

# TIME TO LEAD:

## EMPOWERING WOMEN IN NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP



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For permission, please contact:

Ray Eskritt

rayeskritt@cmail.carleton.ca

Christina Labarca

christinalabarca@cmail.carleton.ca

Lauren Phillips

laurenphillips@cmail.carleton.ca

or

Paloma Raggo

paloma.raggo@carleton.ca

Faculty Advisor

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## Executive Summary

The Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) strengthens Ontario's nonprofit sector by bringing forward voices from the sector to inform policy and decision-makers (ONN, 2019). ONN does extensive research to identify the elements that contribute to decent work in the nonprofit sector, as well as specific research into women's employment experiences. To make this research actionable, ONN is developing and implementing ten solutions based on the "Decent Work for Women" project conducted in 2018. Our work focuses on developing solutions for women to access leadership roles in the nonprofit sector, which have traditionally been male-dominated. In order to do this, we conducted an environmental scan of what nonprofit leadership programs, networks, and models currently exist for emerging and existing women leaders in Ontario. In our findings, we summarize these programs, consider how they compare to ONN's seven core leadership competencies and discuss whether these programs are accessible and effective in supporting emerging and existing leaders. Our recommendations identify the gaps that can be filled in order to support current and future women leaders in the nonprofit sector.

Our research is comprised of two main components. Firstly, online searches for women's leadership programs, followed by key informant interviews with program coordinators. We identified twenty women's leadership programs in Ontario that offer leadership development. Some models are more long-term and delivered in University settings, while others are in a workshop or seminar-style. In considering their accessibility, we discovered that many of the programs would not be considered accessible for all women. This is due to cost, geographical location, and inflexible course offerings, all which create a notable barrier. The literature review suggests the importance of women-only training in order to focus on specific skills that enhance women's leadership opportunities. However, our research reveals that the primary benefit of a women-only program is to provide women a 'safe space' to share experiences and build confidence. In terms of effectiveness, we found that leadership training in conjunction with mentoring, enhanced the level of effectiveness of the training. Finally, although the literature points out the vast research conducted to establish core competencies, we found that leadership competencies were not clearly identified in any of the programs we compiled, and interviewees were either unable to express these competencies or did not feel they were relevant.

While we did not identify a single program that comprehensively met all the requirements set out by ONN, many of the programs, on our list of twenty, have promising aspects that support women's leadership development. However, there are gaps that can be filled to better support women leaders in the nonprofit sector. These include: enhancing the accessibility of leadership training for women, exploring methods to bridge the gap between emerging and existing leaders, and encouraging the utilization of multiple techniques, such as mentoring, to support women leaders. We also identified many areas of additional research that can further aid women in the nonprofit sector, including: conducting interviews with participants of leadership programs, looking into the structure of women's leadership programs across Canada and internationally, as well as further research into the tangible benefits of women-only spaces for leadership training, and the role of leadership competencies in training programs. Ultimately, ensuring that women are supported in accessing leadership roles is essential to the vitality of the nonprofit sector, and our research aims to aid the sector and ONN in their quest to provide decent work for women.



credit: YWCA, <https://ywcasema.org/2017/02/voices-of-women-women-in-leadership/>

## Introduction

The Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) is an independent association for the over 58,000 nonprofits in Ontario, whose mandate focuses on policy development, advocacy and member service to strengthen Ontario's nonprofit sector. Beginning in 2007, ONN has endeavored to create a public policy environment that supports nonprofits by activating, convening and engaging organizations and leaders to tackle issues at a sector-wide level. These efforts work towards the public benefit of the province by bringing forward voices from the sector to policy and decision-makers. Nonprofits play a vital role in the social and economic development of communities, and ONN believes that with a healthier and better-supported workforce, nonprofits can be better positioned to strengthen communities and the province as a whole, leading by example.

In recent years, ONN has been conducting research focused on Ontario's nonprofit sector labour market issues, resulting in the creation of a Decent Work movement. ONN's work draws on the International Labour Organization's (ILO) concept of decent work, which involves providing people with opportunities for work that is productive and delivers: a fair income, workplace security, social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration. Ultimately, an organization that encourages Decent Work should have an environment that gives equal opportunities and treatment for all women and men and provides people with the freedom to organize, express their concerns and participate in the decisions that affect their lives (International Labour Organization, 2019). ONN has identified seven elements that need to be addressed in order to improve the nonprofit sector, including: employment opportunities, fair income, health and retirement benefits, stable employment, opportunities for development and advancement, equality rights at work, and culture and leadership (Van Ymeren & Lalande, 2015).

In 2018, ONN released a literature review on the experiences of women working in Ontario's nonprofit sector, entitled *Decent Work for Women*, which highlights key issues regarding women's status in nonprofit. The nonprofit sector is women-majority with 75% to 80% of the workforce being women: nevertheless, women are significantly underrepresented in senior leadership positions (ONN, 2018). In addition, there are unequal job opportunities for women as

well as a glass ceiling for diverse women, including immigrant, Indigenous and racialized women, women from the LGBTQ community, and those with disabilities (ONN, 2018). Women within the sector experience a gender wage gap, and have limited access to pension plans and maternity top-ups, where the employer pays the difference between the employment insurance and the employee's salary (ONN, 2018).

As a result of these findings, ONN concluded that decent work for women must incorporate the supports that women need to improve their work environment as well as opportunities in the sector. These needs are as follows:

- Equal pay, equal pay for work of equal value, and pay transparency
- Stable employment
- Maternity and parental leave top-ups
- Safe reporting mechanisms for discrimination and harassment
- Pathways to professional development and advancement
- Gender parity and diversity in sector leadership
- Not reproducing gendered roles in organizations
- Recognizing the impact of being a feminized sector on the type of employment opportunities available (ONN, 2019)

From these needs, ONN identified three foundational ideas for Decent Work: a decent work movement cannot be built without women; women's economic empowerment is only possible when women are offered decent work in the nonprofit sector; and investing in women-majority sectors is equally as important as investing in "non-traditional" sectors (ONN, 2019). In addition, the need for women leadership in the nonprofit sector is amplified with the impending retirement 'tsunami' anticipated when more than 60% of the current leadership are likely to depart (McIssac, Park, & Toupin, 2013). Women, as the majority of nonprofit employees, need to be valued as contributors to the sector and considered for professional development and training that would make them eligible to fulfill these impending leadership roles.

Considering these circumstances, ONN wants to better advise organizations in regards to mitigating hiring biases for senior leadership positions for women, and ensuring leadership programs, networks and courses integrate a gender-based intersectional lens. Hence, our research focuses on not only identifying what nonprofit leadership programs, formal and informal networks and models currently exist for women as existing and emerging leaders, but also whether they are accessible and effective, and how they compare to ONN's seven leadership competencies: builder, thinker, mentor, storyteller, innovator, connector, and steward (ONN, 2017). This environmental scan of existing programs provides an overview of what programs currently operate in Ontario, and what gaps may need to be filled to support women leaders in the nonprofit sector.

Our project begins with a review of the literature on leadership in order to identify key themes. It then offers a summary of the findings from our research. Our program tables outline the components of the various leadership programs we identified and we then offer a reflection on the research that ties back to the literature review. Our three key recommendations are presented and our conclusion offers areas for future research.



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# Literature Review

In our review of the literature surrounding leadership, we focus on four main themes. First we explore the definitions, theories and concepts related to leadership as well as leadership competencies, in order to align them with ONN's definitions for the nonprofit sector. Second, we investigate the value of leadership training and development to identify their importance in supporting both emerging and existing women leaders in the sector. Third, we apply a gender-based intersectional lens to evaluate leadership training and development approaches specifically designed for women. Finally, we research the theories for enhancing the effectiveness of leadership training and development in order to further support women leaders in the nonprofit sector

## 1. What is leadership?

Defining leadership is not a straightforward nor simple task. Various theories, concepts, approaches, and behaviours have been explored over the years in an attempt to explain what leadership encompasses. Discussions around trait vs. process leadership, assigned vs. emergent leadership, transactional vs. transformational leadership, leaders vs. leadership as well as the influence of power and coercion all endeavour to find a concrete definition of leadership. Within this plethora of leadership characterization, there are two key themes in the literature that stand out: the discussion of leadership versus management, as well as the perspectives around leadership competencies.

### **Leadership vs. Management**

In order to clearly define leadership, it is important to make a distinction between management and leadership as these terms are often conflated. In his book, *A Force for Change*, Kotter defines management activities as those producing order and consistency, including tasks such as planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem-solving (Kotter, 1990). Alternatively, leadership activities are considered those that produce change and movement, hence, focus on establishing direction, aligning people, as well as motivating and inspiring (Kotter, 1990). Other authors make a distinction between leadership and management based on relationships. As outlined in *Becoming a Better Leader*, "leadership, at its core, is about

relationships – leaders and followers working together, navigating a complex environment, overcoming obstacles, being innovative, in order to get things done” (Multiple Authors, 2015, p. 4). The concept of leadership as it pertains to relationships is interwoven through much of the literature, particularly with respect to the nonprofit sector.

ONN’s report, *Leading our Future*, outlines the challenges in determining a single theory to describe leadership, hence chose a definition reflective of the process, role, relationship and attribute-related elements of leadership. *Leading our Future* describes leadership as follows:

*a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviour of others. Leaders set a direction for the rest of us; they help us see what lies ahead; they help us visualize what we might achieve; they encourage us and inspire us. (Carlson and Schneiter, 2011, summarizing Doe, 2008, pp. 330-331)*

(ONN, 2017, pg. 10)

This definition of leadership incorporates many of the concepts, approaches and behaviours that we explored through our research. Also similar to our findings in the literature, ONN distinguishes leadership from management in that leadership includes vision, strategy, motivation and inspiration (ONN, 2017). ONN outlines that leadership is fashioned by the following:

- Leaders must lead in complex environments based on dynamic relationships with multiple internal and external stakeholders.
- Leadership is not positionally-fixed at the executive level but can be shared and located throughout the organization and in the community.
- Leadership competencies may depend on “situational” variables such as size, stage of development, stability/security of the resource base, etc.
- Nonprofit leaders share management competencies with private and public sector leaders but are distinct for their commitment to the values and mission of the organization and the unique role and purpose of the nonprofit sector.

(ONN, 2017)

Despite the clarity of ONN’s definition and its distinction between leadership and management, the reality for those working in the nonprofit sector is the existence of a large obstacle to this relationship-focused leadership. Within the nonprofit sector, employees do not struggle with the growth of leadership into a relationship-based practice, but the aforementioned gap between management and leadership. While the nonprofit sector would hope to enact McIssac, Park and Toupin’s explanation of leadership as “relat[ing] to vision and creating impact,” (2013, p. 33) the realities of daily work in the nonprofit sector can interfere with this aspiration:

*The lived experience for many leaders in the sector is that they are focused on management—the multiple responsibilities that they hold primary responsibility for at the end of the day. In many cases, this is the structural reality of small organizations that do not have the capacity to free up their leaders for leadership. As the sector develops strategies for leveraging leadership going forward, consideration will have to be given to the levers that enable leaders, and the very structures that free them up to exercise their leadership or hold them back to function as managers.*

As a result of this lack of capacity, many nonprofit employees are barred not in title but in function from leadership positions. Instead of inspiring and developing relationships, many leaders spend their time solving managerial problems to keep a nonprofit running through its daily routine (McIssac, Park, & Toupin, 2013, p. 33). This dilemma highlights a large tension that exists within the nonprofit sector. If the sector recognizes leadership as a crucial aspect of nonprofit life, it must support investment in capacity building and leadership development that would bring opportunities for people, and in particular women, to become leaders in their organizations.

