MIGAL Galilee Research Institute Gender Equality Plan

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By Dr Sigal Fishman

# The Gender Equality plan of MIGAL

## 1. Introduction

### MIGAL GALILEE RESEARCH INSTITUTE LTD (MIGAL)

MIGAL (https://www.migal.org.il/en), located in the northern periphery of Israel, is a regional research and development centre. Its employees include 90 PhDs and 190 researchers, which are part of 44 research groups specialising in biotechnology and computational sciences, plant science, precision agriculture and environmental sciences, as well as food, nutrition and health. As a leading institute for applied research in the region, MIGAL aims to strengthen and promote scientific innovation and spur economic growth. MIGAL serves as a focal point for scientific developments, as well as for science-community relations in the Galilee. MIGAL's researchers collaborate with local, regional and international research organisations and universities, maintaining high levels of achievement and excellence. Furthermore, MIGAL strives to enhance economic opportunities for the local community and provide scientific and educational tools for students at the nearby Tel-Hai College, where MIGAL senior researchers serve as faculty members.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for MIGAL, was first set up in the Horizon 2020 R&I PEERS project framework (2018), "Pilot experiences for improving gender equality in research organisations".

## 2. Context analysis from a gender perspective

### The National Context in ISRAEL

The equality of women and men has already occupied an important space in Israeli legislation and politics for several decades. The 13th Israeli Parliament (Knesset) established the Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women in 1992. The Committee's work, as defined in the Knesset bylaws, was to advance the status of women with the goal of achieving equal representation in education and personal status, preventing discrimination in any area based on gender or sexual tendencies, reducing economic and employment-related gaps, and combating violence against women. In 1993, the Knesset amended the Government Companies Law, 1975 to require an "appropriate expression" of representation by men and women on boards of directors of the government-owned companies. In 1995, the State Service Law (Appointments) was amended to stipulate that for all employees in government service jobs, at every rank and in every profession, there must be "fair representation" of both men and women. The amendment also allowed the establishment of affirmative action programs.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was established, by law, in the Prime Minister's Office in 1998 to "advance the status of women in Israel and coordinate between governmental and non-governmental bodies acting to promote the status of women." The law granted the Authority the power to monitor the activities of government ministries in areas under their jurisdiction and to require them to operate in accordance with policies approved by the government. Despite the described measures and initiatives, Israel has one of the highest gender salary gaps in the Western world, with full-time female workers earning on average 35% less than their male peers. The average monthly salary of women in Israel is 68 percent, compared to the average hourly wage of 85 percent for men.

according to 2017 figures made available by the Central Bureau of Statistics (1), as of 2021, the most recent figures place the average woman's earnings at around 80% of the average man's, though this varies significantly between occupations

The most substantial factor for this disparity, according to the Taub Centre for Social Policy Studies in Israel, is that women work fewer hours than men do, on average, in part because they are still considered main caregivers for children and elderly parents. Another key factor, according to the report, is that "women are more likely to be employed in lower-wage occupations and industries". The Gender Pay Gap refers to the difference in the average pay and bonuses of all men and women across an organisation. It is logical to think that we have equal pay for equal work, however, when comparing an overall average there is still a Gender Pay Gap (2).

In 2000, the Israeli government created the Council for the Advancement of Women in science and technology with the aim to help women advance in these fields (3).

The Ministry of Science and Technology maintained in 2018 the funding of the scholarship programme for female students studying for a doctorate degree in higher education institutions in Israel, but in a different format. The programme's goal is to increase the number of women engaged in science and technology, exact sciences and engineering - areas in which the representation of women is low or insufficiently budgeted.

