

From Gendered Practice to Practice of Equality A Field Guide

Hadass Ben Eliyahu Zeev Lerer



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The Center for the Advancement of Women in the Public Sphere (WIPS) was established at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute in 2009 with the support of the Dafna Fund. WIPS is committed to gender mainstreaming as an overall strategy for promoting the democratic and civil status of women in diverse social groups. Through its focus on transforming the issue of gender inequality into a general social worldview that relates to both women and men and to all social structures, the WIPS center aims to make gender equality an inseparable part of the thought and action of legislators and decision makers in various areas

WIPS conducts research, promotes strategic thinking, and initiates projects and programs in areas relevant to implementing gender mainstreaming and gender equality in Israel. The founders of WIPS seek to make it a framework that brings together women's organizations, feminist activists, researchers, legislators, and decision makers, so that their dialogue and sharing of ideas will serve as a source of knowledge, guidance, and experience for anyone interested in promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Israel. The center also promotes strategies to coordinate the efforts and impact of social action designed to promote the status of women and gender equality by connecting grassroots women's organizations, policy makers, legislators, and those acting for broad social change.

WIPS management: Prof. Naomi Chazan, Prof. Hanna Herzog, Hadass Ben Eliyahu, Ronna Brayer-Garb

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A. Introduction

Almost every day we read in the media data and reports about gaps between men and women in the labor market. The data describe salary disparities in various sectors; the inadequate presence, or complete absence, of women at high levels in organizations or centers of power and decision making; and cases of sexual harassment. The statistics, graphs and tables about Israel and many other countries provide recurring evidence that women are a disadvantaged group in the labor market and derive less benefit from their presence and activity in it and in the organizations that employ them.¹ Beyond the statistical data are the daily occurrences at the workplaces, and the way women describe, based on personal experience, how the organizations that employ them as offensive, distressing and generating feelings of marginality or inferiority on a daily basis. This daily experience is the starting point of the “Gender Equality in Action” program,¹ in its effort to understand women’s reality in the labor market and at work, as a basis for action and change. We envision a society where women are participants of equal status and equal value in the labor market, and equally enjoy the rewards, the power and the satisfaction derived from participating in it. We believe this vision can be realized through a wide network of initiatives of women working together, systematically and deliberately, to change tangible and concrete gendered practices that limit them in their work settings.

Many programs have been developed over the years to improve women’s status in the labor market. Many of them focus on providing women with skills and tools to help them function better and succeed in organizational settings, which are supposedly gender neutral but are actually gendered and structured to fit the ideal worker who is predominantly a man. The uniqueness of the Gender Equality in Action program lies in its focus on changing the organizational settings themselves: the structures, forms of action and practices, which that exclude women from positions of power and influence, limit their achievements, their feelings of satisfaction and their sense of meaning in various organizations. The program seeks to empower women not necessarily by providing tools to adapt and adjust to the existing ground rules, but by providing tools to undertake

¹ The gender gap in the labor market and many other areas of life is presented in detail in the *WIPS Gender Index* (Tzameret-Kertcher 2015) <http://www.genderindex.vanleer.org.il/?lang=en>. See also Izraeli 1999, and Baron and Bielby 1980.

social action to change the organizations' ground rules themselves, so that they become respectful, equitable and empowering for women.

The purpose of this field guide is to present the Gender Equality in Action intervention model, its rationale and assumptions, in order to provide a common language and knowledge base for action. The intervention model is based on experience accumulated over the last few years from a number of diverse groups and forums operating as part of the program, and on case studies and research literature in this field.² The first part of the guide will present the assumptions fundamental to the intervention model we propose. We will answer key questions such as: Why is it important to change organizations "from within?" Why rely on collective action by women? Why focus on gendered practices?

In the second part of the guide we will translate the theoretical assumptions into a methodology of changing gendered practices in organizations. We will define the main concepts that serve the action groups and forums in their work, and present the intervention model and practical steps for the advancement and realization of change in gendered practices in organizations. In this part we will also discuss a series of applied issues and dilemmas based on the accumulated learning in the various action groups and forums.

Throughout the guide we define the key terminology that serves us to describe the intervention model. These key terms are part of the "internal language" shared by the action groups and serve as the basis for understanding the model and its stages.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported this program over the years. Gender Equality in Action could not have developed and proceeded without the faith, backing and support of the Heinrich Boell Foundation in Israel, as well as the Gender Studies Program at Tel Aviv University and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

Special thanks to the WIPS team - Prof. Hanna Herzog, Prof. Naomi Chazan and Rona Brayer-Garb, for their contribution to the development of the project.

2 For further information about the theoretical sources at the basis of the intervention model, see Zeev Lerrer and Hadass Ben-Eliyahu, 2011. "Gender Change in Organizational Arenas: Gender Mainstreaming as a Process of Translation," Heinrich Boell Stiftung (<https://il.boell.org/en/2014/05/29/gender-change-organizational-arenas-gender-mainstreaming-process-translation-gender>).

B. Assumptions of changing gendered practices in organizations

The Gender Equality in Action intervention model is based on a number of premises. First, organizations are the central arena for manufacturing gender, and are therefore the central object for change. Second, exclusionary gendered practices are the cornerstone of gendered reality in organizations and are therefore the primary target for change. Third, changing gendered relations in organizations is a change of the power relations that maintain and preserve gendered practices and barriers over time. Fourth, women are the principal agents of change; and fifth, the effective change of gendered patterns requires collective, intra-organizational and planned action, which is based on an understanding of the organizational power structures, and confronts them in a deliberate and calculated manner. We will now elaborate on each one of these assumptions.

1. Organizations are critical sites for changing gendered patterns

Since the Industrial Revolution, the social environment in modern society has been an organizational environment, and most of our lives take place within various organizational settings and as part of them. The organization is the medium through which we experience social reality, shape our identities and receive and realize opportunities. A basic list of such organizations in the public and private spheres include: the family, the kindergarden, the neighborhood park, the supermarket, the school, the university, the army, the synagogue, and of course the organizations where we work or wish to work. This fact makes organizations critical gender sites. Organizations can be said to be the sites where gender is created, constructed, and where it occurs. If we understand gender as the social translation of biological differences into identities, positions and power relations, then that translation occurs, by and large, in and by organizations. In fact, as Joan Acker (1990) argues, gender is an organizing principle of the organizations themselves.

Therefore one of our primary assumptions is that organizations are critical arenas for action to promote gender equality. If we want to change reality, power relations and women's daily experiences that occur within organizations and are created by them, we must change the organizations themselves.

2. Exclusionary gendered practice is the object of change

A long tradition of feminist theory has successfully identified the power mechanisms and social arrangements that constitute the position and identity of women in various social arenas. Existing theoretical approaches offer various explanations for the sources of power and the exclusion that women experience, and propose various foci for resistance and social change (see, for example, Meyerson and Kolb 2000).

The theories indicate grand, at times abstract forces that shape women's place and status, such as a lack of rights, economic exploitation, patriarchy, or the sexualization of power relations. Addressing "grand forces" as a focus of social action for change and the promotion of gender equality suffers from a number of disadvantages. First, the grand force is in most cases abstract and intangible, and therefore elusive and difficult to identify in daily life: How can you meet socialization? Where is the social structure? Second, the grand force can be perceived as deterministic and all-encompassing, and therefore there is a paralyzing imbalance between its overwhelming power and the agent's ability to act. Finally, because of the differences of approach and even disputes between different feminist schools of thought, the grand force inhibits establishing a wide common ground for action. In light of all of the above, it is difficult for women, especially those who are not professional agents of change to join and act in organized efforts for equality: The paralyzing effect, elusiveness and feminist diversity make it difficult to establish a clear and agreed upon focus for change.

Following the theoretical philosophical tradition of Bruno Latour (1987; 2005) and the approach of Joan Acker and other researchers of gender in organizations (Acker 1990; Yancey Martin 2006), we propose the "exclusionary gendered practice" as a concrete focus of action for changing gender relations in organizations. An exclusionary gendered practice (EGP) is defined as a patterned, habitual and recurring form of action across organizations, situations, times and actors, that routinely manufactures differences between men and women. These differences create hierarchies that place men in advantageous positions in relation to women.

