

A photograph of three people sitting on large, light-colored rocks by the sea. They are seen from behind, looking out at the ocean. The person on the left is wearing a brown t-shirt and has a white backpack. The person in the middle is wearing a dark blue hoodie and also has a white backpack. The person on the right is wearing a blue t-shirt and dark pants. The ocean is a deep blue with white-capped waves. The sky is a pale, hazy blue, suggesting a clear day. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

# Developing Leaders for 'A New Normal'

Special Publication

*Produced by LEAD - Enter next level for the Career Development  
Roundtable 2024 inspired by our collaboration with IOM, Folke  
Bernadotte Academy and UNODC.*

## Special Publication

*Produced by LEAD - Enter next level for the Career Development Roultable 2024 inspried  
by our collaboration with IOM, Folke Bernadotte Academy and UNODC.*



# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>05</b> |
| <b>Developing Leaders for 'A New Normal'</b>                              | <b>06</b> |
| IOM's Approach to UN Leadership Development                               | 06        |
| IOM - A New Approach to Strategic Leadership Development                  | 07        |
| The IOM Leadership Compass: A Comprehensive Framework for Leadership      | 08        |
| Partnership as an Example of Leadership Behavior at Different Levels      | 10        |
| The IOM Leadership Development Programme                                  | 14        |
| Bridging Global Strategy and Local Implementation through action learning | 14        |
| Design Principles of the IOM Leadership Development Programme             | 16        |
| Conclusion - Impact and Future Outlook                                    | 20        |
| <b>IOM Leadership Compass</b>   | <b>22</b> |
| <b>Gender-Responsive Leadership</b>                                       | <b>37</b> |
| A Pathway to Organizational Excellence and Equality                       | 38        |
| The Imperative of Gender-Responsive Leadership                            | 39        |
| Organizational Benefits of Gender-Responsive Leadership                   | 38        |
| UNODC's Commitment to Gender-Responsive Leadership                        | 40        |
| Gender-Responsive Leadership Learning Programmes                          | 41        |
| The UN Secretary-General's Call to Action                                 | 42        |

# Introduction

We are excited to share this special publication for the Career Development Roundtable, which explores how to help leaders adapt and thrive in a challenging “new normal” characterized by the erosion of international norms, multiple overlapping crises, and increasing fragility and protracted conflicts.

In this publication, we share how IOM, UNODC, and the Folke Bernadotte Academy each address this new normal by answering key questions such as:

1. How to collectively define and develop the leadership attributes and behaviors needed for the new normal?
2. How to use leadership development as a driver for strategy implementation and organizational change?
3. How to foster gender-responsive leadership and inclusive organizational culture as a way to stop and reverse the erosion of international norms?

This is our way of sharing with you what has worked for us, in the hope that it may provide value in your own leadership development initiatives. We believe in fostering collaborative learning, and through this material, we aim to open up a dialogue that allows us to learn from one another. These tools are more than just frameworks—they represent our commitment to continuous learning, innovation, and inclusivity.

Whether you join us at the CDR clinic or explore this content on your own, we encourage you to engage with these ideas and consider how they might inspire or inform leadership within your organization. We look forward to exchanging knowledge, experiences, and best practices as we all work toward building more adaptive and resilient leadership in the multilateral sector.

## Written and produced by

**Kristian Dahl**

*MANAGING DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER, LEAD - ENTER NEXT LEVEL*

**Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen**

*MANAGING DIRECTOR AND PARTNER, LEAD - ENTER NEXT LEVEL*

# Developing Leaders for ‘a New Normal’

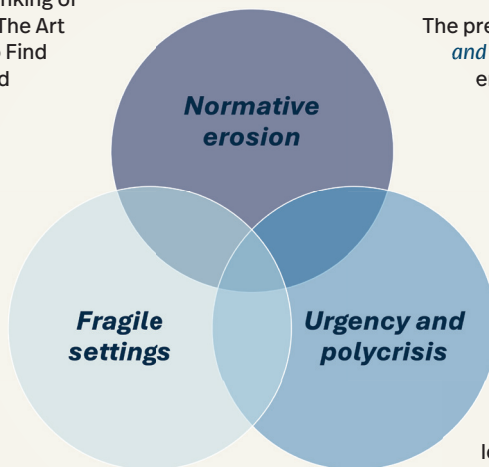
## IOM’s Approach to UN Leadership Development

UN leadership today operates within a rapidly evolving global landscape, shaped by multiple complex and interconnected challenges. The “new normal” for UN leaders reflects a world where traditional norms and structures are under strain, requiring a rethinking of leadership approaches. Inspired by the report “The Art of Leadership in The United Nations: Our Duty to Find New Forms” published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and our own experiences we see three key challenges define this difficult terrain for leadership:

As the model shows, one of the most pressing challenges UN leaders face is a *normative erosion* and weakening of international norms. The concept of multilateralism, which has long been the bedrock of the UN, is increasingly under pressure. Countries are more frequently disregarding established international laws and values. This erosion of norms not only undermines global stability but also threatens the credibility of the UN itself as a legitimate global arbitrator and actor.

Another pressing challenge for UN leaders is navigating in an era of *urgency and polycrisis* where multiple, overlapping crises—ranging from pandemics to climate change and armed conflicts—simultaneously demand attention. These crises are not only interconnected but also increasingly existential, requiring immediate, multifaceted responses.

The complexity of the polycrisis phenomenon places unprecedented pressure on leaders to act swiftly and decisively, understanding how these crises overlap and potentially lead to broader systemic collapses.



The pressure to act is also driven by increasing *fragility and conflict*. Leading in fragile and conflict-prone environments has always been a core challenge for the UN, but today’s conflicts are more protracted, more complex, and harder to resolve. The scale of humanitarian disasters, political instability, and ongoing violence make sustainable peace-building efforts increasingly difficult. Moreover, resource constraints exacerbate these challenges, forcing UN leaders to do more with less in the world’s most volatile regions.

In this context, traditional approaches to leadership are no longer sufficient. The challenges facing the UN require a new leadership model that is adaptable, collaborative, and innovative. It is within this environment that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has developed a pioneering approach through its Leadership Compass, which serves as a guide for cultivating leadership behaviors that align with these complex demands. IOM’s model has the potential to serve as a template for leadership development across the broader UN system, offering a way forward as leaders navigate this increasingly difficult global landscape.

## IOM - A New Approach to Strategic Leadership Development

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the world's leading inter-governmental organization promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. Established in 1951 as part of the UN System, IOM uses its more than 70 years of experience and offices in 171 countries to provide support to migrants across the world.

IOM is at a crucial juncture in its history. Under the leadership of Director General Amy Pope, IOM has outlined its ambitious Strategic Plan for 2024–2028, aimed at addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities that migration presents. The strategic plan reflects the IOM's mandate to facilitate the orderly and humane management of international migration and consists of three objectives:

1. to save lives and protect people on the move,
2. drive solutions to displacement and
3. facilitate pathways for regular migration.

According to the plan, migration is, and has been for centuries, a cornerstone of development, prosperity and progress for many. As the world faces major global transformations – from climate change, demographic transition and urbanization to digitalization – migration can and should be part of the solution. To realize the full promise of migration, new perspectives and new approaches are needed. It starts with leadership.

This requires not only operational changes but also a transformative approach to leadership within the organization, ensuring that leaders at every level can drive the mission of IOM forward effectively.



## The IOM Leadership Compass: A Comprehensive Framework for Leadership

To ensure leaders are well-prepared for the complex challenges ahead, IOM developed the IOM Leadership Compass through a co-creation process in collaboration with the consultancy LEAD – Enter New Level. This process involved the active participation of hundreds of leaders from all levels across IOM globally, making the Leadership Compass a true reflection of the collective voice of IOM leadership.

The IOM Leadership Compass is a comprehensive framework developed to guide leadership behavior and development across all levels of the organization.

Migrants are at the center of the Leadership Compass which revolves around IOM's core values and seven types of leadership behaviors directly linked to strategic enablers in the IOM strategic plan. This ensures that the actions and decisions of IOM's leaders at all levels are aligned with the organization's mission and strategic goals, particularly focusing on the results and impacts for migrants who, naturally, are at the heart of everything IOM does.



