

Gender Equality in Employment and Economic Opportunities

Despite the numerous achievements in advancing gender equality, in 2022 women are still not full and equal partners in the economic arena. Gender-related barriers and stereotypes limit women's economic opportunities as employees, as managers, as entrepreneurs and as business owners. The World Economic Forum estimated in 2021 that it will take another 267 years to close the global gender gap in Economic Participation and Opportunity (WEF, 2021).

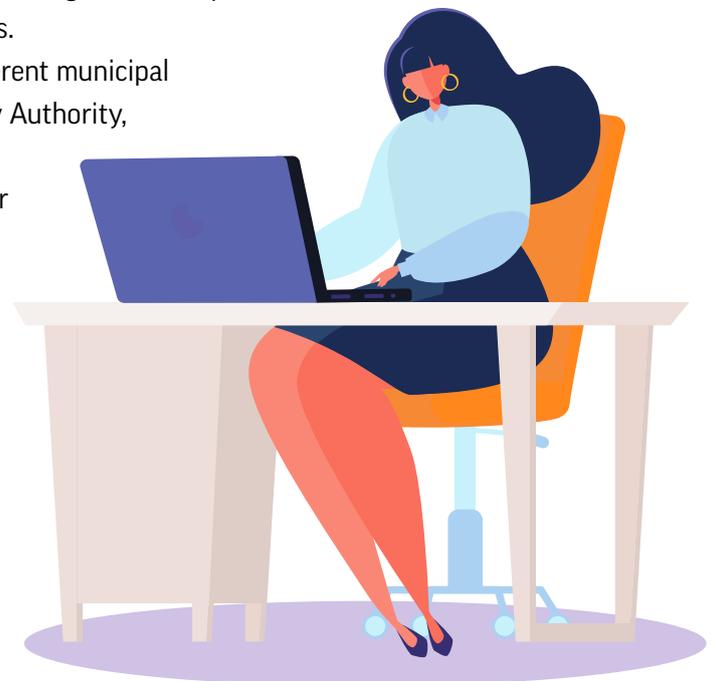
➤ In 1990, women's share in total incomes from work worldwide was about 30%, and at present stands at only 34% (World Inequality Report, 2022).

Economic inequality is not only harmful the women, but also affects the economy and society as a whole. A McKinsey research study showed that if women were to equality participate in the labor market, the result would be an added 26% (\$28 trillion) to the annual global GDP (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). The World Bank showed that despite social and resources limitations female entrepreneurship face, they make a considerable contribution to economic growth and to reducing poverty. Furthermore, they are more inclined than male entrepreneurs to invest in the family's education, health and nutrition (GEM, 2017).

The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality has for years worked to strengthen urban resilience. In the Municipal Strategic Plan (2017), it defined, among other things, an action framework for advancing "a city for all its residents."

This includes promoting equal opportunities, reducing disparities and maximizing the potential of individuals, groups and communities in the city, coupled with inclusive economic growth that produces conditions for prosperity and wellbeing for all population groups.

This chapter continues that framework and is advanced by different municipal agencies, including: the Municipal Resilience and Social Equality Authority, the Community, Culture and Sports Administration, the Social Services Administration, Tel Aviv Global, and others. The chapter proposes action items aimed at advancing gender equality in the city in line with the rapid changes occurring in the labor market. The chapter establishes gender equality as a lens that will promote the local economy in Tel Aviv-Yafo, and by doing so also advance the Israeli economy given the status of the city as a key economic hub.



