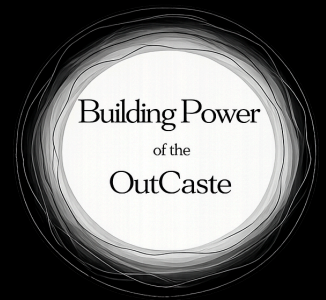


Building Power of the OutCaste



NextGen Rights Lab Module Workbook

International Development & Intergenerational Leadership from the Edges

(For Gen Z & Millennial Intergenerational Leaders from Caste-Affected & Minority Communities)

1. How to Use This Workbook

- This workbook is a self-guide for the module: "International Development & Intergenerational Leadership from the Edges" (International development and intergenerational leadership for caste-affected groups and minority rights)

It is written for:

- people from caste-affected communities,
- people from minority groups (religious, ethnic, linguistic, gender/sexual minorities, migrants, refugees, stateless communities),
- and allies who have lived experience of marginalisation and want to navigate, hack, and reshape international development systems.

What this workbook will do:

- Help you see "development" as a set of political choices, not neutral charity.
- Show you how global agendas, climate finance, SDGs, human rights, and philanthropy land on the bodies and lands of marginalised people.
- Introduce you to key ideas: localisation, decolonising aid, safeguarding, accountability, intersectional development justice.
- Offer concrete exercises to map funder power, identify gaps, and imagine better pathways rooted in your realities.
- Support you to think as an intergenerational leader who can move inside, outside, and against harmful development practices.

What it will not do:

- It will not glorify NGOs, donors, or multilateral institutions.
- It will not pretend international development is fair or apolitical.
- It will not give you a perfect, single blueprint.

Think of it as:

- a compass to understand the landscape,
- a small toolkit to protect your community and yourself,
- and an invitation to imagine better institutions and practices.

Use a notebook or digital doc to write your answers. The learning lives in your reflections and examples, not just in the words here.

2. Module Overview

- **Module title used in sessions: International Development & Intergenerational Leadership from the Edges**

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

- Explain in simple language how international development and climate/rights funding relate to everyday life in Global South communities.
- Identify key actors in the development ecosystem: multilaterals, bilateral donors, INGOs, local NGOs, social enterprises, foundations, CSR, movements.
- Recognise common harms and patterns: saviourism, tokenism, extractive research, projectisation, short-termism, elite capture.
- Understand the language of "localisation" and "decolonising development" from a caste/minority justice perspective.
- Map at least one development or climate/rights project in your context and analyse who sets priorities, who benefits, who bears risks.
- Reflect on your own role as a Gen Z or millennial leader in negotiating with these systems, alongside elders and mid-career actors.
- Commit to at least one concrete practice to make your work with development systems more just and accountable.

This workbook is for people with and without prior development sector experience. You do not need to know acronyms. You do need curiosity and honesty.

3. What Do We Mean by "International Development"?

"International development" sounds big and far away, but it shows up quietly in many places in your life:

- an NGO project in your village or urban basti funded by a foreign donor,
- a climate resilience programme in a coastal, flood, or drought-prone area,
- a skills training center or women's empowerment scheme,
- a child sponsorship or education initiative,
- a microfinance or livelihood project,
- a health campaign run with UN or big-donor branding,
- a human-rights fellowship or leadership programme (like this accelerator).

Behind these projects are complex chains:

- global narratives ("ending poverty", "empowerment", "resilience", "sustainable development"),
- big institutions (UN agencies, development banks, bilateral donors, philanthropic foundations, INGOs),
- local intermediaries (national NGOs, think tanks, consultancies),
- and finally communities, frontline workers, and activists.

As someone from a caste-affected or minority background, you are often positioned as:

- "beneficiary",
- "local partner",
- "community leader",
- "youth voice",
- "research respondent",
- or sometimes "troublemaker".

This module invites you to see development not from the boardroom or donor report, but from where you stand.

