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She Leads

Marcela Bacchin,, Julianna Colonna, Johann Schneider, Sandra Tiemi, Ivi
Mimoto

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SHE LEADS



Sociobiodiversity Women's
Leadership Program

SHE LEADS

Sociobiodiversity Women's
Leadership Program

Coordinated by:



SCHNEIDER & associados
international business consultants

In partnership with:



Team:

Coordination: Marcela Bacchin and Johann W. Schneider

Specialists: Julianna Colonna and Macione Pessoa Baroni

Content: Teçá Impacto (Marcela Bacchin, Julianna Colonna, Sandra Tiemi Yokota, Ivi Mimoto Rufino and Macione Pessoa Baroni) and Schneider & Associados International Business Consultants (Johann W. Schneider)

Editing, layout and revision: Casa Azul Conteúdo e Design para Sustentabilidade

Translation: Andy Beer

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Introduction

Why develop a leadership program for women in socio-biodiversity?

The challenges of female leadership in the business ecosystem are part of Teçá Impacto's story, a company led by a woman who, throughout her journey, has often had her leadership questioned and has also come to question herself about her potential. Teçá Impacto is a company with a network of consultants, mostly women, whose different stories have been shaped by the complexities of being a woman.

Encountering these same dilemmas in such diverse realities within our field of work prompts us to question the added difficulty that comes with being a woman in a leadership role. Women face multiple layers of prejudice, mechanisms of sabotage, and challenges that intersect with gender, race, education, motherhood, guilt over choices, upbringing, behavior, and visions for the future. Despite this concerning landscape, women have emerged as key players in seeking solutions related to food security and forest preservation.

In this regard, the issue of diversity and inclusion, one of Teçá Impacto's areas of expertise, aligned with P4F's (Partnership for Forests) interest in providing more in-depth support to women leading socio-environmental impact organizations. This is also an important part of the challenges faced by Schneider & Associados International Business Consultants in empowering businesses that contribute to environmental preservation through the extractivism, cultivation, processing,

and marketing of sustainable socio-biodiversity products.

Throughout this publication, we address the complexity of socio-biodiversity supply chains, which require the individuals leading these businesses to possess equally complex skills. We also discuss the challenges that peoples and communities that contribute to biodiversity face in managing these enterprises. These challenges range from land conflicts, such as lack of demarcation and encroachments by mining and logging activities, to highly fragile supply chain logistics and the historical marginalization imposed upon these communities.

To compound the challenges inherent to socio-biodiversity, there is the oppression and violence experienced by women, indigenous peoples, and Black and mixed-race individuals. These are people who often live in remote regions, far from major urban centers, with limited access to public healthcare and formal education. Hence, the reasons for developing this program are large in number.

In addition to detailing the different aspects of the issue, this publication shares the rich experience that came from carrying out a pilot project aiming to empower women in Brazilian socio-biodiversity, as well as analyzes the potential impacts of the initiative. The journey involved researching the topic, listening

to female leaders, and learning from their experiences and needs. It also encompassed the conception and implementation of **She Leads: Sociobiodiversity Women's Leadership Program**.

The implementation of this pilot project has generated a wealth of knowledge, content, reflections, and outcomes in the areas of leadership, gender, and community business management. This report systematizes this journey, but it is not the end of the road. There is an ongoing process to be developed based on the establishment of the Women's Network and the team involved in the initiative. Finally, within a one-year period, an evaluation of the process and the impacts generated on the women and the businesses they lead will be conducted.

Enjoy the journey!

About Partnerships for Forests

Partnerships for Forests (P4F) is an eight-year program funded by the United Kingdom government through the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), as part of the International Climate Finance, aiming to invest £11.6 billion by 2026 to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement. P4F is managed by Palladium and SYSTEMIQ and currently operates in Central, Eastern, and Western Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, with a focus on Brazil, Peru, and Colombia. Over 30 companies or initiatives have been supported so far, with more than 1.2 million hectares of forests under improved management, benefiting 1,600 people as of the end of 2022.

About Teçá

Teçá Impacto is a consulting firm specializing in smart strategies for socio-environmental impact. Its purpose is to build bridges between companies, communities, social demands, and the impact ecosystem by delivering effective strategic solutions for communities, generating positive impact for different stakeholders. As an organization that specializes in the developing strategies and solutions for social impact, Teçá Impacto encompasses social, environmental, cultural, economic, and local development dimensions, with a focus on integrated social transformation and strengthening regions. It develops positive impact solutions for companies, communities and social organizations.

About Schneider

Founded by a group of experts in market access, and with extensive experience in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and international business, Schneider & Associados has over 25 years of experience. During this time, it has established a professional foreign trade training school and has incorporated skills and strategic partnerships aligned with the evolution of the global market, such as fair trade and organic certifications, sustainable supply chain development, socio-environmental impact businesses in socio-biodiversity, cooperativism, entrepreneurship, and leadership, among others. Operating in five languages across the Americas, Europe, and Africa, Schneider & Associados has developed projects and programs, methodologies and planning tools, management and training resources, as well as authored and curated content for clients such as Sebrae, APEX, CNI, FGV, FSC, USAID, UNDP, IDB, and Palladium.



“ When we are together, in this moment of leadership, I can appreciate myself more and more, because I am here, and I know where I want to go. ”

1. Context

1.1. Socio-biodiversity and women

According to data from the [Sustainable Community Business Map](#), of the 1,042 organizations mapped in Brazil, 78% have women in their boards of directors, and 63% have women on the board of directors and in management positions. The growing participation of women in the leadership of Brazilian socio-biodiversity organizations is reinforced by a study conducted by PPA (Partners for the Amazon) - [Pathways to the Amazon in 2022](#) showing that among the responding organizations operating in the Brazilian Amazon, 75% have women in leadership positions.

In addition to highlighting the growth of female leadership in these roles, the data indicates that women are crucial for the conservation of Brazilian socio-biodiversity. After all, women play important roles in traditional and indigenous communities, engaging in activities such as extractivism, family farming, and other endeavors directly related to the conservation of nature and local culture.

Women are important agents of change in the fight against climate change and for environmental

preservation, but they face multiple challenges that negatively impact their ability to make autonomous decisions and implement preservation actions. To mention just a few points, they historically have less [access to land ownership](#), equipment, vehicles, [rural infrastructure](#), and [financial resources](#), as well as having to [face domestic violence](#). Women are also often on the front lines of the impacts of climate change representing 80% of those displaced by natural disasters and [climate change](#) worldwide. Due to the gendered division of labor, they are more exposed to insects that carry diseases such as malaria, dengue, and [chikungunya](#).

As well as the existing gender inequality, we must add racial and ethnic disparities. Studies show that [Black women](#) suffer the most [violence](#), are the primary victims of [femicide](#) cases, and have less access to basic rights such as [health, income, and education](#). [Indigenous women](#) also face violence and inequalities related to their gender, origin, and race/ethnicity. Female leaders in socio-biodiversity, like all women, face not only violence and challenges related to their gender but also those related to their race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disabilities - in other words, the intersection of all aspects of their identity.

Despite this concerning situation, women have been at the forefront of seeking solutions for food security and forest preservation. For example, Amazonian women play a crucial role in various productive activities such as fishing, community gardens, and agroforestry systems, as well as in the collection, processing, and commercialization of non-timber forest products. It is worth highlighting the specific role of female extractivism in the Brazil nut chain in the Brazilian Amazon, which accounted for nearly half of the forest-related exports and [generated approximately 22,000 jobs in 2005](#). They carry out work that is often invisible and face limited opportunities for equitable

participation in decision-making related to [land use, forest conservation, and biodiversity](#).

For women to be heard and recognized, they need to have opportunities to take part in their communities, grassroots organizations, and political discussion. Additionally, ensuring their access to land, resources, and comprehensive training, both technical and socio-emotional, becomes vital in promoting gender equity and unlocking a wider range of opportunities for them.

A [study conducted with forest-dwelling groups in Ethiopia](#) revealed that the participation of women in executive committees, that is, in formal decision-making processes, is linked to improved forest management, leading to gains in conservation and livelihood conditions. This indicates that female leadership in decision-making played a crucial role in achieving these outcomes.

Based on empirical evidence gathered from years of working with productive groups in the Brazilian socio-biodiversity context, it is clear that the involvement and leadership of women significantly contribute to generating benefits for their organizations, communities, and forests. This can be attributed to the cultural tendency of women to prioritize and care for their families and communities.

1.2. The challenge of advancing female leadership

Aware of the importance of increasing female representation in leadership positions and empowering current women leaders, the question that arises is: "how can we support them?" From the outset, the team responsible for this report recognized that, in addition to confronting the marginalization faced by socio-biodiverse communities, which affects both men and women, it would be essential to address the reality of systemic sexism and all other forms of oppression, such as racism, that affect women.

The need for targeted support for female leaders in socio-biodiversity became apparent during a project that sought to assist a cooperative of non-timber forest product producers in the Amazon, led by a woman. Despite an extensive national search,

no existing programs were found that adequately addressed the specific needs and characteristics of the organization and its leader. It became evident that there was a lack of specialized programs designed for female leadership, considering the unique sociocultural context of family farming and socio-biodiversity in Brazil.

After recognizing this need, a team of experts was brought together to develop a proposal to fill this gap. The idea was presented to P4F - Partnerships for Forests, a program dedicated to supporting businesses and initiatives that promote sustainable forest and land use. They embraced the initiative without hesitation and provided the necessary funding for the project.



2. Assessment and Program Design

To ensure a solid technical foundation for the training approach to be developed, the first step was to carry out global benchmarking. This research provided valuable insights into best practices and successful models from around the world. Additionally, interviews were conducted with female leaders of producer organizations in the Brazilian socio-biodiversity sector as well as female leaders of support organizations working within this context. These interviews served to gather their experiences, perspectives, and insights, which were instrumental in shaping the design of the program.

2.1. Benchmarking

To test the hypothesis that there were no specific programs tailored to the needs of female leaders in the area of socio-biodiversity, benchmarking research was conducted. The survey mapped 104 initiatives worldwide aimed at empowering women. The initiatives were categorized into programs and courses, articles, platforms, communities, organizations, initiatives, and others. All of them focused on female leadership in various contexts. The following image provides a summary of the research results.



Benchmarking summary



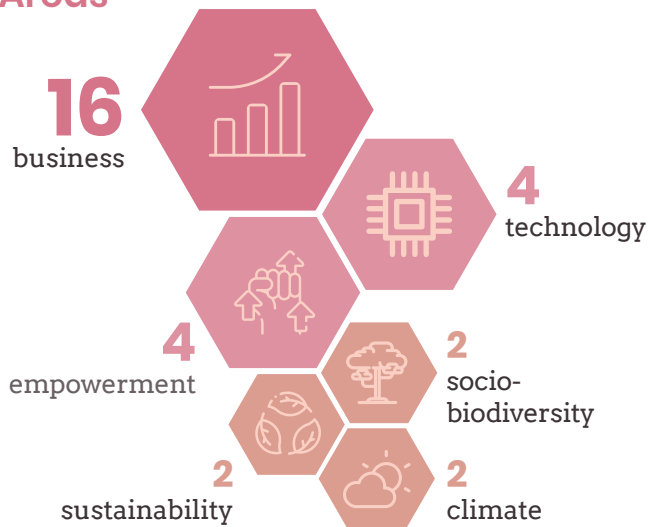
104
initiatives

- 28** programs
- 22** materials
- 11** courses
- 8** platforms
- 6** communities
- 2** publications
- 27** articles and others



38 insights
19 required results
24 topics covered

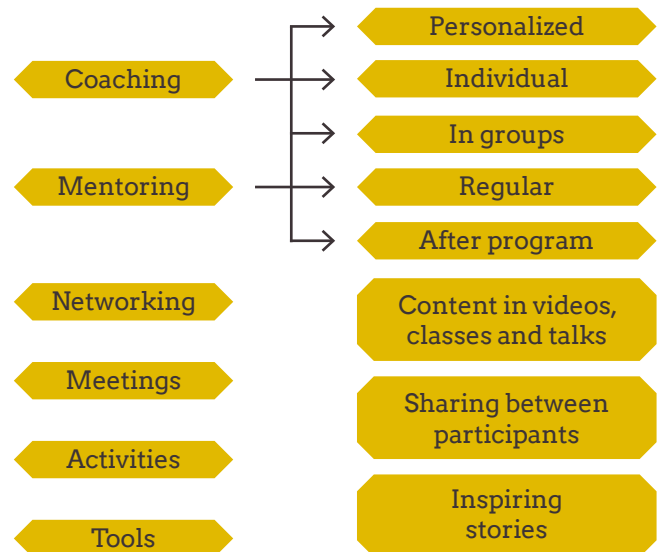
Areas*



*areas encountered in the benchmarking

Two noteworthy publications that align closely with the proposed program are [“Fostering Gender-Transformative Change in Sustainable Forest Management”](#) by the IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development) and [“Rural women’s leadership programme in grassroots organizations; a case study in Nepal”](#) by the IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development).