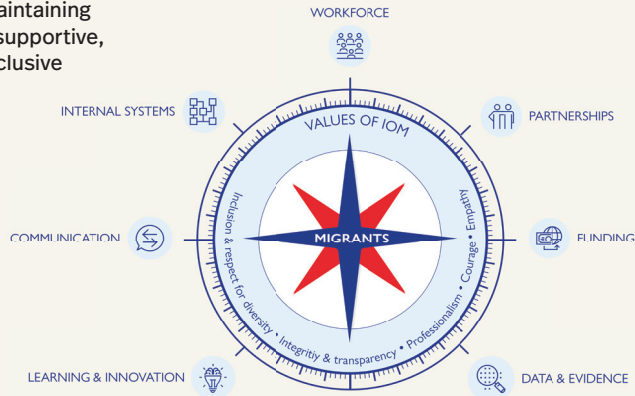


## The logic of the compass: Concise and clear expectations for each level of leadership

The compass operates at different levels: Heads of Teams, Chiefs of Mission, Directors, and the Executive Office with each level having specific expectations for how leaders should demonstrate the seven core behaviors in their role. Each level has its own focus and expectations, reflecting an increasing scope of responsibility and strategic influence as leaders move through the organization. Each level also comes with its own distinct leadership challenges unique to each level. Understanding these potential pitfalls in leadership is critical because these challenges, if not managed effectively, can undermine a leader's success and the organization's ability to achieve its goals.

### Foundation level - Head of Teams

At the foundation level, *Heads of Teams* are responsible for leading teams, with a focus on operational execution, team development, and maintaining a supportive, inclusive



environment. Leadership at this level is hands-on, emphasizing day-to-day management, aligning team members with IOM's goals, and fostering an atmosphere where everyone can contribute meaningfully.

### Next level - Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office

At the next level, Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office lead other leaders and leadership teams. They oversee entire missions or offices, ensuring that local strategies align with IOM's global objectives. These leaders build develop their part of the organization, ensuring that operations are efficient, culturally sensitive, and consistent with IOM's values and policies.

### Higher level - Directors

Directors operate at a higher level, overseeing entire functions or regions. They lead leaders who manage large teams or multiple offices. Directors play a critical role in breaking down organizational silos, fostering collaboration across departments, and ensuring that IOM's strategic vision is realized globally. Their work often spans cross-functional teams and regions, requiring a balance between long-term vision and daily operational oversight.

### Top level - The Executive Office

At the top level, the leadership team members at executive level lead the entire organization, setting the strategic vision for IOM. They ensure alignment with global migration trends, UN standards, and broader humanitarian goals. They champion diversity, inclusion, and innovation at the highest levels, maintaining a strong connection between global strategy and operational realities on the ground.

## Partnerships as an Example of Leadership Behavior at Different Levels

A central feature of the [IOM Leadership Compass](#) is that it provides a differentiated language for what leadership is required at each level, which is essential for helping leaders succeed. Without clear expectations, leaders cannot be expected to engage in the necessary learning and unlearning that fosters growth and development. In the following we will illustrate this principle.

### Partnerships

One of the key leadership behaviors emphasized in the IOM Leadership Compass is leading and creating *Partnerships*. This behavior is critical to IOM's ability to address migration challenges effectively by building, maintaining, and leveraging relationships with a wide range of stakeholders. As leaders progress through the organization, the complexity and scope of managing partnerships increase, reflecting the broader responsibilities at each level. Each level also comes with its own set of potential pitfalls that the leader must navigate with skill and awareness.



# Partnerships

## ▼ LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

## ▼ Pitfalls

### Heads of Teams

Cultivate and leverage diverse partnerships at the operational level to enhance project delivery and impact. Excelling at negotiation, balancing the interests of multiple stakeholders, and mapping potential partners to build long-term networks within and outside IOM and UN. When partnerships are scalable they work with their leaders to increase engagement.

### Chiefs of Mission & Heads of Office

Strategically engage and sustain high-level partnerships with governments, UN, NGOs, civil society as well as community leaders, facilitating collaborative efforts for comprehensive solutions related to migration and displacement as well as influence policy making. Skillfully navigating in complex multistakeholder environments. Challenge conventional thinking, including considering partnerships to advance environmental protection and sustainability. Keeps a focus on opportunities to expand partnerships at a regional scale and enable their leader to succeed with those.

### Directors

Leadership at the regional and global functional levels centers on establishing wide-reaching partnerships across borders and sectors to amplify the Organization's global impact on migration and displacement. Enable their leaders to shape global partnerships by fostering and identifying opportunities.

### Executive Office

Shape global partnership frameworks, positioning IOM as the leader in migration and displacement governance, and spearhead initiatives that build sustainable, relevant, and strategic relationships for global impact.

#### **Over-Reliance on Familiar Networks or not building New Networks**

Failing to expand partnerships beyond established contacts, limiting access to new opportunities and insights.

#### **Mismatched Priorities**

Prioritizing operational needs without aligning with broader strategic partnership goals, risking misalignment with Organizational objectives.

#### **Underestimating Stakeholder Diversity**

Not fully appreciating or leveraging the diverse perspectives and strengths of potential partners, leading to missed collaboration opportunities. This includes failure to partner with representative organizations of persons from different backgrounds, including but not limited to women, persons with diverse SOGIESC, persons with disabilities, youth, and others.

#### **Overemphasis on High-Profile Partnerships**

Focusing too much on partnerships with high visibility while neglecting smaller, potentially impactful collaborations.

#### **Neglecting Local Stakeholder Engagement**

Failing to engage adequately with local stakeholders, which can undermine program effectiveness and sustainability.

#### **Ignoring conflict resolutions and risks**

Not developing or utilizing effective strategies for navigating conflicts within partnerships, potentially harming long-term relationships.

#### **Silos in Partnership Management**

Allowing departmental or geographical silos to impede cross-functional collaboration on partnerships, leading to disjointed efforts and inefficiencies.

#### **Strategic Misalignment**

Launching partnerships without ensuring full alignment with IOM's strategic direction and values, risking dilution of efforts.

#### **Insufficient Support for Partnership Development**

Providing inadequate resources or support for teams to develop and manage partnerships effectively, limiting their potential.

#### **Overlooking Partnership Maintenance**

Focusing on establishing new partnership at the expense of nurturing and evaluating existing ones, which may weaken the Organizational network.

#### **Failing to Leverage Global Networks Effectively**

Not fully utilizing IOM's global presence and networks to forge strategic, cross-border partnerships that could enhance global impact.

#### **Lack of Clear Partnership Framework**

Missing a clear, Organization-wide framework for evaluating and pursuing partnerships, leading to inconsistent approaches, and missed opportunities.

The figure, on page 11, outlines the unique leadership behaviors at all levels to enable partnerships and potential pitfalls for each level.

### Heads of Teams

At the *Heads of Teams* level, partnerships focus on building and maintaining strong relationships within the immediate operational environment. Heads of Teams work closely with local partners, such as community leaders, government representatives, local NGOs, and other stakeholders, to ensure smooth collaboration in day-to-day operations. For example, a Head of Team might collaborate with local service providers to deliver migrant support services, ensuring trust and effective cooperation at the community level. The primary pitfall at this level is to over-rely on established partnerships without seeking to innovate or expand their network, which can restrict the potential for new opportunities.

### Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office

For *Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office*, partnerships take on a broader, more strategic role. These leaders must align local partnerships with IOM's global strategy, working closely with government bodies, regional organizations, and international stakeholders. They manage relationships that contribute to both local impact and organizational goals. For instance, a Chief of Mission might negotiate partnerships with national government agencies to influence and evolve migration policies. A key pitfall at this level is to neglect local stakeholder engagement while overemphasizing high profile partnerships.

### Director

At the *Director* level, partnerships become even more complex, often spanning multiple regions or functional areas. Directors are responsible for fostering high-level relationships with international organizations, major donors, and regional bodies. Their role is to build cross-regional or cross-functional partnerships that drive innovation, funding, and policy development across multiple IOM missions. For example, a Director might work with UN agencies, regional organizations, and donors to create large-scale migration initiatives, ensuring long-term funding and regional collaboration. One potential pitfall at this level is the risk of creating or reinforcing silos, where partnerships become too compartmentalized by region or function.

### Executive Office

At the *Executive Office* level, partnerships are integral to shaping IOM's global strategy. Leaders at this level build and maintain partnerships with heads of state, global organizations, major donors, and multinational corporations. Their role is to position IOM as a global leader in migration, ensuring that partnerships enhance the organization's visibility, influence, and impact at the highest levels. For example, the Executive Office might engage with other UN agencies or form coalitions with international organizations to address large-scale migration crises, securing global cooperation and resources. A potential pitfall for executives is the risk of becoming too focused on high-level partnerships and losing sight of the operational realities on the ground. While it's important to build strategic alliances, there is a danger that these relationships become disconnected from the day-to-day needs of field teams, which can lead to impractical solutions or policies.



