



שטיל שטיל Shatil

[40x40]

משנים מציאות תגׁייר הווע
Changing Reality

[40x40]

משנים מציאות **תגׁייר** **الواقع**
Changing Reality

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Design and printing: Re-Levant Studio

English Translation: Sagir International
Translations Ltd.

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1982. Three years after its founding, the New Israel Fund makes a game-changing decision: grants and traditional philanthropy aren't enough to strengthen civil society; organizations and community organizing efforts need guidance and assistance if they are to fulfill their missions.

Up until that time, almost no advocacy or protest organizations had been active in Israel; there were no local-community organizing efforts, no organizations in the Arab community, no shared society organizations, hardly any rights or democracy organizations.

How do you start a non-profit, and what has to happen in order for it to flourish? How do you raise funds? How do you organize as a community against injustices taking place in your neighborhood, your city, or in the country as a whole? How do you translate needs on the ground into proposals for policy change? How do people become real partners in the legislative process? What is the media's role in social change? How do you criticize the government and how do you work alongside it, and how do you change power relations in society?

These questions and needs are all central to civil society in a democratic country, and urgently require a high-quality, professional response.

And then came Shatil.

With thoroughness and passion, with advance planning but also spontaneity, Shatil began nurturing strategies for social change. Fueled by information and experience on the international plane, the organization also amasses and produces local experience. Since its founding 40 years ago, Shatil has been advising, counseling, and training organizations; working to build infrastructures for civil society; connecting organizations and players in the social change arena; building shared power, and guiding organizations through policy change processes. In retrospect, we can say with pride: Israeli civil society and the Israeli social change movement have grown and developed thanks in great part to Shatil's investment in fieldwork, and to New Israel Fund grants.

We are now celebrating four decades of activity. The first decade of Shatil's life was devoted to sowing seeds and nurturing early strengths. Shatil developed a unique and wide-ranging

form of activity based on guidance and assistance to grassroots organizations. "Grassroots" sounds like what it is: local-community organizational efforts which, like grass, strike roots in the soil of a place and operate at the local and community level: in the Galilee and the Negev, in neighborhoods and cities, in the Arab sector, and in Israel as a whole. At the same time, Shatil promoted the idea of advocacy as an organizational/communal approach: reinforcing civil society's role and significance in criticizing the government and making the voice of the people heard. The first decade was thus a decade of development – ideological, conceptual, and attitudinal. During that decade, Shatil crystallized its main strategies, "translated" modes of action from global to local, and developed and built up the organization – establishing a Haifa branch in addition to the organization's headquarters in Jerusalem. The first decade set the stage for those to follow.

At the beginning of Shatil's second decade a wave of immigration arrived from the former Soviet Union, while Operation Solomon brought olim from Ethiopia. Shatil invested a great deal in connecting these immigrants to Israeli society. As the immigrants had

little familiarity with life in a free civil society, Shatil also connected them to organizations, social change initiatives, and efforts to influence policy. We played a meaningful role in the struggle to advance families of Ethiopian background in the face of absorption difficulties, racism, and substandard conditions at the caravan sites where they were housed. The Russian aliya posed a special challenge in terms of housing, education, and employment. Shatil provided the immigrants with guidance on absorption difficulties as well as on getting their demands met by state and local authorities. Shatil's southern branch in Be'er Sheva opened in 1994 and initiated long-term activity that continues to this day, guiding the local Bedouin population and all Negev residents toward recognition, justice, and the righting of wrongs. This decade also saw the formation and development of a number of "coalitions" coordinated by Shatil: joint action groups comprising civil society organizations and players aiming to influence policy and legislation vis-à-vis the Knesset and the government. The Coalition for Freedom of Information and the Coalition for the Rights of Crime Victims are just two examples.

During its third decade, the 2000s, Shatil upgraded as an organization and developed projects from Rosh Pina to Baqa al-Gharbiyye and Lod. This enabled the organization to stay close to the ground, to meet existing needs and to expand its activity to mixed cities and localities in the periphery. In those years, Shatil was a major player in Israel's social change arena, interacting with numerous individuals, communities and organizations in a variety of areas of interest. The Shatil Center for Policy Change was officially established and became a hub for those involved in advocacy and promoting civil society impact on the policy plane. During the third decade, exactly twenty years ago, Shatil launched the Everett Social Justice Fellowship, a scholarship program that would later connect hundreds of students with scores of social change organizations that benefited from the fellows' expertise. Since the 1980s, out of a belief in the need to nurture new forces and to channel young people toward activism, Shatil has functioned as an incubator for students in community work, organizational consulting, sociology and communications, and has directed their internships. The Fellowship program, along with large-scale investment in fostering a generation

of students with social-community awareness and knowledge, has produced a generation of activists and professionals with a highly-developed social consciousness.

Until its third decade, Shatil was involved in nurturing hundreds of new organizations with the aim of creating a vibrant and flourishing civil society – a mission in which it unquestionably succeeded. However, from Shatil's fourth decade and up to the present day, "impact" has been the key concept. The seeds sown in the past are now being measured in terms of their ability to bear fruit – to influence policy, to create community, to generate change and human flourishing. Shatil's role has also evolved; the focus is now on guiding organizations toward meaningful change on the ground, on formulating strategy and managing partnerships, on proper project administration, and on measuring and evaluating social return on investment. It's no longer a matter of tools for survival, but rather of actions that promote the organization's sustainability and long-term impact.

Ushered in by the 2011 social protests, Shatil's fourth decade was a decade

of activism, of community effort, of technology, social media and digital tools, of globalization and places competing with each other for precedence. This fourth decade ended with the great thunderbolt of the coronavirus pandemic; the crisis has, of course affected the whole world, but its impact in Israel has been pronounced in the economic and organizational spheres, especially with regard to civil society. In the Israel of 2022, Jewish-Arab relations are more fragile than ever, no peace agreement with the Palestinians is visible on the horizon, economic disparities are growing, and the democratic space is shrinking. Shatil is helping organizations cope with a world whose challenges drive uncertainty and instability. The organization is also encouraging professionalism and flexibility, hope and renewal, as part of a new world order that is also affecting social change organizations.

Over the past four decades, Shatil has helped and guided hundreds of initiatives and organizations, and thousands of people. This catalogue brings together the stories of some of these people: 40 social changemakers whom Shatil "touched" and in turn left a mark on Shatil. Within these pages

you will find partners, organization directors, entrepreneurs, activists, leaders, founders of movements, organizations and communities, social startup founders, dreamers, and people of vision. They have received counseling, training, and guidance from Shatil, and played an active role in coalitions and forums coordinated by Shatil. A small number have been Shatil employees. Some have sparked policy change and new legislation. Thanks to these people – and to many others whose stories we couldn't tell in a single volume or, for that matter, in twenty – today's Israel is a better, more equal, place, and a place of greater justice. They are a source of optimism and proof of humanity's tremendous capacity to create, to dream, to generate change.

The stories of these changemakers are intertwined with the "story" of Shatil, via our content and activity domains: social justice, recognition and repair; safeguarding human rights and ensuring the state's democratic character; identity and gender; shared living and the geography of inequality. These 40 changemakers offer only a glimpse of the scope of Shatil's activity, the rich variety of issues addressed, and the organization's vast contribution to

the advancement of Israeli society, in all its diversity and multiplicity of communities. That activity and that contribution could not have been made without the commitment and boundless effort of generations of Shatil staff, the members and heads of the Shatil Committee and the NIF Board, and many others who gave willingly of their abilities and time.

It has been a great privilege to serve as Shatil's Director in its fortieth year, and to contribute what I can to this meaningful body of work.

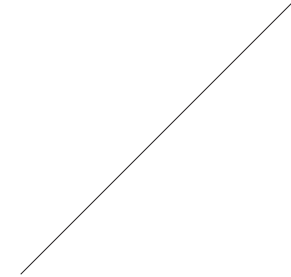
Social change is a long-term process. What started two years ago will be completed a decade from now, what began twenty years ago is only now bearing fruit. What starts tomorrow will reach maturity only in three years' time. What are the challenges that civil society faces today, and what challenges will it be facing in five or ten years? Who will establish the next social startup? Who will safeguard democracy in an era of incitement and fake news? Who will ensure that refugees and immigrants receive housing and that their rights are protected in a global world marked by racism and war? Where will the next #metoo happen? The deep roots we've struck are our

driving force, but what do we wish for ourselves for the future? How will the branches of the tree develop? In order to generate change, you sometimes have to take risks, to do what seems impossible, to insist and insist again, to dream and to believe and, perhaps, to pay a price. We hope to continue lending a hand to all of these dreamers: to launch and develop new initiatives and creative efforts that will meet changing and recurring needs, to support the forces for change and to serve as an incubator and habitat for the growing needs of a new world in the making. We face the future with hope in our hearts.

Think of others.

Esther Sivan

1.



**Democracy
Belongs to
Everyone**

Esty Shushan

Founder of Nivcharot – Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Women for Voice and Equality, and of the “No voice, no vote” campaign, promoting Haredi women’s representation in the Knesset and in decision-making forums.

Aleph Shushan. That’s how I signed my name for years on the columns I wrote for the Haredi press: the initial letter of my first name – Aleph – followed by my last name. Aleph for “Esty.” Aleph for “isha” – woman. Aleph for “af echad” – nobody. My editor said: “If you want to be taken seriously, it’s better they don’t know you’re a woman,” and at the time I thought this was okay, reasonable. As a woman, as a Haredi, as a Mizrahi who’d studied in Ashkenazi institutions, I’d grown used to towing the line, keeping a low profile. To being pleased if someone

merely took an interest in what I had to say. Later I discovered other women who shared space with me in the newspaper under a masculine identity. The censorship of femininity was of a piece with the censorship of certain opinions. I realized, though still only vaguely, that I was serving some kind of closed circuit of opinions permitted for expression by parties permitted to express themselves.

This became all the clearer during the controversy over a Haredi “Beit Yaakov” girls’ school in the town of Immanuel,

and the segregation of students by ethnic group. Not in theory, or in the abstract: actual segregation by wall. Ashkenazi girls to the right, Mizrahi girls to the left. This was a wake-up call for me – seeing parents going to jail just because they wanted their daughters, who look like my daughter, who also look like me, to study in a suitable educational institution. I used the tools at my disposal – words, ideas – to express my frustration and astonishment. But everything I wrote on the topic was suppressed; I was ejected from every Haredi forum where I tried to address the issue. I looked reality in the eye and said: **Enough with the appeasement, the concealment, the restrictions on the topics I can put on the agenda.**

In 2012, I was sitting with a few friends and we were talking about the upcoming elections. I told them: Enough. We need to do something. They asked me, half-jokingly: “What, are you going to found a party?” The logical idea that we could run for office in the framework of an already-existing party – within the exclusive, off-limits male preserve of Haredi politics – occurred to no one.

I had no idea what I was going to do; what I did know was that I was suffocating. I got home and created a Facebook page called No Voice – No Vote. I was a copywriter, after all. I wrote that women need to vote for parties that include them. Sounds elementary, right? This raised quite a few eyebrows, some with outright compassion toward me, on the assumption that I’d “lost my senses” or with stereotypical pity for my “poor husband.” I and the women who joined the cause were attacked in a vile way. We were called “Hellenists” and a danger to the Jews. There was a rabbi who called us schizophrenics and advised us to get psychiatric treatment. There were others who ruled that our husbands should divorce us without the monetary settlements stipulated in our ketubot, as is done with adulteresses. And as for us? We posted pashkevilim by night and distributed leaflets in the Haredi streets, even deep within hard-line Bnei Brak.

Here, social media had a tremendous impact. Women published things anonymously, including me, and in this way I built friendships and managed to connect the dots. There’s no overstating the importance of

that moment when you realize you're not crazy, that there are others like you. That your loneliness stemmed from other women's fear of making themselves heard. Social media gave me control over the degree of exposure. I shed the layers of fear at a pace that suited me.

This was the basis on which Nivcharot was founded.

In the course of the journey there were many achievements. There were, of course, the more "cinematic," shiny and photogenic ones, such as when the Supreme Court ruled that the Haredi political party Agudat Yisrael must amend its gender-exclusionary charter, followed by the announcement that the party would comply. Or the moment at a UN committee meeting when the chair spoke about the issue for the first time and demanded that Israel's representatives examine how the situation comported with the country's democratic aspirations, when such exclusion wasn't even justified halachically. There was also the Me'oravot project that engaged Haredi women for the first time with political and public issues, along with a first wave of Haredi women running for local office around the country.

But the great everyday moments are when I sit in circles with Haredi women and hear myself of a few years ago, knowing that when I was their age I didn't have a place where I could lay out my thoughts and questions. Women with firm feminist views and with courage that I can only dream about tell me that in 2015, when I thought I wasn't reaching anyone, they were at "seminar" (Haredi women's school), reading an article of mine, and waking up. From within the safe space we created, Haredi women can speak up and take action, and that's always the emphasis, but the very fact of speaking up is a major accomplishment.

Shatil entered the picture about two years into our activity, when I realized that in order for this movement to grow, a nonprofit would have to be created. Founding Nivcharot forced me to deal with bureaucracy, which I can't stand. It started with the actual possibility of brainstorming for strategic understanding, in the higher sense of looking ahead, what it means to found a nonprofit at the organizational level. It drove me with increased clarity toward the practical sphere. Later as well, at the fundraising stage – a field I was completely unfamiliar with – an advisor by the

name of Elinor helped us submit our first applications, and orient ourselves within this critical knowledge base. Shatil sharpened our mode of public expression, and connected us with other organizations: Nivcharot belongs to Shatil's Forum Against the Exclusion of Women. The assistance,

and these connections, enabled us to plow confidently into virgin territory, engaging with an issue that had never been discussed or represented until we took it on.

Jaber Asakla

As a student leader, political activist, leader and director of civil society programs and organizations, and more recently as a Knesset member, Jaber has worked, and still works, to promote a society that is fundamentally and fully democratic, shared, and equitable, with no group wielding supremacy over another.

It was a chilly spring day, March 30, 1976, when a general strike was declared in the Arab sector, in protest over land appropriations in the Biqat Sakhnin area. All arms of the government had been mobilized to prevent and thwart the strike. Many young people had gone to the centers of the localities in order to convince those planning to go to work, to strike instead. In the background there was news of police and armed forces entering the nearby localities, Deir Hanna, Arraba, and Sakhnin, and of confrontations with residents. There

were reports of hundreds of arrests and dozens of injured. From a distance I observed what was happening in central Maghar; a few minutes after the young protesters were standing in the street, police patrols arrived and arrested everyone. At the end of the day the picture emerged: 6 citizens dead, hundreds of wounded, and thousands arrested. That day, Land Day, was engraved in my memory, as were the funerals of those killed, which I attended in Arraba and in Sakhnin.

Now I'll jump ahead a little in time. 1982. Between the World Cup games in Italy and the reports on the First Lebanon War, I was employed as a construction worker in Jerusalem – near Mount Scopus. From time to time – and more frequently over time – I'd go on foot to the University to take part in demonstrations against the war that were organized on campus by the left-wing movement CAMPUS and the Arab Students' Committee. I connected with the students and the student activity, and knew what my next step would be: I registered at the university, and even before my studies began I'd become integrated in student life and activity.

While serving as head of the Arab Students' Committee in Jerusalem, the Shamir Government, urged on by the leaders of the student right, decided to institute different tuition levels for students who had and hadn't served in the army. A distinction that was a euphemistic way of saying that Arabs would pay more for academic education. As it was, numerous barriers stood in the way of Arabs who wanted to acquire higher education – language, geographic and cultural distance; now there would also be differential tuition. We considered how to respond to this inequality –

an Arab students' strike? Critical articles and editorials in the Arabic press? The Committee decided that we'd try to go the partnership route. Although the immediate victims of such a decision were the Arabs, **anyone living in a country that reduces civil equality also suffers.** This was the position, and on that basis we proceeded to coordinate forces: we enlisted Knesset members from all parties, journalists and media people, academics – researchers who participated in the demonstrations with us. Even the university heads mobilized aggressively for the cause. It was very sharp, very focused, an appeal so sweeping and so widely supported that within a week the decision had been reversed.

The power of joint action in this cause was clear and encouraging; it has guided me along the way ever since. Later I'd go on to advance this approach as a Knesset member with the Hadash Party; earlier I did so as director general of Sikkui, in Dai Lakibbush! and in other spaces where equality through partnership was called for. But I'll linger now for a moment over my work with and in **Shatil** on these issues.

In the wake of the huge rift that emerged in Jewish-Arab relations over the Intifada, we jointly collected a group of Arab and Jewish leaders and with them, at Shatil, engaged in a dialogue process over the course of four and a half years. We called it the "Influencers' Project." Persistence is also an achievement – four and a half years is a long time. Also the fact that the "influencers" ultimately agreed on 90% of the issues (of course the core issues remained – the Law of Return, the right of return). But the greatest achievement in my eyes was that the concept of a "shared society" took hold, with all of its complexity and power. It became clear that the conflict remained unresolved, but that, together, we could promote causes on which we agreed and continue arguing about the core issues.

Two initiatives that we advanced at **Shatil** dealt with this aspiration to equality – not just in terms of consciousness, and from the bottom up, but also before the law. One was the "Free Education Law" for ages 3-4, which hadn't been implemented in the Arab sector. There were all kinds of excuses: that appropriate professional staff were lacking, that there were no buildings that met the standards, or

that there was no legal operating entity. As part of a coalition of organizations, in cooperation with the Knesset's Early Childhood Education Committee under Tamar Gozansky, we created a situation where the three conditions were fulfilled. Within 3-4 years, a thousand preschools were opened, and now 90% of Arab children enjoy free education from the pre-kindergarten years on (except for 3- and 4-year-olds in the Negev, where thousands are denied recognition to this day). It sounds short and sweet, but it was a stubborn, 7-year marathon struggle.

The other initiative was that of changing Israel's property tax legislation – essentially eliminating the tax. Basically, because most of the land in Jewish use belongs to the state, the property tax's applicability in terms of land was aimed at the Arabs, who constituted 80% of the taxpayers bound by it. In 1999, an amendment to the law stipulated that the tax rate be reduced from 2.5% of the land value to 0%, which saved thousands of citizens encumbered by huge debts. This was the culmination of another 7-year struggle.

These were two changes with dramatic repercussions, as they helped develop a strong sense of capability in Arab society. People experienced themselves – some for the first time – as people who know how to work and advance things necessary for them as citizens. I think the most meaningful aspect of these processes was that Shatil believed in the power of the community, and was willing to build power on the ground. Shatil didn't do things in our stead, but rather assembled a strong group of skilled people who had faith in

us, in the goal, and in a years-long process. Shatil made it possible to sow the seeds of these changes, and supported them until they became established and stable; they provided opportunity, knowledge, and support that empowered citizens to the point where they took responsibility for themselves. In my view, this was the real issue at hand. It wasn't just resolving the dilemmas that was the goal; citizen empowerment was the great thing, and it's still bearing fruit today.

Ishai Menuchin

Works to promote civil-democratic responsibility based on values and knowledge. He currently serves as Director of Programs at Mazon in Israel, and as head of the ideological publishing house November Books; previously he served as director general of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, as chair of Amnesty International Israel, as director of the Jerusalem Spinoza Institute, and as spokesperson for Yesh Gvul.

I was sitting at the summit of a mountain between Lebanon and Syria, looking out at Damascus and listening to the news on an old transistor radio. The prime minister, Menachem Begin, was explaining to the reporter, and through him to the audience, what the goals of the war were: "a new order in Lebanon." I raised the volume and listened. The war was meant to change things in Lebanon – control would be in the hands of the Christians, our allies. The disquiet I'd felt when I'd gone off to war intensified. I'd been conscripted to defend the citizens of

Israel – my parents, my family, my friends. I hadn't been conscripted in order to create a new order in another country, or to participate in wars of choice. A democratic country endangers its citizens and the citizens of other countries only when there's no other option, only for defensive purposes, and doesn't embark on wars of choice – wars that can be avoided. If the state undertakes a war of choice – what about the citizen in a democracy? Do I also have a choice? A moment from the boarding school I'd attended – HaKfar HaYarok Youth Village – arose

before my mind's eye. The principal had posed the question of whether we should go to the Gadna military program, given that the Arab students in our grade couldn't join – should we accept the Ministry of Education's decision as binding? Should we comply with it? So we decided – the Village's 300-400 students – that we wouldn't. That if not all of the students could go to Gadna, then none of us would. And in fact, since then we hadn't participated in the Gadna training exercises. I heard what the Prime Minister said, and I decided that it was actually my democratic duty not to take part any longer in a war of choice initiated by the Israeli government. I notified my commanding officers that I would refuse and, indeed, when another call-up arrived, I refused to serve and was sent to military jail.

After the First Lebanon War, I started pondering the responsibility of the state, its democratic obligations, and the citizen's obligation to democratic values and to the law. **When is it civilly and morally responsible to obey, and when is it not?** What is the correlation between the state's demand that the citizen obey the law, and the state authorities' obligation to the law and to the value system it is meant to

reflect? Does the state itself act on the basis of democratic values and obey its laws, as an entity? I've explored this tension as an activist with Yesh Gvul, Peace Now, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Oxfam GB, and Amnesty; in the November Books publications that I've issued, and in the doctorate I wrote. Today I'm examining it as the director of Israel programs at Mazon in the sphere of food security and poverty. Until recently, for instance, before we finally succeeded in getting the Knesset to include food security funding in the base budget, 97% of Israel's food security budgets came from donations and philanthropists. According to the National Insurance Institute, over 500,000 families depend on charity. Over half a million families! Is it our responsibility as citizens to accept the situation as is, to accept that so many poor people are this invisible and this hungry – or to strive for change? Now that the Budget Law has been passed, thanks to cooperation on the part of 15 organizations, the state has committed itself to assisting a small number of these families. What about all the rest? The state, as a democratic entity, is duty-bound to care for all those who are hungry – an obligation that is being fulfilled only in the most

minimal way. Now we're working together so that the state will invest more to reduce poverty and the lack of food security.

While working at **Shatil** I also addressed the issue of state obligations and citizen rights with regard to the knowledge that the state collects from us and via our taxes – how this information is crucial for all citizens belonging to a democratic state so they can make informed and aware decisions, and exercise all their entitlements. A citizen who's committed to taking a well-founded stand and acting on it, needs reliable and free information on the activity of the authorities. Today it seems self-evident that the knowledge belongs to us, even if it's been collected by the authorities, but like many things that are self-evident, this realization entailed a lengthy struggle. Basically, up until the Freedom of Information Law was passed in 1998, when someone asked a public authority for information, he had to prove his connection to that information and his entitlement to it. Once, for instance, the Supreme Court deliberated on whether "the Ministry of Education can withhold the GEMS [Meitzav] exam

scores of my daughter's school." Today, that information is accessible to all.

In Israel, progress on the Freedom of Information Law was held up for many years. Shatil hired my services in order to get the process moving. We established a loose coalition, with many partners at varying levels of commitment to action – over 100 organizations whose common ground was the belief that freedom of information is one of the fundamental human rights.

Thanks to the multiplicity and diversity of its partners, the freedom of information coalition was a force to be reckoned with. If there was a need for political pressure on the Minister of Justice or a Knesset member, if a press conference needed to be organized, or if a committee needed to be created – a request by a coalition of organizations was much more effective than one by an individual or a single organization. In order to get the law passed, we studied American freedom of information legislation together, and examined the relevant nuances in Sweden and the US; we advised and guided the organizations in their efforts to demand information from the authorities, we shared the

partners' small victories in a regularly-published bulletin (this was before the digital newsletter era...). There is power in numbers, even if sensitive and careful guidance and maintenance are necessary to put it to good use.

Apart from getting the Freedom of Information Law passed and implemented, the coalition's greatest success was the fact that member organizations all viewed the Law enacted in 1998 as an achievement of their own. From my perspective

as a social activist, and from Shatil's perspective as the organization to which I reported, we did our share. What's important isn't the organizational ego or personal credit, but the civic change that was accomplished: the incredible improvement in Israeli citizens' ability to realize their citizenship and their rights through access to more attainable and reliable knowledge.

