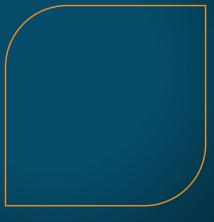# Evolving Perspective:

Leadership Qualities among Young Men and Women in Jordan

GenG Program Action Research

(2022-2023)

Context

This action research has been conducted within the framework of the New Generation- GenG project, an initiative aimed at fostering gender-just and violence-free societies through youth empowerment and advocacy. In Jordan, one of the seven participating countries, the project is implemented in partnership with Rutgers, by the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), and is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. **Generation G seeks to energize a renewed social movement over five years by promoting youth leadership and gender justice.** It will also enhance the dialogue between youth and policymakers to influence policies on youth and women's rights.

In the long term, the project aims to achieve the following strategic objectives:

• Public support -a growing number of young men and women are mobilized to promote gender justice.

• Policy changes -policymakers increasingly adopt, adapt, implement, and are accountable for gender-transformative and youth-inclusive policies and laws.

• Civil Society Organization (CSO) strengthening -civil society for gender justice is increasingly resilient, effective, gender transformative, and youth-inclusive.

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1. Background

1.1 What Type of Leadership, Which Kind of Leader, and Why Does This Matter For ARDD?

Leadership is a complex and evolving concept, associated with a wide range of traits and styles and with context and culture. In recent years leadership traits have transcended conventional notions of authority and position, to acknowledge instead the process of influencing individuals or groups, with the final aim of mobilizing them to achieve specific objectives or facilitate transformative changes[1]. While diverse definitions of leadership abound, today they converge more and more on the central premise that leadership is a relational, discursive, and intersubjective phenomenon that emerges through interactions between individuals[2]. In the current context of the humanitarian sector and the aid industry, leaders aim more than ever at being more ethical, making decisions for the greater, common good rather than only for themselves. Respect, accountability, service, honesty, justice, and community represent the main pillars of ethical leadership[3]. Within the different styles of leadership that can be adopted, there is an increasing literature associating male leadership with making decisions and providing directions, and feminine leadership as guided by democratic principles to unite people in pursuit of a shared purpose[4]. While in the past it was a common belief that women in positions of power had to emulate males to access the privileges and authority of the patriarchal system, contemporary evidence demonstrates that leadership styles today are transforming globally, giving rise to alternative approaches that blend masculine and feminine characteristics and prioritize ethical choices in the leading traits and characteristics[5].

In the quest for new forms of leadership that are inclusive, participative, and ethical, ARDD works with others on various interventions supported by research and policy dialogue. For instance, within the "She Leads" project ARDD supports young women's leadership in Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon and researched the role of families in fostering or hindering female leadership, and it showed that family support is integral to young women's pursuit of leadership and that the familial environment is crucial in providing various forms of support and helping leverage their potential, navigate challenges, actively participate in opportunities, and provide a buffer against societal pressures, enhancing their confidence and ability to engage in public life[6]. Furthermore, ARDD launched the Arab Women Leadership Academy (AWLA), part of the USAID-funded Tawazon -Promoting the Voice and Leadership of Women and is training various cohorts of women as leaders to bring new capacities for leadership in Jordan and the region[7]. As for the Gen G project, ARDD continues to explore the perception of young men and women of political leadership and civic engagement, what impedes and might support their engagement, and the emergence of new generations of leaders, women and men, that will support social and gender justice.

2. Research Questions and Methodology

For this research data was collected using qualitative methodologies from both primary and secondary sources. The qualitative approach was strengthened and validated through a desk review of up-to-date literature, 26 semi-structured interviews with youth from ARDD and Solidarity is Global Institute (SIGI) networks, in addition to 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with youth and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on the following topics:

1 Eleonora Banfi, "Women's Leadership.. a Participatory and Collaborative Approach," *ARDD* (blog), 2023, https://ardd-jo.org/blogs/womens-leadership-a-participatory-and-collaborative-approach/.

