

# Future Women's Health Research Center (FWHRC)

Identifying women's real needs, analyzing them scientifically, adopting appropriate strategies and making recommendations about these needs, all require broad-based scientific research on different aspects of women issues.

In an attempt to extend and promote scientific research on women's health issues, and to identify social and psychological harms being done to women, especially those who are exposed to such harms and threats due to their lack of opportunity to affect social changes, the Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives (RIEWL), after conducting a needs analysis and consulting with experts and researchers working on women's issues, decided to estab-



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lish the Future Women's Health Research Center (FWHRC).

Intending to use specialized expertise in the field of women's health and to prioritize scientific, applied and developmental research projects, FWHRC was founded in April 2005 with the permission of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology.

The scientific departments functioning in FWHRC have all placed the issue of women's health as the focal point for their research activities, and with a comprehensive view analyze the individual, social, mental and physical dimensions of the issue. On this basis, three scientific and research departments have commenced their activities in the fields of women's health, psychology, and social studies.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Conducting studies and research in order to contribute in the compilation of model strategies needed by the country's policy makers and programmers regarding women's issues
2. To depict the status of Iranian women and identify their problems by carrying out fundamental, developmental, strategic, and applied research projects
3. To promote women's participation in cultural, social, economic and political activities
4. To develop educational justice, increase public awareness and enhance women's empowerment with the ultimate goal of eliminating gender inequalities in Iran, the region and the world



5. To help improve university education and post-graduate research programs with an aim to promote women's health and quality of life in Iran, the region and the world
6. To develop both national and international women's health information systems

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES**

1. Investigating research needs in various areas of women issues
2. Compiling a systematic and comprehensive list of research priorities in the field of women issues, with the cooperation of other institutes involved in women's issues
3. Conducting applied, developmental, indigenous, cultural and interdisciplinary research to promote the quality of women's lives
4. Conducting studies and planning to train, educate and capacitate human resources to deal with different dimensions of women's issues
5. Establishing academic relations and attracting the cooperation of intellectual elites, researchers and experts in women's issues
6. Establishing academic relations and joint

ventures with universities and national and international research centers working on women's issues

7. Attracting public contributions towards carrying out research projects and encouraging researchers to focus on women's issues
8. Aiding scientific research capacity building at governmental and non-governmental organizations working on women's issues
9. Devising professional training courses for social workers, students and researchers of social sciences, cultural studies, women studies, management, law, psychology, medicine and psychiatry
10. Organizing training courses and workshops on women counseling for the general public
11. Providing academic consultation services on women-related courses and issues
12. Disseminating findings of research projects carried out either by FWHRC or other women institutes
13. Publishing professional periodicals specializing in women's issues
14. Setting up databanks and classifying articles and other paperwork concerning

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Iranian women

15. Organizing domestic and international seminars and workshops on women and gender issues

16. Making optimal use of the FWHRC's educational capacity to provide training, advocacy and consultancy services

17. Assisting in building research capacity in non-governmental and governmental organizations



## STRATEGIES

**Vision:** With an emphasis on interdisciplinary discourse, the Future Women's Health Research Center serves as an institutional base for research, intellectual exchange and collaboration on women's issues. FWHRC aims to become a center effective enough to be involved in policy-making and national planning on women's issues and to serve as a think-tank in the field. This vision has driven us to uphold the motto "perceiving women, perceiving life."

**Mission:** Empowerment of women and girls particularly those who, due to their deprivation of access to social and economic resources and opportunities, cannot affect the social development process and are vulnerable to socio-psychological harm. FWHRC tries, through scientific, research, educational and advocacy programs, to develop the fullest potential of girls and women and promote their full and



equal participation in building a better world for all, as well as enhancing their role in the development process.

## **ACTION PLAN**

1. To establish and develop scientific\research cooperation, intellectual exchange and collaboration with other national and international academic centers working on women and gender studies and issues of FWHRC's interest
2. To promote special case studies, descriptive analysis and also to conduct secondary analysis that is to evaluate previous research projects
3. To evaluate the services provided by other organizations both governmental and non-governmental, and to study their productivity and effectiveness
4. To encourage and develop inter and multidisciplinary research projects
5. To emphasize gender justice and make it the motif of all of FWHRC's research projects
6. To reinforce the effectiveness of FWHRC's

research results and findings on state policies and national programs

7. To develop the scientific and research capabilities of researchers and others concerned
8. To support relevant research projects in line with FWHRC's priorities, including research on special groups of women and those at risk such as runaway girls, wives of drug addicts and so on
9. To develop action-oriented research projects and avoid parallel and impractical research projects
10. To provide proper information services to those interested and to circulate the scientific findings of the institute
11. To consider indigenous public culture in determining priorities and carrying out research projects and also to encourage and develop localized research projects. Most problems women face can be traced to public beliefs and social attitudes so even legal reform cannot provide the answers to these problems. Thus, it is vital for the FWHRC to consider local and indigenous public culture in its research priorities.

