attitudes are brought to bear and expressed in our routine, daily activities.

The report is comprised of eight chapters: The first chapter describes the process of building and sustaining the community over the years. The second chapter illustrates, through eight activities conducted by Young Na'amat, the concept of a content-process-political oriented group facilitation and possible methods for its implementation. The third chapter expands on the methods to confront the issue of diversity, which is an important, key principle in Young Na'amat's activities. In the fourth chapter, we demonstrate three of the action principles of Young Na'amat as can be observed in various groups. The report's fifth chapter is devoted to the dilemmas and challenges that Young Na'amat will be facing over the upcoming decade. In the final part of the report, we included the personal perspective of one of the participants, Ms. Nadia Belkind, who was a member of Young Na'amat's Group no. 11.

One of the challenges we faced in writing this report was to decide which subjects to focus on, and which to leave out or devote less space. In writing and editing the report, we chose the perspectives detailed above, since we believe that they reflect the organization's uniqueness and the essential path taken by Young Na'amat.

Orly Bitty

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# Community Establishment and Preservation

## Introduction

The Young Na'amat community is comprised primarily of the graduates of the Young Na'amat Leadership Program, which is held once a year (a course with a scope of 100 hours). Establishment and upholding of the community have been an ardent focus and challenge since the early days of the Young Na'amat group, for both the participants and the project team. As far back as the first meeting of graduates of the first course, in November 3, 2007, the participants defined community building as a project in its own right, and wrote:

**"The essence of the group: Na'amat is a group of women that will engage with social, societal, personal advancement issues facing the group's members, and will serve as a support group for the realization and development of personal goals".**

The subjects defined by the first group of graduates - that actually constituted the founding and leading team - are still part of Young Na'amat's activities to this day, with additions, extensions and updates supplemented over the years.

The establishment of Young Na'amat was founded on a deep understanding - both by the graduates and by the team - that the creating and sustaining of a community is a continuous, ongoing process that requires constant review and a multi-channel perspective designed to address the needs of the participants while strengthening the participants' affinity and commitment to the organization's values, that were formulated jointly (our ID), as well as to its organizational framework.

In order to enable the development of independent work, to develop teamwork (leadership team as well as other teams) for the advancement of the personal needs of the participants, for ideological strengthening, preservation of the organizational links, and maintenance of the network of personal ties, we operate through six main channels:

1. Monthly meetings of the Young Na'amat community
2. Annual conferences
3. Joint identity
4. Ideological seminars
5. Working with the leading activists of Young Na'amat ("leaders")
6. Relationships, personal ties and networking
7. Enrichment and development of personal skills
8. Use of virtual and digital tools

## Monthly Meetings of the Young Na'amat Community

These joint meetings are the very heart and backbone of the Young Na'amat community. Once a month, all the graduates are invited to meet with their friends and hold joint activities relating to a specific topic. These meetings are always comprised of three components (although the proportions vary from meeting to meeting): space for the personal, individual viewpoint, interpersonal encounter, and ideological content - with attention to the setting: venue, atmosphere, refreshment, etc.

We have chosen to classify the meetings into four types: ongoing meetings, anchor dates, encounters focusing on coexistence.

**1. Ongoing meetings.** Over the years, there has been a change in the nature and character of these regular, ongoing meetings. This change is expressed mainly in the relationship between the team and the office, with the goal being that the course participants themselves will lead and shape the meetings, including making decisions about the meeting content, productions, as well as promotion and engagement. Thus, these meetings have been varied in character, and included opportunities in which we challenged the various arenas in which young women are active or aspiring to take action.

The ongoing meetings have included workshops that challenge the traditional roles of women, such as a basic car maintenance workshop ("Oto'le"), martial arts, women and money, surfing, and meetings focusing on gender-based violence. Parts of these meetings were devoted to expanding and deepening the range of skills that are at times required on the personal, public, and work levels (e.g. project management, persuasion and influencing, partnership and collaboration, branding, LinkedIn, media and community organization).

**2. Anchor Dates: May Day and International Women's Day.** The existence of every community in the world is based on commonality. Ceremonies and traditions shape, to a large extent, the identity of the community, just like holidays in the religious / traditional world. From the inception of Young Na'amat, it seemed only natural to mark two "anchor dates" that are part of the identity of Young Na'amat and its association with the Histadrut, Na'amat and social-democratic and international values: May Day (May 1), and International Women's Day (celebrated on March 8). To commemorate these days, we selected various subjects, methods, and spheres of activity to ensure their relevance to the lives of course participants, and to broaden their perspectives in a variety of socio-economic issues.

**2.1. May Day.** This is the first anchor day selected by the Young Na'amat team starting on the third year of the project (in the first two years, the course was not held in May). The choice of the International Labor / Workers Day as an anchor date enabled us to demonstrate the distinct identity of Young Na'amat vis-à-vis other women's organizations or other civil society organizations, and illustrate the project's connection to the Histadrut, Na'amat and the Social Democratic tradition.

This decision is not self-evident, and is often a subject of discussion within the group. It is important to note that at the beginning (2009), this choice was even less self-evident and popular than it is today. The program team, that is aware of this fact, must answer this question anew each time so that the women of Young Na'amat will connect with the day and its content. For example, in 2013, one of the participants, who is self-employed, raised the question: "What does a union mean to me?" The group then took this question, with the guidance of the team, as the subject for their next joint meeting.

At various meetings, questions dealing with various aspects of unionization, labor struggles, and solidarity were posed. We chose to use diverse and creative ways to bring the subject closer to the participants' everyday experiences. We've used films (2009 - "Strike"; 2010 - Lecture on working women in cinema; 2014 - "Made in Dagenham"), panels and meetings with unionists and activists (2011 – Panel on the struggles of working women; 2009 – Meeting with the Chairperson of the State Employees Union and discussion about the dilemmas related to union struggles, ideological lectures (2012-2013), Playback Theater workshop (2016) held in solidarity with the struggle of the educational assistants/caregivers, Poetry Slam workshop (2017), and of course dialogue circles (2015).

Since 2014, the format of our May Day celebrations is usually meetings focusing on our shared life experiences, taking this time to highlight the element of solidarity, and to "distance" these coexistence encounters from any folkloristic-isolationist classification, but rather use them to set a horizon of solidarity and cooperation.

**2.2. International Women's Day.** In recent years, International Women's Day has been marked by almost every organization and in every arena - educational, public and media. Na'amat organization has been celebrating International Women's Day for more than 30 years. At Young Na'amat - as an integral part of Na'amat and of civil society - we

vigilantly observe International Women's Day as one of the organization's two anchor dates. The challenge we face is to fill this day with content that is relevant and meaningful for our members. Over the years, we have focused on a range of issues, including macro issues (such as policies in Scandinavian countries regarding women and family, the role of women in the Arab Spring revolutions, and women's representation in politics), as well as issues that our members have experienced and are closer and more relevant they (such as body and body image issues, as detailed below). We constantly endeavor to demonstrate how macro issues relate directly to the lives of the participants, and vice versa: how issues close to the participants and their lives have broader implications and can be contested.

Over the years, three separate sessions were devoted to the woman's body from different perspectives. In 2013 we screened the film "True Women", and held a discussion with the Women and Their Bodies association, which deals with various aspects of women's health. In 2016 we held an intimate meeting on sizeism and held a belly dancing workshop. It is important to note that the body and body image is one of the topics of great interest for young women in the feminist arena, both on the personal level and social structure level, and as such it was selected as the key topic for the meetings.

All the issues raised in the meetings were also broached in a variety of activities, training programs, other joint meetings, coexistence encounters, and conferences that we conducted, as described in the report. For instance, Women in Politics, which is an issue that is included in every Young Na'amat training program, was also on the agenda of a conference entitled "Breakthroughs in Male Worlds" in 2010. The issue of women in politics was also discussed in a coexistence meeting at Tira in 2015, and at the Women's Day conferences in 2011 and 2015. In some of the joint meetings, the issue of women in politics was led by graduates of the program who are aware of its importance ("Why politics now?" 2016).

Women's Day events are also an opportunity to expand the dialogue about topics on our agenda and to present new topics, such as women's representation in the media (screening of the film "Misrepresentation" in 2014 followed by a discussion) or environmental issues and their connection to consumer culture (visit to the Hiriya Center that included lectures and discussion in 2017).

### 3. Joint meetings for coexistence

Over the past three years, we have devoted 3 to 4 meetings a year to strengthening the connection between Jewish women and Arab women. These meetings are conducted in collaboration between Young Na'amat and Na'amat from the Triangle Area, and are open to a broad range of women of various ages. Coexistence encounters enabled the Young Na'amat community to confront an important issue in Israeli society and to create a space for encounters that, unfortunately, does not exist in most of our daily lives. In this sense, these meetings constitute an important and significant political action.

We view the upholding this kind of tradition as a direct expression of the Na'amat spirit. Na'amat is one of the veteran women's movements in Israel, and has been actively involved in the field of coexistence since 1954. We learned about the spirit behind these actions and the dilemmas involved (and are still involved) in these activities, among others, from the book written by the former Knesset Member Nuzhat Katzav, "Swallows of Peace".

Young Na'amat's commitment to this issue is also reflected in Young Na'amat's ID, that emphasizes the principle of diversity and collaboration as part of its core activities. "*We are committed to expressing the differences between women in various communities and traditions as part of our activity.*" (The full ID is attached as Appendix A to this report).

The joint meetings are held on regular dates over the month of Ramadan, Christmas, the Tishrei holidays and May Day. The Ramadan meetings were held in Kafr Qasem (2015), Taibeh (2016) and Tira (2017), with each encounter having its own distinctive and special character. During these meetings, we linked the holiday's traditional aspects (including visits to mosques), acquaintance with the traditional and modern social content of the holiday, understanding of the role of Muslim women in preserving the holiday tradition with critical issues arising from the lives of women with respect to the intrinsic tension between tradition and modernity. We also visited the Ramadan market in Tira (2017), where we were introduced to a feminist project that was the target of threats from the religious establishment.

The Christmas meetings (in 2014 and 2015) were held in the Arab community of Fassuta in the Galilee, on the backdrop of previous acquaintance with a group of women active in the area who participated in the course held by Young Na'amat in collaboration with the Adva Center. These meetings were also an opportunity for a bit of tourism and

acquaintance with the holiday traditions, as well as communal activities and initiatives by the local women's group (the Christmas market, and the establishment of a town library). Many Na'amat members were interested in participating in these events. For the first meeting, we only needed a minibus (for the Young Na'amat activists). By the second year, we already filled four buses with participants of various ages. In 2017, after the Fassuta market became a great commercial success, we decided to diversify and visited the Orthodox community in Jaffa (according to the Orthodox calendar, as we know, Christmas is celebrated in early January, not in late December).

We marked the Tishrei high holidays in a Selichot meeting in 2015 at the Jewish Museum of Libya in Or Yehuda. The meeting focused on learning about life in Jewish communities in Arab countries, as well as on the common denominator between Jews and Muslims with respect to forgiveness, atonement, family, community, and religion. In 2016, no meeting was conducted because of a scheduling conflict with events celebrating Young Na'amat 10-year anniversary. In 2017, the meeting was held in Kibbutz Netzer Sireni, and introduced the participants to a movement that sought to shape and develop cultural and non-religious content for the Jewish calendar.