Gender Inequality in the Labor Market

In most households, women still bear the primary responsibility for the care of the children, dependent parents, and the home, which relegates them to a secondary status in the labor market outside the home. Hence, for example, more women than men work part-time. Women face occupational segregation that starts already in school, leading them to 'female' professions at the bottom of the management ladder, with inferior terms of employment, wage disparities and less employment security. In addition, women face sexual harassment at the workplace and are discriminated against in the hiring and promotion (more about this topic, see the Advancing Women to Senior Positions chapter). Like Israel as a whole and in other places around the world, the economic reality in Tel Aviv-Yafo is characterized by gender gaps:

- The rates of employed women and employed men in the city (out of those who are in the work force) is similar, but there are differences in the number of hours they work: 56% of the women worked full-time, as opposed to 69% of the men; 23% of the women worked part-time, as opposed to 15% of the men.
- Workplace location: among the city's residents, the percentage of women whose workplace was in the city in 2021 was slightly higher than of the men (64% compared to 62%, respectively).

According to data for the year 2020, **68% of the women in Tel Aviv-Yafo participate in the labor force.** That figure is actually high when compared to all women in Israel (58%), but is low when compared to men who live in the city (78%).

Occupation: in 2020, over 60% of sales and service personnel and two-thirds (67%) of office and clerical workers – were women. On the other hand, **only around 24% of the managers were women.**

Data from previous years pertaining to wage gaps between men and women who live in the city point **to an average monthly wage gap of about 37% and an hourly wage gap of about 33%** (taking into account that women work fewer hours than men).¹

(Women in Numbers, 2022)

¹ According to 2018 data: a man living in the city earned an average monthly wage of NIS 18,202, and a woman – NIS 11,379. More recent data are not available.

Women in Entrepreneurship

Although women have a long history of entrepreneurial activity, here, too, gender gaps exist. Not only do women start and run fewer businesses, but they also usually tend to be concentrated in smaller, informal businesses and in 'female' industries, such as services, education and creative industries (ILO, 2015; Ministry of Economy and Industry, 2018).

➤ In Tel Aviv-Yafo, one-third of the self-employed persons working in the city in 2020 were women, and women made up only 24% of the self-employed persons who employ others in the city.

➤ According to a survey conducted in 2020, approximately 23% of small and medium-sized businesses in the city are owned by women. (Women in Numbers, 2022)

One of the reasons this occurs is because entrepreneurship, starting a business and running it are affected by access to resources and funding, as well as connections, training and sponsorship. Women have much more limited accesses than men do to all of the above, and the underinvestment in women's entrepreneurship is a global phenomenon. Among other things, research studies indicate that gender discrimination exists in the financing of women's entrepreneurial activity. This situation has remained unchanged despite the hope that in the digitalized world, which opens opportunities for conducting commerce and business online and connecting investors and customers across the globe, gender discrimination and bias would lessen.



Gender and the Future of Work

Given the numerous changes affecting the labor market, predominantly technological changes, barriers relating to access and higher education, as well as social-cultural bias and norms, limit the ability of women to equally benefit from new economic opportunities, both as employees and as business owners.

The percentage of women in STEM professions (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and in the high-tech industry is still small. In some places, there is a gender gap in access to digital tools. These factors are likely to affect the options available to women and, as a result of that, their livelihood in the future world of work, in addition to perpetuating, if not exacerbating, gender gaps.



In Israel, despite the fact that around 50% of all high school students take 5 study units in Math (equivalent to advancement placement classes), **only 31% of B.A. students whose major is in a field related to high-tech are women.** Furthermore, women account for only about 33% of all employees in high-tech positions (and only 28% of the employees who fill core technology positions).

➤ In the large venture capital funds operating in Israel, women make up only 16.5% of their partners and just 9% of the CEOs who founded startup companies. (Israel Innovation Authority, 2022)

➤ The percentage of women who filled technology-related positions in the Israeli army amounted to only 23% in 2019 (The Marker, 2020).

Tel Aviv-Yafo is the economic beating heart of the State of Israel and the hub of the 'startup nation': 12% of all businesses in Israel operate in the city – more than in the other large cities in Israel (Statistical Abstract, 2021). Around half of the high-tech companies in the country operate in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, and 29% are located in the city itself. The employees of high-tech companies in Tel Aviv-Yafo account for 20% of all employed persons in high-tech companies nationwide (Tel Aviv-Yafo's Innovation Ecosystem in 2020).

