



Palestinian National Authority
Ministry of Women's Affairs



Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy Booklet:
Promoting Gender Equality and Equity

2011-2013



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Foreword

This Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy is part of Palestinian national efforts, supported and endorsed by the Council of Ministers, to develop various sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies for the period 2011-2013 in order to serve as a cornerstone for the development of the national reform and development plan for the next three years.

The content of this 2011-2013 Cross-Sectoral National Strategy reflects the Palestinian National Authority's (PA) commitment to equality and equity, respect for human rights, and active involvement in eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination. The presence of gender issues on the national agenda reflects the government's commitment in this regard. In order to translate this commitment into practical and tangible results, a Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy had to be formulated.

This Strategy serves to respond to the real needs of the Palestinian women who have been continuously and actively involved in the Palestinian struggle for liberation and independence since its beginning. The Strategy seeks to both address and solve problems that prevent women from enjoying equal status with men in Palestinian society, as well as to contribute in achieving the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) - "Promote gender equality and empower women" - which is also consistent with the goals of the PA Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA).

The Strategy highlights multiple challenges that will require full cooperation and coordination between various public institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and the private sector, as well as international and

regional organizations supporting women's issues. To this end, MoWA is looking forward to forging close cooperative links with all relevant stakeholders concerned with the genuine equality of all citizens, irrespective of race, gender or religious beliefs. Such cooperation will necessarily help in creating a broad base of knowledge, understanding and commitment to the Strategy among all of its stakeholders.

The Strategy document seeks to promote gender equity and equality by addressing priority gender-related problems. It offers guidance and serves as a reference for reducing gender gaps and developing appropriate gender-responsive programs, projects and actions to positively influence the living and working conditions of both men and women, with equity and equality. It aims to advance the status of women in Palestinian society and promotes equal opportunities for all citizens in accordance with their varying abilities, skills and conditions.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those whose contributions made this Strategy possible. Special gratitude is due to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN) for its continuous support to MoWA. We would also like to express our appreciation to all of the staff members who have actively contributed to the development of this Strategy, particularly the staff at MoWA, the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD), and in all public institutions, NGOs and private sector agencies involved.

Wishing success to all efforts in support of women's issues.

Rabiha Diab
Minister of Women's Affairs

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Financial and technical support

Special thanks go to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), now part of UN Women for its continuous support to the Palestinian Authority's endeavors to bring gender dimensions into the national development planning process and for having provided us with technical and financial assistance in all fields.

Acronyms

CSNGS	Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoL	Ministry of Labor
MoNE	Ministry of National Economy
MoPAD	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PDP	Palestinian Development Plan
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PNC	Palestinian National Council
PRDP	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women, now part of UN WOMEN
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East



INTRODUCTION

A **Strategy** intended for a better society built on gender equality and without violence:

This Strategy proposes to pursue a set of strategic objectives for 2011-2013, as determined by the various governmental and non-governmental organizations that participated in the process of preparing this Strategy.

Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994, considerable progress has been made in the creation of an enabling environment for gender-responsive development and the empowerment of Palestinian women and girls. Indeed, in spite of a difficult environment, compounded on the one hand by cultural, political, and social obstacles, and on the other hand by the impact of protracted crisis, political division, national fragmentation, and foreign occupation, gender equality is slowly but surely gaining ground within Palestinian society. This is also taking place due to the Palestinian women who have played and

continue to play a special role in all aspects of actively assisting the PA in preparing the grounds for building a democratic state. All States have the responsibility to increase women's empowerment and ensure that they enjoy equal citizen's rights and are fully and actively engaged in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life. Palestinian women have always urged the PA to assume its responsibility in ensuring and achieving sustainable human development in Palestinian society.

Unfortunately the internal Palestinian divide and Israeli restrictions, including the siege imposed on Gaza Strip, have adversely affected the situation of Palestinian women, impacting their access to education and training, economic opportunities and health, and also restricting their political and civil freedoms. In addition, discrimination embedded in legislation, regulations, policies, structures, norms and traditions has exacerbated the declining socio-economic situation of Palestinian society caused

by the oppressive measures of the Israeli occupation. This has led to the widening of gender gaps at numerous levels.

On 17 August 2009, the Palestinian Cabinet made the formal decision to initiate the process of creating a new Palestinian Development Plan (PDP) for the years 2011–2013. With the important purpose of placing gender equality and women's empowerment at the core of the forthcoming PDP, the Palestinian Cabinet, together with the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD), assigned the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) with the task of developing a Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy (CSNGS) which would be incorporated into the PDP.

MoWA, assisted by UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN, led a consultative process with numerous stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental, private sector and donors) throughout the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) to develop a cohesive Cross-Sectoral National Strategy to address issues of gender equality and equity.

The present CSNGS seeks to highlight priority gender gaps in the major fields of citizenship rights, rule of law, residence rights, family law, violence against women, political participation, education, health, women and girls with special needs, and poverty. It proposes policies and interventions to bridge these gaps through joint action between the different ministries, women's and human rights organizations, and civil society organizations across different sectors.

The Vision behind the CSNGS is a democratic Palestinian society characterized by a culture of social justice in which men, women, boys and girls enjoy equal citizenship rights and equal opportunities in both the public and private spheres. This vision includes building the future of an independent Palestinian state that actively and efficiently invests in and benefits from the contributions, capacity and skills of both its female and male citizens, and in this way, attains just, comprehensive and sustainable human development.

Methodology

The starting point for the development of the Strategy was a comprehensive review of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) 2008-2010 and sectoral plans developed by a number of ministries, in addition to a review of recently published literature, research and analyses on the situation of Palestinian women, particularly the publications of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Based on the most recent statistics, an analytical report outlining the situation of Palestinian women across all major sectors was developed and presented for discussions in workshops aimed at identifying priorities for the CSNGS.

Also essential in achieving the objectives of the CSNGS will be the full incorporation of the 2011–2015 National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women, developed in full partnership with all stakeholders concerned with violence against women (VAW) in the oPt. This strategy adopts a cross-sectoral approach by recognizing VAW as a development issue that affects not only women, but also the socio-economic system and political structure of Palestinian society as a whole. This strategy will be implemented and monitored by a National Committee to combat VAW, which is headed by MoWA and brings together other relevant Palestinian Ministries, such as MoSA and Mol, with representatives of women's organizations through the Al-Muntada Coalition (Forum for Combating Violence against Women).

