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Examining Leadership Challenges in Non-Governmental Organizations: Evidence from NGOs Operating in East Africa

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Abstract:

The world is changing and the sweeping changes in society, nations and organizations, rumbling shifts in globalization, technology and changing demographics has given rise to new ways of leading organizations. Similarly, the evolving development and humanitarian landscape is posing profound challenges, in terms of the increasing complexity of major crises and their impact on affected people, leadership gaps and the changes within the sector itself. The most important obligation of leadership in the realization of organizational objectives is to create appropriate environment and conditions for the employees to perform to their full potential. Leaders in organization splay an important role as social architects by creating vision and strategic direction, influencing their team, establishing culture and values to achieve organizational goals. This paper examined the challenges of leadership in this particular sector by gathering information and data from 35 INGOs through interviews and desk research and interrogating the recruitment and selection of leadership; managing performance and ethical conducts; developing and retaining talent, managing multicultural teams and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and provide recommendations on how the INGO leadership should address the challenges by providing empowering proposals and referencing relevant leadership theories and competencies. To be effective, INGOs need leaders who can identify and deliver on organizational goals effectively and engage wide range of stakeholders. The importance thereof and contributions of leadership in such contexts can never be underestimated. Apparently, a number of these organizations are already improving their leadership and it is hoped that the study will foster a more systematic comparison and identification of good practice.

Keywords: INGO, leadership, theory, challenges, organizations

1. Introduction

Competent leadership is paramount in leading today's organizations due to the unpredictable, volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous operating environment. Leaders influence their organizations' operational and strategic thinking and direction. They are expected to work with their boards, internal and external stakeholders, have adequate qualified staffing, expertise and budgets to carry out mandated tasks while ensuring their vision, personal behavior, conduct, actions and decision lead to the success of the team and organization. The evolving humanitarian landscape is posing profound challenges, in terms of the increasing complexity of major crises and their impact on affected people, leadership gaps and the changes within the humanitarian sector itself. According to Fowler (2000) the 'emerging domain of non-profit or civic leaders and leadership remains relatively un-explored and poorly understood' (p.1). Hoskisson, Hitt and Ireland (2004) defined strategic leadership as 'the ability to anticipate and envision the future, maintain flexibility, think strategically and initiate changes that will create a competitive advantage for the organization in the future' (p.43). Allison (2002) states that the modern humanitarian system is being tested like never before by the cumulative effects of population growth, climate change, increased resource scarcity, rising inequalities, displacements, conflicts, economic and geopolitical shifts and rapid technological developments. The changing nature of conflicts in some parts of the world leading to displacement and migration are presenting the humanitarian system with broader challenges of increasing humanitarian caseload; the changing nature of crises; renewed assertiveness of Governments, finite financial resources and humanitarian leadership gap (UK Department for International Development, 2007).

In a rapidly changing world, leaders face incredible pressure to deliver immediate results, do more with less and manage an ever-increasing demand (Hughes & Beatty, 2005). Mullins (2010) posit that the 21st century is a period that has witnessed one of the most dramatic technological revolutions in human history after the industrial revolution, a period of tremendous challenges, a period of transition and change that find solutions to the biggest challenges facing humanity. Arguably, superior organizational performance is not a matter of luck; it is largely by the choice's leaders make (Draft, 2011). The challenges faced by INGO leaders are distinct from those faced by leaders in governments or the corporate sector given the fluid operating contexts. Humanitarian leaders work in complex environments, are often isolated and unsupported. There are discussions around leadership deficit, effectiveness of leaders because of the shortage of talented leaders, challenges the sector is facing, monopolization of leaders and the growth of the non-profit sector generally. As a result, there is some urgency in trying to develop a new generation of leaders and to provide relevant support to existing

and build future leaders (Edwards & Fowler, 2002). Many organizations today view their people as the greatest asset for competitive advantage and recognize that leadership ability, competencies and performance make a huge impact on organization performance (Goleman, 2001).