## **Leadership Competencies**

While exploring the definition of leadership in the literature, we noted an emphasis on various competencies required for leaders, regardless of sector. In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, a shift in thinking from formal qualifications to “self-directed behaviour” in predicting job achievement, set the stage for competency-based frameworks (Gigliotti, 2019). The application of competencies

has gained popularity and is now used for “assessing and selecting job candidates; managing employee performance; workforce planning; and training, educating, and developing individuals across sectors” (Gigliotti, 2019, p. 5). As fields like the nonprofit sector have become more professionalized, we have seen a surge in the development of core competencies in order to consider the “softer” interpersonal qualities required by employees (Gigliotti, 2019). Competencies however, are not easily defined nor agreed upon and can be challenging to identify, as leaders require an array of knowledge and skills to navigate the complexity of our rapidly changing environment. As an example, the Canadian Evaluation Society Competencies were developed through extensive research, consultation by members and expert validation, resulting in 36 competencies in five domains (Canadian Evaluation Society, 2019). Their comprehensive work demonstrates the complexity of identifying competencies and highlights the need to review and revise them as new research emerges and circumstances change (Canadian Evaluation Society, 2019).

Nonprofit-focused literature presents conflicting perspectives of what is important to leaders versus what is considered imperative to those they lead. The ONN/Mowat Centre report determined that of over a dozen competencies, the top four leadership competencies essential for the nonprofit sector included: working effectively with board members, managing change, leading people, and strategic visioning (McIssac, Park, & Toupin, 2013). However, the competencies identified by leaders wanting to improve included managing change, strategic visioning, and balancing personal life and work (McIssac, Park, & Toupin, 2013). This showcases the variation in which leadership competencies might be considered most important based on perspective. The report also shed light on elements outside of competencies including: the importance of the relationship with the board, the value of finding a balance between work and personal lives, as well as focusing on developing skills in managing change and strategic visioning for nonprofit leaders (McIssac, Park, & Toupin, 2013).

With an array of leadership competencies and perspectives to consider, ONN engaged in comprehensive research, identifying the following seven core leadership competencies as specific

to the nonprofit sector based on its changing demographics, resource constraints, the changing nature of work, as well as technological developments:

**Builder:** The nonprofit leader of the future will build strong, adaptive, and diverse organizations that embody clear visions, missions, and values. The leader will build internal capacity and external relationships with communities and other stakeholders.

**Thinker:** The nonprofit environment is complex, and it will be necessary for future leaders to anticipate change, understand the dynamics at play, assess data, and analyze situations and environments. Leaders must thoughtfully develop strategy, and support reflection and learning within the organization and community.

**Mentor:** A nonprofit leader must also be a mentor to support growth and development in employees and volunteers. The leader must be authentic and demonstrate qualities of empathy, sensitivity, trust, and openness. Future leaders will model perseverance, patience, and resilience in dealing with complex and uncertain environments.

**Storyteller:** Future leaders will communicate the nonprofit mission and value compellingly and honestly, and will develop and champion a strong and clear brand for the organization within the broader community.

**Innovator:** Future nonprofit leaders must be curious and encourage efforts to experiment and take reasonable risks. They will promote learning as a result of development and change and will continually adapt and adjust to a dynamic environment.

**Connector:** The nonprofit leader of the future will develop relationships, networks, and partnerships to further the organization's mission and impact. This includes sharing knowledge and ideas and collaborating within and across sectors. The leader will be skilled at listening for diverse voices and negotiating to resolve conflict.

**Steward:** Future leaders must direct, manage, and protect the human, capital, and financial resources of the organization. They will plan for longer-term organizational development, introduce technology and management strategies to strengthen capacity, and demonstrate accountability and transparency in communicating about performance and promote effective decision-making and governance. (ONN, 2017)

These detailed competencies identified by ONN for future nonprofit leaders highlight the complexity of leadership within the sector. We used ONN’s seven core leadership competencies as a basis of comparison with those competencies outlined in the various leadership programs in our research.



credit: Cheesecake Labs, <https://cheesecakelabs.com/blog/women-leaders-cheesecakes-grl-pwr/>

## **2. The Value of Leadership Development**

Through our research, we uncovered extensive literature on the value of leadership training and development across organizations and sectors. In a review of the literature published in *The Leadership Quarterly* over a 25-year period, the authors identified the various definitions and theories that have emerged and evolved around leader and leadership development, pointing out its importance to all organizations, specifically in understanding how to develop leaders, and leadership, effectively (Day et al., 2014). The literature points to two crucial aspects of leadership development: supporting emerging leaders' access to leadership roles, and focusing on making existing leaders and their organizations more effective.

### **Emerging Leadership Development**

Although the majority of the literature surrounding leadership training and development is based on the for-profit sector, its value is still evident when applied to a nonprofit realm. A national study of Canadian nonprofit executive leaders focused on understanding the key leadership challenges of the sector (HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector, 2012). Of the nine key challenges identified through their research, leadership skills was the one attribute that board members and executive directors agreed upon as most important in nonprofit leaders, outweighing managing experience and other attributes (HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector, 2012). This finding points towards the importance of leadership training and development in the nonprofit sector, in order that individuals might develop the skills necessary to support opportunities for accessing leadership.

In addition, research into career paths of nonprofit executives who serve in health and human service nonprofit organizations emphasized the influence that leadership development and educational programs have on many nonprofit career paths. The authors proposed that nonprofit management education would become a prominent higher education credential held by nonprofit executives. This proposal demonstrates that the authors consider leadership training, as part of an educational credential, as holding additional value for nonprofit leaders. Ultimately, support for leadership training and development within academic literature across industries

demonstrates the immense benefits that nonprofits could receive from investing in the development of future leaders.

## **Existing Leadership Development**

Once in leadership positions, it is essential to recognize the need for continuous development. Day et al. (2014) suggests there is value in moving beyond a single theory of leadership training and instead, focusing on leadership development as an ongoing process that “transcends but does not replace individual leader development” (p. 78). They also make a distinction between developing leaders and developing leadership, with the former focused on developing individual leaders and the latter involving multiple individuals such as peers and followers, both having importance in the overarching context of leadership development (Day et al., 2014). As the authors point out, identifying one ‘correct’ leadership theory should not be the focus. Rather, various approaches to leadership, when combined, can be implemented to support individuals in the intricate realm of sustained leadership development. Despite its complexity, leadership development holds many benefits for organizations across sectors, the pinnacle of which is increasing leadership effectiveness. Effective leadership primarily refers to a leader's success in motivating followers to achieve organizational objectives, which is the foundation of an organization’s performance and growth (Amagoh, 2009).

Leadership development requires a continuing organizational commitment in order to realize its benefits for the organization’s performance (Amagoh, 2009). As noted, “the approach to leadership development should be viewed as part of the fabric of organizations in order to receive the support and attention needed to maximize effects on participants” (Amagoh, 2009, p. 997). Hence, the author supports the notion of moving beyond leadership training to institutionalizing an effective leadership development culture, fostering a long-term commitment to the development of current and future leaders (Amagoh, 2009). This approach of implementing a culture of leadership development, in addition to providing individuals with skills training, is promising in its ability to provide both emerging and existing leaders in the nonprofit sector with support to become effective leaders.

### **3. Considering Gender in Leadership Training & Development**

In applying a gender-based intersectional lens to leadership training and development, research consistently highlights the inequality of gender distribution in leadership positions across sectors. Despite the attempts through policies and practices to address the imbalance of women in high-level management in public and private sectors, research indicates that women continue to be under-represented (Clarke, 2019). In academia, the challenges for women in leadership also closely relate to challenges for women in the nonprofit sector, with a gender bias that impedes women's opportunities for career advancement (Knipfer, Shaughnessy, Hentschel, & Schmid, 2017). This research emphasizes that ONN's literature review on the experience of women working in Ontario's nonprofit sector, particularly with women being underrepresented in senior leadership positions, spans across sectors. Such systematic oversights regarding women's needs consequently filters into these needs not being targeted or met within generally recommended leadership training.

Ultimately, this women-majority sector is not a women-led sector, as organizational structures, such as leadership training and development, do not focus on women (ONN, 2018). Therefore, our review of the literature underscored the importance of considering gender in program design, emphasized the benefits of women-only training environments, and highlighted the impact of transformational leadership on women.

#### **Gender in Program Design**

Overall, when exploring gender in leadership training and development, current human resource development theory inadequately addresses the issues and challenges women leaders face, as most leadership theory is based on white males (Bierema, 2016). Leadership continues to be framed through a white, masculine lens, using language that alienates women as well as people of colour (Coombs, 2018). The author of this thesis challenges leadership program developers to include gender and differences in program design and urges the reader to remember that current leadership ideals, which are assumed to be teachable, often rely on a white, masculine rational and ideal (Coombs, 2018). Furthermore, these masculine ideas about leadership persist and

perpetuate a lack of acknowledgement surrounding women's capabilities (Rankin & Stewart, 2012). A report on women's leadership in Canada also confirms that organizations' efforts to close the gender gap within leadership positions, including research and action plans, have stalled, which can be attributed in part to this persisting worldview (Rankin & Stewart, 2012).

In another study, Eagly (2005) identified that the design of leadership training programs, which include a focus on relational authenticity, can increase women's success as leaders. The concept of relational authenticity stresses that leaders endorse values that promote the interests of the broader community, convey those interests to followers who personally identify with these values, and accept them as appropriate for the community (Eagly, 2005). This interface between leaders and followers may be a useful tactic to increase the effectiveness of leadership training programs for women in the nonprofit sector and provides an example of how focusing on gender can positively impact program design.

### **“Women-only” Training**

Ultimately, the literature points to the need for implementing a gender lens in training curriculum design in order to ensure effective training programs for women leaders. Leadership programs, and particularly those designated as "women only," have been shown to help bolster women's careers (Clarke, 2019). Research indicates that “women-only training enables women to clarify their leadership ambitions, recognize their leadership strengths and access leadership positions” (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003, p. 294). A training curriculum designed for aspiring leaders in academia that focused on self-directed leadership development in order to enhance women's motivation to lead was found to increase their knowledge and empower them to seek support (Knipfer, Shaughnessy, Hentschel, & Schmid, 2017). When analyzing leadership development, power and gender must both be a consideration (Collins, 2017). Studies have indicated that gender differences in power motivation may be one reason why women are under-represented in leadership. One way to achieve more gender balance may lie in helping to foster “power motivation” among women (Schuh, et al., 2014). A women-only program can therefore facilitate this space for enhancing leadership development and simultaneously address the gender-based power imbalance.

## **Transformational Leadership**

Other research points to the impact of transformational leadership for women. Taking a gender-sensitive approach, the authors explore the indirect effects of transformational leadership on subjective occupational success, partially mediated by work engagement (Vincent-Hoper, Muser, & Janneck, 2012). Their findings reveal that for both men and women, though women in particular, transformational leadership training in addition to work engagement can enhance occupational success (Vincent-Hoper, Muser, & Janneck, 2012). This study emphasizes the value of transformational leadership for women in leadership roles, and also supports attraction and retention of female employees, which is crucial to encouraging future women leaders in the nonprofit sector. Furthermore, research exploring the ranking of leadership skills required, by senior management roles in vocational education training by gender, reveal that although the skills identified by both men and women are the same, the rankings varied by gender. Men focused on task-orientated leadership skills and women on relationship development leadership skills (Kairys, 2018). As a result, the author concludes that focusing on skills development of cognitive, interpersonal, business and strategic skills may support women in leadership roles (Kairys, 2018). In addition, the similarity of the educational sector, which is as women dominated yet predominantly male-led as the nonprofit sector, helps provide a context to consider these findings in our research. Overall, the research makes a strong case for the benefits of women-focused design for leadership training and development programs in the nonprofit sector.

