Women in Law & Leadership Training Manual

Institute for African Women in Law

African Women in Law and Leadership Initiative

The Institute for African Women in Law (IAWL) is a non-profit, nongovernmental organization established in 2015. It is committed to supporting the formidable works of women in law across the continent of Africa and the Diaspora. Our mission is to be a focal point for addressing issues across the legal and judicial professions. The institute is headquartered in Washington, DC, USA.

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FOREWORD

I commend the Institute for African Women in Law for producing this valuable Leadership Training Manual for Women in Law. I am truly honored to be asked to provide this foreword. This manual is a much-needed resource that will be used by lawyers throughout Africa and beyond. This manual is a practical tool that will provide excellent guidance to women lawyers navigating the leadership journey.

We should realize that the route to leadership is as varied as the different leadership styles discussed in the manual. There are several twists and turns, and unexpected challenges will be encountered. As the leadership stories in part three of the manual show, these challenges should be viewed as opportunities. The need to invest in networks, mentors and coaches is highlighted in the manual. These were invaluable to me on my leadership journey.

My path to leadership at the World Bank had several twists and turns. When I joined the World Bank Legal Department, there were very few African women professionals in the institution. Therefore, we bonded through a group that became the nucleus of an African Women's network that still exists today.

My ambition was to be the best legal operations lawyer I could be based on the example of my mentor, a fantastic lawyer and guide. I was reluctant to apply for management positions. However, colleagues and mentors, both male and female, encouraged me to do so. I became the Chief Counsel for the Africa Division of the Legal Department and eventually the Deputy General Counsel, Operations. I was the first African woman to be appointed to this position. Along this journey, I realized that my leadership style and attributes, beyond the skills and mastery of the subject matter, was my ability to bring people together to achieve results. I also realized that mentoring the younger lawyers was one of my strengths.

On your leadership journey, stay true to yourself and build on your strengths. There is more than one way to leadership. I am sure you will find the guidance provided in the manual and interviews of the women leaders helpful for your leadership journey.

Elizabeth Adu
Former Deputy General Counsel, Operations
The World Bank

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2022, the Institute for African Women in Law (IAWL) launched the Women's Excellence in Law and Leadership (WELL), a five-year project to expand access points for women's leadership in law across the continent. The goal of the WELL is to document women in leadership across Africa, provide training and capacity building, and engage in advocacy for gender equity in the legal profession.

Across Africa, women have made progress in accessing the different sectors of the legal and judicial professions. Africa leads the world in the number of women who have served as chief justices of supreme courts and presidents of constitutional courts. At present, Africa has placed more women on the bench of the International Criminal Court (ICC) than any other world region. A growing number of countries have had women attorneys general, and many top law firms comprise a high percentage of women partners and managing partners.

Despite these positive data, there is still work to be done. In many African countries, the number of women joining the legal profession remains low. In some countries, women are found in the lower ranks of the judiciary. In several countries, women have yet to hold the position of the president of the bar association or law society. Notwithstanding the increasing feminization of the legal profession and the growing number of women leaders, the legal profession still operates on masculine cultures of authority and leadership. Most women need clear roadmaps for navigating their journey to leadership. That is why this manual is necessary– to synthesize what leadership is, how to access leadership roles, and how to be successful in your leadership journey.

The convergence of theory, praxis, and the lived experiences of women in law captured in this leadership training manual will help ease the burden for others seeking ways to excel in their professional leadership journeys. We are indebted to the exceptional women leaders who made the time to provide us with their thought-provoking interviews and words of guidance. In the proverbial saying of the people of Africa, *"tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."* I hope this leadership training manual will help today's lawyers prepare for their leadership tomorrow.

J. Jarpa Dawuni, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Institute for African Women in Law

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BMGF   Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

CEDAW   Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

IAWL   Institute for African Women in Law

ICC   International Criminal Court

PAWL   Pioneer African Women in Law

WELL   Women's Excellence in Law and Leadership

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PART 1 | Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

Women in leadership is a priority for advancing inclusion and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In response to women's under-representation in leadership, several initiatives and resources have been invested in understanding the barriers to women's under-representation in leadership across various sectors. The goals of these initiatives have included creating a conducive social and organizational context for women to attain and excel in leadership and capacity building to strengthen women's leadership skills in various sectors and disciplines, including law. Nonetheless, the evidence shows that the world is more than a century away from achieving basic gender equality goals, including gender parity in leadership.

The situation is worse for women from minority backgrounds and those with identities that increase their vulnerability to stereotyping or outright exclusion from leadership. Therefore, understanding women's unique experiences of entry barriers and other forms of discrimination and exclusion from leadership requires insights into their intersecting identities and how these ultimately shape women's experiences and access to leadership opportunities. Societal expectations and gender roles, as well as organizational contexts, are some essential factors in this regard. Hence, a contextualized approach to women's leadership issues, which accounts for unique identities and spheres of operation, is imperative. Providing context-appropriate recommendations is vital for the success of any leadership strategy. This leadership training manual by the Institute for African Women in Law combines theory and praxis through the lived experiences of African women leaders to provide guideposts to leadership for African women lawyers in Africa and the African diaspora.

Women have achieved significant advancements over the years and have kept their place as key players in the political, social, and economic spheres. It is evident, though, that despite the successes recorded in slowly closing the gender gap in leadership, women in leadership positions still face differing levels of scrutiny (Rubery & Koukiadak, 2016). Therefore, focusing on female leadership is a purposeful action to ensure women have equal access to leadership positions. In the words of Sandberg (2013), "in the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders." Until then, deliberate efforts to close the leadership gap are welcome.

This leadership manual is a cross-sectorial document that captures the experiences of different women leaders in various sectors of the law. It uses an intersectional approach to diversify the pool of respondents for age, regional background, marital, and familial status. The theory and reflections presented in this leadership manual are relevant for early career legal professionals who need a roadmap in starting their leadership journeys. It is also appropriate for medium to senior-level professionals who need reminders and reinforcement along their leadership journeys.

1.2 Conceptualization

For this manual, we define a leader as a person with decision-making authority and the responsibility to direct the institution and those working in it. Different legal sectors have unique classifications for leadership positions. In this leadership training manual, leadership in law firms can include managing partners and senior associates. In the judiciary, leadership is often defined by bureaucratic rules. It may consist of the head of the judiciary (chief justice or president of a constitutional court), head judges in the different courts, the court's registrar or the chief magistrate. In academia, a leadership position may include the chair of a department or the dean of a school or college. Definitions of leadership are explored later in this manual.

1.3 Methodology

The three-fold challenge is to understand the intersecting barriers or challenges women face concerning leadership, identify effective strategies for overcoming the obstacles, and provide resources for strengthening women's leadership capacities. The leadership training manual for women in law aims to achieve these objectives through two main methods. First is a review of the literature on leadership to provide a theoretical background for the issues explored in the manual. Second is the use of structured qualitative interviews with African women lawyers in leadership positions across selected sectors, both within the region and the diaspora. Interviews allow for an in-depth exploration of the professional trajectory of women in law and the use of the legal narrative technique to situate the lived experiences of women in law and leadership.

Figure 1 | **Data collection methods for the manual**

Figure one provides a visual representation of the two main methods used to collect data for the manual. While these two methods are not exhaustive of the different techniques and pathways to leadership, they are privileged in this manual due to the focus on connecting theory and praxis to elicit context-dependent outcomes for women's leadership.
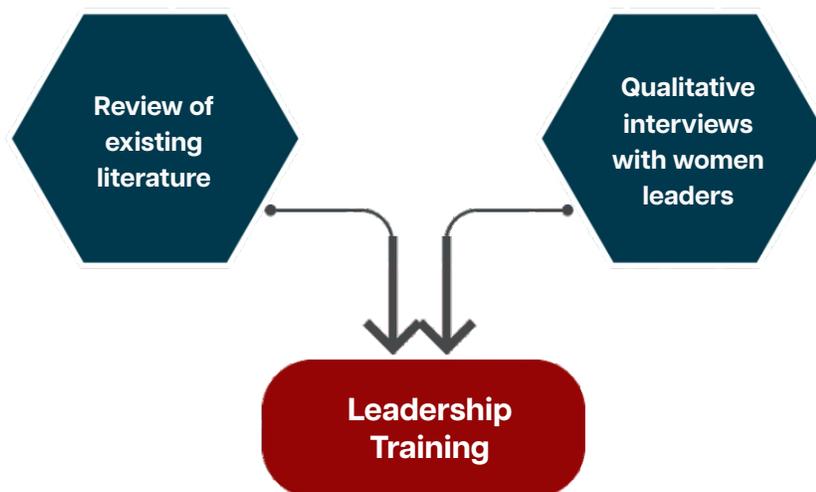
Figure 2 | Examples of different areas of legal work

The participants in the interviews were drawn from academia, judiciary, international organizations/diplomacy, third sector, and legal practice. The selected sectors provide an expansive and inclusive mapping of women's areas of practice and leadership.

Academia

Judiciary

Third sector/ civil society

Legal practice

Diplomacy

Other
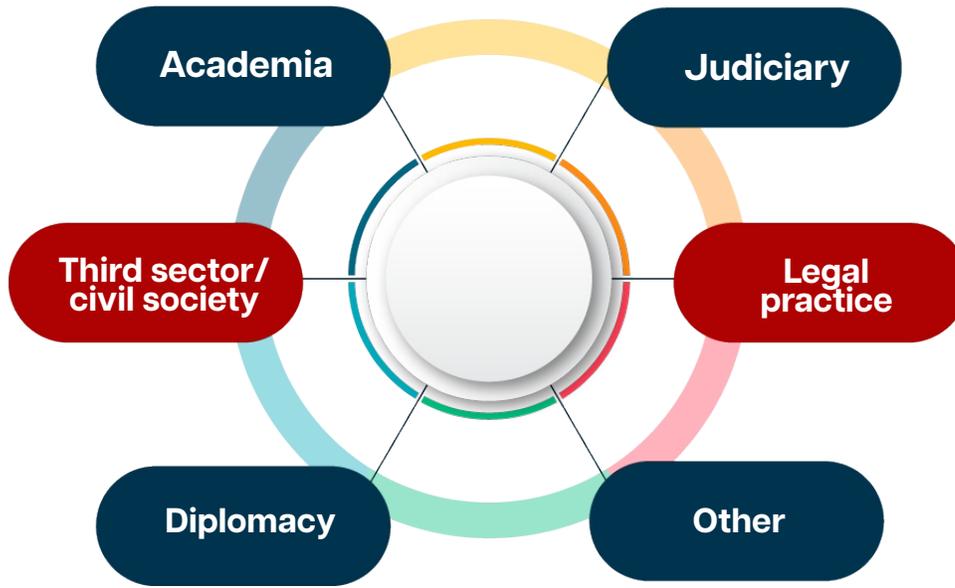
Figure 3 | The focus of research/interview questions

The interview questions explored the respondent's leadership journeys, the barriers they faced, the impact of their organizational context on their leadership styles, and their leadership strategies.

MANUAL

Leadership styles

Organizational context

Leadership strategies

Highlights of the leadership journey

Challenges of the leadership journey

1.4 Structure of the manual

The first two parts of the manual draw mainly from the literature, interviews, and other secondary resources on leadership. Part one discusses the background for the manual and unpacks the meaning of leadership and the different types of leadership. Part two is focused on self-reflection in connection with personal leadership styles and transformational leadership themes. Part two also includes interactive sections, with some exercises that can be adapted to deliver leadership training. Part three presents the unique perspectives of the respondents on the highlights of navigating their leadership journeys, and a discussion of the strategies for supporting women's leadership.