The leadership and direction for the development of the CSNGS, including the technical aspects of the process, were defined and an agreement reached regarding the work plan and methodology to be followed throughout the various stages of the Strategy's development. Several workshops were conducted for representatives of women's organizations and civil society organizations from Jerusalem and various parts of the West Bank, with a similar workshop also held in the



Gaza Strip. In these workshops, participants identified priorities and objectives and proposed policies and interventions. Two meetings were held for gender units in a number of ministries as well as several teams responsible for developing sectoral strategic plans, in which gender mainstreaming was discussed and a number of cross-sectoral gender issues and priorities were identified. Several interviews were also conducted with heads of national teams working on the development of sectoral strategies in order to agree on integrating some of the proposed priorities into their plans. Lastly, discussions were held with a number of experts representing various sectors.

Once gender priorities were identified, three workshops were held with the participation of MoWA senior management, heads of sections and staff members. In these workshops, policies, interventions and activities necessary for the implementation of the proposed Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy were identified, followed by a discussion of the plan and its policies and activities with planning officials working on sectoral plans in the MoEHE, MoL, MoYS,

MoH, MoSA, MoI, MoJ, MoNE and MoPAD. All of the officials involved in these discussions expressed their willingness to include the different sectoral issues and activities raised into the plans of their respective ministries. Lastly, the first rough draft of the strategy was presented to international donors for consultation, discussion and feedback. It was also presented in a workshop with women's organizations and civil society organizations, as well as with the national team, before a final draft version was submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval.

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In conclusion, the objectives of the CSNGS were identified through discussions held by different public institutions, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders in a series of workshops for the purpose of developing this Strategy and preparing the grounds for mainstreaming gender issues across sectors.

This Strategy can only be implemented and its goals achieved through joint action and close coordination between MoWA and other ministries, as well as women's, human rights and civil society organizations.

Family Law

To enable women to enjoy family law
and civil rights that ensure equality and
equity



Family Law

Strategic Objective 1

To enable women to enjoy family law and civil rights that ensure equality and equity.

Q: How old were you when you got married?

A: Twenty years old.

Q: How did this happen? Did you choose your husband or did the family?

A: The family, of course. After they came and asked my family, my family agreed, and afterwards asked for my opinion. I told them: "Whatever you wish". Soon after marriage, I became pregnant. I felt my husband supported me, but not to the extent that I wished, not 100%. My freedom was under strict calculations, restrained¹.

Some facts and figures

- Muslim women in the West Bank are subject to the Jordanian Personal Status Law of 1976, which is based on the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence, while the Gaza Strip is controlled by the unmodified 1954 Law of Family Rights of Egypt.
- Although neighboring countries such as Syria and Egypt have undergone certain progressive changes to their personal status laws, these laws remain essentially untouched in the oPt.
- Polygamy is legal in the oPt; men may take up to four wives at one time.
- Men and women have grossly unequal divorce rights. While there is 'Mukhala'a'² in the law (articles 103 – 107) whereby the couple agrees to separate, there is no 'Khul' as in other amended Egyptian and Jordanian laws, whereby the woman is able to undergo Khul' even if her partner does not accept.
- Palestinian Christian women are governed by laws established by their respective churches. In general, divorce is permitted under the Orthodox Church if a woman is found to be unfaithful, refrains from getting pregnant, is found not to be a virgin upon marriage, or upon a dispute whereby the wife is told by the Church to obey her husband and she refuses for a period of three years. In the Catholic Church and in its ecclesiastical court, there is no possibility for divorce. There is, however, the possibility of 'separation,' the declaration of 'annulment' of a marriage contracted with some irregularity against the law. In all of these cases, men and women enjoy exactly the same rights, without any distinction, and according to the Ecclesiastical Code of Canon Law.
- Although in the oPt (including East Jerusalem) the decision of whether to adopt one's husband's last name is left up to the individual woman in practice, Palestinian women's family names are automatically changed at marriage because the Palestinian passport, like the Israeli identity card that all Palestinians under occupation and in the PA are obliged to carry, automatically changes a woman's family name to that of her husband. Recently, even in Jordanian passports, Palestinian women's names have been changed to those of their husbands. This violates a basic human right stipulated in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).³

1 Testimonies from: UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Publication: (un)Equal Rights, (un)Equal Opportunities: 30 Years of CEDAW, 30 Stories of Women in the occupied Palestinian territory.

2 Dissolution of a marriage by mutual consent is defined as repudiation (mukhala'a) and it is the wife who has to pay the husband compensation. In more progressive legislation subsequently adopted by some Arab States, this compensation (khul') is restricted to marital annulment initiated by the wife. (UNDP, Arab Human Development Report 2005, page 191).

3 Article 16-g CEDAW Convention: 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: [...] (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation; [...]

CSNGS stands for

Taking all legal, legislative and operational measures to reinforce the principle of gender equality and equity in personal status and civil rights.

CSNGS proposes

1. Enacting the Unified Palestinian Family Law.
2. Amending marriage contracts to ensure the inclusion of all rights for Palestinian women.
3. Raising awareness among girls and women about their inheritance and property rights, as well as the conditions and terms that they can include in their marriage contracts ahead of time.
4. Disbursing funds allocated to the Maintenance Fund from the PNA budget.
5. Ensuring that the draft Civil Status Law provides for a woman's right to choose between her own or her husband's family name in her personal ID card and passport.
6. Documenting marriage contracts and divorce in Shari'a courts, and requiring divorce to be made by court only.
7. Computerizing all data related to marital status and linking all courts through an intranet.

Nationality and Residence Rights

To ensure that Palestinian women
of Jerusalem preserve their rights to
residency, movement and nationality



Nationality and Residence Rights

Strategic Objective 2

To ensure that Palestinian women of Jerusalem preserve their rights to residency, movement and nationality.