4. Exercise 1 – Where Development Touches My Life (20 mins)

Take a page and title it: "Where development is already in my life"

List at least five examples where international, national, or NGO projects have touched you, your family, or your community. These can be:

- school or scholarship schemes,
- livelihood or skills training projects,
- women's groups, SHGs, microcredit,
- health campaigns,
- climate/disaster projects,
- human-rights or peacebuilding projects,
- youth fellowships, capacity building programmes.

For each example, note:

- Who was running it? (local NGO, international NGO, UN agency, government department, private foundation, social enterprise, etc.)
- What was the stated goal? (e.g., "empower women", "climate resilience", "livelihoods", "peace", "digital literacy")
- How did it impact you/your community? positive: income, recognition, safety, skills, visibility, networks? negative: dependency, conflict, stigma, extra burden on women or youth, data extraction, broken promises?

Then answer in 4–6 lines:

- When I look at this list, what patterns do I see?
 - Who mostly speaks on behalf of my community in these projects?
 - Whose expertise is valued and paid? Whose knowledge is taken for free?
-

5. Who Holds Power in the Development Ecosystem?

Development is not just money. It is also:

- who decides what counts as a "problem",
- which solutions are "fundable",
- whose evidence is "credible",
- whose time and labour are paid,
- whose voice is seen as "representative".

Some key actors (simplified):

- Multilateral institutions (e.g., UN agencies, development banks, climate funds)
- Bilateral donors (aid agencies from specific countries)
- International NGOs and big NGOs headquartered in capital cities
- National or regional NGOs and think tanks
- Local NGOs, CBOs, unions, movements, informal networks
- Social enterprises and impact investors
- Grassroots community leaders, frontline workers, self-organised groups
- Corporations using CSR or ESG language
- Philanthropic foundations and family offices

Often:

- decision-making and big salaries sit at the top (multilaterals, donors, INGOs, capital-city NGOs),
- risk, burnout, and backlash sit at the bottom (local staff, community organisers, women, youth, caste-affected and minority groups).

As a leader from the edges, you are constantly negotiating this stack.

6. Exercise 2 – Power Ladder of One Project (20–25 mins)

- Choose one concrete project or programme you know well. It can be active or finished.

On a page, draw a simple ladder or pyramid.

- At the top, write the highest-level actor you can identify (e.g., a UN agency, a foreign donor, a big INGO, a national foundation).
- At the bottom, write the community or group most affected (e.g., Dalit women farmers in X area, Rohingya youth in Y camp, slum residents in Z city).

Now fill the middle rungs with any intermediaries you know:

- national NGO,
- state NGO partner,
- district-level NGO or CBO,
- consultants or researchers,
- local facilitators, volunteers, peer educators.

For each level, write briefly:

- What kind of power do they have? (money, agenda-setting, technical expertise, political connections, community legitimacy)
- What do they risk? (public criticism, job loss, legal risk, community backlash, physical risk)
- What benefits do they receive? (salary, career growth, status, safety, networks, direct material benefits?)

Then answer in 3–4 lines:

- Looking at this ladder, who carries the greatest risk and least reward?
 - Where do I sit (or where could I sit) in this ladder?
 - What makes this uncomfortable or empowering for me?
-

7. Localisation, Decolonisation & Caste/Minority Justice

You might hear donors and NGOs talk about:

- "localisation",
- "Southern leadership",
- "decolonising aid",
- "shifting power".

These phrases can be meaningful, but they can also be branding.

From a caste/minority justice perspective, we ask:

- Localisation for whom? Are funds going to dominant-caste, urban, English-speaking elites and their NGOs, or to organisations rooted in affected communities?
- Who signs the grant agreements? Who receives core funding? Who is subcontracted as "local partner"?
- Are Dalit, Adivasi, Muslim, Indigenous, migrant, queer people leading organisations and projects, or only appearing as "beneficiaries", junior staff, or story subjects?
- Are projects respecting local knowledge and self-determination, or pushing pre-designed toolkits and quick outcomes?

