



# Transformative Feminist Leadership – What it Is, Why it Matters

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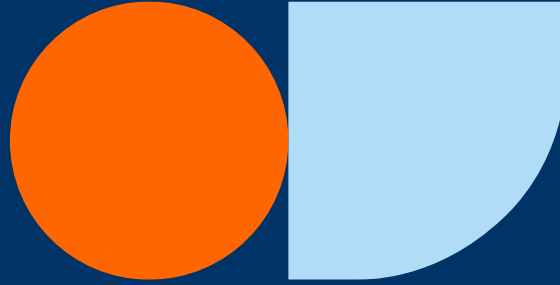
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# In this presentation, we will briefly cover some key contents of the think piece, viz.,

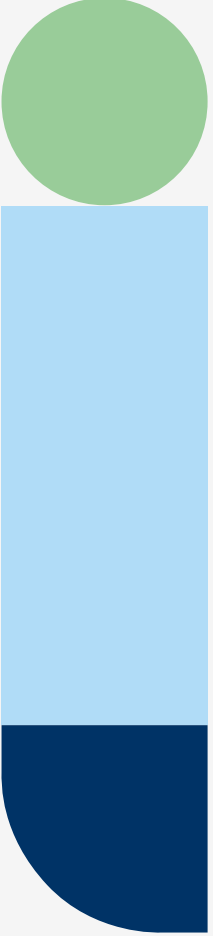
1. What is it – how do we define transformative feminist leadership?
2. Why does it matter? How is it different?
3. The four “Ps” of the feminist leadership diamond
4. What gets in the way of practicing feminist leadership?
5. The four quadrants of change (the Gender at Work framework)

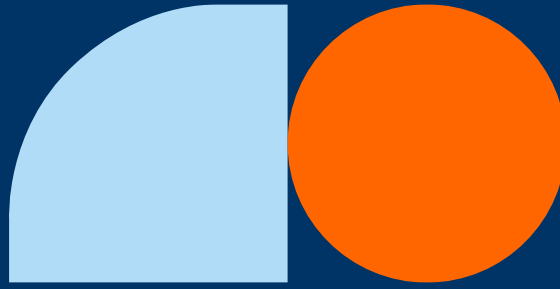


# 1. What is it?

How do we define feminist leadership?

# Transformative feminist leadership means:

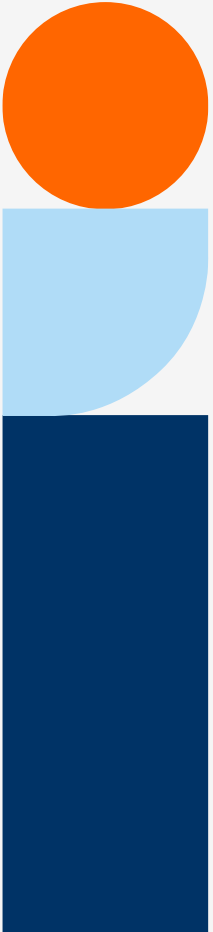
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- A process of transforming ourselves, our organisations, and the larger world to mirror and advance a feminist vision of social transformation and justice
  - It is not about authority and control, nor about being the “boss”, the “shero” or the saviour, but about dismantling discriminatory structures of power – visible, hidden, and invisible, within ourselves, our organisations and movements, and the larger world
  - Mobilising our individual and collective power to build a world of peace, equality, and respect for nature and the planet, where the rights and wellbeing of all people are ensured, regardless of age, gender identity, race, nationality, ability, class, caste, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or location.



## 2. Why does this matter? How is it different?

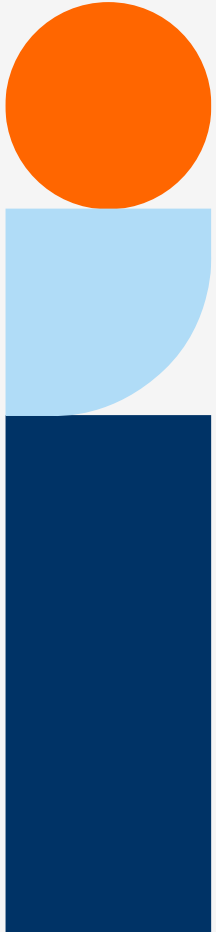
To understand this better we need to unpack  
what makes the feminist approach unique...

