Community leadership development

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Abstract   This paper presents a model for community leadership *capacity building*. This model for individual and organizational development is being used with the Resource and Development Foundation (RDF) in Stellenbosch, South Africa. RDF is a non-governmental organization with the aim of providing resource-based training and capacity-building services to the socially excluded and disadvantaged youth, women and rural people of the Western Cape. Here we examine the process of capacity building, theoretically and practically, with the intention of discovering lessons to inform management education in relation to leadership and change. The paper explores the issues related to developing empowerment: the capacity of a system to engage in enterprising dialogue where power is unequally distributed. It proposes a *community leadership development* framework that comprises three components: leading change through *dialogue*, *collective empowerment* and *connective leadership*.

Introduction

The development of community leadership capacity requires a theoretical framework capable of contextual grounding. Our aim is to present a model for community leadership development, and to contextualize our work in South Africa. We have developed this organizational development model over a period of two years working in association with the International Academy of African Business and Development where we have tested it at conferences in Port Elizabeth and London (Kirk and Shutte, 2002, 2003).

A major part of out thinking has been to find a way of achieving sustainable development that genuinely works with the principles of partnership and empowerment, and is aware of the dangers of theory importation to differing contexts. We have also been keen to develop a model which has the capacity for leadership education and development in different contexts, including that of the United Kingdom.

We take a sociocultural perspective on leadership, which seeks to understand leadership thinking and action in a situated way, and to bring to the surface the different leadership 'models in the mind' of the stakeholders in

particular social contexts. This then provides the opportunity for those stakeholders (members of a group, organization or community) to become more effective in working with the dynamics of their interactions. This we see as a journey of development and empowerment. For us empowerment is progressed by increasing the capacity for enterprising dialogue in a system where power among members is unequally distributed.

The paper begins by setting out our thinking about sociocultural leadership that informs our thinking and practice of organizational development. This is followed by a discussion on the theory that underpins the model. Here we explore a shift in the focus of leadership study. We establish our notion of capacity building. Finally we outline the context for its use in South Africa, and provide an account of the way in which we are using the model in South Africa.

Sociocultural leadership

Developing community leadership begins with recognizing that both the practice of leadership and the situation in which it occurs need to be understood. We consider leadership as a collective relational phenomenon. This collective relational phenomena is also 'cultured', that is, it is a phenomenon that grows out of, and is a product of its setting. It is what we call sociocultural leadership. This contrasts with notions of charismatic leadership invested in heroic individuals and ones usually in dominant hierarchical positions in a community or organizational system (Yukl, 2002, p. 431).

As western institutions increasingly move to more team-based and inter-agency forms of activity and away from hierarchical structures, a shift towards team-based models of leadership is gaining prominence (Horner, 1997, p. 283). As it does, we find the traditional African models of communal leadership or *ubuntu* may have useful lessons to offer (Mbigi and Maree, 1995). And yet the tensions between person-centred leadership and distributed leadership finds an echo even in the traditional African models where communal leadership coexists with the notion of the tribal chief (Chiwanga, 1995).

This tension between the co-existence of the organizational chief (Chief Executive) and an acceptance of distributed leadership represents an interesting paradox in the development of leadership theory. Can distributed leadership exist alongside the 'top of the house' notion of leadership that resides with the formal organizational leader with a title such as Chief Executive? Our response is that it can, but when leadership is conceived as an attribute of role relations rather than the personal characteristics of individuals. Leadership for us is a relational activity between role holders

in a system, and this allows for some roles having wider remits than do others. The underpinning view guiding our approach in our study and development of leadership capacity is seeing leadership as process, and not as person. It is the concept of role relatedness (Armstrong, 1988; Reed, 2001) that defines our view of relational leadership, rather than good inter-personal relationships that depend on people liking each other and being able to 'get on'. This creates organizational (or community) distributed leadership that is more than simply pluralizing the concept, more than just spreading it so more individuals are called leaders.