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) are the state bodies that outline the policy and budgeting of the higher education system in Israel. They are working to increase the representation of women in senior academic staff in higher education institutions and, to this end, decided on a multi-year programme to promote gender. They are mainly involved in raising awareness of gender fairness in higher education institutions and recruitment and promotion of women to academic staff in general, like the natural sciences and the various fields of engineering. In addition, a competitive budget was allocated to support cross-cutting projects to promote gender fairness in academia, and a dedicated budget was provided for the activities of Presidential Advisers on Gender Fairness in Higher Education Institutions. Despite the efforts and resources invested in the various programmes, the data show that the improvement that has taken place in recent years in the situation of women in the faculty in Israel is slow (4). In light of this, after several discussions on the subject, the Steering and Judgment Committee for the Promotion of Gender Fairness has formulated an output-based index of gender fairness in the institutions, budgeted by them, with the aim of encouraging institutions to promote the issue of gender fairness in academia. The index is based, among other things, on previous indices that have been successfully tested in Europe and have bridged the gender gap to a large extent. On August 24, 2020, it was decided to adopt the recommendation of the Steering Committee and to hold a support programme to encourage participation in the "Equator" index for the promotion of gender fairness in institutions of higher education, funded by the National Board of Health and Welfare in the years 2024-2021. At the same meeting, PBC also decided to adopt the Steering Committee's recommendation regarding the setting of criteria for the position of Adviser on Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions as a condition of eligibility for PBC support for the activities of the Adviser (4).

## The Institutional Context

The development of the GEP in MIGAL began as part of the R&I PEERS project. The core action for future implementation was the final announcement of declaration for approval by the MIGAL management board on December 25, 2018.

A Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a set of actions that aim at three major processes: 1) an assessment to identify gender bias and inequalities, 2) identification and implementation of innovative strategies to correct any bias, and 3) Choice of targets and the monitoring of progress via indicators.

<u>An assessment to identify gender bias and inequalities</u>

In order to plan a GEP, we analysed gender equality in MIGAL. This was done during 2018-2019. The data that was collected in 2018 was obtained from a relatively small group of employees and it reflected an image of MIGAL at the beginning of the project. 71% of the employees in the higher-level positions for management and decision-making (neither professors nor researchers) were males, and 56% of the employees who did not occupy research positions, but had a higher level of responsibility in the organization, were males. In the medium level of responsibility for management and decision-making positions, who were neither professors nor researchers, there was a more balanced situation. Indeed, in the first category, there were 47% females and 53% males, while in the second category, there were 52% females and 48% males. There was also a balance between genders among males and females in the initial level of responsibility, 47% females and 53% males. In addition, in 2018, a similar situation in the number of professors and researchers per gender was observed. There were more males than females in level A with 19% females and 81% males, but the situation was more balanced in level B, 48% females and 52% males. In level C, there was one female and one male. In addition, 57% of the fellowships and 78% of the PhD students were males.

The percentage of males in the organisation boards was 88%. In 2018, MIGAL did not follow specific rules for ensuring gender balance in the composition of staff recruitment committees. However, this year, MIGAL did provide employees with services for integrating work-life with personal life, such as smart-working, parental leave and yoga and Pilates classes during working hours.

Data acquired in 2019 showed that there was little change regarding gender equality in the organisation. This would be expected during the first year of such a project since such structural changes (modifying the composition of the high and medium level decision-making structures) take a longer period of time to happen. Yet, there was a small improvement in the number and percentage of females with respect to males within the high and medium level of responsibility for management and decision-making positions, with the percentage of females in the higher-level positions rising from 29% in 2018 to 31% in 2019, and in the medium level increasing from 47% in 2018 to 48% in 2019. The number of females with a higher level of responsibility (neither professors nor researchers) did not change between 2018 and 2019, but the number of males was increased by one (from 9 to 10). Therefore, the percentage of females decreased from 44% in 2018 to 41% in 2019. There was a small improvement in the percentage of females in the medium and initial level of responsibility (among employees that were neither professors nor researchers). In particular, females with a medium level of responsibility increased from 52% in 2018 to 55% in 2019, while the percentage of females with initial levels of responsibilities increased from 47% in 2018 to 50% in 2019.

