



## The Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives (RIEWL)

RIEWL is a non-profit non-governmental organization which works for the empowerment of women through people's contributions and scientific, research, educational and advocacy programs. It tries, by encouraging women's equal access to education and employment opportunities, to empower women, particularly those who are deprived of social and economic resources and opportunities, and thus cannot affect social development processes and are vulnerable to socio-psychological harm.

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Advocacy, education, feminism, healthcare, human rights, research, sexuality, gender-based violence, women's health, youth development, women studies, gender equality, men/boys' participation in gender equality and Millennium Development Goals, are all among the key words that best describe RIEWL's work.

## HISTORY

RIEWL was established in December 1999 and has since dedicated itself to advanc-

ing research on women, gender and culture.

In July 2004, RIEWL was granted Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

In April 2005, it received permit from Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology to establish the Future Women's Health Research Center (FWHRC) for pursuing academic activities, through research, publication and seminars in three major fields of social sciences, health research and psychology.





## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives is made up of three departments: Education, Research, Public and International Relations.

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Responsibilities:

1. Devising educational programs, training courses, and workshops to empower women to achieve sustainable development

2. Holding national and international educational gatherings, seminars and conferences

3. Compiling, translating and publishing books, brochures, magazines and producing and screening films on development indices

4. Educating women about human rights, fundamental freedoms and life skills and promoting legal literacy among them

5. Devising and implementing educational programs for women in managerial positions and providing training and counseling services to women facing difficulties in employment with an aim to achieve gender equality and women's equal access to power

6. Publishing educational brochures and flyers and producing videos aiming to empower women and promote their social, family and educational status

7. Providing national and international educational and research opportunities through inviting foreign lecturers and researchers to Iran as well as sending students and researchers abroad to exchange knowledge and experience and carry out relevant research projects on family and gender issues

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8. Cooperating with the government to carry out research projects and providing necessary trainings to those in charge of women affairs to make them sensitive towards gender issues, physical and mental health of women throughout the life-cycle

9. Teaching the necessary skills to women to allow them to exert their reproductive rights in order to prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS and other STDs

10. Rendering academic support for the institute's library and supplying educational and scientific materials for both the academia and the public

### **DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH Responsibilities:**

1. Introducing and implementing gender

research projects to evaluate access to equal opportunities by women and girls and their access to managerial, decision-making, economic, educational and healthcare services and to collect and compile data on development indices



2. Appraising the services provided to women by government organizations, in order to find out both the strong and weak points of the programs implemented to achieve gender equality and address women's healthcare, and their equal enjoyment of human

rights and fundamental freedoms

3. Making available to the public the results and the findings of the psychological, legal and social research projects carried out on different aspects of women's lives

4. Devising educational-research projects





with full participation of women and girls in an attempt to evaluate their awareness of gender equality and their contribution in family responsibilities for the achievement of gender equality and also to strengthen self-esteem in adolescent girls

5. Devising educational-research projects addressing men, to increase their awareness about gender-related policies and their contribution in accepting family responsibilities and materialization of gender equality within the family

6. Rendering scientific and academic support for the library and the website of the

institute and making them available to both researchers who work on gender issues and the general public

7. Devising and implementing innovative research projects to prevent any social damages to women

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **Responsibilities:**

1. To communicate with individuals and the public, as well as government and non-

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governmental organizations at national, regional and international levels in a bid to exchange information and experiences on effective policies for improvement of women's life and best practices of the other women NGOs across the globe

2. To influence the attitudes of policy-makers on taking effective steps to improve the status of women
3. Coordinating the efforts of volunteers and non-governmental organizations to prevent the duplication of activities and waste of time and energy
4. Identification of academic resources and attracting their co-operation
5. Organizing volunteer forces ready to cooperate with the institute. RIEWL has some 450 honorary members, among them 50 international scientists and lecturers and about 200 doctors or post-graduates as its faculty members

## **CHARACTERISTICS & CAPABILITIES**

RIEWL is among those gender-focused modern Iranian civil society organizations (CSOs) that has based its work on five components: research, education, workshops, publications and seminars. It does not offer any degree but provides women with information and advice on various mental, physical, sexual, reproductive health as well as life skills, women's rights, reproductive rights, civil and citizenship rights.



Being aware of new developments in the world and the advantages of innovative modern technologies, RIEWL avails of any opportunity to launch joint cooperation with third parties in order to be exposed to the best practices both internationally and domestically. It tries to establish new links and maintain the links it has already established at the international and regional levels.

RIEWL has its own plans and programs and tries to avoid impromptu governance struc-

ture. RIEWL follows three strategic objectives set for it to achieve. The strategic objectives of the institute are as follows:

1. Increasing public, particularly women, awareness about life skills, gender issues, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health/rights
2. Capacity building for the institute with an emphasis on increasing human resources
3. Reinforcement of protective programs for women

RIEWL also has its own annual report and audit account and almost all of its personnel are either professionals or members of the academia.