Sofi Sosonov-Hadar

Advocates for civic involvement on the part of Russian speakers in Israel, to promote a shared and egalitarian society. Former CEO of the Morashtenu organization, and cofounder of the Relevant-Info website.

As the daughter of a traditional family of the Caucasus, as someone who grew up in a Soviet space where any attempt at change was repelled and where anyone who held a non-standard opinion was harshly punished, I learned to accept existing conditions as fact; to keep a low profile, to avoid attention, to refrain from asking questions, from expressing doubt. I got my first taste of the right to ask, to question social conventions, in Israel. For instance, at an admissions interview for a leadership program at university, a program meant to

nurture leaders from the periphery, I was asked how I felt about having come from the city of Akko and having studied at a comprehensive school. If I'd lived, say, in Tel Aviv, I could have chosen between several different academically-oriented schools, as I was an outstanding student. I listened to the question in amazement; it had never occurred to me that things were different in other cities. I started wondering about the scholastic tracking of immigrants who come to live in cities in the periphery. This experience raised other questions and

doubts, along with a growing sense that I wanted to change things.

I joined Morashtenu, an organization whose goal is to promote a pluralistic Israeli society with an emphasis on the needs of the Russian-speaking community. The focus on this population relates to its uniqueness: the incredibly stark transition from a totalitarian existence to democracy, the need to rebuild one's entire life in a different country – people don't have the time to develop a civic consciousness, to read platforms, to go to demonstrations, to ask questions. They're busy trying to survive. By strengthening the Russian activist community and raising awareness of social issues on the agenda, Morashtenu encourages questioning, a critical approach, and civic responsibility-taking. The organization also promotes the peace process and coexistence by encouraging interaction between Russian-speaking immigrants and the Arab/Palestinian population.

There are quite a few people in the Arab community who've pursued academic studies in the Former Soviet Union and who therefore know Russian. Some are married to Russian

speakers and have built mixed families in which Russian and Arabic are spoken side by side. We've organized trips to Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, and the buses have always been full, with waiting lists. When meetings begin with Palestinian activists introducing themselves in Russian, people are amazed and this creates an immediate sense of commonality. In Bethlehem a Russian science and cultural center was founded, with a library, so children won't lose their Russian.

We started a forum for Russian-speaking activist women that meets for an annual conference on a different relevant topic each year – employment, exercising rights, violence against women, and more. This is a project that's benefited from collaboration with the Tel Aviv Municipality and the United States Embassy, which has donated to it financially. A women's league was also founded, to create a space for forging collaborations between women from different professional fields, and to offer empowerment courses for Russian-speaking women.

The Relevant-Info website – product of a collaboration between **Morashtenu**, **Shatil**, and

the Mateh HaMa'avak b'Gizanut ("Fight Racism") organization – was created to make varied and reliable information sources available in Russian about Israeli political and social issues. I coordinated the project and worked with Rina, Inda, Lena and Ilanit of Shatil to formulate strategy and to identify and develop content. Shatil and Mateh HaMa'avak b'Gizanut raised money to develop the platform, making it possible to create the website. A large amount of original content was written, and original Hebrew-language Israeli content was translated, along with international sources, and little by little we gained recognition – people started contacting us from the Russian-language press, Channel 9 and other sites asked to share some of our articles on a regular basis; we gradually became a popular portal among Russian speakers in Israel, Germany, the United States, and Russia. We've published content on many different topics, including the election process, how to choose a party – how to read an election platform. The aim was to create a space for the expression of a wide range of opinions, and to enable citizens of Russian background to exercise their

citizenship in a more diverse, aware, and in-depth manner.

Shatil was also an enabling force for us, whether as project partners or as a source of knowledge and crucial professional skills for anyone taking on senior administrative duties in the organization. The CEO course was a safe and reliable place to consult with peers, try out skills, and build a sense of competence in one's new position. Shatil's webinars and courses (such as the course on working in front of a camera) foster confidence and personal capability. And of course there was the personal guidance from Inda, in whom I found a listening ear and someone to consult with who would look at things from a different perspective. These tools and foundations helped me continue advancing initiatives on an increasingly large scale, in order to reach as many Russian-speakers in Israel as possible and give them access to knowledge and information that would spark a desire to ask questions, cast doubt on basic assumptions, fearlessly take a stand, and act on the civic plane to ensure a better future.

Ori Kol

CEO of Mehazkim and co-founder of Fake Reporter – organizations that work to eliminate violence and promote a discourse of justice, equality, and democracy in the virtual space.

I'd never been a political person. Yes, I'd read the paper, I was aware, but you could say I was fairly apathetic. A nice Ramat Aviv boy, a jobnik (non-combat soldier). After I was discharged from the army, Operation Protective Edge (Homat Magen) started, and I felt a certain unease. My friends were fighting in Gaza, and something felt off. I had a need – quite unusual for me at the time – to express my views, and I joined some demonstration that had been organized against the war. There were 50 of us demonstrating at Habima Square, surrounded by dozens of police officers who had to protect us

from dozens of right-wing extremists who came and promised to beat us to death because our opinion didn't suit them in the fervor of the military campaign. At that moment, the first "red alert" sounded in Tel Aviv. The lines between us instantly dissolved. Everyone mixed with everyone else, people ran in all directions, and we were, all of us, together. A short time later the siren ended and there was total silence. Within a few seconds – as in a stage performance – everything returned to its original state. The police, the leftist protesters, the rightist protesters, and Habima

Square. In the midst of this we have a common enemy, Hamas, that wants to kill us all. On that absurd evening I realized it wasn't enough to read the papers. Awareness is nice, but it's not the same as taking responsibility – for the right to express one's opinion, for the future of the state, and for the relationship between the two. I realized I could no longer remain on the sidelines and keep silent.

A little later, I came upon a Facebook group called Mehazkim. This was a group of activists who'd united to work on behalf of the leftist camp. After a debilitating years-long stay in the opposition, the left was splintered and battered. This was five years into the Netanyahu administration; the most widely-disseminated newspaper was Israel Hayom, which functioned as a right-wing outlet, was distributed for free as "neutral," and created an exclusionary agenda. The feeling was one of media silence on the part of the leftist camp. Many leftists, like me, were politically disengaged or frightened, and their voice went almost unheard. This group, Mehazkim, forged a renewed unity among leftists, a desire to restore the political map to a state of equality between the sides, to promote the idea of expressing

other opinions about what was going on in Israel. In the group there was a sense that, **if we organized via the Internet, we could strengthen each other**, give the left a place to express its views, and advance a more balanced Israeli media. Eventually I became the group's administrator. Today, Mehazkim maintains a Facebook page with over a hundred thousand follows, amounting to two million views per month; a TikTok account with over 2.5 million views; and Instagram and Twitter accounts with thousands of followers. We are happy to be the place on the Internet where people fight incitement and racism, the place for advancing social justice and human rights, and the right to live amid a diversity of opinions.

In the wake of Mehazkim's activity, and our attempts to create a strong online community, I began to delve more deeply into the social media world – the new town square. In 2020 I started realizing that the Internet arena isn't run by the right, the left, or even the state, but rather by strong corporations that control what's going on, with an agenda that isn't ideological but rather economic. Social media are interested in an incendiary and violent discourse, because that's

what generates traffic and online presence. I realized that in order to promote a liberal and democratic discourse, and to ensure less racist and violent discourse, I'd have to create a new power balance. I wanted to change the rules of the game. That was during the period of the Balfour protests, and I assembled a group of independent researchers to examine the levels of incitement, conspiracy theories, and violence to which the demonstrators were being subjected. This was how we started the project known as Fake Reporter. A crowdsourced research platform that allows any specific public to participate in the struggle against malicious online activity. I forged relationships with tech people from both the private and the public sectors, and we designed an interface that would be easy for anyone to use. By this means, those who encounter a violent group or discourse can report it, and the research team meticulously reviews and investigates every report. In this way we can protect people who've been abandoned by the state and those in power to the dangers of the Internet, and who are subjected to violence in the virtual space. Violent people profit from the unprotected space of the Internet, and we want to clean the space up, to create a

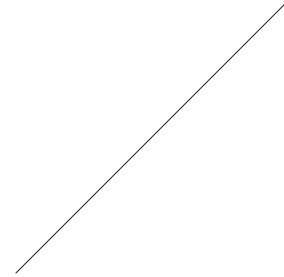
truly free web: not a playing field for those wielding power, but a true platform for a democratic and liberal audience. During Operation Guardian of the Walls, for instance, we exposed over a hundred Telegram groups in which criminals had organized to lynch Arabs. Groups with names like "Death to the Arabs," "Jews Take Vengeance," "Ramle-Lod to War," and many similar ones. There were things we managed to stop in time, and there were others, like the lynch in Bat Yam, that we warned the police about but, unfortunately, in vain. We exposed and closed over a hundred such groups, we took down thousands of violent fake responses, and we exposed six foreign efforts to undermine democracy here. The social media are fertile ground for shallow racist discourse, for conspiracy theories, for violence – and that's where I want to generate change.

It was **Shatil** that provided the support and the resources that made me the activist I am today. Shatil staff did everything possible so that our initiative could happen and become a reality; when I began my efforts, all that existed was a Facebook group. I connected with Mirena, who helped turn the Facebook group into a real organization, with an annual plan, a

budget, and an administrative staff. Together with Shatil, I founded the NGO Mehazkim, and they were the ones who later gave us the tools for growth and development; training in how to fundraise, making connections and encouraging collaboration with similar organizations, and organizing important public initiatives in which I took part as an activist. Shatil is the cushion that absorbs the blows for us, and they maintain a symbolic outlook that I find important –

a flagship organization that promotes the values I fight for: liberalism, openness, democracy, and equality. It takes a lot of courage to support proactive efforts that restore power to the masses, so as to transform the Internet jungle, and society as a whole, into a better place, a place where citizens can be protected and make their voices heard.

2.



**Seeing
the Voices**

Haim Bar Yaacov

a leader of the struggle against homelessness in Be'er Sheva and founder of the Movement for a Dignified Life – to help the victims of mortgages.

I fought my first battle to keep my home as a boy of 11. During summer vacation I arrived from Tunis to the Daled neighborhood of north Be'er Sheva, equipped with broken Hebrew, a small bag, and a lot of anxiety. Just three weeks later, when the school year started, I was sent away. Headhunters were going around to the new immigrants in the neighborhood and telling them that a child who didn't go to yeshiva would become a heretic, fall into bad ways, renounce his Judaism. That didn't leave my parents and me much choice – I went

to a boarding school. Later I ran away from it again and again and again. I thought: maybe I'll go to hell, maybe I don't have a place in the world to come anyway, but at least I'll be spending a little time at home.

After being discharged from the army, I studied at Ben-Gurion University. I joined a program that provided participants with housing in Be'er Sheva's poorer neighborhoods. I turned my apartment into a kind of aid bureau for local residents, who'd come to write letters to the authorities

and to have documents translated. At a certain point, a lot of people were coming for advice and I wanted to serve them tea, coffee; they were old people, after all. I asked the University for a kettle and was told there was no budget for it. What was there a budget for? To host Liz Taylor. She was on the University's board of governors and they wanted to show her what amazing social projects they were doing in the disadvantaged neighborhoods. We convened the residents and decided to keep her from entering. The action made the headlines. On the front page of Maariv it said: "Photographers Chase Liz Taylor but the Poor Neighborhoods Won't Let Her In." The residents didn't have to feel like zoo animals and that was a good thing; but the University threw me out of the program and out of the apartment. I learned that protests come with a price tag, and that there's a practical wisdom of social involvement and making one's voice heard that I hadn't yet mastered.

In the 1990s I wanted to buy an apartment. Those were the days of the aliya from the Soviet Union and I was faced with soaring apartment prices and an inadequate mortgage. I realized that my problem wasn't unique. Some of us from the neighborhoods got

together. Our objective was clear: to find a solution to the housing crisis. We turned to Shatil and founded Young People for Equality (Hebrew acronym: Tzalash). Carlos and Professor Roni Kaufman advised us and we put up a protest tent. Other tents were cropping up around the country at the same time. During our struggle, Amidar contacted us and said, Take an apartment, leave the tent. But we wanted the right to leave the cycle of poverty, and to be rid of the "disadvantaged" label that was attached to public housing at the time. We wanted to buy homes with our own money. As part of our effort, we joined with the Bedouin and put up a common tent. Three months of road blocking, demonstrations, media coverage, visits by Rabin – and, for a while, there was a change in policy. The mortgages became larger and land was allocated to associations of citizens in need of homes. We bought land as an association and folded up the tent.

In the meantime – by now it was 2004 – I had gotten divorced. I left the apartment for my ex and my child and – unrelatedly – suffered an economic collapse. I asked for temporary housing assistance for myself, my second wife,

and our three children, until we could get on our feet. Along with an across-the-board budget cutback, the criteria had been stiffened and the state had sold off public housing apartments. I was told there no way to help me. I was left with no options. Lacking any alternative, I broke into an empty Amidar apartment in the area. One afternoon, 30 days after we'd moved in, I picked up the kids from preschool and they saw their belongings out by the garbage dumpster. Police were in the apartment itself, and we were given an execution order. We turned around and left, with basically nowhere else to go. Our second tent arose from this impasse. **We began as one family, and ended up as 150. One night turned into 9 months.**

We faced physical, emotional, and social challenges in the tent: we were out in the street, in heat and cold, without water or electricity. The group included women and children, and there was anger, frustration, and despair. We positioned ourselves in central Be'er Sheva, in front of the government offices, and I was determined to get results. With guidance from Shira, we built the power of the group; I learned to be a leader who's alternately a gardener,

a producer, and a social worker. While on night watch, Shira and I would plan nonviolent direct actions. In discussions in our improvised living room we thought about how to recruit influential people and intellectuals. Shmulik prepared me for lobbying sessions, and Shira and I provided training to groups and teens, who were completely unaware that there were such things as housing crises or government responsibility.

It was a ticking time bomb and the authorities threatened dismantlement, issued evacuation orders. We used creative ideas and people's anger to generate a crisis that was covered by the media and shook up the Housing Ministry until Minister Herzog intervened and offered solutions. Amidar wanted to sell apartments, and in the end they gave [apartments] to 150 families from the tent. 150 families, Ministry of Housing standards were changed and the tenants' status was improved and we built community power. With **Shatil's** help I learned that a social change effort should be approached in a professional manner; I professionalized in how I communicated messages, I implemented decision-making processes and succeeded in instilling

commitment in the activists. I took a Shatil lobbying course and used the skills I learned to have an impact on policy.

When the struggle had ended, I called the activists together and we founded the Movement for a Dignified Life. Here as well we consulted with Shatil. The association included people whom the effort had transformed into activists, whom we'd taught to take their experience and turn it into a tool for action in order to solve problems. In reality, we prevented hundreds of evictions of people having trouble

making their mortgage payments, and we widened the circle of power. For my part, I leveraged my activism, what I'd learned in the field, into a law career that integrates the social and the personal. It's true that the housing problem hasn't been solved, but I meet friends from the movement and I'm amazed at how they've learned the rules of the democratic game. The struggle sparked an attitudinal change and they're involved in other processes of change.

Marina Zamsky

Founder and director of the Forum for the Families of Immigrants – an association that works for the promotion and accessibility of immigrant rights from a perspective of cultural sensitivity.

It's 1997. The opening day of a learning center for children from Haifa's Ethiopian immigrant community. Unquestionably the most state-of-the-art center in Israel. I'm the host of the gala, the social worker (herself a new immigrant) who conceived and developed the center. Everyone's shown up, the center employees, volunteers, distinguished guests; everyone except ... the children the center is supposed to serve. Not even one child. What an awkward silence ... and questions: What happened? Why didn't they come? I went from house

to house to find out. The answer I got from the community was unanimous: "You opened a community center for children, for us this kind of center is a place for adults. That's where you go to get advice, that's where you ask for help. Children might go there to study and play, but it's our center, the community's center." Some added: "We want to have a key to the center, like you have." This was my first, foundational lesson in cultural sensitivity; **I learned that you can't make assumptions about a given society's or culture's needs,**

desires, or behavior. You can't handle things "top-down", you can't ignore the specific cultural context of each community.

My next lesson came in 1998. I started the first branch of the YEDID organization, in Haifa. This was a new concept in which those advising clients on how to exercise their rights were themselves volunteers who, in the past, had encountered problems with the various institutions. Just as the clients came from different communities, so did the volunteers. And again I found that working effectively in a multicultural environment isn't just a value, but also a form of power.

My next lesson in cultural sensitivity arrived during the Second Lebanon War. During the emergency, immigrant populations became the weak, nonexistent link of the Israeli welfare state. Israel had privatized itself; those who handled the needs of immigrants in the north were various organizations, good people. This weak link had no support networks, nor did it have connections in the right places. In the absence of criteria for access to food, hygiene equipment and toys for the bomb shelters, those with the best connections got the most.

And just-arrived immigrants didn't even get leftovers. There were horror stories of senior citizens who didn't have adult diapers; the trauma units in the north didn't have even a single Russian-speaking psychologist.

At that moment, Shatil staff were the ones who mapped the professional resources available in northern Israel's "Russian" community, all of them women: psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, teachers. What united us was that we both knew the community and were known to the Israeli establishment in our fields of occupation. We realized that our professional voice wouldn't be heard if we didn't organize. Pitchi, Inda, and Lev helped us organize as an association – the Forum for the Families of Immigrants. We discovered that the establishment was eager for a Russian-speaking organization that checked both boxes – that was connected to the community while also understanding the establishment's values and modes of action. We officially joined the steering committee of the coordinating entity in the Prime Minister's Office that dealt with reconstructing the north after the war; local authorities hired our services;

the Schmid Committee consulted with us. It was clear how critical it was to make state services accessible to the immigrant community, and to reduce intercultural gaps.

From the time we united and organized, we could also exemplify the cultural sensitivity necessary to cope with the needs of the immigrant community. The most striking and frightening manifestation of intercultural gaps was the failure of the social services and the removal of children from their homes. That was the hottest topic in the Russian-language media at that time. Families that seemed normative found themselves fighting the removal of their children by the social services. In the Knesset, in the media, and on the street a conflict raged between the social services, which saw themselves as rescue organizations, and the parents, the Russian-speaking Knesset members, and the Russian media. The latter groups couldn't figure out who these women of dubious professional standing (social workers...) were the ones who could decide who was a good enough parent for his children.

And we chose to aim high. We went to the Minister of Welfare and Social Services. We said: Only the Ministry's political cadre can sit the Ministry staff down together with the organizations for a brainstorming session between equals. The then-Minister of Welfare and Social Services, Isaac Herzog, took up the gauntlet. Two wonderful outcomes of that meeting: Firstly, in partnership with the Ministry of Welfare, we launched a national project to make social services accessible to the immigrant community; the project included lengthy training programs in ten welfare bureaus around the country on the topic of cultural sensitivity, and dozens of workshops for immigrants on how to obtain their social service entitlements. Secondly, we created a forum of immigrant organizations alongside the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Welfare, Moti Vinter, which for 3 years discussed culturally sensitive solutions to social problems within the Russian-speaking population. We started as a Russian-speaking group, but representatives of other communities joined us later on.

We developed points of agreement about how the Ministry of Welfare reform regarding immigrants should look. We shocked the Ministry's

upper echelon with more and more individual cases of children being needlessly removed from their homes, removals that could have been prevented if the personnel involved had been in touch with the community organizations, and if they'd been given tools for working with the Russian-speaking community.

Not everyone took a positive view of this situation where a civil society organization from the social periphery was teaching establishment officials how to work with the community, but I never forgot for a moment how my interaction with the Ethiopian community started out, and I knew that the opposition would be followed by the realization that the social workers' toolkit had been incomplete until we entered the field. The Welfare

Ministry is no longer ashamed to say there are gaps. And so our activity on behalf of Russian speakers has also benefited all of the country's culturally distinct communities.

I look upon **Shatil** as a climbing plant: first you go to it with a local issue, then you realize it can help with another issue, and each time you see the organization's height and breadth, whether in in-service training, in guiding coalitions, in fundraising, in individual consulting. Shatil is also like a plant that helps other organizations climb, and for us – to promote, with cultural sensitivity, the rights of all disadvantaged citizens of Israel. Helping immigrants was just the first stage.

Shula Keshet

Mizrahi feminist, spearheads projects in which issues of gender, ethnicity, identity, space, and large-scale exclusion intersect. Director and a founder of the "Ahoti -Movement for Women in Israel."

I was born in Israel, daughter of an Anusei Mashhad family (a crypto-Jewish family of Mashhad, Iran). I grew up and studied in south Tel Aviv, where I still reside and am active. In the course of my activities I meet with many different kinds of women from all over the country, and I've found again and again that participants regard their mothers as models of Mizrahi feminism and female solidarity. I identify with them. Back in the 1950s my grandmother, Hannah Kalti (Yakobov), along with her friend Batsheva Gedalyahu, founded

Beit Halmahot (the "Mothers' House") of the Anusei Mashhad community. Dozens of women volunteers from the community joined them, and together they founded an association, raised funds from community members in Israel and abroad, created an interest-free loan fund for the needy, and purchased three adjacent buildings in the Shabazi neighborhood of south Tel Aviv, where they housed Beit Halmahot. Later, my mother, Mazal Kashi, a nurse, was active in Beit Halmahot and volunteered evenings

in south Tel Aviv, caring for residents in their homes and immunizing them.

In my wide-ranging social activity, I prioritize connecting women, men, and communities. I also connect creative women and men and enterprises of various kinds from Israel's geographic and social periphery. Within the framework of the Ahoti ("My Sister") movement, we've founded civil organizations such as Libi BaMizrah ("My Heart Is in the East"), Koach LaKehila ("Power to the Community"), Lo Nechmadot-Lo Nechmadim, South Tel Aviv Against Expulsion, the protest movement re-closing the Central Bus Station, the Ahoti publishing house, and more.

As a human rights activist, I work to advance long-term public and legal battles connected with shutting down the new Central Bus Station. I advocate for neighborhood renewal, public housing, affordable housing, and the fight against poverty. I and my partners in these efforts are working to promote recognition of residents' housing rights, and to combat the evacuation of Abu Kabir, Givat Amal, Kfar Shalem, HaArgazim, Yafo, and other neighborhoods. This is being done in the framework of Koach

LaKehila, an organization of south Tel Aviv-Jaffa residents, unifying veteran and new populations, asylum seekers, and migrant workers.

We work tirelessly to ensure a better future for the neighborhoods than the one planned for them, and on behalf of veteran residents whose rights are being crushed under the aggressive wheels of gentrification. This includes fighting the expulsion, the effort to uproot people from their homes or to push them out of their neighborhoods, while promoting the rehabilitation of unhoused people and prostitution survivors, and finding appropriate solutions to their needs within the community. **Solidarity and cooperation between the various communities is our guiding principle and the basis for the change that is to come.**

I believe with all my heart, based on personal experience, that real change happens from the bottom up. This is also the outlook of the Ahoti movement. Consistently and with determination, we have succeeded in highlighting the life experience, perspectives, and practical ideas of feminists from communities of color who have broken the monopoly of

white middle- and upper-class women from the "center" of the country. Today they are equal partners in determining the feminist movement's definitions and objectives and its mode of administration. Ahoti has succeeded in creating an alternative feminist space founded on global feminist trends; thus it has become Israel's first diverse feminist movement. As such, Ahoti sees itself as a political home for all women, including women whose communities are subject to various forms of socioeconomic and political oppression, and who view feminism as a comprehensive sociopolitical revolution whose objectives should be not just to break professional glass ceilings – something whose main beneficiaries are women from hegemonic groups – but rather to fight for causes that directly affect everyone's lives.

Shatil was able to provide us with the support we needed, and the organization helped us, for instance, in our work vis-à-vis the media, under the guidance of Shlomit, as part of our South Tel Aviv Against Expulsion effort. Another example: in our endless fight about shutting down the new Central Bus Station, Ella helped and still helps us connect the various arms of this huge struggle. She's a true partner.