Figure 4 | Three sections of the manual

PART ONE	PART TWO	PART THREE
Theory and conceptualization	Self-reflection & types of leadership	Stories and highlights of leadership
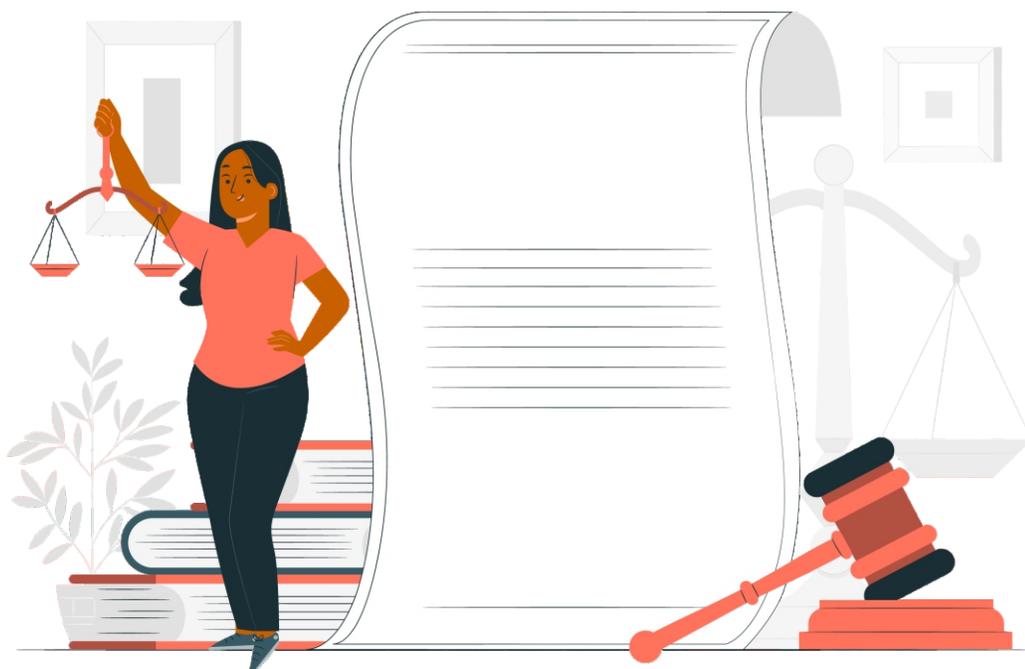
1.5 Background

The current focus on African women's leadership can be linked to the historical women's rights movements and struggles against various structural inequalities across Africa (Berger, 2016). In pre-colonial Africa, women's leadership took different forms, often economic and religious, but occasionally military. For example, Zulu royal women in South Africa played essential roles in the political, social, religious, and economic dimensions that shaped leadership in the region (Weir, n.d.). The Asante Queen mothers in Ghana, the mothers of chiefs also had leadership roles and duty to protect the interest of women in their communities (Stoeltje, 2003). Within the wider society, women also participated in community administration, policy-making, and law-making. As leaders, queen mothers, and council advisors, women possessed a great deal of decision-making authority and influence (Farrar, 1997). However, these influential leadership roles took a downward turn in the colonial era which introduced a more patriarchal system that saw more men than women empowered to participate in formal education, economic opportunities, and ultimately societal leadership roles (Martin & Hashi, 1992). From the 16th to 19th centuries, more European missionaries, traders, and bureaucrats disrupted the pockets of African matriarchal systems and decentralized communal governance systems which recognized women's leadership. Consequently, many women lost their economic independence and influence (Martin & Hashi, 1992).

Women's social and economic power in African matriarchal systems was perceived as a threat to the colonial government. In response, the colonial authority created regulations that restricted women's freedom, placed limits on where they could live and work and abolished some traditions from matrilineal societies (Stoeltje, 2003). The colonial rulers' disregard for girls' education also put barriers to women's employment and economic power (Stoeltje, 2003). Women ultimately lost their place in active engagements in law and policymaking in the colonial era, which continued past the independence era. It is remarkable that women significantly contributed to the nationalist movements in various African countries. The struggle to reclaim political and social power in their communities remains on the agenda of women's leadership movements today.

Concerning legal practice, during the colonial legal system, women were generally not accepted to practice law.[1] A few pioneering women fought for the opportunity to be admitted to law practice (IAWL, 2022). IAWL's Pioneer African Women in Law (PAWL) project curates and celebrates the achievements of pioneer African women lawyers in leadership in various areas of legal practice, including the bar, bench, academia, and public service.

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[1] In the South African case of *Schlesin v Incorporated Law Society 1909 TS 363*. The Transvaal Supreme Court held that women were barred from admission to legal practice based on historical practice in South Africa, Holland, and England.

The dominance of men within African legal and judicial systems as we know them today is partly reflective of the continent's colonial legacy and the political, religious, and cultural transformations that have occurred over the years (Bracher, 2020). In some cases, the barriers which women face in the legal profession stem from the law itself (IAWL, 2020). Legislative interventions and policies on affirmative action have lifted the formal barriers women face to studying and practicing law in many places. However, other barriers still exist to limit the number of women in leadership in law compared to men (Dawuni, 2009). As much as the gender gap is slowly closing, women in leadership positions still face different levels of scrutiny (Rubery and Koukiadak, 2016).

Narrating her experience of the gender pay gap and the importance of standing up against such practices, a pioneer female judge with leadership experience shared:

> I recall the time I was a High Court judge, and we were only two women for a very long time in [country]. One day, I was sitting with a male colleague and those were the days when nothing was digital. So one of the messengers was going around the judge's chambers and giving them their payslips . . . . Then [my male colleague] got his pay slip, I got mine and I looked at mine, I said, "My brother, here is my pay slip. Let me look at yours. Are they the same?" He just laughed and said, "Yes. But I think you might find something in there that is not in yours." I said, "and what can that be?" He said, "You know, you're a woman, so you are not paid house allowance." I said, "Excuse me, what do you mean?" He said, "No, you're not paid house allowance because you're a married woman living with your husband." I said, "Excuse me, I'm a judge. In the course list, it never says married man, married woman. We are all judges." So, you know, I took up that and I went to the senior woman judge because she was senior to me, she was first and I was second, and we made that a big thing. We made inquiries, we went to the office of the President, we saw the senior people there. They told us that married women in government living with their husbands are not paid house allowance. I said, "Excuse me, we are here as judges." He said, "Yeah, you are judges, but you also married women." So, we took up the issue very seriously and we won! And I didn't realise that that incident ended up not just in women judges getting house allowance, but the change eventually permeated through the entire civil service. I discovered this much, much later after I had completed my time at (name of the organization redacted) and I was back. One day I was talking to a woman who used to be in the Office of the President and she reminded me that "Do you know that what you and your sister judge did permeated through the civil service?" So it's instances like that; stereotyping, isn't it? Because we were judges. This is what really shocked me that I didn't realize that even as a woman judge, there were some situations where I was discriminated and told that "No, you are a woman. You can't do this." Of course, those things can't happen today but they did happen at the time. And what was so pleasing to us was that the other women judges, even women magistrates at the judiciary who are married and living with their husbands, they now started getting house allowance.

Leadership is an enormous responsibility that often comes with challenges for the leader. Not all leadership challenges are a result of the gender of the leader. However, additionally, for women, the barriers are as varied as the social and organizational contexts in which women lead. Overall, gender (defined as the social construction of expectations of a binary male versus female dichotomy) remains an important factor in the challenges women experience in leadership and other roles.

When asked whether the challenges she faced as a leader were due to her gender, one female academic noted that:

> Some of them were, I will say yes and no. Yes, because you're coming into a male-dominated space where you have all the male leadership. And, some of the men are older than you. You can imagine that a young, maybe I'm not young, but a young woman is coming to lead these men, and then they sort of look at you like, "What are you coming to tell us? Is she a feminist? Is she a man-hater? Will she start bossing us around?" So those perceptions were there. . . . But surprisingly, [staff members] said they liked the innovative approach that I brought in. The issue of inclusivity was also very important because I found a secretariat that was segregated and fragmented, working in silos.

1.6 Women leaders on stereotypes, barriers, and challenges

African women leaders often face intersecting challenges emerging from several interconnected identities that they bear in their personal and public life. As noted by a woman lawyer in leadership in academia:

> I think it's important to recognize, first of all, that professional exclusion operates intersectionally. You may experience challenges as a woman, different kinds of challenges. As a first-generation woman in academia, which is what I was, you certainly experience very different challenges coming into the academic space as a Black woman, and really, the Black women of my generation, I think, bore the brunt of the transition that had to happen in [country reduced] law schools.
>
> And the layering on what really becomes a thick accreted layer of presumptions of incompetence, or assumptions of corruptibility, even presumptions that you're a token, and so you're underqualified to be there. The disrespect that comes with that, I think, is something that is experienced in different ways and to different degrees, depending on how you're positioned within academia, and I think, the workplace more generally. And this is a layering of professional disadvantage that simply doesn't apply to white men in particular and especially doesn't apply to privately educated white men at elite universities like mine.
>
> Universities, of course, thrive on insecure overachievers, of which I think there is an oversupply of men. In fact, we know this from surveys done in law schools, that women consistently underrate their abilities and competencies while men very often overrate their competencies. And so I think women coming into these spaces, and certainly, that was my experience…. these spaces where things are quite opaque, and you don't really know what the job is, and so you end up working extremely hard. And that dovetails with people wanting you on every committee. Because you're hardworking, but also because you're a woman, therefore, you fill this dual role. For instance, I have a male colleague who is a fellow professor. Although I'm in the faculty leadership, I will be the one who was called on to come and change the paper in the photocopying machine, or to collect his courier parcels from the courier when they arrive, or even to make tea. And these are collegial things, right? So it's very difficult to pin it down and say, really, this is gendered and this is about putting you in your place and without seeming to be uncollegial. But again, it's a type of layering as you start to look around and say "well hang on, why didn't you ask the guy next door to do this for you?" Or you know, the other person who is standing at the tea table?

A female lawyer recounting her experiences of stereotypes and barriers to leadership as a woman and the impact of her intersecting identities recalled having to overcome "male chauvinism" when one of her male bosses said to her plainly: "I don't believe in working women." She also found that colleagues or seniors would "try to bring [her] down." To overcome these challenges, she discovered that persistence by continuing to work hard is the best way to approach those who did not support her success. She shared that rather than letting the criticism discourage her, she found it "assisted [her] to improve in [her] work." To prove her competence, she had to work extra hard:

> How I overcame it was doing my job. Working maybe triple compared to the efforts my other [male] colleagues had to do, and I believe it worked because, at the end of the day, even the boss himself would recognize my work in my annual assessment so there was nothing to change there. This continued on every level. To an extent, I've never been conscious that I'm a woman in the workplace. I'm just a human being doing my job, but others make you feel it a lot.

This theme of persistence continued even when the challenges were outside of her control. For example:

> ... the challenge was in relation to politics. It was beyond me... So at a certain point, you may not be appointed to a position, not because you do not qualify, but because of your region or your nationality... These challenges are beyond the individual, so the only thing I did when I faced this, was that I just accepted the outcome. I'm a realist; I know this will happen. And I keep moving and try to find my pathway somewhere else.

Similarly, another international development lawyer highlighted intersecting barriers starting with her identity as an African woman lawyer working in an international organization:

> I think that the first challenge that I faced in the institution where I was working was the fact that I was an African woman. When I joined, there were very few women in leadership positions in the institution, and there were no African women in management.... So the question was, who are your role models? And what are the obstacles you must overcome for people to see you as a leader?

A corporate lawyer explained that:

> As a visibly black woman, . . . I find myself in many rooms where I am the only Black person and often the only Black woman. I'm always cognizant of the fact that first impressions matter and that there will be individuals in the room who may have a particular view of me or a particular stereotype in their head about who I am or what I present. But to be honest with you, I really try not to focus on that. I'm aware of it. But I just try to focus on what I'm there to do and how I can deliver excellently.
>
> However, oftentimes, we forget that first impressions are really important. So we have to show up properly, we have to show up professionally, and we have to show up in a way that ensures that we are our best and most confident selves. Now, the challenges that I face, I think, are really around underestimating my capacity. And I take that right on the chin, to be honest with you, I'm like, bring it on, let's go. . . . With that in mind, I just go in and make sure that I am fully briefed and able to address questions that are asked of me, and that I'm prepared for every scenario. . . . And I think part of that, involves a lot of discussion around impostor syndrome and things like that. I understand some of the psyches behind it. However for me, I just don't see any limits to my abilities to do what I've been called to do. I think it's about using wisdom. It's also about recognizing that people will always think one thing or another about you, and then going into the room and doing what you do and then changing their minds in that process.
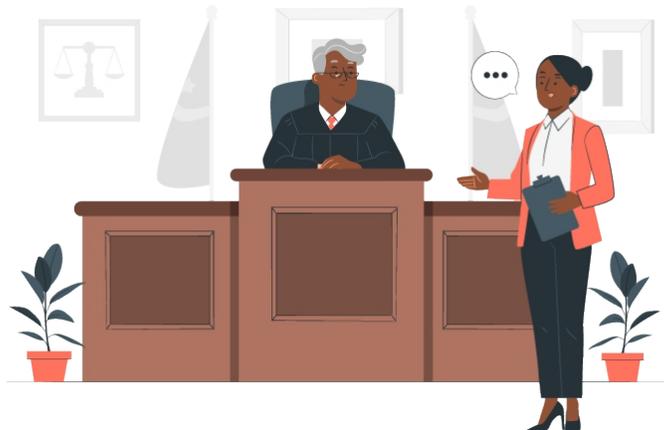
A woman lawyer in the human rights sphere also recalled facing similar challenges:

> More broadly, working in this field of human rights and humanitarian action, and advocacy and a lot of the work I've been doing tends to be dominated by men. So seeing a woman, and a young woman at that, engaging in these issues with such authority, for some, it's a surprise, so they see you as a sort of special product that should be watched from afar. But once you come to the decision-making table, they want you to stay where you are and not interfere or rock the [boat] or share your opinion that is contrary to what the majority of them hold. Then there are those who feel threatened by the fact that you are working in this space that they have been for years and that the attention will shift from them to you. Then there are those who, due to their own beliefs and biases about women's roles in these spaces, can be condescending, and arrogant, and try to put you on the spot on issues that they know might make you feel a bit uncomfortable. So basically, questioning whether you belong there with them. In the beginning, it was awkward.

