

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR INSTITUTION BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

By

Otive Igbuzor, PhD

**Chief of Staff to the Deputy President of the Senate,
National Assembly, Three Arms Zone, Abuja, Nigeria.**

Website: www.otiveigbuzor.com

E-mail: otiveigbuzor@yahoo.co.uk

**PAPER PRESENTED AT FIDA AFRICA REGIONAL CONGRESS
2019 HELD IN ABUJA ON 14TH OCTOBER 2019.**

1. PREAMBLE

Let me thank FIDA for giving me the opportunity to present my thoughts on this important topic of **Leadership strategies for institution building and development**. The theme of the conference focusing on women and children is timely. It has been established that the development of any society requires the participation and contribution of both men and women.¹ Unfortunately, women have been historically marginalised in all areas of life including political leadership, economy and social life. In 2018, the World Economic Forum in a report documented that it could take 202 years (till 2220) for the global gender pay gap to even out at present trend.² Meanwhile, in the last few decades, humanity has realised that progress and development of society requires concerted efforts for gender equality and women empowerment. Children have their rights denied every single day. In 2017 alone, an estimated 6.3 million children and young adolescents died mostly from preventable causes, according to UNICEF report in 2018.³ We now know that countries on top of the human development index such as the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark etc) have gender sensitive and child friendly policies and put a lot of efforts on the growth of women and children.

The seed of discrimination against women is sown during pregnancy, nurtured through socialisation and ossified in institutions. This is why leadership strategies for institution building and development is critical for the future of the world.

Leadership has been recognised as one of the most important variables that affect the performance of any organisation, institution or nation. Study after study, superior financial and organisational performance, as well as other forms of success, have been linked to leadership.⁴ Scholars have opined that the success or failure of organisations and nations depends on leadership excellence and not managerial acumen.⁵

It has been documented that the progress, development and fortunes of many nations are tied to the type and quality of the political leadership that they have had and continue to have.⁶ In a recent survey of 1,767 experts across the world, 86 percent of the respondents agreed that the world is facing a leadership crisis.⁷ According to Myles Munroe, the world is filled with followers, supervisors and managers but very few leaders.⁸

Chinua Achebe argued that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian Character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else.”⁹ But scholars have documented that scourges of bad leadership and signs of darkened mood are everywhere in Nigeria.¹⁰

Despite the recognition that Leadership is crucial for the development of organisations and nations and that leaders can be trained, there are very few organisations especially in Africa dedicated to building transformative leadership. Myles Munroe put it aptly:

There is leadership potential in every person. Despite this universal latent ability, very few individuals realise this power, and fewer still have responded effectively to the call. As a result, our nations, societies and communities are suffering from an astounding leadership void.¹¹

There is therefore the need for leadership strategies for institution building and development. In this paper, we argue for the need to develop transformative leaders that can build gender sensitive and child friendly institutions that will accelerate development. But first, we explicate the concept of leadership, institution building and development.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

a. CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Like most terms in social discourse, there is no universal definition of leadership. Leadership is defined in different ways by several scholars. **Myles Munroe defines leadership as the ability to lead others by influence.**¹² This includes the capacity to influence, inspire, rally, direct, encourage, motivate, induce, move, mobilize, and activate others to pursue a common goal or purpose while maintaining commitment, momentum, confidence and courage. The most popular definition is that Leadership is influence.¹³ Influence here means the ability to move another person in a direction you believe is important. According to Bernard Montgomery, a British Field Marshal, Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence.¹⁴ To influence requires that your ideas are heard and accepted. You can only win hearts and minds when you respect their aspirations, interests and concerns.¹⁵ According to Daniel Goleman, the fundamental task of leaders is to prime good feeling in those they lead.¹⁶ Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great said, "An army of deer led by a lion is more to be feared than an army of lions led by a deer."¹⁷

The leadership of any organization or country determines its success or failure. It is the process of providing guidance to followers- the art of influencing human behaviour to strive willingly for mutually compatible objectives. One scholar once argued that "a leader is a person who knows the road, who can keep ahead and who pulls others after him/her." The Core Leadership Responsibilities include achieving the task, building and maintaining the group and developing the individual. In any organisation or country, it is the leadership that mobilises people to get things done.

