



# **Warm Homes for Teen Girls – Southern Region**

## **Executive Summary**

November 2014

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### **Program Description**

A Warm Home is a therapeutic day center for adolescent girls aged 13-18 who are in situations of distress or risk. Operating in towns in the social and geographic periphery, the Warm Homes provide the girls with a positive experience of acceptance and belonging while instilling skills that will enable them to move beyond the circle of distress and risk.

### **Aim of the Study**

To examine the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals and to provide information about the quality of its operation

### **Methodology**

The study used a questionnaire that was developed for an evaluation of the program in 2009<sup>1</sup> to examine changes in attitudes and behaviors among girls in Warm Homes, which was adapted for the current study. The parameters it examined include: locus of control, self-image, self-confidence, emotional wellbeing, sense of identity, view of own future, relationship with parents, risk behaviors, attitude towards school and satisfaction with the Warm Home and its activities. There were 70 girls who responded, of different ages, from six Warm Homes in the south. Some of the findings were compared with the control group from the 2009 study that included 177 girls who attended Warm Homes before the start of Rashi's intervention.

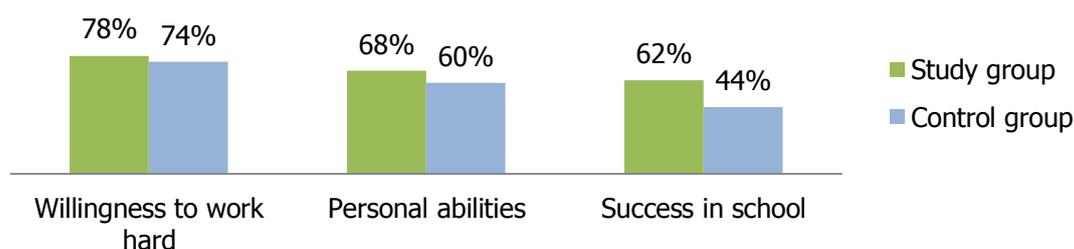
### **Main Findings**

- The Warm Homes program assumes that in order to effect significant change in the lives of the girls, it is necessary to nurture in them a sense of purpose and a conviction that their future is in their own hands. As opposed to respondents in the control group, most of the girls reported on an internal locus of control, meaning that they see success in life as determined mostly by factors related to their own willingness to work hard, their personal abilities and their performance in school. These factors contrast to external factors such as their parents' origin, luck and connections.

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<sup>1</sup>. Tovanot Institute (2009) – A Place in the Heart – Warm Home for Girls at Risk

### Factors of success in life – the internal locus of control\*



\* The rate of girls who agreed that these factors affect success in life

- While most participants reported that they are not exposed to risk situations in their daily lives, some girls said that they were. For example, 40% of the girls said that they were exposed to acts of violence by their close friends, 60% said their friends drink alcohol and only 52% thought their close friends were good students.
- Most of the girls held a positive view of their future. 66% believed that they will achieve full matriculation, as opposed to 54% in the control group. 72% believed that they will enlist in the IDF compared to 59% in the control group. On the other hand, only 37% believed they will go to university, compared to 43% in the control group.
- Similar to the control group, most respondents attached importance to school and viewed success in studies as a means to improving social mobility. 75% reported that they invest great effort in studying, 93% said they were motivated to do well at school and 60% said they achieve good educational results.
- The girls reported very high satisfaction with the Warm Home, particularly with the staff and with the other girls. Their rates of satisfaction were higher than in the control group. Over 85% found the Warm Home staff to be supportive, attentive and encouraging, as opposed to 78% in the control group. The clear majority of girls (85%) was interested in continuing the activity next year and would recommend it to friends.
- As in the control group, there was a relatively high rate of participants who had a poor self-image. Only 50% reported that they find themselves worthy, enjoy self-acceptance and a sense of pride in themselves. Only 53% thought they looked good and 63% thought they were the right weight for their height. On the social side, only 40% reported that they withstand social pressure and know how to retain friendships.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study shows that the Warm Home contributes to improved overall well-being in the girls. Most of them acquire relevant skills and tools to help them deal with life's challenges. They received significant educational, emotional and social support that promotes success.

In view of the findings, it is recommended to operate programs to cultivate the girls' self-image and their aspirations to pursue higher education. Furthermore, given that there were differences between the Homes in many parameters, it is recommended to run intervention in Homes where difficulties were detected. We point out that no significant differences were found in the functioning of veteran and new participants. This undermines the assumption that the longer a girl attends a Warm Home, the more her situation improves.