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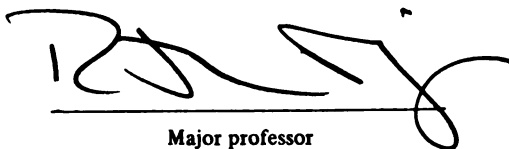
Leadership Development in  
Nongovernmental Organizations:  
Applying Theory To Developing Country Contexts

presented by

Benjamin L. Hartley

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

M.S. degree in Resource Development



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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN  
NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:  
APPLYING THEORY TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXTS

By

Benjamin L. Hartley

A THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: APPLYING THEORY TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXTS**

**By**

**Benjamin L. Hartley**

Leadership development in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is becoming increasingly important as many developing country leaders retire from their positions in these organizations. The growing number, size, and political influence of NGOs also indicate a need for closer analysis of NGO leaders and leadership. Built on a thorough review of three different approaches to leadership and case study analysis of leadership development programs, this paper presents a preliminary leadership development framework which addresses the challenges of accountability, leader transitions, and external environment leadership - three issues particularly salient in the NGO context. Ideas about how leadership development programs may be constructed are offered in addition to specific recommendations for future research endeavors.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

By its very nature, a study of leadership and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) requires a considerable amount of "border-crossing" between academic disciplines. I am grateful for the many colleagues, friends, and mentors who have demonstrated excellence in interdisciplinary endeavors and have patiently facilitated my own learning in areas where they have considerably more expertise.

To Dale Suderman, a trusted friend, mentor, and cyberspace editor, I am perhaps most grateful. His "Chicago streets" analysis of leadership and aptitude in gender studies and social movements has given me added perspective on the nature of leadership which I hope is reflected in this paper. His encouragement and frequent editorial remarks have also made the writing process a much less lonely task. So, from the "top of the Wenceslas pole to the depths of the knightly caverns," I once again thank you.

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Finally, I express my gratitude to my wife, Laura, who not only helped put the finishing touches on this manuscript, but also provided needed encouragement during those inevitable times when the writing process was painfully slow. Her reminders to "break the paper down" into more manageable chunks were invaluable suggestions. I hope to return the favor when she writes her dissertation in the near future.

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## **Chapter One**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders and leadership are currently experiencing a serious period of personal and organizational transition. After years of path-breaking work, many successful NGO leaders such as Muhammad Yunus and Wangari Muta Maathai<sup>1</sup> will soon move on to other endeavors or retire. Such transitions are widespread since many NGOs that were established 20 or 30 years ago are now experiencing a natural attrition of leaders through retirement and death. These types of transitions bring broader questions of leadership to the fore among NGO scholars and practitioners. These questions prompt greater recognition of the value of proactive leadership development efforts to ensure a competent next generation of leaders and the continued success of NGOs (Brown, 1988; Shams, 1993)<sup>2</sup>.

To address the challenge of leadership development, international foundations, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, have created programs to encourage reflection on the role of leaders and leadership in NGOs and to develop the next generation of NGO leaders. The Kellogg International Leadership Program (KILP) provides leaders from developing countries with a three year fellowship to encourage interaction with other leaders and the development of innovative projects for their home communities (Webb-

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Maathai through the Green Belt Movement influenced the mobilization of millions of Kenyans in environmentally sustainable programs. Similarly, Professor Yunus introduced a system to provide credit to poor women in Bangladesh which is being replicated around the world (Getubig, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>This paper maintains a distinction between leaders and leadership in order to highlight the "content" and "process" dimensions of the problem. The second chapter elaborates on the reasons for this distinction. For our present purposes it is enough to recognize that "leader" refers to the specific person while "leadership" refers to the process which involves leaders, followers, and the situation at hand.

Petett, 1995). Initiatives such as the Kellogg International Leadership Program and other innovative programs (see Chapter Three) contribute a great deal to the task of NGO leadership development. It is unclear, however, to what extent programs like KILP reflect the growing number of studies and new approaches to leaders and leadership.

Founded upon a critical analysis of these studies, this paper examines the connection between leadership theory and leadership training to provide an operational framework for NGO leadership development programs that effectively addresses NGO leadership challenges. These challenges include: accountability, leader/leadership transitions, and external environment leadership. Following discussion of case study leadership programs, Chapter Four offers a prototype leadership development framework that might contribute to the development of specific NGO leadership training programs.

After a review of key issues in leadership development and NGOs, this chapter examines various types of NGOs and identifies their commonalities and differences as they affect leadership challenges.

### **Key Issues in NGO Leadership Development**

Leadership development programs in developing countries are rare and most lack the extensive analysis and evaluation done for U.S.-based leadership development programs (Andrews, et. al., 1994; Freeman, et. al., 1995; Matusak, 1996)<sup>3</sup>. Inquiries regarding previous work in this area with

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<sup>3</sup>Community Leadership Programs (CLP's) are one type of widespread leadership development program in the U.S. The purpose of CLPs is to identify potential leaders and encourage their increased involvement in their communities. Participants learn leadership skills and increase commitments as a whole through mentoring and internship experiences (Roush, 1990). This results in a greater breadth and depth of a pool of leaders who are capable to serve their communities. In recent years, CLPs have increased drastically in size. Between 1987 and 1995 The National Association of Community Leadership, the central clearinghouse and resource center for CLPs, grew from 200 to over 450 member leadership development programs (Lilly Endowment, 1995).



members of a nonprofit sector electronic mail listserve ARNOVA-L yielded five responses. While these individuals (Brenson, 1996; Mason, 1996; Macagba, 1996; McGuire, 1996; Regis, 1996) expressed interest in and insight into the problem they also agreed on the need for more inquiry into the subject. One leader from a Colombian NGO remarked,

[This inquiry] is right on target. As I see it however, the main problem, at least in the Latin American countries, is not that of awareness [of leadership as a multi-dimensional concept] but that of an almost total absence of adequate and available training for the "new leadership" that is so urgently necessary (Brenson, 1996).

When compared to USAID's \$150 million a year investment in technical management training<sup>4</sup>, funding for leadership development is virtually nonexistent (Lynton & Pareek, 1990).

There are at least two reasons for the absence of attention to leadership development training. First, the benefits of leadership development training programs are difficult to observe or measure. Thus, they often become the target of budget cuts or are given low institutional priority. Second, the current state of the art in leadership studies is more focused on theories of leadership than on applied suggestions for leadership development training programs (Bigelow, 1995 in Burns, 1996).

The subject of leadership development in NGOs has only recently emerged among development scholar-practitioners (Bingen, 1996; Brown and Tandon, 1990; Carroll, 1992; Kiggundu, 1989). Thus, little is known about the nature of NGO leadership or how the challenges of next generation

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<sup>4</sup>Technical management training may consist of a variety of training tasks including budgeting, management by objectives, position classification, and management information systems (Esman, 1991; Brinkerhoff, 1994). "Top-down" in nature, these training topics tend to conceptualize organizations in a mechanistic rather than organismic light.

leadership development can be effectively met. As Kiggundu (1989, p. 295) notes:

[L]ittle is known about the personal attributes and the contextual antecedents or contingencies that facilitate the emergence and effective utilization of high quality leadership in organizations in developing countries. It is known, however, that such high quality leadership is a product of a highly dynamic and mutually interactive influencing process between the leader and his or her attributes, and the context within which the leadership is exercised.

The complexities of member/leader accountability (Bingen, 1996; Bratton, 1990; Brett, 1993; Global Research Consortium, 1992), NGO external environment leadership (Brown, 1993; Brown & Tandon, 1990; Fowler, 1992), and transitions away from charismatic individuals toward more representational forms of leadership (Carroll, 1992; Fox & Hernandez, 1989; Fox, 1992; Kiggundu, 1989) appear to be among the most pertinent and most frequently discussed leadership issues confronting NGOs. While other topics exist which may also be valuable to address for a study of NGO leadership, a comprehensive review of all concerns which NGO leadership face is beyond the scope of this paper.

Investigation into NGOs' role in next generation leadership development ought to increase as NGOs become more active participants in development endeavors. Brown and Tandon (1990), Carroll (1992), and Farrington and Bebbington (1993), emphasize the growing role of "intermediary NGOs" or "NGO Support Organizations"<sup>5</sup> as facilitators of next generation leadership. NGO Support Organizations' *raison d'être* is to serve grassroots organizations through participatory community-level problem solving, agricultural extension and research service delivery (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993) , political advocacy (Bingen, 1996; Bratton,

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<sup>5</sup>These terms commonly refer to a particular type of NGO which is tied to grassroots concerns but operates at a "higher" level in group organizing, advocacy, or service-delivery.

1995) and miscellaneous training needs<sup>6</sup>. The specific ways to go about leadership development in these organizations remain less clear. The "intermediary" nature of Support Organizations, however, suggests that they might be a key potential resource in developing grassroots leaders and organizational leadership. Brown and Tandon (1990, p. 27) observe:

Support Organizations that can facilitate the emergence of new leadership will make... a crucial contribution. It is not very clear under what sort of circumstances such leadership develops. It may involve, for example, individual consultations, workshops with other leaders, or team building activities that involve leaders and their subordinates and peers. The need for new leadership suggests that Support Organization capacities for leadership development will be a critical resource over the next decade.

### Typology of NGOs<sup>7</sup>

NGOs of all types - from large, international NGOs to small indigenous neighborhood groups - deal with leader and leadership development challenges. Less clear is how the *nature and purpose* of leadership differs in these varied organizations. Carroll's (1992) typology of NGOs offers one means for identifying and clarifying leadership differences in NGOs. Carroll identifies three categories of NGOs: Grassroots Support Organizations (non-membership NGOs) , Membership Support Organizations, and Primary Grassroots Organizations. The following summary of this typology focuses on differences in the roles of leaders, leadership, and leadership development in each type of NGO.

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<sup>6</sup>The greater connection of Support Organizations to primary grassroots organizations distinguishes them from organizations that are devoted only to research or political lobbying even though Support Organizations may also engage in these activities as part of their overall mission (Carroll, 1992).

<sup>7</sup>This section borrows heavily from the work of Carroll's (1992) *Intermediary NGOs: the Supporting Link in Grassroots Development*.

### *Grassroots Support Organizations*

Grassroots Support Organizations (GSOs) primarily provide services and support to local community groups known as Primary Grassroots Organizations and may serve as a liaison to governmental and other agencies in urban centers or foreign countries<sup>8</sup>. These NGOs do not represent a specific membership but generally do have the highest levels of networking and coordination among diverse organizations. Service-delivery is often a central component in their work since multilateral and bilateral donor agencies often utilize them in fulfilling their own service-delivery commitments and policy objectives. Consequently, the degree of accountability present between organization leaders and grassroots groups is sometimes minimized in favor of greater accountability to other groups. The Grameen Bank and The Green Belt Movement are two of the most well-known and successful GSOs with a record of both staying connected to grassroots groups and influencing government policy for the benefit of the poor even though they do not formally represent the poor (Getubig, 1993)<sup>9</sup>.

Leaders and other individuals working for a GSO are often from urban professional classes and may be considered "outsiders" among the communities in which they work. However, the leader's "outsider" reputation has a number of beneficial aspects. GSO leaders with connections in government, international organizations, and universities are able to act as strong advocates and intermediaries with their former classmates and

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<sup>8</sup>The distinction between international NGOs and nationally based GSOs is often blurred in practice since many national GSOs utilize funds from international sources. Carroll (1992) excluded NGOs which were obviously international in scope (CARE, World Vision, etc.)

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note similar dynamics in the United States. At the beginning of the civil rights movement, the NAACP could be considered a grassroots support organization. It was not directly accountable to members and was comprised of a professional class (usually lawyers) who engaged in legal battles on behalf of grassroots groups. The Southern Christian Leadership Council, a membership-based organization engaged in mass action which represented the base membership groups.

colleagues in high-level positions. Balancing external environment leadership requirements and "in-house" needs is a valuable skill for GSO leaders. This skill may be more easily performed in these types of NGOs than membership-based NGOs since GSOs are usually less directly involved in the political process than membership-based NGOs. Muhammad Yunus exemplifies a GSO leader who is extremely well-networked around the world while maintaining credibility at a national and local level.

The "outsider" reputation of GSO leaders and their tendency to collaborate more freely with other outsiders tends to put them at risk of being held suspect by the grassroots organizations that they serve (Thiel, 1994; Vansant, 1989). Lack of clarity about the nature of leadership accountability plagues these organizations - particularly when operating funds come from outside (not the "beneficiaries") sources. The transition from highly charismatic leader/founders of a GSO to a much more "routinized" generation (Weber, 1964) is also a challenge for this type of NGO.

The process of organizational leadership in GSOs is likely to be largely technocratic. GSOs tend to deliver services and are often required to follow procedures laid out by international donor agencies. Thus, the organizational culture of the GSO is likely to resemble the organizational culture of the larger organizations.

Due to their need for organized service delivery and the demands of donor financial accountability, leadership development in these types of organizations has usually focused on technical management training in order to strengthen communication and financial accountability (Cooperrider, 1994; Lynton & Pareek, 1990). Technical management skills are also vital for organizations that are "scaling-up" to become more nation-wide or more involved in multiple sectors (agriculture, health, etc.) As a result of the

emphasis on obtaining technical management skills, leadership development *per se* is often not disaggregated as a distinct aspect of capacity building endeavors but rather is equated with management development (Carolopia, 1994).

### *Membership Support Organizations*

Although Membership Support Organizations (MSOs) and GSOs are similar in many respects, they differ primarily in their type of accountability to grassroots organizations. The regional or national scope of MSOs and their involvement in a variety of activities make them appear similar to many GSOs. In contrast to GSOs, Membership Support Organizations devote a lower proportion of their effort to service-delivery programs and direct contact with international agencies. The primary responsibility of Membership Support Organizations' involves coordinating the local groups that they represent. Because of this strong representation and advocacy role, membership accountability in MSOs is crucial to their continued survival<sup>10</sup>. Farmers' unions, because of their representation and advocacy role are a common example of a Membership Support Organization in developing countries (Bingen, 1996).

MSO leaders frequently share similar backgrounds with their membership but they generally have benefited from more formal education experiences (Bingen, 1996). This type of background helps leaders maintain channels of trust and accountability "from below" as well as secure legitimacy

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<sup>10</sup>Accountability differences between MSOs and GSOs are sometimes less pronounced in practice than they are in theory (Carroll, 1992). In some advocacy activities at the national level, groups that claim to represent and speak for thousands of farmers may be ignored by government policy makers if evidence of such representational power is not forthcoming (Riedinger, 1995). If an MSO is unable to politically organize its members (demonstrations, strikes, etc.) it may be perceived as not having the "voice of the people" behind it. Consequently, its legitimacy may be questioned by policy makers and the MSO's effectiveness diminished.

"from above" at the policy-making level. MSO leaders have the difficult task of providing both intra-organizational leadership and inter-organizational leadership since the regional or national organization which they serve may be fundamentally dependent on numerous smaller organizations. They must expend a great deal of time and energy in organizing these smaller organizations in addition to routine management duties (Bratton, 1990, p. 93). Consequently, useful qualities for MSO leaders include a balance of charismatic appeal with management abilities.

