**Topic 001: Women and Sustainability**

Israeli women make up a higher percentage of post-secondary graduates, comprise 79.5% of Israel’s workforce, and spend at least two years of their life in the Israeli Defense Force. The economy of Israel is dependant on its women, as they continue to dominate large areas of the work force. Israel recognizes the contributions of women in an economic sense, and sees a positive outcome of a stronger female presence in the military and workplace.

**Israel Defense Force**

The Israel Defense Force makes it mandatory for all citizens to serve 2-3 years in the military, and has no gender bias. Women play significant roles in the IDF such as officers, technicians, and supervisors. Through providing women with immediate entrance into a powerful, government supported work environment, the state is therefore allowing the access to a greater supply of previously unforeseen resources, as well as a catapulted entrance into a typically male-dominated atmosphere. The IDF varies in comparison with the military defense systems in other nations, where it is necessary that the army is filled with both men and women, therefore providing both genders with equal opportunity. In light of current territorial conflicts, the State of Israel also deems it important that women are involved in the IDF as key players in the path to justice.

**The Israeli Agency for International Development and Cooperation**

Israel’s Agency for International Development and Cooperation, a branch of the Ministry of Foreign affairs, was established in 1957. The agency in focused around the global distribution of Israel’s experience in human development, and endlessly works on ensuring that there is sustainable development in all realms of the economy, environment and the social world.

The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center which was established by the Israeli Agency for International Development and Cooperation in 1961, and provides education and training for community involvement to women. The center has also delivered over 650 building programs, 28 international conferences to build female innovators, and educated women from 150 countries and 8 continents, all of which were held in Israel.

Israel’s Agency for International Development and Cooperation consistently advocates for the empowerment of women, and has played a significant role in the organization of the 28th International Conference for Women Leaders on “The Post-2015 and Sustainable Development Goals Agenda: Ensuring the Centrality of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the Next Framework.”

**Development Outside of Urban Areas**

Israel has also played a significant role in the development of women in a rural setting, through putting forward resolution along with 62 other states, A/C.2/67/1.34, in a 2012 UN general assembly, which promotes entrepreneurship for development in the UN. Israel believes it is vital women of rural areas be empowered, and has been working alongside the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to provide women and youth with the resources needed to ensure success.

**Topic: 002 - Elimination of Gender-Based Violence**

“The State of Israel ... will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex.” This is an excerpt from the Israeli declaration of independance. Israel advocates for the rights and freedoms of women, but recognizes that it must also satisfy those who practice particular faiths whose religion may disagree or take offense to particular actions women participate in. The State of Israel is a country founded on the unity and religion of the jewish people. As a nation based on the religious practices and principles of the Jewish faith, the limitations of women in terms jewish orthodox beliefs, and the rights and freedoms of women must be considered and acted upon while under the same setting.

The State of Israel has authorized and implemented three of the four international conventions in the interest of women, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. All of which were put into practice in November of 1991. The State is also a signatory to the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage, implemented in 1994. As well as the Law for Prevention of Family Violence, which ensures to the protection of victims of spousal abuse, as well as their children. Drafted by organizations such as the Jerusalem Women's Shelter, and the Israel Women’s Network. The law allows for injunctions to be placed on abusive spouses. The Israeli Yearbook & Almanac states that in a circumstance where protection must be placed on a victim “the court may specifically prohibit the respondent from going near the family home or taking possession of any personal property contained therein, from approaching the victim's place of work or study, or that of members of her family, or from carrying a weapon, or harassing members of the victim's family”, proving the level of safety for the abused individual to be immense as well as intricate.