Leadership study: The journey from person to process

Social observers have attempted to make sense of leadership from different perspectives. They have sought to discover the traits of successful leaders (Stogdill, 1950) and the tasks they needed to perform (Adair, 1979). They point to the style and approach leaders needed to adopt (Lewin and Lippitt, 1938; Blake and Mouton, 1964; Geenleaf, 1998), and how they were to take account of the contingencies of the people and situations they faced (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey and Blanchard, 1977). In recent decades, organizational uncertainties caused by rapid environmental change prompted a resurgence of focus on transformational leaders able to inspire staff to success through troubled times (Bass, 1985). What all these perspectives on leadership have in common is that the focus on the study of leadership is centred essentially on the person of the leader.

Melissa Horner, in her review of the development of leadership theory (Horner, 1997), concludes that the most current theory looks at leadership as a process in which leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers, but as members of a community of practice. A community of practice is defined by Drath and Palus (1994, p. 4) as people united in a common enterprise who also share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking and ways of doing things.

An influencing factor in this shift to a process focus in leadership is the fact that enterprises in the last decade have found themselves working in a range of different partnership arrangements with other organizations. These inter-professional, inter-departmental, inter-agency patterns of working on projects where collaboration is required from stakeholders from different sectors of the business and the community increasingly breaks down the norm of work that is contained within organizational boundaries and organizational hierarchies. People are assigned to different projects working in many different teams where the onus on individuals taking enterprising responsibility for leadership of their contribution is essential for the success of the project. These 'task' and 'person' cultures (Handy,

1993) operate within a framework of traditional cultures such as the UK National Health Service and local government and cause strains in the system. The bureaucratic and hierarchical systems with the emphasis on standardization and accountability sit uneasily with the requirements of delegated authority that drive flexibility, quick response, creativity and innovation.

This new reality of permeable organizational boundaries, which place a premium on working collaboratively with diversity, disturbs traditional hierarchical notions of leadership. With new ways of organizing human collective activity comes the need for new forms of leadership. The notion of the traditional hierarchical leader exercising control over the whole institution needs at the very least to be supplemented by a recognition that leadership in complexity requires distributed leadership across the organization. In team-based organizations, groups of people working in different places need to access their own leadership. The concept of organization as building is gone.

But what precisely does distributed leadership mean? The concept of leadership within communities of practice should not be a picture of a group of people working harmoniously with their shared values and beliefs, in joint endeavour, with unity of purpose. This romantic and sentimental hue with its unitary perspective, that was part of the Human Relations thinking in the 1950s about organization depended on a 'well knit group'. The reality of people working in teams from the same or from different organizations is the existence of differing political agendas and unequal power distribution. This places a greater value on the rigour of collaboration through plurality. It requires in our view a more robust view of leadership able to engage with the hard realities (not just the sound bytes) of concepts like inclusivity, collaboration and diversity. The type of distributed leadership with the capacity for such engagement we propose emerges through a process of dialogue, connectivity and empowerment. It is what we refer to as community leadership: leadership within communities of different people who come together in collaborative endeavour.

Community leadership development in our view offers an opportunity to build leadership capacity in communities of difference who are seeking effective integration. The development of leadership as a relational phenomenon (Horner, 1997; Yukl, 2002; Wood, 2003) coincides with our own experience of the centrality of process in cross-cultural working. It points to the need for developing leadership capacity that is grounded in and emerges from particular cultural settings, and works with the creative energy of two principles that would appear to pull apart. These principles are incorporation and diversity.