The leadership process for MSOs must incorporate strong accountability to numerous village-level groups with a focus on the wider organization's mission and political legitimacy among policy makers. A firm understanding of stakeholders (Grindle & Thomas, 1991), organizational and political history, and group dynamics are key ingredients in the leadership process for MSOs. The types of networks which are involved in leadership processes differ somewhat from those in GSOs. Whereas GSOs tend to initiate relationships with university professors and international donor representatives, MSO leadership focuses more on developing relationships with smaller community organizations and key politicians.

Leadership development programs for Membership Support Organizations are more likely to focus on activities which target larger groups of individuals within the organization, although technical management training endeavors are still commonplace (Tandon & Brown, 1981).

"Consciousness-raising"<sup>11</sup> activities for small group representatives is a popular example of what is sometimes called a "leadership development activity" in MSOs. Initiatives which bring representatives from numerous

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<sup>11</sup>Freire used the term *conscientização* to refer to the ability to "perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1993, p. 17).

village associations together for intensive meetings have been very successful in developing a sense of organizational commitment and identity. Tandon and Brown (1981) found that consciousness-raising activities among groups of farmers increased awareness of their situation and resulted in more organized grassroots groups. Similar intensive training experiences continue to be very successful in womens' groups around the world (Rose, 1992; Levy, 1988; Yudelman, 1987).

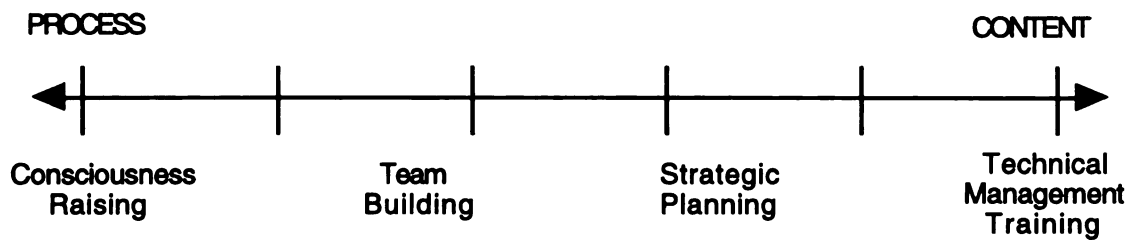
In contrast to the management training programs which are popular in NGO capacity building programs, consciousness-raising constitutes the other extreme of leadership development initiatives. In addition to potentially helping to prepare next generation MSO leaders, consciousness raising activities also help MSOs to build political clout among geographically dispersed constituents. These activities involve a strong process focus which is almost exclusively concerned with group process and personal psycho-social growth. Technical management training, on the other hand, remains limited largely to manager concerns about correct organizational procedures.

Technical management training may not address the depth of leadership issues because of its individualistic and technocratic content, but consciousness-raising activities may ignore other issues of leadership because of their strong focus on group process.

[P]opulist formulations that concentrate only on consciousness raising, local knowledge and grassroots action must be more politically realistic. They must find ways to link local action with strategies to remove structural obstacles to human development (Bobbio, 1987 in Farrington & Bebbington, 1993, p. 13).

Figure 1 illustrates the range of interventions commonly referred to as leadership development training in MSOs and GSOs.





**Figure 1:** Continuum of Leadership Development Approaches

### *Primary Grassroots Organizations*

Primary Grassroots Organizations (PGOs) comprise the foundational components of GSOs and MSOs and are much different in terms of scope, level, and complexity. Village associations, women's microenterprise peer groups, and religious organizations are examples of this type of organization. These organizations are responsible for coordinating village-level projects and also may serve an important social role among the participants within the community.

Since these organizations are very small in nature, the role of the leader is less pronounced. In some cases leaders may rotate every few months. In others, the role of leader is virtually non-existent. Instead, the organization operates by consensus. As long as the group remains small, this poses few problems.

Leadership processes in primary grassroots organizations are usually participatory in nature and are not usually dominated by a "heroic" type of leader. Regular meetings which attempt to solve local-level problems are the primary context where leadership takes place. Terms such as "reciprocity" and "shared leadership" best describe the nature of leadership processes in these groups and offer an excellent context for studying the "indigenous

knowledge" regarding leadership<sup>12</sup>. Leadership development within PGOs would likely involve a strong focus on "consciousness raising" as well as practical bookkeeping and note-taking advice from a larger NGO (Geran, 1996).

## **Summary**

The three different types of NGOs (GSOs, MSOs, and PGOs) deal with the issues of leaders and leadership in different ways. In some cases, the leadership challenges faced by organizations differ more in degree than type. For example, all NGOs must grapple with issues of accountability. Membership NGOs (MSOs) must deal with the challenge of accountability to members in grassroots groups. Non-membership NGOs (GSOs) must deal with donor financial accountability as well as beneficiary accountability in order to ensure their effectiveness in service-delivery and other development projects. Leader transitions and external environment leadership are most pertinent to membership and larger, non-membership NGOs. For the remainder of this paper, GSOs, MSOs, and PGOs will not be disaggregated from the more general term, "NGO" except when a particular leadership issue is more pertinent to one type of NGO over another.

The remaining chapters of this paper focus on four specific areas of inquiry. Chapter Two assesses the key contributions of three main leadership theories and highlights the extent to which they address the NGO leadership challenges of accountability, leader and leadership transitions, and external environment leadership. Chapter Three reviews three NGO leadership development initiatives, and analyzes their assumptions, differences, and

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<sup>12</sup>Bryant, (1992) describes values such as reciprocity and teamwork as being concepts which African managers should utilize in their "modern" organizations to a greater extent since they reflect the values of many African cultures.

similarities. Chapter Four articulates a preliminary leadership development training framework by elaborating and expanding suggestions for leadership training found in the literature. The NGO challenges of accountability, and external environment leadership will be of particular concern in developing this framework. Chapter Five offers a summary, conclusions, and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter Two

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines how three different approaches to leadership frame the key NGO leadership issues introduced in Chapter One. Following a brief overview of three different approaches to leadership (leadership-as-management, "heroic" leadership, and transformational leadership) this chapter assesses how these different approaches or "frames" of leadership improve our understanding of accountability, leader transitions, and external environment leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1990)<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Leadership Studies - Background**

Several authors provide comprehensive reviews of leadership studies<sup>14</sup>. *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership* (Bass, 1981) is perhaps the most well known for its thorough review of leadership research. Other edited works illustrate the multi-disciplinary perspectives found among leadership researchers (Kellerman, 1984; Wren, 1995). Rost's (1991) review highlights the changes which took place in leadership studies on a decade by decade basis through the current century. This section draws primarily on Rost's (1991) summary and historical overview of the study of leaders and leadership.

The development of the field of leadership studies can be divided into four periods. These periods do not represent an orderly and progressive

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<sup>13</sup>The process of viewing situations from diverse perspectives and redefining the problem often removes "perceptual blinders" which may prevent one from seeing alternative solutions. This chapter's presentation of different leadership perspectives on problems differs somewhat from Bolman & Deal's notion of "reframing." Reframing involves a second level of synthesis in addition to an examination of multiple perspectives which will be addressed in Chapter Four.

<sup>14</sup>The study of leadership is often thought to be a relatively recent area of inquiry for contemporary schools of management, education, and psychology. In fact, the earliest contributors to the study of leadership are rooted in the discipline of philosophy. Leadership as an identified subject of inquiry has only entered the purview of psychology, political science, sociology, and management in the past century.

evolution of thought in leadership studies but instead illustrate the trends which continue to shape inquiry among leadership researchers. Specifically, the following review illustrates the influence of historical and political context on theory - an important insight for this paper's analysis of the application of leadership theory in new contexts.

During the first three decades of this century, leadership was primarily understood from a management orientation. Processes of centralization and control were of primary concern. The Allied victories of World War I and concomitant successful organization of massive amounts of logistical information may have encouraged further exploration of these issues (Conger, 1992). Beginning in the 1930's and 40's leadership studies began to move beyond a management perspective and concentrated on traits (charisma) of leaders and leadership as a group process. The fascination with "great leaders" on both sides of the Atlantic during World War II encouraged the study of charismatic leadership while also pointing out the dangers of charismatic leaders (Wills, 1994). The 1950's and 60's continued the earlier focus of group leadership defined as relationship-building around shared goals. During this era, large corporations began sending their managers to such events as "T-groups"<sup>15</sup> to enhance shared leadership skills (Conger, 1992). Behaviorism and Cold War democratic ideology also influenced perceptions of leadership during these decades. Many authors, for example, defined leadership as an "influence process oriented toward achieving shared purposes" (Rost, 1991, p. 53). The 1970's is notable for the large increase in the number of published works on leadership<sup>16</sup> plus a noticeable shift from

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<sup>15</sup>T-groups emerged during this era as interventions to improve executives' interpersonal communication skills.

<sup>16</sup>The number of published works on leadership increased from 51 in the 1960s to 136 in the 1970s. This near tripling effect occurred again in the 1980s with 312 published works (Rost, 1991).

leadership as the focus primarily of social psychology to leadership studies done by organizational behaviorists and management schools. As the publication of leadership books continued to expand into the 1980s, the approaches also tried to make themselves more distinct. Leadership personality traits, charismatic leadership, and management approaches dominated the decade. Rost concludes his extensive summary of this decade's treatment of leadership by contending that leadership had lost its distinctiveness from management theories. (Rost, 1991).

The current plethora of leadership approaches divides the topic of leadership into ever smaller pieces with increasingly specialized perspectives. The diverse treatment of leadership continues to cause confusion in the literature. Contemporary attempts to develop a unified model of leadership have struggled to put these pieces back together to form a coherent theory (Henrickson, 1989). This issue led James MacGregor Burns to declare leadership "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns, 1978, p. 2).

Despite difficulties in forming a unified theory of leadership, there have been some attempts to utilize leadership theory in practical leadership development training programs. Leadership development training programs have a long and varied history and range from those highly oriented toward corporate executive leadership (Conger, 1992) to those targeting rural community leaders (Tanner, 1994). These leadership training programs vary in form, content, and purpose. Some see attainment of specific leadership traits as the goal while others are more focused on achieving community change.

Two components of this literature review must be highlighted in order to add clarity and consistency to the discussion. First, within the leadership

literature there is a widespread tendency to mix or confound use of the term "leader" with "leadership." Henrickson (1989) and Rost (1991) contend that the interchangeable use of the terms "leader" and "leadership" results in a mixing of form/content with process. *Leaders* may practice leadership through various behaviors or traits but *leadership* is not the exclusive possession of a particular individual. Rather, leadership is a process which occurs among a group of individuals. Leaders are just one of the variables which form the leadership process. The following analogy helps clarify this distinction.

To casually equate a leader with the process of leadership is a misrepresentation of leadership just as equating a single politician with the process of statesmanship is a misrepresentation of politics (Henrickson, 1989, p. 140).

Since both leaders and the leadership process are integral components of the challenges facing NGOs, the distinction between these two terms is maintained throughout this paper.

Second, the large body of leadership studies offers a basis for identifying three distinct perspectives on leadership. These perspectives illustrate the breadth of understanding of leaders and leadership present in the field. These approaches to leadership represent amalgamations of several disciplines but are most closely aligned with management (leadership-as-management), sociology/psychology (heroic leadership), and political science (transformational leadership). Two criteria were used in choosing the three approaches from among the dozens of theories on leadership: (1) They are well known and commonly used in the larger field of leadership studies. (2) They are frequently held (albeit not always articulated) understandings of leadership in NGOs and appear to be well-suited to the task of bringing to light different facets of current NGO leadership problems.

More specifically, the leadership approaches can be distinguished by the different ways in which the following three questions are addressed: (1) How is the role of leader/leadership defined? (2) What is the nature of the relationship between leader and followers? (3) How does the approach view leadership development efforts? The sections which follow address these questions at length.

### *Leadership-as-Management*

Leadership-as-management is the most prevalent approach in the leadership literature. As Rost (1991) notes, it is "a perfect summary of what leadership has meant in the industrial era" (p. 94). Leadership theorists who subscribe to this approach tend to equate leadership with management in two ways: the interchangeable use of the two terms, and the measurement of leadership success according to management outcomes (Rost, 1991).

Most definitions of leadership which fall under this category focus on the following specific skills or functions of a leader: motivating followers, exercising positional authority effectively, and providing appropriate performance incentives (Rost, 1991, p. 77-79). Robertson and Tang offer the following illustrative definition of leadership<sup>17</sup>:

The most important role of leadership is to create appropriate incentive structures that motivate members to act in furtherance of common goals. A leader is effective when he or she can convince participants that, if they contribute to a collective effort, they will receive the returns promised to them (1995, p. 72).

Similarly, Yukl defines leadership as:

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<sup>17</sup>This definition is also representative of the New Institutional Economics school which is particularly important for our purposes because of its association with several World Bank scholars (Douglass North, Arturo Israel) who have significantly influenced the NGO sector as well as the development community at large.



[The] information processes involving determination of the group's or the organization's objectives, motivating tasking behavior in pursuit of these objectives, and influencing group maintenance and culture (1989, in Rost, 1991, p. 79).

As these definitions illustrate, "leadership-as-management" focuses on the skills a leader uses to achieve organizational goals. In addition, the relationship between leaders and followers is addressed exclusively in terms of leader/subordinate authority relationships and is highly dependent on a structural understanding of organizations (Mintzberg, 1979).

The process of leadership development in this approach is essentially mechanistic. The advantages are its *specificity* in what it believes must be taught (management by objectives, bookkeeping, etc.) and its *confidence* that the skills and information which leaders need can be efficiently transferred given sufficient training opportunity. Thus, leadership development is defined as occurring when individuals successfully complete management training where the skills of motivating others, using authority, and providing incentives are taught.

### *"Heroic" Leadership*

"Leaders are born, not made." This is the refrain popularly associated with the charismatic approach to leadership. This approach traces its intellectual origins to Weberian sociology. Although thinkers have been fascinated with the power of charismatic leaders for centuries, Weber was the first to develop a concept of "charismatic leadership" as part of a theoretical typology of authority relationships<sup>18</sup>. For Weber, authority relationships tended to move in an evolutionary fashion from inherently unstable forms

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<sup>18</sup>Weber articulated three different types of authority which form the basis of a leader's legitimacy. The nature of authority relationships and the processes whereby authority is practiced depend on whether one's legitimacy is based on rational, traditional, or charismatic grounds (Weber, 1964).

of charismatic leadership to more stable representations of authority. Charismatic leadership was understood as an early, unsophisticated manifestation of authority which rested "on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber, 1964, p. 328). In Weberian thought, "rational-legal" authority was understood to evolve from earlier forms of authority (traditional and charismatic) through a process of "institutionalization" (Weber, 1964)<sup>19</sup>.

The widespread use of "heroic" approaches to leadership suggests, however, that some aspects of charismatic leadership are still useful in more institutionalized forms of organization. Current theorists of charismatic leadership identify the traits of charismatic or heroic leaders more than they describe the process of social change in the tradition of Weber (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Conger, 1989). In this current adaptation of Weber, the role of the "heroic" leader is to exhibit identifiable and specific traits for leading others. Some of the traits most desirable for leaders include expressive behavior, self-confidence, eloquence, insight, and determination (Bass, 1988). The relationship dynamics among leaders and followers also differ from management theorists. While followers affect leaders, they are not part of the leadership process *per se*. Instead, the focus is exclusively on the individual as the one who "makes history."

