

ANNUAL REPORT תשע"ה 2017



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Thank you to our Friends and Supporters

We are deeply grateful to all our friends, supporters and founders, who have played an instrumental role in making this organization what it is today. Through your encouragement and assistance, we have advanced a wide range of vital activities and projects, to reach out to women in need and make legal and social change to improve the status of women in Family Law in Israel.

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The Jewish Women's Foundation of the Greater Palm Beaches
The Joseph and Mildred C. Stern Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
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Welcome

Dear Friends,

We present you the Rackman Center's Annual Report for 2017.

This has been yet another significant year for The Rackman Center, as we have continued to enjoy a second year of our EU grant that has enabled us to expand our programs and increase the number of women we have assisted for a second year. We now face the challenge of securing funding to ensure that aspects of that program can continue. We are thrilled that with the generous support of our donors, we will be able to continue our new Holistic Care Program, which as you will read, provided empowerment and support to 60 women just this year, and trained 30 women to become mentors to provide one on one support to women going through divorce. Each of these women represents a whole family, so this support is far reaching and means that we are a unique organization in being able to both help our clients legally, and help them to move on successfully with their lives.

In other areas, as you will read, we continue to work hard to achieve our goals, fulfil our mission and to lead for changes that will improve women's status in Family Law in Israel.

We pride ourselves on our ability to act – to identify an issue, use our academic and professional expertise to understand it, and face it head on. This can be seen from the way in which we swiftly put together a conference to address the Supreme Court precedent-setting decision on child support handed in July 2017. The decision generated immediate interest, but at the same time created much confusion in the field. Hundreds of professionals attended our conference and were enlightened by the program we devised. With Rabbi Rackman Z'l's legacy constantly inspiring us, and the joint work of a wonderful, dedicated and motivated team, we are moving forward to advance the rights of women in family law and beyond in Israel.

We hope that you will be proud of our achievements that we have included in this report. It is only with your partnership and ongoing support that we can grow and progress. Thank you for your faith in our ability to fulfil this task. You have helped change women's lives for the better all over Israel – both individually and in society as a whole, and for this we are ever so grateful,

Best Regards,

Professor Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Founding Head and Dr. Galit Shaul, CEO



**Professor
Ruth Halperin-Kaddari**
Founding Head of
The Rackman Center
since its establishment in 2001



Dr Galit Shaul
CEO of The Rackman Center

Our Mission

Situated in the highest realm of academia, by combining academic expertise with cause-lawyering, the Rackman Center serves as a junction between research and activism; legislative work and litigation; public advocacy and individual support; the domestic and the international arenas; and the religious and secular legal spheres.

Established in 2001 at Bar-Ilan University's Faculty of Law with the goal of improving the status of women and bringing an end to gender discrimination and inequality in Israeli society, the Rackman Center is now proud to be the forefront organization of legal and social change for women in family law in Israel. It works to advance women's rights and better women's standing in family law in general, and Jewish family law in particular.

Believing in a dual-track approach for bringing about mobilization and social change, we work both from within and outside the religious world, to change Jewish law through its internal tools and methodology, as well as to enable all citizens of Israel to choose the marriage ceremony that suits their beliefs.

The dual-track approach continues when we cooperate with the government to promote policy reforms, while taking an independent stand where appropriate.

Our position as an academic institution in a law school creates a unique synergy between our work representing individuals in family law cases and our academic expertise in analyzing the cases, carrying out legal research, finding innovative solutions to legal problems and recommending legal reform.

This demonstrates another aspect of the dual-track approach in engaging both in a bottom-up method through litigation on behalf of individuals, and promoting the top down process of legislative change and policy reform. We translate academic research, knowledge and training into action aimed at bringing about social and legal change.

The work that we do affects agents of change of all levels, starting from Knesset members and policy-makers, members of the civil and rabbinical judiciary, lawyers, welfare workers and other divorce professionals, through law students to the individual women and children who are directly assisted by the Center.



לקידום מעמד האשה For the Advancement of the Status of Women

Goals Reached 2017

Legal Aid Clinic:



500

500 women received free legal advice via our helpline

45 women received free full legal representation in family and rabbinical courts

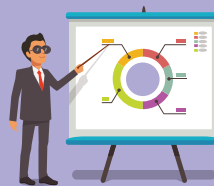
45



500 women received free emotional support and advice



Conferences:



14th Annual Conference

Round Table Meeting on Prenuptial Agreements.
 Knowledge Sharing Webinar with The Law Clinic at Ankara University, Turkey
 Knowledge Sharing Conference with women's organization from Tarkumya
 International Women's Day Conference
 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women Conference on the Istanbul Convention
 Child Support Conference
 Over 1000 people attended our wide-ranging conferences in 2017

21



21 students on Lawyer's of Tomorrow program

Legislation:



Submitted and researched 6 bills and regulations
 Submitted **20** Position Papers
 Submitted **10** letters to Government
 Attended **31** Knesset Meetings
4 High Court Appeals
 Advised members of Knesset
 Worked on our Law Enforcement Project
 Handled issues arising from the Schnitt Committee Collaboration
 Collaborated with over **12** other organizations

Holistic Care:



2 support groups for women going through divorce

30 women joined our support groups

2 mentor training courses for volunteers

15 volunteers

14 women going through divorce had mentors

8 women received free one on one professional therapy

Publications:

3 issues of HaDin VeHadayan were published
 Published our 5th Biennial Statistics on Women and Family in Israel
 Our Website was made accessible
 Social Media updates
 Newsletters
 Mentioned **45** times in newspapers, online news, TV and Radio Interviews
 Published and Presented Israel's Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee at the UN
 Submitted laws to the Website 'Kol Zechut'
 Movie made promoting our Holistic Care Department
 Survey on Agunot compiled by Geocartography Group



The Academic Year At A Glance

October 2016

- Congratulations to **Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** on being awarded the esteemed Knights of Quality Government Award in the Education category from The Movement for Quality Government in Israel (MQG).



- The Rackman Center joined other women's organizations as public petitioners in support of a petition filed by Adv Tamar Ben Porat, against the registrar of political parties and Agudath Yisrael party who have allowed a regulation in Agudath Yisrael's party charter to prevent women from being accepted into the party.

- **Dr Galit Shaul** lectured at Tel Aviv University as part of the 'Women in a trap: Religious Law and Human Rights in Israel' Conference.

- The Tender Years Presumption Coalition sent a joint letter to MK Justice Minister, Ayelet Shaked asking her to appoint the committee she had promised would examine the conclusions of the Schnitt and Schiffman Committees – article link www.davar1.co.il/38441/

- We published Issue 43 of Hadin Vehadayan.

November 2016

- We held an International Day for the Prevention of Violence against Women Conference on the topic of: Between State Responsibility and Civil Society Organization in Combating Violence against Women: The Istanbul Convention as a Case Study.

- **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** was invited to the General Assembly of the Jewish Federation of North America that took place in Washington.

She participated on a panel on "What's Next for Pluralism in Israel?"



- Following her participation at the GA, **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** gave a series of lectures about the Rackman Center at several law offices in New York



- The Coalition to Ensure Child Support Payments met with Welfare Minister, MK Chaim Katz and presented our solutions to child support issues.

- **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** was interviewed on the radio and in the media about 'women in leadership' on discussions about the upcoming US elections.

- **Dr Galit Shaul** discussed the Istanbul Convention on TV.