# The IOM Leadership Development Programme: Bridging Global Strategy and Local Implementation through action learning

The IOM Leadership Development Programme is a comprehensive initiative aimed at helping leaders at all levels meet the expectations outlined in the *Leadership Compass*, while directly contributing to the successful implementation of IOM's *Strategic Plan 2024-2028*.

## GLOBAL LAUNCH

The Global Launch focuses on introducing the IOM Leadership Compass and multidimensional leadership.

During the launch, senior leadership presents the compass, its purpose, and how it aligns with IOM's strategic goals. The launch sets the foundation for the leadership journey, outlining the key components and expectations for leaders at all levels.



## GLOBAL WORKSHOP 1

Global Workshop 1 focuses on the IOM Leadership Compass and leading self and leading up and down.

At the end of the workshop, the leaders will:

1. Understand and start to apply the principles of the Leadership Compass.
2. Start working with your personal action plan and assignments related to your own contextual challenges.
3. Work with your colleagues on your leadership challenges.
4. Have acquired new practices related to Leading and Managing Change and Leading Psychological Safety.



## GLOBAL WORKSHOP 2

Global Workshop 2 focuses on horizontal leadership, leading with peers, partners and interest groups.

At the end of the workshop, the leaders will:

1. Understand and continue to apply the principles of the Leadership Compass.
2. Continue working with your personal action plan and assignments related to your own contextual challenges.
3. Have worked with your colleagues on your leadership challenges
4. Acquire new practices related to Horizontal Leadership and Gender Responsive and Inclusive Leadership



## REGIONAL & LOCAL LEADERSHIP JOURNEYS

Regional & Local Leadership Journeys focuses on the action-learning in the local context of the leaders

During the Regional & Local Leadership Journeys, the leaders will:

1. Engage in collective learning and mutual goal-setting
2. Collaborate within their own leadership teams to set expectations and foster effective interactions across different leadership levels.
3. Develop localized strategic plans with peers and leaders beyond their immediate teams to implement strategy in their unique contexts.
4. Acquire new insights and practical tools through clinics, masterclasses, and guided conversations.



The programme began with a [Global Launch](#), where leaders were onboarded through an online session that introduced the Leadership Compass and its alignment with IOM's strategic goals. This provided a foundational understanding of the programme and sets expectations for their leadership journey.

[Global Workshop 1](#) is a virtual and highly interactive session where leaders from across the organization learn together with peers. It focuses on the Leadership Compass and helps leaders understand their roles in leading both themselves and others (upwards and downwards in the organization). The workshop introduces key concepts in Leading and Managing Change and Leading Psychological Safety. Leaders engage in action learning, identifying challenges and opportunities in their own local contexts and planning how to address them through a personal action plan.

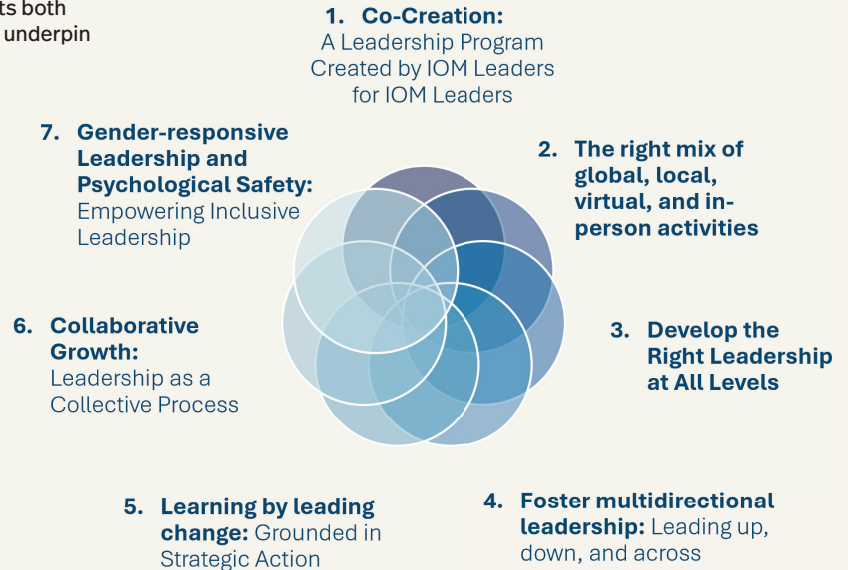
[Global Workshop 2](#) is also virtual and interactive peer learning, with a focus on Horizontal Leadership, emphasizing collaboration with peers, partners, and interest groups. It introduces advanced concepts such as Boundary-Spanning Leadership and Gender Responsive and Inclusive Leadership. Leaders continue refining their personal action plans, preparing to work with their organizations during the on-site Local Leadership Journeys to implement these strategies in their specific environments.

[The Regional and Local Leadership Journeys](#) are conducted on-site in the leaders' local contexts, where they apply the skills and insights gained from the global workshops. These journeys include interactive workshops, team dialogues, and cross-level discussions to encourage collaboration and strategic alignment. Leaders work closely with their teams to address specific challenges, foster cross-functional cooperation, and drive change. This phase allows leaders to implement their personal action plans, ensuring real-world impact and alignment with both organizational goals and local needs.

Following the Regional and Local Leadership Journeys, a [Self-Guided Leadership Journey](#) ensures continuous development and lasting impact. Leaders are provided with a customized toolbox and access to virtual support sessions to help them keep refining and advancing their personal action plans. This phase supports leaders as they build on their progress, continuously adapt their strategies, and remain aligned with organizational goals while addressing emerging challenges in their local contexts.

## Design Principles of the IOM Leadership Development Programme

The design of the IOM Leadership Development Programme has been guided by some of the current global best practices in leadership development and cutting-edge research on how to create high-impact leadership training. These principles ensure that the programme addresses real-world leadership challenges and drives results both globally and locally. We outline the key design principles that underpin the programme.





## 1 Co-Creation: A Leadership Programme Created by IOM Leaders for IOM Leaders

The Leadership Programme is the result of an extensive co-creation process, involving more than 250 people through interviews, workshops and pilot-testings globally. This inclusive, bottom-up approach ensures that the programme addresses the specific challenges faced by IOM leaders in their diverse contexts, bridging the gap between global strategy and local realities. By involving IOM's global leadership community in the design, the programme is seen as practical and directly applicable to their operational needs.

## 2 The Right Mix of Global, Local, Virtual, and In-Person Activities

The programme is delivered through a blended approach that combines online interactive formats, regional leadership days, and local leadership dialogues. This ensures that leaders can engage with the material in flexible and accessible ways, while also benefiting from direct interaction and collaboration.

Regional leadership days provide face-to-face opportunities for leaders to connect, share insights, and develop strategies that are tailored to their specific challenges. Meanwhile, local dialogues allow for contextualized discussions and action planning that drive results in the local operational environment.

## 3 Develop the Right Leadership at All Levels

Leadership development at IOM recognizes that leadership is not confined to senior management but is critical at every level of the organization. The Leadership Development Programme is designed to build leadership competencies across all levels, from Heads of Teams to Executive Directors. The programme is carefully tailored to each leadership tier, aligning directly with the competencies and expectations outlined in the Leadership Compass. Customized modules are designed to address the specific responsibilities and expectations of each leadership tier, ensuring that leaders are well-prepared for the demands of their roles.

## 4 Foster Multidirectional Leadership: Leading Up, Down, and Across

A core design principle of the IOM Leadership Development Programme is the recognition that leadership is multidirectional and not confined to a single hierarchical direction. This means leaders must balance upward, downward, and lateral leadership responsibilities. To support this, the programme includes components that develop leaders' ability to lead up, ensuring alignment with organizational strategy and influencing senior leadership. It also emphasizes leading down, by equipping leaders with the skills to effectively lead their teams, and leading across, which focuses on fostering collaboration with peers, external partners, and stakeholders.

**5 Learning by leading change: Grounded in Strategic Action**  
Effective leadership development doesn't happen in a vacuum; it occurs when leaders are actively engaged in solving real-world problems. The IOM Leadership Development Programme is based on learning by doing, using action learning theory. This ensures new competencies are applied directly to pressing issues, making leadership development a continuous process of reflection, action, and adaptation. An essential part of this is mastering change management—a key skill for leading transformation in dynamic contexts. This approach makes leadership skills practical and enhances the ability to implement global strategies effectively across diverse operational environments.

**6 Collaborative Growth: Leadership as a Collective Process**  
The programme emphasizes that leadership development is not a solitary journey but a collective process. Through peer support and collaboration, leaders are encouraged to share their insights, challenges, and experiences, building a network of mutual learning and growth. A critical part of this collaborative approach is the responsibility of leaders at higher levels to actively develop the leaders at lower organizational levels. Leadership development is seen as a leadership responsibility, and senior leaders are held accountable for the quality of leadership within their teams. This means that leaders must not only focus on their own growth but also take an active role in mentoring and guiding the next generation of leaders, creating a sustainable pipeline of talent throughout IOM.