Mary Lippitt, a Leadership scholar conceives of Leadership as a balancing act in which the leader must grapple with both strategic and tactical issues and problems, attending to both internal and external forces- and always "keep their eyes on the prize."¹⁸ She argues that to get results, leaders must focus on results. She proposes a Leadership framework that is explicit and able to broaden the mindset of leaders and encourage the examination of options and produce results. The Framework consists of six priorities that leaders and teams need to focus upon. The priorities are:

1. Developing new products and services (Inventor)
2. Winning and retaining customers (Catalyst)
3. Designing a supportive infrastructure and systems (Developer)
4. Focusing on efficiencies and improving quality (Performer)
5. Building the culture and developing people (Protector)
6. Scanning the future and seizing opportunities (Challenger)

Leaders can get things done by engaging in five practices.¹⁹ First is to model the way by clarifying values through giving voice and affirming shared ideals as well as setting the example by aligning actions with shared values. Secondly, leaders can get things done by

envisioning the future and enlisting others in a common vision through appealing to shared aspirations. Thirdly, leaders can challenge the process by searching for opportunities through innovative ways to improve and experimenting, taking risks and learning from experience. Fourthly, leaders can enable others to act by fostering collaboration, building trust, facilitating relationships and strengthening others through increasing self-determination and developing competence. Finally, leaders can get things done by recognizing contributions through showing appreciation for individual excellence and celebrating the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

According to John Maxwell, a good leader has 21 indispensable qualities namely character; charisma (ability to draw people to you); commitment; effective communication; competence (ability to say it, plan it and do it); courage; discernment (ability to find out the root of a matter through intuition, intellect and experience); focus (to ensure prioritization, concentration and task completion); generosity; initiative; listening; passion; positive attitude; problem solving ability; relationships; responsibility; security; self-discipline; servanthood; teachability and vision.²⁰

It is important to point out that leaders are ordinary people who accept or are placed under extra-ordinary circumstances that bring forth their latent potential, producing a character that inspires the confidence and trust of others.²¹ This is why Amandla, the cultural wing of the Africa National Congress (ANC) stated that leaders are not born; they are produced during the course of the struggle. Great leaders are usually ordinary people who are prepared to sacrifice and do extraordinary things because circumstances made demands on their potential. True leaders are not selfish and have no interest in themselves or position but committed to influencing others for the common good.

b. INSTITUTION BUILDING

The concept of institution building has evolved over time from its initial interpretation as a matter of management training and development. According to Blunt and Collins, institution building connotes programmes of sustainable, constructive change in organisations which are designed to make them better at doing what they already do, and more efficient; or which are designed to change the character of institutions by modifying their goals and strategies, cultures, ways of functioning, management styles etc.²² The core concern of institution building activities is to improve the effectiveness and capacity of formal organisations.²³ It is well known that the quality of a country's institutions matter for its growth and development.²⁴ In a modern society, there are many institutions in the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government as well as regulatory institutions for the private sector and civil society.

The starting point of institution building in any country is the preparation of a comprehensive development plan. A second step is the formulation of policies and strategies to attain the mission and goals articulated in the development plan. This is then followed by effective organisation with clear roles, standard operating procedures, alignment, co-ordination and synergy among the institutions. The final step is effective delivery of service through budgeting, effective and efficient delivery mechanism with active participation of citizens. As all of these happen, there is institutionalisation of planning and delivery at all levels creating a culture of the way things are done.

c. DEVELOPMENT

The challenge of development is arguably one of the greatest challenges that has dominated world history. Human beings have always been concerned about how to improve their condition of living and better confront the forces of nature and the environment. Over the years, a lot of progress has been made on how to deal with the challenges of development and improve the standard and condition of living of human beings.

It has been well established that every society has the capacity to develop and all societies strive for development. But the concept of development is a very controversial one. We have argued elsewhere that the definitions and interpretations of development are influenced by history, discipline, ideological orientation and training.²⁵ Chambers defines development as “good change”.²⁶ This definition envisages that development is synonymous with progress. This progress should entail an all-encompassing improvement, a process that builds on itself and involve both individuals and social change.²⁷ Kamghampati argues that development requires growth and structural change, some measure of distributive equity, modernization in social and cultural attitudes, a degree of political transformation and stability, an improvement in health and education so that population growth stabilizes, and an increase in urban living and employment.²⁸ In our view, development always involves change that affects various facets of life including economic, social and political spheres. Sustainable development means that development is achieved without excess environmental degradation, in a way that both protects the rights and opportunities of coming generations and contributes to compatible approaches.²⁹