Methodology



These sources provided valuable insights that informed the program’s development, along with the feedback gathered from over 70 female leaders in the field of socio-biodiversity in Brazil.

Key learnings from the referenced publications

1. Fostering Gender-Transformative Change in Sustainable Forest Management

- Transformative change goes beyond individual self-improvement among women.
- There are “structural drivers” of inequality that can either support or hinder gender goals.
- Projects and activities should be seen as complementary to other ongoing processes.
- Providing practical support to women alone, such as services and training, does not bring about transformative change because it does not address the underlying norms and structures that perpetuate gender inequalities.
- The process of transformation involves collective actions connected at the levels of the individual, family, community and institutions.
- Long-term transformations in gender norms come about through networks, movements, alliances, and interests. They come together to unlock resources (economic, political, cultural, environmental, etc.), sustain the changes and expand them further.

- The context of women is highly diverse. They do not constitute a homogeneous group but rather have overlapping identities that influence power, agency, voice, and access to land ownership.

2. Rural women's leadership programme in grass-roots organizations; a case study in Nepal

This study is interesting because it suggests a process that covers capacity building as well as training, coaching, mentoring, exposure, event participation, and discussion sharing. Topics covered include negotiation skills, confidence building, self-development, organizational change, gender integration, rural technical knowledge, and natural resource management. Some challenges encountered were the limited duration of the study, local context, caste discrimination, lack of time and mobility due to women being overloaded performing different roles.

- Programs need to accommodate different types of groups, according to the needs of women and their contexts.

- Networking among women increases their confidence and generates ideas.
- A support network of men is needed to build understanding, acceptance and advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Training should encompass leadership skills as well as technical knowledge.
- It is necessary to practice and consolidate the acquired leadership skills, for example through forums, platforms, and events. Project work plans should accommodate this.
- Female role models inspire others, often more than traditional male role models.
- Training methodologies need to be adapted by local trainers to meet the different needs, abilities and communication styles of farmer organization members, grassroots leaders, and trainers.



Although there is growing recognition that diversity and inclusion can lead to more effective and equitable environmental conservation policies and practices, the benchmarking concluded that there is a lack of programs specifically targeting the development of female leadership in socio-biodiversity. Furthermore, there is still limited data and in-depth studies that relate the issue of

diversity and inclusion to socio-biodiversity in Brazil and worldwide. However, there are some ongoing initiatives and projects with the mission to address this gap.

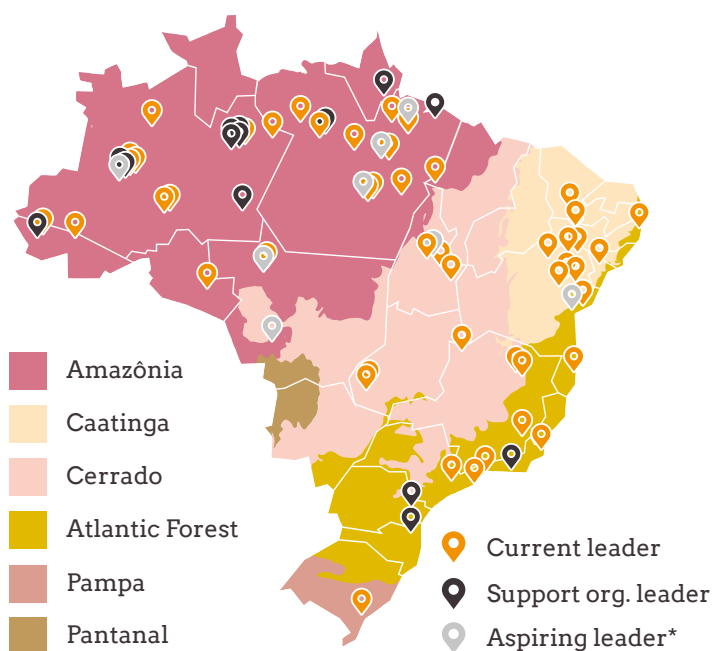
2.2. Interviews

2.2.1. The sample

In order to ensure the representativeness of the sample, the interviewees were prioritized according to factors such as geographic origin and biome, value chains and types of activities, and profile (active or aspiring leaders). The comprehensive mapping of the leaders was made possible through the contact networks of the coordinating team itself, recommendations from facilitators, as well as from P4F and the projects it supports.

In the end, **71 women** were interviewed (57 aspiring and acting leaders and 14 leaders of support organizations) between January and March 2023, representing a range of contexts within the scope of socio-biodiversity. They were located in five Brazilian biomes (Amazon, Caatinga, Cerrado, Atlantic Forest, and Pampa). This prospecting phase for the pilot program ensured important representation within the sample, as shown below.

Geographic location and biomes of the women interviewed



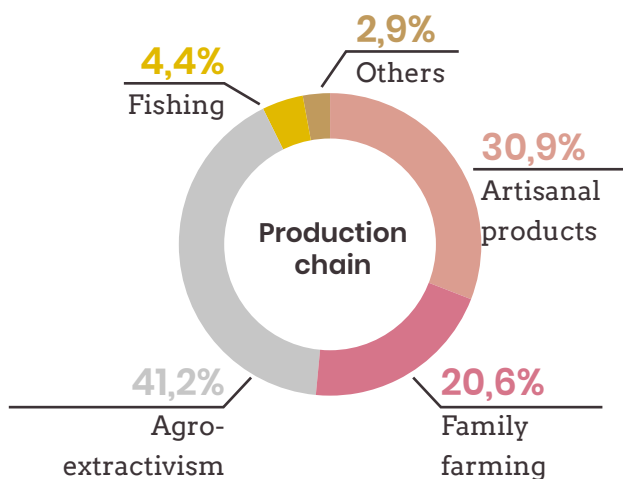
*One aspiring leader did not inform her location

Quantitative distribution among active leaders, aspiring leaders, and advocates



Activities and production chains

Agro-extractivism is the main production chain among the individuals in the sample. This category includes activities such as collecting and processing various types of nuts (Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, and babassu), as well as açaí, oils, resins, and others. Artisanal products is the second most common productive chain among these women, followed by family farming. Fishing and other activities are a minority in the sample.



2.2.2. Scripting

Based on the data gathered in the global benchmarking, semi-structured interview scripts were created for the target audience, consisting of:

- **57** female socio-biodiversity leaders, divided between active and aspiring leaders.
- **14** female leaders in institutions and entities that support socio-biodiversity.

The script used with the leaders and aspiring leaders was structured around four main themes:

- Socioeconomic data, to gather accurate information about the interviewees' background and context.
- Personal and professional experiences and aspirations, to identify relevant topics for their socio-emotional development that were not directly related to support and training needs. This includes exploring excessive workload, oppression, prejudice experienced, and long-term ambitions.
- Previous experiences with courses and training programs, to assess their existing knowledge and expertise in various areas.
- Specific support needs for their individual and professional development.

The script designed for the leaders of support organizations followed a similar structure, adjusted to indirectly gather insights about the target audience. They were also asked to name some influential leaders within their sphere of work.

2.2.3. Quantitative results

The following results refer to the 57 leaders who represent the program's target audience. The data from the support organization leaders was treated separately and used indirectly to calibrate the qualitative analysis and conclusions.

Socioeconomic data

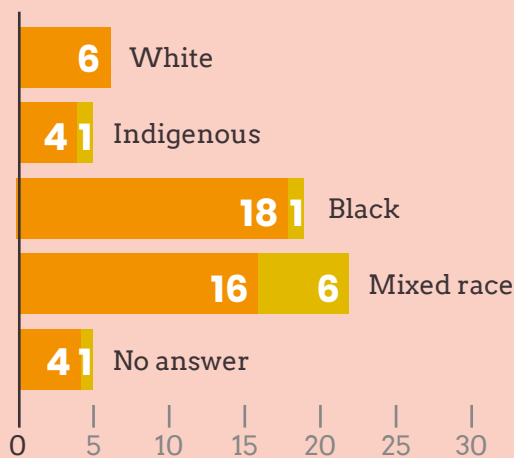
The main socioeconomic data confirms that the prospecting and selection process was successful in its challenge of ensuring a representative range of peoples and communities who contribute to socio-biodiversity.



Color/Race

Among the interviewees,

71,9% (41 women) identified as Black or mixed race and 5 women identified as Indigenous.

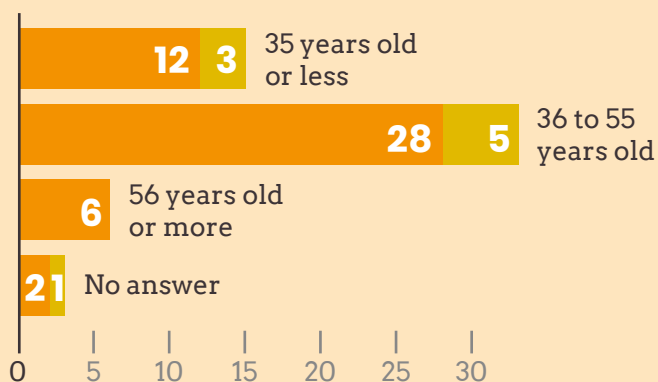


This racial distribution, although different from the Brazilian average (50.9% Black or mixed race and 0.43% Indigenous, according to the [2010 census](#)), closely aligns with the distribution of the Black and mixed-race population in the North and Northeast regions, which accounted for **80.9% and 74.5% Black and mixed race, respectively, in 2021.**

Of the interviewees,

75,5% (43 women) come from these two Brazilian regions. Additionally, the higher number of Indigenous women is due to the significant presence of Indigenous populations contributing to Brazilian socio-biodiversity. Given this context, it was considered that, from a racial perspective, the sample is representative of the population defined as the focus of this program.

Age

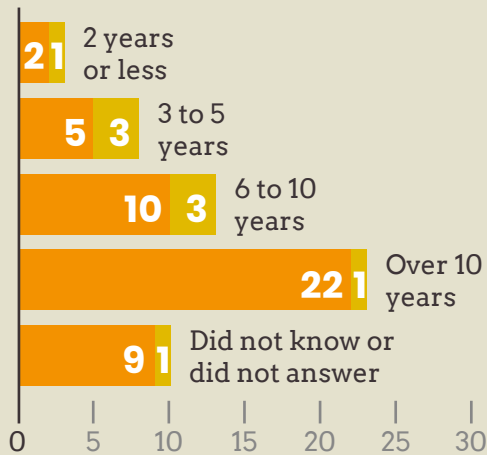


This is a group of experienced women, with 39 of the 54 respondents:

72% are more than 35 years old.

- The youngest woman interviewed was 27 years old.
- The oldest was 71 years old.

