



COLLECTION OF ABSTRACTS

International Workshop

**‘Women's Leadership for
Resilience and Transformation:
A Global Dialogue’**

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This collection contains abstracts of speakers' presentations from the international workshop that combined academic discourse and NGO practical insights to explore the complex issues of women's leadership and gender equality. It amplified the voices of displaced women, celebrated their resilience and creativity, and inspired action towards a more inclusive and equitable world inside and outside academia.

The workshop was part of the joint project of the University of Hull and Mariupol State University **'Fostering Women's Leadership in Ukrainian Academia. An Intersectional and Culturally Responsive Perspective'**, funded by the British Council within the **Gender Equality Partnerships** programme.

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Academic Panel: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP, INTERSECTIONALITY AND INCLUSION

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PROMOTING LEADERSHIP IN UNIVERSITIES AND BEYOND: FROM GENDER EQUALITY TO INTERSECTIONALITY

International institutions, such as the European Commission (2000), have argued for the incorporation of women in science to promote the economic development of the EU. The prosperity of nations is linked to their capacity to produce patentable knowledge and there is an economic advantage in increasing the number of active scientists and engineers. It has been noted that 'the policies and practices that operate in our scientific institutions discriminate against women (albeit at times inadvertently) and by so doing, allow a person's gender to be more significant than their excellence' (European Commission, 2000, p 1-2). For the European Commission the incorporation of women in science is a question of equity, excellence, efficacy, efficiency and it has made specific recommendations to achieve it. Some of the recommendations to promote the incorporation of women in science are: the production of relevant statistics; the elimination of legislation that impedes the participation of women in science/technology and academia in general; the institution of specific legislation to promote equality; the institution of quotas in all public bodies in which women are not represented; the inclusion of a gender dimension in science/engineering so projects in which only one gender is represented will not be financed unless there is a good justification for it; equal pay for equal work; and to establish mechanisms to ensure that the process of selection for jobs do not exclude women such as methods that support anonymity (European Commission 2000).

In the most recent report on the progress of increasing the participation of women in science and technology, the European Commission has supported an 'intersectional perspective that considers age, health status, disability, occupation, socioeconomic status, migratory status, and geographic location' (European Commission 2021, p 64). According to this report, the intersectional perspective helps with workforce attraction and retention; improves research and innovation and it is a useful methodology to analyze data related to inclusion. And I will argue that it also helps to produce better/more objective knowledge/ science and better technology.

Intersectionality can be used by Higher Education Institutions to improve the participation, retention and professional progression of women in academia (Gonzalez-Arnal et al. 2017) and it can help to increase their presence in leadership roles. The benefits of this perspective are illustrated in the presentations by Martha Zapata Galindo (2025) and Sanjeevani Rupasinghe (2025) in this workshop. I will show how the project 'Fostering Women's Leadership in Ukrainian Academia. An Intersectional and Culturally Responsive Perspective' has applied intersectionality in the context of university to promote the leadership of women academics. I will argue that adopting intersectionality allows us to have a

more informed, nuanced approach to inclusion, diversity and equality. Furthermore, I will show that intersectionality discloses forms of exclusion/inequality that would not be visible otherwise and it allows us to design policies and interventions that are more effective. Intersectionality can support women leadership in academia and beyond.

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A WOMAN IN POWER: MECHANISMS AND STRATEGIES

Thirty years ago, 189 countries adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a global programme aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women. During the Fourth World Conference on Women, 12 critical areas of concern were identified, including gender inequality in power distribution and decision-making at all levels (United Nations, 1995).

The report "*Women Political Leaders in 2024*", prepared by UN Women, states that despite some progress, women remain largely excluded from governance. In 113 countries, a woman has never held the position of head of state or government. According to the report, only 26 countries are currently women-led (International Trade Union Confederation, 2025). The issue of mechanisms for promoting women into positions of power is crucial and deserves attention.

Two key mechanisms stand out: family and political parties. Family connections provide women with access to the heights of power through belonging to an influential political clan (e.g., Indira Gandhi in India) or as successors to fathers or husbands who were victims of political assassinations (e.g., Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Corazon Aquino in the Philippines). In the latter case, a woman not only gains the status of a politician and party leader but also becomes a national symbol of the struggle for freedom and progress. She takes on the sacred role of protector and saviour of the nation.

