

# FEPS training manual

# BECAUSE THE LEADERSHIP MATTERS

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#leadership #progressive values #empowering others



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. FEPS TRAINING MANUAL</b> .....	4
<b>2. LANDING</b> .....	6
<b>3. START</b> .....	7
<b>4. GET GOING</b> .....	8
<b>5. ICEBREAKER WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME</b> .....	8
<b>6. THE LANDING, THE ICEBREAKER – TIME FOR THE CONTRACT OF THE SEMINAR</b> .....	10
<b>7. THE CONTRACT IS THERE, TIME FOR THE AGENDA</b> .....	10
<b>8. WHAT IS LEADERSHIP</b> .....	12
<b>9. PERSONAL, PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP</b> .....	12
<b>10. SO WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?</b> .....	13
<b>11. WHAT ARE THE OTHER QUALITIES YOU HAVE THAT MAKE YOU A PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED LEADER?</b> .....	14
<b>12. FROM FORMULATING THE MISSION TO LEADING</b> .....	16
<b>13. LAST BUT NOT LEAST</b> .....	17

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# **FEPS TRAINING MANUAL**

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# FEPS TRAINING MANUAL

The series of Training Manuals is part of the toolbox of the FEPS European Progressive Training Lab. They were created to:

- Safeguard the training concepts prepared and provided by the FEPS Pool of Trainers
- Ensure that the methodology is available beyond the event for which it was designed, remaining instructive for the progressive movement and the broader European audience.
- Support the enhancement of the European non-formal and informal education by providing materials that can be used across the continent.

This training was specifically developed as a leadership training for the young generation of leaders from across Europe, who gathered at the FEPS and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Paris seminar at Massy 17th-19th July 2025. The event took place at the fringe of the Congress of the Young European Socialists (YES) and, based on the feedback, was well received and requested to be repeated. This allows us to state that the methodology presented here was successfully tested and can be further recommended for application, either in part or in its entirety.

## The purpose of the FEPS Training Manual is to:

1. Offer insights into the FEPS Training Activities across Europe
2. Enable sharing methodologies, building a capacity for the informal and non-formal education
3. Provide paths to multiplication across the EU and beyond

## The Training Manuals consist of:

1. An outline of the seminar that can be used as a blueprint
2. An accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
3. Whenever appropriate, additional materials are to be used as part of the training, e.g., topical policy briefs, policy studies, or books.

## Members and Trainers can use the material:




1. In its entirety or partially
2. In English or translated

## Social media:

1. If you / your organisation / your pool of trainers decide to use this material, we would be grateful for a reference to FEPS and notification.
2. We also encourage you to send us pictures of the training you conduct with our resources. We welcome references via social media.

## TAG AND FOLLOW US

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# INTRODUCTION

## THEME: BECAUSE THE LEADERSHIP MATTERS

**Duration:** 4-hour seminar

*Originally, the training elements were implemented in a shorter time (2 hours); however, it is highly recommended to use the full day to enable deeper reflection, more space for working in pairs/groups, and a proper feedback session at the end.*

**Target Group:** Young leaders of political, civil society and trade union organisations

**Size of the Group:** up to 30 participants

**Number of trainers needed:** recommended to use two experienced trainers from the FEPS Pool of Trainers.

*If there is only space for one trainer in some elements, this Trainer can involve participants in some of the tasks.*

### Materials needed:

1. FEPS Manual “Because Leadership matters.”
2. The venue needed is a room to seat 30 people. Some extra space will be needed when they break into groups and/or work in pairs. Because of the nature of the training, it is important that the start-up is a circle.
3. PowerPoint, screen, projector, laptop,
4. Papers, pens, envelopes for participants
5. Flip chart with paper and markers
6. Depending on the methodology of dividing groups: pictures from a magazine

**Aim:**

This training aims to discuss the role of the political leaders with young leaders aspiring to serve further, implement political projects and accomplish political missions. This training is particularly timely within the context of European Union politics, where there is a growing Democratic Deficit, and claims are made that the distance between elites and citizens prompts young people, especially, to turn their back on democratic politics. As a result of disenchantment, they often choose to support extremist, radical, anti-democratic and anti-European forces. Consequently, the training:

- Explores leadership theories
- Identifies the values and characteristics that the participants consider defining for modern leadership
- Explains the difference between leadership and management, as well as dives into the meaning of empowering leadership
- Help design the actions that can make politics more inclusive (and by extension help bridge the gap between politics and the European citizens)
- Looks at ways leaders can examine themselves, as well as seek feedback
- Helps making categories such as “political mandate”, “legitimacy”, “political responsibility” tangible



# LANDING

**Time:** N/A

**Materials:** Music (optional)

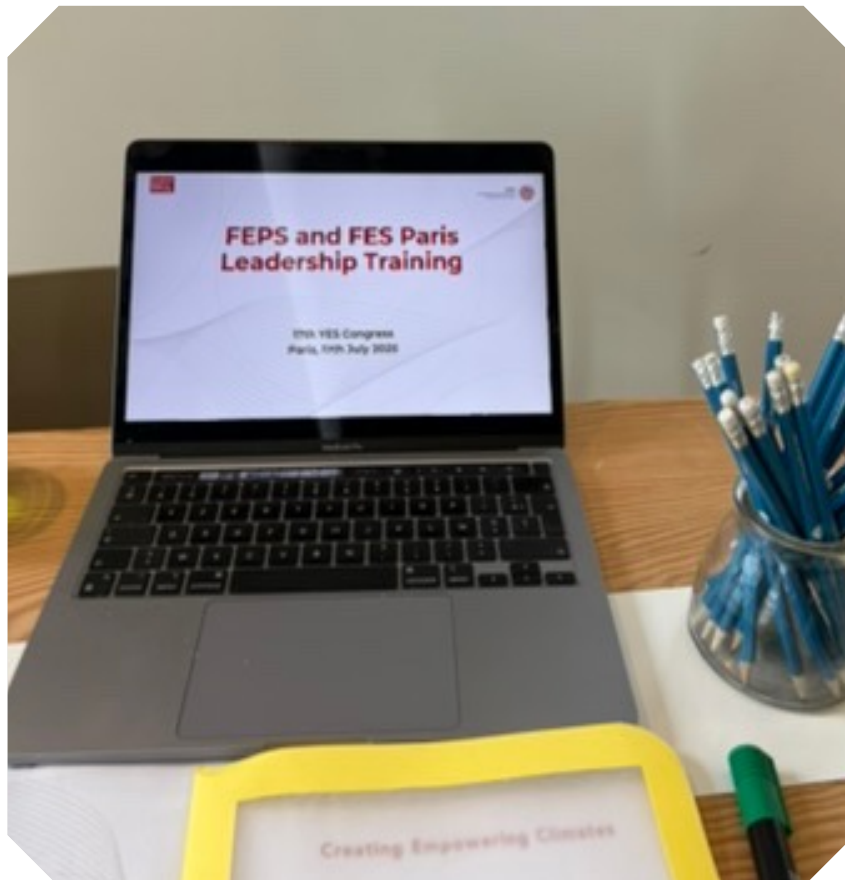
**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 1

Prepare the room in advance so that all Trainers and participants begin in a single circle. It is important to impress the message that, though this is a “Leadership” training, one must always remember that, during the training, all participants are equal, with equal rights, and are expected to contribute to the success of the seminar actively.

*Tip:* You may have funny music playing as a welcome tune, so that when the participants arrive, they can’t resist a smile and/or curiosity.

Upon arrival, all the flipcharts you have prepared and will be using should remain covered so that the seminar evolves naturally – almost as a continuing conversation.



# START

**Time:** 10 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

**Materials:** None / Tennis ball (optional)

**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 1

The trainers welcome the participants gathered and introduce themselves. For this particular training, it is recommended to make a round in which everyone introduces themselves, stating who they are and explaining their expectations for this training.

*Tip:* Because you want to create an atmosphere in which people feel comfortable, instead of going clockwise around the circle, you may hand participants a tennis ball and ask them to pass it to the next person to speak, who is not the person seated beside them. Throwing a ball makes participants both make eye contact with one another and pay attention to who has and has not yet spoken; it can also prompt some laughter if someone misses the ball or throws it incorrectly. That serves as an additional ice-breaker.