Along with activities aimed at promoting familiarity with the different traditions, there was an ideological activity aimed at developing a horizon of solidarity and actions aimed at furthering coexistence. As noted above, the content matter of May Day meetings focused on equality and integration of women in the job market. A focus was also placed on activities in preparation for the 2015 general elections for the Knesset aimed at encouraging women to exercise their right and duty to vote ("Women, Elections, Representation, and Agenda").

Another issue that is just as important, in which Young Na'amat is engaged, is the issue of violence - in its varied forms. Unfortunately, life in Israel includes periods of violence, suspicion, and fear. We are especially proud that even during these periods, we did not surrender to the winds of war and during the Tzuk Eitan Operation in 2014, we held a highly-charged yet important meeting ("War, Peace & Us: Meeting and Talking"). During this meeting, participants expressed their feelings and attitudes about the reality in which we live, we heard about the possibility of resolving seemingly unresolvable conflicts, drew inspiration from conflicts in other parts of the world (Ireland and Liberia), and emphasized the importance of integrating women into negotiations and the peace process.

As we review the activities we conducted, we see that there were different participants at each event, alongside a small fixed core, and this diminished the continued personal acquaintance aspect of these activities. However, we found that the very continuation of these events and activities conveys a significant message in itself within Young Na'amat - the importance of our presence in the coexistence activity arena. In addition, and unfortunately, we found that Jewish and Arab women live in almost totally separate spheres, and a large proportion of the women (both Jewish and Arab) are anxious about entering the sphere or space of the "other group", or at least feel a sense of alienation. In this respect, the mere physical entry into the space of the other group constitutes a significant political action.

In the wake of these coexistence meetings, and in order to deepen the connection and expand the agenda, additional fields of cooperation were developed. For instance, participation in a seminar against racism in which dozens of women from Young Na'amat participated (from the Southern Triangle and the Northern Triangle areas), attending the events celebrating Young Na'amat's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and participation in other Na'amat events (the "Changing Together" project).

#### **4. Building our ID**

As far back as 2009, graduates felt the need to define and identify their distinctive characteristics within the public arena. At this stage, we had about 50 program graduates from three yearly courses, and were about to recruit participants for the fourth year of the Young Na'amat program.

This need felt by the graduates stemmed from the growing number of graduates, from the constant challenge of connecting with different groups and years, and from continual ideological debates among the graduates.

In addition, in 2009, Young Na'amat initiated work aimed at the general public, held its first conference (October 2009 -Work, Not a Market) and even produced a worker rights booklet for female students. It was precisely this intersectional work that heightened the need to define the group, its distinction, and its values.

Young Na'amat's management decided to devote a weekend to this process, a weekend to which all the graduates were invited, and was attended by about 40 women.

Management took responsibility both for the concept itself and for guiding the process. One of the graduates, Liora Leibowitz, took upon herself to lead the process, while others concentrated primarily on the content. During the

weekend, there was a discussion, based on values and principles, about the exact wording that would best express the spirit of the group, its connection to Na'amat, its commitment to the history of Na'amat, and what significance the members wish to give the group in their lives.

It is truly symbolic that the document that was drafted was concluded with a quotation from the founding charter of the Working Women's Council (WWC) at their first conference in Balfouria 1921: *90 years later, it is still relevant*: "We aspire to equality and liberation of women, to women's integration into work and society, self-realization, and self-preservation of women as human beings."

The management and the team are careful to faithfully uphold this ID, and only one change has been made over the years (following a long discussion during the annual Young Na'amat ideological weekend in 2013), emphasizing the elements of belonging and community in Young Na'amat activities.

At the opening of every course, we introduce Young Na'amat's ID to the new participants, and over the coming year we intend to develop an activity for the assimilation of the ID.

The ID is attached as Appendix A.

## **5. Annual Conferences**

Conferences that are open to the general public are an excellent tool to attain public visibility in civil society. The conference enables us to raise issues onto the public agenda, disseminating important information and knowledge, and serve as a meeting place for activists. Members of Young Na'amat felt the need to bring their words and actions to the attention of the general public, and suggested we hold annual conferences. We saw this as an opportunity to practice and apply the various skills related to group action in the public sphere and production of conferences (teamwork, working with the media, guidance, facing an audience, event production, marketing and public relations). As so, we have turned the conferences into an annual tradition, and most years the leadership and organization of the conference were the responsibility of that year's leadership class. Our aspiration has always been to formulate and base the conference's subject on the personal and group work of the current leadership group, as we will elaborate and demonstrate in Chapter 5.

We also feel it is important to mention that our group work raises varied and diverse subjects. Under the direction of the program team, most of the

subjects selected related to the field of the work. (2009 - "Work, Not a Market" Conference, 2011 - "Trailblazers in Masculine Worlds Conference", 2012 - "From Survival Practices to Public Policy Conference", 2014 - "Workplace Abuse", and 2015 - "Youth Policy"). In 2013, the conference did not focus on labor and employment, but rather on violence, and was titled "Violence without Bruises".

Preparation for the conferences was one of the stages and a key component of the process of emergence from the intimate group. This transition is not as simple and obvious as it may seem, and presents constant challenges. Some of the participants felt very empowered and enriched by the process, and even managed to truly express themselves during the process; while others found it difficult to face the loss of group intimacy and transition to a task-oriented group. As a result, some experienced great frustration, creating "noise" within the community.

We are happy to report that diverse and large audiences were invited to the Young Na'amat conferences, and not all participants in the conference had advanced contact with or knowledge about the activities of Young Na'amat. In this sense, this opening up actually defines the activities of Young Na'amat as a group in contact with "the world". Moreover, Young Na'amat has expanded its identity and positioned itself as an initiating community, and is often even ahead of its time in terms of the issues that it puts on the agenda.

Two key rules guide us in organizing and preparing the conferences: (1) the group is responsible for production and implementation of the conference; And (2) the conference deals with issues arising from the discussions held within the group. It is significant that community members are always part of the knowledge providers on the stage, and thus we express the diversity of the sources of knowledge, and of course uphold diversity in terms of the people appearing on the stage, with our commitment to variety and diversity also expressed in the inclusion in the conference program of Jewish women, Arab women, women of different ethnicities, social positions, and so forth.

In 2016, a special conference was held to mark Young Na'amat's tenth anniversary. Alongside the regular format of the conference, as detailed below, we added a festive facet in the form of an exhibition, reception and a Decade party. Despite the temptation to take the "birthday celebration" route, the conference bore a clear ideological and intellectual character, under the heading "Feminism - The Next Generation." At the conference we

discussed feminist issues ("Community, Web and Networking - Between Virtual and Reality", "Education for Gender Equality - Between Being Different and Being Like Everyone Else" and "The Feminist Struggle - With or Without Men?"). The subjects were formulated by leading members of the organization, and they express real dilemmas that arise on a daily basis within our communities.

### **An Ideological-Annual-Traditional Seminar: Between Ideological Discussions and Community Building**

Over the years, we have believed in the great importance of gathering the community together for a weekend in which we delve deeply into an issue derived from the issues we deal with in the framework of Young Na'amat. The seminar allows participants to deepen their knowledge and understanding, and connect with other communities. We are aware that not all members of the community attend all the seminars, so that sometimes the founding groups feel disappointed. However, the absence of members enables seminar participants to experience the large community in a tangible way. The seminars are also a good opportunity for the steering team and the Young Na'amat team to define the agenda and the community's stance towards a wide variety of subjects. In this sense, women who choose not to participate are also introduced to the agenda of Young Na'amat.

The annual seminar is held over a weekend, giving us with an opportunity to deal with several topics from various perspectives. In this sense, work is an extension of content-process-political work, and we often add a perspective enabling content observation by the Young Na'amat community. For example, at the 2015 seminar held at Kibbutz Ruhama, we dealt with central-periphery relations. The weekend began with an experiential tour of social projects in Sderot. As the Shabbat neared, we gathered in the kibbutz's study hall and began a personal workshop entitled "Where Did You Originally Come From?" This workshop was an opportunity for the participants to examine themselves and their personal histories in terms of the weekend's subject. It also enabled the participants to get to know their friends on other levels. Of course, there were members that did not know one another before the weekend, and the workshop allowed them to deepen their acquaintance. Later on, we heard a lecture about the origin of the concept of "periphery" and the economic gaps between the center and the periphery (especially social services). We also held discussions dealing with policy issues and discussed the participants' positions on socio-economic issues.

Since Young Na'amat members come from all corners of Israel, and the challenge of integrating them is constant and ongoing (as well as the challenge of holding Young Na'amat activities outside the central region), we found that it was necessary to devote considerable time to discussion and raising ideas on how the Young Na'amat community can deal with questions related to the periphery. In this sense, the weekend was not only an opportunity to formulate and discuss conceptual issues in depth, but it also posed a challenge to Young Na'amat as an animated and vibrant community. It is important to note that not all issues are suitable for discussion from all the perspectives. In this sense, the center-periphery issue is an excellent topic with impact on all possible discussion perspectives (personal, emotional, social and economic, as well as policy issues and organizational implications for the community).

On the issue of consolidating our community, we combine skills that we feel are needed at the time (for instance: a pitching workshop, use of personal narratives to connect, community organization and community building) with in-depth discussions, formulation of ideas, and making decisions as to the community's path forward. Only a minority of the seminars dealt exclusively with questions related to formation of the community (the basic seminar in 2006, the project seminar in 2007, the agenda seminar in 2008, the leadership seminar in 2014).

One of the challenges posed by the annual seminar is finding lecturers who speak about relevant topics. We always prefer lecturers who are young women, in line with our commitment to promoting young women and providing opportunities for the next generation. This also affords an opportunity to establish long and meaningful ties with the lecturers and enlist them into the Young Na'amat community.

### **Networking**

We at Young Na'amat believe that networking is an integral part of our group and community work. From the very beginning, the graduates of the first course and the founders of the Young Na'amat community envisioned the community as follows:

**"A group of women that will engage in social issues, in our society, and in the personal advancement of group members, while constituting a support group for realizing and developing personal goals."**

In fact, without citing the concept itself, they defined one of the important principles of the community that would be established: networking among community members.

The vision of networking is perfectly aligned with the lifestyle, beliefs, and activities of members of the Young Na'amat team. Thus, we are actually continually operating in a networking format. In fact, one of the members defined her main occupation as: "I happen to know someone there...".

So, what exactly is networking? The network is, in fact, a management approach that assigns value to our social capital, our web of acquaintances and contacts. There are numerous and varied approaches to networking, from marketing networking (referred to as the insurance agents approach), based on a superficial but wide and distributed network of connections, to narrower approaches that prioritize a deeper and narrower network of close friends (we've dubbed this approach as the BFF approach: The best friend approach).

Many different networking groups operate throughout the world. Most groups are based on the WIIFM principle ("What's in it for me?"). Our approach, in Young Na'amat, is the precise opposite: the network is based on giving and only afterwards receiving, or in other words, for us networking means encountering the other, and listening to her needs and dreams, establishing connections, and of course encouraging, as far as possible, the sharing of networks (my friend's network is also my network - and vice versa).

This approach transforms networking based primarily on the classic, individualistic approach into networking that is group-oriented and communal in nature. When coupled with the principle of diversity, the approach offers the Young Na'amat's leadership program and the Young Na'amat community a significant opportunity for networking among women from different regions, with social capital of a more limited or different nature.

