

FAIR SHARED CITY

A Plan for Advancing Gender Equality in Tel Aviv-Yafo

March 2022

Introduction

Girls and women are born, play, have fun, create, mature, study, work, start families, travel or pass through, live and also grow old in the city of Tel Aviv-Yafo.

How do they experience the city?

How does their voice sound?

What place does it have in the urban space?

The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality set out to find out. The Fair Shared City Plan brings the women of Tel Aviv-Yafo to center stage, different and diverse women who come from the entire spectrum of Israeli society, who live and create the nonstop city.



Tel Aviv-Yafo: A City for All

Tel Aviv-Yafo is the beating heart of Israel, the largest and most densely populated metropolitan area, which serves as the economic and cultural center of the entire country. Around 5% of Israel's population live in Tel Aviv-Yafo, and over half a million people visit the city every day.

Tel Aviv-Yafo has always been regarded as a cosmopolitan and open-minded city. For many years now, the Mayor and the city's management have been working to strengthen the city as Israel's bastion of democracy and as a place where the values of pluralism, liberalism, freedom, and innovation are implemented in practice. Tel Aviv-Yafo's vision is to be a city for all its residents. As a socially diverse city, it supports inclusion of all the different social identities, equal opportunities and reducing disparities. These enable the realization of the potential inherent in the population, lead to prosperity and growth, encourage the easing of tensions and hostility between different groups, and contribute to social and economic resilience.

As a local authority, the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality manages large budgets, maintains direct contact with its residents, and makes decisions that have an immediate impact on the lives of each and every one of them.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, under restrictions that were imposed on movement and a strong sense of uncertainty, cities were at the forefront of dealing with the crisis and extending direct assistance to their respective populations. More than anything else, the pandemic proved the importance of municipal

responsibility and resilience in normal times and in times of crisis and expanded a trend that had started even earlier – when large and strong cities began assuming an increasing amount of responsibility for their internal affairs and for spearheading change, especially against the backdrop of a policy vacuum at the national and global levels. COVID-19 also deepened the understanding that a society's resilience is profoundly affected by inequality, and that social justice and caring for all population groups are essential for managing shocks and recovering from a crisis, and even becoming stronger as a result of it.

The crisis created by the pandemic hit society as a whole, but in particular it reflected and aggravated social inequalities that existed prior to it. Similar to previous crises, COVID-19 had damaging effects on women and exacerbated gender inequality worldwide. In view of these insights, the Mayor decided to take the reins and be proactive by developing a citywide plan called 'Fair Shared City' – For Advancing Gender Equality in Tel Aviv-Yafo. The underlying premise of the plan is that gender inequality can be found nearly everywhere, including in the city, and that it is detrimental to everyone – women and men, institutions and the services they provide, and society as a whole. The plan seeks to ensure that the municipal DNA will recognize and consider the voices, needs and perspectives of women in the city – who make up half of the population.

In Israel and across the globe, great strides have been made over the years in advancing gender equality between women and men. Progress has been made in legislation and on the ground with regard to women's participation and rights in public life – in the labor market and in politics. Nevertheless, Israel is still characterized by gender inequality, disparities between men and women, and unequal power relations between them in nearly all spheres of life. Women face stereotypes, gender segregation in occupations, a greater caring obligation for children and other dependents, barriers and discrimination in the labor market, acute underrepresentation in decision-making positions and, of course, gender-based violence in the private and public spheres. Violence against women is a deep-seated expression of gender inequality, and as long as women are not perceived as being equal in all areas of life, it will be difficult to eradicate the violence against them.

Even in 2022, gender inequality dictates different opportunities and paths for girls and boys, women and men. Research studies, both on Israel and worldwide, show that there has been no significant improvement in many of the gender inequality indicators in recent years. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic increased inequality: worldwide, there has been a dramatic rise in reported incidents of violence against women in the family, women have experienced a considerable adverse effect on their employment compared to men, and the absence of women from the decision-making table has been keenly felt. According to professional estimates, the pandemic will have a scarring effect on gender equality.

Did you know:
women make
up **50%**
of the
population
in Israel, but...