2 UN Women, *Why so few women are in political leadership, and five actions to boost women's political participation,* 10/09/2024 https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories

3 Harvard University, *What is Ethical Leadership and Why Is It Important?* https://professional.dce.harvard.edu/

4 Aidan Marie et al., "Leadership Styles: Are Male and Female Leaders Really That Different?," *Ladoke Akintola University of Technology*, December 19, 2024, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387106372_Leadership_Styles_Are_Male_and_Female_Leaders_Really_That_Different.

5 Banfi, "Women's Leadership.. a Participatory and Collaborative Approach."

6 ARDD, She Leads Program - *Raising Tomorrow's Leaders: The Role of Family and Social Norms in Shaping young Women's Leadership in Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt*. https://renaissancestrategiccenter.com/2024/9/raising-tomorrow-s-leaders

7 As part of the USAID-funded Tawazon – *Promoting the Voice and Leadership of Women activity*, ARDD designed the Arab Women Leadership Academy (AWLA) to be rooted in local contexts while drawing from international best practices. AWLA is a key initiative, serving as a comprehensive capacity-building program aimed at enhancing women's competencies and opportunities and aiming at training women across their civic engagement, political and governance participation.

1. Gender Roles; 2. Social Norms; 3. Social Capital. Two out of the four FGDs were conducted through "scenarios" to gain insights into how social norms and roles influence youth and women's leadership and the opportunities and challenges they might face while also identifying potential areas for change to better promote gender equality and inclusive leadership. Additionally, four Policy Labs were conducted, allowing for further discussion and validation of the research data. This multi-layered methodology ensures triangulation of the data and meaningful and inclusive youth participation.

3. Data Analysis

3.1 Young Women and Men's Perceptions of What Defines Leadership

The research revealed that young Jordanian women and men defined leadership through a combination of managerial and soft skills, yet their emphasis differed. Women leaned more toward soft skills, while men highlighted managerial traits. Viewed through a gendered lens, men's emphasis on qualities such as courage, visionary thinking, innovation, and being an ideal role model aligns with societal expectations that associate leadership with authority, influence, and strategic vision. Conversely, women prioritized empathy, inclusivity, and emotional intelligence, underscoring the importance of interpersonal connection and collaboration.

At first glance, this division may seem to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes about leadership. **However, a closer examination of the overlap in soft and managerial skills reveals a shift in perceptions among youth, suggesting opportunities to challenge and redefine these norms**. Both men and women agreed that a good leader must be wise, democratic, cooperative, a good planner, an effective communicator, and team oriented. **These shared traits reflect a collective understanding of leadership as a balance between relational and organizational skills -qualities that transcend gender and pave the way for a more inclusive approach to leadership.**

	Men said a leader is	Women said a leader is
Soft skills	- Wise - A good listener - Courageous - Can Influence and guide others - Ideal role model - Democratic - Flexible - Cooperative	- Close to people - Empathic - Inclusive - Flexible - Charismatic - Cooperative - Serious - Disciplined - Democratic - Just - Wise - Good listener - Emotionally intelligent
Managerial skills	- Aware of context - Participative and a team player - Visionary - Good planner - Innovator - Ensure results - Motivated - Good communicator - Make sure teams work together - Empowering others	- Organized - Good planner - Critical thinker - Problem-solver - Ability to multi-task - Ability to make decisions - Understand teams and their needs - Works well with others - Good communicator

3.2 Gendered Aspects of Leadership as Described by Women and Men

Young women and men offered nuanced perspectives on leadership characteristics, reflecting deeply ingrained social and gender norms. Despite these traditional views, respondents from both genders acknowledged a shifting perception of women's leadership capabilities, **signaling a gradual evolution in societal attitudes toward women in leadership roles**. Male respondents particularly stressed the lack of role models that will help see how women can navigate social and perceived gendered limits to their leadership role.