That's how a Mizrahi feminist revolution is made. That's how the world is repaired. It's not an easy task; it requires force of will, faith, commitment, solidarity, and a lot of true sisterhood.

Nigist Mengesha

A social activist who promotes the rights of Ethiopians in Israel and around the world. Founder of the Fidel Association (AḥB in Amharic) for education and social integration of Ethiopians.

"My daughter will be the head and not the tail," that's how my father would answer anyone who told him to put aside his investment in my studies and start dealing with what's really important – marrying me off. I grew up in Ethiopia, in a home where education and study were the ideal. My parents sent me to school and later to university at a time when it wasn't standard for Jewish girls and young women to go and study at all. I built up a store of questions and knowledge that would enable me look at the world

and, eventually – to intervene in order to change things.

The first big lesson I learned was when I was a second-year social work student. I arrived in Wollo in northern Ethiopia. A mountainous region, hit by famine and drought: 250,000 dead from heavy famine. Or likely more. Our job was to help the doctors and nurses keep newborn babies alive. News of the disaster had sparked unrest around the country, and King Haile Selassie was supposed to come and visit. On the eve of his visit, government personnel

came and handed out clothes to all the local residents, to cover themselves with. I went around to everyone I could and asked them not to put the clothes on yet. I was afraid the king would think the situation of the locals was better than it actually was. I realized that the authorities don't always care about the good of the citizens.

My next lesson came after I'd already made aliya. I arrived with eleven years' experience as a social worker; I looked for work in my field. People looked at me in amazement and offered me work at an Elite chocolate factory. I realized I had to study further in order to acclimate in Israel. At that time, there was one Ethiopian student in all the country's universities; I was the second. The studies were challenging, partly because I had trouble with Hebrew, but mainly due to loneliness. There were days while I was studying when I didn't speak with anyone from morning till night, an entire school day. Besides the lesson in loneliness, I learned about prejudice and stereotypes and how hard it is to break them down, especially when dealing with veteran populations.

I learned another important lesson while working at **Shatil**, during the

time of Operation Solomon. Ethiopian immigrants arrived in large numbers and there was a serious crisis in the community. Absorption of the aliya hadn't been planned in advance, and emerged as an urgent need. Caravan (trailer) compounds were set up around the country; some of them weren't equipped to meet the immigrants' basic needs, whether for education, transportation, or even a grocery. Most of our work was in organizing the community, providing job training, and teaching knowledge and skills to help the immigrants cope with life in Israel on an everyday basis. We wrote documents in Amharic that detailed and explained their rights. I learned how important it is to develop a leadership that can lead new immigrants from within the community.

As part of my studies at Mandel [Leadership Institute] I became more and more aware of the problems Ethiopian Israeli students have with the education system. The community was concentrated in disadvantaged neighborhoods and suffered from a lack of resources; children attended schools for the underprivileged, in distressed areas, and didn't receive first-rate teachers or financial

resources. The parents were concerned with economic survival; for most, involvement in the schools wasn't an option. There were a few encounters with teachers and principals that I couldn't get out of my head. In one instance, I saw a teacher humiliate an Ethiopian boy before the entire class over some prank he'd pulled. Another time, a school principal referred to a student as "problematic" because he would look down when she spoke with him and would never look her in the eye. I tried to explain the cultural differences to her, but it only irritated her even more – that she needed "Rashi's commentary" [i.e., a reference manual] "with these kids."

More and more cases like these made me understand the importance of placing social-educational mediators for Ethiopian children in the education system. Out of this realization came the Fidel Association (A-B in Amharic) for education and social integration of Ethiopians. The organization's flagship project is the Ethiopian social and educational mediators' program. Their role is to mediate between parents, children, and the school, thereby empowering the community and helping them be partners in solving the pupils'

problems. The mediators' job isn't easy; as immigrants themselves they experienced the difficulties of integration first-hand. Despite this, they've become agents of social change, and have themselves progressed to higher education. They've managed to build a set of support services for pupils, to monitor their scholastic status, to mobilize parents, and to forge productive collaboration within the school. The mediators' program has had a huge impact on the education system, with an emphasis and faith that change can be generated when people join forces from within and outside the community.

The only organization that took up the challenge and assisted the many olim who immigrated to Israel during that period was **Shatil**. They helped us organize the community, provided job training; they gave us knowledge, tools, and professional guidance. Later on, at the point when Fidel was being established, Shatil was involved and advised us on all necessary issues; they helped us lay the organizational infrastructure, build relationships with government ministries, raise funds; they guided us with regard to policy and strategic processes.

Above all, Shatil was a resource for us on any question or problem that came up along the way, and they were a listening ear and a source of support. Shatil prepared the ground for the change that was so necessary for Israel's Ethiopian citizens, enabling us at Fidel to continue nurturing the community and helping it grow.

Fathi Marshood

Consultant and advisor to human rights, women's rights, and social change organizations, in the Palestinian community and in Israel as a whole. Has advanced "another kind of fatherhood" projects. Has developed, strengthened, and managed Shatil's northern branch.

As a teenager, I started becoming active in a more political way with the Communist Party Youth in my village, Mazra'a, especially in the cultural and community spheres. At that time, in the early 1970s, this was forbidden. My father was taken for interrogation due to my actions. He always asked me to keep away from this kind of activity, but I didn't really manage to. The fact is that I got my desire to be in a position to help others, and my pride in such a position, from him, from my father. His difficult life story saw him become a breadwinner at an early age,

and someone who had to devote his life to others. Before his father, my grandfather, was murdered at age 36, he was forced to sign a document that handed over all the family's land. In '48 my father also lost his mother, who was run over by an army vehicle. That year he was conscripted to the side of the Palestinian combatants and imprisoned for three years, until he was pardoned by the British High Commissioner. The heavy price my father paid was part and parcel of the founding of this state and the Hebrew society in it.

As a student at the University of Haifa I was active with the Committee of Arab Students, based on a feeling that students should involve themselves with real life as part of their academic journey; that they should take responsibility for their environment. This principle gains in strength when you belong to a community that suffers discrimination.

For me, the balance between being a citizen and being Palestinian has always seesawed. That may be why one of my greatest sources of pride is that I managed to play a meaningful role in the building of a Palestinian civil society. The fact that I could advise social change organizations that arose within the Arab community, that I could help them grow and have an impact. It was always a combination of the professional and the personal. I had close and trusting relationships with those whom I advised. Organizational consulting is an integral part of my personal life. My work has always been mostly in the social change sphere, and that's a continuation of the same approach, in which the professional side is integrated with the social and personal side.

Gender issues are always very present in my activity. I've worked with the Israel Association of Community Centers on community development in East Jerusalem, and my most meaningful project was that of working with fathers of young children, in the Old City. In the most traditional place, we succeeded in making the father a significant figure in the socialization of the child. Not just the mother. This was a movement that aimed to soften the idea of masculinity. But it was precisely in this context that I encountered the most rigid form of masculinity in the place where we live. The East Jerusalem community center where I worked during the First Intifada was a modest place where preschools and a senior citizens' club operated during the morning hours. Soldiers would come periodically and I wasn't willing for them to enter a building where there were women and children. I blocked them with my body and was arrested six times for this during that period. Each time it happened the community center director would use his connections, and it got as far as Mayor Teddy Kollek, who saw to my release.

There was also a dominant feminist angle to my activity. My involvement as a man advising women didn't go over well at first. On behalf of Shatil I came to a meeting with Palestinian women who wanted to start an organization called Women Against Violence. The idea that a man, and a Palestinian man at that, would tell them what they needed to do, infuriated them. Ayelet Ilani, whom I'd accompanied, asked them to speak with me and then judge. At the end of this three-hour meeting I received for the first time a rare title: a feminist Palestinian man. I continued to be active in this field and to provide consulting services – in the framework of UN Women, the Palestinian Prosecutor's Office, and in the occupied territories. At times I felt a weighty responsibility when women I counseled drew heavy fire for their engagement with issues that are taboo in Arab society, with slogans such as "Woman's body, woman's freedom" and other demands that sparked opposition and attacks. But I've always believed in the theory and practice of participatory and empowering management, and have acted accordingly.

Regarding **Shatil**, it's impossible to bring up one single issue, as I've been

with the organization for 25 years. First in Jerusalem, then as an advisor in the Haifa branch, and then, together with the staff, I developed and managed the northern branch. When Rachel Liel was appointed executive director of Shatil, she persuaded me to go back to school in Boston, believed in me, and gave me all the backing I needed. Along the way, the theory of shared society, which talks about norms and values but also about everyday activity, developed at Shatil. The understanding that we should aspire to an equal distribution of resources, to a shared space where there's partnership between everyone who lives there, and where everyone who lives there feels that he or she belongs, culturally and linguistically. We needed to nurture groups of joint leaders, especially women in senior positions in the academic world and in organizational administration. This infrastructure started in Haifa, and spread afterward. Shatil is an integral part of my identity, and leaving the organization was painful for me. I believe that whatever social entrepreneurship ambitions you may have, the basic requirement is ultimately to find people who share your vision and to work together with them.

Lily Ben Ami

Chairwoman of the Michal Sela Forum, an association that promotes technological and innovative means of preventing violence against women and the murder of women.

If only my younger sister, Michal Sela, had shared what she was going through with me; if only I'd had the knowledge to recognize the situation, to understand it, to save her life. I remember myself, a few hours before the murder, looking deep into Michal's eyes. This was at a women's workshop we'd gone to together that evening. We had to walk around the room, stop in front of someone at random, and look into her eyes. Michal and I stopped in front of each other, and for two minutes we looked into each other eyes. An hour and a half later I lost her. Michal was brutally murdered

in her home by Eliran, her husband and the father of her daughter.

I'd been a social entrepreneur and activist for 15 years when my sister was murdered; I'd founded organizations in the field of formal education, in fair employment, and in teaching social entrepreneurship; I'd advocated for women's fair representation in the Knesset; I'd run in municipal elections and earned four mandates. I never thought I'd be dealing with life and death. That I'd be directly involved in the painful issue of women being murdered.

But then my beloved sister was murdered by her husband, whom we'd known as a pleasant, considerate, and loving person. The first to show up if someone needed help. A person we'd never known to raise his voice, and certainly not to raise his hand against anyone. A sensitive partner to Michal, who was a strong, independent, and liberated woman. There was no suspicion, not the tiniest inkling that something like this could happen. After the murder the tears didn't stop, and the questions didn't leave me alone; what did she go through the year they were married? Why did she keep silent? What did we do wrong? How could it be that I, a socially involved and aware person, saw nothing? How could this have happened to my sister? Was there no way to have picked up on the situation and saved Michal? Today I know there was a way.

The day after the murder, I immediately looked for answers and got to work. This was my way of coping and, eventually, of healing. I spoke with people in the field, with expertise in domestic violence, with government ministers, with women who'd suffered violence in their homes. I discovered that **there's a pattern and that there's a way of**

identifying danger before disaster strikes. I also discovered that this is the only field where there's mortal danger but no means of prevention or prediction. The existing tools are: going to the police, to a social service center or a shelter. These three tools are after-the-fact ones, ones that place the burden on the victim, and they haven't changed in fifty years.

I founded the Michal Sela Forum for the prevention and forecasting of violence through out-of-the-box thinking and technology. We map the warning signs one by one and develop innovative solutions; we promote interdisciplinary collaboration; we bring new players from the worlds of high tech and counterterrorism into the domestic violence sphere; we work to raise awareness and to change the discourse from one of problems and victims to one of power, solutions, and solidarity. We are the special forces [in the war on] domestic violence.

The first project emerged from the depths of pain. I discovered that Michal had Googled "jealous partners." She'd suffered from Eliran's obsessive jealousy. For instance, he'd scolded her for looking at other men while she walked with him in the street; he'd

snooped in her cell phone, read her personal journals, constantly call her cell when she wasn't with him, inquire about whom she was meeting, and more. A senior police officer told me that if Michal had filed a complaint with the police, they'd have asked her to fill out a questionnaire, "Danger Assessment," through which they'd have determined that she was in mortal danger and referred her to a shelter. I was in shock. I asked the policewoman again: "Even without prior physical violence, it would have been possible to know she was in mortal danger?" And the policewoman stated explicitly: "Yes, we have a clear and validated mechanism for this." That is, in order to know she was in danger of her life, she'd have had to go to the police. But Michal didn't go to the police, since who'd go to the police because her partner was jealous? I asked the policewoman whether this questionnaire was accessible to the public on the Internet, and the answer was no. I imagined Michal searching "jealous partner" on Google and finding this questionnaire. That was how i-risk, an online Ministry of Social Affairs questionnaire that screens for intimate partner violence, was born. It's easy to find via Google, and self-deletes after completion.

The questionnaire that could have saved Michal.

From there, the Association developed quickly, the main idea being to enlist the country's finest minds and leading-edge knowledge and technology for the task of saving the lives of women held captive to violence. The target is zero murdered women per year.

From **Shatil** I received dozens of hours of professional support. And with their professional and devoted guidance, we became established as an association with salaried employees, physical offices, an organizational structure, and a systematic budget plan. It's amazing to see the process we went through during our founding year. Organizations like us are like seeds in the ground, out in the field day after day, with hands full of work, with a beating heart committed to social change and tikkun olam. Shatil is like the water and air that allow seeds to sprout. A professional organization that's always there, available, and ready to provide advice and support.

Yossi Ohana

Founder and artistic director of Kehilot Sharot "Communities Sing", an association that promotes just recognition and distributive justice by increasing exposure to PIYUT: liturgical poetry.

I was 6 when I immigrated to Israel, a child of the Berber village of Imziri in Morocco. From Sous Valley to the Holy Land. We – my family and I – rode a crowded bus to a place that, for me, was distant and looked like nothing. Out in the sticks. The bus stopped, and we stayed inside, prisoners by choice. No one got off. Representatives of the local authorities got on, got off, made promises, threats. For eight days we stayed on that bus. In the end, somehow, we alighted, and another bus showed up almost immediately. I followed what was going on with the other bus day after day, with a kind of

child's amazement. For three weeks they holed up in the bus. In the end they took all the passengers for a night in jail, and only then did they give up and leave the bus. I assume prayers were heard from the bus, I assume that on the Shabbatot one could hear piyutim – a musical soundtrack for this social struggle. Among the people there was Rabbi Moshe Peretz, who was the cantor in our synagogue and would someday be part of my journey back to the world of piyut – but that was later.

In the meantime – things unfolded in the "melting pot" education system. I figured out in short order what constituted "culture," and that this thing that was held in such high regard had nothing to do with home, my family, synagogue life, piyut, with my being the son of a musical family from Imziri. The dominant, Western, Israeli culture was dense and demanding and my encounter with it taught me to avoid attention, to limit myself, to hide things, to take off my kippa, to shed markers [of my original culture]. I knew there was something called culture, and that it didn't belong to me. What did belong to me? Vocational school and endless failures.

In the meantime – the army draft. Due to a clerical error, I was allowed to attend an officers' course and was assigned to Unit 8200 as an intelligence officer and Israeli Air Force representative. That was unusual, as most of the people there were ones who had been dismissed from the pilot's course. At first my constant and familiar feeling was that I couldn't speak their language, that I wasn't really a part of their culture. Later, I learned and made up the information I'd lacked. I became bilingual. As discharge date approached, the word

"university" was on everyone's lips; I'm not sure I'd even known the term before then.

The pre-academic mechina was a major turning point for me, and provided much more than matriculation make-up studies. For the first time in my life, I took a course on the history of Mizrahi Jews, and I wrote a research paper on the Wadi Salib uprising. First stirrings of awareness. Afterward I went on to university, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, research assistant and graduate teaching assistant. I learned quite a bit about multiculturalism and felt that there was finally a way to conceptualize the erasure I'd experienced. During my Master's degree studies I took on the role of programming manager for Beit Hillel at Hebrew University, an organization that deals with pluralistic identity and that offers students the opportunity to take part in various programs and events. I organized and arranged quite a few events pertaining to Mizrahi culture, based on an outlook that culture is the key to social repair. The idea was that if you don't know a particular culture, it's easier for you to exclude it, to relegate it to a low-status track, to suppress it. Later I also worked at the Berkeley

Beit Hillel. Students there had heard about some of the things I'd done in Israel with regard to Mizrahi culture, and contacted me. I was still in shock in the new country, but even more in shock that they wanted me to teach them piyutim. I didn't understand why young Americans were interested in piyutim, but there was a guy there named John Ehrlich who'd lived in Israel for a few years, and as someone coming from abroad he was much more open than we were to what we have here at home. In Nachlaot he was introduced to the various piyut traditions, learned to play the oud, and he and his group of friends wanted to form a piyut band. A piyut band? Through them I realized: piyut is something alive and well that brings people together.

Later, when I returned to Israel, I wanted to keep the effort alive and we started Kehilot Sharot. An organization that teaches piyutim to groups from Yeruham to Haifa. It's a cultural rescue project, but unique not for being archival, as when the community elders are recorded for the National Library – which is also important; here the idea is one of living people, of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, secular and religious, sitting within "singing

communities." We revive cultures that are going extinct, or that exist in miniature within synagogues.

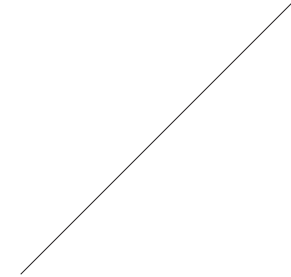
We've had some major achievements. In terms of women's status in the piyut world, we've sparked a real transformation, there are women who come to our groups and learn piyutim from yeshiva students, there are paytaniyot – female piyut composers. We've succeeded in conveying piyut as an organic whole composed of music, texts, and community feeling at the student and teacher level. We've managed to completely change society's attitude toward piyut. We've given teachers in-depth training in how to teach the texts, in understanding the sources and poetic capabilities. The piyut website we created, which was our organizational website, has become a site belonging to the National Library, one of their databases. We started out by doing a conference, with the greatest paytanim all sitting together in one room. To us, success is the fact that the status of piyut culture is now so high that it's become impossible to gather these very busy people together in a single time and place. Despite all these successes, I feel

there's still more work to do until the social-cultural repair is complete.

For me, the relationship with **Shatil** goes back many years. Even before Kehilot Sharot was founded, I worked at Shatil as a network coordinator, so when I started Kehilot Sharot it was the most natural thing for me to come and consult there and with them. At a certain point we needed help with fundraising, Shatil's advisor Kalela gave our staff a fundraising course on Fridays over several months. When we needed intra-organizational

work, Carlos helped us map our organization's internal forces. And when we occasionally experienced internal or external crises, Carlos and the team were there for us. Shatil identified something groundbreaking in our work, based on the idea that preserving traditions boosts the presence of Mizrahi culture, which is fighting for its place in Israeli discourse and public life. Shatil helped us get stronger so we could keep sending out branches of piyut to different parts of Israeli society, and to promote justice.

3.



The Geography of Inequality

Najma Abbas

Head nurse and member of the Shefa-Amr City Council, works to promote equal and fair healthcare policy in the framework of the Citizens' Forum for the Promotion of Health in the Galilee.

We got dressed nicely, combed our hair, stood in the living room, and smiled. As they did every year, my parents had hired a photographer to come to our home in Shefa-Amr and take pictures of us. It took a while until we realized why my parents were so insistent on the photography ritual: it turned out that I'd had a sister and a brother, twins, who'd died suddenly, within a short time, as six-month-old babies. Diarrhea, vomiting, and then totally-sudden death. My parents had no pictures of them, so after those horrible losses they made sure to document us regularly, so that we, too,

wouldn't suddenly disappear on them. Maybe a photographer should have been sent more often to our other relatives and to our neighbors, since there was so much illness around me all the time – parents, acquaintances, friends. So much loss. Ultimately, to become a public health nurse in the Arab sector was, for me, a choice but also a destiny from which it would have been hard to flee.

As a nurse, I've seen pregnant women over the years who've monitored their babies' development with vigilance and awe, and postpartum women who've

recovered physically and emotionally while also caring for a totally helpless creature. I've examined children and adults coming to be vaccinated – or refusing vaccination. With dismay I've observed ever-rising obesity rates, passive and active smoking and their consequences; I've watched the status of one person deteriorate while that of another improved. As a public health nurse, I've kept a map of my community's problematic health status. **It was painful to realize that some, and perhaps even most, of the cases coming to us could have ended otherwise – had there been awareness or meaningful preventive-medicine measures.** Such processes are lacking in the Arab sector.

For this reason, I decided to run for city council in the 2013 elections, and to change attitudes toward healthcare needs in the community. I managed my own campaign, explaining the needs to the best of my ability, from my perspective as a nurse. And in fact, for the first time in the history of Shefa-Amr, a woman – me – made it to second place on a list running in the elections! In retrospect, my joy was premature. I turned out to be four votes short of entering the city council

(the soldier votes...) For one minute I was in, the next I was out. And so, after days of celebrating the election of the first woman ever to the Shefa-Amr city council, I realized I'd failed. As though those four missing votes were fate, willing me not to become a public figure.

And then I saw **Shatil's** announcement of a course for healthcare leaders, and I signed up. Maybe change was still possible? I decided that, without being in the city council, I'd promote health status change through civil society. In the course we learned about the sector's grave health status – and also about the social and political reasons that cause us, as a periphery, as Arabs, to live less long and also less well (by the way, to this day when I meet women and men with a dream of changing something in the health sphere – and after COVID there's no need to explain that health is everything – I first refer them to Shatil's Citizens' Forum. As far as I'm concerned – that's always the first step).

As part of the course, I founded a health committee in Shefa-Amr, and later I joined the steering committee of the conference of the Citizens' Forum for the Promotion of Health

in the Galilee that was being hosted in Shefa-Amr – for the first time in an Arab city.

The morning of the conference, in early April 2016, with impossible timing – MK Smotrich announced that he's in favor of segregating women in hospital maternity wards. What we were planning to say wasn't important, the situation forced us to tell Smotrich what we thought of his proposal. Jewish and Arab mayors condemned him, and the director of Shatil and the general director of the Galilee Society, and I as well, as host of the event – but of course we were all waiting to see what Professor Itamar Grotto, the Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Health, would say. His harsh words indicated to us that the Health Ministry wouldn't aid or abet this racist policy, either. Word of the Health Ministry's uncompromising stand went out from Shefa-Amr to all of the country's media outlets. With the help of Shatil's Media

Department, the health status of the Arab sector gained national exposure.

In the 2018 local elections I took another step forward – no longer as a woman candidate on a male list, but as the leader of a women's list that succeeded this time in entering the council on its own. Shefa-Amr has become part of the Ministry of Health's Healthy City! Program. Formerly, when I'd talk about the need for a health department, they'd tell me (making a Hebrew pun): "There's already a sanitation department!" Today, everyone in the city understands what health is and what narrowing gaps is, and also about how female power advances policy. The municipality has pulled out its wallet and helped with programs to reduce smoking and obesity, and [to promote a] healthy lifestyle. Those working in the field know that this can't be taken for granted, but they also know how much we have left to do.

Yohan Atlan

Founder and CEO of the Negev Council: a multi sectoral umbrella organization that promotes a civic agenda that matches the needs and aspirations of residents of the Negev.

2007: The great student demonstration. Hundreds of young people chanting: "No brain, no pain!" And: "Not on our backs!" They're protesting the government's plan to raise tuition for the next academic year, and to slash the higher education budget. I was a Master's student in philosophy at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev; my tuition certainly bothered me, but I didn't identify with the demonstration. I knew the tuition hike was meant to increase the number of scholarships for low-income students. The protestors were shouting: "Fight for

education!" and "Done being invisible!" and also: "Olmert – resign!" – and I thought about all the people I'd met in my student jobs, people from the Negev, the local population. Adversity and privation at a totally different level. People who really need those scholarships. I went up to the podium. A moment of silence. I worked up the courage to approach the microphone and simply said: "We're a month and a half into the strike. Whoever's sick of going to the pub or the pool can join us and volunteer at the Ethiopian absorption center. We'll be leaving

from the University lawn tomorrow at nine. You're all invited." And I went back down. The next morning, when I got there with a friend, we didn't know who of all the people there had come to volunteer, and who'd ended up there by mistake. We started asking around and discovered that everyone there, 350 students, everyone wanted to come. That's how we started.