**7 Gender-responsive Leadership and Psychological Safety: Empowering Inclusive Leadership**  
The programme prioritizes Gender-Responsive and inclusive leadership, ensuring that leaders foster inclusive environments where diverse teams can thrive. Research shows that diverse teams—when supported by leaders who embrace gender-responsive leadership—are more innovative and effective. The programme trains leaders to understand and address gender dynamics, promoting equity and inclusion at every level. Central to this is the creation of psychological safety, where all team members feel secure in sharing their ideas and perspectives without fear of judgment. Leaders are equipped to build environments where diverse voices are valued, encouraging open communication and creative problem-solving. This is key to ensuring the organization is responsive to the global communities it serves.



# Conclusion

## Impact and Future Outlook

HR leaders in international organizations, particularly within the UN system, play a pivotal role in shaping the future of leadership. As UN leaders face the “new normal”—a increasingly complex global environment marked by polycrisis, normative erosion, and heightened fragility—traditional leadership models are no longer adequate. HR leaders must proactively design, implement, and refine leadership development initiatives that reflect the demands of the “new normal”. The IOM *Leadership Compass* and *Development Programme* provide a forward-looking approach to developing leaders equipped to navigate this increasingly difficult landscape.

Successfully leading in this context requires new competencies and a shared language around leadership expectations. The *Leadership Compass* demonstrates how this can be achieved in a practical way. Co-created with IOM leaders, the *Compass* was developed through a process of exploring what it takes to succeed in the new normal. It provides a clear and structured framework that aligns leadership behaviors with strategic goals at every level of the organization, ensuring that leadership development is directly tied to achieving IOM’s broader mission.

Creating a new Leadership Compass is not enough to ensure development and change—it requires both learning and unlearning for leaders at all levels. This can only happen in a supportive, peer-learning environment, where leaders share experiences, reflect on challenges, and practice new approaches. The IOM Leadership Development Programme fosters this environment, blending

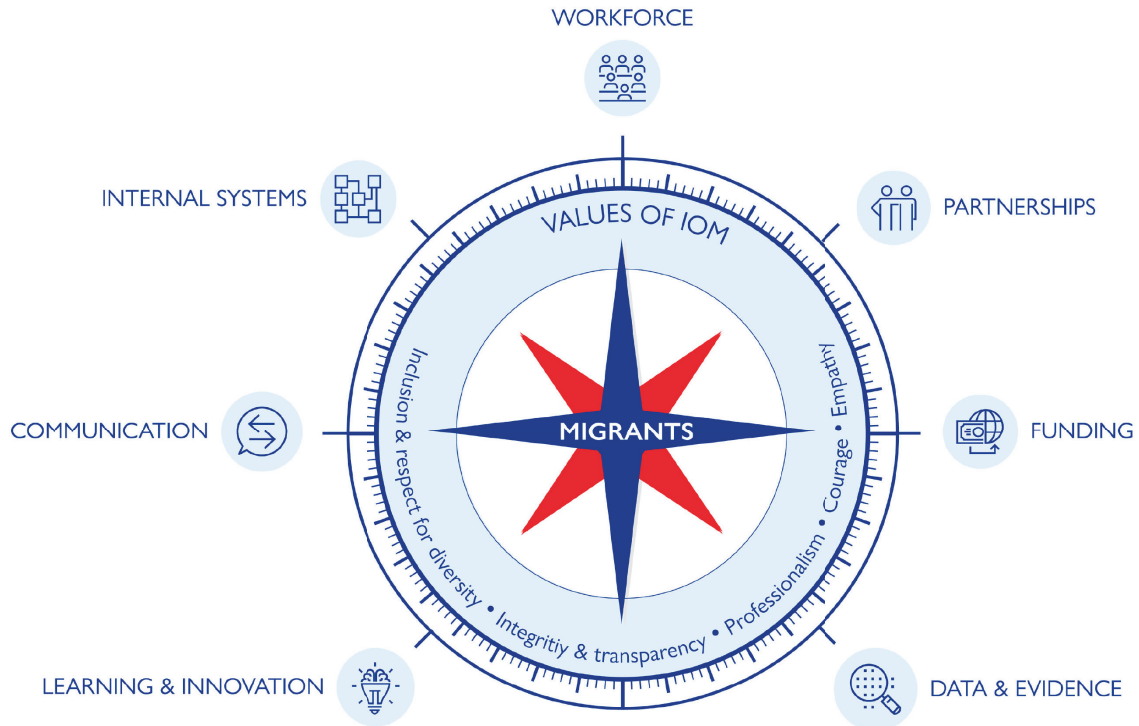
collaborative learning with practical, real-world application.

Leaders are encouraged to build competencies by dealing with to real-world challenges in their environments, learning by doing, while advancing the organization’s mission. This ensures that leadership development and strategy implementation work in tandem. By aligning leadership growth with the organization’s strategic priorities, HR ensures that leadership development becomes a key driver in executing overall strategy, driving both personal and organizational success.

As IOM continues to refine this programme, it could serve as an inspiration for Leadership Development initiatives across the broader UN system. The principles and structure of the *Leadership Compass* and the *Leadership Development Programme* offer valuable insights that may help other UN organizations enhance their leadership capabilities in response to the global challenges that define the “new normal.”



# IOM Leadership Compass





“As leaders at IOM, we must always strive to enrich the lives of all colleagues, build a better Organization, and ultimately create a more just and caring world, especially for migrants. We live our values and humbly accept feedback when we don’t.

Leadership can be exercised by anyone, regardless of title. We define leadership first and foremost as actions that enable results with and through others inside and outside IOM. Leaders inspire followship and serve to change the status quo for migrants everywhere.”

—Amy Pope, IOM Director General.

This leadership compass resets the way IOM leadership is defined and practiced. Developed through a consultative process in 2024, it is the bedrock of a leadership development programme that will enable all leaders to unite and embrace the type of leadership that we need based on our vision, values, UN norms and standards and our strategic plan.

The leadership compass guides leaders at all levels through how to live our values and translate the enablers of IOMs strategic plan into leadership behavior. Making the values and strategic enablers the framework for the compass ensures alignment across the Organization and harnesses untapped leadership and staff potential. Ultimately the Leadership Compass articulates what good leadership at IOM is all about. It sets clear expectations and allows for transparency and consistency.

For each enabler, the compass articulates leadership behavior associated with a specific enabler and how leaders at different levels demonstrate leadership and can create the change we want to see. The accompanying leadership development programme will further allow the compass and levels not to be viewed as territorial lines between leadership levels but rather as collaboration and conversation starters for strengthening the leadership chain and behavior across the entire Organization. The compass will be used to onboard new leaders as well as to develop and assess existing leaders.



## Multidirectional leadership

With the compass and the leadership programme, we firmly embrace multidirectional leadership, where leadership is not only a top-down process but an intricate web of interactions, feedback loops, and shared objectives.



### Leading yourself

You are to master the competencies at your level of the Organization, you can be helped by self-reflection and feedback, a constant focus on cultural sensitivity whether you're a part of the majority or the minority. Building resilience is critical as we often find ourselves in a crisis context, this may help us keep calm and remain stable.



### Your team members

You have a responsibility for the people you lead. One of your main goals is to explain and translate the vision and strategy into their everyday job and context. You listen, believe in involvement and ownership. You are to understand your team members and their difference, support their professional development and cultivate a psychologically safe work environment where people can fulfill their potential and thrive.



### Your peers

Leadership is also understanding and influencing your peers, providing candid feedback as well as identifying opportunities for collaboration and sparring with one another. You are to contribute to a psychologically safe team environment to foster innovation and active contribution.



### Leaders above you

Supporting your leader in their leadership responsibilities is a part of becoming a great leader, this includes speaking truth to power, highlighting opportunities for development and providing access to critical information at the right times. You contribute to creating strategies and solutions to tough problems.



### Partners and other people outside IOM

As leader of IOM you interact with many people outside your immediate spheres at IOM. You excel in mobilizing and facilitating the contributions of others to our vision and goals. You are to demonstrate and champion the values at IOM and advocate for our vision and goals.



Describing levels at the Organization and categorizing roles is a balance between enriching comprehensiveness with enough details to recognize oneself and it yet being simple and in overview format which is digestible for leaders. The consequence for some is that they may recognize themselves as leaders at two levels or at a level with a title different from their own. The compass is meant to guide in a meaningful way, where it is key to reflect on own practices and develop leadership behavior to create value for IOM and ultimately migrants.

