

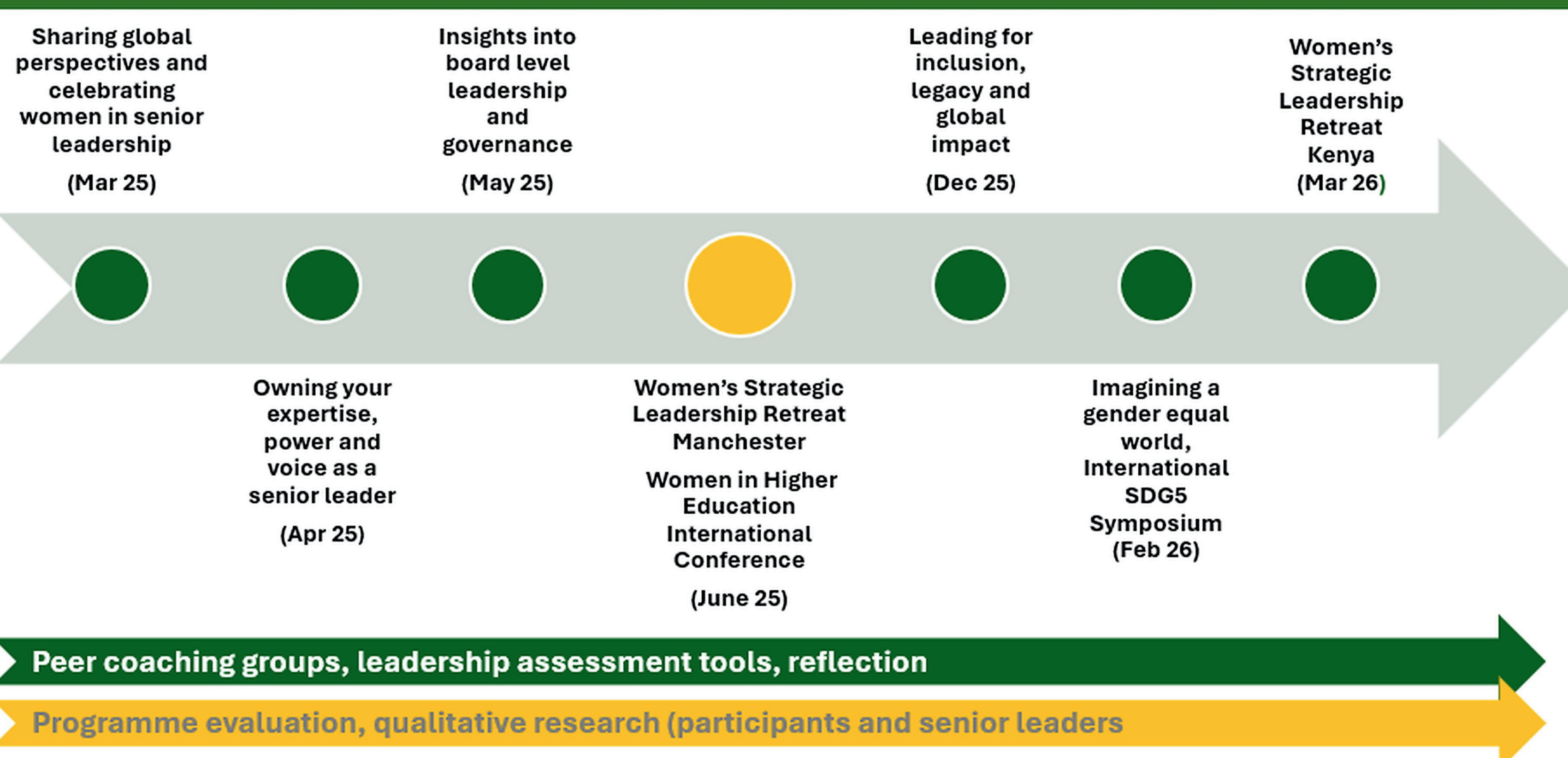
BUILDING INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITIES TOGETHER

Rachel Cowen

Building Inclusive Universities Together is a UK–Kenya partnership between the University of Manchester and partners in Nairobi, supported by the British Council Going Global Gender Equality Partnership. The project was set up to help address the ongoing under-representation of women in senior leadership in higher education.

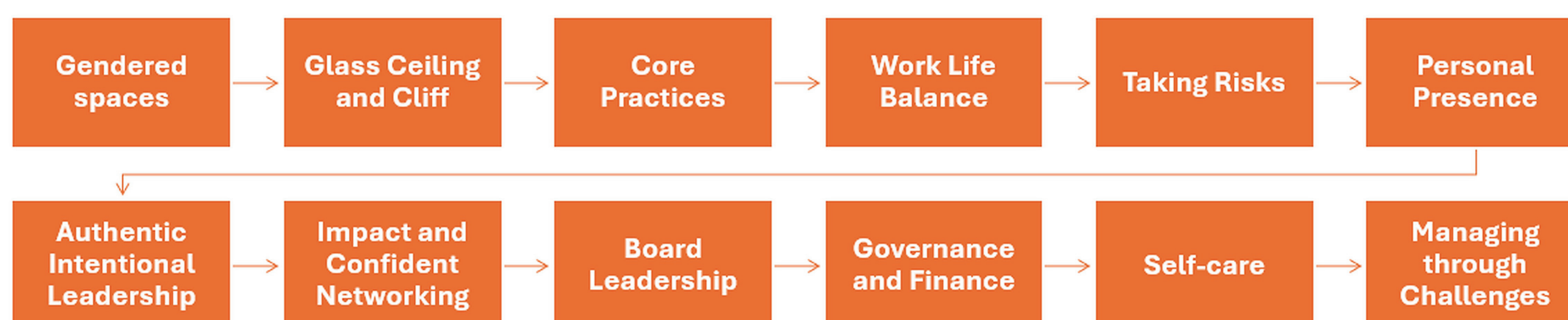
Over 12 months, the partnership brought together women leaders from Manchester and Nairobi to learn from each other, share experiences and explore how universities can become more inclusive. Through online sessions, workshops and retreats in both Nairobi and Manchester, participants discussed leadership, career progression, organisational culture and the barriers women can face at work.

Delivery Timeline



The project grew beyond the original leadership programme, reaching more than 1000 girls, women and allies through events, creative activities, conference contributions and an international gender equality symposium. It has also produced artwork, stories, poetry and academic outputs. At its heart, the project shows how trusted, equal partnerships across countries can support women's leadership, build lasting networks and contribute to fairer, more inclusive universities.

Inspiring Leaders and Key Themes



1h keynote open to wider communities, 2h applied cohort workshop
Gallup Clifton Strengths Assessment and Coaching Feedback



WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

- 12-month leadership programme for 24 women
- Workshops and retreats in Nairobi and Manchester
- International presentations and events
- Invited academic publication
- SDG5 Symposium spanning 18 countries
- Creative and digital outputs

The project showed how an equitable Manchester–Nairobi partnership can move beyond short-term leadership development to create sustained institutional and international change. It strengthened inclusive leadership capacity among women in higher education, built enduring cross-cultural networks, and engaged institutional leaders in conversations about governance, progression and structural reform. Its reach extended to 1000+ girls, women and allies, generating creative outputs, conference contributions, publications and a biannual international SDG5 symposium. Overall, the initiative demonstrates how trust-based, reciprocal collaboration can advance gender equality, amplify women's voices and create more inclusive universities across borders.