Time in the organization

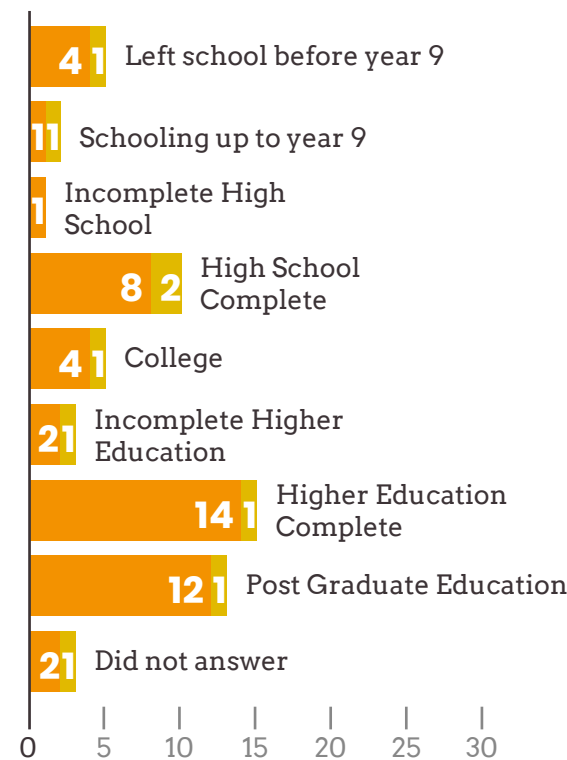


Experience is also reflected in the length of time they have worked in the organizations. Of the 47 women who answered this question:

76,6% (36 women) had been working for more than 5 years.

48,9% (23 women) had been working for more than 10 years.

Level of education



66,7% have incomplete college or more.

The high level of education among the interviewed leaders caught the team's attention, as it is significantly different from the average population in Brazil. In 2019, only 17.4% of individuals over 25 years old had **completed higher education**. Several ideas and hypotheses were developed to explain this result. Some of them include:

- The context of leadership in Brazil is likely different from the population average. This is because formal education can be both a cause and a consequence of this position. Access to education is transformative in itself and can encourage individuals to take on leadership roles. At the same time, once in a leadership position, there are multiple demands for improvement, and a university education can partially address them.

Current leader Aspiring leader

- Most of the interviewees reported having other leaders who inspired them. Studies show that “behavior models, especially female leaders, can have a strong impact on girls’ education. Female leadership does not automatically result in improvements for girls, but women leaders can change social and gender norms, both through policies and legislation and through their own visible example of what girls can achieve” (Rose et al., 2020).
- Additionally, over the past 18 years, there has been an expansion in access to higher education through public policies, the establishment of new universities in more remote areas, and the increasing popularity of distance learning (“EAD” Universities). As a result, this context has provided leaders with the opportunity to pursue and successfully complete their higher education studies.
- It is also possible that the sampling was influenced by referrals. Most of the interviewees were contacted through partner organizations that work with leaders of well-established organizations, often operating within networks and engaging in export activities.

Other relevant results for the design of the program’s methodology:



35%

20 of the 57 women said they had participated in leadership training. However, they criticized the fact that they were not able to retain the learning because of lack of continuity.



56%

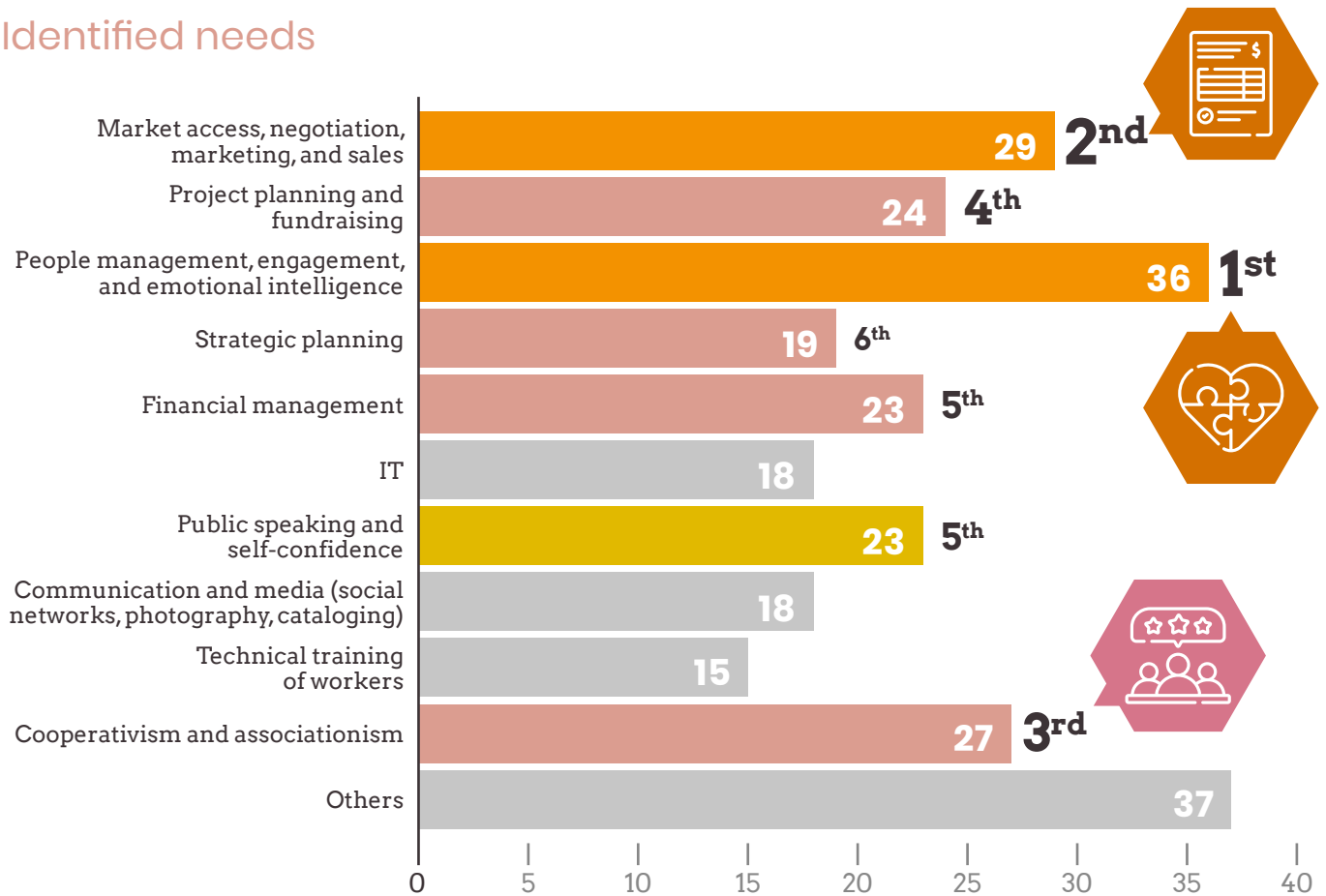
32 respondents felt overwhelmed by the quantity of tasks and responsibilities.



77%

44 leaders said they had suffered some kind of prejudice or discrimination, especially for being a woman (53%).

Identified needs

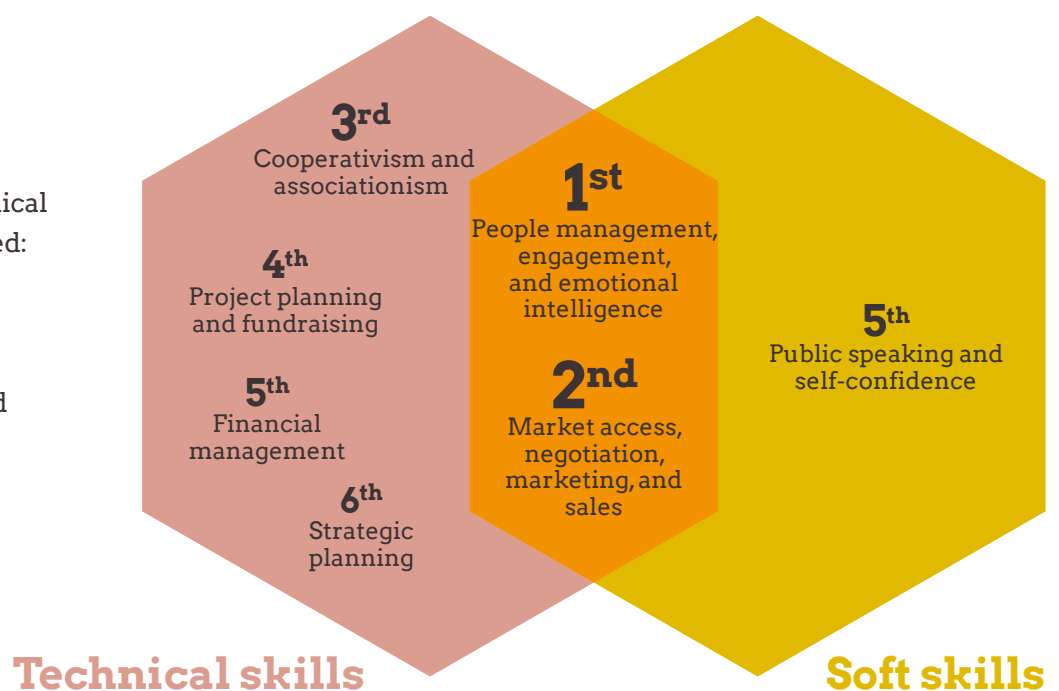


Main needs

Needs classified as technical skills, soft skills and mixed:

 **17** issues mapped

 **7** main needs



The demands that the leaders were able to identify and express spontaneously reveal that their concerns are divided into two groups: technical skills and soft skills, as shown in the image on the previous page. The most mentioned issue was “people management, engagement, and emotional intelligence,” revealing a great concern for the work environment and relationships among employees, as well as conflict management techniques, which includes public speaking. The second highest need was “market building, negotiation, sales, and marketing,” which highlights the importance of self-confidence when negotiating and the necessary technical skills for market building and negotiation strategies. The third most common need is related to “management of cooperatives and associations,” which demonstrates that legal and management issues still deserve support, even for those leading organizations. “Financial management” and “public speaking/self-confidence” followed as the fourth and fifth most mentioned needs, respectively.

Beyond the needs formally expressed during the interviews, other issues relevant to the leaders were mapped out, the most important of which were:

- Prejudice
- Excessive workload
- Succession
- Share the knowledge with their communities

Based on this analysis, the design of the pilot project was started, guided by the intersection of women's needs and existing initiatives aimed at empowering them. It was noted that there are a much greater number of programs offering technical support to associations and cooperatives than programs focused on enhancing women's socio-emotional skills,

confidence, and leadership. A strategy of intervention was chosen based on this market gap, aiming to strengthen female leadership.

2.2.4. Other insights from the interviews

The interview approach was designed not only to gather objective information but also to create a space for women to openly discuss and reflect on various topics that may not be addressed in their day-to-day lives. This process of active listening resulted in a rich and unexpected source of qualitative insights that played a significant role in shaping the program's methodology.

Learning process and the didactic approach

Continuity and follow-up

Many women mentioned that they have taken valuable courses and training programs, but without close monitoring to ensure the **practical application of the knowledge** gained. As a result, the content tends to get “lost” in their daily lives.



FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN

The group of women interviewed has had extensive exposure to various training programs and courses. Moreover, their individual journeys have provided them with valuable insights and knowledge. A common and strongly expressed desire among them was the need for content tailored specifically **FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN**.



Dissemination

All the women interviewed emphasized the importance of sharing knowledge. Within their communities and the groups they lead there are many women who can benefit from the knowledge they have acquired through structured and practical activities. They expressed the need to **share and apply this knowledge** effectively.



Create together

The interviewees stressed the importance of involving traditional communities in the **content creation** process, as it allows for a better understanding of their rights and a stronger sense of belonging. The interviews themselves were seen as valuable moments by the women, as they felt heard and had the opportunity to reflect on topics that had never crossed their minds before. Giving them a voice and listening to their input right from the start positioned the initiative in a unique way. Many of the women expressed a sense of inclusion from the initial contact, appreciating being consulted for the development of such a program and the careful consideration given to their perspectives before implementing any training activities.



