

# DeRise Up Cohort Composition Best Practices

## Leaders' Makeup

For reference: Leader Selection [Power Point](#) from Strategic Plan

- WHO - Rising leaders working on behalf of women & girls to move towards more sustained and systemic impact in their communities and countries
  - o Rise Up exclusively works with adult leaders (18+) who serve girl, youth or women.
  - o Work with leaders who both: (i) meet all selection criteria and are engaging in their community through an organization (See page 3 of [RU Selection Guidelines](#)), and (ii) do not have all the practices of a sustaining leader, as defined below.
- WHAT - Rise Up works with leaders who work to advance gender equity through progress in the areas of health, education, and economic opportunity.

## **Rise Up Leader Leadership Curve Explanation and terminology**

- o **Nascent Leaders (up to 10% of leaders selected)** Nascent leaders are in the initial stages of developing their vision, organization, or model of change. They are passionate about a problem but may not have identified advocacy as a path to the solution for their community.  
**Years of Experience** in the field: 1-2+  
**Position:** Varies, but usually either in entry level or newly promoted to management, often volunteers or students  
**Organization:** Varies, but usually small-medium  
**Example:** *Samuel - Though a program Manager, he has just ventured into non profit work in a small and new organisation. Has experience creating awareness on issues in his immediate community, never done advocacy before, but has the skills . He is eager to learn how to create sustainable change*
- o **Developing:** Leaders can articulate a clear vision and are backed by an organization, often delivering services. Leaders are keen to effectively further leverage advocacy to amplify their impact. [~40% of leaders selected]  
**Years of Experience** in the field: 2-4+  
**Position:** Varies, but usually either in entry level or newly promoted to management  
**Organization:** Varies but usually small- medium  
**Example:** *Nsini Udonta fits into this category when we recruited her - She was a program assistant in a women's shelter for victims of GBV , run by a non-profit established 7 years ago. She had little decision making power and never initiated a program or attracted funding to her organization. but she displayed passion and understanding of the changes that the govt and other stakeholders needed to make to address GBV in her community and state.*
- o **Scaling:** Leaders have experienced success in achieving their vision, often by expanding their approach, goals, or reach of services. Leaders are actively engaging with peers to identify synergies and opportunities to amplify impact. [~40% of leaders selected]  
**Years of Experience** in the field: 5-7  
**Position:** Middle management or director  
**Organization:** Varies, but usually medium  
**Example:** *Prabha Vilas (2019, India) was the ED of a small organization established for 7 years called Work for Equality in Maharashtra. She had not done advocacy before, but wanted to raise the profile of her organization and take on advocacy as a line of organizational work.*

**Example :** Ben Maigari - Project manager in a Media focus non-profit. is part of top management and contributes to decision-making. Has some experience in advocacy and has only worked on local levels. He has potential to take up advocacy at a higher level - state and countrywide, understands the importance of leveraging existing networks and partnerships to success

- **Sustaining:** Leaders see sustained impact and shape the field, guiding peers and influencing funding practices. [up to 10% of leaders selected]

**Years of Experience** in the field: 7-10+

**Position:** Usually middle management or higher

**Organization:** medium or large organization

**Example:** [Sushmita](#) is a director at Project Concern International (PCI) in India, a large global organization with national reach.

### Rising Leaders:

- To ensure the model is effective and impactful for its leaders, Rise Up focuses on **rising** adult civil society leaders in the middle of their professional career and with great potential for learning and exponential growth in the areas of gender equity and advocacy.
- **“Rising Leaders”** are defined as developing or scaling. Rise Up selects approximately 80% of leaders in a cohort as “rising leaders”

Qualities Rise Up leaders **must have** to be selected for a Rise Up Program include:

1. A clear purpose in their work and vision for future that aligns well with RU’s offering of leadership and advocacy
2. Well-articulated desire to engage deeply with content of selected RU issue area
3. A basic understanding of advocacy

Sometimes Rise Up leaders can reflect some of the following contradictions:

1. Interested in a gender equity issue area but not yet be a well established and respected voice in the field
2. A known activist with little/no academic qualifications in the field
3. Providing services with gender focus but with little/no experience in advocacy
4. They can be a nascent leader in a large organization (like Nsini) or they could be an experienced leader at a nascent organization.

### Diversity:

To maximize impact and maintain diversity within leader cohorts, Rise Up ensures a broad range of capabilities and experiences that are represented in selected rising leaders.

- Rise Up actively recruits and selects participants who represent, are part of marginalized groups and/or who engage meaningfully with marginalized communities such as self-identified women, LGBTIQ, youth, women and girls with disabilities, ethnic, religious, political, socially, and racially marginalized groups, internally displaced persons, rural communities, people from socioeconomic disadvantaged groups among many others.

### Organizational Makeup

- To increase the impact of its grantmaking, Rise Up closely considers the organizational capacity of organizations in its pool of leader candidates, and tries to ensure significant representation of **growing and**

**developing organizations**, in the middle of their life cycle<sup>1</sup> and with great potential for implementing a successful advocacy strategy and incorporating advocacy in their core offerings.

**Some recommendations to consider:**

- o Organizations should be registered locally as a non-profit organization though they might not be registered at the national level. Non-registered organizations may still be represented in the cohort, but they should make up only a small percentage of those selected.
  - o At least half of organizations represented in the cohort must be authorized to receive international funds. Organizations not registered to receive international funds may seek a registered fiscal sponsor to implement a Rise Up grant.
- To qualify for Rise Up, organizations must have:
    1. A clear mission and vision statement
    2. Small team full-time dedicated personnel/resources
    3. Demonstrated commitment to the leader's advocacy strategy implementation
    4. Secured amounts of funding in the past that represent amounts equal to or greater than the size of RU grants
    5. Established financial systems and processes to manage multiple funding sources and show evidence of budget management experience in the past 3-5 years.
  - Sometimes organizations can reflect some of the following contradictions:
    1. In the process of establishing financial systems but not yet have established practices for organizational effectiveness and stability
    2. They are well recognized but still building their communications and branding material or design
    3. They may have a varying yearly budget but can show continued funding from multilaterals and foundations

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://tejas.iimb.ac.in/articles/61.php>

## To increase the impact of its grantmaking, Rise Up will focus on rising adult leaders with existing registered nonprofits

*The journey of a social impact leader*

