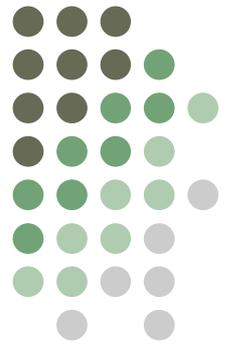


WIZO Keshar - Newsletter



WIZO.
Doing What
Matters

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SPECIAL REPORT

This month we feature a special report by our secretary, Lyn Prowse-Bishop. This is in line with the declaration by the United Nations that 25th November each year be designated as the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**.

Lyn writes from the heart and we encourage you to read her article.

It's my joy to report that we raised over \$11000 during October for the urgent appeal for Israel's children. Thank you all so much.

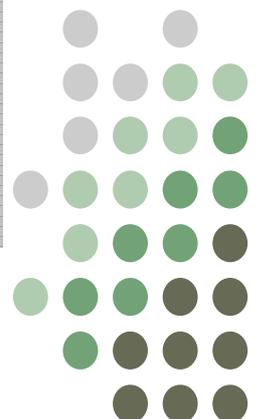
May I remind all of our members that our break-up for 2020 is to be held on December 13th, from 12 noon until 2:30pm. Venue to be advised. It'll be a finger food luncheon and a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for the funds that we have been able to raise for women and children in Israel. AND we have a surprise musician!

Also, annual membership fees are now due for 2021. Please be sure to use the form on the back page.

As we approach Hanukah on December 11th, we remember the brave Jewish folk who, in 167BC, rose up against the Romans and liberated Jerusalem, establishing full Temple worship and practice.

Thank you Lyn, for your most comprehensive and thoughtful article—it is much appreciated.

Rose Toms - President



WIZO Keshar Email: keshar@wizoaustralia.org.au

Domestic Violence

by Lyn Prowse-Bishop

Gender based violence is a huge problem for society - not just in Australia but globally. My personal experience of domestic violence was during a time (1986/7) when Australia had very little in the way of support services and the blame often fell squarely on the victim. It is an issue very close to my heart. Over the intervening decades we have seen a remarkable change in societal, governmental and law enforcement attitudes towards domestic and family violence with much awareness of the personal, family and community effects.

Domestic and family violence awareness takes place on different months across the globe. In the US it is observed in October and began in 1981. White Ribbon Day- which focuses on men's response to family violence - is observed in November. Although in Australia, May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month and October is Sexual Violence Awareness Month, globally 25 November is recognised as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Some historical perspective:

In June 1991 *The Centre for Women's Global Leadership and participants of the first Women's Global Institute on Women, Violence and Human Rights established a global campaign of **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence** from 25 November to 10 December. This led to the establishment of **White Ribbon Day**, first in Canada (1991) and in 1992 in Australia when Bob Pease, a member of the Australian group Men Against Sexual Assault (MASA), drove the launch of White Ribbon campaigns in every state of Australia where MASA was active. From 1992 to 1997 they handed out cut white ribbons during the 16 Days of Activism.*

(To be clear, the white ribbon was a movement for men symbolising the idea of men giving up their arms in opposition to violence against women and is a remarkable achievement especially in Australia with its "blokey" culture and for that time.)

In 1999 the *United Nations declared 25 November as **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**, the General Assembly having first issued their 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women' in 1993.*

The White Ribbon Foundation was established in Australia in January 2007 and was later (2013) renamed White Ribbon Australia. By 2016 all states and territories had a White Ribbon Committee and the campaign was active in over 60 countries running workshops and campaigns to explore ways to engage men in preventing violence against women. (As an aside, White Ribbon Day will take place 20 November this year (2020) in Australia.)

According to the UN: *'Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today, and remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it.'*

The 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women' issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as *"any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."*

It should be noted here that domestic and family violence is not a strictly female issue. Men are also victims, albeit far less frequently, and same sex relationships are not immune either. It is more often referred to these days as "gender-based violence". Whilst male victims are statistically fewer in number across the board, they are still victims. Statistics are patchy because male victims tend to speak about the issue and seek help far less than women. It is a deeply embarrassing situation to find yourself in with a marked fear of judgment. Self-esteem suffers - and it is hard enough for women to admit what is happening let alone men who oftentimes have the very core of what it means to "be a man" tied up with being able to protect themselves and not seem "incapable" or "weak". Gender-based violence is rarely about the violence itself but invariably about control and the exerting of dominance over a perceived weaker partner. The victim is then made to feel weak (even if they aren't) with not only the chipping away of their self-esteem but the fear of further abuse. I wish I had a dollar for



every time someone said to me "You? You are a domestic violence survivor? I can't imagine someone like you being in a situation like that!" Be that as it may, men are far more likely to be the **perpetrators** of abuse and violence, with women making up the far greater number of victims—especially resulting in death - which is why there is a great deal going on now to assist men to speak out against and seek support for aggressive behaviours - especially with groups like White Ribbon (and as will be seen below, the WIZO Men's Helpline). The culture of "don't ask, don't tell" needs to change.