The past five decades have witnessed monumental changes in the world. Global economic wealth has increased sevenfold and average incomes have tripled.³⁰ Yet, poverty has increased to record high levels. **The major problem is that wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few people while majority of the people live in abject poverty.** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its 1998 report documented that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product of the 48 least developed countries. According to Oxfam,

As at the start of 2014, Oxfam calculated that the richest 85 people on planet earth owned as much as the poorest half of humanity. Between March, 2013 and March, 2014, these 85 people grew \$668 million richer each day. If Bill Gates were to spend \$1 million every single day, it will take him 218 years to spend it all. In reality though, he would never run out of money: even at a modest return of just 2 percent would make him \$4.2 million each day in interest alone.

By 2015, the number has decreased to 80 richest people having the same wealth as the poorest 50 percent. By 2018, Oxfam showed that only 26 richest people on earth had the same net wealth as the poorest half of the world’s population (3.8 billion) people.³¹ The 2019 Oxfam report showed that billionaire fortunes increased by 12 percent in 2018- or \$2.5 billion a day while the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity saw their wealth decline by 11 percent. Meanwhile, the number of billionaires has almost doubled since the financial crisis, with a new billionaire created every two days between

2017 and 2018, yet wealthy individuals and corporations are paying lower rates of tax than they have in decades.³²

In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, income inequality is at its highest level in the last fifty years. The average income of the richest 10 percent of the population is about nine times that of the poorest 10 percent.³³

Some scholars have advanced several reasons for the growing inequality in the world including globalization and technological progress. But experiences of different countries have shown that it is more of deliberate political and economic choices driven by market fundamentalism and the capture of power by economic elites.³⁴

It has been documented that there is a strong link between gender inequality and economic inequality. Studies show that in more economically unequal societies, fewer women complete higher education, fewer women are represented in the legislature and the pay gap between women and men is wider.³⁵

3. LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR INSTITUTION BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Institution building and development require visionary, dynamic and capable leadership. There are different theories of leadership.³⁶ **The “great man”** theories assume that the capacity for leadership is inherent and that great leaders are born and not made. **The trait** theories assume that people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them better suited for leadership. **The behaviourist theories** concentrate on what people do that make them to be leaders rather than on their qualities. **Situational theories** point out that leadership emerges according to the situation which also determines the leadership style. **Contingency theory** points out that no leadership style is best in all situations but depend on such factors as the situation, people, the task, the organisation and other environmental variables. **The transactional theory** emphasizes the importance of the relationship between leaders and followers, focusing on mutual benefits derived from a form of “contract” through which the leader delivers such things as rewards and recognition in return for commitment and loyalty of the followers. The central concept in **transformational theory** is change and the role of leadership in envisioning and implementing the change. Transformational leaders are change agents; courageous; believe in people; value driven; lifelong learners; have the ability to deal with complexity; ambiguity and uncertainty; and are visionaries (have grand plans).³⁷ The goal of transformational leadership is to ‘transform’ people and organisations in a literal sense – to change them in mind and heart; enlarge vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum building.³⁸

From the above, it is clear that there are leadership theories based on the idea that there are natural born leaders or those born with leadership traits. But several studies have shown conclusively that leadership capabilities can be developed through education and experience.³⁹ Myles Munroe made the point that every human has the instinct and capacity for leadership, but most do not have the courage or will to cultivate it.⁴⁰ Similarly, John Maxwell argued that leadership is not an exclusive club for those who were “born with it”

and that the traits which constitute the raw materials of leadership can be acquired.⁴¹ According to Jo Owen, you do not have to be born a superhero to become a good leader; you can lead by mastering a range of practical skills.⁴²

It is therefore necessary to build the capacity of people for leadership. Leadership training programmes or leadership schools are based on the understanding that people can be trained to become leaders. As Myles Munroe put it, “true leaders are not born, but made...Leadership courses can only teach skills: they cannot teach character and vision. Leaders are made through developing character and vision.”⁴³

There are different kinds of leadership for different eras. Scholars have pointed out that the period of crisis requires charismatic leadership with a combination of intelligence, purpose, grace under pressure and consideration for followers. The period of change requires transformational leaders who are courageous, value driven and visionary people who are uncomfortable with uncertainty while steady times require transactional leaders who maintain the status quo and strengthen existing structures, cultures and strategies. **It is clear to us that the type of leadership needed in Africa is transformative leadership.** Since it has been proven that leaders can be trained, all efforts should be made to build a new crop of transformative leaders for building gender sensitive and child friendly institutions to accelerate development. It is only through the development of transformative leaders that we can have individuals that can bring sustainable and constructive change to organisations and institutions. Transformative leaders can bring about grand plans that will improve the effectiveness and capacity of formal organisations and institutions. Transformative leaders can help to develop policies that will reverse gender inequality and economic inequality.