The exclusionary gendered practice (EGP) is an organizational behavior or action pattern that habitually and recurrently creates a difference between women and men, whose consequences place women (or a particular group of women) in a marginal, inferior and weakened position compared to men (or a particular group of men). There are countless examples of EGPs in organizations, including the almost complete absence of women; in senior management positions; women's exposure to comments about their appearance or jokes of a sexual nature at professional meetings; or holding regular staff meetings in the evening. A behavior pattern or form of action becomes a practice when they in occurs routinely, are is not limited to a particular time and place, and is performed by different players and at different times.

The difference the EGP creates between men and women might be manifested in tangible elements (level of representation, salary, power), symbolic elements (professional prestige, social status), and even emotional elements (embarrassment, frustration). The consequences of the differences may be exclusionary both in terms of limitations, negation of opportunities or reduced compensation, and in terms of feelings of inferiority and reduced self-confidence or self-esteem.

The practice is usually comprised of a continuous and stable pattern of relations between human actors (people, officials, managers) and non-human actors (instruments, places, rules, data, symbols, images).

The gendered differences created by the practice can be expressed in diverse ways, such as the absence or reduced presence of women from rewarding and prestigious arenas, differences in the division of labor or tasks, differences in the modes and contents of the work itself, in the distribution of responsibility, authority, power, and spatial location, differences in behavior and communication patterns in common situations and interactions, or in the mode of use of professional equipment and means. These differences between men and women expose seemingly neutral organizational practices as gendered practices.

But in order for a gendered practice to be considered exclusionary, we must ascertain that the differences that are created have hierarchical consequences and significance. The hierarchical consequences might also be expressed in a range of dimensions: limited or blocked opportunities, reduced compensation, power or prestige, limited autonomy and influence, inability to realize potential, feelings of difficulty, discomfort, confusion, distress, frustration or humiliation, and the internalization of a weakened, inferior, or flawed identity.

Following Acker (2006) and on the basis of the experiences and case studies we collected, we can say that exclusionary gendered practices should be sought at all levels and manifestations of the organization. They exist on the structural level as formal rules and laws, routine work schedules and organizational procedures; they exist on the cultural level as symbols, images, meanings and informal rules; they exist in interpersonal relations and social scripts that guide daily interactions between people in the organization; and they exist on the level of internalized identities and inner representations of femininity and masculinity, aspirations and perceptions of opportunities and of self.

We think these practices are the stuff of which gender is made, because gender is constituted and manufactured by the hierarchical distinctions between men and women who are subject to and participate in tangible and daily organizational practices. In the sense coined by Latour, these practices are the translation of the great, abstract and theoretical forces into the daily lives of women and men. In other words, in daily life we do not meet patriarchy, rights, sexualization, or the dichotomy of private and public spheres, but rather the ways that all of those and other grand forces are tangibly manifested in practices that are routine, habitual, mostly transparent, and taken for granted.

We believe that exclusionary gendered practices are the object that should be identified and targeted by social action for changing gendered patterns in organizations. In that sense, the EGP is the cornerstone of any process or effort to promote gender equality in organizations. Therefore, a change of a gendered pattern is a change that includes the elimination or removal of an exclusionary gendered practice in favor of an alternative inclusive and equitable practice.

From accumulated experience we know that women easily identify the varied exclusionary gendered practices they experience in their organizational environments. That identification enables concrete and focused action in a real-life context. It makes it possible to recognize concrete actors, forces and processes that can be influenced and recruited in order to achieve gender equality. The identification of the EGPs also allows women to more easily join together, mobilize, and act in order to promote change.

The focus on EGPs also helps avoid the disputes and conflicts that sometimes exist between adherents of different feminist approaches. Focusing on these practices promotes solidarity and cooperation, and creates common ground among the women who come together in order to change these concrete practices, for each can offer her own point of view and interpretation. The focus on actual practices does not deny the importance of theoretical and ideological scrutiny, but deliberately narrows or neutralizes it to enable the establishment of common ground for solidary action among change agents.

3. A change of gendered practices is a change of organizational power relations

EGPs in organizations can be treated as what Latour called “black boxes”: forms of action that become routine, natural and transparent to the point that nobody doubts them, and they become unshakable facts in organizational reality. The transformation of a practice into a transparent social fact as well as its maintenance and preservation as a natural fact can be described as a power struggle. Before a practice becomes fixated as a social reality there are various groups, actors, disputes and interests in competition and conflict over its definition and form, which are resolved through power struggles, until the practice is established as a black box that hides the social and aggressive processes that created it, as well as the forces that keep it closed. These forces are revealed only when an attempt is made to open the black box – that is, when the routine manner in which things work is challenged and an attempt is made to offer an alternative way to do things, i.e., a new practice. It is then, through the disputes and arguments surrounding the proposed change, that the actors are revealed, which is to say the forces interested in preserving or changing the status quo become apparent in their efforts to preserve or promote their positions and interests.

Bruno Latour coined the term **black boxes** to describe controversial “facts” that become routine, natural and transparent to the point that nobody doubts them, so they turn into unshakable facts of life (Latour 1987). In his book *Science in Action*, Latour describes the invention of the diesel engine as an example of a black box: He describes how before the diesel engine was “taken for granted,” it was only one unstable and undeveloped option among many, and how it became a solid and obvious fact only after a long process of disputes, controversies and struggles between commercial companies, scientific laboratories, government agencies, vehicle manufacturers and other players.

These “facts” do not have to be tangible objects, but can also be forms of action, claims and scientific assertions, accessories or tools, and social structures that are part and parcel of our lives and that we take for granted as correct, appropriate and natural. In the present context we propose to understand gendered practices as black boxes: We argue that gendered practices are perceived as the way things are done or the way people have always behaved, or as “the way of the world,” but in fact they are the products of social construction, of the entrenchment of particular modes of action that reflect and preserve the power relations between men and women. The practice of the absence of women’s right to vote until the beginning of the 20th century is an example of a black box. The fact and the situation of women not voting were considered natural and right until women began to fight for the right to vote, turning that practice into something unnatural or, at the very least, controversial.

Latour’s observation is that the process by which the practice becomes a transparent social fact, as well as its maintenance and preservation as a natural fact, are forceful processes. Players and groups with various interests attempt to influence and reinforce the practice as a social reality in a way that conforms with and promotes their priorities. It is an aggressive hidden struggle enabling the practice to be established as a black box. The social power relations that created the black box are hidden by it, as is the social force at work the whole time to keep it closed. That force is revealed and exposed to our view only when an attempt is made to question the natural and routine way things are done. That attempt, when successful, leads to the opening of the black box, which is to say the exposure of the forces (for instance, the players, the interests and the justifications) that keep it closed.

The process of change is, therefore, a process of accumulating enough power to open black boxes and reclose them as new natural facts, this time equitable and inclusive for women in the organization. A successful process of change is by definition a process of disruption of the existing power relations by questioning, challenging and disrupting the naturalness of the black box as well as mobilizing the power of as many important actors as possible in order to change the balance of power and institute an alternative inclusive practice.

4. Women are the agents of change

The claim that men must be full partners in processes of changing gendered patterns and practices for such processes to succeed is being heard more and more frequently. Feminism is even being criticized for “forgetting the men” in the struggle for equality. Out of the understanding that processes of change involve the disruption of power relations surrounding the organization’s “natural” facts, and since women are usually in disempowered or disadvantaged positions compared to men in the organization, we claim that it is women who can and should be the main agents of change of gendered patterns in organizations. This does not mean that men do not have a role in processes of change. On the contrary, men must be recruited and mobilized as active actors. But there are several reasons that women are the ones who should take the initiative and responsibility, be motivated, and manage the processes of change.

First of all, women must be the agents out of the understanding that the processes of change are a clear and vital interest of women as a social group in the organization. Second, since the ability to read and understand power relations begins with women’s daily lives and experiences in the organization, it is their perspective that must initiate, guide, and lead these processes. Third, experience shows that many successful processes of change were based on the ability of women to mobilize other women and their power to act together in order to force the change.