Emphasizing the importance of assertiveness when in the minority position as a woman leader, she continued:

> **But for me, I just felt, if I'm here, I'm here to represent my organization, I'm here to push my own agenda and objects I want to see, and whether these other leaders, mostly male leaders, accept my leadership or not, is not the question, but that respect would be earned. I just need to speak up in spaces and not feel intimidated. Eventually, they will get used to me; the reason why they are saying things that make me feel uncomfortable is so that I will leave the space for them as it is, but if I can face being awkward, and a bit uncomfortable in some of those conversations, then it will only get better, and that's what has happened. And in fact, in the process, many more have even become friends, or allies as we call it because they then realize that you are there to do the work. It has nothing to do with any sort of egoistic ambition but that you are concerned about issues, know what to do, and are knowledgeable.**

A female judge, in addition to highlighting the leadership challenges she experienced, also indicated how the challenges provide an opportunity for honing leadership skills:

> One of the challenges that I faced was that this is a predominantly male profession, in terms of those that are respected much . . .. Generally, I would say that the challenge as a judicial officer is that this job requires a lot of studying, research and analysis. It is work that is diverse. And in its diversity, it demands a lot of workload and ethics. And for me being a young person and a female, there are several instances where I have seen people doubting my capabilities. I have taken that as a stepping stone because then I have taught myself to work hard, such that when they compare me with a male counterpart, they shouldn't find shortfalls or anything lagging on my part. So, I have . . . developed a systemic approach in terms of work. When it is time for work, I need to focus on the work. When it's time for family, I also need to make sure that I give my family the attention that they need and deserve, specifically because I have young ones who need constant attention from me to help them with their homework and daily life. In terms of their leadership, the challenges have helped me to sharpen my leadership skills because it has helped me always to make sure that I identify where my services are needed most. And once I determine that, I find a realistic immediate solution for the situation.

Similarly, a respondent from private law practice indicated that: "every challenge creates an opportunity for me to do something different with the way I lead and to empower the people that I work with."

Recounting her experiences of leadership challenges as a Black woman leader in academia and how she has worked to overcome these, a respondent noted several challenges. First, women, particularly Black women and women of color, must overcome the "credibility gap." She shared:

> ….you come in as an outsider and very often because you don't look, or maybe even don't sound like leaders who have come before you who have historically been white males. My first leadership position was in a place where whites were in the majority, and the leadership role tended to be white males.

Another notable challenge that women in leadership positions must overcome is the effect of negative stereotypes towards women. As highlighted by a respondent from academia:

> The challenge of stereotypes is one of the most difficult for women because women are expected to be leaders and to act as leaders in a particular way, and any derogation from that image of a leader – particularly of a woman leader – is regarded with skepticism and suspicion.

The respondent further asserted that people within one's organization could also actively try to undermine a leader. In her words, trying *"to collaborate with and lead an institution in which you have people who want your leadership to succeed, as well as people who are undermining you, is a huge challenge for women leaders, and particularly women leaders of color."* When discussing strategies for overcoming these challenges, the respondent highlighted the importance of transparency in the decision-making process, empathy to identify with people in the community with different identities and skills, and effective communication.

In the words of a female partner in a leading law firm:

> **Over the years, I've noticed that to be a successful female legal practitioner, you have to work twice as hard to achieve half as much because, in Africa, women have specific socio-cultural responsibilities which we are expected to carry. Law firms and legal institutions can help by acknowledging those socio-economic obligations and by making it easier for women in practice, to fulfill their full potential.**

On the individual level, many women have experienced feelings of imposter syndrome or inadequacy, whether at school, at work, or in other areas of their lives. In an interview, a respondent who is an academic shared the feelings of imposter syndrome she experienced before starting her post-graduate degree. Believing in herself and achieving important milestones, such as her first professorship appointment, gave her the confidence to know that she belonged in her position. She used transformational leadership skills, such as teamwork, inclusion, and leadership without hierarchy, to further give her the individual confidence she needed to be an effective leader. Hence, women can use transformational leadership to manage feelings of imposter syndrome or inadequacy and provide women leaders with the skills they need to be self-confident.

Moreso, organizations can play an important role in mitigating the stereotypes and challenges impacting women's leadership through their policies, processes and personalized support for women. This would require the active involvement of the leaders of the organization, particularly male allies in organizations that are led mainly by men.

One respondent from private law practice who has benefitted from starting her career in a supportive organization highlighted as follows:

I always say that I'm one of the people with positive stories when it comes to stereotypes. I know about the kind of stereotypes that women typically face in different fields, and especially in the legal profession. But perhaps one of the best decisions I made was the firm that I chose to work with, which had male leaders, but male leaders who were allies for pushing and empowering women. I probably didn't realize it at the time. But once I entered the firm, I realized that this was a firm that was interested in pushing women as far as they were willing to go. And so, in terms of stereotypes, the people who were in the driving seats in the firm made it such that I didn't face any stereotypes. And they opened doors; they carried me along. Their credibility was such that when I appeared in court and I said I was from this place, people were not likely to look at me as just a woman. But to believe that this was a competent person because of where I was coming from and what we were noted for as a firm. So, I've had very positive experiences. Now, that said, I've encountered typical male chauvinism. I've encountered people who see me and are underwhelmed. But I like that because I always like to surprise people. I'd rather you thought less of me and I exceeded your expectations than you put me on a pedestal, and I disappoint. So for stereotypes, I've had a very good experience. And even now, I don't encounter the usual barriers that one would face in rising up in their career trajectory.

1.7 Organizational context and impact on leadership styles

The organizational context plays an essential role in the experiences of the members of the organization and the demands on the leaders. Many African women in the legal field have experienced discrimination in their organizations. A respondent reflected on her career and stated, "[b]eing a woman is still not an easy task in the workplace. . . We are humans above all else, despite being discriminated against based on gender." Beyond race and gender discrimination, some women leaders have experienced age-based discrimination.

In her commentary for the Amandla African Women in Law Women to Watch edition, Adejoké Babington-Ashaye of Nigeria writes:

> I started my career at a young age and found myself having to justify my presence, even though I was well qualified to be present and heard. It was equally frustrating to be told that I could not hold certain positions because I was a young woman. With time, persuasion, or pure assertiveness, it became clear my age did not define me and that I should be judged on my knowledge and the quality of my work. I have also encountered sexism, racism, and other micro-aggressions. (IAWL, Amandla WOW).

Speaking of her leadership experiences in the higher education institution, a respondent stated that:

> [There is] this idea of flat structures in universities. Those can really be used to convince you that you're leading, right, because we're already there, and perhaps you do have influence. But very often, the power actually lies elsewhere. Consequently, what happens is, you're on one of these committees, you're consulted regularly, you're part of those cycles of legitimation, and they are making sure all the women are consulted, or the black woman are consulted, and getting input which can be can be really quite exhausting. I think there's been quite a lot of talk recently about decision fatigue and the cost of being involved in these and being the one consulted. That is something that one has to think about, but also, those flat structures legitimize why you're not being credited for the input that you're giving into those spaces. I think at a very basic and kind of banal level; there are also other ways in which you're put in your place.

Where the organizational context induces negative experiences of stress, anger or frustration, the leader has an essential role to play in mitigating the impacts and boosting the morale of the people working in the organization while working to transform the drivers of these negative experiences.

A respondent stated that she had to balance respecting the organizational structure that already existed while trying to bring in her own leadership goals and styles:

> I think one of the things that I needed to do was to make sure that, as the leader, I embraced the existing culture. At the same time, I explained to my colleagues my intention to motivate a new team and strengthen relationships because there was no trust between the senior staff and the junior staff. One of the things that I did was to create WhatsApp platforms for every section of the organization. I made sure that I actively initiated conversations on the platforms and united the staff. More importantly, I communicated my vision - to have a collaborative approach toward work and to build relationships within the institution.

One interviewee shared how she learned from previous negative organizational contexts to be more supportive as a leader:

> Well, I would say that in the career I was in, you see everything, not only nationally but you see it internationally. You are faced with many challenges, and you try to overcome them. So when you try to shape the way you want to lead later, you try to learn from the experience you have, be it the good part or the bad part, so when you have a bad experience, you have a lot of negativity that comes out of it. And one thing, for example, that took place when I was mistreated because of any triviality or because of someone who just didn't like me, I decided that I would never do the same to another person when I am in leadership. I learned, let's say, through the negative rather than by the positive, not because someone taught me to do the right thing but because I had a bad experience. I decided I would not allow myself to do that to my colleagues when I was in a leadership position. When we speak about leadership, there is a difference between leadership and management because being in management is much easier than being a leader. Managing the daily work I have had to do since my early years in different positions. And it's easier than when you try to lead first by example. Second, by inspiring all of those working with you to work as a team to develop and ensure that the workplace is like the home. I would describe my personal style in leadership as focused on human beings. It's more about encouraging my team working with me to feel we're a family and that we belong to the institution we are working for. We have to carry the burdens coming out of this job in order to deliver properly. This is what I have done in all my positions.

Similarly, a woman leader in the judiciary shared:

> The organizational context and the choice of leadership style for the people you work with are very important, because what the staff does in and outside your courtroom impacts a lot of the job you are doing. If you are not in control, someone else will take control.

However, a positive environment and organizational context can also prepare women in law for success. One respondent reflected on the experience she had working her first job with women leaders:

> I am extremely fortunate to have started my career as an associate in a team that was led by a woman who is one of the most prominent lawyers in [my country] and a public figure who is credited for advocating and advancing women's rights in [my country]. Her presence and the role she played and continues to play to date as my mentor and role model have had a tremendous effect on my personal development and showed me what it really meant to be a real inspirational leader at work and in life in general.

1.8 Unpacking the meaning of leadership

The term "leadership" carries many connotations and appears to be fluid based on people's perceptions of a leader. According to Noureddine, D. (2015), leadership is influencing, motivating, and directing others to achieve expected goals. Yukl, G. (2006, p. 8) defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives".

Winston, B.E., and Patterson, K. (2006) critiqued the scholarly definitions for only probing the parts of leadership while missing the whole. To integrate the definitions of leadership, Winston, B.E., and Patterson, K. (2006, p. 7) define a leader as "one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted, coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives."

Despite varying theoretical perspectives on leadership, certain traits, qualities, and behaviors of a leader are commonly regarded across disciplines. These include being knowledgeable, the ability to influence and motivate others toward a common goal and preventing or solving problems. Here are some reflections on leadership by women in law in the IAWL Quotable African Women in Law and the Leadership Training Manual projects:

> **A leader is the one who identifies a problem before it becomes problems.**
>
> Phillipina Akyena
> (Managing Partner, Zoe, Akyea & Co)

> **[A leader should] be empowered by knowledge.**
>
> Omnia Gadalla
> (Founder of Her Honour Setting the Bar)

> **I would say that the first thing that women have to do is to sharpen their competence. And this is both technical competence and managerial competence… As a leader, you need to consciously develop the skills that you need for leadership.**
>
> Patricia Kameri-Mbote
> (Professor of Law, Kenya)

> **Leadership must be valued by knowledge, know-how, and competence, and guided by values.**
>
> Amsatou Sow Sidibe
> (Professor of Law, Senegal)

> **Show leadership by being humble, friendly, recognizing people, and make them feel respected at all times.**
>
> May Agbamuche-Mbu
> (Managing Partner, Norfolk Partners)

> **Leadership is about leading yourself and giving of yourself to make a difference in the lives of the people you lead.**
>
> Isabel Boaten
> (Managing Partner, AB & David, Ghana)

> **Leadership is about confronting the unknown courageously and with a determination to succeed.**
>
> Osai Ojigho
> (Country Director, Amnesty International, Nigeria)

> **Leadership is not about power, but a willingness to have integrity, self-confidence, empathy, and a vision for the collective good.**
>
> Reine Alapini-Gansou
> (Judge of the International Criminal Court)

> **One test of true leadership, among other things, is caring for the people that you lead, and having them know that you have their back and will not let them down regardless.**
>
> Funke Agbor, SAN
> (Partner, DENTONS-ACAS, Nigeria)

> **For anybody who wants to lead other people, and who wants to lead in any industry, you have to be made of something stronger than just your qualifications and your intelligence. You need that emotional intelligence, which means that when other people are crumbling to bits, you know, you still keep the vision and you know how you're going to lift them up.**
>
> Victoria Barth
> (Sam Okudzeto & Associates, Ghana)

> We must lead by example, courageously and fearlessly, whether as diplomats, politicians, lawyers, or judges. We must be mentors and role models for the youth.
>
> Memooda Ebrahim-Carstens
> (Judge, United Nations Dispute Tribunal (Retired))

> A woman leader in the legal field must seek to become an integral part of an organization that fits her ambitions, and to adopt its values and its vision and grow with it and within it. She must cultivate from the very beginning direct relationships with her clients and aim to become their reliable and trustworthy go-to advisor. She must also cultivate a healthy working relationship with her peers, built on mutual trust and collaboration: this is, in fact key to her success and to the success of the organization she wishes to lead.
>
> Ingy Badawy
> (Founding Partner, Zulficar and Partners Law Firm, Egypt)

> As African women in law, the issue of integrity cannot be overstated. It's something that we must have at the heart of our leadership journey.
>
> Habiba Osman
> (Chief Executive Officer, Malawi Human Rights Commission)

> It is important to have a clear vision of what you are trying to do as a leader.
>
> Dee Smythe
> (Professor of Law, South Africa)

> **Everybody develops a leadership style. I don't think that there is a common leadership style.**
>
> Joyce Aluoch
> (Retired Judge, Kenya)

> **When you want to reach a leadership position, you have to continue going, you have to go straight up.**
>
> Namira Negm
> (Former Director, Legal Affairs, African Union)

> **You need to listen to the people you work with in order to understand better what their challenges are, what their issues are, and how they feel about the work. That is how you find ways to improve your leadership.**
>
> Nkemdilim Izuako
> (Judge, United Nations Dispute Tribunal (Retired))

> **To deal with challenges, or make decisions as a leader, a person must be innovative. The peculiar needs of whosoever must be assisted, must be taken into account at whatever level a leader is performing their duties.**
>
> Jean Kayira
> (Judge, Malawi)

> **When we talk about leadership, I don't think it's one size fits all. I think, it's a broad range of skills that you literally go in and pull out what you need, depending on the circumstances and the situation that you find yourself in.**
>
> Lloydette Bai-Marrow
> (Founding Partner, Parametric Global Consulting)

> **Sometimes our leadership will take us down roads that maybe we didn't think about. As lawyers, we often think of academia, in-house counsels [House Counsel], litigation, etc. What else can you do? Where can you bring your skills to bear? The skills we have as lawyers in terms of analysis, how we view facts, among others, are useful in so many spheres.**
>
> Elizabeth Adu
> (Former Deputy General Counsel, Operations
> The World Bank)

1.9 Importance of leadership

The abovementioned definitions highlight leadership as the capacity to affect a group of people's values, attitudes, beliefs, and conduct or influence a situation or organizational context. Through effective leadership tactics, leaders guide the organization's operations toward its goals and objectives (Jun Hao and Yazdanifard, 2015). If an organization lacks good leadership, nothing will change because there are no leaders to inspire and guide the organization's personnel or provide the organization with a clear direction (Jun Hao and Yazdanifard, 2015).

