

DEVELOPING RESULTS LEADERS FOR AFRICA TRANSFORMATION The East African Uongozi School Experience

*From the African Community of Practice on Management for
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Case Study
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SYNOPSIS

The institutionalization of a result culture in Africa requires strong and committed leadership. African universities are a major avenue for developing effective leaders across the continent and they are called to design and roll out innovative programs to enhance Africa's leadership capabilities. This paper features the case study of East Africa Uongozi (leadership) training program that involves, since 1998, undergraduate students in the arts, humanities, social sciences, law and related fields from East African and North American universities. The school's main goal is to foster civic and intellectual leadership qualities among the next generation of East African leaders and to contribute to the promotion of rational and dynamic policy making processes that are informed by African as well as global perspectives.

Key findings. It is important to have a generic leadership paradigm that connects leaders across the political, private and civil society sectors, respecting the different emphases of the different cultures and regions but identifying and building on commonalities in accordance with the Management for Development Results methodology. Over the last two to three decades, experience, in fact, has shown that while people may have different leadership characteristics, certain dimensions of leadership which are key to development in a wide array of cultures and contexts are the same and can be developed.

Key lessons. As Africa focuses on regional integration, the East African Uongozi Institute and other institutions involved in such activities are instrumental in fostering the spirit of brotherhood and sharing knowledge on development issues. Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063 depend largely on the development of strong and visionary leadership.

Main Recommendations. The East Africa Community (EAC) member states must support the activities of the Uongozi Institute and other institutions alike; and the African countries should establish a Pan African incubator for young leaders' capacity building. The African Union (AU) and the continental institutions are called to support the Uongozi Institute and assist in replicating the same in the other regional economic communities for increased African integration and for building up a pool of capable young African leaders.

Introduction

The adoption and application of Management for Development Results (MfDR) in many cases require leadership development efforts that promote the pluralistic and broad-based inclusion of individuals representing all segments of society. It requires a

focus on improving the effectiveness of existing leaders, supporting emerging leaders and representatives of disadvantaged groups in society

and social activists¹. In 21st Century Africa, the paradigm of leadership must shift from focus on trappings of power to effective service delivery (Juma 2015).

Acquisition of leadership skills has the potential to increase Africa's competitiveness in the rapidly growing global knowledge society, resulting in good governance and policy decisions that will transform African economies. Leadership is also vital to shared growth and transformative change in Africa. It is one of the fundamental elements necessary for society to progress because failures of leadership—whether within society, certain groups, or organizations—have terrible consequences for societal development as a whole.

In fact, poor leadership inhibits innovation, the courage to challenge the *status quo*, and the capacity to mobilize and use opportunities to expand the economy and promote democratic change (Bolden and Kirk 2009). It is critical for African universities to nurture highly skilled and well-informed, accountable and courageous leaders to spearhead efforts to promote good governance and stimulate economic transformation in their countries. African universities must lead the way in strategic leadership development to transform knowledge, bolster intellectual capital and enhance capacity for effective decision making under varying strategic and risk scenarios, (Kararach et al. 2011).

Leadership and economic transformation

Leadership skills play an important role in the economic transformation of Africa. Countries cannot achieve transformative growth without significantly improving governance institutions (Joseph 2013). Research in developmental governance demonstrates that facilitating factors of development governance are crucial and these can appear in different configurations in contemporary Africa. The African Centre for Economic

Transformation (ACET) (2014) contends that the impressive economic growth of African countries, advances in governance and the turnaround in investor confidence provide a foundation for Africa's economic transformation. Writer and thinker Chinua Achebe, in his book *"The Trouble With Nigeria"* argues that the problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership, which is an apt prognosis of Africa's leadership challenge and a subject of serious discourse. Likewise, Juma (2015) reminds that Africa can learn from Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew's philosophy, which is premised on three pillars: entrepreneurship, power of innovation and managerial discipline.

Leadership capacity building for youth

Socio-cultural, policy and economic challenges are common all over the world and the international community has shown cohesion in calling for the use of the world resources to reduce inequities and promote social justice particularly within the youth population. According to the Africa Economic report, Africa has the youngest population in the world with more than 200 million inhabitants aged between 15 and 24 (AfDB, 2012). This figure will double before 2050 (Ibid). Faced with this demographic growth, African education systems struggle to adapt to changing economic contexts and social transformations and it is a priority for the youth to receive sound education and leadership capacity building opportunities so that they can become professional and efficient agents of change (ibid, 2012).