However, men can and should be full partners in the processes of change because they are critical actors in the networks that maintain change or black boxes. A successful change also involves the ability to create and mobilize partnerships with men actors, groups and institutions, in order to gather the necessary force to change the balance of power surrounding the gendered practices.

5. Promoting the change of gendered practices is a planned collective activity

Effective change of gendered practices requires collective, planned, systematic, and deliberate action, starting with the thorough reading and deciphering of the organizational power structures that uphold the exclusionary gendered practices. These forces are complex and cannot be reduced to a single “chauvinist” or “patriarchal” force. Sometimes they include diverse logics of action and interests that are not directly related to gender or women but are connected to other matters such as money, prestige, authority, autonomy, hatred, honor or competition.

The emphasis on planning, and on the systematic and collective action of women, creates a very different form of action from what is usually identified with the common image of the angry, blunt feminist who clashes and is in conflict with various parties in order to promote women's rights and equality. We suggest that this image, which is usually perceived and presented in a negative light, is part of a "cultural script" that deters women from joining social action to change gender relations, and silences them.

The form of action presented here is also different from that script because it is based on solidary action by a group of women rather than a struggle by a lone woman. Action as part of a group provides women with space and freedom of action, as well as a reduced level of personal risk, compared to the activity of a lone agent of change.

The main principles of the action model we propose are inclusion and solidarity between the agents of change, among women and between women and men, along with the use of systematic, informed, sophisticated and complex strategies, rather than (only) adversarial and conflictual ones.

C. Methodology of changing gendered practices in organizations

In this section we will present the methodology of the process of changing exclusionary gendered practices in organizations in a specified series of stages, steps and procedures in the work of an action group of women for changing gendered patterns and practices in an organization or professional field. However, we stress that this separation into stages is only for analytical purposes; in practice the process of changing gendered patterns is not a linear process with a beginning, middle and end but rather a process with a spiral dynamic, which requires constant scrutiny and review of the actions that were taken and the adjustment of solutions and strategies to concrete developments.

The action group's work process will be presented in two main stages. In the first stage the group learns to decipher the organizational settings through a gender lens. At this stage the group is formed, creates a common language and develops its action goals and priorities. In the second stage the group acts to change gendered practices in the organization, based on a systematic methodology that includes thorough and logical planning of the change process in light of the specific organizational-political context in which the group is operating and the goals it wishes to achieve.

Stage I: Understanding the organizational field

In the first stage the group learns how to decipher the organization or professional field to which it belongs through "gender glasses". The participants learn and develop a common language and knowledge base that will serve them down the road. This stage includes four steps: building the group; a gendered reading or deciphering of the organization or professional field; creating a systematic catalog of exclusionary gendered practices in the organization; and developing solutions (alternative practices).

First step: Building the group

The first step in the change process is recruiting a group of women who are willing and able to assume the role of agents of change. The common denominator of the group of women is belonging to a specific organization (such as teachers at a certain school or employees at a particular high-tech company) or professional field that includes similar organizations (such as nurses from different hospitals or lawyers from different law firms). That affiliation is a key requirement because considerable familiarity and involvement with the organization or field are necessary for the implementation of the change process in all its aspects.

It is important to emphasize that the group of women is an action group and is thereby different from other group initiatives which are dynamic or whose purpose is the participants' empowerment or self-improvement. The group operates according to a systematic outline and is guided by facilitators who specialize in the methodology and tools of Gender Equality in Action.

Second step: Gendered deciphering of the organization

The group's work begins with the participants' learning to identify and decipher the exclusionary gendered practices to which they are exposed in the organization. This is the stage where the women participants experience putting on "gender glasses", which is to say that they learn how to read their organization and professional lives through lenses focused on the differences between women and men in the organization or professional field. The participants collect experiences and personal stories of women in the organization and translate them into concrete EGPs. The expression of experiences as practices illustrates the gendered power relations to which they are subject in their professional lives and helps to understand them as such. The product of this process is a systematic catalog of authentic EGPs that exist in the specific organizational context in which the members of the group operate (see "cataloging the practices" in the following step).

Experience has shown that many of the gendered practices are generic or universal (such as practices connected to long work hours and shifts, recruiting new personnel, sexist jokes at work meetings, or practices of sexual harassment), and they prevail and recur in many if not all organizations. However, it is very important to delineate the specific configuration and manifestation of the generic practice in the specific organizational context and lives of the women who are members of the group.

The group participants learn how to identify and analyze gendered practices through a three-question test they apply to the participants' experiences:

1. **Is it a practice?** That is, is it a repeated organizational pattern that occurs beyond a specific time and place, as opposed to an exceptional or unique event?
2. **Is it a gendered practice?** That is, is it a pattern that systematically manufactures differences between women and men or between specific groups of women and men?
3. **Is it an exclusionary gendered practice?** That is, are the differences that are created hierarchical differences whose consequences relegate women to a lower, limited or marginal status compared to men, in the tangible sense (compensation, status, powers), the emotional sense (distress, difficulty, embarrassment), or the identity sense (internalization of inferiority and weakness)?

For instance, participants at a certain workplace reported about the structure of shifts at their job that included a compulsory shift from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. without room for maneuver. They went on to say that women usually have difficulty performing their shifts because of their responsibility to pick up their children from kindergarten and school and run their households and families during those hours. The shift structure therefore manufactures a clear difference between women and men at that particular workplace. This difference had clear hierarchical consequences for men and women: the women had to negotiate for easing their shifts, which marked them as problematic and less committed personnel; many women left the kind of work that required shifts (which was more rewarding) and had to seek other, less rewarding positions in the organization; the women's chances of advancing to the top of the organization were reduced because they had not done the shift work and because of their being labeled as less committed to the organization, and so on.

There are several methods to identify and collect EGPs, and the choice between them is based on their suitability to the local context and the nature of the group. What they all have in common is that they are based on the patient deciphering of the women's perspectives on the organization. The methods include among other things site visits, in-depth interviews with other women in the organization, biographical stories, and documentation of their daily schedules in a diary.

Third step: Cataloging the practices

As stated, the product of the deciphering stage is cataloging local gendered practices of the organization or professional field. The list of practices, which is usually long, undergoes

a conceptual processing by the group and facilitators. The practices are classified into families or categories of practices depending on the circumstances of the local matter. The practices are classified by their common denominator: the organizational level where the practice occurs (for example, the structural level or the level of interpersonal interactions); the nature of the exclusion it entails (such as limiting promotion chances, emotional distress or exclusion from social networks); or any other classification that is relevant to the gendered nature of the organization or professional field.

Cataloging is an important tool in the group's work because it makes it possible to transfer the stories, experiences and personal feelings into a conceptual map that clarifies and gives meaning to those experiences as collective experiences. The problems and difficulties are understood by the cataloging not as personal problems but as organizational and social problems that are related to other problems, and moreover, as problems that can be associated with modes of action and solutions.

An examination of the catalogs of gendered practices from different organizations and professional fields, as well as the professional literature on the subject (see, for example, the comprehensive survey by Calas, Smircich, and Holvino 2014) allows us to identify a number of categories of practices that recur in all contexts and organizations:

- EGPs that impact women's professional status and authority in their field of work (for example, lack of representation, the image of the outstanding manager, instruments of recruitment and selection, compensation system);
- Practices associated with training processes in the field or profession (such as teaching practices, evaluation tools or learning aids);
- Practices of schedule and work arrangements (such as meeting hours, flexibility and part-time positions, frequency of travel or work in shifts);
- Practices of sexual harassment and gender harassment (such as sexual jokes and providing personal services);
- Practices of body and sexuality (dress codes and professional appearance or use of appearance and touch to promote sales);
- Physical infrastructure practices (such as the weight or size of devices, an equipment not adapted to women's body, hazardous and unsafe areas in workplaces);
- Practices governing social interactions between men and women and between women themselves (for example, dominance in speech acts, not giving credit for ideas, attribution of laziness or lack of effort to women who do not succeed).