Leadership can shape a good organizational culture by creating trust between leaders and followers. Further, through various incentives, such as prizes or recognition, a leader can motivate team members to learn a new skill and be innovative. Therefore, leadership plays a crucial role in a group because it makes goal-setting easier, gives the team members the inspiration and motivation they need to work toward the goals they have set, and encourages innovation. Good leadership in organizations is essential in meeting employee needs, resolving internal conflicts, fostering the development of future leaders, and boosting employee morale and productivity (Kaur, 2021). Additionally, leadership is essential for an organization to manage change and foster innovation and creative thinking successfully. For instance, within educational organizations, the administration plays a significant role in improving the quality of the curriculum and the entire educational system and inspiring innovative ideas that translate into sustainable actions for problem-solving in various sectors.

TABLE 1 | Interactive session: what are the characteristics of a good leader?

	Exercises on the characteristics of a good leader
1	**Leadership characteristics (Stapleton, 2018)** Trainees are divided into pairs or groups of three. The next step is for each group member to tell a personal narrative about a leader they admire. Trainees discuss the traits they believe made the individual in each story an effective leader after the stories have been shared. After each trainee has shared a personal experience, the group compiles a list of all the qualities they believe make a powerful leader.
2	**'Leadership Pizza' (Cserti, 2018)** The leadership pizza is an exercise offering a self-assessment tool for building leadership skills. People start by listing the knowledge, values, and characteristics they believe are crucial for effective leadership. The individual then evaluates their progress in the outlined categories. In a coaching session, the framework can be a useful tool for helping individuals determine their leadership development goals.
3	**Leadership advice from your role model (Cserti, 2018)** Everyone in the group thinks of a role model they look up to. They then think of a young person they know. What kind of guidance would the role model provide to the young person if they asked for leadership advice? Discuss the type of advice that has been identified in groups and speak about where there are contradictions and how to resolve them. The idea of situational leadership may be introduced in a useful way through this sharing session.

TABLE 2 | Self-assessment exercise

Characteristics of a good leader			
Traits of a good leader	**Do I have these qualities?**		
	Yes	No	Maybe
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

1.10 Leadership styles

Leadership styles refer to the combination of techniques and personality traits through which leaders achieve influence, motivate others, and implement action toward achieving a desired outcome for the common good. Various leadership styles are highlighted in the literature, including autocratic leadership; laissez-faire leadership; strategic leadership; coaching-style leadership; bureaucratic leadership; transactional leadership; and finally, transformational leadership. In practice, leadership may comprise a combination of two or more of these styles. An effective leader would often need to adapt their style to the exigencies of the organization or context that they are leading.

> There's no question that the context of the organization determines your leadership. ...If you have a particular goal and the institutional context suggests that this is the way that you achieve that goal, then that's what you do. That's not being inconsistent, that's being strategic, and that's ensuring that you meet your goals. I think it's when you change the values that there's a problem. So, changing your leadership style to accommodate the institution's needs is good leadership.
>
> Penny Andrews
> (Professor of Law)

Leaders frequently blend styles or switch styles depending on the situation or organizational context. Hence, there is no single "best" style of leadership and a leader must be adaptable to govern effectively. The adaptability of leaders to context can also be seen in some of the leadership styles discussed below, especially the situational and transformational leadership styles.

> Some leaders adopt one of the following leadership styles: democratic (the will of the majority), authoritative (the will of the leader), delegative (permitting employees to take reins with guidance), and transformational (focus on unity with change as the goal). In my experience, no one leadership style works in every situation. You have to carefully study the organization you are a part of and decide what would work best under the circumstances. I have found a mix of various leadership styles creates a balance in an organization, enhances performance, and minimizes conflicts.
>
> Christiana P. Tah
> (Former Attorney General, Republic of Liberia)

A. Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership involves decentralized decision-making between the leader and their team. Democratic leaders frequently ask their team members for feedback and suggestions. They promote dialogue and engagement in the choice-making process. The benefit of democratic leadership is that involving subordinates in forming plans and decisions inspires them since they are aware that their opinions are respected and sought after (Dike & Madubueze, 2019). However, there is a high risk that the leader could make poor choices and carry them out poorly. The core tenet of democratic leadership is that everyone has an equal stake in the decision-making process and a common level of expertise, which is rarely the case (Dike & Madubueze, 2019). For instance, this could take the form of the lead partner in a law firm holding consultations with team members from different departments to develop organizational policies on leave or other human resources matters.

Example of democratic leadership in law.

> In my style of leadership, I like to engage whoever I'm talking to. I like to make sure that they feel safe with me, they feel satisfied. As a mediator, you can engage that very easily. When somebody is talking to you, you can tell whether you are able to reach them and engage them. So I recalled that even when I was Head of the Family Division, there were times I would tell lawyers just to give me about 10 or 15 minutes, step back and leave me with the parties so that I could have a conversation with them. That's very much mediation ... I can say that I have an engaging leadership style. I also tend to give people time to talk with no interruption, sometimes I just keep quiet. And then they look at me and say, "Are you still listening?" I say, "Yes, I'm listening and you can ask me just what you've said. I was giving you time to talk, to let it out."
>
> A Judge
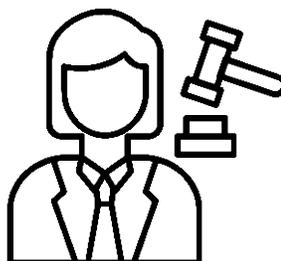
B. Autocratic leadership

Autocratic leadership is a management approach in which all decisions are made individually with little involvement from the group (Chukwusa, 2018). Typically, autocratic leaders do not take advice from their followers and instead base decisions on their opinions and assessments. In some circumstances that require rapid decision making, autocratic leadership may be advantageous. For example, the dean or head of department may need to make an executive decision on a pressing issue without consulting the faculty board if there are extenuating circumstances and a decision needs to be reached quickly to avert more problems. In an organizational setting, the method enables employees to concentrate on completing specific tasks within a limited time, which can be advantageous to the firm (Chukwusa, 2018). However, the downside is that where autocratic leadership style is sustained, staff may not be committed in this environment, leading to poor motivation, low morale, and resistance to goal setting. There needs to be adequate checks to prevent abuse of leadership authority and negative impacts on the team.

Example of autocratic leadership in law:

> It is in this role, that I've found that everything I've ever known has been stretched to the maximum, because I'm having to deal with people with very strongly-held opinions, but also having to be a bit firmer politically in asserting myself. Before you had the whole team, the whole group, all of us come to a common understanding, here at (organization) it is about taking charge, and also about pushing an agenda forward even if other people would not be willing to walk the walk with you, which for me was a bit of a shock, because I'm used to having everyone work on the same table... But because this is not a natural way of leadership for me, I'm having to adapt in a way that takes a lot of my mental activity and requires a lot of presence in order for me to function optimally...I'm learning now within my team and also within the international leadership that some kinds of leadership styles that appear aggressive, might work in certain situations or tend to lean more in certain cultural spaces... So it's about balancing, but it's also about understanding the context in which we work.
>
> A Voice from the Third Sector

C. Laissez-faire leadership

Another leadership approach is laissez-faire, a French phrase meaning "to let them do." Leaders who practice laissez-faire leadership have a trusting and dependent attitude toward their workforce. They do not micromanage, get overly involved, or provide excessive direction or instruction. Laissez-faire leaders, on the other hand, encourage their staff to use their initiative, resources, and expertise to further their objectives (Iqba, 2021). Employee engagement is crucial in most of the management and leadership philosophies. The positive side of laissez-faire leadership is that it gives followers the authority to make decisions, which keeps them motivated and innovative. This is important for fast-paced corporate environments or legal teams that frequently need to negotiate on behalf of their organizations or clients. This leadership style is at the extreme spectrum of democratic leadership. It works well if the followers have the expertise and high level of training to make decisions pertinent to achieving the organization or client's mandate.

Example of laissez-faire leadership in law:

> Since I've become a leader, I think one of the things that I carry with me every day and really impacts on what I do is to know that you succeed because you're part of a team. And that while you lead a team, your team helps you achieve all of the goals that you put in place. So nurturing talent, being inclusive in my leadership in the sense that I give people opportunities to flourish and allow them to shine, co-create what I do, and ensuring that you create that open space for those who you're working with to feel comfortable to challenge, to bring new ideas, and to be secure in making mistakes because they know that you're going to support them regardless of what happens.
>
> An Academic

D. Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership, as used here, refers to the use of the strategy process as a methodical decision-making technique that incorporates reciprocal leadership into its principles and practices (Morrill, 2010). In addition to being a management tool used by leaders in positions of authority, strategy is also a style of interactive leadership that explains goals and priorities, enlists support and resources, and establishes a course of action for the future. To be strategic, leaders must first comprehend the mission of their firms. This entails a thorough understanding of the organization or law firm's goals, its target audience, and the precise ways it can benefit them. Finally, leaders must develop a plan to implement the goal. The plan should outline the actions required to move the organization from its current situation to its ideal situation. Depending on the mission of the organizations, its goals could range from improving external rankings (for academic institutions and law firms), to boosting profits (for businesses), improving access to justice (for the judiciary and third sector organizations), or building global development partnerships (for international organizations).

Example of strategic leadership in law:

> When I'm handling issues, I always make sure that I consider them with this discipline and seriousness, because I always bear in mind that issues that are brought to my attention are concerning a person and they are dealing with decisions that will change their lives forever. So, that helps me in terms of the leadership to make sure that whatever decision I make, be it in consultation or alone, the final decision is properly considered. This is so because I know the impact that any mistake I make will have in terms of the life of that person who is affected by my decision. The leadership positions have helped me in terms of appreciating the need to be strategic and innovative because challenges that come to a leader are not going to be similar. They're always diverse. So if a person has to deal with challenges, or is to make decisions as a leader, much as the principles may be similar, a person has to be innovative, because the peculiar needs of whosoever has to be assisted, have to be taken into account at whatever level a leader is performing the duties. The nature of the judiciary has helped me in terms of being innovative, to be responsive to the peculiar needs of people.
>
> A Judge

E. Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership, also known as management leadership, is a leadership style where the leader encourages the compliance of subordinates through rewards and penalties (WGU, 2021). Employees are typically given their short- and long-term goals and expected to strive toward them. Everyone is required to observe the organizational rules, with close monitoring by the leader. Employees who achieve their objectives are rewarded, while those who miss their deadlines receive criticism. This is illustrated in settings such as law firms where the remuneration of team members is based on commission only. The disadvantage of transactional leadership is that it suppresses innovative ideas by only focusing on processes and group performance based on set rules (Western Governors University, 2021).

Example of transactional leadership in law:

> You know, sometimes you need to use the stick. Because if you don't, the court system is a very difficult place. Some people who come to court are prepared to do a lot of things that are unethical to have their way. And so, and they will employ the staff of the courts in the dirty game. There are other people who want to make money, because the courtroom is one place that people think they can make a lot of money, they are going to mess up the work you are doing, they will rubbish what you as the Judge is doing, unless you tell them to stop and you tell them to stop in the language they will understand. Talking about the organizational contexts, you come with compassion, when you deal with people, whether it is the people who appear before you, or the people with whom you work with, it is compassion that you need to deal with the issues...And then of course, you stand for what you believe in. And you refuse to be pushed around, refuse to allow other people to take over, to take control, to make the decisions which you should be making... So sometimes you use the stick.
>
> A Judge

F. Coach-style leadership

Coach-style leadership emphasizes cooperation, support, and direction. By guiding their teams through objectives and challenges, coaching leaders are committed to bringing out the best in their teams (Karlsen, 2020). This type of leadership is the opposite of authoritarian leadership, which emphasizes top-down decision-making. This leadership approach prioritizes long-term improvements, encouraging the learning process, and developing people. This is evident where established academics, or senior lawyers or judges mentor early career professionals and offer them guided opportunities to participate in leadership and decision making. Leaders who employ this strategy encourage collaboration and two-way communication, provide constructive criticism, assist people in developing personally and professionally and promote critical thinking. The downside of this leadership style is that it is time and energy consuming, needs a lot of effort, and does not always produce the quickest, most effective outcomes.

