Arab Leadership Academy for Women
Inaugural Edition
Newsletter

Launch of the Academy at Casa Árabe Madrid, October 30th - November 3rd, 2023

UNDP, in collaboration with the UN's Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, inaugurated the Arab Leadership Academy for Women, marking the UN's renewed commitment to promoting peace stability, and inclusive development in the Arab region.

The Academy draws strength from strategic partnerships with the Organization of ArabEMBs, the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ANNHRIs), the League of Arab States (LAS), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation (Sida), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), Casa Árabe, the Moroccan Leadership Institute, and the Women Democracy Network (WDN).

Through a collaborative design and implementation approach, the regional Arab Leadership Academy for Women and its national chapters aim to:

- Cultivate compassionate transformational leadership, driving inclusive development and fostering peace.
- Forge powerful synergies by uniting established and emerging women leaders, catalyzing impactful change.
- Change the narrative to normalize the presence of women in influential leadership roles, both regionally and nationally.

The inaugural Academy in Madrid convened exceptional seasoned and emerging women leaders from diverse backgrounds, including representatives from elected bodies, government civil society, media, and the private sector.

The intensive five-day program at the launch event focused on peer-to-peer learning, experience sharing, and exposure to national, regional, and global expertise. By the conclusion of the five days, participants had challenged the academy's outline and content, reflected on the contextualized implementation of national academies, and expressed strong commitment to lead and support the new initiative.

Supported by their respective UNDP offices, participants from eight countries—Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco Qatar, Somalia, and Sudan—developed plans for national academy rollouts.

The launch of the Arab Leadership Academy for Women signifies a significant milestone in promoting compassionate transformational leadership in the Arab region. It serves as a pathway to strong partnerships and underscores the crucial role women across different generations can play in transforming conflict into cooperation and adversity into opportunity.

The Five-Day Journey

Overall

Throughout the five-day immersive experience of our launch event, women leaders from diverse backgrounds were deeply engaged in a comprehensive program emphasizing peer-to-peer learning, knowledge exchange, and insights from global experts. Our approach was multifaceted, strategically designed to foster intergenerational collaboration, bridge cross-sectoral divides, and arm participants with essential digital-era leadership skills. Additionally, we laid the foundation for a vibrant alumni network to foster mentorship and peer support. The feedback we received highlighted participants' gaining of new skills and knowledge, ranging from transformative and compassionate leadership to strategic communication and navigating complex and uncertain scenarios.

Beyond being the inaugural cohort, our participants at Casa Arabe played a pivotal role as co-creators of the Academy's curriculum. They actively contributed feedback and suggestions across the 12 sessions, ensuring it resonates with the evolving needs of women leaders in the Arab region. Their diverse experiences and perspectives significantly shaped the trajectory of the Academy, amplifying their collective contribution to its future.

Day One: Igniting Leadership and Connectivity

Our inaugural day was focused on welcoming participants, creating a safe space for learning and sharing, and delving into the concept of intergenerational leadership. Partners and champions delivered compelling opening remarks, setting the tone for an inspiring journey.

Expert-led discussions covered sustainable leadership and intergenerational connections, while interactive activities focused on vital skills like collaboration, adaptability, and embracing diversity.

Key takeaways highlighted the significance of safe spaces for inclusive dialogue, emphasizing effective communication and collaboration strategies across generations. As the day ended, attendees left with enriched perspectives, new connections, and a unified vision for a path toward sustainable and inclusive leadership.

Day Two: Empowering Change and Breaking Barriers

Our second day was a dynamic exploration of leadership essentials for today's women leaders. Participants delved into global leadership trends, focusing on compassionate transformational styles, and addressed hurdles faced by women leaders. Engaging discussions tackled evolving leader expectations, modern skillsets, and regional challenges. Inspirational case studies empowered attendees to challenge political stereotypes. Through interactive sessions, women identified key features of Arab female leadership, leaving inspired and poised to embrace compassionate, transformative leadership.