I am from Rameen village. I got married to a man inside the Green Line in Qalansawa village. I gave birth to a girl and a boy but I never got an Israeli ID card. My husband is an old man in the age of 65. My family's house was demolished. The Police forced me out of my husband's house in Qalansawa on the pretext that I do not have an ID. My children attend school in Qalansawa. So I was separated from my husband and children. They proved to me that the Occupation does not have mercy. I was forced to live in Tulkarem town, while my husband and young children are in Qalansawa and my family in Rameen. I wish I can live with my husband and young children, who cannot bear being away from their mother.⁴

Some facts and figures

- The Jordanian Nationality Code (Law no. 6 of 1945) and its amendments, applied in the West Bank, and the Egyptian Nationality Code, applied in the Gaza Strip, deny the right of women to pass their nationality to their spouses or children, which is a right enjoyed by Palestinian men.
- In law, a woman loses her nationality if she marries a non-Palestinian unless she submits a written application to the Minister of Interior within one year of marriage.
- Palestinian women and men from the West Bank and Gaza Strip who marry Palestinians who hold Israeli citizenship face difficulty in transferring citizenship to their family members. The same is true for Palestinians in the West Bank who marry holders of a Jerusalem Israeli identity card.
- In July 2003, the Israeli government enacted the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) following a May 2002 freeze on applications for family reunification between Israeli citizens and Palestinians from the PA areas. The law prohibits Palestinians from the oPt who are married to Israeli citizens or permanent residents (such as Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem) from receiving Israeli citizenship or residency. Its enactment affected 21,000 families in 2004, and affects even more today.
- Many Jerusalemite women – and men – married to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip cannot obtain Jerusalem identity cards for their spouses, and their spouses are not allowed to live in Jerusalem.
- Children also find it difficult to live or attend school in Jerusalem if only their mother holds a Jerusalem identity card.
- Palestinians from Jerusalem may lose their Jerusalem residency if they leave the country for more than seven years. To retain their Jerusalem residency, they must continue to present documents that prove their “center of life” is Jerusalem.

⁴ Testimonies from: UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Publication: *(un)Equal Rights, (un)Equal Opportunities: 30 Years of CEDAW, 30 Stories of Women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*.

CSNGS stands for

Taking all measures on the legal and advocacy levels, both locally and internationally, to protect the nationality and residency rights of Palestinian Jerusalemites in their hometown.

CSNGS proposes

1. Exposing racial discrimination practiced by the Israeli occupation court system and revealing the discriminatory nature of Israeli military law, which violates international law by seeking to allow Israeli military leadership to practice full and free discretion.
2. Exposing violations practiced by the Israeli occupation forces and settlers against Palestinians in Jerusalem.
3. Lobbying for the holding of a convention of states party to the Geneva Conventions in order to hold deliberations on Israel's refusal to apply the Geneva Conventions to the occupied Palestinian territory as well as overall breaches practiced by Israel, a state party, and to agree on the responsibilities of all state parties under the provisions of Common Article One.
4. Developing an action plan to utilize international jurisdiction all over the world, particularly in states party to the Geneva Conventions, to prosecute Israeli criminals who have committed and are still committing violations against Palestinian men and women.
5. Protecting Jerusalemite women and raising their legal awareness.

Violence and “Honor Crimes”

To reduce all forms of violence against
Palestinian women



Violence and “Honor Crimes”

Strategic Objective 3

To reduce all forms of violence against Palestinian women

When I was small, I was raped by my older brother. He has disability of about 80%. This incident happened and I didn't tell anybody except a very close friend of mine, with whom I used to play. I told her about what happened to me. We grew up together and forgot about the story and never talked about it. At 11, I was raped again by an adult. I thought: “Why me?”⁵

Ghadeer is the second woman that was sheltered at the Mehwar Centre after it opened in 2007. In her early twenties, coming from a village close to Hebron, Ghadeer came seeking protection from her father, who threatened to kill her.

For more than a year, she did not share her difficult story with the Mehwar team. She challenged them with her obstinate silence or told them contradictory events, disorienting the social counselors and making it impossible to understand Ghadeer's true emotions and thoughts. However, the Mehwar team did not withdraw their support to Ghadeer, knowing that the path to rebuilding trust, especially after being betrayed with violence by one's loved ones, is often a very long road. The staff's persistent support finally helped Ghadeer to open up and reveal her tremendous story of abuse and violence, perpetrated first by her brother, then by her community.

Some facts and figures

- Amongst unmarried women over the age of 18, 25% had been physically abused and 52.7% psychologically abused. Among married women, psychological abuse rose to 61.7%, while physical abuse fell to 23.3%, and sexual abuse stood at 10.5%.⁶
- Domestic violence is not prohibited by law in the oPt, although violence, whether perpetrated against males or females, is illegal and punishable in the oPt under gender-neutral criminal law.
- Official information and resources do not exist regarding female victims of human trafficking in and out of the oPt for sexual purposes and/or forced prostitution.
- Women are theoretically able to prosecute assailants under assault and battery charges, but several factors keep battered, abused, raped and threatened women from doing so. Social norms shame women who report abuse to the police and also encourage women to remain silent for the sake of their children. Additionally, women often have no alternative place to live. Private or government-sponsored shelters are insufficient, with only three shelters operating in the West Bank and none in the Gaza Strip.
- Perpetrators of “honor crimes”, violent crimes committed against women for “tarnishing the name and the honor of the family”, are still protected by law, which allows them to enter a plea of extenuating circumstances. Al-Muntada found 32 cases of “honor killings” in the oPt between 2004 and 2006.⁷ Seventeen of those murders occurred in 2006 alone, with 12 in the Gaza Strip and five in the West Bank. Thirteen women were killed in “honor killings” in 2009.⁸ The Minister of Women's Affairs presented a request to the Cabinet in 2008 to freeze the law on “honor killings”.

⁵ Testimonies from: UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Publication: (un)Equal Rights, (un)Equal Opportunities: 30 Years of CEDAW, 30 Stories of Women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

⁶ PCBS, 2006.

⁷ Palestinian NGO against Domestic Violence against Women (Al-Muntada): *Crimes of Women's Killing in Palestine – In the period 2004-2006*, 2007.

⁸ For the numbers of 2009: Numbers and figures presented by the Al-Muntada Coalition of Palestinian NGO's at the Violence against Women workshop, January 2010.

CSNGS stands for

Protecting women from all forms of domestic and sexual violence through the enforcement of prohibitive laws and procedures.

CSNGS proposes

1. Enacting a law to protect women from domestic violence.
2. Amending the Penal Code to remove any form of gender-based discrimination.
3. Amending the Penal Procedures Law with regard to provisions on criminal prosecution that discriminate between men and women in filing complaints.
4. Adopting all interventions stated in the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women, which is to be approved by the Council of Ministers.

