

## **Empowering Women without Status and Promoting their Rights**

### **Isha L'Isha – Haifa Feminist Center**

These women are Palestinian women from the West Bank who are married to Israeli partners who will not receive an Israeli citizenship due to their Palestinian origins and the family unification law, which denies Palestinian spouses married to Israeli partner to receive the Israeli citizenship or residency rights. Many of these women are located in the center in Israel, society knows they are here, they live among family, but they live in fear, that someday they will be found and separated from their families and children.

Women who were trafficked into Israel for purposes of prostitution and remained here, also do not enjoy rights as the average Israeli citizen, many of them were kidnapped, or brought to Israel with the promises of work and being able to earn money and send money back to their families. But, once upon arrival, their passports were taken, along with their freedom.

Women asylum seekers and refugees from African countries also reside in Israel without any legal rights, they either live in communities in the center or live in shelters.

**All of these women do not have access to health services, as health services are contingent on legal status in Israel, employment needs, empowerment and leadership.**

In addition, there is a fear that these women suffer from double oppression, those who are dependent on male members for their livelihood can be victimized by men who exert sexual, economic, cultural or social violence against them. Almost all of them have no supportive community and live in social and cultural isolation, and deep fear of Israeli immigration authorities. Most often, they do not reach out for assistance, their status is not recognized, they fear being deported and most of all being separated from their children and families.