

Personal Safety for Every Girl and Woman in the City Facilities

Gender-based violence and the fear of it shape the lives of girls and women from all groups and classes of society and in all spheres of life, both in the private space and the public space. According to estimates, one out of every three women in the world has experienced or will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime (World Bank, 2019).

The public and media discourse frequently focuses on cases of women who have been murdered by their partner or by other family members, which is an extreme expression of violence against women. But gender-based violence has multiple forms and manifestations and occurs not only in the family and at home, but also on the street, in playgrounds, in commercial and recreational areas, on public transportation, at educational and health facilities, in workplaces, on apps and on social media. While gender-based violence occurs on a daily basis, times of crisis and emergency exacerbate and intensify the problem, as witnessed in extreme climate events and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gender-based violence against women is violence that targets women because they are women. This violence reflects the social power relations between men and women, and is used as a social, political and economic tool to sustain them. It is considered discrimination against women and a violation of their human rights, and includes all acts that result in, or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, harassment, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in the public space or in the private space.¹

The need to increase women and girls' personal safety in Tel Aviv-Yafo in the different spheres of life is a common thread that runs through the Fair Shared City Plan. Each subject area that the plan deals with reveals that gender-based violence is both an expression of gender inequality and a barrier to advancing equality between women and men. Gender-based violence against women – whether committed by a person close to the woman or a stranger, whether within home or outside of it – is not only a private matter between the perpetrator and the woman. Its roots are deeply embedded in the practice of discrimination against women, and it is a direct outcome of the way society views and treats women. Consequently, the murder of women in the family is just the tip of the iceberg of discrimination against women.



¹ According to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW (which Israel signed and ratified) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).

As long as women continue to be unequal to men in all spheres of life, it will be difficult to eradicate violence against them, and the other way around: violence is a significant barrier to women's full participation in public life, to their liberty, independence, health, education and employment, and also prevents them from fully enjoying the city and equally participating in urban life.

The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality recognizes that violence against women is a social and public issue, which can assume a wide range of forms and should be viewed from a broad and cross-disciplinary perspective. The starting point of the entire Fair Shared City Plan is that national legislation is not enough, and that market forces left on their own will not drive the needed change. Gender inequality in general and violence against women in particular, poses a challenge that requires widespread institutional intervention, and, in fact, numerous municipal partners are taking part in the effort to stop violence against women: the Social Services Administration, the Education Administration, the Municipal Resilience and Social Equality Authority, the Operations Division, and others.

For many years, the Municipality has worked to address violence against women. "Or-Nur"- The Center for Safe Relationships in the Family, and "Ma'ayan" – The Multidisciplinary Center for the Treatment of Sexual Trauma - are among the programs that operate in the city, run by the Social Services Administration. In addition, the "Lotem" Center for the Treatment of Sexual Trauma operates at Ichilov Hospital. When developing the Fair Shared City Plan, it became clear that the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality has an important role in expanding activities to prevent violence against women in the city, in all its different forms, with a special focus on shared and public spaces.



Besides discussing the issue in the different chapters of the plan, a separate chapter is devoted to ways to integrate a **360-degree holistic approach to combating violence against women**: a variety of steps, which take account the range of age groups in different life settings, and places emphasis on creating innovative data-driven solutions. This chapter provides a consolidated presentation of selected data regarding the scope and damages of violence against women, coupled with a review of best practices from other parts of the world. The chapter also describes the municipal steps which already have been implemented, as well as action that will be taken in the next five years to intensify the fight.

The different chapters of the Fair Shared City Plan discuss ways to combat violence against women and include various action items for enhancing the sense of personal safety in the city:

- In the area of transportation – ensuring that there is cell phone reception in municipal parking garages and advancing trainings for public transport drivers.
- In the public space – developing a municipal mechanism for collecting and tracking needs on the ground regarding lighting and violent incidents.
- In the area of education – developing the gender equality program in the city's educational system.
- In the area of sports and culture – developing special programs for preventing sexual harassment.

