Intergenerational Leadership:
Tools to power your next Leap of Leadership

Philosopher Roman Krznaric warns us that humanity has "colonized the future" with growing greenhouse gas emissions, risky technologies and other systemic injustices. But from "future design" political planning in Japan to legal cases seeking personhood for rivers to protect nature in Aotearoa and India, "time rebels" are actively struggling to change that. We hope these tools will help you to forge the strong intergenerational connections and solidarities needed for your own leadership in the #TimeRebellion!

What are some of the fault lines or conflicts emerging between generations?

- Power-sharing from the get go among youth vs. "passing the torch" from older leaders down.

- Youth feel tokenized/depoliticized vs. elders feel their experience/struggle is overlooked.

- "Sandwich generations" feeling invisibilized or under-supported as they age out of youth movements or enter new leadership roles in mainstream organizations.

- "Intergenerational discounting" a breakdown in the reciprocal obligations of care and respect, often by withdrawing empathy and participation in intergenerational collaboration.

What are some strategies for building strong intergenerational collaborations?

To understand your unique needs, consider these questions:

- What is the level of trust between people of different generations in your group? Do your rules or good relationships depend on youth or subordinates agreeing with those in positions of power?

- What are the intergenerational responsibilities? What resources, support or access to decision-makers can be provided to younger leaders? What is new that older leaders could learn?

- What are the different historical oppressions, external power dynamics and intergenerational traumas that might be affecting how people in your group walk through the world?

Responding to these questions to move from binaries to reciprocity could include:

- Get on the same page by setting assumptions together before big meetings, at the start of new managerial relationships, and at the early design stage of projects.

- Make openness to being challenged a group norm. Bring people together through shared values and desire to stay in relationship with one another to work through disagreements.

- Consider "reverse" or reciprocal mentorships to ensure youth/emerging leaders benefit from the wisdom of experienced leaders while elder leaders also have a chance to understand emerging issues of strategic, moral and cultural significance.

- Build trust with storytelling. Facilitate sharing about what intergenerational relationships look like in people's own lives, what they feel misunderstood about and what excites them.

- Be intentional and consider multiple stakeholders. A one-size-fits all approach doesn't work any better internally than it does in our projects or communications.

Recommended Resources

- **OpenglobalRights:** "Breaking binaries and intergenerational reciprocity" by *Marisa Viana (RESURJ) and Ruby Johnson (formerly of FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund).*

- **Layla Saad**: Good Ancestor Podcast hosted by Layla, an East African, Arab, British, Black, Muslim thought leader and anti-racist educator living in Qatar.