In 1998, East African universities established the East African Uongozi School/Institute in collaboration with universities of the United States of America (USA) in response to the capacity building needs of young African leaders and Africa's structural transformation challenges. This initiative was able to strengthen young East African leaders' capacities, offer them visibility and assist with various

¹ http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/training/mfdr_training_leadership.pdf (retrieved 02 March 2016)

opportunities to facilitate their personal and leadership development with positive transformation impact on their respective countries. The objective of this case study is to present this initiative, which has shown visible impact across the Eastern African countries, as a mark of innovation and a good example of an effective leadership development programme in the region.

Methodology

Data for case study were collected through a desk review of available research reports and related publications as well as programme reports. Skype and phone interviews were also conducted with 10 beneficiaries of the program – to get their first-hand experience and impact of the program in the current professional carrier and or leadership roles.

Leadership in management for development results (MfDR)

MfDR is also a political process. Citizens and parliaments hold decision-makers accountable for transparency and results and leadership and political will over a sustained time are necessary to establish and maintain a “performance culture”. “Results leaders” have to take responsibility for results and be the drivers of change.

Moreover the adoption and application of MfDR necessitates leadership development efforts which promote a pluralistic and broad-based inclusion of individuals representing all segments of society. This focus must improve the effectiveness of existing leaders and support emerging leaders, youth, representatives of disadvantaged groups in society and social activists.

There is also a need for a generic leadership paradigm that connects leaders across the political, private and civil society sectors respecting the different emphases of different cultures and regions but identifying and building on commonalities. Over the last two to three decades, experience shows

that while people may have different leadership characteristics, there are certain dimensions of leadership which are key to development in a wide array of cultures and contexts and these dimensions can be cultivated.

What is the Uongozi school/East Africa Uongozi Institute?

The institute was established in 1998 with the purpose of inculcating leadership qualities and competencies among the young generations of East Africans as well as fostering a greater understanding of international development issues relating to Africa and beyond².

The University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in collaboration with the University of Nairobi (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda) and the University of California, Los Angeles' James S. Coleman African Studies Center inaugurated the Uongozi (Leadership – in Kiswahili) Institute, a summer school, in 1998, in Tanzania. The project involves undergraduate students in the arts, humanities, social sciences, law and related fields from the East African universities and North America. The school's main goal is to foster civic and intellectual leadership qualities among the next generation of East African leaders and to contribute to the promotion of rational and dynamic policy making processes that are informed by African as well as global perspectives. This has been accomplished by involving promising undergraduate students at the mid-point in their studies, in a six week summer school. In the process the students learn problem solving techniques, critical thinking, and the values of team-work and co-operation and are introduced to current theoretical, methodological and substantive debates in academic disciplines, and the wider society as they relate to East Africa. A major feature of the Institute is the interaction of the students with prominent African leaders and noted African and Africanist scholars as well as field work/internship. The American-based students are normally an integral part of this

² See also <http://chuss.mak.ac.ug/news/political-science-hosts-east-african-uongozi-institute-summer-school#sthash.XwaZsaSb.dpuf> – (accessed 12 March 2016)

networking process and their own study of Africa is enriched by the experience of living and studying in Africa.

Specific Objectives of the East African Uongozi Institute

"Uongozi" means leadership in Kiswahili and inspiring and strengthening leadership is the purpose of the East African Uongozi Institute (EAFUI). Based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the Uongozi Institute is dedicated to supporting African leaders to attain sustainable development for their nations and for Africa. It seeks to inspire leaders and promote the recognition of the importance of leadership in sustainable development. The overall objective of the Institute is the creation of a dynamic and broad-minded leadership in the East African region. To achieve this main objective, a number of "intermediate" critical objectives have been implemented.

- a) providing leadership training to over 200 carefully selected students in leadership training at the Uongozi School through well-planned annual training programmes
- b) Increasing knowledge of leadership-related problems and issues in East Africa and elsewhere through research, publications and documentation.
- c) establishing functional links with key stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations and public institutions in East Africa by creating a solid network of information dissemination
- d) providing advisory and mid-career follow-up training to EAFUI graduates and other interested public servants in East Africa through appropriate programs
- e) Developing a global critical constituency support.

