

A scenic landscape featuring a large body of water in the foreground, a small island with trees in the middle ground, and a range of mountains in the background. The sky is a mix of deep purple and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

# Leadership

## Description

Not only will you need to guide your organization as a student leader, but you will need to support and encourage your team to develop their leadership skills as well. This is important for engaging your members and ensuring that they feel fulfilled throughout their experience, which can give them the confidence to apply to higher positions within the organization. Developing leadership skills in all of your members will also ensure that they can take charge of their responsibilities during events and initiatives and represent the organization well in any situation.

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# Acknowledgements

This guide was created with the help of knowledge and experience obtained from:

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## About Re\_Generation

[Re\\_Generation](#) is a Canadian youth movement that seeks to build a regenerative, sustainable, and just economy. We aim to reimagine our schools, repurpose our careers, and remodel our companies to be aligned with regenerative principles. In particular, we provide resources for individuals to launch impact-driven careers and advocate for change within their companies and schools. We also aim to advance public policies that promote regenerative and sustainable business practices.

Our successful 'Our Future, Our Business' Manifesto campaign received the support of 65 youth organizations, 130 high-level executives, and 100 civil society organizations recognizing the need for reform in business education on sustainability. After three years of existence as the Canadian Business Youth Council for Sustainable Development, we have changed our name to Re\_Generation to become more inclusive of all youth, not just business youth.

We believe that the ideal society is a [regenerative](#) one. Regeneration to us means putting human and ecological [well-being](#) at the centre of every decision. It means restoring relationships, both within nature and within society, while helping all communities to thrive. Read more about our history and vision at our [About Us](#) page.

# Executive Development

Be sure to continually challenge and support your executive team in developing themselves throughout their experiences.

- Get to know everyone outside of work
- Help each individual set personal development goals that are not directly related to their operational goals (and tracking them)
  - eg. improving communication skills and how this can be measured
- Reflect on their development throughout the year in 1on1 meetings (suggested bi-weekly or monthly)
- Get your executives to do the same with the members they are leading
- Deliver leadership-related sessions in your team meetings

## Leadership Sessions

Some sessions you may want to deliver to your team could be related to:

- Advocating for sustainability in the organization/in your everyday life
- Reflecting on personalities, strengths & weaknesses
- Time management
- Team management
- Planning and implementation
- Problem solving
- Share an inspiring video/resource and reflect on it with your team
- Share stories about your personal experiences and lessons you learned

## Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a crucial component of creating team cohesion and ensuring your organization's work will create transformational change. A great tool for getting started is [Gamestorming](#). It is a great resource to find facilitation cues, canvases, discussion structures and just good ideas.

To assess how systemic your impact & internal structure are, it is extremely important to use a framework that will help guide the conversation. One powerful framework is [Regenerative Capitalism](#). The hyperlinked essay is arguably one of the most important sustainability essays in the past decade.

## “Why is this framework so powerful?”

Regenerative Capitalism helps to understand that we as a society need to be much more ambitious than most of our current plans if we want to tackle the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time. One very easy way to realize this is by looking at “Earth Overshoot Day”. This is the day of the year by which we will have consumed the maximum amount of resources that our ecosystems can support. In 1970, that date was the 29th of December. Today, it’s the 29th of July, almost half a year less. Achieving carbon neutrality and zero waste would allow us to stabilize that overshoot day.

The problem: we cannot settle for stabilizing this date. We need to push it back, to regenerate both the ecosystems that we have been overexploiting for too long, as well as our society which is at the brink of rupture with the current levels of inequalities.

The framework allows you to go from the traditional sustainable business approach (which still suffers a lot from the neoliberal economic paradigm) into hard hitting questions like systemic inequality, doughnut economics, degrowth, the central role of indigenous knowledge, and many more. It allows any organization/project to ensure it is not perpetuating issues through its work but getting to the root cause of the problem by achieving systemic change.

For a quick introduction, read both the [Executive Summary](#) and this [article](#) that summarize the framework. The full version of the paper combines plenty of thoughts from cutting-edge research & experience in sustainability into one framework of 8 principles that are easy to apply.

## “How do we use this framework?”

The framework’s 8 principles serve as building blocks to guide the discussion. Your goal is to translate each principle into different actions, whether they be an event, an initiative, an internal process, or a different approach to sustainability & sustainable business in general.

