



GENDER RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

FAQs

SEPTEMBER 2021 - DECEMBER 2021

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Please cite as: Leslie Groves-Williams and Kristin Valasek, "Gender Responsive-Leadership FAQs" (Folke Bernadotte Academy: Draft 9th July 2021).



WHO IS A GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEADER?

In a nutshell, a gender-responsive leader is a person in an executive or management position who actively works towards equality for all women and men both in the workplace and in operations. They do this by ensuring that day-to-day tasks are done in a way which promotes equality between women and men and through putting in place targeted actions for gender equality where required. They use their existing leadership and management skills to achieve their institutional goals on gender equality, taking into account the structural and systemic issues that lead to discrimination and inequality.

WHY DO WE NEED GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP?

Senior leaders play a pivotal role in ensuring that their organization is contributing to greater equality between women and men, rather than inadvertently perpetuating or exacerbating inequality. They have the responsibility and the expertise to initiate and sustain systematic organizational change towards gender equality.¹

This is not a “nice to have” in the leadership toolbox. It is essential to delivering on their organisational mandate.

The aim of gender-responsive leadership is to:

- Ensure a workplace that is safe, fair and equal for all women and men.
- Ensure that all operations and programmes contribute to equality between all women and men, girls and boys.

¹ This is in line with numerous international, regional and national policies and laws including the 2030 Agenda commitments relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) and the follow-up resolutions, the Comprehensive approach to EU implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820 (Council of the European Union 2008b 2012).

HOW DOES GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP RELATE TO DIVERSITY?

We all have multiple social identities and biological characteristics including sex, gender, race, class, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, ability country of origin, age and cultural, economic and physical background, among others. Each of these affects our experience of privilege or compounds our experience of discrimination. Within this framework on gender-responsive leadership, we take as our primary focus inequality between women and men, girls and boys. Using an intersectional approach to gender inequality, we highlight how other forms of discrimination exacerbate these inequalities and what leaders can do to take action for equality.

DO I NEED TO BECOME A GENDER EXPERT TO BE A GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEADER?

No. But you do use your leadership skills to identify and take action to reduce inequalities between women and men where needed.

Experience shows that there are 5 things that every good leader does that are critical to effective gender-responsive leadership:

- They lead by example;
- They set priorities and strategies for their teams;
- They communicate clearly and convincingly;
- They manage and develop staff, resources and operations; and
- They hold themselves and others to account.



Figure 1: The gender-responsive leadership programme is designed around the 2 goals and 5 actions of gender-responsive leadership.

A gender-responsive leader continues to improve these skills and employs them to take concrete action to reduce inequality between women and men and stop discrimination when it arises, both in the workplace - be it digital, face-to-face or hybrid - and in their area of leadership.

WHAT EXACTLY DO I NEED TO DO TO BE A GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEADER?

For each of the five goals, there are concrete actions that each leader can take to contribute to greater gender equality. The Gender Responsive Leadership Programme will support you to develop your practical skills so that you can confidently integrate each action into your leadership practice.



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