UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

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ONLINE

29 OCT 2026 - 12 NOV 2026

S.O.S – Strategic Opportunities Series for Managers in the UN: People and Performance



LANGUAGE
English

DURATION
4 weeks

ENROLL BY
23 Oct 2026

PRICE
1,500 USD

LOCATION
ONLINE

TARGET
UN Only

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The Strategic Opportunities Series (S.O.S.) offers UN managers a clinic-style intervention that addresses the most acute needs of the UN system and its people. It provides curated learning experiences that respond to the pressing "how-to" questions managers face in the most fragile moments of their work, when priorities shift, budgets are restricted, or programmes are suspended.

In periods when managers are asked to do more with less, leading stretched teams, managing dispersed colleagues, and adapting to reshaped structures and expectations, the S.O.S. series helps leaders refocus on what truly matters: their people, the resources that sustain their work, and the organisation's visibility and credibility in a constantly evolving environment.

It also offers managers a space to pause, reflect, and realign, supported by peers who share similar challenges and experiences, helping to strengthen leadership resilience and foster collective learning across the UN system.

Through curated and tailored learning interventions, managers explore how to:

- Lead teams with empathy, clarity, and purpose;
- Sustain motivation and performance amid shifting demands;
- Mobilise resources through partnerships, private donors, and philanthropy;
- Strengthen the organisation's recognition and trust through strategic communication, advocacy, and positioning.

Introduction

Track 1: S.O.S. People and Performance supports leaders navigating uncertainty, high stakes, and resource-constrained contexts. Across four focused blocks, the programme develops practical skills to stabilise team climate, strengthen trust and communication, hold developmental performance conversations, and prioritise work in a way that sustains both team wellbeing and organisational results.

Objectives

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Build a climate of trust and psychological safety where team members feel safe to share ideas, raise concerns, and perform confidently in uncertain conditions.
- Reduce survival mode responses within their teams and apply leadership behaviours that enhance team climate.
- Strengthen communication by shifting from transactional exchanges to meaningful, high quality conversations in hybrid and multi location teams.
- Diagnose performance challenges using root cause analysis and lead timely, constructive conversations that support development and accountability.
- Conduct performance conversations that are timely, respectful, and focused on growth rather than stress.
- Prioritise effectively in resource constrained contexts using methods such as Stop, Start, Continue and align team priorities with organisational direction.
- Manage workload expectations with teams, delegate in ways that develop capability, and prevent burnout loops in overstretched teams.

Course methodology

Online (or in person on demand)

Course contents

Block 1: Managing people in times of uncertainty, high stakes, and pressure

This block focuses on strengthening trust, psychological safety, and communication within dispersed or stretched teams. Participants explore how to reduce survival-mode responses, rebuild connection in hybrid or multi-location settings, and apply small everyday leadership behaviours that positively influence team climate.

Block 2: Performance conversations that work

This block develops confidence and skill in holding performance conversations that are timely, constructive, and growth-focused. Participants learn to diagnose performance challenges using root-cause analysis, shift from evaluation to developmental partnership, hold supportive yet firm accountability conversations, and manage defensiveness effectively.

Block 3: Prioritising work and managing workload in resource-constrained contexts

This block helps leaders and managers sustain performance when resources are limited. Participants learn to align team priorities with organisational direction, use simple prioritisation tools such as Stop, Start, Continue, manage workload expectations up and down, delegate to build capacity, and prevent burnout loops in overstretched teams.

Block 4: Performance Management in Practice – Practical Responses to Underperformance, Overload & Toxicity

This block focuses on practical approaches to managing different levels of performance while maintaining accountability and trust. Participants explore how to respond to underperformance, address unhealthy patterns of over-functioning and dependency, and adapt their leadership response to different performance situations.

Target audience

The programme targets UN staff members with managerial functions who are responsible for leading teams, managing performance, mobilizing resources, and representing their offices or divisions. Participants typically include P4 - P5 level managers, though enrolment may extend to other levels depending on organizational context and managerial responsibilities.

Cost of participation

$ 1,500