

Leadership Dialogue 2025

**Demonstrating the
UN values through
our behaviours**

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE AND MATERIALS



Welcome to the United Nations Leadership Dialogue

Thank you for taking part in the 2025 United Nations Leadership Dialogue. These annual discussions provide an opportunity for all of us at the United Nations to engage in meaningful conversations about topics that shape our work.

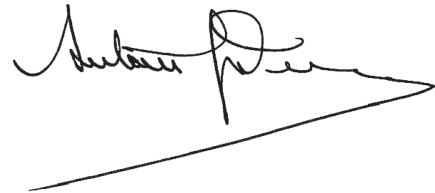
Each year, senior leaders initiate a guided Dialogue with their staff. In turn, they continue the conversation with their teams, ensuring that every United Nations staff member has the chance to participate. This cascading approach allows all of us to reflect on issues that impact how we carry out our roles daily.

Since its launch in 2013, the Leadership Dialogue has addressed a range of critical topics – from the meaning of international civil service, to last year’s discussion on navigating outside activities with integrity.

This year’s topic, **Demonstrating the United Nations Values through our Behaviours**, focuses on the five behaviours from the United Nations Values and Behaviours Framework. Created in 2021 with input from nearly 4,500 staff members, this Framework builds on the 1999 ‘Competencies for the Future’. It reflects years of internal and external changes, to help ensure that our ways of working align with the Organization’s priorities and operational needs.

Since October 2024, the Framework has been integrated into performance management – and will soon fully replace the 1999 competencies.

I extend my gratitude to everyone involved in making this Dialogue possible. Let us all keep working together to build a culture that fully reflects the United Nations Values and Behaviours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

António Guterres
Secretary-General

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Background

In 1999, the UN 'Competencies for the Future' were launched with a view of enabling "staff to contribute to their maximum potential." For over 20 years, these competencies have provided the Organization with the base on which to define its organizational culture. The UN Values and Behaviours Framework builds on the competencies' strength and transforms them to reflect the goals of the Organization for the next decade. It takes into account the constant changing nature of the world and renews our commitment to the people we serve.

The UN Values and Behaviours Framework forms the basis of an organizational culture that is both current and aspirational. Its nine elements, the result of a co-creation process involving nearly 4,500 staff that took place in 2020-2021, should guide how we build relationships, how we perform our jobs, and how we experience the organization on a daily basis.

As such, the UN Values and Behaviours have been integrated into learning and development, and from October 2024 into performance management. Given this, from April 2025, all staff are required to integrate into their workplans the behaviours that will inform how they deliver on their goals.

The host of your Leadership Dialogue (in general, your manager) will facilitate a discussion lasting between 90-120 minutes on at least three of the five behaviours in the UN Values and Behaviours Framework. The session will also include a short discussion of some of your team's DOs and DON'Ts related to one of the behaviours, so you can agree how to strengthen the alignment of your team with our organizational values and behaviours.



Before and After the Dialogue

To help you and others get the most out of this year's Leadership Dialogue, we would encourage you to take the following steps before and after the Dialogue:

STEP 1: PRE-READING

Please take a look at the following resources prior to the Dialogue:

- [UN Values and Behaviours Framework](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours Knowledge Gateway page](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours ISeek page](#)
- [UN Behaviours – Team DOs and DON'Ts](#)
- [Secretary-General's message on UN Values and Behaviours Framework](#)
- [Living Our Values \(culture narrative\)](#)
- [Staff Stories – UN Values and Behaviours](#)

STEP 2: PREPARE TO PARTICIPATE

- Please come to the discussion ready to actively participate, ask questions and contribute relevant examples/discuss relevant situations you may know of or have heard about.
- As you may be participating in the Dialogue through Microsoft Teams, or through a telephone call in areas with low bandwidth, be sure to ask the appointed colleague to note down your name as a participant. This will ensure accurate reporting.
- Let your Leadership Dialogue host know if you have any needs related to disability, or any other requirements that need to be addressed to enable you to fully participate.

STEP 3: SCENARIOS

- Please read through the three scenarios below, reflecting on the discussion questions if you have time.

STEP 4: AFTER THE SESSION

- Take a look at the resources linked to each of the Behaviours.
- Submit appendix F online (see page 12) to evaluate your discussion leader/session facilitator's conduct of the leadership dialogue session. You can opt out to submit anonymously.
- Don't set the UN Values and Behaviours aside. Keep them in mind as you do your work, and encourage your team to finalize the discussion around your team's DOs and DON'Ts to demonstrate your collective commitment to the UN Values and Behaviours.