- **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** presented challenges to the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals on Gender Equality at a conference held at the IDC.

December 2016

- The Rackman Center hosted Nadi Nasawiya a Palestinian women's rights organization from Tarkumia, for a knowledge-sharing conference, sponsored by the EU.

- **Adv. Keren Horowitz** presented at the Sderot Conference on the topic of Israel Society and Equal Parenting.

- International Webinar Conference with the Domestic Violence Law Clinic in Ankara, Turkey, sponsored by the EU.

- **Dr Galit Shaul** and **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** were honored to attend the book launch of Carol Gilligan's new book: *Joining the Resistance*.



- **Dr Galit Shaul** lectured at the Intel Conference on the topic: Everything (does not) stay in the family: On Reciprocity and equality in the family and in the workplace.

- We held our first enrichment training session for the whole staff including volunteers, law students and administrators. We learnt important tools for dealing with difficult issues, giving support to everyone at the Rackman Center to help us provide the best Holistic and Professional care of the women who come to us for help.

January 2017

- We held our 14th Annual Conference, which this year was on the topic of: Between the Family and Inheritance: On the Interface between family law and Inheritance Law.



- Adv. Keren Horowitz** spoke in a television interview about MK Yoav Kish's bill proposal to change the way child support is calculated.



- An emergency conference of women's organizations including the Rackman Center was held in Beit Achoti in Tel Aviv in which single mothers called on the Justice Minister to oppose MK Yoav Kish's new child support proposal.

- As a member of ICAR, we joined a protest outside the Supreme Court in support of an agunah from Tzfat who received her Gett 3 years ago due to her husband being in a coma for the past 7 years.

- Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** was interviewed on TV about President Trump's restrictive policy on abortions.



- Our students on the Lawyer's of Tomorrow program visited a women's shelter as part of their course.

February 2017

- We began our partnership with WIZO to provide divorce support groups in Beer Sheva.

- We attended two important Knesset meeting about child support – **Adv. Keren Horowitz** put forward how absurd it was that women were having to choose between being employed (even earning very low income) and losing the child support to get essentials for their children.

- We published our 5th Biennial Statistics on Women and Family in Israel

- Dr. Galit Shaul** was a speaker in the main National event for the Memorial day for victims of Violence against Women.



- We held a Collaborative Divorce Conference together with the Israeli Organization for Collaborative Divorce.

- We participated in committee meetings on regulations to allow women to run for position of director of the rabbinical courts.

- The Rackman Center ran a conference on International Women's Day, on the subject of "Literature, Friendship and the Sisterhood of Women," during which we discussed the books of Elena Ferrante, which have been translated into Hebrew.

March 2017

- On the occasion of International Women's Rights Day, **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** was invited as a keynote speaker at the Minnesota Human Rights Center and spoke of the Rackman Center's work in Israel.

- The Rackman Center attended a meeting at El Halev in Jerusalem to meet both members of the Women's Amuta Initiative along with representatives from the Greater Miami Jewish Federation's Israel and Overseas Allocation Committee.



- Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** was part of a panel discussion on Women's Service in the IDF - Gender Separation and the "Right Integration" in cooperation with the Center for Jewish and Democratic Law and the Rackman Center.

- International Women's Day was marked in the Knesset. **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** gave a presentation, that reviewed the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN and explained the importance of assimilating the objectives.

April 2017

- We were delighted to host Rabbi Ellen Flax and representatives from the Hadassah Foundation at the Rackman Center. **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** and **Dr. Galit Shaul** presented, and answered interesting questions. **Gilit Inbar-Kimchi** gave an overview of our new volunteer program, "A Woman by Your Side," which offers one-on-one mentoring by volunteers for women going through divorce.



- Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** gave a lecture at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art on the topic of Ethics and Art.

- A new "Moving on" support group session began.

- We participated in an emergency Knesset committee meeting after the recent tragic deaths of 3 Israeli women due to domestic violence.

- The Rackman Center participated in the "Equal Parenting" Conference in Tel Aviv.

- Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari**

participated on a panel at the 'Night of Ideas' event organized by the French Embassy on



'outstanding women', held at the Tel Aviv Art Museum.

May 2017

- Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** and **Dr. Galit Shaul** welcomed back Jane Stern Lebell and Ronnie Stern, to our offices. Jane is one of our original founders and a long-standing supporter. We are so grateful for the ongoing support and encouragement from the Stern family. Thank You!



- Dr. Galit Shaul** was included in a wonderful inspiring list of "things Israel's Successful Women love about Israel".

- We were thrilled to attend a special event in honor of Romie Tager QC and his wife Esther, who our sponsor our prominent publication, Hadin Vehadayan.



- Dr. Galit Shaul** participated in a conference for the central Israeli Bar Association in Tel Aviv on the subject of employment law. She was on a panel that discussed equal work opportunities for women.

June 2017

- We held our Moot Court. This year's topic was: Is the "Shragai Ruling" still relevant?



- Adv. Miri Bernstein** and **Adv. Keren Horowitz** participated in a conference at Haifa University on the topic of "Women's Rights in Israel"



- The Rackman Center attended the end of year ceremony for the Bar Ilan Legal Clinics, where our EU grant partner, Kol Zchut received recognition for their work.

- The final meeting for the support group, "A Woman by your Side" was held in Jerusalem in collaboration with Wizo.

- We held a conference together with members of ICAR on the issue of: Prenuptial agreements – the halacha and the reality.

July 2017

- **Dr. Galit Shaul**, participated in a seminar in Macedonia on immigration and refugees. The group met with many local leaders, including the President of Macedonia, Dr Djorga Ivanov the Minister of Culture (see photo). Robert Alagjovovski, the Mayor of Ochrid, Dr Nikola Bakracheski, and other ministers.



- A 20 years memorial event was held for the late Professor Rosen-Zvi. Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari gave a lecture on his legacy to family law in Israel at the event.

- **Dr. Galit Shaul** participated in a conference for the central Israeli Bar Association in Tel Aviv on the subject of employment law. She was on a panel that discussed equal work opportunities for women.

- The article written by **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari**, with advocates Horowitz and Zilberberg was extensively quoted and relied upon in a groundbreaking Supreme Court decision.

August 2017

- **Dr. Galit Shaul** was interviewed on T.V by Anat Saragusti about the supreme court ruling to determine child support where there is joint physical custody



- We produced a short film about our Holistic Care section.

- **Dr Galit Shaul** participated in the 6th Annual Israeli Bar Association evening. She spoke on a panel on the topic of "The roles of parenthood according to the law in the modern era - between the early years presumption and the balance of power in the family."



September 2017

- **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** participated in the European Caucus on Reproductive Rights conference, held in Geneva.



- **Dr. Galit Shaul**, presented her speech in the framework of a dialogue on women's issues in cooperation with the Israeli delegation at the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as part of our work sponsored by the EU.

- The Rackman Center ran a highly successful conference for legal professionals on the topic of child support. The conference was packed to capacity and had great feedback.



- **Adv Keren Horowitz** gave a lecture for the Israeli Bar on the topic of "Supreme Court ruling on equality of the burden of custody and joint custody - what has changed?"



- **Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** gave a lecture for an Israeli Bar Conference on the topic of: "Is it appropriate to use civil law on the issue of child support, and what is its nature?"

