

LEADING BY DOING

Taking up Space and
Driving Change



YOUth Lead: A Toolkit for Transformational Leadership to Support Gender Equality
by CIWiL and ParlAmericas



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This module is part of the toolkit ***“YOUth Lead: A Toolkit for Transformational Leadership to Support Gender Equality.”***

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INTRODUCTION

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the Caribbean underwent a series of social, political, and economic developments. A number of visionary women saw the manifestations of social inequalities around them – from unfair wages to declining welfare state systems to rising violence against women – and they recognised how much remained to be done to close the gaps. They created their own roadmap for transformational leadership, guided by their passion for justice, the practical knowledge and tools they had, and the relationships they formed. They organised collectively in a more structured way and stepped up to address the need for more just and equal societies.



As you embark or continue on your own leadership development path, remember that transformational leadership is not so much about what you say, but about **action, outcomes, and impact**. Austrian-American women’s history scholar, Gerda Lerner, reminds us that transformational leadership is primarily a practice:

“

The point is that wherever we are as women, wherever we are situated in our lives, we can advance a feminist agenda if we stop thinking about how to be leaders and think rather about how to be doers, how to be agents if you move on or go away. To me, that has always been the measure of leadership.¹

”

This resource has thus been designed as a follow-up to the “[Learning to Lead: Laying the Foundations for Transformational Leadership](#)” module which outlines some of the values and outcomes of transformational leadership. This tool shares suggestions, opportunities, and resources that can help to inspire and guide you in being a transformational leader and confidently taking action on issues important to you. Its content covers:

- Spaces for applying transformational leadership
- Leadership-building tools

1. Gerda Lerner, *Woman of Power*, Issue 24 (January 1995) Leadership: Feminist, Spiritual, Political: 44, quoted in Srilatha Batliwala, *Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud* (CREA, 2010), 12.

SPACES FOR APPLYING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Caribbean feminist advocacy has always involved the use of multiple strategies at all levels - individual, organisational, community, national, regional, international, and global - to build networks, alliances, and coalitions that advance women's rights in particular as well as justice for all. Strategies have taken multiple forms, including information sharing, lobbying, petitioning, demonstrations, and sustained campaigns.

Transforming the political
economic, social, cultural, legal



Transforming one's beliefs
attitudes, behaviour, relationship
to power, leadership approach

There are likewise several avenues that can be taken by young women in leadership today, depending on their particular advocacy issue, roles, organisational and environmental context and moment in time. No action or role is too small. One thing remains clear, and it's that wherever you are and whatever the time, it is the right place and time to apply transformational leadership principles.



Leadership is often only thought of as it pertains to the realms of politics or business, but the possibilities for exercising transformational leadership exist across multiple other spaces, disciplines, industries, and sectors. Transformational leadership is premised on **starting with the self** and making leadership an everyday practice, so by its nature, it is something that you can bring into all life roles.



IN YOUR EVERYDAY, PERSONAL LIFE



Parents are leaders to their children, friends often come to us seeking our advice and counsel, or we may spark up a conversation with a stranger in a queue. These scenarios all present opportunities for us to be transformational leaders. Responding through, for instance, active listening and emotional intelligence are just a couple ways that you can enact the principles of transformational leadership even in your regular, everyday lives.

While we tend to think of leadership as something that takes place only in the public domain, or as a formal or professional role, being a transformational leader is not a hat that you put on at work and take off at the end of the day – it is a way of life, and that means that you can be a transformational leader in small ways everyday in interactions with your parents, siblings, extended family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, classmates, service providers and strangers that you encounter.

Watch these videos for examples of how you can apply transformational leadership in your everyday, personal life:

1. [Dr. Bertice Berry – Find a space that works to make this place a better one](#)
2. [Mel Disley – A vision of everyday leadership: Why we can all be leaders](#)
3. [Sarah Armstrong – Is leadership just kindness?](#)

THROUGH YOUR CAREER OR PROFESSION

Some of the principles and characteristics of transformational leadership like cooperation, compassion, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability can be adopted by any person in any profession and industry regardless of their role or rank in an organisation.

The higher intended outcomes of transformational leadership (a redefinition of gender and power relations towards equity and justice for all) can indeed be harder to achieve. This is especially so in some industries (e.g., sport, science and technology) that have been historically male-dominated and have organisational cultures, practices and policies deeply embedded in a patriarchal value system.

Despite resistances, it is important as transformational leaders to press on – to understand the nature of our industry and organisation, our own influence within the organisation, who our allies are, and how to optimise existing spaces of solidarity and resistance (e.g., trade unions) and, all considered, what are the best strategies for creating change. Opportunities for transformational leadership can vary depending on the sector. These a few real-life examples:



Transformational leadership in action in various industries:

CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS

Carolyn Russell Smith is the founder of [Khulcha Theatre School of Dance](#) in Jamaica, a pioneer of the performing arts, and a recipient of the Prime Minister's Jamaica 55 Commemorative Medal of Appreciation for Service to Jamaica in Education and the Creative Arts. Speaking at a women's summit held in Mandeville, Manchester parish, Jamaica in 2018, Russell-Smith said:

“When I came to Manchester to start this school I had three students, one of whom was my daughter, and we later moved from three to 18. We have grown significantly over the years... I use my dance to empower lives, not just teaching dance steps - it's a mind, body approach. It takes a lot of concentration and it spills over into the academics. It's not teaching in a vacuum, and I enjoy doing it because I see young girls who have transformed their lives, those who wanted to commit suicide, but came to dance and thought better about themselves and did better in school.”