Political parties, on the other hand, offer women a completely different path. Essentially, they function as "party soldiers," adhering to ideology, party hierarchy, and discipline. In a male-dominated environment, women must employ an extraordinary combination of confrontational and cooperative strategies, emotional influence on the audience, and unconventional speech practices (e.g., Giorgia Meloni in Italy).

The paths to power of two women from behind the *Iron Curtain* – Angela Merkel and Yulia Tymoshenko—are particularly notable. Both were the first and so far the only women in history to serve as Chancellor of Germany and Prime Minister of Ukraine, respectively. Interestingly, both assumed office in the same year, 2005, though with vastly different tenures—Merkel served for 16 years, while Tymoshenko held office for only 3. Both previously worked in government as ministers and deputy prime ministers, and both were members of parliament – the Bundestag and the Verkhovna Rada. Both hold academic degrees and grew up in states that no longer exist – the GDR and the USSR. However, they built their political careers in the newly established states of a unified Germany and an independent Ukraine, both direct outcomes of the end of the Cold War.

Both Merkel and Tymoshenko became subjects of political satire – Merkel as the protagonist of the comic book *"Miss Tschörmanie"* (Hollstein & Sakurai, 2009), and Tymoshenko as a character in a political animated series. However, they have significant differences, primarily due to the nature of their respective political systems. In Ukraine, almost all political parties are personality-driven, whereas in Germany, parties are ideological. This fundamental difference shaped their paths to political leadership. To become a party leader in Ukraine, one often has to create a party from scratch under personal leadership (as Tymoshenko did with *Batkivshchyna*), or form a political bloc under one's own name (*The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc*).

Merkel, on the other hand, had to fight to lead the CDU, despite being an outsider on multiple fronts—an East German, a scientist, and a woman in a country where a queen had never ruled. She eventually became the youngest Chancellor in Germany's history.

An analysis of Angela Merkel and Yulia Tymoshenko's political success strategies sheds light on the broader framework of how women attain and exercise power.

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INCLUDING WITHOUT EXCLUDING. APPLYING INTERSECTIONALITY TO INCLUSION POLICIES IN UNIVERSITIES.

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The presentation addresses the influence of intersectionality on university inclusion policies, highlighting the efforts made through the MISEAL project. This project, funded by the European Union with a budget of 3.5 million euros between 2012 and 2014, focused on promoting accessibility, fostering specialised training and creating transnational networks connecting institutions in Latin America and Europe. A key aspect of the project was the development of practical guides and tools that applied intersectional perspectives. These guides included methodologies designed to identify and analyse structural barriers in educational policies, as well as to implement solutions that addressed the specific needs of marginalised groups.

One of the main guides (Zapata Galindo et al., 2014) developed in this project was a methodology for the creation and application of indicators. This intersectional methodology serves as a basis for diagnosing the situation of different university groups, including students, administrative and academic staff. Its purpose is to support policy and administrative makers in processes such as access, retention and mobility within institutions. It analyses various dimensions of inequality, considering the intersections between categories such as gender, socioeconomic status and ethnic origin. Another key tool (Gonzalez Zarate et al. 2014) was a critical analysis of university regulatory frameworks, designed to identify exclusionary elements and propose inclusive aspects. This analysis revealed that many inclusion measures are not formally enshrined in official regulations and often depend on the political will of institutional leaders. Through an analytical model that detects discursive elements such as ambiguous formulations and regulatory gaps, the project highlighted how certain regulations can produce exclusionary effects.

The progress achieved through the MISEAL project is a tangible example of how international cooperation and commitment to social justice can bring about significant changes in educational institutions. It also highlights the importance of female leadership in advancing these inclusive policies and recognises the persistent challenges, including structural barriers and the need for greater representation of women in decision-making positions within universities.

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GENDER INCLUSION IN UKRAINE'S RECOVERY: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

The post-war reconstruction of Ukraine is not only a process of economic and infrastructural restoration but also an opportunity to create a more inclusive and just society. Gender inclusion is a key factor in successful reconstruction, ensuring equal access to resources, opportunities, and political participation.