Women Prisoners

To improve the status of Palestinian
women prisoners



Women Prisoners

Strategic Objective 4

To improve the status of Palestinian women prisoners.

I'm a 36 years old woman. I got married twice and I have a daughter who is 13 years old. My one week old daughter was taken away from me by my first husband. My step mother, who was a very cruel person, obliged me to get married to a 20 years old man with physical problems when I was at the age of 22 years. I lived with my first husband only one year. When I was 24 years old I got married again to a man who was 60 years old. I lived with him for 7 years. I had no sexual relation with him due to his sexual impotence. He did not pay for our daily expenses and I had to work in a textile factory and spend on myself. My second husband used to drink and beat me badly and finally I left him after I filed a complaint against him. My father and brothers blamed me for my unsuccessful marriage and they isolated me for four years, locked me in a house in my village because they did not want people to know my story. My family never cared about me. Two years ago I broke a window and began to get out at night. There were three boys in their 20s, including my cousin, and I used to help them tear the plastic homes and steal vegetables. I did that each month for two years but I did not get any money from them. I did that because I wanted to take revenge from everybody. I never asked much, I just want a simple and stable life and to be able to see my daughter".

She is in prison since April 2010 with no support. There was a meeting with her family and it seems very clear that whenever she will be released from prison they will killed her.

Some facts and figures

- As of August 2010, there are still 35 women held in detention and prison by the Government of Israel⁹ outside the oPt in violations of IHL obligations.¹⁰
- According to a report produced by UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN and Addameer NGO,¹¹ Palestinian women in detention face different forms of violence including torture, harassment, as well as verbal and physical abuse
- Cases of medical negligence by the Israeli prison services¹² has been reported, where health problems of women in detention often remain untreated for lengthy periods
- Harsh imprisonment conditions, including poor quality of food, lack of fresh air and sunlight, dirty overcrowded cells, are contrary to the UN Standards Minimums Rules for the Treatments of Prisoners of 1955 and UN Basic Principle for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1990, and contribute to weaken the physical and psychological conditions of female detainees.¹³

⁹ www.aseerat.ps. Accessed August 2010

¹⁰ According to Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, an Occupying Power must detain residents of occupied territory in prisons inside the occupied territory.

¹¹ The paper will be published by the end of December 2010.

¹² A study conducted by Addameer in September 2008 revealed that approximately 38 percent of Palestinian female prisoners suffer from treatable diseases that go untreated.

¹³ «Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners» – Adopted by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (1955), <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/treatmentprisoners.pdf>

CSNGS stands for

Taking all measures required to improve the status of Palestinian women prisoners and released prisoners, and to respond to their needs.

CSNGS proposes

1. Documenting the experience of women prisoners throughout the history of the Palestinian national struggle.
2. Advancing the cause of women prisoners as a national-level political issue.
3. Providing psychological support to Palestinian women prisoners in Israeli detention centers and in exile.
4. Involving Palestinian women prisoners in all national decisions, structures and political decision-making processes, working both at the local and international levels.
5. Ensuring a dignified and decent life for Palestinian women prisoners and their families.

Decision-making

To facilitate women's active political involvement and to activate their role in decision-making



Decision-making

Strategic Objective 5

To facilitate women's active political involvement and to activate their role in decision-making.

"Challenges [on the national level] faced by women are that they are rarely involved in policy-making unless it is specifically on women's issues. When involved, their work often goes unrecognized and they have difficulty gaining access to or being taken seriously by policy makers".¹⁴

Some facts and figures

- Women constitute only 7.5% of the Palestinian National Council (56 women out of 744 members), and account for only 4% of its Executive Committee (five women out of 124 members).
- In the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), there is only one woman (Hanan Ashrawi).
- Because of the quota system put in place in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), 12.9% of its members are now women (seven women out of 132 total members), as opposed to 5.7% from the 1996 legislative elections.
- In Local Councils throughout the oPt, female representation rose from 1.8% in 2000 to 18% in 2004-2005, also due to the implementation of a quota system.
- Until August 2008, the female representation among judges and lawyers reached 13.2% (21/159). In 2009 two more women were appointed, raising the percentage of women to 16%.¹⁵
- In 2008, five out of 39 judges in the Gaza Strip were women (12.8%). However, this percentage has since declined due to increases in competition with men as a result of widespread unemployment. In the West Bank, where 18 judges out of 120 were women in 2008 (15%), the percentage has since risen, reaching 16.6% in 2009.

¹⁴ Fatina Wathaefi, General Director of Planning and Policies, PA MoWA

¹⁵ Women in decision-making: Judges and Lawyers, PCBS 2008.

CSNGS stands for

Taking all legal and other measures to increase women's participation in the political sphere.

Taking appropriate measures to rectify negative effects of cultural and social heritage regarding women's role in society.

Taking appropriate measures to enhance women's abilities and skills.

CSNGS proposes

1. Amending the Political Parties Law, the Electoral Law, the Professional Associations and Trade Unions Law and the Societies Law from a gender perspective.
2. Adopting an electoral system that facilitates and supports the election of women candidates to leadership positions.
3. Facilitating the participation of female university students in student councils.
4. Developing and implementing a media strategy to address the negative cultural and social heritage regarding women's issues and roles in Palestinian society.
5. Modifying school curricula to reflect the importance of women's role and participation in the political sphere.
6. Developing and offering training programs for women to build their capacities.

Education

To improve the quantity and quality of educational services in the occupied Palestinian territory from a gender perspective



Education

Strategic Objective 6

To improve the quantity and quality of educational services in the occupied Palestinian territory from a gender perspective.

"Four of my sisters got married. My brother was the only boy. My dad had a dream to send him to study medicine. In fact, he did so once my brother finished school. He said: 'I will send him to study medicine in Iraq.' So my brother went to Iraq and kept asking for money every month. Three of my sisters remained at home with my father. When the expenses for my brother's medical education became too much, my dad took the three of us out of school. He took us out of school in order to make my two older sisters work in Israel. He deprived them of schooling and made me assist him in working the land in our village. All the money my sisters made from their work in Israel was sent to my brother to cover the costs of his medical studies. Ten years later, after my sisters and I lost our chance to marry, and we remained at home, my brother arrived from Iraq. Day by day we came to know that my brother was nothing."

Q: What was the highest grade you attended in school?

A: The ninth.

Q: You didn't complete your schooling?