2. Tamara Bailey, “Let's do this – women supporting women,” The Gleaner, April 12, 2018, <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20180414/lets-do-women-supporting-women>.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Gillian Goddard's business enterprise began with opening and running an organic food store in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and she supported small local businesses that were growing and producing organic food items by selling their products. She later started her own venture, Soular, which sold value-added food products like pancake mix made entirely from plantain flour, and sun-dried bananas, all processed by the company from crops grown by themselves organically.

Today, Gillian is known for her brand 'Suneaters,' under which she markets her local fine-quality bean-to-bar chocolate. Gillian, however, describes herself as an activist with a business. Indeed, several activities and projects led by Gillian have demonstrated that the real values behind all her work are food sovereignty, care for the earth, women's empowerment, community empowerment and anti-colonialism.

This ethic is most evident in her work done through [The Alliance of Rural Communities of Trinidad & Tobago \(ARC\)](#), a non-profit organisation she founded in 2014. ARCTT comprises residents of rural and semi-rural communities and their urban allies. Their work in the cacao sector includes teaching rural cacao communities to make artisan chocolate, incubating community-owned chocolate companies and increasing capacity to utilise the companion crops and resources on cacao estates.

According to ARCTT, its approach is "to ensure wealth distribution and environmentally sustainable income generation in financially excluded rural Caribbean communities."

Gillian has since diversified the "ARC" brand. For example, ARC Conservation focuses on rainforest habitat conservation and ARC Co-Create Hub was designed as a space for community problem-solvers to rest and collaborate.



HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Liberty Latin America, parent telecommunications company of FLOW, recognised the increasing prevalence of gender-based violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. In fact, in the space of less than a year (in 2020/21), two women employees of FLOW Jamaica were killed by their former partners.

The company was thus motivated to pledge to do everything in its power to educate, prevent, protect, and support against gender-based violence in its companies and communities. It developed a gender-based violence policy which covers staff training (on bystander intervention, crisis support and education on GBV), protocols for various employees (for victims/survivors, managers and colleagues), as well as ensures victims'/survivors' access to services such as counselling (EAP), financial support, temporary accommodation, up to 15 days paid 'safety' leave and resources to create personal safety plans.



THE PUBLIC OR GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

- While the locus of power and authority in the public sector can seem far removed from the average employees, there always remains some level of latitude to influence the culture within your organisation and teams.
- Employees in government ministries, departments, agencies, and other state-owned corporations can leverage existing State commitments to human rights and gender equality (as may be articulated in the Constitution, national laws and policies and represented by the ratification of international treaties like CEDAW) to advocate for the mainstreaming of gender across their own programmes of work.
- Seize any opportunities for dialogue and input (e.g., internal consultations on your institution's strategic plan) to substantially advance the aims of feminist transformational leadership in your organisation.

THE PRIVATE BUSINESS OR CORPORATE SECTOR



While the private sector may have a notorious reputation of being profit-oriented at all costs, many organisations are increasingly recognising the all-round value of championing gender equality integrally – beyond it being merely one aspect of its corporate social responsibility.

- Transformational leadership in the private sector begins with recognising how a range of inequalities, discrimination and oppression, based on sex and gender, don't only exist in wider society (e.g., domestic violence and women's unequal care responsibilities), but spill over into the workplace.
- Applying a transformational leadership approach can mean, for example, reviewing and revising existing policies to ensure that they are gender-sensitive, ensuring equal pay for work of equal value for all employees, offering flexible working arrangements and access

to childcare resources, and implementing internal policies and procedures preventing all forms of violence and sexual harassment at work.

A primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions is the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), a set of 7 principles (established by UN Global Compact and UN Women) that are grounded in international labour and human rights standards, and which offer guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Transformational leaders in the private sector can raise awareness amongst their colleagues about these principles and gather internal support for signing the WEPs.³

3. Learn more about WEPs [here](#)

THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL, NOT-FOR-PROFIT OR SOCIAL ECONOMY SECTOR

The inherent nature of the third non-profit sector aligns with a transformational leadership approach. However, it should not be taken for granted that because your work is human-rights based, that your leadership approach is automatically transformational.

According to the transformational leadership approach, personal transformation is a continual process. Reflect on how you lead your teams internally and engage externally with stakeholders, and what are the areas of improvement.

REFLECTION PROMPT

- What are my vision and mission at the personal and organisational levels, and how are they feminist?
- Do my work practices and the way I interact with others in my organizations align and reflect with a feminist vision?



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship is the process by which entrepreneurs develop solutions that directly address a social or environmental social issue. Social entrepreneurs are primarily motivated by the positive difference that a business venture can make on their community or society. Below are a couple examples of transformational leadership in action through the model of social entrepreneurship.



EXAMPLES

Arlene Nysus worked as a Registered Nurse at a public hospital in Trinidad where she noticed many elderly persons being admitted with usually preventable conditions that may have been caused by poor home care. She also became aware of the prevalence of elder abuse at home. Motivated by her sense of justice for the elderly, a passion to fill the gap in elder care and to raise the bar in the home care industry, Arlene founded her own care agency, Nice Us Geriatric. She now manages the agency alongside a team of Registered Nurses with over 45 years of combined specialised nursing experience.

Arlene ensures that all caregivers at her agency are qualified, that they are vetted for competence, emotional intelligence, and credibility, and that they successfully complete the additional certified training provided by her agency in fundamentals of geriatric care. Clients receive free consultations before the agency designs a customised plan of care and renders its services.