- They account for fewer than 30% of Knesset (parliament) members and government ministers.
- They earn an average monthly wage that is about 30% lower than that of men.
- They work more hours a week in unpaid, unrecognized work – household and care work.
- They account for fewer than 25% of all CEOs, active athletes, and singers heard on the radio stations, and around 25% of professors in academia.
- Every year, an average of 20 women are murdered in Israel by their intimate partner or another family member.

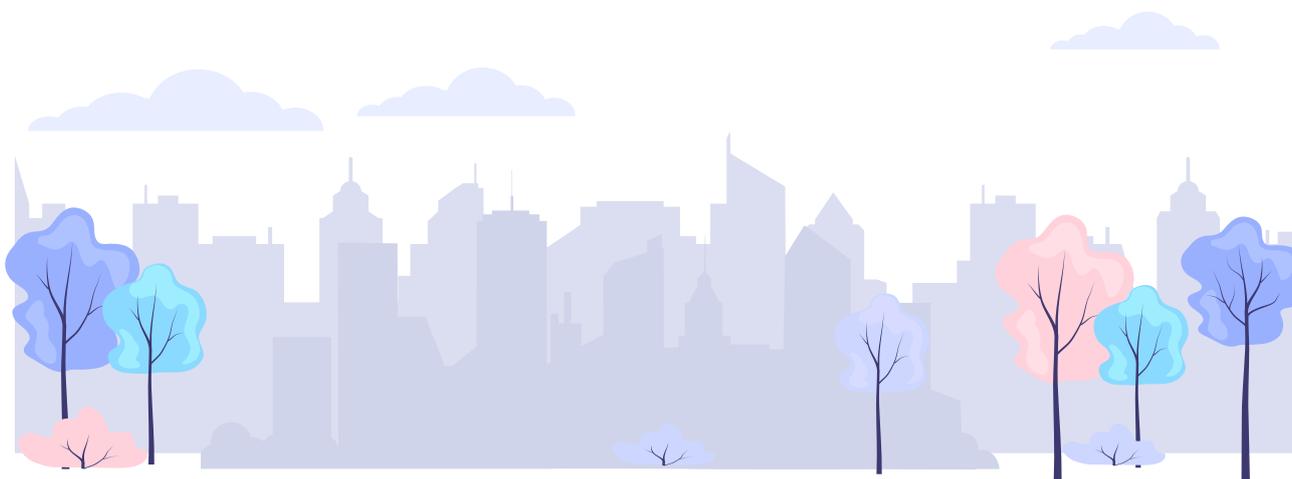
Globally, the World Economic Forum estimates that it **will take roughly another 136 years to close the overall gender gap**. In its Global Gender Gap Report 2021, the Forum ranked Israel **in 60th place out of 156**, trailing far behind other Western countries.

Gender Equality as Urban Resilience

The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality launched the Fair Shared City Plan for Advancing Women and Gender Equality in order to modify the gender reality in the city. It reflects the Municipality's recognition that national legislation is not enough and that market forces alone will not drive the needed change. Even though the Municipality has, over the years, spearheaded steps that addressed inequality issues in the city, the current trends, and the COVID-19 crisis in particular, increased the understanding that a direct, proactive and comprehensive policy is required. Such a policy should closely examine formal and informal mechanisms that impede the advancement of gender equality, with the purpose being to bring about systemic change.

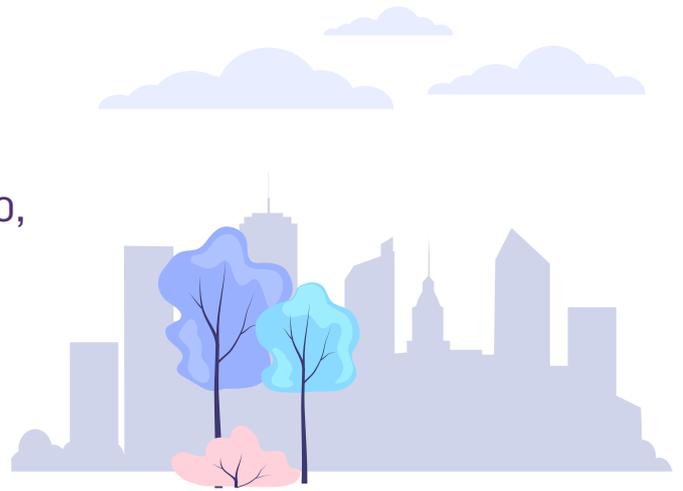
The Municipality's guiding principle in the Fair Shared City Plan is that the advancement of women and gender equality is connected to the extensive work it does in different spheres of life. **The starting point is that gender equality is not a matter solely for women or their benefit. Rather, it is important for society as a whole because challenging stereotypes and removing barriers will open up opportunities and possibilities for women and men alike in a way that benefits all.**