At the participants' disposal is a longstanding, strong network in the form of the program team, and in a certain sense the Na'amat and Histadrut networks, which are large and veteran organizations that are entrenched in decision-making hubs of Israeli society.

Community members learn how to approach their colleagues and program staff with questions, requests for expert help and support, and even calls for concrete assistance in certain issues – and they are rarely disappointed. T, a participant in the first course, says: "I want to advance in my field of work. I arranged to meet N for coffee. She is wonderfully networked among nonprofit organizations and is always up to date about all sorts of job offers. She referred me to my two last jobs".

A, who holds a senior position, called the office and said, "Why didn't you tell me that G (a graduate from a different course -they didn't know each other

personally) was participating in the tender? I feel that members of Young Na'amat should prioritize a member if there are two equally qualified candidates. And in the case of this tender, they were actually equally qualified..." These are examples of how the network puts the power of the group at the disposal of the individual (and in our case, at the disposal of the community).

Just before we completed preparation of this report, I received a WhatsApp message from M, a graduate of course 11, a young Haredi woman who left the religious world with four children and no occupational capital and was struggling to survive. I obtained her consent to quote the message she sent: "Hey, Orly, how are you? Where should I start? It's complicated. ☺ I was lucky, really lucky to get to know such wonderful people as you. Three years ago, I didn't believe that there were people in this world who are secular and human. You are not only human – you care, are concerned and lend a helping hand. I am so glad to be part of all of you, and hope to pass on and learn everything I get from you. On Sunday I am starting a new job, and it's all thanks to you. Thank you!". It turns out that during the ideological weekend she met another graduate of course 3, and she referred her to that job. All this occurred without any staff intervention. It is simply the spirit of Young Na'amat. So, what did we have here? A weekend with an opportunity to meet a variety of women, to network and to establish personal relations, or in other words - a community.

### **Relationships and Personal Bonding**

Each one of the Young Na'amat members has participated in a group process at least once in her life. A group process is characterized by its high energy and a sense of exhilaration. Members often do not want the group process to end and wish to continue this sense of energy and connection. Experience has unfortunately proven that when the pre-planned program ends, the process ends, and we separate, with the normal course of life distancing the experience and weakening the common foundations, so that the bonds between the participants begin to dwindle.

The weakening of bonds occurs mainly among program participants whose lives are very busy. They work and study, are advancing their careers as well as dating, and if they have forsaken the dating world, they are often mothers of young children, and very pressed for time. It is a wonder to us how so many of them continue to maintain ongoing ties with the Young Na'amat community and dedicate part of their precious time to it.

The transition from the group experience to a larger, looser framework for bonding and connections is Young Na'amat's great challenge. Building a community of women who were only slightly acquainted with one another

(since Young Na'amat is comprised of many courses and participants in the various programs held in different years, women do not necessarily know participants from other years) is a central focus of the leading team.

Alongside all the methods reviewed above, a special place is devoted to the personal ties between the team and the graduates. People like to be in places where they feel significant. Personal relationships are, to a large extent, one of the ways that graduates feel significant and important to at least for the team that is familiar with all of them.

Nadia Belkind, one of the graduates of the 11<sup>th</sup> leadership program, remarked in the closing discussion: "When I came to the first meetings of the program, I definitely expected inspirational content, discussions, questions, and professional tours to expand my knowledge. What I did not expect was to meet women (both in the team and group) that within a week would become meaningful figures for me. Courageous women and some that are less courageous, women with clear life goals or those in the process of searching, women speaking different languages and of different cultures, with children or far from that stage in their lives. The connection with them was the most significant thing for me". Nadia's statement appears in full in Chapter 7.

It is clear that these personal relationships are not instrumental, but rather totally authentic. They are based on the team's practice of viewing each participant as a unique individual, loving her as she is (despite her weaknesses, sometimes even because of them), and looking at her with a view to the future - not as she is right now but as she can be, alongside their willingness to help by offering a sympathetic ear, good advice and sometimes even practical help for each of them. Nurit, the head of the Leadership Program for many years, describes the relations as follows: "The sense of personal relationships is based on the fact that the women in the group feel that if they get stuck on the way from Eilat at two in the morning, Orly (or for that matter Nurit or Noga) will come pick them up".

Na'amat's agenda consists of numerous personal references: S calls to consult about the work relations in her office. M is preparing for a job interview with us. T calls late at night because she has decided to divorce her husband and needs urgent help. And N, who married and emigrated from Israel calls to share that how much she misses her family, homeland, activities, and community. The sense of community and our personal involvement in the group is also reflected in the fact that we are often invited to special occasions of group members: weddings, the birth of a child, bat mitzvah of a daughter, or sad occasions, such as mourning for a family member. We face a real dilemma as to how we, as the

leading team, can possibly (in terms of time, energy, and even money) participate in all these events, a dilemma that has not been resolved to this very day.

However, when someone "disappears" and does not show up, we try to contact her and express that time and distance are not an obstacle, and that we are still interested in her, in her accomplishments, her dreams and her needs, and want her to continue to be part of us, part of our community. In this sense, the work is never ending, demanding a lot of time, attention, and energy (both emotional and physical).

In the professional literature, it is accepted that the possible scope of close-community relations for one person is 150 people. The ability to preserve this or a similar pattern of relationships encompassing the large numbers that now constitute Young Na'amat is one of the major challenges facing the leading team.

We choose to end this chapter with two stories of Young Na'amat members that successfully demonstrate our community spirit.

K's story, which she shares in almost every new Young Na'amat group:

K came to us following a chance meeting with one of the staff members in a dog park. At the very first meeting she attended, K told us that she was in a relationship with a boyfriend she was unhappy with. She used the term violence, although she never shared a concrete story of violence, and certainly not physical violence. At a later stage of the program, the group visited the Glickman Center, a center for treatment of victims of domestic violence. The more she heard, the stronger she felt that she was living in a violent and even dangerous relationship.

However, after seven years together, K found it difficult to leave him. Only after the end of the course, when she joined us on one of the Young Na'amat weekends, did she finally realized what she should do. When she returned home, she encountered violent and possessive behavior by her partner, who commented on her membership in Young Na'amat, on how she dressed, and even followed her to her workplace.

At this stage, K felt threatened, and with personal guidance by the director of the Glickman Center over the phone, she decided to pack her belongings and return to her parents' home. A group of Young Na'amat members feared that a direct confrontation with her violent partner would end with dismal results, and so some of them escorted her to the apartment, while others kept watch at the entrance to the building. They then drove her to her parents' home and stayed

with her for the first few hours. They helped her persuade her parents to accept her and not press her to return to the violent partner (who of course expressed regret and appeared on their doorstep with an engagement ring in hand). The practical and emotional support that K received from the community members enabled her to turn over a new leaf. It is therefore no wonder that when she married six years later, all the Young Na'amat members received a wedding invitation and many of them came to be celebrate with her and her new partner.

The second story has not yet ended at the time of writing of this report. It is the story of Noga Klinger, a Young Na'amat activist and graduate of the 7<sup>th</sup> course, who has been working as Young Na'amat's coordinator since 2014. In March, Noga was diagnosed with breast cancer, and since then has been undergoing very difficult medical treatment. At the end of September this year, Noga underwent surgery. Young Na'amat members organized spontaneously and sent her a video expressing their love and encouragement. They set up a roster on the Web, and arranged that every day in the first weeks after the surgery, a member would come to visit her and bring homemade food for Noga and her entire family. It was very touching, because it was all performed spontaneously by the members, without a guiding hand from the office, as an expression of personal commitment and with a sense of cooperation. We now hope that Noga's story will also have a happy end, and that we can all come and rejoice with her and celebrate her recovery with her and her family.

### **Working with the Main Young Na'amat Activists ("Leaders")**

Motivating members to take action is one of the cornerstones of the program, and so from the very beginning, we viewed our graduates as partners in developing and realizing the Young Na'amat agenda. As of the second course, we have regarded graduates of the first course as partners, and later founded the Young Na'amat Leaders.

Several principles guide our work with the leaders, namely:

The first principle is that anyone who is willing to be active is invited to act as a "leader". Leaders must commit to one year, with every activist asked to examine once a year her readiness to share the burden. They are invited to continue their work every year.

The second principle is that each course must have its own representation among the leaders in order to improve the connection with the graduates of the various courses.

The third principle is to ensure diversity.

The challenge of working with the leaders is not simply that these women are very busy. We operate within a set of constraints. Young Na'amat's position as a project within a top-down organization and various political sensitivities are only some of operating constraints, and in fact the leaders (as well as the team) operate in the context of great uncertainty.

Over the years, great and constant efforts have been focused on making the "leaders" more active. The team has also provided the leaders with organizational consulting (organizational consulting offered by Shatil), as well as training we felt was important, such as a community organization through narratives (Feya Hillel, 2014). A weekend seminar was held only for leaders to decide on action issues for Young Na'amat, and identifying community needs (Prof. Merav Moshe Gorodski, 2017) in order to deepen the leaders' knowledge and thus enable them to take more extensive and more accurate action.

Working within these limitations, the leaders have led a majority of the annual Young Na'amat meetings, and in some years even led the joint meetings of Young Na'amat, which are the avenues of activity for graduates, and their opportunity to maintain contact with the community and initiate activism. The leaders view the connection with the parent groups, as well as drawing them to engage in the activities of Young Na'amat, as part of their role. This tends to wear the people involved down and requires constant maintenance by the team.

Over the years, various issues have recurred over and over again: issues related to involving members, the transition from an intimate group to an action group, and then to the broad group; how to identify and decide on issues that are relevant to many women; the dialectical and complex relationship with Na'amat; and of course, questions relating to motivating action.

### **Enrichment and Development**

In this part we will concentrate on the enrichment, enhancement and development of professional skills as part of the preservation and expansion process, including the facilitators course, and the Women Activists Online project. As noted above, the continuation of activities requires constant effort and nurturing on the part of the team. One of the ways we chose to attain this goal was to enhance the skills of Young Na'amat's key activists.

Community Facilitation Course. There were three reasons behind the idea of holding a community facilitators course. One is the desire to preserve the community by increasing the employment horizons of community members; Second, to expand Na'amat's circle of partnership through groups that will guide practicum groups; And third, to position Young Na'amat as a professional body with a distinctive work method (content-process-political), and to take our place as such within the field of social organizations, Na'amat and the Histadrut.

To date, we have conducted two full courses (260 hours), and a shorter course for group dialogue facilitators (100 semester hours). The courses were offered primarily to Young Na'amat graduates, and so far about 60 women have participated in these Young Na'amat training programs (about 45 of them Young Na'amat graduates). As part of the practicum, many of the facilitators led groups throughout the country, thus increasing the impact of work done by Young Na'amat. However, we feel that the potential of this part of our activities has not been utilized to the fullest. The facilitators maintain ongoing contact with Young Na'amat, and along with participation in the regular activities of Young Na'amat, they are invited for refresher sessions four times a year (dealing with political as well as professional issues).

The demand for our facilitators course (both internal and external) is constant and has potential for expanding the work of Young Na'amat and for establishing collaborations. We should also mention the collaboration with the "Involvement" group (a group of ultra-Orthodox feminist activists) who approached us to teach them how to lead group dialogues and thereby increase their range of activities.