### The compass has the following levels:

#### All leaders

This level is each one of us, meaning we are all expected to demonstrate this kind of leadership behavior towards ourselves, our peers, our partners, and our leaders.

#### Heads of Teams

are typically those leading individual contributors.

#### Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office

are often leading leaders and a mission or an office.

#### Directors

are those leading a function with a large number of people and leaders of leaders.

#### Executive Office

leading the Organization.



## WORKFORCE

Leadership cultivates diverse, resilient teams and promotes inclusion. It fosters professional growth and empowerment and cares for the whole workforce. Attention is given to induction of young talent. Workforce leadership entails creating enabling environments, which recognize and address harmful power dynamics and microaggressions based on social characteristics. Prioritizing an empathetic, safe, and supportive workplace where staff wellbeing is never neglected. Leaders take responsibility for resolving conflicts as they arise. All above is essential for realizing the potential of migration and protecting the vulnerable with agility, humility, and compassion.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Leaders excel by cultivating strategic, inclusive, and relevant partnerships that enhance the Organization's capacity to deliver comprehensive solutions for migration and displacement, and foster equality, diversity and inclusion. Building networks outside the familiar spheres, exceptional negotiation skills and collaboration even with those we do not agree with is key to build trust-based and long-term relationships working towards whole-of-society approaches.



## FUNDING

Effective leadership demands securing sustainable funding and efficient resource management. It involves presenting a compelling value proposition, actively engaging donors and maintaining strict reporting and compliance practices. Demonstrating Organizational impact to win longer-term funding, strategic financial planning, innovative fundraising, and persuasive donor engagement, ensuring initiatives adapt to changing migration dynamics.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

Leadership in this area requires a commitment to evidence-based decision-making, underpinned by robust data collection and analysis capabilities. Leaders must champion the use of data and analytics to inform policy making and practice, fostering a cross-Organizational culture of transparency and accountability. This skillset enables the Organization to lead in the development of informed migration policies and practices that are responsive to emerging trends and challenges.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

Leaders cultivate an environment that values innovation and ongoing learning. Leaders should promote creative problem-solving, adopt new technologies, and remain open to change. Emphasizing knowledge sharing and collaboration with external partners is key to devising and expanding effective solutions that safeguard migrants' safety, dignity, and rights.



## COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is a key leadership attribute, necessary for shaping perceptions and engaging various stakeholders. Leaders must excel in crafting and disseminating clear, impactful and respectful messages that advocate for the rights of all migrants in their diversity and the importance of orderly migration. From time to time this may also include carrying out difficult discussions. Internal communication and change management efforts are critical to ensure team cohesion and alignment with the Organization's goals, fostering a shared commitment to its mission.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

Leadership related to internal systems (policies, procedures and technologies) requires overseeing the development and maintenance of a robust Organizational infrastructure that responds to the changing needs of migrants and other stakeholders. Leaders role model integrity by managing resources and people honestly and fairly.

Leadership catalyzes digital transformation, by creating the narrative for change and inspiring the workforce for digital transformation. Leaders strike a balance between innovation and compliance while never compromising data security and integrity.



## WORKFORCE

Workforce leadership at this level includes hands-on guidance and nurture of a diverse and resilient team, focus on operational excellence, personal development, and maintenance of productive and constructive team dynamics. Foster an environment where every team member feels valued, safe, understood, and motivated to contribute to the team's goals. Heads of teams supports their leaders in understanding sentiments among individual contributors.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Cultivate and leverage diverse partnerships at the operational level to enhance project delivery and impact. Excelling at negotiation, balancing the interests of multiple stakeholders, and mapping potential partners to build long-term networks within and outside IOM and UN. When partnerships are scalable they work with their leaders to increase engagement.



## FUNDING

Create funding opportunities in often volatile funding environments and articulate the impact and value of the team's work to donors. Emphasize the importance of securing support that extends beyond short-term projects to foster sustainable project outcomes. Ensure all funding is gender responsive. Making sure funding opportunities are transparent for their leaders to leverage synergies.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

Foster a team environment that prioritizes data-driven decision-making, encouraging the collection of disaggregated data (sex, age, location etc) and ensuring analysis of data to understand the context, gender and intersectional power dynamics, and conflict dynamics to guide program and operational development, actions, and effective evaluation. Practicing becoming aware of own biases and personal beliefs, and supporting teams in their self-reflection to improve decision making and inclusivity.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

Building psychologically safe teams where people openly share new ideas and doubts. Foster an environment where persons of different diversities are valued, respected, and provided space to contribute, especially those most marginalized. Ensure learning is built into projects. Being attentive to how individual learning paths are consistent and valuable to overall Organizational imperative. Foster a culture where team members are invested in one another's development and spark curiosity and remain open to opportunities for improvement and constant collaboration and exchanging of ideas. Highlight growth mindset as an asset to the Organization.



## COMMUNICATION

Excel in articulating the team's vision and achievements, using effective communication to ensure team alignment with Organizational goals and enhancing motivation towards the mission's success. Uses simple, respectful and clear communication and is attentive to leverage different communication channels and make an effort to reach people personally to counter overuse of e-mails. When messages are delivered take time to ensure it is well received and understood.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

Team leaders deeply understand and can explain to their team members and supervisors the importance and context of different policies and systems. They can identify breaches and take corrective action when needed.

Team leaders manage risks effectively and ensure the digital literacy and security as well as equality, diversity and inclusion, protection, conflict sensitivity and environmental sustainability knowledge of the team.



## WORKFORCE

- **Micromanagement:** Inhibiting team autonomy by overly controlling work processes, which can stifle creativity, initiative and ultimately innovation.
- **Neglecting Team Development:** Failing to invest in the team's professional growth and not providing opportunities for skill enhancement or career advancement.
- **Does a lot and forgets to lead:** Acts as individual contributor rather than a leader.



## PARTNERSHIPS

- **Over-Reliance on Familiar Networks or not building New Networks:** Failing to expand partnerships beyond established contacts, limiting access to new opportunities and insights.
- **Mismatched Priorities:** Prioritizing operational needs without aligning with broader strategic partnership goals, risking misalignment with Organizational objectives.
- **Underestimating Stakeholder Diversity:** Not fully appreciating or leveraging the diverse perspectives and strengths of potential partners, leading to missed collaboration opportunities. This includes failure to partner with representative Organizations of persons from different backgrounds, including but not limited to women, persons with diverse SOGIESC, persons with disabilities, youth, and others.



## FUNDING

- **Pursuing only Small, Short-term, and non-strategic grants:** Prioritizing projects with immediate funding without considering long-term sustainability, and strategic alignment.
- **Insufficient Fundraising Skills:** Lacking the skills to effectively articulate the value proposition of projects to potential donors or partners.
- **Overlooking Diverse Funding Sources:** Relying too heavily on a single or limited number of funding sources, increasing vulnerability to funding cuts.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

- **Limited Scope in Data Utilization:** Relying on a narrow set of data sources or types e.g. quantitative over qualitative data, potentially overlooking valuable insights that could inform project design and implementation.
- **Personalized and bias-unconscious decision making:** Making decisions based on intuition or past experience without adequately consulting relevant data or evidence.
- **Insufficient Data Sharing and Transparency:** Failing to foster an environment where data is openly shared and discussed within the team, limiting collective understanding and buy-in.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

- **Insufficient encouragement of Diversity and Creative Thinking:** Not creating an environment values difference and where team members feel safe to propose innovative ideas or challenge the status quo, stifling creativity and innovation at the source.
- **Overlooking Professional Development:** Failing to prioritize or invest in ongoing learning opportunities for team members, limiting their growth and the team's ability to adapt to new challenges.
- **Resistance to New Technologies:** Demonstrating reluctance or slow adoption of new technologies that could enhance team efficiency and effectiveness, potentially hindering the team's operational capacity.



## COMMUNICATION

- **Underestimating the Power of Listening:** Focus so much on disseminating information and instructions that they neglect the importance of active listening.
- **Inconsistent Feedback:** Providing feedback that is either too infrequent or not constructive, hindering team development and morale.
- **Assuming Information is Understood:** Failing to ensure that messages are clearly understood by team members, leading to misinterpretations and errors.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

- **Inefficient Use of Technology:** Not leveraging available technology to streamline team operations, leading to inefficiency, and wasted resources. Failing to establish or follow robust data management protocols, risking data integrity and security.
- **Tolerance of Unethical Acts:** Overlooking or not addressing ethical breaches, which can erode team integrity and set a negative precedent.
- **Neglecting Knowledge Gaps:** Not addressing gaps in knowledge of the team on equality, diversity and inclusion, protection, conflict sensitivity and environmental sustainability.

