



Ladaa't – Choose Well

2018 Annual Report

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About Lada'at Choose Well

Lada'at – Choose Well was founded in 1976 (under the name "Shilo") to promote healthy sexuality and reproductive rights. We combine sex-positive educational activities, supportive family planning counseling and advocate on behalf of all citizens' right to achieve full self-determination in decisions related to reproduction and sexuality. Based in Jerusalem, we serve the full range of diverse populations in the city. In the 2018 program year, our 5,000 beneficiaries included both religious and secular Jews, Arabs, African asylum seekers, foreign workers, and tourists.

Vision and Mission

We envision a society in which sexuality is perceived as an inherently positive and integral part of human nature, where all individuals have full access to reliable information and services enabling them to live out their sexuality based on conscious choice. Our mission is to ensure that all individuals are informed and empowered to make and implement conscious, healthy, safe, and authentic choices regarding sexuality and reproductive health.

Activities

Counseling and Reproductive Health Resource Center (thousands reached annually): Lada'at is the only organization in Jerusalem providing supportive peer-based counseling in areas of sexuality and family planning in Jerusalem. Lada'at's volunteer counselors serve thousands of diverse clients through a combination of in-person, telephone, email and internet chat counseling, offering individualized information on contraceptives, and support surrounding unplanned pregnancy. We

aid our clients to make informed and healthy choices regarding sexuality and reproduction, especially in times of crisis.

Education for Healthy Sexuality (4,500 reached annually): Healthy Sexuality Workshops give teens skills for making healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sexuality, while encouraging them to think critically about gender norms, pornography, and sexuality and body image in media. We reach a range of target audiences, including youth at risk, and teens of Ethiopian or Eastern European descent. Beyond work directly with youth, we also engage educational and psychosocial staff, enabling them to serve as trusted authority figures on topics related to sexuality. In the 2016-2017 school year, we reached approximately 4,500 youth, educators and parents in the greater Jerusalem area through workshops.

Public Advocacy and Community Outreach: At Lada'at, we seek to promote the reproductive health and rights of women and girls in Israel by addressing the root causes that result in a lack of reproductive health services and infringement on reproductive rights in Israel. Lada'at achieves this by training medical and psychosocial professionals who provide reproductive health services or support, and by leading public advocacy efforts in order to create attitude change among the general public as well as policy change among decision makers, such as Members of Knesset and HMO administrators.

Board Members

Dr. Shlomit Sholov Barkan – Chairwoman

Michal Barkai-Hadani

Revital Shimoron

Edna Etgar

Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman

Anat Ben Zaken

Dianna Ginzburg

A Message from the Director

For over 40 years, *Lada'at – Choose Well* has been active in the healthy sexuality education and counselling. Forging education and dialogue about sexual matters is complex, since on the one hand social taboo try to silence such discourse, while at the same time we are living in a cultural environment rife with sexually-charged messages and images. Technology has brought amazing innovations into our lives, but these are not without challenges, particularly with regard to sexuality. The intensive, early exposure to pornography to vulnerable adolescents leads to confusion among teenagers and young adults. An illusion is created that all information is out in the open, and since they are exposed to all of it, we, the adults, have nothing to teach them. Within the framework of our educational activities, we are discovering on a daily basis that quite the opposite is true. These young people are desperate for knowledge, for someone to come and make order out of all the confusing messages to which they are exposed. I believe that we, the significant adults in their lives, have a duty to do this. We no longer have the privilege of keeping silent or merely dropping hints; we must speak directly, clearly and morally on the subject.

At Lada'at, we believe that through positive sex education, providing meaningful tools for life and for critical thinking, we are helping teenagers and young adults reach better, healthier decisions regarding their sexuality. Ultimately, as a result of this approach of empowerment and respect, we also expect to see a decrease in negative and dangerous phenomena, such as exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, and sexual violence.

Silence about these issues also has a negative influence on dialogue relating to family planning. We are constantly meeting women and girls from every sector in society, who struggle to choose suitable means of contraception, and who lack information concerning their rights and options concerning unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

We are committed to providing answers and professional instruction for every question we receive, and we are working to increase the information available to the public and to expand its reach to all sections of the population – through education, our counseling center, website, social media, community outreach and beyond.

2018 has been a year of changes and developments in every one of the organization's areas of operation. Now, at the beginning of 2019, we are looking forward to further development and growth and to continuing our important work.

None of this would be possible without your generous support of our efforts, for which we thank you most sincerely.

Yours,

Dina Shalev

Summary of Activities 2018

1. Organizational Changes

In 2018, Lada'at – Choose Well experienced a number of major organizational changes.

Office and Counseling Center Relocation

At the beginning of the year, Lada'at – Choose Well relocated to new premises. The organization moved from Even Israel Street in Jerusalem's city center to offices shared with the organization *El HaLev*, located in the city's Talpiyot neighborhood. After much deliberation, Lada'at management decided that this was the right step, both strategically and economically. The new offices in Talpiyot better suit the organization's needs and, additionally, presented an opportunity for to enter into a meaningful partnership with El HaLev, an organization with similar objectives to our own. The first joint initiatives are already underway. Also, worthy of note, the relocation allowed Lada'at to reduce annual spending by over NIS 50,000.