Getting out of the comfort zone

The pivotal moments in their leadership journey, as shared by the majority of the interviewees, were experiences that pushed them beyond their comfort zones. Examples include exporting their products, traveling, visiting major urban centers, and taking on unforeseen responsibilities, among others. These moments presented challenges in their lives, but they were also incredibly enriching and transformative in their path towards becoming leaders. It became evident that such opportunities are scarce in their respective realities.

Insecurity and exposure

The majority of the interviewees unanimously expressed the need to feel more **confident**, especially in public speaking and negotiation. However, as previously discussed, it became evident that what they lack is not just the technical knowledge of these skills, but rather opportunities to get exposure and practice the skills in a safe and structured manner, with guidance and support, in order to overcome their insecurities.



Practical content

The leaders reinforced the need for content that is practical and applicable to daily life.



Support from men

Men's knowledge of gender issues and their support are important factors in reducing discrimination.

Other relevant lessons learned for the development of the program are:

- The context of the interviewed women is very diverse. Access to the internet, formal education, digitalization, knowledge, communities, and different means of communication varies greatly among them. For instance, the distance to an airport can range from less than an hour to a two-day journey.
- The women exhibited different leadership profiles, at different degrees of maturity.
- The life stories of these women are filled with personal, professional, and territorial challenges. Accessing and staying in formal education are initial and foundational challenges in their lives.
- A common milestone in the lives of the interviewees is their participation in social, labor, and/or religious movements.
- Their lives are marked by inspiring individuals (relatives, teachers, professionals). Their accounts relate their leadership roles to the examples they have received from these individuals.
- The educational and professional opportunities and experiences during their youth made a significant difference in their stories.



“ I leave behind insecurity and uncertainty. So now, if they come after me, I will kick back. ”

2.3. Program design

2.3.1 About the selected leaders

The pilot of the **She Leads** program, for methodological and budgetary reasons, could only be undertaken with 20 women. So, 20 of the 57 female leaders who had been interviewed were selected.

The selection criteria considered the leaders' previous or current involvement in P4F-supported projects, their availability to attend an in-person immersion workshop in April 2023, and the diversity of the group, particularly in

terms of race, biomes, productive chains, and socioeconomic conditions. Here are the key details about the selected leaders.

Socioeconomic profile and territorial location

The selected women are divided across Brazil as shown in the following image.

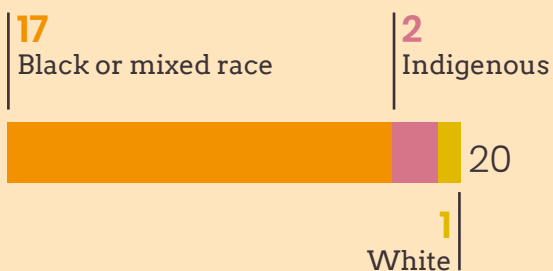
Legend:

- Amazonia
- Caatinga
- Cerrado
- Pampa
- Pantanal
- Atlantic Forest

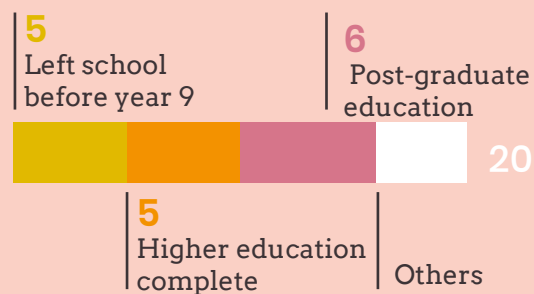
Leaders and Organizations:

- 1: Ana Paula Souza dos Santos - **Areua**
- 2: Denise Cardoso dos Santos - **Central da Caatinga**
- 3: Elizangela Conceição Cavalcante - **ILC. CAVALCANTE e outras**
- 4: Elizeth Marques de Souza - **AMA**
- 5: Fernanda Pires de Araújo - **ARTE PEIXE**
- 6: Joelma Marcelino dos Santos - **Mulheres do GAU**
- 7: Jucimaria Santos da Silva (Mara) - **COOPAF e outros**
- 8: Luzirene Coelho Lustosa - **COOPAVAM**
- 9: Maria Aparecida Ribeiro de Sousa - **Central do Cerrado**
- 10: Maria Cristina da Silva - **COOBEC**
- 11: Maria do Socorro Teixeira Lima - **MIQCB e outras**
- 12: Rosicley Santos Pereira - **COOPCAU**
- 13: Maria Renilda Santana da Costa (Branca) - **Mulher Flor**
- 14: Ocicleia de Oliveira Mendonça - **Teçume da Amazônia**
- 15: Rosely Alves Dias - **CACUXI**
- 16: Rosicley Santos Pereira - **COOPCAU**
- 17: Sandra Barros Maia - **ASPACS**
- 18: Silvia Cecília Gouveia da Silva - **Quilombolas de São Lourenço**
- 19: Tania Aldenaide Brandão Shanenawa - **Associação Yushãtʃu**
- 20: Valdirene dos Santos Oliveira - **COOPSERTÃO**

👤 Race and color



📖 Education



To ensure a minimum socioeconomic diversity, 25% of the selected women had not completed primary education. In the initial sample, less than 10% of the leaders had not completed this stage of education.

💰 Sources of income

- 1** Has their leadership activity as their main source of income.
- 4** Have income that comes from the productive activities of the organization they lead.
- 5** Have governmental cash transfer programs or retirement as their main source of income.
- 10** Have another activity to provide their main source of income.
- 20 All women have more than one source of income.**

This alarming data reveals that the majority of associations and cooperatives do not provide financial compensation for leadership positions. The need to have several jobs and activities to secure their income is detrimental to both the women, who burden themselves with an excessive workload, as much as the organizations that cannot count on their leaders' dedication to the role.

⊗ Oppression

- 19** Have ever suffered some kind of oppression or prejudice.
- 20**
- Most mentioned: **gender and race.**



The life of a leader and the business

Main production chains of the organizations



The value chains focused mainly on a single product are Brazil nut collection, artisanal products made from natural fibers, fish, and cocoa. The case of Brazil nuts and cocoa can be explained by the market interest in these products, which are often exported. On the other hand, the fishing value chain requires the organization to specialize and comply with food safety regulations.

* In this survey, extractivism includes activities such as collecting and processing nuts, oils and resins, seeds, and fibers, as well as sustainable timber management.

** Agriculture includes various food types and the processing of products.

*** Part of producing artisanal products is linked to extractivism (seed and fiber bio-jewelry, for example).



 **Where they are leaders**

Women play a leadership role in different spaces, not only in the community business.

16 Are leaders in their communities.




10 Are leaders in their families.




10 Participate in various councils (guardianship and environmental councils, among others).



 **Succession**

10 have difficulty with their succession as a leader or do not have this issue planned.



 **Feeling overloaded**

14 Feel overloaded.



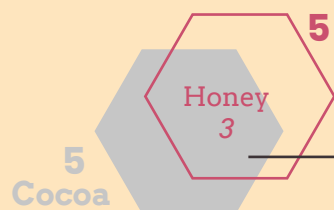
Digging deeper into four key aspects - productive activities, leadership context, workload, and succession - further underscored the conclusion about the wide range of businesses these women are engaged in. It also confirmed the hypothesis that leadership roles are not confined solely to professional domains but extend to various other spheres of life.

One of the impacts of this situation is the overwhelming workload, which was mentioned by more than half of the leaders, as well as the difficulty in securing or preparing a successor.



Supply chain analysis

How to read these charts

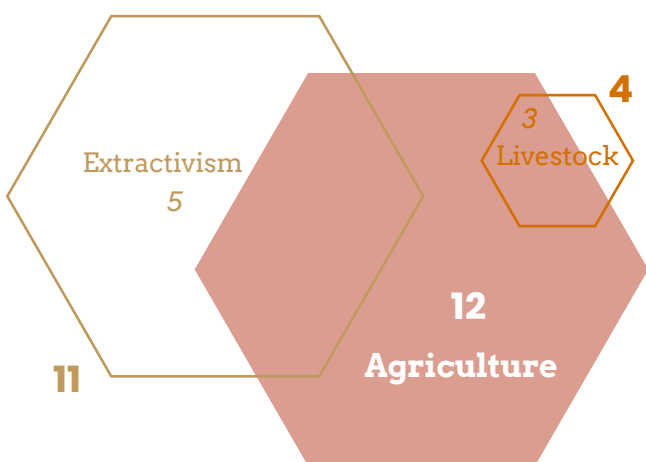


The number displayed outside the hexagon indicates the frequency with which the value chain was mentioned by the participants. The size of the hexagons reflects this frequency and, therefore, the significance of the activity within the organizations they are associated with.

The number in italics inside the hexagon shows how many times other value chains were mentioned alongside that category.

The following analysis, based on the top five value chains mentioned by the leaders (agriculture, extractivism, artisanal products, honey, and cocoa), reveals a common feature in family farming: optimizing income generation by harnessing the synergy between different socio-biodiversity value chains.

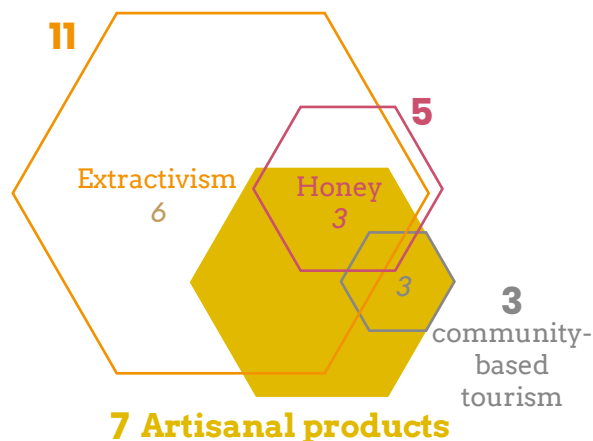
Extractivism often appears in conjunction with various agricultural activities, which, in turn, are also frequently combined with rearing livestock.



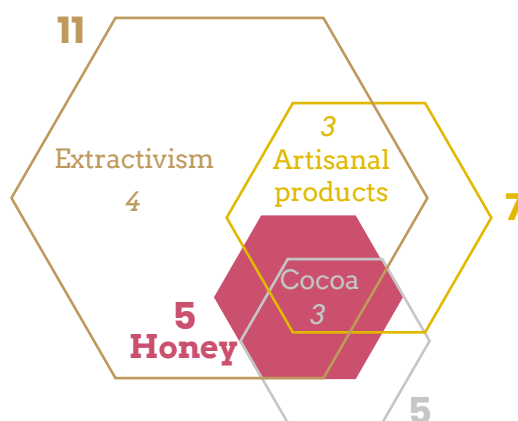
There is also a clear synergy between the artisanal products and extractive chains, as raw materials for crafts are usually derived from natural seeds and fibers.

The production of honey often works well with extractive activities in natural areas. Additionally, community tourism is an interesting complement

to artisanal products and extractive products, combining the appeal of nature with the sale of artisanal items.



Cocoa is interconnected with various other activities such as artisanal products, extractive activities, and honey production.

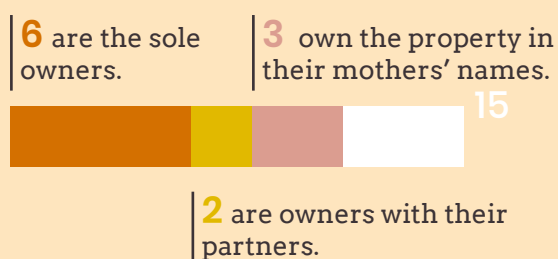


Women and their territories

Land ownership

Out of the 15 women, to whom land tenure applies*, 11 own their land:

73,4% own their land. Their ownership status can be categorized as follows:



* Women living in Indigenous territories (where land ownership does not apply), as well as in urban areas were not included in this analysis.

- On average in Brazil **12,7%** of women own land.

This result is **drastically different from the Brazilian average**, which reinforces the idea that women in leadership stand out from several national statistics. In this survey, it is not possible to confirm what came first: whether it is the fact they have a different reality from the average woman that encouraged them to become leaders, or the fact that they became leaders that led them to build a different reality. Most likely, a mix of the two possibilities.