Our Services:

The Legal Aid Clinic

The Program for Legal Aid, Advocacy and Outreach in Family Law and Women's Rights

Our Legal Aid Clinic works on three fronts:

Free Legal Representation and High Court Appeals: We advocate for the rights of agunot, and work to eradicate extortion of women and exploitation of children as leverage in divorce. We offer free legal representation across the board, on all family and divorce matters, in both civil and religious courts, up to the supreme court and high court of justice, for over 40 women each year. In addition to cases from women who are in financial distress, we also select potentially precedent-setting or complex cases, as another effective venue to bring about legal change.

The Free Legal Aid Helpline : Our helpline provides free legal aid to over 500 women of all backgrounds each year.

Lawyers of Tomorrow Program: Believing in the future and in the critical role education plays in mobilizing social change, we select the best law students to train in our clinic in the Lawyers of Tomorrow Training Program. Those selected demonstrate a commitment to promoting and advancing gender and social justice, and to learning the essential representation and litigation tools that enable them to do this.

Advocacy and Legislation

- Writing, researching and submitting position papers.
- Submitting appeals and petitions to the supreme court.
- Working closely with Members of Knesset and law makers.
- Submitting recommendations for legislation changes , new bills and regulations.
- Participating in Knesset Committee Meetings and coalitions with other women's organizations to make real legal and social change for women.
- Enforcement of laws and follow-up on progress made to change laws
- Representing Israeli civil society at the UN CEDAW Committee

Holistic & Empowering Services

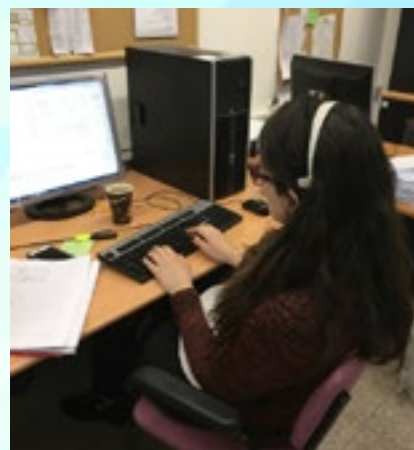
- Collaborative Divorce Department
- Moving On - a Divorce Support and Empowerment Group
- Volunteer Mentoring Training Program
- A Woman by Your Side - One-on-one mentoring by our volunteers for women going through divorce
- Private therapy sessions

The Klosk Legal Aid Helpline

The Legal Aid Helpline provides free legal advice to all women who call with family law related questions or concerns.

In 2017 we maintained the significant increase gained last year in the number of calls to our legal aid helpline, with 500 callers this year, compared to 365 in 2015. The average time spent with each client was half an hour for the initial call, followed by 45 minutes with one of our lawyers, with callers often providing legal documents for review beforehand. The average client age was 42 years, and clients on average had between two to three children. After calling the helpline, some callers were invited for a meeting before we selected which cases to represent.

Thanks to our Legal Aid Helpline Director, Adv. Osnat Prinz and our Volunteers' Coordinator, Gilit Inbar-Kimchi we have 7 volunteer lawyers. Each of the volunteer lawyers took on approximately two clients per month still leaving the majority for the Rackman Center lawyers, but their work enables us to provide legal counseling by phone to many more women, and at a faster response rate than last year.



According to research on our legal aid helpline undertaken by the School of Social Work at Bar Ilan University, **more than half of helpline callers reported being exposed to domestic violence.**

In response to this, we emphasized on encouraging callers and referring them to get appropriate help – for example via the Ministry of Welfare hotline, Family violence Clinics etc.

We have firmly established our holistic approach to our legal aid clinic with our project “A Woman by Your Side” – providing one-on-one mentoring (by volunteers) for women going through divorce – in addition to our divorce support groups. This also includes referrals for emotional help done in partnership with students of social work and the School of Social Workers. This is an EU sponsored project.

As in previous years, we dealt with varied requests from callers, with some of them at the initial stages of the divorce process and some at an advanced stage in the legal process. Support included consultations about filing for an appeal, further consultation with our lawyers or referrals to other lawyers or professionals to help the caller.

THE KLOSK LEGAL AID HELPLINE

41
years old

Average age of caller

Average length of marriage

15
years old

2.5

Average number of children

Employment status of callers

52%

of calls to our helpline reported being exposed to some sort of domestic violence

22%

of women who called were unemployed

8.5%

of women who called were self-employed

2%

of women who called were retired

67.5%

of women who called were employed

Personal Stories from our Helpline

Legal Help regarding Child's Education

Rivka phoned us for help because the father of her child was refusing to sign papers that would allow her to get a proper assessment for her five-year-old special needs child, so that he could get extra help at school. We assisted Rivka with the necessary forms and papers she needed to take to court so that she could move forward with the assessment without the father's signature. We added a letter for her to submit to the court, emphasizing that this needed to be urgently resolved within 5 days, because the child was not able to go to school until the assessment was done and the court usually gives up to 30 days for this. With our help, Rivka could proceed and get the help her child needed.

Query from a woman who has no religion

We received an unusual call from Sandra who is not Jewish, and in fact is atheist and belongs to no religion. She did not know how to divorce as usually in Israel this goes through the religious courts - whichever religion that may be. We explained the process, which in this case, could go through the family law court with a special marriage annulment agreement.

Legal Advice

We received a call from Emily, who was married with a one-year-old child. She and her husband had tried marriage counselling, but it was clear that it wasn't working. Emily's friends suggested that she contact us to get an understanding as to the divorce process. Her husband was unemployed, with no property in their name and she felt lost in how to move forward. We advised her on her legal rights and how child support should work. We explained the whole divorce process to her and helped her find appropriate legal help to move forward.

Free Legal Representation and High Court Appeals

Appeal cases come from calls to our helpline, referrals from other lawyers or welfare organizations.

Gett via Emissary

Leora and her husband got married abroad and then made aliya to Israel. Leora's husband continued to travel for work, and one time he just did not come back. They had three children and her husband paid nothing towards the children and did not see them. He also left Leora to deal with outstanding payments and other financial dues. He refused to give a Gett.

Suddenly, after a year away, he decided he would give a Gett but his past record made this decision very unreliable, and we knew we had to act quickly in case he changed his mind. We went to the Agunot Department at the Rabbinical Court here, and with pressure from us to act fast, they appointed Dayanim from London to travel to where the husband had settled (where there were no Dayanim). There he signed his agreement, the Gett was completed in London, and then brought over to Israel. In this type of Gett via a messenger, time is crucial as at any point the husband could cancel the Gett until it is in the hands of his wife.

Thankfully, the Gett reached Israel and we accompanied Leora as soon as it arrived to accept the Gett. We continue to help Leora settle the rest of her divorce but so happy that she received the Gett.

Gett 'Lechumra'

Sarah (pseudonym) called our helpline in a panic. She was divorced from her husband a few years ago. There were some custody issues, where her ex husband did not always comply with their childcare agreements and he kept making changes.

Sarah faced some medical issues and difficulties over the past few years that somehow brought the couple back together for a short time. After about a year, when their relationship ended again, the ex-husband filed to the Rabbinical Court that their Gett was now invalid because they had got back together - which meant they were now 're-married' and the Gett should be cancelled.

Sarah rang us, felt panicked that her Gett may be cancelled and afraid that she may be made to accept new conditions to receive a new Gett. Her ex-husband was a lawyer and she did not understand what might happen. We decided to take on Sarah's case and we knew that as experts in divorce in Jewish law, we could sort out Sarah's case.