The heroic leadership perspective receives a great deal of attention in development literature because of its usefulness in explaining instances of NGO effectiveness. Yunus and Maathai, the founders and "heroic" leaders of

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<sup>19</sup>With the onset of postmodern critique, political scientists and organizational theorists have debated to what extent charismatic leadership is possessed by a particular individual and to what extent it is "socially constructed" in the midst of leader, follower, and situational contingencies (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, are household names among development theorists and practitioners. Heroic perspectives on leadership help to understand reasons for organizations' success and illuminate potential weaknesses as well.

Leader and leadership development training is a problematic concept within this perspective for a number of reasons. Unlike technical management techniques, self-confidence and determination are difficult traits to learn in a series of seminars. The intangible nature of these traits and abilities causes some scholars to conclude that charismatic leadership cannot be learned (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988). Robertson and Bradley (1988) go so far as to contend that training in charismatic leadership should not be undertaken since it can easily lead to deception and exploitation - risks they are unwilling to take. Leadership development training programs which do exist and ascribe to charismatic leadership theory attempt to teach the *traits associated with* charismatic leaders rather than make the presumptuous claim that they are training future charismatic leaders (Conger, 1992, p. 51).

### *Transformational Leadership*

This is by far the most recently developed and increasingly popular approach to leadership. Beginning with James MacGregor Burns' book *Leadership*, (1978) this approach focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers, encourages multi-level analysis of leader and follower motivations, and incorporates a strong ethical component<sup>20</sup>. Burns defines leadership as:

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<sup>20</sup>Scholars argue that Bass (1981) and other authors' attempts (Hunt, 1984; Avolio & Gibbons, 1988) to operationalize transformational leadership have downplayed the explicitly ethical component and made it more similar to charismatic/trait leadership than Burns had originally intended (Burns, 1996; Rost, 1991, p. 85). Bass (1988) maintains that his empirical research revealed charismatic leadership as the most significant factor in respondent ratings of

[A] reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers (p. 425).

Burns further distinguishes between transactional<sup>21</sup> and transformational leadership based on the importance of modal or end values in the leadership process. Burns contends that *transactional* leadership is the process of realizing the *individual* (rather than mutual) goals of leaders and followers and focuses on the modal values of honesty, responsibility, and fairness. *Transformational* leadership, on the other hand, is a *mutual* process of mobilizing peoples' resources and motivations to "transform" the participants toward "higher levels of moral functioning" and the end-values of liberty, justice, and equality (Burns, 1978, p. 19-20; Kohlberg, 1963).

Transformational leadership emphasizes the values of mutuality, reciprocity, and moral development, and includes a careful analysis of politics, stakeholders' motivations, and power resources. The transformational leadership process distinguishes itself from other approaches to leadership by an analysis of power bases and constituent motives which are used to "elevate individuals to higher levels of moral functioning" rather than exploit individuals (p. 433). For Burns, exploitation is the result of raw power-wielding rather than leadership. The differences between the following definitions of the power process and Burns' definition of the leadership process provide interesting contrasts. Whereas the

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transformational leadership - thereby justifying the close relationship between the two theories. This paper adopts Burns' definition and understanding of transformational leadership because of the impact it has had on the field of leadership studies and its relatively distinct perspective. Like any typology, the distinctions represented are inevitably less clear in practice than they are in theory.

<sup>21</sup>Some leadership theorists (Rost, 1991; Rosenbach & Sashkin, 1995 in Burns, 1996, p. 150) argue that Burns' understanding of transactional leadership is equivalent to the leadership as management perspective.

definition of leadership encompasses notions of reciprocity and mutuality, the definitions of power highlight other ways of achieving social change.

[The *power* process exists where] power holders, possessing certain motives and goals, have the capacity to secure changes in the behavior of a respondent, and in the environment, by utilizing resources in their power base, including factors of skill, relative to the targets of their power-wielding and necessary to secure such changes (1978, p. 13).

[Power is] those processes and effects... that are produced by the intended, purposeful efforts of persons with power resources...regardless of whether or not the motives of power wielders are congruent with those of power recipients" (1978, p. 433).

[*Leadership* is] a reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers (1978, p. 425).

Burns argues that an overemphasis on power conceptualizes human influences as necessarily coercive, mechanical, impersonal, and exploitative. He proposes a more sophisticated understanding of power, mutual persuasion, and transformation while acknowledging that coercive aspects of power relationships cannot be ignored. With this type of understanding, an analysis of power within the context of human motives and physical constraints may lead to a greater understanding of the nature of leadership.

Leadership development training from Burns' transformational leadership perspective takes on much different forms than the heroic leadership or leadership-as-management approaches. Transformational leadership's concern for the process of leadership and contextual understanding of power yields a unique understanding of ways transformational leadership can be developed in prospective leaders. Gibbons (1986 in Avolio & Gibbons, 1988) proposes a developmental approach to leadership training which acknowledges the highly dynamic and interactive

forces which contribute to the development of leaders and the practice of transformational leadership processes.

Avolio and Gibbons (1988) conclude that the "developmental antecedents" which increase the self-efficacy of leaders and followers must be examined in future research endeavors. They argue for the construction of individualized developmental plans for potential leaders that build on their strengths and weaknesses and increase their self-awareness. Changes in leaders' "meaning-making system" or moral reasoning abilities are the ultimate goal for such leadership development endeavors, though increased self-awareness and other process skills are also integral components in developing transformational leaders (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988, p. 303) <sup>22</sup>.

## Summary

Each of the three leadership approaches discussed here raises questions about the role of leaders, leader/follower interactions, and leadership development in different ways. Leadership-as-management looks at the skills leaders/managers use. Heroic leadership focuses on the personal traits of leaders, while transformational leadership emphasizes the dynamic interaction, motives, and power resources among leaders and followers. Each approach has different implications for leadership development training and as discussed in the next section, these approaches offer different perspectives on key NGO issues.

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<sup>22</sup>Burns' integration of Kohlberg's moral development stage theory into his theory of leadership corresponds with Avolio and Gibbons' emphasis on changing the "meaning-making system" of the leader (Palus & Drath, 1995).

## Contemporary NGO Leadership Challenges

### *Accountability*

Accountability is defined as the extent to which a leader is obligated to answer to NGO members. Fox (1992) elaborates on the internal and external dimensions in membership-supported NGOs:

Leadership accountability refers to members' capacity to hold leaders responsible for their actions, but it also requires some degree of autonomy from external domination. Autonomy refers here to a group's control over setting its own goals and making its own decisions without external intervention, whether by governments, political parties, religious groups or development agencies. Autonomy is no guarantee of accountability, however; it is essential if leaders are to fend off external threats and remain responsive to membership concerns (Fox, 1992, p. 23).

Fox also notes that leaders can become autonomous from membership and increasingly oligarchic by building up economic, political, or other power resources. Co-option, scaling-up, and changes in relationship to the state contribute to the complexity of leader accountability in membership supported NGOs.

Among non-membership NGOs and small primary grassroots organizations, accountability challenges are different in nature than for membership supported NGOs. Since there is no direct representational power for the non-membership supported NGO, the degree to which beneficiaries drive the organization's operations is minimized and consequently, the accountability of leaders to the individuals being served is lessened<sup>23</sup>. With large national or international NGOs which are dependent on outside donor support, accountability concerns may be more directed

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<sup>23</sup>This does not mean that non-membership NGOs do not struggle with increasing accountability or consider accountability to beneficiaries as one of their fundamental values. However, the nature of beneficiary - non-membership NGO accountability is based more on improved service delivery and humanitarian concern than on political viability.

toward financial aspects of NGOs' work. In these cases an NGO may lack the autonomy to be accountable to beneficiary groups. Among primary grassroots organizations, accountability is informal and based on close interpersonal relationships within a community. The remainder of this section's discussion of accountability focuses on the membership-supported NGO.

Leaders of membership-supported NGOs face difficult accountability challenges as their organization ebbs and flows in size, in relationship to the state, and in financial resources. Political accountability (understood as the extent to which NGOs are legitimately representing beneficiaries) is a growing area of concern for NGOs expanding to influence regional or national policy (Bingen, 1996; Bratton, 1990). UELC<sup>24</sup> in Mexico illustrates these challenges. When the leaders lost connections to rank-and-file membership (through scaling-up and leader election conflict), the government was able to co-opt the organization, resulting in less autonomy for the NGO. Decreases in organizational autonomy in turn directly influenced leader-member accountability.

Difficult tradeoffs must be made in intra-organizational accountability. Internal democratic procedures in NGOs simultaneously minimize the risk of the "iron law of oligarchy" - the tendency of democratic organizations to be co-opted by a formerly "heroic" leader or bureaucratized elite (Fox, 1992; Fox & Hernandez, 1989) - but also add complexity to organizational decision-making processes (Riedinger, 1995). Fox (1992) argues that previous research on cooperatives and trade unions illustrates that internal democracy is not the only explanation for accountability between leaders and members. Pressures from competing "heroic" leaders or family obligations from diverse groups within an organization also promote leader/member accountability.

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<sup>24</sup>Lázaro Cárdenas' Union of *Ejidotes* is a farmers' union in west-central Mexico (Fox, 1992).



For NGOs, some combination of both internal democratic procedures and other accountability is most preferable.

From a leadership-as-management perspective, accountability problems arise when leaders lack skills. The focus of concern is with accountability issues created by an organization's hierarchical structure. Formal procedures of control, supervision, financial planning and accounting, incentive structures (Robertson & Tang, 1995), and delegation are among the specific skills for NGO leadership (Conyers & Hills, 1984, p. 188; Israel, 1987) deemed to contribute most to increasing leader and organizational accountability. Creative arrangements such as participatory subgroups and horizontal linkages among membership organizations can provide additional means to assure accountability outside structural hierarchical arrangements (Fox, 1992). From this perspective, a leader's informal skills, such as encouragement or motivation, are acknowledged but considered a less important means for improving accountability (Honadle & VanSant, 1985, p. 118) than his or her formal skills.

Arturo Israel's (1987) presentation of techniques for increasing accountability in development projects is representative of the leadership-as-management perspective on accountability. Israel argues for increased "specificity" in order to increase accountability within development projects. "Specificity" is the degree in which project objectives can be accurately measured through standard evaluation procedures. According to this perspective, accountability can be improved in situations which lack specific goals by clarifying objectives and providing staff members with performance-based rewards and incentives (Heaver, 1982; Israel, 1987, p. 48).

The locus of accountability in NGOs begins in a different place when viewed through the lens of heroic leadership. For Weber, (1964) the heroic

leader receives authority by virtue of personal "giftedness" and is independent from the "attitudes of the masses" (p. 359-360). From this perspective, bureaucratic rules of organizational functioning are less relevant since heroic leaders consider themselves outside the realm of accountability. Carroll's (1992) analysis of intermediary NGOs identifies several examples of NGO leaders who share this restricted view of leadership, choosing to focus on the "heroic leader" image rather than the leader who listens to and synthesizes the needs of followers.

Several aspects of charismatic leadership may supplement exclusively mechanistic techniques for promoting accountability. For example, accountability may be enhanced through a charismatic leader's moral persuasion regarding the importance of accountability to the poor or other values (Bass, 1988). Moral persuasion may be particularly effective among NGOs which self-consciously operate as "value driven" organizations although an NGOs' "value-driven" nature itself adds complexity in accountability issues as well (Brett, 1993).

Transformational leadership views accountability as integral to its definition since leadership is understood as a "reciprocal process of mobilizing" between leaders and followers. It assumes a dynamic of communication between leaders and followers and, by extension, other constituent groups with whom an NGO is accountable. Accountability can be enhanced in NGOs through this understanding of leadership. Instead of providing "feedback loops" to local beneficiaries as in the management perspective, transformational leaders attempt to engage in a constant reciprocal process of learning with local beneficiaries.

[Transformational leaders] shape and alter and elevate the motives and values and goals of followers through the vital teaching role of leadership (Burns, 1978, p. 425).

The cooperative planning of a new project or the exercise of political influence in policy-making help to illustrate the useful applications of a transformational leadership perspective. Rather than carefully laid out project objectives or "blueprints" (Korten, 1980) the transformational leadership perspective on the planning process offers a far less mechanistic view:

1. Planning leaders must perceive that [absolute] consensus in planning would be deceptive and dangerous, that advocacy and conflict must be built into the planning process in response to pluralistic sets of values.
2. Planning leaders must recognize purpose - indeed, planning is nonexistent without goals - and recognize that different purposes will inform the planning process.
3. Planning must recognize the many faces of power; ultimately the authority and credibility of planning leadership will depend less on formal position than on the capacity to recognize basic needs, to mobilize masses of persons holding sets of values and seeking general goals, to utilize conflict and the adversary process without succumbing to it, and to bring about real social change either through existing social structures or by altering them (p. 420).

Korten's (1980) learning process approach echoes many of the same values articulated above. Transformational leadership theory assists participants in understanding the complexity of their task and the role of accountability and participant feedback within the task itself.

### *Leader/Leadership Transitions*

The transition of leaders in NGOs is often seen as an organizational crisis. There are few concrete examples in the literature of how the transition of leaders may be facilitated more smoothly. Different conceptions of leadership may help to improve an understanding of ways to deal with leader transitions.

There are three different types of leader transitions which are significant in developing country NGOs: (1) transitions to new leaders, (2) transitions in the leadership process toward more (or less) internal democracy, and (3) transitions which leaders face as part of "scaling-up". A transition to a new leader is sometimes difficult to imagine for an NGO which has experienced the long tenure of an existing "heroic" leader. NGOs that possess an organizational culture which is tied to the identity of their leader may do very little anticipatory planning to facilitate orderly leader transitions. The overall "organizational learning" capacity may also be low since the leader's capacity was previously able to compensate for this weakness.

Transitions in leadership "process" rather than a transition in actual leaders, are also often traumatic. Some NGOs deal with transitions from a charismatic leader to a more collegial leadership process while others attempt to move from highly democratic and sometimes cumbersome forms of governance to ones in which a single leader is assigned greater decision making powers (Brown, 1988). Often part of the transition difficulty is not related to the person designated as *leader* as much as it is related to the process of *leadership* practiced in the organization. These two challenges often intermingle.

Because the personal style of leaders often dominates [NGO] behavior, the way that the relationship develops between the leader, the staff and the (eventual) formal owners of the organization determines the probability of achieving continuity by balancing charisma with institutional consolidation. Where the [NGO members] become themselves owned by the Founder leadership problems tend to arise in both organizational continuity and ability to adapt to changing environments... The transition to different patterns and structures of leadership is a common area of difficulty and sometimes conflict within [NGOs]; an issue that must be consciously addressed (Fowler, 1992, p. 6-7).