# GET GOING

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Materials:** None

**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 2

Before diving into the theory, the Trainers should shed light on why they were keen on preparing this training. The way to do that is to:

- a) Explain the motivation
- b) Share personal experience/anecdote about leadership
- c) Offer an insight into leaders and leadership styles that the Trainers admire

*Tip:* This can be the second slide (after the opening) in the PPT, presenting a list of leaders the Trainers found particularly memorable, inspiring, etc. In the PPT attached, the three selected leaders are presented with the photos of the book covers that they wrote and published, which also nicely link to the idea that *Leaders create history, but there is also always a story to tell about them.*

*Importantly,* try to ensure that the leaders you name as examples also represent diverse qualities, genders, and geographical regions. Since inclusiveness and diversity are also subjects touched upon during the training, it is key to remain consistent at every step.

# ICEBREAKER WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers, coloured post-its in two sizes

**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 3 - 4

As a Trainer, you have now spoken for a while, so it is time to open the floor again to the participants. This is slide 3 of the PPT presentation.

The slide suggests an introduction round, but if you have done that at the “Start” step, you should skip it here, of course. This means you will need to ask two questions:

- **Introduce the leader who inspires you**
- **Name one specific quality that makes them stand out**

This is a moment when the two Trainers have to divide the roles between them, and if there are fewer than two, the Trainer will need to ask the participants for help.

To complete this step, you will need a flipchart and post-its in two sizes

- Smaller to write the names of the leaders, the participants will mention
- Larger to write qualities they will be referring to

The Trainer in the circle asks participants one by one, while the Trainer at the Flipchart notes the answers on the respective post-its.

*Tip:* Try to avoid and discourage comments like “but I have too many role models – can I name two?” Encourage the participants to tell the story of why the leader of their choosing is special, and then ask them to come up with one specific quality they appreciate.

After the round is finished, as a Trainer, try to group the qualities and have a short debrief with the participants. If time allows, you may also ask participants to grade the values they find most important (e.g., colour dot stickers) and then discuss why these and not the others.

*Tip:* If you expand the discussion, you can also ask an additional question about the context: *are these qualities particularly important now, or have they always been? Is there any qualitative change in expectations towards leaders/ leadership over time? Does every time need a different type of leader? Are these qualities the same and of the same importance for women and men?*



# THE LANDING, THE ICEBREAKER – TIME FOR THE CONTRACT OF THE SEMINAR

**Time:** 10 minutes max.

**Materials:** Flipchart, markers

**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 5

By now, the discussion should already be going quite smoothly, and there should be an emerging consensus in the group regarding which concepts will be the subject of the training: leadership, qualities of leaders, and, implicitly, how to become values-based, strong, successful leaders. So this is the right time to come to a point where the unfolding of the seminar will be explained. Before presenting the agenda, it is relevant for participants to agree on the rules for the seminar.

If you are with two Trainers, you split the tasks between yourselves – with one moderating the debate and the other taking the notes on the flipchart. It is good to swap the roles you had in the previous step (so the one who was writing takes over the moderation now, and vice versa).

Ask participants to come up with 10 rules to be followed by everyone during the seminar. It can be very practical things (like “no use of mobile phones”) or more ethical (like “respect other people’s opinions”, “don’t interrupt speakers”). These 10 rules don’t have to be exhaustive, but it is important to have them and agree on them, as this constitutes a binding contract.

*Tip:* This is also the moment you, as a Trainer, can reiterate that the responsibility for the seminar’s success lies with everyone, as much with Trainers as with participants.