If you already have an organization with existing initiatives, consider assessing your past, present and future approaches to systemic change based on these principles.

To help you, we created a thorough user guide with questions to ask your team to get the conversation rolling. This guide also has plenty of examples of concrete initiatives to help you go from abstract principles to transformational actions.

For example, this is an excerpt from Principle #4: Empowered Participation:

“How can we get people to think about certain hard-hitting topics instead of just educating them about it?”

“For example: interactive workshops that create practical skills and get people thinking about complex topics (e.g. the role of taxes, social INTRApreneurship, decolonizing businesses, etc.)”

You can find a list of questions to help guide the use of the Regenerative Capitalism framework [here](#), along with many examples to help guide your thinking. Additional questions which can be helpful to moderate a brainstorming session (but cannot replace the use of a full framework like the previous one) are [here](#).

## Motivating Your Team

- Encourage a bottom-up dialogue among the team: what change do they want to see? How can you support them in making this change a reality?
- Moderate; don't dominate discussions. Keep people on track during conversations so you don't forget the purpose of it, but don't act like you have all the answers.
- Be enthusiastic and fun. You work with students, they are busy enough - make things enjoyable for everyone, and project a positive attitude.
- Take time at the beginning and at the end of each meeting to do check-ins and check-outs. This ensures everyone feels good and on the same page.
- Team bonding is essential too: you are working with students, but you are also working with your peers and you obviously share the same values, why not become friends (but always distinguish personal/professional lives).

## Empowering Your Team

An incredibly powerful framework for positive impact leadership is the [Breakout Innovation Framework](#). Organizations love saying they co-create and they share power when they actually don't. They either do it for show or do it genuinely, but in the wrong ways. This paper gives an easy to use framework to ensure actual co-creation within a team.

### **“Why do we want Co-Creation in our organization?”**

Not only does this approach lead to better results and ideas, it also empowers individuals within organizations and makes them much happier, more productive, and more aligned. Your organization will probably face some issues with regards to internal processes, where too much ideation happens top-down and your team will be siloed. There will be a lack of co-creation and people will not feel empowered. This framework can play a crucial role in allowing you to understand how to make the change towards true co-creation and decolonizing your own thinking as leaders.

## “How do we use this framework?”

First, you can start by sharing this [quick summary](#) of the full framework with your team. Then, you can have conversations with your team and use our complete user guide with questions to guide the thinking and examples of processes and initiatives to help you go from abstract principles to concrete actions.

For example, this is an excerpt from Practice 1: Share Power

“How do we accommodate for different levels of experience and knowledge, and allow everyone to get what they want out of their involvement with the organization?”

“For example: Intellectual conversations (every member shares interesting resources about a topic in Sustainability they are passionate about and they host a conversation with people who want to learn more)”

You can find the full guide [here](#).

## Creating Accountability

- Small teams are more effective than larger ones; consider having groups of 2-5 per event/project/initiative. More specialized functional roles (e.g. finance, marketing) will likely need to work with all the groups.
- Trust should be given, not earned. However, it is fragile.
- Create clear expectations around showing up prepared and on time for meetings. Define the purpose and objectives of the meeting and finish on time. Make sure everyone feels their limited time and energy is being put to good use.
- Lead by example, and keep everyone accountable.

## Building a Brand Image

### Building a reputation and a brand image

- Can every internal member of your organization articulate why you exist, what you do, and why? Can external stakeholders do this? Clarity and coherence between mission, theory of change, and strategy is essential.
- Consider who your target audience is: are you only catering to the niche who are already 100% on board with sustainability or are you engaging with a broader, mainstream audience?
- Be strategically political. Recognize that sustainability is a political issue. Lead with your values. Don't water down your commitments to fit other people's paradigm. For more: read Don't Think of an Elephant by George Lankoff and watch to the Pricing of Everything by George Mombiot on YouTube.

- The members of your team are your brand ambassadors. Make them excited to be a part of your organization and of your vision, and they will make people around them excited as well. Moreover, word will get out that your organization is the best place to work, and you will attract the most competent and passionate students for recruitment.

## Resources

Here are some helpful resources that can help you throughout your leadership experience:

- Many resources about leadership and sustainability from [Oikos International](#)
- [16 personalities test](#)
- [Enneagram personality test](#)
- [Gamestorming tool](#)
- [Regenerative Capitalism framework summary](#)
- [Breakout Innovation Framework](#)