Women's Perspective

Social Models Impose the Traits of Women's and Men's Leadership: Some respondents argued that the perceived differences between male and female leaders are shaped by societal expectations rather than inherent traits. Women are often seen as more emotional, even when they demonstrate logical thinking. There is a strong call for more female role models to challenge these stereotypes and showcase their leadership potential. Participants highlighted that women are often more creative, effective at risk-management, and logical than society gives them credit for. One participant mentioned: *"that modern leadership no longer relies on physical strength, making it equally accessible to both genders, but society does not support women leaders or women who wish to take up leadership positions."*

It Is About Individual Capacity: for another group of respondents, both men and women can lead and succeed but it depends on individual capacity and individual efforts. For these respondents, the differences depend on circumstances and capacities. One respondent emphasized that: *"leadership skills are determined by personality and abilities rather than biological traits or genetics."*

There Are "Nature" Defined Roles for Women and Men: A third group of respondents expressed the belief that natural roles are divided between men and women, attributing these differences to biology. They argued that women perceived emotional nature, stemming from their biological traits, makes them more suited for roles in education, caregiving, health, and domestic responsibilities. Conversely, men were seen as better equipped for fields such as the military, diplomacy, and the judiciary, reflecting traditional gendered perceptions of occupational suitability.

Finally, a few respondents mentioned that it improved and there are currently equal opportunities for women and men to lead.

Men's Perspectives

There Are Differences in Women's and Men's Capacity for Leadership: A group of respondents thinks that differences exist in women's and men's leadership and their leadership capacity, and these are related to biology and upbringing. They added that women might be more emotional, less courageous, and hasty in making decisions, while men can have more wisdom. One respondent stated that: *"at the family level, leadership is typically assigned to men, as they are perceived as tough, whereas women are considered more emotional."*

Women Can Be Leaders But: The second group of respondents acknowledged that women can be effective leaders but highlighted that their leadership roles are often challenged by family responsibilities and societal expectations, particularly regarding privacy and intimacy. These social and familial standards can create barriers to women's leadership. One participant emphasized that: *"**the lack of visible female role models** further complicates the situation, as it limits examples of how women can navigate and overcome these challenges."*

No Difference Between Women and Men: In the third group, respondents stressed that there is no difference between men and women. Society is changing and now men are looking for working women, this will allow them to have more access to leadership positions. One participant added that: *"women are as good as men in management if not better."*

This variety of opinions, which range from bio-essentialism to gender equality, is an interesting observation. **The data underscores a gradual shift in perceptions of leadership among youth in Jordan, with increasing ac-**

knowledgment of women's capacity to lead. However, deeply rooted societal norms and biological narratives continue to influence attitudes, particularly among men. Women advocate for structural changes and role models to combat stereotypes, while men acknowledge women's potential but often frame leadership within traditional roles. **The perspectives reflect a society in transition, where the balance between challenging and perpetuating norms remains delicate.**

This trend is supported by data from the Arab Barometer[8], which shows that in 2016, 82.6% of young men and 73.9% of young women in Jordan believed that men were better suited for political leadership than women. While these percentages have declined over time, the decrease among men has been minimal, with 80% still holding this belief in 2024. In contrast, the decline among women has been more substantial, dropping by 11 percentage points to 62.8%. **Although a significant portion of young women still question women's suitability for political leadership, the reduction indicates a notable shift in attitudes over the past nine years.**

3.3 Perceived Support for Women's and Men's Leadership by Women and Men

Youth involved in the research and the project expressed that there is limited support for young women and men to assume leadership roles in Jordan. However, both groups acknowledged that change is occurring, with men attributing this shift partly to the country's dire economic situation. Their perceptions remain deeply rooted in social and gender norms, with a persistent lack of role models and a reliance on stereotypes highlighted by many respondents. Notably, there is also growing backlash against the existence of quotas for women, which some view as unnecessary or unjustified, and hindering the perception of women's capacity to lead.

Women's Perspectives

Limited Support for Leadership: Women participants emphasized the lack of support for women to lead or engage in politics, particularly in rural areas and early career stages. They observed that societal norms condition women to support men as natural leaders, who are seen as wise and less driven by emotion. Men often receive family support for leadership roles, while women are expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, participants noted a lack of solidarity among women, with one estimating that 80% of women do not support women leaders.

