

## **Best Practices for social and economic programs aimed at combating poverty**

### **Creating leaders to combat poverty in the MENA region**

#### **Introduction**

The need for skilled and effective leaders is considered by some to be one of the highest priority needs in many organizations and in many countries (House et al., 2004; Kouses and Pozner, 2002). In the U.S., student leadership development programs often go beyond the curriculum to develop leaders through community service projects, campus organizations, workshops, and mentoring (Dugan and Komvies, 2007). Some estimate that 98% of leadership theory comes from the U.S. (House and Aditya, 1997). However literature on such programs outside of the U.S., especially in developing countries is sparse. Yet the need for leadership development may be greater in developing countries with high illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty.

How then can we develop leaders to address the development needs of much of the world? How can we develop leaders who can lead effectively in various cultural settings, with people from different cultures? What qualities should we seek to develop in those leaders? What are we preparing leaders for, the culture that shaped their grandparents and parents, or the culture of their country's future, undoubtedly a more globalized one? Attempts to establish culturally endorsed leadership characteristics at the national, regional and global levels (House, et al. 2004) give us a target toward which to aim our leadership development efforts. Existing leadership programs in the U.S. also give us tested structure and best practices for effective leadership development albeit in a U.S. cultural context, not a globalized one.

To develop leaders who can and will address the poverty, illiteracy, poor sanitation, hunger, disease and other development needs of much of the world, we can adapt the leadership theories and practices from the U.S., using emerging knowledge about national and regional cultures. To define our targets – the characteristics, competencies, skills, and values we want students to gain in our leadership programs - we can again adapt leadership development models and theories from the U.S., using recent research on regional and global leadership.

This is the purpose of this paper, to overview the leadership development literature, models and theories, largely from the U.S., overview recent research on regional and global leadership, and show how both have been used to create a student leadership program in Morocco that builds service and change oriented leaders. This paper seeks to answer the following two questions: how can we develop leaders who can and will address the development needs of much of the world? And what kinds of leaders should we develop to meet those needs?

#### **Research on leadership development in the U.S. – best practices and main models**

##### Best Practices

In an early study of the effectiveness of student leadership programs in the U.S., Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) found that exemplary programs used a range of leadership development approaches including workshops, guest speakers, community service projects, mentors, and participant involvement in running the program. Table 1 (see Appendix A) presents these findings. As a result of these leadership programs, they also found increased commitment to

service/volunteerism, personal/social responsibility, and civic/social/political activity. Table 2 (see Appendix B) presents these findings.

In a follow-on evaluation of exemplary leadership programs at U.S. universities and colleges, funded by the Kellogg Foundation, Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (2001) described the hallmarks of these exemplary programs. These hallmarks can serve as best practices in designing leadership programs. The hallmarks include: skill building through seminars and workshops, service learning and servant leadership, and community involvement (see Appendix C).

Repaski (et al. 2005) benchmark nine exemplary college leadership programs. Their assessment details the logistical, educational program, and student development aspects of these programs. Additionally, they provide the Council on Academic Standards (2003) standards for evaluating college and university leadership programs (see Appendix D). Repaski (et al. 2005) summarize the value of leadership programs well.

“Nonetheless, to some degree, all leadership development programs seek to develop leadership skills, team building skills, and a sense of honesty and integrity in their students. Ultimately, it is the hope of colleges and universities that such programs will attract a higher caliber student and in turn produce a competitive new professional who is increasingly employable and who is able to creatively meet the challenges and hurdles of today's society. Therefore these programs create the long lasting effect of strengthening the backbone of the nation's leadership structure while serving the greater public good.” (Repaski, et al, 2005, p.12)

#### Main Models – targets for student leadership development

From this research and others, there are several widely used leadership development models. These models influence the characteristics of leaders that leadership programs are aiming to develop in their students. These programs include transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass and Avolio, 1994), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1990), social change model (Austin and Austin, 1996; Higher Education Research Institute, 1996) and leaders-developing-leaders (Komvies et al. 2006).