In 2019, there was also a rise in the number of professors and researchers per gender in levels A to C relative to 2018. In A and C, the position improvement of females was greater than that of males, while the number of males in level B grew more than the number of females. Therefore, the percentage of female professors and researchers increased slightly from 2018 to 2019, with i) 19% in 2018 for level A and 20% in 2019, and ii) was left 50% in 2018 and 50% in 2019 at level C. There was a decrease in the percentage of females from 48% in 2018 to 46% in 2019 in level B. Among those employed as research fellows, there were more males than females. The number of females who were research fellows in 2018 was 70, growing to 78 in 2019, but also the number of male research fellows grew from 95 to 106. Thus, in 2019, the percentage of female research fellows remained the same as it was in 2018, 42%. In 2019, the PhD student number was not assessed.
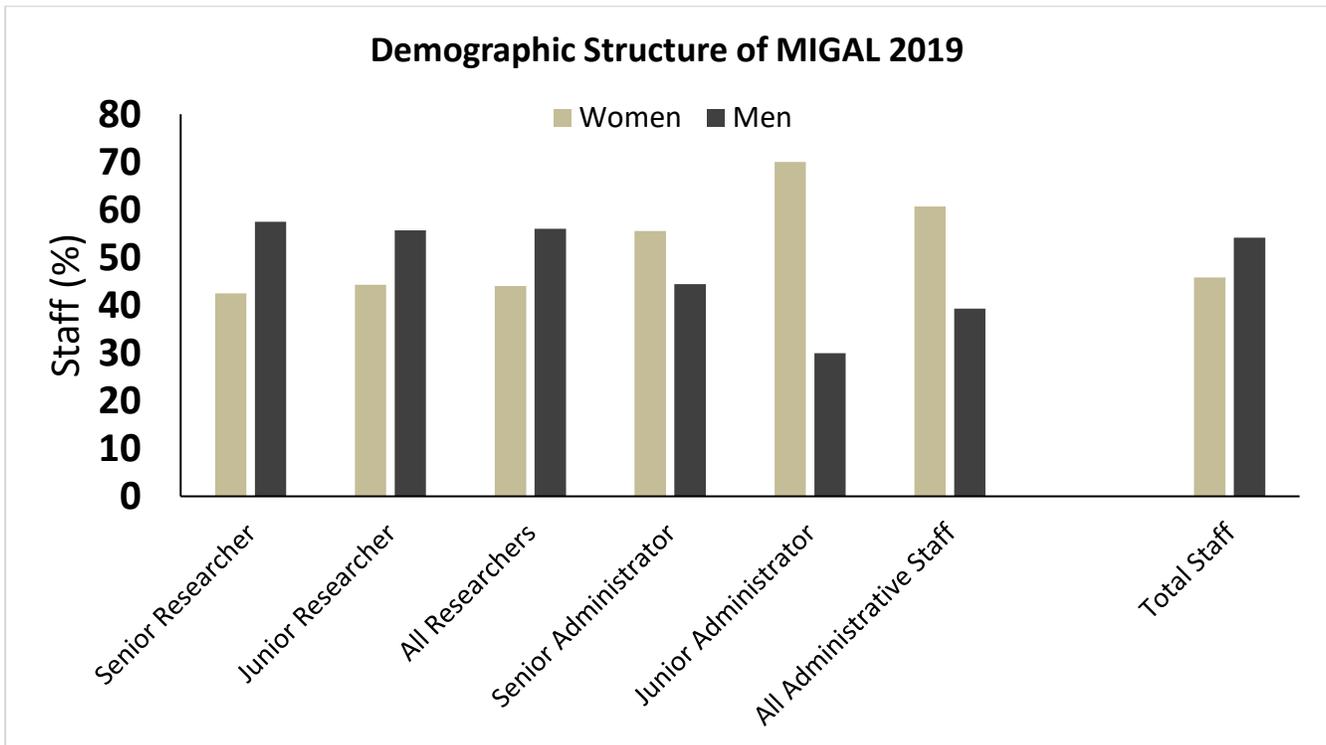


Fig. 1. Demographic structure of MIGAL between men and women at 2019

The demographic structure of MIGAL was relatively balanced between men and women, but with more male researchers and more women administrators. In 2019, relative to 2018, no changes occurred in gender composition in the boards of MIGAL. In addition, there were no changes in the rules for staff recruitment regarding committee composition and in the tools available for work-life balance. The analysis of numerical data has shown that the gender distribution among academic researchers is even; however, significant disproportions may be observed in higher positions.

## 3. Overall objectives and goals of MIGAL at the GEP

The objectives of the MIGAL Gender Equality Plan were defined based on the results of the diagnosis phase in which the criticalities concerning gender disparities emerged at the institutional level. The need

to tackle those barriers, that still limit the full participation of women, were merged into realistic objectives that encompass the entire research institute. At the beginning of the project, the MIGAL team begun drafting the MIGAL Declaration for approval by the MIGAL Management Board. After the approval of the final draft announcement by the MIGAL Management on December 25, 2018, the GEP was designed, and the management also approved the course of the GEP activities and appointed a team that began to sort out the researchers that would participate in the process. The team wrote the goals and the set of activities and set a budget that was carried out for the first three years (2018-2021). They appointed the HR manager as the activities' organizer and defined a timeline for the process to open the GEPs.