In every organization and undertaking, competent leadership is vital and the success in ever-changing work environments needs organizations as well as leaders to be creative and put more effort into better understanding, managing, and leading organizations. Effective humanitarian response and development programmes require effective leadership with the capacity for informed effective action and understanding of contexts and trends, the development of emotional intelligence and the ability to model and encourage adaptation. The trouble with the sector is squarely ineffective leadership. The humanitarian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the occasion, to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership (Lewis, 2001). Yousef (1998) states that 'an organization that is short of capital may resort to borrowing money, and one in a poor location has the option to move. However, an organization with short of leadership has little chance for survival' (p.87). I agree with Yousef statement that most INGOs lack true, ethical, servant and credible leadership.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Numerous challenges confront today's leaders of non-governmental humanitarian organizations both at personal and organizational level and the need for effective leaders who understand the complexities of the rapidly changing global environment is urgent (Hailey, 1999, Neha 2012). The challenges INGOs face are funds, poor or ineffective leadership, capacity issues, poor governance, lack of investment in local leadership and capacity, political interference and changing trends. INGO are only at the beginning of their development in most countries. If organizations, do not work on attracting, maintaining and developing their leaders now, they are at risk of not having effective leaders to deliver effective programmes. This study aimed to inspire greater attention to leadership in international organizations, instigate learning across them and draw attention to good practice. New generations of employees, disruptive technologies and innovation, assertive government that hinder humanitarian interventions will present unique constraints and opportunities and organizations must comprehend the manner in which these factors will engender changes that organizations and leaders face and how the diverse responses to those challenges will change the nature of organizations (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). Consequently, today's leaders must lead differently as they need to acquire the essential practical skills, knowledge, emotional and social intelligence to thrive in the knowledge-driven 21st century organizations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions and Perspectives

Leadership is interpersonal process by which one person influences the activity of people as individuals or within a team or a group with the aim of communicating what the organization mission, objectives, and what the group are expected to do on their part (Covey, 2007; Mullins, 2010). Northouse (2004) defined leadership as 'a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal' (p. 3). Bruce and Kathleen (2006) define leadership as:

..one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives (p.7).

The above illustrate that leadership is about relationships, influence and achieving the most positive interaction between leaders and followers and around common goals of organizations. Numerous challenges confront today's non-governmental humanitarian organizations and the need for effective leaders who understand the complexities of the rapidly changing global environment is urgent (Hailey, 1999). According to Mullins (2010), the 21st century is a period that has witnessed one of the most dramatic technological revolutions in human history after the industrial revolution, a period of tremendous challenges, a period of transition and change that find solutions to the biggest challenges facing humanity. These changes include new technology, increasing globalization, automation, crisis, displacement and immigration, artificial intelligence and changing workforce demographics and the shifting landscape of leadership. Leadership plays an important role in handling today's humanitarian challenges and while the perspective on leadership has continuously evolved and adopted to global events, generational change, technology, amongst other influencing factors, humanitarian leadership has lagged behind (Northouse, 2007),

Effective humanitarian response requires effective leadership with the capacity for informed effective action and understanding of contexts and trends, the development of emotional intelligence and the ability to model and encourage adaptation (Hailey, 1999). The question is; what does leadership look like in the context of the complex and challenging environments within which humanitarian workers operate? What are the leadership problems in such contexts and what leadership competencies are important and can they be developed? (Gabaudan, 2012). To tackle global humanitarian challenges such as displacement (refugees and internally displaced persons) crisis effectively, international NGOs must improve their leadership-related talent and performance management processes and ensure that they work across inter-agency boundaries (David, 2014). This is because, over the next decade, it will no longer be possible to deal with issues ranging from climate change to global insecurity, disease outbreak to scarce resources and increasing scrutiny from a wide range of stakeholders at a local, national and global level (Tierney, 2006). Instead, a new breed of highly effective leaders will be required. Without doubt, effective leadership in the humanitarian context is critical, and while we each have a

responsibility to model leadership behaviors, the role of INGO leaders requires special consideration (Quinn, 2000; Hailey and James, 2004).

