

How to Design Inclusive Convenings

Lessons from the Emerging Leaders Initiative

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BACKGROUND

The [Emerging Leaders Initiative](#) (ELI), a six-year partnership between the Skoll Foundation and the Mastercard Foundation, sought to support the next generation of rising social entrepreneurs. Between 2014 and 2019, the program brought together 69 young leaders from around the world to experience and participate in the [Skoll World Forum](#). Skoll views four main outcomes for Forum delegates: Connection, Learning, Visibility, and Growth. However, young social entrepreneurs, especially from the Global South, have often been underrepresented, and thus excluded from these benefits, due to bottlenecks such as insular networks and limited guest lists, as well as barriers like cost, location, and visa restrictions. Overcoming global challenges requires global, representative perspectives. The Skoll World Forum and convenings like it are not achieving their full potential without that representation and inclusion. The ELI program was one step on the journey to create an equitable, inclusive convening that supports the next generation of leading social entrepreneurs.

METHODOLOGY

This was conducted as an internal learning evaluation. The key learning objectives were to understand Leader’s experiences of the program, the aspects that were most useful, and leaders’ most significant outcomes, disaggregated by gender and occupation.

A comprehensive analysis of the ELI program began in September 2019, using data from three key sources: **Post-Forum surveys** taken after each cohort, **virtual interviews** conducted with select alumni in September 2019, and a **follow-up most significant change (MSC) survey** shared with all alumni (other than those interviewed) in September 2019. **Pre-Forum surveys** from the 2017-19 cohorts were also reviewed, with 22 respondents in total, to better understand expectations and aspirations of ELI participants prior to the Forum.

Post-Forum Surveys	Virtual Interviews	MSC Survey
<p>A combined analysis of post- Forum survey responses from 2015-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n = 42* • Medium: Online • Date of completion: Close of Forum • Majority are anonymous (with the exception of 2015). <p><i>*44 respondents began the survey, but 2 were removed due to incomplete responses.</i></p>	<p>A qualitative coding analysis of interviews administered to select alumni across all cohort years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n = 13 • Medium: Zoom/Phone • Date of completion: September 2019 • Not anonymous <p><i>A payment of \$75 was offered to each respondent as a “thank you” for their time and participation.</i></p>	<p>An analysis of a follow-up survey sent to all alumni of the program*, with a raffle incentive offered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n = 14 • Medium: Online • Date of completion: September 2019 • Issued anonymously, though all respondents opted-in to providing their details (for inclusion in raffle)

KEY RESULTS

Connection	Learning
<p>Connecting with peers, mentors, funders, and potential partners was the highest aspiration for the Emerging Leaders at 91%, though there were variations by gender.</p> <p>Women were more likely to mention an aspiration of connecting with peers and other social entrepreneurs. Additionally, in interviews women did not mention benefiting from as many mentorship connections as men (14% of women vs. 83% of men interviewed).</p>	<p>Learning was the second highest aspiration among Leaders at 86%, who expressed a desire to learn from peers, leading social entrepreneurs, experts, and thought leaders on topics such as global issues, best practices, and strategies for achieving impact.</p> <p>Women were more likely than men to mention a desire to improve their public speaking skills.</p>
Visibility	Growth
<p>Visibility includes the opportunity to highlight one's work or views to the larger global community, which lends it credibility.</p> <p>In interviews, 69% of leaders mentioned visibility as a positive outcome and opportunity from the program, with 46% mentioning that the visibility and resources, such session recordings of their talks, lent them more credibility, especially for founders</p>	<p>Visibility includes the opportunity to highlight one's work or views to the larger global community, which lends it credibility.</p> <p>In interviews, 69% of leaders mentioned visibility as a positive outcome and opportunity from the program, with 46% mentioning that the visibility and resources, such session recordings of their talks, lent them more credibility, especially for founders</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP TAKEAWAY:

Leadership programs, like ELI, are powerful tools for increasing diversity and fostering more proximity at global convenings, but organizers need to put a lot of intention and work into making sure these events are truly inclusive.

"You could clearly see the difference between people who are coming from the US or Europe. You could tell these are things they've done before, and they already had friends and networks at the Forum and places to be. But the new, completely fresh participants, there was a bit of just feeling out of place."

Angela Nzioki, 2016 Emerging Leader,
Kenya CEO of Sokowatch,

CONNECTION: Take steps to remove barriers to connection that young social entrepreneurs, especially women and leaders from the Global South, face at global convenings.

LEARNING: Be responsive, not prescriptive, when it comes to designing trainings and workshops.

VISIBILITY: Make young leaders visible by putting them on the convening agenda.

GROWTH: Appreciate that one of the most valuable aspects of your program might be the intangible takeaways.

Get the full report [HERE!](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation would not have been possible without the insights of the Emerging Leaders themselves. Jamiel Alexander, Lashon Amado, Sonia Ben Ali, Melissa Bime, Michelle Chimuka, Marcel Fukayama, Faith Kaoma, Kevin Lubembe, Ritah Namwiza, Jean Bosco Nzeyimana, Angela Nzioki, Navalayo Osembo, and Andrew Ozanian were all interviewed for this evaluation. This evaluation was supported by the Mastercard Foundation and conducted and prepared by the Skoll Foundation.