Alongside these steps, all the action items developed under the plan, which are designed to advance gender equality in Tel Aviv-Yafo and increase the presence and participation of women in the city, will enhance women's sense of personal safety, besides being instrumental in creating a city that is safe and good for everyone.

Violence Against Women – What Do We Know?

It is difficult to assess the precise scope of violence against girls and women in the private space and in the public space – in general, and in Tel Aviv-Yafo in particular. The reason, among other things, stems from a lack of adequate research about the range of violent incidents, as well as a gross underreporting of such incidents. Thus, for example, according to a survey about personal safety in Israel conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2019, around 97% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police, and more than 50% of the women who were attacked or threatened with violence did not report the crime to the police. There are, however, data that provide a partial picture of the situation.

- Based on assessments, over 200,000 women victims of domestic violence live in Israel (Domestic Violence Index 2019-2020, WIZO). Every year an average of twenty women are murdered in Israel by their partners or other family members (Gender Index, 2021).
- In 2021, more than 1,000 interventions were carried out at "Or-Nur"- The Center for Safe Relationships in the Family in Tel Aviv-Yafo. Roughly half of those interventions were carried out after residents sought counseling at the center, and the other half were in response to complaints filed with the police (Or-Nur data, 2022).
- In 2021, the police in Tel Aviv-Yafo opened about 1,500 investigations into incidents of violence against women. This constitutes an increase of around 11% compared to the previous year. Additionally, approximately 800 investigations were opened into threats made against women (Women in Numbers, 2022). According to police data, complaints and cases of violence against women are opened at every police station in the city, regardless of geography and socioeconomic status.
- Nearly every day, municipal patrols and security personnel in Tel Aviv-Yafo receive complaints about sexual harassment/ indecent act in the public space. In 2021, for example, 348 complaints were received (municipal data, 2022).

Gender-based violence takes a heavy toll: from a personal perspective, both in the immediate and the long term, the violence affects all aspects of the woman's life and of those dependent on her. From a social and economic perspective, significant impacts can be seen in social services, health, etc., which could have been prevented by taking action in advance.

It is important to stress that according to research, gender-based violence in the public space increases the fear of sexual assault and restricts the movement of women in the public space (Mor, 2017). Even in the absence of an actual personal experience, the existence of gender-based violence affects the subjective feelings that women have and shapes their experience in the city. The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality also recognizes the gender difference in how personal safety is perceived in the public space, and addresses this in the Fair Shared City Plan.

- In Tel Aviv-Yafo, women feel less safe than men do, and feel an even greater lack of safety than men do when walking outside in the dark (Women in Numbers, 2022). An analysis of the calls dealing with public lighting received by the 106 Plus Hotline in 2020 showed that 64.8% of the calls asking for more lighting in public gardens were made by women.
- At the city beaches as well, more women than men report that they do not feel safe, and women go to the beach less frequently than men do (Women in Numbers, 2021). Additionally, of those engaged in physical activity in the city, women exercise less in the public space – on the streets, in parks, at the beaches, etc. (Municipal Sports Survey, 2020) because, among other things, they fear for their personal safety.

Domestic Violence against Women

In Israel, steps are being taken nationally and locally to combat domestic violence against women. However, this battle requires more intense, methodical, and comprehensive action on different levels: improved services and support for women victims of violence, including emergency solutions that are not necessarily shelters; counseling for children who are exposed to violence; executing judgements and punishing the offenders, coupled with more counseling services for them (of which there is a serious shortage); and additional preventive measures, such as of an educational nature.