# THE CONTRACT IS THERE, TIME FOR THE AGENDA

**Time:** 10 minutes max.

**Materials:** PPT

**Set up:** plenary / circle

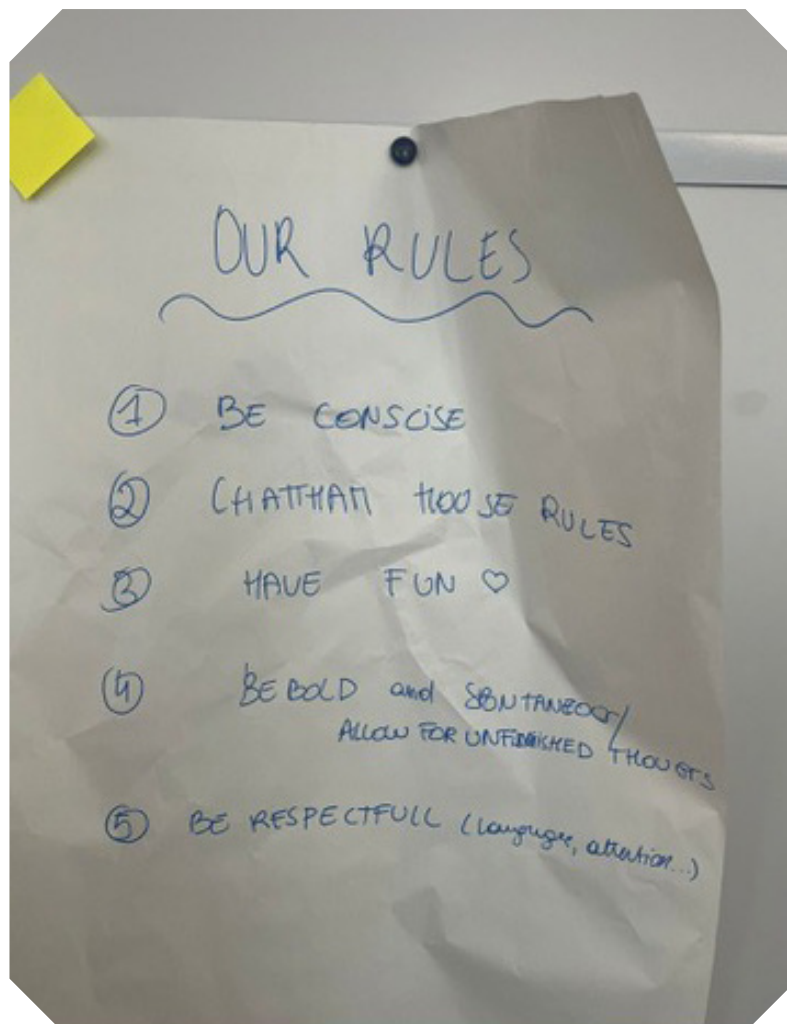
**PPT:** Slide 6

At this point, you should introduce the agenda and explain what will be the plan.

- If you run a several-hour or day-long seminar, do not forget to tell the participants when the breaks are foreseen.
- Explain how the building blocks relate to one another and how they are anchored in what you have already built in this workshop (understanding of leadership, objective of the training, contract)
- Use slide 6 from the PPT.

*Tip:* As you will be speaking after this point for a while, it is good to remember to ask participants if they are in agreement with the proposed agenda, where they want to put emphasis, etc.

*Tip:* This may be a good moment for a break, as after this segment, you will want to explain the leadership theories, which is the least interactive part of the Training, so it is good to give everyone a moment to stretch their legs and take a deep breath.



# WHAT IS LEADERSHIP

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** PPT

**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 7 - 9

This is the theoretical part, where you explain terminology:

- Leadership
- Leadership theories
- Leadership styles
- Transformational leadership
- Differences between leadership and management

For the background, you will find schemes on slides 7, 8, and 9 of the corresponding PPT presentation.

*Tip:* As this is a lot of knowledge to acquire, include examples relevant to the participants and ask them for their opinions as well. Draw also from the post-its from the earlier step to anchor your explanation in what has already been said by the participants. Ask also how relevant diverse issues are – *is authenticity more important than qualifications? Is transactionalism the basis of politics? Can you be a great leader when you can't manage?* etc.

# PERSONAL, PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** flipchart papers, markers

**Set up:** plenary / circle, then divide into groups of 3

**PPT:** Slide 10 - 11

This is a time to come back to the participants as leaders (leaders in making) themselves. You shall divide the participants into groups of three and give each group a flipchart and markers. Your introduction to this segment should draw on reference to the qualities that have been named as leadership qualities at the beginning by the participants, the theoretical knowledge you have just shared and the context (reiterate the democratic deficit, gap, anti-elitism – which particularly pertain to the relations between European citizens and the EU level politics).