The project "Gender Inclusion in Ukraine's Recovery Programmes: European Experience in Achieving Equal Opportunities", implemented by Zaporizhzhia National University (ZNU), has become a crucial initiative in studying and integrating European gender mainstreaming practices into post-war reconstruction processes. This project is particularly significant as it incorporates a multifaceted approach to assessing the gender dimension of recovery.

One of the most important areas of our work is the analysis of military conflict and the transformation of gender roles during wartime. Researchers studying gender dynamics in society emphasise that war increasingly masculinises both society and politics. However, war also reshapes traditional gender roles, with women playing an expanding role in security forces, volunteer movements, politics, and the economy.

As part of the ZNU project, an in-depth analysis is being conducted on women's participation in volunteer initiatives during the war and its impact on social cohesion. However, there are risks of increasing inequality, particularly in access to employment, social security, and protection from violence. Women displaced by war frequently encounter discrimination in the labour market and limited access to resources necessary for starting their own businesses.

The underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes concerning recovery is another challenge for post-war reconstruction. The ZNU project highlights the importance of engaging women in local councils and civic initiatives through educational programmes and training sessions.

The increase in cases of gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence calls for a systematic approach to addressing these issues. The project includes a series of training sessions and educational initiatives for social workers, psychologists, and student communities on preventing gender-based

violence in crises.

European practices of gender inclusion in post-war recovery are crucial for our project. The post-war reconstruction of Europe after World War II demonstrated the importance of integrating women into economic reintegration efforts. The experience of European countries shows that including women in the workforce after war contributed to faster economic stabilisation.

The political and economic integration of women involves gender-sensitive budgeting in EU countries as a mechanism for the equitable distribution of resources. The ZNU project aims to develop recommendations for implementing gender budgeting in local economic recovery programmes. We are inspired by policies supporting women's entrepreneurship and reintegration programmes for displaced women across Europe. Previous research within the ZNU project has revealed that successful European practices in supporting small businesses can be adapted in Ukraine through the creation of microcredit funds for women. These initiatives will be further explored in the economics module of our educational course.

Leadership practices in Ukraine should incorporate mechanisms for implementing European experience. This primarily involves optimising gender policies and adopting a cross-sectoral approach, which requires forming interdisciplinary teams for gender-sensitive recovery planning. Within the ZNU project, expert opinions from gender pedagogy, psychology, history, economics, mass culture, arts, and legal studies are integrated. Additionally, legal and sociological experts will be involved in analysing the gender aspects of infrastructure restoration. There are plans to expand expert groups within the project to establish monitoring mechanisms and assess the impact of recovery programmes on gender equality. One of the ZNU project's key objectives is to introduce gender effectiveness assessment tools in local government policies.

Institutional changes and gender leadership include increasing women's representation in local councils and national government bodies. The implementation of gender-oriented reforms in education, healthcare, and social protection requires skilled professionals familiar with gender issues. The project's educational course, tailored for various majors, aims to prepare gender equality specialists who can lead relevant projects and initiatives.

The project "Gender Inclusion in Ukraine's Recovery Programmes: European Experience in Achieving Equal Opportunities" reaffirms that successful reconstruction is impossible without the inclusion of women at all levels – from local communities to national policymaking.

Leveraging European experience, implementing gender mainstreaming, and developing educational and economic programmes will contribute to building an inclusive society based on equal opportunities for all citizens.

Gender equality should be a social standard and an effective tool for establishing a stable, democratic, and economically developed society in post-war Ukraine.

NGO Showcase: BUILDING BRIDGES: NGOs IN ACTION FOR WOMEN LEADERSHIP

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A MODEL FOR CHANGE: A PROFESSIONAL TRAINING COURSE ON INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP THROUGH CULTURAL IMMERSION

The presentation reports on the design, facilitation, and outcomes of a 30-hour professional training course “Inclusive Leadership in Academia through Cultural Immersion”, a key activity of the joint project between Mariupol State University and the University of Hull, "Fostering Women’s Leadership in Academia. An Intersectional and Culturally Responsive Perspective", funded by the British Council.