Day Three: Communicating to Influence: Unleashing Personal Brand Power

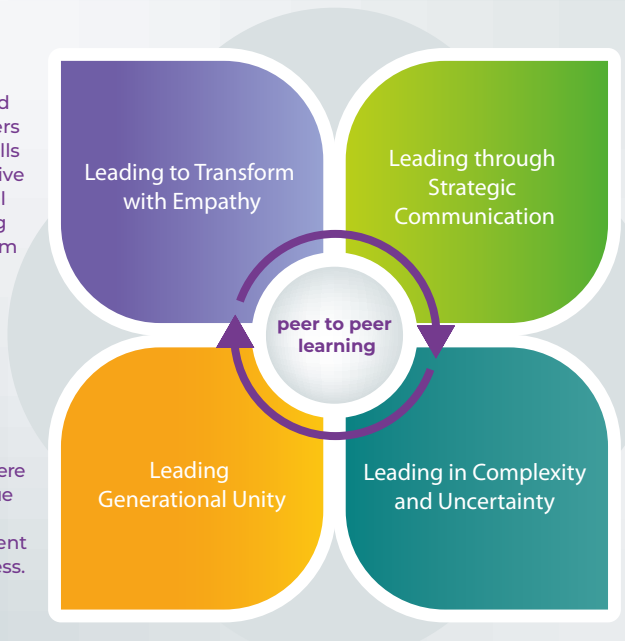
On day three, our focus centered on the influential power of personal narratives and strategic leadership communication. Participants engaged in activities aimed at crafting their authentic visual presence and refining their storytelling skills. Diving into the 'People, Power and Change' framework by Marshall Ganz, facilitators guided attendees in connecting with their 'Story of Self' through inspiring mentor stories.

Through engaging simulation exercises led by experts, the highlight was an exploration of strategic leadership communication tools and techniques for effective influence.

The day ended with a dynamic 'From Lens to Legacy' studio experience where participants engaged in personalized photo shoots and video recordings led by seasoned facilitators.

These hands-on activities aimed to refine visual presence and boost confidence in authentic self-presentation. Participants gained valuable insights into the significance of personal narratives in leadership defining their brand identities, and preparing for impactful communication.

Academy Framework



Embodied in both theory and practical experiences of leaders participants gain insights, skills and strategies as transformative leaders, nurturing individual potential while emphasizing empathy, innovation and team empowerment.

Empowering leaders to be powerful and purposeful communicators: participants learn to merge strategic thinking with effective communication strategies, shaping narratives that amplify their vision, influence perception and drive impactful change.

Fostering intergenerational leadership to create a culture where leaders can embrace the unique values, experiences and communication styles of different generations for collective success.

Understanding and responding to Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA). Participants learn adaptive leadership strategies honing skills to anticipate disruptions make informed decisions under uncertainty, and cultivate resilience within teams.

Day Four: Leading in Complexity and Uncertainty: Navigating Conflict and Digitalization

Our focus on the fourth day centered on leadership within intricate scenarios and the digital landscape's impact on conflicts. The morning began with personal stories in a plenary session, shedding light on effective conflict management strategies of real life leaders.

Expert facilitators guided engaging discussions, exploring diverse approaches to handling conflicts. Participants then delved into 'Leading in a VUCA World,' navigating through scenarios of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in the classroom setting. Afternoon sessions centered on the digital revolution's impact on conflicts, addressing misinformation and sharing tools for monitoring mis/disinformation.

Skills honed encompassed crisis management, resilience, adaptive leadership, and navigating uncertainty, while knowledge gained included understanding VUCA scenarios' impact on politics and the influence of the digital era on political leadership.

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Arab Leadership Academy for Women

Day Five: Training and Action Planning

The final day was dedicated to crafting personal leadership roadmaps and presenting action plans for national Academy rollouts, which the participants developed throughout the five days. The day allowed for reflecting on individual growth, strengths, narratives, and formulating strategies to support each other within the cohort.

Discussions centered on leveraging these insights to frame action plans, offer mutual support, and identify needed resources for national implementation.

The day ended in a celebratory ceremony and closing featuring testimonials, certificate presentations, and partner commitments for continued support, marking the successful conclusion of the start of our transformative leadership journey together.

SCAN AREA

PARTICIPANT BIO

AGENDA

CONCEPT NOTE