Signs of Change: Despite these challenges, some participants expressed optimism, observing that women are beginning to support one another and that societal attitudes are shifting. **They attributed this change to higher levels of education among women, the influence of social movements, and the emergence of new women leaders who inspire younger generations.** Men with exposure to international environments or "foreign mentalities" were also noted as being more supportive of women's leadership.

Role Models: Many women highlighted the importance of role models, with some existing women leaders inspiring. However, they noted that certain women leaders fail to align with cultural norms, resulting in a lack of broad support. A participant remarked, *"I see women leaders as inspiring; we need more."*

Men's Perspectives

Lack of Support for Women Leaders: Male respondents echoed the sentiment that women face limited support from both genders. Women were described as distrusting other women, with societal traditions perpetuating this dynamic. Men also struggle to see women as leaders due to their traditional roles as housewives. One participant remarked: *"women are the enemy of women in Jordan, reflecting a widely held perception."*

Jealousy Among Men: Interestingly, men also acknowledged a lack of mutual support among themselves. They described leadership as highly competitive, with jealousy and envy undermining solidarity. One participant noted: *"as a man, I am happy when I see a successful man, but not all men feel the same."*

8   The data was extracted from the third wave (2012-2014) and the eighth wave (2023-2024) from the Arab Barometer survey. The data was analyzed using SPSS and filtered to only include people from ages 18 to 30 and split according to gender.

Emerging Change: Male participants recognized a gradual shift in societal perceptions. Women, once seen as outsiders in the labor market, are increasingly entering leadership roles due to economic pressures. The difficult economic situation in Jordan has driven more women to work and seek leadership opportunities, which some men are beginning to support.

Quotes System

Youth perceptions regarding quotas reveal a significant backlash against their use for women's political participation. Many view quotas as undermining the recognition of women's competencies, with both male and female participants advocating for political access based on merit rather than mandated representation. While quotas are acknowledged as instrumental in facilitating women's entry into politics, they are also criticized for being tied to tribal systems, which many see as a barrier to genuine progress. Participants emphasized a preference for competency-based participation, noting that although women who have entered politics through quotas have performed well, their achievements are often overshadowed by the perception that quotas, rather than qualifications, facilitated their success.

Both male and female participants expressed concerns that quotas undermine women's credibility in leadership. A male respondent remarked, *"I am ambivalent about quotas. I can see why they are needed, but they undermine women leaders."* According to the Arab Barometer, there is a notable gender gap in perceptions of the validity of quotas for parliamentary and cabinet positions. Support for a minimum number of parliamentary seats for women was voiced by 59.6% of men, compared to 84.8% of women who agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, for cabinet positions, 54.1% of men supported the idea, while 84.9% of women agreed. **This divide highlights a contradiction in attitudes.** While men frequently argued that women lack the capabilities for leadership, and the lack of role models that can showcase how women can deal with domestic/family care responsibilities and new leaderships roles they also criticized quotas for undermining competition and offering women an easier pathway into politics. Statements like "*quotas are good for women, but access to politics should be based on competency*" were echoed throughout the discussions.

Participants also raised concerns about the limited impact of gender quotas, advocating for parliamentary access rooted in merit and competencies rather than quota-based mechanisms. This backlash against quotas is particularly noteworthy in a country with a tradition of quota systems for minorities, which has not faced similar resistance. Interestingly, the critiques of quotas emerged organically, even without direct prompting in the research methodology, indicating the depth of the issue within public discourse.

3.4 Political Participation vs. Civic Engagement: Which Roles Are Better Suited For Women and Men?

Most participants from both genders expressed that civic engagement is more suitable for women, while politics is better suited for men. This sentiment has been echoed in a research article studying the gender differences in civic and political engagements and participation among Italian youth where they found that young female participants reported higher scores on online and civic participation while male participants were more likely to report political and activist participation[9]. This is particularly noteworthy, as civic engagement itself constitutes a form of political participation, emerging as an alternative where the formal political sphere is hindered by structural deficiencies[10], but it is still perceived as inherently feminine.