A: There was no chance. I had to go to the city, but there was no chance for me to study in the city. I attended school in the village, which was up to grade nine.

Q: So you didn't complete your schooling because the remaining schooling had to be completed in the city?

A: No. Social life has had a role, too.

Q: Being a girl, you were not allowed to go to school?

A: Being a girl and also lack of resources to allow me to travel and learn. My mother was supporting the family and could not afford my education costs.¹⁶

Some facts and figures

- School syllabi, especially in secondary schools, remain traditional and promote stereotypical roles for women and men. Girls are also encouraged by their parents to pursue education paths designed for jobs that are in line with their perceived future roles as mothers and caregivers.¹⁷
- The Barrier hindered 48.4% of children living on its east side from reaching their schools in 2006.¹⁸
- There is a clear link between violence in schools and the worsening economic situation and suppressive measures inflicted upon Palestinians by the Israeli occupation authorities.¹⁹
- Illiteracy in the oPt reached a rate of 9.5% among females and 2.4% among males in 2007. The worst illiteracy rates were found amongst those 45 years old and above, for whom 50% of females and 25% of males were illiterate in 2007.²⁰
- Although 35% of women work in the agricultural sector, only 0.2% of girls enroll in agricultural education.
- The highest unemployment rate for girls is found amongst those with 13 years of schooling or more, showing clear evidence that education does not necessarily lead to income-generation.
- Though the gap has lessened in recent years, the percentage of males in the oPt holding a BA degree or higher is 10%, while only 6.7% for females.²¹
- Women's representation in the educational sector decreases as the educational level they serve increases; while women represent 55.4% of teachers at the secondary school level or lower, they represent only 27% of the faculty in community colleges and only 15.9% of the faculty at the university level.²²
- Only 7% of all PhD holders were women in 2006/2007.

16 Testimonies from: UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Publication: (un)Equal Rights, (un)Equal Opportunities: 30 Years of CEDAW, 30 Stories of Women in the occupied Palestinian territory.

17 United Nations Country Team oPt, Inputs to the Report of the Secretary General on the Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian women, page 10, September 2010.

18 According to Badil

19 UNESCO International Institute for Education and Planning/Save the Children UK: *Fragmented Foundations: Education and Chronic Crisis in the oPt*, IIEP-UNESCO 2007.

20 Data provided by PCBS.

21 Ibid, data 2008.

22 Ibid.

CSNGS stands for

Expanding and activating the compulsory education policy to cover secondary education.

Taking the required measures for incorporating gender issues into school curricula and higher education.

Making all required amendments and measures to encourage enrolment of girls and women in Technical and Vocational Education and Training and agricultural education, both at the secondary level and in higher education.

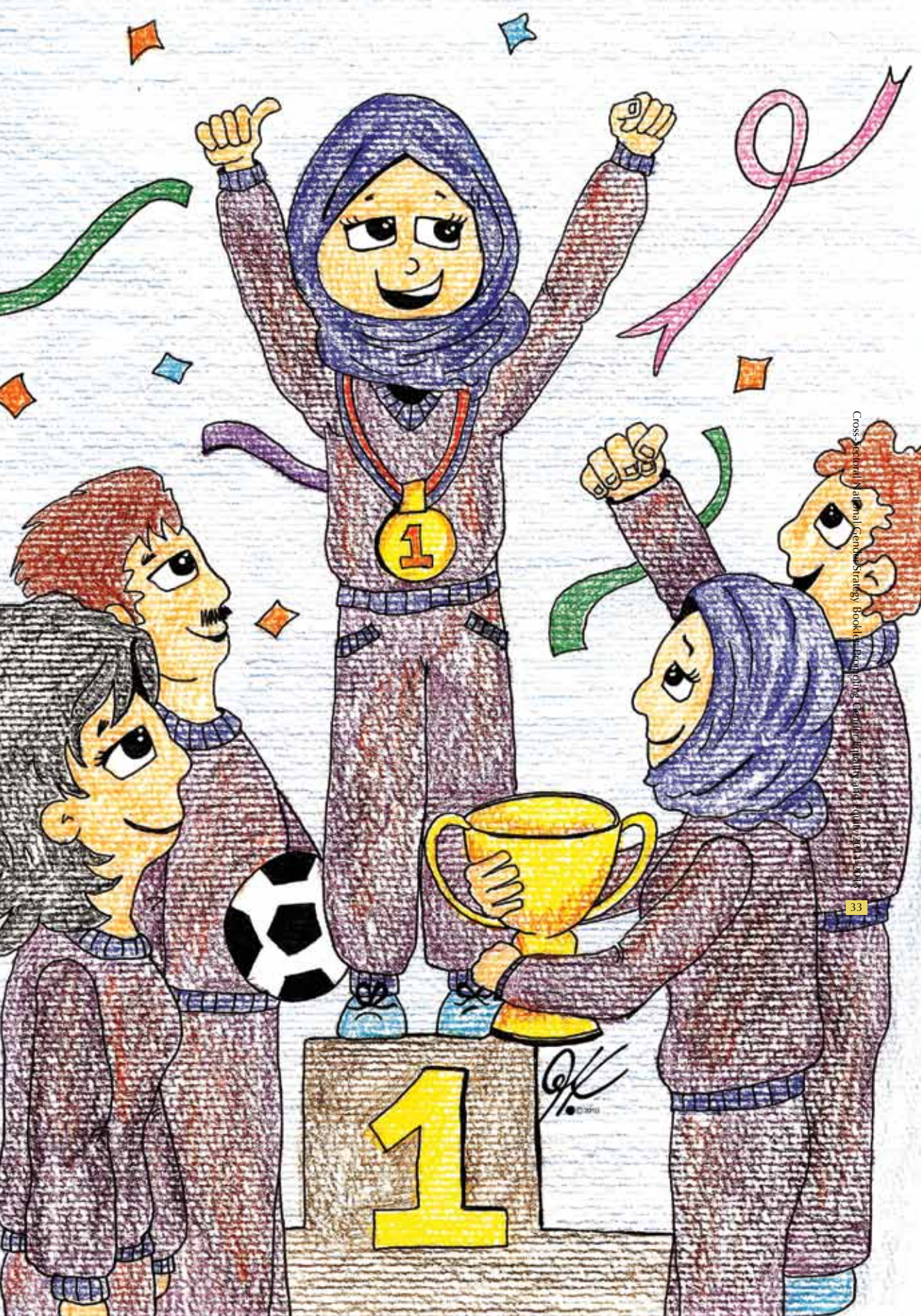
Taking all measures that ensure access to education for both males and females with special needs.