Morgan (2006) explored the metaphor of organizations as organisms examining theories that view organizations as living or open systems. This recognizes the general view of survival, importance of organization-environment relations and effectiveness of organizations. This underscores that environment affects every aspect of life and organisms have different parts that work together to make up an entire system. The system can survive better in some environments more than others can, so are organizations. Morgan examined organism metaphor from the Contingency Theory, which focuses on adapting the organization to fit the environment, from theory of organizations as organisms focusing on the provision of resources and engagement in competition and organizational ecology perspective, which recognizes that organizations interact with environments at the same time environments interact with organizations (Morgan, 2006). In the context of humanitarian organization, the environment includes the staff, processes, systems, security and operational contexts, our donors, Government, clients and beneficiaries and competitors within and outside the sector. To remain relevant, competitive and survive, the organizational leaders must bring their talent, identify needs and risks and improve interacting processes that have to be balanced internally and in relation to the environment (Wheatly, 2007; Morgan, 2006).

Today's organization environment is undergoing profound and far-reaching change. According to Yeramyan, (2014), globalization, innovation, automation and advances in information and communication technologies are altering the basis of competition among organizations. The world is evolving into a globalized society, the leadership space is growing at unprecedented speed and variables of leadership are expanding just as the definitions. Northouse (2015), states that the concept of leadership is a complex one, which involves three components; the leader, the follower and the context and the impact leader-follower theory has on management and the workplace. The personality of the leader and likewise the personalities of followers set the stage for achievement of common goals. Most of organizations today operate in a disruptive, unstable and unpredictable environment and in multi-layered kinds of structures and therefore in finding a best fit in terms relevance of programs, service or even hiring talent, organizational leaders must do review of strengths and weakness internally as well as opportunities in the external environment (Morgan, 2006).

International NGOs widely agree that they must improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of their humanitarian response to overcome the challenges that arise from climate change, global insecurity, displacement, scarce resources and increasing scrutiny from a wide range of stakeholders (Adair, 2002). There is an intense focus on leadership across the board in the public sector and private sectors. According to active learning network for accountability and performance in humanitarian action, the critical role of leadership in humanitarian response has taken on particular emphasis following the challenges experienced in Haiti and Pakistan in 2010 and Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. The limitations in these emergencies encouraged review of the need for strengthened leadership in the sector (ALNAP, 2012). However, the leadership challenges have remained with ineffective and untimely response, deployment of leadership without the necessary qualification and experiences, corruption and accountability issues among others (ALNAP, 2012).

The rapidly evolving humanitarian contexts and workplace is forcing organization to re-think and adapt to new and emerging ways of doing things. The uncertain times are putting undue pressures on leaders and managers to adopt practical approach to leadership and management to motivate their followers to enhance their performance, share the visions and missions of the organizations and solve problems in order to realize their set objectives (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Those who occupy leadership positions are expected to become conversant with leadership and management theories, principles and practices, as they are component parts of social and economic development process (Drucker, 2006). With emerging developments, leaders need to become global citizens with an expanded field of vision and values to achieve competitive advantage and be capable of understanding and leading across global regions.

2.2. Leadership Theories and Perspectives

Daft (2010) states that organizational theory provides the tools to analyze and understand how and why some organizations succeed and others fail. The theories help to understand what happened in the past, as well as what may happen in the future; in order to help leaders, manage organizations better and more effectively. *Organizational theory* consists of approaches to *organizational* analysis, which explains structure, functions, individual, group behaviours, and help leaders manage organizations more effectively and include classical, neoclassical to modern organizational *theories* (Mullins, 2010). *Leadership theories* on the other hand seek to explain how and why certain people become leaders, focusing on the characteristics of leaders, and attempt to identify the behaviors that people can adopt in order to improve their *leadership* abilities and influence their followers. Northouse (2007) states that the leadership theories can be grouped as trait theories (theories that propose specific personal characteristics that differentiate leaders from non-leaders), behavioral theories (theories that assume specific behaviors that differentiate leaders from non-leaders), and contingency theories (theories that assume the situations determines the best style of leadership). Transformational leadership, transactional, authentic and servant leadership are other contributions to the literature of leadership. *To understand the various theories and their application in organizations, a brief perspective is provided below.*

2.2.1. Trait Theories

The Trait theory conceptualize leadership with respect to the traits and focus on attributes and characteristics that differentiate leaders from the others. Old leadership paradigms focused on the study of the traits leadership theories and the common phrase 'he is born a leader' allude to Traits theory. The traits theory argue that effective leaders have some common personality characteristics and have leadership advantage with evidence of traits as height, integrity,

likability, intelligence, honesty, self-confidence and appearance (Northouse, 2016; Geddes & Grosset, 1998; Robbins, Judge, & Sanghi, 2007).