Knowing the generic categories assist women in the group to expand their gender perspective to a variety of areas in their professional and occupational lives, and to

identify gendered practices in contexts they are not used to looking at or have not personally experienced.

Fourth step: Alternative inclusive practices

Based on the cataloging of gendered practices, the members of the group select a few specific practices to be the objects of change and on which the group will focus its future work. The practices are selected by a number of criteria, such as the number of women who experience the practice and the magnitude of its consequences. At this stage, practical considerations or the group's chances of succeeding to change the practice **do not** play a role in selecting the practice.

Inclusive practices are organizational forms of action that provide an alternative to the exclusionary gendered practices. An inclusive practice is one that, if implemented in the organization or professional field, would eliminate the exclusionary difference between women and men created by the gendered practice, so that men and women can work together in the organization in a way that does not prevent, inhibit or limit the participation of either side. Since the inclusive practice illustrates alternative ways for organizational conduct, it is often also called an "alternative practice" or an "alternative." The process of changing gendered practices and patterns in organizations seeks to lead to the adoption and implementation of the alternative practice.

In this stage the group will develop and plan inclusive **alternatives** to the exclusionary gendered practices, on which the group wishes to focus. Alternatives are ideas for different kinds of solutions that can be equitable practices and replace the exclusionary gendered practice, precisely eliminate the exclusion it entails, and make the situation gender inclusive.

Developing alternatives is a creative but structured brainstorming process. Group members propose as wide a list of ideas as possible, without criticism or judgment and without taking into account their applicability or practicality. Questions of budget, time, professional standards or even legality are not considered at this stage. The demand to ignore all considerations of feasibility or suspend them is not easy to apply in the group discussion, because we all have the tendency or habit of judging and rating alternative solutions primarily by their feasibility. But in the context of change, these considerations

actually serve as **feasibility regimes** that help maintain the status quo. Since by their nature feasibility regimes express the existing gendered power mechanisms, judging the alternatives by them distorts the discussion and silences voices, ideas and options. The group discussion therefore requires creative and “out-of-the-box” thinking, while systematically fending off feasibility regimes and keeping them out of the room during the discussion.

Feasibility regimes are the evaluation and judgment of ideas that are raised as alternatives to the EGPs in terms of their relevance and applicability in the existing organizational reality. Judging ideas in terms of applicability operates as a feasibility regime in the sense of limiting and silencing the ability to envision alternative realities. It thereby constitutes a form of exercising power that denies and prevents the possibility of promoting an alternative to the existing reality. Feasibility regimes serve as resistance and disruption for change processes and for the implementation of alternative gendered practices. Common examples of different kinds of feasibility regimes are financial cost, a boss’s possible objection, a previous attempt that failed, bureaucratic complexity or cumbersomeness, lack of time, differences in organizational culture, and fears of violating autonomy or authority.

After the brainstorming, the group constructs out of the list of proposed ideas an applicable alternative practice that can be used in order to promote the change processes. The proposed alternative practice is tested again through the eyes of the women in the group: Does this alternative practice actually change the exclusionary situation? Does it entail new problems? New difficulties? New exclusion? Is it fair to men?

It should be stressed that the alternative practice might be modified during the change process. It can be amended and adjusted after interactions with the various actors in the field and understanding their points of view. It will be refined to make it more practical, acceptable and applicable, with better chances of adoption.

Developing alternatives is the last step in the first stage of the group work. This stage includes six to seven meetings and enables the members of the group to create a common language, learn to put their perspectives and experiences as women at the center, and “read” the organization through those experiences, through the gendered glasses that become an inseparable part of them. In the next stage the group will plan and put into action the change processes in the organizational field based on the gendered reading it performed.

Stage II: Action in the organizational field

The central goal of the action group is to promote the assimilation of equitable and inclusive practices as an alternative to EGPs that they identify in organizations or professional fields. The actions they take are based on deliberate planning of political-organizational strategies that recruit allies with the ability to impact decision-making in the organization in favor of realization of the desired change. In light of the aforesaid, the second stage of the action group's work is to plan the change strategies and their actual implementation.

This stage also has several steps. At its outset the group members learn the organizational networks and power arrays relevant to the change they wish to promote through structured tools, choose a strategy of action, and recruit support for the alternative practice they wish to assimilate.

First step: Identifying the actants

Identifying and deciphering exclusionary practices and even proposing fair and effective alternatives are not enough to assimilate the change of gendered patterns in the organization and are only the beginning of the process. Organizations are complex networks of actors and each practice involves a large number of them, some of which are inter-organizational and some of which are external and exist in the organization's institutional environment. Therefore, realizing the change requires contending with the organizational-political network in the organization and its environment in order to accumulate enough power to change the balance of powers surrounding the existing practice. The first stage in planning the action in the organizational field is to identify the actants who uphold the gendered practice, maintain and preserve it over time, and organize them in a systematic **list of actants**.

According to Latour, the **network of actants** includes all human and nonhuman players (actants) relevant to the existence of a particular social phenomenon, and the way they are connected to each other in the existence of that phenomenon. The term "actant" replaces the word player because it refers both to human and to non-human "players" who may have the power to compel and force positions, actions and decisions of other actants in various situations during the change process.

Human actants are players who have the ability to operate in the network of actants, who are part of the power array that preserves and maintains the EGP, or who are relevant to realizing the alternative practice. The players might be intra-organizational or extra-organizational.

Non-human actants may be, among other things, data, laws, tools, examples or models from other places, which can be used in the process of enlisting human actants and in decision making situations or sites. Other non-human actants are abstract elements such as “the media” or “women’s organizations,” whose power can be mobilized in favor of realizing the alternative practice. When the non-human actant is powerful enough, it has a compelling and coercive force over the decision-maker. Examples of powerful non-human actants include study results that indicate damage or loss by maintaining a certain practice, laws that make a certain practice illegitimate, examples of practices customary in other organizations that serve to persuade organizations of the feasibility of an alternative practice, or threatening to expose the goings-on of the organization in the media. The non-human actants are used by human actants and change agents in order to influence decision making in the organization.

In practical terms, the group should start with the list of actants directly relevant to making a decision or determination about the change the group wishes to promote (see below, step two). Another two lists of actants who need to be mapped out are actants who are party to the exclusionary practice as it exists in the present, and actants who will be required to adopt the alternative practice the group seeks to introduce. Naturally there may be considerable overlap between these two lists.

This stage requires familiarity with and deep understanding of the organization. Creating the list of actants requires the group to explore and collect specific and concrete information about the organization, its structure, culture, internal politics, power relations and so on. It also requires knowledge and familiarity with the organization’s external institutional environment – namely external bodies, actors, positions and their relevance to the exclusionary or alternative practice. The list of actants should be specific and concrete: specific and named functionaries, officers and institutions. Despite the powerful temptation, the list of actants cannot include abstract concepts such as “education,” “the culture,” “habits,” “socialization,” and not even “tracking,” “chauvinism” or “patriarchy.” That is because not much can actually be done with those abstract concepts on the level of the action group, and they are not objects of influence or local intervention.

The main test for inclusion of actants in the list is the **association test**: whether and how the actant is associated with maintaining the existing practice or implementing and assimilating the alternative practice. Any kind of association is relevant to inclusion in the list: the actant may pay a price as a result of giving up the existing practice; implementation of the alternative practice may be dependent on the actant; actants can disrupt or oppose implementation of the alternative practice, support it or promote it; an actant can provide justification or support for the existence of the alternative practice or for the maintenance of the existing practice.

These actant arrays represent the forces operating to maintain the status quo on the one hand, and on the other hand signal where and how one must intervene to create change. Therefore, identifying the actants is the basis of planning the change process, as will become evident in the description of the following steps.

Second step: Identifying sites of determination

Along with identifying the actants, the group must identify and locate organizational sites of determination relevant to implementing the alternative practice and create the list of actants who are relevant to decision-making situations or opportunities in each site of determination (the same way the lists of actants relevant to the practices were created in the previous step). The actants we recruit in the process are expected to operate in the sites of determination to promote the adoption and implementation of the alternative practice. The concept of sites of determination therefore makes the connection between the actants and the actions carried out in the process of change.

