

THE LEADERSHIP LABS

An illustration at the top of the page features a bright yellow sunburst background. A dashed red line traces a path across the scene, starting from the left and ending at a large red paper airplane in the upper right. Three smaller white paper airplanes are also shown in flight, following the path. The background is filled with radiating yellow lines and stylized clouds.

What are the Leadership Labs?

Leadership Labs sessions are a collaborative online space for Youth Collective members and Communities of Action to explore effective leadership approaches and ways to strengthen youth civil society together – and develop stronger collaborations. The leadership labs are peer led and apply a powershifting approach.

Any youth led/focused organisation can lead a Leadership Lab, and if that's you, here's a short list of steps you should follow to make it happen.

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**
POWERED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Before the Leadership Labs:

1. IDENTIFY THE TOPIC

Start by speaking to youth civil society organisations to understand their learning needs. The idea behind the Leadership Labs is to respond to learning needs of youth civil society organisations by focusing on a leadership topic that strengthens their resilience and leadership approaches. You can do this through a needs assessment or in the existing communication platforms you have with the organisations. If they flag multiple topics, do a prioritisation survey with them.

2. CREATE A CONCEPT NOTE AND SCHEDULE THE LEADERSHIP LAB

Design the concept note detailing the topic, context, objectives, targeted audience, speakers and the date of the event. Also draft the schedule detailing the session layout. Set a date two months ahead of the session to give enough time for all logistical preparations and advertising. Create a plan on how you'll be fairly compensating the youth speakers who'll be part of your session.

3. SECURE PARTICIPATION OF FACILITATORS AND SPEAKERS

You probably already have the people you want to invite to be a part of this Leadership Lab in mind, so it's time to send them the invitation to be speakers, moderators and/or breakout leads if necessary. Make sure they confirm and gather their bios and pictures to add to the marketing materials. Ensure you have a balanced panel with diverse speakers (e.g gender balance, ethnicity etc).

4. PINPOINT INCLUSION MEASURES

Know your audience and their inclusion needs and place all measures in place to meet these needs. These can include, but are not limited to interpretation/translation, accessibility of materials, closed captions, sign language etc. Inclusion measures may have a budgetary implication, fully cost them when planning your Leadership Lab.

5.

SCHEDULE THE CALL AND REGISTRATION FORM

While you can use other conference call platforms accessible to you, we recommend zoom as it has multiple features (such as interpretation and other inclusion features) to host the call with ease. Set up a registration method that works best for you, it can be a zoom registration or it could also be a Google form or any method that you decide.

6.

CREATE ADVERTISEMENT MATERIALS

It's now time to create advertising materials, for instance a webpage with all the information on the LL (concept note, bio of speakers, registration, etc) in all necessary languages, ideally this should be done 1 month before the Leadership Lab. You could also just design flyers to share on your social media platforms to advertise your Leadership Lab.

7.

DO A RUNTHROUGH

Schedule a call with everyone involved: panellists, interpreters, back end helpers, etc, a week or two before the event and do a runthrough of the session, make sure everyone understands their role and that no one has any questions for the session.

8.

ADVERTISE A LOT AND SEND REMINDER EMAILS

Advertise your event everywhere you think might be useful to reach a wide audience, remember that not necessarily everyone who registers will attend, so keep advertising until the very last minute, and send reminder emails to everyone registered: 1 week, 1 day and 1 hour before the event.

During the Leadership Labs:

9.

HAVE A GREAT SESSION!

During the session, have people supporting the back end, letting people in, answering messages, sending links to the chat, etc. We know that organising an event can be stressful, but remember to enjoy it, you have done a great job! As internet connection can drop for some speakers and facilitators during your session, always have a back-up plan to cover for the connectivity drop.

After the Leadership Labs:

10.

THANK PARTICIPANTS AND SHARE OUTCOMES

Create a learning page with all the resources shared during the session so that other people can also turn to it for useful information. The learning page is a summary of the key lessons and takeaways from the session and some punchy quotes from participants. Resources could include additional links to further reading etc. This can sit on your website under the resources section.

You can send a thank you email to everyone who attended and also to everyone who registered with a link to the learning page and resources available, ideally no longer than 1 week after the Leadership Lab. This step is a great way to follow up with participants and maximise learning and impact of your events, it's also a way to try and foster longer term collaboration.

Final Tips:

- Each Leadership Lab is different, and not always what works for one will work for the next one, so don't shy away from switching the order of the steps or adding or removing anything that you think might not fit into your vision.
- Consider the capacity that you or your team have and adapt the approach to suit that, for example, while we strongly encourage having a landing page and a learning page, you might not be able to design and create it, and you can still have an impactful Leadership Lab without it.
- Add all necessary accessibility measures during your preparations, and be aware that to make this a reality, you will need to invest in these, so be realistic on what you can offer people attending the lab, and be honest on what is/isn't possible.
- It can be useful if you're creating a learning page to capture short insights or recommendations during the session to share back with participants.
- Get inspired by the [previous Leadership Labs](#) hosted by Restless Development.

If you're looking to conduct a Leadership Lab for youth organisations and want to discuss your ideas or need any support we would love to hear from you! Get in touch with jimena@restlessdevelopment.org or info@restlessdevelopment.org