➤ The ecosystem for startup companies in Tel Aviv-Yafo was ranked in seventh place in the world (Startup Genome, 2021). However, according to the Dell Women Entrepreneur Cities Index (2019), which measures cities around the world based on their ability to attract and support women entrepreneurs, Tel Aviv-Yafo came in at only 32 out of the 50 cities that were ranked.

Municipal Activity as an Engine for Local Growth

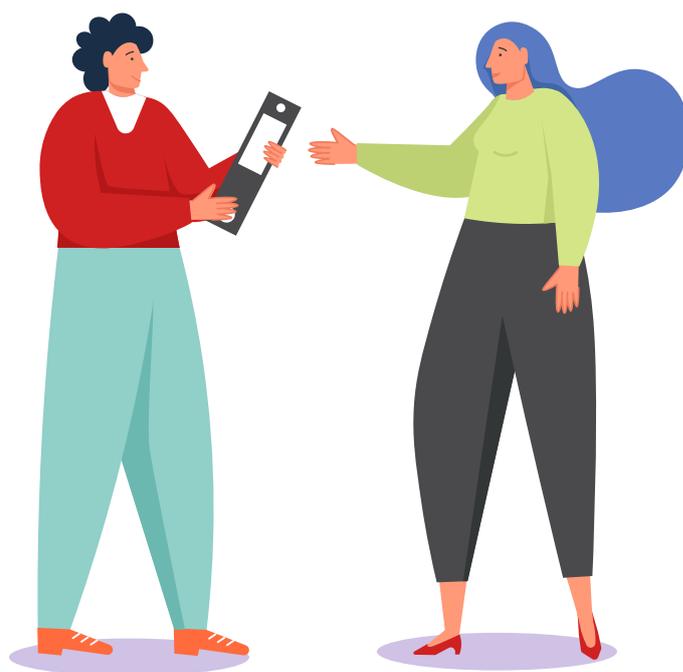
Against the backdrop of all of the above, the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality set a goal for itself to adopt action strategies that will improve the economic reality of women in the city – as employees, as entrepreneurs, and as business owners, in general, and in high-tech, in particular. This is a significant element of the continued efforts to strengthen the local economy and build urban resilience. The need to take these steps has become even greater given the changes characterizing the labor market – including the local market - and especially in view of the coronavirus pandemic, which had a disproportionate adverse effect on women and placed the gender equality achievements already attained in the economic arena in actual jeopardy.

➤ In Israel, during the months of the COVID-19 crisis, the percentage of women among new job seekers registered at the government employment agencies was higher than that of men. Greater volatility was seen among women than men as regards leaving and returning to the workplace, probably correlated with the closing and opening of the school system and of workplaces in the industries where they are employed (Gender Index, 2021).

➤ Following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, women in Tel Aviv-Yafo were more fearful than men about being able to cover their expenses, and higher percentages of them reported that their income took a hit due to a decline in the amount of work they had. Women were more pessimistic about the economic horizon and believed that their economic situation and that of their household was going to get worse (Women in Numbers, 2021).

Reducing gender gaps as well maintaining and even increasing the participation of women in local economic activity play a key and vital role in the rehabilitation efforts, and also in building long-term urban resilience and developing resilience to future crises.

The She-fting Program was developed by the “Library”- a Municipal Innovation Center and part of the Community, Culture and Sports Administration, together with the Resilience and Social Equality Authority and the Opportunity Center run by the Social Services Administration, as part of municipal activities for the city’s residents who were dealing with an employment crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program seeks to assist women residents who are at an employment crossroads and are contemplating a move to the high-tech industry. The program offers lectures on basic concepts and an overview of the different positions available in high-tech, hands-on workshops, group discussion circles and individual career counseling. Two cohorts of the program have already been launched (2021 and 2022), with dozens of women participating in them. Some of the graduates of the first cohort have already been hired at local technology companies where they fill a variety of positions, while others have gone on to vocational courses or are considering embarking on an entrepreneurial path.