A **site of determination** is the organizational situation where an idea, claim or request can materialize and become a practice. A site of determination can be a formal or informal organizational situation; it can be the decision of a sole player (director or boss) who has the power and authority to force upon other players the steps and measures necessary for realizing the practice; and it can also be a formal decision-making institution such as a board meeting, a general meeting of an organization, a vote in parliament or a court decision. A site of determination is not necessarily located at the top of the organization's hierarchy. For instance, in bureaucratic-hierarchical organizations there can be sites of determination at low echelons of the organization (such as in the case of an official who has the power to approve a particular aspect of the alternative practice).

Sites of determination do not have to be institutional and formal events of the organization such as board meetings, directorate meetings or votes, even though those are obviously classical sites of determination. A social encounter at a restaurant or pub at the end of the work day can also be a site of determination, as well as a brief conversation in the office kitchen or during a joint bikeride of work colleagues. Sites of determination can also be the decision of a single person relevant to the matter, such as the owner, CEO or any director in the organization. Even though the formal hierarchical structure of organizations attracts attention to the senior echelons or executive levels and almost by default biases us to treat them as sites of determination, on many occasions that is not the case. We will often discover that the relevant centers of power or sites of determination can also exist on other levels or at different parts of the organization.

When the group identifies a site of determination it must pay attention to its **implementation power** – in other words, check whether a decision at this site has enough power to bring about the realization of the alternative. In many cases decisions are made without enough power, authority or responsibility to change the balance of power that preserves the exclusionary gendered practice, and for that reason the change does not actually materialize. That is why a decision made at the senior echelons is often not translated into real change in organizational practices. In any case, the site of determination must be relevant to the specific practice in question. For instance, CEOs often express commitment to a proposed change of gendered patterns and are even willing to back it. But when the realization stage arrives it turns out they do not have the organizational authority or power to force the implementation due to the resistance of the head of the relevant division or workers union, who are not willing to cooperate with the change.

An accurate identification of the sites of determination is necessary in order to focus and direct the entire change process for three main reasons. First, promoting and leading processes of change usually involves a significant investment of effort, work hours and even funds. But these may go down the drain if they are overly diffuse and unfocused on a particular focal point that has the power to realize change, or if they are directed at the wrong focal point. For instance, many protest responses, such as signing petitions, demonstrations or even elaborate public campaigns are not always aimed at the relevant sites of determination or able to affect them.

Second, identifying the sites of determination is also important because actants' power to hinder or advance the implementation of the alternative practice becomes evident in situations of determination. Therefore, the change process is to a large extent the process of enlisting a significant and sufficient number of actants and mobilizing them to the correct sites or situations of determination at the appropriate time.

Third, identifying the site of determination is very helpful in focusing enlistment and mobilization vis-à-vis the actant itself. The actant's contribution to promoting the alternative practice will be expressed by a specific action he takes before the determination is made or during the decision making situation itself (such as enlisting additional actants in support of the alternative or personally voting in its favor). This action should be planned based on a deep understanding of the actant's point of view, as will be explained in the next step.

The site of determination is not a fixed site. We may understand and identify numerous sites of determination as the change process moves forward and adapt the focus of our efforts accordingly. Sometimes what seems at a certain stage to be a central site of determination (such as the CEO) loses its validity as the process progresses, as new actants join or as a result of actants' actions. It turns out that the site of determination is different than what we thought at the beginning, and is located elsewhere in the organization (such as in the finance department). For these reasons the site of determination is one of the constant focuses of deciphering in the process of organizational change (along with identifying the network of actants and developing the alternative). The identification itself often requires research and information gathering by the participants. Even participants deeply involved in the organization and who know it well often have to make some inquiries about possible sites of determination.

Third step: Deciphering points of view

Deciphering the points of view (POV) of central or important actants in relation to the alternative practice is a built-in element of the group's work. The purpose of the deciphering is to enable the group members to identify possible ways to mobilize the actant's power in favor of promoting the alternative practice and the actant's **potential for action**. In other words, understanding actants' POV is necessary for the group in order to identify how to enlist an actant's active support for implementing the desired organizational change.

Point of view is the totality of elements that influence the actant's attitude toward the alternative practice (or the gendered practice), which often compel and coerce that attitude, as well as influencing the action the actant will take toward it. It is necessary to decipher an actant's point of view in order to understand his or her attitude toward the practice or toward a particular action he or she takes in regard to it. It is also necessary for understanding the actant's potential of enlistment in favor of the change process: Can this actant be enlisted? If not, should its power be neutralized? In order to decipher an actant's point of view, it is necessary to investigate and understand their organizational situation: the internal and external forces operating on them and that they need to consider, and consequently their professional logic of action, the institutional and personal interests they express and the justification regimes they employ.

Deciphering point of view does not mean a deep and comprehensive psychological understanding of the actant's mentality, personality or biographical background but only understanding their position toward the exclusionary practice and the proposed alternative practice. POV analysis is an interpretive study that proposes possibilities for identifying the actant's point of view and drawing attention to relevant elements of it in order to delineate on its basis how to recruit him or her. Point of view is deciphered by answering four questions:

1. **Organizational position:** What are the forces (and the actants) that influence and even compel the actant's attitude toward the practice? The basic assumption is that actants do not choose their position toward the practice freely but that the choice is made or shaped as a response to various forces that coerce or compel an actant's attitude toward the practice. These **compelling and coercing forces** may be the actant's organizational position, subordination or commitment to other actants, fear of other actants and even time and resource constraints. In other words, every actant is in a relationship with other actants who stipulate and force their attitude toward the practice and their role in its maintenance. We would like to decipher the elements that influence the actant's attitude, position and action toward the alternative practice and what kind of influence they have. For example, an attempt was made in a public organization to change the service relations between the secretaries and the executives, which were perceived by the secretaries as humiliating. As part of the change they tried to institute a procedure

by which secretaries would not serve coffee to executives but self-service coffee corners would be set up instead. The head of the personnel department consistently refused to approve the new procedure, despite making statements supporting it in principle. A POV analysis suggested he was afraid of the reaction of his executive colleagues to what they might perceive as a loss of their privileges in the organization. In our terms, his senior executive colleagues were a compelling and coercive force that dictated his attitude toward the alternative practice.

2. **Logics of action:** What are the logics of action that serve as the glasses through which the actant views, judges and solves organizational problems in general? Logics of action are actants' permanent patterns of relation and judgment, usually institutional, toward professional tasks and problems. They are usually dictated by the actants' organizational and professional position. For example, legal advisers will treat various issues and problems through legal glasses, financial people will relate to them out of budgetary and resource considerations, personnel people out of considerations of staffing and promotion needs, business people out of considerations of profit and loss, university students out of the desire to save time and effort, and politicians in terms of their chances of reelection. Needless to say, an actant may have more than one logic of action that guides their actions and often even conflicting logics.
3. **Interests:** What, if anything will the actant gain or lose by implementing the alternative practice? The interests are the practical way the actants will treat the alternative practice in light of their organizational situation and their logics of action. By deciphering interests the women in the group try to identify the consequences of implementing the alternative for the actants and in that light to understand whether the actant will support or object to the implementation of the alternative.
4. **Justification regimes:** What are the main arguments the actant makes to promote their position concerning the alternative? Justification regimes are the arguments various actants use to justify their position toward the exclusionary gendered practice and toward the alternative practice. The actant's situation, logics of action and interests will be reflected in the actant's use of various regimes of justification. Justification regimes might be moral ("it is not fair for women to earn less than men"), economic ("if we equalize pay the entire organization will collapse"), legal ("there is no law that requires equal representation of women on work teams"), emotional ("the impossibility of promotion causes disappointment and a feeling of being stuck"), or any other kind of discourse. In the sites or

situations of determination, justification regimes serve to silence or weaken other actants' justifications as well as to enlist additional actants. As such, they can be understood as power practices.