Capacity building

Our approach to community leadership development begins with capacity building. James defines capacity building as 'an ongoing process of helping people, organizations and societies improve and adapt to changes around them' (James, 2002, p. 6). While this characterizes our purposes in the farm workers project, we add three caveats which provide a value base to inform our work:

Firstly, if capacity building is a process, learning must be at the heart of that process. It is through learning that people may come to see themselves and their situations in different ways. A transforming perspective enables people to engage reality with new eyes. It is this capacity to see differently that holds the prospect of beneficial social change. Learning that results in fundamental change, is what Argyris and Schon (1996, p. 21) refer to as double loop learning. That is change that goes beyond adaptation; it is change that reframes attitudes, beliefs and cultural values (Chapman, 2002). A consequence of seeing differently is that one is able to occupy one's role in a system in a different, more authoritative way. In this way learning presents an opportunity for system change.

The second point is that in James' definition capacity building is described as a 'helping' process. We should be clear about the nature of this 'help' since it marks the relationship between participants. For us partnership is the inter-dependence of different people with different roles engaged in the pursuit of a shared goal. If clarity of role, purpose and relationship is not articulated and 'lived out' then the desire for empowerment as an outcome in capacity building programmes, is undermined by a process which consciously or unconsciously fosters dependency. This can become a hidden virus in capacity building, and is what Freire was at pains to address in his work and writing on development (Freire, 1967, 1973). This places strictures on the participants. Those in the role of research facilitators must be critically aware of their power in the development dynamic and its potential for abuse. For those who are subjects in the research to engage with the task rather than in 'basic assumption' activity which reduces their role to being reluctant partici-pants, passive recipients or active belligerents or complainants (Bion, 1961).

Our third point is that while we accept that capacity building is an ongoing process, nonetheless specific and appropriate interventions can provide useful boosters to momentum, motivation and direction. The field of organizational development is based on this premise (Neumann *et al.*, 1997; James, 1998). Action research presents a powerful tool for learning and change that is ongoing, situated and sustained because it requires rigorous intervention to extract and use the lessons that emerge from the project. This is reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983) and is quite distinct from capacity

building interventions that send individuals off on training courses to develop skills and knowledge from some imported model of competence. This project for example does not seek to develop free-floating competencies. The skills and understandings developed will emerge out of and thus be better able to deal with the emotional, power and political milieu that pattern the cultural norms, memories and beliefs and influence behavior in the wine-producing community of the Western Cape.

The community leadership development framework

The three components of community leadership development are leading change through dialogue, connective leadership and collective empowerment. The components are represented in Figure 1 below and this is followed by a description of each component.

Leading change through dialogue
The contribution of dialogue, defined as collective thinking, is to help organizations create climates that lead to greater collaboration, fluidity and sustainability (Isaacs, 1993). It helps to promote organizational learning because it is concerned not to diminish difference, but to work creatively with the potential that diversity has to question the status quo and develop news ways of thinking and doing. Dialogue can advance understanding and reduce unnecessary conflict between groups and individuals by 'surfacing' or 'suspending' assumptions, thus clarifying what gives rise to the particular stance that different groups or individuals might be taking. It has been illustrated in a number of cases, for instance the transitional government in South Africa, that practising dialogue can lead to an

Figure 1 Community leadership development framework

agreement between parties even though they do not have the same reason for agreeing to the direction agreed or the action to be taken.

Dialogue, however, as used by authors like Buber (1947), Bohm (1996) and Isaacs (1993, 1999) is not simply a synonym for talking. It suggests a disciplined way of talking that is quite different from the open discussions of meetings so often characterized by domination by the powerful voices and advocacy rather than the pursuit of understanding. A safe container is a prerequisite for collective and inclusive learning through dialogue. Isaacs (1993: 25) describes dialogue thus:

> In dialogue, as we use the term, people gradually learn to suspend their defensive exchanges and further, to probe into the underlying reasons for *why* those exchanges exist. However, this probing into defenses is not the central purpose of a dialogue session. The central purpose is simply to establish a field of genuine meeting and inquiry which we call a container.

This, Isaacs says, is a setting in which people can allow free flow of meaning and vigorous exploration of the collective background of their thought, their personal predispositions, the nature of their shared attention and the rigid features of their individual and collective assumptions.