Regardless, gender-based violence is recognised as a whole-of-society problem. How much of a problem?

According to the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*:

- 2.2 million Australians have experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or previous partner;
- Indigenous people were 32 times as likely to be hospitalised for family violence as non- indigenous people in 2016/17;
- Police recorded more than 25,000 sexual assaults in 2017 - 26,892 in 2019 with 97% of offenders recorded by police being male and 95% of cases *not involving a weapon*;
- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men in Australia have experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or previous cohabiting partner;
- 25% of women and 5% of men have experienced emotional abuse from a current or previous cohabiting partner;
- By 28 August 2020, 37 Australian women had died as a result of family violence.

According to an *Australian Institute of Criminology online survey of 15,000 Australian women conducted in May 2020 about their experience of domestic violence during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the three months prior to the survey, "4.6% of women who responded to the survey experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former cohabiting partner. Almost 6% (5.8%) of women experienced coercive control and 11.6% reported experiencing at least one form of emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour. For many women, the pandemic coincided with the onset or escalation of violence and abuse."*

Victims find it impossible to avoid abusers whilst in lockdown and the stresses of being 'trapped' at home for many abusers, with their victim close to hand, creates a powder keg scenario.

How is the problem being tackled in Israel and by WIZO specifically, and is it a problem? As with elsewhere, the statistics tell the story:

- 17 women have been murdered in Israel over the 2019 year;
- In the past 14 years, 163 women have been murdered by their partners, 50% of those victims were already known to the welfare authorities;
- In Israel, 10,000 restraining orders are issued each year;
- The police open an average of 60 domestic violence cases on a daily basis;
- In 2018 there were 3,114 telephone calls related to domestic violence received by Israel's Ministry of Social Welfare's assistance telephone line - a 70% increase over the number of referrals in the previous year, which stood at 1,830;
- In May 2020 **alone** 1,885 domestic violence complaints were filed with social services centres.

According to the *World WIZO site*: "*WIZO runs three Centres for the Treatment and Prevention of Violence dedicated to stopping acts of abuse and to help violent members of the family deal with difficulties in a non-threatening way. The individual and group programs are run at the centre while maintaining the family unit and eliminating violence. The staff includes social workers who specialise in anger management and the treatment of domestic violence as well as dedicated volunteers. The centres specialise in the effects of abuse on children and offer group and individual counselling for children.*"

Statistically there are at least 200,000 women living with abuse in Israel and an estimated 600,000 children exposed to domestic violence. WIZO runs two shelters for battered women and their children providing them a safe place to escape violent home conditions. The shelters accommodate women and their children for a minimum of six months at a time and their main goal is to prepare mothers and children for independence. Mothers receive legal aid, therapy and job training. Children - who in many cases have witnessed the violence and suffer the traumatic effects - are provided with counselling and therapy, as well as tutoring to assist with any lack in studies that might have resulted from the result of domestic abuse scenarios preventing them from attending school.

However WIZO does not just focus on the immediate need of protecting women and children. WIZO believes that it is possible to reduce domestic violence by treating the perpetrators, a sentiment echoed by the White Ribbon movement. WIZO runs the only telephone helpline of its kind in Israel to assist men caught in the cycle of domestic violence to take responsibility and get the help they need.

Established seven years ago, the advice hotline, staffed by trained volunteers (all men), provides initial support and encouragement in a non-judgmental way, and guides the men towards the best next step towards complete support. The anonymous nature of the hotline allows for men to call without the fear of stigma. The hotline received 1000 calls in 2019!

WIZO sees The Men's Hotline's *"vital activity as a reflection of the world view that men in the cycle of violence are not just a major part of the problem, but are also a major part of its solution"*. (WIZO Israel Chairperson Ora Korazim)

Last year as part of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, WIZO focussed on technology violence - something we don't tend to think of when we think of domestic violence but emerging as the next frontier in the battle against domestic abuse. Domestic violence doesn't just involve physical abuse. According to the Australian Government eSafety Commissioner, technology-facilitated abuse can take many forms such as:

- abusive messages or calls;
- account take overs - where someone accesses your online accounts and locks you out of them;
- image-based abuse - when someone shares or threatens to share an intimate image of you without your consent;
- fake social media accounts - when fake accounts are being used to harass you or post negative comments about you online;
- being tracked through a phone or device - when tracking techniques or spyware are used to see where you are.

WIZO thus focussed attention on this emerging area of domestic violence highlighting these "non-physical" abusive behaviours.

