

New report reveals discrimination against women in Israeli academia

"I want to see fifty percent women among the presidents of universities and among all the positions at the top of the pyramid," says women's advocate.

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There is a significant gender gap with regards to women holding senior positions in Israeli academia, according to a report released this week by the National Authority for the Advancement of Women.

During the course of the past year, the authority gathered information regarding membership for the Board of Trustees of universities and academic colleges throughout the country. According to the findings, only 22 percent of women hold positions on the board at higher education institutions, compared to 78% of men.

The board of trustees serves as the governing body of higher education institutions, responsible for forging educational strategies, fiscal policies and appointing the president of the academic institution.

“The vision of the authority is for equality in academia.

I want to see 50% women among the presidents of universities and among all the positions at the top of the pyramid,” said Vered Swid, the authority’s director-general.

According to the report, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has 99 men and only 31 women representing 23.8% membership on the board.

Similarly, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev has only 26.3% female representation, Weizmann Institute of Science has only 17.5% representation and Tel Aviv University has only 24.1% representation.

The Lifshitz College of Education in Jerusalem has a board of 14 members, none of whom are women.

While the vast majority of the academic institutions had low levels of female representation on the board, Gordon College of Education in Haifa and the College of Arts and Society in Netanya stood out as having equal representation among men and women.

In addition, as part of the study, the report examined the factors contributing to the barriers of sub-representation of women in key positions in academia. The findings indicated that one of the central reasons was the “unequal division of labor in the family,” in which women received “less support” in their pursuit of postdoctoral studies.

In Israel, it is considered the norm that to receive faculty positions at higher education institutions, students are encouraged to pursue postdoctoral studies at universities abroad. For women, many of whom have families and children, this has proven to be a problematic and often impossible undertaking, placing them at a distinct disadvantage.

“The findings reveal that the vast majority of academic institutions have not yet internalized the principles of equality, and I hope that from now this will change,” said Swid.

In light of the findings, Swid addressed the academic institutions where there were glaring gender inequalities and warned them that this reflected an “illegal exclusion of women.” She called on the institutions to immediately correct the deficiencies.

Swid also announced that she would award a certificate of gender equality to the academic institutions acting to promote the integration of women in key positions.

In addition, the authority established a database of women with the credentials to hold key positions, so that institutions could use it to locate suitable candidates for the board of trustees and other senior positions.

Report indicates uptick in gender inequality in Israel

According to the report, Israel ranked 130th, second only to Angola, with regards to wage equality between men and women.

By [Lidar Gravé-Lazi](#)

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Gender inequality in Israel increased over the past year but the country remains the best in the region when it comes to equality between the sexes, according to the World Economic Forum 2014 Gender Gap report.

Israel's overall equality ranking, with a score of 0.700 (where 0 reflects inequality and 1 represents complete equality among genders), dropped 12 spots from 2013 to 65. The country's closest competitor in the region was Kuwait with a ranking of 113. Since the World Economic Forum started releasing the Gender Gap report in 2006, Israel has continually slid in the rankings, dropping a total of 30 spots from its initial ranking of 35.

The report aims to reveal the magnitude of gender-based disparities and track their progress over time. It ranks individual countries and provides global and regional comparisons in four categories: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment.

According to the report, Israel ranked 130th with regards to wage equality between men and women and dropped from 56 to 90 in "Economic Participation and Opportunity," which examined the participation gap, the remuneration gap and the advancement gap between men and women.

It also fell three spots from its 2013 ranking of 96 with regards to "Health and Survival."

Despite these declines, there were some areas of improvement including "Educational Attainment," which examined the gap between men and women's access to education, where Israel jumped to 49 from 82 in the 2013 report.

Meanwhile, in the "Political Empowerment" category, the country moved up to 49 from 57, reflecting increased participation of women at the highest level of political decision-making.

Of the 142 countries surveyed in 2014, the Northern European region topped the list for gender equality with Iceland, Finland and Norway capturing the top three spots, respectively. Also in the top 10, countries such as Nicaragua, Rwanda, Ireland, the Philippines, and Belgium received top marks for gender equality.

In sharp contrast, and perhaps not surprisingly, Syria, Chad, Pakistan, and Yemen were at the bottom of the list in overall gender equality.