From 2022 MIGAL is adopting the mandatory process-related requirements following the classification provided by the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans.:
1. **Public document**: The GEP will be a formal document published on the MIGAL's website, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution. It will demonstrate a commitment to gender equality and set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them.
2. **Dedicated resources**: Resources and expertise in gender equality will be dedicated to implementing the plan.
3. **Data collection and monitoring**: MIGAL plan to collect sex/ gender-disaggregated data on personnel (and students) based on indicators annually. We will collect and analyse the data, including resources, and ensure that data is published and monitored annually. This data will inform the GEP's objectives and targets, indicators, and ongoing evaluation of progress.
4. **Training**: The GEP includes awareness-raising and training actions on gender equality, and they will engage the whole organisation. Activities are going to cover unconscious gender biases training aimed at staff and decision-makers. They can also include communication activities and gender equality training that focuses on specific topics or addresses specific groups.

## 4. Structure of the GEP at MIGAL

The current GEP updated version reflects modifications made after the first and second validation workshop of R&I PEERS project and it is consistent with the European Commission format (5,6) and definition of a GEP:

1. *Work-life balance and organisational culture*. The organisational culture is in the hands of key actors and decision-makers, regional authorities and researchers. It directly affects the work-life balance of all employees at the organisation, including technical and administrative staff, students and families of researchers. The start date is 1/2019. Those in charge are the Human Resources Management and a Senior Expert in European Research Funding Programmes. There are three indicators: 1) Analysis of professional women's and men's needs [personnel satisfaction rate among researchers; number of beneficiaries of specific working facilities; routine workshop to raise awareness; systematic annual collection of gender-sensitive statistics; analysis of researchers needs through focus groups, etc. (evaluation on how effective are existing measures); sending of periodic questionnaire specifically tailored to analyse needs and expectations in terms of parental leave], 2) Clear and fairness policy [standard and clear procedure for parental leave;

institutionalisation of financial support section in internal document; wide dissemination of parental leave policy through update of website and internal publicity], and 3) Information and communication of work-life balance possibilities [provision and diffusion of a career support scheme (before, during and after parental leave); publishing of a clear policy on the institute's website regarding work-life balance; dissemination of measure taken/implemented in supporting work-life balance].

2. ***Gender balance in leadership and decision-making***. This GEP target is intended for key actors and decision-makers but includes indirectly also researchers, technical and administrative staff, students and families of researchers. Those in charge of this target are the Head of the European Desk at the Research Authority, and it extends from 10/2018 to 8/2022. The activities of this GEP target are the monitoring of the ratio between men and women in decision-making bodies (DMB) and organising yearly workshops on gender bias in DMBs. The main indicator is a gender-balanced board of directors and decision making bodies [% of women responsible for European project; ratio of women and men among reviewers; ratio of women and men among heads of departments; ratio of women and men in funding decision making bodies; promotion of turnover policy for directors of the department ensuring the alternation of men/women; number of strategies to maintain gender balance in decision-making processes; increase in female presence in boards and in evaluation panels].

3. ***Gender equality in recruitment and career progression.*** In MIGAL we support the career and excellence of female researchers. This GEP target is intended for researchers, and also technical and administrative staff, students and families of researchers, and is being carried out from 10/2018 by the Human Resources Management and a Senior Expert in European Research Funding Programmes. The main activities in this GEP target are the organisation of women in science activities and programmes, organisation of events on successful female role models, special fellowships for women-researchers to continue their PhD and the introduction of mechanisms to facilitate leaves for education and research. The indicators include: 1) gender-sensitive analysis of existing promotion practices [ratio of men/women attending trainings for empowering career; number of existing promotion practices implemented; number of female research scientific article/books published], 2) visibility of women researchers' results [training for researchers on research finding skills; ratio of women and men among applicants for promotion; ratio of women and men among promoted researchers; increase in number of women's publication by special mentoring], 3) woman researcher's excellence prize [regular workshops on the criteria for promotion and how to achieve them; number of excellence women researchers prize or success rate for women and men applicants; institutionalisation of prizes for study and research including gender], 4) promotion and dissemination of the results [number of training events and workshops with the presence of role models present their "success and private story"; training for young female scientists on how to communicate their research results; trainings for researchers for achievements for broader audiences; special promotion campaigns and channels of social media] and 5) mobility [ratio of women applying for mobility programmes; ratio of women supported by

