

PowerPoint Discussion Guide

Women

הקרן החדשה לישראל
New Israel Fund
الصندوق الجديد لاسرائيل

The following guide provides a suggested script (in *italics*) and tips for your PowerPoint presentation. The text in **bold** will appear on the slide (it is not necessary to read this text out loud). We suggest that you go through the PowerPoint beforehand to familiarize yourself with the flow of the presentation and the order in which information appears on the slides. Thank you for taking the time to educate your community on social justice issues in Israel, and to inform people about the work of the New Israel Fund.

CHECKLIST

- Computer enabled to show PowerPoint and video (internet or DVD player)
- Copy of *Discussion Questions* (for facilitator to lead discussion)
- Optional: Copies of *NIF 101, Participant Handout and Related Articles* (to distribute at end of presentation)
- Optional: copies of *Evaluation Form for Program Participants*

Before you start the PowerPoint, you may show *Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue* (~12 min) to provide an overview of NIF. (Click on link in Facilitator's Packet or insert DVD)

PRESENTATION

Slide 1: Introduction

- a. State the purpose of the event: *We are here to discuss one of the social justice issues facing Israeli society. This presentation will focus on women in Israel.*
- b. You may want to start with an icebreaker, such as asking what experience each person has had with social justice issues, or what knowledge they have about the situation of women in Israel, both positive and negative.

Slide 2: Israel's Declaration of Independence

Ask a person in the group to read the quote. Point out that this is the ideal NIF works to uphold.

"The State of Israel...will be based on freedom, justice and peace...it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or gender..."

Israel's Declaration of Independence, 5 Iyyar 5708 / 14 May 1948

Slide 3: What is NIF?

The New Israel Fund is the leading organization committed to equality and democracy for all Israelis. NIF's primary focus is supporting the creation, development and operations of organizations working towards these goals (choose a participant to read the following):

- **To protect the civil and human rights of all Israelis,**
- **To close the social and economic gaps between Israel's diverse communities, and**
- **To promote religious pluralism and tolerance.**

Slide 4: How does NIF work?

1. **Grant making**

Since its founding in 1979, NIF has granted over \$200 million to more than 800 non-profit organizations.

2. Capacity-building

In 1982, NIF established SHATIL (“seedling” in Hebrew) to provide organizational development and training for organizations. SHATIL teaches skills such as fundraising, coalition-building and working with the media.

3. Leadership Development

NIF has leadership programs for Israelis and Diaspora Jews who want to work in the field of social justice.

4. Public Advocacy

Advocacy includes educational events and campaigns to create public awareness about social justice issues in Israel, such as NIF’s campaign to kick racism out of soccer.

Slide 5: Now to our main topic of discussion, *Combating Inequality and Violence Against Women*

Slide 6: Women in Israel

Women have reached prominent positions in Israel’s political, economic and social realms.

Because of its liberal and socialist Zionist roots, the State of Israel appears to be a country where women enjoy full equality. People often think of Golda Meir, Israel’s only female prime minister, or of Israeli women serving in the army. In reality, only in recent decades have more women entered the workforce and achieved higher levels of education.

Nonetheless, a deep societal change in how women are viewed and treated in Israel is still needed.

Social institutions, patriarchal traditions, and religious laws have kept women at a disadvantage in schools, the workplace, the courthouse, and as victims of violence. In addition, Israeli women in minority and immigrant groups have disproportionately high rates of unemployment, poverty and health problems.

Slide 7: Challenges

These slides include issues from the *Related Articles*, which we encourage you to distribute at the end of the presentation. You do not need to read the quote that appears on the slide.

The Courthouse: Israeli Jewish women may be “chained” to their marriages

According to Israeli law, marriage status for Israeli Jews falls under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox rabbinate. This means that in divorce proceedings, men have the final say and women often fall victim to extortion. If their husband refuses to divorce them, they remain agunot, or “chained” to their marriages.

The Workplace

Women are paid an average of only 62% of men’s salaries.

Only 34% of government ministry directors or department heads are women.

Despite their increasing numbers in the workforce and in higher education, women still have limited access to higher positions of authority.

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been reported by 35-40% of women.

Slide 8: Challenges

Domestic Abuse and Violence

Reports of physical and sexual assaults continue to rise every year across all sectors of society. From 2004 to 2007 the number of haredi women calling hotlines for domestic abuse and violence doubled.

From 2009 to 2010, the number of Arab Israeli women filing complaints of sexual offenses increased by 15%.

Domestic abuse and even “honor killings” stain Arab-Israeli communities. (See Related Articles for more information on “honor killings.”)

These are two of the many reasons that these situations are not easy to escape:

Pervasive cultures of silence

It is often difficult for abused women in traditional communities, such as the haredi and some sectors of the Arab-Israeli community, to come forward. There are taboos about discussing abuse and fears of being blamed. The culture of silence in Arab communities often results in witnesses refusing to testify or even report “honor killings.” As a result, most perpetrators are never prosecuted.

