

Grassroots Women Leaders Make a Difference

Annual Report 2020

Kayan – Feminist Organization





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Annual Report 2020 // Kayan - Feminist Organization

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A message from our General Director

Dear Friends,

In these uncertain times, we are thankful for your steadfast support and friendship. We have seen everywhere that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities, made vulnerable populations even more susceptible, and caused a drastic increase in violence – and Arab Palestinian women in Israel have been no exception to these unfortunate trends. Grassroots women's leadership has been the highlight of this year. Thanks both to the outstanding initiative of grassroots women, as well as the generous support of friends, like you, we have been able to face this challenge head on.

In 2020, we witnessed the true power of grassroots women. When the crisis emerged, the local women's groups and Jusur Forum of women leaders activated their networks and responded quickly and effectively in order to address the specific needs of their communities as a result of the Covid-19. We also developed our creativity in the face of pandemic-related restrictions, such as finding new ways to raise awareness through social and digital media, as well as creating new partnerships and networks – including the first-ever cross-border feminist coalition of two-dozen feminist and human rights organizations, bringing Palestinian groups within '48 together with organizations in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.

We are proud to report that we accomplished much this year outside of the emergency response. In continuing to advocate for women's full inclusion in politics, we issued two publications, a formal evaluation of our project and a study on experiences of



women local councilors, which will help us and other organizations in our future work. In our work to address gender-based violence, we completed a comprehensive research project on femicide in Arab society. Additionally, we partnered with a dozen coalition members to present our annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, which inspired a diverse audience of all ages, backgrounds, and genders through almost 40 creative public activities and an online anti-violence campaign. Our collective work fighting for gender equality is more urgent than ever, especially in the face of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis. Through our unique holistic, grassroots approach to women's empowerment and leadership, we will continue to advance the human and civil rights of Palestinian women in Israel, to better our collective society. None of these efforts would be possible without the ongoing interest and support of our donors, partners, and friends. As always, we are profoundly grateful.

In peace and solidarity,

Rafah Anabtawi,
General Director

Our Story

Kayan was founded in 1998 by a group of Arab Palestinian feminists in Haifa who sought to advance the status of Palestinian women in Israel. As a feminist, grassroots organization, we take a bottom-up approach to advocating for women's rights. Since Kayan's inception, we have dedicated ourselves to dismantling the root causes of gender-based discrimination in Palestinian society, through community outreach, legal aid, and local and international advocacy. Through our community work, we provide personal and group empowerment, assist local women's groups with community organizing, including creative awareness-raising campaigns, and provide trainings and ongoing support on topics related to women needs in the local and the national levels. In our legal program, we provide free legal aid to Palestinian women, and work with local, national, and international institutions to both promote and uphold Palestinian women's rights. We also provide women with holistic legal and emotional support through our hotline, which is available 24/7. We are determined to enhance Palestinian women's leadership while consolidating their collective power and advancing their social, economic, and political rights.

Our Mission

Kayan strives towards consolidating an active, systematic, nationwide Arab Palestinian feminist movement that actively affects social change through contesting the root causes of gender-based discrimination, defending and promoting the rights of women, and ensuring their integration into decision-making positions.

Our Vision

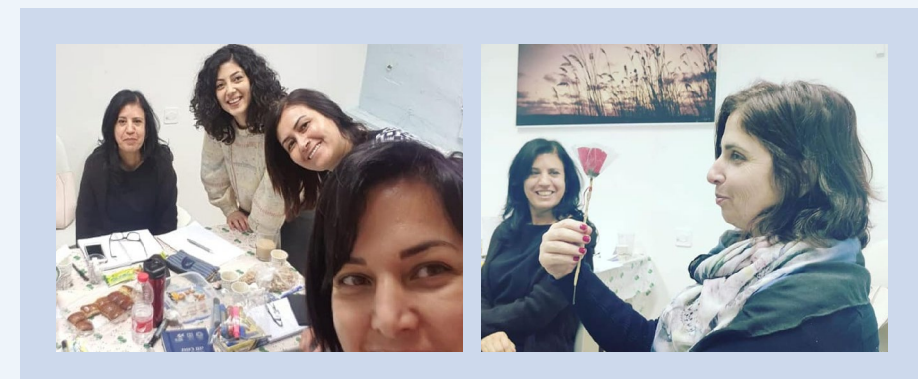
Kayan envisions a secure and just society free of gender-based discrimination, in which Arab Palestinian women in Israel enjoy full and equitable opportunities for self-actualization, and take a leading and active part in society through realizing their individual and collective rights.