We continued volunteering in neighborhoods around the city for the next two years. Of the masses who came that first time, a group of 12 students formed who kept coming and even increased and upgraded the activity. As part of a fundraising effort, we met with JDC-Israel, who invited us to launch a social involvement and municipal leadership framework in Dimona. Later, I went on to coordinate this sphere of activity in the entire area, which introduced me to the big challenges of the Negev.

A group of young Jews and Bedouins from urban and rural places throughout the Negev, we met in order to work together to address issues of burning interest to young people in the area, and to improve residents' quality of life. **We saw the Negev as a region that has different**

communities in it, with different needs but also a shared desire to grow and thrive together.

During this period there were discussions about the construction of a new international airport that was planned for Megiddo in the Jezreel Valley. Jezreel residents opposed the project for their own reasons, and we realized there was a big latent opportunity here for us – to build an airport in the Negev and to develop tens of thousands of new jobs. Our first action was in front of the Nevatim Air Force base; we all stood on our heads together dressed as David Ben-Gurion. The amusing image made it to the media, and that was a very promising moment. But the answer we got almost immediately was: "Construction of an airport at Nevatim is impossible, and dangerous to state security." The environmental organizations were actually in favor, the Negev local authorities were interested, and the feeling was that there was no real reason for the categorical refusal, and that the voice of the Negev wasn't reaching the higher echelons. Decisions on the Negev weren't going through the people of the Negev, they were being made in the corridors [of power] in

Jerusalem, far from the people living the reality of the south. We came to the realization that in order to get things moving we'd have to unite as a larger and broader force. To create a Negev coalition that would say: The Negev has an opinion!

At the same time, the local authority heads and the social organizations were coming to the same realization, and so we gathered together – young people, authority heads, representatives of organizations active in the Negev – and from within the Negev we founded the strongest lobby the region ever had: the Negev Council. A non-partisan organization encompassing the region's huge variety of communities and sectors, in order to take action and advance major issues within the consensus. Together with Avi of **Shatil**, we wrote the Negev Council's founding document, which still guides our efforts.

One of our main areas of activity is that of promoting health in the Negev. In 2017 we succeeded in getting an allocation of hundreds of millions of shekels, and an expansion of Soroka Medical Center; we also got a joint Supreme Court ruling on the establishment of another hospital in

the Negev. These were decisions that had already been made but left in limbo, and if we hadn't taken action, the money would apparently have disappeared in favor of other goals, not in the Negev but in the center of the country. We're partners in the health coalition founded and co-led by Shatil, and we're on the executive committee. Shatil moderates our meetings in all of the healthcare struggles, they lend a hand with planning and strategy, and they also make contacts for us that we didn't make ourselves; they teach us how to involve the right people and organizations in any issue, how to network in order for us to work together for the good of the Negev.

Tovi Fenster

Professor of geography and urban planning in Tel Aviv University's Department of Geography and the Human Environment, founder and head of PECLAB - Planning for the Environment with Communities, founder and first chair of Bimkom - Planners for Planning Rights, an organization that works to strengthen the connection between the planning systems and human rights via professional research tools.

In 1982 it was decided to move Nevatim Airbase from the Sinai to the Negev, following the peace treaty with Egypt and the evacuation of Israel's airports from the Sinai. The measure entailed evacuating Bedouin residents from the Tel Malhata area. Same old story, Jews removing Arabs and taking their land. But this time, Prime Minister Begin, in the euphoric spirit of those times, declared that nothing would be done by force. As a geographer working with Tahal Consulting Engineers, I served in this unusual administrative unit that negotiated with representatives

of the Bedouin themselves. In reality, difficulties arose and it took many years of struggle, but a sincere attempt was made to involve the residents in the process. The exceptional character of the Nevatim story is a good way to understand a fundamental problem with Israeli planning: there is no tradition here of public participation. Citizens are brought into the process only at the objection stage. Why not take their views into consideration from the planning stage? When an area is developed, this generally spells disaster for the veteran population.

It's a devastating absurdity: often, in the name of the future, with no regard for cultural, gender, or political sensitivities, present residents are looked upon as the history of the place where they reside.

Bimkom exists specifically to rectify this situation, using professional research tools. Both discourse and efforts on the ground. The nonprofit is active in three spheres, which it connects: the planning establishment and the planner, the communities (especially disadvantaged communities affected by planning), and human rights organizations. Architecture is important, but there are many other things to consider: infrastructures also need to be laid with social, health, educational, and economic issues in mind. It isn't just a matter of physical, technical, or design issues. These fields can't all be managed by just one single professional. The gender issue, for instance. Feminine identity is very dominant in the public realm – not only in traditional societies such as that of Ethiopian immigrants, who were deposited in a reality that didn't take modesty into account. Even in the most modern societies, a woman planning her route home will consider

things that are less relevant for men – safety in open spaces, lighting in the public realm.

Change takes time. It's a matter of basic and higher education, knowledge of economic trends that influence decisions. For example, there's a balance of power between the municipalities and the developers. A municipality can come and tell a developer "If you want to build here, make sure to include public spaces." But I know of no municipality that comes to a developer and tells him "The condition for a building permit is that citizens be involved at the planning stage." Regarding education – I facilitate a project at the University called Planning, Housing, and Justice in the Public Realm, whose purpose is to examine issues of social and spatial justice via projects carried out with community participation. A few years ago, I went to the house on Yafet Street where my family was placed when they immigrated to Israel, and the concept "Arab house" reopened for me, filling with an actuality that had been lacking: For the first time in my life, I talked about it with my mother; she said she'd felt bad about the way they'd been given a house that had belonged to someone else. **Suddenly**

the methodology I'd been working with for many years merged with my personal story, and this "delay"

says a lot about the efficacy of Israel's educational repression mechanism. I embarked on a search for the original Palestinian owners of my grandfather's and grandmother's home, and found myself, in the end, just across the road. Another time, a student with this project told me: "The encounter with this old Arab woman transformed me, changed the entire way I perceive things. She reminded me of my grandmother. "A person – geographer/architect/planner – who definitely could be expected to have an impact on the public realm, and for the first time in his life met Arabs and spoke with them.

Shatil played a critical role in the founding of Bimkom, in that the idea we had was able to become something concrete. They helped us

at every stage, from drafting our plan and strategy, through the practical aspects of founding a nonprofit and the organizational steps taken after its establishment. I remember that we met with the late Alona Vardi and with Carlos at 7:30 in the morning at Café Aroma on Hillel Street, and five days later an application to register a nonprofit had already been submitted. They told us whom to contact and what to do. The founding was a peak moment for me, on a very long journey. The organization has achievements to its credit, added to all kinds of seeds I scattered along the way that I didn't know when or how they'd sprout, like students who became key urban planning figures and who are promoting awareness of human rights in various places.

Vivian Silver

Works to promote equality between genders and sectors as a basis for a shared society. Former CEO of the AJEEC-Negev Institute. Currently, among other things, active in 'Women Wage Peace'.

In late April 1970, on the day I completed my Bachelor's degree in Canada, I moved to New York. That was the day the United States invaded Cambodia. A few days later, 4 students were shot at Kent State University in Ohio, which sparked and intensified the demonstrations against the Vietnam War. I was drawn to the feminist movement, and was also part of a group active in a radical Zionist movement. On the one hand, we were actively opposing the Vietnam War; on the other hand, we were organizing an aliya garin – a small

group preparing to immigrate to Israel. This combination of activities drove Israel's then-ambassador to the US, Yitzhak Rabin, crazy. It also bothered the then-prime minister of Israel, Golda Meir, who met with us during one of her trips to the US. With the help of the aliya shlichim who were guiding us, we managed to withstand their displeasure, and a short time after the Yom Kippur War we wound down our lives in New York and immigrated to Israel with a Habonim garin, to reestablish

Kibbutz Gezer and embark on a life of cooperative effort and equality.

Most of us didn't know what work tools looked like or what to do with them, and our acclimation was slow.

I served as kibbutz secretary and in this capacity participated regularly in meetings of the kibbutz movement. In all of the committee sessions, at all of the meetings, there were usually only men. Out of all of the kibbutzim of the United Kibbutz Movement, there were only 7 women secretaries. I realized that, despite ideal conditions for gender equality, women with degrees in chemistry and biology were mostly being assigned to the service divisions (kitchen, laundry, childcare), just because they were women. I thought: What can I do so that women will fight the gender-based division of labor on the kibbutz? I researched the topic, edited a book on inequality between the sexes on the kibbutzim, and founded the Department for Promoting Gender Equality in the kibbutz movement. We held empowerment workshops for kibbutz women, and I was invited to speak at kibbutzim all over the country. They regarded me as a crazy American with a heavy accent,

a bra-burner, and I came in for a fair amount of ridicule. Twenty years later, in a different context, a woman came to me and told me that her exposure to my activity had given her the courage to demand a job at her kibbutz that was commensurate with her training and skills, rather than her gender. **Social change outcomes always appear slowly, over time, like bulbs that have to mature in the soil before the plant can grow upward and start blooming.**

In 1990 we moved to the western Negev, to Kibbutz Be'eri, and my work in equality promotion took on a new form. A few years later, I served as CEO of the Negev Institute for Peace and Development Strategies, which had been founded by Dr. Yehuda Paz. At that time we held courses in Gaza and the West Bank on the role of civil society in promoting peace and sustainable development. We also offered training in how to promote cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, such as joint workshops for Palestinian teens from Gaza and teens from the Tzofim (Hebrew Scouts) movement. I'd travel regularly to Gaza to meet with our partners; today it sounds surreal, but in those years Israeli parents would agree to

let their children meet with young people from Gaza so they could get to know each other and develop Jewish-Palestinian initiatives.

After a few years, Amal Elsanah-Alh'jooj joined us with the idea of founding AJECC - the Arab Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation as part of the Negev Institute. Our work with the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank had underscored the need to address the challenges of the Negev within a framework of building relationships and bridges between the Jewish community and the Negev's Arab-Bedouin population. When we talk about Arab-Jewish partnership, the tendency is to look at mixed cities or the Palestinian Authority, but this makes us overlook an entire sector constituting 30% of the Negev's population - a sector about which we barely know anything beyond stereotypes. AJECC sparked a revolution, as it constituted an Arab-Jewish partnership that emerged in the midst of the intifada, when trust between the populations was at its lowest. Within a short time, Amal and I had become the organization's co-CEOs.

One of AJECC-Negev Institute's first projects to benefit from Shatil's guidance and counsel was a program to develop volunteering within the Bedouin population. Dvorka Oreg, **Shatil's** manager in Be'er-Sheva at the time, worked closely with us to plan the initiative. The program we developed together offered a year of volunteering by Bedouins for Bedouins, as well as a joint track for Bedouin Arabs and Jews from the Tzofim movement. We presented our model to the government, but received no support. We didn't give up; we raised funds from donors and foundations around the world, and founded the Volunteer Tent in Be'er-Sheva, which recruited between 1000 and 1200 volunteers per year. The government recently adopted the AJECC-Negev Institute model, and will soon start budgeting it for national deployment. The project looks at Bedouin youth in a different way - instead of coming and developing projects to help the local populations without involving them, or pressuring young men and women to join Israel's National Service, it builds the community by means of the community itself. The skills acquired by the young project participants help them build their careers and their futures.

Amal Elsana-Alh'jooj

Founding co-chair of AJEEC-NISPED: Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation and Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development, former board member of the New Israel Fund.

When I was five years old, I was given my first job, as a shepherd: a small girl in a great desert, 30-40 sheep and a vast sky above us. As a shepherd, I had a lot of freedom to decide where to take the sheep and what to think and dream about while I was with them. On the other hand, I bore the weighty responsibility of bringing them all home safe and sound. Sheep, after all, were part of our family's livelihood. I learned to make decisions, to rely on myself, to be responsible. Jackals, weather damage, pits and rocks: the open desert space

also posed dangers, and I had to stay alert – to simultaneously take care and take charge.

From the pasture area I could see Lakiya – my home – and the nearby Jewish town. I could perceive the differences in visibility between these localities, and the differing treatment they received from the authorities. **I realized what it is to be an invisible citizen** and returned home with questions. My grandmother talked to me about politics from a very early age: about what had happened in

'48, about family members' political activity on behalf of the Bedouin community. I asked my grandmother about the capable women around me who were illiterate because they didn't have a school near home. At a very young age I understood what it means to navigate within and between two power systems – to be a woman in a masculine society, and to be a Palestinian in a Jewish state. I asked hard questions and got answers that filled me with anger. One day, my grandmother told me: "If you keep your anger within, it will consume you; learn to use it to deal with the source of the anger and to change things."

That's what I did. At age 14 I developed and taught a literacy course to women in Lakiya. While I was developing the course, I wasn't thinking about a strategic plan; I was working from instinct, from the anger. I saw myself – a literate teenaged girl – as a resource. I felt that the course gave me the right to stand before women and teach them; it entitled me to their respect and esteem. From this experience I learned how important it is to communicate as an equal, in an open and respectful way. Within three years the project had expanded: theatrical performances, summer camps, more

language courses; I founded an informal committee for the women of Lakiya, and recruited more women to run the projects, since my two hands and two feet were already not enough. I also raised funds for the projects, with the help of Sultan Abu Obaid, who was managing the Sons of Lakiya organization at the time, and who would later become head of the Negev branch of **Shatil**.

A few years later, by then a student, I had the opportunity to expand the range of activity. Dvorka of Shatil proposed that she and I seek out groups of women in the unrecognized villages and help them organize, per the Lakiya model. And we actually did it. We created dozens of groups that dealt with employment, education, language, health. This experience taught me that the majority can and should learn from the minority, that the minority better understands itself and the situation on the ground, and contains within itself the solutions that should be strengthened and nurtured. In accordance with this principle, I built AJEEC, which is founded on the idea of minority empowerment and achieving equality as the basis for Arab-Jewish partnership. I believe that in order to free a population from the cycle

of victimhood, it needs to be given the reins of power and leadership; at the same time, the majority has to be taught what it means to belong to a minority group in Israel.

The tools Dvorka brought with her later helped me organize and promote the social effort I spearheaded: strategic planning and work plans, building communication channels and learning about the work methods of local authorities. These capabilities were critical for advancing initiatives with impact on policy and the way it is implemented. For example, in 2005 the Daily Meal or "Hot Lunch" Law was passed. To me it was clear that a change in legislation alone wouldn't bring about real change, and that it was necessary to ensure a constructive form of implementation. The town of Hura was chosen as a pilot program for implementing the law, and catering from Gush Etzion was initially brought in to provide food to the schools. I saw that the food was being thrown out and that the students weren't enjoying it. This immediately brought to mind that 80% of the women of

Hura were unemployed, and who if not they were entitled to employment when they could obviously cook food for their children. We founded an enterprise, and until the coronavirus it was indeed supplying over 10,000 meals to schools in Hura and the nearby localities, and was recognized as one of Israel's most successful social initiatives.

The Negev is a place with many challenges, but also with potential and a lot of desire to grow. The ability to organize and lead initiatives is what causes people to look upon their struggle as a common one, and to see themselves as people with rights who are responsible for their future, and as having the ability to build that future. This is even more true for Bedouin women, who need to prove their capabilities twice over – once as women in a patriarchal space, and again as citizens in a Jewish state.

Nadia Tatarenko

Founder of Immigrants for Successful Absorption – a nonprofit that since 1997, has been engaged in supporting the integration and successful settlement of immigrants in the Negev.

It was definitely a moment: I stood before a map of the world and looked for Israel with a magnifying glass. I was in Kharkiv, in the Jewish Agency office, with all the paperwork. The year was 1990. I looked at the map and it took me a while to find it, I thought: this country's so small, Israel, how will we all manage to get in? How's it going to work? At the meeting with the Jewish Agency representatives, people around me were asking: "How much does a pair of shoes cost in Israel?" or: "Should we bring our grandmother's lamp?" – as though they were going

on a trip, a visit. I, who was an engineer and part of whose training had been to come up with complication and solution scenarios, had one main question: how is it even possible?

We arrived in Israel, in Be'er-Sheva. Fifteen months later, I went like everyone else to the National Insurance Institute to sign a form. As usual, there was a 100-meter line; every action, every question, authorization, or signature required half a day, and even then chances were fairly high that they wouldn't understand what you

needed due to the language barrier. And I really did sit there for half a day, looking around me; **I saw that people would talk a little, explain things with their hands, do whatever they could, both the olim and the staff – but still frustration was high.** When my turn came I told the employee, who was very courteous and service-oriented: "You know everyone leaves here and cries in the hall? They don't understand what they're signing." She said: "I'm doing what I know how," and added, "What more do you think can be done?" I offered to mediate between the employee and the olim. They felt more secure talking with me in Russian, and I slowly gained a better understanding of Hebrew, of what the various forms said, and how to meet the needs, shorten the lines, and lower the frustration level. I came for a moment and stayed on for months as a volunteer. Afterward, via the Russian press, I made information accessible about rights and obligations, based on what I'd learned at the National Insurance Institute. This was a tremendous platform for understanding the needs of Negev olim.

At the organization we ultimately founded – Immigrants for Successful

Absorption – we worked endlessly to meet those needs. First and foremost, [we created] a Guidance and Aid Center that assisted hundreds of families over the course of 20 years (absorption services, National Insurance, housing, the municipality, banks, etc.). And also: a night school; summer and holiday camps with enrichment programs and subsidies for children from needy families; fitness centers that produced international athletes; theaters. All based on the needs of the moment, problems and possibilities. We gave a "head start" to everything we could.

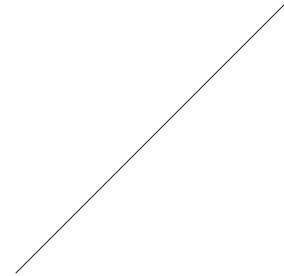
An example of an exceptional and ongoing need could be seen in Be'er-Sheva's Nahal Beka neighborhood, which started out as Israel's biggest trailer park and evolved into a lightweight construction compound for elderly new immigrants, unmarried people, single-parent families who were sent there from all over the country. But the buildings collapsed; the American-style quick housing solution proved unsuitable for the Israeli climate. There were termite and rodent infestations, there were groundwater surges that caused the houses to sink; at a certain point five streets started falling. Five streets! It feels like a symbol of the state of

aliya at the time. Sinking in mud. Falling apart. As a nonprofit, we took charge of the situation and didn't let up. We involved the residents, Amidar (the public housing company), the media, the local councils, the Knesset, the Ministry of Absorption and the Ministry of Housing – and we managed to get to a situation where massive renovations were executed throughout the neighborhood. For my part, I prefer to think that this is how Nahal Beka, as a neighborhood, now symbolizes aliya: with a voice, cooperating, building.

I knew – from my heart, from our shared experience, from what I'd learned at the National Insurance Institute – what to do for of my community. How to do it – I was taught at **Shatil**. Inda, who ran Shatil's Russian Street project, met with me while I was volunteering on behalf of single-parent families, and told me: "You have very great potential. You're strong. They'll work with you. You'll found your own organization." I didn't see it, but Inda made it clear to me. As I got more and more requests from Negev olim who weren't single parents but nevertheless needed help, I really did found that organization. We started out with nothing,

then Shatil let us use their office, computers, and fax; they helped with translations, with submitting projects to foundations, they taught us how to create partnerships. That was how we mobilized local and national Amidar for all the projects and, in particular, to address the needs of Nahal Beka, and the regional council. Or something that was critical for us – Knesset activity. We learned how to write to ministers and Knesset members, whom and how many to send to (even what their addresses were), how to prepare for a Knesset committee meeting, what to say. Shmulik David worked very closely with us all along the way. When Herzog was Minister of Construction and Housing and we sat together at a Knesset committee meeting on Nahal Beka, he interrupted suddenly as I was speaking, and said: "You all should know, this is the woman who started a housing revolution in the Knesset." But I know that no revolution, no ongoing civic change, can be generated alone. We created our revolution with Shatil.

4.



Community: Under Cons- truction

Awad Abu Freih

An academic, social activist and one of the founders of the Negev Education Coalition.

In the unrecognized village where I was born, al-Araqib, there was no school. I started first grade only at age 8, together with my 6-year-old younger brother and my 10-year-old older brother. The three of us attended the same class; we rode together on a donkey and traveled 10 km to get to the school in El Huzaiyil (now Rahat). Along the way, we'd see yellow school buses transporting pupils from the nearby Jewish localities, but until I reached university I didn't know what those buses were for – that there are other ways of getting to school than by donkey.

There were other huge gaps – linguistic, cultural, economic – that I had to close as I progressed from the small, resource-poor village school to completing a doctorate in chemistry at the Technion. I returned to the Negev as a statistical anomaly, a miracle – an educated Bedouin. I thought: what would my life look like had a school not opened just at that time? If I hadn't had that teacher who gave me an enrichment book to read because he saw I was interested? I thought: little Awad suffered greatly, but there were no other little "Awads" suffering as he did. **I decided that I'd act to reduce**

these disparities, so that a Bedouin with higher education wouldn't be a "standard deviation," an exception, but rather the norm. I also decided that Dr. Awad, as a Bedouin academic, wouldn't allow himself to remain in the ivory tower, far from the society to which he belongs, and from activity within it.

In 1995 we founded the Al-Khwarizmi association, which united Negev-based academics; soon after, we established the Negev Education Coalition. We realized that in order to give Bedouin children the conditions for academic success, the efforts of one community leader or other wouldn't suffice; a common effort was required. We worked in two directions. One was internal, oriented toward the community: we created parent committees to fight for the quality of education in each school, and to persuade parents to send their children, especially the girls, to school. The other direction was focused outward, mainly toward the government, but also toward public opinion, the media, and Knesset members: the aim was for them to see what children in Herzliya get from the state, and what Bedouin children in the Negev receive. At that

time, eligibility for the matriculation certificate was 5.9%. Sixteen Bedouin schools weren't connected to the electrical grid; many schools had no access roads, and were closed on rainy days. There were almost no job slots for truant officers or educational psychologists, along with many other unacceptable injustices.

We met with MKs on the right and the on left, Jews and Arabs. We arranged the submission of dozens of parliamentary questions. Afterward, we turned to the courts. We filed 20 Supreme Court petitions and pre-petitions. We were aided by legal experts, law clinics – Adv. Dori Spivak, who would later be appointed vice president of the Regional Labor Court in Tel Aviv, represented us. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel put Adv. Dana Alexander at our disposal. The Reform Center for Religion and State also assisted greatly with administrative petitions. Arab attorneys such as Durgham Saif and others put their skills at our disposal as well.

In one round of deliberations, Justice Aharon Barak said (and his statement was later quoted in a lengthy article in Yedioth Ahronoth) that he didn't

believe that in our day there were schools that weren't connected to the electrical grid. Generators had been brought to the schools, but it turned out that the schools were entirely lacking in electrical infrastructures, and that it was necessary to install switches, to wire light points, etc. We also filed Supreme Court petitions regarding the construction of schools and preschools, the construction of libraries, job slots for educational psychologists, school nurses, teachers, etc. Another petition dealt with school access roads that hadn't been paved. In all of these cases we racked up achievements – and the budgets grew.

I met with every Minister of Education – Amnon Rubenstein, Shulamit Aloni, Yossi Sarid, Yuli Tamir – but in particular I recall my meeting with Zevulun Hammer, which occasioned a major breakthrough. He was a kippah-wearing member of the National Religious Party, and we feared that the meeting would come to nothing. We sat in the waiting room of his office, a group of academics, women and men. Suddenly he entered, and asked "Where are the Bedouins? I'm supposed to be meeting with Bedouins," adding: "You don't look Bedouin." He'd assumed he'd be

meeting people in traditional garb. After overcoming his momentary embarrassment, he asked, "What do you want?" We told him: "We don't want anything, only that you appoint a review committee that will tell the truth about the state of education in the Negev, as we're certain that the Negev officials aren't telling you the whole truth." He said he'd never heard such a thing in his life, and summoned his assistant, Avraham Moalem, and afterward Dr. Yaakov Katz, and asked them to study the issue and write an exhaustive report. Both of them saw that we had knowledge and abilities, and listened to the arguments and the information we presented, and collected them in a document known as the Katz Report. 90% of it consisted of things we'd told them. This review committee started a revolution in education in the Negev. I emphasize – nothing less than a revolution. I can say that ten years after the founding of the Coalition, the situation had completely changed – today every school is connected to the electrical grid, and the percentage of those eligible for the matriculation certificate has increased six-fold!