"Or-Nur"- The Center for Safe Relationships in the Family

In Tel Aviv-Yafo, "Or-Nur"- The Center for Safe Relationships in the Family offers a variety of services for women, men and children who are caught in the cycle of domestic violence: evaluations, assessment of the degree of risk, individual and group therapy, personalized and accessible treatment for specific groups (such as the Arab community, Israelis originally from Ethiopia, asylum seekers, and others), a unique position for treating economic abuse, assistance in economic-occupational rehabilitation, and more. The Center serves as a liaison and mediator with the departments of social services and the police. Furthermore, in Tel Aviv-Yafo there is a police social worker whose job, among other things, is to make relevant counseling and community services available to crime victims who contact the police stations in the city. The Or-Nur Center is also engaged in gathering and consolidating data, and offers trainings and lectures on the subject of domestic violence to municipal staff and others.

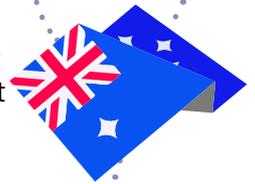


What did we learn from other parts of the world?



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign that has been adopted worldwide, including by leading cities such as **New York**. It runs every year from November 25 (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until December 10 (International Human Rights Day, thereby underscoring that violence against women is a serious violation of human rights and not just a 'women's issue'). Orange is the official color of the campaign, during which educational, cultural and public events dealing with the fight against gender-based violence are held in different places around the world.

Free to Be is a map-based social tool that was designed with help from young women. It aims to enable them to identify, in real time and without fear of repercussions, areas in their city where they feel less safe, and by doing so map out geographical areas that require intervention. The tool was first tested at the end of 2016 by the organization Plan International in **Melbourne, Australia**. It was later adopted by other cities, including some of the biggest ones in the world: **Delhi, Kampala, Lima, Madrid** and **Sydney**. The information gathered from using the tool and from focus groups in those cities formed the basis for research and a document containing recommendations on how to create safer cities.



The Municipality of Madrid has been actively involved in the long-term eradication of violence against girls and women since the horrific rape that occurred in 2016 during the popular San Fermin bull-running festival in Pamplona. Among other things, a decision was made in Madrid to deploy purple-colored information booths (Puntos Violetas) at neighborhood celebrations and events in the city (such as international music festivals). The purpose of the booths is to raise awareness about violence and sexual harassment, provide information, and extend assistance and counseling on the premises if needed. Helplines also operate in addition to the staffed booths.