CAF - National Register of Family Farming

Out of the 20 women, **11** of them have families with CAF.**



Only one is not registered.

** CAF replaces DAP - Declaração de Aptidão ao Pronaf, as of November 2022.

The CAF (Cadastro Nacional de Agricultura Familiar) is the main means of access to public policies aimed at Family Farming (FA). When women are registered, they can **access credit and participate on their own in various programs.**

Land conflict

15 of the 20 leaders said there was some land conflict in their territories. The most cited were:



In number of citations.

Data from the Pastoral Land Ministry point out that, in 2022, deaths from conflicts in the countryside rose

34,2% over the previous year.

This data reveals that the majority of the leaders, besides being **responsible for their organizations and acquiring multiple jobs to secure their income, also have to face conflict**. The consequences of this situation go far beyond emotional and work overload, placing them in situations of significant insecurity and even jeopardizing their safety. In other words, **despite owning the land, they confront considerable levels of uncertainty and risk**.



2.3.2. Main insights and design of the approach

The benchmarking and the listening process yielded valuable insights that provided a strong foundation for the design of the Program for Female Socio-biodiversity Leadership.

Socio-emotional approach versus technical training

The needs expressed by the leaders indicate that their concerns can be divided into two groups: technical skills and soft skills.

Even though there was an explicit demand for technical training and tools, the interviews revealed the importance of addressing socio-emotional issues before focusing on instrumental training. It was recognized that neglecting the socio-emotional aspect could lead to a risk of undermining technical content due to factors such as insecurity and lack of motivation.

Based on this insight, it was decided to prioritize the socio-emotional aspects, which would be addressed in a safe space during an in-person meeting. The more technical topics would be covered in a condensed manner during the workshop, focusing on the core content and concepts. These would then be further explored and reinforced in subsequent remote sessions, allowing for deeper understanding and application.

Room for exposure

Recognizing the need to help them gain more confidence and acknowledging that opportunities for exposure are rare for women in socio-biodiversity, several activities and challenging moments related to public speaking and self-confidence were incorporated. However, it was important to create a safe and supportive environment, accompanied by technical guidance, to ensure their success.

Self-awareness

One of the secrets of successful entrepreneurs and leaders is not knowing how to do everything but rather recognizing their strengths and weaknesses. Autonomy is achieved through self-awareness and a structured effort to drive personal development, leveraging strengths, and seeking support to address weaknesses. To support this process, the program includes an Individual Development Plan (IDP).



Immersion

Taking into consideration the decision to prioritize socio-emotional aspects, it was determined that the ideal format for the in-person workshop would be an immersive experience. This format would ensure a higher level of focus and attention from the participants, as well as provide dedicated spaces and opportunities for continuous exchange of experiences, particularly among themselves. Additionally, supplementary learning activities would be included to enhance the development process.



By women, for women

To value the experience and vast knowledge of the leaders themselves, as well as the weight of the authenticity of their voices and common background, it was decided that the strategy of the learning approach, as well as the facilitation of the presentations, would maximize the sharing of experiences among the participants. Even in more technical topics, where a greater transfer of knowledge and practical tools were expected, it was determined that after the initial presentations of concepts, diverse practical examples from the group would be actively sought. This approach not only empowers and validates the participants, but also allows others to relate to and resonate with the practical examples shared.

Program commitment versus strengthening the ability to build partnerships

To meet the technical demands of the participants, there are several organizations and institutions that offer excellent resources, many of which are accessible nationwide or are available remotely. Therefore, rather than including specific content on these topics in the program, the focus shifted towards strengthening the women's ability to foster partnerships and secure collaborations. These skills would not only be valuable in the program but also applicable in various other situations, further empowering the leaders' autonomy.



Oppression, challenges and difficulties

Virtually all the women shared stories of challenges, hardships, and difficulties that have had a profound impact on their lives. To pave the way for a positive and constructive vision of the future, it was essential not to overlook these difficult moments. The decision was made to address them in a safe and nurturing environment, allowing the participants to make peace with themselves, grow stronger, and take pride in the women they have become. By acknowledging and embracing their past experiences, the program aims to empower the participants and foster a sense of self-empowerment and resilience.



Inspiring women

The leaders' pasts are full of examples of other women or individuals who have had a significant impact on them, often including their mothers, grandmothers, and other community leaders. Understanding the power of these role models, an additional activity was incorporated where they could share stories and information about these inspiring women.



Multiplication

As leaders, these women not only manage the present but also shape, inspire, and think about future generations. This creates a strong interest in sharing the knowledge and experiences they have gained with their collaborators and communities. To address this forward-looking perspective, the program includes a Multiplication Plan.

2.3.3. Strategic objectives of the program

From the insights and concepts, the strategic goals of the program were defined:

- Safer and more confident women.
- Women more aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Women motivated to grow personally and professionally.

It was decided that the program would build upon this strengthened socio-emotional foundation to develop the more technical and practical skills. To accomplish this, the participants would be equipped with tools, content, and resources to address the practical aspects of their individual and organizational development. With this in mind, the program includes:

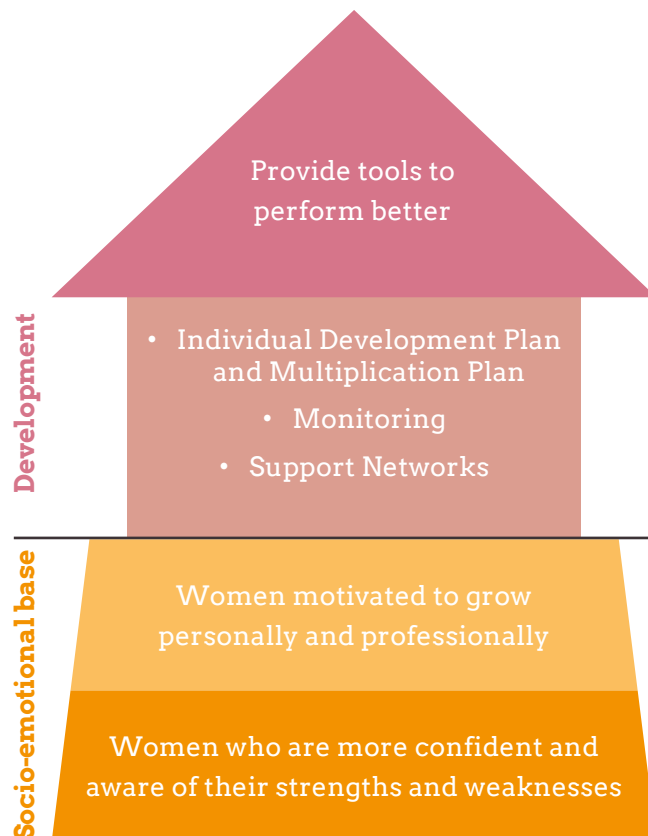
- An Individual Development Plan (PDP) and the monitoring of its implementation.
- A Multiplication Plan and the monitoring of its implementation.
- Practical planning and management tools and content and the monitoring of their implementation.
- Verified links to third-party materials.
- A leadership and support network.
- Coordination of partnerships and networking for technical support.

2.3.4. The logic behind the approach

To achieve the defined objectives, the approach was organized in two blocks:

- The **socio-emotional base**, which is the foundation on which knowledge will be built.
- The **development** of the skills that will effectively enable leaders to perform more and better.

Using a fitting analogy, the program was built like a well-designed house, with a strong foundation - the strengthened socio-emotional base. This foundation serves as the support for the entire construction - the practical development phase. While the house itself may be the most visible part to those looking from the outside, it is the solid foundation that ensures the stability and success of what sits above - the entire project.

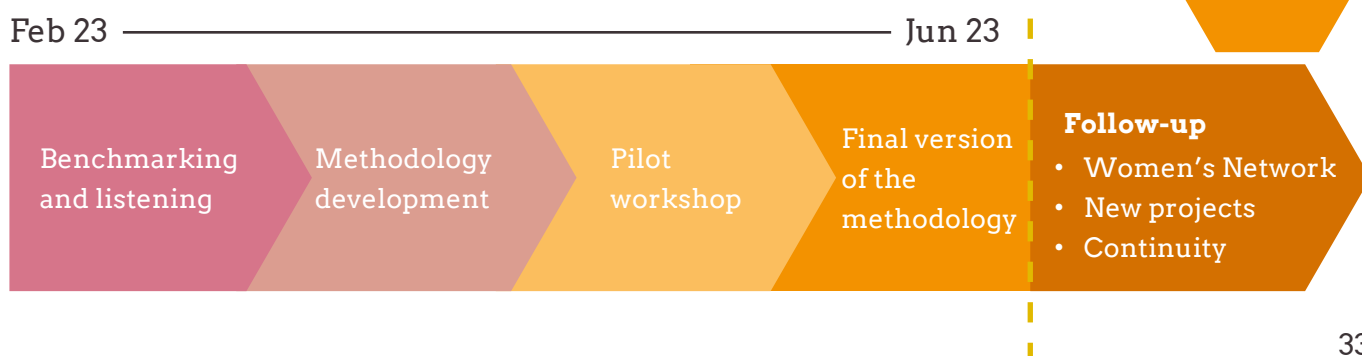


Duration and distribution of content and activities

The benchmarking study revealed that leadership programs often span several months, and in some cases, over a year, with a combination of in-person and remote activities. For audiences connected to rural and agroforestry sectors, greater emphasis is placed on in-person activities.

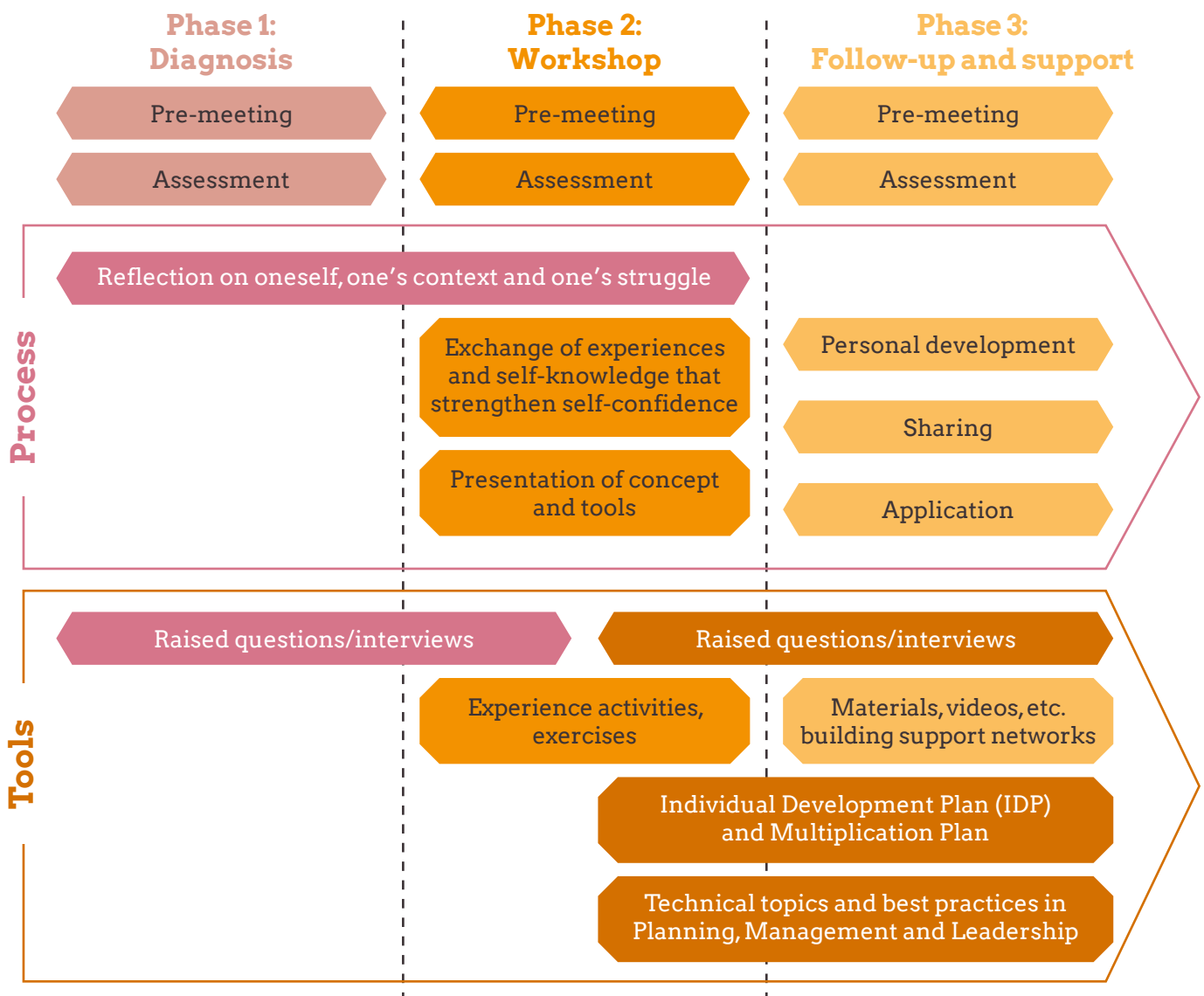
Given the constraints of time and resources, the She Leads pilot program had to prioritize the initial in-person activities while carrying out the remaining activities remotely. The program schedule was organized accordingly, as shown in the following chart.