Yet another kind of leader transition occurs when leaders move from a local neighborhood group to a regional support organization without adequate training and preparation for the different challenges these new positions entail (Arnold & Reineke, 1996). In a local community an NGO leader may have been able to garner support on the basis of his or her charismatic appeal but find that these leader skills are insufficient for a new context where s/he is unknown. Charismatic or "heroic" leadership may be the "engine" of NGOs in the early stages of development but as the organization grows and its leaders move into expanded roles, more managerial or other types of leadership processes are often required (Van Orman, 1989, p. 179).

When leadership is viewed as primarily management the challenge of leadership transitions is relatively straightforward. A new leader is simply the person who has best learned all the necessary management skills. Developing these new leaders for small regional membership NGOs requires that "pre-packaged" management skills be adapted for use in the rural NGO sector (Cuyno, et. al, 1982). Too often, management consultants teach budgeting or other technical skills more suited for well-resourced private-sector companies in urban centers than for the voluntary sector in rural contexts. Although leadership/management theory for development projects is helpful (Rondinelli, 1987; Esman, 1991; White, 1987), the trainer of new leaders must begin with the leaders themselves and selectively adapt the suggestions from development administration scholars (Cuyno, et. al, 1982; Arnold & Reineke, 1996).

In addition to more training for new and potential leaders, the NGO as a whole may also benefit from a specific leadership-as-management technique in dealing with future leadership transitions. Strategic planning, grounded in

management theory and an understanding of group processes, may aid NGOs in developing a vision for the future. Through strategic planning the NGO may learn to transcend the vision of the leader and maintain its viability during upcoming transitions. The temptation to equate a leader's vision with organizational vision is prevalent among NGOs with charismatic leaders (Israel, 1987, p. 34-35; Honadle & VanSant, 1985).

Strategic planning seminars have been done with a number of international NGOs through the SIGMA program<sup>25</sup>. After participating in this program, international NGO executive teams reported greater competency in "energizing shared commitment to a vision, building collaborative, multi-sectoral alliances, and developing more reflective and anticipatory learning" (Cooperrider, 1994). Similar programs developed at multiple levels among developing country NGOs may help to decrease dependence on a charismatic leader and to unify an organization behind a shared vision which may help facilitate smoother leader transitions.

The heroic leadership perspective offers two suggestions for dealing with a leader transition. The first is to train new potential leaders in charismatic leadership traits. Since there is considerable pessimism and even fear of training pure charismatic leaders, Conger (1989) suggests training individuals in the traits which charismatic leaders usually possess (eloquence in articulating a vision, etc.). By drawing on the techniques of exceptional

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<sup>25</sup>SIGMA (Social Innovations in Global Management Program) is a part of the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Building on past strategic management and leadership training efforts such as the PVO/CEO Program, SIGMA has submitted a proposal to USAID to strengthen collaboration between international and indigenous NGOs, teach strategic management, and provide follow-up organizational support for change agents. The World Bank is also developing strategic planning training manuals to be used by local World Bank consultants in conjunction with NGOs in order to improve NGO strategic planning capacities.

charismatic leaders, emerging leaders' skills are enhanced, providing a larger pool of new leaders.

Teaching leader traits, rather than producing charismatic leaders *per se*, is only one part of a larger process of "routinizing" the role previously held by the heroic leader. Weber (1964) argues that the process of routinization occurs when a former leader names a successor, a biological heir is declared, and/or there is a ritualized ceremony of "passing the torch." These practices maintain elements of the charismatic authority of the original leader in the successor but also make the new leader more dependent on followers, since the authority is not solely the result of personal traits. In effect, the process of routinization diminishes the role of the charismatic leader.

A greater focus on "routinizing" the role of the charismatic leader may, however, improve the sustainability of some development projects. Out of 175 projects surveyed by the World Bank, 33 of these identified "strong leadership" as the determining factor in "whatever progress took place in institutional development" (Israel, 1987, p. 34). However, in many of these cases an inverse relationship existed between the level of institutional effectiveness and the stated importance of leadership (Israel, 1987 in Blunt and Collins, 1994). In these cases, it appears that "strong leadership" served as a substitute for more effective processes because when a leader left a project, it quickly fell apart. These projects were unsustainable and further illustrate the potential damage charismatic leaders can do in development.

The "heroic" perspective on leaders and leadership may also be helpful in understanding the sometimes devastating effect of NGO leader transitions brought about by processes that change the source of a leader's authority. As an NGO moves away from its exclusive ties with a community or group of communities, a leader transition may result in tremendous loss of power and

prestige for certain segments of the society. Instead of being dependent on the village elders (who would perhaps sanction more traditional or charismatic leadership styles), the new leader is now sanctioned by an outside political group on the basis of formal education or the leader's potential vulnerability to the outside political group's co-option.

As this happens, the source of legitimacy for the NGO leader becomes increasingly bureaucratized. Jonckers' (1994 in Bingen, 1996) anthropological research in Mali highlights the tensions which arise through leader transitions in NGOs. Jonckers found that as government extension workers developed relationships with younger members of villages in teaching farming practices, these "leaders" replaced and marginalized older village leaders. In Weber's terms, this case is an example of "traditional" leaders being replaced by "rationalized" leaders. Such situations pose difficult ethical issues in development practice (Goulet, 1995).

Since transformational leadership focuses on the development of mutual influence, it is most helpful in providing suggestions for transitions away from a charismatic leader toward a more collaborative type of leadership. In preparation for a leadership transition, an NGO training program based on some of the principles of transformational leadership could ease the impact of a leadership transition. By identifying valued leadership traits which NGO staff members valued in their charismatic leader, NGO staff could be encouraged to consider ways those "transformational" abilities could be transferred to the organization as a whole (Bass, 1981).

The large number of leadership transitions among NGOs in developing countries are unlikely to subside in the near future. NGOs are increasing in number and in size as funding opportunities increase from



international donors<sup>26</sup>. Equally ambitious programs to develop capable leadership cadres for the expanding NGO sector remain largely undeveloped to meet NGO leader transition needs in the future (Fowler, 1992).

### *External Environment Leadership*

External environment leadership is defined specifically as the interaction of leaders and organizational leadership processes among organizational "outsiders." Sometimes referred to as "managing the environment," the relationship between leaders, leadership and an organization's environment has received little attention in leadership studies<sup>27</sup>.

Effective external environment leadership among NGOs has become a particularly acute challenge during the past decade. Observers of development have expressed growing concern about those NGOs which are scaling up, increasing the scope of their activities, and developing collaborative relationships with government organizations (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993; Carroll, 1992; Mattocks & Steele, 1994). These scholars have primarily addressed the structural and organizational challenges inherent in combining NGO "micro-action" with "macro-influence" (Fowler, 1992). Less attention has been given to the role of leaders and leadership in facilitating coordinating structures among organizations that are potential partners in development (Selsky & Smith, 1994, p. 282). Some NGOs have been able to meet the responsibilities which scaling-up requires. For example, Gentil and

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<sup>26</sup>Bilateral and multilateral forms of development assistance are increasingly seeking out NGOs as intermediaries rather than government agencies.

<sup>27</sup>Organizational behavior theorists have researched "managing the environment" for some time. However, this has dealt more with organizational structures and processes than it has dealt explicitly with the role of leaders and leadership in engaging the external environment (Rainey, 1994).

Mercoiret's study (cited in Bingen, 1996) of farmer's movements in francophone West Africa found that leaders possessed strong ties to both outside government agencies as well as peasant communities. Other NGOs have found scaling up much more problematic and in the process have lost overall efficiency and jeopardized their previous strengths in the base community (Annis, 1987).

The leadership-as-management perspective is almost exclusively concerned with internal organizational functioning rather than external relationships (Rainey, 1994). When the external environment is considered, it is often understood as more static than dynamic in nature. Although this orientation serves many NGO leaders, scale-up efforts often demand that NGO leaders learn how to engage government officials and policy makers. Training NGO leaders in specific, more outward-oriented management skills may help them become more effective in their external interactions with government officials as well as their traditional community supporters (Arnold & Reineke, 1996).

From the leadership-as-management perspective, strategic planning is one way to handle the external environment leadership issue. Strategic planning focuses on the organization's competitiveness in the wider environment and offers a corrective to the discipline's limited perspective about external environment sensitivity. Previously reviewed as a way to ease transitions in leaders, strategic planning may also help articulate an NGOs' wider mission within the voluntary sector. Specific guides exist for strategic planning for nonprofits in the U.S. (Barry, 1986; Bryson, 1988; Fear, 1995) and are beginning to be more widely used in developing countries (Shields, 1995; SIGMA, 1990). Strategic planning commonly involves three dimensions:

(1) Mission/goals, opportunities, (2) strengths and weaknesses within the organization, and (3) threats outside the organization.

The policy reform perspective (which may be considered a sub-topic of leadership-as-management) is another technique for dealing with external environment questions. Grindle and Thomas (1991) propose an analytic framework for enhancing external environment leadership in developing country policy reform. As NGO leaders strive to enter the policy making arena in developing countries (Bratton, 1990) they increasingly need to develop strategies and frameworks for understanding the environment around them. An analytic framework proposed by Grindle and Thomas can be used to assist developing country leaders in understanding the complexity of policy reform and in maneuvering within its constraints.

This framework enables leaders to analyze the context, circumstance, and characteristics of policy reform (Grindle & Thomas, 1991). Context refers to the "macro-structures" of history, culture, decision-maker predisposition, and professional expertise. Circumstance refers to the political environment influencing what is placed on the agenda (e.g., whether the country is in crisis or relatively stable). Policy characteristics refers to the nature of the policy reform initiated (its level of impact, publicity expected, etc.) and the likelihood of effective implementation. Grindle and Thomas contend that an understanding of these facets can enhance leaders' "maneuverability" in influencing policy reform in developing countries.

Viewed through the lens of a heroic leadership approach, the personal traits of the heroic leader are more important than the techniques of strategic management, stakeholder identification, and policy reform in external leadership. The more a leader embodies the traits of charismatic leadership,

the more s/he is likely to be considered a charismatic leader by individuals external to the organization (Conger, 1989).

Selsky and Smith's (1994) framework for "social change leadership" incorporates what they refer to as "community entrepreneurship" - a term also used by Conger (1989). Selsky and Smith define community entrepreneurship as a process of reflecting and boldly acting upon community-based experiences, characterized by diverse interests and fluid alliances toward facilitating social change. The framework of leadership traits Selsky and Smith (1994) propose accentuates the importance of external leadership and consists of two key traits and skills which are vital for community entrepreneurs to master (also see Conger, 1989): the ability to view problems from multi-frame perspectives and the proactive "leveraging" of community interests.

The ability to analyze problems from a multi-frame perspective is instructive when one considers NGOs' growing exposure to other actors in development. Charismatic leadership theory focuses on the ability to operate and appropriately "frame" a problem through rhetoric. This may include presenting a problem as more of a crisis than it actually is, for the purpose of mobilizing resources (Grindle & Thomas, 1991). Heroic leaders have the ability to amplify values held in common among diverse groups and to "create meaning" in ways that peoples' beliefs are unified behind the leader's goal. These practices are not necessarily participatory in nature and can be used for inappropriate ends (Conger, 1989).

Proactiveness is the ability of a heroic leader to see opportunities for action and "leverage influence in the community" from an organizational base by brokering commitments to a particular issue (Selsky & Smith, 1994). Conger (1989) describes it as a process of forming a strategic vision out of a

process of decision making within an organization and changing external events. The use of symbolism to demonstrate a leader's personal commitment is also a way to leverage influence in the external environment (Conger, 1989). The skills of multi-frame problem analysis and proactive leveraging are valuable contributions to understanding effective external environment leadership although this perspective tends to be too focused on the individual techniques rather than the leadership process.

Transformational leadership, with its strong values-centered and collectivist approach to leadership, views the problem of external leadership in a more collaborative manner than heroic perspectives. Win/win situations are sought for the purposes of furthering the cause of one's own organization as well as the other organizations one engages. This differs from attempts to co-opt other organizations. Transformational leadership engages other organizations in external environment leadership through mutual processes of influence rather than authority-based power-wielding. The "heroic" leader perspective de-emphasizes the distinction between influence and power-wielding - and is primarily concerned with the behavior of the leader rather than leadership processes. The transformational leadership approach encourages the NGO leader to enhance his or her understanding of power resources and motivations but to do so with the end-values in mind.

The transformational leadership focus on reciprocity and mutual influence does not mean that transformational leadership is necessarily dissensual, particularly when the external environment is the focus (Burns, 1978). Whereas charismatic leadership and managerial approaches are more likely to stifle dissent to accomplish an individual leader's goals in dealing with the external environment, transformational leadership seeks to use dissent in the process of mobilizing persons of different backgrounds and

goals. The following excerpt from Burns (1978) depicts the necessarily fluid nature of influence in complex external environment leadership scenarios.

But even if we hypothesize that causal influences are set in motion when leaders take the initiative in linking themselves with followers to fulfill mutual purposes, we cannot identify discrete steps in the process. We always find a stream of evolving interrelationships in which leaders are continuously evoking motivational responses from followers and modifying their behavior as they meet responsiveness or resistance, in a ceaseless process of flow and counterflow (p. 438).

Providing effective external leadership among organizations with diverse agendas is difficult and relatively new challenge for NGO leaders.

## **Summary**

This chapter demonstrates the advantages found in a multi-frame analysis of particular NGO leadership problems and introduces a new dimension to leadership theory development. The process of applying the leadership literature to new situations of NGO leadership challenges is what Schön (1963) refers to as a "displacement of concepts" - an essential process of new concept formation and theory development. "Displacement of concepts" occurs when an "old concept is shifted to a new situation in such a way as to change and extend itself" (Schön, 1963 cited in Terry, 1995, p. 519). Figure 2 provides a helpful conceptualization of previous issues and illustrates what is meant by a framing analysis. Summary information regarding how each leadership approach views a given NGO problem is also provided. Even though some of the leadership approaches appear to have less applicability to NGO problems than others, the points where each leadership theory and NGO problems converge demonstrate the great potential for integrating these previously separated areas of inquiry.

	Leadership-as-Management	"Heroic" Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Accountability	Formal communication channels are developed	Leader establishes accountability criteria	Accountability is continually negotiated among leaders and followers
Leader Transitions	New leader needs correct techniques	New leader must have necessary traits	Internal democracy is highly valued
External Environment Leadership	Strategic planning practices are used	Leader must be "entrepreneur"	Win/win situations sought. Power resources of various groups are analyzed

**Figure 2:** Summary Matrix of Framing Analysis

After a brief presentation of methodology and justification for using the selected case studies, Chapter Three reviews three NGO leadership development programs. An analysis of the implicit and explicit assumptions about leaders and leadership in these case studies provides a concrete example of how the leadership development theory reviewed in this chapter is applied in actual training programs.

## **Chapter Three**

### **CASE STUDY REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING**

This chapter reviews three case studies of leadership development programs which have been used to train developing country and U.S. community leaders<sup>28</sup>. Analysis and evaluation of leadership development training is uncommon since leadership training is often implemented only on a piecemeal basis and is popularly viewed as "a non-replicable factor that eludes analysts, planners, and donor designers" (Honadle & VanSant, 1985). The purpose of this chapter is to identify features of extant leadership development programs and derive lessons that might be useful in designing leadership training for the NGO sector in developing countries. Two questions are posed after a brief description of each case study training program. First, what are the apparent strengths and weaknesses of this program from the perspective of the leadership approaches outlined in the previous chapter? Second, to what extent does the training program address the key leadership problems of accountability, leader/leadership transitions, and external environment leadership?