Questions of religious and gender-based freedoms are recognized by the state, but do face controversy as conflicts relate to a non-existent Israeli constitution. The Basic Laws that outline the governing of Israel have several constitution-like ramifications on the state. The Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty, passed by the 12th Knesset on March 17, 1992, “...determines that the basic human rights in Israel are based on the recognition of the value of the human being, the sanctity of his life, and his being a free person.” The law has the purpose of protecting the freedom, privacy and intimacy of Israeli persons, but characterizes person with the pronoun “his”, “he”, or “man” in many clauses of the written law. Although Israel has many examples of the advocation and positive actions concerning the rights women of the State, the lack of Constitution and specific Gendered descriptions, combined with the ethics of the state's’ founding religion, judaism, creates a complex and controversial way to address the rights of women in current settings.

**Topic 003: Education and Employment**

**Employment in the Israeli Workforce**

**Israel Defense Force**

Israel prides itself in the involvement of women in many aspects of its workforce, for example the Israeli Defence Force. It is a legal requirement that all Israeli citizens participate in 24-32 months of service in the IDF, including women. Out of the 33% of women in the IDF, 51% are officers. Virtually all positions are open for women, with some specifically inaugurated for the female population of the military, for example the Women’s Affairs Advisor, whose role includes ensuring opportunity and a befitting environment for women.

The amount of women graduating religious education systems and joining the IDF has taken a dramatic increase in the past 5 years, where the amount of women enrolling in the armed forces in an non-mandatory position has doubled. There has been a 71% increase in the past 2 years in the amount of religious female soldiers straying from the status-quo and joining the Israel defense force, this has caused the IDF to open new positions for women, offer mores courses for new recruits. The IDF has also had Muslim women and Christian Arabic women enlist in March 2016. The IDF provides a space of leadership and equality for women, particularly young women to learn sustainable skills, which have the potential to lead to alternate career opportunities. Military service provides a solid foundations for the lives of young women, while they simultaneously break gender barriers through engaging in typical male roles, especially a role of such integrity.

**Israeli Work Force**

Women are record setting in the Israeli work force as they make up 79.5% of working population compared to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development average of 66.2% worldwide. The high percentage of working women even makes up for those percentage of the population that doesn’t work, for instance most Arab women, and Haredi men. 66.2% of Haredi women also work. To break down barriers and arise the potential for Arab women to work the State has invested $56 million through the Economy Ministry and the Joint Distribution Committee in its creation of over 20 centres completely invested in granting employment opportunities to the Arab sector. 76% of the citizens served are women.

Israel women dominate some of the largest workforces. In the financial sector three out of five of Israel’s largest banks are run by women. Women also make a prominent mark on education, and in healthcare, as midwives predominantly deliver babies. Due to the mark women have made in the employment sector, benefits women are provided with during pregnancy are impeccable. As soon as women reach 5 months in their pregnancy, she will be able to spend 40 hours out of office to engage in medical related practices concerning her pregnancy, and be exempt from overtime work. Immediately after giving birth women will have a minimum of 14 weeks of paid maternity leave, with their job still waiting for them when they return.

**Government**

Women also play a role in the governance of Israel, the number of female Knesset ministers has seen a 50% increase in the past 15 years, even leading to the creation and election of the first minister of Gender-Equality, female minister Gila Gamliel, who was elected in 2015.

**Education**

The percentage of women earning postsecondary degrees are generally higher than that of men in Israel. According to recent OECD reports on the status of the education of Israelis, 61% of students graduating from a master's degree program were women, 60% of bachelor degree graduates were women, and citizens achieving a doctorate were both 50% men and 50% women, all as of 2014. In 2013 a quarter of both the female and male population in Israel had achieved 16 years of schooling or more. 49% of Israelis have graduated a form of higher education, much above the OECD global standard, Israeli students excel in math and science, ranking, once again, much above the OECD average, men and women are also ranked equally in these 2 categories. These are just some of the statistics proving Israel’s deep interest in creating equal opportunity for the education of both genders. It is believed that education continuously proves to be the key to the sustainability and empowerment of women all over the globe, and has been highlighted already by Israeli leaders. The Israeli Agency for International Development and Cooperation views women to be a vital component of sustainable development, it is believed by the state that the key to empowering women is through education. Education provides women with the means necessary to provide themselves with a career, a source of income, a voice and so much more.

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