CSNGS proposes

1. Amending and approving the basic education draft law to include compulsory education all the way through the end of grade 12.
2. Activating school counseling for girls and raising awareness among them and their families on the disadvantages of early marriage and the importance of education, as well as ensuring concerted work by relevant ministries to address this issue.
3. Creating a special fund for poor female students in secondary education and linking it with secondary girls schools in remote areas.
4. Modifying some school textbooks from a gender perspective, especially the two standard textbooks on the subject matter of "*Contemporary Issues*."
5. Introducing a compulsory course on gender in all universities and community colleges.
6. Enacting the Vocational and Technical Education Law;
7. Encouraging girls and women to join TVET.
8. Introducing vocational fields of study for girls and women in vocational schools that correspond to the demands of the labor market.
9. Increasing awareness among girls, women and families on the importance of agricultural education.
10. Enhancing school facilities to adapt to the needs of males and females with special needs.
11. Conducting an awareness-raising campaign to encourage families to enroll children with special needs, especially females, in formal education.

Health

To increase the protection of women's
health



Health

Strategic Objective 7

To increase the protection of women's health.

When I was pregnant with the fourth baby, I felt ill while I was in the third month of pregnancy. I had pains and bleeding and my blood [hemoglobin] was 5. I stayed in Makassed Hospital and gave birth in the sixth month by a C-section. The baby weighed 700 grams. He was kept for 2.5 months in the incubator and the cost was 65,000 NIS. The baby was referred to Caritas Hospital, where he stayed for 1.5 months and the cost was 3,000 NIS. We made two hernia surgeries for the baby, the first at Makassed Hospital for 1,500 NIS and the second in Al-Hussein Hospital, covered by the Intifada health insurance. The boy now is in grade 6. He is menace and does not understand anything at school other than making troubles for the teachers. Until now, we still owe money to the hospitals and I do not know what to do to pay them.²³

Some facts and figures

- A large number of women of reproductive age suffer from malnutrition and anemia, which are mainly caused by early marriage and recurrent and successive pregnancies.²⁴
- Most women are discharged one to two hours after a normal delivery, even when the criteria for discharge are not fully met by both the mother and the newborn. There are no mitigation strategies available for avoiding an early discharge.
- Women with mental illnesses are often stigmatized in their communities and society at large, which tends to negatively affect their condition.²⁵
- The healthcare system in Gaza Strip has gradually declined over the last few years.²⁶
- Movement restrictions have a deleterious effect on the health situation of Palestinian women, notably by making their access to health care more difficult.
- Only 6.9% of women in the oPt decide the number of children they have.²⁷
- In 2005, 55.2% of female teenagers in the West Bank and 67.4% in the Gaza Strip had children.
- 39% of Palestinian girls marry under the age of 19 years old.²⁸
- The percentage of women in the oPt that receive postnatal care does not exceed 30%. While governmental health centers are supposed to provide postnatal care for 42 days as well as mammography services, many of these services are not actually functional.²⁹
- Out of all pregnant women in the oPt who nurse, 35.7% are anemic. For refugee women, this rate rises to 45.7%.
- The lower the job level in the health sector, the higher the percentage of women.
- There are no sex-disaggregated health indicators measured in the oPt.
- Many women in remote areas complain that health centers are not within reach.
- Only 527 schools out of 1,677 in the oPt have appropriate facilities for persons with special needs.

23 Testimonies from: UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Publication: (un)Equal Rights, (un)Equal Opportunities: 30 Years of CEDAW, 30 Stories of Women in the occupied Palestinian territory.

24 According to World Health Organization.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 PCBS, 2007.

28 Juzoor, 2009.

29 Source: Juzoor and UNRWA.

CSNGS stands for

Taking all legal and legislative measures to ensure comprehensive health rights and medical services for women throughout the different stages of their life cycle.

Expanding the provision of specialist services for diseases affecting women (physical and mental health).

Raising women's awareness about their reproductive and health rights.

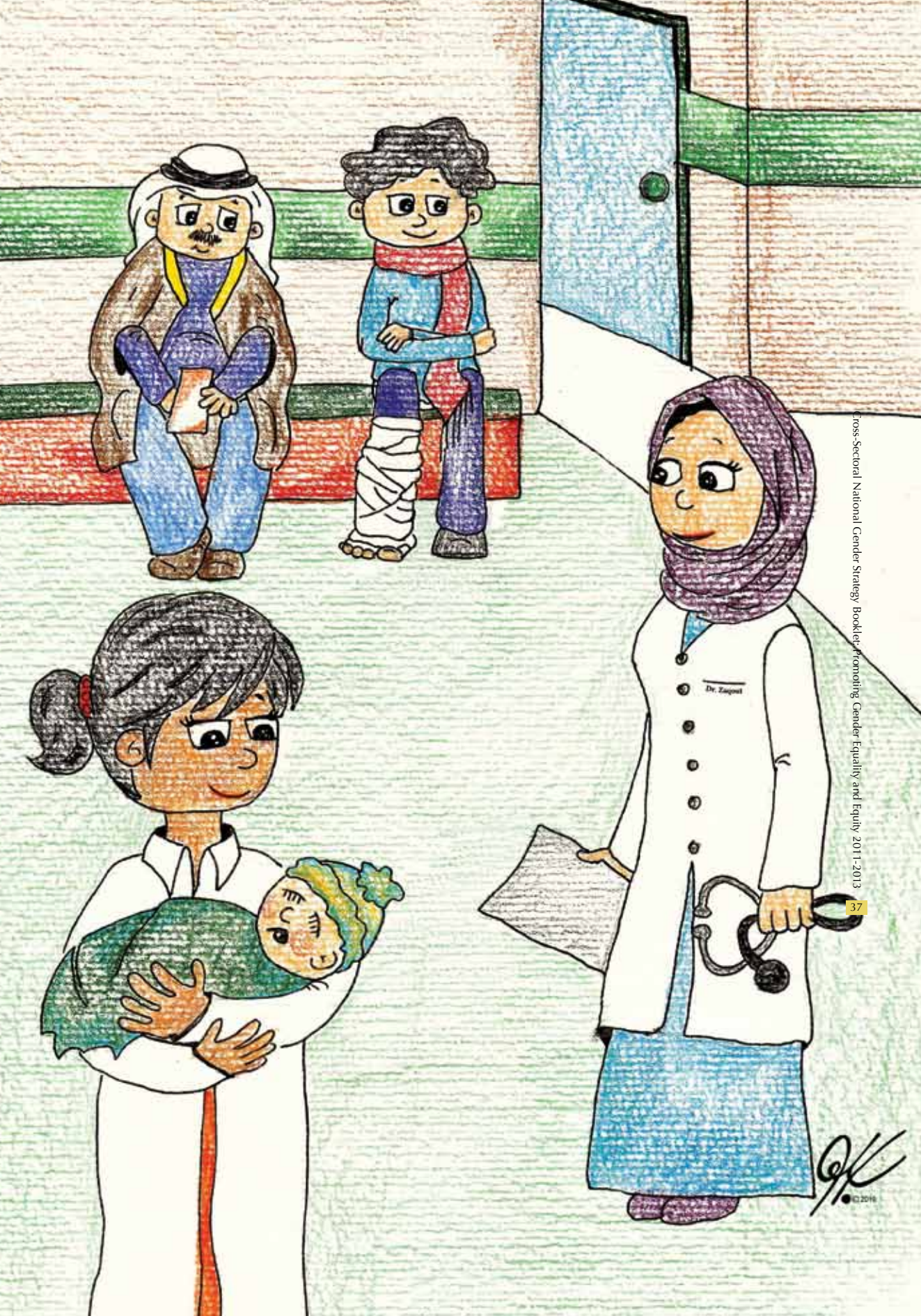
Taking affirmative action measures in support of female health professionals.