Decolonising development is not just about national flags. It is about:

- who holds the pen,
 - who holds the purse,
 - who is allowed to say no.
-

8. Exercise 3 – Buzzword Reality Check (20 mins)

Think of a programme, fund, or organisation that uses phrases like:

- "localisation",
- "Southern leadership",
- "inclusive development",

- "equity, diversity, and inclusion",
- "decolonising aid",
- "climate justice",
- "leaving no one behind".

Answer honestly (you can keep it anonymous):

- Where is this organisation based? Who leads it (class, caste, city, race, gender, etc. as far as you can tell)?
 - Who receives long-term, flexible funding? (Look at boards, partners, grantees, staff seniority.)
 - Are caste, race, indigeneity, religion, and queerness addressed as structural issues or just added as identity labels?
 - Is there real decision-making power in the hands of people from caste-affected and minority communities, or mainly representation and stories?
 - Write 4–6 lines on what would need to change for this effort to feel more real and less performative from your perspective.
-

9. Development, Projects & the Logic of "Deliverables"

Most international development flows through "projects":

- 1–3 year cycles,
- logframes and indicators,
- "beneficiaries" counted in numbers,
- reports, photos, case studies as evidence.

This logic can:

- force communities to fit into donor timelines,
- encourage "pilotitis" (many small projects, little structural change),
- create competition between local NGOs and groups,
- overburden women, youth, and "community leaders" with unpaid or underpaid work,
- reduce complex justice struggles to "activities" and "events".

Yet, projects can also bring:

- some resources and visibility,
- opportunities for training and travel,
- chances to document violations and push for policy change,
- space to experiment and organise.

As an intergenerational leader, you need to hold both:

- not romanticising poverty or refusing all funding,
 - not surrendering your agenda to donor logframes.
-

10. Exercise 4 – Project Autopsy (25–30 mins)

- Choose one project or programme (again, something you know or can imagine realistically).

Answer:

- What was the official objective? (in donor/NGO language)
 - What do you think was the deeper need in the community? (in your language)
 - What were the main activities? (e.g., trainings, meetings, infrastructure, advocacy, content, research)
 - Who was counted as "beneficiaries"? Who was not counted but clearly affected?
 - What changed by the end of the project: – for the community? – for the local staff and volunteers? – for the NGO or donor?
 - If you could redesign this project from a caste/minority justice perspective, what are three changes you would make? (Consider leadership, budget, timeframes, accountability.)
-

11. Safeguarding, Harm & Ethics in Development Work

International development actors now talk more about:

- "safeguarding",
- "do no harm",
- "protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH)",
- "accountability to affected populations".

This is because there have been many abuses:

- sexual exploitation by aid workers,
- abuse of staff and community members,
- racism, casteism, colourism, and sexism inside organisations,
- unsafe data collection and storytelling putting people at risk.

As a leader from the edges, you need to know:

- You have the right to dignified, safe working conditions.
- Community members have the right not to be coerced, tokenised, or exposed.
- There should be clear channels for complaints and whistleblowing.
- Safeguarding is not only about sexual abuse – it includes power misuse, exploitation, discrimination, retaliation.

Good practice includes:

- clear, accessible codes of conduct,
 - fair pay and hours,
 - informed consent and privacy in data and stories,
 - intersectional safeguarding that understands caste, religion, sexuality, disability, migration status.
-

12. Exercise 5 – Safeguarding from Below (20 mins)

- Think of a context where you, your peers, or your community interacted with an NGO, INGO, donor, or project.

Answer:

Were there any clear rules shared about behaviour, boundaries, and complaints? If yes, were they understandable in local language(s)?

Did you ever feel something was wrong or exploitative – even if it seemed "normal" in that space? Write 3–5 lines.

