



Next Gen(D)eration Leadership Collective

Toolkit for Change
Embracing Diverse Constituency



We recognise that the views and beliefs expressed in this toolkit reflect our own experiences.

We recognise and value that people have diverse experiences and are often situated in different contexts than our own.

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This toolkit was developed by the Next Gen(D)eration Leadership Collective (NGLC) to support groups, organizations, and collectives working in nutrition and food systems, with the ultimate goal of driving transformational change.

Contents

<u>Background</u>	1
<u>Objectives of this Toolkit</u>	2
<u>Who is this Toolkit for?</u>	2
<u>Principles that Inform this Toolkit</u>	3
Intersectionality.....	3
Self-Reflexivity.....	3
Collaboration.....	3
<u>Partners in Change</u>	4
COLANSA.....	4
Solidarity Kitchens.....	4
<u>From Principles to Practice: Tools</u>	5
Tool 1 - Social Identity Mapping.....	5
Tool 2 - Non-Violent Communication.....	8
Tool 3 - Storytelling Practices.....	10
<u>References</u>	12

Background

The Next Gen(D)eration Leadership Collective (NGLC) is a collective of women at all career levels, organizations and partners, committed to advancing collective and courageous leadership practices (outlined in [Achieving A Well-Nourished World: A Manifesto for Leadership](#)) through intersectional approaches and equitable partnerships to shift power in food systems. Its vision is just and equitable food systems fueled by collective action towards a well-nourished world.

Eight courageous leadership practices for a well-nourished world

1. Prioritise social purpose



5. Listen with curiosity

2. Persist by learning & adapting



6. Reflect individually and collectively

3. Deviate from the norm



7. Connect with others for collective action

4. Lift others up



8. Speak openly and authentically

To learn more about our leadership practices and our manifesto visit:

<https://nextgenerationleaders.org>

where you can find more resources, connect with professional women working in food systems, and be updated on NGLC events.

Objectives of this Toolkit

This toolkit was developed as part of the NGLC's ongoing work to build and sustain partnerships with organizations, groups and collectives that share our vision of a more sustainable and equitable nutrition and food system.

In this toolkit, the NGLC presents methods and tools for organizations and collectives working in nutrition and food systems to:

- Identify and navigate differences across perspectives, identities, and experiences.
- Strengthen collective support, identity, efficacy and agency towards collective action.
- Identify and challenge power imbalances.

Informed and guided by the NGLC's Eight Courageous Leadership Practices¹, the tools aim to support and strengthen the application of these practices. This resource also highlights real-world examples of how the NGLC and its partners have effectively applied the tools to help achieve their missions.

Who is this Toolkit for?

This toolkit is designed for international, regional, national & grassroots organizations, civil society organizations, groups, initiatives, and collectives working in nutrition and food systems who seek to drive transformative change.



We deviate from the norm and prioritise social purpose by finding a collective voice in taking new approaches that challenge embedded power hierarchies. See other examples of courageous leadership practices being used throughout this guide.

Principles that Inform this Toolkit

This toolkit is grounded in three principles, each implemented through practical tools and specific leadership practices.

1. Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognizes that diversity goes beyond gender, race, or ethnicity to include cultural norms, values, beliefs, and personal principles that shape our identities. When working together, each person brings visible and invisible dimensions of identity. Applying an intersectional lens means becoming aware of our own assumptions and biases, and viewing differences as opportunities for learning, inclusion, and shared growth rather than barriers or sources of power imbalance².

2. Self-Reflexivity

Reflexivity means turning the lens inward, acknowledging how our own identities, positions and experiences shape the way we understand others.

Self reflexivity is a way to:

“...understand ourselves as a part of the process of understanding others” - Ellis & Berger, 2003

3. Collaboration

Collaboration depends on building trust, empathy and transparency within and between organizations.

Partners in Change

The principles of intersectionality, self-reflexivity, and collaboration have been tested and applied in practice by some of our partners introduced below. The NGLC's approach with all partners is grounded in **co-production**, meaning they are actively and equally involved at every stage of the process, from identifying their needs to co-creating the solutions that meet those needs.

COLANSA

COLANSA (*Comunidad de Práctica en Nutrición y Salud para Latinoamérica y el Caribe*), brings together over 30 organizations working across food labeling, industry interference and economic policy. COLANSA partnered with the NGLC to co-create a new cross-cutting hub on gender and intersectionality. A collaborative workshop brought together participants to co-develop the new hub's conceptual framework and governance strategy, rooted in courageous leadership practices.

The COLANSA workshop was attended by another NGLC partner, CONAMURI (*Organización de Mujeres Campesinas e Indígenas*). This provided an opportunity to connect with others for capacity-sharing and knowledge exchange, strengthening organizational and collective networks.



