



Resident Coordinator Leadership Development and Learning Activity Report – 2025

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THE RC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING STRATEGY

The Development Coordination Office's (DCO) learning and leadership development initiatives for current Resident Coordinator (RCs) and members of the RC/HC Talent Pipeline aim to:

- Bring learning "close to work," ensuring it is relevant, timely, and tailored to each RC's needs;
- Work with the entire team (RC and UNCT members) so that they drive change together;
- Provide learning support over time to anchor learning and drive behavioural change.

The priority areas of intervention are:

- Strengthening RC/HC Talent Pipeline members to equip future RCs with foundational skills and knowledge for the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre and future deployment.
- Fast-tracking first-time RCs' growth during their critical transition.
- Empowering RCs and UNCTs with systems leadership strategies essential for the 2030 Agenda.
- Offering tailored knowledge and learning tools to support RCs across diverse contexts and career stages.

FIRST-TIME RC ORIENTATION

The orientation programme for first-time RCs is designed to help them understand the country context, build relationships with key stakeholders, and expand their networks within the UN system. In 2025, 17 first-time RCs benefited from the programme (three of whom from outside the UN), which is broken down into three stages:

- Upon selection, individual conversations were held with the RC designates to understand their learning needs and identify potential learning interventions. RCs designates were encouraged to attend webinars hosted by sitting RCs for RC/HC Talent Pipeline and RC Pool members, offering valuable exposure to the real-world experiences of active RCs. For those joining the RC role from outside the UN, mentoring tutorials were conducted, with a former RC holding four to five individual sessions to familiarize the RC designate with the RC role.
- Upon clearance, incoming RCs received briefings from the outgoing RC, the RC Office, and the DCO Regional Director, ensuring that the knowledge and experiences of the predecessor were passed on to preserve institutional memory. RCs were also paired with a mentor to help accelerate their learning curve and ensure a smooth transition.
- Upon deployment, the RCs received a comprehensive suite of in-briefings, including a 5-day in-person session in New York, virtual sessions with agencies based in Rome, Geneva, Vienna, Paris and Nairobi, as well as in-person or virtual briefings by agencies' regional directors. In addition, RCs from outside the UN had the opportunity to shadow a sitting RC to acquire hands-on experience.

In addition, an annual induction workshop, paired with the RC Global Meeting, supported experience sharing and community building, with mentoring from experienced RCs. In 2025, seventeen first-time RCs attended.

LEARNING PROGRAMMES FOR RCs

Connect & Reflect

For current RCs, DCO continues to curate virtual 'safe spaces' for peer exchange. One such initiative is "Connect & Reflect", a monthly one-hour session, where RCs discuss topics of their own choice. In 2025, topics included host country relations and dynamics, engaging with the private sector, cross-border and regional collaboration and managing United Nations country team (UNCT) dynamics, with 62 RCs participating in at least one session. Feedback from regular attendees emphasized the value of these sessions for connecting with fellow RCs from different regions.

Fireside Chats

In 2025 DCO continued "Fireside Chats", a monthly one-hour session where RCs freely discuss with DCO senior managers issues relating to policy and programming, communications, and the Joint SDG Fund. Almost 60 RCs attended one or more sessions, with positive feedback highlighting the value of the space for cross-fertilisation of experiences.

RC Peer Consultations

RCs were offered a new series of virtual peer exchanges focused on navigating complex country contexts. These exchanges provided 19 RCs with an opportunity for in-depth, confidential discussions within a small group of current and former RCs, exploring key issues, dilemmas, and trade-offs through the lens of one participant's country context.

"The sessions were well organised, with a clear methodology that enabled us to exchange experiences and learnings on complicated issues, whilst receiving highly valuable input from our peer RCs and the excellent resource people. I found the experience of the other RCs particularly useful to help me think outside my box, and to challenge my assumptions in a constructive manner."

Gender-Responsive Leadership Boost

"The sessions provided a wealth of insights, best practices, and lessons learned, as well as a space for self-reflection—including on blind spots. They equipped us with practical tools to navigate the complexities of our work in a more gender-inclusive and responsive way."

