



In six Future Leaders programs all over the world a hundred and twenty young leaders were prepped for their future role. Yet, even more people, the stakeholders, had a life changing experience. The far-reaching impact of the program is multidimensional; personal growth, inspiration, and practical skills in social entrepreneurship for young academics and experienced business leaders. Last but not least, the real life projects have brought about significant change in local communities. An ultimate win-win situation.

Marije, what is the success of this formula?

This formula is successful because it brings together young, ambitious leaders with different backgrounds and nationalities, who all learn to see how connected this big world can be. They play a crucial role in the program. Together they make the difference and experience how significant their work is. A couple of features make this special program truly effective. First of all, the circumstances are quite challenging.

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Being in a completely unfamiliar environment for two weeks, the Future Leaders learn to rely on one another and work together. We guide them intensively regarding their personal development, leadership skills, and social entrepreneurship.

We use several different methods, from coaching sessions on personal goals to 'presence' sessions on how to maximize one's impact with self-confidence, good posture, clear voice, and a worthy appearance.

The incorporated Business Leaders program is another unique component: established business men and women from Dutch corporations join the Future Leaders after the first week. They might be new to the scene but their broad experience shines a useful light on the business projects at hand. It creates a wonderful synergy of reciprocal and intercultural learning that even transcends the generations: nobody is ever too old to learn! Many business coaches told me they would never forget this experience, that it was an enriching journey. And most importantly, they feel very confident about the next generation of leaders.

The role of our clients is also a critical success factor. They not only sponsor the Future Leaders, but the amalgamation of the program with their organization has an impact on the corporate culture, management development, recruitment, and customer relations management.

What is your dream for the Future Leaders program?

It is our dream that all Future Leaders alumni will unite in a strong network, creating a kind of new leadership movement. That our Future Leaders brand will soon be recognized as a quality mark, anywhere in the world. Through the creation of Better Future, the organization that developed the Future Leader brand, we experienced that it is okay to have big dreams. When you give it your heart and your energy you will most likely be successful. Passion and enthusiasm inspire others, and the same goes for working together on a higher purpose. I hope the Future Leaders program will inspire many more young leaders to give their utmost for themselves and for all the communities around us. The essence of leadership does not change over the years but the context does. Leadership is about encouraging others to be the best they can be. It is about creating networks of people that feel connected by the same goal. And with this I am not talking about things like maximizing profit, we all know better I should hope. Rather, we need to govern ourselves by the Ubuntu concept of leadership: 'I am because we are'.

the future of the future leaders program

Interview with Marije Adriaansens, managing partner Better Future

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How will you realize this dream?

We see a lot of opportunities to expand the Future Leaders brand of Better Future. One way is to differentiate and reach an even larger group of young leaders. For example, we want to create a 'Future Leaders Human Rights' version and 'Future Entrepreneurs'. Next year we will implement the first 'Future Leaders Health' program together with our client VvAA (a (financial) service provider for medical professionals) and AMREF Flying Doctors. We also like to invite companies to look at our program as a highly effective leadership experience for their own trainees and recruits, as a wonderful customer relations management program, and as a unique way to move and shake the internal organization. It is an inspiring learning experience, for everyone involved. We truly believe in the power of connecting young, motivated people and inspiring them to make a difference. What we would really need is more hours in a day and more days in a week. It really feels like time is too short to realize everything within the range of our ambitions.

How would you like to see Future Leaders Alumni contribute to a better future?

The Future Leaders network starts now, today. Many alumni are still actively involved in their projects. For example, Larissa from Surinam, a spontaneous young woman in the final stages of her Bachelor's degree in Economics. She is dedicated to the advancement of her country and decided to research the odds of a successful introduction of micro-credit in Surinam. The Surinam Bank has received a European subsidy to set up a micro-financing system. We expect Larissa to play a big role in this venture,

especially after her return from the Gambia where she is now learning the tricks of the trade from our partner, Reliance.

Another great example, Matthias, a Dutch student from the Roosevelt Academy. Due to his and his team's efforts in the Tanzania program, Mobility Care can still manufacture high quality, low cost wheelchairs, tailor-made for Tanzanian road conditions. Old discarded wheelchairs from the Western world threatened Mobility Care's chances of survival. While working with his Tanzanian counterparts, Matthias was able to change his perspective on life. Their positive attitude, no matter what, taught him to see the bigger picture and look for the nuances. It has reinforced his determination to make a real difference.

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I can give you a hundred and twenty examples of amazing young leaders who became more self-confident and more aware of the world they live in. Young people with a higher purpose, who understand that their own happiness is tied in with the life around them. All Future Leaders have a responsibility to do something with their experience and insights. This Future Leaders Newsletter is the best example of the kind of bond we hoped for. And yet, here is to dreaming big: wouldn't it be great if in thirty years from now some Future Leaders alumni

become part of 'The Elders', the group of the most influential, innovative and inspiring leaders like Nelson Mandela and Mohammed Yunus?

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