## **4. Enhancing Effectiveness of Leadership Training Programs**

The literature review provided numerous concepts to consider in enhancing the effectiveness of leadership training and development. Within the multiple approaches presented, the prominent theories we encountered included supporting leadership training with organizational structures, considering psychology in leadership program design, as well as providing ample time for an individual to hone their leadership skills. Although the literature we reviewed on effectiveness was not specific to the nonprofit sector, these notions stood out as having direct applicability to the sector, and to women's leadership training in particular.

## **Organizational support**

A robust theme throughout the literature was that leadership training in isolation may not be adequate, hence support in the form of mentorships, networks, and ongoing leadership development supported by the organization are necessary considerations. A study focused on the characteristics of effective school leadership networks in Ontario included the variables of network leadership, structure, health, connectivity, and outcomes (Leithwood, 2019). The findings revealed that network leadership had the most significant total effect of network outcomes, followed by health and connectivity (Leithwood, 2019). Collaborative leadership training was also found to have a positive influence on the effectiveness of leadership development, as building relationships outside of the organization can provide leaders with an advantage (Grover & Lynn, 2012). As the authors noted, "the leadership lesson for organizations is increasingly well-defined across public, private and nonprofit organizations: value creation within a closed, rigidly hierarchical structure is dead" (Grover & Lynn, 2012, p. 5).

In a study on the factors that influence or inhibit the transfer of leadership training, the most influential factors depended on colleagues and bosses also receiving leadership training, whereas the most significant inhibitor was the fear of breaking cultural norms (Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe, 2007). This highlights the necessity of building support through a culture of training in order to enhance leadership effectiveness. Organizational support was also found to be a key to transferring the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) that employees acquire through leadership training, to their job (Franke & Felfe, 2012). Research on how to fast-track leadership development identified seven leadership accelerators, one of which was formal leadership training/continuing education (Longenecker & Insch, 2019). Included in the six additional leadership accelerators was working for an organization that supports skill development as well as possessing a strong mentor (Longenecker & Insch, 2019). The concept of building support for leaders, whether through external networks or internal organizational structures, can therefore significantly influence the effectiveness of the leadership training and development.

## **Psychology in Leadership**

The literature presented numerous psychological theories and concepts that can increase leadership effectiveness through considering them in the design of leadership programs. These include: training emotion regulation in order to increase leadership effectiveness (Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2017), the influence of leader identity and experience (Kragt & Guneter, 2018), as well as support for leaders' psychological reactions during developmental interventions (Mason, Griffin, & Parker, 2014). Another concept which has been shown to enhance the effectiveness of leaders is motivation. In a study on the construct of motivation to lead (MtL), individual preference to take on a leadership role is considered a predictor of leadership training effectiveness (Stiehl, Felfe, Elprana, & Gatzka, 2015). The authors pointed out that individuals with high MtL benefit more from training, acquiring more leadership competencies, and organizational support offers further enhancement of that leadership training (Stiehl, Felfe, Elprana, & Gatzka, 2015). Additional research revealed that transferring knowledge, skills and abilities depends largely on the trainees' motivation and perseverance (Franke & Felfe, 2012). Therefore, incorporating psychological theories or concepts into the design of leadership programs, as well as considering the impact of motivation are seen as ways of improving program effectiveness.

## **The Value of Time**

Finally, it is essential to recognize the value of time in leadership training and development. As noted in *Professionalizing Leadership*, Kellerman (2018) distinguishes education from training, the former being associated with knowing and the latter with doing. Kellerman identifies that most leadership programs are more about developing skills (i.e., training) and that reaching a level of "mastery" in skill development takes time (Kellerman, 2018). Further research emphasizes the value of a slow development of leadership qualities over time, in addition to ongoing leadership skills training (Lord & Hall, 2005). The authors propose that leadership skills develop through various stages, are influenced by individual differences and will emerge uniquely for each leader (Lord & Hall, 2005). It is prudent to note that leadership skills development requires time, and attaining a certain level of "mastery" allows the use of these skills to be considered truly effective.

## Findings

Our research identified twenty programs in Ontario that are focused on providing leadership training and support to women (See Appendix 1, pg. 46 for Methodology). These programs generally fall into two main categories of leadership programming: long-term education programming, such as University programs, as well as short-term, networking-focused events such as workshops or conferences. These program types varied in regards to who they served in terms of age and experience level as both long-term and short-term programs existed for emerging and existing leaders. However, upon reaching twenty programs, we began observing similarities between programs.

The list of twenty Ontario programs (see Appendix 4, pg. 57 for Program Summaries) is not exhaustive but brings forward formats and themes that provincial programs appear to follow. Foremost, few programs exist that purposefully overlap between women's leadership and nonprofit leadership. Program websites and resources occasionally mention that nonprofit employees are welcome to apply, but were rarely focused on the nonprofit sector exclusively. Overall, we found that women's leadership programs are not only easier to access online, but often have little mention of nonprofit leadership within them, at least, not in a formal capacity. Advertised nonprofit leadership programs then were often the reverse. Specific programs advertised as nonprofit leadership focused were frequently found to be co-ed.

There also appeared a clear delineation between the design for programs that focused on emerging leaders and existing leaders. Within the field of women's leadership, emerging and existing leadership programs appear to be built with two different structures. Existing leadership programs are often highly structured, long-term and based in either educational institutions, or multi-day conferences in formal convention-type settings. Emerging leadership programs are often presented in workshops, training or internship formats, generally with a combination of all three. In each case, tailoring to the respective audiences became apparent when we examined the accessibility of the respective programs. Many existing leadership programs come with costly tuition or ticket prices and have few reimbursements, bursaries, or grant opportunities. For

emerging leaders however, programs are often free or are lower priced with additional accommodations such as child-care, micro-grants and scholarships. This difference signaled a clear divide within women's leadership, with little evidence to suggest bridged opportunities for moving through one's career as a leader.



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## Emerging Leader Programs

Program Name	Organization	Type	Location	Cost	Scholarships or Grants Available	Childcare Available	Mentorships Available	Accredited
Accelerated, Online & Employer Internal Mentorship	Women In Leadership Foundation	Mentorship	BC	\$350	No	No	Yes	No
Born to Lead Conference	Women in Leadership and Business	Conference	Niagara Falls	Free	Yes	No	No	No
Framing Our Future	Young Women's Leadership Network (YWLN)	Forum & Networking	Toronto, Hamilton, York, Ottawa	\$20 per event	No	No	No	No
Leadership Development for Women	Canadian Management Centre	Academic	Toronto	\$2,195 Non Member Fee	No	No	No	No
Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women's National Leadership Program	YWCA Canada	Training & Networking	Orillia	\$500-\$750 Includes all activities, travel and food.	No	No	Yes	No
WeWIN Mentoring	Women's Infrastructure Network	Mentorship	Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa, Montréal, and Saskatchewan	Free. Admission by application.	No	No	Yes	No.
Women Connecting with Women	Skills for Change Nonprofit	Workshop	Toronto	Free	Transit Passes	Yes	Yes	Human Resource Professionals Association (HRPA)
Women Let's Take Our Place Program	Girls Action Foundation	Training, Workshops	Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta and Nova Scotia, (online)	Recommended \$50	Yes	No	Yes	No

## Existing Leader Programs

Program Name	Organization	Type	Location	Cost	Scholarships or Grants Available	Childcare Available	Mentorship Available	Accredited
Boundless Leadership	University of Ottawa, Telfer School of Management	Academic	Ottawa	\$4,900 + HST	No	No	No	No
Break Open, Bust Out, Authentic Leadership for Women of Colour	Anima Leadership	Conference	Toronto	\$1200 + HST	No	No	No	No
Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership (BAWL) Program	Ontario Native Women's Association	Training	Fort William First Nation	Free to attend. Provincially funded	No	No	Yes	No
Leadership Development for Women: Early Career (formerly ATHENA)	University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management	Academic Forum	Toronto	\$3,400.00	No	No	No	Human Resources Professionals Association
Leadership Development for Women: Mid to Senior Career (formerly EMERGING LEADERS)	University of Toronto Rotman School of Management	Academic Forum	Toronto	\$7,400.00	No	No	No	Human Resources Professionals Association
Leadership in Administration	University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management	Academic Forum	Toronto	\$1,950.00	No	No	No	Human Resources Professionals Association
Practical Strategies for Successful Women Leaders	York University, Schulich School of Business	Forum	Toronto	\$3,550.00	No	No	No	Human Resources Professionals Association
The Judy Project	University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management	Academic Forum	Toronto	\$9,500.00	No	No	No	Human Resources Professionals Association

Program Name	Organization	Type	Location	Cost	Scholarships or Grants Available	Childcare Available	Mentorship Available	Accredited
Women and Leadership Program	Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity	Professional Development Sessions	Toronto	varies	No	No	No	No
Women in Leadership	Ivey Business School (Western University)	Academic	London	contact for fees - Employees of not-for-profit organizations receive 40% discount	Yes	No	Yes	Western University
Women in Leadership and Business Conference	Women in Leadership and Business	Conference	Niagara Falls	\$1,649.00	Yes	No	No	No
Women's Leadership in Community Development	Coady Institute, St. Francis Xavier University	Academic	Nova Scotia, remote learning	\$4,600 CAD	No	No	Yes	No

## Reflecting on the Research

After reviewing the program descriptions, the second phase of our research worked to provide additional information on the programs that was not evident in our initial research. We conducted key informant interviews with program coordinators to inquire about the primary objectives of the program, as well as learn about their typical participants. We also asked interviewees to discuss the core leadership competencies in their program and how they assess their program's effectiveness. In addition, we inquired about whether tracking is done following the completion of their training, regarding participant's career paths and what other supports are provided or recommended during and after programming. Finally, we asked the program coordinators to share what they feel are benefits of a women-only leadership program (See Appendix 3, pg. 56 for Interview Questions).

With a combination of our internet research, our interviews, and our review of the literature, we reflected on whether the twenty programs identified would be considered accessible and effective in supporting emerging and existing nonprofit leaders. We then analyzed how the program competencies compared to ONN's seven core leadership competencies identified for future nonprofit leaders – builder, thinker, mentor, storyteller, innovator, connector and steward.



## **Supporting Emerging and Existing Leaders**

In reflecting on our research we considered the literature review's indication that leadership development holds high value across sectors, and has aspects which support both existing and emerging leaders. Particularly important was the consideration of leadership development as an ongoing process and its ability to increase leadership effectiveness, motivating followers to achieve organizational objectives. This idea is especially crucial for leaders in the nonprofit sector as these leaders help ensure that the mission of the organization is always at the core of its work.

During the interview process, we found evidence to support the importance of leadership development in the nonprofit sector, as each program coordinator addressed the need for leadership programs involving critical thinking and flexibility, despite differences in their program demographics. Program coordinators indicated that leaders “need to have additional skill sets or ways of thinking that help... navigate [an] organization through some very complex situations” (I. Richter, personal communication, October 22, 2019). All five interviews fell along this theme, with other program coordinators framing their programs as an opportunity for women to “help support one another and...increase their leader impact, in their own communities and in their world” (T. Sweeney, personal communication, November 1, 2019). In this manner, all of the program coordinators framed leadership holistically. Interestingly, each program coordinator accepted and understood that while their participants come from diverse backgrounds, every participant ultimately looks to encourage positive change in their workplaces or their broader community. This consensus is notable given the fact that three out of the five program coordinators we spoke to were coordinators of programs designed for existing, and not emerging, leaders. Therefore, only two of the informants we spoke to had a unique experience of leadership for youth. However, all of the coordinators focused on broad community impact and holistic leadership, indicating that youth leadership goals do not appear to be removed from adult leadership in content and teachings.