# What makes the feminist approach unique?

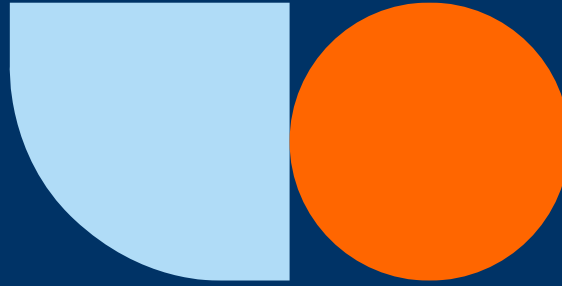


- When most ideologies of social justice **stop outside the door of the household or family, feminism opened the door** and analysed how power is practiced in our most intimate spaces and relationships - it identified and interrogated hidden, invisible, and “normalized” power differences, discrimination, bias, violence
- Feminism is unique in the way it questions power structures *within* our institutions, organizations, relationships, **and within ourselves**
- Most importantly, feminism **recognises our bodies and our sexuality as sites of power**, discrimination, control and violence

# Why is this approach to leadership different?



1. Feminism believes that **leadership is about leading for a larger purpose** – viz., dismantling patriarchy and the other power structures through which it operates - **not** about being “the boss,” exercising power and authority over others, or even being the “s/hero” / saviour
2. It also means that **feminist values and politics have to be reflected in all the spaces we occupy, all the roles we play, all the institutions we build** – and that the power structures embedded within these institutions have to be dismantled and transformed to reflect these values.