Our Board

Mariam Haj Khoury, Chair
Iman Jabour*
Dr. Hanaa Hamdan-Saliba
Boshra Rashed Awwad
Reem Haj
Ruzeen Odeh

Our Staff

Rafah Anabtawi, General Director
Mona Mahajneh, Director of the Community Department
Alhan Nahhas-Daoud, Legal Advocate
Hajar Abu Salih, Community Organizer
Zeinab Diab**, Project Coordinator
Nisreen Tabare, Project Coordinator
Samar Abo Sinne, Administrative Assistant
Shayna Solomon**, Resource Development Coordinator
Cecilia Yen, Resource Development Coordinator
Francis Tams, Accountant



**Iman completed her tenure as a board member at the end of 2020. Kayan would like to thank her for many years of faithful service to the organization.*

***Zeinab and Shayna have transitioned out of Kayan to pursue different opportunities. Kayan thanks them for their work and contributions, and welcomes Nisreen and Cecilia to the team.*

Kayan's Approach to Social Change

Our context

Palestinian women navigate a complex socio-political environment in Israel and encounter overlapping oppressions: as a marginalized minority in a discriminatory and increasingly religious-nationalistic Jewish state, and as women in a patriarchal society. Society condones violence and shaming as means of control over women's behavior, and Palestinian women face numerous obstacles to seeking and receiving justice from a discriminatory state and legal system. Israeli personal status law (e.g. marriage, divorce, child custody) is governed not civilly but by heavily patriarchal religious courts, often trapping women in inequitable and dangerous situations with a drastic power imbalance. The Covid-19 crisis has only exacerbated the problem. Reported cases of domestic violence and other types of gender-based violence increased by 40% compared to 2019. Shelters filled up rapidly and faced severe budget and capacity limitations. Israeli state institutions are even more reluctant than usual to take women's safety seriously because they are prioritizing Covid-19 response.



Jusur Forum: a movement led by grassroots women

Our grassroots women's movement addresses the issues described above and forges a path to gender equality through community-based activism that builds sustainable change from the roots. The movement is led by Jusur Forum, 25 Arab Palestinian women activists representing local women's groups across Israel, who consolidate collective power using a community organizing model to ensure the sustainability of community-based initiatives for social change. Together, Kayan and Jusur Forum discuss and address critical issues and strategize local and national action plans to promote community organizing and social activism for women and youth. Activities include awareness-raising campaigns, creative field work, and extensive collaboration to connect the local and national levels of advocacy.

In 2020, Jusur Forum has continued to be a strong voice for Arab Palestinian women's rights by elevating the work of local women's groups to the national level. The forum played an active and critical role in guiding the Covid-19 emergency response, as well as in strategizing creative new ideas and approaches for the 16 Days Campaign. They also played a key role in increasing the visibility of real women who escaped violence and their personal stories and are continuing to expand our audiences to include more men and youth.



Empowering Women



25

Jusur Forum
women leaders

&

100

women in local
women's groups

Worked to support their communities
and raise awareness of critical issues

174

Women received legal and
emotional assistance from
Kayan's hotline, including careful
and holistic follow up through
thousands of calls



34%

Took actions to change
their situation as a result

15

Women local councilors (out of 18)
received support and guidance
from Kayan in their work

Reaching Communities



21

Localities were reached through the
work of Kayan, Jusur Forum, our
local women's groups, and our 16
Days Campaign coalition partners