What did we learn from other parts of the world?



New York has consistently been ranked as one of the best, if not the best city in the world for women entrepreneurs, and the local authority has played a pivotal role in achieving that. Among other things, the Mayor's Office of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises was created to address historic disparities in City contracting and provide minority and women entrepreneurs increased opportunities to do business with the City. The WE NYC is another initiative, whose aim is to help women in the city open and develop businesses. Initially, research was conducted to map out the women entrepreneurs and business owners in the city and characterize the barriers they face. This was done on the basis of an online survey and interviews with women across the city. Subsequent to the research, WE NYC provides financing to companies, networking and mentoring programs, entrepreneurship workshops on different topics, such as finance, loans, negotiating skills and leadership, as well as legal services. Additionally, the Women.nyc program operates as part of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and offers a variety of resources to female residents (information manuals, workshops and courses, financing, assistance in finding a job, and more).



San Francisco regularly competes with New York when it comes to attracting and supporting women entrepreneurs, and in 2019 was ranked by Dell in first place out of the 50 cities that were measured. The Office of Economic and Workforce Development runs special programs for women entrepreneurs, with a focus on women from minority groups. One example is a 12-week program that provides training, mentoring, networking and community support for women who want to become entrepreneurs. The graduates of the program can compete for a monetary prize used to start a business. Another program offers free personal consulting services to women who already own a business in the city. And yet another program provides training and support to owners of childcare facilities, whose aim is to ensure quality care for the city's children. There is also an incubator for women entrepreneurs in the food industry, which helps talented cooks who come from a low socioeconomic status and minority communities open a business that will generate income for them. In addition, there is a fund that offers grants to women who are small business owners in the city, which can be used for special projects designed to grow their business. That fund extended extra assistance during the COVID-19 crisis.



In **Barcelona**, the local economic development agency, Barcelona Activa, has for about three decades been working to advance women in the business world by running an entrepreneurship school for women. In recent years, it was expanded and turned into a leading program called Lidera, which offers resources to women, such as: workshops for acquiring skills needed for job seeking and management, vocational courses (e.g. at the IT Academy), a networking and mentoring space, and more.

Action Items for Advancing Women and Gender Equality in Employment and Economic Opportunities in Tel Aviv-Yafo

For Implementation within Five Years

Broadening the information about the challenges faced by women in a variety of industries

- A special survey and focus groups (for example, on self-employed women in the city).
- A gender analysis of data (for example, regarding the participation of women in the local high-tech industry) 

Boosting entrepreneurship and business owned by women

- Creating and supporting services adapted to self-employed women, women entrepreneurs and business owners (for example, coworking spaces and advancing local exposure). 
- Advancing businesses owned by women through the municipal procurement procedures. 

Advancing gender equality in the local high-tech industry

- Special programs for women from different population groups as part of Tel Aviv Tech² and the municipal innovation centers – vocational trainings, mentoring programs, and more. 
- Programs that expose women to the high-tech industry and assist them to integrate in it (among other things, by expanding the She-fting program).
- Advancing forums for women workers, founders and investors in startups. 
- Supporting the development of technologies that foster gender equality, including through CityZone³. 

Encouraging higher education and trainings among women in the city

- Training programs and support for academic studies for women, with a focus on minority groups. 
- Encouraging girls to study science and technology subjects.
- Courses and workshops on financial education for girls and women. 

[Click here to read the introduction and the other chapters of the plan >>](#)

² Tel Aviv Tech is a program through which the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality collaborates with high-tech companies in the city. Its aim is to support their success and their operation in the city.

³ A cutting-edge laboratory and testing ground for advancing technological solutions to municipal challenges in collaboration with the Municipality, Tel Aviv University and Atidim Park.

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