A lawyer without our background, could turn this case into a mess and cause much unnecessary harm. Adv. Shay Zilberberg represented Sarah at the Rabbinical Court, where the Rabbinical court did not accept that the previous Gett was now invalid and also refused to get involved with any custody issues. To reassure Sarah, they recommended a 'Gett Lechumra', which is not really necessary, but would give Sarah the security she needed to ensure her ex-husband could not try and use anything against her in the future. At first, her ex-husband resisted handing her the 'Gett Lechumra', but Adv. Shay Zilberberg told him very clearly that it was his responsibility to hand it over as nothing was changing anyway and there was nothing in it for him to resist. Adv. Shay Zilberberg's presence ensured that Sarah received her extra stringent Gett, protecting her right to being divorced. The case was resolved quickly thanks to the Rackman Center. In addition, Shay referred Sarah to our holistic care department, for one on one therapy with our partners at the School of Social Work, to help her through her divorce stress and other issues.

Here you can read the lovely letter of thanks received from Sarah – a letter of appreciation, which is also directed towards you, without whom, this project would not be able to take place:

*"Greetings,
My name is Sarah (pseudonym) and I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the existence of the Rackman Center.
I turned to the Rackman Center after my complex case was brought in front of the Rabbinical Courts and I was just so very lucky to have been accepted by the Rackman Center.
Adv. Shay Zilberberg, who from the very first moment handled my case seriously, was available to answer every question, always answered my calls, showed me that he cared and supported me when needed.
I have no words but to thank you for the very existence of this Center. I do not know how I would have overcome this period, if at all, without your help!
The mitzva that the Center and the people working in it do is such a great mitzvah that I cannot describe it with words ... I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart and be happy that there are organizations, and people like you in the world!
Lots of thanks for your amazing work!
In Great appreciation,
Sarah"*

Custody Court Issues

Four years ago, we represented Maya after she suffered violence in her marriage and wanted to divorce and ensure she had custody of their then small baby, as well as to receive child support. We assisted her and she went on with her life. This year, Maya contacted us again in need of help because her ex-husband was demanding changes to the custody arrangements and asking to reduce his payments. We once again went to the court to represent her and ensured Maya and her child's needs were met. After the hearing, Maya was so thankful and told our lawyer, **Adv Adi Raz** that she was one of the people in her life, since she came to Israel, that she will always remember and will hold a special place in their hearts.

Here is the touching letter she wrote:

*"Adi,
What can I possibly say to convey how grateful I am? You have been with me since the beginning. I showed up at your office with a baby, by bus, stressed and frazzled, totally broke and scared. I had no family in Israel, no income, barely any Hebrew, and I was terrified of my soon-to-be ex-husband. It was a great comfort to have you on my team, fighting for me and my baby. You not only were an amazing lawyer, but you also put my tremendous fear and worry at ease. You always went above and beyond. I've never heard of lawyers, even the expensive, private ones, being as responsive, kind, fast and generally as nice as you. I've heard horror stories about other lawyers and it makes me even more grateful because you are so awesome!
I am no longer afraid and my son and I are doing well – in a large part thanks to you. He was just an infant when I first came to Rackman and now he turns four years old. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you **Adi Raz** and the Rackman Center."*

The Rackman Center Represents an Agunah in one of the Most Difficult Cases:

Tzvia Gorodetsky, has been an Agunah for 17 years. She told the media, "Even his 16 years in prison have not persuaded him to release me."

Gorodetzky, a client of the Rackman Center at Bar-Ilan University, began a hunger strike to awaken Knesset members and rabbis to act on her behalf and that of women in her condition, and to release her from her agonizing situation.



Adv. Shay Zilberberg of the Rackman Center and Adv. Sara Markovitz described this case as "...one of the most difficult cases that the State of Israel has known, and the agunah has reached a state of hopelessness to the point of using a means of hunger strike after more than 17 years of refusal." We will update you on our progress. You can see more about it in the Israeli media.

Gett Refusers should be publicly shamed

Last year we reported about the notorious case of Oded Guez, who refused his wife a Gett, and as a result the Rabbinical Court granted permission for his name to be publicly shamed, which also included publicity on social media. Guez still refused his wife a Gett and managed to escape from Israel.

From his hiding place abroad he appealed to the High Court of Justice that the Rabbinical Court had no right to order his shaming, and especially not on the internet.



We represented Guez's wife, with an aim to help her, and other women, by proving that the court had every right to shame him and that this sanction should be used more often in the future. In February 2017, thanks to our lawyers, **Adv Shay Zilberberg** and **Adv. Keren Horowitz**, Guez's appeal was rejected.

In this ruling, the High Court of Justice recognized a major and important tool that can help to rescue many women from their aggrievances, especially when the Gett refuser flees abroad and cannot be punished by imprisonment. The ruling of the High Court of Justice is a significant achievement, and now it will be recognized that the terrible injustice that these men cause their wives by chaining them to their marriage, justifies the use of means such as "shaming" on the Internet.

The Lawyers of Tomorrow Program

This year, 21 students completed a training program that aims to mold tomorrow's lawyers into committed advocates in the battle for women's and children's rights.

The program is part of an obligatory third-year course for students to work in a legal clinic. Student applicants are selected based on their academic excellence and commitment to women's rights. A great deal of thought and planning is invested in the students' studies and practical training, emphasizing both theoretical and practical solutions in all areas of family law. Training includes bi-weekly group meetings and lessons in which cases are analyzed and Halachic and legal solutions are discussed, as well as other legal dilemmas.

Student meetings in the past year were led by **Professor Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Adv. Yossi Mendelsohn**, and our Center's lawyers. We also brought in specialist lecturers, including: judges, social workers and lawyers, who specialize in areas taught through our program. Students also benefited from individual meetings to discuss factors involved in choosing appropriate legal procedures in each case. Participants met with clients and attended court hearings, wrote pleas and lawsuits, and were active in drafting new bills for legislation. Students in the training program also participated in educational tours, including visits to: the Knesset, the Ramat Gan Family Law Court, the Rabbinical Court, and a battered women's shelter. The Knesset tour was especially significant in allowing the students to see firsthand the process of bill submission and legislation, which is so vital for making long-term social change. This training not only builds students' skills and experience, but also empowers them as individuals to become lawyers with strong ideals, and the confidence and tools to make positive change, helping their community, and supporting women and children.



Adv. Shiri Zeidman, Director of the Legal Aid Clinic described the student visit to the battered women's shelter in Rishon Lezion:

"We met the director of the shelter who explained to us about the shelter. We then heard difficult, personal stories from women who are staying at the shelter. It was clear that they have gained so much strength from the support they receive at the shelter – both for them and for their children. It was a difficult experience, but the students asked insightful questions and learnt a lot from the visit."



Students with Adv. Shiri Zeidman on a visit to the Rabbinical Court, Netanya

The Moot Court

The Moot Court is one of the highlights of the Rackman Center's annual activities. The project is essentially a 'mock trial', a simulation of a real court hearing that is led by law students in the Rackman Center's 'Lawyers of Tomorrow' training program. Actual professional judges preside over the trial and express their views in a detailed judgement. The students work with the Rackman Center's legal staff to prepare both sides of the case, which they then present before the panel of judges.



This year's topic was: Is the "Shragai Ruling" still relevant? Regarding the authority of the Rabbinical Court in the claim for child support.

