|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

*A Proposal to Support*

**The Center for Gender, Law and Policy**

*Promoting equality and opportunity for women in all segments of society*

The **2020 Gender Gap Index** recently published by the World Economic Forum presents a distressing picture regarding the state of gender inequality in Israel. Instead of moving forward, Israel is lagging behind other Western countries. When the Gender Gap Index was first published in 2006, Israel was ranked 35th out of 153 countries; in the 2020 Index, Israel was ranked 64th.

Gender inequality in Israel is a central problem. It requires the formulation of a practical and research agenda, the focus of which must be identification of the existing barriers to the advancement of women in the private and public sectors, as well as the formulation of legislative and policymaking tools that can break down those barriers.

**The Center for Gender, Law and Policy** was established in 2014 at the University of Haifa with the goal of changing the landscape of feminist legal research and activism in Israel. The Center serves as the first academic platform of its kind for the advancement of research, instruction, legal training, community outreach and public policy initiatives surrounding topics of gender inequality in Israel.

**The Center for Gender, Law and Policy** aims to achieve progress through the following channels of activity:

* Promoting legal reform
* Developing and disseminating knowledge in the field of gender equality - creating a focus for research and teaching in the field
* Promoting public debate on issues of gender inequality in various circles of influence: government offices, legislators, judges, lawyers, academics, feminist field organizations in Israel and around the world

**Areas of Activity**

**Academic Arena -** Teaching and multidisciplinary research with an emphasis on gender analysis of law

**Non-Academic Arena -** Disseminating knowledge among decision makers and actively participate in shaping public policy, and initiating projects centered on the connection between feminist theory and practice.

**Academic Initiatives in Israel**

To date, no academic institution in Israel comprehensively addresses the topic of gender inequality in Israel and provides a socially impactful response. The Rackman Center at Bar-Ilan University is dedicated to family law, and the Lafer Center for Women and Gender Studies Hebrew University focuses on internal domestic issues**.**

**What Makes the Center of Gender, Law and Policy Unique?**

* **Integration of theory and practice**. **The Legal Feminism Clinic**, established in 2005, stands at the forefront of feminist legal activism to promote women's rights in Israel. Under the direction of Dr. Arianne Renan-Barzilay and Adv. Vardit Avidan, the Clinic addresses economic violence, women's treatment in the Family Court and gender discrimination. The Feminist Legal Clinic deploys teams of students in promoting legal advocacy and legislative support for women. Through the work of the Legal Clinics, law students are exposed to examples of social injustice and provided with hands-on opportunities for corrective intervention using the law.
* **Broad Base of Gender Research.** The Faculty of Law at the University of Haifa is the leading faculty in Israel in this field. In addition to Prof. Noya Rimalt and Prof. Shulamit Almog, the Faculty has eight other faculty members and women dedicated to gender as a primary field of research.
* **Social Setting and Local Support.** The city of Haifa, with its diverse population, and the University of Haifa's pluralistic student body and faculty, have been home to the grassroots feminist movement since the early 1970s. Since then, Haifa has become a vibrant center for feminist organizations where Jewish and Arab women join forces to collaborate.

**Academic Leadership**

**Noya Rimalt** is a Professor of Law at the University of Haifa. She joined the University of Haifa Law Faculty after serving as the founding director of the first Israeli clinical program in civil rights that was established under her leadership in 1993 and operated until 1999 at Tel-Aviv University.

Professor Rimalt teaches various courses in the areas of criminal law, gender studies and feminist legal theory. In recent years she was a visiting professor at the University of Toronto Centre for Ethics and a visiting faculty at Georgetown Law Center and at the Washington College of Law at American University. She currently serves as the co-director of the Center for Gender, Law and Policy and as the co-director of the Center for the Study of Crime, Law & Society.

Professor Rimalt received her LL.B from Tel-Aviv University, her LL.M (Summa Cum Laude) (as a New Israel Fund Civil Liberties Fellow) from Washington College of Law at American University and a Ph.D in Law (J.S.D) from Tel-Aviv University. She has won the Raul Wallenberg Prize for Outstanding Research in Human Rights for her Ph.D dissertation.

Professor Rimalt’s scholarship examines the intersections of gender, law and feminism in both legal theory and practice. She has written articles on numerous issues such as female offenders, sexual harassment, gender and multiculturalism, women in the military, female conscientious objectors, motherhood and work, abortions, criminalizing the client in prostitution, gender segregation in academic programs for the Ultra-Orthodox, pay equity and affirmative action. She has published extensively in leading law journals. Her book Legal Feminism from Theory to Practice: The Struggle for Gender Equality in Israel and the United States has been published in 2010. Professor Rimalt is the recipient of the 2018-2019 Excellence in Teaching Award.