Solidarity Kitchens

As a result of the war on Lebanon in 2024, solidarity initiatives for community kitchens emerged to support over a million displaced people. These initiatives provided essential nutrition while navigating political and social challenges. Through the NGLC's capacity-sharing activities, focal points from different kitchens strengthened their leadership, communication, and conflict resolution skills, identifying best practices for collaboration during crisis.



From Principles to Practice: Tools

The experiences of our partners, along with NGLC's practices and insights, have helped identify the use of three practical tools introduced in this section: Social Identity Mapping, Non-Violent Communication, and Storytelling. These tools can be used individually, but also with your team or across organizations.

Tool 1: Social Identity Mapping (SIM)

Social Identity Mapping (SIM) draws on the work developed by Danielle Jacobson and Nida Mustafa. While originally developed as a tool for individual reflection, SIM can also be applied in organizational or group settings. After each participant creates their own SIM, the group can come together to share and reflect on the patterns that emerge. This collective reflection can lead to important discussions around how our identities shape the way we lead and collaborate. For example: *Do certain identities feel excluded by how meetings are conducted or how decisions are made?*

From these conversations, the group can identify practical adjustments to foster a more inclusive working environment.

Purpose: To understand positionality, power and privilege, and explore how our intersectional identities shape the way we lead, collaborate and make decisions.

When to Use: At the start of a collaboration or team-building, when individuals are coming together to work across differences.

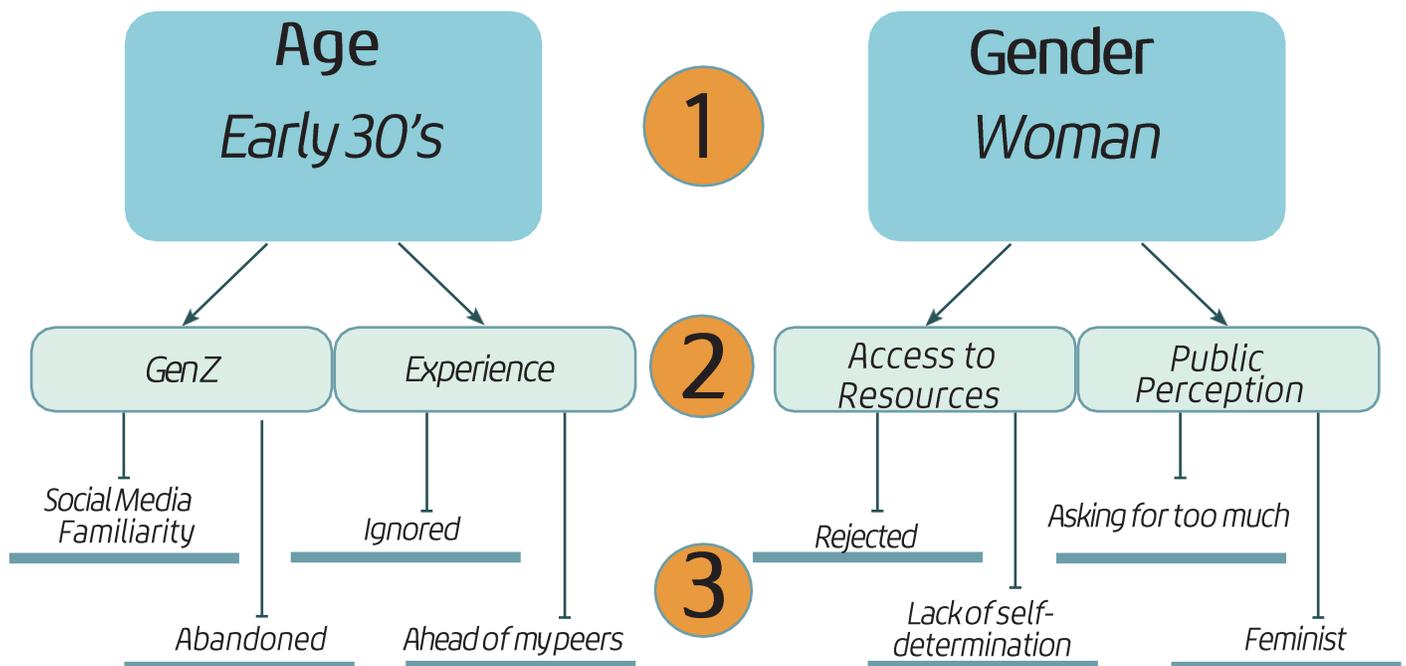
Like the food systems we seek to transform, our identities are complex, with many places of overlap and intersection.