The program coordinators also touched on the idea that this ability to influence a community, which connects well with the idea of upholding a nonprofit mission, requires participants to learn “how to be in the moment, and how to respond to...cues...and not judge [themselves] too critically” (T. Sweeney, personal communication, November 1, 2019). In addition to being adaptable in the

moment, program coordinators also emphasized the need to “be comfortable to ask for what...they want to see happen” (B. Dart, personal communication, October 22, 2019) and become acclimated to “going beyond their comfort level” (J. Cloutier, personal communication, October 24th2019). Such statements indicate a penchant for programs to highlight the importance of being confident in your own decision making, which falls in line with the notion that leaders must be able to encourage a team toward a common goal and achieve a mission.

Overall, four of the five coordinators focused on the soft skills mentioned above and spoke about more general concepts such as confidence and like-mindedness rather than individual traits. However, one program coordinator did outline the skills that their program suggests are needed to run a team, which included: hiring, motivating, delegating tasks and assisting teammates (D. Mossman, personal communication, October 23, 2019). Interestingly then, these hard and soft skills overlap in their need to not only establish a common goal or desire but also encourage and aid their team in reaching that goal. As a result, the five programs seem to agree that a primary component of leadership training is establishing a sense of self-assuredness, while also developing team work and managerial skills.

### **Accessibility of Leadership Programs**

Despite the value that leadership development holds for both existing and emerging leaders, our research identified some barriers for those wanting to hone their skills. In terms of accessibility, it was evident that within our original list of twenty programs, the majority would not be considered accessible based on cost, location and format. With existing leadership programs, coordinators indicated a desire to support their participants or even remodel their programs to increase access to nonprofit employees. However, they also noted a lack of resources to provide cost relieving services such as childcare, transportation costs or granting. Even putting aside the vast divide between the cost of academic programs versus shorter workshops, three of five program coordinators in interviews indicated barriers to funding, such as the fact that they "haven't found a way" (I. Richter) to provide low cost programming that would cater to nonprofits, or that they have budgets which are "tight" and suffer from a lack of sponsorship (T. Sweeney). One program was even considering “moving to either a not-for-profit status or a B-corp” due to

their limited funding (T. Sweeney). A final coordinator indicated that they only provide assistive funding outside of their programs, such as general scholarships (D. Mossman). Only one program expressed a commitment to making their existing leader programming accessible with “free childcare” as well as a “subsidy for travel” as part of their pipeline programming that helps women re-enter the workforce (B. Dart).

With emerging leader programs, there was more mention of grants, scholarships and lower costs, but only three out of eight programs we looked into were entirely free, with costs ranging from fifty dollars to \$2,200.00. However, of the five we interviewed, only one emerging leader program was “fully funded” (J. Cloutier) and hosted people from all backgrounds ranging from homeless people to youth starting out in the workforce, to experienced administrators.

Ultimately, looking across our program table, more accessible and affordable programs are often designed with either youth or newcomers to Canada in mind. Such financial support and variance in work experience then seem to lose priority for existing leader programs, which suggests a lack of investment in women’s nonprofit leadership development.

## **Effectiveness of Leadership Programs**

The literature suggests that implementing a gender lens in leadership training curriculum design is necessary, as most leadership theory is based on white males. It highlights that focusing on specific skills or aspects of leadership training in a women-only training environment can help boost women’s careers. In addition, transformational leadership training was noted as being valuable for women, though this theory did not present itself in the findings from our research. Our research primarily revealed that although women-only leadership training is essential, the effectiveness lies less in the gender-specific design of the curriculum and more in allowing women a 'safe space' to share experiences and build their confidence in leadership. A second aspect of effectiveness focused on the idea that leadership training in isolation is not sufficient.

The most notable aspect of effective women’s leadership programming, a women’s only space, was revealed by the fact that every program coordinator we interviewed spoke about women needing

safe spaces to talk about their workplace experience. While women's only programs were agreed upon as a necessity for women's safety and comfort, 4 of the 5 program coordinators also prefaced their praise for women's only programming with the caveat that the necessity for such programming is "old fashioned" (I. Richter), "unfortunat[e]" (B. Dart & D. Mossman), or even "hate[d]" (T. Sweeney). From these comments, it appears that program coordinators, and possibly the broader leadership space, is surprised and saddened by the need for women to occupy a separate space in order to participate in open and honest communication. In one surprising statement, a program coordinator suggested that having a women's only space reduced the likelihood of sexual harassment between participants, which seemed at odds with the encouraging tone the other coordinators had (D. Mossman). Rather than viewing their programs as a women's escape from harm (within or without the program), the other four coordinators spoke about the program as an opportunity for self-reflection and spurring confidence, not avoiding violence.

In fact, each of the program coordinators agreed that having a unique space for women to learn about leadership brings positive results. This positivity often focused on the fact that in these spaces women could move away from stereotypes or expectations of femininity and move into "real conversations about challenges they believe women uniquely face" (I. Richter) and guide the conversation in a way that they are not encouraged to when men are present. For some programs this meant "talking to each other about what the workplace looks like, smells like, what are the challenges," (I. Richter) and discussing how the work environment or behavioural expectations can affect women differently than men: "women show up differently when men are at the board table" (T. Sweeney). A common theme throughout was the assertion that women conduct themselves differently around men, which was partially attributed to "power dynamics" (J. Cloutier) and "unwritten rules" (B. Dart) that presumably keep women from voicing their opinions or ideas.

With this acknowledgement, there also came a sense of positivity, as program coordinators cited their programs as opportunities for women to "connect...grow and thrive together" (T. Sweeney) as well as a time for them to "learn how to lean-in, bringing themselves in, and promote themselves" (B. Dart). As such, our research suggests that women only programming is a way for

women to be comfortable enough to not merely mention their own ideas, but also promote those ideas and their own capabilities. Notably, although psychology, and in particular motivation, was seen as having a positive impact on effectiveness in the literature, these were not evident themes in our research.

Our literature review also pointed out that leadership training in isolation may not be considered sufficient. Therefore, in order to create effective leadership training, additional support such as mentoring, is required. Forty per cent of the programs we investigated offered some form of mentoring support. Through our interviews, we noted that although mentoring is considered beneficial, there can be challenges in matching mentors with mentees based on geography and compatibility. In reality, some interviewees pointed out that mentoring often happens more informally; Hence, providing a space for networking may allow for mentoring relationships to form naturally. This natural formation was often encouraged by the program coordinators reliance on social media to discover the current employment or status of former participants. In line with this sentiment is the fact that the most common word we found regarding networking during interviews was 'informal' or 'not formal'. While the program coordinators recognized that a mentor/mentee relationship gave participants a valuable connection to their community, as well as a resource to move forward with their leadership goals, only one program was able to formally track participants due to a federal funding provision.

Due to these limited resources, program coordinators indicated that engaging in social media groups and actively participating in provided networking events was the most valuable way that participants could experience a connection resembling mentorship: “we don’t organize them, we don’t monetize it...we just allow [networking] to happen organically and encourage it” (T. Sweeney). It is important to note, our research does not definitively explain why the other programs do not track participants, but program coordinators most frequently pointed to a lack of funds or lack of employee resources for such work.

Despite being unable to track participants’ outcomes, each program coordinator did view mentorship connections positively. They viewed mentorships as creating opportunities for “self-

awareness” (I.Richter), forming lasting career connections that bring “confidence, courage, connections and skills” (T.Sweeney), as well as participating in “Facebook groups” where participants “engag[e] together” and “giv[e] opportunities to one another” (J. Cloutier). Ultimately, while the reliance on informal mentorship seems to be credited to a lack of resources, the impact of mentorship might remain equally valuable in comparison with in-person mentorship, with one program mentioning that mentorship efforts seemed to be more useful to participants when “when people decided with who they want to [have a] mentor/mentee [relationship]” (J. Cloutier).

Tying in with the heavy emphasis on mentorship, program coordinators also expressed the importance of leadership skills needing time to develop. In one case, mentorship was a crucial part of this developing time, “otherwise it’s just a moment in time experience” (I. Richter) This program coordinator hoped the participants would to keep in touch with each other as well as presenters and demonstrates the important concept that personal connections during training help to increase the longevity of a programs’ impact. The coordinators also recognized the importance of women taking part in their programs at different times in their careers, with an understanding that women’s progression into and throughout leadership roles can take different paths and varying amounts of time. Coordinators spoke about helping women transition into the “next level” of their careers such as “growing their business or advancing their career” (T. Sweeney) as well as “trying to decide what to do next” with their career (I. Richter). In this manner, women’s leadership programs value the longevity and changes throughout women’s careers and account for the time needed to invest in developing leaders’ confidence and abilities.

Ultimately, our research demonstrated that program coordinators help foster effective leadership by valuing networking opportunities and systems such as mentorship, as well as accounting for the time needed for leadership development to develop a level of mastery. We also found that the program coordinators’ positive outlooks toward these two aspects of training have the potential to encourage well-developed leaders and impactful programming. Mentorship allows for the continuation of lessons learned during programming, as well as strong bonds with other participants and community members. The investment in time for development provides a long-

term dedication to leaders that encourages continual learning and improvement and keeps leadership from stagnating.

## **Leadership Competencies**

As noted previously, much research has been done into the competencies for leaders by organizations including ONN. Interestingly however, our research indicated that leadership competencies were not clearly identified in any of the programs we researched online, and our interviewees were either not able to express them clearly nor did not feel they were relevant to their leadership programs.

Overall, program coordinators generally spoke about competencies in two ways. In one case, coordinators denied the effectiveness and utility of competencies. On the other hand, coordinators gave a list of 'competencies' that spoke more to overarching themes of the program. Program organizer Richter suggested that competencies are too vague to be utilized, stating that "organizations like to have lists of competencies, but it doesn't mean anything until you're on the ground" (I. Richter). This opinion aligns with the recurring theme of safe space and comfortable interactions with women in the programs, as our interviews indicate that women are provided with these programs with the intention to help them address their specific needs and limitations in the workplace. As a result, looking at competencies that are not individualized to one's leadership style or work context sounded too vague for some coordinators and were viewed as limiting, not allowing for women to examine what they personally "brin[g] into the room and how [they] are leveraging that" (I. Richter). In this manner, criticisms of competencies often stemmed from coordinator's assertion that women must "lean-in" (B. Dart) and learn to "build [themselves] a personal brand" and "promote" themselves, rather than allowing the idea of meritocracy keep them from forwarding their goals and ideas. One program coordinator was adamant that "the expectation that someone will notice you and applaud you, just doesn't work" (B. Dart).

Meanwhile, other coordinators brought up 'competencies' that speak to much broader societal aims and issues, such as "advocacy," "social justice" and "empowerment" (J. Cloutier). In this case, coordinators spoke about topics that moved away from specific ideas and continued along the

lines of personalized or tailored leadership training, such as helping participants discover their “authentic leadership style...that uses [their] personality” (B. Dart). By emphasizing the exploration of personal leadership styles and using “improv exercises...to be in the moment” (T. Sweeney), coordinators demonstrated a strong desire for personalized programming that is tailored to each group. Furthermore, coordinators spoke about the content of their programs being different each year, where “negotiation skills, influencing skills...aren’t the core” (B. Dart) and are of lower priority than the aforementioned personalized activities, with the exception of “communications” (T. Sweeney). In fact, only one of the coordinators mentioned concrete skills such as delegating, motivating, hiring and directing team members (D. Mossman). Ultimately, the attitude of coordinators toward competencies was unfavourable. Our research demonstrates that program coordinators value women’s self-expression and ownership of their personal leadership style, over pre-established competencies.