Example of coach-style leadership in law:

> **I would describe my personal style in leadership, I would say it is focused on the human beings, it's more about encouraging the team that's working with me to feel we're a family and we belong to the institution we are working for. So we have to carry the burdens coming out of this job in order to deliver properly. This is what I have done as an ambassador, this is what I've done as a legal counsel. I always joke by saying, I'm proud to say, the day I left the office *(at organization)*, there was no staff, senior or junior, from the lawyers, without a master's degree from a decent university. I know we were understaffed, but I gave them space, it was important for me to make sure that they develop because when they develop, the work itself develops.**
>
> A Diplomat

G. Bureaucratic leadership

Bureaucratic leadership relies on clear lines of authority, stringent rules, and compliance (Callahan, 2017). The crucial distinction between bureaucratic and autocratic leadership is that the leader is in charge of making all significant decisions and is the center of attention under autocratic leadership. However, in a bureaucracy, the leadership is in the chain of command rather than a single leader. This is illustrated in law firms, academic institutions, or other organizations with clearly defined chain of command, where tasks and responsibilities for each level of authority are well outlined. The bureaucratic leadership approach emphasizes placing the best person in each position and has very defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations (Callahan, 2017). However, everything must go through a chain of command, which is inefficient and discourages personal and professional growth and stifles innovation, creativity, and creative thinking (Callahan, 2017).

Example of bureaucratic leadership in law:

> **Universities are very difficult. I mean, it's one of the myths of universities that we have flat structures. They are extremely hierarchical and militant in some sense. And they're supportive of a top-down approach to leadership.**
>
> An Academic

H. Transformational leadership

A leader that practices transformational leadership encourages, inspires, and motivates team members to innovate and implement change that will advance the organization and determine its development trajectory (Korejan and Shahbazi, 2016). Within organizational settings or the judiciary, transformation is achieved by establishing an example at the executive or senior management level, through a strong sense of corporate culture, employee ownership, and independence in the workplace. In contrast to transactional leadership, which focuses primarily on extrinsic incentives to accomplish specific job duties, transformational leadership encourages people to go above and beyond the minimum standards required to work toward a shared goal (Korejan and Shahbazi, 2016). Transformational leaders rely on traits such as communication, charisma, adaptability, and sympathetic support as they engage with their team members to achieve effective change (Korejan and Shahbazi, 2016).

Example of transformational leadership in law:

> **I think inclusivity, a horizontal rather than a hierarchical style of leadership, and leading by example is how I perform my role. As a leader, you succeed because you're part of a team. And while you lead a team, your team helps you achieve all the goals that you put in place. I believe in nurturing talent and being inclusive in my leadership in the sense that I give people opportunities to flourish and allow them to shine and co-create what I do.**
>
> Engobo Emeseh
> (University Professor of Law)

I. Situational leadership

When a leader is adaptable in their approach and employs several leadership tactics based on the scenario, this is known as situational leadership (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). A leader that uses situational leadership adjusts their management approach to the demands of their team or the current workplace. This type of leadership relies on a leader's capacity to adapt to the needs of a group to be a more effective leader rather than focus on a leader's skills. A situational leader may employ a variety of approaches (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2001). One is telling or frequently directing team members and providing close oversight. This approach is practical where the team lacks experience in the task. Where the unit lacks the expertise or motivation for a job, a situational leader could either get involved to carry out the task or persuade skillful team members who lack motivation. Alternatively, a situational leader could delegate tasks where the team is skillful and motivated enough to deliver the desired outcome.

Example of situation leadership in law:

> In [organization], there was at a time when ... there were widespread protests, there was a lot of disruption so it meant I had to pivot to another place, another kind of context and another style. And that was again, trying to work with the various constituencies, but particularly with the students who demanded change, and also working with the leadership of the university. So organizational context is crucial to styles of leadership, the strategies that you choose, and so on. And I think that it's important that leaders pivot to the organizational context to ensure that the way that they are leading the institution is good for the institution, good for all the constituencies, and it will allow them to reach the aims and the goals of what they intended to achieve as a leader. When you go into an institution as a leader, you have certain goals, you have a vision of what it is that you want to do but the context determines how you achieve those goals, how you bring about that vision, and ignoring the context, you do so at your own peril... I think it's when you change the values, that is when there's a problem. Changing your leadership style to accommodate the needs of the institution is good leadership. Not changing it is poor leadership because you won't achieve your goals. I think that with the question of consistency, I believe in consistency in values, but not necessarily consistency in style.

An Academic

TABLE 3 | Interactive session: choosing a leadership style

The interactive section below offers a chance to examine situational leadership

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**Choosing a leadership style**</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>**'Centre Stage' (Eventbrite, 2018)**

Choose four volunteers to participate in this activity. One team member assumes the role of a worker who has recently missed meetings or arrived late to work. The other three players exhibit various leadership philosophies (to save time and nominate a particular personality trait). Place two seats in the centre of the group after asking everyone to form a circle. Request feedback from the entire group regarding the various leadership philosophies after each demonstration of how to handle the employee. The group could, for instance, think about what worked and what didn't. Ask the group to discuss what the "ideal" leader would do in the scenario to round out this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>**'Jumping Ship' (Johnson-Gerard, 2017)**

The purpose of this game is for players to consider several leadership styles and generate a list of real-world work situations that would require a leader to "jump ship" from their natural style of leadership to a more effective one. Three bulky pieces of paper are distributed to each group. Request that each team submit a leadership style in writing (i.e., autocratic, coach-style, democratic). After that, give the groups 45 minutes to brainstorm actual workplace scenarios when using a specific leadership style might be bad. Ask the groups to hang the paper sheets from the wall and have a team discussion about them. Review the posters with the group.</td>
</tr>
</table>

1.11 Do women lead differently from men?

When asked if there was a difference in the leadership styles adopted by women and men, most respondents agreed that there was a general difference in the leadership styles of women and men and that this could be traced back to the different gender roles and dispositions.

A respondent noted:

> I would say yes, because our experiences are different. Well, the baggage we carry by the time we arrive to a leadership position is different than the males. First, there is some kind of a personal touch you usually will not be able to have with male colleagues. The borderline between being professionals, and being brothers and sisters in the workplace, is a fine line and one very difficult for some male leaders. Some of them worry so much about being nice because they might be perceived as weak. Women don't have this problem because all through our lives, we are perceived as weak, and we try to show that we are not weak. We have no problem with that; we're not intimidated by this. I think the other thing is that again, with the male chauvinism that we face, males do not face that. Women learn early on in their careers how to balance, when to make a fuss out of something and when to let it go smoothly and act differently, or with indifference towards some people who will cause issues unnecessarily just because of your gender. This doesn't happen to men. On the contrary, some females in different workplaces need to look tougher than men because otherwise, they might be taken as doormats. As simple as that, just because she's a woman, and this is one of the things that we will keep facing, I don't think it will disappear soon.

One respondent noted:

> I think women generally pay more attention to details. I know I do. Although I am an advocate of delegation of authority, I do not neglect to superintend, monitor, review, and evaluate what is being done by junior staff as this level of involvement is sometimes dictated by the nature of the work, the capacity of the staff, and the tools available to carry out the job.

Another respondent similarly found that women leaders often have unique qualities:

> Without sounding stereotypical, I believe that women, generally speaking, tend to be more inclusive in their management style, less confrontational, egocentric and opinionated. Women are generally inclined to be team players as they seek to build consensus around their decision making and course of action and have a collaborative style of leadership; Women leaders tend to discuss and consult more before making a call, especially with respect to critical situations.

Based on the widespread consensus on the differences between women's and men's leadership styles, respondents were asked whether they considered this to be a reason for women's underrepresentation in leadership positions. Remarkably, these differences were not considered by the respondents to be negative, or as the reason for women's underrepresentation in leadership positions.

In the words of one respondent:

> No, I don't think this difference is bad. I think the different styles bring a better understanding of the work. ...you have to be treated as equal on the same level in order to check whether this management style or this leadership style is better or not.

Rather, the reason for women's underrepresentation stems from the barriers, challenges and stereotypes in various settings.

A respondent reiterated that:

> I will go back to the first point, it's because we are in male chauvinist environments. If you think of even the United States today, you have different salaries for males and females. If we're talking about leadership of organizations, if they are governmental organizations now it's been encouraged everywhere, to have real equality numbers, and it's like 50/50 between males and females. We [have not reached the goal] yet, but there is a real encouragement to do it. But if we go to the private sector, this is another problem because it's just like, until now, I would say the main owners of capital are males, they are not the females so this is one of the problems. ... In the work environment, of course, there is another problem because females, have to take some breaks from work because they have babies, care for children or for other family reasons. 90% of the workplaces do not take that into consideration. Even if you are brilliant, they'll say "Oh you took a break for a year, this means you have been doing nothing in your life for a year." This is something, it's not perceived. If a male colleague takes off for a year just to have fun, it's acceptable, they took a break but for you, it was because of a child then they see it as if you put your family first, so you don't care about your career. So all of these factors do play a role in not having more women in leadership. And I think also I would say that women themselves are a problem, because they don't trust in their abilities as much as their male colleagues, it's either we bring each other down, or it's like, "Oh no, I may not be able to do that" because you know, it's too much. I'm a woman, I cannot face all of this. But you face it every day, you'll face it in your personal life, you'll face it in your public life, in your work, everything.

Other respondents similarly found that differences in leadership styles are not the cause of the under-representation of women in leadership. The under-representation is instead a result of social biases:

According to a respondent:

> **The differences between individual styles of leadership across both genders can very often be subtle and not radical nor fundamental, therefore, I do not believe that the leadership style of women is in any way the root-cause of their underrepresentation. Whatever their leadership style is, whether it fits a stereotypical perception or not, most women leaders have generally excelled once given a leadership opportunity in any organization. Underrepresentation is fundamentally linked to social bias than to anything technical, stylistic or objective.**

A respondent from the judiciary found that women do have different leadership styles and the difference is rooted in the way women are socialized and a sense of having to prove their own worth in the legal field and in "a man's world":

> **Honestly, I think sometimes women tend to lead somehow differently. And this is because sometimes, again, women struggle to maintain a balance, so as not to be seen to be weak. . . . And because of that, sometimes some women can be unduly and unnecessarily heavy-handed. . . because they're trying to show "I can do it." . . . The way women are socialized is different, you know.**

Emphasizing the value of women's leadership, a respondent from an international law organization asserted:

> **Women bring a value that is not masculine to leadership, because men are men and women are women. And there are certain things that women come to leadership with. I would, for instance, say that a lot of women wouldn't be in the "winner take all," they're more inclusive and would want the good of others, probably because of the nurturing roles that women play. So this whole thing of "it doesn't matter who gets hurt, I must get to the top" – I see fewer women following that than men.**

PART 2 | Reflecting on Personal Leadership

2.1 Mirror to self

Although leaders are generally the most outward-facing member of a team or an organization, becoming an effective leader requires an internal look at one's own identity, motivations, and biases. The following sections should encourage you to take a mirror to yourself to examine your leadership style and help you evaluate how you can become an effective leader.

2.2 Positionality and context

Examining one's social and cultural position and understanding how that position relates to others and the circumstances in which you are operating will help you become an effective leader. This is in line with the positionality theory which, according to Kezar and Lester (2010), has three main components: *intersecting identities, power relations, and context.* In the leadership context, the theory "focuses on the intersection of various aspects of a person's identity, such as race, class, and gender, in shaping leadership perspectives" (Kezar and Lester, 2010, p. 165). Further, a "leader's identity informs the positionality, and there is an interconnectedness between positionality and power" (Mervio, Cleveland, S. and Cleveland, M., 2020, p. 2).

Where an individual's identity aligns with those that hold power in society, the individual's positionality is directly connected to their social power. For example, in patriarchal societies, men have social power. Thus, a person's gender identity informs their positionality and affects how much power the person holds in society. It is essential, therefore, for leaders to examine how their identities and positions influence their leadership styles and biases. In other words, "leaders must recognize how their own subjectivity controls their perspectives and how, for the most part, their perspectives are limited to the constraints placed upon them by the perceived societal norms and the role models who raised them to understand these norms" (Mervio, Cleveland, S. and Cleveland, M., 2020, p. 2).

Examining one's position goes beyond assessing personal identities, however. Positionality must also include an examination of the context one is working in, such as a new supervisor or support staff, the influence of other groups on the organization, or the dynamics among different groups in the organization (Kezar and Lester, 2010).

As an African woman leader, your assessment of your positionality may include a different or more expansive set of factors. As Meer and Müller (2017) note, "the range of social categories that inform individuals' lived experiences and the production of social relations on the African continent may be considerably different to the staples of race, class and gender in the existing, mostly American and European-focused identities and classifications" (p. 3). When assessing your positionality, keep in mind that "managerial [or leadership] identity is not formed solely by personal identities in the workplace but by the socio-historical-political and cultural context within which individuals are embedded" (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016, p. 26).

