



Policy Brief

Suggested Policy Interventions for PLC members for Decreasing Gender Based Discrimination in the Palestinian Territory

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The Palestinian Women Research and Documentation Center (PWRDC) was founded in 2005 as a special project for the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and operates in accordance with UNESCO's rules and regulations. The PWRDC meets the urgent need for an institution capable of promoting women's rights and activating Palestinian women's roles in economic, political, and cultural domains.

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PLC members are vital agents of change and particularly for the changes needed for gender equality as this needs great political support. Gender equality is one of the basic issues that need to be addressed for the development of our nation and one that is faced with many challenges and constraints. This document contains selected areas of intervention where the required changes can begin and with the help PLC members it can be pushed into action. The survey conducted on PLC members by PCBS in 2010 which discussed attitudes towards certain gender issues has shown that there is acceptability towards creating changes.

The purpose of this Policy Brief is to highlight the results of a survey conducted by PCBS on the attitudes and practices of a sample of PLC members towards gender discrimination. The brief also contains some selected figures from the latest surveys conducted by PCBS that show gender gaps and other figures of concern. These have been summarized to give a short brief of the situation, the attitudes and practices of PLC members on the issues, and required interventions.

The policy paper will be divided into 4 main parts:

- Social Rights,
- Equality in the Workforce,
- Equality in Political Participation, and
- Gender Based Violence.

Equality in Social Issues

14.1% of women aged 15-19 are married and currently there is no law to limit the age of marriage in the Palestinian Territory.

89.2% of PLC members did not support early marriage and 63.5% supported the need to raise the age of marriage to 18 years.

68.2% of PLC members said they had made efforts towards raising the age of marriage over 18 years, however only 11.6% have pursued legal means and the majority (50.8%) have worked on this issue through media.

Intervention needed:

Taking more legal steps towards drafting a law that would raise the age of marriage for men and women to a minimum of 18 years.

Currently Palestinian women are automatically given their husbands family name when they must change their ID after getting married.

87.0% of PLC members supported the right of a woman to keep her family name on her ID after marriage.

Intervention needed:

Take legal steps to standardize the procedures of changing the ID after marriage, attached with the necessary administrative instructions and regulations, so that women have a choice of keeping their family name or taking their husbands name.

Currently women do not have the right to divorce as the ability to divorce can only be from the husband.

Only 36.8% of PLC members supported the change of the personal status law which gives the right for women to divorce equally as men.

Of these 50.9% PLC members have taken action to change the personal status law to give women the right to divorce; 34.5% of which were legal action and 29.3% advocated for this issue through media.

Intervention needed:

Taking the necessary legal actions to provide both partners in marriage equal right to divorce from the court which should decide on the provision of alimony and the custody of the children.

Equality in the Workforce

15% of women are in the labor force compared to 67% of men. The women labor force participation rate in the Palestinian Territory is among the lowest in the Arab region.

39.1% of PLC members believe that there is a lack of equal opportunity between men and women in obtaining work. In addition, when asked if the Labor Law needs some revisions in order to avoid gender discrimination, 40.9% of the PLC members agreed and 32.4% agreed to some extent.

When asked about discrimination in the workplace, about a third of the PLC members believed that women are denied or denied to some extent in promotions, raises and training. In addition, over 70% believed that women in the workplace are denied to travel for work.

90.9% of the PLC members supported the initiation of a law that obligates employers to protect the rights of working women such as providing day care services and paid maternal leave. 92% supported the provision of a day care center for working women in the ministries and different organization and 41.4% supported the provision of paid paternity leave.

Interventions needed:

Revision of labor law and drafting laws that provide working women with equal opportunities with men in promotions, wages and trainings and that insures the rights of women in paid maternal leave as well as providing paternal paid leave.

Imposing the establishment of shared day care centers for a specified group of ministries or organizations that are subsidized or for a reduced rate for women employees.

Gender Based Violence

23.3% of married women in the Palestinian Territory are physically abused by their husbands, 62% are physiologically abused and 11% are sexually abused.

85.0% of PLC members supported placing a law to punish those who perform any of the forms of violence (physical, verbal, psychological and sexual) against women.

66.5% of PLC members supported and supported to some extent the revision of the personal status law and 57.4% supported this for the revision of the penal code in order to further eliminate gender discrimination.

55.0% of PLC members stated that they had taken an initiative towards resolving the issue of gender based violence; 28.4% of which was a legal initiative and 43.2% was through media.

In addition 73.8% of PLC members stated that they had taken action towards placing a law to punish those who perform any of the forms of violence; however, only 17.3% of this was a legal action, 29.9 was through media and 23.6% was through awareness.

Intervention needed:

Revision of personal status law and penal code law to criminalize all acts of violence (physical, sexual and psychological) and taking legal actions that punishes perpetrators of violence and compensates the victim both financially and psychologically.

Killing in the name of honor is still practiced in the Palestinian Territory and punishment for the murderer is reduced and is not treated as any other murder.

74.3% of PLC members did not support that the penal code law for the reduced punishment for killing in the name of honor.

Intervention needed:

Annul the law that reduces the punishment of those who commit murder in the name of honor (article number 98 in Jordanian penal code) and considering this type of murder a crime that is punishable by law as other murders.

Equality in Political Participation

Women represent 12.9% of the PLC, 19% of local governance and 15% hold key positions in ministries as general directors and above.

38.5% of PLC members believe that there is no equality between men and women in reaching higher positions in ministers and public or private organizations.

14.6% of PLC members did not support that women be involved in political negotiations and 43.2% did not believe that a women should hold a presidential position.

PLC members agreed that there should be an increase in the number of women in Ministry Council (55.0% agreed) and in higher positions within the ministries (90.6% agreed). 70.3% agreed that there should be a set percent for women in parliament to insure gender equality.

Intervention needed:

Insuring that women and men are equality considered for high level positions within the government based on their qualifications as stated in the basic law article number 26 on political participation.