Based on our overall analysis, two programs stood out as having the potential to meet some of the needs of women leadership training in the nonprofit sector include: **Skills for Change** and **Women’s Leadership In Community Development**. Given that our definition of effectiveness includes organizational support for training that goes beyond the training session(s) and the investment of time in employees’ leadership development, we believe the programs below to be exceptional models of leadership programming.

### **Skills for Change:**

Skills for Change stands as an exceptional program because of its commitment to organizational supports that greatly improve the accessibility of their programming. Skills for Change provides services including childminding services, free transit tokens, counselling/crisis counselling, support groups, mentoring, language enhancement and life-skills training to ensure that as many women as possible are able to participate in their programs throughout variances in their career timelines. The Skills for Change program addresses the key issue of giving vulnerable or overworked individuals in a comprehensive manner, which sets it apart from the other twenty program descriptions.

## Women's Leadership in Community Development:

Women's Leadership in Community Development held its onsite learning in Nova Scotia but has a significant remote/e-learning component. This is an exceptional program in its tracking and monitoring of participant demographics and progress after the program. This program seems to be on par with other remote nonprofit education programs because of the overlap in reading content, and is ahead of other programs such as Carleton's MPNL (<https://carleton.ca/mpnl/>) in regards to formally connecting students with mentors and grants. The impact of this program as a women's nonprofit leadership program, which was planned with mandatory evaluation, is immense due to its capabilities to track student progress and demographics. The evaluations were possible due to their partnership with the Canadian Women's Foundation that carefully selects and funds programs with the strongest outcomes and regularly evaluates the program's work. This program's tracking demonstrates our definition of effectiveness given that it not only provides the flexibility of e-learning and therefore a variety of career tracks and timelines, but also is able to provide the support that comes with tracking demographics. This program can determine its effectiveness for participants of different nationalities, community sizes, and other variables while also providing financial assistance such as granting.



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## Recommendations

Through our research, we identified twenty programs in Ontario which provide leadership training for women. Although we did not identify a single program which comprehensively met all the requirements of ONN as being accessible, effective in supporting emerging and existing women leaders, and including ONN's leadership competencies, many of the programs do show promise in supporting women's leadership development. Therefore, working with an existing program while considering the recommendations identified can better support emerging and existing women leaders in the nonprofit sector. Our key recommendations include: enhancing the accessibility of leadership training for women; exploring methods to bridge the gap between emerging and existing leaders; and encouraging utilization of multiple techniques to support women leaders.

### Enhancing Accessibility of Leadership Programs

One of the challenges that may arise when encouraging the participation of nonprofit women leaders in training programs is cost. Many of the programs that we identified, particularly those for existing leaders, could be considered cost-prohibitive for women in the nonprofit sector given that they are unable to provide grants, scholarships or subsidies and do not have the infrastructure for childcare or transportation. In the case of one program coordinator we spoke to, it was assumed that the employer would cover the cost of the program, an accommodation that simply is not sustainable for the nonprofit sector. In the *Change Work* report, the authors highlighted that organizations in the sector are not spending sufficiently on training and professional development due to a lack of resources, and it was unclear to nonprofit organizations whether or not training actually offered meaningful opportunities (Van Ymeren & Lalande, 2015). This finding suggests there is low investment in training in general by nonprofit organizations, therefore supporting women's participation in leadership training may be met with resistance. This issue, however, is not exclusive to the nonprofit sector. Research found in *The Leadership Quarterly* outlines a strategy created to estimate the return on leadership development investment (RODI) (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010). The key goal of the research was to help decision-makers see leadership development as an investment rather than a cost, therefore, calculating

RODI could be valuable to recognize the value in the nonprofit sector to invest in training programs for women leaders (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010). It is recommended that the sector invest in leadership to a greater degree. One way to do this could be through calculating the RODI for leadership programs and disseminating that information to the nonprofit sector to encourage more investment in leadership training (See Appendix 2, pg. 55 for RODI formula).

Understanding the return on leadership development investment may allow for nonprofit organizations to provide funding to support women in leadership programs, perhaps apply for specific grants or approach their community partners to provide funds for leadership training. We also suggest that further research be conducted to find partners to subsidize tuition, or provide bursaries or scholarships that may be available to women leaders in the nonprofit sector in order to make the opportunity for leadership development more accessible to all women. Organizations should begin putting resources towards training leaders and supporting women through leadership training programs, such as giving them paid time to take courses or providing partial financial support to cover costs. If leadership training programs are less cost-prohibitive, more women will have access to leadership development opportunities and hence, decrease some of the barriers they face in accessing leadership roles in the nonprofit sector.

### **Bridging the Gap between Emerging & Existing Women Leaders**

Our literature review emphasized the necessity for leadership development to be ongoing in order to support both emerging and existing leaders. However, during our program analysis and the interview process we found no evidence in Ontario that current programs exist to foster young emerging leaders from their initial program participation through their careers and up until the point that they become clientele for existing leadership programs. Yet, as noted within our methodology, our list of programs is not an exhaustive one, and there are programs such as this in Canada. Namely, the Level Youth program run by the Vancouver Foundation in British Columbia (<https://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants/level-youth-granting>). There was only one program description that discussed an aim for continuity between programs even though two more of the five programs provided multiple leadership programs for groups of people with different age and work experience. This is an interesting finding given that this lack of continuity

could point to another facet of the 'leaky pipeline' that we already observe in women's struggle for decent work.

Therefore, we recommend conducting additional research into the gap between current organizational leaders and the skills of emerging leaders. This would involve looking further into emerging leaders career trajectories and existing leaders journeys' into leadership training opportunities. Such research may indicate what circumstances are most likely to encourage people to participate in emerging leadership training, apply that training to their careers, and continue their leadership education as existing leaders. By consulting with national programs such as the Level Youth granting, ways to encourage this type of program model in Ontario and provide equitable training and leadership opportunities for women over their lifetimes may arise, helping bridge the gap between emerging and existing leader training.

### **Utilizing Multiple Techniques to Support Women Leaders**

Another recommendation based on our research and supported by the literature, is to ensure that training is not done in isolation. Studies found that training and professional development interventions using flexible, multiple training techniques tailored to organisational contexts can improve individual competence and performance (Ayeleke, North, Dunham, & Wallis, 2019). These findings support the importance of including mentoring, coaching, action-based learning, performance appraisal, 360° feedback and self-development projects as part of effective leadership training (Ayeleke, North, Dunham, & Wallis, 2019). A study of women graduate students also indicated the benefits of mentorship in addition to leadership training (Grantham, Pidano, & Whitcomb, 2014). Furthermore, research found that a combination of coaching, classroom instruction, feedback and experiential training has a significant impact on leader performance as well as organizational effectiveness (Stiehl, Felfe, Elprana, & Gatzka, 2015).

Therefore, we recommend that nonprofits build a culture of development and ensure ongoing training for women so that they are more likely to become highly effective leaders. A variety of forms of training allows for more enhanced development of leadership skills and increased effectiveness of the training. Many of the options for continuing leadership development, outside

of traditional training programs, are low-cost and relatively easy to implement, such as creating informal structures of networking through social media channels. We suggest that nonprofits are provided with resources to encourage creating a culture of leadership development through implementing some of the literature suggestions including performance appraisals, 360° feedback and self-development projects.

The importance of mentoring programs for supporting ongoing leadership development was clear from the literature as well as our research. In many cases, however, formal mentoring proved to be challenging due to geography or finding the appropriate mentor-mentee pairing. Therefore, we recommend informal networking opportunities to allow for mentorships to form naturally. This can be done in face-to-face environments, but has also seen success in social media platforms such as Facebook groups, as this does not limit uniting mentors and mentees who are in different geographical regions.



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## Conclusion

Our research focused on identifying what nonprofit leadership programs, networks and models currently exist in Ontario, whether they are accessible and effective in supporting emerging and existing nonprofit leaders and how they compare to ONN's leadership competencies identified for future leaders. Based on this research, we determined what gaps exist in supporting women leaders in the nonprofit sector. Through our research, we identified twenty programs for women's leadership in Ontario, offered in a variety of settings and structures, from long-term university programs to one-day workshops. One of the programs was specifically targeted to the nonprofit sector and others offered training that may be applicable to meet some of the needs of emerging and existing women leaders in the nonprofit sector. There was not a single program that we identified as meeting all the needs of ONN's mandate to support women leaders in the nonprofit sector, however some offered programs that could provide the basis for leadership training (refer to pg. 36/37 for potential programs identified).

The importance of supporting women in nonprofit leadership is essential, with an expected 60% of leadership positions becoming vacant in the near future (McIssac, Park, & Toupin, 2013). There was evidence from the literature and our research that leadership development does help support emerging and existing leaders. However, when analyzing the programs we noted a distinct separation between programs for existing leaders and those for emerging leaders, highlighting a gap in the consistency of training. In terms of accessibility, we considered cost, location and flexibility of the various program offerings. Overall, we discovered through our research that many programs would not be considered accessible for nonprofit women leaders based primarily on cost, and there appears to be a marked difference between existing-leader program access and emerging-leader program provisions. Our interviews demonstrated a desire to aid participants or create a newly funded model, but an inability to sustain any cost-reducing services.

When considering effectiveness, we analyzed the value of women-only leadership training which our research revealed as having the primary benefit of providing a "safe space" for women to build their confidence in leadership. Mentoring was found to be a key factor in supporting women in leadership though was not necessarily most effective in a formal setting. In addition, our literature

also pointed to needing time to “master” leadership and become an effective leader. These findings indicated that existing leadership programs are a promising foundation for women’s leadership development. However, these programs can be tailored and added upon to create greater opportunities for women. Applying a gender lens to these programs does not involve reinventing the programs, but simply emphasizing safe space, mentoring and time for development. Although we had originally hoped to use tracking of outcomes as a measure of the effectiveness of programs, the coordinators we spoke with did not formally track outcomes of participants and program coordinators tended to agree that follow up and evaluation were simply not within their budget, staffing or scope.

Finally, when looking at leadership competencies, we struggled to identify these clearly in the program materials we researched, and through our interviews found that the idea of strict competencies is too removed from program coordinators’ understanding of their programs. Coordinators were significantly more interested in personalizing their programming for women and creating a safe and productive environment to discuss workplace barriers, improvements and practice asserting their leadership style. This may suggest a secondary understanding of leadership by our program coordinators that runs parallel to our research findings.

Hence, there are three key gaps that need to be filled to support women in nonprofit leadership. One of these is to enhance the accessibility of leadership training for women by encouraging investment in leadership, as well as conducting further research to find partners to subsidize tuition or provide bursaries or scholarships. The second opportunity we identified is to explore methods to bridge the gap between emerging and existing leaders by tracking the leadership journeys of existing leaders as well as following the trajectory of emerging leaders careers as they evolve. Lastly, utilization of multiple techniques can support women leaders through nonprofits building a culture of development promoting ongoing and multifaceted training, as well as providing informal opportunities to develop mentoring relationships.

## **Future Research**

Due to the limited time and scope of this project, there are many areas of further research that could provide additional information to consider in supporting women leaders in the nonprofit sector. One area of future research may include conducting interviews with participants of the programs we identified to understand their perspectives on how the leadership training impacted them. This would provide a more well-rounded understanding of the value of the leadership programs and potentially identify additional gaps to support leadership for women. Another opportunity for additional research includes looking at women's leadership programs across Canada and internationally to see if a more complete model of leadership program exists to support the needs of the nonprofit sector. For example, Clore Leadership, (<https://www.cloreleadership.org/about-us>), which is based in the United Kingdom, is aimed at developing and strengthening leadership potential across the cultural and creative sectors. They offer a range of programs, resources, and networking for both emerging and existing leaders in order to develop confidence in their leadership styles and the potential for impact. Other programs in Canada which could be considered for further research include the Aspen Institute (<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs>) and the Banff Centre (<https://www.banffcentre.ca/search/leadership>).

