



Next-Generation Leaders
for Global Good

Empowering Voices, Sustaining Change: A Global Collaboration in Feminist Leadership

with the Society of Gender Professionals

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Introduction

My Leadership-in-Action (LiA) project was centered on an internship with the Society of Gender Professionals (SGP), a global feminist non-profit organization dedicated to promoting feminist action, applied research, and elevating the profile of gender expertise around the world. SGP brings together gender practitioners, academics, and activists from diverse backgrounds to challenge traditional power structures and advocate for gender equality. The organization operates on principles of co-leadership, inclusivity, and the deconstruction of hierarchical norms, making it a unique platform for addressing global gender issues.

My role as a summer intern involved the re-launch of SGP's podcast and conducting research to establish partnerships with educational institutions, particularly in underrepresented regions. This project was significant because it aligned directly with SGP's mission to leverage co-leadership principles to create a sustainable platform for global dialogue on gender issues, aiming to expand its reach and deepen its impact. The work was done entirely virtually, connecting me with a diverse team of professionals from various countries and time zones, which provided both challenges and opportunities for learning.

SMART Goals and Leadership Attributes

The project was driven by three specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals designed to ensure the effective application of leadership attributes:

1. **Increasing Global Outreach and Participation:** My first goal was to expand SGP's outreach by establishing connections with educational institutions in underrepresented regions, particularly in the Global South. The aim was to identify and make a list of at least three potential partnerships by the end of my internship. This goal was crucial for enhancing SGP's visibility and ensuring that it engaged a more diverse and

inclusive audience, aligning with the organization's commitment to global feminist leadership.

2. **Strengthening SGP's Media Presence and Thought Leadership:** The second goal focused on the re-launch of the SGP podcast. My objective was to complete and publish a series of podcast episodes that would highlight SGP's co-leadership model and feminist principles. By the end of my internship, I aimed to have the first two episodes fully recorded and eventually available to the public by the fall. This goal was essential for positioning SGP as a leading voice in global gender discourse and for providing a platform that amplified the voices of gender professionals from around the world.
3. **Ensuring the Sustainability of the Podcast:** The third goal was to develop a comprehensive Podcast Sustainability Plan that would ensure the long-term viability of the podcast. This plan included strategies for maintaining member engagement, attracting financial support, and ensuring the continued relevance of the content. The goal was to deliver this plan before the conclusion of my internship, providing SGP with a roadmap for sustaining the podcast beyond my time with the organization. Achieving this goal was critical for ensuring that the podcast would remain a valuable tool for SGP's mission.

Global Feminism in Practice: Navigating a Virtual, Dispersed Team

The virtual nature of this project presented unique challenges, particularly in coordinating the podcast re-launch with a globally dispersed team. Team members were spread across different time zones and cultural contexts, requiring a high level of adaptability and strategic communication. This aspect of the project highlighted the importance of co-leadership, where power and responsibility were shared, and everyone's contributions were valued.

To address these challenges, I implemented a structured workflow that included clear timelines, regular virtual meetings, and the selection of podcast platforms that were accessible to all team members, regardless of their technical expertise. This approach not only facilitated effective collaboration but also reinforced the co-leadership model that is central to SGP's operations.

Sustainability as a Core Leadership Practice

Sustainability was a central theme throughout this project, particularly in the context of ensuring the long-term viability of the podcast. The development of the Podcast Sustainability Plan was a key component of this effort. This plan included strategies for engaging SGP members, attracting financial support, and ensuring that the podcast content remained relevant and impactful over time.

One of the primary lessons I learned was that sustainability in leadership is not just about maintaining operations—it's about creating systems and structures that enable continuous growth and adaptation. By focusing on sustainability, I ensured that the podcast would continue to serve as a vital tool for SGP's mission, even after my internship concluded.