Women Activists Online Project. From the very beginning of Young Na'amat operations, we have felt a lack of Internet activism - the fourth wave of feminism. "Women Activists Online" is a social enterprise initiated by Dr. Shlomit Lir in 2011 as part of her study of activism. The project aims to promote the voices of women working in the public sphere, both online and offline. It began as a collaborative project with Young Na'amat, because we realized that it would enable our members to make their voices heard, act as a group, and establish their presence on the web, thus bringing the diversity that connects us to the digital arena. We chose to collaborate with the project because its message was in line with our agenda. Even the name was a result of this collaboration, with Women Activists Online being a variation of the name chosen by the women participating in Young Na'amat's second course Women Activists for Change. It seems that we were a perfect match for the project, just as Dr. Lir's agenda matched ours. The course taught us that technological knowledge is not sufficient (although more thorough assimilation is required),

and in fact the best way is to remove barriers related to writing, exposure, visibility, skill in different types of writing, and even stimulating the drive to write.

### **Digital – Use of Virtual and Digital Tools**

The work method formulated by Young Na'amat is based primarily on meaningful personal relationships and face-to-face encounters. However, in the context of internal communication, the digital world affords a variety of tools to expand our connections (sometimes at the expense of the depth of the connection), yet in terms of visibility it is irreplaceable and perceived as essential. At this stage, we have a closed group, a Facebook page, and even a monthly newsletter, as well as our very active WhatsApp groups.

Over the years we have been working to improve and refine our digital capabilities. However, it is important to note that the digital issue is not one of Young Na'amat's strong suits. Therefore, over the past few months, a group of leaders have come together with the goal of focusing on this important issue, aiming to formulate a strategy and develop skills in this field within Young Na'amat. The group is headed by Young Na'amat's coordinator, Noga Klinger. As we noted earlier, Noga has been diagnosed with breast cancer and has taken time off to care for herself. Under these circumstances, one of the other activists has assumed her role. So far, we have held a one-day workshop dealing with the variety of digital tools and the differences between them, including considering how to implement the tools in Young Na'amat's activities. In addition, the group has expanded the circle of writers on Facebook, and improved the writing on our page, and is now working on upgrading the mailing lists of Young Na'amat. Since 2016, we have been publishing a monthly digital newsletter that serves as a platform for deeper discussions into various issues (before or after a monthly event), and the deepening of the ties between the members.

We hope that over the coming year we will be able to improve our online visibility.

## **Work on Ideological and Political Content**

The principle of the project's unique facilitation work, **content-process-political**, is expressed in the design of the content, the design of the entire meeting, the choice of methods and the manner in which they are used.

In this chapter we will demonstrate the work method of the Young Na'amat Project by detailing and discussing the eight actions that we implement in the course. The eight actions exemplify the method and nature of the work, and how the personal-experiential is connected to social content and enables the formulation, challenging of, and changing of the attitudes of the participants.

### **1. The Personal is Political. The opening activity on our joint path.**

The activity was formulated during the third Young Na'amat course (which was the second course led by Nurit Haghagh). The purpose of the activity is to enable participants to confront the concept that "the personal is political", a slogan that has accompanied the Feminist movement since the 1960s (from Carol Hanish's article, 1969). By understanding that the social and historical contexts of women's experiences and comprehending how the personal experiences of the participants, which are perceived as individual experiences disconnected from class, historical, and cultural contexts, are actually common experiences stemming from and related to social structures, to the power structure in society (social, gender and class power struggles), socialization processes, and the constructs of identities - gender, social class, race / ethnicity, physical / intellectual ability, religion, language and nationality.

At Young Na'amat, we adopted this activity as an opening exercise, despite the exposure it requires, since it creates an experiential and conceptual basis for continued activities. In addition, the shared gender experience that produces the activity promotes familiarity and ties between group members on a deeper and more intimate level than is customary in other leadership groups.

Activity description: Participants are provided with sheets of paper and colors in the center of the room. They are asked to think about three events (not necessarily negative events) in which being little girls, school girls, and women influenced their lives (not necessarily dramatically). They are asked to recall a concrete event, not general statements. If participants need direction to recall events, we provide examples of statements such as "It's for women"/ "It's not for women", "You belong here" / "You don't belong here," "Girls do this" / "Girls don't do this". The participants are invited to draw and paint the event, but if they prefer they can just write a few paragraphs that describe the event.

Once the participants finish drawing the events or writing about them, they are invited to share one event. At the end of the first round they are invited to share other events or events they recalled while listening to stories shared by the other participants. At this stage, we ask the participants to just listen to the stories and not to comment or discuss / analyze / comment about the stories. This method accompanies us throughout the exercise and enables participants to listen and give each woman the time and space she needs, without requiring her to respond or defend herself. During this sharing stage, the facilitators identify and gather recurring themes.

Next, during the processing and conceptualization process, several steps are taken:

1. Drawing the attention of participants to the fact that most of us were able to identify with most of the stories described.
2. Identifying common themes and issues that emerging from the stories presented in the group, and demonstrating the connection between the issues raised and Feminist theory. For example, subjects such as body, army, sports, and the role of hair in our lives as women. It should be emphasized that at this stage, reference is made solely to the stories related by the group.
3. Presenting the idea that "the personal is political" and its significance in Feminist history and activities, its importance, and especially the power of cooperation and the group in terms of this concept. As long as we don't share our personal stories, we will never know that the others have also undergone the same experience, which is actually a shared, general, and political experience and not just a personal experience.
4. The last stage of the activity is a lecture (external or internal) that provides a conceptual and theoretical introduction to Feminist thought, thus putting the activity experience in a comprehensive, social, and political context.

The transition from personal experience to theory is neither natural nor easy, but we are committed to keeping it on the political and moral level, and to lead the participants from the personal and shared perspective to observing themselves, women in general, and society as part of a critical and political perspective.

## **2. Circles of Time**

This activity was first formulated at the Young Na'amat event marking Women's Day held a few years ago. The idea arose when we dealt with the issue of WLB (Work Life Balance) and challenged the assumption that we have made "progress", and that this "progress" is beneficial for us, how we stand in relation

to past or upcoming generations, and what are the prices we have paid for this "progress". In recent years, we have used this exercise in groups of various ages, and found that it is most suitable for women after the first years of intensive care of young children. We have adopted this activity because it is suitable for a wide range of ages and social statuses, and it is an opportunity for a different and exciting acquaintance among participants, combining critical thinking about the work world, perception of family, and the place of leisure in the participants' lives.

Activity description: The participants are provided with sheets of paper and writing tools / colors placed in the middle of the room, and are asked to draw three circles and divide them according to the proportion of time devoted to various activities (a "Time Pie"). One circle reflects the time allocation of their mothers, the middle circle expresses their own current daily schedule and time allocation, and the third circle expresses the time allocation they would wish for their daughters or another significant woman in their lives.

The categories are not predefined by the facilitator. We believe that the definition itself is part of content and substance of the exercise. For instance: Do I have a "job" or a "career"? Is there separate time allocation for the couple's relationship, or is it part of "family" time? Is spending time with family "leisure" or "chores / duties"?

The size of the circles, their shape and their relative location (aside from the fact that the central circle represents the participant herself) are not prescribed in advance, and are not even hinted at in advance by the facilitator. In our experience, we have found that both the shape and location allow participants to add an additional layer of observation and interpretation. At the same time, the participants are asked to write at the bottom of the circle "0 time for..." - and here they are meant to add important things that are not shown in their practical division of time.

In the second stage, after the participants prepare the time pies, they are invited to share, in pairs, their personal stories and those of the most significant women in their lives. During the third stage of the activity, the participants gather and are asked to share with the group short examples and insights that emerged from the activity. The insights are actually the basis for discussion about today's labor market structure, cultural changes, cultural and class differences, as well as differences stemming from different professions. A secondary benefit of this exercise is the deepening of acquaintance, as well serving as an opportunity for each woman to look at her own life and identify what is lacking (0 time allocation), and the capacity of this observation to lead to change. For example,

one of the participants was surprised to learn from the exercise that she devoted almost no time at all in her daily routine to her relationship, and as a result she decided to act to correct the situation (including a career change).

In the final stage, we use the personal experiences to open up and lead a discussion of work-family-leisure issues, and the connection to policy that will enable women and men to support and care – according to the vision of Young Na'amat.

### **3. Identities**

The subject of identities (fixed and changing) and identity politics occupies us at the group level and as activists in the political and sometimes even party arenas. We constantly examine the place of identities, including our identity as a "woman" in different spheres. Is our female identity conclusive, or does it tie in to other identities and is influenced by them (am I a woman or an Oriental woman? Am I a woman or a poor / rich woman?). These questions led us to a constant and ongoing dialogue with the participants and Young Na'amat activists, and to constantly expand our insights about this topic. The following activity enables participants to perceive their diverse identities and the movement and passage between identities, to see the variance between different people in the public sphere, and allows freedom to act through the identity of my choosing (whether it is an ideological position, geographic location, sexual orientation, religious identity or ethnic identity).

Activity description: In the first stage, the participants conduct brainstorming about identities in order to expand the range of identities as far as possible, so as not to remain with familiar, stereotypical identities, in preparation for the second stage of the activity.

During the second stage, the participants are requested to answer three questions in writing (while the facilitator explains the questions):

- a) Which identity determines your daily routine (when to get up, what you do, what are your constraints, how does this affect interaction with other people, etc.)?
- b) Through which identity do you view the world (to whom do you compare yourself, how do you see yourself, what defines you in general and relative to other people?)
- c) What is the identity you choose to act through in the public sphere or would you like to act through in the public sphere?

This activity was conducted in a number of groups, and we found that typically the identity that determines a women's routine is not usually assigned political

or activist significance, since it is perceived as self-evident. Thus, for example, the daughter of elderly parents who is very occupied in caring for her parents found that this issue is not on her political agenda and that of other women in her condition.

In response to the question of through which identity do you view the world, we found, alongside the predictable answers, a variety of surprising and interesting answers, such as my identity as a fat person, my identity as a single woman, or my identity as a single woman in Tel Aviv. We also found that the participants are not active in these fields, although these issues have clear political potential.

During the last Knesset election period (2015), we added a fourth question: What is the identity that influences your decision as to which party to vote for? It was interesting that the majority of the participants mentioned identity politics with regard to their friends, while they were blind to the influence of their own identity on their voting decision. The exercise helped participants to recognize how their identity impacts their voices, and to legitimize this impact for others.

Some of these exercises have aroused interest in other organizations over the years, and in some cases, they have adopted them. On November 15, 2017, we were invited to present this activity in the Dialogue in Mixed Cities Conference held by the Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace and the Besod Shiach Association.

#### **4. Home**

This activity was created in an attempt to demonstrate to facilitators that did not undergo our training course, what content-process-political oriented group facilitation work is about. The encounter with the facilitators was a one-time event, but following its success, we adopted it in additional leadership groups, and even in the group facilitators training course for our graduates. The activity is a suitable exercise for introducing the issue, deepening our understanding of it, and for dealing with this issue which is of such great consequence in every woman's life: the right to housing, housing policy on a historical and international continuum, activism in the field, and other issues related to home and housing.