The finding related to leadership competencies, or a lack thereof, in women's leadership programs is yet another area of research potential. The discovery that women-only leadership programs exist to primarily offer a "safe space" for development of skills, and particularly to increase levels of confidence in women, questions the need to heavily focus on leadership competencies. Further research into what the actual benefits are of a women-only space, especially from the point of view of participants of programs, could reveal additional information that is valuable to support women leaders in the nonprofit sector.

In addition, as we found very few programs that focus primarily on serving the nonprofit sector, more research should be done into whether nonprofit women leaders need expressly nonprofit leadership training, or whether leadership training, in general, allows women to gain skills and confidence that can be adapted to nonprofit leadership values and missions. There could also be

the potential to simply include nonprofit statistics and job information into generalized leadership training. The combination of transferable skills that carry across sectors, and the inclusion of nonprofit sector specific knowledge, has the potential to make connections for women leaders and expose them to the possibilities of this sector, without having to design entirely new programming.

We would also suggest looking into formal participant tracking methods and their effectiveness in comparison to informal tracking methods such as the social media groups mentioned in the majority of our interviews. With a lack of established outcomes for these programs, we do not currently have specific answers regarding what these programs achieve. There is also a lack of continuity, best practices or common knowledge for women's leadership programs. Tracking outcomes would not only allow programs to offer deliverables but also be aware of why women-specific programming is sought out and what difference it makes to women's careers. Notably, we recognize that formal evaluation might not be suitable for every program, but it may promote further understanding of these programs and their needs.

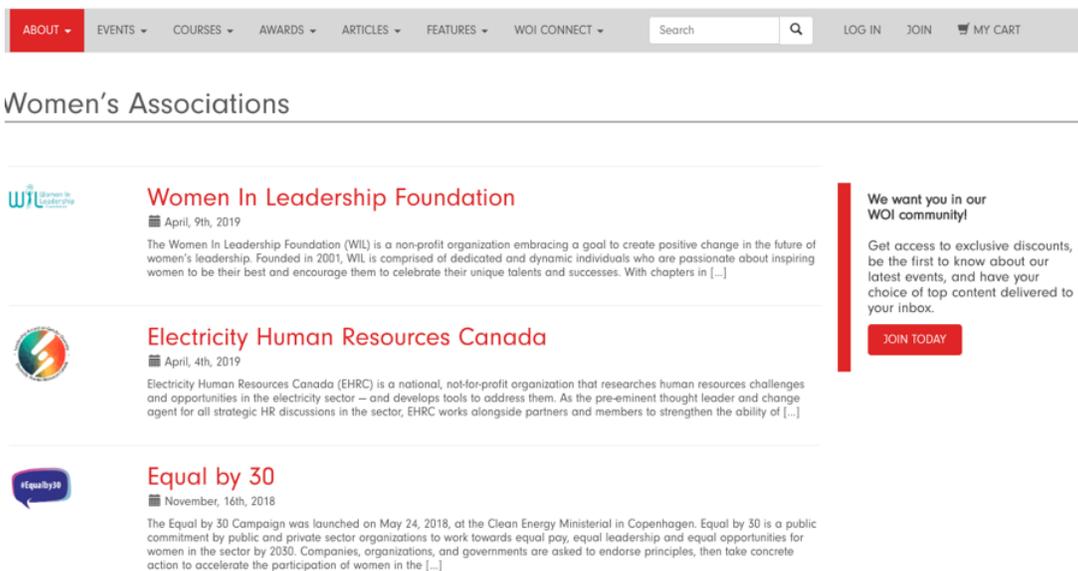
Lastly, it is worth mentioning a recent study of women CEOs in large nonprofit organizations. The research provided a link between female members of the board and women CEO's, hence suggested the importance of nonprofits creating diversity on their board in order to increase the likelihood of women in leadership positions (Lee, 2019). This is another area of potential future research that may uncover external factors that contribute to building opportunities for women in leadership roles.

Altogether, this research has highlighted significant gaps not only within women's leadership programming but also in the crossover of women's leadership and nonprofit leadership programs. As a result of these gaps, the aforementioned conclusions and recommendations look toward bridging the disparity between these two types of programs services through continued research, with the hope that this research will shed light on what leadership programming in Ontario needs to not only reach women interested in leadership education but also foster them through multiple stages of their leadership journeys.

## Appendix 1. Methodology

### Data Collection: Preparation and Process

Our research hinges on the request from the Ontario Nonprofit Network to conduct an environmental scan regarding existing leadership training in Ontario for women in the nonprofit sector. In order to conduct this research, we compiled a list of twenty Ontario based programs that frequently appeared across online searches. Notably, the list of twenty Ontario programs is not exhaustive, and does not reflect national programming, but does bring forward patterns that provincial programs follow. During online searches, we used the keywords "women's leadership" "women nonprofit leadership" "leadership programs Ontario." By using resources such as Charity Village and Women of Influence, which create curated list of programs for individuals to learn about, we were able to sort through lists of leadership programming options (see Figure 1 & 2).



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Women of Influence website, including links for ABOUT, EVENTS, COURSES, AWARDS, ARTICLES, FEATURES, and WOI CONNECT, along with a search bar and options for LOG IN, JOIN, and MY CART. Below the navigation bar, the page title "Women's Associations" is displayed. The main content area features three featured organizations:

- Women In Leadership Foundation**: Founded in 2001, WIL is a non-profit organization embracing a goal to create positive change in the future of women's leadership. It is comprised of dedicated and dynamic individuals who are passionate about inspiring women to be their best and encourage them to celebrate their unique talents and successes. With chapters in [...]
- Electricity Human Resources Canada**: A national, not-for-profit organization that researches human resources challenges and opportunities in the electricity sector – and develops tools to address them. As the pre-eminent thought leader and change agent for all strategic HR discussions in the sector, EHRM works alongside partners and members to strengthen the ability of [...]
- Equal by 30**: The Equal by 30 Campaign was launched on May 24, 2018, at the Clean Energy Ministerial in Copenhagen. Equal by 30 is a public commitment by public and private sector organizations to work towards equal pay, equal leadership and equal opportunities for women in the sector by 2030. Companies, organizations, and governments are asked to endorse principles, then take concrete action to accelerate the participation of women in the [...]

On the right side of the page, there is a red vertical banner with the text: "We want you in our WOI community! Get access to exclusive discounts, be the first to know about our latest events, and have your choice of top content delivered to your inbox." Below this text is a red button labeled "JOIN TODAY".

Figure 1: the Women of Influence website, which lists women's focused associations, leadership groups, foundations and the like.

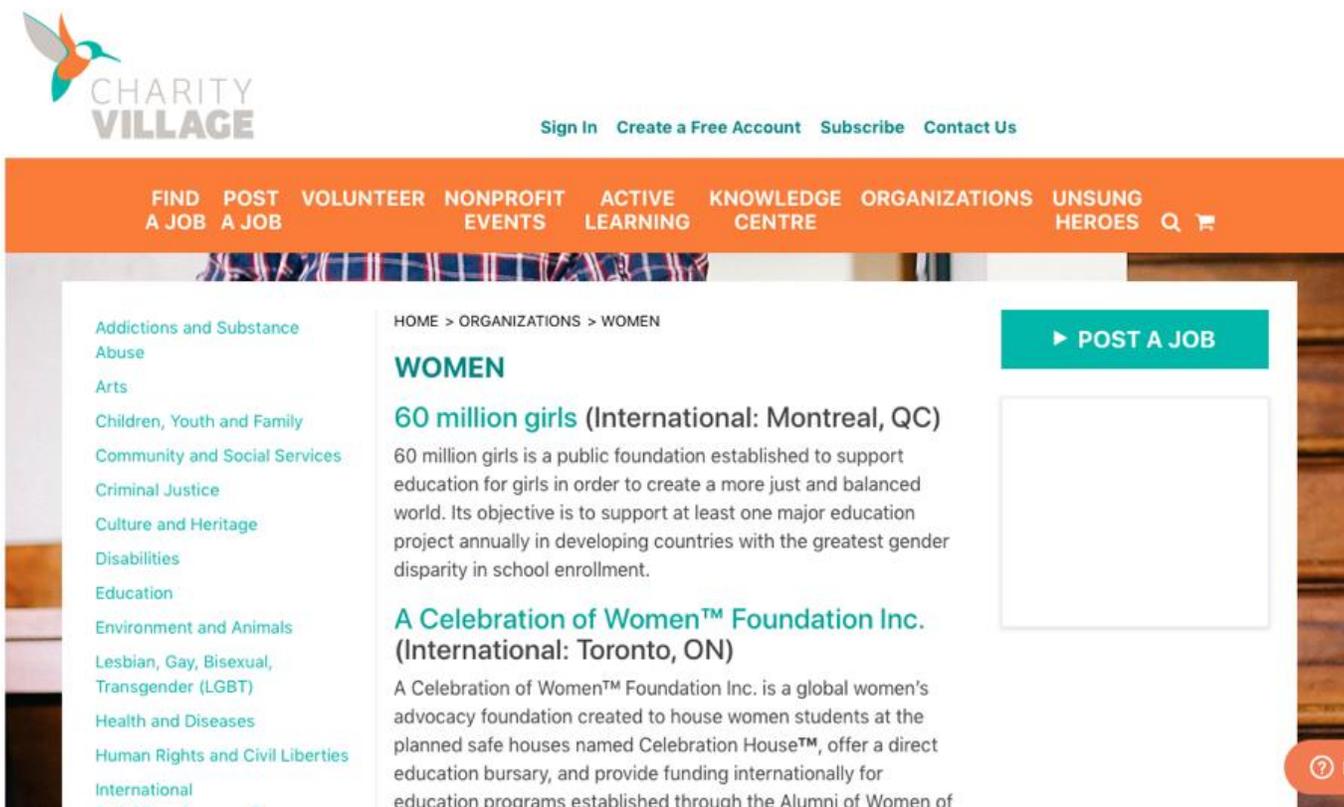


Figure 2: the Charity Village website list of women's organizations.

From these curated lists we went on to create a program table tracking the location, contacts, available resources and notes pertaining to twenty programs across Ontario with the hope to hold key-informant interviews with ten of those prospects. Early on in the online search, we discovered that few programs overlapped between nonprofit leadership and women's leadership. While sorting through Ontario programs, we found that nonprofit leadership programs were most commonly mixed-gender programs, while women's leadership programming often lacked a nonprofit focus.

As a result of this pattern and the ONN's current work in Decent Work for Women, we chose to focus on women's leadership programming over nonprofit leadership programming. In turn, our scope became more narrowly focused on women's leadership programs based in Ontario. This decision to focus on women's leadership was also made in part because of the fact that our literature review demonstrated a more considerable emphasis on transferable skills in leadership and the importance of leadership development components, such as mentorship, rather than a

gender-specific curriculum. It should also be noted that the researchers' current program Master's in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership at Carleton University was excluded from this data set due not only to personal bias regarding the program contents, but also due to its nature as a nonprofit-focused program over a female-focused program.

We determined that for the scope of our project and the availability of resources, key informant interviews would give us the most in-depth information in a format that would highlight the unique word choices of program coordinators and hint at commonalities that we could have missed in creating a survey. Key informant interviews offered us a data collection method that balanced our outreach and analytical work. This time management allowed us to analyze interview contents with a high degree of effectiveness, focusing on common themes that emerged from program coordinators word choices. The purpose of key informant interviews in this research was to collect information from a specific perspective: that of the program coordinators. We chose to look at program coordinators because of their first-hand knowledge about: the content they teach, the intention with which the program is designed and the methods and tools the programs use to teach their participants. We had initially considered interviewing program participants but found that asking about what competencies the programs intend to teach was better suited to the organizers of these programs. Notably, program coordinators were also better suited to our research capacity as their contact information is often readily available, and they are not usually part of a vulnerable population.