Every leader should aim to identify, nurture, equip and develop other leaders and ultimately form a team of leaders. When this happens, there is nothing they cannot achieve. People development is a worthy and fulfilling experience for any leader. As Maxwell has stated, to live a worthwhile, meaningful life, a person must be part of something greater than himself.”

It is therefore necessary for every organisation and country to put in place mechanism to develop traits and attitudes of people as well as attract, develop and grow leaders for transformative change of organisations and nations.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of transformative leaders to build organisations and institutions that are able to adapt to change, grow or prepare for a more uncertain future or deliver services in a sustainable manner. Many institutions are losing credibility and trust of citizens or failing to perform to deliver services for which they are set up. This is why we need leadership strategies to produce transformative leaders who are then able to build strong institutions that will drive growth and development. The leadership strategies should make explicit how many leaders we need, of what kind, where, with what skills and behaving in what fashion individually and collectively to achieve institutional building and development. The strategies should consider issues of the required current and future leadership capabilities; leadership development strategy; Strategic execution and leadership culture; talent acquisition, talent sustainability and leadership practices; and current and future leadership culture.

4. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

It is important that every organisation or nation should have a deliberate strategy of building a pipeline of leadership succession that will tackle issues of institution building and development among other issues. Scholars have pointed out that 99 percent of all leadership occurs not from the top but from the middle of an organisation.⁴⁴ Therefore, for transformative change to occur in any organisation or nation requires a critical mass of transformative leaders.

The first thing that needs to be done is for government at all levels, business organisations and civil society to take the challenge of building transformative leadership seriously and put in place a strategy for the development of leaders.

Secondly, governments, private sector and civil society should establish or support the establishment of leadership schools for the training of transformative leaders.

Thirdly, leadership mentoring should be institutionalised in all sectors- government, politics, business, academics and civil society.

Fourthly, strategies and policies should be put in place to deal with gender inequality and economic inequality. Scholars are in agreement that policy intervention is critical for institutional change.⁴⁵

Furthermore, there should be deliberate effort to promote intergenerational dialogue at all levels. In addition, more emphasis should be placed on youth development. This will involve among other things the formulation and implementation of effective youth policies that will deal with the challenges facing youth that include but not limited to lack of access to high quality and relevant education, unemployment, chronic poverty, political disengagement and poor environmental health.⁴⁶ Youth development is important because young persons are more amenable to change. They can learn quickly and run with new ideas.

Finally, there is the need for a more nuanced leadership selection process in governance, business and civil society.

5. CONCLUSION

Leadership has been recognised as one of the most important variables that affect the performance of any organisation, institution or nation. There is unanimity among scholars and commentators that leadership is one of the challenges facing Africa. Institution building and development require visionary, dynamic and capable leadership. It is therefore necessary to build the capacity of people for transformative leadership for gender sensitive and child friendly policies to drive development. This can be done through deliberate strategy at all levels with special focus on women and youth.

ENDNOTES

¹ Igbuzor, O (2012), Gender and Political Leadership in Overcoming Challenges of Transformation in Nigeria. Lagos, Joe Tolalu & Associates.

² World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 Global Gender Gap Report.

³ UNICEF (2018), Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2018.

⁴ Fulmer, R. M and Bleak, J. L (2008), The Leadership Advantage: How the Best Companies are Developing their Talent to Pave the Way for Future Success. New York, Amacom.