Transformational leadership seeks to grow students into leaders who lead with a strong moral dimension and “transform” their followers into better (more human, healthier, more moral) people. Transformational leadership has four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass and Steidlmeier, 2004). Idealized influence is charisma. It “sets high standards for emulation” often with spiritual and moral dimensions in the influencing process (ibid. p 179). Inspirational motivation “provides followers with challenges and meaning for engaging in shared goals and undertakings” focusing on the best in people (ibid. p 180). Intellectual stimulation creates openness to assessing the situation, forming the vision, influencing and implementing decisions, and helps followers to question assumptions and generate more creative solutions. Individualized consideration provides “coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities” to develop followers into leaders (ibid. p 182).

Servant leadership seeks to develop students into leaders who work to help the group meet its goals and also grow the members-followers into healthier and more effective people. Servant leadership involves ten principles: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization,

foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 2003.)

The social change model of leadership seeks to increase self-knowledge and leadership competence so that student-leaders will facilitate positive social change to help the institution/community function more effectively and humanely (Austin and Austin, 1996). This model seeks to develop seven critical values in students that are intended to serve as foundation for facilitating change. These values are: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, citizenship, with change as an eighth but underlying value (Austin and Ausitn, 1996).

Embedded in the transformational and servant leadership models, is the model of leaders-developing-leaders that influences student leadership development. Komvies (et al. 2005, 2006) identify stages by which students develop identity as leaders through leadership development programs. Development to the final stages (generativity, and integration/synthesis) involves, in part, a concern for developing leadership abilities in others. This leaders-developing-leaders model seeks leaders to head leadership programs who develop leadership capacity in students who will then mentor and develop leadership in other students, and develop leadership capacity in their followers in community service projects (Camplin, 2009).

*Desired characteristics of leaders* - In their review of research, Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994) discuss the relationships between leadership and personality factors. The “big 5 personality factors” (i.e. surgency, emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and intellectance) are supported as influencing leader effectiveness. But the perceptions of leader-like qualities that others hold influence leaders’ effectiveness. “People are seen as leader-like to the degree that their characteristics (i.e., intelligence, personality, or values) match other peoples’ preconceived notions of what leaders should be like” (Hogan, Curphy, Hogan, 1994, p12). These implicit notions of how leaders are and should be (implicit leadership theory) are influenced by external factors including culture.

*Implicit Leadership Theory* - In the Project GLOBE cross-cultural study of culture and leadership in sixty-two countries, implicit leadership theory was examined at the levels of country societies participating in the study, regional clusters of culturally similar countries, and globally (House et al. 2004). Project GLOBE examined the way leadership is currently practiced in the participating countries and also the way it “should be” practiced – what people in those countries want in their leaders. Characteristics of a globally validated implicit leadership theory (ILT) were found along with regional and cultural ILT. The significance of this work for leadership development is twofold. First by defining culturally appropriate targets for using leadership development models created and practiced in the U.S. to develop leaders in other parts of the world (e.g. Morocco, Saudi Arabia). Second, the global ILT gives us a set of desired leadership characteristics for developing our students into leaders that are seen as effective in many parts of the world. Table 1 presents these universal positive and negative leader attributes. While the regional and country-cultural data help define the current (as is) leadership practices that our students may have already internalized, the desired (should be) leadership values serve as context and motivation for what we develop our students to be as leaders.

Table 1: The universal positive and negative leader attributes found in Project GLOBE study.  
(Dorfman, Hanges and Brodbeck, 2004. Pp. 677-678.)

Universal positive leader attributes	Universal negative leader attributes
Trustworthy	Loner
Just	Asocial
Honest	Non-cooperative
Foresight	Irritable
Plans ahead	Non-explicit
Encouraging	Egocentric
Positive	Ruthless
Dynamic	Dictatorial
Motive arouser	
Confidence builder	
Motivational	
Dependable	
Intelligent	
Decisive	
Effective bargainer	
Win-win problem solver	
Administrative skilled	
Communicative	
Informed	
Coordinator	
Team builder	
Excellence oriented	

From this research, these universal leader attributes form the following global culturally endorsed implicit leadership dimensions.

1. Charismatic/value based
2. Team oriented
3. Self-protective (negatively related)
4. Participative
5. Humane oriented
6. Autonomous

Regionally, the Middle East cluster of countries in the GLOBE study included Morocco, Qatar, Turkey, Egypt and Kuwait. Table 2 contrasts the globally endorsed leadership dimensions between the Middle East cluster and the Anglo cluster (including the U.S.). This suggests some of the cultural “gaps” or differences that must be adapted to for leadership programs developed in the U.S. to be effective in the MENA region.