Practising dialogue can lead to an agreement between parties even though they do not have the same reasons for agreeing to the direction to be followed or the action to be taken. When the environment for dialogue feels good enough, safe enough, people are better able to deal with the uncertainties and difficulties experienced, and construct appropriate responses to the realities of the world in which their organization is to find its place. Witness the case of the transitional government in South Africa in the early 1990s that contained highly polarized political beliefs.

In rapidly changing organizations people need even more to be able to think together, talk together and work together in pursuit of a shared purpose. Such collaboration is possible where people can be publicly open about uncertainty and not-knowing, feel able to discuss their problems and successes, have the capacity to tolerate the shame and frustration of not knowing and express vulnerability in their need to learn from others, and seek help from others (Krantz, 1998, p. 94).

In social constructionist perspectives (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1991; Shotter, 1993) organizations are seen as constructions of dialogue. Organizational meaning and action are derived out of the conversations of people connected with the organization, its primary stakeholders. These conversations echo voices of the past as well as those of the present. It is the currency of the voices that secure patterns of thinking and behaving that constitute the operating culture of the organization. Exploring the impact of

voice in organizational conversations and its ability to reinforce existing patterns or to change them has been the focus of recent studies (Zeldin, 1998; Gratton and Ghoshal, 2002). If dialogue has the capacity to shape and organize collective endeavour, then using dialogue for change becomes a key leadership task. And based on our earlier discussion above which posits leadership as a collective distributed phenomena and one that is more about process than person, we conclude that leading change through dialogue is pivotal in community leadership development.

Connective leadership
Connective leadership is concerned with:

1 Helping individuals connect with their goals (establishing their roles).
2 Helping members collectively to explore the possibilities and potential of connecting with a common goal (effective team working).
3 Helping to create and sustain a creative space where collective leadership can flourish. It will foster collaboration and enable different voices to be heard. The leadership will not necessarily come from just one direction.

The connective leadership we are proposing as the third component in developing community leadership involves the task of enabling. The focus here is on enabling people to find creative ways of connecting personal goals within role, and enabling different organizational members to connect with through their roles in collaborative pursuit of mutual goals within the system's aims.

The contrast here is of two models originally described in David Bakan's analysis of agentic and communal or relational knowing. The first mode is about independence, autonomy and self-reliance, with separation and control as operating principles. This has traditionally been perceived as a male-gendered model. The connected way of knowing, the 'communal' mode (constructed as female-gendered) has its focus on developing creative networks of people in communal engagement with learning generated through relationship (Bakan, 1966). The term 'connective leadership', originally used by Jean Lipman-Bluman, integrates the gendered notions of leadership (Lipman-Bluman, 1992 quoted by Winderman and Sheeley, 1998, p. 263). It is an approach, which not only connects individuals to each other, but also to their mutual goals.

The connection that integrates individual desires with organizational goals is organizational role analysis (see Reed 2001; Briskin, 1996). It involves a person identifying the aim of the system they belong to, taking ownership of that aim as a member of that system and choosing the action

and personal behaviour which from their position best contributes to achieving that aim (Reed, 2001, p. 2). This process, described as role finding, role making and role taking, involves the harnessing of personal values, experiences and skills and drawing on that personal power as they exercise leadership in that role. This constitutes a legitimate use of personal power as opposed to the use of organizational position to pursue individual goals unrelated to system aims.

Role relatedness is the second mode of connective leadership and concerns people relating to each other interdependently in role. It does not rely on inter-personal relationships as the determinant of collective and cooperative behaviour between organizational members. Rather, it is a process whereby members of a system in the exercise of role engagement exercise distributed organizational leadership.

