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Dilemma of leadership development



BY PROF. VINCE SININING

Large corporations have allocated budgets for professional development training among pool of talents with potentials to become leaders. In the United States alone, the American Society of Training and Development reported that more than \$170 Billion were spent by U.S. Businesses on leadership-based curriculum.

The Corporate Executive Board, in one of its research findings, said that sixty six per cent [66%] of the companies around the globe have invested in programmes that aim to identify high-potential employees and to prepare them for leadership roles. However, thirty three percent [33%] of the top

In the past three decades, I have observed many leadership development programmes across the globe. However, very few of them have achieved the ultimate goal of developing leaders that possessed the competencies required.

executives from the world's largest corporations hired their top executives from the outside – and not from the internal pool of staff who underwent many Leadership Development Programmes. Why did leadership development programmes fail to develop real leaders?

Mike Myatt, Chairman of N2Growth, in his opinion article at *Forbes Magazine* presented his argument that most of the leadership based curriculum failed to deliver their promise because they are focused on the indoctrination on systems, processes, and techniques. Training and

Development become synonymous which is not. "Training," Mr. Myatt reiterated, "is often a role, one directional, one dimensional one size fits all, authoritarian process that impose static, outdated information on people. The majority of training takes place within a monologue [lecture/ presentation] rather than a dialogue." As a Professor and Mentor of shaping and building better leaders, I agree in the philosophy that we don't train leaders, we develop them.

Deborah Rowland who carried out an excellent research in leadership development came up with four factors that lie at the heart of good, practical leadership development:

- a) making it experimental;
- [b] influencing participants' "being" not just their "doing";
- c) placing it into its wider, systematic context;

- d) enrolling faculty who act less as experts and more as Sherpas. The education equivalent of Sherpas, Rowland reiterated, are trainers able to guide participants toward their personal and organizational summits.

The June 2014 Harvard Business Review article on "21st Century Talent" presented the key competencies of

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developing leaders: motivational fit, curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination. Leadership traits in large corporations – who are playing the roles as Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, or Chief Strategist – are identified based on the corporation's challenges and goals, and requirements vary from one organization to the other. Common competencies being identified are: strong strategic and results orientation; inclusiveness and team and change leadership; collaboration and influence, and strategic orientation; results orientation, developing organizational capabilities, team leadership, and inclusiveness.

In its 2017 Leadership Development Workshop series for University Leaders, the Association of African Universities based in Ghana focused on the following competencies: strategic planning, resource mobilization and allocation, leadership and

governance, and quality assurance. Experts have common views on the important competences that Professional Institutes must focus: motivational fit, insight, attitude, result orientation, strategic orientation, collaboration and influence, team leadership, understanding of the environment, change leadership, developing organizational capabilities, and emotional intelligence.

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Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive the world with an open mind, and self-awareness is its basic foundation. We can only understand others if we pay attention to ourselves first. When we feel good about ourselves,

we have more to give to others. Obviously, we can't take care of others if we cannot take care of ourselves first. "If you want to lead," Dee Hock, founder of VISA once said, "invest at least 40% of your time in leading yourself." Lars Sudmann presented some effective strategies in mentoring others: self-awareness, self-reflection, self-regulation. Investing our time in these simple strategies will help us be able to control our emotions, reflect before we react to every situation, and have the emotional strength on the manner we interact with others,

In organizations, Peter Drucker said, "only three things happen naturally: Friction, confusion, and underperformance. Everything else requires leadership." We need leadership development programmes not only for corporations and schools, but as well as in government, small and medium-sized business enterprises, organizations, and even in our own selves. After all, great leadership starts with self-leadership. What kind of self-leadership am I talking about? I had the opportunity to be a leader of a university, a college, and nonprofit organizations in various countries. As a leader in those various entities, I have experienced the common leadership problems that leadership guru Lars Sudmann itemized: too little time – feeling as if there is not

just enough time to do or accomplish things; people – having to deal with all kinds of people; power – the way individuals with rank behave and act.

Effective and great leaders inspire action. Simon Sinek, in one of the leadership seminars in the USA that he spoke at in 2009, presented thought provoking examples of individuals on why they became respected leaders and not those who have more than what they have. He presented a pattern among all the great leaders in the world – be it in government, corporations, organizations, and others. He called it the 'golden circle' where the inner layer is "why", the second layer is "how", and the outer layer is "what." In an organization, everyone knows what they do, and how they do it. But very few know why they do it – the purpose, the cause, and the belief of doing so. Leaders hold the power or authority. But those who truly lead, inspire us. We follow leaders with inspiring 'mission' not because we have to, but because we want to; not for them, but for ourselves.

Dr. Vince Sinining is an educator since 1988. He is a Professor on Sustainable Development, Leadership and Governance. He taught in the USA, Southeast Asia, Pacific Islands, and Africa. He is the Administrator of Reimanlok Foundation [Republic of the Marshall Islands], and Chairman/ Founder of VCS Research since 1996. [www.vcsresearch.org].



Dr Vince Sinining with high school students in the south of Kigali, Rwanda.