Rochelle Codner is an entrepreneur and longtime advocate for women’s empowerment who started Pink Cabbie in December 2020, a for women, by women taxi service based in Jamaica. She had always been passionate about the safety of women but was further fuelled to start Pink Cabbie after reading a Twitter thread where a woman recounted an experience of being harassed by a taxi driver. It was one of many stories that she had become all too familiar with. Reports like this had become increasingly common over the past few years and had escalated to include several counts of attempted kidnapping. Her Pink Cabbie service offers women an opportunity to travel on time, comfortably, and with reduced exposure to unsafe situations.

IN SOCIETY MORE BROADLY



You can apply transformational leadership principles in more systematic ways in society – both internally at the organisational level in terms of how you lead your work teams, as well as externally, in terms of your civic engagement in the wider public sphere. The following are a few of the social spaces and avenues whereby your engagement as a transformational leader can make a difference:

In your community

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOS):

- Scale up or expand your advocacy efforts by joining (as a director, member, volunteer, employee, or contingent worker) an NGO, youth-led movement, non-profit organisation, or other civil society agency that has a history of work in advancing human rights, a vision and mission that aligns with your personal transformational ones, and a programme of work that interests you.
- Becoming involved with an existing NGO can also be an opportunity to learn from more seasoned advocates involved in the organisation and deepen your knowledge on Caribbean feminisms.

- Where you recognise that there is a community need that is as yet unmet, inadequate social services provided, or a perspective not yet offered, you might want to think of forming a new movement or NGO to address those gaps. This process requires not only a clear, sound vision and objectives from the start, but also diverse skills including planning, operational and financial management, and resourcing your team with the right people. Consulting and collaborating with other transformational leaders and subject matter experts is crucial to this process.

Watch this video series **“Rising to the Challenge: Young Women Leaders Being the Change”** of three young feminists from the region sharing their journeys of creating their organisations.

1. [Ashlee Burnett \(FEMINITT\) - Rising to the Challenge: Young Women Leaders Being the Change](#)
2. [Michaela Harris \(Her Shine Theory\) - Rising to the Challenge: Young Women Leaders Being the Change](#)
3. [Chelsea Foster \(Girls of a Feather\) - Rising to the Challenge: Young Women Leaders Being the Change](#)

COMMUNITY GROUPS:

- Take advantage of leadership opportunities closer to home by serving on the management committees of your community centre or youth empowerment centre, participating in the youth clubs in your vicinity (these are varied and may be run either by your local church or religious leaders, private sector organisations, youth-serving agencies like the Police or Fire Service, or individual community members), local NGOs, community cooperatives, and other community-based groups.

Some of these groups are committed to carrying out a specific set of activities, some focus on personal development, and others carry out a broad range of activities (e.g., community cleanups and recycling programmes, community gardens, and neighbourhood watch groups) with a goal



of community improvement and wellbeing. The organisations and activities with which you choose to engage should be guided by your feminist transformational vision and intended outcomes. In some cases, you may even want to organise your own groups for different purposes and projects.

- As part of these groups, you can have the opportunity to lead outreach programmes in your own neighbourhood, surrounding communities, and schools, where you can raise awareness about the gendered dimensions of issues affecting the communities (e.g., violence, unemployment, natural disasters) and educate persons on how they too can play a part in promoting gender equality.



COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH:

- When it comes to addressing any issue – whether it be gender-based violence, climate change, or the digital divide – policymakers rely on data to inform their decisions and design their interventions. In the 1980s and 1990s in the Caribbean, feminist groups developed activism around a variety of issues where there was paucity of raw data to support programmatic changes. The rolling out of gender studies departments in universities committed to research, teaching, and outreach later helped to fill this gap.⁴ However, there remain great opportunities for collaborative, community-led research approaches that are rooted in the principles of participation and empowerment.
- If you are aware of a problem in your community and have recognised that there is no or little research specific to your community on the issue, opportunities exist to work with researchers and subject matter experts to design and conduct a research study. Reach out to professors at a local post-secondary institution with related research interests.

4. Patricia Mohammed, “Women’s and Feminist Activism in the Caribbean,” *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss412>

- There may also be opportunities for collaboration and leadership on existing research programmes that integrate community-led action, such as citizen science programmes (e.g., Sandwatch in the Caribbean, and the UWI Seismic Research Centre’s ‘myHAZ-VCT’ citizen science app in St. Vincent and the Grenadines). Such programmes train community members to coordinate on-the-ground research, monitor natural phenomena, and report results, as well as, in some cases, involve them in the development and implementation of sustainable activities to address environmental issues. These could also present opportunities to use your knowledge and experience to contribute a gender perspective to the work being done.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Elected local government officials are duty-bearers who are responsible for the provision of a great scope of social care and other vital services within their community, such as sanitation, housing and utilities.
- By running to be, or volunteering with, an elected member of local government, you will engage directly with diverse members of the local population. Thus, you can begin to apply a transformational leadership approach by considering the diverse needs of the people in your community – including those often marginalised and underrepresented – and help to ensure that policy decisions and actions promote the wellbeing of all.

As a student

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Student guilds, councils, and other student associations are great spaces to develop skills associated with transformational leadership in a political context. Effectively representing of the student body and advocating on their behalf requires the values (democracy, consensus-building) and skills (active listening, emotional intelligence) characteristic of transformational leadership in order to further their concerns and interests.