In partnership with the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), DCO offered RCs a "Gender-Responsive Leadership Boost" – a series of ten monthly webinars focused on gender analysis, resourcing gender equality at a time of funding cuts and establishing formal and informal accountability mechanisms for gender equality. A total of 27 RCs participated in these sessions.

Retreat on Leadership, Negotiation and Dialogue Facilitation

In partnership with FBA, in May 2025 DCO convened a retreat for 16 RCs focused on effective leadership, negotiation, and dialogue facilitation skills. The three-day, in-person programme addressed political acumen, collaborative and transformational leadership, and personal agency, alongside structured sessions on the architecture, preparation, and management of dialogues and negotiations. RCs examined practical tools for negotiation analysis and enhancing influence in complex and crisis-affected contexts, drawing on case studies and facilitated peer exchanges. The retreat also incorporated participant-led case

work and reflection sessions to consolidate key learnings and support the application of negotiation and dialogue skills in the RC role.

RC Seminar on SDG Financing

DCO collaborated with Yale University's International Leadership Center to convene 13 Resident Coordinators for a seminar in autumn 2025, focused on global and domestic financing for sustainable development. The agenda covered the state of global finance, financial stability, and economic policy, alongside sessions on taxation, illicit financial outflows, and the alignment of national budgets with the SDGs. Participants discussed innovative financing mechanisms and project bankability, as well as policy and regulatory frameworks, and partnership ecosystems for investment and impact. The programme also included leadership-focused sessions on navigating crisis contexts, influencing decision-making, and applying systems approaches to translate financing priorities into action.

"It was a great experience overall and a very well-structured seminar. Great information which I was excited to tell my colleagues about in the RCO. I will also provide key highlights to the UNCT."

Global Executive Leadership Initiative (GELI) Trainings:

In 2025 DCO facilitated the participation of four RCs in GELI trainings. One RC participated in the "Responsible Negotiation for Senior Leaders" Course, developed with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), to help senior humanitarian and development leaders hone their negotiation skills. Two RCs took part in the course "Influencing for Senior Leaders: Analysis, Strategy, and Practice," focusing on strategic communication approaches that integrate risk assessment, humanitarian diplomacy, media engagement, and agile response techniques. One RC participated in GELI's Inspiring Women Leaders program to strengthen leadership impact through participatory case studies, coaching and peer exchange.

UNCT Leadership Course

Two RCs participated in the UNCT Leadership Course, delivered by the United Nations System Staff College, which convened UN Country Team members for an intensive learning programme focused on strengthening leadership, communication, and negotiation capacities in a rapidly evolving UN development context. Through expert-led sessions, practical exercises, and peer exchange, participants examined system-wide trends, UN development system repositioning, and funding and financing challenges.

LEARNING PROGRAMMES FOR RC/HC TALENT PIPELINE MEMBERS

In close collaboration with OCHA, the RC/HC Talent Pipeline's Learning & Development Programme aims to support pipeline members in acquiring the knowledge, competencies, and exposure to the RC and RC/HC roles required to be successful in these demanding positions. In 2025 the programme featured the following initiatives:

- **Monthly Webinar Series** with RCs and RC/HCs provided 106 RC Pool and RC/HC Talent Pipeline members with exposure to the realities that current RCs and RC/HCs face and to how they are navigating the complex and pressing challenges they must address in the role.

- **Peer Action Learning** groups for 23 Pipeline members, which met virtually six times for 90 minutes. Participants appreciated the exposure to new aspects and dynamics of the RCs system as well as the network of support at global, regional and country level.
- **RCAC preparation workshop:** 39 Pipeline members participated in a dedicated workshop to prepare for the 2025 RC Assessment Centre. Of these, 31 participated in the RCAC and 24 successfully passed the assessment and have joined the RC Pool, making them eligible to apply for RC posts.
- **Self-paced learning platform:** All Pipeline members have access to a range of self-paced learning offerings. The platform hosts webinar recordings featuring current RCs and RC/HCs, core reference documents, podcasts, and courses drawn from both the UN system and external providers.

DCO also facilitated the participation of 10 Pipeline members in “**Leaders Solving for Tomorrow**”, a 6-week virtual programme by PricewaterhouseCoopers focusing on global megatrends, systems thinking and transformational leadership.