2.2.2. Behavioral Theories

Behavioral theory of leadership focus on the behavior of the leader stating that what makes the leader successful and effective is the way the leader behaves rather than the traits that the leader has. The theory postulates that people can learn to become leaders through teaching, observation and learning. The behavioral leadership theory emphasis the behavior of leaders from a task and relationship dimensions suggesting that effective leadership is dependent on the right behavior (Northouse, 2016; Robbins, Judge, & Sanghi, 2007). Northouse (2016) further states, 'Behavioral approach focuses on what leaders do and how they act. In shifting the study of leadership to leader behaviors, the behavioral approach expanded the research of leadership to include the actions of leaders toward followers in various contexts'(p. 71).In other words, behavior theory emphasizes the second variable of the leadership function (behaviors) more than the other variables. (Robbins, Judge, & Sanghi, 2007).

2.2.3. Contingency and Situational Theories

The contingency theory focuses on the effectiveness of the leader, based on the leadership style and the situation. Gill (2011) suggest that effective leaders must adapt to the different situations implying leaders require cognitive ability to adapt different leadership styles for a given situation. The theory demonstrates further that effective leaders should adjust to the job, task and function as well as the people that needs influencing (Praszkie, 2017). Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) state that traits do not universally resonate with effective leadership and argue that situational factors play a great role in influencing effective leadership. While there are some born leaders, others become leaders through commitment and honing their leadership skills through extensive practice (Hill, 2009).Situational theories postulate that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variables and different leadership styles may be appropriate for different contexts and certain types of decision-making. According to Northouse (2016),the situational approach focuses on leadership in situations and that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. From this perspective, to be an effective leader requires adapting styles to the demands of different situations. To determine what is needed in a particular situation, a leader must evaluate the situation and assess how competent and committed the followers are to perform a given goal in given context. Based on the assumption that 'followers' skills and motivation vary over time, situational leadership suggests that leaders should change the degree to which they are directive or supportive to meet the changing needs of followers' (Northouse, 2016, p. 93).

INGO leadership in practice appears closer to the contingency approach as opposed to the view that there is a best way of leading. According to this approach, leadership 'depends' on the respective context, the past and current status, and future goals of an organization. One important element of this approach is the influence of 'culture' on leadership as various cultural issues (such as norms, conventions, standards, expectations, etc.) have significant bearing on leadership (Hofstede, 1991). Culture is an important element for NGOs as well and it is made more complex by the typical combination of cultural influences from various sources such as from outside, from within the organization and from abroad (Fowler, 1997). Many NGOs depend on resources from donors and Governments and this high resource dependency leads to their vulnerability to external control and change. To cope with such dependencies, NGO leaders need to have a contingency approach. Further, effective leadership requires not only the right people in the right place, but also an environment that enables leaders to lead. This is particularly relevant for humanitarian leaders, who lack experience in fragile contexts and therefore rely heavily on a conducive environment in order to deliver on their mandate (Northouse, 2016).

2.2.4. Other Contemporary Perspectives

Other contemporary leadership theories such as transformational, transactional, authentic and servant leadership have gained attention and are shaping the leadership discourse. These leadership paradigms consider leadership as a function of the leader, follower and the context and looks at the styles and qualities of the leaders (Northouse, 2016; Ellman & Kaufmann, 2018). Transactional leadership is defined as 'the exchange of relationship between leader and follower to meet their own self-interests' (Bass &Stogdill, 1990, p.10). This suggest that the leader and follower agree to certain norms, for instance where people only complete tasks when there are external rewards.Avolio and Bass (1995) conceptualize transformational leadership as a method of inspiring and motivating followers to achieve high levels of performance by converting vision into reality and inspiring followers to perform, walking the extra mile beyond the call of duty. According to George (2018), good leaders are authentic suggesting that authenticity is key in leadership and such leaders are deeply aware of how others perceive them. The perspective integrates contextual, cognitive, affective and spiritual element such as values and morals building the leaders legitimacy through honest awareness and relationships. Servant leaders on other hand make difference in their organizations and in the lives of their followers through care, great relationships, and a shift from self-serving leadership to leadership that serves others (Blanchard, 2018).