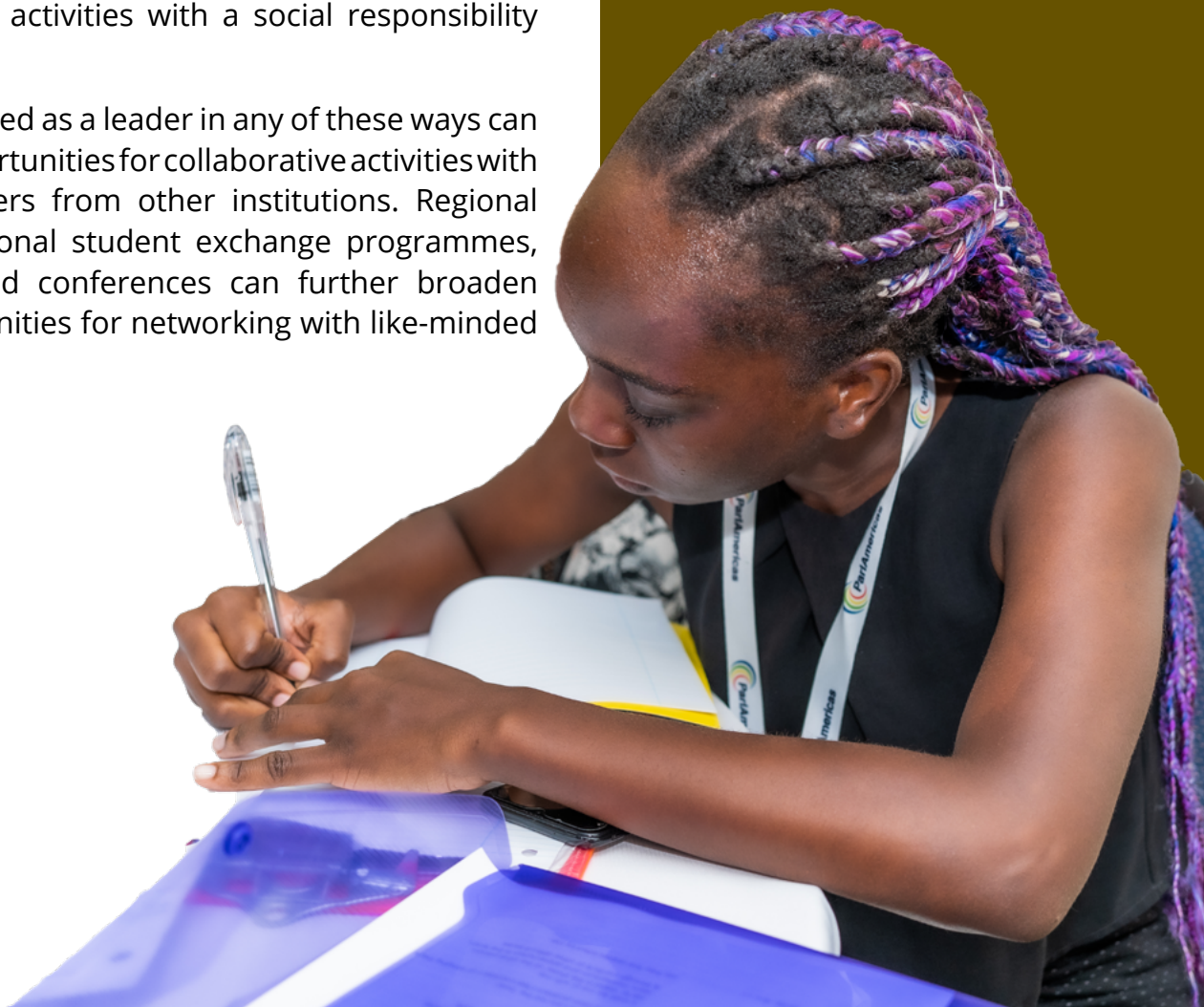


STUDENT HALLS OR RESIDENCES

As you transition to university life, do your research before booking your accommodations. Look for student halls or residences that offer experiences and opportunities that are in line with your goals and help you to progressively build your leadership capacity. The Mary Seacole Hall at The University of the West Indies – Mona Campus is a great example of this. It is an all-female hall that not only fosters sisterliness but offers strategic programmes designed to help students transition to university life, grow their understanding of their social responsibilities, develop their leadership skills and equip them with the tools to thrive after leaving university.

YOUTH-LED STUDENT ACTIVISM

- You can lead transformatively within academic, co-curricular, or youth-led activist groups at school, through student volunteerism or service-learning opportunities, or within any of your school's initiatives or activities with a social responsibility aspect.
- Getting involved as a leader in any of these ways can open up opportunities for collaborative activities with student leaders from other institutions. Regional and international student exchange programmes, symposia, and conferences can further broaden your opportunities for networking with like-minded students.



SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

- You do not have to be at any particular level of study nor a fulltime student of gender studies in order to apply yourself as a feminist transformational leader through your academic work. Many projects and assignments - regardless of the course - will present an opportunity to focus on an issue related to gender equality or women's rights.
- At the university level, you can participate in or lead research studies that use a gender lens, feminist methodology, or feminist conceptual framework, to investigate and analyse a social issue, the findings of which can subsequently contribute to data that informs gender-sensitive policy decisions on that issue.
- You can also author or co-author articles and essays on women's rights issues that can be submitted for publication to academic journals, anthologies, or university and student-owned publications, including school newspapers.