#### **Methodology**

Case studies were obtained by first sending letters of inquiry to 27 NGOs registered with USAID. Most of these organizations had identified "leadership development" or "leadership training" as part of its mission in a

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<sup>28</sup>One of the case studies utilized in this paper assesses U.S.-based community leadership programs. Although not specifically targeting NGOs, the community leadership programs in the U.S. are instructive for the purposes of this paper because they offer a different type of approach to leadership training which has potential applications to the developing country context.



brief paragraph description of their work for a USAID directory (USAID, 1995). Some of the organizations which responded received follow-up telephone interviews with staff members. Three international foundations were contacted in a similar manner to procure information regarding their activities in leadership development.

This chapter offers an applied examination of the NGO leadership issues presented in Chapter Two. Whereas the previous chapter analyzed the relationship between leadership theory and NGO challenges, the following discussion focuses on the ways actual leadership development programs address the NGO leadership issues of accountability, leader transitions, and external environment leadership. Figure 3 illustrates how this can be conceptualized in a matrix format.

	Outreach International	Kellogg International Leadership Program	Community Leadership Program
Accountability			
Leader Transitions			
External Environment Leadership			

**Figure 3:** Conceptual Matrix of Case Studies and Leadership Issues

A most-different cases approach is utilized in order to capture the range of leadership development training programs targeting NGOs. This methodological approach is used to highlight the variety of existing leadership training programs rather than offer a more specific "compare and contrast" treatment of the training programs. The three programs differ with

regard to target audience, pedagogical approach<sup>29</sup>, and objectives of their leadership development program.

### **Outreach International**

Outreach International weaves its approach to leadership training into its other activities. It is not a distinct training program *per se*<sup>30</sup>, but is designed to offer guidelines for leadership development among targeted nascent grassroots beneficiary groups who are "traditionally left out of leadership development training programs" (Cash, 1996). Outreach International's objective is to develop grassroots groups and the leadership within these groups.

The approach uses two definitions of leadership that appear to illustrate a "transformational" understanding of leadership training:

Leadership is working with and through people to accomplish work that achieves agreed-upon outcomes, and at the same time develops the capacity of people to deal with issues critical to their futures (Outreach International, 1996, p. 29).

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<sup>29</sup>Pedagogical approach refers primarily to the teaching methods employed (seminar, experiential learning, etc.). Different theoretical understandings of leadership ("heroic", "leadership-as-management", "transformational") are also implied although these sorts of differences are less distinct in these case studies. Conger (1992) reviews four leadership development training programs which represent four philosophies and techniques for leadership training. Ranging from most "content" to most "process" in orientation Conger labels the programs as follows: conceptual, skill building, feedback, and personal growth. Conceptual (content) approaches are highly theory-oriented and comprise the approach to leadership most common in university settings (Freeman, 1994). Skill-building approaches focus on building competencies in interpersonal relationship skills and facilitation of planning meetings. Feedback approaches focus on personal psychological awareness, employ a substantial battery of psychological assessments, and conclude with one-on-one meetings with a clinician. Personal growth (process) approaches focus on team-building and risk-taking in usually an outdoor wilderness experience or "obstacle course" strategy. The differences outlined in the following case studies are not as striking as Conger's (1992) but nevertheless demonstrate somewhat similar variations in their overall theoretical and pedagogical approach.

<sup>30</sup>The following information on Outreach International's approach to leadership development was derived from a 41 page section of a field staff manual which deals explicitly with leadership development. The remaining two-thirds of the field staff manual provides theories of social change, community organizing, and poverty. Practical ideas for facilitating effective community meetings and inspirational writings reflecting the value-driven nature of Outreach International as an international NGO.

Leadership is not a function of titles; it is a function of relationships (Lundy, 1986 in Outreach International, 1996, p. 26).

These two statements portray an understanding of leadership process and provide a link to Outreach International's concerns for "Participatory Human Development" in its development endeavors.

A sharp distinction between leaders and managers is also evident in Outreach International's ideas regarding leadership development.

The manager administers; the leader innovates.  
 The manager is a copy; the leader is an original.  
 The manager maintains; the leader develops.  
 The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.  
 The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it (p. 27).

This definition of "leader" as opposed to manager differs greatly from the previous two definitions of "leadership." Whereas the previous definitions focused on the leadership process, the above leader/manager definition describes the specific functions of leaders.<sup>31</sup>

Outreach International's use of "leadership tip sheets" outlining the principles of leaders and leadership focus primarily on the skills and behavior that leaders should possess. These "tip sheets" are practical in format and characterized by a "how-to" approach to leader development. The "tip sheets" each contain 3-6 general principles for identifying and developing leaders. Example tip sheet titles are: "Identifying Current Leaders: Reputational Approach," "Identifying current leaders: positional approach," "How to recruit and place leaders," "How to practice leadership," "How to process leadership experiences." The tip sheet for "identifying current leaders: Reputational approach," suggests carefully interviewing people to

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<sup>31</sup> The attention to both leader and leadership definitions illustrates the degree of eclecticism in Outreach International's approach toward leadership theory.

discover the perceived leaders in a community. Problems inherent in identifying leaders by their community reputation are also briefly discussed.

### *Assessment*

The primary strength of this approach lies in its practical orientation and straightforward suggestions for leadership training which could be utilized in other existing development projects. The heroic approach to leader development is represented through the emphasis on leader behavior and traits in many of the "leadership tip sheets." The emphasis on identifying community leaders acknowledges the primacy of a charismatic or heroic view of leadership useful for organizations in the early stages of formation. In emerging groups which Outreach International is working with, the heroic view of leadership may appear particularly relevant since heroic leaders often serve as "engines" of early organizational growth.

Other "tip sheets" for "processing leadership experiences" and "developing consensus" seem to focus on the techniques common within the leadership-as-management approach. Leaders' skills are to be developed and utilized at different times in a quasi-mechanical, "off the shelf technology" fashion. Although this appears limiting in some respects, the leadership-as-management approach is the perspective most easily expressed in a training manual format and may be especially valuable for emerging group leaders.

When considered in the context of their "participatory human development" concerns, Outreach International's approach to leadership development reflects some features of the transformational leadership approach (Burns, 1978). Citizen participation and democratic group process appear to be dominant values within the organization as a whole. Still, leadership as a transformational process remains a relatively undeveloped

idea. The definitions provided appear consistent with such an approach but the overall pedagogy appears somewhat more oriented toward a leadership-as-management perspective<sup>32</sup>. A preference is given to leader behaviors, leader styles, and leader skills which is not grounded in Burns' understanding of leadership as a transformational and reciprocal mobilizing process.

The sharp distinction between leaders and managers cited above is a conceptual weakness which may encourage a limited understanding of leaders' roles and the top-down orientation of "management." Rost (1991) argues that emphasizing the value of leadership by denigrating the value of management is a common tendency in some leadership theories. Leadership is defined as opposed to management rather than a distinct entity. When management is portrayed in such a negative light, the tasks which could be referred to as management become subordinated and secondary to leadership. Management is denigrated to such an extent that essential, albeit routine, tasks may be considered unimportant. For example, the statement, "the manager maintains, the leader develops" ought not be understood in a bifurcated manner.

Outreach International indirectly addresses the NGO leadership challenges of leader transitions, accountability, and external environment leadership. The intended target audience is less-established leaders in less-established organizations. Consequently, leader transitions are of less concern than the task of identifying new and additional leaders in the community. Likewise, accountability is not addressed from the perspective of the leader beyond a stated preference for a more democratic styles of group process.

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<sup>32</sup>It is difficult to assess a clearly dominant pedagogical perspective since implementation of leadership development efforts no doubt varies according to the specific facilitators involved.

External environment leadership skills are given the lowest priority since the target groups are local in scope.

### *Summary*

The leadership development orientation of Outreach International is highly pragmatic insofar as it provides an easily accessible introduction to leadership issues. It develops a definition of leadership and gives concrete suggestions for identifying and developing leaders in relatively unorganized, inchoate, community groups. Although other definitions are provided which reflect transformational leadership values, the techniques illustrated by this program are most closely aligned with the leadership-as-management and heroic leadership approaches. Transformational leadership perspectives also appear consistent with sections on community participation in the training manual but these remain largely unintegrated to the discussion of leadership.

### *Lessons Learned*

The lessons which may be learned from this program arise from its emphasis on the integration of leader development in other community development activities. The development of leaders takes more than a formal, 3-week, program. "On the job" leadership development strategies eliminate the difficulties found in more formal programs (Conger, 1992) where the skills learned in the leadership development experience are not always easily transferred to daily responsibilities (Gardner, 1990). The practical presentation of leader and leadership principles also helps to de-emphasize leadership as a "magical" trait held by only few individuals.

### **Kellogg International Leadership Program**

The Kellogg International Leadership Program (KILP) is a leadership development training program which is international in scope and targets "established leaders" ranging from government policy makers to small NGO leaders<sup>33</sup>. Established leaders are defined as follows:

Established leaders are those in strategic positions to influence the fulfillment of organizational missions, policy implementation and outcomes, and play an important role in shaping social change (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 2)

Most participants are from developing countries in Latin America and Africa. Twenty-two percent of the first cadre of participants were U.S. citizens<sup>34</sup>.

The stated objective of KILP is to "develop, support, and network leaders globally so that they can help communities improve the quality of life of all their residents and of future generations" (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 2). This goal has several explicit assumptions regarding the nature of leadership and leadership's role in society. The program assumes that leadership capacity can be enhanced "by intentional efforts to develop *individual leader[s'] skills*" and "by improving those *processes* through which citizens lead and participate in shaping their own lives" (p. 4). The positional understanding of leaders is also recognized but only as one element of a broader conceptualization of leadership. Leadership processes which encourage greater participation are explicitly stated as being preferable to leadership which "divides or dominates others" (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 4)

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<sup>33</sup>Other leadership development programs exist which specifically target both government policy makers (Pew Charitable Trusts' Economic Freedom Fellows Program) and NGO leaders (The Rockefeller Foundation's Leadership for Environment and Development Institute, the Asian NGO Leadership Fellows Program at the Institute for Development Research (IDR).

<sup>34</sup>These statistics are derived from the first group of KILP fellows who began their course of study in 1989. The second cycle of KILP participants began their three year term as fellows in October, 1995.

The pedagogical approach of KILP contains three primary components which the participants identify through consultation with an individually assigned W.K. Kellogg program director. In the first component, participants identify the types of learning experiences and competencies they hope to gain which would assist them in their role as leaders in their organization and community. A specific course of action is then planned in order to achieve these goals.

The second aspect of the curriculum requires that each participant design a community-focused project for the purpose of expanding their capacity as a leader. Projects may include policy making initiatives, specific community programs, or organizing NGO networks. W.K. Kellogg program directors visit their respective KILP fellows to discuss planning and implementation strategies of the community-focused projects.

The third element is a plan to share their leadership roles and increased awareness with emerging leaders - particularly focusing on youth. Participation in annual global seminars where KILP fellows explore the issues of leadership and community is an integral part of all three curriculum components. During these global seminars, fellows have the opportunity to interact with each other and WKKF staff. Participants also visit community development projects near the seminar sites and discuss their different approaches to development (p. 9).

Evaluations of the KILP program indicate that it has been successful in obtaining its objectives. In concluding their evaluation of KILP, previous participants evaluated the program as follows:

A sense of international citizenship has evolved as a result of the KILP experience. We have all begun to look at the definition, character, and attributes of the leader. We have widespread agreement that effective



leadership strategies involve sharing and letting go (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 6).

Boston University's Center for Educational Development in Health (CEDH) also performed a detailed evaluation of KILP's program. They concluded that KILP "had considerable success in developing a cadre of individuals who will create and manage projects in the future which further WKKF's objectives" and fellows' respective goals (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 18).

### *Assessment*

KILP's stated assumptions of leadership and the way that it is practiced appear to incorporate the values and strategies most closely aligned with the transformational leadership approach (Burns, 1978). The KILP program incorporates the transformational leadership tenets of a value-based and systems-oriented training program with an emphasis on networking with other leaders to solve problems. The values articulated as the driving force behind KILP include "mutual respect, ethical behavior, participatory democracy, sensitivity to and valuing of diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints, and mutual responsibility" (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 8). The networking and participant reflection component of the KILP experience provides an opportunity for continued personal development after the three year formal term ends. Finally, by including participants from sectors beyond nongovernmental organizations, the KILP program offers practice in understanding the motivations and power resources (Burns, 1978) available to leaders in other social change facilitation roles.

Although KILP does not explicitly refer to the heroic perspective on leadership, the structure of the program at times suggests this approach. For example, KILP appears to target relatively elite individuals from developing

countries. Leaders of very small NGOs may not have the available network to learn about the program and may choose not to apply if KILP is perceived as a program for "big leaders" only. The international travel component increases the cost and complexity of the program and makes it very difficult to replicate for other organizations less well endowed than the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. By withdrawing the organization leader from his/her context and placing him/her in an environment with other exceptional leaders, KILP may unintentionally accentuate an heroic perspective of leadership. While KILP acknowledges the important role of heroic leaders, the program also appears cognizant of the weaknesses of this approach.

A leadership-as-management perspective is also discernible in KILP's stated assumptions but is not given a key place in the overall approach. An understanding of leaders as those who perform certain skills and those defined by formal position or title comprise one aspect of a broader notion of leadership (p. 4). The distinction between leaders and leadership acknowledges the importance of leadership-as-management without emphasizing it in such a way to confuse KILP's strength in developing leaders who possess more than management skills (p. 4).

KILP appears to be well-suited to address the three NGO leader/leadership problems of accountability, leader transitions, and external environment leadership. KILP's thorough understanding of adult learning processes articulated in its program objectives demonstrates its priority for problem-focused education. Rather than prescribing a curriculum with each participant, the participants construct their own course of study. This general orientation of the program increases the likelihood that particularly challenging NGO problems will be effectively addressed.

The strong transformational leadership orientation provides participants with a more nuanced understanding of leader accountability than the other leadership approaches. KILP fellows are encouraged to view their roles as participatory in nature. This view of leaders' roles may encourage dialogue among leaders and members regarding ways to increase leader accountability in an NGO. The leadership-as-management and heroic view of leaders would likely discourage a strong collaborative orientation.

KILP's transformational leadership bias may also facilitate smoother leadership transitions since the focus of the leadership process and of leaders, is more democratic in nature. One of KILP'S working assumptions about established global leaders is that they "need to take the responsibility for consciously passing on their skills and roles to a new generation of leaders" (p. 5). KILP fellows are essentially held accountable for passing on what they have learned to next-generation leaders. The evaluation of KILP performed by CEDH in 1995 reported "modest success" in developing leadership within the community which did not exist prior to the project" (Webb-Petett, 1995, p. 18).