9   Serena Stefani et al., "Gender Differences in Civic and Political Engagement and Participation Among Italian Young People," *Social Psychological Bulletin* 16, no. 1 (March 30, 2021): 1–25, https://doi.org/10.32872/spb.3887.
10   ARDD, "Civic Engagement: The Key for Women's Political Participation in Karak," 2016, https://ardd-jo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Civic-Engagement-E.pdf.

Women's Perspectives

Civic Engagement as a Natural Space for Women: Women participants emphasized their success and leadership in civic spaces, noting that women excel in civil society work, education, and sectors tied to public service. They believe women are better than men in the public sector, while men dominate in the private sector.

Challenges in the Political Arena: Many women acknowledged the difficulties they face in politics, with some suggesting that women should not compete directly with men in this domain. However, others argued that it is time for change, pointing out the need for more female role models to demonstrate women's capabilities in political leadership. A participant also highlighted: *"the gap between women's role in leading political change and the visibility of their contributions."*

Men's Perspectives

Division of Roles Between Civic Engagement and Politics: Male participants generally agreed that women excel in civic spaces and education, while men are more suited for politics. They attributed this to perceived differences, such as men being "wiser and more rational," making them better political leaders. Women, they noted, are effective in addressing family and women's issues within the House of Representatives.

3.5 Gender Roles and How They Affect the Perception of the Role of a Member of Parliament (MP)

Youth perceptions collected in FGDs over scenarios reveal a significant disconnect between the ideal and actual roles of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Jordan. While the ideal role is legislative and oversight-focused, societal expectations have redefined the position into a service-oriented one, creating a "legislative vacuum" that undermines institutional effectiveness. **Tribalism heavily influences this shift, with the quota system being viewed as a mechanism for tribal mobilization rather than a tool for genuine political empowerment**. Decentralization is also criticized as improperly implemented, resulting in personalized representation and further diminishing the institutional role of MPs.

Gender disparities are deeply entrenched in these dynamics. **Women face substantial barriers to political participation, with financial dependency on male family members acting as a significant obstacle**. Social norms designate roles like tribal representation as inherently male, perpetuating stereotypes that women lack the capacity for such responsibilities. Additionally, women are expected to balance **domestic and professional duties**, often without adequate support, while also contending with societal scrutiny and cyber-political violence, which further marginalize them.

The youth recognize that women in politics are often under-informed about policies and legislative processes, limiting their effectiveness. While quotas are seen as a necessary entry point, they are criticized for failing to foster genuine competition or long-term empowerment. To address these challenges, the youth propose systemic reforms, including the creation of supportive work environments, greater political education, and preparing MPs' families for the role's demands.

3.6 What Would Contribute to Building Social Capital for Young Women And Men in Jordan?

According to the youth involved in FGDs discussions, social capital in Jordan is deeply influenced by societal, geographical, and cultural factors, with significant differences in access between genders. Youth emphasizes that **social capital is primarily built through networks and relationships that provide support and opportunities for advancement.** These networks are shaped by traditions and geography, with family and tribal connections playing a crucial role. According to the youth, supportive families and tribes can empower individuals, particularly women, while unsupportive ones can reinforce barriers. They also highlight economic disparities and regional underdevelopment as significant factors that limit access to social capital, particularly in rural areas.

Youth participants point out that women face distinct challenges in building social capital due to societal norms that restrict their mobility and interactions. They see **civil society organizations (CBOs) as essential in addressing these barriers by facilitating opportunities for women to extend their networks.** According to the youth, autonomously building relationships with CBOs and participating in their initiatives throughout the country are effective ways for women to strengthen their social capital. They also stress the importance of women autonomously engaging in learning opportunities and training offered by CBOs and local institutions to enhance their networks and skills.