Scenarios

SCENARIO 1: CONNECT AND COLLABORATE/DELIVER RESULTS WITH POSITIVE IMPACT

Quick impact projects (QIPs) continue to play a crucial role in peacekeeping missions. These small-scale, community-focused initiatives aim to swiftly improve the lives of local populations. These projects contribute directly to mission objectives and long-term stability.

In one peacekeeping operation, John, the team lead of the QIP team, organized a meeting with his team members - Martha, Dina, and Yuchi - to discuss community-based needs identified by colleagues in different mission teams across the country. They brainstormed opportunities and challenges, considering the potential impact of each idea, and their alignment with both immediate humanitarian needs and broader peacebuilding objectives. John was ready to listen to everyone's inputs and ensured that all ideas were considered. Ultimately, the team decided to establish a project to build a well in a remote village where women had to walk long distances to fetch water. All agreed that it would not only provide access to clean water to the community, but it also integrated a gender mainstreaming aspect. Indeed, it was aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and Goal 6 (Ensure access to water and sanitation to all).

Committed to delivering sustainable results, John and his team reached out to mission stakeholders necessary for the project's development and implementation, including the Engineering Section, the Transport Section, the military component, the Head of Office for the region, and mission teams deployed to the area. Work began promptly, and within a couple of weeks, the well was built at the centre of the village. The Mission organized an inaugural ceremony with its representatives, the village chief, and regional government officials, and the project was deemed a success.

However, a few months later, it became evident that the well was not being used, and village women were still walking to far places to fetch water. Curious about this, Sergei, a new Civil Affairs Officer working with the local community, engaged with civil society actors to investigate. During a conversation with a women's rights activist, he discovered that the women were not using the well because it was located at the village centre, near the chief's residence. The women preferred fetching water from a distance as it provided them a safe space to discuss village issues openly, which they could not do at the well's central location.

Rather than seeing the challenge as a setback, the team embraced it as an opportunity to enhance future projects. Indeed, they initiated a dialogue with the local women's group to co-create solutions that could better respond to their needs.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. How did John's approach reflect the 'Connect and collaborate' behaviour?
 - What worked well?
 - What could he have done differently?
 - What other actions could the team have taken to enhance its needs assessment?

2. How did the team integrate aspects of the behaviour of 'Deliver Results with Positive Impact' in this case?
 - What worked well?
 - What could the team have done differently?
 - What additional steps could the team have taken to ensure their project had a lasting and meaningful impact on the community?
3. How do we integrate the behaviour of 'Connect and Collaborate' within our team?
 - Is there anything we can do differently to create a better team environment for 'Connect and Collaborate'?
 - What about with other stakeholders (our partners, clients, with those we serve)?
 - Is there anything that we can do differently to improve our connection to others to enhance our work?
4. How do we generate positive impact through our work?
 - How do we know we are being successful?
 - In our own work, how do we balance when we have to deliver quick results with positive outcomes?
 - What can we learn from this scenario that can be applied to our own work when planning and implementing projects?

SCENARIO 2: ANALYSE AND PLAN/CONNECT AND COLLABORATE

In a headquarters team supporting offices operating in complex environments, Sara, the team lead, and her three remaining team members - Raj, Maria, and Jamal - struggle with severe budget constraints and staffing shortages. Their team, which typically consists of six members, has been reduced to just four due to liquidity issues. Emily left for another UN organization, Javier left for the private sector, and Jamal, a Junior Professional Officer, is nearing the end of his contract with no replacement in sight.

After months of advocating, Sara and her team secured a budget, but it was cut by 30% due to the ongoing financial crisis. Now, three months into the budget cycle, frustration is mounting. The team is stretched thin, and while they believe additional staff would significantly enhance their productivity, hiring remains uncertain. They are also concerned about potential delays in funding and the absence of a clear plan for maximising limited resources.

Faced with these challenges, Sara consults with the team to evaluate the team's workload, identify critical gaps, and reprioritise tasks to ensure essential operations continue smoothly. She also facilitates a team discussion on how it could turn this challenge into opportunities by rethinking the way they work.