Justification regimes are internal and external rationales used by the actants to explain (to themselves and to others) their position and attitude toward the exclusionary gendered practice (or toward the inclusive alternative) and in order to convince other actants they are right. Through regimes of justification, the actants enlist other actants (human and non-human) as compelling and coercive powers in the disputes surrounding the gendered and inclusive practice and in decision-making situations. So the power to open and close black boxes has its practical expression in the regimes of justification. The power is not in the quality or rationality of the arguments themselves but rather in the power of the actant who uses them. An example of this distinction is the use of menstruation as an argument that successfully served politicians and senior decision-makers for a long time to justify denying women the vote. That is why identifying as early as possible the regimes of justification that are employed in the disputes can help us promote the implementation of the alternative practice by enabling us to use effective regimes of justification ourselves, creating counter regimes or neutralizing the regimes of justification that prevent or block realization of the change (for a thorough discussion of the concept of regimes of justification, see Boltanski and Thévenot 2006).

The question of the "authenticity" of regimes of justification, or the question of whether the actant really believes them or is only making manipulative use of them, is not significant for evaluating their role and impact. Whether they are authentic or manipulative, the justification regimes have impact. We must also remember that the women agents of gender equality also use regimes of justification just like any other actant in the organization. In our case, their regimes of justification can be feminist but can also be of different kinds.

A significant tool that helps members of the group perform the work of deciphering POVs is role-playing. Some of the group members play the key actants and the rest of the participants interview them. The group members can collect further information about the actants' points of view through conversations with various informants: organization members who are familiar with various actors, people who filled their positions in the past, people who used to work in the organization in the past. Based on all of the information collected, the group members collectively map out the various actants' points of view.

The purpose of deciphering the actant's point of view is to enable the group to identify the actant's potential for action in the process of organizational change and especially the ways the actants and their power can be enlisted to affect promoting the alternative in the site of determination. Based on deciphering the POVs, the group discusses specific expectations from each one of the actants in the process: Can they be expected to support the alternative in the site of determination? Can they help put the issue on the organizational agenda? Will they agree to influence other actants (to recruit supporters or neutralize opponents)?

We called the connection between the actant's point of view and their actions in the change process **hooks**, because they can be used to "hook" or recruit the actant. A "hook" is a possible connection between actants' logic of action and interests as reflected in their POV, and the steps we are taking in order to promote and realize the alternative practice. The hook can be discovered by deciphering and thoroughly understanding the actant's POV. The connection may be clear and obvious in the actant's situation if the actant has a specific and clear interest which can be realized by the change. For example, in a change process that required the support of physicians to realize the alternative practice, an analysis of the physicians' POV revealed that a central focus of their interest is publishing research papers. In this case, the promise that the process of implementing the inclusive practice would be accompanied by medical research and funding for it enlisted their support in the organizational change.

Fourth step: Mobilizing actants

Acts of enlisting human actants are the center of the change process. Enlisting actants is actually a process of **recruiting the necessary power** in order to implement the alternative practice. As noted above, the ability to enlist a broad array of organizational, institutional and personal allies who support the change, accept it and even take actions that facilitate its implementation (or avoid action that prevents its implementation) is the essence of the change process. The goal of enlistment acts is ultimately to mobilize and bring together sufficient power, represented by various actants, **in the site of determination**. For instance, the victory in the Alice Miller supreme court ruling (1995), forcing the Israeli air force to open pilots' training to women, can be understood as a result of the petitioner's ability to mobilize a large number of influential human actants (activists from women's and civil society organizations, senior officers who supported her claim, expert witnesses), as well as non-human actants (the fact that the American air force already had female combat pilots, the petitioner's civilian flying license, air force personnel data, the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty), which supported her petition. In fact, the ruling that was given can be read as a reflection of the balance of

power between the actants that both sides were able to mobilize.

Effective enlistment turns the actants into a **compelling and coercive force** for the decision-maker in the site of determination, so that the presence of the actant in the decision-makers' situation compels them or even coerces them to support and/or implement the alternative practice (Durkheim 2006). How do the actants become a compelling and coercive force? There are several situations that make that possible: human actants constitute a compelling and coercive force by virtue of their hierarchical power, by the fact that others are obliged to them, by the arguments they manufacture within the situation, by their organizational status, by relations of friendship or dependence.

A successful enlistment process exerts a compelling and coercive force on the actant to operate in our favor. The intention is not for the enlistment to be an adversarial act. Furthermore, an actant's enlistment in our favor does not mean turning the actant into a declared feminist, nor is that the goal. A deep change in the actant's consciousness and attitude toward women and feminism is not the goal and is not a realistic expectation of the enlistment process. The goal on which the enlistment is focused is to create a situation where the actants exert their power in favor of the process of implementing and realizing the alternative practice. Actants can be enlisted not only for the purpose of direct impact in the site of determination but also for other purposes. For instance, they can be enlisted to influence other actants, which is to say that the actant can act to enlist other actants or to neutralize hostile actants. The actant can also be enlisted to define the gendered practice as an organizational problem and even make the necessity to deal with it part of the organization's agenda (see disruption act below).

The recruitment of non-human actants means making their presence felt in situations of enlistment and decision making as compelling and coercing forces. For example, a law (a non-human actant) quoted at the site of determination can be a compelling and coercive force in the decision-maker's situation: the law is introduced into the situation, is present in a way that cannot be ignored, creates a dilemma or problem for the decision-maker, and if it is "strong" enough, forces itself upon the decision-maker who cannot afford to ignore it or make a decision that is not legal. This is true not only for laws but also for any fact, figure, model, fixture or instrument that is presented in the decision making situation. Another example is the attempt to eliminate the practice of women clerks personally serving coffee to officers in IDF offices. The alternative practice that was developed was to establish self-service coffee corners. One of the counter-arguments was the supposedly high financial cost of the coffee corners (an economic regime of justification). In order to neutralize that argument, tangible non-human actant was enlisted: electric kettles from an electric appliance retailer. It turned out that those kettles were so cheap that from the budgetary perspective, the entire army could have been equipped with self-service coffee corners. Thereby, the cheap electric kettles were

recruited and made “present” very effectively in the decision-making processes (i.e., in the site of determination).

The recruitment of human actants is based on a meticulous and careful analysis of their POV, as described in the previous step. At the center of the enlistment is the ability to identify the hooks – i.e., the possible connections between the actants’ logics of action and interests, and the action required of them in order to advance the desirable change or prevent its inhibition. The agents plan the actants’ enlistment processes and practice them by running simulations and analyzing them together. The main questions we would like to answer by these simulations are (not necessarily in order of appearance):

- What is the actant’s attitude toward the inclusive alternative?
- Would modification or adjustment of the alternative help the actant enlist?
- Are there other actants who can help us persuade this actant to enlist?
- Can the actant be enlisted or must he or she be counterbalanced?
- What actions can we expect the actant to take?
- How important it is to enlist this actant compare to others?

Therefore, the group acts to recruit key actants in favor of promoting the desired organizational change, to act as a compelling force in the site of determination. The goal is to enlist strong enough human and non-human actants in order to change the balance of power surrounding the gendered practice and make it possible to implement and realize the alternative practice.

Fifth step: Disruption (problematization) and disputes

Changing organizational gendered practices involves undoing, disrupting and reorganizing relations between actants. This is a preliminary step in the process of implementing the inclusive alternative practice. The disruption act is aimed at turning the exclusionary gendered practice, which is usually transparent, invisible and taken for granted, into an organizational problem – a practice that is not taken for granted or is challenged. In the words of Latour, disruption or problematization is “to open the black box.” This act must be planned and proactive and ought to draw attention to the gendered practice and question it. The disruption does not have to be defiant but sometimes a demonstrative and assertive act is needed in order to draw attention to the practice and what is wrong with it.