By networking and arguing issues with individuals from a number of backgrounds, the fellows may obtain a greater understanding of leadership in the external environment. In contrast to programs which focus on NGO leaders exclusively, the KILP initiative gives fellows the opportunity to interact with members from other sectors who are also trying to bring about positive social change. The experience of networking among individuals outside of the NGO sector may increase the leaders' confidence to exert leadership influence in the external environment in their own context.

### *Summary*

Although there are elements of other leadership approaches within the KILP framework, these appear to be secondary to KILP's transformational leadership focus. KILP may be faulted for having too great a focus on leader development out of context of the organizational reality of its participants. KILP strives to minimize this tendency through a tailor-made curriculum which challenges the leaders to focus on their specific community and organizational needs and concerns. The three year length of the program for each cadre of leader and multi-sector representation among the fellows also contributes to KILP's effectiveness. The program also appears to discuss and examine the NGO challenges of accountability, leader transitions, and leadership in the external environment.

### *Lessons Learned*

The lessons which may be drawn from KILP mostly revolve around its highly individualized approach to leadership training. W.K. Kellogg staff members with varied experiences in community problem solving are an invaluable source from which strong mentoring relationships may develop and may lead to continued relationships beyond the three year fellowship program. Leadership development programs for NGOs in developing countries could learn from this mentoring focus. Opportunities to engage with participants in other sectors besides NGOs offer another asset which might be replicated on a reduced scale within a specific country and with an appropriate networking organization. A final lesson which is helpful to apply to future NGO leadership development training is KILP's concern for next-generation leadership development. By requiring participants to devise

a plan for "passing on" what they have learned to emerging leaders, KILP multiplies the effects of its program.

### **Community Leadership Programs<sup>35</sup>**

Roush (1991) offers several defining characteristics of Community Leadership Programs in Indiana. In his study, CLPs generally targeted a mix of emerging and established leaders, utilize an advisory board to help shape programming, and are sponsored by a variety of community stakeholders (e.g. chambers of commerce, nonprofit groups, and university extension offices). A typical CLP class had 26 participants who were recruited via Cooperative Extension and general community announcements. The Indiana groups met once or twice each month for a total time commitment of 8 hours per month in most cases (Roush, 1991, p. 96).

Although CLPs rarely subscribe to a particular, guiding definition of leadership, statements of purpose and major achievements of the programs indicate several assumptions in their pedagogical approach. Most significantly, a high value is placed on team-building, networking skills, and cooperative strategies in addressing community issues.

Knowledge about the community, leadership skills, and commitment to community are the three curriculum components found in most programs (Roush, 1991). The activities in which participants take part may be categorized in one of these areas. The learning strategies used throughout the leadership training program offer the opportunity for participant feedback.

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<sup>35</sup>The following case description borrows heavily from two sources. *Leadership Development: Description and Impact*, (Tanner, et. al., 1994) a special study of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's *Rural America Cluster Evaluation*. (Andrews, et. al., 1994) evaluates eighteen leadership development programs around the country. *The Status of Community Leadership Programs in Indiana*, a dissertation by John G. Roush (1991) from Ball State University reviews 50 Community Leadership Programs in Indiana and analyzes the ways they have changed in recent years.

Role playing, community tours, team-building exercises, "action projects", and traditional seminars are employed as learning strategies throughout the programs.

At the beginning of a CLP, the participants spend a great deal of time learning more about their community, its history, and its public, private, and non-profit organizations. Participants learn about other individuals interested in the welfare of the community and are provided with foundational understandings of community challenges. Typical activities to accomplish these tasks include community tours and seminars describing the history of the community.

The second component of CLPs involves leadership skill training. Training topics include team-building, motivating volunteers, group process, and constructing "win-win situations" to facilitate community change (Tanner, et. al., 1994; Roush, 1991). The purpose for teaching these skills in CLPs is different from most contemporary leadership training programs that target corporations (Conger, 1992). These latter programs are much more focused on a specific leadership approach and view increases in leadership capacity as the end goal. Conversely, CLPs tend to view leadership and personal development as a *vehicle* for achieving the end of community change rather than seeing personal development of individual skills as the primary goal. The following comments from leadership program directors support these conclusions.

We operated from community development theory bases versus leadership development theory.

We were more interested in community building than we were with individual leadership development.

The bottom line...the program focuses on personal development and leadership for economic development at the same time (Tanner, et. al., 1994, p. 10-11).

Nurturing a commitment to the community is a primary value of community leadership programs. Although this has not always been emphasized, it is now an area of growing concern. In surveying change in Indiana CLPs from 1987 to 1990, Roush (1991) discovered a general trend away from community orientation activities toward a greater interest on leadership skills and "community trusteeship"<sup>36</sup> (Roush, 1991, p. 101). The training activities to accomplish this are usually internship programs with community organizations or in long-term team projects (Roush, 1991; Tanner, et. al., 1994, p. 22).

### *Assessment*

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of CLPs' approach to leadership development is its focus on community and organizational change rather than the personal growth of the leader. Leadership development is perceived as a "vehicle" rather than a destination for the program.

The emphasis on "community trusteeship" and the programs' developmental progression from self-improvement toward more community-oriented values is what Burns identifies as transformative change within a leadership process. According to Burns, transformational leadership is a process wherein leaders and followers are mutually

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<sup>36</sup>"Community trusteeship" was first coined by CLP experts in 1988 to describe a higher level of commitment and values beyond knowledge *about* leadership and the community. The community trustee is value-driven in his/her commitment to the community (Coughlin, 1988 in Roush, 1991, p. 30).

transformed to higher levels of moral development<sup>37</sup>. A movement from "self-improvement" toward an understanding of the program as "preparation for community change" appears to be in accordance with what Burns refers to as moral development (Tanner, et. al, 1994, p. 15). Community trusteeship refers to similar strengthening of commitment to the community.

The de-emphasis on "self-improvement" also illustrates the relatively low status of heroic and leadership-as-management approaches in most CLPs. There was very little concern for developing specific traits in order to increase one's status as a leader. Instead, the most frequently cited achievements involved team-building, networking, and collaboration skills. A multitude of learning strategies help participants to integrate leadership as management information through experiential learning processes.

The ambiguity and sometimes even total absence of leadership definitions caused some "barriers to implementation" among several of the programs. One program director stated:

The greatest obstacle is the ambiguity. Leadership is a real "buzz" activity, within a community many are "doing" leadership and competitive natures set in (Tanner, et. al., 1994, p. 21).

Battles over "turf" have occurred when other community stakeholders learned about the community leadership programs and questioned why they were not consulted. A certain degree of such political conflict is unavoidable but may be prevented by incorporating a number of partnering organizations in the program effort (p. 21).

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<sup>37</sup>Kohlberg's (1963) stage theory of moral development is a key component to Burns' understanding of transformational leadership. According to Kohlberg, individuals progress through developmental stages of moral reasoning in much the same way as children develop cognitively. Transforming leadership is the process which facilitates development to higher levels of moral reasoning.



The community-oriented focus of CLPs suits them well for dealing with the NGO problems of accountability, leader/leadership transitions, and external environment leadership. Although accountability was not explicitly described as an important component in any of the CLPs, the collaborative nature of the training program may indirectly encourage leader accountability. For example, the ideal leadership development program which the program directors describe, calls for an institutional structure that encourages a long-term perspective on a community's development (Tanner, et. al, 1994, p. 25). Mutual agreement among members and leaders regarding leader accountability are essential components in such a long-term strategy. If accountability is weak among leaders and organization members the long-term viability of an organization or organization network is doubtful.

Leader transitions in organizations are also not addressed in detail with CLPs although a concern for both emerging and established leaders indicates that the CLPs are involved in next-generation leader development. The extent to which this is a growing or shrinking area of concern among Indiana CLPs is unclear. In Roush's (1991) study, there was a 17% decrease in CLPs specifically intended for emerging leaders between 1987 and 1990. During the same period, CLPs which aim for a mix of established and emerging leaders increased in number by 9% (Roush, 1991, p. 100). Tanner et. al (1994) likewise noted that there is a shift in the type of emerging leaders which need to be included in these types of programs. Greater attention to assure that emerging leaders and leaders who represent the gender and ethnic diversity of their communities is an invaluable component of a leadership development program that seeks to address leader transition concerns (Tanner, 1994, p. 7).

External environment leadership in an increasingly global environment is a growing concern for rural communities (over 50% of CLPs reviewed by Roush and Tanner were based in rural communities). Tanner highlights the importance of external environment leadership as one of the important changes to which rural communities must adapt.

Successful rural leaders will need to be internally focused, but they also must be able to consider effectively the external environment and be able to link their endeavors to larger systems and forces (1994, p. 1).

Rather than viewing the CLP as an opportunity to enhance a single community's welfare, many program directors saw the training program more as an opportunity to "enhance multi-community development collaboration."

### *Summary*

The community leadership programs differ from the other two approaches insofar as they focus on and operate within the community context. The stated purpose of the CLPs is to develop community leaders but the expected outcome of leadership development transcends the realm of personal empowerment. Community change is the focus of these programs. The strong focus on collaboration, networking, and team-building are valuable aspects of these programs which are important competencies for communities and NGOs in developing countries to sharpen as well.

### *Lessons Learned*

The most valuable lessons for the NGO context which can be learned from this approach to leadership is its strong community focus. Leadership development for its own sake without reference to the wider community and

NGO problems would be inappropriate. CLPs' focus on building commitment to the community through an extended "action learning" internship may be quite useful in building partnerships among organizations within the community. As the number and size of NGOs in developing country communities increases, community and NGO leaders who are able to work collaboratively with a number of players in civil society will be a valuable asset.

### **Summary**

This chapter's review and analysis of three leadership development programs reveals the breadth of possibilities for designing leadership training programs in developing country NGOs. The principle lessons learned are: integrating leadership training in other aspects of organizational activity; offering individualized attention and mentoring; and focusing on challenges within a community context. Each is valuable in considering the design of future leadership development training programs for NGOs. This review also reveals the importance of analyzing the connections between the theoretical foundation of leadership development training programs and the way leadership development is operationalized. While all three programs benefited from incorporating more than one understanding of leadership, the resulting eclecticism sometimes caused the overall direction of the program to be ambiguous. In other words, an examination of the theoretical underpinnings of the programs indicates that programs may subscribe to an overall philosophy but (1) are very pragmatic in training and (2) will offer different interpretations of similar activities, learning strategies, etc., depending on which "frame" is used.

The next chapter identifies several principles for designing leadership development training programs which build on the lessons learned from leadership programs reviewed in this chapter. The challenges of accountability, leader/leadership transition, and external environment leadership are addressed under specific suggestions for designing leadership training.

## **Chapter Four**

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AMONG NGOS: TOWARD A PROTOTYPE FRAMEWORK**

Drawing on the lessons learned from previous leadership development training programs, this chapter offers theoretical and practical suggestions for addressing NGO leadership issues. Based on a discussion of Rost's (1993) framework of leadership, this chapter outlines a prototype leadership development training program for NGOs. The prototype specifically addresses accountability, leader/leadership transitions, and external environment leadership and identifies the most important facets of an NGO leadership training experience.

Rather than offer prescriptive advice, the following discussion is intended to prompt reflection among NGO practitioners who are interested in designing leadership development training programs<sup>38</sup>. This paper introduces a process similar to the World Bank's recent "consultancy methodology" (Shields, 1995) for strategic planning with NGOs. Rather than designing specific strategic planning processes for each locale, Shields (1995) offers broad guidance to potential trainers so that they do not have to "reinvent the wheel" in designing strategic planning. "Fine tuning" the strategic planning processes would still be required by each consultant. This chapter offers a similar "consultancy methodology" through its prototype leadership development training program. Specific modifications would still be necessary through consultation and collaboration within specific NGO contexts.

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<sup>38</sup>Reflection and philosophical inquiry within leadership studies is a growing tendency among leadership scholars and appears to be a healthy response to management science's long-standing dominant and prescriptive stance toward leadership studies and related fields (Schön, 1983).

	Outreach International	Kellogg International Leadership Program	Community Leadership Program
Accountability	Focus is on accountability among grassroots members. Leader accountability - less pertinent.	Follower participation is encouraged in fellows' projects	Focus is on developing "trustees" with long-term commitment to the community and its residents
Leader Transitions	Concern is given to emerging leaders rather than leader transitions	Explicitly requires established leaders to develop plan for mentoring younger leaders	Involvement of both established and emerging leaders may lead to mentoring
External Environment Leadership	Low priority	Encourages networking with other sector leaders on an international scale	Inter-community dialogue among leaders encouraged promoting external environment awareness

**Figure 4: Variations in Leadership Development Training Due to Target Group Differences**

	Outreach International	Kellogg International Leadership Program	Community Leadership Program
Accountability	Encourage beginning understanding and practice of collective action and role of leader	Encourage participant seminar discussion of multiple ways to enhance accountability	Practice ways to increase accountability in actual group projects
Leader Transitions	Initiate transitions in grassroots groups early in their formation	Encourage direct mentoring of younger, emerging leaders	Encourage direct mentoring of younger, emerging leaders
External Environment Leadership	Build beginning awareness of external resources	Network established leaders with national-level policy makers and others	Encourage interaction with other communities in surrounding area

**Figure 5: Variations in Leadership Development Training Due to Program Objectives**

The case studies in Chapter Three differed most in relationship to their target audience, pedagogical approach, and objectives. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the training implications of two of these contextual differences: target audience and program objectives. Future leadership development programs must deal with the fact that the methods used to address various NGO challenges are contingent on the targeted audience, desired objectives, and other factors.

### **Summary of Leadership Approaches<sup>39</sup>**

In contrast to the dominant approaches to leadership outlined in Chapter Two, contemporary leadership theorists are re-conceptualizing leadership in ways more suitable to the values and characteristics of present and expected future organizational life (Burns, 1978; Palus & Drath, 1995; Rost, 1991). Leadership as management and "heroic" perspectives of leadership as presented in Chapter Two do offer some insight into ways of viewing leaders and leadership. After decades of research, however, attempts to discover the nature of leader traits or the precise content of management skills appear overly mechanistic for most organizational contexts. Recent research suggests that more process-oriented understandings of leadership may be in order. Burns' (1978) understanding of transformational leadership marks the beginning of this change which has been further developed by other scholars.

While acknowledging the contribution of the leadership as management and the "heroic" approaches to leadership studies, leadership scholars are now pursuing a more nuanced understanding of leadership consistent with Burns' transformational leadership approach (1978). Recent

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<sup>39</sup>This section offers a brief review of leadership approaches which were presented in detail in Chapter Two.

authors' understandings of leadership are commonly referred to as "new paradigm"<sup>40</sup> approaches. These include a concern for increasingly collaborative approaches, a greater focus on the process of leadership, a respect for plurality and dissent in decision-making, and a belief that leadership should be "morally uplifting" (Burns, 1996).

### **Rost's Leadership Framework**

Rost (1991, 1993) provides one of the most thoroughly refined conceptualizations of this "new paradigm" leadership that is gaining acceptance as a dominant perspective within leadership studies. Burns (1978) himself refers to Rost's 1991 book as "the most important critique of leadership studies in our time" and the future "Bible" for an emerging postindustrial school of leadership (Rost, 1991, p. xii).