With their particular knowledge and understanding, we intended for program coordinators to provide insights on the goals of their programs and the program design. Looking at the perspective of the program coordinators also allows this research to examine the kind of participants these programs hope to attract, whether they were in keeping with the ONN's desire to look at emerging and existing leader programming, as well as differentiate clearly between the resources that programs provided online in comparison to what our key informants emphasized as important program content in their interviews.

## Participants

Name	Position	Agency
David Mossman	Program Director	Women in Leadership Foundation
Jenny Cloutier	Bilingual Project Coordinator	YWCA
Tammy Sweeney	CEO WILB Conference and Born to Lead Conference	Women in Leadership and Business
Beatrix Dart		University of Toronto
Ingrid Richter	Executive-in-Residence at the Telfer School of Management	University of Ottawa

In order to have the best chance for high engagement and response rates to recruit for the interview process, we decided to contact all twenty programs. After reaching out to these twenty programs, we had a response rate of 40% with eight program coordinators expressing an interest in learning more about our research objectives and six who explicitly scheduled an interview time. Out of those six scheduled interviews, five program coordinators responded to our phone calls and completed a full interview. Each program coordinator also consented to being recorded during their interview and having their names and interview content used within this research. Unfortunately, due to a technical difficulty, one of those five interviews had a corrupted audio file. This resulted in 4 fully transcribed interviews and one interview with full meetings notes, but the inability to be transcribed and relayed verbatim for coding purposes. Interestingly, within the 25% response rate, we did begin to notice similarities between participant answers, which seems to indicate a small threshold for the level of saturation. It also should be noted that the people we were able to contact were primarily coordinators of programs for existing leaders rather than emerging leaders.

In order to prepare for these keynote interviews, consisting of the nine questions found in our appendices, we also developed an interview coding sheet to transcribe interviews into, which contained a list of keywords that we anticipated hearing in interview answers. The interviews were

conducted by two of the researchers, with the third researcher conducting coding and content analysis in order to avoid bias towards the interview subjects based on their tone or phrasing.

## **Limitations**

There were four clear limitations observed during the research process. Our primary limitation was our reliance on technology and searching for programs via their online presence such as websites and Eventbrite events. Using this method restricts our ability to discover programs that have strong community presence due to word of mouth, which may not have an online presence. This speaks to a more substantial limitation of the research, which is the fact that women and women's programs are often deemed to be suited to soft networking rather than more standardized or mainstream methods of promotion. As a result of this difference in women's programming, it seems likely that valued local community programming is being overlooked. While online searches are a specific method for collecting program coordination that we utilized, the findings from these surrounding their aims and outreach remain valuable, if different in marketing style from more grassroots or ad-hoc offline programs.

A second limitation of this research concerns program outcomes and effectiveness. Due to the fact that programs did not often track their participants formally, using social media rather than reporting or research to monitor participants, it is out of this research's scope to determine whether career advancements tie directly to these programs. This claim also would have been complicated by the notion of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Women taking these programs are reported to often be seeking a career change or have the intrinsic motivation to work on their leadership styles and improve. So, the women participating may already be more inclined to receive a promotion or be an appealing candidate for hire. We attended to this limitation, supported by research found during our literature review, by shifting our definition of effectiveness. We honed in on organizational support for leadership training as well as organizations willingness to invest in the time commitment required for the ongoing process of leadership development, as the two primary determinants of program effectiveness

Our third limitation was our own worldviews and biases. All three researchers for this paper are cis-gendered, Caucasian women with feminist worldviews and are also currently learning through

a mixed-gender academic nonprofit program. This makes us all intrinsically connected to the subject matter and prone to bias. As we searched through programs and approached our interviews we endeavored to remain neutral in our views. We and our program coordinators were surprised by the need for women-specific training, but found through our research that creating a safe and comfortable space for women allowed them to build their confidence and imbued their decision making with that same trait. Our worldviews caused an amount of surprise and disappointment with this finding as we believe systemic change needs to happen for women to have equal access to leadership opportunities, and, like the women we interviewed, found it counterintuitive to advertise specialized women only program, as it may appear as a sign of female fragility. While we noted our feelings during this research process, we also acknowledged these biases as an opportunity to view the programs through different perspectives. As such, we aimed to put aside our own feelings and examined the interview transcriptions with the aim to compare and contrast the programs' structures and curricula with ONN competencies, rather than make value judgements for their larger societal implications.

The final notable limitation we experienced was the choice to focus on Program Coordinators as interview subjects. While Program Coordinators can give detailed accounts surrounding the intent of the programs, their answers are not reflective of the participant experience and what participants take away from the program design and curriculum. Importantly, we acknowledged that this research presents a particular perspective via program coordinators and is unable to display objective curriculum/itinerary weaknesses or candid opinions about the program structure and impact on participants. In noting this specific perspective, we gained valuable insights into program structures and goals, and maintained focus in these areas, not attempting to speculate on participant outcomes or other abstractions. Hence, the limitations we identified did not diminish the values or importance of our findings.

## **Data Coding and Analysis**

Our data analysis involved coding the interview transcriptions and discovering what the program coordinators believe to be the most essential aspects of their programs, which is displayed through Table A and its themes. Table A shows sorted keywords observed during key-informant

interviews. The analysis of these keywords revealed three salient themes: well-being, networking and accessibility. Interview coding and analysis was conducted by the third researcher, the individual who did not participate in interview collection or transcription.

Notably, Table A’s keywords are arranged first by breadth, the content mentioned by the highest number of coordinators, and secondly by the frequency, the highest sum or number of mentions. We felt this ranking of words by not only its frequency, but also its breadth, would give us the clearest display of related keywords so that we could accurately determine the most salient themes. With this coding of keywords and content analysis we hoped to observe what program coordinators highlighted as important aspects of their leadership program and how those aspects compare to the competencies highlighted by ONN.

### **Content Analysis: Key Informant Interviews**

Table A: Displays sorted keywords, those observed during key-informant interviews.

Word	Beatrix Dart - U of Toronto Leadership in Administration	David Mossman - Women In Leadership Foundation	Ingrid Richter - U of Ottawa Boundless Leadership Program	Tammy Sweeny - WILB and Born to Lead Conferences	Jenny Cloutier - YWCA Canada’s Leadership Program for Youth	# of interviewers used the term	Sum
Safe/Safety	1	2	3	1	2	5	9
Experience (work)	1	1	1	2	3	5	8
Network	6	0	1	3	6	4	16
Opportunity [ies]	1	1	1	0	3	4	6
Change	2	0	3	8	0	3	13
Grow	0	0	2	4	1	3	7

Confidence	5	0	1	1	0	3	7
Comfort	2	1	0	0	3	3	6
Not formal/ Informal	0	0	2	2	2	3	6
Experience (New content)	0	0	1	1	1	3	3
Subsidy	1	0	1	1	0	3	3
Communi- cation	0	0	4	5	0	2	9
Nonprofit	0	0	3	0	5	2	8
Government	4	0	3	0	0	2	7
Next level	0	0	2	4	0	2	6
Conflict	2	0	4	0	0	2	6
Power	0	0	1	0	4	2	5
Free	3	0	1	0	0	2	4
Scholarship	0	1	0	1	0	2	2
Chance	0	0	0	0	7	1	7
Promote	4	0	0	0	0	1	4
Grant	0	2	0	0	0	1	1

The three primary themes that were observed from these keywords were:

1) **Well-being:** Safety, confidence, comfort.

Interestingly, the word with the highest recurrence was safety. Program coordinators stressed the idea that women needed a safe space to express themselves and grow their confidence. Four out of our five interviewers mentioned the safety of women's programming. Notably, the use of the word safety typically followed after the suggestion that women's programs should not have to exist, which brought about a more in-depth discussion regarding the reasons women attend gender-specific programming. The quotations that involved these keywords informed our gender-based findings.

2) **Networking:** Network, opportunity, change, grow, not formal/ informal.

The opportunity to network, meet others and have new experiences was in our top ten keywords. The oddity in this listing is the use of informal or formal, which came up in every discussion of networking opportunities. We also noted that long-time programs and short term programs said similar things about not creating formal mentoring networks or tracking participant progress. These keywords factored into our findings surrounding leadership development beyond the initial program.

3) **Accessibility:** Grant, Chance, Scholarship, Free, Subsidy.

All within the bottom ten keywords, accessibility terms were least frequently used and least frequently prioritized by the program coordinators. This led to a discussion about the difference in expectations between emerging and existing leadership program attendees, wherein participants who have work experience are generally expected to cover their own costs or be provided funding by an employer. This contrasted heavily with the emerging leader programs, in our initial list, that frequently provide financial aid.

While we expected to discuss specific skills and competencies, accessibility and the demographic information of participants, upon coding our interviews, the research displayed significantly different themes than we anticipated. Rather than discussing particular skills or the career trajectory of their participants, we were informed of the need for safe spaces, open conversation and the building of workplace confidence for women. Overall, our findings were markedly different from our expectations.

## Appendix 2 - RODI Formula

As noted in our recommendations, an RODI can be used to encourage the sector to invest in leadership development to a greater degree. Cascio's formula is similar to other return on investment (ROI) equations in that the expected financial cost of investment (in leadership development) is subtracted from the expected financial increase from that specific investment. This number (overall increase or decrease) is then divided by the overall initial investment cost. The product is a rate of return or RODI. The data that is typically required to calculate the RODI include the number of people going through training, the costs of training, the expected effect of training and duration of that effect, as well as the estimated dollar value impact for those who have gone and not gone through the intervention (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010).

Cascio's formula consists of the following:

**RODI =  $\frac{NTdSDy}{C}$**  where:

**N** = number of participants in development intervention.

**T** = expected time duration of change in leadership behaviors (converted to fraction in years such that a year and 6 months would be 1.5).

**d** = effect size of intervention, also considered as the average difference in outcomes between trained participants and untrained counterparts.

**SDy** = standard deviation of dollar valued job performance among untrained employees. When dollarized performance metrics are not available, the performance metric may be a function of 40% of annual salary. In this case, 40% of one's annual salary is a conservative estimate of that individual's dollar value to the firm in terms of performance.

**C** = total cost of training the expected number of participants.

## Appendix 3 - Interview Questions

### Interview Questions:

1. What are the primary objectives or goals of the program?
2. Who are the typical participants in this program? (age, experience, sector, etc.) Follow up: Have you had participants that are working in or interested in the nonprofit sector?
3. *Open question to clarify information not found on the website* - Is the training targeted at existing or emerging leaders/cost of program/etc.
4. Could you tell me the core leadership competencies that your program focuses on?
5. How do you assess whether your program is effective in fostering women's leadership?
6. Do you track where participants career paths lead following completion of the training and if so, please tell me about it?
7. What other support is recommended or provided to participants of the training program? (i.e., mentorship, leadership networks, enhanced training opportunities)
8. What strengths does a women's only program bring? How is it different from mixed-gender programs?

## **Appendix 4 - Program Summaries**

The following are summaries of the twenty leadership and mentoring programs that were investigated through our research:

*(Note: the term “academic” is used as per a programs self-description)*

### **Boundless Leadership**

#### **Ottawa**

Boundless Leaders, offered through the University of Ottawa’s Telfer School of Management, is designed to specifically address the needs and questions of current and emerging women leaders. The program consists of 5 days delivered in 2 modules and welcomes women with 5-10 years of management experience. Participants are asked to appreciate and reframe current strengths and those they can cultivate further. Instructors present strategies to navigate personal and systemic biases; approaches to productively address interpersonal conflict; renewed self-confidence and courage to address setbacks; greater capacity to use power and influence in a way that fits one’s values; and practical ways to balance personal priorities while facing exciting (or daunting) work requirements.