2.2.5. Humanitarian Contexts and NGO Leaders

The organizations provide humanitarian assistance to poverty affected, displacement affected populations (refugees and internally displaced persons) and other vulnerable groups. Some of these organizations often works in protracted crises characterized by long-term cyclical displacement and in such contexts; conflict and insecurity coincide with other factors such as recurrent natural and man-made disasters and assertive government creating complex crises that lead to new and repeated displacement. This have given rise to long-term needs that challenge traditional leadership

and humanitarian response. Such contexts require a shift in focus from short-term emergency relief to long term durable solutions such as supporting people gain access to sustainable development, democratic rights, civil participation, land rights among others and a leadership that goes beyond traditional thinking (Clarke & Ramalingam, 2008). The Greater Horn of Africa currently faces one of the largest humanitarian crises in its history. The number of people in need of food assistance has increased to beyond 30 million and the number of refugees who have sought protection beyond their borders has exceeded 4.4 million (UNOCHA, 2017). While the successive impacts of conflict, floods and drought are likely to see the need for a widespread humanitarian response continue in the future, the operational footprint and experience developed within the humanitarian community means it is well placed to respond to the many challenges that will emerge. The conflict in the region will however continue to negatively impact on humanitarian space requiring leaders of tomorrow (NRC, 2018). These environments are characterized by increased access impediments, assertive governments, insecurity and conflicts, the risk and the duty of care towards employees and how crisis leaders can lead in such contexts.

What is clear from research and in their own admission is that not only do NGO leaders play a critical role in shaping the strategic direction of the organizations, but their role and effectiveness is largely affected and determined by the operating context (Smillie & Hailey, 2001, Hailey & James, 2004). The leadership of humanitarian NGOs face extraordinary challenges given the limited resources in uncertain and volatile political and humanitarian circumstances to help the displaced and disadvantaged members of communities. Civicus (2002) posit that the growing deficit in leadership in NGOs results in programmatic dysfunctionality and even organizational collapse. Discussion abound, there are concerns that the current NGO leaders are not prepared for the kind and contexts NGOs operate, raising further concerns about the capacity, experience and availability of adequate leaders. This is compounded by the fact that relatively little research has been conducted on leadership in the NGO sector. Some of the competencies required in the senior management of NGOs is the ability to develop strategy, communicate the vision, inspire and motivate teams, develop managers and other leaders deliver the mission. Apparently, many NGOs are having hard time to attract the right candidates with right skills and experience to operate in hard to reach and evolving contexts, making leadership attraction and development a bigger challenges (Hailey & James, 2004; Neha, 2012).

3. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

3.1. Summary of Findings

Undoubtedly, effective leadership is not easy, and there is no easy way to becoming an effective leader, making leadership in and of itself one of the most complex of human endeavors. Leading in today's increasingly complex NGO landscape is becoming challenging. Additionally, the demand from the greater complexity of organizations, a more empowered group of followers, and the challenge of being an effective leader makes leadership almost insurmountable (Wheatley, 2007). The implications of these developments for organizations include demand for new leadership, new skills and continuous learning, accelerated work pace and changing workplaces (Sadmann & Vandenberg, 1995). There is so much at stake, dealing and leading in contexts and situations that make the difference between life and death. As the saying goes, 'It is in times of crisis that good leaders emerge', NGO leadership is a work in extreme context, with limited support, limited resources, assisting people in distress, which demands leadership with right qualification, skills, character and competence (Binney, Wilke & Williams, 2005). The challenges of leadership continue to grow, with humanitarian leaders working in chaotic, often physically challenging and insecure environments. Leaders should be willing and have the ability to manage competing pressures from different stakeholders in order not to compromise both the leader's individual identity and values and organizations (Hailey & James 2004). They should 'embrace a new paradigm of change and crisis management, empowerment, diversity, a higher ethical purpose and humbleness' (Nel et al. 2011, p. 313).