Now we need to proceed to the next stage of the revolution: the rise in

the matriculation eligibility rate has halted, and we're still hovering at 36%. There are places in Israel that reach 90%. Where are the 60% of Bedouin pupils who aren't eligible? Where do they leak out? We have the ability – there are engineers, physicians and practitioners of other academic professions – that's clear. Now we need to work on persistence, the quality of the matriculation certificate, occupational guidance toward the academic and employment worlds, and dropout reduction, especially among boys.

Shatil was a big part of this revolution. In terms of networking and resource-pooling, for instance, we knew we needed legal advice and Shatil staff found NGOs that were willing to help and made the connections for us. In terms of a place to conduct our activities – technically, a meeting

space – we worked in Shatil's offices. In terms of resources – we received support from Shatil and the NIF. In terms of how to manage a coalition, how to create partnerships between the various parties – this also we learned from Shatil's experience with coalition work. Chaya, who ran Shatil's Negev branch, was actually the coalition coordinator – she supported and guided the growth of the first civil organizational effort in Bedouin society. Of course, as needed, there were also advisors on lobbying, media, fundraising. We received comprehensive guidance that enabled the revolution to happen. The general educational-social revolution started with a personal revolution within the sons and daughters of Bedouin society. We learned to fight both within and without. I'm proud of what we've done for our society.

Avner Amiel

A social worker, activist and leader of social struggles. He accompanied street gangs, youth at risk, the 'tent protests' and the black panther movement. He was a man of the people.

The late Avner Amiel was an intellectual and someone with an exceptional ability to analyze political situations at the macro and micro levels. His approach was critical; he believed in a grass roots approach to policy change, and was committed to values of social justice, equality, and peace. Avner opposed the occupation, privatization, and threats to democracy, and he did it all while relating to people as equals, with his unique brand of charm and humor. A lover of humanity, in the deepest sense of the term.

Avner was born in 1928 in Jerusalem to parents who themselves had been born in Morocco. They lived in the Old City, and later moved to the Ohel Moshe neighborhood, next to the Machane Yehuda market. As a child he studied at the Alliance, and then in yeshiva. In his teens he was caught posting broadsides against the British Mandate and was sent to prison along with members of the underground. After Israel achieved independence, his status as a liberated prisoner from the underground gained him a scholarship to Hebrew

University, where he pursued studies in the Department of History. After his studies, he worked in mini-clubs founded for children of the Jewish Quarter who had been expelled from their homes. In 1956 he established the Department of Community Work in the Jerusalem Municipality, and in 1962 he began Master of Social Work studies at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

During his studies, Avner worked in Cleveland's disadvantaged neighborhoods. He witnessed desegregation rallies. These were the years of President Johnson's War on Poverty, when programs to fight poverty in general and street gangs in particular were being instituted.

In 1964 Avner returned [to Jerusalem] to head the Community Work Department. He worked with street gangs and with community work in the neighborhoods. Avner led several community battles in which he employed activist social work practices. In 1971 the media were invited to a press conference to protest cutbacks in services for youth in crisis. Only one reporter came and met with members of the street gangs. A statement by one of the teens sparked

controversy. The angry teens declared that "the blacks" were once again being "screwed," and the quote "We're the Black Panthers" made headlines and gained resonance. In the wake of the article and the "noise" it generated, a demonstration was organized with the participation of three hundred people, including many students and intellectuals. **Thus began the Black Panthers struggle, in the course of which Avner Amiel and employees of the Department played a guiding and modulating role and were in contact with the youths and their families.** After the effort had waned, Avner continued with community work in the Katamonim neighborhood, and was involved in the Ohel Yosef community project and tent protests.

Amiel, who was employed for many years by the Jerusalem Municipality, was a kind of "whistleblower" who called the public's attention to injustices perpetrated by the organization for which he worked. He publicly criticized the municipal social service bureau and its employees, and was therefore regarded as disloyal. He was censured and suspended by the Union of Social Workers, though the Union would later confer upon him the Henrietta Szold Award, the

professional community's most prestigious mark of recognition. The Award was granted on the basis of his having placed loyalty to a disadvantaged population over loyalty to his employer. Thus was he honored for work he'd done 14 years earlier.

After all the vilification his "troublemaker" label had earned him, Amiel was surprised when Teddy Kollek himself attended his retirement party. According to Amiel, when he expressed his astonishment, Kollek answered "I came to make sure you're really going."

Having left the Municipality, Avner joined us at **Shatil** as a pensioner, promoting the rights-based

community practice model that had been brought to Israel by Professor Jim Torczyner of McGill University. This was the ideological basis for what would later become the Community Advocacy organization. Together with Carlos, Avner trained the first group of instructors and students at Ben-Gurion University in this approach, and these trainees opened Israel's first Rights Shop. This was the inspiration for other organizations such as Yedid and the rights centers founded by local authorities.

Avner died in 2020 at the age of 92, and was buried in the Yekirei Yerushalayim ("Worthy Citizens of Jerusalem") plot in Givat Shaul.

Tag Meir

A forum that encourages religious tolerance and condemns religious fanaticism and racism, encompassing 50 organizations and 5 student cells.

Hanukkah 2011. An extremist group of Beitar Jerusalem fans celebrates victory over the Bnei Yehuda soccer team at the Malha Mall. The expressions of joy include chants of "Muhammad is dead", shouts of "Death to the Arabs", and a 300-fan assault on 10 Arab workers, all of whom are injured. The shocking images of Arabs fleeing the frenzied crowd joined a lengthening list of racist attacks on Arabs, known collectively as Tag Mechir or "Price Tag", that had taken place unhindered both within and beyond the Green Line.

The ideological basis for these acts of vengeance against innocent Arabs/Palestinians lay in books of incitement that had been published during the period 2006-2009 by rabbis of the extreme right. The book *Torat HaMelech* ("The King's Torah"), which deals with the halachot (religious laws) pertaining to the killing of non-Jews, published in the summer of 2009, was written by two rabbis of the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva in Yitzhar, and received enthusiastic endorsements from 4 major rabbis of the Religious Zionist and National Haredi streams. The work authorizes individuals to perform acts

of revenge like that of Baruch Goldstein in the Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994, and to harm innocent Palestinians/Arabs/non-Jews. Torat HaMelech is a manual in the category of such other books as Baruch HaGever and Kumi Ori, as well as an article entitled "Mutual Responsibility" that provides detailed instructions: "The women should block the roads and the men should enter the villages and attack property and people."

The Tag Meir forum was founded in December 2011 to fight the Tag Mechir phenomenon and the religious-ideological support it enjoys. We – a number of organizations disturbed by the acts of wrongdoing – gathered together and decided to respond to Tag Mechir by means of another kind of "tag" – Tag Meir (meir – "to illuminate"). One of our first acts as a forum was to light Hanukkah candles in front of the Malha Mall – bringing light into the darkness, in more ways than one. From there we went on to light menorahs in other places around the country where acts of hatred and racism had been carried out.

The most important thing we do at Tag Meir is simply to go, and as quickly as possible, to places where

acts of hatred have taken place. To us it doesn't matter what the crime was, we don't distinguish between Arabs and Jews, nor do we care on which side of the Green Line it happens. We try to make it to the site of the incident within 24 to 48 hours, to dissociate ourselves from the attackers and to condemn them. We come and we tell the victims that we're there to embrace them and hold their hands, that they're not alone, that the people who hurt them don't represent us or Judaism or Islam or Christianity or the majority of Israeli citizens.

One well-remembered instance was a solidarity trip to Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood after the massacre at the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue in 2014. We went from house to house, 4 families per evening, one after the other. We sat, listened, and felt the pain. Along with us came dignitaries from Baqa al-Gharbiyye, whom we'd visited a few months earlier after a mosque in their city had been vandalized in a Tag Mechir action. They wanted to join from the moment they heard about the terrorist attack. The dignitaries from Baqa al-Gharbiyye were joined by dignitaries from Kafr Qasim, they wore white kipot on their heads and told the bereaved families:

"We're here in the name of Islam. It's against our faith, what they did to you." It should be noted that when we make such visits we offer assistance, as needed; sometimes it's candy and toys for children, sometimes it's funding for two months' rehab at Beit Levenstein. **The main mission is to halt the cycle of vengeance and hostility.**

A solidarity visit of a somewhat different kind is paid each year on Jerusalem Day: the Flower Parade held in response to the Flag Parade. The Flag Parade traditionally passes through the Muslim Quarter, with many participants singing songs of hate (e.g.: "Remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee ... that I may be at once avenged for my two eyes of Palestine, may their name be erased," and others). We, by contrast, march through Damascus Gate, distribute thousands of flowers, patronize the local shops, and convey a message of shared living. Through our parade, we show that it doesn't really matter what the political solution is going to be, Jews and Arabs will be living here together, whether there's one parliament or four. That's the reality we all have to accept, and the sooner it's accepted, the fewer victims there will be. It's a marathon, and nothing

happens in the blink of an eye. Still, little by little, we're seeing signs of acceptance. For instance, during the events of last May citizens looking for a way to channel their frustration contacted us, and together we started initiatives to hand out flowers at intersections around the country, Jews and Arabs alike.

We're very much concerned with the documentation and visibility of acts of solidarity; it's important to us that the public understand that there are those who do their despicable, divisive and violent acts in darkness, but that there are also those who do their unifying acts in the light of day. We know the pace of the media, and we make sure to react to Tag Mechir in a timeframe where our visit will resonate in the press. Our staff includes the photographer Yossi Zamir, who goes everywhere with us. This is crucial in terms of developing a public consciousness. And we're also very digitally active: a Facebook page in three languages, and a newsletter. Besides this, we engage in educational activity, developing lesson plans and teacher in-service training, especially for the religious sector, and we offer Jewish and Muslim halachic discourse that examines questions of racism.

There's a developing consciousness on the legal plane as well. For instance, we're investigating whether it's possible to equalize the compensation received by Jews and Arabs from the territories who've been harmed by acts of terrorism. At present, Jewish Israelis receive ten times the compensation received by Palestinians. We're trying to improve the status of Arab victims of hostile acts, and we're creating precedents vis-à-vis inter-ministerial committees, with the help of first-rate attorneys.

When we founded Tag Meir, we consulted with **Shatil**, especially Carlos, in order to learn the nuances of managing a coalition. 50 partners, after all. We have a secretariat that convenes once every two months, and Shatil's been a member of it

since the very beginning. Besides this, we've consulted with them quite a bit along the way: with Ruth regarding definitions and role-building, work plans and fundraising; with Eitan about evaluation and feedback skills; and there was also an idea of Yael's about developing a student training program, and that caught on. Ultimately, Shatil's an incubator where initiatives are nurtured in their early stages, so a seed can develop and reach a situation where it has a stable presence in the public sphere. Without them, and without the New Israel Fund, it's hard to imagine Tag Meir's extensive activity making it this far.

Rachel Shapiro

Founder and CEO of Gesher Hinuchi, an association that provides parental guidance, along with educational and social support for students for 15,000 new immigrants across the country so far.

When I'd come across a new immigrant somewhere in Lod who was even "greener" than I was, and see the lost look in their eyes – at the grocery, at the National Insurance office, in a crosswalk, peering at a street sign – that would be a decisive moment for me. I'd know exactly what the person was going through, with this transition; after all, I'd been through the same thing and was still going through it. Yet there would be something different between them and me. Over my years in Israel, I'd acquired Hebrew to some degree; by now I was in some measure acquainted

with the way things are done in Israel; I'd worked all kinds of jobs and finally found my place in a municipality position. In those brief moments of encounter, in the street, I'd realize that even though I was a new immigrant myself, I'd been around long enough to help other olim with the difficult transition to Israeli life. To be a bridge for my community – a shaky one at first, barely a rope bridge – but even that's something to hold onto.

People started turning to me informally. Families who'd immigrated from Russia, parents who hadn't found

the time to learn Hebrew, since we were all working one and a half jobs and preferred to send the kids to ulpan, so they'd bring Hebrew home. A lot of people who didn't understand the legal system here, who weren't able to communicate with their children in this new reality, without understanding the culture and the conventions, the institutional system. Kids who dropped out of school and turned to drugs because they didn't understand the language used in class, or the Israeli dress code, and were treated badly by their classmates. As an education researcher my ear was always highly attuned to these questions, and I wondered what could be done, and how. And yet – I myself had encountered the same problems: a mother of three, my husband working in a factory, my children like everyone else dealing with complex situations at school.

I consulted with a few friends who were in a similar situation, and we decided to start with what was close and familiar. We hung signs in Russian all around the city – "Who wants to be a better mom? Who wants to understand the school better? Who wants to understand Israeli law?" – and we started a parents' group.

All the things no one bothers to explain when you arrive in Israel, we organized, arranged, and presented to them. We taught them about Israeli institutions. We helped them communicate with their children. If the teacher called the parents about their child's behavior, the school cleaning woman had to serve as translator; we helped them understand how things are done here. In Russia, hitting is a legitimate means of disciplining children. In Israel, the social services are called in over domestic violence incidents, and parents needed to understand the norms and laws that prevail here. We started one parent group after another. **We used all the skills and knowledge we had from our professions in Russia, and the knowledge we'd acquired in Israel; we tried to help people who'd come with less knowledge and fewer possibilities.** Very soon, the school itself was sending us parents who needed it. Later we expanded into other activity areas that would assist the immigrant community. A group was founded for dropouts; day care centers were established; subsidized psychological counseling was offered, as well as Hebrew study for adults, study camps for children, and more.

We were invited to Tel Aviv, Herzliya, Netanya, Ashdod, and other cities, to teach new immigrant children and Israelis how to open up, how to connect and communicate with diverse populations. We brought Arab and Jewish pupils, new immigrants and veteran Israelis together in the Psifas ("Mosaic") project. In another project, Atid ("Future"), we created a support system for immigrant pupils from families of low socioeconomic status, and had them meet with volunteers in spaces that signal promising horizons: banks, high-tech companies. This was a shot of encouragement and motivation for the pupils, a reason to look beyond their immediate difficulties. The main project was Horut Ba-Aliya ("Parenting Upward"); we organized meetings with parents so they could acquire tools for parenting in their new country. We also opened day care centers where the emphasis was on speaking Hebrew, so that the children wouldn't enter the school system with too great a gap in their knowledge of Hebrew.

At first we led the workshops ourselves, in people's homes. It was all on a volunteer basis. When we needed office equipment so we could help people with bureaucracy, each of

us contributed money from her own pocket. But the community's needs went beyond that, and we wanted to expand the circle of assistance. That's how we came to Shatil. We benefited from their guidance from the very beginning. At the level of choosing a name for the association, sending in the forms to establish the association, developing strategy, creating an organizational structure, submitting requests for support – **Shatil** was there for us and gave us the tools for action, for maintaining ourselves organizationally and economically. Through Shatil, we also got to know other organizations, and together we could support ourselves and expand so that new immigrants would receive needed services. In 2008 there was an economic crisis in Israel, and many associations closed. Shatil guided us on how to increase our association's self-earned income, and thanks to their leadership, we also survived that crisis and continued developing. Shatil helps us at every step of the way, nurturing along with us the association that started as a frail seedling and is now well-established. Together with them, we provide services to all immigrants – pupils and parents – who settle in Israel.

Gilad Sevitt

Founder and Professional Director at Madrasa – a social initiative promoting Arabic study free of charge for all. Over 100,000 students are enrolled in the online school he founded in 2014.

I was that guy who studied Arabic in high school and tried to use it when visiting the Old City or in small talk in the street – but with no success. I was that guy who'd strike up conversations in Arabic with the Druze on base, even though no one else communicated with them in that language. I was the guy you'd have to be patient with on coffee break because he was trying really hard to string one word to the next. I broke my teeth on the words, even though I'd studied literary Arabic in high school; even though I'd also studied Arabic in the army. When I wanted to use the Arabic I'd spent 9

years learning – to communicate in it a little, to engage with Arabic as a spoken language in the public realm, not for strictly utilitarian purposes – I realized I didn't yet have the skills to do so.

After being discharged from the army, I undertook a project: to successfully communicate in Arabic. I approached the task as though I wanted to learn some other language. If I wished to study Spanish, let's say – what would I do? I'd buy a conversation manual, I'd search on YouTube, I'd watch Spanish-language TV shows, and finally – I'd

talk with people as well. Suppose you meet someone who speaks fluent Spanish; you don't say to him: "What, you served in Spanish intelligence?!" So that's what I tried to do with Arabic: **to completely neutralize the language from its contexts of fear, the conflict, politics.** To treat it as a beautiful language with a rich culture that if I live here I have to get to know – and from there to learn how to speak it.

At first I studied spoken Arabic, on my own, with a few booklets and conversation manuals. Later there were street encounters that occasioned brief conversations. Over time, friends also asked me to teach them to communicate in Arabic. And I did it. We'd sit in my parents' living room, they'd bring food, I'd bring the Arabic. Worked out well for all of us. Later it was suggested that the lessons be filmed and posted as videos online, "so more than just a few people in a living room can benefit from them." In 2014 there was no place where you could study Arabic for free – to go back to the analogy with Spanish, if you wanted to study it for free, you'd find dozens of online options. In any case, we made 3 home videos, posted them on a website that it took us two

hours to put together, added a few PDF files for independent study, and that was it. It sounds like nothing, but it generated a lot of buzz. Thousands of views in the early days, and it just grew and grew. On Galatz [the army radio station] they wanted to interview me: how did a white-Jewish Israeli come to speak with chet and ayin, and teach Arabic? That's the degree to which it was perceived as unusual.

Two years later – by now we had our first 13 videos, a community of tens of thousands, a very broad social media presence. At this point we stopped for a moment and said: We're no longer just a student project or a community looking to communicate in spoken Arabic. There's something bigger than that here.

The next leap was in 2017. We founded a nonprofit, raised 170,000 shekels on Headstart [an Israeli fundraising website], and in 2018 we set up a site with free online courses that now have an enrollment of 100,000 students, with 100 new students joining each day – all this together with wide-ranging and meaningful social media activity that reaches hundreds of thousands. We became more and more professional. We upgraded and

continue to upgrade our content, so that spoken Arabic can be more and more accessible, and so we can offer an effective and enjoyable learning experience for all those who want to learn.

Along with the studies that are open to the community, we operate any number of projects and collaborations at the national level; we teach dozens of lecture-based courses per month to organizations and communities that want to study Arabic in a way that challenges how Arab has been taught in Israel up to now; we cooperate with government ministries, with academia, and with the public and business sectors both in order to fund our activity and so that we can reach any place where people want to study Arabic – and offer the best program for learning how to communicate in it. In this way, our impact has deepened at both the pedagogical level and at the social level, since a real encounter is now possible between learners, and between Arabic learners and Arabic speakers.

This year we won the Zussman-Joint Prize for our efforts! As a nonprofit, we made another leap when Shatil invited us to the Lowering the Walls

program. We spent 80 hours learning how to fight racism and promote multiculturalism, in a kind of close-knit, boundary-crossing group – Haredim [ultra-Orthodox Jews], secular people, leftists, rightists, Arabs, Jews, women and men. The forum gave us an opportunity to stop, to conceptualize, to study racism theory; and we gained a better and more broadly-contextualized understanding of our own endeavor.

Along with this, we had to position ourselves within a collection of activists who were sharing their ideas – [to figure out] what was different and what was the same. We had to articulate and more precisely define our initiative for them. And also at the partnership level – we felt that we weren't alone. In the sense of a safety net and support and solid ground, and also in a networking sense. The Madrasa initiative could have been low-profile and home-based, but our acquaintance with the program participants led us to collaborate with organizations from East Jerusalem, and to open things up.

Beyond this thing that has strong identity-based elements for us at Madrasa, there's also the knowhow

that we learned on an ongoing basis. How to draw up a balance sheet, how to submit a grant application, how to run a nonprofit. As entrepreneurs – we don't always have the critical knowledge or the time necessary to learn on our own and make mistakes and correct them – so the access to a useful toolkit at **Shatil**, to in-service training, to a newsletter that's always

relevant and, in particular, to the open line and the awareness that there's someone to go to and hash things over with – that's the solid ground that lets you concentrate on growth, on expanding the knowledge of Arabic in major social spheres, and on connecting the various subgroups in Israeli society.

5.



**Creating
a Place,
Designing
a Space**

Eran Ben Yemini

Environmental activist. Founder of Green Course, a student environmental organization, and of the Green Movement party. Currently serves as Director General of the organization Life and Environment.

It all started in England. I went there to study drama and found myself in a real-life drama – a huge struggle over the M11 motorway, a highway meant to circle London. For instance, there was a young man who dug tunnels and lived in them, so that for three weeks no bulldozers could be operated because no one could locate him. There were mass marches with huge floats bearing people with quarry hammers who made cuts in the roadway; people would go and plant trees in the clefts that formed. Seats were built on trees marked for removal. All these things were meant

to disrupt routine life in which it's acceptable to damage an entire area in order to build a highway. And in fact this road was never completed.

The M11 protests, which should not have been relevant to me in any way, shook me up. They made me see how many different issues the environmental struggle encompasses. When the government wanted to build the road, it didn't consider the people who lived there, the entire communities that were going to be uprooted from their homes, the 90-year-old woman who would have to leave the home she'd

been raised in and where she hoped to end her days, the trees that grew there and would have to be cut down, the animals whose natural habitat it was, or the disadvantaged populations that would once again find themselves far from the shopping centers and educational facilities that were going to be built in the area of the highway – far from their neighborhoods, and inaccessible to anyone without a private car. Thanks to the protests over the ring road, I came to perceive, with resounding clarity, that environment is environment. What's true for England is also true for Israel; the atmosphere has no borders.

I returned to Israel, straight into a period of protests against the construction of the Trans-Israel Highway (Highway 6), which I joined. Through this struggle I learned a lot of basic things that stayed with me later on, and realized how important it is to recruit students for efforts to raise awareness and generate change regarding the environment. As a first step, I decided to establish cells in the universities. I studied the issue for half a year, and got to work. I set up tables on the campuses, and called for people to join me in the fight against Highway 6. From 4 cells

we grew to 24, which operate in the universities and colleges here in Israel, with hundreds of student participants. **The student cells developed into an organization, and from a one-issue organization we turned into an organization that deals with dozens of environmental issues at the national and local levels.**

One of Green Course's most meaningful causes was that of getting the Protection of the Coastal Environment Law (the "Beach Law") passed. A law that would keep Israel's coastline open to all, with no entrance fees and no construction along the shore. At Green Course we focused on public activity and direct action. One of our most significant actions against a construction site on the coast was to take over a crane for four days. There was no way to lower us, we stopped the work and got media exposure for the cause. At the same time, along with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and Adam Teva V'Din, we worked at the legislative and legal level. The vote on the law was postponed many times, we went there again and again – in vain. Ultimately, the vote was scheduled for the last day of the Knesset session, just before the Knesset would go to recess. We arrived there

on the day of the vote, looked at the agenda, and saw that the bill wasn't on it. We went into the office of the Knesset chairman, who told us that the bill wasn't on the agenda because it hadn't been printed yet. We were a student organization, and if students know how to do something, it's how to photocopy and staple. We went to the Government Printer, saw a few people slowly stapling the documents. We rushed to print, photocopy, and staple the bill, and hurried with it back to the Knesset chairman to have it put on the agenda. We assigned one of our activists to every Knesset member who might be in favor of the law, to get them to come. That night we managed to get the law passed with 34 MKs in favor and only one opposed. This was really at the last minute. After a long six-year struggle, trips around the country and demonstrations, we succeeded and the "Beach Law" was passed.