- If you could design a safeguarding charter from your point of view, what are four non-negotiable points you would include? For example: – no unpaid labour from marginalised youth for donor visibility, – no forced storytelling of trauma, – safe complaint channels outside direct supervisors, – protection from casteist or racist remarks inside teams, – right to refuse photos or videos.
 - How might you bring at least one of these principles into the spaces you work in now (student groups, NGOs, fellowships, collectives)?
-

13. Intergenerational Leadership in Development Spaces

International development is full of generational tensions:

- Elders who have seen boom and bust cycles of funding, policy fads, crackdowns.
- Mid-career professionals carrying heavy institutional responsibilities and compromises.
- Young people entering with strong intersectional politics, digital fluency, and impatience with hypocrisy.

From a caste/minority justice lens:

- Elders may carry deep movement history and survival wisdom, but may also carry scars, caution, and internalised hierarchies.
- Mid-career leaders may be stuck balancing donor demands with community accountability.
- Young leaders may push for bolder language and methods but risk burnout, tokenism, or co-option.

Intergenerational feminist and justice-oriented leadership asks:

- How can we learn from elders without repeating mistakes?
 - How can mid-career people use their positions to open doors and protect younger people?
 - How can young people challenge respectfully but firmly, while sustaining themselves?
-

14. Exercise 6 – My Intergenerational Position (20–25 mins)

Answer:

- In development or NGO spaces I know, who are the elders? mid-career? younger people? (Think in terms of roles, not only age.)
- Where do I mostly sit now? (elder, bridge, younger edge, or several at once)

- Write one example where an elder or mid-career person used their power well in a development space you know.
 - Write one example where power was misused or hoarded.
 - In 5–6 lines, describe one concrete way you want to show up differently as an intergenerational leader in development spaces (for example: mentoring younger people, asking elders for guidance, insisting on caste/minority representation in proposals, protecting team members from exploitative tasks).
-

15. From Critique to Strategy: What Can We Actually Do?

It is easy to hate "the development sector". It is harder and more important to ask:

- How can we protect our communities in the short term?
- How can we redirect resources towards justice, not just charity?
- How can we build our own organisations, funds, and infrastructures over time?
- How can we hold donors and institutions accountable without burning out?

Some strategic roles you might play:

- Insider: working in NGOs/INGOs/donors and slowly shifting language, budgets, and partners.
- Bridge: connecting community realities to donors and policy forums, translating both ways.
- Outsider: organising movements, unions, or collectives that pressure institutions from outside.
- Hybrid: moving between roles over time.

There is no single "correct" role. The key is clarity and accountability:

- Who are you answerable to first – donors, bosses, or your community?
 - How transparent are you about the trade-offs you are making?
 - Where are you saying no?
-

16. Final Commitment Exercise – Your Development Practice Shift (20–25 mins)

- This module is not asking you to fix the entire aid system. It is asking you to make one realistic, meaningful shift in how you relate to development work.

Take a quiet moment.

- Look back at your notes from this workbook. Underline or highlight anything where you felt: "This is exactly what I have experienced" or "I want to do this differently".

On a fresh page, write:

- "From this international development module, one practice I will change or adopt in my work is..."

Now write at least 8–10 lines describing:

- What this practice is.
- Why it matters to you / your community.
- Where you will apply it (campus, local NGO, INGO, donor spaces, movements, online platforms, research).
- What might make it hard (institutional culture, money pressures, fear of losing opportunities, family expectations).
- One or two things you can do to support yourself in keeping this commitment (peer circle, mentor, regular reflection, boundaries).

Examples:

- "I will refuse roles where my community is tokenised but not paid or given decision-making power."
- "I will ask about safeguarding and complaint mechanisms before joining a project."
- "I will insist that any project I work on has at least one budget line directly under the control of a caste-affected or minority group partner."
- "I will start documenting harms and successes of development projects in my area from our perspective."

If it feels safe, share this commitment with one person you trust and ask them to check in with you in 3–6 months.

Keep this page. This is your anchor for working with and against international development systems as an intergenerational leader from the edges.