Similar to the research context, where a positionality statement is essential to guide the reader's analysis of the research product and the conclusions that the author has made, it is important for a leader to assess their leadership style through the lens of positionality. The exercise in Table four (4) outlines general questions for determining positionality and more specific questions to situate your positionality in the context of your organization.

TABLE 4 | Exercise on positionality and personal leadership context

	General introduction questions to start the reflection period
1	List your main identities and priorities on a sheet of paper.
2	What are the traits which you have acquired as part of each of the listed identities and priorities?
3	Examine how each of the listed identities/priorities potentially influences your leadership style.
4	How would you describe your leadership style based on most of the listed traits?
5	Identify the essential roles, your positions in your private and public life, and how these influence your leadership.
6	How do personal perspectives and perceptions of how one is viewed by others influence leadership styles?
	Additional questions
7	How do the identities compare with the people on your team? How does your assessment of your positionality relate to those in your organization and how does that positionality affect the distribution of power?
8	How does your organization's environment affect the context you lead? What other considerations specific to your organization affect your decision-making?
9	Use the responses to these questions to prompt discussion and guide your self-reflection journey.

Source: Adapted from Holmes, 2020

Examining positionality is an important step in developing your leadership style and skills. Be sure to revisit the previous exercise if you feel your position, leadership style, or organization has changed. As identified in this section, the climate of the organization you lead will impact your experience as a leader and your leadership strategies. In brief, "[o]rganizational climate emerges from social information processes, and the meaning individuals within an organization attach to policies, practices, and procedures they experience . . . [It] also entails the behaviors employees observe that leadership rewards, supports, and expects" (Roberts and Brown, 2019, pp. 87-88). Leaders play a significant role in developing the organizational climate or culture, and "[t]he management style and beliefs of the leader influence the culture of the organization" (Kawatra and Krishnan, 2004, p. 1). Think about how changes in your organization could affect your responses to the exercises in this section.

2.3 Motivation to lead

The intrinsic motivations for leadership differ based on individual personalities. In some leadership scholarship, the motivation to lead has been measured and studied to determine the effects on an individual's leadership. Chan and Drasgow (2001) define the motivation to lead as individual differences that may affect "decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities and that affect his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (p. 482). Five important personality traits for motivation are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience (Shrout et al., 2014; Kennedy et al, 2021). Beyond certain personality traits relating to the motivation to lead, Kennedy et al. (2021, p. 2) have found that the "expressed desire to claim a leadership role," or the intention to lead, is also needed for developing your leadership skills.

While personality traits do not determine your leadership efficacy, they may be a useful guide in helping you determine why you are leading. By identifying these traits, you may be able to assess your strengths, weaknesses, and leadership potential. They could also help you understand the motivations and intentions behind your leadership and can guide you to become a better leader. For example, if you have the personality trait of extraversion, you may find you are best motivated to lead when working in a group setting. However, if your team includes a mixture of extroverts and introverts, you may find that you will have to balance group and individual work to accommodate diverse personality traits. Consider a few self-reflective questions below to determine your motivation and intention for leading (see Table 5).

TABLE 5 | **Exercise on identifying personal motivations for leadership**

	Questions for self-reflection on personal motivations for leadership
1	Would you describe yourself as extroverted, introverted, or a mixture of both?
2	Would you describe yourself as agreeable or combative?
3	Would you describe yourself as conscientious or dismissive?
4	Would you describe yourself as emotionally stable and unchanging or more emotionally reactive?
5	Would you describe yourself as open to new information and ideas or more closed off and trusting of traditional, "tried-and-true" ideas and methods?
6	Collect your responses to the previous questions. Which personality traits may be strengths of your leadership style? Do you see any traits that may be challenging to your role as a leader? How can you take these personality traits and use them to be an effective leader?

Source: Adapted from Kennedy et. al, 2021

2.4 Personal biases

Personal biases could take the form of negative attitudes or stereotypes that can affect leadership style and efficiency (Faigman, Kang, Bennett, Carbado et al, 2012). Biases may be explicit or implicit. Explicit bias is easily identified as overt discrimination, such as racism or sexism. It may be understood as an attitude or stereotype that a person is aware they hold and actively chooses to believe or endorse as a personal belief (Faigman, Kang, Bennett, Carbado et al, 2012). Conversely, implicit bias describes "attitudes, memories, and stereotypes that are outside of 'conscious, attentional control" (Levinson and Young, 2010, p. 3; Greenwald and Krieger, 2006; Kang, 2005). Implicit bias is an automatic response that may impact decision-making even when a person is unaware that their implicit biases affect their choices (Faigman, Kang, Bennett, Carbado et al, 2012).

Leaders must be particularly aware of their own biases and work to actively mitigate any negative effect these biases may have on leadership. Your positionality may contribute to the biases you hold as a leader, so consider how your identities, upbringing, and other contextual characteristics may affect your views. The first step to addressing your biases is to acknowledge that them (Polden and Andreson, 2022). See the guiding questions below (Table 6) to help identify your biases (Acton, 2022, paras. 14-19).

TABLE 6 | **Exercise on identifying personal biases**

	Guiding questions for identifying personal biases
1	What core beliefs do I hold? How might these beliefs limit or enable me and my colleagues at work?
2	How do I react to people from different backgrounds? Do I hold stereotypes or assumptions about a particular social group?
3	As a leader, do I acknowledge and leverage differences in my team?
4	How would my team describe my leadership style if they were sharing their experience of working with me to others?
5	Do my words and actions reflect my intentions?
6	Do I put myself in the shoes of the other person and empathize with their situation, even if I don't relate to it?

Source: Acton, 2022, paras. 14-19

Once you have acknowledged and identified your personal biases, there are several strategies to address them and keep them from affecting your leadership effectiveness. You must "let others challenge your assumptions [,] . . . [b]e open to feedback[,] . . . [and] [e]mbrace diverse perspectives" if you are to address the biases that you hold (Acton, 2022, paras. 22, 29, 25). Additionally, you must "confront bias rather than be complacent or avoid difficult situations" (Polden and Andreson, 2022, p. 85). By starting your journey acknowledging and reflecting on the biases you may hold, confronting yourself and others who you see exhibit bias may be easier since you have already done the reflection work.

Bias affects everyone. Finally, as a leader, inclusivity is a strategy to help disrupt the negative effects of your biases on your leadership. Certain behaviours and traits are a mark of inclusivity, such as "making sure that team members speak up and are heard by everyone, making it safe to propose novel ideas, empowering team members to make appropriate decisions without fear of retribution, taking advice and implementing feedback, giving feedback, and sharing credit for the successes of others on the team" (Polden and Andreson, 2022, p. 87). By acknowledging and actively confronting your biases to achieve inclusivity in your team, you will be a more successful, effective, and inclusive leader.

2.5 Discrimination within the organization

Although you may work hard to confront and eliminate bias in your leadership style, this does not insulate you from the biases of others you work with. Adesola Adeboyejo in her Amandla Women to Watch response writes: *"[a]s a woman, you must break through the glass ceiling that face women all over the world and the unconscious biases that comes with being a woman of color"* (*IAWL*). Netshitangani (2016) identified several sources of discrimination that African women face in achieving leadership positions in education organizations, which occur in other professional workplaces. These include organizational barriers, selection processes, workplace relationships, globalization, internal motivation, and lifestyle conflict. Among these, gender and racial discrimination or sexual harassment and the toll that these take on an individual's well-being are additional challenges that women may face in an organization. For African women, the effects of colonialism shifted women's social role from "complementary role to man" to subordination, further complicating organizational discrimination (Netshitangani, 2016, p. 81). The Institute for African Women in Law launched the Men Advocates in Law for Equality (MALE) Allies campaign to encourage a new culture of inclusion in the legal profession. The campaign recognized the historic significance of communality and complementarity in African systems, noting that the "majority of precolonial traditional African systems were built on communality, consensus, and complementary gender roles."

Gender-based discrimination in organizations affects women in tangible ways. The ideal employee is based on "a traditional patriarchal family" where the male employee "has no childcare responsibilities, is able to 'work at least forty hours a week year round,' and work overtime on short notice" (Kaminer, 2004, p. 310).   This ideal employee structure prevents women from reaching their full potential in the workplace. This is because women are the primary caregivers in many households, and are expected to put family before careers. Inflexible work schedules disproportionately harm women as the primary caregivers in a household (Kaminer, 2004).   Further, barriers such as the gender wage gap and harmful stereotypes against pregnant women or mothers, such as the perception of their lack of competency in the workplace after childbirth, actively prevent women from excelling in the workplace (Reuter, 2006).

To address discrimination, Roberts and Brown (2009) suggest adopting empowerment and leading behavioral techniques. Empowerment techniques include "self-efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building" (Roberts and Brown, 2009, p. 94). Leading techniques include "a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion, advocacy for change, impression management, and governance" (Roberts and Brown, 2009, p. 94). While these strategies may not work in every situation, consider employing some to advocate for a better organizational climate for yourself and to practice self-care for your own well-being when faced with discrimination. In the context of African feminism, Netshitangani (2016) suggests that "[w]omen in Africa can use the traditional values of womanhood to combat the patriarchal impositions and prejudices frequently levelled against them" (p. 85).

In addition to the strategies discussed above, discrimination in the workplace is legally prohibited in most countries. Multiple international human rights legal documents protect women's rights in the workplace. For example, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) all enshrine protection for women against discrimination. Beyond the international human rights instruments, country-specific legal rights through statutes, constitutions, and case law provide similar protections. In Nigeria, for example, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) works in conjunction with the statutory protections provided for in the Nigerian Labour Act and the international human rights protections from ratified treaties such as CEDAW. Using the legal system to challenge a violation of protected rights is also an option to addressing gender-based discrimination. See the discussion below for ways to assess discrimination and how to use the various strategies.

TABLE 7 | **Analysing experiences of discrimination**

	Questions for analyzing experiences of discrimination
1	Have you ever been discriminated against? Was it based on one of your identities? How did you feel?
2	What tools do you wish you had in your organization to fight against discrimination?
3	How might the empowerment and leading techniques help you address discrimination?
4	What traditional values of womanhood can you identify that may be useful to you or your organization in fighting discrimination?

Source: Inspired by Kaminer, 2004; Roberts and Brown, 2009; and Reuter, 2006.

2.6 Transformational and feminine leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as "a process by which leaders bring about significant positive changes in individuals, groups, teams, and organizations by using inspiration, vision, and the ability to motivate followers to transcend their self-interests for a collective purpose" (Warrick, 2011, p. 12). Broadly, "transformational leaders inspire followers to perform beyond normal expectations" (Mokgolo, 2012, p. 3). A transformational leader is one who leads with a vision for change. Additionally, transformational leadership has been proven effective. In a study of leaders in South Africa after the 2009 elections, researchers found that "[t]ransformational leadership had a positive correlation with subordinate leadership acceptance, performance and job satisfaction" (Mokgolo, 2012, p. 1). This example from the South African context shows how the characteristics of a transformational leader can prove efficient in society. Transformational leadership at the societal and community level is a prime starting ground for change to sway social and cultural norms. Women can embody these transformational leadership characteristics and work at the societal level.

Transformational leadership is also rooted in feminist and feminine leadership qualities. This type of leadership work means "proceeding in ambiguity, in circumstances of 'not knowing,' and being open to diverse and shifting measures of success" while rejecting a "masculinist, ethnocentric bias" that focuses on "models and rules about how to lead" (Sinclair, 2014, p. 29). More specifically, Netshitangani (2016) states that "[l]eaders who want to be transformational or those who want to entrench a new organizational culture can utilize feminine qualities of leadership contained in transformational leadership" (p. 86). These feminine qualities have been identified as nourishment, cooperation, compassion, sensitivity, and the ability to multitask (Netshitangani, 2016). Sinclair (2014, p. 26) has described similar qualities couched in the leadership context:

> **This research documents that women's organizing consistently rejects hierarchy, put effort into building relationships and empowering others, and emphasizes collective achievement and responsibility rather than the leadership of individuals. At the same time, collections exploring women's leadership usually find there is considerable diversity in the way women go about the job of leading despite a common interest in transforming outcomes to better serve women's interests. Partially this arises because of the contexts and constraints they must work around, within, and against to do their leadership work.**

This rejection of hierarchy is particularly relevant in traditional organizational structures that use a top-down approach to manage teams. Examples include the centralised system of administration that are commonly found in universities, big law firms, and the judiciary. Instead, transformational leadership as rooted in feminine leadership qualities brings a collaborative and community-building approach to the organization that encourages lateral rather than hierarchical organizing. As noted by Netshitangani (2016: p. 90), "the nurturing role of a mother in Africa can bring forth a number of lessons for women in leadership," such as managing a household, emphasizing the value of sharing, caring, and listening. While the idea of mothering qualities is helpful in many ways, the authors warn of mothering traits that may weaken leadership efficacy, such as taking on too many responsibilities, displaying overprotective qualities, or failing to maintain one's own well-being.

Studies have shown that combining transformational and feminine leadership leads to positive outcomes. Kawatra and Krishnan (2004, p. 7) demonstrated these positive outcomes:

> **Results [from the study] show that feminine leadership enhances people orientation, collaboration, and team orientation. Similarly, transformational leadership enhances competitiveness, achievement orientation, performance expectations, results orientation, innovation, and taking advantage of opportunities. Results also show that transformational leadership and femininity together enhance achievement orientation and reduce stability.**

Overall, transformational and feminine leadership styles lead to positive outcomes. Whether the leadership style is used in the societal or organizational contexts, the general characteristics that encourage change for a collective purpose through collaboration provide a strategy for efficient and effective leadership.