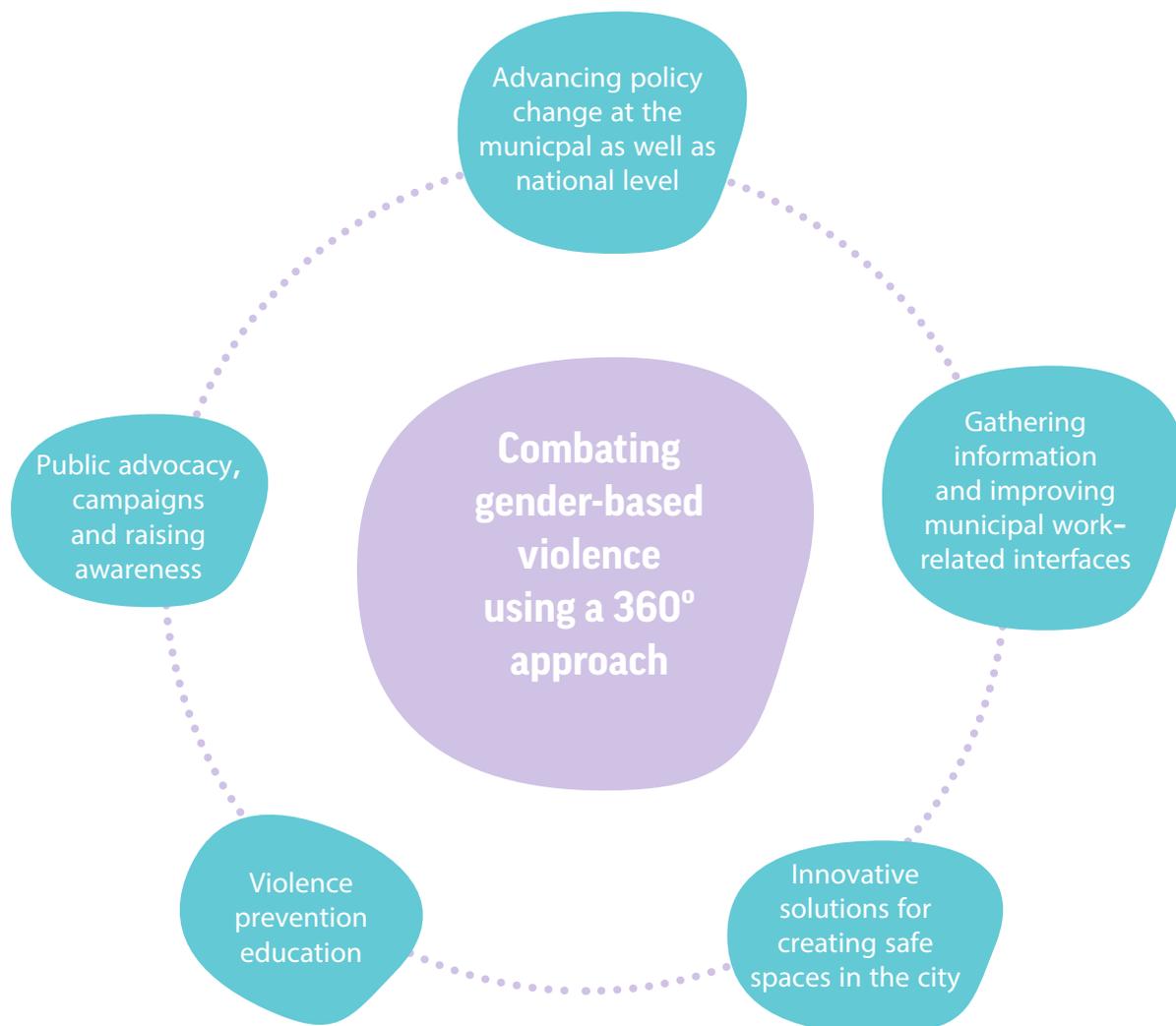


Right to Be is an initiative that emerged out of a blog that collected stories about street harassment. Since then, it has grown into a global team who provide tools to a variety of groups that can be used to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in everyday settings, in business establishments, and in institutions and organizations. Among other things, Right to Be offers trainings to bystanders and passersby on how to intervene and extend assistance if they are exposed to harassment.

Municipal Strategy: Combating Gender-Based Violence Using a 360-Degree Approach

Coupled with the treatment efforts invested by the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, **the Fair Shared City Plan highlights the important role the Municipality has in increasing prevention efforts of violence against women in the city, in all its different forms.**

Accordingly, the Municipality has adopted a holistic and cutting-edge approach that encompasses a wide range of measures, including special collaborations with a variety of agencies, both municipal and national, and both from the nonprofit and business sectors in the city.



Action Items for Combating Violence against Girls and Women

in Tel Aviv-Yafo

For Implementation within Five Years

Advancing policy change at the municipal as well as national level

- Implementing municipal policy that makes it harder for strip clubs to operate: reflecting the recognition that striptease dancing objectifies all women and violates the human dignity of women and men alike, the Municipality's Planning and Construction Subcommittee adopted in 2020 the recommendations made by the Mayor's Advisor on the Advancement of Women, and approved policy "according to which, as a rule, there is no room for approving requests for nonconforming use made by strip clubs".² A rehabilitation program for women seeking assistance was also adopted, together with advancing efforts at the national level to combat striptease dancing. 
- Advancing the implementation and enforcement of the Law Prohibiting the Consumption of Prostitution (Temporary Order and Amendment of Legislation), 5779-2019, coupled with support and assistance for population groups in the cycle of prostitution.
- Advancing policy designed to combat domestic violence in collaboration with the government ministries (for example, in the matter of treating violent partners).