The recruitment process

The Uongozi Institute Program brings together students from the main universities in the East African community (EAC), namely, the University of Dar es Salaam, University of Nairobi, Makerere University, Rwanda and Burundi universities and students from North American Universities coordinated from University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Each intake comprises 45-60 students. The selection process and the composition of the participants is based on gender and discipline criteria. It is explicitly stated that not less than one third of the participants will be females. Regarding disciplines, students of the Uongozi School are drawn from the disciplines of Political Science, Public Policy and Administration, Sociology, History, Economics, Business Administration, Commerce, Law, Education, the natural Sciences and other related fields (see Mukandala 2000; Bana 2014). In the early years, the participants of the Uongozi School originated from 14 Universities: five Universities in East Africa, eight Universities in the United States, and one University in Europe (Mukandala 200).

The Uongozi School programme training curriculum, combined formal studies with educational visits to interesting historical learning sites. For a period of six to eight weeks about sixty students undergo a program that starts with a one week community service field work. Thereafter, they participate in a series of lectures and panels with leading intellectuals and officials from the public service sector, the private sector and the civil society sector. Finally, the program involves several educational field trips and visits to important learning sites such as exchange markets and museums. The EAFUI also organizes internship programmes which place alumni of the school for practical training in a wide spectrum of high profile institutions in the region and beyond. Some of these institutions include legislatures, high courts, election commissions and refugee camps, chambers of commerce, NGOs, EAC, and the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Nearly 200 participants have gone through the internship programme.

Components of the East African Uongozi Institute

The components of the EAFUI have the following intermediate objectives peculiar to each of them:

- 1) **The Uongozi School (UOS).** This component handles all activities relating to the organization and conduct of the annual leadership training programmes - Uongozi School of EAFUI.
- 2) **Research, Publications and Documentation (RPD).** The RPD is responsible for organizing and conducting research, ensuring publication of research findings and proper documentation and distribution of relevant literature to facilitate the annual training programmes. Emphasis is on two types of research, namely leadership-related research and research on the "burning issues" of the day which include East African co-operation, as defined by the Project Steering Committee.
- 3) **Networking, and Information Dissemination (NID).** This is intended to create an "East African constituency" of people concerned with the leadership factor. These actors, considered as the "stakeholders" of EAFUI, will be identified from different sectors as the East African Cooperation Secretariat, government agencies, business, academic, and voluntary/NGO sectors. Such component attempts to link these stakeholders through various ways, including seminars, workshops, conferences, and distribution of EAFUI newsletters and bulletins.
- 4) **Advisory and Follow-up Training Services (AFTS).** This component is responsible for organizing and conducting follow-up training courses for mid-career public servants and leaders who include former EAFUI graduates and other interested persons. The component responds to specific requests from any of the major stakeholders such as learning institutions, the civil service, the East African Co-operation and voluntary sector groups. The requests from stakeholders may take different forms such as advice on specific issues, mounting

specialized leadership training courses for particular groups and conducting research on specified issues. It is believed that AFTS have the potential to becoming a source of funding for EAFUI through the sale of professional services.

Outcome and Overall Assessment Achievements

- 1) The Fifteen years of implementation of the Uongozi programme in East Africa region enabled training of over 599 participants/students in new leadership skills, insights and experiences. Since its inception in 1998, the EAFUI has achieved five components. First, it has organized annual Uongozi Schools which initially consisted of participants from the Makerere University, University of Nairobi and the University of Dar es Salaam. By end of 2014 a total of 599 participants had been trained and successfully graduated from the school. Resource persons were drawn from a pool of academicians and practitioners including prominent politicians, journalists, serving and retired government officials as well as academicians from the region. In its early days, the School was able to attract a diverse group of participants from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and the United States (38 students), Canada (3 students), Denmark (2), South Africa (1), Zimbabwe (1) and Zambia (1). Some of the graduates from the programme have subsequently become Members of Parliament (MPs), academicians, leaders of political parties, ambassadors, civil society activists, journalists, government officials, United Nations and World Bank officials and successful entrepreneurs in the private sector.
- 2) Community service has been a characteristic feature of the Uongozi School since 2000. Visits to historical sites of national and international importance are undertaken to widen the participants' understanding and appreciation of regional and African history but also of existing and potentials resources that can be harnessed for development in the region.
- 3) The Uongozi School has enjoyed high levels of political support in the region. The opening and closing ceremonies of each School session have been

officiated by high-powered dignitaries, including the Presidents of Tanzania (2005) and Uganda (2004), the Prime Minister of Tanzania (2006), the Prime Minister of Kenya (2009) and senior government ministers, etc.