At national and supranational levels

NATIONAL YOUTH GROUPS

- Your country's national youth council or national youth leagues are great spaces to develop and apply your ethic and skills as a transformational leader, as are national youth programmes and periodic events like national youth parliaments, youth ambassador programmes, and youth conferences.
- These platforms often enable young leaders to participate in national political, economic, and social dialogue and decision-making processes. As a result of your participation in these spaces, you may be called upon to represent youth (and young women's) voices at national consultative processes, task forces, and multistakeholder groups.
- Young transformational leaders who make positive differences in their communities and countries can be presented with further opportunities to represent their countries at regional and international fora (e.g., the UNFCCC's Conference of Youth).



POLITICS

- Political systems can only be democratic and representative if they include young women in formal political institutions and processes. And if those political institutions and processes are to promote just, peaceful, and equal societies, they must integrate a feminist transformational leadership approach.
- Learning more about the political and parliamentary system in your country is a great place to start. Some avenues to become further involved in politics could include volunteering with or running to be an elected official in the parliament, joining a political party, and looking for opportunities for public participation in parliamentary decision-making spaces.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

What are the current spaces in which I am practising transformational leadership?

Are there opportunities to increase or expand my impact towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment? How can I better optimise my spaces and spheres of influence to advance gender equality?

TAKE ACTION

Identify and join some of the student-led groups at your school that have a focus on human rights or environmental and social development.

e.g., IGDS Ignite is a youth-led, social justice undergraduate student group of the IGDS (UWI, St. Augustine) that promotes social change by building feminist consciousness and activism in and around UWI. Students who join can benefit from the mentorship of existing activists, former IGNITE members and IGDS graduate students, and participate in team building actions, popular actions, community and school outreach

Reach out to an NGO or non-profit group in your vicinity that advances social justice or applies a right-based approach to their work.

Find out if they have a volunteer programme or require additional assistance, explain your value proposition and offer your time and services.

Join their mailing lists and follow their social media accounts to stay abreast of upcoming activities that you can participate in and to which you can lend your support.

Request information about their membership model and take the necessary steps to become a member. This can later create paths to leadership opportunities in the organisations.

Join regional or national youth networks and coalitions where your leadership will be put to use and have the opportunity to develop,

e.g., The Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network or your local chapter of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN).



RESOURCES

YWIL Parliamentary Sittings

- [1st Young Women in Leadership \(YWIL\) Sitting - March 9, 2020](#)
- [Young Women in Leadership Debate – Monday November 22, 2021](#)
- [List of NGOs, Women’s Organisations, and other Community Organisations in the Caribbean - by IGDS](#)
- [Leaders in Action](#) (WEPs Case Studies) – by Imani Duncan -Price, Sarah Merusi and Robin Haarr
- [Gender, Government & Good Governance](#) (Audio file of a webinar) – by CIWiL

LEADERSHIP-BUILDING TOOLS

Transformational leadership is a leadership philosophy that is distinctly and explicitly feminist – in its purpose and goals, and the way we think about, engage with and deploy power. It is feminist in its core principles and its practice. It is therefore not a management technique or about efficiency, and it is less an academic pursuit and more so an approach that comes from the heart. At the same time, there are skillsets that any good leader in any space must develop if they are to effectively execute the project of advancing a feminist agenda. These are 10 skill-building areas for transformational leaders:



1. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management is the application of specific processes, methods, knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to achieve specific predefined project objectives, that deliver value to people, within agreed parameters (e.g., of time and budget). Project management involves a wide range of skills, some of which are outlined in subsequent skill-building areas here.

2. VISION SETTING



Having a feminist vision and committing yourself to this work is the starting point of every good leader in the gender and development space. A key outcome of transformational leadership is the redefinition of gender and power relations. It follows that practising leadership requires that we first see in our mind's eye what this "redefinition of gender and power relations" looks like. While, at this point, we may not be able to identify a very clear, set path to that vision, what is vital at this stage is that our vision is aligned with the intended outcomes of feminist transformational leadership – with goals of gender equality and the tenets of human rights – and that we remain resolute in its pursuit.

//

Transformational women leaders are women with a feminist perspective and VISION of social justice, individually and collectively, transforming themselves to use their power, resources and skills in non-oppressive, inclusive structures and processes to mobilise others – especially other women – around a shared agenda of social, cultural, economic and political transformation for equality and the realisation of human rights for all.

↳ *Srilatha Batliwala, feminist scholar, social activist and women's rights advocate.*

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A Harvard Business Review study by Kouzes and Posner of thousands of working people asked what attributes they look for in a leader and a colleague. "**Honesty**" was the trait identified as most valuable in both a leader and colleague. The second-highest requirement of a leader, selected by 72% of all respondents, was that they be "**forward-looking.**" Among respondents holding more-senior roles it was even greater, at 88%. On the other hand, only 27% of respondents sought out this quality in a colleague. No other quality besides "**forward-looking**" showed such a dramatic difference between leader and colleague.

3. BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- As you continue to learn and grow, and as society's collective consciousness around certain topics (*like sexual harassment in the workplace, LGBTQIA+ rights, or gendered responsibilities for care work in the home*) evolves, it is normal that you may find yourself questioning, changing, refining or even becoming more resolute about your previous positions on some issues.
- As a transformational leader, it is important that you have clarity at any given point on your views. A leader must operate from a place of knowledge. However, do not be overwhelmed; you do not need to know or learn everything at once, but start with current and critical issues, those which hold most interest for you, and those on which you may be required to speak and engage with others as a leader. Research them well, know what the various arguments are, have an awareness of the laws and regulations around those topics as well as what the national, regional and global responses are to those issues and seek to understand the issues, as far as is possible, from first-hand accounts from the people most affected.
- Finally, as you form or reform your perspectives, consider whether they are congruent with the aims and qualities of a transformational leader.
- [Use the Gender Equality 101: Unpacking Key Concepts and Issues](#) module in this toolkit to help you build your knowledge.



