



2024 East Africa Family Planning & Contraceptive Access Leadership Journey Application & Program FAQ

Application Questions:

- **Why should I join the WomenLift Leadership Journey?**
The 12-month learning experience focuses on giving you the tools, along with the support of peers, mentors and coaches, to successfully grow and amplify your leadership voice, expertise, and presence for impact.
- **How do I apply?**
The WomenLift Health Team has reached out to a small network of partners and nominators for this year's application. We consequently invite the nominee to make an application.
Please review all components of the [application here](#) and apply by October 31, 2023. In addition to basic personal information, you will be asked to submit your Leadership Project idea and responses to a set of Leadership Snapshot questions. You will also be asked to submit your resume and a letter of recommendation that speaks to your abilities and experience.
- **When will I find out if I've been accepted?**
After a period of application review, we will notify applicants about their acceptance, waitlist, or rejection status by December 2023.
- **Why am I being asked to submit a letter of recommendation from my supervisor?**
The purpose of the letter from your supervisor is to garner internal support and space for you to take on this journey and to "sow a seed" with organizational leaders so they begin noticing the environment in which their women leaders work and potentially, begin thinking about ways to make it more gender-equal.
However, if you are unable to obtain a letter of recommendation from your direct supervisor, you may submit a letter written by a senior leader at your current organization or a national or regional leader in health in Africa who has experience working with you.
- **Will I be able to apply again if I previously applied and didn't get accepted?** Yes, but we recommend that you apply again only if you believe you have significantly added to and enriched your professional experience since your last application.

- **Is there a cost if I'm selected?**

The Leadership Journey is fully funded. All the leadership resources provided during the year are covered by WomenLift Health. However, the initiative does not pay for your time. You will be expected to have access to a computer and internet to attend the virtual touchpoints. We also do not provide funding for your leadership project.

- **Should I apply if I am borderline in terms of years of global health experience?** If your total global health experience is borderline and close to the minimum of 10 years, there may be a small possibility that your application passes the screening and onto the review stage. However given our candidate pool over the past few years, we have seen the more junior candidates face much competition during the scoring stage. You may decide to wait until you have accrued more experience for a stronger application to increase your chances of being selected.

Program Questions:

- **What are the program expectations and what does the time commitment look like?**

If accepted, you will be required to attend each virtual touchpoint and the in-person learning experiences* and to complete any intersession activities and the deliverables associated with the Leadership Project. Please ensure you would be available during the session dates as outlined in [the calendar](#). The time commitment for the required Leadership Journey activities (all virtual touchpoints, intersession activities) ranges between 4-8 hours each month with the exception of the months of the in-person residencies. This estimate does not include the time required for the design, planning, and implementation phases of your Leadership Project, so please consider that in your decision to participate in the program.

You will also be asked to complete a “360-rater evaluation” and leadership style assessments, to inform your understanding of your leadership strengths and growth areas. The 360-rater evaluation will involve soliciting feedback from your boss, peers, direct reports, and others.

As our approach involves human-centered design and is carefully contextualized for each region we serve, we will ask you to evaluate the experience and contribute ideas for how to enhance the Leadership Journey for future cohorts.

- **What are Learning, Mentoring, and Coaching Touchpoints?**

Learning Touchpoints: Learning Touchpoints are facilitated, virtual group sessions. Cohort members explore leadership frameworks, research & tools in highly interactive learning touchpoints and workshop-style sessions focused on dynamic practice. The touchpoints focus on personal & professional growth, relevant topics and priorities for health leadership, as well as their Leadership Projects.

Mentoring Touchpoints: As part of the Leadership Journey, WomenLift Health identifies senior-level African leaders in health from different backgrounds, sectors, and disciplines to serve as mentors to the cohort. Mentoring groups, comprising several cohort members and one mentor, are grouped based on complementary backgrounds and professional trajectory. Cohort members will be able to rely on their mentor to serve as a technical and career resource during the Journey.

Coaching Touchpoints: Cohort members will be paired with a Coach who works one-on-one with them to build on their strengths and address areas for growth. Leadership style assessments, including a “360-rater evaluation,” will inform these conversations and enhance each participant’s understanding of their own leadership skills.

- **What are the Leadership Immersion and Leadership Lift-Off events?**[Text Wrapping Break]At the core of the journey are also two in-residence experiences*: the *Leadership Immersion* (early-Journey) and the *Lift-Off* event (end of Journey).

The ‘Leadership Immersion’ is a 4-day experiential convening that takes place a few months into the Journey, where through dynamic discussions, presentations, and hands on exercises, cohort members enhance their skills, apply them to real-world examples, and reflect on lessons learned. A series of powerful conversations will complement the instruction, featuring eminent figures in global health who have led transformational change, and who are able to impart practical knowledge that can be immediately applied to varied career and life situations.