CSNGS proposes

1. Reviewing health-related laws from a gender perspective.
2. Mainstreaming gender issues in health policies and practices.
3. Monitoring and evaluating the mainstreaming of gender issues in the implementation of health laws and policies.
4. Providing health services needed for women's protection.
5. Providing the required specialist health personnel for women's care.
6. Increasing health awareness among women and in the society on reproductive health and diseases specifically affecting women.
7. Adopting an affirmative action policy for the appointment of qualified women to replace a number of retired men in senior health professional positions.
8. Offering scholarships to women in postgraduate health studies.
9. Respecting the reproductive role of women by raising or refraining from specifying an upper age limit for academic scholarships for women.

Economic Participation & Poverty

To improve women's participation in
the labor market and increase their
participation in economic decision-
making



Economic Participation & Poverty

Strategic Objective 8

To improve women's participation in the labor market and increase their participation in economic decision-making.

I got married when I was 14 years old and lived with my in-laws. They were 10 members in the family. The house was small (composed of 2 rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom). Eight years later, my husband got married to a second wife. Now I have seven children and the other wife has seven children as well. Then my husband abandoned me and left me to raise my children on my own. I used to go to bring some sewing works in order to provide for the children. I have a daughter studying in the university and a son, who couldn't go to the university because I cannot pay for his education. Now I live in a 2-room house with an external latrine. I have no kitchen. I have two sons at school.³⁰

Some facts and figures

- Food insecurity affects 61% of Gaza Strip households and 25% of West Bank households.³¹
- While there is a lower ratio of children to adults within female-headed households, there is a high dependency ratio of adult members on one income earner.
- Illiteracy rates among food-insecure heads of households are significantly high: 64% in the West Bank and 34% in the Gaza Strip.³²
- At the end of 2009, formal labor force participation among women was 15.2%, down from 15.8% in the first two quarters of 2009.³³ Food insecurity and vulnerability among women are reinforced by their persistently low participation in the formal labor force.
- Thirty-seven percent of employed female heads of household are food insecure and are therefore not receiving sufficient income to lift their families out of poverty.
- Prevailing cultural norms in much of the oPt present an unequal climate for women to pursue work outside of the home.³⁴
- Few women in the oPt hold high-level jobs and wage gaps persist between men and women for the same type of work.³⁵
- The Palestinian Labor Law of 2000 still contains discriminatory provisions whereby women are not granted the same benefits and/or allowances as men.
- No legal barriers prevent women from entering into businesses or economic-related contracts and activities. However, discriminatory family influences and social norms, especially in rural areas of the oPt, hinder many women from engaging in economic activity.
- Some families would revert to a more traditional division of roles within the household if their economic situation so permitted.³⁶
- Poverty influences the likelihood of girls dropping out of school, as parents use early marriage as an economic coping mechanism.

30 Testimonies from: UNIFEM, now part of UN WOMEN Publication: (un)Equal Rights, (un)Equal Opportunities: 30 Years of CEDAW, 30 Stories of Women in the occupied Palestinian territory.

31 FAO/WFP, Socio-economic and Food Security Survey (SEFSec) - West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2009.

32 Ibid

33 PCBS, Labour Force Survey.Fourth Quarter 2009.

34 PCBS, Labour Force Survey (October–December 2009) Round (Q4/2009).

35 PCBS, Labour Force Survey (October–December 2009) Round (Q4/2009).

36 Household Studies, undertaken by OXFAM GB.

CSNGS stands for

Taking all legislative and executive measures to ensure protection of working women from all forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Taking all appropriate measures to provide income generation opportunities and social security rights for women, especially for unemployed women with 13 years of education or more.

Adopting a strategy for mainstreaming gender issues in ministries concerned with economic activity.

Adopting a motivational policy to increase women's participation in the labor market.