Schedule



Intervention proposal

From these initial definitions, the program was divided into three main phases: Assessment, Workshop, and Follow-up and Support, as shown in the image below:



The main challenge was to find the right balance between the socio-emotional and technical topics to be covered during the in-person meeting, a valuable opportunity for personal interaction, direct exchange of experiences, and group activities. We also needed to determine how to address the remaining content during the remote follow-up phase.

Socio-emotional factors

Based on the insights provided in the previous chapters, it was decided to prioritize the following topics related to socio-emotional factors during the in-person session (workshop):

- Achievements and oppression experienced
- Insecurity versus self-confidence
- Self-awareness
- Positive self-image

Technical topics

Due to time constraints, it was not possible to delve into all the technical topics during the in-person session, for example, doing exercises to reinforce what had been learned. However, it was deemed that several of the topics deserved a differentiated approach that would help demystify and simplify concepts and practices, reducing resistance and making their application easier in day-to-day life. As a result, the decision was made to focus on essential concepts and practical tips, which would be conveyed through interactive exercises and activities that encourage reflection. Following the principle of “by women, for women,” the language used aimed to be clear and relatable, drawing upon the participants’ own examples and experiences whenever possible.

It was determined that these topics would be revisited, delved into further, and applied to practical cases within the organizations during the remote group and individual sessions planned for the follow-up and support phase. The advantage of this approach is that leaders could invite their teams to join these sessions, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge. Any difficulties in accessing the sessions live could be overcome by recording them and then making them available online.

- Inspiration (getting inspired and inspiring others)
- Public speaking
- Emotional intelligence

Several of these issues are interconnected and interdependent. The rationale for their application is detailed in the next chapter.

The following technical topics, linked to the section on **Planning, Management and Leadership**, were included in the program:

- Vision of the future
- Systemic view
- Strategic versus operational planning
- Market access strategy
- Strategic management
- Communication strategy - storytelling
- Project development and fundraising
- Leadership style and techniques
- Conflict management and negotiation
- Management and engagement of people and team building
- Feedback
- Delegating tasks (solution to work overload)
- Creating partnerships
- Networking
- Succession
- Multiplying knowledge



Topics not directly included in the program

Among the topics that should be addressed in the program, we identified those which are already catered for by reputable entities offering free or affordable resources for the participants:

- Financial management
- Communication and social media
- Management of cooperatives and associations

With this in mind, it was decided that these topics would be addressed indirectly or at a later stage, in three ways:

- > **Indirectly:** The program would include a module dedicated to strengthening **partnership building**, preparing participants to seek specific technical support from specialized institutions and organizations, as well as securing the necessary resources for that purpose. This would also be a way to empower the leaders and their organizations in the long run.
- > **Helping identify potential partners and/or publicly available resources:** A curation of materials, solutions, videos, tools, institutions, and other useful information organized by topic will be developed and made available. This can be achieved through the use of a shared drive or other means of dissemination.
- > **Encouraging participants themselves to share their experiences with partners and adopted solutions:** a network of leaders will be created to promote mutual support and collective.



“ I thought, I cried. I got emotional, my past strengthened me. ”

3. The Workshop

3.1. The workshop proposition

The **She Leads** program was designed as a three-day immersive workshop, **held in Brasília from April 26th to 28th, 2023**. This format was chosen to ensure that the participants could fully immerse themselves in the program, fostering close interaction, personal and professional exchanges, and allowing for additional activities beyond the main sessions.

3 days of immersion

Approximately **24 hours** of activities

Greater emphasis on **eight behavioral subjects**

Moments of **interaction and connection**



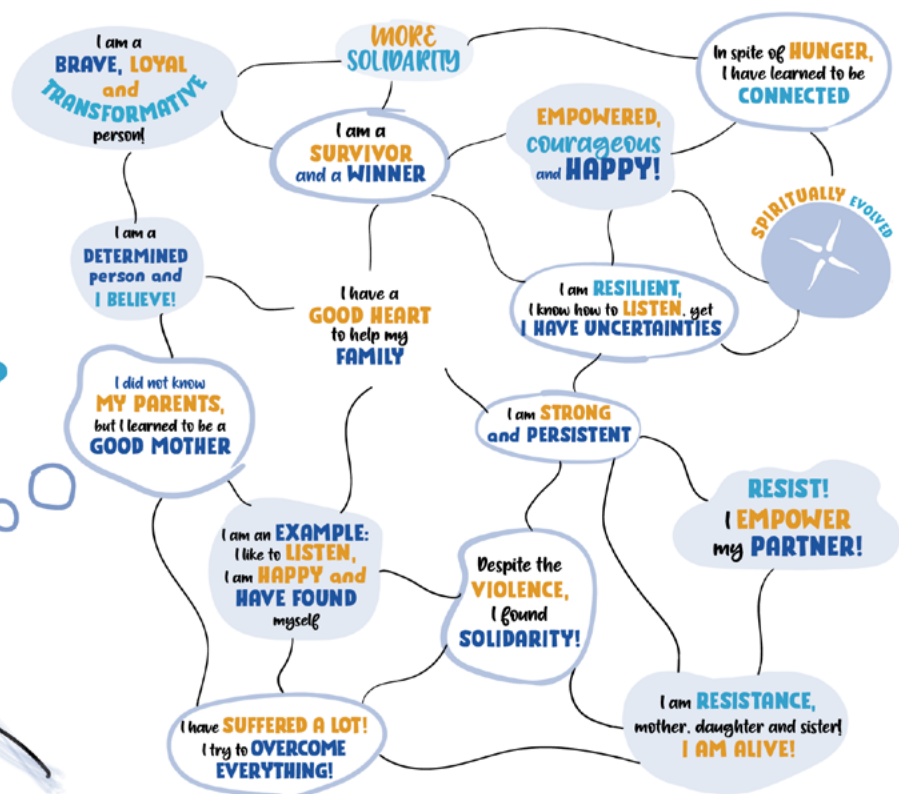
The workshop was designed to be the pinnacle of the pilot project, enabling the participants to not only acquire new knowledge but also establish strong relationships within a community of female leaders. This community will provide support and encouragement as they navigate their personal and organizational development challenges.

Based on the insights from the interviews, a concept was developed to guide the participants through a

journey of self-discovery and self-development, encompassing their past, present, and future.

- The **pasts** of these leaders needed to be remembered, touched upon, and worked through so they can remain connected to who they are and what they have gone through in a positive and comfortable way. However challenging they may have been, their pasts can serve as a catalyst rather than a weakness.

**WHO AM I,
REGARDLESS
of my PAST?**



**WHO AM I,
THANKS to my
PAST?**



- The **present** was the main focus for most of the time, aiming to help them reflect on who they have become, recognize and embrace their strengths and weaknesses, develop the skills they need, and assess the current reality of their organizations.

- The **future** is approached through tools specifically designed for the **She Leads** program, with a vision of continuity and reducing the burden placed on the leaders.

Tools developed

In addition to building a narrative and choosing the topics for the workshop, several tools were used to support the process. Two of these tools were developed by the program team, with the aim of consolidating content from various subtopics and modules, and serving as a practical resource for when the participants return to their communities:

- Individual Development Plan - IDP
- Multiplication Plan
- Leadership Wheel
- The Toolkit

Individual Development Plan

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) served as a key tool during the in-person workshop. It provided a structured framework to identify areas for growth, whether that meant acquiring new skills or transforming existing habits. The IDP prompted the participants to engage in guided reflection and respond to the following key questions:

- **What do I want to improve?**
Establishing points for improvement and corresponding goals, throughout the workshop.
- **How will this help me?**
Reflecting on the need for change, which serves as justification and motivation.

- **What am I going to do to be able to grow?**
Establishing practical actions for improvement. The more practical and specific, the better.
- **Who can I count on?**
Using the already established network or seeking new partnerships.
- **How will I know if I have succeeded in developing?**
Defining indicators for “proof” of improvement, also focusing on practical points and specific issues.
- **How will I celebrate this achievement?**
Reinforcing the importance of celebration.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP) ACTION PLAN

Priority
1 - short term
2 - medium term
3 - long term

What do I want to develop?	How will this help me?	What will I do to develop?	Who can I count on?	How will I know if I have succeeded?	How will I celebrate this achievement?
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Notes:

This image shows the IDP in a summarized format, listing the main points to be worked on.

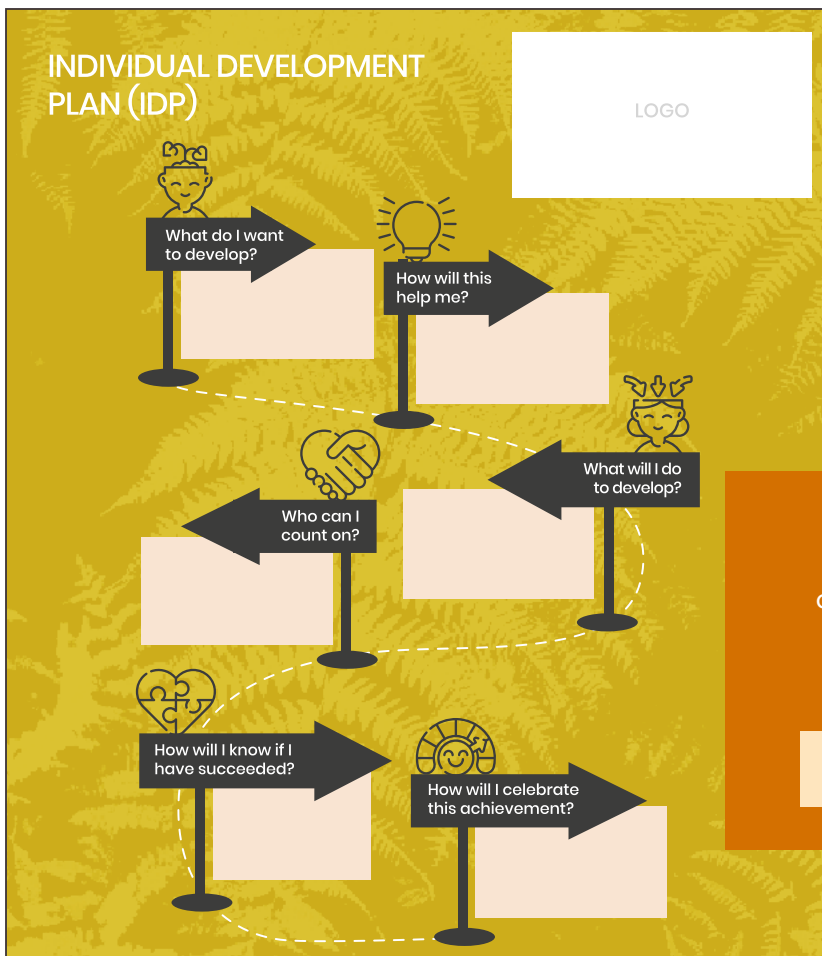
[Download tool](#)

SHE LEADS Sociobiodiversity Women's Leadership Program
Coordinated by: SCHNEIDER international business consultants
In partnership with: UK Government Forests

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Participants completing their IDPs.