Shatil supported us from the early stages of founding the student cells. The late Alona Vardi contacted me and volunteered to guide the project, and

did it with passion. Alona had a very progressive organizational vision with which I wasn't familiar. Green Course had a very good organizational structure but Alona really helped me understand the organizational needs of every cell and every functionary, and she helped me manage the organization in the most effective way. Alona also helped forge the links between our cause and other efforts that were going on at the same time. That's how we brought additional populations – the Arabs, who received no compensation for the land expropriations, and people with disabilities, whose budget was delayed by the Ministry of Finance – into the struggle against the Trans-Israel Highway. We learned to work in concert, to identify with other people's causes, and to see the connection between us. Thanks to the organizational vision, the collaborations, and the professionalism, environmental organizations are now able to work in an effective and meaningful way to ensure a sustainable world for all of us.

The Public Housing Forum

Israel's civil representation organization for public housing, addresses issues of housing stock, eligibility criteria, and the rights of current and continuing tenants.

For a decade now, talk of public housing immediately brings achievements to mind: a billion shekels for new public housing; the construction of 2,500 apartments for seniors, most of them 1990s-era immigrants; the Transparency Law that allows residents to monitor their debt and keeps the housing companies from evicting families from public housing due to small debts that have inflated into impossible sums. But our most important achievement is actually a new perspective on public housing. Five years ago, the discourse was still

one of public housing as a problem, and even the Bibi-Lapid government still talked openly of liquidating the country's public housing stock. "Let's give these poor folks a few pennies a month so they can rent apartments in the free market, and get rid of public housing." Thanks to the Forum's efforts, the government now understands that stable housing is an asset, not a burden; former Housing Minister Galant and Ministry Director General Reznik have drawn up a plan in which public housing is part of an array of solutions to Israel's housing crisis!

"I began my journey with public housing in 2014, as a policy advisor at Shatil and as head of the Forum's lobbying team," says Danny Gigi. **Shatil** coordinated the Forum for over five years, and also led the Forum's policy and media activity. Shatil was like a rock that can hold its place even under unstable conditions; like the Biblical rock, it was also able to give water. Up until the coronavirus we enjoyed a streak of achievements, and then came the pandemic. There were no achievements and there were also no decisions. And then a government formed, and suddenly the Ministry of Housing decided to evict 1,200 families from public housing. Public housing residents, most of whom were in no way candidates for eviction, mounted a struggle that went into the neighborhoods and the homes of the Director General and the Minister of Housing. There were a lot of strong feelings, people took their gloves off, mud was slung at me as well, but ultimately, the evictions were halted and a committee was appointed to examine the criteria for public housing.

The strongest feeling at the Forum is a feeling of "us". Partners in the cause always speak in the plural, always

"feel" plural. The truth is that the Forum and the issue of public housing are so formative and influential for us that it doesn't matter if we take action individually, together or through some organization; ultimately, our primary identity is the fight for public housing in Israel, and all those involved in the fight are our sisters and brothers. It's also our mode of operation that led us to these achievements. Those who head the struggle are the women fighting for themselves. Some are fighting for their right to public housing, others are already living in public housing, but all are prepared to battle not just for themselves, but for others. Of course it's both men and women fighting the battle, but it's women who are on the front line.

Another method that's brought results is that of paying attention to every situation where the state tries to use a "divide and conquer" approach on us. The easiest way for the government to reduce its investment in public housing is to create the illusion that you're not getting public housing because there's another community that's getting more. They tried to create that illusion and to divide people living in poverty from people with disabilities; immigrants from veteran Israelis;

different immigrant communities from each other; center and periphery. They can try to put a waiting Arab family in a Haredi neighborhood, and if there are protests from the Jewish side and the Arab family forgoes the apartment, then that can create a false sense that there's no public housing problem in the Arab sector and they're just refusing to accept the apartments offered to them. Haredim are also sometimes offered apartments in areas where it's hard to maintain a Haredi way of life. Our activist group includes everyone, and when everyone's sitting at the same table, then you can clearly see that the state is drying up all the public housing, and only solidarity between the groups can get results. Of course there are groups within the Forum that are advancing the needs of different kinds of victims, such as single mothers, Haredi women, or the invisible disabled (people who aren't in wheelchairs), but even within specific causes there is solidarity and a broad perspective. Everyone agrees on the universal solution.

Public housing discourse has evolved within the social change organizations as well. In the 2011 protests and for

several years afterward everyone preferred to talk about affordable housing; it was feared that talk of public housing would alienate the middle class. There, as well, we can see an important shift toward the realization that public housing isn't just for the down-and-out; that there's public housing in Vienna, Amsterdam, and Singapore, and it's also for the middle class.

Our conferences, our activity with the committees and the Knesset lobbies, our website, the connections we forge between the legal aid organizations run by the state and academia, the demonstrations, our work on Facebook, the training sessions where we learn that we aren't either pitiable indigents or exploiters, but rather citizens entitled to housing: all of these things have helped change the state's attitude toward public housing, but also the attitude of public housing residents and activists toward themselves. Our vision is that public housing will be the government's main engine for solving the housing crisis. We're not there yet, but we're also very far from where we started.

Maigal Alhawashla

One of the heads of the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev.

I was the Johan Cruyff of the village of Alr'ara; soccer in its most "total" form, barefoot on a dirt field with a goalpost made of Tempo bottles. To aim for the goalpost, to break through, to pass and charge accurately – there's a lot of seeing the other, a lot of strategy, and a lot of dreams. Maigal with the ball and – Goal! It's always a group effort. After I'd matured a little, I took my cleats and moved to central Israel, to play for the Arab soccer team Rakevet Lod. In order to fulfill my soccer dream, I worked as a taxi driver in the city. At that time the area was awash with

drugs; between practice sessions I met a great many people who'd gone off the rails. They'd ask me to drive them to places that would turn out to be spots where drugs were sold. It hurt to see the suffering, the neglect, and the lack of a way out for these people – whether they were Jews or Arabs. These are people that no one notices, that society dissociates from, shuts its eyes to, pretends aren't there. Those taxi trips crystallized my outlook – I decided that I wanted to be involved in changing things, I wanted to keep other people from falling apart

this way, especially those whom the state doesn't see. I hung up my soccer shoes and went back to my village.

The unrecognized villages of the Negev suffer from long-term neglect that creates a vicious circle of poverty, with a lack of infrastructures, employment opportunities, education, and dreams for the next generation. The residents of the unrecognized villages are desperate for opportunities – I remember when the SodaStream plants opened in Rahat, how many young people from the nearby localities rushed to apply for jobs there. This is a population that needs access to entitlements and to options that it isn't always aware of; **what's required, above all, is a true dialogue between policymakers and residents that raises the problems and comes up with appropriate solutions.** The challenge is complex and multidimensional, spanning different areas: healthcare, housing, access to entitlements, legal battles. This complexity can be a deterrent. Thirty years ago, as a first step, I focused on the medical sphere.

There are no health funds [kupot holim] or clinics in the unrecognized

villages, and so the people who live in these places don't receive crucial healthcare services that are considered to be a normal part of life in Tel Aviv or Haifa. One of the most acute problems is the lack of Tipat Chalav (family health) clinics, which results in a very low percentage of children receiving the required immunizations in the first years of their lives. And so, together with the Galilee Society, we brought healthcare service trucks to children in Al'ara, so their parents wouldn't have to find a way to get to the nearest city in order to get their children vaccinated; they also received explanations from the medical staff about the importance of immunization. Within two years, the Galilee Society effort in the south had expanded to other unrecognized villages as well.

In 1997 I went on to address another challenge – basic and higher education. As the head of the education department in the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages, I was familiar with Shatil and knew Shmulik, who'd guided and assisted with many efforts in the education sphere. Together we sent over 500 letters to the Ministry of Education, participated in the Education Committee, the

[Special] Committee for the Rights of the Child, and others. After I appealed to the then Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, we obtained raw data from the Education Ministry on the state of education in the unrecognized villages, and were able to work with local committees and other partners to improve the statistics and send them on to government ministries and decision makers. For example, we found that the Education Ministry had estimated that 5,000 children in the unrecognized villages weren't enrolled in educational frameworks. After we mapped the situation and reached out to the villages themselves, we showed that the actual number was much higher. I led protests to get preschools opened in the unrecognized villages; thanks to the protests, 39 preschools were established in these places.

Another challenge that I and my colleagues in the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages have to contend with, along with the village residents, is that of housing, evictions, and demolition orders. Four years ago I was contacted by residents of an unrecognized village north of Arad who'd received an eviction order. Together with Bimkom, Shatil, and Adalah, we went to the village and

talked with the people who lived there and with local Jewish business owners who employed the village residents, so we could formulate a strategy vis-à-vis the state authorities. As part of the strategy's implementation, I oversaw the creation of a committee in the village that later joined with the Council and now receives legal support from Adalah.

The housing challenge is also related to the issue of legalizing the status of the unrecognized villages and their residents. In 2012, the Council, together with the Bimkom and Sidreh organizations, published the Master Plan for the Recognition of Unrecognized Villages, which offers an alternative to the problem of planning and recognition of all Bedouin villages. In this context, one of the Council's most meaningful achievements has been the state's recognition of 11 villages to date, and the Council's ability to issue residence certificates to people living in the unrecognized villages so they can receive services from the Ministry of Interior and the National Insurance Institute. Residence certificates have facilitated access to the aid that the state provides to disadvantaged populations. For example, during the coronavirus

lockdowns we helped people obtain the one-time grant; we reached out to hundreds of people and helped residents fill out the necessary forms.

Shatil has helped the Council all along the way, and continues to help by providing infrastructures and connections that enrich and advance the cause. Shmulik, Suleiman, and

Sultan have assisted and still assist us with the development of work methods with state authorities, with mapping, and with activity in the localities, so we can gather data, testimonies, and voices, and determine the needs we aspire to meet on an everyday basis, in the villages that have yet to be recognized.

Alona Vardi

One of the founders of the environmental movement in Israel. Both her activity and her personal life were based on her belief in peace, environmental justice and human rights. Alona was a beloved and esteemed consultant in Shatil, and also led the 'Friends of Tibet' Israel branch.

The late Alona Vardi was one of the founders and pioneers of the Israeli environmental movement. An intelligent, generous, and educated woman who engaged with "the environment" in its most comprehensive sense: that of an optimal setting for people to live in peace.

Alona was loved. A woman of depth, a shining star – yet utterly devoid of ego. She had an entire circle of friends who, through her, became friends of the environment themselves.

Alona joined us at Shatil in 1995, involving herself in our efforts to assist the environmental organizations. She came after having spent a few years working at the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, where she'd been a guide, in the broadest sense of the term, to activists in the environmental movement. Even after moving on, she continued to advise the activists, and left behind her a legacy of young, strong leaders in the field. She co-edited two environmental journals, developed environmental studies curricula at the School of Education at Tel Aviv University, and

coordinated an international seminar for the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Through her work, Alona became aware of the importance of thorough fieldwork – advancing and supporting it. She was skilled in the subtle art of nurturing a project from its beginnings, and knew how to gradually guide it toward independence. Among her other initiatives, she helped establish the Public Health Coalition at Shatil, and watched it take shape as an independent organization that sparked real change. She also identified citizen concerns about cell tower radiation, and founded the forum dedicated to regulating ionizing radiation – the Forum for Cellular Sanity, which accomplished real public policy change. Alona was the one who connected environment and society, "green" and "red"; she founded a group of organizations and activists who, in the face of massive development and construction plans, succeeded in safeguarding citizen rights to open urban space: Jerusalem's Gazelle Valley.

For five straight years, Alona, in cooperation with the Green Environment Fund and via a diverse

steering committee of Israeli environmental organizations, coordinated the Environmental Power Conference – the annual gathering of the environmental organizations. Thus she took steps toward the consolidation of a single movement. Alona also founded an annual environmental award (later to be known as the Green Globe), and passed the baton to the umbrella organization Life and Environment.

Alongside her work with Shatil on behalf of the Israeli environmental movement, Alona helped found the organization Israeli Friends of the Tibetan People, which she headed for many years, until the day she died. Alona got to know Tibet and its exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, during the 1990s, when she coordinated the international seminar marking 40 years of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, which hosted the Dalai Lama. While she was ill, she initiated arrangements for another visit to Israel by the Dalai Lama in 2006, and he indeed came as the guest of Shatil and the New Israel Fund. The highlight of the visit was a meeting with activists from Israel's social change organizations. During his time

in Israel, the Dalai Lama expressed esteem and appreciation for Alona. In Alona's first conversation with Rachel Liel, when the latter became Shatil's new CEO, she told her: "Listen, you don't feel it yet, but Shatil isn't a workplace, it's a mission, a calling, and this organization will change your life. You'll look at the world differently."

And she, as usual, was absolutely right. In retrospect, it was Alona who influenced Shatil – with her outlook, her discernment, her optimism, and her hard work.

Alona died on Saturday, October 14, 2006, age 50, after battling cancer for over a year.

Shahira Shalaby

Member of the Haifa City Council on behalf of the Hadash faction, founder of Kayan – the first Palestinian feminist organization, co-founder of Israel's first Arabic-language rape crisis center.

I grew up in a political home. As an activist with Hadash and the Communist Party, my father went to political events and meetings, demonstrations against the occupation and against the wars, International Women's Day events, and party gatherings. I joined him fairly often. As a girl, I didn't always understand what I was doing at each meeting; some of them were boring while others seemed exciting. I was taken by the passion, the agitation, the unwillingness to accept the injustices and failings in society, and

by the desire to make things right. As a teenager I joined the Communist Party Youth. When I started studying at the University of Haifa I joined a Hadash party cell, and today I'm a member of the Haifa city council. Political as a girl, teen, and woman – always and forever.

As a social work student, I decided to volunteer with women's organizations in Haifa. I provided Arabic translations during support group meetings in a battered women's shelter. From there I went on to volunteer at a rape crisis center. I and other volunteers

identified a service gap: the victims, sometimes in situations where their lives were at stake, were dependent on the availability of translators. In partnership with the Association of Rape Crisis Centers we founded the first Arabic-language rape crisis center in Israel. Later I also started an Arabic hotline for victims of violence that operated 24/7 nationwide. We took care of the women who contacted us, accompanied them to the police station and the hospital. From there I proceeded to coordinate a hotline for women suffering from domestic violence, and at a certain point I realized that, as an association that raises funds from abroad, we couldn't maintain a network of hotlines for violence victims entirely on our own. With some effort, we persuaded the Ministry of Social Welfare to take responsibility for the hotlines, which ensured the project's continued existence, albeit with some differences.

As I delved more deeply into my work with women affected by violence, I realized that it wasn't enough to provide services to these women. In order to create real and profound change, we'd have to work to prevent violence. For this reason, I and a group

of other Arab women activists founded Kayan, the first Palestinian feminist organization, in 1998. Our goal was to conduct research, to be a center for thinking and philosophy that would change the discourse surrounding women's status, and surrounding Arab women's status in particular. Beyond the essential writing tasks, we promoted social-political activism among Arab women. We went to Arab localities to meet with the women, and encouraged them to start projects and initiatives. We created a large network of women's groups. Today we're talking about thousands of projects across the country. This is a project that succeeded because it reached each woman and each home, and the results are visible on the ground – more Arab women are pursuing academic studies and participating in the labor market, and the discourse surrounding gender is becoming more liberal.

This visibility has come at a price – we didn't just spark discussion, we also sparked widespread anger by letting the genie out of the bottle; we demanded that domestic rape be talked about, violence against women, women's rights, the right of women to their bodies, and women's

freedom and freedom of choice. We got opposing reactions from the traditional movements, the Islamic Movement, and also from the political movements, because we wanted the parties to deal with gender along with national issues, and not to push gender to the margins. Our discourse was radical and called for complete freedom for women, and for the implementation of equal rights; we discussed the level of radicalism we were projecting, and what the cost would be in terms of our ability to reach the broader public without arousing antagonism and opposition.

Our discourse was radical but we hesitated, as our goal was to reach as many women as possible so as to raise awareness of their rights and to give them tools and places to turn to in times of trouble. And on the other hand, we find it important to generate a new radical discourse of real social change.

In 1994 we founded the Elbadil organization, to fight the murder of women. Fathi of **Shatil** guided the organization's founding process from the very beginning, from strategic planning to drafting a work plan. This guidance made it possible to set the

organization's activity in motion. Later I also worked at Shatil for a decade as an organizational consultant; I led a number of projects, the largest of which was the establishment of the shared society field; I directed a program called Haifa Shared City. We drew up models for how a shared city should function in the spheres of education, housing, neighbor relations, employment, and culture, and we involved international organizations in the initiative. In 2018 the Haifa Municipality approved the program and started its implementation on the ground. As a member of the Haifa city council (as of 2018), I continue to advance policy and action aimed at creating a safe urban public realm for women, and at cultivating the shared city values that I formulated during my employment at Shatil.

To me, social change change is like a field of cotton. You can fertilize it, irrigate it, set its boundaries. But ultimately, the flowers are borne away by the wind in different directions, filling the air.

Yossi Saidov

Founder of the 15 Minutes organization for Israeli transportation consumers. 15 Minutes receives 15,000 public queries per year, and led the community effort to create Jerusalem's Train Track Park.

When I was 30, the father of a six-month-old girl, a random encounter with a neighbor in the building where I lived in Jerusalem changed the course of my life. All I knew about her was the sign on her door: The Levines. Running into her one day, I half-laughingly hummed the song "What's the Matter, Mrs. Levine?" and her response surprised me. She said: "What's the matter? I'll tell you exactly what's the matter!" and related that the Municipality was advancing a plan to build us a gigantic highway right behind our building.

Until then I'd been working as a journalist, I'd report on local injustice, but that moment brought a palpable threat to light that scared me and spurred me to action. I enlisted a few other neighborhood residents to try and change the decision; we met in my living room. Of the seven people there, not one was wealthy, or a lawyer, or especially well-connected. As someone who'd covered the municipality during the mayoral terms of Lupoliansky and Olmert, I was pretty pessimistic.

We realized at that meeting that there was no chance of stopping the road construction plans by means of an objection. At the same time, we managed to identify a shared need: there was no park in the area. We had to trek to distant neighborhoods in order for our kids to play in open spaces. And so, based on these two realizations, we turned the threat into a vision. What gets you out of the house is fear, but what keeps you out, fighting over the long haul, is hope. The alternative we came up with provided a broad common purpose: the idea of creating a park drew nine other neighborhoods into the picture. An amazing community emerged.

In my view, a journey of this kind needs three anchors: in-depth knowledge of the issue; familiarity with the playing field – lobbying, policy; and a community that legitimizes ongoing effort.

Our proposal's demonstrated feasibility caused the decision-makers to abandon the highway agenda. The park, whose provisional plan called for a kilometer and a half to be developed over the course of a few years, was ultimately extended along the entire historic rail route, from the

old train station by Liberty Bell Park to Malha – six kilometers. It's a meeting place for people from Jerusalem's entire population spectrum – and the route of the future light rail line was changed so as not to disrupt it.

In the public transportation field, there's a huge gap between the decision-makers and the consumers. Those who decide what line will go by your house don't live near you and usually don't use public transit. The decisions are made by the Ministry of Transportation, and the municipality is an advisory party. In Jerusalem, with its million residents and its land area exceeding that of Tel Aviv and Haifa combined, this is a crucial gap. When you speak with decision-makers about parks, they say, "But you have Sacher Park." When you talk about public transit, they say, "But the light rail." For me, as someone who needs a wide array of services near his home – due to a visual impairment, among other things – these answers offer no practical solution to my everyday needs.

And so 15 Minutes – Public Transportation Alliance was born. Our original goal was for there to be a bus line that would get from Jerusalem's

Katamonim neighborhood to the Central Bus Station within a quarter of an hour. Overnight we received endless requests from residents of other neighborhoods seeking solutions to all kinds of problems, ultimately leading to the creation of a nonprofit. It took four years until the neighborhood line was established, but the movement led to many other achievements. Cancelling the terrible contract with Citypass for operation of the light rail; reducing pollution from the Central Bus Station, followed by unprecedented financial compensation – money that was put toward environmental change, passenger boarding at all bus doors in Israel, 15,000 public queries per year via the 15 Minutes app – people who till then had no one to turn to and whose appeals were now leading to serious change.

Today I come to projects from a different, more optimistic place. I always try to challenge myself a new – my own personal "handicap principle." I like to jump back into the fray in full force. That's how I got started with a project to develop a park along Jerusalem's Hebron Road – an idea that was once a non-starter but which I'm now convinced beyond a doubt will come to fruition – the only question

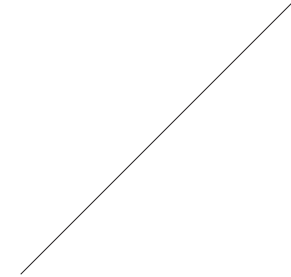
is when. That's also how it was with my most personal struggle, to create a community of retinitis pigmentosa patients – I'm one of them – a disease that limits one's field of vision. People who were once alone with the experience of vision loss are no longer alone. A very costly medication that we've succeeded in getting added to the medication "basket" has saved ten young people and restored them to independent living.

This initiative, the founding of 15 Minutes, and a new project, Barchovot Shelanu – In Our Streets, Israel's future organization for pedestrians, came alive thanks largely to tools I acquired through **Shatil**. I got to know the organization during the Train Track Park effort; later I participated in a course for social entrepreneurs. At Shatil I learned how to work with volunteers – a critical feature of any social initiative. I also learned about fundraising and about how the governmental system works from an economic perspective – knowledge for which there's no substitute. But Shatil isn't, for me, a formal channel; more than anything else, it's home. When I'm there I go into offices, talk with people, exchange ideas and experiences and,

above all, feel comfortable. Now I'm on the advising end at Shatil, and I can give of my knowledge to less experienced social entrepreneurs. This fits with the belief that guides me in every project: a community whose members

stimulate each other's thinking is the necessary foundation for social change.

6.



**The Change
Starts from
Within**

Hanan Alsana

Director of Beer-Sheva branch and the Bedouin women's rights center at Itach-Ma'aki Women Lawyers for Social Justice.

At age 11, I worked as a bookkeeper in the Shik-Diwan, in Lod's Bedouin Rakevet neighborhood; a small girl counting coins, sorting, figuring out revenues and expenditures from the sheep market in a space meant solely for men. As a girl, I was allowed to participate in this because there were only two boys in my family and there was a great deal of hard everyday work. I was useful and perceived as capable when I put the merchants' paperwork in order. Eventually, when I asked to pursue higher education – the only one and the youngest of 9 sisters –

the sheikh, who knew me from the Diwan, supported my request. Only a few conditions stood between me and higher education: where to study, what to study, how to dress, where to live, what field to work in, and whom to marry. It sounds restrictive and limiting, but for me at that moment it was like a promise and a launch toward new and unfamiliar horizons. I agreed to all of the conditions – the main thing was that I'd be able to study.

At university I encountered accessibility problems. To get from Lakiya – my uncle's home – to Be'er-Sheva required public transportation that didn't exist, even though the locality is right next to Be'er-Sheva. Even accessibility at the language level proved very difficult – my Hebrew wasn't adequate for academic purposes. I'd made a huge effort, a true quantum leap, to get from the Shik-Diwan in the Rakevet neighborhood to university, and when I finally arrived I realized that arrival wasn't enough.

I struggled with Hebrew every day, one reading assignment after another, class after class. I progressed slowly. In my first year at university, I found myself struggling with Hebrew for others, as well. I volunteered at Soroka in order to help Bedouin women understand what the doctors were saying to them a little better, and to mediate between them. One day, I saw a doctor and a nurse yelling at a Bedouin woman who was crying next to her child. I asked what had happened, they told me that the woman had made her child swallow a medication that was meant solely for external use. I realized that the woman didn't know how to read the instructions and didn't understand

what the doctor and the nurse were telling her, that is, she'd endangered her son's life with her own hands. That was how I became aware of a major and dangerous illiteracy problem among Bedouin women, especially in the unrecognized Negev localities.