Israel's victims aren't immune to the effects of COVID and the increase in domestic abuse since lockdowns. As at June 2020, 6 women had died as a result of domestic violence since the COVID lockdowns. Since lockdown started, incidents of domestic abuse have increased exponentially according to a Channel 13 News report. As we saw in the recent post from WIZO Australia:

"As Israel moves towards nearly total shutdown for at least three weeks, we are deeply concerned about the inevitable increase in incidents of violence against women by partners and spouses. As always, despite the shutdown, WIZO will continue to do everything they can to prevent such violence, and protect and care for those women and children who are victims of abuse."

And despite the tenfold increase in referrals to social services in Israel in 2020, according to Ora Korazim, Chairperson of WIZO Israel, government budget allocation actually decreased - so these centres and the helpline need our support more than ever!

Additionally, the increase in demand for the shelters combined with the need for two weeks' mandatory quarantine has led WIZO Israel to create a unique national emergency shelter in central Israel (the exact location of which is confidential), for women in the most severe danger, an initiative supported by the Welfare Ministry.

Domestic violence is indeed a universal problem. It is clearly not culture-specific and connects - and affects - us all. It is therefore up to all of us to proactively raise awareness and do something to turn the tide and stop the inevitable cycle of gender-based violence. No longer is it "none of our business".

If you or someone you know is a victim of family and domestic violence, contact 1800 RESPECT - The Australian National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service.

Resources:

<https://bit.ly/2ZQnAou> - DV Awareness Month (Days of the Year)

<https://bit.ly/32JDh31> - DV Connect

<https://bit.ly/3mtDwH4> - United Nations International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women

<https://bit.ly/3ill9LD> - White Ribbon Australia

<https://bit.ly/32JCRJZ> - AIHW DV Report- Behaviours Risk Factors

https://bit.ly/3hli_aBi - Impact for Women Australia's Death Toll 2020

<https://bit.ly/3chiEhx> - Counting Dead Women Australia 2020 Facebook Page

<https://bit.ly/3hEO82g> - Australian Institute of Criminology publication - "Prevalence of Domestic Violence Among Women during COVID-19 Pandemic"

<https://bit.ly/2RFRLdA> - Australian Bureau of Statistics - Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia

<https://bit.ly/3ccmqZC> - WIZO Centre for the Treatment and Prevention of Violence

<https://bit.ly/3hK30N0> - WIZO Men's Hotline Conference

<https://bit.ly/3kyBsfo> - WIZO 2019 International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women press release

<https://bit.ly/3mA8Xj1> - WIZO - Men's Hotline

<https://bit.ly/2EdNBGP> - Australian eSafety Commissioner - Technology-Facilitated Abuse

<https://www.1800respect.org.au> - National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service

<https://youtu.be/bjDFw2KfYKA> - Channel 13 Israel News Report on Emergency Shelter



Why We Pay Membership Fees

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WIZO'S STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

WIZO is recognised by the United Nations as an NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) with consultative status to UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and ECOSOC (the United Nations Economic and Social Council). Both these bodies deal with issues affecting women and children worldwide, and WIZO has had a voice within them since 1959.

This unique status is dependent on maintaining verifiable numbers of financial members. This applies to WIZO Australia, to WIZO in Israel and to all 50 WIZO Federations around the world. Without a certain level of financial members, this United Nations status is in jeopardy, and a vital avenue for presenting Jewish women's opinions and points of view at this international forum is at risk. Please read this paragraph again as it is very important because every two years an audit is carried out and the voting rights are based on the number of PAID UP MEMBERS we have at the time, and the more paid up members we have, the more clout WIZO has as far as leverage and control is concerned.

BENEFITS TO MEMBERS

- * A financial commitment acknowledges that we are proud to stand up and be counted together with 250,000 other dedicated members from around the world (including Israel)
- * Financial Membership of WIZO offers opportunities for us to take positions of responsibility where we can shine in our field of expertise. Alternatively, we can learn new skills in a warm, supportive atmosphere
- * Financial Members unable to attend meetings and functions may wish to contribute with ideas for fund raising events.....ideas and suggestions will always be welcome
- * A financial commitment acknowledges that membership of WIZO is important to us—that it is a valued activity in our life



WIZO KESHER MEMBERSHIP 2021

Name _____

Date _____

Postal Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership Jan-Dec 2021	\$ 25.00
Gift	\$
Total	\$ _____

Bank Transfer:	BSB 484 799
Acc. No:	6022 53941
Acc. Name:	WIZO Keshet
Cheques to:	PO Box 998 Buderim Qld 4556

Please include your name.

Our unique status with ECOSOC and UNICEF at the U.N. requires our membership to be 'paid up members' thus enabling WIZO to have a representative with voting rights. So please renew your membership as soon as possible.

We Value Your Support!