For each area of growth, participants complete an action plan. The journey format makes the process more fun.

[Download tool](#)

One More! Multiplication Plan

The creation of this tool was not only driven by the fact that the coordination and funding teams attribute great importance to the continuity of activities, but because this demand was expressed by the women themselves during the interviews. The tool consists of a series of guiding questions, which are as follows:

- **What is your superpower?**

A playful way to instigate reflection on personal qualities and encourage self-awareness and the ability to recognize one's own strengths. These questions were worked on throughout the workshop.

- **What can or should I delegate?**

This question is connected to an activity in the face-to-face meeting, in which the leaders identify tasks they don't like and/or don't do that could be delegated.

- **How does this quality help me to inspire or lead?**

Reflection on how this quality could help them delegate tasks, either through the ability to explain

what should be done or the ability to convince people.

- **Is the right person in the right place?**

Also connected to a workshop activity, this question prompts thinking about who might take on a certain activity or role. They could think either of people who are already part of the organization or of the profile of good fit.

After this initial reflection, the following questions prepared the women to execute their plan:

- **What do they need?**

Putting yourself in the shoes of the person taking on a new position or activity, what would you need to offer them? Training, resources, support?

- **How can I and others fulfill that need?**

Aiming to find solutions rather than problems, this question encourages exploring what is already available, and what current or new partners might need.

- **When will I put this into practice?**

Setting deadlines.




Participants completing the Multiplication Plan.

LOGO


One more!
MULTIPLICATION PLAN

Download tool

What is my superpower?	What can or should I delegate?	How does this quality help me to inspire or lead?	Is the right person in the right place?
What does this person need in order to do this activity or fulfill this role?			
What does this person need?	How can I and others fulfill that need?	When will I put this into practice?	





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International business consultants

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Leadership Wheel



Participants completing the Leadership Wheel.

Leadership Wheel


STRATEGY
VISION FOR THE FUTURE, CREATIVITY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, TEAMWORK



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT
EMPATHY, RESOURCEFULNESS, INSPIRATION

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT
ACCEPT RISK, ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION, ORGANIZATION & PLANNING

VALUES
HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY, FLEXIBILITY, HOLISTIC, CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT, DEVELOPMENT

[Download tool](#)

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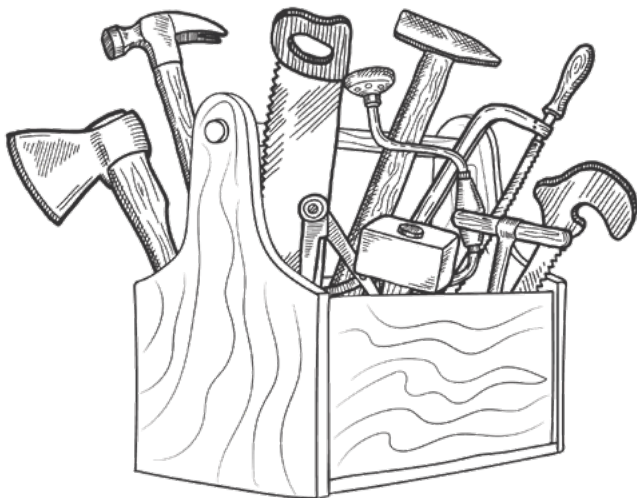
This is one of the tools developed to support self-awareness activities, serving as input for tools such as the IDP and the Multiplication Plan. Inspired by the “Wheel of Life,” the **She Leads Leadership Wheel** consists of 16 axes divided into four topics.

- Strategy
- People management
- Organizational management
- Values

Identifying and reflecting on strengths and weaknesses allows the leaders to gain a better understanding of themselves, purposefully leverage their strengths, and find personal development in areas they identify as needs.

The toolkit

While the emphasis throughout the workshop was on socio-emotional activities, a helpful set of practical tools has been compiled to support the leaders and their teams to put things into practice. During the in-person event, a physical toolkit was given out, containing large printed cards to represent each tool. Printed materials include a symbol to highlight the items from the toolkit provided throughout the program, including those to be used in subsequent sessions.



Toolkit Items*

- Narrative about oneself
- IDP- Individual Development Plan
- Leadership Wheel
- The Three States of Being
- One More! Multiplication Plan
- Building a Narrative (storytelling)
- Feedback and Negotiation
- Delegate
- Inspire and Motivate
- Teamwork
- Types of Leadership
- Systemic View
- Strategic versus Operational Planning
- Strategic Management
- Networking and Connecting
- Collective Struggles and Public Policies
- Tips for Dealing with Difficult Situations
- More Tips for Public Presentation
- Vision of the Future

**New items will be included throughout the monitoring and support phase, by collecting additional materials and carrying out online deep-dive sessions, as explained earlier.*

“ I will do my best to show that our limitations are not weaknesses, but possibilities to ask for help when needed. ”



Additional activities

Besides the scheduled activities, the following additional activities were prepared to complement the workshop:

Panel of inspiring women

Before the in-person sessions, the participants were asked about the women who inspire them, both in their personal lives and in the public sphere. Based on this collection, a mural with photos and mini-biographies of these inspiring women was prepared for the in-person gathering. Each day, new names were added to the mural. On the first day, the mural was dedicated to the women who inspire them on an emotional and personal level, and on the second day, to public figures. On the third and final day of the workshop, images of themselves as leaders were added to the mural, with spaces for their own stories and contributions.



Socio-biodiversity dinner

To celebrate the rich biodiversity of Brazil, a dinner was organized with a variety of ingredients mainly from the Cerrado biome. Besides being a moment to relax and enjoy, it was an opportunity for the participants to try new dishes made with ingredients from different biomes, discovering new flavors from different regions.



The leaders at the socio-biodiversity dinner.

Final presentation to the group and the panel

To further help confidence building and public speaking skills, a presentation session was included in the in-person program. During the session, the leaders had the opportunity to present their work to a panel consisting of two members from the program's team and a rotating participant. Feedback was provided immediately after each presentation.





Leaders presenting to the panel.

Visit to Brasília

As mentioned earlier, one of the key learnings from the interviews was the importance of travel in the lives of these leaders. As an additional activity, a guided tour of Brasília, the capital of Brazil, was organized on Thursday afternoon. This tour not only provided an opportunity for sightseeing but also sparked meaningful discussions on public policies for traditional communities, racism, and political engagement.



The group, consisting of the leaders and the execution team, gathered in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Brasília (left) and the Ministries of Environment and Climate Change, and Culture (right).

Audiovisual products

During the in-person gathering, a video and photographer crew was present to provide two valuable assets to the participating leaders: professional portfolio photographs for each of them, and individual videos of them sharing their leadership stories.

The professional photos can be used by the women in their social network profiles, to promote

the organizations they are part of in addition to boosting their self-esteem.

The purpose of the videos was to record each one of them talking before the face-to-face meeting as well as at the end of it. Because speaking in public or in front of a camera was seen by many leaders as a difficulty, or even as a fear, the intention was to register their progress over such a short but enriching period of time.



Some of the professional photos given to the leaders.

3.2. The results of the workshop

The two main objectives established during the design of the **She Leads** program were:

- Women are confident and aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Women are motivated to grow personally and professionally.

To evaluate whether the objectives were met, two assessments were used, at two points in time:

- **Quantitative evaluation:** through self-assessment with 11 questions, it aimed to capture changes in self-perception before and after the in-person meeting.
- **Qualitative evaluation:** in addition to including boxes for comments in each of the 11 self-assessment questions, at the end of the workshop, the women answered two open-ended questions that sought to capture general perceptions about what they had learned during the workshop.



ANA PAULA PATAXÓ



DENISE CARDOSO DOS SANTOS



ELIZÂNGELA CONCEIÇÃO CAVALCANTE



ELIZETH MARQUES DE SOUZA



FERNANDA PIRES DE ARAÚJO



JOELMA MARCELINO DOS SANTOS



JUCIMARIA SANTOS DA SILVA (MARA)



LUZIRENE COELHO LUSTOSA



MARIA APARECIDA RIBEIRO DE SOUSA



MARIA CRISTINA DA SILVA



MARIA ELENA ARAÚJO BISPO



**MARIA RENILDA SANTANA DA COSTA
(Branca)**



MARIA DO SOCORRO TEIXEIRA LIMA



OCICLEIA DE OLIVEIRA MENDONÇA



ROSELY ALVES DIAS



ROSICLEY SANTOS PEREIRA



SANDRA BARROS



SILVIA CECÍLIA GOUVEIA DA SILVA



TANIA ALDENAIDE BRANDÃO SHANENAWA




VALDIRENE DOS SANTOS OLIVEIRA

Growth in self-awareness before and after the in-person workshop

The first assessment to assess the success of the objectives is the comparison between two self-evaluations: the first one conducted on the first day of the in-person gathering before the start of activities, and the second conducted one week after the leaders returned to their communities. In both evaluations, the women answered 11 questions, rating themselves on a scale from 1 to 10 in terms of the following criteria:

- Confidence as a leader.
- Ability to identify one's own strengths and weaknesses.
- Motivation for personal and professional development.
- Readiness for self-development.
- Availability of tools needed for development.
- Rating as a leader.
- Ability to inspire and engage people.
- Ability to share knowledge and develop successors.

 When comparing the results between the first and second evaluation, **the average self-awareness score increased in all aspects of the evaluation.** After the meeting, of the 20 participants:

13 felt more motivated in terms of their personal and professional development.




16 believed they had more tools for their personal development.



10 felt more able to prepare a successor.



 The scores of some women were lowered in the second evaluation compared to the first. For example:

6 lowered their score regarding the availability of the tools necessary for their professional development.



6 felt less able to engage and inspire people.



6 felt less able to share their knowledge.



The program's team interprets this seemingly negative evaluation as the result of a deeper understanding which the training offered to its participants, enabling them to become aware of issues or complexities that had not been considered before. For example, the perception regarding the availability of tools for their professional development does not indicate that they have fewer tools after the gathering, but rather that they have become acquainted with new tools.

In addition, it is worth noting that the leaders generally rated themselves quite positively, with the majority of criteria receiving high scores above 7. This demonstrates their maturity as leaders, their previous training and education, and positive self-esteem, despite the insecurities they may have described.

In addition to the scores, in the final evaluation, the women were able to leave comments on each question. Some of them provided a deeper insight into the achieved outcome:



About self-confidence

“ I feel more prepared and confident. I have a broader perspective on how to grow the cooperative and a clearer sense of our mission. ”

“ I've overcome the fear of facing challenges. Today, I feel confident, as challenges are meant to be overcome and learned from. ”

“ I know it won't be easy, but I'm ready to move forward. ”

“ I feel confident knowing that I now have the support of the network and that I'm able to improve my performance as a leader. ”



About awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses

“ I'm feeling more encouraged to face challenges, but I need to improve my communication with my colleagues. I've already taken some initiative, but I know it doesn't happen all at once, it takes time. ”

“ I've even learned about how to communicate, how to initiate a conversation with people. I used to be afraid that people wouldn't give me credit as a leader, but now I believe that I have to trust myself first. ”

“ I think now I can identify my difficulties (...). The hardest part for me was delegating, but I have learned to trust, I'll trust her and work together. ”

“ I recognize some of my strengths well, such as my persistence. By also acknowledging some weaknesses, I've been working to improve my formal communication skills. ”



About motivation

“ I’ve become a strong and empowered woman. I have the support of my organization to grow personally and professionally. I’ve learned to do many things, such as planning and executing small projects, and I take responsibility for everything I do. ”



About multiplying knowledge

“ It was a great surprise for me to discover that I was already inspiring someone when I arrived at the meeting. And as I evaluated my professional journey upon returning, I realized that I’ve been doing this for a long time with my students, being a role model for them. With care, listening, and paying attention, I’ve been able to change the course of many of their lives. I realized that with a little ancestral knowledge, we can change the stories of many people. ”

Reflections gathered in the final evaluation

In the final closing session, still during the meeting, the participants answered two questions aiming to provoke reflection on the immersive experience:

- What have I learned and gained from this experience?
- What will I be leaving behind?