The study found various challenges of leadership in NGOs. The first is the highly personalized nature of leadership in the sector. Leadership is concentrated in the hands of people said to be the ambassadors or caretakers of the organizations who safeguard their interest. The kind and styles of leadership exhibited is authoritarianism and frustrates other employees who are embodiments of new ideas, initiatives and innovation which are not allowed to be expressed and practiced. Hailey (1999) alluded to the detrimental impact of paternalistic founder leaders and charismatic autocrats arguing that such leaders demonstrate a drive, commitment and a remarkable ability to mobilize people and resources mostly from the donors of their countries. On the contrary, they dominate leadership roles in organizations, have limited knowledge and skills, are unaccountable and often fail to adapt to changing circumstances. Chambers (2005) also points out that such leaders can achieve many things through their 'guts, vision and commitment,' but the way they use power is a 'disability' that jeopardizes organizational effectiveness and as a result, they hinder promising initiatives (Chambers, 2005). This monopolization of leadership roles leads to disadvantage that fresh blood is not allowed to flow into the organization, its thinking and programme implementation thus limiting innovation and effectiveness.

The second leadership challenge found was the lack of qualified, dedicated ethical leadership. Leadership competencies in NGOs determine the quality of programs and service provided by organizations to target population. Leaders in the NGO sector are motivated by organization vision and by their desire to make a difference, however they lack the right qualification, exposure and experience, the lack of effective talent and performance management systems (Peter & Maxwell, 2009). Few NGOs are also willing or able to invest in training for capacity building, stating that most donors do not provide budget for training and development. Weak capacity affects fundraising ability, governance, leadership, program quality and other facets of the organization. It is very difficult to get trained persons who are either willing or trained to work in the rural and hard to reach contexts where most of NGOs work (Chambers, 2005). With the high expectation of expatriates and due to lack of funds, NGOs are not able to spend more funds for training and development couple with high turnover rates that allow talent flowing out of the organizations.

The third challenge facing NGO leadership is dealing with multicultural teams, differences and dynamics. Given their paternalistic views, limited skills and experience, leadership and management styles, there is a problem in handling diversity issues in organizations. Often there are prejudice from expatriates and opposition from national colleagues. The unwillingness of such leaders to understand and appreciate diversity, difference of judgements, opinions, cultural and contextual understanding and lack of confidence to seize opportunities, have far reaching implications (Fowler, 1997). The fourth challenge is related to ethical and legal dimensions, which is misuse of organizational resources through fraud, corruption and sexual exploitation and abuse. Fraud and corruption are prevalent in the humanitarian sector with some unscrupulous unqualified leaders making fortunes by floating NGOs for their personnel gains. This leads to the local employees also involved in such vices. The lack of qualified leadership and the complex contexts lead to weak internal controls and governance structures, which further compromises accountability to beneficiaries. Data shows the increasing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in the humanitarian sectors, demonstrating safeguarding lapses and code of conduct breaches, as growing risks to the aid sector's ability to deliver accountable and high impact programs. As well as undermining program effectiveness, these issues also have even more serious potential to compromise the safety and protection of program beneficiaries and erode the trust of the populations being served by aid agencies and the sector as a whole.

3.2. Recommendations

The following are some of recommendations put forward to resolve the current NGO leadership challenges.

First, deploy qualified leaders with the right leadership competencies, styles and a good understanding of leadership and organizational theories and operating contexts. The organizations should avoid paternalistic approach to recruitment and review talent acquisition right from leader recruitment, from leading diverse groups to leading in times of crisis, from leading individuals to leading groups, from leading nationally to leading globally, from leading operationally to leading strategically and ethically. Effective leadership involves the leader doing the right thing for the particular circumstances, cognizant of the task, the followers, the beneficiaries, the situation, the timing, and the process (Deutscher, 2013). Gardner (1987) categorizes the different types of bad leaders over the course of history. He explains that some leaders are cruel, and some are destroyers of processes that others have previously built with human dignity. However, he also offers a series of inspiring examples of leaders who are caring and serve for the common good. The emerging pressures of the behaviors of the great leaders, increases obligation to hire leaders whose backgrounds are carefully considered, hence, holding them more accountable for their actions and the consequences of those actions (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). This requires the right academic qualification, the right technical as well as emotional and situational intelligence. This will be key in identification of the right leadership.

