



A New Leadership Mindset for Scaling Social Change

Current Leadership Thinking: Over the past 50 years our thinking about leadership, whether in communities or board rooms, has been heavily influenced by heroic models of leadership. We traditionally think of leadership as the skills, qualities and behavior of an individual who exerts influence over others to take action or achieves a goal using their position and authority. At the Leadership Learning Community we believe this way of thinking about leadership is only one part of the leadership story -- one that does not fully recognize leadership as a process grounded in relationships that are fluid, dynamic, non-directive and non-unilateral. In 2009 we launched Leadership for a New Era (LNE), a collaborative research initiative, to understand leadership more fully. Understanding leadership as a process requires us to think very differently about how change occurs and how we work with others. We will never mobilize leadership at the scale needed for significant progress on social change or any other complex issue without expanding our thinking about what leadership is, how it works and how we can support it.

Leadership as a Process: Through Leadership for a New Era we are deepening our understanding of leadership as a process through which individuals and groups identify and act on behalf of a larger purpose, such as greater equality and the well-being of people and the planet. Understanding leadership as a shared, relational process is fundamental to many cultures even though the dominant American model of leadership is deeply rooted in individualism. These cultures have much to teach about sustainable change and transformation.

Traditional approaches to leadership and leadership development assume that training an individual leader with appropriate knowledge and skills will result in an increase of organizational capacity which will in turn lead to better community results.

Leader Development Model for Stronger Organizations & Community Results

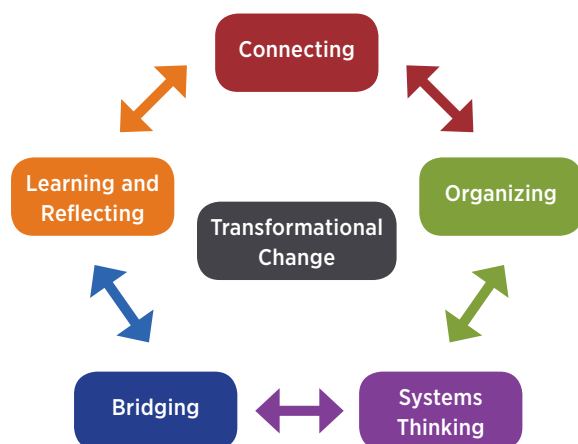


While this model has had notable successes, it is not scalable. In other words, we will not reach the scale of change we seek, developing one leader at a time. Our attachment to this leader development model prevents us from recognizing that often, leadership development that focuses on teams, organizations, communities, and networks is better positioned to accomplish systems and social change. Intuitively many of us have experienced the power of the collective in the creativity and productivity of teams, in sports or in music, and yet we have not brought this experience to our leadership thinking and at some cost! We can reach more people and tackle bigger problems by investing our time and resources in strengthening leadership processes that support organizations, communities and networks to take collective action.

To support leadership that results in transformational changes, we need to focus on how individuals and groups are connecting, organizing, thinking systemically, bridging, and learning as a dynamic leadership process that mobilizes action on the scale needed to address the inequities and injustices we care deeply about.



Leadership as a process for transformational change



Connecting authentically with openness and humility lays the foundation for developing a shared sense of purpose out of which collective action grows. This involves connecting first with oneself to clarify one's intention, values, beliefs, and worldview then listening and asking questions that help individuals make meaning of their individual experience and understand each other better. Through this process groups begin to identify shared frustrations and aspirations. Building relationships that foster trust and mutual understanding enables groups to work through conflicts and build shared commitment and accountability.

Organizing is the process by which a group with a shared sense of purpose develops and implements strategies for achieving its goals. Organizing involves utilizing tools and creating communication pathways and structures that help the group set direction, plan, allocate resources, make decisions, engage the skills of individuals and mobilize action.

Systems Thinking is the process through which we utilize a systems analysis to observe and understand the structural systems that perpetuate disparities and inequities. By looking at the complex interactions among multiple factors influencing the system we begin to identify leverage points that we can experiment with by prototyping interventions in the system.

Bridging is a process of uncovering shared concerns, frustrations, hopes and goals across differences in culture and focus of work. As we recognize interdependence and find connections in our efforts we uncover and unleash new opportunities to link and leverage our work. By finding common purpose and

expanding our networks we achieve new scale and reach creating the conditions for transformative change.

Learning/Reflecting is a continuous process that is integrated with action. It is the means we can use to hold ourselves collectively accountable for how we are doing and mobilizing to do better, individually and as groups. Reflection requires that individuals and groups understand themselves, inquire into the level of awareness, identities and motives they bring to the work, and the personal work required to serve the collective purpose of the team, organization, community or network. Through reflection, we continue to clarify and evolve our collective purpose, more fully embody our values and renew our commitments.

