



**PEACE PLAYERS**  
MIDDLE EAST

## Celebrating Women Every Day

At PeacePlayers Middle East, an organization led by women and devoted to the growth of Palestinian and Israeli girls as athletes and as leaders – we celebrate women every day. And yet, last month, International Women’s day gave us a special opportunity to really think about what that means. That’s why over several weeks leading up to and following International Women’s Day, PeacePlayers Middle East held many activities and events that highlighted women’s empowerment and advocated for the importance of “women supporting women.”

In one particular event, an overnight retreat held at the end of February near Jerusalem, 30 young leaders, alumnae, and staff were brought together for two days of leadership and team building sessions focused particularly on celebrating young women's leadership, in fostering gender equality, and in looking deeply into the importance of gender equity in sports and other areas of society.



Among the many inspiring moments of the retreat, one zoomed in on the subject of role models. Every participant and staff member thought long and hard about who were the biggest role models who influenced who they are today as young women. And one theme stood out in everyone’s remarks – you don’t have to look far and wide for role models; often they are right in your backyard – literally.



“My mother is the most powerful woman I know. My mom is very hard-working. She is a judge, a job that demands a lot of hard work and patience. She is not only great at her job, but she is also the best mom. Although her job requires a lot of time she takes care of us all, always listening to me and helping me when I need her. She worked really hard to be where she is, I am proud of her, and I hope to be as successful as she is when I grow up.”

– Keren, 16



"My role model is my mom. She works at the Knesset, and she does a lot of work with organizations that bring together Arabs and Jews. I feel so proud that my mom works in what she believes in, and even though she works for the government, she still does everything she can to create a more peaceful society"

– Ofri, 13



"My mom is my biggest role model. She always stands on her own and in what she believes in. And she does not deny from herself to do the things she believes in. Even if people in her life try to change her ideas. She has always told me and my sister that we can do and be whoever we want."

– Noa, 16

"I admire my sister, she was one of the first girls to ever play capoeira in my community. A lot of people were against her at first, but now she is the first Arab female coach of capoeira in my region. I admire her because she followed her dream even though so many didn't believe in her."

– Jinan, 16



"I look up to my mom the most, because she takes care of me and my siblings, and does a million other things. I also admire my teacher, because whenever I do anything wrong, she always teaches us in a positive way, and helps us grow."

– Lour, 15

"My role model is my mom because she has always been there for me, she gives me advice and has been one of my biggest mentors throughout my entire life." – Bayan, 16