Social media is also identified by the youth as a powerful tool for building social capital. They emphasize that leveraging social media provides networking opportunities, allowing individuals to connect, share knowledge, and mobilize communities. Youth see social media as a way to overcome traditional constraints, particularly for women and youth who face barriers in more traditional settings. However, they also raise concerns about the balance between civil society's influence and the preservation of traditional values, especially in conservative regions. According to the youth, while there are challenges, civil society organizations and social media are crucial in bridging gaps in social capital and fostering greater inclusivity across Jordan.

3.7 Inter-Generational Support and Social Capital

From the youth's perspective, intergenerational support plays a critical role in shaping civic and political engagement, but it remains a double-edged sword. Youth recognize the efforts made in the past decade to bridge the intergenerational gap in Jordan, acknowledging its potential to bridge divides and create opportunities for mutual learning and role modeling. However, they also **highlight significant challenges, particularly the persistence of negative attitudes among older generations, who often view youth as unskilled and unreliable due to their age and perceived lack of experience.** This dynamic is seen as a major barrier to effective collaboration and advancement in the political and civic spheres.

Youth point to a societal structure that rigidly organizes roles by age, further reinforcing generational divides. This is evident in various spaces, such as academic institutions, families, and workplaces. For example, one respondent noted, "*At the academic level, old professors are often against technologies and innovative ideas. At the end of the day, this creates a gap we can feel after graduation and challenges in market involvement.*" Similarly, within families, youth frequently feel unheard, with older family members maintaining authority over decision-making. These entrenched attitudes create a lack of communication and trust, which not only limits opportunities for collaboration but also deprives young people of role models in the political and civic spheres.

Despite these frustrations, youth see significant potential in fostering stronger intergenerational collaboration. They believe that open dialogue with older leadership figures could pave the way for mutual understanding, allowing both groups to learn from one another. Such collaboration could formalize support for youth, especially women and persons with disabilities (PWDs), helping them bring their ideas and energy into the political and civic arenas. **Importantly, youth emphasize that intergenerational dialogue has the power to build stronger connections across geographic and demographic divides, further empowering young leaders to take an active role in shaping their communities.**

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The perceptions of leadership among young men and women in Jordan reveal notable contradictions regarding gender roles and the qualities associated with leadership. While both genders acknowledge a mix of managerial and soft skills as essential for effective leadership, their emphasis on these skills diverges, reflecting gendered expectations. Men tend to highlight managerial traits such as vision, courage, and authority, aligning with societal norms that associate leadership with power and control. In contrast, women prioritize soft skills like empathy, emotional intelligence, and inclusivity, traits traditionally linked to feminine roles and interpersonal dynamics.

This division appears to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, yet a deeper examination suggests a shift in perceptions. Both men and women recognize qualities such as wisdom, democracy, cooperation, and communication as essential leadership traits, demonstrating a more inclusive approach to leadership that transcends gender boundaries. These shared views signal a potential transformation in how leadership is defined and valued, pointing to a more balanced and equitable vision for future leadership. This is particularly significant among young women, as the Arab Barometer highlights a greater shift in attitudes toward challenging traditional gender norms among young women compared to young men.

The contradiction becomes more apparent when considering men's attitudes toward gender quotas. While men often express skepticism toward quotas, arguing they undermine merit-based leadership and create an unfair advantage for women, they simultaneously argue that women are not fit for leadership. This perspective reflects a deep-seated belief in male superiority in leadership, despite acknowledging that women are increasingly taking on leadership roles due to economic pressures. Some men suggest that while quotas might open doors for women, they undermine the credibility and competence of women leaders, as their positions are seen as a product of the quota rather than individual merit.

This paradox underscores the tension between supporting women's political participation and adhering to traditional gender norms. While some men support quotas as a necessary tool for women's entry into politics, many view them as a "crutch" that perpetuates the perception of women as less competent than their male counterparts. This attitude is not isolated but rather part of a broader societal debate about gender equality and the legitimacy of women's leadership.