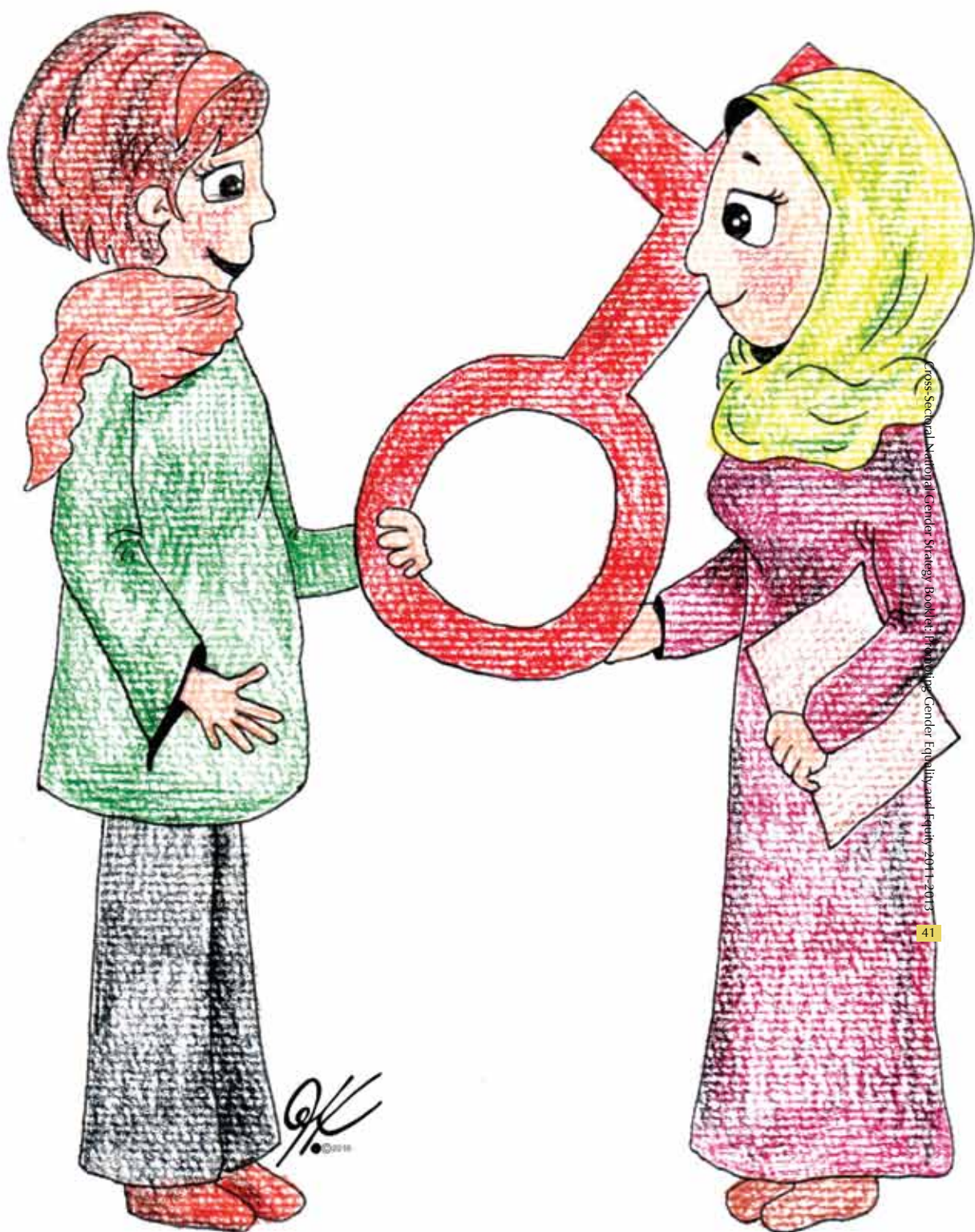
Ensuring legalized social protection for women participating in informal and home-based economies.

CSNGS proposes

1. Amending the relevant laws and developing executive bylaws for the Palestinian Labor Law.
2. Drafting and developing a strategy for matching the outputs of higher education with the needs of the labor market from a gender perspective.
3. Providing facilitation and services to support working women.
4. Creating job opportunities for unemployed women with 13 years of schooling or more.
5. Developing data and information on the labor sector and disseminating it both locally and internationally.
6. Mainstreaming gender issues in ministries concerned with economic activity.
7. Increasing women's awareness of their legal rights.
8. Developing a legal framework validating domestic work as part of the national economy.
9. Developing relations with regional and international bodies and organizations concerned with women's economic rights.
10. Ensuring a linkage between the inclusive health insurance scheme (once approved) and registration of women working in the informal sector.
11. Enacting a law providing partial tax exemption to institutions marketing the products of rural women.
12. Providing women's cooperatives with guarantees for tax exemption.
13. Providing custom facilitation to institutions exporting the products of rural women abroad and/or marketing them locally.
14. Coordinating with the Ministry of Local Governance (MoLG) and MoNE for the registration of all women working in the informal sector.

Institutionalization of Gender

To mainstream gender concerns
and issues in the work of Palestinian
governmental ministries



Institutionalization of Gender

Strategic Objective 9

To mainstream gender concerns and issues in the work of Palestinian governmental ministries.

“As a strategy, mainstreaming is about ensuring that gender equality goals are embedded at every level and in all parts of an institution – rather than confined to an often very small, corner. It’s about making sure resources are mobilized to move what is often a huge agenda. Most importantly, gender mainstreaming is not the same as ‘integration’ or adding on gender – the add women and stir approach”.³⁷

Some facts and figures

- On July 28, 2008, the Cabinet decided to rename the women’s units in the different ministries as gender units, whereby duties, responsibilities and structures for various units were defined.
- The Cabinet also endorsed the strategy presented by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs that included the responsibilities and mandate of each gender unit in line with the Cabinet’s vision and commitment to gender mainstreaming.

To date, the decisions of the Cabinet have yet to be properly implemented. Although there are presently gender units in fourteen ministries:

- In four ministries, the gender unit has been approved, but not yet established.
- In four ministries, the gender units have not been approved or established.
- In three ministries, there are units for women that have different mandates than those of the gender units (Health, Social Affairs and Awqaf).
- Although there are ten employees currently serving as heads of different gender units in ministries, some have been given this role in addition to other roles, which means that they do not have enough time to carry out their responsibilities as heads of gender units.
- Although there have been positions allocated for the gender units, some people hired for these positions do not actually work in the units.

37 Fatina Wathaei, General Director of Planning and Policies, PA MoWA

CSNGS stands for

Seeking the advancement and enforcement of governmental commitment and decisions on gender issues.

Ensuring that all measures are taken to mainstream gender issues in ministerial planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

CSNGS proposes

1. Activating the implementation of Council of Ministers' decision No. 08/65/12/CM/SF on gender units;
2. Activating the implementation of Council of Ministers' decision No. 01/05/13/CM/SF of 2009 on the adoption of gender-sensitive budgets;
3. Building the capacity and skills of MoWA, gender units and administrative, planning and executive personnel in the approach of gender mainstreaming; and
4. Ensuring the provision of sex-disaggregated data.