Second, develop NGO leadership skills and styles. INGO leaders should practice a number of leadership styles as each situation presents a unique combination of opportunities and challenges that no simple framework can fully answer (Adair, 2007). The situational theory of leadership suggests that no single leadership style is best, it all depends on the situation at hand, and it describe four basic situational styles: (a) delegating, (b) supporting, (c) coaching, and (d) directing. The leader will choose any of these depending on the suitability for the scenario (Northouse, 2006). Northouse further notes that the leadership approach includes inputs and feedback and the leader uses 'supportive behaviors that bring out the employees' skills around the task to be accomplished' (p. 93). Leaders with transformational style put emphasis on the big picture within the organization including growth and development of value system of employees, their inspirational level and moralities and abilities with the objective of transforming people and organization. Bass and Avolio (1990) argue that in the transformational leadership style, the leader integrates the interests of followers into the greater work and encourage followers to think beyond their own personal and individual advantage, thus transforming individual emotions, values, ethic, standards and long-term goals through the process of charismatic and visionary leadership. By making use of this type of leadership style, it is believed that the level of satisfaction, leader effectiveness and extra effort made by followers will increase, improving the performance of organizations.

Third, build value-based leadership to help streamline the ethical, social and legal issues faced by organization. Greenleaf (1970), allude that servant leadership style is the passion and the wanting to serve first in order to ensure that other people's highest priority needs are served. The servant leadership style uses less institutional power and control while shifting authority to the followers and they are believed to advance the greater well-being of their followers even at the potential expense of the organization (Patterson 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002). The authentic leadership style on the other hand emphasizes value and principles, integrity and ethical aspect of leadership (Northouse, 2016). Authentic leaders emphasize building legitimacy through honest relationships and ethical action that maximize efforts of others to achieving the common goals (George, 2009). This will help organizations to remain true to their values and principles and resolve safeguarding concerns and build unshakable reputation. Moreover, Pearce and Conger (2003) espouse shared leadership which involves 'a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both' (p. 167). Here, decisions should be decentralized in a matrix structure, authority, responsibility delegated, team decision making encouraged, and employees are trusted to make informed choices to advance organizational objectives. Embrace self-leadership concepts through training programs designed to increase self-leadership skills and behaviors in the workplace is key (Neck & Manz, 2010). In fact, exceptional leaders distinguish themselves because of their superior self-leadership (Bryant, 2016).

Four, establish leadership development program, mentorship and discipleship in organizations. Organizations should use experience as a teacher by providing relevant developmental opportunities to develop leaders, be part of career development for all and start early rather than only for the more senior staff. This means fostering and developing leadership qualities through talent acquisition, training, mentoring, discipling and coaching (Stewart & Harrison (2016)).

Organizations can foster this developing performance management systems, availing budget for training and development and ensuring leaders have the opportunity for mentoring and coaching. Systematically providing opportunities for high-potential managers to work in a variety of positions, mentoring and coaching will develop those critical technical and cross-cultural leadership skills. A philosophy of leadership succession lies in the background of any successful organization (Shea, 2002).

Five, adapt and implement cross-cultural leadership skills as a best practice, which begins with a deep understanding of the contributions that employees make in today's dynamic, competitive global business environment. According to Mullins (2010), the single critical success factor for leaders working in humanitarian environment is cross-cultural leadership competency. Cross-cultural competencies elevate a leader to highly competent global leader status able to work with diverse and multi-cultural stakeholders and manage diversity concerns in organizations. As a best practice, organizations should develop pool of leaders with cross-cultural competencies to meet the organization's strategic imperatives and competitive demands. Expatriate leadership in most organization should be equipped with cross-cultural interpersonal skills, including cross-cultural communication effectiveness, empathy and social skills (Mullins, 2010). Moreover, organizations are embracing generational diversity and developing environment that encourages participation and collaboration between age groups and are better equipped to respond to 21st century challenges. In fact, 'the largest diversity of generations is represented in today's workplace and leaders must act intentionally to unite generations in order to reap the benefits of generational diversity. Five different generations are still present in the workforce such as the silent generation or Veterans, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z. This defines cohorts based on birth years and the new context may have led to the emergence of new values among the younger generations (Angeline, 2011; Parry & Urwin, 2010).'. The skills to manage diversity are critical success factors in today's NGO leadership.