4. DETERMINE YOUR FOCI OR ISSUE

- In the 1970s and 1980s, Caribbean women such as Nita Barrow, Lucille Mathurin Mair, Joycelin Massiah, Rhoda Reddock, Hazel Brown and many others began to step forward to curb the unjust conditions around them, including economic hardships, the unfair working conditions of women domestic workers and violence against women. They recognised what the critical issues were that women were grappling with, and responded to the gaps and needs at the time.
- Your very impetus to set out on a leadership path may be that you have already identified the issues you are most passionate about and around which you intend to centre your leadership. Still, it is still valuable for you to pause and consider and reach a clear conclusion about why you have chosen each particular issue as your focus. What gaps are you aiming to fill and whose needs will be met?



5. DEVELOP AND ARTICULATE A THEORY OF CHANGE

- Identify the desired change you want to make and work backwards from there, in order to understand and map out the sequence of changes required to reach your envisioned goal(s) for gender equality.
- These steps should be realistic and measurable. Consider whether they are in the most logical order, whether you have the resources to undertake them and how you will evaluate your degree of success in achieving them.
- This process of articulating your **“theory of change”** helps in gaining clarity about the path to your desired outcome for gender equality, and the specific activities and indicators involved.

The visionary processes of two transformational Caribbean women

CLOTIL WALCOTT

Clotil Walcott was a revolutionary trade unionist in Trinidad and Tobago who put transformational leadership into practice - who transformed belief into action - when she took up the cause of working-class people at the height of the Black Power uprising in 1970, and remained committed for decades onwards. She was particularly set upon demonstrating the economic value and housework and became spokeswoman for the Wages for Housework Campaign. In 1985, she was instrumental in the formation of the National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) and in making the case that led to the UN recognising that women's work should be counted in the GNP. Clotil simply describes herself as a concerned working-class woman, housewife and concerned mother. Despite her humble beginnings and background, or perhaps because of it, Clotil was able to recognise and relate to an issue that needed addressing, commit to it, and optimise every opportunity along that path to advocate for it.



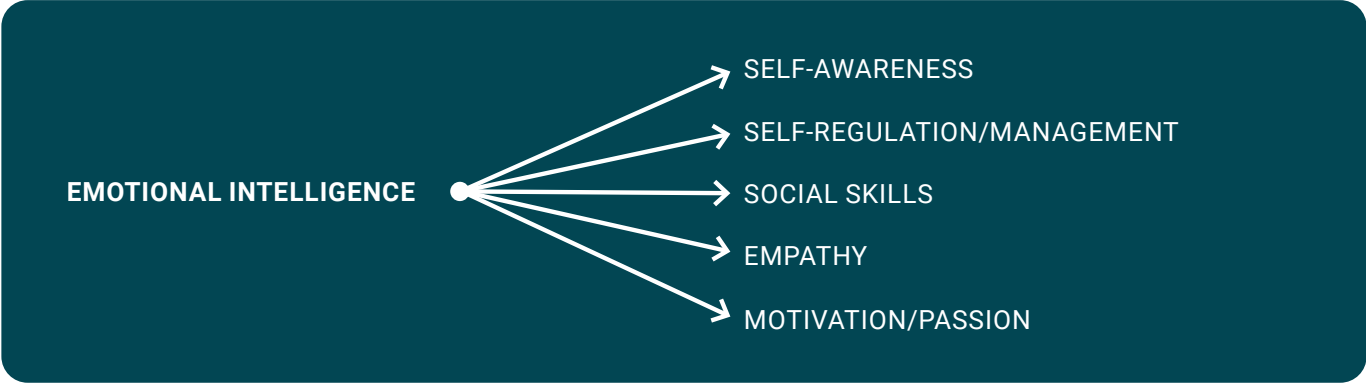
PROFESSOR JOYCELIN MASSIAH

Professor Massiah, the first female Head of Department at Cave Hill, UWI, is well known for her "Women in the Caribbean Project" which sought to establish a Caribbean database for teaching and research, as well as guidelines for a social policy that recognizes women's needs and draws upon their skills for programme planning, and informs development initiatives. What we may not realise is that prior to this work, there had been a dearth of such data on women in the region. Massiah recognised this gap and acted upon it. Her work in this area has since had a major impact on the establishment of a frame of reference for comprehending and analysing the issues related to women, their status and development in the region.



6. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The ability to lead with emotional intelligence is an invaluable characteristic in any field. This is especially true for gender and development, human rights, and social justice, where your ability to sensibly, sensitively, and empathetically handle interpersonal relationships and engage with various diverse demographics – many of which may be already marginalised communities of people – is not only a desirable trait, but a core requirement.



7. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



Effective communication is often touted as one of the top skills required by leaders across all spheres, and it is no different in this case. Active listening, transparency, the ability to empower and motivate your teams, openness to feedback and dialogue, and clearly communicating goals and responsibilities are essential for leadership in the gender equality space.

Active listening

Transformational leaders practice active listening which involves listening in a non-threatening, non-judgmental manner with sensitivity, sincere interest and attentiveness to both the content and feeling of what/how someone is communicating so that the meaning of the message is wholistically understood. By all accounts, active listening is more difficult than it sounds but working on developing the skill has huge payoffs in terms of fostering a positive relationship between the speaker and listening and enabling the mutual growth of both parties.