Disruption (problematization): A disruption is an act that challenges the status of the gendered practice as natural or normal, and turns it into a problem that requires a solution. For example, at a law firm it had been customary and normal for years to “compliment” women lawyers on their clothes and appearance. When one of the women lawyers decided and dared to react and asked one of the men lawyers not to say that anymore, her reaction simultaneously exposed the practice (made it noticeable) and disrupted its progression. The frequent comment such as “that dress looks good on you” no longer went over smoothly or naturally but began to be an act that required an explanation or an apology. In other words, problematization is an act that disrupts the permanent, silent and transparent pattern of relations between the actants (both human and non-human), which maintains the exclusionary gendered practice. Latour called that act **“opening the black box,”** and it is a necessary step for setting change in motion. The disruption creates disputes between actors and stakeholders in the organization, thus providing the energy necessary for the organizational process of change to progress.

Aristophanes’ play *Lysistrata* (411 BCE) is a classic example of a prototype of such a disruption: in the play *Lysistrata* persuades the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands and lovers as a means of forcing the men to negotiate peace and end the Peloponnesian War. Another example of a disruption is the confusion and dispute created by the American suffragists when they went on a hunger strike to gain the right to vote. The disruption was created by the need to imprison and force-feed them, which drew harsh public criticism and enlisted many more actants to the struggle. A current example is speaking Hebrew in the feminine gender in the public sphere, a practice identified with Knesset member Merav Michaeli.

The active disruption must be strong enough to make the gendered practice no longer taken for granted. As we have argued, practices become black boxes when the pattern of relations between the actants who participate in maintaining the exclusionary situation is automatic, non-reflective, taken for granted and therefore transparent. The problematization at the very least disrupts the lack of reflexivity in maintaining the practice. Good inclusive alternatives, or practices that make it difficult to resist the change, are an important part of the ability to create effective problematization. Sometimes, familiar and accepted forms of resistance to exclusionary and discriminatory practices are trivialized and themselves become part of the structural pattern of connections that maintains the practice. For instance, when a woman directly protests sexist jokes at a meeting, the reaction in many cases is: “What’s the matter with you? We were just kidding,” or “You have no sense of humor.” The protest and the reaction to it have eventually become part of the exclusionary gendered practice. The protesting response (the disruption) had become

routine and predictable and thus a part of the situation that maintains the practice and does not prevent it or disrupts it. When there is a good and strong inclusive alternative, the ability to easily dismiss the disruption act diminishes. The inclusive alternative becomes a compelling and coercive force in the situation in a way that can disrupt the continued smooth and uninterrupted flow of the maintained gendered practice. A good and strong inclusive alternative will usually be fair to both women and men; in particular it is very difficult to resist alternatives that maintain organizational effectiveness or even clearly reinforce it (which does not rule out or minimize alternatives that demand more radical changes and draw more resistance). For example, at a technological workplace men and women were required to use a heavy ladder to do their jobs. The practice of using the ladder had a range of exclusionary consequences for the women, who had a very hard time doing the job and frequently had to ask men for help. A strong equitable and inclusive alternative was a lightweight aluminum ladder. The strength of the alternative stems from the fact that it was cheap, it helped both men and women, and it accurately abolished the exclusionary consequences of the gendered practice.

If the problematization is effective, or disrupts the transparent flow of relations surrounding the practice, and if it suggests effective alternatives, many **disputes** will arise surrounding the alternatives. The controversies will come from actants connected to the tension between the exclusionary practice and the alternative practice – that is, from actants who are directly involved in maintaining the exclusionary practice and therefore also have a direct relevance to implementing the alternative.

Disputes: Disrupting the gendered practice draws interest and involvement of numerous actants, expressed by disputes between them. The disputes are an expression of the points of view, logics of action and interests of the various actants in relation to the practice (both the existing one and the proposed alternative). In the context of changing gendered organizational patterns and practices, disputes are not a negative phenomenon; on the contrary, they help identify actants who can help or inhibit the change process and facilitate exposure of their POVs and arguments (regimes of justification). They thereby help the change agents decipher the network of actants relevant to the change they are trying to promote. The disputes also create interest and involvement among the actants, on the basis of which they can be enlisted to promote the implementation of the alternative practice. That said, the disputes create organizational tension, disagreement and the need to decide and resolve problems, all of which may not be easy to deal with but can be used to promote the process of change. In other words, the actants' interest and involvement in the wake of the disputes that arise can be understood as the energy that sets the change process in motion.

Disputes are not only a symptom of disruption of the gendered practice but are significant and contribute to the organizational change process in their own right, for several reasons. First, the disputes allow the various actants relevant to the change to be exposed. In many cases the entire network of actants who maintain the gendered practice is impossible to identify at the outset. But in a state of dispute, actants act to enlist other actants in order to settle the dispute, and by following the arguments and counter arguments in the dispute we can identify additional important actants who are part of the change process. For instance, if a certain actant quotes studies and figures that express opposition to the change, or if another actant presents transportation difficulties as an obstacle for implementing the alternative, or if yet another actant expresses the objection of a particular group in the organization to the change – all of those indicate to us important actants we may not have identified in our initial mapping of the actant network: studies and data, road conditions or vehicle shortage, or a specific group of people in the organization.

Second, disputes enable us to foresee the regimes of justification that will be used in the site of determination. After all, **regimes of justification** are a form of communication through which the actants enlist and translate other actants (human and non-human) as compelling and coercive forces in disputes and sites or situations of determination. In other words, regimes of justification can be understood as the stuff disputes are made of, and as the currency exchanged in them. That is why the regimes of justification are the tangible force that enables the gendered practice to persist and maintains the exclusion it creates. For that reason, identifying the regimes of justification used in disputes as early as possible can help the change agents use them in the change processes by manufacturing and advancing counter regimes of justification or neutralizing certain ones. Finally, the disputes not only expose the actants and their regimes of justification, but manufacture the interest and involvement of numerous actants in the process, both supporters and opponents, without which it would be hard for the change process to move forward. As noted above, that is the energy that sets the change process in motion because it manufactures situations where actants can be enlisted and arouses the need to make decisions and resolutions.

A structured agenda for action group meetings

Despite the orderly and structured stages and steps presented above, changing gendered patterns in organizations cannot be understood as a linear process. The dynamic of the process is spiral and requires constant reflection and evaluation in order to ensure that the group's actions are still valid, and a willingness to modify them if necessary. In light of the aforesaid, we propose a systematic structure of group meetings at this

stage, using a methodology of reflection, planning, evaluation and modification of the change strategies and enlistment processes until the success of the endeavor. The clear structure of the meetings is designed to allow effective and productive discussions as well as actual progress. After a few meetings in which the group members plan their initial moves on the basis of investigating and politically reading the organizational power arrays (identifying the actant networks and sites of determination, deciphering the key actants' points of view, planning the enlistment and disruption measures), the participants implement the actions they decided upon. The members come out of each meeting with various tasks according to the decisions made, and perform the planned actions until the next meeting, in which they regroup in order to be updated, conceptualize the present situation and plan the next steps, and so on.

Accordingly, the group meeting will include three elements: update, present situation and future steps, as follows:

- A. **Update:** A brief summary of the previous meeting and the decisions made there, and an update on the steps taken by the members between the meetings.
- B. **Present situation:** Where we stand now. The review of the present situation includes revisiting all of the elements of the change:
 1. What is the **alternative practice** we are promoting right now?
 2. What is the relevant **site of determination** right now?
 3. **What is the site of determination comprised of:** Who participates in it directly and by what rules does it operate (for instance, who makes the decisions? How important are the other participants? How are decisions made - by vote? By persuasion?) Is there further information we need to find out about the site of determination?
 4. What is **the force operating against us** in relation to the site of determination? Who are the actants who oppose the change and what are the regimes of justification and the compelling and coercive forces they can manufacture in the decision situation in order to undermine the change we are promoting?
 5. **Enlistment status:** What is the force at our disposal right now in relation to the site of determination? Who are the human and non-human actants who will operate in our favor in the site of determination? What are the actions they will take in our favor, and do they manufacture enough compelling and coercive force in the decision situation in order to outweigh the counterforce?

