



# **Evaluation Report on the Health Education Program in Warm Homes**

## **Executive Summary**

February 2013

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### **Program Description**

There are 120 Warm Homes for adolescent girls across Israel, 60 of which are operated by the Rashi Foundation via a tender. Warm Homes provide girls aged 13-18 with a sense of belonging and emotional support, while attempting to equip them with tools and skills to break the vicious circle of hardships. As part of an initiative to upgrade services offered by the Warm Homes, and in view of the need, it was decided to introduce an additional element of health education. The activity was carried out in one of two formats:

1. Moderate intervention – enrichment for the girls through various workshops on health
2. Intensive intervention – enrichment through professional instruction by a community nurse in the homes.

Furthermore, all Warm Home staff received training and individual instruction.

### **The Research Goal**

The research examines the degree to which the Health Education Program achieves its goals.

### **Methodology**

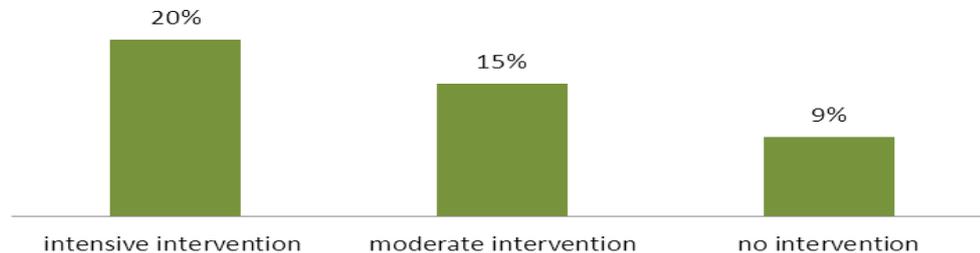
The impact of the activities on participants was examined by administering questionnaires to three Home groups: homes that received moderate intervention, homes that received intensive intervention and homes that did not receive intervention (for budgetary reasons). Since the homes were randomly selected to receive the activity, questionnaires were sent only at the end of the first year of activity. A total of 420 girls from 36 homes across the country completed the questionnaire, which covered such topics as body image, knowledge of various health issues, nutrition (attitudes and behavior), exposure to risk situations, use of healthcare services, etc.

### **Main Findings**

- The most discernible finding is increased awareness and consumption of healthcare services. Increased intervention was directly proportional to increased visits to gynecologist and adolescent clinics.

- The findings indicate that girls adopted a healthier, more balanced diet as the level of intervention increased.

Percent of girls adopting balanced diet (N=420)



- Overweight was more common in the group that had no intervention than in the intervention groups.
- No difference was found between the groups in terms of personal knowledge with regards to sexual maturity.

### **Exposure to risk situations**

- The type of intervention did not have any impact on the level of exposure to risk situations. The differences in exposure to risk behavior are connected to sector (Jewish / Arab), with girls from the Jewish sector being more exposed.
- A strong correlation was found between body image and exposure to risk situations – the more positive the body image, the more the girl would avoid risk situations. A possible explanation is that a lack of confidence in one's external appearance increases the likelihood of exposure to risk situations, as compensating behavior (smoking, alcohol, unprotected sex, etc.)
- 31% of the girls suffered from physical violence or threat of physical violence in the past year, most of them in the Arab sector and from northern Israel. Approximately one-third of the girls experienced verbal or physical sexual harassment in the past year, most of them from the Arab sector.
- 20% of the girls experienced humiliation, mockery or name-calling in the past year, irrespective of sector or geographic area. However, this was very common among girls suffering from overweight.
- 10% of the girls reported that they smoked cigarettes, most of whom come from the Jewish sector and southern Israel.
- 4% of the girls reported that they had full sexual relations, the majority of whom are from the Jewish sector, older and overweight.

### **Body Image**

- 82% of Arab girls are satisfied with their external appearance, in comparison with 73% of Jewish girls. The dissatisfaction with external appearance is particularly discernible among girls who suffered from overweight.

- Body image declines during adolescence. The desire to undergo plastic surgery is particularly discernible among the older girls, in the Jewish sector, and among girls who suffer from being underweight.

### **Conclusion**

The health education program in Warm Homes was found to be partially effective but of definite importance (awareness and consumption of healthcare services as well as a certain change in eating habits). Repeat measurement at the end of the second year may demonstrate greater effectiveness.