## Chiefs of Mission & Heads of Office



### WORKFORCE

Workforce leadership involves setting strategic goals aligned with both IOM's mission and the constantly changing local context. Leading leaders, and delegating leadership tasks, as well as managing performance and talent development, and empowering and enabling other leaders in country to ensure a culture of ownership and initiative. A leader at this level understands Organization-wide requirements.

Being an effective team-player within the UNCT and a champion of inclusion are essential. Leaders at this level supports directors in connecting workforce critical information across areas as they have country and mission specific insights.



### PARTNERSHIPS

Strategically engage and sustain high-level partnerships with governments, UN, NGOs, civil society as well as community leaders, facilitating collaborative efforts for comprehensive solutions related to migration and displacement as well as influence policy making. Skillfully navigating in complex multistakeholder environments. Challenge conventional thinking, including considering partnerships to advance environmental protection and sustainability. Keeps a focus on opportunities to expand partnerships at a regional scale and enable their leader to succeed with those.



### FUNDING

Excel in strategic financial dialogues with key donors, aligning mission initiatives with broader, impact-focused funding priorities. Focus on securing sustainable support that underpins comprehensive, long-term migration solutions. Contribute to opportunities for pooling resources across the Organization and with UN partners and enabling their leaders to report on cross functional opportunities. Cognizant of their role to focus on broader Organizational imperatives.



### DATA & EVIDENCE

Advocate for and enable evidence-based practices in their missions, ensuring that policy advocacy, programmatic and operational decisions are grounded in reliable data and analysis to address migration challenges effectively. Builds a culture of databased decisions balanced with qualitative and context specific insights to counter decisions made on personal beliefs and bias.



### LEARNING & INNOVATION

Lead by example in promoting innovation and a learning ethos across missions and partners as well as building learning in as a part of projects. Prioritize establishing feedback practices, nurturing a growth mindset among leaders, and ensuring a psychologically safe space for experimentation and learning, positioning missions at the forefront of adopting innovative practices for effective migration governance and environmental sustainability.



### COMMUNICATION

Master the art of persuasive and impactful messaging to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from government officials to community leaders, advocating for the rights of and protection of all migrants in their diversity and the benefits of orderly migration. Ensures the mission has efficient communication processes in and outside IOM. Spend time on improving internal communication. Attentive to timing and relevance in communication internally as well as externally.



### INTERNAL SYSTEMS

CoMs and HoOs support responsive and ethical mission operations. They communicate important changes and consistently balance programme and innovation with compliance. They always act in accordance with UN, IOM and local rules. Ensure business continuity by creating knowledge management systems and providing clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, and requirements for collaboration between teams.

They are early digital and sustainability adopters. Highly aware of own power and privilege and ensuring a system of checks and balances.



## WORKFORCE

- **Overlooking Cultural Sensitivity:** Not adequately addressing or appreciating the diverse cultural backgrounds within the team, which can affect team cohesion and effectiveness.
- **Insufficient delegation and development of diverse leaders:** Struggling to delegate responsibilities effectively, leading to workload imbalances and potential burnout among team members or deflecting responsibilities to others such as HR. Failing to be a gender responsive and inclusive leader. Not clearly enabling collaboration between teams and working in silos.
- **Failure to Foster Psychological Safety:** Not creating an environment where staff feel safe to share ideas, raise concerns, or admit mistakes, hindering innovation and learning.



## PARTNERSHIPS

- **Overemphasis on High-Profile Partnerships:** Focusing too much on partnerships with high visibility while neglecting smaller, potentially impactful collaborations.
- **Neglecting Local Stakeholder Engagement:** Failing to engage adequately with local stakeholders, which can undermine program effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Ignoring conflict resolutions and risks:** Not developing or utilizing effective strategies for navigating conflicts within partnerships, potentially harming long-term relationships.



## FUNDING

- **Strategic Misalignment:** Initiating projects that attract funding but deviate from IOM's core mission and strategic objectives, leading to mission drift.
- **Neglecting Funding Synergies:** Failing to leverage partnerships for co-funding opportunities or to share resources, reducing potential impact.
- **Inadequate Engagement with Local Stakeholders:** Not fully engaging with local donors or stakeholders who could provide support aligned with local needs and strategic goals.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

- **Inadequate Alignment with Strategic Data Needs:** Not fully aligning data collection, disaggregation, and analysis efforts with equality, diversity and inclusion commitments and the strategic priorities of the mission or office, potentially misdirecting resources
- **Neglecting Local Context in Data Analysis:** Applying data insights without adequately considering the local context and nuances, which can lead to ineffective or inappropriate interventions.
- **Underutilizing Data for Advocacy:** Missing opportunities to use data and evidence in external communications and advocacy efforts to influence policy and practice at the local or national level.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

- **Neglecting Diverse Input for Innovation:** Not leveraging the diverse backgrounds and perspectives within the mission to fuel innovation, resulting in missed opportunities for creative solutions.
- **Inadequate Feedback Mechanisms:** Lacking effective processes for collecting and acting on feedback, which is crucial for continuous improvement and learning from experiences.
- **Underestimating Local Innovation:** Failing to recognize and scale innovative practices developed at the local level, which could have broader applicability within the Organization.



## COMMUNICATION

- **Neglecting Tailored and respectful Communication:** Not adapting communication styles to fit the diverse cultures, social identities and languages within the mission, potentially leading to misunderstandings.
- **Undercommunicating with team and own part of the Organization:** Failing to adequately involve, listen and communicate about changes in strategy or policies.
- **Overlooking Stakeholder Communication:** Not engaging sufficiently with local stakeholders, which is crucial for mission success and community relations.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

- **Inadequate Adaptation to Local Needs:** Implementing internal systems that do not consider the specific requirements or constraints of the local context.
- **Failure to update data in systems:** Not keeping internal systems updated to reflect changes in the operational environment or Organizational strategy.
- **Ignoring Signs of Unethical Practices and avoiding difficult decisions:** Not taking immediate action upon noticing unethical practices, potentially compromising the mission's integrity.



## WORKFORCE

Leadership here means breaking down silos and fostering a culture of collaboration, both internally and externally. It's about role-modeling unity and teamwork under a shared strategic vision, encouraging innovation, and aligning efforts with the IOM's mission. This leadership level is key in nurturing future leaders, inspiring value-driven leadership, and ensuring impactful operations worldwide aligned with UN best practice. Leaders at this level are expected to connect executive teams members with dynamics of the Organization.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Leadership at the regional and global functional levels centers on establishing wide-reaching partnerships across borders and sectors to amplify the Organization's global impact on migration and displacement. Enable their leaders to shape global partnerships by fostering and identifying opportunities.



## FUNDING

Oversee the strategic financial planning process, ensuring alignment with Organizational goals and fostering long-term donor relationships. Drive the shift towards funding models that prioritize programmatic impact and sustainability over short-term projects. Help their leaders creating a global value proposition for donors.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

Oversee the development of Organization's data and insights strategies and policies. Ensure data governance and utilization are central to the Organization's approach to migration issues. Reduce barriers to data usage. Ensures the Organization has culture, as well as structures, and processes that counters bias and personal beliefs in decisions. Can combine analytics from large data sets with qualitative and context specific insights.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

Strategize Organizational learning and innovation initiatives, focusing on the development and implementation of cutting-edge solutions to complex migration challenges. Emphasize the importance of a learning culture that values feedback, foster a growth mindset among staff and allows staff to take out time to develop. Builds and maintain psychological safety that tolerates mistakes and seeks intelligent failures.



## COMMUNICATION

Lead strategic communication efforts across the Organization externally as well as internally, setting the tone for how migration issues are communicated externally and fostering an internal culture of openness and alignment with IOM's values. Prioritize internal communication during challenging times. Take actively part in developing a framework for continuous improvement of internal communication and role model internal communication practices. Contribute to the global narrative around human rights for all, orderly migration and humanitarian responses.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

Direct the Organization-wide internal systems strategy, integrating advanced digital solutions and risk management practices to enhance operational efficiency and ethical governance. Understand the digital landscape and visualize how technology can enhance internal processes, drive innovation and deliver better results. Advance continuous improvement through seeking input from internal stakeholders.





## WORKFORCE

- **Silos and Isolation:** Allowing Organizational silos to persist, which impedes global, cross-border and cross-departmental collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- **Misalignment with Strategic Vision:** Not effectively communicating and aligning the team's work with IOM's strategic goals, leading to confusion and misdirected efforts.
- **Always guided by short-term priorities rather than a strategic vision and forgets to build Organizational capacity.**



## PARTNERSHIPS

- **Silos in Partnership Management:** Allowing departmental or geographical silos to impede cross-functional collaboration on partnerships, leading to disjointed efforts and inefficiencies.
- **Strategic Misalignment:** Launching partnerships without ensuring full alignment with IOM's strategic direction and values, risking dilution of efforts.
- **Insufficient Support for Partnership Development:** Providing inadequate resources or support for teams to develop and manage partnerships effectively, limiting their potential.