Gathering information and conducting a gender analysis of data, and improving municipal work-related interfaces

- Creating a municipal mechanism for collecting and tracking personal safety needs in the public space, supported, among other things, by state-of-the-art technologies and an analysis of 106 Hotline calls. 
- Under a newly formed joint municipal council comprised of the Municipality and the police, special emphasis will be placed on increasing the personal safety of girls and women in the public space. 
- Training staff members and developing special tools for dealing with displays of violence, for use by municipal departments entrusted with the public order and safety. 

Innovative solutions for creating safe spaces in the city

- Improving municipal infrastructure to enhance personal safety in the public space, achieved among other things by means of: a distress button pilot project, better street lighting, deploying cameras, overhauling and winding narrow pathways, etc. 
- SafeUp: an application whose development was facilitated by the Municipality and CityZone³, aimed at increasing personal safety and solidarity between women residents of the city. The application enables phone/video "guardians" to escort women who are nearby, and also helps the Municipality identify problem spots, inadequate infrastructure, etc. 

At the end of 2021, there were over 11,000 registered users of the app in the city. A survey found that thanks to use of the application, women in the city spend more time in the public space, about five hours more than in the past, and report that they feel safer when walking alone at night

² "It is superfluous to note that the matter at hand is the formulation of general policy, which does not prejudice conducting an assessment and discussion based on the merits of specific requests, should they be submitted."

³ A cutting-edge laboratory and testing ground for advancing technological solutions to municipal challenges in collaboration with the Municipality, Tel Aviv University and Atidim Park.

- The Good Night initiative for safe entertainment and recreational venues and nightlife in the city: trainings for employees of clubs, bars, pubs, restaurants, etc., to deal with incidents of sexual violence in collaboration with privately-owned businesses in the city and with the Rape Crisis Center. 🌱

Dozens of local businesses throughout the city have already joined the initiative.

- Advancing a special initiative designed to increase personal safety at large-scale municipal cultural and recreational events.
- The Gatekeepers project: training for a network of professional women from different fields (e.g. beauty and healthcare professionals), aimed at identifying incidents of violence and referring the women to resources that offer assistance.
- Supporting and expanding activities at the 'Social Space' that was established on the ruins of the Pussycat strip club in Atarim Square. The 'Social Space' offers workshops and educational tours to high school students in the city, to the general public and to professionals to raise awareness and reduce the consumption of sex for money. 🌱
- Municipal gender equality startup calls for supporting technological and innovative initiatives that advance gender equality and the fight gender-based violence. 🌱

Dozens of projects responded to the request for proposals issued in 2020

- The Safe Running project: paving safe running routes in the northern and eastern parts of the city, aimed at increasing the sense of safety and encouraging physical exercise in the public space. 🌱

Information campaigns and raising public awareness

- Raising public and municipal awareness through lectures, workshops and campaigns, while making information available to diverse population groups in the city. 🌱
For instance, by means of the Warning Signs campaign aimed at identifying toxic relationships, run in cooperation with the Michal Sela Forum; informational videos about healthy sexuality; public and educational activities held around the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and more.
- Providing information and tools that can be used to deal with harassment in the public space, aimed at bystanders and passersby. 🌱

Violence prevention education

- Expanding workshops for students at all the schools in the city, aimed at preventing violence and promoting healthy sexuality in line with the gender equality program (developed under the Education chapter of the Fair Shared City Plan). 🌱
- Developing special programs tailored to diverse population groups: special education students, Arab students living in Jaffa, and students who attend religious schools. 🌱
- Training of educational teams about gender-based violence, in general, and domestic violence, in particular. 🌱
- Expanding the existing activities held in informal education settings in the city, designed for youth and for staff members of organizations and youth movements. 🌱

[Click here to read the introduction and the other chapters of the plan >>](#)

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