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## STRUCTURE

FWHRC is made up of a Board of Trustees, President, Research Council, and Research Departments for health, psychological and social studies.

### **Board of Trustees:**

- Dr. S. Ziaee, Physician, University Lecturer and President of the Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives

- Dr. Seyed Akbar Bayanzadeh, Associate Professor at Tehran's Psychiatric Institute
- Dr. Ja'far Bolhari, Psychiatrist and an Associate Professor at Iran's University of Medical Sciences
- Dr. Hadi Khaniki, Sociology Lecturer at Alla'meh Tabatabayee University
- Dr. Ameneh Setareh Forouzan, Psychiatrist



and an Associate Professor at the University of Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences

- Dr. Yadollah Eslami, Faculty Member of Iran's University of Medical Sciences

- Dr. Seyed Mahdi Mirsalimi, General Practitioner

- Kambiz Norouzi University Lecturer and Legal Attorney

- Engineer Zahra Sadr-e A'zam Nouri, University Lecturer

- Engineer Seyed Reza Norouz-Zadeh

### **Research Committee:**

- Dr. Hadi Khaniki, Sociology Lecturer

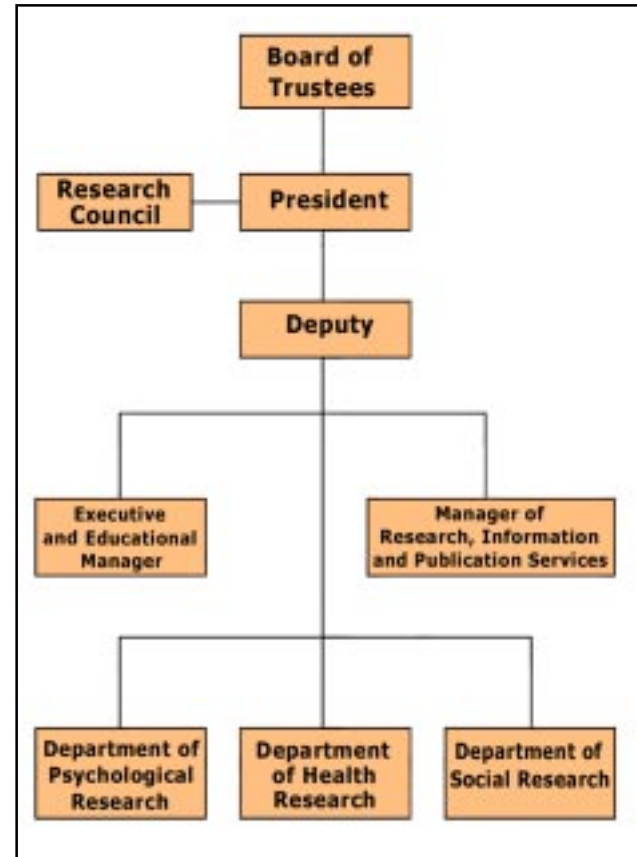
- Dr. Seyed Akbar Bayanzadeh, Psychologist

- Dr. Yadollah Eslami, Physician

- Dr. Ja'far Bolhari, Psychiatrist

- Dr. Mehdi Mirsalimi, General Practitioner

- Kambiz Norouzi, Legal Attorney



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## **FUTURE PLANS**

In the first two years, the center has focused its activities on setting up its organizational structure, its research council and departments. During this period each department was required to carry out two research projects, and publish its results as two scientific articles appearing in scientific periodicals, implement an educational program as a taught course, or workshop, as well as publishing its educational substance as a textbook or brochure. Moreover, in line with conducting interdisciplinary research projects, the center's departments are required to undertake joint research projects. This aim of these joint projects is to have the opportunity to analyze and study a social problem from three angles of health, psychology and social studies, and finding a practical solution.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH**

Taking into consider women's health, and social factors affecting it, are the main points of focus of the center. The department conducts research on the issue of women's health, a vari-

able which is influenced by various factors such as development, poverty, education, gender equality, and violence. In this view, health is not merely a one-dimensional and physical phenomenon of the body, rather it is a combination of physical, mental and social issues, which are studied comprehensively and with great precision.