3,000

Individuals directly participated
in public activities sponsored
by Kayan

Facing the Covid-19 Crisis



In addition to our usual work, grassroots women

Delivered

733

Aid packages

Organized

160

Regular meal deliveries

Provided direct assistance to

300

Women facing issues such
as violence

Raising Awareness Through the Media



1.2
million

reached through Facebook,
Instagram, YouTube
and Twitter

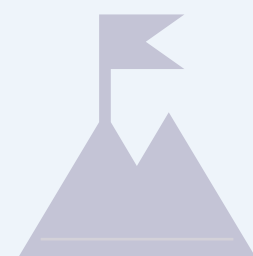
60

Media pieces written
about Kayan's work

21

Interviews with Kayan staff
and Jusur Forum women

Leading on the issues



2

Studies performed on the experience of women
local councilors and on femicide

1

Evaluation written on Kayan's women in politics project

1

Report on domestic violence in the Covid19- crisis
submitted through special consultative status to the
UN Economic and Social Council

A Year of Crisis and a Grassroots Solution

Kayan and its grassroots network saw the critical need for gender-sensitive emergency response to the Covid19- crisis and parallel crisis of violence. Kayan's local women's groups strategized and mobilized to stand up for women during this difficult time, learning online tools to hold virtual meetings to conduct emergency needs assessments and form gender-sensitive action plans.

"2020 was especially difficult for women, as measures to limit the spread of the epidemic, such as lockdowns, have brought many women into a cycle of violence. It was more important than ever this year for us to continue our cooperative work raising awareness of women's issues in our society."

Hajar Abu Saleh, Kayan community organizer.

Grassroots women worked closely with local councils by serving in emergency committees and consulting with welfare departments, representing an unprecedented increase in women's public leadership and visibility. The women's deep connections to their communities helped them organize effective emergency response that ensured no vulnerable members were left behind.

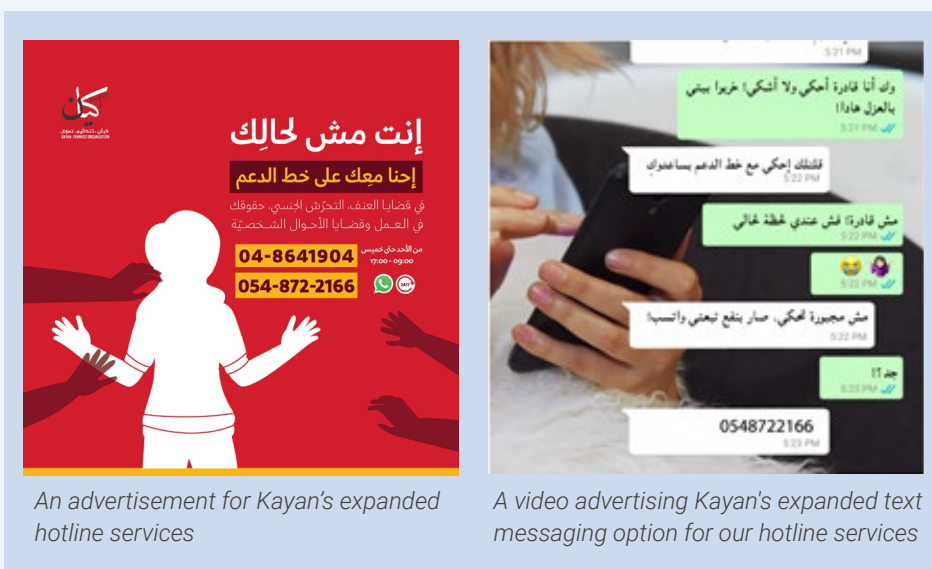


Grassroots women highlight the parallel crisis of violence

At every stage of their emergency response, grassroots women spread the message that Covid-19 had also brought a parallel crisis of violence. They challenged society to stand up against violence against women through social media engagement and protests, and provided resources and encouragement to women so they could come forward for assistance.

Expanding the hotline

Kayan responded to the crisis of violence against women by expanding its legal and emotional support hotline to be available 24/7, as well as opening a text messaging option to increase accessibility. Grassroots women spread wide scale awareness of this resource through social media. They also positioned themselves as trusted advocates for women in their communities, ensuring that women in need felt comfortable approaching them to ask about available help, including the hotline.



Grassroots women raise awareness about public health

Grassroots women directly addressed the health impacts of Covid-19 by embarking upon a large-scale public information campaign to spread public health awareness and keep their communities safe.

Grassroots women lead emergency response to local economic needs

Local women's groups saw the critical need in their community for economic support and stepped up. They worked in a wide variety of ways to ensure that women and families in their communities had access to basic necessities, including food, medicine, and childcare.