Tool 1: Social Identity Mapping - Continued

How to use: The first level of the map includes the main parts of our identity, which are self-defined and differ from person to person. Examples may include age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, education, sexual orientation, social class, political affiliation, marital status, or ability³. The second level describes how these identity categories manifest in our lives. For example, a person's age may lead to assumptions about their experience, or their gender may influence how others perceive their access to resources or commitment to social causes. The third level captures the emotions and impacts that arise from these experiences—both positive and negative.

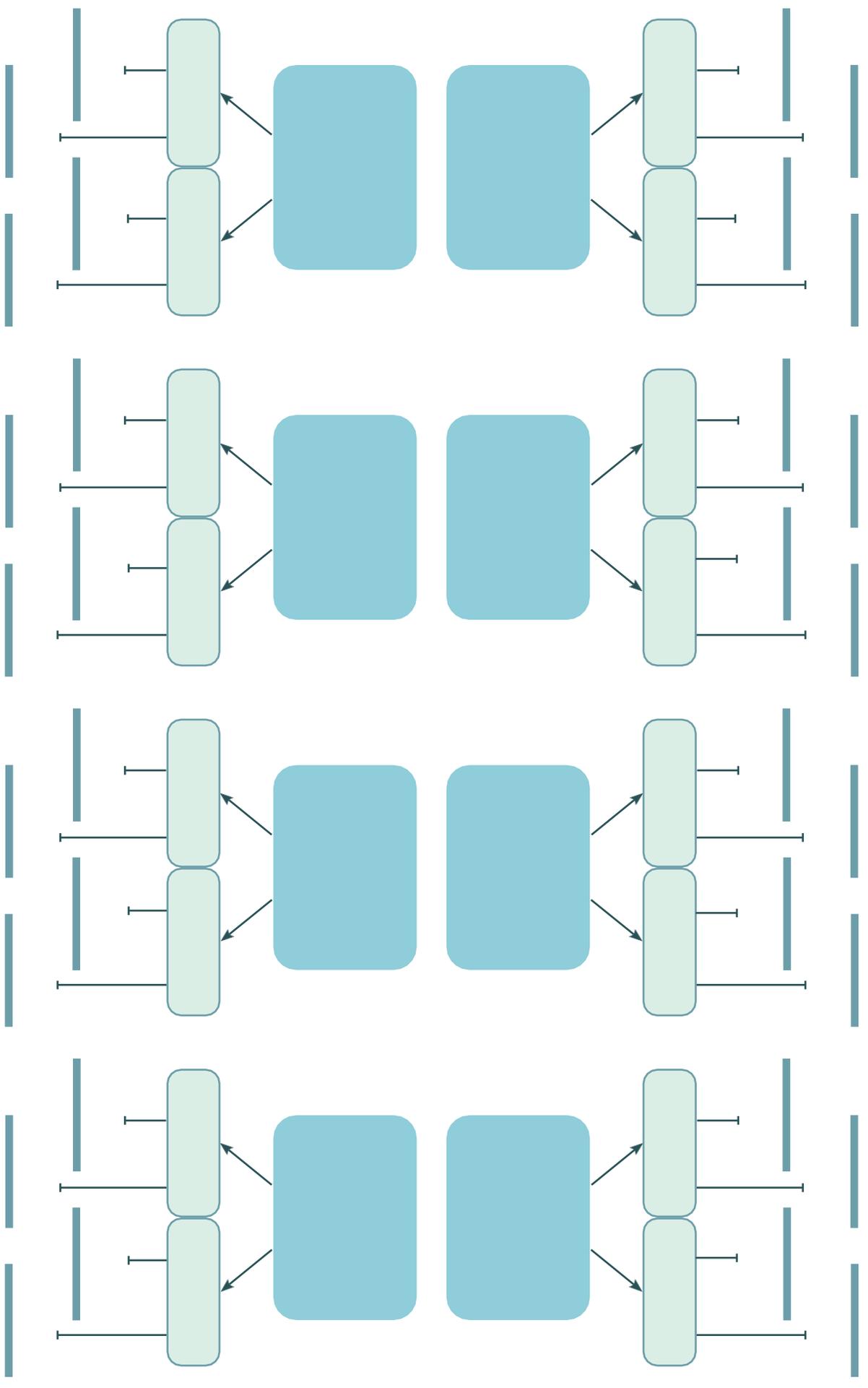
For instance, someone may feel their voice is overlooked due to limited experience, yet also empowered by what they have achieved despite that barrier.



Our identities are not rigid, but are subject to change over time, and as such, revisiting this tool more than once is a useful exercise. Teams are also encouraged to revisit their maps when new members join or at key project milestones.



Worksheet - Copy this page to create multiple social identity maps.



Tool 2: Non-Violent Communication (NVC)

Listening with curiosity and speaking openly and authentically are courageous leadership practices that are inherent to non-violent communication. These practices build trust by sharing our own vulnerabilities and being willing to understand those of others.