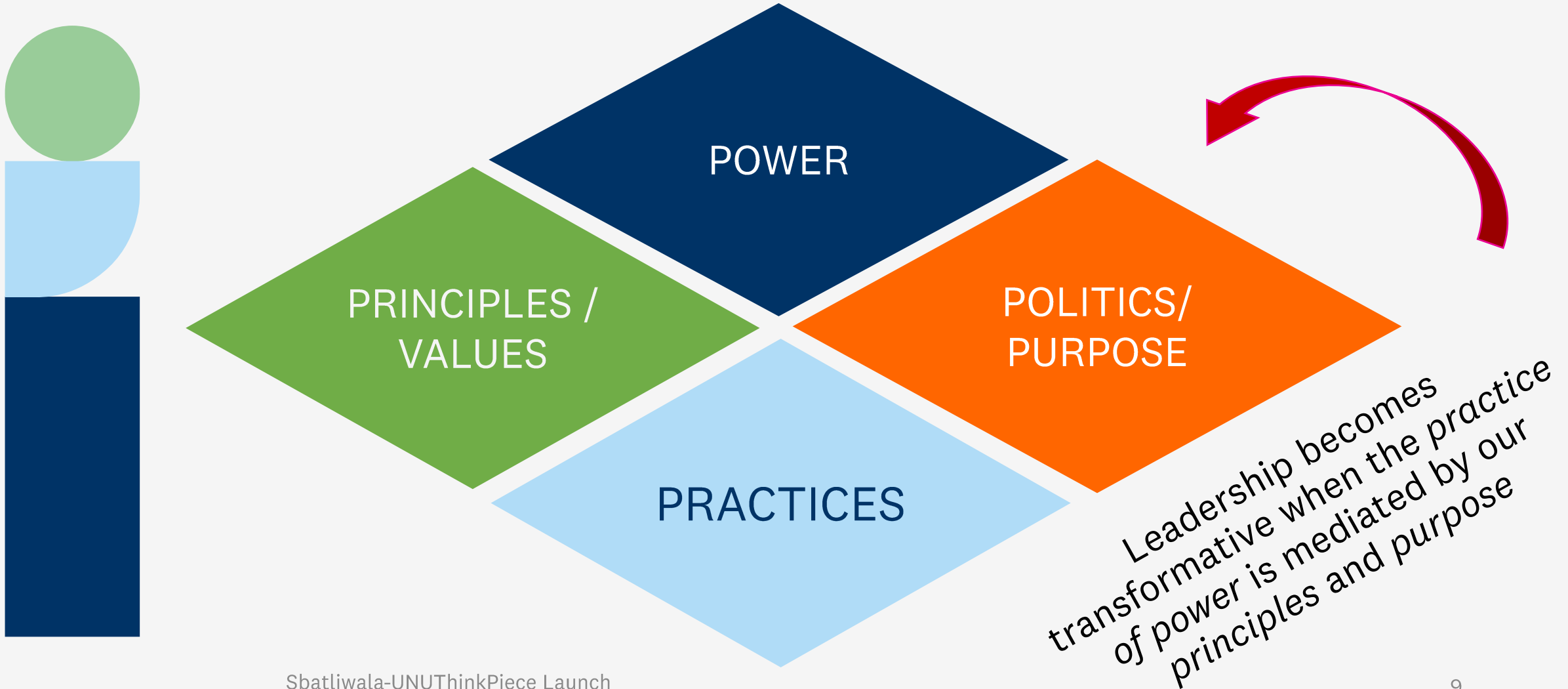


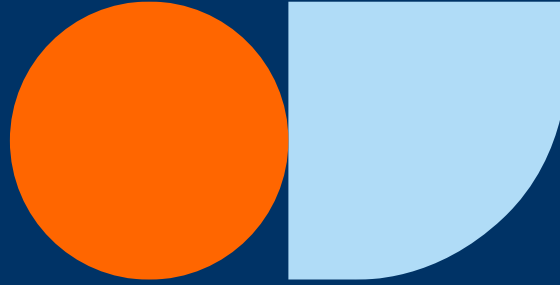
### 3. The four “P”s of the feminist leadership diamond

To practice feminist leadership in an authentic way, we have to balance the four Ps of power, principles, purpose and practice...



# The four facets of leadership – the feminist leadership “Diamond”

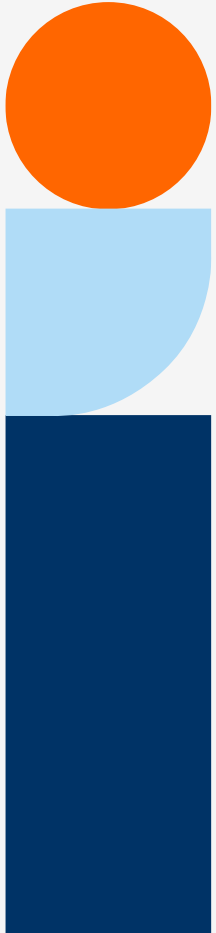




## 4. What gets in the way?

Challenges to the practice  
of feminist leadership...

# The Main Challenges



## **“Normalised” biases in the overt structure**

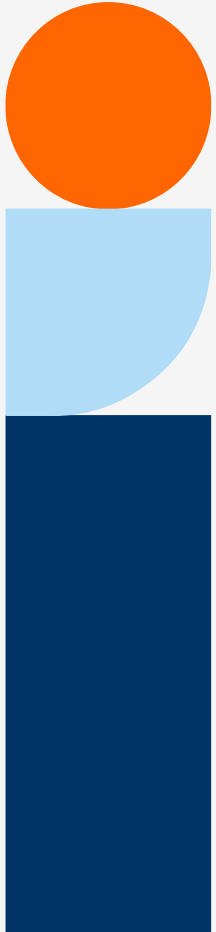
– (sexism, neo-colonialism,  
age-ism, racism, casteism,  
homophobia, etc.)