This activity demonstrates how to confront large, complex issues, some of which look as if they belong exclusively to the economic and real estate sections of the newspapers, and how to make them close and personal for each participant, to create a personal experience for each of them, to create a group experience,

and then leverage these experiences to conceptualize and create organized knowledge, and even a critical and political approach to this reality. The state of housing, much like the state of healthcare, as well as many other issues, are the result of policy. The choice of housing was made based on the facilitator's previous acquaintance with this field, yet any choice of this type requires the facilitator to acquire theoretical knowledge in the field or to refresh her prior knowledge.

A secondary benefit of the activity is community building and establishing ties between different courses and years. Community building requires constant contact, and therefore the question of familiarity and the creation of intimacy in an optimal and enabling space is constantly on the agenda, and we need many and varied platforms for this purpose.

Activity description: In the first stage, the participants are asked to record for themselves the course of their lives through their homes – their history through the houses in which they and their families lived. During the second stage, the participants are requested to tell this story to the group. The facilitator records the types of houses described in the stories and the circumstances under which they moved (wedding, divorce, economic situation, relocation - sometimes it is an upgrade, sometimes a downgrade or even a crisis). Sharing the house stories is actually a very intimate and moving act, with both pleasant experiences alongside difficult experiences. We've even encountered cases of women who burst into tears during the discussion when their story brought difficult memories to the surface.

In the third stage, the facilitator writes the various housing formats on the board and invites participants to classify them according to the categories they define. During the discussion the facilitator, based on her personal knowledge and worldview, raises questions for discussion, such as ownership versus rent, country versus city, center versus periphery, private space versus public space, transfer between generations, etc. Finally, the activity is concluded with a short lecture or short article, which sums up the knowledge acquired.

Similar activities, using the same model, were held focusing on the subject of work, in which we asked participants, beyond the description of their private work history, to describe their motivations to change jobs.

## 5. Housing

During our annual ideological weekends, we delve deeper into the content we touched on during our programs. A weekend gives us an opportunity to discuss each subject from several perspectives. This activity was launched towards the end of the 2011 annual weekend, held in Kibbutz Degania Bet, and dealt with the importance of policy and its impact on our lives. In the previous section, we described our activity dealing with the subject of home. During the weekend, we delved deeper into this subject. We began with the first part of the Home workshop as described above, and added this workshop dealing with the housing policy which we found to be more suitable for deeper discussion, as well as because these women were already aware of our positions about the importance of policy. The goal was to communicate to the participants, first and foremost, the fact that there is no single solution, and there are different solutions both in the world and in Israel that are implemented in different periods. Thus, we challenge the automatic acceptance of the current policy as self-evident, vital and unshakable.

We further revealed to the participants that each one of the solutions, that has its distinctive advantages and disadvantages, is founded on an ideological socio-economic position, based on assumptions about human nature. Another goal was to give the participants a sense that they have the relevant knowledge, and the knowledge is not exclusively held by "distant experts and anonymous policy makers", and that they can and therefore should confront the policy and influence it (expanding the sense of competency of the group).

The activity was held in groups, motivated by the belief that this issue must be faced. The assumption that there is no need to discuss the issue, deal with it, and formulate solutions was not accepted as a legitimate assumption. In fact, meanwhile we are already leading the discussion based on the belief that this is an issue and a policy we must deal with.

Activity description: In the first stage, before they are divided into groups, the facilitator asks the participants to consider the issue in as broad a context as possible (land, money, mortgages, public housing, rental, etc.). During the second stage, each group is asked to think about every solution that comes to mind – a solution they are familiar with or one they imagine - for the housing problem, and then write down the advantages and disadvantages of each solution. The discussion of the advantages and disadvantages gives rise to the latent assumptions underlying the solutions. Next, the groups are requested to prioritize the solutions and present them to the general assembly.

At the conclusion, in the summation stage, these ideas are briefly reviewed, in terms of their historical and current aspects, emphasizing that most, if not all, solutions have been on the agenda of decision-makers for a very long time, as feasible and legitimate solutions, but have been rejected for ideological reasons (such as laws relating to public housing, rental apartments, regulations related to mortgages).

## **6. Flags**

This activity was inspired by May Day, and the red flag that was held high and waved at May Day parades. On May Day, Nurit marched with the red flag, was photographed with it and at the end of the parade placed the flag in the room. This experience caused her to wonder about the flags we carry, their weight, the responsibility that accompanies the flag bearer - are we the flag or are we only its bearers? What is our relationship with the flags? When do we choose to hold them high and when do we choose to lay them down? The aim was also to offer space to lay down our flags and "rest."

Activity description: In the first stage, the facilitator tells the group her personal story and her May Day parade experience. Sharing the personal story is an expression of our view that the personal is political. During the second stage, the participants are asked to share their answer to the question: "Which flag would you like to wave? Which flag would you like to lay down?" The goal of this exercise is to allow participants "freedom of movement" between flags, to choose new flags, and to let go of flags that although they are identified with them do no longer serve their agenda.

## **7. Working with WhatsApp**

For the first time, we were exposed to the use of WhatsApp application for activism during the workshop conducted by Roni Plzen, as part of the community facilitators course dealing with borders. The possibility of using WhatsApp sparked our imagination, since most of the participants in the workshops have smartphones, and also because of the possibility of involving women that are unable to physically attend meetings. Alongside this fascinating opportunity, this activity also poses a challenge to the group's borders.

WhatsApp use is diverse and versatile, and can be applied to a wide range of questions, issues, or situations. We used this channel in different groups and situations, both for the purpose of acquaintance, visual illustration of an issue, and once even to include participants, who were "stuck" outside the city due to the in the Tel Aviv marathon, in our discussion. It is especially important to

ensure that all participants have a smartphone and have mastered the use of WhatsApp.

Activity description: Our first use of the tool was with a relatively young group, and concerned the question of women's perspectives on gender issues and Security Council Resolution 1325. Resolution 1325 states that since women and children are affected differently by conflicts, women should be given representation and a voice in all negotiations and decision-making processes having to do with conflicts, wars, conflict resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, and more. Professional literature also recognizes that conflict resolution settlements that were formulated with the involvement of women were more stable over time than settlements that ignored the female voice. The activity was designed to connect the participants' private perspective with issues related to policy setting, influencing, and implementation of Resolution 1325.

In the first stage, the participants were asked to go out and take a photo that they believed reflected a gender perspective and send it to the WhatsApp group. The exercise took place in the Histadrut building, which provided varied stimuli, such as posters, photos, signs, as well as everyday objects.

During the second stage, when the participants returned to the room, they shared the object of their photos with the group, and discussed the significance of this representation in their lives.

In the third stage a discussion was held about whether there is a special life experience for women, do women have a unique perspective, do participants think that women's voices are of special importance? And women's life experiences? Is it important to bring women's voices into decision-making processes?

In the fourth stage, the facilitator introduced the participants to Resolution 1325 on the integration of women into decision-making positions (also into the process of political negotiations). We read a number of excerpts from the resolution that emphasize the unique experience of women and children in conflict zones and the importance of women's representation in conflict resolution negotiations.

## **8. Press – Summary Activity**

The idea for the activity stemmed from the constant interest among the staff as to whether the participants' reading of newspapers changes at the end of the group process. Will they read articles they never used to read? Will their perspective on the articles be different than in the past? What will the differences be? What will they notice now as opposed to the past?

Activity description: The facilitator collects various articles on economic and social issues related to the group's content matter and spreads them on the table. The participants are asked to choose an article that deals with a subject that prior to the program they would not have read. The questions asked: What is the subject? Why didn't we pay attention to it in the past and notice it now? What did we think about this subject previously and how do we view it now?

The participants are asked to present their results before the audience, so that they also practice skills while dealing with the course content. This enables them to observe the progress they have made, and appreciate the knowledge and tools they have acquired having to do with economic and social issues.

## **Diversity in Action**

The diversity of the Young Na'amat programs is not expressed solely in Jewish-Arab relations and their national or religious representation in the program. As far as we are concerned, much of our activity deals with a continual examination of the identity categories that the program's participants retain throughout their lives, beyond their national or religious attributions.

We are committed to ensuring that our programs will reflect and express all components of Israeli society. In a particular course, not everything is always discussed and analyzed, but in general our goal is to give room and space for all identity categories of course participants. Course participants have included women who have made Aliyah and immigrant women, non-Hebrew speaking women, women who are immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopian women, Arab women, women residing in the periphery, and secular, traditional and ultra-Orthodox. The age range is very broad, as are their personal statuses, which is varied. Thus, for instance, course participants have included mothers, childless women, married, divorced and single women, straight women and lesbian women, activist women, women who are members of political parties, and women whose participation in the Young Na'amat courses was their first encounter with activism, feminism, and community work, and of course women from varied social and economic classes, from poor women to financially affluent women.

When dealing with issues of diversity, we must remember that the work method used in Young Na'amat is political-process-content (and for those opposed to the term political: value based-process-content). Values are not only part of the program's content matter, but are present at every work stage, from the stage of content design, advertising, recruitment, and organization to logistics, financing, and operation. We are aware that the work focuses on expansion and extension, a process that constantly challenges the team and members. The important questions for us are: Who haven't we included yet? Who haven't we looked at yet? And in these terms, this is a never-ending challenge.

### **Our starting point**

"Our starting point is that the Histadrut and Na'amat, both as movements and as organizations, must be accessible and open to every woman in Israel – each and every one woman. Our starting point is founded on the belief that 'our home is open to every boy and girl who identifies with our core values', as avowed by the youth movement Working and Studying Youth. This may be an old-fashioned belief system, that some would even describe as Bolshevik, which

asserts that we (men and women) must be everywhere on the map. Yet since we share a broad common denominator stemming from the fact that we are women who work for our livelihood, and because Na'amat is a women's movement affiliated with the Histadrut, we believe that Na'amat is duty bound to address the needs of all of us". This is a direct quote of a statement made by the program team. In this sense, work with diverse groups in Israeli society reflects the Histadrut and Na'amat tradition.

### **Enlisting Participants**

The challenge of maintaining the diversity of Young Na'amat, so that it appeals to different sectors of Israeli society, is to recruit women belonging to groups that are under-represented in Israeli politics. Despite our commitment to diversity in the broadest sense of the word, we place special emphasis on recruiting Arab participants. In spite of our attempts to collaborate with the chairwomen of the Arab districts, we rarely succeeded in enlisting participants through them. This may be because they are primarily interested in local activity and not necessarily in national activity. A central source for enlistment were the instructors/guides of the Working and Studying Youth in the Arab and Druze centers, that since the beginning of our activities (Course 1) have tried to enlist Arab and Druze participants. Another solution was hit upon in Course 11, in the form of an Arab facilitator (this will be described in detail later on, in the chapter providing examples of principles and working methods through different groups).

### **Accessibility (Travel, times, Pricing)**

Our commitment to diversity in the project meant that we were faced with several issues that required us to make fundamental or specific decisions.

**Program location.** From the very beginning, we sought to include participants from all over the country. As to the location, we decided that the main program course would be held in the Histadrut building in Tel Aviv. We found that this location provides optimal convenience in terms of transportation, access to public transportation, free parking on Fridays for those arriving by private vehicle and proximity to interurban traffic arteries, and logistics in general. However, the choice of Tel Aviv does have its shortcomings - some real and some symbolic.