Then you move to the exercise:

- **We divide ourselves into groups of 3, and you will have 5 minutes**
- Each group would need to work on a definition of what is principle-oriented leadership
- Definition would have to have 3 key characteristics
- Please put them on the flipchart (use capital letters)

After the time is up, ask participants to return to the circle and present (group by group) what they came up with. Check jointly: what are the common features? What are the diverse ones?

Afterwards, move to the key question: is principle-oriented leadership a way to succeed? Can it succeed in the age of populism? What about European progressive leadership – are there general principles or specific ones that apply?

## SO WHAT KIND OF LEADER ARE YOU?

**Time:** 10 (15) minutes

**Materials:** white papers A4 (one per participant), pens

**Set up:** plenary / circle – then individual sitting

**PPT:** Slide 12 - 13

The previous rounds were devoted to establishing a theoretical framework and to helping participants discuss *leadership* as a concept in the broader context (EU democratic deficit, anti-elitism, transactionalism in politics). These were collective exercises, so now is the time to turn to the participants for their own assessment of themselves as leaders (upcoming leaders). This will allow them to apply what they have learnt to analysing themselves.

Start by distributing a paper and a pen to each person. Explain that they will be creating their own “personal page” to map their leadership. Each of them will be encouraged to sit at a distance from the others, so that they can calmly reflect and have space to fill in the page. Then:

- Ask participants to use the page in a landscape format
- And ask them to write now only on the left-hand side
- Ask them then to respond to the following questions:
  - a) What type of a leader are you?
  - b) Make an inventory of your own qualities.
  - c) Consider all aspects – drawing from professional, political and personal lives.
  - d) Don't be too modest
  - e) Add 2 weaknesses

Following the explanations, ask the participants to find for themselves a (relatively) cosy space where they can complete the answers. They should be able to do so without fearing that other colleagues may get a glimpse of what they are writing. Ask them to come back to the circle once they are done with the task. The time for this exercise is short because you want the answers to be spontaneous and not tempered (especially by second thoughts).

*Tip:* Underline that, though this is done within the seminar format, the answers to the questions remain private, and there will be no need to present them. The only questions you shall be asking at the end are how participants feel after filling in the page, whether something surprised them, etc.

## WHAT ARE THE OTHER QUALITIES YOU HAVE THAT MAKE YOU A PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED LEADER?

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** white papers A4 (one per participant), pens (the same ones as in the exercise that has just been completed)

**Set up:** plenary / circle – then sitting in pairs

**PPT:** Slide 13 – 15

After everyone has returned to the circle and you have had a short debriefing, you will move to the next step. The purpose of this one is for the participants, who have just reflected on how they see themselves as leaders, to have a chance of learning how others perceive them. Assuming that the people in the room know each other, or at least everyone has at least one person in the room who knows them better, you can divide them into pairs. If any participants know anyone, explain that in the next step, they can rely on the impressions they have of the others (having now been in the room for a while).

You will ask participants to form pairs, in which they hopefully know each other. In those pairs, they will need to have a conversation, within which they shall:

- a) Offer each other feedback – what is the quality of the other person's leadership that they most value
- b) Describe an activity they would like to do with the other person or something you would like to learn from her.

You give the pairs 10 minutes to discuss, and you ask the participants to fill in their personal page – the column on the right with the information that they have just acquired. After they have done that, they shall look at the page again and reflect for themselves:

- What was easy about this exercise? What was difficult?
- Was any of the information received from other participants particularly welcome or helpful? If so, what was it? Why did you like hearing it? Was it the manner in which the positive information was conveyed, or was it what was said?
- Did the exercise help you know or understand others a little better? Did the exercise generate trust? Was communication open and candid? Why or why not?
- Did the exercise enhance your feelings towards the group generally? Why or why not?

