



Dear friends,

With the holidays behind us, we are now all getting back into a regular routine. So too is "Women and Their Bodies" – the work is piling up, and so we thought it was a good time to pass on some updates.

Following is a description of some of our highlights and ongoing efforts to advance women and teenage girls' health in Israel, and a variety of ways in which you can take part in our work and help us make a difference for Israeli girls and women.

Workshops for and about at Risk Adolescent Girls



WTB runs workshops on health and sexuality for teenage girls, staff working with teens in educational or treatment settings, and mothers of adolescents. The workshops are picking up steam and reap great rewards. Last year we worked with hundreds of teens across the country, including many at-risk teens, Arabic speaking teens, and teens from the Ethiopian community. The workshops aim to raise awareness and foster learning and discussion on topics including identity, body image, nutrition, eating disorders,

anatomy, menstruation, sexuality, and relationships. We also provided special training for our facilitators who work with teens through which they met a range of professionals working in these areas. We also work continuously with the facilitators to integrate the insights they gain by conducting the workshops about the needs and interests of the target audiences. WTB has received very positive feedback to our workshops, with participants emphasizing the great importance of such work.



Research and Writing on Adolescent Girls

WTB is currently taking part in a unique group organized through Sapir College and Tel Aviv University that is working to develop a book and conference about adolescent girls and their bodies. Composed of academics and representatives from organizations addressing relevant topics, the group is looking at the cultural context of Israeli girls, their life experiences, the meanings they attribute to their body, and their identity through a feminist and multi-disciplinary lens. WTB is drafting an article for the book summarizing the initial stage of our research on this topic. The research addresses questions such as what girls know about their bodies and health; what do they think they know; what topics do they want more information about;

and where do they turn for information on these topics. WTB's qualitative research is based on interviews, group discussions, and observations of adolescent girls, as well as analysis of content from internet forums that address topics relating to the body, health and sexuality.

WTB is currently looking for additional volunteers to conduct interviews with teens. If you are interested in volunteering and have a background in qualitative evaluation, are relatively young (to make it easier for teens to connect), and are available for a three-hour training session please contact Tal Tamir at tal.muma@gmail.com.

Women's Health and Menopause

Between the ages of 40 – 60, women experience a wide range of emotional, physical, sexual and social changes. Over the past two years, WTB has listened closely to the voices of women we meet through our activities, as well as doctors and other health professionals who work with women in this age range. It has become clear that there is a true lack of attention to this issue and that women's needs and experiences during this phase of life do not receive sufficient attention from the Israeli health establishment and in government policy.

WTB continues to run workshops, lectures and action groups for middle-aged women to raise their awareness to central issues addressing their health during this phase of life. These encounters also provide us with an ongoing channel through which to receive information on the needs, interests, and experiences of menopausal women.

WTB is currently working on a position paper on this topic that will be submitted to the Knesset's Committee to Advance Women's Status. If you have any relevant statistics or personal experiences that might be helpful we would greatly appreciate you passing them on to us.

On November 8, WTB participated in a conference run by the "Israeli Menopause Society". The conference targeted health professions and we took part in a panel that aimed to present the voices and experiences of women. WTB shared insights from our work such as what are the health issues that women are concerned about and what are women's expectations from their doctors.



Knowledge and Action Group on Fibromyalgia



Over the course of the past year, WTB coordinated a Knowledge and Action group addressing fibromyalgia – a syndrome resulting in widespread pain and many other debilitating symptoms. The group included 22 women who suffer from fibromyalgia and five professionals. All of the group participants had a great deal of energy and were interested in taking action to make a change for fibromyalgia sufferers. The group took on a variety of projects including creating a Facebook page; participating in a conference on fibromyalgia at which they distributed information and produced an art exhibition and creating a brochure aimed at employers, spouses, family and friends describing the experience of living with fibromyalgia. Please contact WTB if you would like to receive copies of the brochure.

Women and Their Bodies – In the Top 100!

WTB is proud and honored that The Marker chose our founder and director, Dana Weinberg, as one of its "100 most influential people" last year, and included a description of WTB and its work in its special Top 100 edition.



Position Paper on the HPV Vaccine

Here in Israel we are regularly bombarded with ads addressing the HPV vaccine against cervical cancer. At WTB's request, Dr. Sagit Arbel-Alon, a veteran gynecologist and former WTB Board Member, drafted a position paper with updated information to address the many questions that this topic raises.

Drafting a Doctor - Patient Contract

The Israeli Medical Association asked WTB to take part in its project to draft a contract between doctors and patients. A final draft of the contract is currently in the works and we will be happy to pass it on once it is complete.

Bat Mitzvah

WTB sees a Bat Mitzvah as an opportunity for girls, their families, and Israeli society to think about the relationship between maturity, body and culture. WTB runs workshops on "Perceptions of the body, menstruation, and health" for Bat Mitzvah girls and their mothers.



Conference on Sexuality

Over the past two years WTB has been active in the Jerusalem-based Forum for Sexual Health. The forum will be sponsoring a conference entitled "Education for Healthy Sexuality among Teens and Young Adults - a Multicultural Perspective."



We need your help!

As the above description makes clear, WTB is busy on many fronts, working with girls, women, health care professionals, and policy makers to create change that will improve Israeli women's health and well-being. WTB has worked for the past nine years with no offices and with only a small professional staff - relying extensively on volunteers. We greatly appreciate any contribution you could make – financial or otherwise!

How can you donate to WTB:

1. WTB is authorized to receive donations through IsraelGives. For every donation made in US dollars, the donor receives an instant 501c3 e-receipt for the full amount of the donation.

For a secure donation press here.

2. US tax deductible donations can be marked as "donor-advised to Women and Their Bodies" and sent to the New Israel Fund, P.O. Box 91588, Washington, D.C. 20090-1588.

In addition, you can also help us by reaching out to others who might be able to offer financial support; buy copies of WTB's books; invite us to provide a workshop or lecture for women you know; and spread the word about WTB and all it can offer!!!

And mostly, we are happy and grateful that you are with us – a part of Women and Their Bodies.

The staff and Board of "Women and Their Bodies"



For more information about how you can support Women and Their Bodies, please contact us at info@wtb.org.il