A good group exercise for developing your active listening skills, borrowed from Carl R. Rogers and Richard E. Farson, who first created this listening model, is for the listener (you) to –

- Restate in your own words the point the last speaker has made, before speaking or before moving on to another speaker.
- Upon trying this exercise, observe and reflect on how it may have changed the feeling or value of the discussion.

Gender-sensitive or gender-inclusive language

Using gender-sensitive or gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias. Some examples include:

MASS COMMUNICATION

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Although new forms of media seem to have largely taken over our forms of communication, traditional forms of media – radio, broadcast television, cable and satellite, print, and billboards – are still useful tools for awareness-raising, information-sharing and feminist advocacy, especially since they maintain a wide reach and capture different demographics of people. Transformative action through these media can take the form of letters to the editor, op-eds and press releases in newspapers.



NEW MEDIA – SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER DIGITAL PLATFORMS

- Despite some of the negative ways in which social media platforms and online technologies are used, these continue to be influential, knowledge-producing spaces of political thought and a form of civic participation.
- Caribbean people are increasingly optimising digital spaces as an extension of their on-the-ground feminist organizing and activism. They use multiple social and digital media platforms such as blogging, microblogging and online petitions, not only to express or self-publish their own views on social issues, but also to build partnerships and communities with allies at home and across borders. This collectivizing through the online space has opened up public discourse on subjects related to gender equality, prompted police investigations into human rights violations, and led to the halt of sexist advertisements and other public content.⁵

5. Tonya Haynes, "Mapping Caribbean Cyberfeminisms," *sx archipelagos*, Issue 1 (May 2016).

#LifeinLeggings is a Caribbean-wide movement that started as a hashtag. It started when founder, Barbadian, Ronelle King, took to social media to share her experience of a man trying to force her into his car after she refused his offer for a ride. After an indifferent response from the police to the incident, she told the story on Facebook with the hashtag #lifeinleggings. It then took off, with women from all over the region from Jamaica, and the Bahamas to Trinidad and Tobago, sharing their own stories of sexual assault, harassment and domestic violence.

Queen Macoomeh started an online petition in 2012 against an Angostura advertisement that was suggestive of date rape; it bore the tag line, "Avoid the friendzone, offer her a real drink." Members of the public were then empowered to translate their outrage into action through the simple step of signing the petition. Support for the petition, and international media coverage by outlets such as Buzzfeed, was ultimately enough to lead to Angostura to subsequently remove the advertisement.



8. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict situations are a normal and expected occurrence within any group. There are multiple models and strategies for conflict management and resolution that can guide you in being able to assess a conflict situation, understanding when to intervene as a leader and helping your team through constructive dialogue that leads at solutions.

9. NETWORKING AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING



In nearly every field, making useful contacts and building productive stakeholder relationships are recognised as vital to enhancing your own work. Linkages with other stakeholders will enable you to expand your knowledge and awareness of issues, be exposed to a diversity of ideas and approaches, and find opportunities to create new partnerships that are greater than the sum of its parts. The solidarity and unification of voices from organisations working towards common feminist aims can potentially create greater pressure for decision-makers to effect change. A few networking and alliance-building avenues include:

Male allyship

Male allies are men who are active proponents of gender equality who cooperate with, listen to and support women towards the achievement of their feminist transformational visions.

Building bridges with conventionally counteracting actors

- Grassroots activists and State allies: Building strategic alliances with women on the inside of mainstream politics and bureaucracies is an important strategy towards achieving some of the critical goals of the feminist movement. Within the movement itself there are

some critics of this strategy – those who believe that such working relationships between grassroots activists and actors within State institutions and bureaucracies leads to co-optation by the State, and is a sign of grassroots activists having sold out the movement. However, this remains an important strategy for gaining support at the highest levels of influence and increases your chances of having these issues tabled in Parliament.

- Religious leaders: Arguments on the basis of religion are often used as tools against achieving full gender equality, particularly as it relates to certain issues like women's access to reproductive health and the rights of the LGBTQI+ community. In subtler ways, some religious institutions can preserve the patriarchal order that sees women's roles as subordinate to men. Due to the great influence of religion in nearly every dimension – social, cultural, political and legal – this understanding of women manifests in multiple ways that limit their access to their full rights and freedoms. While this may seem like an immutable area of resistance, for transformational leaders purposed to dismantle patriarchal systems, it is crucial to strategically engage religious leaders and gain their support, wherever possible, if we are to move any closer to fundamentally transforming unequal gender and power relations.

Networking with feminists

Women's leadership and networking events

- Participating in webinars, workshops, conferences, and symposia (including events around International Women's Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and other special days) is a good way to listen to and engage with Caribbean women leaders who are either panellists, guest speakers, or co-participants.
- These types of events are often facilitated by international regional and local organisations (e.g., [Women Deliver conferences](#), and CIWiL's quarterly webinars), universities (e.g., [IGDS](#), [UWI](#), [Lunchtime Seminar Series](#)), the gender machinery of your country's government, women's professional organisations and associations (e.g., [The Business & Professional Women's Club of Barbados \(BPW\)](#) workshops and



seminars) and private sector organisations that include gender as a pillar of their corporate social responsibility (e.g. The Annual Women’s Conference hosted by [First Citizen’s Bank](#)).