Once all pairs have completed their work and everyone has had a chance to ponder the questions, ask participants to return to the plenary circle and discuss them aloud. They do not need to offer specifics, as announced before, but they must draw conclusions, as this is a significant learning moment in this seminar.

*Tip:* Depending on which turn the debriefing takes, make sure to anchor the conclusions in the context and see whether the lessons learnt from this exercise are in any way helpful when discussing the contemporary challenges leaders are facing in Europe (i.e., mediatisation, polarisation, anti-elitist mood). You may land with the question of what is more relevant to participants when trying to become principle-oriented leaders – their own values and self-confidence, or the perception of others.

## WHAT ARE THE OTHER QUALITIES YOU HAVE THAT MAKE YOU A PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED LEADER?

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** flipchart papers, markers

**Set up:** plenary / circle – then sitting in groups

**PPT:** Slide 16

*Tip:* If your design allows 5 hours - a full day of the event, this is again the moment in the programme when one could consider a break – to stretch legs, get some energy, etc.

You begin this step in a circle, explaining that by now you have discussed leadership (and leadership versus management), diverse theories, principle-oriented leadership, and the kinds of leaders the participants are themselves. The next segment will focus less on *them as leaders* (as this has already been covered) and more on their missions as leaders. This connects to the debate on leaders' abilities to deliver on their promises (and in case not, recurring democratic deficit – that is observed overall, but especially in relation to the EU level politics).

You explain the exercise, which will be about forming smaller groups (of up to 5 people). You explain that leaders want to lead, but for that to have purpose, they need to define the direction. Ask participants to think about

- **What** is the **change** you would like to make
- **How** would you like to make this change
- What will be your **personal contribution**

Then split them into working groups of no more than 5 people, ask them to present their answers, and stick them to the flipchart using the different colours of post-its. The role of the fellow participants in the group is to ask questions, pursue the precision of the promise, etc.

Once they have completed the exercise, ask the participants to return to the plenary and report.

*Tip:* If the participants are from the same organisations, you can expand the briefing and ask them whether they agree with the proposed changes, whether they see a problem with the division of tasks, and how they would ensure that personal contributions are adequately valued.

# FROM FORMULATING THE MISSION TO LEADING

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** flipchart papers, markers

**Set up:** plenary / circle – then sitting in groups

**PPT:** Slide 17

Building on the previous step, ask participants how they would like to convince others that the mission they are proposing is not only transformative but also inclusive and empowering. This is a stepping stone to a discussion on “Empowering leadership,” on which you may want to ask everyone to reflect briefly.

And with that, it is time to discuss the obstacles to the mission and the limitations of one’s leadership. This is the reason to ask at this point for everyone to take flipchart papers (one per person) and ask them to:

- ✓ **List positive actions you could take right now to create a more empowering climate in your organization.**
- ✓ **List restraints (anything that seems to prevent people from expressing their power) that could be removed to create a more empowering climate.**
- ✓ **Star those that could be removed right away by you.**
- ✓ **Select one restraint that is particularly troublesome and that you could remove on your own. List one action you could take to get this restraint removed.**

*Tip:* This is the basics, but with the discussion, you could expand the topic. If you have more time, you can re-divide the group into two (or more, however in equal numbers) to make one focused on positive actions and the other on restraints – and, with the contributions that have just been made, come up with a strategy.

# LAST BUT NOT LEAST

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** pens, paper, envelopes

**Set up:** plenary / circle

**PPT:** Slide 18

This is the last step of the seminar. Hence, the recommendation is to include a step here that can help structure the knowledge and ensure continuity of the reflection beyond the seminar.

The task is “to write a letter to oneself”. Remind the participants gently that they are leaving the training with knowledge about:

- a) What is your personal and collective view on leadership
- b) What do you want to achieve in this mandate as a leader
- c) What are the things you need to do to become an empowering leader

So the next, and last, step is to write a letter to oneself. As the facilitator, you need to insist that the participants learnt during the training, and now they need to turn what they know into a commitment. So it is only right that you ask them to say to themselves in the future something they promise they will do, something important.

*Tip:* This is a moment you can stop the event and debrief, and you may also wish to add an energizer.



**In case of any questions or queries on training, please contact Elena Gil.**

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