

## FICHE DE PRESENTATION PERSONNELLE

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**Forum : Forum sur l'égalité de genre**

**Thématique : Face au regain des tensions et des enjeux autour du genre, comment atteindre l'ODD n°5?**

Nom du/de la Citoyen.ne : Laura Russell Santiago

Situation familiale <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marié/en couple</li><li>○ Célibataire</li><li>• Avec enfants, si oui combien</li></ul>	Niveau d'étude <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Primaire</li><li>○ Secondaire</li><li>• Universitaire</li></ul>
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### 1. De quelle manière êtes-vous concerné.e par le sujet ?

As a parliamentarian and a father of two daughters, the issue of gender equality is both personal and political. I cannot ignore the fact that if my daughter aspires to enter politics, she will face systemic barriers that her male peers will not. These barriers are not due to lack of talent or ambition but because the structures of our society and institutions are not designed for full equality.

The situation in Israel is worrying. Domestic violence has risen sharply, and state support for women has been weakened. In 2023, 30 women were murdered due to gender-based violence, six more than in 2022. The war has intensified this crisis. Yet instead of reinforcing support systems, the government in 2024 dismantled the Ministry for the Advancement of Women because of budget and replaced it with a weaker authority, now led by Mary Golan, who is openly critical of the feminist movement and was in favor of Israel's decision not to sign the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. This replacement gave a clear message: women's rights are no longer a political priority.

And beyond violence, the inequalities are structural: women leaving the workforce due to unpaid leave or childcare, lack of representation in leadership, and deep underrepresentation in politics, only 29 out of 120 Knesset members today are women. These realities affect me as a legislator who believes in democracy, and as a father who wants his daughters to live in an equal society.

### 1. Que proposez-vous à votre échelle ?

At my scale as a legislator, I cannot transform society overnight, but I do have the power to shape laws and institutions in ways that gradually dismantle structural inequalities.

The first and most urgent step is to restore a strong institutional framework for gender equality. The dismantling of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in 2024 sent a damaging signal that women's rights were no longer a government priority. I believe we must reinstate it as a full ministry, with adequate funding and authority to coordinate across other ministries such as education, labor, health, and security. This directly advances SDG target 5.1, which calls for ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls. In Israel, NGOs such as *Itach-Maaki* and *il Na'amat* have already warned that without such a ministry, women's issues were being forgotten. We must ensure our women that the government is still fighting for them and gender

equality.

A second priority is to address women's underrepresentation in politics itself. This is directly tied to SDG 5.5, which calls for ensuring women's full and effective participation in leadership. Rather than immediately turning to quotas, I believe the government should prioritize funding NGOs such as WePower, which work to empower and train women for political leadership. These organizations can help build a strong base of qualified female candidates and foster long-term cultural change. However, if such efforts fail to significantly improve representation within a reasonable timeframe, then legislation requiring party lists, both at the municipal and national levels, to include at or close to 50 percent women in realistic positions should be considered. Israel must ensure that women's voices are heard where decisions are made.

Violence against women is another urgent crisis that demands structural reform. To meet SDG 5.2, which calls for eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, I would push for legislation guaranteeing multi-year funding for shelters and crisis centers so that protection is not dependent on unstable budgets. At the same time, the justice system must respond more effectively: police, judges, and prosecutors should undergo gender-sensitivity training, and domestic violence cases should be handled in specialized fast-track courts to ensure that victims are not left waiting for justice.

Economic equality also requires reform in how we structure family and work. To advance SDG 5.4, I would propose universal, state-subsidized childcare and a parental leave system that obliges fathers to take part of the leave. Such policies would reduce the disproportionate burden on women and allow more of them to remain in the workforce.

Finally, real change must begin in the classroom. Schools are where the values of the next generation are formed, and gender equality must be embedded in education from the earliest grades. This would mean revising curricula, training teachers, and integrating gender-sensitive content into lessons. While NGOs such as the Israeli Institute for Gender Equality in Education have already pioneered innovative programs in a limited number of schools, national policy is required to scale this work across the country. This reform aligns with SDG 5.1 and 5.c, which call for ending discrimination and adopting effective policies to promote equality.

To conclude, my responsibility as a legislator is to use the tools of law and governance to make gender equality not just a principle we proclaim, but a reality we build. By aligning reforms with the concrete targets of SDG 5, whether in representation, violence prevention, family policy, or education, we can create a society where my daughters, and all daughters, can aspire to political leadership without facing systemic barriers.