

INVESTING IN LEADERS AND RELATIONSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN THE CONSERVATION SECTOR

Enabling senior and emerging
leaders to better collaborate
within and beyond their
organisation and sector

PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT

- **Client:** MAVA Foundation
- **Years:** from 2018 to 2022
- **Number of participants:** 176 senior and emerging leaders in the Conservation Sector
- **Participating countries:** 26 countries in Africa, Middle East and Europe



The overall experience has been very unique for me. I was very pleasantly surprised by the great ease and naturalness of connecting despite the fact that all meetings were remote. If this happened so easily under such difficult conditions, I think that the potential to connect with and help others in our daily routine life is immense, and this can have a huge impact in bringing change for sustainability.

Spyros Kotomatas, Senior Marine Conservation Officer, WWF Greece

THE OBJECTIVES

In 2016, the MAVA Foundation initiated the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy to ensure the sustained impact of conservation partners beyond the end of its funding end in 2022. Their focus: fortifying organisations driving environmental change by fostering leadership at all levels.

The Academy's mandate was ambitious yet focused: to enhance institutional resilience within the conservation sector. It endeavoured to achieve this by empowering both experienced and emerging leaders to collaborate seamlessly across generations, sectors, and cultural divides to address environmental challenges and take ownership of decisions.

THE CHALLENGE

Conservation leaders face numerous challenges that can impede their effectiveness:

- Insufficient investment in adequate leadership development inhibiting collaboration and growth.
- Generational, sectoral, cultural, and professional divides that hamper communication, collaboration and support within organisations and the sector.
- Limited personal, organisational, and sector resilience undermining efforts in the field.
- Climate/conservation/environmental anxiety, burnout, and stress, impacting their well-being and capacity to address environmental issues effectively.

OUR APPROACH

In collaboration with the MAVA Foundation and Common Purpose, The Human Edge developed an **intergenerational leadership programme** designed to promote collaboration and exchange of knowledge between young and senior professionals. The programme combined:



AN INTERGENERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The intergenerational nature of the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy is unique. By bringing together young and senior professionals in the same programme, it was possible to create strong dialogue and collaboration. This produced positive changes – new initiatives and strategy, and shifts in organisational culture. Young professionals took more initiative, and senior professionals made space for younger colleagues to participate in idea generation and decision-making. Senior colleagues dedicated more time to the development of their younger colleagues.



KEY OUTCOMES

Greater personal impact



82%

of senior professionals are better able to support young professionals in achieving their individual goals



74%

of young professionals are more confident in approaching senior professionals with their own projects and initiatives

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First, on the personal front, and even with people outside my day-to-day circle of colleagues, I noticed improved abilities to communicate and interact with others in different situations. I achieved work that I am really proud of. With Ahmed, my colleague on the Academy, we came up with a project that won first place at COP 25.

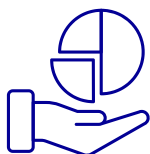
Manel Ben Ismail, Association Director, Notre Grand Bleu

Stronger relationships and more effective teams



87%

of participants are better able to lead or operate beyond their circle of authority



83%

of young professionals feel better able to contribute to their organisation

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I'm a biologist, an environmental scientist. I wasn't educated to manage people or organizations, for me, becoming a better manager, working more effectively with my staff, my volunteers, my trustees, developing as a person, as a human being, this was the most important part.

Daphne Mavrogiorgos, Director, ARCHELON

Shifts in organisational strategy and culture



82%

of senior professionals are better able to support young professionals in achieving their individual goals



74%

of young professionals are more confident in approaching senior professionals with their own projects and initiatives

Cross-sector partnerships



86%

are more willing to explore opportunities for collaboration outside their sector

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The organization was going through a transition. And the Academy gave me the tools, and helped me to actually reflect and zoom out...it really helped me to organize this transition in a better way.

Joan Marc Simon, Executive Director, Zero Waste Europe

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“If I hadn't gone to the Academy, the [leadership] hub would not have happened. Because if we had not shown [our CEO] Teresa how you can change, it would not have got her to put leadership into the strategic plan.”

Sboniso Phakathi, Programme Manager – Rural Initiatives for a Sustainable Environment, SAWC

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The Academy has helped me to put more trust in other collaborators from outside the organization and engage with parties that we did not commonly consider before. One example is a successful relationship with a private company organizing nature tours in Albania. We have started to organize tours together with the agreement that part of their profit will be used by us for nature conservation work in the country.

Aleksander Trajce, Executive Director, PPNEA

In the Academy, 20% of mentees transitioned into mentors after the programme, and 20% joined our REMP (Running Effective Mentoring Programmes) training to embed mentoring within their work and organisations. This ripple effect of the Academy underscored the circular and sustainable nature of mentoring. As a result, organisations such as Partners for a New Economy, Euronatur, European Climate Foundation, and Global Diversity Foundation partnered with us to extend mentoring benefits throughout their networks.

Looking to invest in those driving the impact you desire or to support leadership development in your network and sector?

[Contact us](#) now to discuss how mentoring-centered leadership development can benefit your work and help you deliver greater impact.