**Shulamit Almog** is a Full Professor of Law at the University of Haifa, Co-Director of the Center of Law, Gender and Policy and Director of the Doctoral Program. Her research focuses on law and culture, law and literature, law and film, children's rights and feminist legal studies. She has published numerous books and articles in US, Canadian, European and Israeli law reviews.

Alongside her academic work, she is she is publicly active on human rights issues, appearing before the Israeli Knesset, drafting sections of Israel's report to the UN on the International Convention on Children's Rights, and participating on the committee reforming Israel's Adoption Law.

Prof. Almog’s academic vocation is marked by the aspiration of investigating the links between law and culture. One of her main contribution to Israeli jurisprudence is the importation and development of Law and Literature. Her book trilogy -- Law and Literature (2000), Law and Literature in the Digital Age (2007), and Law and Film (2012), has evoked a still ongoing lively discourse.

Prof. Almog is deeply committed to the application of research to promote social justice, and believes that a rigorous intellectual framework, focused on the power of narrative, can inform policy in these areas in a manner that can bring about very real improvements to people’s lives. In recent years she has dealt extensively with law and narrative, and with the pivotal role of narrative in the quest for social change and paradigm shifting.

**Selected Achievements of the Center for Gender, Law and Policy**

* **Reform of Regulation of Prostitution in Israel** (2017)
* **Reform of Termination of Pregnancy Law**. We hosted an International Conference (2014) attended by Professor Mary-Ann Case of the University of Chicago and drafted a Comprehensive Abortion Law Reform Bill.
* **Women in the Net (**2015**)** : Presented a position paper on Women in the Net to the Committee on the Promotion of Women's Status in the Knesset; Hosted an international conference in collaboration with the University of Haifa and Law & Technology Center, Law Firm (topics: Vengeance on the Internet, Sexual Offenses, Women and Online Games, Digital Management Avenue and more); Publication of a position paper. We are currently drafting a bill to reform the issue.
* **Research**: Law, Politics and Ethics of Regulating Fertilization Technologies in Israel (Research supported and funded by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space, and conducted by Prof. Almog with Dr. Sharon Bassan)
* **Symposia**: 'Ultra-Orthodox Women Make Change (2014); "Women, War and Peace" (2015)
* **Workshops**: Sexuality and Law (2015)

**Request for Support**

**The Center for Gender, Law and Policy** is deeply committed to advancing social justice by developing an intellectual framework that will inform policy in these areas and bring about real improvements to Israeli society.

**A generous gift of $100,000** will enable the Center to dedicate itself to the following activities:

* Provide annual fellowships for outstanding post-doctoral candidates
* Host annual symposia on timely and compelling topics
* Establish a merit-based award in recognition of excellence in gender research.

*Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.*

 **THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA:**

***Israel’s first ‘multiversity’***



The University of Haifa has embarked upon a strategic plan that will transform it into a multi-campus academic institution – a “Multiversity”. The Multiversity model will encompass academic entry points or portals across the Haifa region, and as far as China, that will offer world-class education in a broad range of academic and research fields. As the first academic institution in Israel to operate in such a format, the University of Haifa is improving access to higher education in the North and expanding professional opportunities for ethnic and social minorities.

Key to our growth is the development of our downtown Haifa campus. **The Lorry I. Lokey City Campus** will house Israel’s only School of Data Sciences – a dynamic new field that is shaping the future of research, machine learning and high-tech innovation.

University of Haifa is driving marine research in Israel and advancing an innovative educational platform for long-term marine conservation strategies for the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The **Marine Sciences Portal** is poised for a dramatic expansion of its research efforts with coastal facilities located in Haifa, Sdot Yam, Acre and Ashdod.Our campus is academic home to 18,000 students and faculty members from different ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. Jews, Arabs, Druze, new immigrants, international students, IDF officers and security personnel come together to study, research, socialize, and prepare themselves for the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

With six faculties and numerous centers of excellence including neurobiology, cancer, brain research, Holocaust studies, education and security studies, the University is educating tomorrow’s leaders to address the world’s most critical problems.

**In the next decade, no other institution will have a greater impact on Israel than the University of Hai**