**Activity hours.** Course hours are also subject to constant negotiations within the group. The goal is to enable participants to attend the course yet continue their regular routine. The decision to open this issue for discussion within each group is not self-evident, and is a value-based decision stemming from our

commitment to diversity, and the perception of an open, democratic, enabling and inclusive process. The issue of activity hours required us to be sensitive to the starting times (those arriving from far away prefer to start later), sensitivity to the ending hours (to suit train schedules or the need to return home at a certain hour), attention to public transportation hours (trains, buses), daycare and school operating hours, social codes in various sectors (for instance, options for sleeping outside the home, returning home late).

**Scheduling activity dates.** The process of preparing the activity Gantt for Young Na'amat is a laborious crossword puzzle. Along with the program needs, we must take into consideration the holidays of the four main communities in Israel (Jews, Moslems, Christians - Catholics and Orthodox, Druze), school holidays, Sabbath observance, international holidays, and more.

**Activities on weekends for women that observe Shabbat.** In recent years, more and more women who observe the Shabbat have joined our ranks. We are making great efforts to adapt the activities to Shabbat observance, without turning this into a substantial burden on other participants. The participants themselves do not have to write or carry out activities that constitute desecration of Shabbat. We also only invite lecturers and speakers capable of lecturing without the use of electrical equipment, and of course the weekend seminar ending times are scheduled to correspond to Shabbat ending hours.

**Cost (payment for the course).** The third sector conducts various leadership courses for women. Young Na'amat's leadership program is comprised of 100 hours, including two weekends which include accommodations. Despite the high costs, the course is subsidized and its cost per participant amounts to NIS 500. Similar courses, in terms of size and goals (of other women's organizations) are priced at 4 or 6 times the price of a participant in Young Na'amat's leadership program. This price is closer to the actual cost of the leadership program.

The decision to charge an equal sum for every woman stems from two considerations: firstly, and most importantly, we do not want to make the price an obstacle or barrier. The second is based on the concept of a uniform price, rather than a differential price according to the socio-economic condition of the participants (which would require them to submit requests for discounts).

**Travel expense reimbursement.** Although the program budget includes a deficit and it is subsidized, despite this the cost for a participant coming from afar may be high. Two-way train fare from Acre to Tel Aviv is approximately NIS 75, and the overall expenditure for numerous trips throughout the course, for a participant coming from far away, may amount to as much as NIS 1,200. In view

of the scant financial resources, the method chosen to confront this problem was, until last year, to exempt those arriving from afar (based on their economic circumstances) from paying for the course. We are aware that the exemption does not necessarily cover the actual travel costs, but we feel that it certainly helps.

Last year we succeeded in obtaining a special donation from Na'amat USA to support the participation of women from the periphery in the program, and chose to utilize this donation to reimburse the fuel costs of women that drove their fellow participants to the course from afar (Yarka), as well as reimbursement of public transport costs for women coming by bus or train.

**Parenting responsibilities as a participation barrier.** In our courses and seminars, we were asked more than once by participants to allow them to bring their children with them. This question is particularly important for single mothers or mothers who do not have family support that allows them to share parental responsibilities.

We made several attempts to enable mothers to bring their children with them. In the case of newborn or very young babies, this was possible because young babies do not require constant attention; In other cases, we allowed participants to attend with their mothers, girlfriends, or partners, but when there was no third person to care for the baby/child, our attempts were unsuccessful. It should be noted that even the decision to permit the subsidized accommodation of another person during the seminar is a decision with direct and substantial financial implications (since one participant cannot be awarded a benefit without awarding it to another participant). The possibility of employing a caregiver for children was also found to be ineffective, due the age differences between the children. On one occasion a daughter of one of the staff volunteered to occupy the children who came with their mothers.

Regrettably, this issue has yet to be resolved, as we try to balance the desire to allow every woman to take part in our activities with the desire to provide a professional solution and an optimal learning space for all participants.

**Team, lecturers and facilitators.** The main challenge we faced, especially in the economic field, was to find women lecturers, and not to be tempted to invite male lecturers. This challenge proved difficult, and after repeated attempts we feel that we have succeeded in locating suitable lecturers even in the economic field. This question is a source of constant tension among the team members, most of whom are committed first to the modeling of a female lecturer as part of the Feminist worldview, while others are committed first and foremost to the socio-democratic economic worldview.

Alongside this challenge, there is the constant challenge of diversity. The leading team is itself a diverse team, both in terms of ethnic background and age. Alongside the regular team, we invited lecturers, coordinators, facilitators and various activists. We have tried to recruit them from various and diverse recruitment sources.

The constant dilemma we face is whether to strive for a stable team (which means fewer opportunities for diversity) or to prefer the principle of diversity. The relatively small scope of activities led us to prioritize the principle of diversity, although this question has not as yet been resolved – methodically or in principle.

**Speakers at events.** Along with the group process, we are committed to a diverse variety of speakers at Young Na'amat events. No significant event will be held without diversity on stage. Special attention is paid to non-Jewish speakers, but considering the nature of the group, we try to provide representation and voices for other female speakers (women of Ethiopian or former Soviet Union descent, young, sometimes very young, center-periphery). Clearly, it is not always possible to represent all categories. As we noted at the beginning of the chapter, we look at the entire Young Na'amat picture, and are committed that the overall group composition, even of the speakers, will not be homogenous.

## **From Survival Practices to Public Policy**

In recent years, the view that responsibility for economic success or lack of success is the exclusive responsibility of the individual is on the rise. This perception is also reflected in the central economic policy in the form of the state's renunciation of its responsibility. As a result of these perceptions, Israel is currently ranked low in terms of the state's investment in civil expenditure in general, and in reducing inequality in particular, compared with other welfare states.

As part of the internalization of this discourse, many training and leadership programs deal with how to improve the participants' personal skills so as to "succeed in work and in life in general." Their message is: "If you only learn this and that skill, and work hard, you will succeed." We call this "survival practices." "Survival practices" are all the forms, mechanisms, and techniques each and every one of us uses to care for our family and our agenda as working women and women in general. (For example: assistance by the family in the form of money and money equivalents, cutting working hours, paid help, etc.).

Along with recognition of the need to improve personal skills and a personal process of empowerment and growth, our program takes a critical look at the reality described above. The central message we wish to convey is that the reality of the participants' lives is not predestined or inevitable, but rather is the result of public policy, which we can influence.

In the first stage, we demonstrate to participants how politics affects their own daily lives, fosters inequality, and contributes to its escalation.

In the second stage, we present to the participants, in contrast to the existing policy (which is perceived as the "professional" reality - the professional-economic-scientific truth), other alternatives from other places and/ or other periods in Israel, which are no less "professional" or economic.

During the third stage we try to formulate a joint group proposal for an alternative policy.

The gradual progress of the discussion, as described above, enables participants to touch on policy (macro) issues that are not ordinarily accessible to most citizens, and to women in particular.

Our activities with Na'amat, and in association with the Histadrut, encourage our involvement in issues related to the labor market on the one hand, and has the potential to promote policy on the other, since the Histadrut is a central player in labor relations.

This perception has, over the years, prompted our involvement in the labor market as a whole ("Labor, Not Market" in 2009), as well as with more focused issues that stemmed from the life experiences of participants ("Two Earners - Two Caregivers" - a Young Na'amat model for balancing work and family; workplace bullying and abuse; the need to formulate a policy for inclusion of young women and men in the work force).

The challenge is not to relinquish personal responsibility, but rather the opposite: to overcome despair and expand personal responsibility beyond the private, individual world, to believe that the personal is political, and to take action in the political sphere to bring about change.

"From Survival Practices to Public Policy" is an empowering political action whose very existence challenges society's liberal-individualist discourse.

## **Illustrating Principles and Work Methods Used in Different Groups**

In this chapter we will address several topics, some of which have been described in the report, yet we feel it is necessary to expand and use the stories of specific groups to demonstrate the way we work.

### **Diversity in Action: The Story of Group 11**

We have faced the challenge of group diversity in all our groups, from the very beginning of Young Na'amat. Over the past year we decided to take several steps and use various channels in order to attain group diversity from the inception of the group. For this purpose, we have taken action on several levels.

The first stage was to choose a young woman from Shfar'am that we met at the Feminar project held by the Open University to serve as our coordinator. We were aware of her committed to feminism and were confident that her great personal charm would help her enlist participants, as would her intensive activity on social media. The decision to choose an Arab coordinator was not confined to the recruitment stage, since the presence of an Arab woman in the team as one of the year's project leaders demonstrates that we are striving to implement the program's equality values. In addition, her ability to mediate the discussions both linguistically and in the training room proved to be a great advantage.

At the same time, we worked to assimilate Arabic in all our publications and our writing on social media. The office keyboard now supports three languages: Hebrew, Arabic, and English. The publications by Young Na'amat and the coordinator have aroused great interest among new audiences.

In the pre-group stage, our outreach focused on groups that had come into contact with Young Na'amat, such as groups from the central Galilee region, and reached out to these women, many of whom had never had any contact with Na'amat and the Histadrut (for example, women who were newly secular). We also contacted graduates of the Open University's Feminars<sup>1</sup>, where the groups are naturally more diverse. At the end of the process, out of a group numbering 20 participants, 40% were non-Jewish participants. The group combined women that are religious and secular, single, married and divorced, mothers and non-mothers, rich and poor, highly educated and those with only

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<sup>1</sup> Feminar - Short and intense weekend seminar of Young Na'amat for students on different campuses

a high school education, and single mothers; Among the Jewish women, there are three participants that are newly secular – certainly a diverse group.

Another aspect of the group's diversity is geographic. The participants came from Kiryat Gat in the south to Yarka in the far north. We dealt with the issue of travel expenses with the help of donations from Na'amat USA that will enable us to cover the participants' transport costs (as detailed in chapter 4 of the report).

Conducting a dialogue and creating intimacy in such a diverse group, both in terms of language and life experiences, was a real and substantial challenge. In a group composed of participants that are so very different from one another, women may wish to maintain their privacy, and in fact each participant is "a group unto herself." Each participant experienced the dialectic of being a representative of her group, alongside disavowing this "role". At the same time, the differences and diversity between them resulted in anxiety that they would not be understood because of the great differences between them – and this constituted quite an obstacle for the creation of intimacy and disclosure. In addition, some groups are in conflict, and participants consistently tried to seek common ground and avoid areas of conflict between groups.

By the end of the process, participants felt that they had established a certain intimacy, although added to the usual difficulties of maintaining contact and intimacy at the end of a group process was the element of geographical distance, making it even harder to maintain the ties. Although we succeeded, to a great extent, in forming the group, creating intimacy and establishing a connection to Young Na'amat, the great variance and differences, with the challenges they pose as described above, influenced our ability to follow the usual, familiar path of formulating a common subject, and the group was unable reach agreement and converge around one subject. At the beginning of the process, we planned that the annual conference would be held in the Knesset, but intended to hold an ideological conference centering on a specific subject, as we do every year. Since there was no common subject, we held a tour of the Knesset and made mutual acquaintance with the decision-making centers, without promoting a group subject.

## **From Survival Practices to Public Policy – The Story of Group 6**

In recent years, more and more women's groups have emerged professing to teach their members how to deal with the challenges they face - be it career management, finding a balance between family and work, and a range of other issues of interest to women throughout their lives. The key message conveyed

by such groups is: "If you only learn this and this skill, and work hard, you will succeed."