People with system-wide roles exercise their own leadership by facilitating this, enabling connective leadership – by providing the environment that encourages and nurtures such communal leadership. Leaders in these positions need to consider their roles from a systemic perspective requiring them to collaborate, connect and share leadership with those they lead. The development of these approaches in the west is hampered by a tendency towards fragmentation. This notion is more comfortably in accord with African perceptions of community, as illustrated by the concept of *ubuntu* (Mbigi and Maree, 1995). The cardinal belief of *ubuntu* is that a person can only be a person through others. A Shona proverb illustrates the use of these concepts: 'Chara chimive hachitswane inda' (a thumb working on its own is useless). It has to work collectively with the other fingers to get strength and to be able to achieve anything. (Mbigi and Maree, 1995).

Collective empowerment
Collective empowerment is about helping individuals to find their place, their role, their identity and their voice in the system. Collective empowerment comes from the interconnection of individuals in all parts of the system who have a clear conception of their roles. Through the process of collective empowerment individuals develop fruitful relations with others, and clarity about purpose, meaning and value in their work.

It is our contention that collective empowerment is enabled through organizational members taking up their role in the organization. The concept of role taking (Armstrong, 1988; Reed, 1976 and 2001) provides individuals with the authority to exercise voice. In this view, it is not hierarchical position or social status, but role that provides the basis for individual empowerment. And as more individuals exercise leadership in taking up their roles in relation to each other, leadership is distributed through the system. Collective empowerment comes from the interconnection of

individuals in all parts of the system who have a clear conception of their roles.

Krantz suggests that by helping people to see themselves in role and understand their roles, no matter how constantly changing and unstable they are, leaders can help people to link their authority to that of others and bring their interdependent experiences into focus (Krantz, 1998, p. 102). This achieves organization 'enrolment', a term preferred by Krantz to 'empowerment' because it offers a more effective collective container than the notion of 'empowerment' which has its focus on individuals empowered in isolation.

For individuals to take up their role means to take account of the system they are in and their relations with others in that system. They then take responsibility for themselves in relation to these others, their work, the system they are in and to the larger environment that contains their system.

An example of someone taking up their role in relation to the system as they saw it was Nelson Mandela. Mandela stepped far outside the conventional concepts of a leadership role when he initiated talks with the ruling National Party at a time when he was still in prison. He risked wrath and rejection by the ANC, but both inner conviction and his interpretation of the action needed within the political context of the time shaped his interpretation of his role.

The new models of leadership we propose promote partnership between individuals and groups who essentially need to work together to build organizations and communities where the values of empowerment, inclusivity, collaboration and transparency are paramount. The 1998 Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa speaks of the belief that participation rather than alienation was the way to reaffirm human dignity and integrity in the post apartheid endeavour of nation building. The process was a unique story of collective empowerment in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We witness communities where access to political power and autonomy have undergone radical change as a result of recently acquired national independence, change of government or policy changes. The success of the change will depend on involving many more people than the designated leaders in the process of shaping future directions. Poverty relief initiatives in South Africa are an example. Forums were established at which those affected together spoke out and voiced their needs and participated in the attempt to meet those needs.

The OD rationale

Principles
The work makes a direct contribution to the equitable development of all participants in the project. The aim is for all stakeholders to work together

in partnership in the common goal of building capacity that contributes in a holistic way to community betterment. Furthermore, it is our hope that this work will provide a template for other projects that will spread a language of inclusive community leadership. In order to realize these values, we intend to use a collaborative research and development method-ology. Our way of working is guided by the following principles:

- Congruence with capacity building principles.
- Collaborative inquiry and practice.
- Contained by a theoretical framework that is robust enough to provide the work with its focus and direction.

Congruence with capacity building
Capacity building is a collaborative relationship between partners in a development venture that is conditioned on three factors:

- Clarity about the common task.
- Clarity about the different roles of partners.
- Commitment from all partners to a joint inter-dependent enterprise that seeks to develop, empower and reduce dependency.

It follows therefore that the research process must accord with the above principles. And as a consequence the research participants should be actively reflexive in their engagement with the process.