In 2019, Tel Aviv-Yafo introduced its City Resilience Strategic Plan, after it was chosen to be a member of the 100 Resilient Cities Network, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation. The Municipality has continued to strengthen the city's resilience, and the Fair Shared City Plan is an integral part of this work. The Fair Shared City Plan views gender equality as a broad and structural social issue, an important value in and of itself, but also as a critical factor for strengthening urban resilience and sustainable social-economic development. Studies conducted by international and corporate research bodies show the direct effect that advancing gender equality has on promoting education and health in society, on business success, and on increasing the GDP. Numerous organizations and frameworks around the world have already acknowledged that. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations and advanced worldwide, including by the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, call in Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



THE TEL AVIV-YAFO MUNICIPALITY HAS JOINED THE RANKS OF LEADING CITIES IN THE WORLD,

including Vienna, London, Barcelona, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver and others, which have begun to implement municipal plans for advancing women and gender equality – a trend that has become much stronger in recent years.



The Vision: A Fair Shared City | The Way: Gender Mainstreaming

The Fair Shared City Plan promotes the idea of routine and integral use of **gender mainstreaming** in the Municipality's operations, making it part of the city's DNA. That means assessing municipal processes, decisions, plans and operations from the perspective of women, and providing suitable solutions to their needs and way of life that will advance gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming facilitates seeing those areas where policy appears to be gender 'neutral' - namely, when it is perceived as having the same effect on women and men – but is actually gender 'blind' and does not take into account characteristics and needs unique to women, nor their experiences and voices, which can be different than those of men. Gender mainstreaming examines both how fundamental equality between women and men can be advanced and how policy can be promoted effectively.



Thus, for example, in the field of transportation, the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality adopted a transportation vision that seeks to "reverse the pyramid" and put those who choose to move around using bikes, among others, at the top of that pyramid. To achieve that end, the Municipality has invested many resources in paving bike paths. While working on the Fair Shared City Plan, it was found that the percentage of men who ride bikes in the city is considerably higher than the percentage of women who ride bikes. That gap led the Municipality to examine why women are less inclined to ride. Municipal research on the subject raised a number of issues, including that women lack a sense of security and safety when riding bikes, the incompatibility of the Tel-O-Fun rental bikes with the average height of women, etc.

Accordingly, action items were defined under the plan that include paving bike paths that are separated from the traffic, special bike riding workshops for women, lowering the height of Tel-O-Fun bikes, and more.

As such, applying a gender lens encourages women to ride bikes and serves the overarching municipal transportation vision of increasing the use of bikes in the city.

Another example comes from sports. The Municipality invests numerous resources in developing sports activities in the city. The Fair Shared City Plan found that a significantly smaller percentage of girls take part in competitive team sports such as soccer, which is still considered a 'male sport'. Research on the subject showed that offering sports activities right after the regular school day can remove a key barrier and lead to change. Against that backdrop, a pilot league for girls at the elementary schools in Jaffa was launched in 2021. The program received enthusiastic feedback, sparked a lot of interest, and led girl students to take part in soccer games in much larger numbers, including those held independently of the project.

Intersectionality

The Fair Shared City Plan highlights the intersectionality of gender and other forms of identity. All women have to deal with a reality of gender inequality, but women are not a homogeneous group. Some women have unique needs and contend with intersectional discrimination, based, for example, on their age or a disability, or their belonging to a low socioeconomic status or a different religious, ethnic or national group. Consequently, the plan puts a spotlight on the unique experiences and needs of women who belong to diverse social groups (such as single mothers, women in the Arab community, Ethiopian Jewish women, and others).