## FUNDING

- **Lack of Integrated Funding Strategy:** Not coordinating an Organization-wide funding strategy, leading to fragmented efforts and inefficiencies. Not aligning budget allocation and Organizational priorities.
- **Overemphasizing Compliance:** Prioritizing compliance to the extent that it stifles innovative funding mechanisms or programmatic flexibility, instead of appropriate usage of compliance where learning is derived, and best practice is leveraged.
- **Failure to Cultivate Donor Relationships:** Not investing in long-term donor relationships, which are crucial for sustainable funding and understanding donor priorities.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

- **Siloed Data Management:** Allow data systems and practices to be developed and managed in silos, impeding Organization-wide access to and analysis of data.
- **Overemphasis on global quantitative data:** Prioritizes quantitative data at the expense of qualitative insights, which can provide crucial context and nuance to the numbers.
- **Lack of Investment in Data Capacity Building:** Not sufficiently investing in building the data literacy and analytical skills of staff across the Organization, limiting the overall capacity to leverage data for decision-making.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

- **Siloed Approach to Innovation:** Allowing Organizational silos to impede the sharing of ideas and innovations across departments, reducing the potential for cross-pollination and Organization-wide improvement.
- **Overemphasis on Short-term Results:** Prioritizing initiatives that deliver immediate outcomes and daily operations over those with potential for significant long-term impact, discouraging investment in groundbreaking projects.
- **Insufficient Risk Tolerance:** Demonstrating a low tolerance for intelligent failures and the inherent risks of innovation, which can discourage experimentation and the pursuit of novel approaches to migration challenges.



## COMMUNICATION

- **Siloed Communication:** Allowing information to be confined within departmental, functional and geographical silos, preventing a unified understanding of Organizational strategies and goals.
- **Being inconsistent in communication:** Lack of transparency by sharing too little information about decision-making processes or oversharing confidential information or deviating from messaging from the executive level, which can erode trust and hinder buy-in from staff.
- **Failure to Champion Interdepartmental Dialogue:** Not facilitating opportunities for cross-departmental communication, which is essential for fostering collaboration and innovation.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

- **Lack of Cross-departmental Coordination:** Allowing silos to hinder collaboration and information sharing across departments, reducing operational effectiveness.
- **Avoiding difficult decisions:** Keep investing in and sticking to systems even though they are ineffective or have failure.
- **Neglecting of regular review and reinforcement of the Organization's ethical standards:** Assuming that staff understand and will follow ethical guidelines without providing regular training and reinforcement.



## WORKFORCE

Leaders at this level cultivate top-level cohesion in the leadership chain throughout the Organization. Leadership signifies setting a visionary direction and fostering a global culture that values equality, diversity, inclusivity, and excellence. Executive team members role model empathy and understand how decisions impact different levels of the Organization, connecting the global strategic plan to operational reality. It involves championing a global talent strategy to attract, develop, and retain top talent. It champions UN collaboration and alignment.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Shape global partnership frameworks, positioning IOM as the leader in migration and displacement governance, and spearhead initiatives that build sustainable, relevant, and strategic relationships for global impact.



## FUNDING

Lead Organizational efforts in communicating the value proposition of IOM to a global audience, with a special emphasis on securing flexible and multi-year funding arrangements. Ensure these efforts support the Organization's capacity to adapt to changing migration dynamics with a focus on impacts. Works strategically with global trends, political decisions, counters donor fatigue and understands competition.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

Champion evidence-based decision making. Foster a culture of transparency and accountability. Promote the use of data and insights in strategic decision-making, planning, policy formulation, and practice. Position IOM as the place to get robust and inclusive data and information on migration patterns and trends.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

Champion a global culture of innovation, learning, and continuous improvement across IOM. This includes promoting diverse teams and partnerships that celebrates the creativity of persons of different backgrounds, including the most marginalized. Being genuinely open to feedback – also when it is uncomfortable and inconvenient. Valuing colleagues that speak truth to power and diverging feedback in general. Encouraging experimentation and accepting that failures can foster learning and innovation.



## COMMUNICATION

Champion the Organization's global communication strategy, shape a balanced narrative around migration, promoting the rights of all migrants in all their diversity and contribute to positive change to harness the potentials of migration. Voice different opinions while promoting internal cohesion and a unified commitment to the mission. Shape a framework for successful internal communication and continuous improvement. Champion and value the role of different and diverse leaders in the leadership chain.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

Role model honesty and integrity through transparent, fair, and ethical decision-making. Role modeling compliance while being an enabling force for innovative practices, speed of action and championing simplification around bureaucratic burdens. Curious about how technology can enable better results.

Adjust internal systems in a timely manner to meet the evolving needs of migrants and other stakeholders. Ensuring efficient policies around data management and data privacy.



## WORKFORCE

- **Disconnection from operational realities:** Becoming too removed from the day-to-day challenges and achievements in countries. Risking decisions that are out of touch with realities and demonstrates selective empathy.
- **Inconsistent Communication of Vision:** Not uniformly disseminating IOM'S vision and values, leading to disparities in understanding and commitment across the Organization.
- **Focusing too much on parts of the Organization rather than the whole and not building a coherent Organizational architecture with clear roles and mandates at all levels that counters micromanagement.**



## PARTNERSHIPS

- **Overlooking Partnership Maintenance:** Focusing on establishing new partnerships at the expense of nurturing and evaluating existing ones, which may weaken the Organizational network.
- **Failing to Leverage Global Networks Effectively:** Not fully utilizing IOM'S global presence and networks to forge strategic, cross-border partnerships that could enhance global impact.
- **Lack of Clear Partnership Framework:** Missing a clear, Organization-wide framework for evaluating and pursuing partnerships, leading to inconsistent approaches, and missed opportunities.



## FUNDING

- **Not Setting a Clear Funding Vision:** Failing to articulate a clear and compelling funding vision that aligns with the strategic direction and motivates donors to invest.
- **Underestimating the Importance of Advocacy:** Overlooking the role of advocacy and technical expertise in securing funding, especially for policy-influencing initiatives, or emerging challenges.
- **Inadequate Risk Management for Funding:** Not implementing robust risk management strategies for funding sources, leaving the Organization exposed to financial volatility. Chasing new donor and neglecting long term relationships.



## DATA & EVIDENCE

- **Not Champion a Data-centric Culture:** Failing to lead by example in valuing and prioritizing data and evidence in strategic decision-making, potentially leading to a wider Organizational culture that underappreciates the importance of data.
- **Inadequate Strategic Vision for Data Utilization:** Not articulating a clear and compelling vision for how data and evidence should drive the Organization's strategic direction and operational excellence.
- **Overlooking Global Data Collaboration Opportunities:** Missing opportunities to collaborate on data initiatives with global partners, including other UN agencies and international organizations, diverse civil society groups which could enhance IOM'S data capabilities and impact.



## LEARNING & INNOVATION

- **Lack of Strategic Direction for Innovation:** Not providing clear strategic guidance on how innovation aligns with the Organization's broader goals, leading to fragmented or misaligned efforts or driving innovation without an eye for the change load on the Organization.
- **Inadequate Support for a Learning Culture:** Failing to model a commitment to personal and Organizational learning, which is essential for fostering an environment where continuous improvement is valued. Not promoting Psychological Safety.
- **Overlooking Global Collaboration Opportunities:** Missing opportunities to engage diverse teams and diverse global partnerships that could enhance learning and innovation across the migration sector, limiting the exchange of knowledge and best practices.



## COMMUNICATION

- **Failing to emphasize the positive impact of migration on communities worldwide:** Not addressing migrant crisis fearmongering with data and evidence of how migrants contribute to building stronger and more inclusive societies.
- **Inconsistent Messaging Across the Organization:** Sending mixed messages to different parts of the Organization, which can create confusion and dilute Organizational goals.
- **Not Modeling Open Communication:** Executives not practicing open and approachable communication styles, setting a tone that discourages openness and feedback from lower levels.



## INTERNAL SYSTEMS

- **Misalignment Between Strategy and Systems:** Developing strategies without ensuring the internal systems are in place to support their execution.
- **Underestimating the Impact of Organizational Culture:** Ignoring the Organizational culture's influence on the effectiveness of internal systems, including ethical behaviors.
- **Lack of Accountability Mechanisms:** Failing to implement effective mechanisms for holding staff accountable for their actions, especially concerning ethical breaches.