Achieving physical, mental and social health for women requires us to pay attention to factors which are threatening and harmful in individual and social life, as well as creating the conditions for women's equal access to oppor-



tunities in society. Inequality in accessing educational, health, economic and social opportunities consistently impacts the mental and physical wellbeing of women. Ignorance or neglect towards the emotional and human needs in families and society, especially towards women, make violence and discrimination appear as normal and institutionalized behavior. This process which normalizes violence against women diverts the family from the path of a healthy future. In such conditions, the social and economic development at a macro and structural levels are faced with serious obstacles and such a situation for women and families, the family environment will no longer be conducive to raising progressive children, nor conducive to having a calm household, rather it bring about a forced and tense environment which will become unbearable.



Thus, returning life to society requires a new look towards women and their individual and social life. And this is how our motto “Perceiving Women, Perceiving Life” sets out the overarching outlook of our center.

It is with this deep conviction and insight and foresight that the Department of Health Research has commenced its activities. This department has organized its research activities with an aim to identify the various factors influencing women’s health and providing appropriate

solutions for promoting women’s health and enhancing their lives.

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

The main focus of the Department of Social Studies is to emphasize sociological challenges in women’s issues. After Iran’s Islamic revolu-

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tion of 1979, and particularly over the last few years, Iranian society is experiencing rapid social changes which leave their impact on women's lives.

Increased levels of education, as well as increased cultural, political and social participation are among these developments. Therefore, identification of the new social process in women's lives is of great importance.

Identifying social obstacles hindering the advancement of women's empowerment and their social movements requires a comprehensive study about the impacts of the new developments on the family structure. The new developments include women's extended role in the family, their increased level of education, particularly higher education, their employment and participation in civil society and social management as well as damages inflicted on them by the rapid urbanization process, social inequalities and different gender-based obstacles.



Institutionalizing women's success and advancement in society requires stability in their legal status. It is proven that modification of the legal system in a bid to advance women's legal status should first be gradual, secondly should keep pace with social developments and thirdly, should include socio-cultural characteristics of Iranian society.

Identifying opportunities as well as threats faced by Iranian women and girls, collaborating for the promotion of women empowerment, challenging the obstacles and making use of the



opportunities through research, education and cooperation with civil and academic institutions and governmental organizations at the national and international level are among the other priorities of the Department of Social Studies.

The main research areas of the Social Studies Department are as follows:

1. Family studies
2. A gender-sensitive employment approach
3. Gender discrimination in education
4. Upgrading women's social status (interdisciplinary studies)
5. Socialization and cultural products
6. Public culture and social functions
7. Girls' vocational skills
8. Family health
9. Women's performance, awareness and attitudes towards their rights and implementing an effective involvement system
10. The legal and social status of women in the family and household

11. Legal customs relating to women in different social classes
12. The status of women in Iran's criminal law

## **DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES**

Educational and research experience in the Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives indicate that Iranian women, children and youth are greatly in need of psychological research activities. Therefore the Department of Psychological Studies emerged to respond to this increasing need for psychological and mental health activities. Thus, it carries out research projects mainly in the following areas:

1. Behavioral disorder (dangerous behavior)
2. Family studies (tolerance levels)
3. Mental health
4. Women awareness and empowering them with life skills
5. Evaluating social mental health
6. Evaluating mental health services

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## MEDIA

With regards to the importance of information dissemination and keeping in contact with the center's diverse audience range, the research management is seeking to publish a specialized periodical for the center. It also plans to update its website, both in English and Persian. The Persian website, focusing on general women's issues, is expected to cover a wider range of women from different walks of life. However, the English website will address women activists and researchers. The aim of this internet website is to strengthen the center's international connections. The site can be visited at <http://www.riewl.org>.

**The Future Women's Health Research Center proudly welcomes all researchers and experts in women's issues to work with the center in scientific\research fields. Researchers and enthusiasts can gain more information on working with the center at our office, located at No. 41, Shahin St., Gha'em Magham Farahani St., Tehran, or our website <http://www.riewl.org> or by calling +982188847188-90.**