The trial was based on a real case from 2012 in which children's rights for support payments were brought by the mother before the secular family court, with the implied approval of the religious rabbinical court. However, the father appealed to the Grand Rabbinical Court, arguing the secular court did not have jurisdiction over the subject-matter.

The Grand Rabbinical Court decided to nullify the family court's decision and claimed that it lacked the jurisdiction to determine such a case, leaving the mother and children in limbo and without the resources they need and that they should receive by law.

The mock trial case was heard by a panel of three professional Israeli judges: The Honorable Supreme Court Retired Justice Dalia Dorner, the Honorable Grand Rabbinical Court Jerusalem Judge Rabbi Eliyau Heisherik and the Honorable Tel Aviv District Court Judge Zila Zfat.

We thank the esteemed judges for coming, and also thank Adv. Danit Assaf-Yehudai for her professional guidance, to **Adv Shiri Zeidman**, Clinic Director at the Rackman Center, for the organization of the mock trial, and to all the staff of the Rackman Center and the students at the clinic for their successful work.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the US Embassy in Israel for funding this project and for joining us.



The Collaborative Divorce Section

Collaborative Divorce is an Alternative Dispute Resolution process that strives to preserve the emotional and financial resources of the family, while achieving a marital settlement agreement that considers and respects the welfare of everyone in the family.

Collaborative Divorce is a new model in divorce, certainly for Israel, and we at the Rackman Center are thrilled to be leading the way forward for this important and ideal legal procedure, which aims towards a more harmonious divorce.

We are proud to have helped establish the Israeli organization for Collaborative Divorce and launched it at a conference at Bar Ilan University. 2017 was our third year since establishing this section, led by **Adv. Adi Raz**.

This year, the second Collaborative Divorce Conference was held at Bar Ilan University. We strongly support this method of divorce and will continue to take on cases using this method, as well as encouraging other professionals as well.

הארגון הישראלי לגירושין בשיתוף פעולה (ע"ד)

אנו פוסקים אודות לזכו המרכזי של הארגון הארצי לגירושין בשיתוף פעולה (ע"ד) שיתקים ביום א' | 26.3.17 | בין השעות 15:30-19:00 באוניברסיטת בר-אילן, בניין 430 אלום בוק (חדר ה-Coffee time)

סדר היום אפרים המרזים בקבוצת פנסאף

עלות: 50 ש"ח למשתתף

במסגרת הסיום התאפשר הרשמה מיוחדת הכוללת לארגון הארצי בכך 200 ש"ח

לפרטים נרשמת: tripw@gmail.com | 094-4343738 | esther102@gmail.com | 050-6756651

נבחרת זכי' ולדון | עורכת דין אסתר יסיר

חניה - בחניית הסטודנטים של יסיר 5, ליד רחוב סקס ואנה 28.

בג"ד הארגון הישראלי לגירושין בשיתוף פעולה (ע"ד) 2017 סדר היום

15:30-16:00: התכנסות

חלק ראשון: 16:00-17:30

16:00-16:05: פתיחה ע"י נחמה בונגן | ע"ד אסתר יסיר

16:05-16:15: סיכום הפעילות של הארגון הארצי לשנת 2016 | ע"ד נעדרת | הב"ד ארי-סו

16:15-16:25: האמנ"ם על הספק | ע"ד יעילי אקין | ע"ד עירית סופר

16:30-16:45: הפתח הערש לספור המדיניות: אורחין | אורחין | ע"ד סביל שקדי | ע"ד סביל סקס | ע"ד אביה טאקס קורנר

16:45-17:15: הספקס מסויסר וירושון בשיתוף פעולה | ד"ר ערני סולסק - היא ממרכז המחקר והמחקר המרכזי למחקר המשפטי

17:15-17:30: פרטים פרקטיים להגיש תביעה המנ"ם | ע"ד דגה דורמן | הב"ד נרית סקס נפתח

17:30-18:00: הפסקה

חלק שני - 18:00-19:00

18:00-18:30: אחרית הדבר סומכמת בביל נבוטאקס בורש ד"ר אה גאלה שקדי - אסטרטגיה בירוקרטי, יסיר וסיר

18:30-18:55: קדמה מפורטת על המועדף

18:55-19:00: האמנ"ם הכלכלי כקבוצת חולקים בנש"ם | 94 ארי נירדא



The Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Advocacy and Legislation Unit

The Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Advocacy and Legislation Unit, headed by **Adv. Keren Horowitz**, drafts bills and amendments to advance laws, propose reforms, and advise policy-makers. Ministers, Knesset Members, civil servants, and journalists continually consult us on every aspect of family law. We regularly appear on public committees and are permanent invitees to Knesset discussions on women's rights. We conduct policy-oriented research and lead media campaigns supporting the change we attempt to make. We are involved in practically every change in Israeli family law.

This year we drafted 6 bills.

We prepared and submitted 20 position papers and submitted 10 letters to government officials. We were involved in 4 High Court appeals. We advised members of the Knesset regularly throughout the year and collaborated with over 12 other organizations.

We continued to handle issues arising from the Schnitt Committee.



The Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Advocacy and Legislation Unit continued...

A Glimpse into this Department's Work:

Fighting a Bill to Expand the Powers of the Rabbinical Courts

The Ministerial Committee on Legislation approved a bill by MKs Gafni and Meklev, according to which the rabbinical courts could serve as arbitrators on civil matters whether or not they are related to divorce.

The bill transgresses the situation in Israel back years. For more than a decade, the High Court of Justice has prohibited rabbinical courts from dealing as arbitrators in purely civil matters.

The bill expands the power of a judicial system that excludes women.

There are no women judges in the rabbinical courts. Moreover, it enhances the risk of Gett abuse, extorting the "consent" to arbitrate. We continue to oppose this bill, so far with success.



The Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Advocacy and Legislation Unit continued...

New Regulations Approve Allowing a Female Director-General for the Rabbinical Courts

The Rackman Center welcomes the new proposal to include women in the choice of appointment of a director-general for the rabbinical courts, while working on improving the criteria for a director general of the rabbinical courts. This regulation constitutes a continuation of legal proceedings before the High Court of Justice that began with a petition by the Rackman Center in 2010.

Child Support will be Continued in Cases of Insolvency and Economic Rehabilitation

A discussion was held in the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee on the draft law on insolvency and economic rehabilitation (preparation for first and third readings). At the hearing, Adv. Miri Bernstein represented the Rackman Center, who led the process of amending the bill to ensure that child support does not get delayed as a result of the insolvency process that applies to one of their parents.

At the meeting, the Rackman Center's legal clinic proposed that the payments to eligible individuals would not be frozen when the bankruptcy order was issued, but would continue to be paid until a request was submitted to the court that it would pay the child support. Proudly, the Rackman Center's proposal was accepted by the committee.

The Bruce and Ruth Rappaport Advocacy and Legislation Unit continued...

Rackman Academic Article Extensively Quoted and Relied upon in Groundbreaking Supreme Court Decision

A widely publicized decision by the Supreme Court from July 2017 ruled that child support payments should be adjusted equally between partners according to their income in a case of joint custody, rather than being the father's sole responsibility. In reaching the decision, the Supreme Court quoted extensively an academic article on the subject of child support, written by **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Adv. Keren Horowitz** and **Adv. Shay Zilberberg** of the Rackman Center. The article was titled:

"The Chaos in Child Support Decisions in Cases of Joint Physical Custody: Critique of the Caselaw and of the Shiffman Committee's Report." In the article, the authors presented examples that show that even in cases of joint custody, it is necessary for the court to appoint one parent to be responsible for purchasing all the extras a child may need, aside from the basic living essentials.