Collaborative inquiry and practice as a phrase signals the necessary relationship between content and process, and theory and practice. Indeed Kurt Lewin's chief point at the heart of action research is that theory *is* practice (Lewin, 1946). In the same way our research takes the view that inquiry without practice and practice without inquiry are unnecessarily limiting.

Positivist paradigms that see researcher and researched as *subject* and *object* are restrictive as well as reductionist. As Fals Borda (2001, p. 30) puts it, without denying immanent dissimilarities it seems counterproductive to regard the 'experts' and the 'clients' as two discrete poles. Rather they need to be considered as real thinking-feeling persons whose diverse views on the shared life experience should be taken jointly into account. Borda uses the term 'symmetric reciprocity' which aptly connotes mutual respect and appreciation. The nature of such engagement between research participants is described as 'an emancipatory process, one which emerges as people strive towards conscious and reflexive emancipation, speaking, reasoning and co-ordinating action together, unconstrained by coercion' (Bradbury and Reason, 2001, p. 447).

We use collaborative inquiry (Reason and Heron, 1986; Kelly, Mock and

Tandon, 2001) as a means whereby all participants in the project are able to explore current realities in relation to our emergent model of community leadership and create their own goals and development plans as ways to pursue them. In this way it is our hope that with the minimum of influence from external agents, participants will be able to discover contextually appropriate mechanisms for change. The inquiry process itself becomes the vehicle for leadership development.

The medium of language is an important part of the research. It can act as a double-edged sword. The meanings and actions that are engendered through dialogue are rendered inadequate when the participants have unequal facility with the language being used in the dialogue. Where different languages are used it is important that the lingua franca used does not privilege some participants and disadvantage others. The methodology used needs to be literacy sensitive as well as language sensitive. As with Freire's work in Brazil where drawings were used, we too will need to develop ways of engaging that empower and do not reinforce power differentials. Oral narratives will be especially helpful in this regard.

Contained theoretical framework
We are aware of the power of our own role as consultants to the process. We recognize the developmental process in any particular project is an emergent one, and that we as participants in the process have to be alive to the patterns of possibility that are created out of the process. We also recognize however that we carry our own theoretical lenses that inform our own interventions in the process. For this reason we have attempted to be explicit and transparent about the frameworks of theory and principles that we bring to the process. We recognize too that we must be part of the critical review, so that our actions in practice are also open to scrutiny. The theoretical framework presented in the *community leadership development model* above is used to contain, direct and give focus to the work. The thrust of the model is that leadership is developed in a community when there is a nurturing culture that develops and sustains connective leadership, collective empowerment and the capacity for dialogue.

The development context

The Resource and Development Foundation (RDF) has recently been established in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Its aim is to provide resource-based training and capacity-building services to the socially excluded and disadvantaged youth, women and rural people of the Western Cape. It seeks to maximize their skills and knowledge through an integrated and holistic

approach to training and resource provision for sustainable development in the following areas:

- Youth development.
- Entrepreneurship training for unemployed women.
- Capacity building for rural farm workers.

The RDF Board's decision to use the model initially on itself for developing leadership on the Board was for two reasons. Firstly, it provided the Board with a developmental opportunity and, secondly, through the experience it is able to consider the application of the model in other areas. An imminent such project sponsored by RDF and supported by Irish Aid, is the Farm-worker Capacity Building Programme in the wine industry of the Western Cape.

Way of working

We use action research as the main vehicle for systemic learning and development. The iterations between planning action, action, and critical review of outcomes provide the basis for collective development as participants surface and critically review their theories and its use in practice. In this way the action research methods we use incorporate the primary ideas behind action science and action learning. The guiding idea behind Argyris' action science is that people can improve their effectiveness by exploring the hidden beliefs and resistances that drive their actions (Raelin, 1997, p. 23). This together with the abiding principle in Revan's action learning of fellow collaborators working to support one another on a continuing journey provides the dual features of the programme (Raelin, 1997, p. 22). This accords with the notion of capacity building discussed above which is seen as a journey rather than one-off interventions (James, 2002).