For more information about Kayan's response the covid-19 crisis, see our newsletters from [April](#), [August](#), and [November](#).

A Groundbreaking Collaboration:

Fada Coalition of Palestinian Women Against Violence



In response to the monumental challenge of the Covid-19 crisis, Kayan formed a groundbreaking coalition of Palestinian feminist organizations across borders, the Fada Coalition of Palestinian Women Against Violence. Fada is the first and only coalition of Palestinian feminist organizations that includes groups based in '48, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.

The coalition collaborated intensively to create a massive media campaign, "We are Your Voice." The campaign called on Palestinian society to stand up against gender-based violence, while reaching out to women with a message of empowerment and information about Fada member organizations' critical resources.

The campaign resulted in:

- **Dozens** of media appearances, including TV and radio
- Over **1.2 million** reached on Facebook
- **418,000** reached on Instagram
- **Tens of thousands** through Facebook Messenger and text message
- **Thousands** of women facing violence who were able to access crucial resources for help.

Click [here](#) to view a video made by grassroots women to support Fada Coalition's campaign

"The Fada Coalition provides added value as a transnational Palestinian feminist coalition - the very first Palestinian coalition that represents all Palestinian women in their various places, unifies the feminist discourse on the issue of violence against women, and holds all segments of society responsible for preventing violence against women, using community organizing tools of lobbying and advocacy."

Fatima Dana, expert consultant



A video for the "We are Your Voice" campaign made by the local women's group of Yafa al-Nasireye

16 Days of Activism Against Gender -Based Violence Campaign (25 Nov - 10 Dec)

As in all of our work, grassroots activism powered this year's campaign to raise awareness and change attitudes about gender-based violence. Local women's groups and Jusur Forum, in collaboration with a dozen coalition members, cooperated on all aspects of planning and coordination of all public activities and a social media campaign.

"The campaign had such a strong presence in Arab Palestinian towns and social networks. The combination of direct work with people in different field localities with the online media campaign helped us deliver the campaign's message to different generations and segments of our society."

Juhaina Hussein, member of Jusur Forum

Don't Leave It in Your Heart: an important message for difficult times

Our slogan for this year's campaign was, "Don't Leave It in Your Heart," a message of empowerment to encourage women to speak out against gender-based violence. Opening day included protest marches throughout six different localities, in which people rallied for anti-violence awareness and distributed masks printed with our campaign slogan.



Creative events highlight the importance of ending gender-based violence

This year's campaign included almost 40 creative public events that used innovative ways to raise awareness about gender-based violence. Activities included interactive youth workshops, Covid-19 safe versions of flash mobs, and art workshops. By using innovative ways to reach diverse audiences, our message against gender-based violence was clear, impactful, and meaningful.



Youth Outreach

This year saw a continued focus on engagement with youth. Jusur Forum women came up with many creative ways to overcome Covid-19 restrictions to educate them about pressing issues and empower them to lead change for the next generation. For example, three youth workshops were held in youth centers instead of schools, which were all closed, allowing us to reach more vulnerable and at-risk youth. Many young people were also drawn to participate in other creative activities, including rallies and art workshops. Importantly, girls and boys both participated in the campaign: one male youth leader commented that the workshop he attended had turned him into a feminist!

Building online community: 16 Days social media campaign

We published eight videos featuring actors retelling real stories of women who overcame violence. They collectively received over 55,000 views, demonstrating the power of these real stories and the ability of social media to touch so many people. These videos showed multiple dimensions of violence that women face in their daily lives, bringing to light many issues the public does not usually hear about or even realize are forms of violence.



Screenshots from some of the campaign videos

Solidarity Against Gender-Based Violence in the 16 Days Campaign

Local Solidarity: The 16 Days Campaign Coalition

Kayan continued to collaborate with other Arab feminist and human rights organizations to expand our collective influence through this year's campaign. Thanks go out to the following members:

- Tishreen Association
- Al-Tufula Center
- Intimaa and Attaa Association
- The Galilee Society – The Arab National Society for Health, Research and Services (R.A.)
- Ma'an - Forum of Negev Arab-Bedouin Women's Organizations
- Na'am - Arab Women in the Center
- Adalah Center
- Al-Zahraa Organization for the Advancement of Women
- Arous Elbahar for Women in Jaffa
- I'LAM Arab Center for Media Freedom Development and Research (R.A.)
- Jinsaniye Forum
- Mada Al-Carmel Arab Center for Applied Social Research

Palestinian Solidarity: *Fada participates in the 16 Days Campaign*

Fada, the first cross-border coalition convened by Kayan, participated in its first 16 Days Campaign this year. The coalition put on a joint virtual roundtable discussion on ending violence against Palestinian women, which over 5,000 people watched over Facebook.