It is important for the child to know whom he should ask for a new coat for the winter, for example. It is therefore necessary for the other partner to contribute to these expenses as well, relative to each parent's income. We are proud to say that this concept, as well as others, was adopted in the court's final decision. We would like to emphasize though, that while this is being publicly declared as showing equality, there are still 80,000 cases where the father pays no child support or in fact any support at all. We hope that this ruling will be a step towards improving this situation too, in the best interests of the children.



Working Together with Coalitions towards Change



Coalition to Ensure Child Support Payments

The Rackman Center is the leading organization of an effective Coalition to Ensure Child Support Payments, with the goal of ensuring that children receive what is owed to them, regardless of their mother's income level.

We have participated in protests against the proposed changes to the law that we believe are wrong, and we have seen firsthand that the coalition is effective. We appreciate the fact that the Welfare Minister genuinely understands and supports what we are trying to achieve and is working closely with us to find appropriate solutions.



In the photo, Galit Shaul with Payne Sukenik of the "Asher Talki" organization.

Tender Years Presumption Coalition

The last years, more strongly from 2015 we faced a constant struggle against private bills that were put forward at the Knesset to abolish the tender years presumption from the Guardianship Law, and the Tender Years Presumption Coalition was established to unite women's organizations in this struggle.

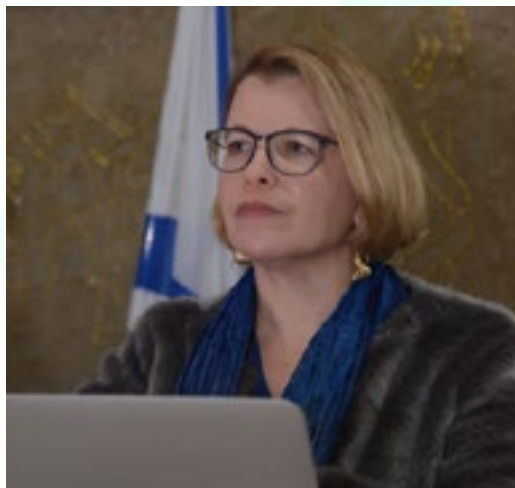
Last year, we helped MK Shuli Moalem-Refaeli to offer an alternative bill for the original Tender Years Presumption, which, rather than abolishing the presumption (as MK Kish is pushing for), currently suggests that physical custody should be given to the mother up to the child's fourth birthday (rather than age 6 as has been the case until now). After age 4, the "approximation rule" should take effect, which would mean that the same division of care would continue after the divorce, to ensure stability for the child and to put their interests first. Both of the parents are the legal custodians of the child at any age.

Conferences

The Rackman Center Annual Conference

In January we held our 14th Annual Conference on Women, Family and Law, on the topic: "Between Family and Inheritance," which addressed the interface between family law and inheritance law.

We discussed questions that have a significant impact on the economic implications of family life and end of life.



To watch the conference, click on this link <https://tinyurl.com/AnnualConf14>

Conferences continued...

The Rackman Center Conference for International Women's Day

We held a special event for International Women's Day, together with the Center for Communications and Law at Bar-Ilan University. The event was on the subject of "Literature, Friendship and the Sisterhood of Women," during which we discussed the books of Elena Ferrante, which have been translated into Hebrew.

Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari spoke about the portrayal of gender-based violence against women in Ferrante's books. The event was moderated by **Dr. Galit Shaul**, CEO of the Rackman Center, together with Dr. Anat Peleg, Director of the Center for Communication and Law, and a passionate reader of Ferrante who presented the idea. Other speakers were Alon Alters, the wonderful translator of the series of Hebrew books, who came to the event all the way from Venice; Dr. Shira Stav, Professor of Literature at Ben-Gurion University; Prof. Miriam Faust, University Rector and Researcher in the Field of Psychology; and Gilad Meltzer, Director and Curator of the Agam Museum and Senior Lecturer at the Art Academy.



Conferences continued...

The Rackman Center Conference for the International Day for the Prevention of Violence Against Women

The Rackman Center held a conference about the Istanbul Convention (the "Convention") for the International Day for the Prevention of Violence Against Women. The conference, was held to promote Israel's accession to the Convention, which states that violence against women is gender-based structural violence, carried out against women, for being women.

Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari laid out the history of the international struggle and the importance of applying the criteria of the Istanbul Convention to the developments in this field in Israel. She pointed to significant deficiencies presented by government representatives and said that the Istanbul Convention offers a solution for this exact issue, by defining clearly and precisely what the state must do, what tools must be provided for dealing with the issue, and the necessary coordination between the various authorities. "Forty-seven (47) countries belonging to the Council of Europe have already signed the Convention. I understand that the professional bodies in Israel are seriously considering the possibility of joining, and if it is decided that Israel sign the Convention, it will be a significant and important step in the advancement of the struggle against violence against women in Israel."

Dr. Galit Shaul, CEO of the Rackman Center, added: "The Convention attaches great importance to the close cooperation between the authorities and civil society organizations. Joint mobilization of state and civil society sectors in Israel is critical to the success of necessary change, and sometimes it can be a solution to the failures of the existing structures, as pointed out by several government ministries at the conference."

MK Aida Touma-Suleiman, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, referred to the lack of actual implementation of commitments and committees' recommendations and said: "**Committees are a good thing, but unfortunately some of the recommendations are not implemented at all.**"

The conference also marked the retirement of Ms. Vered Swede, Outgoing Director of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Prime Minister's office.



Conferences continued...

Child Support Conference

The Rackman Center held a highly successful conference for legal professionals on September 3, 2017, at the end of the academic year, on the topic of Child Support. As mentioned in our Legislation section, the Supreme Court handed down a precedent-setting decision on the issue of child support, in which the seven-judge panel relied heavily on an academic article written by **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari** and Rackman Center lawyers **Adv. Keren Horowitz** and **Adv. Shay Zilberberg**. The panel actually quoted us 40 times in the decision! Considering this and other recent developments, we saw a need to explain the changes and present it to professionals in the field.

The conference was packed to capacity and was very interesting.

With thanks to all the speakers who took part in the seminar:

Adv. Zerach Rosenblum and Adv. Shalom Cohen, **Adv. Keren Horowitz**,

Judge Varda Plaut, Prof. Dov Frimer, Prof. Shahr Lifshitz, Judge Shaul

Shohat, **Adv. Shay Zilberberg**, Judge Neil Hendel,

Judge Rabbi Eliyahu Hishrick, **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari**,

Prof. Zvi Trigger and the facilitator of the seminar,

Dr. Galit Shaul - CEO of the Rackman Center.

Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, together with **Adv. Keren Horowitz** and

Adv. Shay Zilberberg, had also prepared an analysis of the decision,

which was uploaded on the internet and handed out to the conference audience.



Publications



Ha Din VeHadayan The Law and its Decisor

Together with The Center for Women's Justice, we publish the "HaDin VeHadayan" - the Law and its Decisor, made possible through the ongoing generous support of Mr and Mrs Romie Tager, QC, London, England. The first issue was published in February 2003, and each issue contains summaries of cases and full rabbinical court decisions in family matters.