Executive Staff Change

In June, we said goodbye to Alexandra Berger-Polsky, who led the organization for two and half years. We are very grateful to her for many impressive achievements, her dedication, and for her significant contribution to the organization's financial stability. Dina Shalev (MSW), who had managed Lada'at's Counseling Center for the previous four years, assumed the position of director.

New Website

At the end of 2018, we launched a new, comprehensive website (www.ladaat.org.il).

The content is similar to that of our old site but has been updated, the presentation is now more user-friendly, and its design is more modern and pleasing to the eye. In addition, the entire site has been translated into Arabic, which will enable us to extend our reach, and provide information and assistance to a greater number of women and populations who need it.

2. Counseling and Reproductive Health Resource Center

Lada'at – Choose Well operates a professional, discreet counseling center, which addresses the needs of teenagers and adults, regardless of religion, race or gender. The center is staffed by voluntary female counselors, who are professionally and comprehensively trained by Lada'at, and who take part in ongoing training throughout the year.

Counseling topics include: contraceptive options, correct use of contraceptive methods, concerns about pregnancy and use of the "morning after" pill, and support in cases of unplanned pregnancy. The advice we provide is discreet and non-judgmental, respecting a woman's autonomy of her own body.

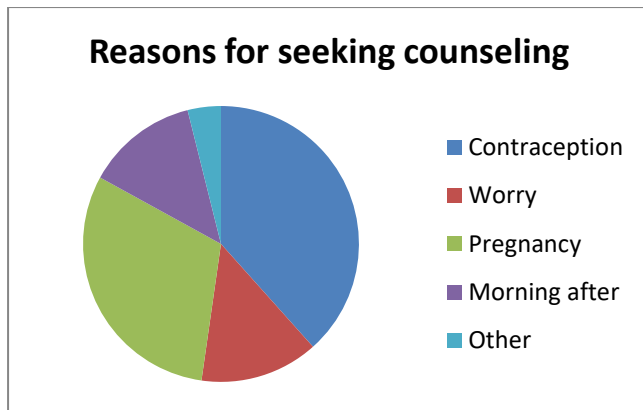
Lada'at provides counselling through a number of channels: face-to-face, telephone, email and Internet chat with a counselor via our website.

The Counseling Center is open three evenings per week (during which time chat and telephone consultations are held), and questions on our email hotline are answered within 24 hours.

2018 Activity Data Summary

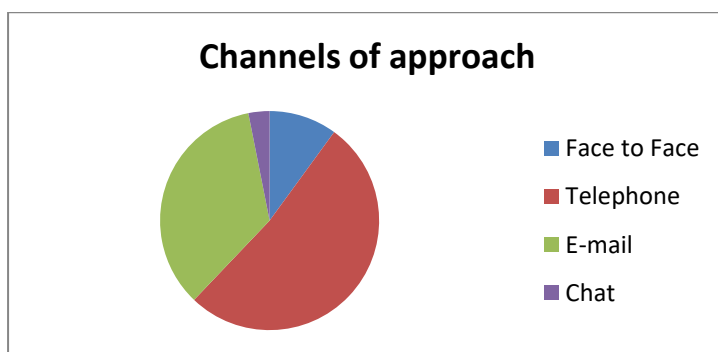
In 2018, the Counseling Center served 578 clients in total through all of its channels.

Reasons for approaching Lada'at



43% of our clients sought advice on the choice and use of contraception, 34% sought assistance with regard to unplanned pregnancy, and the remaining queries were divided between: pregnancy concerns, use of the morning-after pill, and miscellaneous questions.

Methods through which clients approached the Counseling Center



52% of queries were received by telephone, 34% by email, and 10% of clients sought face-to-face counseling. To date, only 1% of clients have contacted us via Internet chat, due to the fact that this is a new service.

Demographic Data

The average age of clients was 23, while 35% of those seeking advice were girls under the age of 18. The majority of clients were Hebrew-speaking Jewish-Israelis,

with 15% comprising Arab women, women without legal status in Israel, foreign workers and tourists.

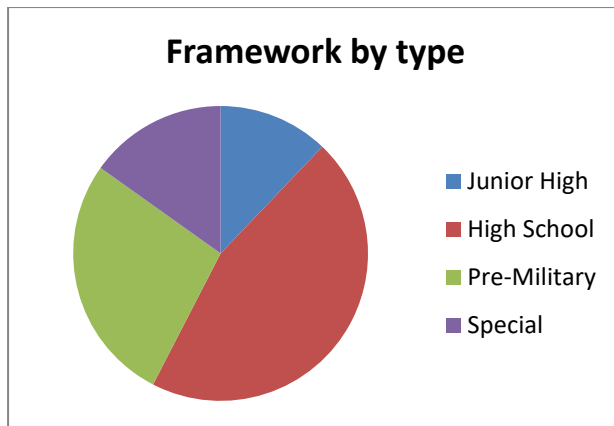
3. Educational Activities

Lada'at – Choose Well's education department, led by Lital Holtzer-Sinclair, provides educational programming that aims to provide knowledge and tools, and encourage the development of deep and critical thinking about positive and healthy sexuality. Our workshops target adolescents, young adults, populations at risk, parents, educators and psychosocial professionals, with the aim of enabling informed, sound and healthy decision-making regarding sexuality and sexual behavior.