Global Solidarity

The 16 Days Campaign is part of a global campaign that takes place across more than 185 countries. This year, Kayan collaborated with a partner Swiss organization, cfd, to send a message of international solidarity through a joint flash mob activity. On the same day, Swiss and Arab Palestinian people completed a puzzle made from a poster symbolizing the collective strength of women. Kayan also partnered with the Dutch embassy to participate in a discussion panel about tackling domestic violence in the time of Covid-19.



16 Days puzzle activity here (bottom) and in Switzerland (top)

Fighting Femicide

Every year, an average of 10 Palestinian women are murdered in gender-based violence. In 2020, the situation was particularly dire with 15 femicides. Kayan is taking a multi-faceted and holistic approach to address the femicide crisis.

Raising awareness: Kayan amplifies the story of each femicide victim to our audience, and our grassroots women leaders often organize demonstrations to protest murders of women. By highlighting each case, Kayan calls on society to stop excusing violence.

Research: Kayan began conducting groundbreaking, community-centered research about femicides against Palestinian women in Israel. We recognize that, in order to meaningfully address femicide, we need evidence-based research to help us understand the societal and institutional/legal factors that lead to these crimes. Kayan collaborated with experts, grassroots activists, feminist partners, and community-based researchers to gather comprehensive data, including through interviewing relatives of victims - a demographic never before addressed through research - and obtaining institutional records. For the first time, we are telling the women's stories from their own point of view. Analyzing all the data through a social and a gendered lens has shown that:

- Femicide is a reflection of societal-level problems, not only individual problems
- Society often holds a victim-blaming view of this type of crime, rather than seeing it as a societal phenomenon
- Family, including children, of victims lack institutional support
- The media does not address the topic of femicide holistically or substantially; most just copy and paste information from police reports without providing analysis or a gender-aware perspective.
- More advocacy is needed to change social and institutional attitudes.

We will be publishing a report on this research in early 2021.

Saying No to Sexual Harassment

Kayan continues to be a leader in fighting sexual harassment. Through this difficult year, Kayan has addressed this issue through raising awareness and working to increase protections in local authorities.

Kayan celebrated a huge success this year in compelling Arab local authorities to take the Sexual Harassment Prevention Law seriously. Kayan, in partnership with Lawyers for Good Governance, wrapped up legal actions against local authorities who failed to implement the law, which mandates posting the sexual harassment regulations prominently in the workplace and assigning an appointee to oversee sexual harassment prevention work. This resulted in the number of local authorities implementing the law to increase from under half to 92%.

In parallel, Kayan provided support to local authorities to implement the law effectively, including by providing appointees with personal support and consultations, a bilingual instruction manual, and an Arabic version of the sexual harassment regulations (previously only available in Hebrew). Altogether, this means stronger protections for the many women working in Arab local authorities. Kayan staff also provided personal consultations to several women regarding their experiences with sexual harassment.



A protest against the murder of a woman in Jadeidi al-Makr

"My father never was as kind or nice as all the other fathers; he was very serious and tough. But he covered our material needs. When I was 13, he started to hug me and tighten his body to mine. At the beginning I was happy and thought he had finally started to like me...but when he started to touch my sensitive parts, I was shocked. I said to myself that I must be crazy to think this way and it was for sure by accident! But when he repeated and repeated his actions then it was clear...and I had to admit that he was sexually harassing me."

A woman who reached Kayan for consultation and emotional support. Through her words, the woman expressed her difficult experience with her father's harassment and her feelings of self-blame and shame for a long time, until she recognized, with Kayan's assistance, that she did not do anything wrong and her father had failed her.