The gradual shift in opinions is evident, as fewer young people support the idea that men are better suited for leadership roles. While this shift is more pronounced among women, the change among men has been slower. Yet, even as men begin to accept the possibility of women in leadership, their support is often conditional, shaped by traditional views of gender roles and the belief that leadership should be based on merit rather than quotas.

This contradiction is further highlighted in discussions about political participation versus civic engagement. While civic engagement is seen as a more appropriate domain for women, politics is still predominantly viewed as a male-oriented arena. Both genders acknowledge that women excel in civic engagement, particularly in education, health, and social services, yet many men still view political leadership as inherently male. This division reinforces the idea that politics, with its associated power and decision-making roles, is reserved for men, while women are better suited for more nurturing, service-oriented roles.

In summary, the youth in Jordan express a complex and evolving relationship with gendered perceptions of leadership. While there is an increasing recognition of women's capabilities as leaders, deeply rooted societal norms continue to influence attitudes. The contradiction between supporting quotas and simultaneously questioning women's leadership abilities reflects the ongoing struggle to reconcile gender equality with traditional expectations. Despite these challenges, there is a gradual shift in attitudes, suggesting that leadership in Jordan is being redefined, albeit slowly, to allow for greater inclusivity and gender equality.

4.2 Recommendations

For Future Project Phases and Gen G Partners:

1. **Developing Inclusive Leadership Programs**

   o Promote New Leadership Models That Are Empathic, Inclusive, and Ethical: Develop leadership models that encourage both men and women to embrace diverse leadership qualities and characteristics, dismantling traditional gender stereotypes.

   o Enhance Leadership Skill-Building: Design comprehensive skill development programs that integrate both relational and organizational skills and focus on new traits of leadership for young people.

2. **Elevate Female Role Models and Mentorship**

   o Increase Visibility of Women Leaders: Focus on promoting female leaders across various sectors beyond the political sphere, especially those defying traditional norms.

   o Create Mentorship Initiatives: Facilitate mentorship programs where young women are paired with accomplished female leaders for guidance and empowerment.

3. **Improve Civic Engagement and Political Participation**

   o Foster Women's Involvement in Civic Initiatives: Create more opportunities for women to participate in community-based programs as a stepping stone for political engagement and for building a stepping stone for social capital.

   o Promote Gender-Inclusive Political Education: Offer programs for both men and women that challenge the idea that politics is a male-dominated field and encourage equal participation.

   o Partnering with the Media to Foster Women Leaders: utilizing media outlets to promote women leaders and their achievements while also laying the groundwork for a more gender-inclusive political and civic sphere.

4. **Focus on Social Capital and Networking**

   o Create Networking Spaces for Women: Support women's involvement in civil society organizations (CBOs) and provide platforms to build professional networks.

   o Utilize Family and Community Support Systems: Encourage supportive family and community dynamics, including tribal structures, to help young women build leadership potential.

For Stakeholders Involved in Youth and Women Political Empowerment:

1. **Address Structural Barriers to Women's Leadership**

   o Promote Work-Life Balance for Women: Advocate for policies that allow flexible working conditions and family support to help women balance professional and personal responsibilities.

   o Combat Societal Biases in Leadership: Launch public awareness campaigns to challenge gender-based biases and promote leadership based on merit, not traditional gender roles.

2. **Encourage Policy and Systemic Reform**

   o <u>Address Concerns About Quota Systems:</u> Ensure that gender quotas are used effectively, supporting equality while maintaining merit-based leadership standards, and ensure visibility of successful women leaders.

   o <u>Enhance Political Education and Resources for Women:</u> Provide women with the tools and resources they need to succeed in political roles, including preparation for the challenges of leadership.

3. **Foster Male Allies in Leadership**

   o <u>Promote Male Support for Women Leaders:</u> Encourage men to advocate for gender equality and support women leaders, focusing on collaboration and shared leadership values.

4. **Encourage Societal Dialogue on Gender and Leadership**

   o <u>Facilitate Open Discussions on Leadership and Gender:</u> Create spaces for public dialogues that engage both men and women in reshaping societal perceptions of leadership, promoting gender inclusivity in leadership roles.