The “DEEP  
STRUCTURES” of  
our organizations

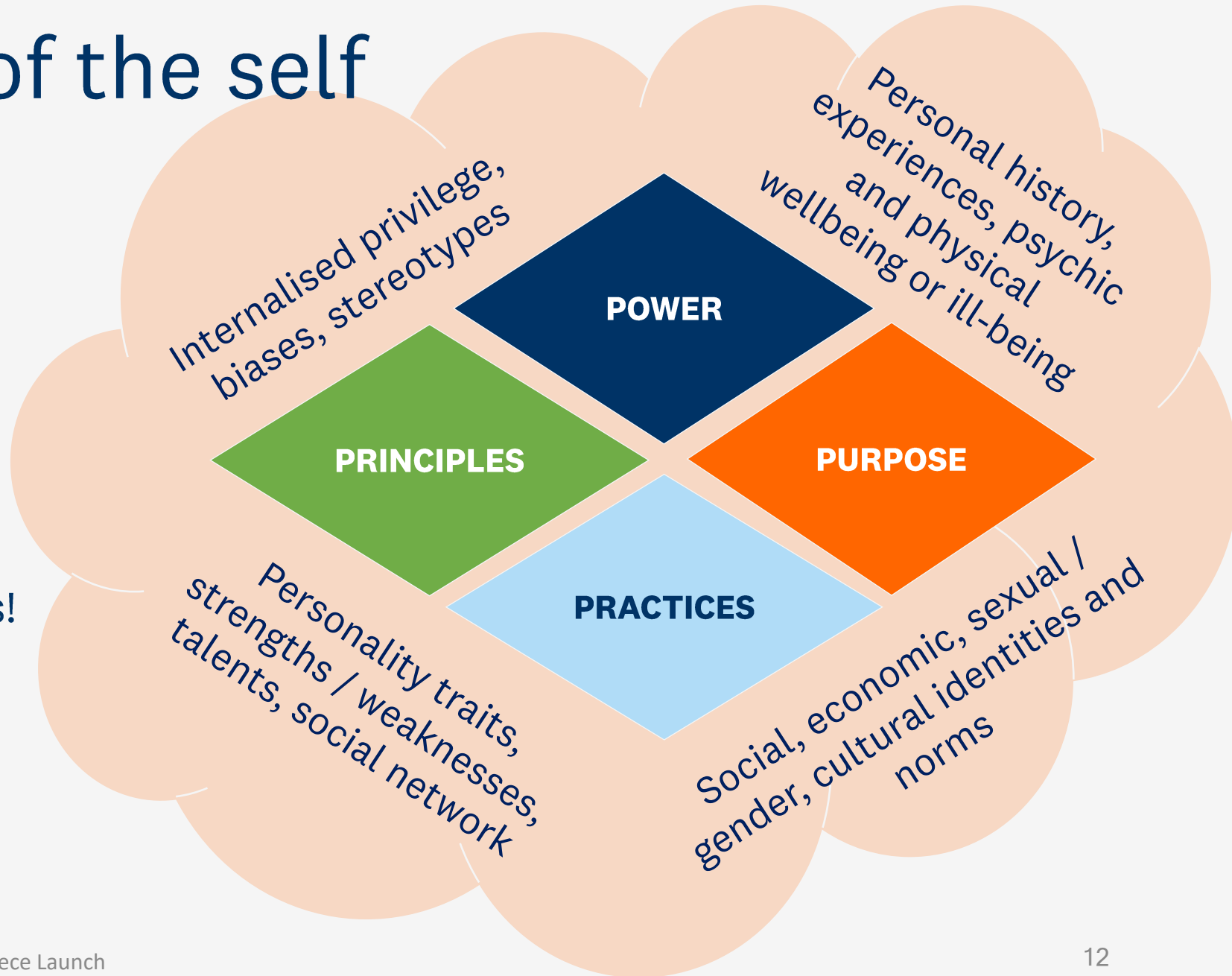
**The SELF:** Our own  
histories, experiences  
with power, social  
conditioning, and  
internalized victimhood

**“POWER UNDER”** –  
unhealed trauma that  
pushes us to use  
power in negative  
ways...

# The role of the self



Our personal histories, psychic baggage, emotional health, strengths & weaknesses all influence the way we balance the Ps!



# Power under

- When people who have suffered trauma / oppression, and carry unhealed rage, become oppressive to others when they gain power of some kind...
- In organizations, Power Under manifests as manipulation, subtle sabotage, gossip, back-biting, and other behaviours as ways of asserting “victim power”



**If I don't show who's boss,  
I'll become the victim**



# What are organizational “Deep Structures”?



On the surface....

Hidden, subtle ways in which people (often unconsciously) reproduce social biases, hierarchies, and non-transparent practices within organizational spaces, ...



**But underneath....**

**Common  
deep structure  
dynamics in  
organizations**

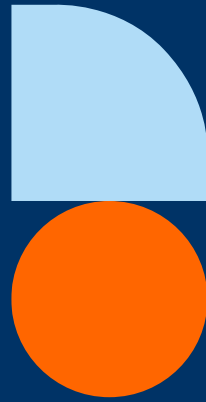
**Informal  
norms  
differ from  
formal  
rules**

**Personal  
biases / sense  
of privilege  
reproduced in  
the  
organization**

Certain kinds  
of behavior  
is rewarded,  
other kinds  
penalized

**Some  
individuals  
or groups  
have greater  
power /  
influence**

Personal  
baggage and  
“Power  
Under”  
practices



## 5. Organizational Transformation Matrix

The Gender at Work framework for transforming leadership and organizations



**Individual**

Internalized  
privilege, biases  
unhealed trauma /  
rage

**Resources, voice,  
access, control**

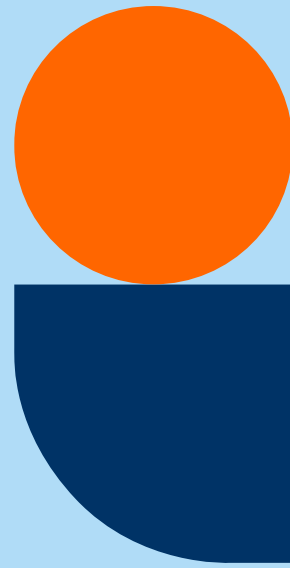
**Informal**

**Formal**

Informal norms /  
deep structure  
dynamics

Hierarchy, rules,  
roles, policies,  
accountability  
systems

**Systemic/  
Organisational**



**It's a challenging journey,  
but well worth the struggle!**

**Good luck!**