Personal Status Rights Update

Improving equality in the ecclesiastical courts

At Kayan, we believe that women have the right to choose for themselves their spouse, type of family, and what kind of marriage they want to build. In addition to advocating for civil marriage, this also means advocating for equality in the religious courts. Currently, the ecclesiastical (Christian) courts charge prohibitively high fees for divorce and related legal proceedings, which disproportionately affects women. In December 2020, Kayan participated in a suit submitted to the district court in Tel Aviv to lower the fees charged by the ecclesiastical courts by contributing an amicus curiae ("friend of the court") brief.

Helping women stand up for their legal rights

We continue to provide legal support and consultations to women on family issues, including through our support hotline. We provide legal consultation to women to enable them to know and advocate for their rights related to personal status, such as navigating divorce, custody, or alimony hearings. Kayan approaches these consultations through a feminist lens that is sensitive to the multiple challenges women face in going through the legal process, including socio-economic exclusion and various forms of violence.

Women take the Lead in Politics

Another bright spot of 2020 was the incredible and inspirational leadership of Palestinian women. The women in Kayan's local groups built new collaborations with local councils and claimed their political space within their communities. Kayan particularly celebrates two projects that amplified women's political voices and created a basis for stronger women leaders going forward.

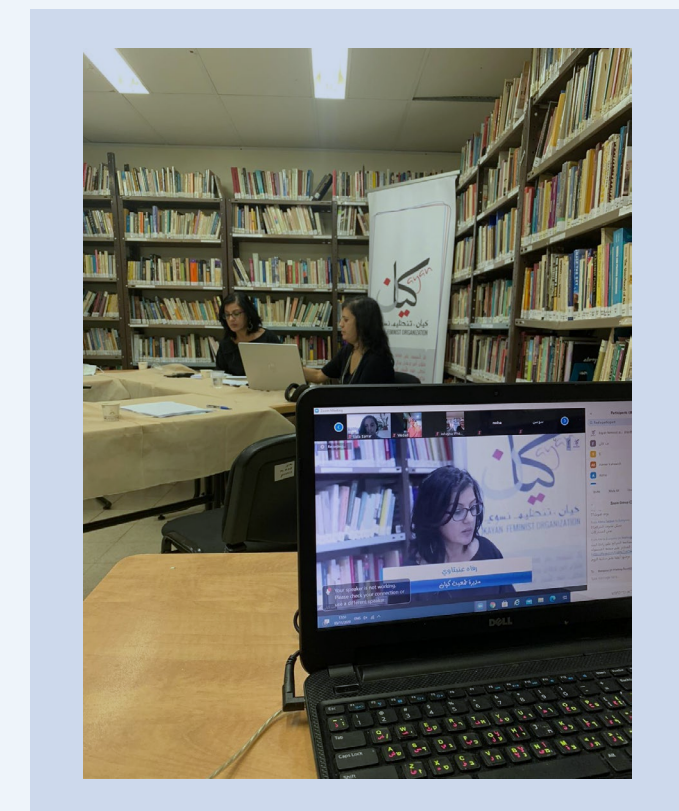
Women Councilors Convene

Kayan and our partners held the first-ever large convening of Palestinian women councilors in Israel. Eight women councilors (nearly half of all Arab women local councilors) attended, alongside more than a dozen grassroots leaders. The gathering included training, mutual support, and discussion on models for effective political work and strategies for changing the political environment.

Understanding Women's Political Experiences

Kayan's experience working with women politicians made it clear that more information was needed to provide proper support to women candidates and councilors. This inspired a research project to document the experiences of current women councilors through interviews. We found that women councilors are likely to try to make transformational change in their local councils, but

they often face significant barriers resulting from the patriarchal environment in both local councils and society. Kayan shared this research in a [report](#) and a virtually broadcast [roundtable](#) as a critical tool for addressing the critical issue of women's exclusion from politics.



The roundtable sharing Kayan's research about experiences of women local councilors

What's Next

Empowering the Next Generation of Activists

In 2021, we will expand our youth work by having grassroots women take the lead in developing and empowering youth as activists. Youth will benefit from the mentorship of women with deep and personal experience in local activism and learn how to be activists in their own communities. These youth will contribute to raising further awareness about feminist issues, while embarking upon the first step of becoming next generation's leaders.