To address staffing gaps, she encourages the team to reach out to sections and units they collaborate with to identify potential areas for cross-team collaboration. In addition, Sara asks Robin, a Human Resources Officer specialized in data analytics, for help with utilizing Power BI, the business analytics software application, to identify useful workforce trends to predict future staffing needs based on historical data and funding trends. This information helps the team to anticipate potential funding and staffing shortages and adjust resource allocation. Other than that, Maria, an enthusiastic user of Microsoft 365 Copilot, uses the tool to generate a report with insights and recommendations based on the data analysis produced by Robin.

Based on the outcomes of these consultations, analysis and conversations with her own manager, Sara reallocates responsibilities to balance workloads and responsibilities more effectively, minimizing the impact of funding delays.

The impact of these actions is mixed. The team appreciates having a clearer direction and Sara's proactive stance but is still concerned about the increased workload and the pressure to deliver with limited resources. Also, some worry that the financial situation will further deteriorate and result in more staff cuts, adding to the uncertainty and stress they already face.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Sara worked with her team to evaluate workloads, reprioritize tasks, and reallocate responsibilities. Given the reduced team size and budget constraints, what were the positive aspects of Sara's approach?
 - What alternative approaches could Sara have considered to manage the team's workload more effectively?
 - How could Sara have involved the team further in the decision-making process?
 - How could the team have better communicated their concerns or suggestions?

2. To address staffing gaps, Sara encouraged the team to explore cross-team collaboration. How effective do you think this approach could be?
 - Is there any other approach you think Sara should have tried to address staffing gaps?
 - What challenges or opportunities have we experienced when working with other teams?
3. Funding delays remain a potential risk. What contingency measures did the team put in place to ensure they can continue operations smoothly if funding arrives late or is further reduced?
 - What are other funding sources that the team could explore?
 - How could the team communicate potential delays to clients, including management and partners?
 - What role does transparency play in managing expectations and maintaining trust during times of financial austerity?
4. How can we, as a team, track the effectiveness of our decisions and adjust our approach to stay on course despite ongoing challenges?
 - What type of data and evidence can we use to assess whether our approaches are leading to the desired outcome?
 - How can we make sure that everyone understands their role in a changing environment?
 - How can we capture lessons learned to be integrated into our future work?
 - What can we do to make our planning processes strong enough to handle uncertainties?

SCENARIO 3: LEARN AND DEVELOP/ADAPT AND INNOVATE

A few years ago, in a Special Political Mission, Xuan, who led the Mission's Training Unit, suggested a change in the unit's work. She proposed a crowdsourcing approach with one of the UN agencies on the ground to develop capacity among Mission national staff to be better prepared for an eventual mission withdrawal. However, her idea faced resistance from various actors at both Mission and headquarters levels. As the Mission was expected to continue for at least another five years, they argued that the focus should remain on activities directly related to its mandate – i.e. verification of the implementation of different aspects covered by the peace agreement and sustaining support for mission operations. It was too early to boost national staff capacity development.

Xuan persisted, highlighting the importance of starting early in preparing for the eventual mission withdrawal. She suggested that the mission's strategic priorities could still be met as the programme would focus on new and enhanced skills that staff could apply as part of their current roles. In addition, she aimed to save on travel expenses by organizing learning activities remotely or on-site. Despite initial pushback, her supervisor agreed to a pilot programme, providing only 10% of the requested funds due to budgetary constraints.

Xuan saw this as an opportunity rather than a setback. With the help of her team, she put together a pilot that could test a prototype programme with a smaller group of participants. With the limited resources, and in close collaboration with the UN agency, she launched the pilot programme, determined to prove its value.

As the pilot was designed to allow participants to apply what they were learning at work, it resulted in an observable improvement of the group's skills and knowledge. It also created opportunities for staff to support other teams temporarily, and enabled mentoring by more experienced peers, thus boosting staff morale and engagement. In addition, both Xuan and her team also learned from the insights provided by participants. To increase the pilot's visibility, she asked the Mission's Chief of Staff and Director of Mission Support, to hand over the course certificates at the end-of-programme ceremony.

Not to lose momentum, Xuan organized a series of presentations and workshops, where participants and their supervisors would share their experiences, emphasizing the programme's value and positive outcomes. During these sessions, Xuan and her counterpart at the UNHQ also shared some lessons learned from the experience. Furthermore, they recognized the value added by those she worked with, and the support she received from participating staff and supervisors, creating a network of programme advocates.