Clear and effective communication is an essential trait of transformational leaders. When providing direction to a team, a transformational leader will communicate "in terms of goals (what needs to be done), values (how things should be done), and priorities (what is most important)" (Warrick, 2011, p. 15). Breaking down and organizing information before presenting it to the team will create a more effective line of communication and allow for more time for collaboration and sharing ideas. The key characteristics of collaborative leaders are similar to those of transformational leaders who collaborate with a team to bring about positive change.

Collaborative leadership styles can be distinguished from the more traditional hierarchical approaches (Kloosterman and Safier, 2014). Both collaborative and transformational leadership styles involve participatory and democratic approaches to achieving leadership objectives (Ardoin et al, 2014). Within the context of women's leadership in law, collaborative leadership would involve democratic and team-building approaches aimed at achieving set goals. Additionally, transformational leadership inspires positive change within the team and culminates in a call to action to achieve the shared objective or leadership goal. The transformation could occur at the individual, organizational, or societal levels.

At the individual level, transformational leadership could result in a change in leadership style from traditional hierarchical leadership to more collaborative approaches. At the organizational level, transformational leadership could result in restructuring policies and processes within law firms and other organizations to mainstream ethical goals such as socially responsible investing. Within the public sector and at the societal level, transformational leadership could be aimed at supporting social justice, gender equality and broader equity goals.

2.7 Transformational leadership supporting women leaders

Transformational leaders can play important roles at the individual, social, and organizational levels to support women leaders. Characteristics such as teamwork, open communication, and a desire to bring positive change are essential to creating space for women leaders. On the organizational and social level, transformational leadership can play an essential role in creating an enabling environment to give women the tools they need to be effective leaders.

Transformational and feminist leaders in organizations can make powerful changes. Changes such as flexible work schedules, equal pay, and training to address harmful implicit biases and stereotypes can all be achieved with a transformational leader who is working for positive change. By engaging the members of the organization as a team and motivating the team to work towards a collective purpose to uplift all members from diverse backgrounds, the culture of the organization may shift.

**TABLE 8** | **Exercise on transformational leadership skills**

Questions for self-reflection on transformational leadership skills	
1	Review the characteristics of transformational and feminine leaders discussed in this section. How well do you identify with those characteristics?
2	What are some ways you can engage with the transformational and feminine leadership styles in your everyday work?
3	Have you experienced imposter syndrome? How might you use transformational leadership skills to build your own self-confidence and build connections with your team and community?
4	What obstacles to women's advancement do you see in your organizations, community, and society at large? In what way can you use transformational leadership skills to change the common practices in your own organization or community?

Source: Inspired by Kawatra and Krishnan, 2004; Kloosterman and Safier, 2014; Mokgolo, 2012; Netshitangani , 2016; Sinclair, 2014; and Warrick, 2011.

Transformational leaders on the societal level can also use their passion for positive change. Many societies are based on a patriarchal organizational structure with men in power. Patriarchal institutions often encourage and support negative stereotypes towards women that hinder their ability to reach the highest and most prestigious levels of leadership. With transformational leaders at the community and social level, leaders can shift negative practices to counter harmful stereotypes towards women, work with male allies who support women's advancement, and provide opportunities for women to lead at the family and community levels. Thus, transformational leaders are essential to bring positive changes at all levels and give women the tools and flexibility they need for successful leadership positions.

PART 3 | Women Leaders Speak

3.1 Introduction

This section offers insights into the lived experiences of women leaders on two themes: (a) navigating the leadership journey; and (b) strategies for positioning women for leadership.

3.2 Navigating the leadership journey

Women leaders who participated in this project shared varied experiences of navigating the leadership journey and provided highlights from their personal experiences. Few started out with an innate desire or aspiration to become leaders within their areas of practice or organizations, and one respondent even described her leadership journey as "unexpected."

Another respondent in academia described her leadership journey as "accidental":

> I came to academia through quite a circuitous route. In many respects, I'm an accidental academic. In some ways, I could say I was even an accidental graduate. I didn't come in with a view of where I was going to end up and the kinds of leadership positions that I might end up filling, of which there have actually been many, in retrospect, but I've always thought of them as service positions.

Another found that her support system allowed her to explore options outside of a family tradition of science-based careers:

> I think it started with having parents who were not only supportive, but told you that you could do anything you wanted. I have three brothers and [I was] the only girl, but there was never any differentiation as to who was going to do what. And I think that confidence of growing up in a family where both my parents encouraged us to do what we wanted to do, gave me that confidence to move forward. So that's one big part of it. The second part was actually a challenge that I had, you know, my dad was a scientist by training and all my brothers were doing science. And so at school I was going to do biochemistry . . . [but I switched] to do history, geography and English.

After speaking with her father to determine what she could do with her new-found subjects, the respondent decided to intern with an uncle who was a lawyer, after which she found "I realized that I found where I wanted to be. And so for me, it was the basis of moving forward."

One respondent, a managing partner, highlighted how taking on greater levels of responsibility within the firm incrementally prepared her for leadership. She also emphasized that this occurred with other ongoing changes in her private life and the need to strike a balance between professional leadership responsibilities and other responsibilities in one's private life, also acknowledging that there are sacrifices to be made on the leadership journey.

> ...the highlights started with being given responsibility beyond just following someone to court because I focus on litigation. So, it started with being given a schedule I ran on my own, handling a trial in the High Court. That was a big thing for me. I found myself doing trials back-to-back unsupervised, and then getting to have my own team. I thought then that... I had hit my ultimate. I must say that I didn't have big dreams. At the time, I was satisfied with being a team leader in a leading firm. But beyond that, I became a leader of leaders, where I was leading more than one team in the litigation space. Eventually, the opportunity came for me to take over the role of managing not just the lawyers in the firm, but the admin and support team. So, the highlights for me have been coming into my own, standing out, not being under anyone's shadow, and leading not just a team of people, but an entire firm. And in that process, as well, it has opened other doors for leadership roles. And along with all these were other aspects of my life that were also evolving. And that has to do with family life. So the journey was all the more sweet because even though sacrifices were made, there was work-life balance, and other areas of my life also developed.

However, one common thread that connected the different experiences was the way in which the skills and experiences that were gathered while working in various fields and positions proved valuable on their leadership journey. In order words, their prior experiences and lessons learned were inadvertently important resources that strengthened the quality of their leadership and culminated in successful outcomes in different contexts.

In other words of a diplomat who also left her mark as a leader in academia:

> **Well, I will start with the hard work when I started as a diplomat. That's the beginning because I joined the ministry maybe almost now 30 years ago, a little bit less. And I think the turning points were when I decided to continue my studies, not only to stop at the bachelors, and move on up to the ambassadorial level and try to change a bit of the dynamics in the life of a diplomat. So I didn't stop at just doing the same things like everybody else. But I continued in academia, I taught at the university, and I think that was a turning point for me because it widened my horizons. Far beyond just the diplomatic career.**

3.3 Strategies for positioning women for leadership

Remarkably, there were some recurring themes in the strategies that were shared by the respondents for positioning women for leadership, such as hard work, networks, knowledge and competence, among others. There were similarities in the strategies shared by women across other sectors, and no one strategy would be applicable in all situations."

Remarkably, a respondent alluded to the range of factors that impact on leadership:

> **Strategies in leadership styles are determined by several factors such as the nature of the task, capacity of the workforce, personality type of employees, location, logistics, etc.**

Further, it is important to recognize women's diverse responsibilities and gender roles in deploying strategies for positioning women for leadership. Women have to ensure that they do not succumb to gender stereotypes that are capable of stifling their leadership potential.

As a respondent from the public sector highlighted:

> When women are the primary caregivers and managers at home, it gives detractors in the office a justification for why a woman may not be available or capable of assuming a leadership role in the office. Women must embrace a positive outlook and not allow themselves to be defined by stereotypes. We must believe that we can raise a family and serve the public simultaneously; it is possible.

A respondent with a background in social organizing and academia found that deep knowledge building was the key to positioning women for leadership positions. She shared:

> Knowledge is indispensable in any trajectory you are going to take. Even though you don't have the vision right now, the more you read, the more insights you will get along the way. The more benefits you receive from other people's experience, whether it's written or said in any interview or any event, the knowledge is important and it becomes rare. From my own point of view, especially in the era of technology and takeaway culture, it's like people are doing shorter videos or shorter interviews because the attention span of the people becomes very short because people don't have the patience to listen to long speeches or long talks, although it's important, it's beneficial. But this takeaway culture is very harmful. Knowledge and persistence to be knowledgeable and patience till you are knowledgeable enough, it's very important . . . . So the more you read, the more knowledgeable you are; the more you're using the different tools you have around you, it is going to help and it is going to shock the people that do not believe in you.

She also noted that women must have the courage to take the first step in their career or leadership journey, even if they don't know the future. In addition, she found that resilience, self-care, solidarity, and the use of international tools are essential to preparing women for leadership positions.

Similarly, another respondent from academia highlighted the importance of self-confidence, curiosity, openness to diverse opinions and personalities, and understanding the institution where one works. In her words:

> The *first strategy* is that women should *believe in themselves and be confident in their ability to be leaders.* And that confidence is not arrogance or boastfulness, it's confidence in knowing yourself, your skills, what you are capable of, what you're passionate about, what you're interested in, and so on. So, a belief in yourself is important because I do believe that women still lack a sense of their own capacity and their own strengths, which impacts their confidence. So the first is confidence and believing in yourself.
>
> The *second strategy* is an important one, is to *be curious.* You have to be curious because your curiosity will lead you to the investigation, knowledge, and information that you need to acquire. Because life and leadership are about learning all the time, we have to learn and you only learn by being curious. So being curious also means knowing how much you know, but you're also aware of what you don't know.
>
> The *third strategy* is to *be open to a diverse range of opinions and a diverse range of personalities*. Leadership means that you will be leading people – and thereby working with them collaboratively – who don't necessarily share your worldview, your ideas, your goals, and your aims. And you will also be working with people who are on a range of personalities and skills, and so on. So being open to divergent viewpoints, capabilities, emotional needs, and so on is very, very important.
>
> And then the *fourth strategy* I would say is to *know your institution.* If you're going to lead an institution, you have to know the history of that institution, how it works, the important aspects of that institution and so on.

Another respondent found that moving out of your comfort zone and identifying a path forward, building relationships and networking, and building your brand were important to positioning women in leadership positions.

On the first point of stepping out of her comfort zone, she shared:

> [Y]ou have to approach your career as a strategist. Nobody is going to build your career for you. You are going to be the primary person who pushes your career forward, you will have supporters, you will have advocates, you have mentors, you have sponsors, but you are the person that needs to be the *Chief Strategist of your own career*. I think clearly identifying where you want to go, and what that route looks like and who is on that way that can help you to get there. So be very strategic and be very clear as much as you can be. I think also you have to be open to try new things.

She further shared that:

> Another strategy is *relationship building and networking*. ...An additional strategy is brand building. Making sure that you have a brand and understanding that you have a personal brand to build that sounds very new age. But honestly, we need to understand the importance of having your own brand and developing what makes you a good candidate for a role.

A judge similarly found that "knowledge and competency, good mentors, hard work" and preparation were the keys to successfully positioning women in leadership positions. A different judge found that hard work, continuous learning, and conviction so as not to be influenced by the views of others were skills and activities that women should have to be well-positioned as leaders. On the other hand, another judge respondent found that aspiring women leaders who wish to position themselves for leadership roles must be assertive, determined, and open to constructive criticism. Additionally, the judge noted that leaders must manage public expectations by setting realistic timelines for assignments. She states:

> **[t]he third aspect that a person who is a leader must consider is to set realistic timelines for assignments as a way of managing public expectations. I know that leaders will always want to have targets, but the targets must correspond with what is realistic and practical if the targets are not properly managed, that will even frustrate the expectations that the public will have, and even those that you are working with will have in the management. And once the people are frustrated and have lost the trust and confidence of the management, it has serious repercussions on how they will discharge their duties. So that would also be an area where I would say that any woman who would want to be in a leadership position should be ready and willing to lead so that they are able to discharge their leadership skills without challenges.**

One respondent found that the required skills or experiences depend on the type of leadership position.

She shared three strategies:

> **From my personal experience, women aspiring to senior academic leadership as deans or chairholders, for example, should have a *broad knowledge of how the core business of the academic institution – teaching and research - are regulated and managed,* as well as an idea of the internal and external environment that potentially affects this business. This calls for a willingness to get involved in the "dirty" work of academic administration, such as deputy deanships and headship of academic departments. Secondly, research outputs are essential qualifiers for both top academic leadership positions and chair positions. Thirdly, *fundraising* skills are critical in today's higher education funding environment.**

Another respondent from academia indicated that:

> The first step is to **step up and ask for responsibility.** On the one hand, I'm saying women are getting tapped all the time to fulfil so-called leadership roles, which are actually administrative roles. However, the point here is about being deliberate. **Don't be an accidental leader. Think very deliberately,** about what kinds of responsibilities you want to take on, and then go and ask, don't wait to be tapped. And then when you've got that job, pull your weight. Because the people that are on that committee or in those spaces with you are going to see what you do. And those are the people that will walk the road with you for many years to come. So you're building a reputation as somebody who gets things done. However, you have to be very strategic, make sure that your name is on it. **Be deliberate about the people that you surround yourself with. Have each other's backs, support each other,** I can tell you, really, from my own experience, that men do that. They write reference letters for each other, and they're there for each other in ways that sometimes women actually aren't. And we need to do that much more deliberately. **Pay attention to your mentorship needs, and seek out those relationships** and build those relationships because I think people are available to support you.