-
- ⁵ Sinek, Simon (2017), *Leaders Eat Last*. UK, Penguin Random House.
- ⁶ Igbuzor, O (2017), *Leadership, Development and Change*. Ibadan, Kraft Books Limited
- ⁷ Petiglieri, Gianpiero (2014), There is no Shortage of Leaders. *Harvard Business Review* December 15, 2014.
- ⁸ Munroe, Myles (2009), *Becoming a Leader*. New Kensington, Whitaker House.
- ⁹ Achebe, Chinua (1987), *The Trouble with Nigeria*.
- ¹⁰ Anam-Ndu, Ekeng A. (1998), *The Leadership Question in Nigeria: A Prescriptive Exploration*. Lagos, Geo-Ken Associates.
- ¹¹ Munroe, Myles (1993), *Becoming a Leader*. New Kensington, Whitaker House.
- ¹² Ibid
- ¹³ Collier, K and Williams, M. (2004), *Biblical Leadership: Becoming a Different Kind of Leader*. Greenville, Ambassador International
- ¹⁴ Quoted in Maxwell, J. C. (1999) *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*. Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson Inc.
- ¹⁵ *Successful Manager's Handbook* (2002 by Moi Ali et al)
- ¹⁶ Goleman, Daniel (2012), *The New Leaders: Transforming the Art of Leadership into the Science of Results*.
- ¹⁷ Sanborn, Mark (2006), *You don't need a Title to be a Leader*. New York, The Doubleday Broadway Publishing Company
- ¹⁸ Lippitt, Mary Burner (2002), *The Leadership Spectrum: Business Priorities that Get Results*. California, Davies-Black Publishing
- ¹⁹ Igbuzor, O (2009), *Lecture Notes on Leadership*. Abuja, African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development.
- ²⁰ Maxwell, J. C. (1999), *Op Cit*
- ²¹ Munroe, M. (1993) *Op cit*
- ²² Blunt, Peter and Collins, Paul (1994), *Institution Building in Developing Countries in Public Administration and Development Vol 14*, pp 111-120.
- ²³ Moore, M., Stewart S and Hudock, A. (1995), *Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method: A Review of Literature and Ideas*. Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)
- ²⁴ Mukand, S. W. and Majumdar, S (2004), *On Institution Building*. Paper presented at One Day Public Economics Workshop at Queen's University.
- ²⁵ Igbuzor, O (2005), *Perspectives on Democracy and Development*. Lagos, Joe-Tolalu & Associates.
- ²⁶ Chambers, R (1997), *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. London, Intermediate Technology Publication.
- ²⁷ Thomas, A (2000), "Meanings and Views of Development" in Allen T and Thomas A (Eds), *Poverty and Development in the 21st Century*. UK, Oxford University Press.
- ²⁸ Kambhampati, U. S. (2004), *Development and the Developing World*. UK, Polity Press.
- ²⁹ Dalal-Clayton, B and Bass, S (Ed)(2002), *Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book*. London, OECD and UNDP
- ³⁰ Watkins, Kevin (2000), *The Oxfam Poverty Report*. An Oxfam Publication
- ³¹ Oxfam 2019 Inequality Report
- ³² Oxfam *ibid*
- ³³ Oxfam
- ³⁴ Oxfam 2019
- ³⁵ Oxfam 2014
- ³⁶ Igbuzor, O and Anuku, C. E. O. (2013), *Lecture Notes on Leadership and Entrepreneurship*. Abuja, African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development.
- ³⁷ Rao, N. (2009), *Theories of Leadership: A brief Introduction*.
- ³⁸ Bolden, R. et al (2003), *A Review of Leadership Theory and Competency Frameworks*. UK, Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter.
- ³⁹ Tamenbaum, Nancy (2013), *Can Leadership be Taught?* www.execdev.kenan-flagler.unc.edu
- ⁴⁰ Munroe, Myles (2005), *The Spirit of Leadership*. USA, Whitaker House.
- ⁴¹ Maxwell, John (1993), *Developing the Leader within You*. Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson Inc.
- ⁴² Owen, Jo (2009), *How to Lead*.
- ⁴³ Munroe, M. (1993), *Becoming a Leader: Everyone can do it*. Bahamas, Pneuma Life Publishing.
- ⁴⁴ Maxwell, John(2005), *The 360 Degree Leader: Developing your influence from anywhere in the Organisation*. United States of America, Nelson Business.

⁴⁵ Mukard, S. W. and Majumdar, S. (2004), Op Cit

⁴⁶ Gyimah-Bempoud, K and Kimenyi, M. S. (2013), Youth Policy and Future of African Development. Washington, The Brookings Institution