The workshops cover a wide range of topics about healthy sexuality, including: anatomy and physiology, considerations about having sexual relations, contraceptive choices, body image, pornography and media.

This year, our educational team grew from 10 male and female facilitators to a team of 18, who carry out workshops throughout Jerusalem and its environs. Facilitator training has undergone significant development and expansion over the past few years. Currently, each new facilitator participates in a 40-hour training course, plus further courses every six weeks throughout the year. In addition, Lada'at management conducts observations of each facilitator on an ongoing basis.

In 2018, Lada'at implemented 364 workshops in a total of 30 frameworks, including junior high schools, high schools, pre-military academies and other frameworks.



Educational Staff Workshops

In 2018, we expanded workshops for educational staff, and we launched a 1.5-hour workshop especially for educators with the aim of assessing attitudes among educators and providing tools for dialog with students about healthy sexuality. During the year, Lada'at held 13 workshops with pedagogical staff.

Special Projects

In, 2018, Lada'at placed particular emphasis on reaching out to new audiences, and developed, revised or renewed content to suit their needs. Among the new frameworks reached this year:

- Hillel – The Right to Choose (organization helping young adults who have left the ultra-orthodox world);
- Pre-military Academies: Erez, Acharai, Ruach Nachon, Aderet, Hevruta, and more;
- Bat-Ami and Elem: Programs serving youth-at-risk completing National Civilian Service (*Sherut Leumi*).
- Hostels and boarding schools for at-risk youth

Our objective for the coming years is to continue to increase our target audiences, ultimately reaching every institution that is interested in professional, high quality education for healthy sexuality, and we welcome the formation of every new partnership.

4. Public Advocacy and Community Outreach

Celebrating Our New Office

In June, we celebrated our relocation with a public event for young men and women, and, of course, for our staff. The evening included four simultaneous workshops on topics, including, selecting contraception, masculinity, a movement workshop, and an introduction to the activities of our host organization, El HaLev. These interesting, informative workshops were followed by welcome greetings and a dance party. The launch was an opportunity to celebrate our work and to present it to new audiences of adults, youth and students in Jerusalem.

Policy Change – Meuhedet Health Services

In August, one of our Counseling Center clients alerted us of the unacceptable and illegal conduct of Meuhedet Health Services in Jerusalem. The client, whom we counseled and supported through a pregnancy termination, informed us that Meuhedet demanded that she submit a signed letter from her doctor confirming that she will begin regularly taking birth control pills, as a condition for receiving financial reimbursement for the abortion (which is guaranteed by law). Such a demand is beyond the HMO's authority, and is in fact against the law. From the women's perspective, this practice eliminates a woman's choice over her own body, and choice over birth control.

Lada'at Director Dina Shalev submitted a formal letter to the HMO to inform them that this practice was against women's rights and against the law. After not receiving

a response from the HMO, Lada'at turned to local news outlets to attempt to effect the issue through greater exposure. The story was picked up by Ma'ariv (the article - unfortunately only available in Hebrew - can be found here: <http://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-659107>).

We presented a formal letter of complaint to the Ministry of Health, demanding that they order Meuhedet to abolish this patronizing and illegal practice. To our great satisfaction, the Ministry of Health took our complaint seriously and immediately ordered Meuhedet to cease this practice.

Two new community projects launched

As part of our ambition to expand services and provide assistance to more clients, we have introduced two new initiatives, which, following successful pilots in 2018, will become significant projects in 2019.

1. **Parlor Meetings:** Intimate home gatherings hosting discussions on the topic, "How do I choose the contraceptive method that's right for me?" We offer groups of female friends the opportunity to organize a meeting and invite us into their living rooms for informal but informative, women-to-women conversations about the factors influencing our choices, followed by a review of all the methods available on the market. These meetings are aimed at empowering the participants to make the best, most informed choice for their needs.

2. **Mobile Counseling Center:** While we understand that face-to-face counseling is in less demand in recent years, we believe that there is nothing more effective than a meaningful interpersonal encounter. Therefore, we decided to send our counselors seek out target audiences in their own environments and to offer them guidance as needed. The aim is to give clients the opportunity for individual consultation, not just in times of emergency or distress, in order to make them aware of our services in case they should need them in the future.

Thank you

Once again, we would like to express our gratitude for your partnership and dedication to our work. Without you, we would not have been able to accomplish any of the achievements described in this report. We look forward to many years of further collaboration.