Increasing Cross-Border Work through Fada

After a successful launch year, we will continue Fada Coalition's important anti-violence work in 2021. We will incorporate learnings from the challenges and successes of our first year and engage in a strategic planning process at the beginning of 2021 to solidify our vision and goals for the coalition.

Laying the Groundwork for Enhancing Women's Leadership in the 2023 Municipal Elections

In 2021, we will build upon the evaluation of our women in politics project and our study of experiences of women local councilors in order to prepare for the next municipal elections in 2023. This year, we will prepare at least two local women's groups to undergo leadership and empowerment training, and to start thinking about

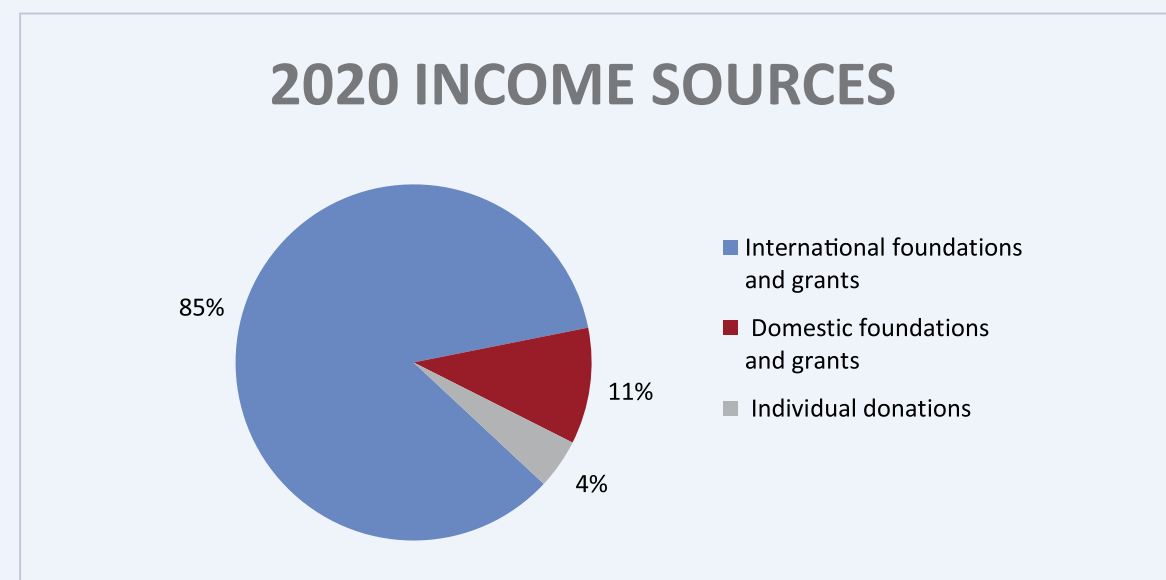
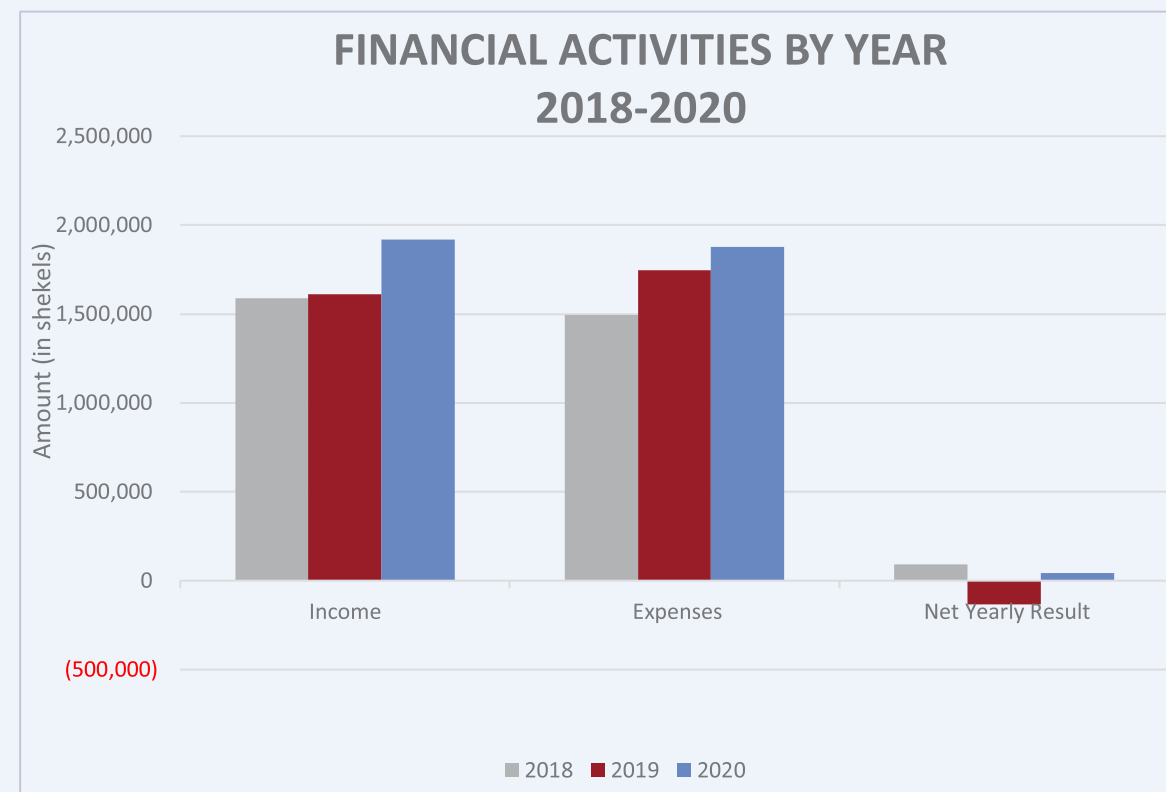
campaigning for the upcoming elections. We will also continue to provide extensive support to current women local councilors, as well as gender sensitivity training to local male politicians.