Conducted between October and November 2024, the course engaged 40 educators and inclusion workers from diverse institutional backgrounds, spanning the academic spectrum from humanities to STEM fields. both within Ukraine and internationally. The course aimed to develop trainees’ skills and knowledge to maximise their leadership potential, raise awareness of the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and intersectionality related to leadership; and prepare educators to apply culturally responsive leadership practices in their teaching.

The curriculum integrated the Model of Inclusive Leadership (Korkmaz et al., 2022; Randel et al., 2018) with principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Florian, 2021; Meyer et al., 2014) to equip participants with practical strategies for creating flexible and inclusive learning environments. The course content was comprised of the following training modules: Leadership and EDI in Academia, Gender and Intersectionality, Inclusive Course Design, Inclusive Teaching Practices through Cultural Immersion, Promoting and Measuring Student Success, Redesigning a Module with an Intersectional Perspective: Teaching Gender Theory and Intersectionality.

A significant focus involved developing cultural understanding through an intersectional lens. This approach considered culture as 'mental software' – the deeply ingrained, often unconscious beliefs and values that shape our perceptions and behaviours, as conceptualised by Minkov (2013). Uncovering these foundational cultural elements and their influence on more visible aspects necessitates deliberate effort, often facilitated by models such as Hofstede's Cultural Onion Model and Hall's Cultural Iceberg. The training incorporated experiential learning methods, including visual arts analysis, to foster participants' ability to identify and address social justice issues in diverse educational contexts. For instance, the analysis of Robert Frank's "Trolley, New Orleans, 1955" demonstrated how art can serve as a didactic tool for cultivating cultural understanding and empathy. The course emphasised the importance of selecting art based on criteria such as diverse representation, social commentary, and evocative character portrayal. Culminating in a task where participants critically examined and reimagined their own modules through the lenses of inclusive leadership, intersectionality, and cultural

immersion, the training aimed to instigate practical changes in pedagogical approaches.

A qualitative research methodology based on participants' semi-structured reflections gathered evidence of the course's effectiveness. This feedback indicated increased motivation, practical gains in teaching and course design, exposure to international best practices, and significant personal transformation, including a broadening of perspectives, a reduction in stereotypes, and an enhanced capacity for intercultural dialogue through mediums like art. This study underscores the potential of targeted professional development to foster inclusive leadership, intersectional and culturally responsive practices in academia.

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FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION: WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMIC-CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS IN UKRAINE

Women in Ukraine play a significant role both in the fields of education and the civic sector, influencing societal development and the implementation of reforms. Ukrainian women have demonstrated leadership and resilience in the public sector, both during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the context of the ongoing Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine.

According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2020), in 2019, women made up 83% of all teaching staff in general secondary education institutions. As for the public sector, although precise data are limited, there is notable female engagement in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), particularly in the fields of human rights protection, gender equality, and social reforms. As of the end of 2020, women led 28.1% of registered NGOs in Ukraine, reflecting their active participation in the public sector (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021).

A report titled "*Women and Men in Leadership Positions in Ukraine: 2017-2020*", prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Ukrainian Centre for Social Data and the Swiss government, analysed gender representation in leadership positions across all sectors in Ukraine. According to this report, in 2020, women held 40.5% of leadership positions in Ukraine – one of the highest rates in Europe and well above the global average of 29% (UNDP Ukraine, 2021).

Despite the high representation of women in certain sectors, they frequently encounter barriers to career advancement and access to leadership roles. These challenges stem from entrenched gender stereotypes and structural barriers, including resource imbalances and disparities in influence.

International organisations and funds provide substantial support to women across all sectors in Ukraine. A key organisation is *UN Women*, which actively promotes Ukraine's integration into the EU by aligning national legislation and policies with the EU gender norms. During the last decade, numerous NGOs and SMEs have been founded by Ukrainian women, which can serve as a model of entrepreneurship and community service as well as resistance and resilience. A few cases can be mentioned here. The *EdCamp* (edcamp.ua) founded in 2014, has provided a platform for teachers' professional growth. The IT company "IT-Integrator" (it-integrator.ua) actively promotes the involvement of women in STEM fields, mentors young female leaders, and supports educational programmes for girls. *The Insight* organisation works to protect women's and LGBTQ+ rights in Ukraine including humanitarian aid and support for vulnerable populations. *SaveEd* (<https://saved.foundation/>) founded in 2022, has aimed at rebuilding war-damaged schools.