## STAFF

There are 15 full-time employees working with RIEWL, all of them holding university degrees; two PhDs, three holding graduate degrees and the rest are undergraduates. It is worthy to mention that holding a university degree is a requirement for being employed by the institute. If a man and a



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woman apply for the same job, women have the priority in case of similar qualifications.

RIEWL enjoys continuous cooperation of faculty members of domestic and international universities. More than 200 academic personalities are among honorary members of RIEWL.

Among other officers, researchers, and staff affiliated with RIEWL, the following people are members of the board of directors:

- Dr. S. Ziaee, Physician and University Lecturer, President
- 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. Eslami, Faculty Member of Iran's University of Medical Sciences
- Kambiz Norouzi, University Lecturer and Attorney of Law

## LIST OF PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

### 1. Projects

- Surveying post-disaster and rehabilita-

tion efforts and living conditions for earthquake survivors in Bam, (2003)

- Surveying the quality of life of families residing in Tehran and their mental and psychological conditions (2003)

- Studying domestic violence and its relationship with drug abuse carried out in one of Tehran's district police departments (2004)

- Teaching communication skills to more than 200 teenagers and their parents, 2005

- Training teachers and experts from the Education Ministry

- Teaching life skills and citizenship rights to employees of the healthy city headquarter affiliated to Tehran Municipality (2005)

### 2. Publications:

- Iranian Women in the Course of Development (translation)

- Influence of Culture on Women's Life (translation)

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- Power of Culture (translation)
- Facilitating Team Work
- What Does Stress Mean?
- What is Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)?
- Depression and What All Women Should Know About It?
- Life Skills for Youngsters, Parents

### **3. Websites and Information Center**

RIEWL is launching its website both in Persian and English containing scientific and educational materials in three fields of health, psychological and sociological studies. Its information is going to be updated regularly.

RIEWL has set up an information center equipped with six computers and high-speed internet facilities and its service are free of charge for its personnel and members of other women NGOs.

### **4. Conferences, Workshops and Meetings**

- An international conference entitled, "The Culture of Democracy and the Role of

NGOs in Iran" (Feb 22 and March 11, 2005)

- An International Conference entitled: "Religion's Role in Mental Health", held in co-operation with Tehran's Institute of Psychiatry

- A Review Conference on "Problems Iranian Women Face Today"

- A national conference on "The Condition of Prisoners and Women Inmates", held with participation of more than 450 academic and executive officials, lawyers, judges and journalists

- Three specialized roundtables on "Post-Disaster and Rehabilitation Efforts and Living Conditions of the Survivors of the Bam Earthquake"

- Ten roundtables with participation of experienced lawyers to review women's legal status and providing the results and the feedback to the Women's Fraction of the Sixth Majlis (Parliament) to push forward ratification of new women-related laws and modification of certain other laws

- A training workshop on the concepts of gender, gender equality and reproductive rights



- Two educational workshops on HIV/AIDS Preventive Measures, one in cooperation with UNAIDS and the other in cooperation with the Center for Women Participation (recently renamed as Center for Women and Family Affairs)

- Two national conferences in commemoration of World Family Day, attended by young couples

- A national conference on the occasion of Women's Day, attended by women from different walks of life

- A training workshops on the concepts of Gender, Gender Equality and Reproductive Rights

### **5. Miscellaneous Activities**

- Running more than 10 training courses on life skills

- Visiting Egyptian, Indian and Japanese women NGOs and exchanging views on issues of common interest

- Participating in Commission of Women Status meetings in New York

## **IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS**

1. Carrying out practical research projects on the status of Iranian women regarding domestic violence, women's physical and mental health as well as gender equality and making the results available to the country's policy-makers and programmers

2. Publishing simplified educational brochures on life skills and distributing them among women from different walks of life

3. Holding different workshops and seminars on HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, improvement of daily life skills, stress management and the like

4. Providing research findings, information, advice and recommendations to the National Committee to Abolish Violence against Women

5. Reviewing women inmates' situation and impacts of their imprisonment on their families particularly on female-headed households

6. Carrying out research projects on gender equality and ways to its materialization

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7. Holding educational and training workshops on different topics including communication skills, gender equality and improved life skills for experts from ministries of education and health as well as Tehran municipality's headquarter of healthy environment.

## AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

The Future Women Health Research Center (FWHRC) which was established in April 2005 with the permission of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. FWHRC consists of three major study groups including social, health and psychological studies.

The Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives, in an attempt to broaden its reach and expand its honorary membership, welcomes any individual who wishes to join the Institute.

Join us through our website:

<http://www.RIEWL.org>

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