The growing acceptance and academic rigor of Rost's (1991) approach to leadership for the "postindustrial" era makes it a prime candidate for application in NGO leadership development contexts. NGOs and the growing nonprofit (third) sector around the world are some of the new developments which Rost purposefully addresses as part of his "new paradigm" approach to leadership.

Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes (Rost, 1991, p. 102).

Rost divides this approach to leadership into four parts. First, the relationships in leadership processes are based on influence, rather than

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<sup>40</sup>A degree of caution is warranted in referring to these approaches as "new" paradigm approaches to leadership. In fact, many of the insights trace their origin directly to classical philosophy and Lockean thought (Weaver, 1991). The "rediscovered paradigm" of leadership may be a more fitting term.



authority or the use of coercion<sup>41</sup>. "Influence" is defined by Rost as the use of persuasion based on an understanding of one's own and collaborators' "power resources" (Burns, 1978).

Second, both leaders and their collaborators are actors in this leadership relationship. Leaders and collaborators are both crucial variables in this "process understanding" of leadership. These roles may be played by different people at different times during a leadership process. This is perhaps the most crucial distinguishing characteristic of Rost's approach to leadership.

Third, leaders and their collaborators *intend* real changes. This component of the model recognizes that sometimes the practice of leadership may not result in real changes due to a variety of unforeseen circumstances. Evaluation of whether or not *effective* leadership was present must take place "after the fact". Effectiveness should not be included within a general definition of leadership since that would make "ineffective leadership" an oxymoron. A rigorous definition of leadership must be conceptualized without regard to considerations of effectiveness.

Fourth, the changes that leaders and their collaborators intend reflect their mutual purposes. The intended changes are decided in a collaborative manner among participants in the leadership process. Some of these participants have more influence than others and the arrangement of influence may change within a group during the leadership process.

The following four suggestions for designing leadership development programs are derived from Rost's definition and theory of leadership. They offer a beginning framework from which to construct a leadership development program within NGO and other contexts.

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<sup>41</sup>"Persuasion" acknowledges the volition of collaborators more than "coercion." The use of coercion requires that one individual have authority over another. Management theory tends to assume that relationships are authority based.

1. Take the focus off the "leader" and begin conceiving leadership as an episodic affair carried out by a group.
2. Train people to use influence and work within noncoercive relationships.
3. Help people understand the nature of real - that is, transformative change.
4. Reconstruct people's basic world view about life toward a collaborative orientation and develop dialogue on the role of ethics in leadership development (Rost, 1993, p. 102-107).

These suggestions for leadership development training programs differ markedly from those exemplified in management and "heroic" leadership perspectives. Those two perspectives tend to view leadership development training in a more mechanistic manner. Specific traits, skills, or personality styles are taught to leaders which they, in turn, are expected to utilize in their leading of others. The following suggestions, derived from Rost's framework and the case study examples, approach leadership from a much more reflective stance and focus on leadership as a process where leaders and collaborators engage in a mutual fashion. It is less prescriptive and as a result needs to be "fleshed out" in unique ways for particular contexts.

#### *Suggestions for Leadership Development Training*

1. *Take the focus off the leader and begin conceiving of leadership as an episodic affair carried out by a group rather than an individual alone.*

Rost's entire understanding of leadership rests on a clear distinction between leaders and leadership. He argues that the role of leaders is important, but that it is difficult to know specifically how to train leaders. A plethora of leader behaviors, traits, and personality styles are found in the leadership literature but their vagueness and lack of specificity do not allow

for individual variation. A greater focus on leadership as a group process which takes place episodically in one's life reflects the ways individuals actually experience "leadership" in their own lives. People rarely experience leadership as one individual's activities, but as a combination of a leader's behaviors and the behaviors of other "collaborators" (Rost, 1991).

This suggestion for training programs is a "meta" leadership training issue since it re-conceptualizes leadership development as a group-oriented rather than an individual-oriented intervention. This is consistent with other scholars' findings in development training. Lynton and Pareek (1990) argue that a comprehensive, context-sensitive training strategy is more valuable than most development training which focuses on improving individual rather than organizational capacity. Training programs which are too set apart from daily work settings and are individually-oriented tend to focus excessively on the "fancy circus of curriculum" rather than on solving organizational problems (Lynton & Pareek, 1990, p. x in preface).

Individually-oriented and "away from work" leadership development training is also more difficult to transfer back to "real life" NGO situations. These difficulties can be minimized by continued contact and support to the NGO from the training program. The Kellogg International Leadership Program encouraged this process by involving W.K. Kellogg Foundation staff members in the leadership development program. WKKF staff representatives visited fellows' communities and offered feedback on proposed projects for community improvement. Unfortunately, many leadership development training programs do not have the resources to provide similar means of continued support.

Lynton and Pareek (1990) suggest that development training begin with a set of questions to identify the most appropriate type of training

intervention. This de-emphasizes an exclusive examination of the role of leader in favor of a broader consideration of the organization's context. A similar process occurs in the Kellogg International Leadership Program where individuals were asked to devise their own personal course of study through consultation with a W.K. Kellogg program director. Community Leadership Programs reflect a similar collaborative process in leadership training through their growing concern with the development of "community trusteeship" among participants. A group-oriented process of collective reflection on NGO leadership problems and needs would strengthen NGO leadership development and encourage the concept of leadership as an episodic event.

Context-focused approaches to leadership development training also illustrate the concept of leadership as a process which occurs in episodes rather than as a quality to be possessed. The Community Leadership Programs focused on the community context to such an extent that leadership development became an *instrument* to advance community goals rather than an end in itself. This perspective appears to encourage a view of leadership as an episodic event within the process of community development. That is, leadership is seen as one of the necessary processes to bring about a particular end. A similar perspective within the NGO context would be quite helpful. Continued focus on the leader may only exaggerate traditional notions of heroic leadership which consequently may limit NGO sustainability during future periods of leader transitions.

## 2. *Train people to use influence and work within noncoercive relationships.*

Rost uses the term "influence" to connote acts of persuasion which are by definition noncoercive. He encourages efforts to train individuals in the

many forms of persuasion (rational, emotional, etc.) through different communication medias (speeches, memos, letters, etc.). Effectively using power resources such as a network of friends, information, and like-minded individuals within the organization are important assets in learning how to use influence. Similar to the "group-oriented" focus on leadership, this suggestion involves changing preconceived notions of authority and management which are thought to drive the leadership process.

Relationships which are characterized by noncoercive influence encourage a more multi-directional information flow and thereby allow for greater member/leader accountability within NGOs. As leadership is re-conceptualized as a process of using influence rather than mere positional authority, it becomes a process where more individuals can contribute to "doing leadership."<sup>42</sup>

The use of influence rather than coercion ought not be construed as political naiveté within NGOs. This framework actually encourages the use of political skills far more nuanced than relationships based on authority and coercion. Using influence requires that leaders and collaborators be intimately aware of the relative power resources which other individuals within and outside their organization possess.

A better understanding of the complexities of using influence may improve prospects for inter-organizational collaboration with government and other NGOs. By building relationships of influence instead of coercion between individuals in NGOs and government agencies, the prospects for

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<sup>42</sup>An "influence perspective" within an NGO requires a concerted effort to change long-held beliefs about organizational functioning and organizational culture. In the U.S. context Ella Baker (first associate director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and influential in the 1960s student movement) brought a "group -centered" notion of leadership to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Students for a Democratic Society which differed from the charismatic leadership orientation of SCLC (Morris, 1984).

greater inter-organizational collaboration may increase dramatically for the benefit of both parties (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993; Kaimowitz, 1993; Wilson, 1994). Grindle and Thomas' framework for policy reform also offers suggestions for dealing with the complexities of using influence within an NGO and its external environment leadership. Analysis of the environment surrounding policy concerns is an important skill for NGOs to acquire in their search for creative ways to influence players in the external as well as internal environment. Skills in identifying stakeholders' power resources may improve one's ability to use influence (Blair & Fottler, 1990).

*3. Help people understand the nature of real - that is transformative - change.*

Traditional leadership strategies focus mostly on incremental changes in efficiency rather than transformation in organizations and larger societal structures. Rost argues that transformative change "is more complex and messy than people in [many] organizations want to believe." Leadership development training programs need to address this fact and come up with creative ways of facilitating change which may go against long-established organizational procedures. Rost's suggestions for training experiences which develop an understanding of the politics of change as it takes place among larger groups over longer periods of time appear to be particularly valuable for NGO leadership development. Leadership conceived as a transformational process helps facilitate creative responses to challenges of accountability, leader transitions, and external environment leadership. Training experiences along these lines could help both leaders and NGO members to conceive of solutions which lie outside the realm of traditional, incremental change.

NGOs in developing countries may possess a greater transformative change orientation in their understanding of learning strategies than Northern countries. Initiated in a developing country context by Paulo Freire (1993), "action learning"<sup>43</sup> concepts have somewhat different meanings in the South than they do in the North. Leach (1994) argues that "action learning" within the "Northern tradition" is more focused on incremental *organizational* capacity building while the Southern tradition is more attuned to the importance of *individual* transformation or conscientization.

In the Northern tradition [of action learning], large scale social change is usually defined in terms of strengthening cooperation and coordination to make incremental improvements in the quality of people's lives, or in the competitiveness of a nation's or region's economy. The Southern tradition [of action learning] usually aims at more fundamental transformations in economic and social relations. The Southern tradition is more concerned with individual transformation as a prerequisite for larger systems change, and is less planful or explicit about how individual change leads to social change. It is more organic, less highly engineered approach, appropriate to situation where civil society may be weak, and political space is limited (Leach, 1994, p. 5-6).

These different approaches in action learning strategies must be taken into account in the design of leadership development training. Leadership development training for NGOs consistent with Rost's broad training suggestions would include aspects of both dimensions of action learning - Northern and Southern. Rather than attempt to modify Northern approaches to leadership development, however, it appears plausible to begin with Southern approaches to action learning and devise leadership training

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<sup>43</sup>"Action learning" is a broad term which is intended to incorporate action research, action science, experiential learning, participatory research, organizational learning, and learning systems (Leach, 1994, p. 1). Although these terms all have different nuances in their meaning they hold in common a tension or dialectic between reflection and action (Freire, 1993).

approaches based in familiar (to countries of the South) learning theories and strategies.

The development of political skills and political awareness requires both individual transformation and an understanding of the systemic nature of change. Previous research demonstrates that such skills are better learned within the context of informal engagements in the political arena rather than only through intentional educational interventions (Kieffer, 1981). Mentoring relationships within the context of political engagement (Alinsky, 1969) and nonformal education experiences such as the Highlander Folk School are two key interventions which have facilitated increased political awareness and leadership development among individuals in the U.S. Similar educational experiences that highlight a transformational approach to leadership appear to be promising initiatives for emerging NGO leaders and membership. A cadre of individuals trained in the nuances of political engagement may lessen the traumatic nature of leader transitions and encourage greater NGO internal democracy and accountability.

Transformative change processes may be learned through leadership training experiences which use appropriate symbolism. Specific cultural or religious myths which call for transformation of individual and social values should be incorporated into leadership training experiences. Powerful illustrations from sacred writings can be utilized to convey transformational leadership values. Sharma (1995) identifies several instances of leadership models within Eastern scriptures such as the Ramayana, the Bhagvat Geeta, and the Dhrama, although he cautions that not all leadership models demonstrated in these texts are necessarily desirable. Similar integration of religious symbolism and leadership has also taken place within the Christian tradition (McConnell, 1996). Jung, et. al (1995) has demonstrated the



similarities which exist between transformational leadership and the values found in collectivist cultures.

*4. Reconstruct people's basic world view about life toward a collaborative orientation and develop dialogue on the role of ethics in leadership development.*

Formal leadership development training programs may facilitate greater reflection on the nature of leadership and more collaborative understanding of leadership while ignoring the fact that leadership development is a long-term process. A "developmental" perspective on leadership development acknowledges that leaders move into places of influence as the result of a wide variety of social, cultural, and economic factors (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988; Gardner, 1990; Kieffer, 1984). The task of "reconstructing people's basic world view" requires such a developmental perspective. Formal training programs along with other social and cultural influences contribute to the development of leadership. National literacy programs, for example, have contributed a great deal to developing the leadership capacity in many developing countries (Bingen, 1996).

A more concentrated discussion of ethics and values in NGO leadership development training programs is another important aspect of the process of "reconstructing" the world view of NGO leaders and collaborators. Given the challenging ethical dilemmas facing developing countries and NGOs, such issues deserve more focused attention (Goulet, 1995). Rost identifies possible directions for implementing a discussion of ethics into leadership development training; he proposes greater attention to the nature of the "common good" (Daly & Cobb, 1989), and more focused inquiry into the area of gender.

Leadership development training within the NGO context must incorporate the ethical dimensions of gender and development and

humanity's relationship to the environment. Stivers (1993) and Heller (1982) provide preliminary guidelines, which reflect some of Rost's (and Burns') understandings of leadership for integrating a rigorous understanding of gender into leadership development training.

As leadership comes properly to be seen as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs of followers, women will be more readily recognized as leaders and men will change their own [leader] styles (Burns, 1978, p. 50).

Stivers and Heller argue, like Rost, that popular images and myths of gender and leadership tend to orient individuals' expectations of leaders away from what is now referred to as "feminine" qualities.

The preceding suggestions illustrate the ways Rost's suggestions connect with contemporary concerns of development scholars and the realities facing NGOs. Key insights for NGO leaders and members to incorporate in their organizational capacity building efforts are: decreased attention on the leader and greater attention to the organizational context; a revised conception of leadership as "episodes" not "possessions"; and the use of influence in relationships. A deeper understanding of the nature of transformative change through collaboration ultimately requires that leadership development programs look beyond the confines of formal training toward long-term interventions. These suggestions illustrate how new conceptions of leadership differ from the mechanistic processes associated with management science.

### **A Prototype Leadership Development Program for NGOs**

The prototype draws on the lessons learned in the case study analysis and utilizes Rost's leadership framework. While it does not address all of the details which go into an excellent leadership training program, the prototype

is a useful guide to the following questions. (1) Who should implement NGO leadership training? (2) What should it look like? (3) Where should it take place?

*Who Should Implement Leadership Training?*

Although any organization has potential for implementing leadership training, organizations which are well-networked and able to "build bridges" across diverse constituencies appear the most promising. International (and increasingly), national and regional foundations are best suited for implementing these programs because of these factors. The Kellogg International Leadership Program, for example, was able to recruit leaders from diverse sectors within developing countries, thereby increasing participants' confidence and ability to maneuver among a variety of stakeholders. A less networked or more politically polarized organization may have had considerable difficulty bringing together a diversity of participants similar to KILP.

In some developing countries a growing cadre of national foundations exist which may be able to implement leadership training experiences. The West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF) is one example of a regional foundation with extensive experience in bringing together NGO leaders from West African nations. As foundations such as WARF become more numerous, the opportunity for sector-wide leadership development training may increase. Larger membership or non-membership NGOs may also serve as valuable initiators of leadership development training, although these organizations may have a more difficult time bridging different types of organizations. Individual NGO could also implement leadership

development efforts which exclusively target their own organization's members rather than attempting to bridge multiple constituencies.