Strategic Planning for the Future

This year, Kayan will undergo a strategic planning process to update and refine our direction for the next several years. This process will give us the opportunity to reflect on our experience from previous years and to prioritize where to focus our energies and resources to maximize our potential for achieving our mission.



2020 Financial Report



How to Support Kayan

Donations from generous supporters are crucial in helping us further our mission and vision of creating a secure and just society free of gender-based discrimination. Please consider making a gift to Kayan Feminist Organization in one of the following ways:

Bank Transfer

The First International Bank of Israel
#31 Branch #007
Account #105-552836
Komo 1, Ziv Center Haifa, Israel

Credit or Debit Card

PayPal is a fast, secure way to donate to Kayan. For one-time or monthly donations, please visit our website at:

www.kayanfeminist.org/donate

GlobalGiving is another fast, secure way to donate to individual projects at Kayan. For one-time or monthly donations, please visit: <https://www.globalgiving.org/donate/26365/kayan-feminist-organization/>

American, Canadian, and European donors can also make a tax-deductible contribution online through the New Israel Fund at:

<https://secure.nif.org/onlineactions/g94CeEoiE-dvjc3gy-zqA2>

Check

Tax-deductible contributions by check can be made payable to "New Israel Fund" and marked as donor-advised to Kayan in the memo line. The checks can be mailed to the following addresses:

US donors: New Israel Fund, 6 East 39th Street, Suite 301, New York, NY, 10016-0108

Canadian donors: New Israel Fund, 801 Eglinton Ave. West, Suite 401, Toronto, Ontario, M5N 1E3

European donors: New Israel Fund, St. James House, 10 Rosebery Ave., London, EC15 4TD

For more information, or for general inquiries, please contact us at:

info@kayan.org.il

With Thanks to Our Supporters

- Anna Lindh Foundation
- Brot für die Welt
- cfd – The Feminist Peace Organization
- Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders
- European Commission
- Haifa Municipality
- Israel Palestine Mission Network
- Israel Religious Expression Platform (iRep)
- Kvinna till Kvinna
- Mediterranean Women's Fund
- National Council of Jewish Women
- New Israel Fund
- Open Society Foundations
- Pro Victimis
- Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung
- Schusterman Foundation
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Human Security Division
- Tikkun Olam Women's Foundation
- Women's World Day of Prayer
- Drs. Steven and Sybil Wolin



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