Yet another respondent from academia emphasised the importance of self-confidence and exceeding expectations, in order to succeed as a leader.

She shared that:

> I talk about **owning your space and not giving ground in that space**. This is not necessarily in an aggressive way, but in a way that says, "I'm comfortable here, I belong here and I am going to put a stamp and have an input in this role." I think that's really, really important, because I think a lot of the time women sell themselves short. The other thing I would say is, it is unfortunately still true that **you sometimes have to go over and above what other colleagues are doing if you want to achieve in that space. ... I would say you also have to be very clear about what is required for you to progress.** ...Also, it's about working smart, and about being aware of what is needed to progress ... be aware, get information about what is needed, and make sure that you're positioning yourself to move through whatever pathway there is that is available. ... **I think being ready and prepared to take up that opportunity when it comes knowing that you will grow in the role.** Nobody gets into a role and fits in 100% and that's why it's called a promotion, you'll grow in the role. But by all means, ensure that you have the skills, you have the experience, you have the networks and the support system to help you succeed in that role when you do get into it. So, for me, that is how I think women may position themselves in higher education especially, but I think it applies to any other legal field that one wants to progress in. I think part of that is when you then progress, not to set a ceiling on yourself to say "Wow, well I got here. This is all that there is." Be open to go even further and knowing that you can go even further.

The importance of **hard work as a strategy for leadership** was a recurring theme that was emphasised by respondents from other sectors besides academia as well.

In the voice of a judge:

> When you want to be successful, at that level, number one prescription is **hard work, hard work, and hard work**. ... It is also about **quality and standard.** You need to set your own standards, you know, and **you need to do a lot of continuous learning**. ...And another thing is, it is good to **seek out good** mentors. Especially when you are younger, a lot of mentoring early on, if you find some good role models, in the legal world, it is good. I also read a lot of biographies. So I say **knowledge and competency, good mentors, hard work, study,**... about every area..., and always be prepared.

Highlighting the importance of competence, knowledge and intuition in leadership, a respondent from academia stated that:

> It's important to **invest in yourself;** not just in the academic sphere, but also in other areas that help you know how to deal with people, how to manage systems if you're asked to handle systems, and of course, especially with finances, keeping books, being able to give speeches, being able to carry your team along. ...The second thing is **networks**. ... my network is really my net worth because that is the group that I can call on when I face challenges and structural issues that I'm not able to deal with and the network doesn't even have to be one, people talk about being networked to high net individuals. ...And I think the final one is **listening to your heart**. Many times, we think that leading is from the head but I've found that listening to my heart, sometimes can lead to outcomes that would benefit my institution more than using my head because using my head, may trump on issues that many people don't think are important.

Another respondent shared the following strategies:

> *Hard work;* there's no replacement for hard work, you have to work hard. You also must aim high. To get there, you must aim high. You have to take advantage of whatever training opportunities there are. *Keep learning.* ...learning is something that there's no substitute for because there's so much competition and there's so much to learn so do not limit yourself. You must continue learning. You must be independent and always strive to know more and be on top of things. *Independence, impartiality,* these are not just words, we must practice them. If you're a woman, judicial officer, judge, magistrate, be independent and not be influenced, that's really what I had in mind, not being influenced in any way.

An international development lawyer highlighted the need to be brave and adventurous, stating:

> *Don't be afraid to take on challenges and take on difficult assignments.* I think sometimes we like to play it safe. But in playing it safe, you would close off opportunities that you could have made a difference. *You should try different things.* Legal training is something that actually gives you the ability to do more than just be a lawyer. And I think sometimes our leadership will take us down roads that maybe we didn't think about, you know, as lawyers, we either think of academia, we think of House Counsel, we think of litigation, etc. What else can you do? Where can you bring the skills? Because the skills we have as lawyers in terms of analysis, in terms of how we view facts, etc, are useful in so many spheres. And I think we don't do enough of that. *Don't be afraid to be yourself, and being and thinking of what impact you're going to have. ...Take on the assignments that will enhance your skills. Reach out to people when you need help,* but figure out what you want to do and what you want to achieve. And move on that.

Another respondent advised that:

> **The first strategy is to *recognize specialization and rely on the expertise of one's colleagues while sharing knowledge, insights and experiences*.** Being a successful leader does not mean knowing everything but rather knowing when to rely on other team members and colleagues to perfect one's output and the output of the team one is leading. This may seem simple and common sense, but it is quite tricky in any competitive environment: it is thus important to build trust among the members of one's team and convince them that there is intrinsic value in sharing knowledge and certainly a common interest. The second strategy is to ***focus on developing one's team and investing time and effort into building their professional characters while paying special attention to their educational and emotional needs*.** Every generation has its peculiarities, be very mindful of that. The third strategy is to ***lead by example, to practice what one preaches, and to be flexible and pragmatic:*** Not every situation requires the same level of intervention. Empowering one's team members and managing their level of involvement and responsibility depends on your assessment of the situation, and this could be crucial.

A respondent from private practice shared the following strategies:

> I think ***building relationships*** is very, very, very, very key. And someone may call it "networking". But at the end of the day, whatever support base you build, whatever your fan club is going to be, it starts with connecting with people. And it's not just an overnight thing. ...So you have to be present, show up, deliver, make your mark, and build relationships because those are the very people who are going to vie for you when you need their votes. The other thing is ***character,*** ... You have to have a value system and be an ethical leader. Because you can only get so far by demonstrating competence and good human relations. But you must stand for something which will inspire people to look up to you as a leader. And of course, there's the lobbying as well, which is one thing that we typically don't like to do as women, but all these things can be learned. And that's another thing that has also helped me notwithstanding that I hold a leadership position, I'm not shy to ***consult.*** I have people that I can constantly get in touch with, people in high positions, some at my level, some not even in the legal industry. ... you need to build your capacity, you need to keep growing, and you need to show that you're somebody that other people can look up to for direction.

For a respondent from the third sector, her top three strategies involved a combination of being intentional, building interpersonal relationships, and having faith in the Divine.

In her words:

> I think the first thing is about knowing what you want. ... you have to be **intentional; leadership is intentional.** What do you want to achieve? You need to set goals and targets that are achievable and realistic and work towards achieving them. ... The second is **human interactions** ... No matter how introverted you are. ...over time, you will learn how also to navigate your natural comfort zone, and endure a bit of discomfort in order to attain a connection with another person. Human connection is critical in your leadership journey, there are people there meant to help you, there are people placed in your pathway for you to also help. And leadership is the recognition that we need one another, and you learn communication, how to resolve conflicts, and you also build very strong interpersonal skills, through those friendships and acquaintances that you meet. And in those friendships are also mentors, coaches, sparring partners. ... you cannot do this leadership journey alone because it's extremely lonely. So having people that you connect with is critical. And knowing the role they play in your life is also critical. And finally, **you have to have belief.** For me, it's my belief in God, I'm a woman of faith. And I believe that this has also been quite instrumental in how I have navigated the most difficult decisions of my life, that God did not put me here to fail. ...So spending time to actually pray, to actually reconnect spiritually, and to look after yourself would also go a long way in strengthening you..., it's the glue that holds everything else together, achieving your greatest ambitions and your greatest dreams. So I think those three strategies for me are important, and I will recommend them.

Finally, a woman in public service emphasised that visibility for women lawyers was very important, from building an individual brand to participating in women lawyers' associations. In addition, she noted the importance of mentorship and connecting with people from different professions:

> **Again, I think one of the things that is also important is the issue of inclusivity. And what I mean here is, if you have a position like this, making sure that you're bringing people from diverse backgrounds. As lawyers, we like to champion other lawyers, but coming in a space like other human rights bodies, I've realized that we need to work with economists; we need to work with people that are coming from the health sector. So when you're in a leadership position, you need to deliberately create a situation where you have people from different backgrounds, it is very important. It's a constant journey of learning, and, at the same time, when you are not able to understand issues, you can go and learn from others who may have a different perspective on things that you do not know.**

She also emphasised the importance of mentorship, stating that:

> **Again, I think one of the things that is also important is the issue of inclusivity. And what I mean here is, if you have a position like this, making sure that you're bringing people from diverse backgrounds. As lawyers, we like to champion other lawyers, but coming in a space like other human rights bodies, I've realized that we need to work with economists; we need to work with people that are coming from the health sector. So when you're in a leadership position, you need to deliberately create a situation where you have people from different backgrounds, it is very important. It's a constant journey of learning, and, at the same time, when you are not able to understand issues, you can go and learn from others who may have a different perspective on things that you do not know.**

3.4 Concluding remarks

Leadership requires being deliberate about one's trajectory, building networks and cultivating interpersonal relationships.

One respondent from academia offered the following advice to aspiring women leaders in law:

> At the start of your career, even in law school, think about your five-year goal, your 10-year goal, and your 15-year goal. Have a sense of your goals, even though much in life means that your plans don't always come to fruition, but it's good to have plans, it's good to have a strategy. Then even as you think about your goals, develop the ability to be flexible and resilient. When those plans are thwarted, be willing to change and so on, but have a sense of where you would like to be. There are certain choices in your life that you must consider purposely -- *the first is your choice of friends.* All the research shows and anecdotal evidence shows that your friends ultimately determine where you will end up. So, if you have friends who are committed to your goals, your visions and in the legal profession, committed to the goals of social justice or whatever goals you have, those friends will inspire and collaborate with you in a way in which you have shared values, and they will support you. Choosing your friends is very important. *Second is choosing your life partner;* your life partner must be somebody who will support you and inspire you, not thwart you, and so on, so think about that very, very carefully. And then, the third thing is that from the most menial person that you will meet in your life – somebody who sweeps the street, somebody who is the cleaner in your building, to the leader, the top person in your institution, *be gracious, be courteous, be kind*. Kindness is a value that people in our profession don't necessarily appreciate that much.

Overall, the need for resilience cannot be overemphasized!

> I would always say that *resilience is very important* when it comes to leadership. When you want to reach a leadership position, you must keep moving, you have to go straight up. You must widen your horizon, but you cannot keep going horizontally; you have to go up. This is something very important. My advice to everybody is *you'll have to get support from within.* Don't look for it anywhere else. Yes, *learn from all the seniors, and try to grasp as much as you can from the knowledge, but the power lies within you.* And this is how you can advance. I think it's very, very important when you are in a leadership position to *be humane*. And to realize always no one is indispensable. No one. Any job can be done with or without you. The only difference when we have different human beings in the workplace is to focus on the style and deliverables. Whether it's of high quality, low quality, good delivery, or poor delivery. That's it; nobody is here forever but leave your mark wherever you go.

Moreso, various stakeholders have a role in supporting strategies for positioning women in leadership; these include women, male allies and other key stakeholders within organizations and society.

Recalling the important role of male allies and other stakeholders one respondent, shared:

> There was a man [name redacted], who was a pioneer advocate of female education in [country redacted]. And that was at the time when there was a huge debate on the need to educate females – it was very early in our history, but it was very important. I think he played a major role to make sure that girls have the right to education as a start. If I think of the legal profession, at least for us, I know we have very early university professors and lawyers, female lawyers, back home since the 1950s and so on when women were allowed to enter the universities in the 1920s and to advance. Internationally I would say all the initiatives like this one of having the Institute for African Women in Law showcase women in law in different parts of life, in different countries and showing them to the world. Showing them to our girls gives them the inspiration to think that this is a good path for them. I would say the important factor here is to learn and encourage our own governments to bring females as candidates for such positions. We have to think about how we can encourage governments, how we can encourage philanthropists and NGOs to prepare women, especially in the developing world, to reach these levels. This is what we really need. Maybe we have a lot of females in the international sphere nowadays, be it international lawyers, academics, or international organizations, but we are not there yet. And that is why I'm saying, if we think of strategy, I'd rather bring these brains together to come up with a map, with ideas on how to encourage young women to join the law profession, and not only to join the law profession locally but to go to the international sphere, which is very difficult for many of us.

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Appendix

Sector
Bar (Managing Partners in Law Firms)
Bench
In-house solicitors/corporate practice
Academia
Public service
NGOs/Third sector organisations
International organisations / diplomacy

Appendix

APPENDIX B: Interview questions

1. What are the highlights of your journey to your leadership position?

2. What are the main challenges, including stereotypes, which you have faced as a leader? How have these affected you and how have you evolved your leadership style to overcome the challenges?

3. In what way, if any, has your organisational context impacted your choice of leadership style?

4. In your experience, do women have different leadership styles from men? And does this account for women's under-representation in leadership positions?

5. How can women position themselves for leadership in the legal profession? Citing your personal experience, what are the top three leadership strategies which you can share to inspire women to take on leadership and be successful?

6. Do you have any other observations, suggestions, and information that you would like to share about the topic of advancing women's leadership in the legal profession?

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