Co-Leadership and Cultural Humility in Global Feminism

Working with a globally dispersed team and engaging with educational institutions in underrepresented regions required a deep commitment to cultural humility. Understanding and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of team members and potential partners was critical to the success of this project. One key aspect of cultural humility was recognizing and challenging my own biases. During interviews with SGP's founding members and in my research on potential partnerships, I made a conscious effort to approach each task with an open mind, actively seeking to understand different perspectives. This approach was

particularly important when working with institutions in the Global South, where cultural and educational contexts differed significantly from my own experiences. The emphasis on cultural humility also reinforced the co-leadership model at SGP. By valuing diverse perspectives and sharing leadership responsibilities, we were able to create a more inclusive and effective team dynamic. This approach not only benefited the project but also strengthened my own leadership skills, particularly in the areas of empathy, active listening, and cross-cultural communication.

Ethical Leadership in Global Feminist Advocacy

Ethical considerations were a significant aspect of my work on the SGP podcast and in researching potential partnerships. Ensuring that the podcast accurately represented the diverse voices within SGP was a key ethical concern. I worked diligently to include a wide range of perspectives in the podcast, ensuring that the content was both diverse and equitable. In my research on potential partnerships with educational institutions, ethical leadership meant approaching these institutions with respect and a clear understanding of their unique challenges and needs. The goal was to establish partnerships that were equitable and culturally appropriate, avoiding any potential for exploitation or misunderstanding. This ethical approach was critical in ensuring that SGP's outreach efforts were impactful and aligned with its feminist values. Moreover, the responsibility of ensuring the podcast's sustainability also involved ethical considerations. I was keenly aware that creating something temporary could do more harm than good, particularly if it left the organization with an unfinished or unmanageable project. This awareness guided my decision to develop a robust sustainability plan that would support the podcast's long-term success, reinforcing SGP's commitment to ethical and sustainable practices.

Collaboration Across Borders: The Power of Shared Leadership

Collaboration was a cornerstone of this project, and my interactions with team members and stakeholders were critical to its success. The experience of working with a globally dispersed team taught me the importance of flexibility, adaptability, and cultural humility. We had to navigate different time zones, cultural norms, and levels of technical expertise, which required patience and a strong commitment to our shared goals. The collaborative nature of the project also reinforced the importance of co-leadership. SGP's model, which emphasizes the distribution of power and responsibility, was reflected in our team dynamics. This approach not only empowered each team member to contribute meaningfully but also ensured that decisions were made collectively, with input from diverse perspectives. This experience solidified my belief in the power of inclusive leadership and the critical role it plays in fostering collaboration and innovation.

Measuring Impact and Ensuring Sustainability

The impact of this project extends beyond the immediate outcomes of the podcast re-launch and potential partnerships. The sustainability plan I developed will be critical in measuring the long-term success of the podcast. Key indicators include the continued production and publication of episodes, growth in SGP's membership base, and the ability to attract and maintain financial support. Regular feedback from listeners and team members will also be essential in assessing the podcast's ongoing relevance and impact.

The project has also laid the groundwork for future collaborations with educational institutions in underrepresented regions, providing SGP with a strategic approach to expanding its global reach.

Conclusion: Co-Leadership and Sustainability in Global Feminism

My Leadership-in-Action project with SGP was a challenging yet rewarding experience that required the application of critical leadership skills and a deep commitment to ethical and sustainable practices. The re-launch of the SGP podcast and the research into potential partnerships provided invaluable insights into the complexities of global collaboration, the importance of cultural humility, and the need for sustainable leadership.

The work accomplished during this project will have a lasting impact on SGP and the broader community of gender professionals. It has provided SGP with a sustainable communication tool that aligns with its mission of promoting gender justice and has laid the groundwork for future collaborations with educational institutions in underrepresented regions.

As I move forward in my endeavours, the lessons learned from this experience—particularly in the areas of co-leadership, sustainability, and global feminism—will continue to guide my leadership practice. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to SGP's mission and to be part of a global movement that is making a meaningful difference in the pursuit of gender justice.