We reject this message which embraces and enfolds an ideology of individualism. The main focus of our approach at Young Na'amat is based on critical observation of social, political, and economic structures with the aim of influencing public policy. The personal is political in every area of a woman's life. Of course, we also offer practical tools and skills, yet we emphasize to participants that the reality of their lives is not their inevitable destiny, and that it is the result of public policy which we can influence.

The story of Group 6, that focused on family-work balance, is a good example. This subject comes up in every group. The reason it became Group 6's leading theme was that family-work balance was dealt with in previous seminars and the previous Young Na'amat group. As a result, one of the participants in group 6 arrived with prior knowledge of this subject, and this enabled the group to deal with the subject not only intuitively, but rather on the basis of work already done. The group's activities included a conference, research, and communication about this subject, submission of a position paper to Na'amat's chairwoman and the Na'amat liaison office in the Knesset, as well as appearances before the Histadrut's Status of Women committee, elected representatives, as well as before various Knesset forums.

To illustrate our point of view and that of the group, we will quote from the position paper prepared by the group in preparation for its activity in the field:

"...In this impossible reality, women find extremely creative ways to maneuver between all their obligations and to successfully live through this impossible period - we call them survival practices - but that is not enough, and it is not a private matter..." Young Na'amat calls for us to take another step forward on this path and advance to a model that encourages every person – both woman and man – to be an earner and a caregiver, by enabling them to do so. Instead of each of us navigating alone and in private, we must outline a public policy that views a person as a whole. Not only a worker, but also a person who lives a full life, composed of work, family, community and society – based on full gender equality." (The position paper is attached and marked Appendix B)

### **From Life Experience to Conceptualization and Influence in the Public Sphere - The Story of Group 8**

When Young Na'amat was founded, one of its goals was to give voice to the needs of young women, and not impose an agenda that was irrelevant to them,

all within the context of the Histadrut and Na'amat. This aspiration is consistent with the principle that leads us from a moral and professional point of view: the personal is political (as we described in previous chapters in this report). Out of our loyalty to this point of view, we wish to formulate the central subject of each course based on the issues raised in the room. Sometimes we are exposed to subjects that were not at the top of our agenda, and even some we were unfamiliar with.

Group 8 focused on the subject of workplace bullying. There were groups and organizations dealing with this subject on the fringes of public awareness in Israel, and there was even a book about it (*The Silent Epidemic in the Workplace* by Eitan Meiri). However, the issue was not at the center of the public agenda of employees, male and female, in Israel. When one of the participants first reported her workplace experiences, we still did not know what to call the story, yet many of the participants identified with her story and testified that they had experienced similar experiences as victims or were exposed to this behavior. The group chose to explore the issue and put it on the agenda.

In the case of this subject, as well as other subjects (and clearly in the subject of group 9 - the need to promote a policy of integration of young women and men into the workforce), the question arose as to why a group of young women focuses on issues that are not strictly gender issues. This decision often led to differences of opinion within the group and surprised parties outside Na'amat and Young Na'amat. Our answer is that a group of young political women can speak out on general social issues, and the assumption that it is "permitted" to deal only with "women's issues" is unacceptable.

The group toiled to hold a conference on September 2013, which attracted many participants and received extensive media coverage, including television appearances by the program's team, by graduates of course 8, and even coverage of the main activities of Young Na'amat. In addition, we contacted MK Merav Michaeli, who had drafted a bill on the subject, we held meetings within the Histadrut, and began collecting personal stories and legal materials from around the world dealing with workplace abuse. We forwarded the material we collected to the Histadrut's Legal Division and were invited to accompany the legislation process on behalf of the Histadrut.

Although the extended group chose not to continue to engage in this issue, one of the program's team members (Orly Beatty) continues to accompany it on behalf of the Histadrut, and cooperates with other organizations, including "Joining Wings", in the production of a guide dealing with workplace abuse and bullying in social organizations.

## Ripple Effects

Young Na'amat faces many diverse challenges. One of them is to make sure that the project continues to be relevant, significant, and influential in various arenas.

**A first and immediate arena**, that is not a simple one, is Na'amat. The very existence of a project of young women revealed to Na'amat the importance of integrating young women into Na'amat activities. At the same time, we must acknowledge the significant contribution that this association provides - both to the essence of the organization and its visibility. This exposure was attained, inter alia, by (1) promoting the project within the framework of Na'amat institutions (Na'amat Center, Na'amat Conference, and other institutions); (2) invitation of the Na'amat team and district chairwomen to participate in the activities of Young Na'amat, and (3) providing a platform to Na'amat teams to present their activities before Young Na'amat.

Throughout our years of activity in Na'amat, consistent efforts were made to establish young groups in Na'amat districts throughout the country, yet the links between activities in central Israel (which is the main activity area) and women's groups in other parts of the country have encountered constant difficulties. This is one of the main challenges we face. The alternative of operating regular local groups with ongoing activities, such as the central group, is not possible at this stage due to a shortage of resources.

We credit ourselves, to a great extent (although we have no way of proving it), with the emergence of community work in Na'amat. As we described in reports for 2009, the community work at the Histadrut and Na'amat was in a state of crisis. In recent years, and to a certain extent due to the model set by Young Na'amat, we have witnessed an awakening and revival of community work. It is only fair to note, however, that the process is taking place concurrently with the Histadrut's economic recovery, which greatly contributes to the increase in community work.

**The second arena** in which the Young Na'amat project is engaged is civil society. As part of the project's activities in civil society, we try to maintain diverse partnerships with other organizations, to establish coalitions and to promote issues that are close to our heart. Thus, for instance, over the past few months, representatives of Young Na'amat have been participating in the "Local Elections 2018" partnership, which promotes the election of women to local authorities in the 2018 elections.

**The third sphere of influence** is in the public sphere, in which Na'amat actively participates in shaping various feminist traditions (for example, in 2017, two of the most prominent Young Na'amat activists, Reut Achdut and Maayan Kulavker, participated in the leadership team of the SlutWalk), and instigating unique initiatives within the framework of civil society. An excellent example of this is the Hi-history [She-history] Calendar (2017). This calendar associates contemporary feminist activists with important feminist activists (whose contribution to society is unknown), and thereby raises public awareness of their contributions. The initiative for this calendar was that of Dorit Tadir (a graduate of the ninth class of the Young Na'amat Program), and project partners include Bracha Barad (a graduate of the Feminar seminar in Tel Aviv University). Dorit also enlisted central Young Na'amat activities into the project (namely Nurit Haghagh, Lilach Chibi-Menachem and Noga Klinger). The calendar was sold on the open market, and the revenue was donated to the Centers for Victims of Sexual Assault. Following the calendar, the group plans to mount an exhibition, with members of Young Na'amat invited to participate.

A few months ago, the leadership of Young Na'amat decided to intensify its work to promote its presence and partnership with civil society organizations and initiate the process of formulating an action strategy.

**A fourth sphere of action and influence** is to promote the exposure and recognition of our unique work model among other organizations and groups attempting to learn about it from us. The program staff is often invited to advise and demonstrate Young Na'amat's method of action. One recent example is our invitation to hold a workshop in the framework of the seminar "Dialogue in Mixed Cities – Innovative Encounters" (a joint initiative of the Adam Institute, the Bilingual School, Tzav Pius, the Center for a Shared Society at Givat Haviva and the Besod Siach Association) currently being held. We are invited to present Young Na'amat's method of operation. It seems that the existence of a community dealing with political content that has been operating for more than a decade ignites the imagination of other organizations, and we always happy and willing to share our knowledge.

## **Activities and Other initiatives**

Often, initiatives are born within Young Na'amat, and for various reasons and circumstances they continue to exist independently. Following are several examples:

**Women of Jerusalem.** In 2012 we worked to promote a Feminar in cooperation with the Student Union of the Hebrew University. The Feminar was not a success, but the few participants who did attend formed a founding group that that approached us in order to obtain support for the establishment of a feminist cell at the Hebrew University. These active students received help and backing from us (a consolidation seminar, writing a work plan, and later individual support), and they established the "Women of Jerusalem" cell. A Jerusalem cell is a great success, since they have succeeded in building a brand, helped establish similar cells on other campuses ("Women of Tel Aviv", "Women of Haifa", "Women of Jaffa" and more) – and even succeeded in the crucial challenge of passing the roles onto the next generation. The founders of the cell, each in her own way, are currently in various positions and places in terms of their public and political activities, and continue to maintain contact with the Young Na'amat team.

**Facebook page: "Social Sciences and the Humanities - DIY".** The participants in the 9<sup>th</sup> Young Na'amat course brought up the need to promote a policy of employment placement for young women and men. Moran Nizri was one of the most prominent activists in this group and is also part of the leaders group. Based on her exposure to the issues and hardships confronting her friends and colleagues, graduates of social sciences and humanities, Moran established an active Facebook page to help members cope with the difficulties of job placement and career development issues.

**"Merimot" [Lifters] project.** In 2016, the Feminar was held, as usual, in collaboration with the Student Union of Tel Aviv University. The graduates founded two working groups: One of the groups developed feminist training programs for youths and succeeded in motivating the Tel Aviv municipality to organize feminist groups for girls within the framework of the neighborhood youth centers.

Selection of Young Na'amat graduates to serve in decision-making positions a great source of pride and effective influence. The first example is the selection of a participant - a contract worker at the National Insurance Institute - to be a member of Contract Workers committee. Following her selection, and in cooperation with the Histadrut, all of the contractor's workers were hired as direct employees of the National Insurance Institute. Another example is the

selection of Inbar Hochberg, who participated in the second Feminar by the Student Union at Tel Aviv University, to head the Student Union. Inbar was the first woman to be elected to this position after many years of total male domination, and has implemented many changes in the work of the union. It should be noted that when she left this job, she "bequeathed" it to a woman, and thus contributed to strengthening the feminist narrative in the Student Union.

We encourage our members to become political and social activists. Ronnie Plzen is one of the Young Na'amat graduates, and she attested that the encounter with the program changed her way of life and turned her into a social activist. Ronnie is active in peace projects, was one of the first and significant activists in the "Women Make Peace" movement, and continues to be involved in diverse activities. She shows up whenever she is called, shares with the participants her experience, path and insights, and always tries to promote young partnerships for Young Na'amat that enrich our activities. Thus, for example, Ronnie made the connection between us and art students at the Kibbutz Seminar through a meeting that gave birth to the Decade exhibition celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary held in June 2016.

A special place should be devoted to the "Mikveh attendant story". As part of the practicum of the facilitator's course, a pair of trainees directed a group of mikvehs attendant (also known as "Balanit") in the Ashdod area. The request was made by Ms. Zehava Elimelech, Chairwoman of Na'amat Ashdod, in order to strengthen ties with the public, and the work was done in full coordination with her. During the project, the attendants related the problems they faced at work. The facilitators, along with the Na'amat Ashdod Chairwoman, invited Histadrut representatives to meet with the attendants. In the collective agreement that was later signed, the women obtained a special addition to their salary beyond the general wage supplement in the public sector, and the move to improve their terms of employment continued. This is an excellent example - and we hope for many more like it - of the connection between the graduates' political awareness supported by the professional skills they acquired in our courses and their collaboration with Na'amat in raising the issues with influential parties within the Histadrut in order to lead to solutions.

We are proud and glad that many young graduates of Young Na'amat view the program as the space where they began to develop their initiatives for the first time, thanks to the training they received and the connections they cultivated, and some continue to view it as an empowering and productive action space. At the same time, we also recognize that not all the graduates feel that Young Na'amat is the suitable arena for their activities, and hope that in the future we

will be able to strengthen our ties with these welcomed initiatives, and that we will expand our role as a home for constantly developing activists that impact and act in the public sphere.