- Young women leaders can optimise these fora by engaging in group break out discussions, Q&A with the panellists, and other opportunities to connect with fellow feminists and develop your leadership skills through those connections.
- **Women’s networks:**

Joining women’s and feminist NGO networks and coalitions, communities of practice, multistakeholder groups, women’s associations, societies and umbrella organisations will allow you longer-term, more regular, consistent conversation with Caribbean women leaders and other young feminist women leaders who are working as a collective on the issues you care about. Every organisation will have a different mandate; join or engage with those which align with your feminist objectives (e.g., If you are interested in advancing women in entrepreneurship, connect with [Women Entrepreneurs Network of the Caribbean \(WENC\)](#). If your focus is advancing women’s political participation and leadership, join your local [CIWiL National Chapter](#)).



Mentorship:

- Mentorship is critical to leadership development. A good mentor can help you through the process of better understanding and articulating your strengths and objectives as a leader, while at the same time pushing you to challenge yourself, helping you expand your networks and grow in confidence and skills.
- Young leaders can simply ask another leader they know to serve as a mentor in an informal capacity.
- You can also optimise mentorship opportunities and leadership programmes that are open to young people in your country. A few such programmes that were offered in the past have included the [Young Women in Leadership \(YWIL\) programme](#) hosted by ParlAmericas and CIWiL, the Commonwealth Women’s Mentorship Scheme, and the AMCHAM Annual Women in Leadership Mentorship Programme.



REFLECTION PROMPTS

How can I increase the number and quality of my connections and better leverage my networks in ways that enable me to learn from other feminists across generations, gain access to resources, build alliances, enhance my own capacity to lead, and advance the issues I am advocating for?

10. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



Regardless of your cause, vision, or objectives, every leader - even young leaders - should have foundational skills in financial management that enable them, firstly, to manage their personal finances and, secondly, to oversee the finances of your group. While you may have personnel on your team with designated roles of accounting and finance, every good leader must have generalist skills in the area in order to realistically make plans and set goals. This includes skills in budgeting and resource mobilisation which refers to the activities involved in obtaining resources, such as time money and resources, for your project or organisation and how they are deployed in implementing your goals.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- Where are the gaps in my skillsets? What are the main skill areas I need to strengthen to build my technical competencies as a leader?
- How can I increase the number and quality of my connections and better leverage my networks in ways that enable me to learn from other feminists across generations, gain access to resources, build alliances, enhance my own capacity to lead, and advance the issues I am advocating for?

RESOURCES

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- [Principles of Project Management \(Article on the PMI Website, excerpted from the book, PM Network\) – by John A. Bing](#)
- [10 Project Management Tips for Non-Project Managers](#)

VISION SETTING

- [Women in Leadership: Inspiring Positive Change \(Self-paced course on Coursera\) – by Case Western Reserve University](#)
- [3 Things that Make a Meaningful Vision \(Video\) – by Simon Sinek](#)

BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE/ DETERMINE YOUR FOCI OR ISSUE

- [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2023 – a UN Women Report](#)
- [Summary Status of Women and Men Report - The Impacts of COVID-19 – by UN Women](#)
- [Regional report on the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Latin American and Caribbean countries, 25 years on](#)

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- [Emotional and Social Intelligence \(Course on Coursera\) – by UC Davis](#)
- [The Johari Window \(article\) – by MindTools](#)

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- [Improving Communication Skills \(Free videos and course on Coursera\) – by University of Pennsylvania](#)
- [Communicating about violence, peace and social justice \(4-page brief, pdf\) – by the Australian Psychological Society](#)
- [Strategies for running a winning campaign \(Audio file of a webinar\) - by CIWiL](#)
- [Making of Cyberfeminisms in the Caribbean \(YouTube Playlist\) - IGDS, UWI, St. Augustine](#)
- [Using Social Media to Advocate and Influence Policy \(article\) – by NASSP](#)
- [Guideline for Gender Sensitive Language – by UNDP](#)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- [Conflict Resolution Strategies for Inclusive Leaders \(article\) - by St. Catherine University](#)
- [Managing Conflicts on Projects with Cultural and Emotional Intelligence \(Self-paced course on edX\) - by UoM](#)
- [What's Your Conflict Management Style? \(article\) - by Dr. Barbara Benoliel, Walden University](#)

NETWORKING AND ALLIANCE-BUILDING

- [Stakeholder mapping toolkit - Communication for NGOs \(Erasmus+\)](#)
- [Male Allies for Gender Equality - Parl Gender Tools](#)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- [A Beginner's Guide to Reading and Understanding Financial Statements \(Harvard Business School Online's Business Insights Blog Post\) - by Tim Stobierski](#)
- [Basic Understanding of a Company's Financial Statements \(guide, pdf\) - by PWC](#)
- Caribbean Policy Development Centre's 3-part Video Series on Resource Mobilisation
 - Part 1: [NGO Resource Mobilization Part 1 \(YouTube\)](#)
 - Part 2: [NGO Resource Mobilization Part II \(YouTube\)](#)
 - Part 3: [NGO Resource Mobilization Part III \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Resource Mobilisation Brief for Civil Society Organisations \(6-page brief\) - by the World Bank](#)

This tool, *“Leading by Doing: Taking up Space and Driving Change”* was one module of the toolkit, *“YOUth Lead: A Toolkit for Transformational Leadership to Support Gender Equality.”*

Find the other modules here:

- [Gender Equality 101: Unpacking Key Concepts and Issues](#)
- [Learning to Lead: Laying the Foundations for Transformational Leadership](#)
- [Being Your Best Self: Protecting your Mental Wealth](#)