Propelled by this destabilizing experience, I joined a high school equivalency studies program for women in the unrecognized Bedouin villages. While teaching, I worked with women on their stories, their experiences, things that had happened to them, their dreams and desires. That was the curriculum. A woman would tell me how she was doing, and based on what she said we'd extract one or two words that were central and learn how to write and read them – first in Arabic, then in Hebrew. We dealt with everything. Violence, polygamy, women's status, barriers posed by the local authority, tribalism, Bedouin history, it was all raw material for a lesson – if it came from them. With this, the women took the matriculation exams in Hebrew, and performed outstandingly. The Ministry of Education, which was very skeptical at first, gave a lot of attention to modeling the process we went through in order to make it accessible

to other high school equivalency centers. Later, I also presented the model to the UN's committee to prevent gender discrimination.

In every village or unrecognized locality we entered, I'd first go to the sheikh. I'd tell him about that woman in the hospital, I'd say: Once, women were independent in their sphere, in the pasture, they'd weave their tents (in more ways than one), they managed the household, they had dignity and they didn't need to read and write for that. Today, without basic education, a woman has no dignity in her home, she isn't a partner, the children run her affairs, and the cycle of poverty and violence expands. The sheikhs agreed, under certain conditions, and the women studied and progressed. I meet their daughters studying at universities and colleges and it looks as though the destructive vicious cycle for 3600 women has been halted.

Today I deal with the needs of the Bedouin community in other spaces, and **I'm thrilled that these women, who a decade or fifteen years ago had no voice, are now demonstrating against home demolitions, fighting to have voting stations placed in unrecognized localities, demanding**

to participate, to be heard, and to have their say.

Both at Sidreh, where we dealt with high school equivalency studies, and at the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, where we deal with policy – **Shatil** has been our partner. For me, in particular, Shatil is Hedva and Shmulik, who've always demonstrated accessibility and support. Always – a listening ear. Always available. Limitations of time, money, or job description didn't concern them. They both dedicated themselves two hundred percent to the needs at hand. Like a stable, mature tree that shelters a young plant from a harsh wind. They were there [to advise on] on how to do things, on technical issues and also on essentials, on "why" to do things. On any need that arose, on any issue that had to be advanced – Shmulik guided and still guides us. From the level of how to write a position paper, when to appeal to council heads, how to establish a forum, how to develop a five-year plan. He moves ahead with us, stage by stage. It's clear that if you want to change policy, you need Shmulik.

And Hedva: the first course I took at Shatil Resource Management – I enrolled in only because Hedva encouraged me, really convinced me, to go from the Negev to Haifa to participate. That I had to. She made me realize that no meaningful civic change is possible without complete command of the supposedly prosaic issue of resource management, and she was right. Or – once a month Hedva would invite us to a consulting and training forum; there were disagreements, it

was complicated, but a community of activists for change emerged. Shatil provided support and made connections that we didn't make for ourselves, it built a community out of different social groups. Without guidance, support, or nurturing partners, it's easy let go of the mission and the burden of struggling for civil equality.

Nabila Espanyoli

Founder of the Al-Tufula Center for women's empowerment and the advancement of early childhood education in Arab society, advocate for the "Free Education Law" and for changing Israeli family law and raising the legal marriage age to 18.

I was born and raised in Nazareth, the seventh daughter in a family of ten children. My parents decided to have more and more children until a son appeared, the ninth child, followed by another son, the tenth. I was the not-son, one of many attempts along the way, and the difference between us was clear to me from an early age and sparked in me a desire for change.

At that stage, I understood that social work plays a role in generating change in society, and so right after high school I started working in

that field, still without training, in one of Nazareth's most problematic neighborhoods. There was a shortage of social workers, and I was regarded as someone who would later get university training, so I got in. But, to my surprise, I wasn't admitted to a study program. When I opened the envelope from the University of Haifa, I started crying. My sister, who was already studying, told me: "Those who cry, cry alone. Go fight for your right to study." Taking her advice, I went and got different answers from different units: your English, your Hebrew, your

I.Q. In reality I was just one Arab too many for the department [I'd applied to], they'd already accepted six others in that graduating class. That was where my struggle began against the injustices I saw facing me and facing my society. I went to the department head with the various answers I'd received, and with recommendations from reputable social workers who already knew me from my work in the field, and I told him that I wanted to understand. Two weeks from the start of the academic year, I was admitted to the department, and this brought home to me the power and possibility of change. That was my first fight, and I'd succeeded. I began my studies. **I haven't stopped fighting since, not just for my place and for myself, but also with other women**, and on behalf of women and Palestinian society as a whole.

Early childhood education and its immediate impact on women's options was an issue I came to almost by accident. I'd returned from Germany with a degree in clinical psychology and was looking for work in something meaningful that would improve the state of Arab society. I found a job training early-childhood caregivers in Akko. When I tried to find relevant

material, I found that almost nothing existed. It was all very preliminary. I started researching, writing, taking an interest in the field, trying to grasp the degree of the deficit. In response, I founded the Al-Tufula Center in Nazareth in 1989 – a center that promotes early childhood education and curriculum development, while working to empower female Palestinian citizens of Israel.

From 1992 to 1999 the Center strove to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood education in Arab society, and to promote its inclusion on the local community's agenda. This was a Sisyphean task that took a long time, but ultimately we succeeded in mobilizing the community and the local councils and driving internal change, first of all, along with the recognition that this represented a very significant opportunity for women's employment. If a woman doesn't have to stay home to watch the kids during the day, the options open to her for developing, studying, and working change drastically. The preschools themselves provided a lot of workplaces for women. When we started, there were almost no Arab-sector preschools anywhere

in the country; today, with over 3,600 preschools, there are another 3,600 workplaces for preschool teachers, teacher aides, supervisors, psychologists, and counselors. Nine preschool teacher training colleges also opened across the country. The entire field expanded.

It wasn't an easy process. In 1999, when the "Free Education Law" was declared, we were already prepared with physical infrastructures and appropriate personnel to move things forward, but we discovered that the list of "national priority" localities didn't include even one Arab village. We went to the Supreme Court and demanded clear eligibility criteria. Our proposal was for eligibility based on socioeconomic level: almost all the places in the low socioeconomic clusters are Arab villages. Ultimately, after a change of government, the proposal was approved and this was a huge success. For a great many years we'd tried to advance the issue, and with this law we created a real revolution. Up until 1992 only 12% of children in the Arab villages attended preschools, most of which were private and non-subsidized; today over 90% of these children are in preschool.

Besides expanding the [early childhood] field, which significantly improved women's employment capabilities in Arab society, we worked to promote women's status in other ways. We developed business entrepreneurship projects, we published the first directory to include hundreds of Arab women with various skills so as to reduce the incidence of social exclusion, and we changed the law so that Arab women could litigate in civil courts, not religious courts, on marital and family issues – which led to the legal marriage age being raised to 18. This wasn't a cause that was readily accepted; the Islamic Movement responded by targeting us and publishing our names as women advocating for the abomination known as *izruach*. But the results only strengthened us and drove us to improve our work.

Early in my career, I participated in training courses run by **Shatil** on the topics of management, policy change, and organizational work; these activities helped me establish and advance the Al-Tufula Center. But one of the most important things I got from Shatil was my participation in an early childhood education forum that they launched in 1992. We created an

action committee and a coalition to promote early childhood education in Palestinian society. I was the chair, and Jaber Asaqla was the forum coordinator on behalf of Shatil. He was involved in all of the operative stages: seminar preparation, applying to the local councils, conducting a survey of challenges, advocating in the Knesset, and contacting the right people. We presented our case, spoke, brought our knowledge to bear – the voice of our society; and Shatil supported, advised, guided, and developed our skills. With their help, I developed as a leader in the

field. For me, this is a very successful model of how to work with civil society, rather than in its place. Assistance that empowers and nurtures organizations' abilities, provides them with the right conditions for growth and for leading the desired change themselves. Ultimately, this was also how I worked with the women in Arab society, and this is how I believe they can move forward and enlarge the scope and resonance of the change.

Pnina Pfeuffer

*Executive Director and founder of HaTzibur
HaHaredi HaMamlakhti – an umbrella
organization advocating for an active and
influential Haredi civil society.*

As a young, divorced Haredi woman, I exited the safety zone in which I'd been living. The desire to see change for the better in my community had been with me from an early age: to see women sitting at the decision-making table as equals, to address the needs of the next generation of men who'd been deprived of basic life skills – I realized that the social price I'd already paid for my divorce could be put to good use in advancing social agendas outside my comfort zone.

I took part in all kinds of social and political initiatives. I founded the Labor Party's Haredi faction, so that a Haredi woman candidate could run in the primaries; I joined the board of the Yerushalmim movement, with which I ran for city council after reaching second place in the party's internal primaries. I launched a project called Mizrach that I still operate with the organization Ir Amim, to familiarize the neighboring Haredi community with issues relating to East Jerusalem and the Occupation. Although I didn't get into the city council, I realized

during the process that while I and others like me were fighting for political representation outside the Haredi parties, there was a need for an influential lobby through which we could promote the changes on which our efforts were focused.

I founded an umbrella organization for Haredi activists seeking to promote a mamlakhti ("statist") ultra-Orthodoxy, along with equality between and within all sectors. As an umbrella organization, each activist advocates for the issues of importance to him or her, and we all help each other. Essentially it's an orphanage for issues that no one in or out of Haredi society is engaged with. The issues are explosive ones in the Haredi world, such as women's status, sexual assault, and core studies for boys. Outside of the community, these things are perceived as "their issues," not as something politically worthwhile to deal with. Our mamlakhti approach is one of full civil equality – in rights and in obligations.

Since the organization was founded, we've succeeded in generating major change in Haredi society, in Israeli public life, and in the journey toward mamlachtiyut.

Regarding core studies, for instance: A decade ago, I'd argue with people about whether Haredi boys should study core subjects; now there's no longer any debate. Today people understand, they say there should be core studies, and the question is that of how to provide them. We're also fighting for the recognition of Haredi mamlakhti educational institutions – the mamachim. We want Haredi children to also be able to study in budgeted and supervised institutions with full core studies. Our struggle for institutional and legally-anchored recognition for the mamachim is now on the table and is being developed as proposed legislation. This is a topic whose internal importance to Haredi society lies in poverty reduction (most Haredi working people are poor) and in the ability to maintain the sector's unique way of life along with education and community welfare. Of course the Haredi public's large numerical size also affects the state economy and relations with the Haredi minority. The shortcuts attempted through training and employment integration at later stages proved to be failures, and so attention is being paid to our insistence on educational investment whose fruits we will all reap together.

Another example is the campaign to support the victims of Chaim Walder. After the investigative report on him was published, we saw that there were forces choosing the path of silence. We chose to act without going through the accepted channels. We printed over a million flyers that were distributed in Haredi cities and neighborhoods, with a clear message of believing the victims. We hung announcements on private mailboxes, we reached people directly without mediators, and we managed to change the discourse from one of silencing to one of believing and supporting the victims. In order to cover our costs, we ran a Headstart funding campaign, we raised a quarter of a million shekels in donations from the Israeli and American Haredi communities, and we proved that our voice is important to the public. Two weeks ago, we held a demonstration of Haredi girls against a school principal who had been found to be a molester, demanding that she be suspended. These are things that couldn't have happened without networking and consistent support by Haredi activists who take responsibility.

With regard to women's status, we've also succeeded in moving the discourse several steps forward. About

a year ago, a women's conference was held by the Bnei Brak Municipality; all of the speakers were men while the audience was all women. Thanks to our social media efforts, the municipality spokesman and the rest of the team realized that the conference didn't look good. This was a moment of success as we realized that the discourse had changed. Suddenly, women's status was being discussed. We'd moved from a point where no one cared about women's place in Haredi society, to a point where public discussion of the topic was happening.

The assumption that the Haredim are Israeli citizens, not guests, is fundamental to us. Our causes – women's status, preventing sexual abuse, fighting sectoral racism and, of course the mamlachti Haredi schools – these all look both inward and outward. What we demand of those on the outside, of the state, is that Haredim be treated as citizens, that the right to education, equality, and personal security be recognized. At the same time, we are working within the community to advance the civic approach as part of a fabric of groups sharing the public realm, and whose well-being depends on everyone's

success – regardless of faith, race, or gender.

Shatil's strategic work with us was very meaningful and helped us to focus. From the beginning – drawing up a work plan, mapping target audiences, joining coalitions, and connecting with other organizations. Shatil takes

a long-term view; things that now seem marginal, outside the consensus, avant-garde, are suddenly entering the consensus thanks to Shatil's work with us. The support we received when the initiative was in its infancy enabled us to generate change in Haredi society – change that is spreading to Israeli society as a whole.

Netanel Shaller

CEO of Havruta, a nonprofit that has been in operation since 2007 and serves the religious LGBTQ community.

I was standing at the funeral of a friend from the army who'd committed suicide, a good friend. I was in the middle of my law internship. This friend had once asked me, while we were in the army, if I was gay, and told me about himself, that he came from a Haredi home and when he'd come out to his family, they'd cut off all contact with him. We were good friends. And suddenly, there at the funeral, I realized that his family basically hadn't known him since he was seventeen, they didn't even know what he looked like. They asked

us, his friends, for pictures of him so they could identify their son. That experience was so upsetting, I felt that I had to do something. I became a volunteer spokesman for the Havruta, Bat Kol and Shoal organizations and, later, CEO of Havruta.

One of the first issues we dealt with was that of conversion therapy. Our data show that, despite all of the awareness and public discussion, there's actually been a rise in the number of people undergoing conversion therapy. One of the saddest cases I've encountered was

that of a 14-year-old boy who came out to his parents. Their response was that maybe they could try and treat it and change his orientation, and since then he hasn't gotten out of bed, doesn't eat, just lies in his room. We founded the Center for Fighting Conversion Therapy. The Center is a collaboration of ours with the Tel Aviv Municipality and every day we see how necessary it is. **Our position at the Center is that conversion therapy isn't therapy; on the contrary – it's damaging.** We spent a long time gathering data, research and any information that could help our clients and their families, and we work to ensure that the information reaches all those who need it. In general, we've noticed that the therapy people get from professionals isn't always the kind of therapy that's right for them.

For example, clients who come from religious backgrounds need someone who speaks their language. So we assist with that as well, we help those who ask us for help finding therapists appropriate for them. Recently we also opened a group therapy framework for victims of conversion therapy, a group operated with guidance by psychologists and other professionals.

We are extremely occupied with the halachic issue. People come to us and ask to consult specifically with a halachic figure acceptable to them. There are several rabbis who work with us with whom we can consult about the queries we receive and can get their help. Ultimately, these situations carry a great shadow of sin whose punishment is death, and that's earth-shattering for a person of faith. Or parents have concerns regarding the family life that their son will or won't have. Of course they seek a rabbi's advice and we connect them to the best of our ability. Regarding Haredim it's a little more complicated, since there aren't a lot of Haredi rabbis who will agree to answer these questions, but we aren't giving up the search. Our work is often also with religious teachers, ramim (teacher-rabbis) and rabbis – so they'll know how to give the optimal answer to the next young student who contacts them, or to the one who's already done so.

Another major issue is that of community development. In the end, religious people and Haredim are very used to community life, and homosexuality isolates them.

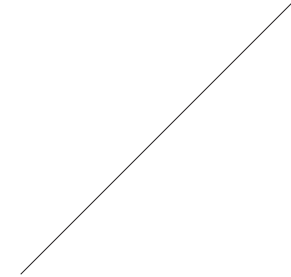
For example, at a Shabbat we held for all members of our community, we went to a hostel far from the center of the country, a place where people would be able really be with us through the entire Shabbat. This was a religious Shabbat in every way – prayer services, meals and Shabbat songs. Shabbat came in, and during prayers at synagogue someone showed up with a white mask, like a drama mask, that covered his entire face. We tried to reach out to him but it didn't go very well, he participated the entire evening with his mask on. There were prayers, and then a meal, and singing and talking into the night. In the morning he appeared, and suddenly went outside for a moment and returned without the mask. He sang along with everyone and participated. At the end of the Shabbat he told us it had been the most important Shabbat of his life.

We also frequently deal with issues of visibility and publicity. I'm always pushing for real pictures from our events. It's not just a spokesperson thing. There are a lot of life and death situations here. Secrecy and concealment cause extreme reactions and we're fighting this through documentation and dissemination,

and by demonstrating presence in the public realm. If someone has personal examples and role models, if they realize they can still have a community, maybe they won't commit suicide because they're attracted to members of their own sex. This normalization is dramatic, and I see that there's more and more willingness to be photographed.

Shatil was there for Havruta and for me from the outset. From the level of how to be the spokesperson for an event, how to build a budget, how to raise funds, how to manage staff, how to draft a work plan. There were questions of substance as well, Shatil was always there to help guide the way. Two advisors were appointed to assist us, Milana and Elinor, and I feel that many of Havruta's achievements wouldn't have happened without their attention and positive outlook. Today, as an organization, Havruta is a mature tree that gives a lot to Israeli society; creating change in terms of the LGBTQ community's acceptance in religious society – and that's very much to the credit of our beneficent farmer, Shatil, who guided us and still guides us all along the way.

7.



**Justice
Justice We
Shall Pursue**

Lara Zinman

Chair of "Families of Murder Victims", advocate for the Rights of Victims of Crime Law and for the establishment of victim aid centers.

"Lara," a law reporter asked me in the corridor, "What are you doing here?" I said nothing, not entirely sure myself what I was doing at the court deliberations about the murder of a son of some mother who wasn't me. "What are you doing here?" the court reporter, who knew me, likewise asked. Again I was silent. A month after my daughter Ganit's murder trial ended, I found myself returning to the courthouse again and again, as though, by sitting there and listening to deliberation upon deliberation I'd somehow understand what had

happened to us as well. I'd understand how someone could take the life of another person; how someone kills a person and shatters an entire family in an instant. For 26 years now I've been attending court proceedings and I still don't understand.

Friends and relatives told me: You're dragging yourself down with all these proceedings. Go back to computer programming at the Technion, read, listen to music, travel, go back to being the sociable, people-loving Lara we knew, get out of the courthouse.

There were many others who ignored the situation, as though it could just be glossed over. And a few others for whom my presence caused fear and anxiety, as though I might say something too painful to bear. I very soon realized that it's almost illegitimate to talk about coping with murder, and that murder is somehow perceived as dirty. I set myself a goal to behave in a totally normal manner, but in the end I isolated myself: You don't want or aren't able to know? Then I won't tell.

On that day in the courthouse, at the end of the session, I went up to the murder victim's mother and introduced myself. I said that I was so sorry for her loss, that I'd help however I could, based on my own experience, which at the time wasn't much. We hugged, long and hard. That was the first time I felt the mask was off, that I could speak freely and be understood. It was a deep and intuitive connection. An automatic click between two women whose worlds had been similarly destroyed. We could tell each other anything. As we talked and got to know each other, I realized **we shared similar experiences of callousness on the part of the legal system, which didn't recognize us, the families, as**

victims. The fact is that the families go through all sorts of crises, and can't afford to concentrate on mourning or on memorializing the victims. They're thrust into a foreign and alienating world of crime, and if they're lucky, the murderer will be caught. At that stage, we were two women with a similar kind of pain who'd found each other and were seeking contact with families in our situation.

Two years later, we answered the call of Ora Berez, whose daughter Tamar had also been murdered, and who had invited anyone who'd been through a similar experience to contact her. Together we founded an organization that unites families whose loved ones have been murdered. We gathered together and decided to work toward changing the situation, and to advocate for the rights of families within the criminal justice framework. In those days, we weren't even notified about court proceedings or plea bargains. As far as the system was concerned, we didn't exist.

What we did in the organization was to promote change in the status of the victims of deadly crime. In 2001, Israel's Rights of Victims of Crime Law was

was passed; the law obligates all relevant parties to provide information and to accept the families' positions on plea bargains and remission of the final third of jail terms for murderers (and the perpetrators of other crimes). In 2009, in accordance with recommendations we had submitted to an inter-ministerial committee, and per a government decision, aid centers were established with funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security. The purpose of the centers was to provide families with mental health care and legal assistance, as there are families that collapse financially and emotionally due to the disaster and its repercussions. While continuing to advocate for the rights of crime victims, we also worked hard to promote legislation aimed at crime prevention and mitigation, and to place the struggle against violence on the public agenda. Our efforts included informational activity with educational institutions, collaboration with academic research, organizing conferences, and actively participating in victim memorial events. Today, families feel more present than they did in the past. Along with the institutional aid, we hasten to reach the families; we come to the shiva, the courts. We need them to know from

the outset that they won't be alone, and that there are other families in the same situation.

We came to **Shatil** as green as we could possibly have been, with zero experience in public activity. There are a lot of people out there developing big and novel ideas without direction. We had Shatil to support us, from the level of how to establish a nonprofit, when to open a bank account, how to manage volunteers, when to submit reports, to the level of founding a Knesset subcommittee and submitting position papers and recommendations that will be adopted and that will completely change the lives of crime victims. Even before we became a registered nonprofit, we were invited to participate in a coalition of organizations coordinated by Shatil that dealt with the rights of crime victims. With the help of Carlos and Shlomit, we clarified our goals, as distinct from the goals of other organizations in the coalition. The greatness of Shatil – and especially of Carlos and Shlomit – was that it filled vacuums. For example: at that time we had no legal advisor. Our joint work with the other coalition members who did have legal advisors helped us as well. Or: if position papers were being

submitted by coalition members, we learned from them how to write position papers. Nobody looked down on us, as sometimes happens with victims. And I contributed something as well – I knew English and the Internet, and so I provided major assistance to the coalition members by accessing material from other countries.

At one discussion, in 2007, Shlomit turned to me and said: "Lara, you have to join the inter-ministerial committee headed by the Social Affairs Ministry deputy director general, they're working on an aid

program for some victim groups, your organization is needed there." If Shlomit says something – she knows. I entered the committee – which was supposed to be active for 3 weeks and ended up lasting a year and a half – and ultimately, it was only the recommendations we submitted regarding the victims of deadly crime that were approved. Without Shatil's guidance, I don't think we'd have reached such major legislative achievements, and the victims of deadly crime would have nothing to rely on.

Amitay Korn

Chair and cofounder of the Kol Zchut website, which provides validated and no-cost information on social rights. Last year, five million Israelis were aided by the site.

And ... exit!

In 2006 we celebrated the sale of TefenSoft to Mercury (later HP). Per the sale agreement, I had to stay with the company for another three years, which enabled me to take a break from the intensiveness of entrepreneurial life. When those (slow-moving) years came to an end, I realized I was still full of energy and that the right thing for me to do would be to connect my entrepreneurial-technological experience with a social goal. But what that goal would be, I didn't yet know. I encountered Erez Perlmutter,

with whom I'd once had a business relationship; in the course of conversation he raised the issue that people don't know what their rights are, and so they don't exercise them. This sparked the idea of creating a website that would make people's rights in all areas of life accessible, in Hebrew and Arabic. To this day we quibble about whether it took us a week or a month to decide whether we were going to do it. The project got underway like a startup: a small and committed team working from home (and from the train ...), surrounded by

a thick cloud of indulgent skepticism from all sides.

I studied the topic for a year, and realized that the entire framing of rights accessibility was incorrect. People thought about rights only in terms of society's most disadvantaged members: people with disabilities or illness. I interviewed a lot of people, and two examples made me realize the framing was problematic: In one case, when I asked (affluent) parents of children on the autistic spectrum about their rights, they smiled bitterly. Everything they knew came from other parents whom they'd met in their children's frameworks, or from non-current websites of this or that organization. The other example had to do with labor rights. I myself was once a construction worker, and then I became a capitalist. I'd seen life from both sides. I knew that rights in this sphere weren't being exercised, and how could they be – when it wasn't clear what they were?