What are implications of an expanded model for leadership development work?

Leader development: The majority of leadership programs recruit individuals. Many individuals have noted the value of these programs in helping them develop critical skills that make them more effective leaders in their organizations or as political leaders who have increased understanding of how to assess a political landscape or advocate for policy change. Over the past 10 years many leadership programs have recognized the importance of cultivating systems thinking and a stronger capacity for collaboration. Cultivating these capacities have opened up greater possibilities for having an impact on communities and systems. A few programs have taken a more integral view by emphasizing the inner shifts (including a deep sense of connectedness with the whole) that are critical for embodying relational and systemic change.

Leader development: As a field we are still learning how to support leadership within teams, organizations, communities and networks. The focus of leadership as a process is not who (which individuals to recruit into a program) but on how to strengthen the capacity of teams, organizations, networks and communities to engage in the leadership process, while inviting individuals to do the inner work that enables them to contribute their true gifts in serving the collective. Many of these programs identify a community or region where they would like to see a change and think about the individuals and organizations that will need to be connected in that specific community to tackle large problems.

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Achieving scale and impact with these approaches is not conjecture, it's being done. Innovations by programs in the chart below are developing the

leadership of networks, communities and regions and accomplishing significant results with fewer resources.

| Who | Where | Results |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lawrence Community Works | Networks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 900 network members• 25 affordable housing units, playgrounds & community ctr.• Collaborative downtown development initiative |
| Leadership in Action | Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 9% increase in school readiness over a four year period in Baltimore |
| Kellogg Leadership for Community Change | Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth led community digital storytelling project on education• Passage of \$112 million dollar school construction bond for the first time in 12 years• Passage of first Indian Education Plan in Montana School District |
| ELIAS | Regional, Multi-stakeholder | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross sector water management capacity in China• Ecosystem innovation in sustainable food supply in Brazil• Women's micro-venture network in the Philippines |
| Making Connections | Resident Network | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fifth grade reading scores raised 30%• Adoption of a bilingual district wide report card• State legislation adopted to support parents school reform |

Sources for chart:

- *National Housing Institute, "Network Organizing: A Strategy for Building Community Engagement", William J. Traynor and Jessica Andors, 2005*
- *Data collected by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005 (Leadership in Action Program)*
- *Leadership for 21st Century Change Brochure, Kellogg Leadership for Community Change*
- *"Ten propositions on transforming the current leadership development paradigm". Otto Scharmer, 2009*
- *"Unleashing the power of the parents to fix their kids' schools." Tory Read, 2006*

Leadership development results: The majority of leader development programs hold themselves accountable for individual level results and will determine their success based on what the participant says about new skills they have developed and how they believe their leadership has improved in a specific context, often their organization. A few programs may also look for team level and organization level results using organizational assessment tools, site visits or feedback from other employees.

Few leader programs are designed to be accountable for community and systems level results. The intention to achieve change at greater scale can transform how leadership development is approached. For example, Leadership in Action (listed above) seeks population

level results. In Baltimore, they engaged a diverse cross section of the community to significantly increase the number of children who enter school ready to learn. By learning to coordinate and align their efforts across different parts of the system that produces school readiness, they achieved a 9% improvement in school readiness. As we learn to support processes that mobilize actors who can leverage their efforts across a system we will see breakthrough changes.

Changing Leadership Work: Through LNE we will produce solid research, program assessment tools, models of innovation and resource materials that will help those engaged in leadership work to achieve greater scale by implementing leadership as a process.

About the Leadership for a New Era Series | Leadership for a New Era (LNE) is a collaborative research initiative launched in 2009 by the Leadership Learning Community. Through this initiative we seek to promote leadership approaches that are more inclusive, networked and collective. We believe the dominant leadership model that places a strong emphasis on the individual is limiting our ability to positively impact change in our society, so we have joined forces with a diverse group of funders, researchers, practitioners and consultants in the leadership development field to shift the current thinking. Our research focuses on the following four areas: Leadership and Race, Leadership and Networks, Collective Leadership, and Leadership Across Difference. For more information, please visit www.leadershipforanewera.org/

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About Leadership Learning Community | We are a national nonprofit organization transforming the way leadership development work is conceived, conducted and evaluated, primarily within the nonprofit sector. We focus on leveraging leadership as a means to create a more just and equitable society. We combine our expertise in identifying, evaluating and applying cutting-edge ideas and promising practices in the leadership development field, with access to our engaged national network of hundreds of experienced funders, consultants and leadership development programs, to drive the innovation and collaboration needed to make leadership more effective. We also offer the following consulting services to help programs and foundations optimize their leadership investment strategy: scans, evaluations and network development. For more information, please visit www.leadershiplearning.org.

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