mobility programmes; ratio of researcher that have worked abroad for more than 3 months in the last 10 years; ratio of researchers that have worked abroad for less than 3 months in the last 10 years; percentage of non-mobile, according to gender and career stage]. This target includes the perspective of *Mentoring.* It is intended for researchers but also indirectly can reach key actors and decision-makers, technical and administrative staff and students. Its activities include yearly assessment of indicators of career paths of young researchers, regular training for mentors and workshops on grant and project application writing, academic writing and how to achieve promotions. The main indicators for mentoring: 1) analysis of needs of young and senior researchers [statistics], 2) support of female junior and senior research – by workshops [workshops on applications for grants and projects; workshops on gender in research; tailored mentoring (from different research groups to protect privacy; peer to peer mentoring for female (students)], 3) improvement of self-efficacy for mentors and mentees [regular training for mentors; skills training (negotiation, funding, management, leadership)], 4) effective presence of role models [support for woman researchers to achieve fellowships], 5) operation of workshops on academic article writing [increasing number of women's publications by special mentoring; regular workshops dedicated to academic writing] and 6) dissemination [effective information of training courses for mentees through social media].

4. ***Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content.*** MIGAL integrate the idea of reducing the gender gap and raising awareness of gender equality within the organisation. This GEP target is intended for both researchers and newly recruited staff, key actors and decision-makers, with additional technical and administrative staff, students and candidate students. The start date is 10/2018, and it is managed by the Human Resources Management and a Senior Expert in European Research Funding Programmes. Its two activities comprise establishing a committee/group/office for equal opportunities in the organisation and establishing a specific channel (anonymous) for the report of disrespectful behaviour, abuse, and sexual harassment. The indicators of this GEP target are 1) Effective monitoring and evaluative processes to guarantee gender equality [number of policies aiming at achieving change toward gender equality (boards, bodies, committees, researchers, etc.)], 2) Strong involvement of the potential researchers (students, PhD, etc.) in gender topic issues to build gender awareness; other communication/diffusion means: social networks, websites, newsletters, etc.] 3) Prevention of gender harassment [% of participants in workshops on how to tackle the permissive attitude toward gender harassment; % of participants in psychological assistance courses to enable reporting formally; existence of clear sanctions against offenders; guidelines and code of conduct available; code of conduct made public]. 4) Effective monitoring and evaluative processes to guarantee gender equality [number of policies aiming at achieving change toward gender equality (boards, bodies, committees, researchers, etc.)], 5) Strong involvement of the potential researchers (students, PhD, etc.) in gender topic issues to build gender awareness [number of meeting for GEPs implementation; online platforms/websites to communicate initiatives linked to the gender equality and diversity policy of the organisation; other communication/diffusion means: social networks, websites, newsletters, etc.].

5. ***Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.*** This priority area aims at establishing institutional mechanisms to combat gender-based violence and clear and transparent protocols to address these issues. These GEP actions should solidify protocols for dealing with gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. The start date is 10/2019, and it is managed by the Human Resources Management. The activity consists of an ongoing and continuous organisation of workshops on how to preclude gender-based violence, and sexual harassment, the indicators are: 1) inclusion of gender studies. 2) Prevention of gender harassment [% of training on how to tackle the permissive attitude toward gender harassment; % of psychological assistance courses to enable reporting formally; existence of clear sanctions against offenders; guidelines and code of conduct available; code of conduct made public].

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4) https://che.org.il/en

5) https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

6) https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear

Main legal documents and other GE related initiatives

- The Law for Discharged Soldiers, 1949
- Women's Equal Rights Law, 1951
- Law of Hours of Work and Rest, 1951
- Women's Labour Law, 1954
- The Civil Service Law (appointments), 1959
- The Employment Service Law, 1959
- Government Companies Law, 1975
- Equal Employment Opportunity in the workforce law, 1988
- Equal Pay for Men and Women, 1996
- Protection of Workers Law, 1997
- The Law for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, 1998
- Strategic Plan 2014-2016: Deepening the enforcement of equality law; Enabling inclusion in the labour market; Deploying expertise to inform policy and practice; Making it work (being effective and efficient)