C. **Future steps:** Planning continued enlistment actions according to the following questions:

1. Which **additional actants** need to be enlisted considering the situation in the site of determination?
2. What are the **points of view** of the additional actants and what **hooks** can be used in order to enlist them?
3. Does the alternative **need to be updated or modified** in light of the power relations? What modification will make the alternative into a compelling and coercive force in the site of determination?
4. **What action needs to be taken in the site of determination?** Should we seek a different site of determination or use an opportunity created in the process as a site of determination?
5. **Allocation of tasks** to members of the group: Who does what until the next meeting?

The structure of the meeting as described above indicates that **documenting** all the meetings and preparing a **written summary** is an integral part of the process. The summary of each meeting should be distributed between all members of the group and presented at the beginning of the next meeting. It is extremely important to systematically organize the documented materials by discussion topic before each meeting to facilitate easy and quick updating on the present situation and devote most of the time to planning future steps. The list of questions and issues for discussion allows all participants to be updated, influence the future directions of action and take an active part in the change process.

At this stage we may identify the **main features of the change agents' activity** as part of the action group in the processes to promote gender equality in organizations, as arise from the model we have presented to this point. First, as noted above, these change processes are not linear in nature and they demand from the group members constant, reflexive and simultaneous engagement with three key issues:

- What is the concrete change they wish to promote?
- What is the network of actors relevant to the concrete change and how can they be enlisted?
- What are the critical organizational sites where the change can materialize?

Second, the change process is structured, planned and deliberate, and requires deep familiarity with the organization or professional field, which sometimes requires the investment of concerted effort in obtaining relevant information and details if the group

members do not have them. The required reflexivity also indicates another feature, which is flexibility – the only goal is change, and therefore no alternative, change strategy or specific enlistment measure should be carved in stone. The willingness and ability to make modifications in light of developments in the process or new information that arrives are significant sources of power for the action group. And finally, organizations are usually hierarchical and the first inclination in change processes is to enlist actants from the most senior level of the organization. But the present model seeks not to let the paradigm of bureaucratic hierarchy in organizations determine the change agents' mode of operation.

D. Agency in changing gendered practices

Everything described heretofore in this guide is to be done, exercised and carried out by an agent of social change.³ Why agent? The term agency refers to our ability to act autonomously, make free choices and impact the reality and situations we are in. In the case of changing gendered patterns in organizations this is a particularly important issue, because the participating women are subject to organizational structures and arrangements that determine their possibilities of action. The question of agency therefore touches upon a woman's very ability to take a stand, act and become an active actant in the network.

When a woman becomes a conscious and active agent of gender equality, she operates within the network to disrupt and change the balance of power surrounding the gendered practice. The agency is expressed by the agent's deliberate and systematic action within the network that shapes and maintains the gendered practice. The purpose is to change the power relations in the network so that an inclusive and equitable alternative can be adopted.

But women who are identified in their organizations or professional fields as having a feminist agenda or trying to promote gender equality are often perceived and labeled negatively by their colleagues (both men and women). Even women with a deep feminist awareness and a strong desire to change the reality are often averse to initiating action for change gendered patterns and avoid joining and taking part in change processes, out of fear of the price they might have to pay (for instance, social ostracism, doubting their loyalty and commitment to the organization, labeling them as troublemakers and even getting fired). The image of the "feminist" – as someone who fights and confronts, sacrifices and pays prices, deals with unimportant issues and even lacks a sense of humor – is in itself a powerful deterrent for women from taking action for gender equality or joining such action.

3 This section is based on a separate position paper: Lehrer, Zeev and Ben-Eliyahu, Hadass, "Promoting Gender Equality as a Process of Organizational Translation: A Discussion of the Position of the 'Change Agent'" (not yet published).

A woman might be reluctant to join an action group for women out of fear of being identified with weakness and victimhood. Women who are successful, and who possess power, influence and status at their workplaces, might identify belonging to a women's group as a sign of weakness or of needing help. But in the intervention model proposed here, strong and powerful women are a significant resource for promoting change, and the hope and expectation is that they will use their power not to rebuff and turn their backs on other women, but to promote change in solidarity.

The intervention model of Gender Equality in Action presented here deals with this array of negative images in two main ways. First, the proposed action strategies for the realization of the change of gendered practices are sophisticated and varied and based on processes of enlistment and negotiation with allies and not only on adversarial processes. Second, the collective and solidary action as part of a group creates a framework of support and backing that is not available to a change agent who acts and struggles alone, and thereby reduces the vulnerability of a lone woman. Although we cannot ignore the fact that acting to promote gender equality involves a certain amount of risk for the change agents involved, an agent who initiates a process of change or is involved in one, can also be empowered by it both personally and in terms of her status and power in the organization.

E. Conclusion

In this guide we presented the intervention model of Gender Equality in Action, its assumptions, terminology and methodology, and the internal language that serves the women who participate in the action groups as part of the program. The practice of changing gendered patterns is presented through the stages and steps that the model is comprised of, which illustrate the fact that initiating, leading and realizing the change of gendered patterns in organizations is a planned and systematic effort that demands commitment, time and deep involvement by the change agents. The collective and solidary action by the women participating in the process seeks to influence the organizational “ground rules,” and change them so that they become more fair, respectful and equal for women. The understanding that these rules – the organizational practices and forms of action – are not gender-neutral but grant men various kinds of advantages, directs the change efforts toward the organizational arena itself.

Changing gendered practices is a process of enlisting sufficient power to substitute existing gendered forms of action with forms that are inclusive for women. Dealing with power relations in the organizational field and confronting them is perceived as alien and deterring for many women, but the intervention model of Gender Equality in Action makes this confrontation accessible and possible by the systematic analysis and planning of the change processes: exposing the forces that preserve the existing gendered order; identifying and enlisting potential partners for creating a new gendered order; identifying and leveraging the power of the women themselves as change agents; and recruiting powerful and influential women to act on behalf of other women.

As can be understood from the assumptions and the intervention model presented above, we do not perceive gender as permanent and stable categories (“men” and “women”), but as a practice – namely, tangible organizational forms of action that routinely establish and manufacture a gendered order of distinctions and boundaries between women and men (or between groups of women and groups of men). Therefore the change itself is a practice intended to disrupt an existing gendered order and introduce in its place a fair and equal order for women. The disruption of the existing order is an act meant to set a change process in motion, which is to say to open a black box – to put a question mark on the taken for granted way things are done, to offer an alternative to an existing practice and to reveal the relevant stakeholders. Sometimes the disruption is an achievement in its own right: in many situations the forces (actant’s network) that

maintain and preserve the gendered practices over time are so powerful that undermining them is almost impossible. In these cases the disruption is an achievement. A common example the practice of sexual harassment or sexual violence in the workplace that have persisted for many years before they are exposed and challenged (see the cases of former president Moshe Katzav, journalist Emanuel Rosen and editor Yitzhak Laor, and the sexual harassment in the Israel Police, exposed in 2015). Another practice that has persisted for many years and is very difficult to expose, challenge and disrupt is gender discrimination in pay.

For the women who participate in the groups, the intervention model of Gender Equality in Action is, in our opinion, a new experience of empowerment: unlike traditional empowerment, which in many cases gives women the tools to better themselves and adapt to existing organizations whose masculinity is taken for granted, the present intervention model gives women tools to act collectively and in solidarity in order to change the organizations themselves, while designing and leading the process, based on their life experiences as women, and while dealing directly and systematically with the power relations that shape those experiences.

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This field guide presents the program of Gender Equality in Action and its intervention model, developed to promote gender equality in organizations. The program provides tools and strategies for collective action aimed at changing organizations' «rules of play» so they become more respectful and empowering for women.

The first part of the guide presents the rationale and basic assumptions of the model, based on experiences accumulated over the years from different groups and forums of women who joined the program, case studies, and relevant research literature. In the second part the theoretical assumptions are translated into a structured and practical methodology of promoting gender equality in organizations.

The field guide is relevant for women and men who are concerned with the situation and status of women and wish to understand and change negative gender aspects of community life, work settings, or public arenas, and to become part of a dynamic network of women who work in solidarity to achieve gender equality.