

In government jobs, women are still way behind

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Here is an interesting figure: About 60 percent of all employees in Israel's Public Security Ministry are women. Sounds okay but don't let this figure mislead you. When you examine the median salary on offer at that ministry, you discover that in 2016 men earned 25,000 shekels (about \$7,200) a month, in contrast to 14,800 shekels paid to women. In addition, despite the large proportion of female employees, the Public Security Ministry – like the other government ministries in the country – also have large gender gaps when it comes to the number of women in managerial positions.

Among executives in senior departmental posts at the ministry, there are eight women compared to 23 men. These women earn an average gross salary of 23,000 shekels a month, while the men earn 30,000 shekels – in spite of the fact that the

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women have almost twice as much seniority: 17 years in the civil service compared to nine years among their male counterparts. On the other hand, among this group only seven women have an academic degree, compared to 20 of the men. On the level of coordinators and middle management, there is actually a majority of women (71 compared to 59 men), but the men's salary is still higher: 17,000 shekels compared to 14,000 for the women – even if, on average, the women have more seniority.

Four years after there was a decision to require government ministries to present what is referred to

as a gender audit of their budgets, the picture is particularly gloomy. Since the initiative taken then by MK Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid) – who convinced then-Finance Minister, Yesh Atid chairman Yair Lapid, that gender gaps would only be reduced if clear and accurate information were provided – every ministry is supposed to submit an annual budget request based on principles that facilitate a better understanding of workplace relations between men and women, both in terms of salaries and funding earmarked for various projects involving them.

However, an examination of the ministries' recent reports on the gender situation, with proposals due to be incorporated in the 2019 state budget, indicates that the subject has been only partially internalized. The ministries do not all present the requisite data; indeed, often more information is hidden than revealed. A "mapping" effort, albeit based on partial information from the ministries, reveals a similar picture: Men always earn more, even when there are more women in middle management, and even if women have more seniority and education. The data are surprising because in the civil service we would have expected smaller gaps, if any.

Barbara Swirski, director of the Adva Center – an NGO that monitors economic and social developments in the country – analyzed the ministries' data in advance of a discussion held Monday in the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality. Her most interesting finding concerned the small number of female senior executives.

"Women constituted 27 percent of the senior executives in the Economy Ministry, 26 percent in the Internal Security Ministry, 18 percent in the Israel Lands Authority, 28 percent in the Tax Authority, and so on," she explains.

"For the most part, women also benefit less from the budgets of the various services, the grants and the



MK Aliza Lavie and the treasury's director general, Yael Andorn, at a Knesset meeting on the status of women in 2014. Olivier Fitoussi

scholarships. Even among those providing outsourcing services [to the ministries], the number of women is small. More importantly, only a minority of the ministries revealed any steps being taken to increase gender equality, and not a single ministry said it had initiated an examination of what is needed as a result of a gender analysis. The conclusion is that there's still a long way to go to before we properly exploit the potential of gender budgeting," adds Swirski.

More women, earning less

The Health Ministry reports that it employs over 27,000 people. Of them 68 percent are women, but they receive only 60 percent of all expenditures earmarked for ministry wages. In the government health system, the median (gross) monthly salary for women is 14,876 shekels, compared to 16,534 for men. Among the reasons for these gaps are overtime hours, which usually means double pay, but another reason is the salaries earned by senior management. "Due to the fact that most

of the senior positions in the health system are held by men," according to the ministry's report, they are the ones who earn more.

The Agriculture Ministry, too – with its 1,015 employees, 453 of them women (45 percent) – reports that wage gaps between men and women are large: Women earn an average gross salary of 13,100 shekels per month, while men earn 17,600 shekels. The Volcani Center Agricultural Research Organization reports an even greater discrepancy: Men earn an average of 21,000 shekels a month, as opposed to their female counterparts' 13,000 shekels – and almost half of Volcani's employees are women. Of the grants awarded in 2016 by the chief scientist, 78 percent went to men.

Last year in the Finance Ministry as well, women employees reportedly outnumbered men: 463 to 409. Still, the average salary was 19,400 shekels a month for men and 14,500 for women. While there are some 130 women working in the ministry headquarters, in contrast to about 70 men, in all the professional departments, where wages

are higher, there are more men, according to TheMarker's report.

As finance minister, Lapid had made Yael Andorn the treasury's first female director general in 2013.

In the Israel Tax Authority, women constitute some 52 percent of all employees but only 28 percent of those holding senior positions.

The Social Equality Ministry, headed by Gila Gamliel, reports that it has 94 employees, 45.7 percent of them women and 54.3 percent men. Of those in the 12 highest managerial jobs director general, deputy director general, department heads, etc.) – six are men and six women. So far so good. However, according to the ministry's gender report, although some 46 percent of all employees in the ministry are women, they account for the majority of those with lower salaries, "because many positions in middle management (characterized by a relatively low wage) are filled by women, as compared to most of the senior positions, which are filled by men." The gap between men and women in terms of median salary is also great. "Women's salary is about

70 percent of the men's. This discrepancy is smaller at the executive level."

At the Ministry for the Development of the Negev and the Galilee, for example, you won't find a single woman in a senior position. At present, the ministry has 64 employees – 38 of them women. Figures from 2017 show that after the female director general left, no women hold managerial posts there. The average salary for men is 24,400 shekels a month, for women 14,700.

According to the gender report published by the Justice Ministry, "Throughout the years, the rate of salary paid to women out of all the fees paid for professional services to outside lawyers by the public defender's office, is low relative to the proportion of women employed by the prosecution." The situation there is that 75 percent of all the external attorneys employed by the ministry are men.

In the public defender's office, 36 percent of the employees are women, but they receive only 25 percent of the salary. In the ministry itself, women account for 63 percent of the total cost of employing workers, although they constitute 68 percent of all employees.