Laws, rulings, regulations, petitions, precedents – how to make them accessible – this was our next great question. **The trick we came up with – originally a combination of ignorance and chutzpah – was**

to attack the problem as one of information management, and to decide it was doable. The fact that we didn't know legal language helped us seek accessibility, mediation, for ourselves first of all: Is the information understandable to us like this? In some other way? What's missing? By late 2010 we already had 700-800 very incomplete information sheets ... But those who saw them said there was something important there. We went live. Today – 12 years later – the information on Kol Zchut is clear and simple, oriented toward getting readers to act, and displayed in a set format: who's eligible, how to claim the right, what can be done when it's denied, what other rights the person's eligible for, and which aid organizations can help. It's the largest free database on the rights of Israeli citizens. It's accessible and so up-to-date that even law and social work professionals use it today. Since June 2021, the site's been fully funded by the Ministry of Justice, but with "academic freedom" in terms of writing the content. Another kind of exit ...

The idea of engaging with the rights problem was sparked by Erez's participation in **Shatil's** Social Economists program under

the direction of Eran Klein. Basically, we started out from there. If not for The idea of engaging with the rights problem was sparked by Erez's participation in **Shatil's** Social Economists program under the direction of Eran Klein. Basically, we started out from there. If not for the information and the experience, we wouldn't have been aware of this lacuna, and wouldn't necessarily have acted to change it. Even during our planning year we were helped greatly by Eran, who assisted us in

the preparation of our business plan, introduced us to social organizations such as Yedid that deal with the exercising of rights, and put us in contact with the Research Department of the Bank of Israel and the National Insurance Institute. And afterward – at every juncture or on any question, we knew there was someone to turn to. It's important to me to say – if we were a commercial enterprise, Shatil would probably have had at least 30% of the founders' shares. No less :-)

Yofi Tirosh

Feminist jurist and law professor, fights the spread of women's exclusion and segregation of the sexes in Israel.

At the beginning of the last decade, I started feeling that my **sense of Israel as a progressive place in terms of commitment to gender equality needed to be reexamined**. We'd all been reared on that ethos; on the pioneering figures of Golda Meir and Hannah Szenes; and we also have very progressive legislation on issues of equality. Suddenly, occurrences started popping up that seemed to have come from a different era. I discovered that academic programs and study tracks were opening in Israel that featured segregation of men and women – albeit for the important goal

of integrating Haredim in academia and the labor market. This in itself fairly stunned me, and the more I learned about it, the more astonished I was, as I found that segregation also entails discrimination, nearly always and as a function of its inner logic. Female instructors in segregated tracks couldn't teach men, although the opposite wasn't a problem, and thus these instructors' employment equality was compromised. Study programs offered to Haredi women students differed from those offered to the men; the women were tracked for low-status and low-income

occupations. Furthermore, the segregation slid from the classrooms into the public realm – separation in the cafeteria and the library, sights highly reminiscent of the racial segregation between blacks and whites in the United States of a century ago. In some places there is even policing of the women students' modesty levels – "If you come without stockings, you can't take the test." All of this was promoted under the auspices of the Council for Higher Education in Israel, a state entity, and without considering the impact of the new arrangements on women's equality in academia. As I predicted, these segregation precedents created a slippery slope. Segregation spread from Bachelor's to Master's degree studies, and from there to state-sponsored professional training. Since that time, we have seen Knesset members ask that women not sit next to them in the plenum; cultural events have been funded by municipalities for the Haredi public that only men were allowed to enter; female parliamentary aides have been barred from entering the Knesset because their skirts were too short; bus drivers have kept young women from boarding because their pants were "immodest."

Despite the importance of the goals, and the desire to exhibit tolerance and cultural sensitivity, as a society we cannot sacrifice gender equality or women's human dignity. Not in the public realm, and not under the sponsorship of state institutions. I have therefore devoted the better part of my efforts over the last decade toward the advancement of a discourse in which Israeli society had never before engaged.

I've organized academic conferences; I've started researching the topic, writing about it and being interviewed on it in the popular media; I speak to diverse audiences and advise behind the scenes on legal proceedings. I do all this with the aim of highlighting the dilemmas and finding ways of elucidating and resolving them, so that the right balance can be struck between integration and equality. For 7 years I led a Supreme Court petition that asked the Court to examine the legality of gender segregation in academia. In July 2021, the Supreme Court issued a ruling in an expanded panel of 5 justices. Those were hard years in which I also experienced personal attacks that didn't always have to do with the matter at hand. My outlook was

condemned for imposing Western feminist values on the Haredi public; I was accused of being hostile to religion and of wanting the Haredim to "stay in their bubble." **But in my view this wasn't a zero-sum game with winners and losers. Our challenge is to find a way of living here together.** In its ruling, the Supreme Court recognized that gender separation undermines equality and women's dignity, but maintained that it was justified in light of the goal of integrating Haredim, so long as it was proportional – i.e., so long as the discrimination against women instructors and students ceased. Our homework for today is to verify that the discrimination against women instructors and students in academia is indeed being addressed as the Supreme Court instructed.

This was the first time that the Supreme Court dealt with the legality of gender segregation; apropos of the issue (and this is a major achievement), the topic of segregation in academia and in general became one that Israeli society is aware of and engaged with.

Five years ago, we took another step forward in our struggle and in the attempt to influence public

discourse: in cooperation with **Shatil**, the Forum Against the Exclusion of Women was founded. The Forum unites organizations active in the field, and facilitates collaboration between them. One of the most important things it offers is a place for dialogue between different organizations and between secular, Haredi, and National Religious feminists, and for the joint exploration of dilemmas. It is a framework for mapping the relevant challenges and strategies, and for dividing up the work between the activists involved. Shatil was the soil out of which a diverse community grew – a community whose joint efforts illuminated the degree to which the challenge is cross-sectional and increasingly widespread. We've partly succeeded in halting the trend for now, as with the petition to prevent separate professional training programs. But there are still many fronts. My message is that anyone who wants to participate in Israeli society is more than welcome to do so, but one should be aware that there are women in it, everywhere.

Itzik Dessie

Founder and former CEO of the Tebeka Association ("Advocate for Justice" in Amharic), founder of the Clinic for the Promotion of Equality at Bar-Ilan University, the first lawyer in Israel of Ethiopian descent.

2002. An excited father goes to the principal's office to register his son for first grade at the elementary school near his home. He entered with a kind of hesitancy typical of Ethiopian immigrants, those who innocently believed that government decisions were meant to benefit the common citizen. The principal told him: "Sorry, the school's already filled its 25% quota of Ethiopian students, you'll have to find someplace else for your child." The father was pained by the decision, but like many other Ethiopian immigrants he couldn't

conceive that the state would discriminate against his son, or that it wouldn't let him go to school with his friends from kindergarten, from the neighborhood, just because his parents were of Ethiopian background. That conversation with the principal was recorded, televised, and made a lot of noise. The principal hadn't acted on his own but rather in accordance with official Ministry of Education policy as implemented in the schools since 1992. This policy was supposedly intended to cope with the "problem" of large concentrations of children of

Ethiopian parents in specific schools. The idea of petitioning the High Court of Justice was unimaginable for that father, but no choice remained. Thanks to the petition, a place in the class was found for the child, and the Education Ministry's quota policy was abolished.

Ethiopian immigrants' lack of awareness of the "rules of the game" in their new country was very striking and reflected a need for protection of the Ethiopian Israeli community's legal rights, and for improvement in the community's status. Thus the Tebeka Association ("Advocate for Justice" in Amharic) was born. The organization has been active on four planes: the courts – legal counsel and representation, including petitions to the Supreme Court; decision makers and policy makers – drafting and presenting position papers on a variety of issues; opinion makers – making effective use of the media, and holding seminars and conferences; and the Ethiopian community – raising awareness of rights and obligations.

There are two "opposing" indicators of Tebeka's success: first, the number of requests for assistance in the civic injustice sphere multiplied many times

over, which means that there was greater awareness in the community. During the organization's early years of activity, people weren't aware that they had rights and that there are ways of exercising them, and so only a small percentage of immigrants turned to us. Over the years, the number of queries grew. Secondly, and in contrary fashion, the number of requests dropped later on, indicating that the organization's efforts were having a significant effect, that employers were aware that workers from the community had a legal advocate – that there was deterrence. In most cases, it was enough for a Tebeka student volunteer to call the employer and tell him, "Listen, we represent So-and-So," and the response at the other end of the line would be "Okay, I understand, it's taken care of."

From the outset, I went to study law as a tool for social change. I only became aware of the true magnitude of the task once I was involved. Even so, I'm optimistic – both due to our achievements, and because that's the only way not to become passive.

The status of the community is much better than it was before. The younger generation doesn't back down; when there's injustice there's an outcry, and that shows the existence of a shared vision and community solidarity. In recent years, though, there's been a sense of disconnection between organizations active at the national level, and young activists in the community. Young people don't seem to understand that demonstrations and protests are a means and not a goal; on the other hand, the organizations aren't managing to channel the younger generation's energies to advance the community's interests. For example, in 2007 there were protests following an event known as the Second Blood Scandal. Students and young adults (including Gadi Yevarkan) wanted to lead the protests without the big organizations being involved. At that time, in addition to my position as CEO of Tebeka, I was serving as chairman of Representatives of Ethiopian Jewish Community Organizations. We held a dialogue with the young people, and agreed that they'd lead the protests on the ground, while the organizations would provide logistical and professional support. The young protesters took it upon themselves

to draw up a list of demands to be presented to the Prime Minister. But on the day of the demonstration I was notified that the list of demands didn't exist. I immediately dialed my friend from Shatil, Shmulik David, and explained the matter to him. Within a few minutes we'd drafted a list of demands, and an hour later the document was in my hands, printed in multiple copies. The document formed the basis for a five-year plan for the Ethiopian Jewish communities, however much I might criticize it. In this way, a demonstration set the stage for real change.

Shatil was there whenever I turned to them. Even when I stepped down from my position at Tebeka and worked to launch the Clinic for the Promotion of Equality at Bar-Ilan University, Gideon Ambia and Carlos were the first ones I went to for brainstorming and professional assistance. They arranged consultation for me at Shatil, and together we focused the vision and the clinic's goals. The organizational, practical side is an area where I got extensive support from Shatil – for the clinic and also for Tebeka. I'd come with questions – What does one actually do? How do you define goals and a vision? How do you raise funds? How

do you write applications? How do you set priorities? How do you collaborate with other organizations? How do you word a press release so it'll make it into the news? How do you keep publicizing the story afterward? And Shatil would have the answers. It was

kind of “nurturing” of the optimism you need to support people who've been discriminated against due to their group affiliation, and to advance the implementation of laws meant to ensure equality.

Susan Weiss

Founder and director of the Center for Women's Justice – an organization established in 2004 for the purpose of safeguarding women's right to equality, dignity, and justice in the rabbinical court framework.

When I immigrated to Israel as a young family law attorney, I was surprised by the chaos I saw in the courts. I came to do justice and all I saw was injustice. In one of my first cases, I represented a young woman, a convert to Judaism, who wanted to regain custody of her son. We came prepared and equipped with legal tools for making our case; before us stood a to'en rabbani, a rabbinical pleader, who represented the woman's husband. What he came equipped with I don't know, because large segments of the proceedings were conducted between him and the court rabbis in Yiddish! A language that

neither I nor my client understand. I couldn't comprehend how a legal proceeding could be held in such a way, and immediately after the trial I filed an appeal with the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, based on various arguments and a political position of taking great care not to affect what goes on in the rabbinical courts, decided not to intervene. The woman I represented, out of a sense of devastating powerlessness, backed down. She gave up her son in the face of an indifferent, foot-dragging system whose very language she couldn't understand. I realized that

I was facing a major problem. There was no justice here for the woman, no justice for the child, no justice at all.

As a private lawyer, I saw up close the exploitation that becomes possible within this system. More and more women are trapped in marriages they don't want. They're mesuravot get (women subjected to divorce refusal) until they agree to give their husbands custody of the children, until they forgo the child support money to which they're entitled, or even until they pay their husbands out of their own pockets. I, as their legal counsel, couldn't know when the legal proceedings would end, or what they had to prove in order to win the case. There weren't and still aren't regulations that are clear, and certainly not transparent, in the rabbinical court. Sometimes I'd arrive at the court and they wouldn't be willing to hear the case at all. In particular they'd refrain from ruling something concrete, so as to avoid "pressuring" the husband, which is a halachic problem. In this way, years could pass, and each woman had to consider very carefully how much her freedom was worth.

At some point I realized that the problem was greater than one of husbands and dayanim (religious judges) – that it couldn't be solved from within. Taking a page from Audre Lorde, a feminist thinker who maintains that **the master's house can't be dismantled with the master's tools, but that tools from outside** the patriarchy are needed, I understood that something else was required. It was necessary to awaken and involve the secular-civil arm of the state for an external response to the prevailing injustices.

I opened the Center for Women's Justice in 2004, with a team of women attorneys. Together we filed tort claims in civil courts around the country against sarvanei get (divorce-refusing husbands), to establish that the husband harms his wife when he refuses her a divorce; to ensure that there would be a price for his refusal, and thereby to change the attitude and the status quo regarding sarvanut get. Instead of a halachic right, this became a legal injustice. We took on cases of mesuravot get and helped the women, but our main goal was to change the status quo. To make the country more democratic and more equal. To promote civil marriage, to

protect agunot (women trapped in unwanted marriages), mamzerim (children of religiously-forbidden couples) who are inscribed in the Rabbinat's "blacklist" and unable to receive child support money, inheritances, or even the right to meet with their biological parents), women converts to Judaism whose conversions can be rescinded years later by the courts, and more.

In the framework of CWJ activity, we have developed prenuptial and postnuptial agreements that ease the problem of being trapped in unwanted marriages. These agreements cover the issue of damages and were published in 2015. Since then, they have been adopted by a number of organizations, and today more and more couples are signing them before their weddings.

One of the main difficulties we have encountered concerns the Supreme Court, which for political reasons would refrain from ruling against religious entities, and preferred not to decide in such cases but rather to find pragmatic and solutions. We at the CWJ decided to continue filing petition after petition to the Supreme Court, even if we wouldn't win – because the

statement itself is what's important. It's what influences public opinion and generates systemic change. I realized that such change would come from below. Not from halacha, not from the outside – from the courts or the Supreme Court – but rather from the people.

That's the reason why **Shatil** has been such a significant part of our activity over the years. They help us in all areas related to public opinion – organizing support groups, building a community, contacting Knesset members for help with legislation. From them I learned how to use the power of the social media – we've put up a relevant and active website, created and promoted a podcast entitled Mevakrot BaRabbanut (a pun: "Women Visiting/Criticizing the Rabbinat"), and built a forum called Dim'at Ha'Ashukim ("Tears of the Oppressed") that tries to mobilize academics and religious figures to deal with the issue of mamzerut. These things are useful and have a major impact, and changing the discourse is critical.

Mandy (Amanda) Leighton-Bellichach

Chair of "Bizchut" (By Right) and founder of the Israeli Society for Fighting Pain, promotes the recognition of chronic pain, accessible and individually-tailored treatment. Member of the New Israel Fund International Council.

At age 20 I went from being an active person planning a life of energetic effort, to a wheelchair. Less than 4 months into a pre-army course, I started getting stress fractures that resulted in knee surgery with complications. From there – very severe nerve pain syndrome. And then crutches. And finally a wheelchair, without which, and without strong pain medication, I can't function. I realized I could no longer make the contribution I'd wanted to, as an officer; I'd no longer become a drama therapist as I'd imagined. All

my intentions and plans came to a screeching halt; my body became a kind of obstacle that stood between me and my dreams. I found it very hard to deal with the physical pain I felt, and there were other sources of pain; first of all, a complex illness leading to frequent hospitalization, but also people's looks, and meetings with doctors where I perceived a very hurtful unreceptiveness on their part. From someone who wanted to devote her life to helping others, I became someone who needs help, I became that other.

I remember a moment that was a turning point for me: I was crossing a street and a car blocked the ramp in front of me – and thus my ability to cross and continue on my way. The driver flung out: "I'll be right back," and then disappeared, returning to clear the way for me only after long minutes had passed. At that moment, while I was stuck in the road, I knew I had only two options: either I'd give up on life, or I'd undertake to do something to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

I started volunteering with Bizchut – the Human Rights Center for People with Disabilities, with an emphasis on media and advocacy for Knesset legislation. Among other things, I was involved in advancing the first part of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law. This was a stage at which discourse in society – and, naturally, in the Knesset – was concerned solely with charity: "We have to help disabled people and those in need" – exactly the opposite of what we were trying to promote at the Center. It's amazing to see how the language has changed since then, and how much power it has to influence reality. Later I joined the organization's board, and now I'm the

chair. Over the years, we've advanced legislation to make buses and voting stations accessible to people with disabilities, to integrate children with special needs in regular schools, and more. My work at Bizchut has given me the strength and ability to act for the good of others and, ultimately, for my own benefit.

From time to time I'd speak with this or that doctor and explain more about my experience of chronic pain, what it is and how one copes with it. It dawned on me how much misunderstanding there is – especially among those who are actually supposed to understand, to know and to provide care. A realization that had been taking shape for some time finally crystalized: an organization specializing in pain issues was needed. I got to work on establishing such an organization in Israel, while also taking part in the founding of a European umbrella organization for chronic pain patients, whose first president I became.

At the Israeli Society for Fighting Pain we fought for recognition of pain as a disease in its own right. In 2005, when we started working to ensure the inclusion of 6 pain medications

and treatments in the subsidized drug basket, we sparked a real revolution: the discourse changed from one focused solely on extending people's lives to one that also talks about the quality of those lives. During this period, despite excruciating pain, I'd go to physical therapy, then to the Knesset, then to table tennis practice, and then back to work at the organization. Everything that helps manage pain makes the dramatic difference between being unable to function and being able to function, to be independent, to live.

We also fought with regard to the type of treatment, and to highlight the importance of understanding and trust between patient and treatment provider. We taught patients mostly through a hotline; we taught treatment providers and Ministry of Health personnel via talks and by communicating the needs of people with pain. Today, after hard work, and thanks to the pain specialty that we introduced into Israeli medical centers, many more physician pain specialists are accessible to patients, and there's a deeper understanding of their world. We brought about a profound attitudinal change within the system. Today, for instance, when a patient

comes to the emergency room, he's always asked what his level of pain is.

Later, together with a medical psychologist named Gabi Golan, we developed a model for coping with chronic pain. We provided tools for coping and a space for belonging, and encouraged people to live independently and meaningfully along with, and in spite of, severe pain.

I didn't always have anyone to consult with, until I got to **Shatil**. At Bizchut they'd counseled us on the big campaigns, given us direction and focus. When I started the association, I received guidance from an advisor named Tamar who taught me how to work systematically at the organizational level – appointing a board, consolidating the organization's divisions, and deciding which campaigns to choose and how to bring them to fruition. It meant a lot, not to feel alone in the effort. Shatil brought a living spirit into our work, enthusiasm; to me, this kind of spirit is what breathes life into an organization. And, as we like to say at the association – life wins out over pain.

Sari Revkin

CEO of Shatil between 1984 and 1997. Founding CEO of Yedid - The Association for Community Empowerment winner of the Rappaport Prize for women generating change in Israeli society (2014).

Like many New Yorkers, I would go on Sundays to a baseball park with my father. If we'd wanted, we could have gone inside, to see the games, but we stayed outside listening to the announcer and the cheering of the fans. This was in the early 1960s. Blacks still weren't allowed in as spectators, and [one Sunday] a rally was being held against this form of discrimination by the gate of the ballpark we went to. I was a little girl, 5 years old, it was a hot Brooklyn summer day, and I was very bored. "When are we going?" I asked. Silence. I went on: "Daddy, enough

with this demonstration, when are we going?" Again, silence. My father leaned down to me, looked at me for a few moments, and answered: "Little girl, we're not going anywhere until we succeed. We won't stop until blacks can also enter the ballpark like me and you." **That moment has stayed with me all my life: to fight against injustice and not to give up, not to despair, until we've won.**

Equipped with this understanding, and no longer a child, it became very clear to me what I wanted to do in life – to

fix things. While studying for a Master's degree in community social work, I was given my first opportunity to engage in repair. A social rights center for welfare mothers was being developed in Baltimore. We first helped these mothers become aware of their right to benefits and state assistance, and then to demand and receive them. In this way we succeeded in improving their living conditions. Later we also demanded fair and affordable housing for all of these single-parent families, who'd been living up till then in disgraceful conditions. In the course of this campaign, I realized how much power a group and a joint organizational effort can have, especially where disadvantaged populations are concerned. I also came to understand how crucial it is to be aware of one's rights, and I started to understand the tremendous difficulties that bureaucracy poses to those wishing to exercise their rights.

Eventually, in Israel, I'd establish Yedid, an organization that promotes awareness and navigates red tape so those who need to exercise their rights won't give up, especially people from the periphery and the disadvantaged strata of society. It's not enough for civil society to open

air-conditioned offices in the center of the country; it needs to go out into the field and operate in the remote periphery, along with large-scale supportive activity at the national level. Our rights centers operated from 1997 to 2020 in accordance with this vision: from Rahat and Ashkelon in the south, to Safed, Kiryat Shmona and Hatzor HaGlilit in the north. The centers provided aid and support free of charge to 30 thousand individuals and families per year. We didn't use income testing, there were no preconditions for the receipt of our services. We worked in both Arab and Jewish localities, and provided aid to everyone who turned to us and utilized our services. The Yedid centers helped their clients exercise their rights, cope with everyday difficulties, and interact with the state authorities: whether it was public housing, the Ministry of Welfare, or the rights of single-parent families.

One day I visited our center in Sderot and came across a woman who was crying. She told me that she'd sent her child to school that morning with a sandwich consisting of two slices of bread with nothing between them.

His friends found out and laughed at her son, who came home crying. No one who earns a good salary can really understand how a family can earn less than NIS 2500, how it is when there really isn't anything to spread between two slices of bread. We guided this mother through the process of obtaining her entitlements, but we also found a gap in the law on this issue. From this hungry, tearful child we achieved – after exerting pressure – a governmental allocation of NIS 200 million for food security in 2014. From efforts on the ground to supportive activity at the policy level, and back.

Shatil, from a certain perspective constitutes the culmination of this activity. Let's go back a moment in time. Even before I immigrated to Israel, while still in the US, I was interested in the work of the New Israel Fund. I immigrated to Israel in the early 1980s and I was active in the Shutafut ("Partnership") organization in Haifa, which connected Jews and Arabs; I wanted to work on behalf of equality and justice in Israeli society. For 14 years, starting in 1984, I served as CEO of Shatil, and I'm proud to say that I built up and developed the organization. From a small entity

with an excellent idea, I turned it into an infrastructural organization that helped, and continues to help, hundreds of social change organizations to develop their ability to have an impact on policy, to raise funds for their own development, and to operate programs and projects that advance the organizations' goals.

During these years, the social change organizations were at a growth and development stage. We came to work with all of these groups and communities in Israel's periphery, from the Bedouins in the Negev, to immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, the Ethiopian immigrant community, single mothers, and public housing tenants. Shatil was the only entity that helped not only associations, but also these communities and organizations to grow. The entire concept of civil society and community organizations was still new in Israel. We learned a lot from the experience that I brought, and that others brought, from the United States and from elsewhere in the world. In Israel there were organizations, but they were very institutionalized and large, usually organizations that provided services. We actually sought, and also found, the more community-

based places, and the rights and advocacy organizations, those dealing with social justice, employment, housing, rights – everything that had an effect on people's everyday lives. We built the idea of "social change" with our own hands and a lot of legwork. The idea was that the injustice and inequality that exist in society could be changed through public and community demands and activities directed at the state and the authorities. Impact could be generated by citizens organizing together, in cooperation with professionals, and society could be improved. We were the first to create coalitions of organizations that brought about policy and legislative change. The New

Israel Fund and, with it, Shatil, were the first to say: Third sector organizations don't just need philanthropy; they also need consulting, training, and guidance that will develop their independent ability to have an impact and succeed.

I like to make things happen, especially those things that everyone said wouldn't happen ... It's important and crucial to look back and be proud of what we've already done. Of what's already been achieved. And, at the same time – to look forward, to be fully aware of what still needs to be fixed, changed, amplified, advanced. We'll keep working until we succeed.

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