Purpose: To support communication grounded in listening, understanding, empathy, clarity and respect ⁴.

When to Use: During disagreements, misunderstandings or collective decision-making.

How to Use: Practice the steps outline below and on the following page.

Observation

A description of what we experienced - the aim is to do this neutrally, creating a shared reality that is grounded in objectivity. For example “I noticed that our group meeting was not attended” is objective, vs. “nobody cares about this work” is subjective.

Feelings

Feelings give the opportunity to express the emotional response that resulted from what was observed. It should be grounded in our own truth, and not an interpretation of what another may be feeling. i.e. “I feel frustrated” vs. “I feel like you aren’t invested in this organization”.

Needs

Needs are tied to what is going on in the background that is unmet for us, the something that is missing or not being addressed based on what we observed that made us feel a certain way. E.g. “I need to feel connected to the group in this effort”.

Request

A specific ask that seeks to fulfill our unmet need. These may be either requests for connection or for solutions, such as “can you let me know why you haven’t been able to attend our meetings”, a connection, vs a solution - “would you able to attend one of these upcoming meetings next month?”

Practice Exercise - NVC

Think of challenges in leadership you or your organization may have experienced. With a partner or group, practice transforming that experience through the 4 NVC steps. See the following table for examples of basic feelings and needs*.

- WHAT did you observe?
- HOW did it made you feel?
- WHAT unmet need caused that feeling?
- WHAT can you ask for without demanding?

Feelings when our needs...		Basic needs we all have	
<i>...are fulfilled</i>	<i>...are not fulfilled</i>	Acceptance	Honesty
Comfortable	Angry	Air	Inspiration
Confident	Annoyed	Appreciation	Love
Eager	Confused	Authenticity	Meaning
Energetic	Discouraged	Choosing dreams	Reassurance
Fulfilled	Embarassed	Celebrating life	Rest Respect
Glad	Frustrated	Celebrating loss	Rest
Hopeful	Helpless	Community	Self-worth
Inspired	Impatient	Creativity	Shelter
Optimistic	Lonely	Emotional Safety	Support
Proud	Nervous	Empathy	Trust
Stimulated	Overwhelmed	Food	Understanding
Thankful	Reluctant	Fun	Water
Trustful	Uncomfortable	Harmony	

*NVC methods, feelings and needs checklist adopted from the work of Marshall Rosenburn and the Center for Non-Violent Communication. Visit www.cnvc.org to learn more.

NVC in Action

During a collaborative workshop, COLANSA participants practiced NVC through role play and chose to include it as part of their organizational values and their internal documents.

Tool 3: Storytelling Practices

Purpose: To support communication grounded in listening, understanding, empathy, clarity, and respect.

When to Use: For reflection and evaluation, internal communication, conflict resolution, knowledge & capacity sharing, and advocacy to mobilize action. Storytelling could also be used to realign around common purpose or to lift others up.

How to Use: This following page outlines basic storytelling principles⁵ employed by the NGLC and highlights how these have been effectively used by organizations, groups or collectives across a broad range of intersecting identities.

Storytelling in Action

[Changemaker Connect Forums](#)- The NGLC Forums bring together organizations from around the world to share stories of how they apply the eight courageous leadership practices. COLANSA, the Solidarity Kitchens, and other NGLC partners have presented their experiences and challenges in leading collective efforts toward more inclusive food systems.

Solidarity Initiatives for Community Kitchens- 5 case studies were shared during the workshop highlighting challenges including navigating regulatory requirements, volunteer fatigue, equitable participation, values alignment, as well as communication. Following the sharing of stories, a plenary session organized identified themes into principles, skills and procedures that were necessary to achieving and upholding organizational aims.

Principles of effective storytelling

1. Stories are real experiences

Narrative power is held in the authenticity of retelling something that actually occurred. Your expertise as a storyteller is not built upon data, but upon the ability to recount something that you observed. Experience IS expertise.

2. Stories tell about change

Effective stories take us from a starting point to an end point, describing how you got from one place to another. Stories should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Using this structure helps to translate your experiences into a purposeful and relatable narrative.

3. Stories have an objective

What is the point you want to get across with your story? What do you hope your audience will take away once they have heard your or your organization's story? Having a clear understanding of your objective will lend purpose and help as you develop your story.

Checklist for story building

- o Identify a challenge you experienced or wanted to address
- o List/name the barriers faced (structural, political, power imbalance...)
- o List/name the actions you took (align with courageous leadership practices)
- o Reflect on an individual (yourself or other) impacted in this story
- o Describe the outcomes (what happened) as a result of actions taken
- o Reflect on questions that remain or challenges still occurring

References

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