## **Personal Testimony: Nadia Belkind, a participant in the course of the Young Na'amat Project**

"Current technology allows us to learn from others with the click of a mouse, or maximum two: Another interesting video, another interview that conveys an important message. Different women teach us what they have learned on their own. But what if we met them as members of a group that meets every Friday over a long period? How would we experience life if 15 different and unique women would accompany our personal and professional decisions, listen, express opinions, and give advice? My name is Nadia Belkind, and I come from the world of education and training. Over the past year, I participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Young Na'amat program - a framework that contributed to my personal development far beyond my expectations.

For me, Young Na'amat is a unique meeting place that combines not only knowledge and content communicated by the finest speakers and lecturers, but also a personal meeting place that encourages sharing, listening, and learning from each other. When I first came to the program, I certainly expected inspiring content, conversations, questions, and professional tours that would expand my mind. I did not expect to meet women who within a week would become significant figures in my life. Women that are more courageous or less courageous; that have clear goals in life, or are in the process of searching; women that speak different languages and come from different cultures; women with children or without, who feel far from motherhood.

If you ask what exactly the connection is and why these women became so meaningful for me, my answer is that the connection is based on our being women who want to make an impact, and to make the world around us – each in her field - better, more just, or more right. These are not necessarily far-reaching changes that transform the world, but rather the persistence and effort to make changes in things that bother us in our daily life. At Young Na'amat I learned that leadership skills are not tools that can be taught in a few limited sessions. Leadership is a way of thinking, proactive action that is backed by broad group support, and increasing familiarity with key figures in society. From every encounter, I took with me one idea or point to think about in an effort to be a more critical woman, and thus to grow and develop in the direction I wanted.

The program gave me much more than content. The personal connections established within the group will continue to accompany me on my path. And the work and life path have chosen for myself is undoubtedly linked to my experiences as a participant in Young Na'amat."

Nadia Belkind is a social activist in the fields of state and religion, with an emphasis on women's rights and access. She is a lecturer in sociology at Tel Aviv University, and promotes academic involvement in the community. Belkind is involved and active in the Tashtit (infrastructure) community, as well as a graduate of the Mazeh Leadership Program.

## **Celebrating a Decade - What Next?**

Challenges for the Future, as well as Dilemmas

In September 2016, Young Na'amat celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Leading up to the decade celebration events, many discussions were held and various dilemmas were raised both by the team and the central activists accompanying us. At the end of the conference itself, the "leaders" decided to highlight issues that they believe are of great public interest: between a virtual community and a real community, cooperation with or without men, and how to educate our next generation of daughters and sons.

In parallel, during the various discussions questions were raised that are only of interest to Young Na'amat and the staff. We chose to list some of them here:

- Maintaining intimacy as we expand – numerically and geographically

As we have noted, Young Na'amat is expanding both numerically and geographically. Personal relationships cannot be maintained under these conditions, especially since participants live and operate throughout the country, from Fukta and Majdal Shams in the far north to Kiryat Gat in the south. The main challenge in this context is to establish an organizational structure and modes of action that will enable expansion without sacrificing intimacy, uniqueness, and connection to the community. Naturally, this is also related to the issue of extending the resources, which will be discussed below.

- Public visibility

The main activists of Young Na'amat and the staff have recently sensed that Young Na'amat's public visibility and activities are expanding, yet they still do not adequately reflect the organization's abilities and actions. Public visibility, as formulated by the leaders, includes activities in the public arena (civil society), media activity (social and traditional media), and activities in the Knesset. Taking action in the public arena for a group that is perceived as mainstream, affiliated with the establishment (Histadrut and Na'amat), and having multiple agendas is not a simple matter. In addition, the team notes the importance of Young Na'amat's visibility in the Histadrut and Na'amat spheres as a way to leverage the positions and agendas of Young Na'amat. The leaders are currently devising a strategic plan for branding and visibility, and this is one of the important challenges that has many implications for other issues covered in this chapter as well.

- Participants in the Activists course

One of the constant challenges we face is to transform participants into activists. Although a significant portion of Young Na'amat's leadership courses are factual, conceptual, and value-based, the intimate group experience becomes very central in the participants' lives, and fuels a desire to continue this type of relationship, and the transition from an intimate group to an action group (as described in the relevant chapter) is difficult and not self-evident. Although we find ourselves dealing with this issue successfully in each course, we still view it as a major challenge requiring improvement.

- Resources

Most of Young Na'amat's financial resources are provided by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. In order to meet some of the challenges that we set for ourselves and to expand and deepen the activity, Young Na'amat must expand its fundraising both from activists as well as other organizations and foundations. Beyond the challenge of fundraising, it is important to ensure that these additional partnerships do not blur the ideological and moral and ideological character and principles of Young Na'amat.

- Ideological and professional training and their links to the community

The demand to open additional courses that will expand the activists' skill set, above all the facilitators course, is constant and ongoing. On the one hand, the team has a great interest in carrying out enrichment and in-depth programs (all of which, of course, take place in the context of content-process-political work). On the other hand, conducting these programs raises difficult questions on the part of the staff (screening versus relations, translating the programs into leverage for Young Na'amat and not keeping them as a private resource of the participant, and more).

At the end of the day, all of the challenges mentioned above (and others that we have not listed) converge into one central challenge: how to establish Young Na'amat as an organization with a tradition, organizational structure, financial resources, and an action plan that is not dependent on one person or another.



## Appendix A - ID

We are a group of young women from different parts of the country, different backgrounds, different occupations, different religions and traditions, that believe in the ability of women to influence their personal and community standing and the standing of other women through political and community action.

We choose to realize our goals, through for action and influence, within the framework of Young Na'amat.

Young Na'amat is a cohesive learning and action reference group that operates in association with Na'amat and the Histadrut, that is inspired by Na'amat's decades of work to advance the status of women in Israel and to change social policy in order to attain gender equality in the family, workplace, society, and economy.

Young Na'amat is committed to the revitalization and updating of Na'amat, to instilling Na'amat's values among young women, and to reinforcing its activities within this group.

We believe in total equal opportunities between the sexes and the possibility of complete self-realization of women, regardless of their economic, social, educational, religious, ethnic, or familial status.

We believe that the social and economic rights alongside encouragement of social, community, and political involvement are prerequisites for the full realization of human and civil rights in any society.

We strive for a just and egalitarian society that maintains highly developed and comprehensive services, including welfare services for all, a strong public sector, and provides all members of society with equal access to resources, sources of knowledge, and development.

We will work and strive for a more just and egalitarian society.

We are committed to expressing, in our activities, the diversity among women from different communities and with varied traditions.

We view Na'amat as a platform enabling us to act independently and creatively in the spirit of Na'amat values, which will enable the growth of Na'amat and young women within it.

We believe in influencing and taking action that is based on learning, inquiry, and knowledge, and viewing each other's personal growth process as a central component leading to action.

We are certain that group action will bring about the realization of our capabilities, and believe in action that combines the private with the political.

90 years later, and still relevant: "We aspire to equality and liberation of women, to women's integration into work and society, self-realization and self-preservation of women as human beings." (From the founding conference, Balfouria, 1921)

## **Appendix B - Between Work and Family – From Survival Practices to Public Policy - Position Paper**

From its inception, the State of Israel has advocated equal opportunities for women to achieve economic independence and to integrate into the labor market. This principle, based on the concept of gender equality and value of labor equality, has in recent years gained momentum. This is due, inter alia, to the aspiration to align ourselves with the norms of the Western world, and the OECD in particular, as well as in order to encourage the growth of the Israeli economy. Thus, for example, over the past year, the state has set itself a national goal to increase the employment of Arab women and reach a rate of 40% by 2040, and has allocated NIS 170 million to promote this policy.

However, the scope of social benefits afforded to parents has not increased significantly since the 1940s. Three decades ago, Israel was ranked at the top of the list of countries that are worker-friendly in general, and particularly working parent-friendly, yet we now we lag behind other countries.

**From a model of a man as the breadwinner and woman as the family caregiver, we have switched to the model of a breadwinner and a half (breadwinner and assistant breadwinner) and one full-time caregiver.** There are policy measures in place that are designed to make it easier for the woman to cope with the work life, but at the same time impose upon her, and only on her, the burden of maneuvering between her roles as breadwinner and mother.

Under these impossible circumstances, women develop very creative ways to navigate between their obligations and to live through this impossible period - we call them "survival practices" - but that is not enough, and neither is this a private matter.

- It negatively affects women who are unable to take rewarding jobs and attain promotions
- It affects men who cannot take a significant role within the family and society
- It negatively affects society as a whole

**Young Na'amat calls for further steps to be taken on this road, and to implement a model that encourages every person - both woman and man - to earn and care, and enables them to do so in a substantive way.**

Instead of each of us maneuvering in private, we must outline a public policy that sees a person as a whole - not only a worker, but a person who lives a full

life – a life of work, family, community, and society, based on total gender equality.

**We believe that public policy should encourage a society in which:**

1. Women and men shall have the same rights and opportunities for education and paid work that provide a person with the possibility of economic independence throughout life.
2. Women and men shall have the same rights and opportunities to care for their home and family and the same possibilities for granting and receiving such care.
3. Women and men shall have the same rights and fundamental opportunities to be active citizens in the state and within the community.
4. Just as the state encourages women to work, men should be encouraged to take part in unpaid jobs in the private sphere, and first of all to care for their family.

**Action Principles**

1. Modification of the labor market to support parenting - both in terms of the length of the work week and in terms of the number of paid vacation days.
2. Parental rights and not mothers' rights:
  - a) All rights granted to mothers in the labor market by virtue of their motherhood will also be granted to men.
  - b) Some of the rights may be used only by men, otherwise the family will lose them, for example: maternity leave for men (eight days) together with the woman immediately after birth to help and provide care over the first few days, extension of the paid maternity leaves by two additional weeks that will be granted to men, and if they do not realize it, these days cannot be transferred to mothers, and more.
  - c) Review of the set of rights to encourage parents to share equally in the care of children. For example, the law currently allows both parents to take sick days due to the illness of a family member at the expense of their sick days, however compensation for the first few days is significantly lower than for the following days. This encourages the caregiver (usually the woman), who took the first few sick days, to continue to care for the sick child, and does not encourage the sharing of the burden so that both spouses can maintain their status in the workplace.
3. The existence of supervised educational frameworks with public funding (at least partial) that will be highly accessible to all working families, as of the end of the maternity leave.

4. Adjusting the hours children remain in the educational frameworks to the working patterns of female and male workers.
5. Encouraging employers to adopt family support practices for all employees - men and women alike. These practices refer primarily to the amount of work hours, reducing the need to stay at work after regular working hours.

**Vision: Women and men will have equal power to shape society and their lives**

Economic - equal opportunities and conditions for education and paid work that enable a person to enjoy lifelong economic independence

Equal distribution of unpaid work (home and family care) and the same options for receiving and providing such care

Equal rights and opportunities to be active citizens of the state and community members

Equal distribution of power and influence between women and men

The eradication of all forms of objectification of women, exclusion of women, and violence against women - an absolute goal

ISBN 978-965-572-902-3