This first "core group" became key partners for the enhancement of the programme. It meant that they could become peer mentors for new participants, and suggest improvements and new topics for future editions, ensuring it remained relevant and responsive to their needs.

Over the next two years, Xuan's programme thrived, adapting and evolving based on feedback and lessons learned. Despite the challenges, she remained resilient and determined to make a difference. As the programme matured, it began to yield significant results, increasing mobility of national staff across teams and functions, and to other UN agencies in the country.

Then, unexpectedly, the host country communicated its desire for the Mission to withdraw within six months. However, as Xuan's programme had been strengthened, it supported a significant percentage of national staff with finding employment opportunities with other UN System organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as public and private sector entities.

Xuan's initiative not only addressed an immediate need for capacity development but also left a UN legacy in the country. Indeed, it showed that investing in people is a strategic advantage, one that not only meets immediate operational needs, but also ensures a sustainable impact beyond the lifespan of a mission.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. How did Xuan demonstrate flexibility and adaptability when faced with budget constraints and push-back from headquarters? What alternative approaches could Sara have considered to manage the team's workload more effectively?
 - How did Xuan turn limited funding and initial resistance into an opportunity?
 - In what ways did Xuan take advantage of partnerships to make the most of limited resources?
 - How can cross-UN System collaboration enhance the impact of activities?
2. What innovative approaches did Xuan employ to meet strategic priorities while implementing her pilot programme?
 - How did Xuan's response to budget limitations reflect a growth mindset?
 - What creative solutions did Xuan use to align learning activities with mission objectives?
 - What strategies can teams use to gain buy-in for innovative ideas?
3. How can our team foster a culture of innovation and adaptability in the face of organizational challenges?
 - How can we create an environment where new ideas are encouraged and tested?
 - How do we balance the need for innovation with the constraints of decreasing resources, and existing policies and procedures?
 - How can we share knowledge and good practices across different teams and entities?
4. In what ways can we encourage team members to think creatively and propose novel solutions to existing problems?
 - What challenges prevent team members from thinking outside of the box? How can we address them?
 - How can we ensure team members feel safe to propose novel solutions without fear?
 - How can we create a team culture where experimenting with new ideas is valued, even if not all ideas succeed?
 - In what way can diverse backgrounds and experiences contribute to more creative problem-solving?

Participant evaluation of facilitator form (Online)

Instructions: Each participant should submit the information below online using the link <https://forms.office.com/e/iTYhmzckkm> OR the QR Code below.



Prepare to fill in the information below online:

1. Date of session
2. Name of discussion leader
3. Your entity
4. Was the discussion leader knowledgeable and prepared?
5. Did the discussion leader engage your interest?
6. Did the discussion leader give sufficient time to complete discussions and exercises?
7. Did the discussion leader encourage you to participate?
8. Did the discussion leader listen to your comments, ideas, or questions?
9. Did the discussion leader limit his/her intervention to an appropriate level to focus the discussion on the views of the participants rather than his/her own?
10. Any other comments

Resources and References

- [SG's Bulletin on United Nations Values and Behaviours Framework \(ST/SGB/2024/4\)](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours Framework](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours Knowledge Gateway page](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours ISeek page](#)
- [UN Behaviours – Team DOs and DON'Ts](#)
- [Secretary-General's message on UN Values and Behaviours Framework](#)
- [Living Our Values \(culture narrative\)](#)
- [Staff Stories – UN Values and Behaviours](#)
- [SG's Bulletin on Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations \(ST/SGB/2023/1/Rev.1\)](#)
- [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service \(2013\)](#)
- [UN Charter: UN Charter | United Nations](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours Learning – The Blue Line](#)
- [UN Values and Behaviours Learning – LinkedIn Learning](#)
 - » [Inclusion](#)
 - » [Integrity](#)
 - » [Humility](#)
 - » [Humanity](#)
 - » [Connect and Collaborate](#)
 - » [Analyse and Plan](#)
 - » [Deliver Results with Positive Impact](#)
 - » [Learn and Develop](#)
 - » [Adapt and Innovate](#)
- [LIDERA – the Leadership Community](#)
- [Effective Work Planning Guide \(Performance Management\)](#)
- [Administrative Instruction on Performance Management System, Rev 1 \(ST/AI/2021/4/Rev. 1\)](#)

Leadership Dialogue Contact Information

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO COMMENT, CONTACT:

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