As indicated earlier, we use collaborative inquiry (Reason and Heron, 1986; Kelly, Mock and Tandon, 2001) as the means for participants in the project to explore current realities in relation to our emergent model of community leadership, and create their own goals and development plans as ways to pursue them. In this way, with minimum influence from external agents, participants in the project discover contextually appropriate mechanisms for change. The inquiry process itself becomes the vehicle for leadership development.

We want to ensure that our methodologies are not literacy-dependent and so story telling and drawing, apart from being rich methodologies for surfacing assumptions and making sense of behaviour, have a universal appeal that do not privilege the literary participants at the expense of any non-literate ones. The theoretical model set out in the community leadership

development model above provides the analytical framework for data collection and analysis.

The process with the RDF Board is in two stages. Stage one involves individual Board members providing their observations on the following questions:

1 **Dialogue.** *How well do you talk together as a Board? What are your reasons for thinking this is so?* (Dialogue is about a way of talking that enables all voices to be heard, respected and listened to irrespective of status. It is a way of talking together that allows participants to explore the different positions people have, the assumptions and reasons behind them in a way that leaves people feeling respected. It also leaves people feeling the decisions they have taken have been well considered, even though not everyone may agree with them).

2 **Connective Leadership.** (Connective leadership is a way of establishing a community of practice. By this we mean a group of people from different backgrounds and experiences who share a common set of values and aspirations and work together in a joint enterprise. It is a place where peoples' individual values and aspirations are shared and shape the common values and work of the team). *Please say how you think your Board matches this description. What evidence in terms of practical examples leads you to this view?*

3 **Collective Empowerment.** (Collective empowerment is the product of a team working together well. The experience of collective empowerment is the group operating powerfully as a unit – not just a few members operating powerfully. Collective empowerment occurs when people are able to take up their roles in relation to each other, fully with a sense of purpose, confidence and authority. This happens best when there is mutual respect and recognition of the validity of all their roles, however large or small). *Given this meaning of collective empowerment, can you please give your views on the extent to which collective empowerment is present in your Board? Can you give some examples of how this is demonstrated?*

Stage two is for the Board to discuss the individual responses to the questions asked in stage one, and consider two issues:

1 What are the implications from these individual responses for leadership development in your Board?

2 What are the practical implications for the use of this leadership development framework in RDF projects?

The consultant's role is to facilitate the inquiry process and to assist the Board in working through appropriate actions that take forward the process into the preparation of a development agenda.

A dialogical framework is used to explore with participants their perceptions of the current position in relation to the three components of community leadership development. The group works with the different outcomes that emerge from this process in order to interpret the results and to construct together a developmental strategy that serves to develop leadership capacity in the system. The dialogical framework presented below has been developed by Gustavsen (2001, pp. 18–19):

- Dialogue is based on a principle of give and take, not one way communication.
- All concerned by the issue under discussion should have the possibility of participating.
- Participants are under an obligation to help other participants be active in the dialogue.
- All participants have the same status in the dialogue arenas.
- Work experience is the point of departure for participation.
- Some of the experience the participant has when entering the dialogue must be seen as relevant.
- It must be possible for all participants to gain an understanding of the topics under discussion.
- An argument can be rejected only after an investigation (and not for instance on the grounds that it emanates from a source with limited legitimacy).
- All arguments that are to enter the dialogue must be represented by actors present.
- All participants are obliged to accept that other participants may have arguments better than their own.
- Among the issues that can be made subject to discussion are the ordinary work roles of the participants – no one is exempt from such a discussion.
- The dialogue should be able to integrate a growing degree of disagreement.
- The dialogue should continuously generate decisions that provide a platform for joint action.

Concluding remark

The work we have described is ongoing at the time of writing. One of us, Anna Marie, has since returned to South Africa where she coordinates the research. The emerging outcomes of this research will inform the interests of the research participants in developing the theory and practice of community leadership development.

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