

The Next Gen(d)eration of Leaders for a Well-Nourished World Initiative

Powering courageous leadership practices in nutrition and food systems

Next Gen(d)eration of Leaders for a Well-Nourished World is a new initiative that builds on the experience of professional women working in the field of nutrition and food systems.

Currently led by a Task team of 12 women, the initiative started with a survey of 60 women from all over the world. After collective discussion and engagement with existing, complementary, leadership initiatives, it is now undertaking its inaugural activities with the ambition of reaching thousands more leaders at all levels committed to applying a set of what we are terming “courageous leadership practices.”

Our purpose is to create a leadership movement towards a well-nourished world.

We believe that transforming what the world eats requires transformations in leadership. By transformations, we mean shifting power to those who apply leadership practices crucial for change (see Box). Applying these practices is not easy; in fact, structural barriers mean they are the hard path. This is especially true for women, given their efforts to assert them are all too often held back. We want to see the power that women already have achieve greater influence in decision-making towards a well-nourished world.

What are courageous leadership practices?

1. Prioritising social purpose
2. Deviating from the norm
3. Listening & showing curiosity
4. Clear & consistent communication
5. Lifting others up
6. Patience and adaptation
7. Regular self-reflection

Our activities will focus on advancing the application of leadership practices at all levels to enable more impactful decision-making in nutrition and food systems.

Our solution is to provide transition pathways towards the widespread adoption of these leadership practices, pathways that many - of all genders - can commit to taking, forming a movement to tackle structural barriers together. Our strategic priorities are designed to establish these pathways, each working to complement the other.

Strategic Priority 1. *Create the forums and tools to build the collective power to navigate and disrupt structural barriers.* We will prioritise providing inclusive, safe spaces for conversations where women can give each other courage and honest feedback, championing and learning from each other. We will create resources and tools to guide decision-makers who may not be aware of how to most effectively ally with women, shifting them towards applying these leadership practices.

Strategic Priority 2. *Create visibility for leadership practices and those who practice them.* Many people working in nutrition and food systems, especially women, are applying these practices. But these women are often invisible, allocating less time to pushing themselves forward. We will prioritise activities designed to make the invisible visible, so elevating women to positions of greater power while inspiring others to join the pathways.

Strategic Priority 3. *Create knowledge about the leadership problem and the proposed solution.* At this stage, our articulation of the leadership solution remains a hypothesis, emerging from our own experience, observation and reflection. We thus want to generate more evidence about the role leadership practices play in our ability to achieve a well-nourished world.

Our primary audiences are decision-makers in nutrition and food systems across all genders and professional women navigating the challenging terrain of leadership at all levels. We are committed to advancing the latent, unrealised potential of this leadership. With major international initiatives like the UN Food Systems Summit, and the greater attention paid to all forms of malnutrition in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the time to transform leadership is now.