Formulating the Plan and Methodology

The Fair Shared City Plan is founded on extensive research, on learning from the work done abroad, on a public participation process involving male and female residents, and on consultations with leading experts, with nonprofit and corporate organizations and with various municipal stakeholders. This involvement, which crossed departments and units at the Municipality, mobilized key people to lead wide-ranging processes. It also made it possible to obtain a picture of the current situation and outline steps designed to achieve change that are tailored to and connected with the Municipality, the city and the reality on the ground.

The plan will be implemented over the next five years. The action items, which have been incorporated into municipal work plans, are divided into three time spans: short (2021-2022), medium (2024) and long (2027).



What did we learn from the field?

When starting to formulate the Fair Shared City Plan in 2020, the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality approached the general public to obtain information and learn about initiatives and ideas from those who live the city. Over a thousand women and men from the public responded to that request and hundreds of proposals, ideas and initiatives were received.

Among other things, residents raised the need for greater representation and presence of women in the public space in the city – for example, by using gender-equal language in municipal publications and increasing the number of streets and institutions named after women.

They also cited the need for improving the sense of personal security and fighting violence against women – for example, by implementing technological solutions, expanding public information campaigns and educational activities, and holding trainings for businesses and municipal staff. Another need that was raised had to do with adapting transportation in the city and making it more accessible, for example regarding bikes, as well as in the field of sports – the facilities and the activities. The respondents also noted the importance of educational initiatives for advancing gender equality, the desire to encourage works of art and cultural endeavors by women, the fear of sex segregation at public events, and the need to support small and medium-sized businesses run by women and offer economic opportunity platforms in the city.



Even though the responses ostensibly dealt with different issues, all of them touched on the same manifestations and core generators of gender inequality: the absence of personal security experienced by girls and women as a result of gender-based violence at home and in the public space; the traditional gender division of roles between home and work which is still prevalent and affects the options and opportunities that women have and shapes their path in life, including in city; and their lack of representation. These things are all interconnected and perpetuate the existing gender reality. For that reason, they constitute focal points that need to be addressed and changed in the municipal context as well.

Reflecting a holistic approach that considers the **life course** of women at different times and stops in their lives – when they study, participate in leisure activities, travel, work, use municipal services, and more – and based on the diverse voices that emerged from the research and the field, the plan focuses on eight subject areas:



EDUCATION



PERSONAL SAFETY



PUBLIC SPACE AND COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS



TRANSPORTATION



CULTURE AND ARTS



SPORTS



INTRAORGANIZATIONAL CHAPTER THAT DEALS WITH ADVANCING WOMEN TO SENIOR POSITIONS.

Four gender equality elements

Based on a model developed in Sweden (the 4Rs model) and implemented in other places around the world (such as Vienna), four elements were examined for each of the areas that comprise the plan in order to characterize disparities, barriers and needs and define measurable action items for achieving change:

1

Representation and Participation

Who takes part in decision-making?
Who benefits from the decisions?
Does anyone require different services?

2

Resources

What are the municipal resources invested and how are they divided up (for example: money, time, information and space)?

3

Reality

Which barriers create this situation?

4

Realizing Change

Which adjustments and changes are needed to advance equality?

The Fair Shared City Plan is not 'for women only' and is not a plan that stands on its own. It is a plan that interfaces with and serves the city's vision, making it possible to optimize municipal services. Gender equality is a concern and responsibility for all, and it is a cornerstone of urban resilience and prosperity. In its scope and depth, the Fair Shared City Plan of the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality bears an important, innovative and groundbreaking message for the city's residents. Accordingly, the unique lens applied in the plan, coupled with its development stages and work methods, will enable the Municipality to extend its endeavors in advancing social equality to other indicators as well and for additional minority groups.

The plan, with its eight chapters, provides a roadmap for the Municipality, and forms the foundation for its continued wide-ranging, meaningful and effective work. Through the plan, Tel Aviv-Yafo strives to be a beacon for gender equality and drive change in Israeli society as a whole.

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

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