This publication consistently offers crucial access to Rabbinical Court holdings.



The importance of this project is twofold: first, from a legal professionals' perspective, these cases are now available to all lawyers and judges involved in family law. More than one lawyer has shared with us how this information was used as evidence in court. Secondly, the publication of rabbinical court decisions and deliberations will contribute to an increased public awareness of both problems and potential solutions, while serving as an internal review mechanism.

This Year we published three issues with rulings that covered the following topics:

ISSUE 43: Children, Restraint Orders, Revocation of conversion, Property, Grounds for divorce.

Issue 44: Rules of Procedure and Evidence, Restraint Orders, Grounds for divorce, Ketubah, Property, Kiddushin

Issue 45: Damages claims, Get conditions, for Divorce



Women and Family in Israel – Statistical Bi-annual Report:

We are proud to announce that the fifth issue of women and family in Israel has just been published.

The Yearbook is a data center on women and family and the relationship between women and family. The Yearbook enables tracking of processes, changes and changes, or the absence of changes in these areas. Chapter 2 of the Yearbook contains unique information collected through applications under the Freedom of Information Law, which relates to legal statistics regarding divorce proceedings conducted in rabbinical courts and family courts.

We believe that data are a necessary tool for motivating social and legal change and therefore we hope that the Yearbook will serve as an effective tool for workers to bring about change in the areas covered by the Yearbook.

Those wishing to buy the Yearbook are invited to contact the Rackman Center at: rackman.center@biu.ac.il



Knight of Quality Government Award



The Movement for Quality Government in Israel (MQG), a Jerusalem-based NGO which is committed to promoting values of democracy, transparency, good governance and civic engagement in the Israeli society, holds an annual Knights of Quality Government Award. This year, the recipient in the Education category was our very own **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari**.



Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari is awarded the esteemed Knight of Quality Government Award in the Education category from the Movement for Quality Government in Israel (MQG).

The EU Project: Realizing Women's Human Rights and Access to Justice in Family Law in Israel

In 2017 we were in full swing of our generous EU grant (two-year grant) from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which funded a new project that was launched in April 2016 and will conclude in 2018.

Our overall objective for this project is: ***To realize women's human rights in family law in Israel with emphasis on concerns by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) regarding 'discrimination against women in the context of divorce' due to the fact that religious laws have exclusive jurisdiction over marriage and divorce.***

Objectives:

To focus this objective and maximize the effect on our beneficiaries, we identified the following specific objectives and results, which we believe will be most effective in creating real change on the ground.

Specific objectives:

1. Bringing Israel closer to international standards as set out by the UN CEDAW Committee and raising awareness of these standards among policy makers.
2. Facilitating and easing access to justice in family law in Israel for women of all religions.
3. Sharing knowledge with other women's rights organizations in Israel and internationally, to develop tools and protocols together.



*Some events as part of the EU Project:
Sharing Knowledge Conferences*

In November 2016, the Rackman Center hosted a Palestinian women's rights organization for a conference at Bar-Ilan University to discuss the shared challenges Israeli and Palestinian women face in their respective societies. The conference was called "Access to Justice: Sharing Knowledge Seminar." The objective of the EU endeavor is to improve the sharing of ideas, tools, and protocols for development to implement women's rights and divorce support for Israeli and Palestinian women. The event included presentations from the trained facilitators of the Israeli and Palestinian support groups; a guest lecture from Nabila Espanioly, Director of the Altufula Center *مركز ألو فطلا زكرم* in Nazareth; and small group discussions on topics such as direct assistance, legal activism, and personal empowerment. Our ultimate goal of this part of our project is promoting cooperation and progress for women in both Israeli and Palestinian societies.



The EU Project: Realizing Women's Human Rights and Access to Justice in Family Law in Israel

In December we held an online webinar with the local violence law clinic in the Faculty of Law, University of Ankara. The purpose of the meeting was to share knowledge and experience on women's access to justice in family law.

This meeting, discussed the common and different challenges for Israeli women and Turkish women, with the aim of improving the sharing of tools and ideas in assisting and making information accessible to all women.



The discussion was led by Professor Ruth Halperin Kaddari and Professor Golaris Yogur of Ankara University.

During the meeting, the activities of the two bodies were presented on topics such as direct assistance and legal activity in the framework of the clinics.



Knesset meeting about Israel adopting the UN Sustainable Development Goals

On Tuesday, March 17, International Women's Day was marked in the Knesset, among other things, by a discussion of the Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women.

The meeting focused on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations and their adoption in Israel, while adapting them to the local level, with the aim of integrating social, economic and environmental considerations into decision-making and policy-making processes.

During the discussion, **Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kadarri** gave a presentation, that reviewed the SDG and explained the importance of assimilating the objectives which are measurable and universal goals and which can serve as a basis for comparison between countries around the world. In the review, it was explained that apart from the fifth goal of the SDG, which deals specifically with the empowerment of women and girls, gender objectives are gender-specific.

The committee called on the government to adopt the goals of the United Nations to promote society in general and women in particular.

The discussion was attended by Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein and many Knesset members.

Holistic Care

'Moving On'

Divorce Support Group

We are very proud of the unique, life-changing aspect of this project – our holistic department.

Since the 'Moving on' Support group began we have run the group 4 times. 30 women have been part of a group over the past year and a half, all of whom attended 10 meetings which each lasted about 90 minutes.

The meetings included sessions by professionals in the field and therapies, as well as empowerment and legal advice. It also included a session with Kol Zchut (All Rights) to teach women how to access information about their rights through the Kol Zchut website.

We are excited to update that the Rackman Center is joining the "Kulanana" initiative - which works to strengthen social cohesion and diversity in Israeli society by initiating joint projects in the community of non-profit organizations. This year, the Rackman Center is joining together with the Chicago Lod Cultural Center for a joint project "Continuing on the Road" - support groups for single mothers. On Monday, 20.2.17, we participated in the first community meeting together with dozens of associations with whom we will take a common path. At the meeting we laid the cornerstones for joint work in the community in general and with the "Multicultural Center" in Lod in particular. With our partnership, we have already held a first working meeting and we are excited by the cooperation. We are happy to take part in the Kulanana initiative and to leverage our activities for women from all Israeli society.



In the pictures, Dr. Galit Shaul and Gilit Inbar Kimchi from the Rackman Center with the project's partners and representatives of the project - Kenan Rabino, Deputy Director of the Arison Foundation and Adv. Liron Almog of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women.

Holistic Care

'A Woman by your Side' Volunteer Training & Mentoring Program

Through the EU program, we have now recruited 15 volunteers for our volunteer network, most of which are from central Israel and are between 48-67 years old. They came from diverse backgrounds, including: education/academics, high-tech, law, finance, law enforcement, medical, human resources, and theater. Approximately half are divorced and wanted to use their experiences inside the system to help other women in similar situations.



We promoted the network through Facebook, WhatsApp, word of mouth, and through Ruach Tova – an organization that pairs people with organizations looking for volunteers. To be able to mentor a woman going through divorce, every volunteer committed to a detailed course to give them tools and knowledge to be a mentor.

The group was coordinated by **Gilit Inbar-Kimchi** who, at some meetings, was also the facilitator. Each session started with a lecture, followed by discussions and processing of content or mastering of tools taught in the lecture. One session was led by Kol Zchut, our partner for this project, on rights and using their website, as a tool for navigating rights.