Ukrainian Association of Professors and Researchers of European Integration (aprei.com.ua) founded in 2015, has served as a platform for collaboration between educational and public sectors for enhancing the quality of European Studies and contributing to the European integration processes in Ukraine. These and other examples highlight the crucial role of women in Ukraine's education and public sector while also highlighting the need to address existing challenges to achieve gender equality and unlock the full potential of women in these spheres.

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COOPERATION BETWEEN MEMBERS OF NGO “CENTRE FOR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS” AND UKRAINIAN ACADEMIA IN INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

The main objective of the NGO “Centre for Personal and Social Transformations” activity is to support the psychological well-being of citizens in periods of social, political and economic uncertainty by means of cyberspace. Another important direction of CPST work is the organisation of conferences and seminars on topics related to citizenship education. CPST members actively participate in international projects on psychological support and citizenship education. Due to mass internal and external displacement, migration became an important topic in citizenship education in Ukraine and around the world. Mass displacement of Ukrainians due to the war determined the focus of psychological support, in which CPST members are actively involved. Irina Bondarevska (PhD, Associate Professor, CPST Founder and Head of the Board), Kateryna Bondar (PhD, Associate Professor, CPST co-Founder and member of the Board), Alina Yudina (PhD, Associate Professor, CPST member) actively participate in international projects. The most relevant are the following.

CPST coordinates the organisation of the international annual conference and seminar “Political and Economic Self-Constitution” which took place in different countries from 2013 till 2024. Latest editions of the conference are available on [You Tube channel of CPST](#). [Proceedings of PESC conference](#) are available on the website of CPST. Among the co-organisers of the PESC conference are universities and research centres from 15 countries. Dr. Irina Bondarevska is a constant editor of conference proceedings.

[Citizenship Education in the Context of European Values](#) was a Jean Monnet Network focused on citizenship and values education. Project duration: October 2020 – March 2024. The project involved 28 universities from 19 countries and 78 researchers of various specialisations, from experienced academics to PhD students. Dr. Irina Bondarevska was academic coordinator for Ukraine from University of Educational Management.

Dr. Irina Bondarevska led a Swiss-Ukrainian project [“Attitudes towards migration and society in Ukraine”](#) realised by 5 researchers from the University of Lausanne, a coordinator from Dnipro National University, Dr. Zoya Bondarenko, a coordinator from Alfred Nobel University, Dr. Alina Yudina, from April 2023 till December 2024.

Dr. Kateryna Bondar is the project manager and principal investigator of the EU-funded [BURN project](#), which connects war-affected universities in Ukraine with EU universities that have strong psychological support centres (Germany, Latvia, Estonia, duration 2024 – 2027). The project aims to establish crisis intervention courses and psychotherapy services at psychological centres in Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEIs), supporting the resilience and well-being of university communities.

Kateryna Bondar is also the founder and psychodrama practitioner of the *Playback Theatre Echo* project, which has worked with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine since 2016. Initially, *Echo* fostered dialogue for integration. From 2016 to 2022, it used participatory theatre storytelling to

support war-affected students, the stigmatised LGBT community, and inclusive education professionals. Since 2022, *Echo* has promoted emotional education through psychological theatre in civic activism projects, addressing government-citizen relations, women's career barriers, and gender-based violence (GBV). In 2024 – 2025, it has integrated conscious movement practices and embodiment techniques to promote ecological empathy, further expanding its mission of inclusion and social change in Ukraine.

Dr. Alina Yudina participates in the project ["Rehabilitators"](#). Project started in 2024 and is ongoing. Organisations involved in the project: Alfred Nobel University, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, Alliance Française Dnipro, FEFU Federation Echanges France Ukraine, Centre Hospitalier de Lorquin. Goals of the project are the following: 1) train Ukrainian psychologists to work with wounded people who have had their limbs amputated, mental health problems, and cognitive disorders; 2) conduct online webinars for the exchange of experience between Ukrainian and French specialists.