The organized findings of these talks, that were recorded on video, show that the leaders:



Feel more secure and know themselves better

15 stated that they gained more security, resilience, strength and/or confidence in the process.



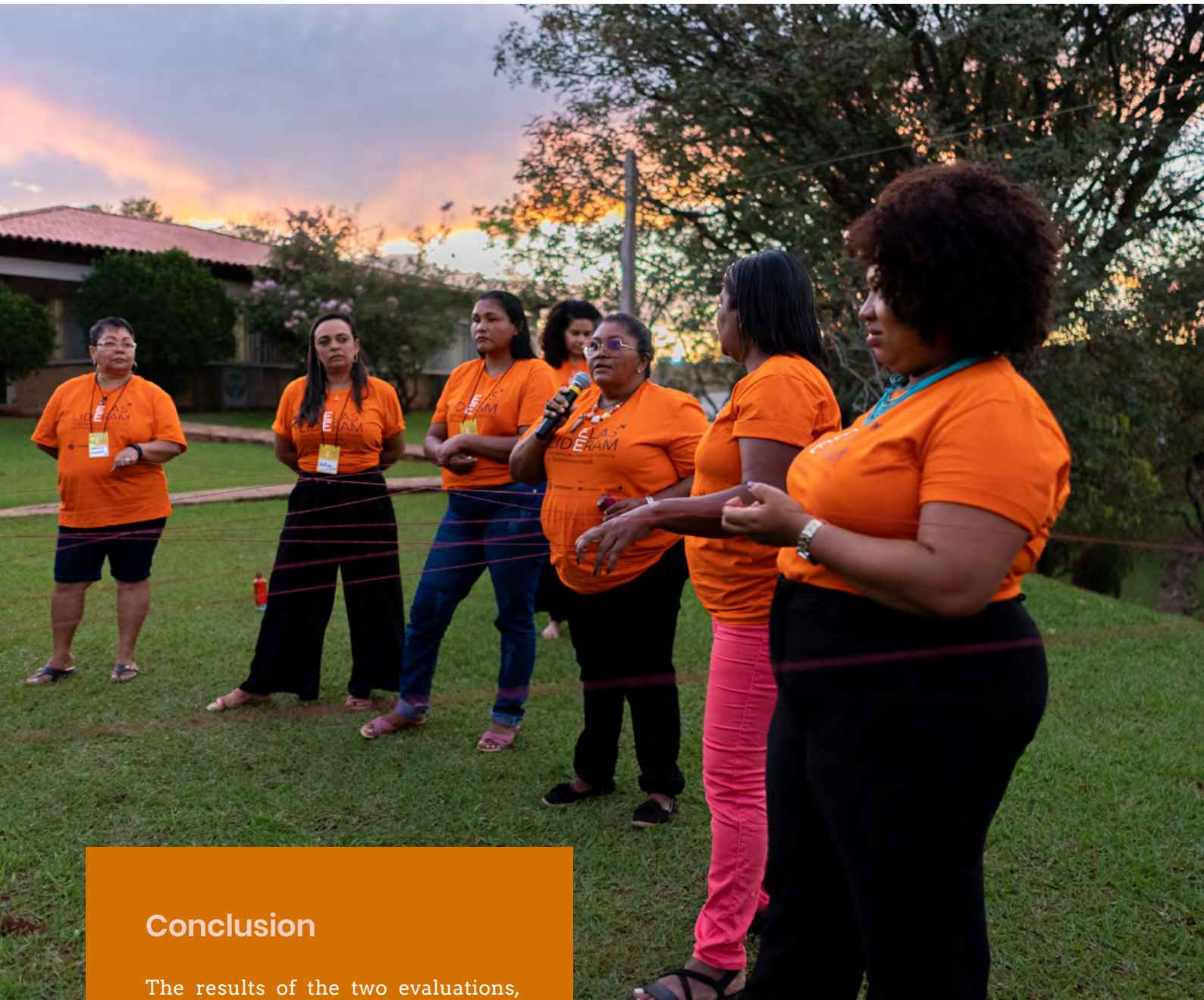
6 stated that they gained more self-knowledge thanks to the workshop



They left their fears behind

16 rated that they got rid of various fears or insecurities, expressed through words such as nervousness, indecision, shyness, uncertainty, anguish, anxiety, negative thoughts.





Conclusion

The results of the two evaluations, both from the quantitative and qualitative perspectives, show that the objectives of the **She Leads** program, cited at the beginning of this section, were largely achieved.

3.3. Lessons learned



◆ The interviews offered the team valuable insights and were highly appreciated by the participating leaders. Therefore, in the end, the team concluded that **She Leads** should be structured into three phases: Assessment/Interviews, In-Person Meeting/Workshop, and Follow-up/Support.



◆ Despite the positive learning experience, the period between the initial interview (assessment) and the meeting (approximately two months) was considered long, which left some of the women without support to manage the results of the suggested reflection.



◆ To ensure diversity, the face-to-face meeting brought together leaders from various regions, some of whom had considerable logistical challenges. These challenges not only affected the travel time for the women but also impacted the project's budget, such as rescheduling flights. For future projects, this challenge should be discussed with the funders in advance in order to find suitable solutions.



◆ The organizing and coordinating teams need to be more diverse, at least in terms of racial representation.



◆ The team was surprised by the level of engagement and intensity displayed by the women during the “Our Struggles” exercise, during which they were encouraged to reflect on challenging moments in their lives with the aim of overcoming and accepting them. The strong reactions from the majority of participants underscored the importance of this exercise and the significance of addressing their past before envisioning their future.

◆ The need for practical support on specific issues related to their organizations arose at various times, both during sessions that addressed such topics and during breaks. The questions were related, for example, to planning, fundraising, and market expansion. As mentioned earlier, these topics will be collectively addressed throughout the follow-up phase to provide the necessary assistance.



“ In my nine years of involvement with cooperativism, this has certainly been the best and most informative course I have ever taken. You can truly help us in our day-to-day activities! ”

4. Follow-up and Support

As presented in section 2.3.4. The Logic Behind the Approach, the follow-up phase should provide continuity and further exploration of the various topics covered during the workshop, as well as other objectives. The main learning goals of this phase include:

- Support the implementation of the IDP and the Multiplication Plan.
- Deepen and consolidate understanding of the technical topics (Toolkit).

- Strengthen and empower contact networks.
- Organize partnerships.
- Build and feed the online library.

In practice, the implementation of this phase will be carried out through online group sessions starting in the second semester of 2023. During this period, the topics covered during the workshop will be revisited using the tools and presentations provided. The focus will be on

applying these concepts to the leaders' projects, organizations, and communities through practical exercises. These group sessions will not only facilitate the continued exchange of experiences but also foster a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for this platform of sharing and mutual empowerment. All sessions will be recorded and made available in the online library for those who may not be able to participate or fully follow them in real-time.

One of the benefits of further exploring technical topics in an online format is the ability to engage other members of organizations and communities. This expands the scope and impact of the learning process and contributes to proliferating knowledge. In addition, individual support can be provided to address specific needs, facilitating real-world application of the course content.

In the case of the Individual Development Plan (IDP), in addition to the group guidance, individual support will be provided. This is because personal matters may require discretion and a personal approach.

A WhatsApp group has also been set up, and the participants of this first project are actively using it to share news that might be of interest to others as well as other relevant information. In addition to this organic communication, the project team regularly updates the group with news and technical content, ensuring continuous reinforcement of what they have learned.

It is important to emphasize that this space is more than just a social media platform; it serves as a practical tool for ongoing education and support.

The online library will include exclusive online storage and a YouTube channel, accessible only to the participants. It will provide a wide range of materials used during the workshop, along with curated content, recommendations, and relevant links for each topic. The selection of materials will consider the group's profiles and their preferred way to engage digitally. While internet access may pose challenges for live online sessions, participants have expressed appreciation for the ability to download content to watch offline, even on mobile devices. This enhances accessibility and flexibility in their learning journey.

The learning outcomes of the follow-up phase also include that, over time, the group will take responsibility for the ongoing expansion and maintenance of these tools and channels for sharing and learning. And that, in the future, other project groups may join them.

The program implementation team intends to continue mentoring the group even after the closure of this project and will still use its own network of contacts to refer potential partners to the group members. The planned time frame for the follow-up phase is until the end of 2023.

“ I really enjoyed all the activities and I'd like to make a request to those who organized and funded this meeting to hold this event again and again. ”

5. Looking Forward

The search for partnerships for expansion

The **She Leads** program was a pilot project aimed at designing and testing a methodology for the development of female leaders in socio-biodiversity. The experience described in this publication has been incredibly valuable, and it has already produced significant results up to this point (the completion of phase 2, which involved the workshop). However, in order to truly foster an economy that preserves forests, this journey cannot end here.

Beyond the follow-up phase, the program must continue. More female leaders should have the opportunity to go through this experience, and

there have already been expressions of interest for future courses. However, more than just forming new groups, one of the goals for this project is to find one or more partner organizations that embrace the cause, supporting its development and regular implementation, even beyond the borders of Brazil. This is the main challenge for moving forward.

The second workshop

Although this publication was developed shortly after the completion of the program, both the benchmarking findings and the lessons learned from the experience indicate that ideally, the methodology should include a second workshop with the same leaders after one year. The learning outcomes would be:

- Encourage the sharing of experiences about the impacts and learning made possible by the program.
- Review and document the progress and any difficulties that the leaders have experienced in implementing the IDP, the Multiplication Plan, or any other learnings from the program. Even if the follow-up makes it possible to carry out and refine these processes, a formal record, with well-defined parameters and metrics, would

contribute to the continuous development of the methodology for future classes.

- Reinforcing and strengthening the personal relationships among the participants of the first project, something relevant especially for this audience profile, which clearly prefers face-to-face meetings to remote meetings. Unfortunately, the available resources, as well as the deadlines of the pilot project, made it impossible to include this in the first group.
- Strengthening technical topics through group work.
- Practice preparing presentations and public speaking skills.

Proposal for the complete training cycle



The complete training cycle consists of two immersive and formative modules. The first module, which corresponds to the one conducted in this pilot program, primarily focuses on socio-emotional skills and leadership tools. The second module, on the other hand, delves into leadership and management topics specific to socio-biodiversity organizations. Its purpose is to provide leaders with the necessary tools to address their daily challenges while strengthening socio-emotional matters.

To encourage the creation of communities, after completing the full training cycle, the women become part of a Socio-biodiversity Women's Network. This ensures that communication and connection between them can continue despite not being physically together. The goal is to provide a space for encouragement, sharing experiences, and monitoring Individual Development and Multiplication Plans.

For the next four years, the development of eight additional complete training cycles is planned, with two cycles per year and 25 new women in each cycle. As the Network grows, annual meetings will be held to discuss agendas,

engage leaders, and strengthen the Network. Additionally, starting from the third year, the goal is to establish a Management Committee that will be responsible for autonomously and independently managing the Network.

With all these efforts, it is expected that, within a span of five years, the **She Leads Network** will comprise 220 female leaders actively engaged in promoting gender equality and safeguarding Brazilian socio-biodiversity.

To achieve this, institutions and backers that prioritize gender equity and recognize the significant impact that women leaders from their organizations and communities can have on the protection and restoration of socio-biodiversity will be invited to join this effort in support of women's leadership.

Interested in supporting SHE LEADS?

Contact us at:



marcela@tecaimpacto.com.br
sandra@tecaimpacto.com.br
johann@schneider-consult.com.br



11-94164-7703 (Marcela)
81-98878-3138 (Johann)



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Referências

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