After the training, we matched up the volunteers with women who have turned to the Rackman Center for legal help and emotional support. Each volunteer supported one woman for 6 months. They met once per week for 1-2 hours. We also operate group support for the volunteers.

Feedback from our mentor volunteers has been very positive, with many wishing to continue volunteering. Thanks to the EU grant we have produced this movie that explains what this program is achieving. You can watch it by clicking on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgIQrqATSnl>



Adv. Osnat Prinz and Gilit Inbar-Kimchi together with the volunteers

Holistic Care

What does volunteering mean to our volunteers?

In the day-to-day activities of the Rackman Center, we are fortunate to meet many amazing women. One such woman is one of our veteran volunteers, Orna Nachmani Arazi. Orna has been volunteering for about a year in the Rackman Center helpline, and last summer she joined the Center's "A Woman By Your Side" program, in which she personally accompanied one of the applicants to the center. Here is what she said about her experience.

"My name is Orna, the mother of two children, Hamutal and Ofer, I am 58.

I am a lawyer by profession and I completed mediation studies in family law, as well as further training at Bar-Ilan University. Up until two years ago, I was a senior officer in the Israel Police Force. As part of my work, I worked in various positions, as a police prosecutor, as the head of the road accident victims section and as the head of the bereavement notices team.

I was mainly exposed to the issue of women's rights in my position as head of the Victims of Offenses Section, in which, together with other bodies, I fought against violence against women both in terms of family and sexual offenses.

In the future, I would like to help in other areas of the center's work, both because of the therapeutic orientation in me, and because of my professional knowledge.

I hope that I can be very useful in other areas. "

Upon my retirement from the police, I applied to work as a volunteer at the Bat Yam Family Care Center, and in this framework, together with a social worker, I directed a psycho-didactic group of violent men. Through my work there, I came to hear about the Rackman Center.

Women's rights, and people's rights in general, are a subject that has always interested me. When I arrived at the Rackman Center, I received training for responding to calls on the helpline, so that I could contact them and be sensitive to their stories, as well as referring relevant questions for follow up by the Rackman lawyers. I made a point of forgetting the conversations I had, out of a desire to preserve the privacy of the women with whom I spoke. I feel that the each conversation I have with the callers, has a positive effect on the women. I give them someone to talk to, a listening and unjudgmental ear. Quite a few women are emotional overloaded, and need someone to focus on them. I think the one-on-one time is good for these women as it gives them the feeling that there is something to be done and that it is possible to get the right help.

I think the existence of the Rackman Center is so important, and I greatly appreciate the work they are doing. The staff have an agenda to promote women's rights, and their work is very important. Their kindness and willingness to help are like an embrace for these women who are in times of trouble, and they offer great consolation.

Orna Nachmani Arazi



Collaboration with other Organizations



Collaboration with other Organizations

We often collaborate with other organizations doing work that touches ours. Many cases are referred to us by other organizations working in the field, and we are also happy to refer cases to appropriate organizations if we feel they would be more suitable. We also collaborate often with other organizations through legal advice, joint bill proposals or appeals to the High Court, and even joint representation.



The ICAR Coalition, meeting at the Rackman Center

The Center is a well-respected member of the ICAR Coalition, an international coalition for the rights of Agunot and Mesoravot Gett and we take an active role in ICAR's Legal Steering Committee, and the Committee for events for the Agunah Day, Legal Committees and Committee for Rabbinical Appointments.

We also regularly work together with other bodies within Bar Ilan, including the Gender Studies Program, the Student Union, and the School of Social Work, among others.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the other amazing civil society women's organizations with whom we collaborate towards the same goals to advance women's rights in Israel.

Partnership with Kol Zchut



Kol Zchut - or "All Rights," is the leading website for information on rights and entitlements in Israel. Kol Zchut is a non-profit, collaborative project, built and maintained by a group of Israeli experts, building an encyclopedia for all information about rights and entitlements in Israel.

Kol Zchut is intended for use by the public at large, as well as by the municipalities, organizations and centers that assist the general public access to claim their rights.



As part of our partnership with Kol Zchut, they have already prepared and uploaded to their website 23 new pages in Arabic on rights related to marriage and divorce under Sha'aria law, to support women's access to justice in Muslim religious divorce in Israel.

In addition, they have uploaded eight new pages about women's rights in Hebrew and will reach 10 by the end of the first year of the project.

These additions were all prepared by a lawyer on behalf of the Rackman Center.

Please see here for a link to the website.
http://www.kolzchut.org.il/en/All_Rights>About





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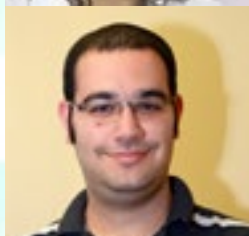
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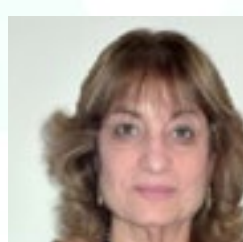
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Deborah Dickson
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Adv. Osnat Karplus
Legal Aid Clinic
Lawyer



Mina Goren
Logistics Manager

We wish to thank our student administrators from this year:

Student Employees

We wish to thank our student administrators from this year:
 Aviyah Kabilo and Gil Shmuel – Legal Aid Helpline
 Adi Goldberg and Nitzan Chazan – Legal Clinic
 Dikla Toyoto – Publications
 Racheli Degani – Conferences
 Chemdat Kav – New Media and Network Defamation Prevention
 Liad Rosinkovitz – Hadin Vehadayan
 Lior Bar-Levi – Social Media and Website





Board of Directors



Professor Shahar Lifshitz

Continuing as Chair of our Board, Prof. Shahar Lifshitz is the Dean of Bar Ilan University Law School. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute, where he co-directs the project on Human Rights in Judaism. His research fields are family law and contract law.



Professor Shmuel Feiner

Prof Feiner is a senior Lecturer in Jewish History at Bar Ilan University. He is also head of the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem



Dr Ronit Ir-Shai

Dr. Ronit Irshai is one of a select cadre of scholars exploring what she terms the “dynamite combination” of halakha and feminist thought, she is a sought-after speaker, author of an innovative work on fertility and Jewish law, and activist in the Orthodox Jewish feminist organization Kolech. She is academic advisor for the Gender Studies Program at BIU.



Professor Rachel Dekel

A leading member of the School of Social Work, Professor Rachel Dekel’s team’s research focuses on coping and adjustment following traumatic events and their implications on the survivor, family, therapist and community.



Adv Moriel Matalon

Adv Moriel Matalon has vast legal experience. He is Chairman of the Israeli Fund for UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund). and was the Managing Partner of Gornitzky & Co and the Chairman of the firm’s Executive Committee.

Conclusion

Thank You

The Rackman Center is a unique team of professionals who work tirelessly and selflessly for our clients, for the other women that we help and for women in society at large. We thank all our staff for their hard work, positive attitude and drive to make a real difference towards our goals in making legal and social change for women in family law in Israel.

We also thank Bar-Ilan University for their ongoing support, and of course we would like to express our utmost appreciation and gratitude towards our generous donors, our fabulous grant partners, supporters and friends.

Onwards and upwards for 2018

We look forward to updating you on our work, achievements and progress throughout the upcoming year. We couldn't do it without you.

Thank you!