At the end of the year-long Journey, the 2-day ‘Leadership Lift-Off’ event celebrates the cohort’s growth as they ‘lift off’ to a new phase of their leadership. This occasion provides time for the cohort to reflect on their leadership evolution through the course of the year and to present their leadership projects to their peers as well as global health audiences.

- **What does a Leadership Project entail?**

The Leadership Project, required of every cohort member, is an opportunity for each member to design and lead an effort that taps into each woman’s expertise, network, passion, and creativity. The cohort will be asked to refine their project idea and develop a theory of change, implementation plan, and stakeholder map in the first half of the Journey. The implementation phase of their project begins in the latter half of the Journey. At the Lift-Off event, the cohort will present a summary of their project’s development and implementation, as well as any early outcomes. It is difficult to estimate the exact amount of time that cohort members place into their leadership project because oftentimes their project is aligned with their current workstream at their organization. But you should make sure to also carve out enough time to work on a Theory of Change, stakeholder mapping, 1-2 page implementation plan and a 1 page progress report.

The implementation of your Leadership Project does not have to be complete by the Lift-Off event and will likely continue beyond the 12-month Journey.

- **What kinds of ideas would be appropriate for a Leadership Project?** There are only 4 rules for the Leadership Project:
 - It should focus on improving outcomes at the intersection of family planning/contraceptive access
 - It should leverage your leadership skills
 - It should be within your scope of control or influence, but also stretch you beyond your day-to-day work requirements
 - You should be passionate about it

Your Leadership Project could accomplish one or more of the following, but is not limited to:

- Answering a research question
- Promoting health or gender education in a particular group
- Developing a new or better technology
- Innovating a better way to collect/analyze/use family planning and contraceptive access data
- Improving a gender or health-related process/system in your organization
- Empowering or enabling women in your community or organization to be successful
- Incorporating a gendered Family Planning/contraceptive access lens into a policy, practice or research project where it was absent.

[Refer to this page](#) and [this document](#) for the rules and parameters of a Leadership Project. See examples of Leadership Projects from the 2022 East Africa Cohort [here](#).

This is *your* year to use your leadership skills and the peer, mentoring, coaching support available to you to bring to life a special idea that improves health, gender equality, family planning and contraceptive access.

- **Does WomenLift Health provide funding for the Leadership Projects?** Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to fund implementation of the leadership projects. However, we do offer technical support through our highly experienced WomenLift team, mentors, coaches and project reviewers. Your peers can also be an excellent resource for enhancing your project. We also encourage you to align your project with your work stream and gain buy-in from institutional leaders. We find that the ideal intersection is one in which you are able to align the- project to your work stream and but also use this as a stretch beyond your day to day.
- **Why do I need to be based in East Africa for at least 75% of the program?** We ask cohort members to attend all touchpoints (which would be scheduled during typical

EAT/CAT business hours) and we believe that becomes very challenging if they are in a non-EAT/CAT time zone. This year, the program will be a hybrid with both in-person and virtual events so there would be travel within East Africa involved. We also want the cohort to be able to fully engage, build community with us and their fellow peers outside of the touchpoint time - which we believe can be tricky with a geographic spread.

- **How will this help me to connect with other women leaders in health at the national, regional, and global level?**

Throughout the Journey, we'll build a community where fellow cohort members collaborate and learn from each other, one that will continue after the Journey concludes. We intend to keep alumnae engaged and wish to continue learning with and from you long after the completion of your Leadership Journey.

Our goal is to create a robust network of alumnae at the global, regional, and local levels who continue to support each other and new cohort members, for example as mentors, and to also advocate for women's leadership locally and at large. To facilitate networking among the cohort community and amplify your voice, we will heavily leverage our digital platform (website, social media platforms, etc.). You will become part of the WomenLift Health family. Our resources will be yours and we will always value and nurture this relationship.

- **How can I balance this leadership opportunity with my already busy professional and personal life?**

This 12-month Journey is designed for the working woman. We realize that work-life harmony is a key challenge holding many women back from climbing up the ladder of success, and we do not want to add further burden to your personal and professional life. We promise to work with you and take an integrative approach towards incorporating your personal needs into this journey.

- **What comes next after the Leadership Journey?**

You will join our community of Alumnae, where you can network with our global network of Alumni. You will have access to relevant information and other resources. In addition, we will continue to amplify your work through our different platforms.

***Covid Caveats:** Please note that due to uncertainties caused by Covid-19, the programming and calendar, including the in-person events, may need to be converted to an all-virtual format.