Six, implement a strategy of empowered and courageous followers. By focusing on the leadership aspect alone presents the leader-follower paradigm a zero-sum game. The organization should empower followers making them courageous followers who can play critical roles in the organization and if need be challenge the status quo (Chaleff, 2009). Cameron and Green (2008) in exploring five key roles used by effective leaders enumerated the following: the edgy catalyzer, the visionary motivator, the measured connector, the tenacious implementer and the thoughtful architect. In understanding these critical roles of effective leaders, leadership practices must empower followers to achieve extraordinary results and turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes. In the leadership theories, much emphasis is placed on a humanistic approach in which the following competencies are highlighted according to Bester (2012) namely 'hope; humility; values; realism and temperance' (p. 52).

Seven, embrace the power of local leadership. Most INGOs hardly utilize the power of local skills and knowledge and mostly depend on the perceived skills of expatriates and expect expatriates on short term contracts to build local capacity. NGOs should implement in addition to the coaching and mentoring programs, initiatives for homegrown leadership and building the capacity of local partners and communities. There is capacity and potential as well and donor communities are insisting building local capacity of communities, staff, local NGOs and authorities (Harvey, Stoddard, Harmer & Taylor, 2009). There is also a clear recognition that the humanitarian aid community must invest proactively in national actors and administrative structures to create a more appropriate response and to ensure that funding available for aid is able to contribute to sustained efforts in disaster response. Thus, NGOs should be push themselves to transfer skills to local workers, committing to internal development, focusing on developing skills among local staff. This capacity-building works both ways, as local leaders can bring insights and depth to international organizations (Knox, 2013).

Eight, employ more women in leadership roles. According to Eagly and Karau (2002) women in leadership is emerging and seen as competitive edge for the future. Women apply some leadership behaviours that have proved to enhance organizational performance and meet tomorrow's challenges. It is also emerging that many women in leadership roles employ transformational leadership, preferring to build relationships with followers and to lead more democratically. Functioning communities can be incubators of positive change and in most countries, women are key contributors to making organizations and communities work better. The participation of women in NGO work and in all aspects of society is more important than ever and of strategic importance.

Nine, implement sound ethical systems. Following widespread moral lapses and financial scandals, NGOs are under scrutiny as never before and today's leaders face tremendous pressure from the government and the public to hold their organizations and employees to high ethical and professional standards. For instance, scandals in some organizations are because of ethical failures and code of ethics is not enough to assure ethical behavior, but it should be reinforced by an effective organizational architecture (Brickley, Smith & Zimmerman, 2002). Mullins (2010), assert that 'ethical foundation embodies the basic principles which govern the external and internal relations of the organization which include fair trading and relationship with beneficiaries, customers, suppliers and the general public' (p.705). Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, (2015), postulate that 'misuse of company resources, abusive behavior, harassment, exploitation, accounting fraud, conflicts of interest, defective products, bribery, and employee theft are all problems cited as evidence of declining ethical standards' (p.7). Every organization is susceptible to unethical behavior and thus the growing importance to uphold ethical standards in organizations. NGO should improve organizational culture concerning dealing with fraud and corruption, through implementing the recommendations from year one assessment of best practices and gaps on fraud and corruption prevention, detection and management. They should improve the safeguarding practices of NGOs and reduce the risks of sexual exploitation and child abuse in NGO programs. The benefits of ethics and good governance include employee commitment, donor interest, and beneficiary satisfaction and improved profit margins, organizational reputation among others.

4. Conclusion

Evidence suggests that building effective NGO leadership is a work in progress and an issue of strategic importance. The most important obligation of leadership is not only shaping the destiny of the organization but also to create appropriate environment and conditions for the employees to perform to their full potential and increase organizational performance. Leaders in organizations play an important role as social architects by creating vision and strategic direction, influencing their team, establishing culture and values to achieve organizational goals (Mullins, 2010). Effective leaders can impact the organization and lives of vulnerable people. Unfortunately, there are concerns about leadership deficit, or about the adequacy and quality of leadership in the sector. The problems NGO leadership can best be solved by proper application of leadership practices, a good understanding of the current NGO contexts, building new generation of leaders that can meet the challenge in the sector and implementation of value and ethical norms.

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