

ONLINE

04 MAY 2026 - 28 JUN 2026

S.O.S – Strategic Opportunities Series for Managers in the UN: Communication and Positioning

MANAGEMENT**LANGUAGE**
English**DURATION**
4 weeks**ENROLL BY**
06 Mar 2026**PRICE**
1,800 USD**LOCATION**
ONLINE**TARGET**
UN Only **CONTACT** unemp@unssc.org

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 2: S.O.S. Communication and Positioning

This programme supports UN leaders and managers in strengthening their strategic relevance, communication effectiveness, and influence in complex and rapidly changing environments. Across four modules, participants examine how their teams are positioned within the wider UN ecosystem, learn to communicate with clarity and composure in high-stakes situations, use storytelling to enhance external communication, and build the skills required to lead effective negotiations. The programme develops practical capabilities that help managers navigate political dynamics, safeguard credibility, and create lasting value through purposeful engagement with partners, stakeholders, and external audiences.

Objectives

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

- Analyse their operating environment and understand the political, economic, social, and organisational factors shaping their work.
- Assess their team's current positioning within the wider UN system and identify opportunities to enhance relevance, influence, and strategic contribution.
- Communicate with clarity, composure, and purpose in high-pressure or politically sensitive contexts.
- Recognise reputational risks, identify manipulative or distorted communication environments, and respond with transparency and professionalism.
- Strengthen external communication by preparing strategically, analysing audiences, and crafting credible and empathetic messages.
- Use storytelling techniques to make communication clear, compelling, and emotionally resonant in order to build trust and influence.
- Prepare effectively for influence and negotiation by analysing actors, interests, and the wider negotiation context.
- Build credibility and trust through persuasive communication and ethical engagement with stakeholders and partners.

Course methodology

Online (or in person on demand)

Course contents

Block 1: Positioning and Repositioning for Relevance in Changing Environments

This block focuses on understanding the broader political, economic, social, and organisational forces shaping the UN context. Participants examine their team's current positioning within the UN system and among external stakeholders, identify opportunities to enhance relevance and influence, and use analytical tools such as PESTLE and perceptual mapping to reflect on how their work is perceived. The block supports leaders in aligning their team's purpose with evolving organisational priorities.

Block 2: Communication in High-Stakes Environments and Under Pressure

This block develops the ability to communicate clearly, calmly, and strategically in sensitive or rapidly changing situations. Participants explore how communication influences external perceptions, how to recognise reputational risks, and how to navigate manipulative or politically charged environments. The focus is on crafting messages that are credible, empathetic, and aligned with UN values while maintaining professionalism under pressure.

Block 3: Storytelling for Impact: Strengthening External Communication

This block highlights storytelling as a powerful leadership tool for influencing, inspiring, and building trust. Participants learn how to prepare strategically by analysing audiences and clarifying desired outcomes, and how to shape stories that make messages relevant, credible, and emotionally resonant. Storytelling techniques are applied to make complex ideas clear and compelling and to enhance visibility and influence in dynamic contexts.

Block 4: Building Influence and Leading Effective Negotiations

This block supports managers in preparing for and leading negotiations in complex environments. Participants learn how to analyse negotiation contexts using structured tools, identify key actors and interests, build trust, and communicate persuasively. The block emphasises uncovering mutual gains, strengthening relationships, and creating ethical, sustainable solutions that advance organisational priorities and support effective partnerships.

Target audience

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

Cost of participation

USD 1,800