4) Over the 15 years of the school's existence, a wide number of topics and themes on leadership, democracy and development have been covered during the training. Box 1 shows the themes of the sessions of the school.

Box 1: Themes of the sessions
1998: Governance, democracy and development
1999: Conflict management and regional co-operation; the challenge of Africa leadership
2000: Governance and democracy
2001: African leadership ad Globalisation
2002: African leadership ad Globalisation
2003: Leadership, development and African union
2004: African leadership and challenges of Multipartism and poverty reduction
2005: Leadership and participation
2006: Leadership and development
2007: Leadership and development
2008: Leadership, pan –Africanism and Development
2010: Leadership and empowerment
2012: Leadership and Social transformation
2013: Leadership and Democracy

Source: Uongozi School 2014 Report

The theme of the 2014 Uongozi School was ***“African States Competing Identities and Democratization”***. Politics of identity or politicization of ethnic identities dominate many African countries. Exclusion of specific ethnicities from effective control of state power and economic resources has been a source of many post-independence violent conflicts in Africa. One of the undesirable

consequences of the third wave of democratization that re-introduced multiparty politics was the resort to ethnic politics. Ethnic entrepreneurs mobilized people by emphasizing sub-nationalities to maximize their corporate political, economic and social interests. In many instances, states ceased to be the arbiters of different group interests to become the centre for group contestations. Ethnic politics is short-sighted and counterproductive as voters are only concerned with enabling their members or coalition to control the state (Hon Membe 2014)³.

The Uongozi school programme remains as relevant today as it was when it was established in 1998. The East African Uongozi Institute draws its relevance from its deep desire to address one of the most formidable challenges facing Africa, which is, leadership deficit in order to bring about sustainable development, democracy and stability in the continent. After five decades of independence, most African countries still experience famine, misery, poverty and vulnerability among its populations. Economic growth has not yet transformed people's living standards for the better by providing employment and better income-earning opportunities to the majority of citizens. Democratic leadership has been uneven across the continent with few countries demonstrating positive trends towards democratic governance, avoiding corruption and instability. It is on this basis that there have been a myriad of efforts in trying to nurture responsible and transformative leadership in Africa (IEO 2014, 2015).

The Uongozi Institute complements, as such, ongoing measures and benefits from existing regional structures to achieve its goals. The work that EAFUI does is highly complementary to the efforts that the EAC partner states are making to deepen and strengthening their cooperation. When young East African scholars are brought together in the Uongozi programme, they appreciate that there is a lot that unites rather than dividing them. They cultivate long term personal relationships and

³ Opening speech of guest of honour 2014 Uongozi summer school

understandings that are critical for the sustainability of the Community.

9) Training of African leaders: The main thrust of the Institute is to foster knowledge, innovativeness and patriotism among potential leaders of the region. The EAFUI therefore represents a major advance in leadership training and development. The EAFUI goes beyond traditional training offered by universities and prepares its young graduates for leadership positions in the public, private and non-profit sectors and for the ethical challenges they will encounter throughout their careers.

The EAFUI rests on three premises: First, the long term success of an organization, community or society depends on visionary and transformative leadership and not just on technical proficiency and management. It is critical to have a cosmopolitan elite whose cognitive competence also encompasses world views and experiences that are critical to successful statecraft as it has been recently argued by a number of respected scholars (Beegle 2016; ACBF 2007; Corrigan 2015). Second, good leadership must be grounded in ethical values. Third, although leadership is a complex form of human behaviour, it can be learned and developed through training as Plato observed centuries ago. The competing identities in East African countries and Africa in general, if not well managed and depoliticised, might degenerate into violent conflicts and unhealthy power struggles. Fourth, there has been a sustained strong leadership of Uongozi pioneers. It is only through strong and visionary leadership and commitment of the East African Uongozi Institute has it been possible to implement and sustain the programme for more than a decade, – successfully addressing inter-state relationships, understanding the dynamics and challenges involved as well donor relations.