A lack of economic independence

Arab-Israeli women, for example, face particular economic challenges. Many reside in towns that lack jobs or public transportation to areas with employment opportunities. This contributes to a low percentage, only 19%, of Arab woman in the workforce. More economic independence could help women leave abusive households.

Despite this culture of silence, the rise in reports shows that more women are coming forward. This may also be the result of an increase in incidents.

Slide 9: Trafficked Women

Several thousand women are trafficked into Israel every year to work in the sex industry.

They are victims of violence, threats and rape by smugglers, pimps and clients.

Many are trapped in a trafficking cycle.

Most trafficked women are from the Former Soviet Union. Trafficking victims rarely speak Hebrew and are unfamiliar with the Israeli legal system. They are often deported to their home country only to be trafficked back into Israel again.

Slide 10: Now we will watch two episodes of *Against All Odds* (~20 min each). (Click on link in module or insert DVD)

Afterwards, open the discussion by asking the group for their thoughts on the episode, or by referring to the *Discussion Questions*. But first, propose some of the following discussion guidelines:

- Participants should listen with curiosity—ask questions to expand their view before offering a different /opposing view.
- Participants should express their perspectives in terms of how a situation impacts them, instead of labeling it (e.g., “I strongly agree/disagree with ...” instead of “S/he is right/wrong”)
- Participants should not interrupt one another.
- Everyone’s voice should be heard (people should not monopolize the conversation).

Remember...

- Clarify points of confusion by restating individual contributions to confirm understanding and ensure that they are heard by the whole group (e.g., “I hear your view as, is that right?”).
- The facilitator reserves the right to redirect the conversation.

In the last few minutes of the discussion, ask for two final comments and continue to the next slides to wrap up.

Slide 11: Responding to the Challenges

Since the 1980s, NIF has seeded and supported several generations of feminist organizations in Israel—including the country’s foremost women’s advocacy groups. NIF and its grantees work towards these goals (choose a participant to read the text in bold):

- **Empower women from disadvantaged and traditional sectors, and strengthen organizations working to advance women’s status in these communities**
- **Win better safeguards, funding and support for victims of sexual violence**
- **Promote solutions for thousands of “agunot” (chained women)**
- **Combat trafficking of women**

Slide 12: Making a Difference on the Ground

Women’s organizations have made great progress in advancing the rights and status of women in Israel. Here are a few examples:

Kolech: The Religious Women’s Forum

Promoting women’s rights from *within* Orthodoxy

As we saw in the episode, Kolech helps women in cases of domestic violence, raises awareness of the issue and also promotes religious roles for women in Orthodoxy.

Women Against Violence

Fighting against emotional and physical violence towards Arab Israeli women

In addition to helping victims of sexual abuse, Women Against Violence encourages women to get involved in public and political life. For example, the organization promotes employment opportunities for university-educated Arab women.

Ahoti- Sister for Women in Israel

Works for the economic and personal empowerment of disadvantaged women in Israel, including Mizrahi (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent), Ethiopian and Arab women

Ahoti informs women about their right to fair pay and appropriate work conditions. In addition, Ahoti establishes economic empowerment projects, such as the Women’s Community Kitchen, which trains women with cooking skills to set up cooperative catering businesses.

Slide 13: How can you get involved?

- **Attend NIF events**
- **Stay informed: sign up for NIF’s e-newsletter**
- **Follow NIF on Facebook and Twitter**
- **Join New Generations (20s and 30s)**

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- See NIF on the ground: join an NIF trip to Israel
- Apply for NIF fellowship programs (20s and 30s)

WRAPPING UP

1. Propose next steps, such as scheduling next event to learn about another topic (Ethiopian Israelis, Migrant Workers, Human Rights or Palestinian Israelis) and connecting with NIF.
2. Distribute the *Participant Handout*, *NIF 101*, and *Related Articles* so the group can learn more about the issue and NIF.
3. If possible, ask participants to fill out the survey online (www.surveymonkey.com/s/NIFoutoftheBox) or the *Evaluation Form for Program Participants*. And be sure that you fill out the *Evaluation Form for Facilitators*.

Conclusion:

Today we learned about a marginalized group in Israel that has faced a lot of difficulties. On a positive note, we have also seen how Israeli women have stepped up to the challenges and established organizations to protect and empower other women. NIF works towards this goal, empowering all people in Israel, on a daily basis. As the organizations demonstrate, progress has been made. I'd like to thank all of you for taking the time to learn about this social justice issue in Israel.

Note on sources:

This information has been gathered over the past decade by the New Israel Fund, based on current events, government policies and information from NIF grantees. Numbers have been provided by Adva Center (www.nif.org/assets/pdfs/10-Facts-You-Probably-Didnt-know-about-women-in-Israel.pdf), the U.S Department of State *2010 Human Rights Report: Israel and the Occupied Territories*, and the Israel Women's Network (www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=170369). Last updated April 2011.