# Gender-Responsive Leadership

## A Pathway to Organizational Excellence and Equality

As global organizations, including the United Nations (UN), strive to foster inclusive environments, the need for leaders to be at the forefront of gender equality initiatives is evident. This article explores the significance of Gender-Responsive Leadership (GRL), the tangible benefits for organizations, and how the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has pioneered Gender-Responsive Leadership training to create transformative change.

When the UN Secretary General in 2022 commissioned a review of the UN's own capacity to address gender equality internally and externally, he set the UN on a path for a significant transformation of leadership approaches.

Key findings of the review, included that:

1. Despite the UN's efforts to advance gender equality over the last 10–15 years, leadership commitment has been inconsistent, and that leadership has not sufficiently prioritized gender equality across the system, hindering progress.
2. Leadership has failed to address entrenched power dynamics and structural inequalities that continue to limit the advancement of gender equality. A radical transformation of leadership approaches and strategies is urgently needed to overcome these barriers.
3. There is a significant lack of accountability for gender equality outcomes, with many UN entities lacking the structures or leadership necessary to drive meaningful change.

These findings underline that without stronger leadership commitment, the UN's gender equality goals will remain unmet.



## The Imperative of Gender-Responsive Leadership

Gender-responsive leadership goes beyond symbolic gestures. It encompasses a leadership approach that prioritizes gender equality in all organizational decisions, policies, and practices. The UN System-Wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan emphasizes that gender equality must be integral to leadership, both internally within organizations and externally through the services they provide.

On International Women's Day in 2024, the UN SG launched the UN System-Wide Gender Equality Action Plan as the UN's response to the review. Former UN Assistant Secretary General, Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, now Managing Director and Partner at the consultancy firm LEAD – Enter Next Level helped the UN System facilitate a multi-stakeholder process which led to the adoption of the ambitious Acceleration Plan.

The Plan is centered around a comprehensive and strategic approach to advancing gender equality, including supporting every single UN leader to become a gender responsive leader.

Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen emphasizes:

***“I’ve met hundreds of UN leaders who really want to become more inclusive and gender responsive, but they often lack the tools and skills to translate it into daily leadership practices. I’m therefore particularly excited by the fact that the Acceleration Plan calls on all entities to provide training to leaders on gender responsive leadership”.***

Managing Director and Partner, Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen  
LEAD - Enter next level

## Organizational Benefits of Gender-Responsive Leadership

Advancing Gender-Responsive leadership is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do:

1. Diverse leadership teams that incorporate gender-responsive approaches are more likely to bring innovative ideas to the table. Research shows that diverse organizations are 75% more likely to successfully market new products and services. GRL fosters creativity by harnessing diverse perspectives, ultimately driving better decision-making and higher productivity
2. Gender-responsive leaders not only advocate for equality but also embody these values throughout their actions. By committing to gender equality, organizations enhance their credibility both within their workforce and externally among stakeholders and the public.
3. Today's workforce seeks organizations that prioritize diversity and inclusion. Gender-responsive leadership makes workplaces more appealing to high-performing candidates, particularly women and marginalized genders, by ensuring a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment.
4. Leaders who actively address gender inequalities help create an environment where all employees feel valued and heard. This leads to more open communication, stronger team cohesion, and reduced incidents of discrimination and sexism.



## UNODC's Commitment to Gender-Responsive Leadership

The UNODC has emerged as a leading example of how organizations can embrace GRL from the top down. Through the Gender-Responsive Leadership Learning Programme, UNODC has trained its leaders to recognize and address gender biases, promote gender equality, and drive inclusive policies across all levels of the organization.

This program not only focuses on skill-building for current leaders but also encourages a culture of accountability and continuous learning. As part of its 2022-2026 Gender Strategy, the UNODC has implemented an action plan with specific commitments to gender equality, ensuring that leadership at every level is accountable for achieving these goals. By integrating gender considerations into every aspect of its work, UNODC has seen transformative results, setting a new standard for other UN organizations.

The UNODC have used the gender responsive leadership framework and handbook developed by the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy (FPA) as their programme framework and have seen great feedback from leaders.



*Scan the QR-Code a read more about the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy Gender-Response Leadership Framework*





# Gender-Responsive Leadership Learning Programmes

As part of FBA's on going Gender-Responsive Leadership Initiative, leaders and managers in the EU, UN and OSCE are participating in Gender-Responsive Leadership Learning Programmes.

## Gender-Responsive Leadership skills

The five core skills Gender-Responsive leaders use to achieve gender equality and woman's rights are:

- 1. Lead by example**  
Mitigate gender stereotypes, intervene in cases of sexism, and drive organisational changes for increased gender equality and the achievement woman's and girl's rights.
- 2. Set priorities and targets**  
Identify key implementation gaps of gender equality policies, set strategic priorities and measurable targets for increased gender equality.
- 3. Communicate clearly and convincingly**  
Use Gender-Responsive language and be clear, convincing and consistent when communicating on gender equality and woman's and girls's rights.
- 4. Manage staff, resources and activities**  
Establish the right conditions to enable staff to succeed in achieving gender equality priorities and targets; build a strategic working relationship with the gender adviser of focal point; and use

gender analysis to ensure that resource and activities contribute to gender equality.

- 5. Hold self and other to account**  
Develop a learning and accountability culture for gender equality performance, including using formal and informal accountability mechanisms such as follow-up and feedback.



## The UN Secretary-General's Call to Action

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly emphasized the need for accelerated progress toward gender equality. In his 2024 International Women's Day address, he warned that at the current rate of progress, full gender equality is "some 300 years away," which he described as an "insult to women and girls" globally. He stressed that true gender equality requires not only political will but substantial investments in programmes that promote women's leadership, end gender-based violence, and address systemic biases.

Gender-responsive leadership is more than just a leadership style—it is an essential strategy for creating inclusive, equitable, and high-performing organizations. By investing in GRL, organizations like UNODC demonstrate how top-down leadership commitment to gender equality can yield transformative results. As the global call for gender equality intensifies, particularly with the UN's System-Wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, the time for action is now.



# About the Authors and Their Organization

## Kristian Dahl

Managing Director and Founder  
MSc in Psychology  
LEAD - Enter next level  
E-mail: kd@lead.eu  
Phone: +45 28 74 22 20



Kristian is one of Scandinavia's foremost occupational psychologists and founder of LEAD. He is a highly sought-after trusted advisor for top leaders when management, talent or organizational development is on the agenda. Kristian has wide-ranging experience with designing and implementing development processes that make organizations ready for new strategic horizons.

He works as a trusted advisor for leading ambitious multilateral organizations, global funds and public sector organizations. On the side, Kristian has also worked as a researcher and leader in the academic world, as well as being the author of a series of books and articles on management and organizational development.

## Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen

Managing Director and Partner  
M.A. in Law  
LEAD - Enter next level  
E-mail: aba@lead.eu  
Phone: +45 22 42 18 11



Anne-Birgitte is a global leadership advisor, facilitator, mentor, and transformative leader. As a top executive AB has worked at the UN, in NGOs and philanthropy internally stewarding major transformation processes and externally advancing human rights and the SDGs, with a strong focus on women's and children's rights, education, and health. In addition, AB has founded and created several global partnerships. She has extensive board experience, including as Chair.

At LEAD – enter next level AB focuses on helping leaders transform their organizational cultures and sustainable impact through inclusive strategy processes, enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion, gender-responsive leadership, psychological safety and wellbeing in the workplace. AB was in 2018 on Apolitico's 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy. She holds a master degree in law.

## LEAD - Enter next level

E-mail: [lead@lead.eu](mailto:lead@lead.eu)

Phone: +45 53 37 60 00

[www.lead.eu/international](http://www.lead.eu/international)

We are a consultancy driven by a passion to lift people and organizations to the next level, so they can make a difference for others and society. We help make transformation, strategy implementation and change happen through human-centered leadership.

We are over 60 globally minded leadership enthusiasts. We cover a range of disciplines (psychology, anthropology, political science, law etc.). We are trusted advisors and have lived experience from top level leadership positions in government, UN, business, academia, philanthropy and CSOs.

We work in strong partnerships with clients and partners to create better, balanced and meaningful relationships.

We produce and disseminate research-based knowledge that challenges and rethinks existing understandings of management and the organization.

We translate knowledge about what works into understandable and actionable solutions close to practice.

We build the capacity of those we work with, making ourselves redundant over time.

**LEAD**   
enter next level



## Special Publication

*Produced by LEAD - Enter next level for the Career Development Roultable 2024 inspried  
by our collaboration with IOM, Folke Bernadotte Academy and UNODC.*