Challenges

Sustainability is the major challenge facing the Uongozi school programme. From the beginning the program has been heavily funded by external donors such as the Ford Foundation. The future of the

programme depends largely on donor funding unless EAC member states allocate funds to this effort.

Other Efforts to Develop Leadership in African

In growing leadership and governance capabilities, two initiatives stand-out in Africa, namely, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the Mo Ibrahim Leadership Prize. The APRM was established in 2003 as an instrument to monitor the performance of participating countries based on agreed upon protocols. This fosters the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through shared experiences and best practices (Mukamunana and Kuye, 2005). The APRM offers a unique approach to monitoring agreed norms of political, economic and corporate governance in Africa (Killinder, 2008). Nonetheless, experience with the APRM's implementation indicates a need for its review to reflect emerging governance challenges, leadership realities, and the aspirations of its people (Corrigan, 2015; Bing-Pappoe, 2010).

The Mo Ibrahim Leadership Prize was established with one clear objective, namely, to put governance at the centre of any conversation on African development (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016). Established in 2007, the Ibrahim Prize recognises and celebrates excellence in Africa's leadership. The Prize aims to encourage leaders to dedicate their tenure of office to surmount development challenges of their countries, improve livelihoods and welfare of their people and consolidate the foundation for sustainable development. The Prize is a US\$5 million award paid over ten years and US\$200,000 annually for life thereafter. The significance of the Prize lies not only in its winners but also in the conversation around leadership that it generates. Two potential winners are: the Tanzanian and Nigerian newly elected presidents' for the global admiration they have drawn sum up the aspirations for credible leadership in Africa.

President John Pombe Magufuli's presidency has received national, regional and international acclaim within his 100 days in office. In bold pursuance of cost-cutting measures, instilling discipline in the civil service and leading by example, the Tanzanian president has made it clear that leadership can and does make a difference (Mtulya, 2015). Likewise, Wa-Kuhenga (2016) describes Magufuli, as a man of the people who has distinguished himself as a leader to propel the country towards economic independence and restore Tanzania's international profile to the levels of the founding "Father of the Nation", Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. Similarly, Alison (2016) contends that Magufuli demonstrates a humility lacking in many African leaders. *#WhatWouldMagufuliDo* trended for weeks and the president's example was used by citizens of other countries to question why their own leaders failed to deliver on their promises. One hundred days on, *#WhatWouldMagufuliDo* remains a fair question for many African leaders.

When President Muhammadu Buhari's government assumed office in Nigeria in 2015, there was optimism resulting from his government's reforms in all sectors, which, coupled with his leadership style, brought meaningful development to Nigeria. There is real hope that a severe contest between intelligence, which presses forward and timid ignorance obstructing Nigeria's progress, will stimulate citizens to support national development (Moghalu, 2015). Accordingly, if Tanzanian and Nigerian contexts are representatives of the Africa that their citizens desire, then, Africa needs leaders in all sectors to perform better than they have so far.

Conclusion and recommendations

As Africa focuses on regional integration, the East African Uongozi Institute and other institutions involved in such activities are instrumental in fostering the spirit of brotherhood and sharing knowledge on a number of development issues. The role of good leadership cannot be over-emphasized since it is central to Africa's development in an increasingly complex world and accelerating change. The achievement of the Sustainable Development

Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063 depends largely on strong and visionary leadership. The Uongozi School plays, as such, an important role in promoting civic and intellectual leadership qualities among the youth which constitutes the next generation of East African leaders. It is thus important for:

1. The governments of the EAC member states to support the activities of the Uongozi Institute and other institutions involved in similar work;
2. The EAC member states and African leaders need to increase investments in youth leadership if African continental objectives and vision on socio economic development are to be realized;
3. African countries should establish a Pan African incubator for young leaders' capacity building. This will enable African youth with leadership potential to undergo capacity building and mentorship by experienced leaders;
4. African states should promote policies and efforts that support the development of future African leaders and talented entrepreneurs. This will also reduce the brain drain and retain most talented youth in Africa to execute her transformation agenda;
5. The Africa Union and continental institutions should support the Uongozi School and replicate the model in the other regional communities.

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