*What Should It Look Like?*

Rost's framework with its strong distinction between leader training and leadership training is imperative for operational reasons as well as for philosophical ones. Leader training is more difficult and less promising than leadership training for a number of reasons: to discern who emerging leaders are; to know how to train them; and, to guarantee that they will be the kind of leader that is desired. Leader development training may also become a self-fulfilling prophecy. (i.e. if someone receives training in how to be a leader they are by definition, a leader.)

In contrast, leadership development is concerned about training a group of persons how to do leadership together. While not arguing that "we are all leaders," this approach involves teaching people to act as leaders at different episodes in their life. A leader is someone who exerts influence and since the amount of influence people have is never the same, the identity of leader may change situationally. NGO leadership training conceived of in this way encourages greater internal democracy and has greater promise for developing collaborative relationships with other NGOs and government. An explicit and close association with a specific framework of leadership also lessens the ambiguity which pervades the terms "leadership development" and experienced as a problem with the Community Leadership Program. If an organization is able to provide a specific statement of purpose of a leadership development program the ambiguity may decrease.

Although based in the leadership-as-management frame, nevertheless strategic planning experiences are consistent with a group-focused training

method. The goal of strategic planning is to provide a context where participants discuss their vision for the organization in the future. The vision and plan for the future is constructed in a collaborative manner for the purpose of producing statements of purpose and organizational vision which are cooperatively affirmed.

Training and cooperative reflection on building teams within the organization may also be utilized within the NGO sector. In many developing countries the challenges in encouraging a team approach are quite different than those commonly faced in Western contexts. Most developing country cultures are collectivist in nature, thereby making a team approach to problem solving a different challenge than in more individualistic Western countries (Hofstede, 1984; Jung, et. al, 1995).

Rost's approach to leadership emphasizes a collaborative orientation while at the same time embracing a politically astute understanding of leadership. Participants should be challenged to come up with significant portions of the training program themselves. Participant work groups during a leadership development program may identify, develop, and present certain topics (such as those presented in Outreach International's approach) in the areas of "community-building" or "teamwork". The process of designing elements of the training experience also increases personal investment in the experience. The discussion sets up a situation where people are trying to exert influence. Encouraging a collaborative perspective in solving a current organizational dilemma also provides a way to draw connections to "daily work" application.

NGO leadership development programs should encourage a strong mentoring component to help participants make new connections and reflect on their organizational experiences. Mentoring appeared to be a strong

component of the KILP initiative and involved W.K. Kellogg staff visits to the community where each fellow worked. Similar periodic visits by formally assigned mentors could be arranged for leadership training participants. The value of mentoring relationships has been shown to be invaluable in past research involving citizen leaders in the U.S. (Kieffer, 1981; Vandenberg, 1993). Participants should also be challenged to develop an "action plan" similar to that used in the KILP initiative which incorporated a strong next-generation leadership focus. This enables participants to "pass on" their learning through mentoring.

The last distinguishing characteristic of a prototype leadership development program involves the role of ethics and values in development. Ethical dilemmas pervade development NGOs. Forest and wildlife preservation often seems at odds with growing needs for agricultural land (and foreign capital from logging firms), pressures to modernize which lead to increased marginalization of some groups of people, and relationships between local markets and global market forces which influence poor land-use decision making are just some of the dilemmas which are commonplace to NGOs. Encouraging reflection about these ethical dilemmas is essential in a leadership development program which strives to be transformational in its approach to solving problems.

### *Where Should the Leadership Training Take Place?*

Leadership development training for NGOs needs to adopt a combination of the most effective aspects of the CLPs and KILP in terms of their training context. While CLPs were community-based they often did not provide participants with the opportunity to view issues outside of their own community. KILP, on the other hand, had almost all of its group training

activities through global seminars. The connection to the participants' local context was nurtured through the completion of a community-focused project and regular mentoring meetings with a W.K. Kellogg program director.

A prototype NGO leadership development program would be mostly community-based but should incorporate a national or regional travel component in order to encourage free thinking among the participants. When one moves beyond familiar surroundings sometimes new insights are more easily obtained since environmental constraints in familiar surroundings do not as easily limit creativity in a new setting.

### **Summary**

This chapter demonstrates the ways in which Rost's leadership framework and the lessons learned from other leadership programs may be applied in designing a "consultancy methodology" for leadership development training. Attention to new conceptualizations of leadership must accompany leadership development with NGOs if they are to continue as a vital force in the development arena. Management and heroic conceptualizations of leadership are insufficient for NGOs' increasingly collaborative stance toward other organizations and government (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993). While the specific techniques and format for implementation of leadership training remain unanswered, this chapter's suggestions and prototype model for addressing NGO issues provide a useful preliminary guide.

## **Chapter Five**

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

#### **Summary**

This paper has reviewed contemporary leadership theory and has sought to apply that theory to NGOs. NGOs are undergoing accelerated changes through leader transitions, the way accountability is maintained, and their growing "macro" influence on country policy making. A closer analysis of leadership and leaders in the context of these changes has been the core purpose of this paper.

The "multi-framing" discussion of leadership approaches illustrated the usefulness of different leadership approaches for understanding NGO problems. The "displacement of [leadership] concepts" (see Chapter Two) from a predominantly North American context to the development NGO context may help to expand interpretations of leadership theory (Schön, in Terry, 1995). NGO practitioners may benefit from a careful assessment of leadership theory as they seek to understand the problems of organizational effectiveness and sustainability.

The case study analysis illustrates the vital connection between theory (reflection) and practice which is an essential part of continued organizational learning. The distinction between leadership and leaders which some of the case studies portrayed is useful for emphasizing the highly contextual nature of leadership. An individualized and even developmental approach was addressed in KILP and the CLPs which prioritizes the role of mentoring relationships for emerging "community trustee" leaders. Greater integration of leadership development training with other organizational learning activities helps to improve both the practice of leadership training and



organizational understanding of the nature of leaders and leadership. These lessons are invaluable as NGOs strive to deal with the challenges they face in the twenty-first century.

The leadership development training framework and prototype in Chapter Four examined the applications of Rost's leadership theory to leadership training programs in NGOs. Rost's philosophy of leadership and his suggestions were a valuable complement to the case study analysis. The prototype leadership development guidelines to emerged from this synthesis of theory and practice.

In summary, this paper offers a unique, interdisciplinary perspective on NGO leadership challenges. Charismatic leaders, though still valuable in facilitating social change, are not sufficient in the dynamic NGO environment. Concentrated reflection on the nature of leadership and the NGO context, as introduced in this paper, may help to improve NGO capacity building (broadly conceived) in the years ahead. The following recommendations appear most promising in this endeavor.

### **Recommendations For Future Research**

The integration of leadership studies and so called "Third World" development studies naturally reveals a number of different directions for future interdisciplinary research. The following research directions may be pursued by leadership theorists, development scholars, or creative teams from both areas. The most salient and particularly promising areas for further research fall in three broad, related, categories: training initiatives, culture and leadership, and ethical concerns.

### *Training Initiatives*

The clearest research need involves a comprehensive examination of the many different kinds of leadership development programs that exist for NGOs. A review of existing leadership training programs illustrates the types of leadership training implemented among NGOs, but does not ascertain the effectiveness or the number of leadership development training programs which currently exist. Comprehensive research on leadership development training could address a variety of different subjects.

A comparative analysis of the leadership development training programs which philanthropic foundations sponsor would be useful since philanthropic foundations are both the most involved and the most promising future initiators of leadership training. The Rockefeller, W.K. Kellogg, and Pew Charitable Trusts are already collaborating to some extent by networking their leadership training participants to one another. (Webb-Petett, 1995). The in-depth comparative study of their separate programs involving extensive interviews and/or focus groups of participants appears particularly timely. Reviews of U.S. leadership programs (Tanner, et. al., 1994; Roush, 1991) identify the relative strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned. Similar research endeavors which target NGO leadership development programs sponsored by these and other foundations would be equally valuable. Creative strategies for ways to make more "capital-intensive" programs accessible to smaller developing country foundations or NGO associations are also needed.

Donors such as the World Bank, USAID, and others need to expand their understanding of leadership development training beyond management and "heroic" leader perspectives. Previous reviews of institutional development in 80 World Bank projects reveal "inadequate

management skills" as the most frequently cited institution development problem (Brinkerhoff, 1994). Modifying management training to incorporate some of the values and processes of what is here called "leadership development training" would be a valuable improvement.

The particular context and type of NGO must be carefully considered whenever training programs are proposed. The matrices in Chapter Four highlight the variation found in the case studies which must be appreciated in the design of future programs. The broad typology of NGOs introduced in Chapter One may also be helpful in thinking about appropriate training interventions for NGO leadership. Figure 6 illustrates some of the broad differences in leadership development training in different types of NGOs.

	Grassroots Support Organizations	Membership Support Organizations	Primary Grassroots Organizations
Accountability	Accountability to "beneficiaries" is still important but less crucial for purposes of political viability	Accountability seems most important in these organizations and deserves a considerable amount of attention	
Leader Transitions		Leaders from within the organization are most effective. Ways to facilitate transitions are needed.	
External Environment Leadership	These organizations tend to be well-networked with international organizations	Smaller MSOs would benefit from being better networked with other organizations.	Information regarding external resources to help the group would be valuable for these more isolated groups

**Figure 6:** Leadership Development in Different Types of NGOs

### *Culture and Leadership*

Although beyond the scope of this paper, a careful analysis of the leadership/culture nexus is essential. Geert Hofstede, (1980) one of the most well-known authors in the field of cross-cultural analysis of management theory, analyzed leadership qualities among multinational corporation staff to determine the different styles most associated with effective leadership by individuals in various cultures. Careful examination of "power distance," "uncertainty avoidance,"<sup>44</sup> and other variables which Hofstede analyzed would be a valuable issues to consider in developing leadership training programs in other cultures.

Dissertation work done by a student of Rost's (Henrickson, 1989) proposes a new theory of leadership constructed within a cultural "frame." Built on a thorough review of leadership theory and anthropological research, Henrickson develops an understanding of the process of leadership which parallels his approach to culture<sup>45</sup>.

Research which draws comparisons and links leadership theory with cultural norms would be a valuable asset for improving the leadership process in NGOs. Jung, et. al. (1995) has begun to address some of these concerns by drawing comparisons between transformational leadership theory and collectivist culture norms.

In development circles the interface between culture and leadership are becoming more widely accepted. In a recent conference on *Culture and*

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<sup>44</sup>Power distance refers to the degree to which a given culture "accepts the fact that power is distributed unequally in organizations". Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which a "society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater career stability" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 45).

<sup>45</sup>Henrickson defines leadership as "a dynamic, adaptive and ethical process by which leaders and followers form collective relationships which create socially meaningful structures by utilizing social, political, linguistic, symbolic and generative resources to meet human needs" (p. 548). He argues that while the specific content of leadership varies across cultures, the processes of leadership are quite similar.

*Development in Africa*, Bryant (1992) briefly traces the development of management practices as they have affected development and suggests ways to integrate local cultural norms with management practices.

Traditional practices that "modern" management now considers very important, such as skills in achieving consensus, were not valued in early nineteenth century colonial administrative practices... The challenge for African managers is to identify [indigenous] components of their culture that can be built upon to have greater synergy in the workplace as a result of working with, rather than against, widely held cultural norms. The concept, for example, of reciprocity is found within many African cultures; it is also central to building teamwork, a widely held tenet in modern management (Bryant, 1992, p. 454).

Applied research which analyzes leaders and NGOs in developing countries would be a useful complement to the U.S.-based research studies which have analyzed the history of nonprofit leaders' development in the U.S. (Kieffer, 1981). This is consistent with the growing attention to leadership development as a long-term process (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988).

Several development scholars call for increased attention to "institutional ethnographies" (Farrington & Bebbington, p. 56) and "leadership social histories" (Bingen, 1996) to learn more about the interaction between leaders, leadership, and their larger context. Farrington and Bebbington argue that case studies on institutional changes could eventually be used to help train individual leaders and other members of NGOs on ways to "effect strategic change" within their organizations (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993, p. 57). Similar work exists for government institutions and government leaders (Grindle, 1986 in Farrington & Bebbington, 1993) but no parallel work exists for NGOs.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Although different in form from a study of development NGOs, current research on the educational reform movement known as the Waldorf School analyzes how leaders have transitioned during the movement's 75 year history (Oberman, 1996a). Oberman's case study analysis of the transition which took place within the Waldorf organization provides a useful

*Leadership Ethics for Development*

The subject of ethics and leadership is an area of growing importance. The "tyranny of means" commonly referred to in development circles as "doing things right" rather than "doing the right things" continues to plague many development efforts. Unfortunately, many leadership approaches in the past have not encouraged ethical reflection in decision making. The recent emergence of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA) in 1987 and Rost's (1991, 1993, 1995) focused attention on ethics illustrate a greater urgency among scholars for more inquiry into ethical dimensions of development and organizational life.

Denis Goulet (1995), one of the charter members of IDEA, states that the "qualities" needed by development leaders include the following:

An intuitive grasp of the larger historical dimensions latent in local struggles.

The ability to reconcile multiple class alliances.

Moral and physical courage.

How to communicate their own vision of possible success to less imaginative or less experienced masses.

How to learn quickly from their mistakes.

Careful not to encourage an elitist view of leadership, Goulet qualifies his long list of necessary traits for development leaders (an "heroic" leadership perspective) by calling for leaders to internalize a greater sense of "humility which makes them define their own true consciousness as necessarily requiring constant rectification by the consciousness of the masses" (Goulet,

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template for further studies of NGOs' organizational evolution. Oberman (1996b) argues that a switch from charismatic leader to a transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) understanding of organizational process was crucial for the movement's sustainability.

1995, p. 191). Goulet's affirmation of a dialectic between leaders and followers reflects a number of the values imbedded within Burns' transformational leadership approach. Further exploration of the connection between an ethic of development and a transformational leadership approach would be extremely valuable.

In contrast to Goulet's largely "content" oriented focus on *leader* ethics, Rost (1995) calls for more attention to the process of *leadership* ethics. Rost's leadership ethics involves the use of ethical behavior in the process of influence which takes place during leadership. Leader ethics asks a different question. Are the changes being proposed by the leader ethical? Various ethical frameworks (utilitarianism, rule ethics, etc.) may be utilized in answering this question but ultimately, Rost argues, these are not that helpful. A "post-industrial" school of leadership ethics is required which addresses the process of leadership within groups, the common good, gender, and ethnic issues (Rost, 1995, p. 140). The connections between such an ethical approach and leadership development among NGOs are worthy of more exploration.

Continued dialogue between leadership researchers and development scholar-practitioners is a necessary prerequisite to the advancement of these areas of research. Although these two areas of inquiry have previously not been seriously integrated, it is hoped that this paper provides some of the necessary groundwork for further intellectual pursuit of this important and timely area of research. Further serious investigation into questions of leaders and leadership is critical as NGOs shape developing country policy and democratic processes in the years ahead.

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