### **Born to Lead Conference**

#### **Niagara Falls**

The Born to Lead (B2L) conference is offered through Women in Leadership and Business, alongside their annual conference. B2L is a national one-day conference for 50 young leaders (ages 16-21) who are female, in Grade 11 and 12, College or University student, or a young professional between the ages of 16-21 who have been identified by teachers, professors, or guidance counsellors as emerging, high potential leaders and entrepreneurs. B2L delegates integrate with Women in Leadership and Business for keynotes, interactive sessions and networking/mentorship opportunities. The two audiences join together in a session called Perspectives (a highlight of the conference from both sides). Youth gather to learn, grow, connect, find their voice, help define their leader influence, and share that learning with others.

## **Break Open, Bust Out, Authentic Leadership for Women of Colour**

### **Toronto**

Anima Leadership offers this two-day forum for women of colour. The organizers claim "Much of leadership is the balancing of many needs, including within oneself." (Animal Leadership, <https://animaleadership.com/training/wl2020/>) Rather than give easy answers, this course invites participants to notice the complexity they dance with when they work with groups of diverse individuals in complex systems where most issues have no easy solution. Topics include: Reclaiming Authenticity: Valuing Emotions as Information, Implicit Bias: Messages we Absorb, Accessing Personal Power: Reclaiming Our Story, Authentic Communication: Recognizing and Unhooking from Triggers, Playing to our Strengths: Growing Our Inner Warrior, Truth or Dare: What would I be doing if...?

## **Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership (BAWL) Program**

### **Fort William First Nation, ON**

Offered through the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), the BAWL Program aims to assist and support Aboriginal women as leaders in their communities. The BAWL program focuses on the issues, challenges, and inequities that Aboriginal women face as they strive to fulfil the responsibilities of jobs, meet the needs of family members, and answer the demands of the community. The program also addresses the issue of under-representation of women in positions of influence, on tribal and band councils, management boards and boards of directors of Aboriginal organizations. Leadership skills teachings focus on leadership methods, facilitation skills, board development training, and financial literacy.

## **Framing Our Future**

### **Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, York Region, and Ottawa Region**

Offered by the Young Women's Leadership Network (YWLN), Framing Our Future connects women and nonbinary youth with leaders and professionals through forums, workshops, and social events. Participants are provided with personal and professional development opportunities that aim to prepare them for civic leadership & career advancement. Participants

are given access to have meaningful engagement with political leaders to prepare them for civic engagement.

### **Leadership Development for Women**

#### **Toronto**

This course is offered through the for-profit Canadian Management Centre. It is designed for female business professionals in the early stages of their leadership journey looking to define their personal leadership vision, overcome limiting beliefs and build relationships to support forward movement in their careers. Participants aim to master emotions in even the most unwelcoming atmosphere, develop a network of support, take smart risks and view competition in a more positive light. They are instructed how to present oneself in a way that earns respect and how to pursue goals with positive energy.

### **Leadership Development for Women: Early Career (formerly Athena)**

#### **Toronto**

Offered through the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management, this two-day forum is aimed at project and team leads, managers, and aspiring leaders. The program addresses fundamental leadership competencies and offers participants effective strategies for performance and career management. The Program promotes personal authenticity and self-cultivation as stepping-stones to team leadership and increased accountability. The Program includes a pre-program EQ-i Emotional Intelligence assessment and post-program coaching to enhance learning and establish a strategy for personal and professional growth.

### **Leadership Development for Women: Mid to Senior Career (formerly Emerging Leaders)**

#### **Toronto**

This program is an academic and experiential four-day forum for women in a mid-level career offered by the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management. The forum promotes leadership effectiveness and business insight by aiming to develop critical skills that shape a career and better organizational and team performance. Participants complete a 360° self-

assessment, review and discuss leadership case studies and models. The program is designed to broaden leadership capacity and better equip women for increased responsibility and accountability through understanding strategic decision-making.

### **Leadership in Administration**

#### **Toronto**

Leadership in Administration is a two-day forum offered through the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management. The program aims to enhance productivity and performance management. Participants receive the professional development and interpersonal tools they need to achieve and maintain administrative performance. The Program includes an EQ Emotional Intelligence assessment and practical, relevant approaches to productivity and time management.

### **Practical Strategies for Successful Women Leaders**

#### **Toronto**

York University's Schulich School of Business offers this two-day forum explicitly designed for women currently in mid-management from any sector who aspire to lead in senior management positions. This program is designed to help women develop an action plan for personal and organizational development that builds on their unique strengths and opportunities as leaders. Drawing from research and best practices, as well as stories from successful women, it aims to help participants identify the obstacles in their own workplace and increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of what it takes to be successful as a woman leader.

### **The Judy Project**

#### **Toronto**

The Judy Project is a one-week forum for executive-level women, offered through the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management. It covers themes including Excellence and Influential Women Leaders, Becoming an Exceptional Leader, Leadership and Networks, The Art of Personal Branding, Leadership in Organizational Crisis, Global Leadership, Leader as Architect: Designing Your Future. Intensely experiential, this forum aims to enable women to embrace their ambition,

cultivate personal and team leadership from within their organizations and form a critical peer advisory board to support their evolving leadership priorities

### **Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women's National Leadership Program**

#### **Orillia, Ontario**

YWCA Canada delivers this comprehensive bilingual leadership program that includes online learning sessions and talks, self-study, peer mentorship and support, and civic engagement activities along with a three-day immersive training and networking summit. Participants learn strategies for effective leadership, develop a better understanding of anti-racism and anti-oppression, financial literacy skills and project management skills, governance and decision making, and tools for handling confrontation or conflict.

### **WeWIN Mentoring**

#### **Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa, Montréal, and Saskatchewan**

Offered by the Women's Infrastructure Network, this program is designed for women in the engineering, finance, law, and public sectors. Participants are matched with a mentor on a one-to-one basis and encouraged to meet on a bi-weekly basis. There are three goals of the program; to provide opportunities to create individual connections and engage with professionals in the infrastructure sector, allow mentors to develop leadership skills while providing guidance to aspiring leaders and to support WIN's imperative of enhancing the profile of women in the Canadian infrastructure space.

### **Women and Leadership Program**

#### **Toronto**

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS's) Women and Leadership Program consists of a series of six professional development sessions that blend theory with practical applications, and provide an opportunity for women working in the sport or physical activity sector to share experiences, reflect on ideas and apply specific techniques. The sessions allow for networking opportunities among participants.

Available workshops include Effective Communication, Conflict Management, Influencing Change, Life Balance, Effective Networking, and Leading with Confidence.

## **Women Connecting with Women Workshops**

### **Toronto**

Offered through Skills for Change, the Women Connecting with Women Workshops address the systemic issues of newcomer women who face multi-barriers. Not especially leadership focused, Women Connecting with Women aims to provide newcomer women with tools and resources to reduce social isolation, increase self-esteem, increase their networks and build confidence. The program also provides access to one on one counselling/crisis counselling, support groups, mentoring, language enhancement and life-skills training. The end goal is for newcomer women to feel empowered and to support their social and economic integration in the Canadian Society.

## **Women in Leadership**

### **London ON**

This course, aimed at high-level leaders, is offered through the Ivey Business School at Western University. Women in Leadership explores insights and the latest research about gender, diversity, inclusion, and their implications for leadership, the self, and organizations. Students learn together about personal leadership effectiveness and leading strategically to implement bold visions. Participants work individually with a coach to work through situations that create or reduce leadership energy. In small groups, students experiment with different leadership behaviours and their impact. The program focuses on strategic alignment, leading change, and leading others for long-term sustainable performance. Participants will look at their contexts for leadership, and develop goals and practical ideas for implementing change and enhancing performance back at home.

## **Women in Leadership and Business Conference**

### **Niagara Falls**

A 2.5-day Canadian interactive learning and development conference designed for women leaders. The creators, Women in Leadership and Business, claim that they are "passionate about

cultivating leaders of all ages, inspiring them to lead with integrity, and helping them connect in magical ways.” (Women in Leadership and Business [www.wilbconference.com/](http://www.wilbconference.com/))

## **Women In Leadership Foundation (Mentorship Programs)**

### **British Columbia with Ottawa Chapter**

The Women In Leadership Foundation offers three mentorship programs; accelerated mentorship, online mentorship, and employer internal mentorship. The award-winning mentorship programs match rising star young women with mentors from diverse backgrounds.

## **Women’s Leadership in Community Development**

### **Nova Scotia (accessible remotely)**

This one year program is offered through Coady Institute at St. Francis Xavier University, in partnership with the Canadian Women’s Foundation. This course is primarily focused on women engaged in community development practice, and supports emerging women leaders in Canada’s nonprofit sector. The program provides a broader, more inclusive approach to leadership, and will match students with mentorships when available. Participants are suggested to have demonstrated leadership experience in a social or economic development endeavour which focuses on addressing the rights of women and girls and/or in sectors such as livelihoods or inclusive economic development, food security, environment, access to education and health care, governance, or political engagement of women.

## **Women Let’s Take Our Place Program**

### **Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta and Nova Scotia**

This social change project is organized by the Girls Action Foundation and offers training, workshops and micro-grants. Up to 17 proposals, designed by young women and non-binary youth who complete a six-week, bilingual civic engagement and leadership training, are chosen to receive a micro-grant of up to \$1,000 to support the implementation of their project. Training is offered online in 6 sessions and includes the participation of successful women leaders from marginalized communities across Canada who will inspire and mentor participants.

## References

### Leadership Programs:

Boundless Leadership

<https://telfer.uottawa.ca/en/executiveprograms/our-programs/blw>

Born to Lead Conference

<https://www.wilbconference.com/born-2-lead/>

Break Open, Bust Out, Authentic Leadership for Women of Colour

<https://animaleadership.com/training/wl2020/>

Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership (BAWL) Program

<http://www.onwa.ca/bawl>

Framing our future

<https://www.ywln.ca/programs>

Leadership Development for Women

<https://cmcoutperform.com/leadership-development-for-women>

Leadership Development for Women: Early Career (formerly ATHENA)

<http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment/InitiativeForWomenInBusiness/Programs/LD1>

Leadership Development for Women: Mid to Senior Career (formerly EMERGING LEADERS)

<http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment/InitiativeForWomenInBusiness/Programs/LD2>

Leadership in Administration

<http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment/InitiativeForWomenInBusiness/Programs/Leadership-Administration>

Practical Strategies for Successful Women Leaders

<http://seec.schulich.yorku.ca/program/practical-strategies-for-successful-women-leaders/details/>

The Judy Project

<http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment/InitiativeForWomenInBusiness/Programs/Judy-Project>

Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women's National Leadership Program

<https://www.thinkbigleadnow.com/>

WeWIN Mentoring

<https://www.womensinfrastructure.ca/mentoring>

Women and Leadership Program

<https://www.caaws.ca/leadership/women-and-leadership-program/>

Women Connecting with Women Workshops

<https://skillsforchange.org/womenconnect/>

Women in Leadership

<https://www.ivey.uwo.ca/academy/programs/program-finder/women-in-leadership/>

Women in Leadership and Business Conference

<https://www.wilbconference.com/>

Women In Leadership Foundation Mentorships

<https://www.womeninleadership.ca/>

Women's Leadership in Community Development

<https://coady.stfx.ca/education-ie/womens-leadership-in-community-development/>

Women, Let's Take Our Place

<https://www.girlsactionfoundation.ca/womenletstakeourplace>

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