Table 2: Culturally Endorsed Leadership Characteristics for Middle East and Anglo Regional Clusters.  
(Dorfman, Hanges, Brodbeck, 2004)

	Charismatic/	Team	Participative	Humane	Autonomous	Self-
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	Value-based	Oriented		Oriented		Protective
Middle East cluster (includes Morocco)	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	M	M	<i>H</i>
Anglo cluster (includes the U.S.)	<b>H</b>	M	H	H	M	<i>L</i>

**H** or **L** (bold) indicates highest or lowest cluster of the 10 regional clusters into which the 62 countries were grouped; *H* or *L* (italics) indicate second highest or lowest cluster.

A small body of research is emerging from Project GLOBE and other studies, that examines country/culture differences in management and in leadership. Smith, Achoui and Harb (2007) examine similarities and differences in managerial styles in Arab countries. They found support for both regional studies of management and leadership as well as country/culture level analysis. Kabasakal and Bodur (2002) use GLOBE data to examine the Middle East cluster. Figure 2 presents the “as is” of leadership practices and the “should be” of leadership values for this cluster.

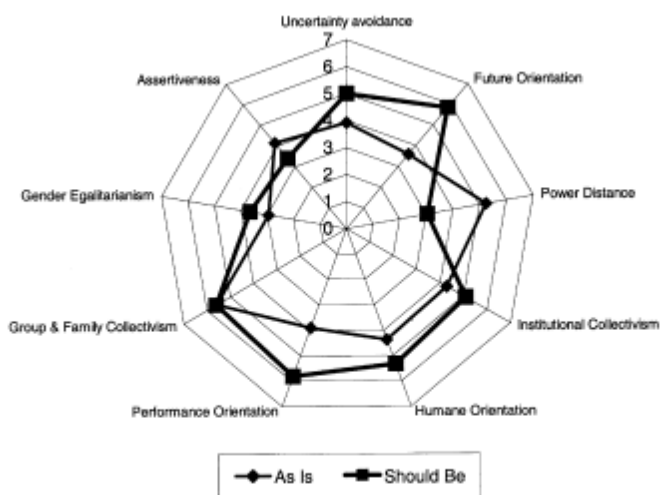


Fig. 2. Arabic cluster's societal culture scores.

Shahin and Wright (2004) examine differences in leadership between the U.S. and Egypt and argue for adjustments in using Bass and Avolio's (1994) transformational leadership model for leadership development in other cultures. Neal, Catana, Finlay, and Catana (2007) compared leadership among European and Arab women and find support for pan-Arab Implicit Leadership Theory. Marmenout (2009) presents preliminary findings from two studies of the Women Leadership Initiative in the Middle East identifying culturally influence constraints on developing leadership skills in professional women in this region. Abdella and Al Homoud (2001) also argue in support of regional Implicit Leadership Theory in the Gulf states citing similarities in Qatari and Kuwaiti leadership traits and behaviors.

### Adapting the models to the ILT – the AUI model

The AUI leadership development model adopts best practices from U.S. leadership programs to the cultural context of Morocco. For example, families in Morocco are not accustomed to pay for higher education. So the AUI Leadership Development Institute (LDI) program is free. Students seek distinction yet many are not willing to take on additional challenges. So the LDI program is a year-long weekly series of workshops that require no preparation from the student yet give the student a certificate at the end. Culturally, AUI students do not plan, communicate, or manage time well.<sup>i</sup> So the AUI leadership program builds these desired leadership skills from the beginning. The AUI leadership development model is illustrated through the two main components of our program described in the following section.

## **AUI leadership programs**

### Leadership Development Institute

After a year-long pilot where skill focused workshop design was developed and tested, the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) was launched in September, 2009 at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI) Morocco. With student leadership development as its focus, the LDI is a year-long program consisting of weekly skill building workshops, a speaker-discussion series, a service project to help build leadership capacity in the community, a mentoring program, and student involvement in running the program. After satisfactorily completing the requirements of the program, students earn a “co-curricular” transcript which is part of their permanent academic record at AUI. The LDI adapts leadership development models and best practices from universities in the U.S. to the skill development needs of Moroccan students.

*Workshops* - The skills developed in the workshops have been identified as needed by students and include:

- Ethics and integrity
- Interpersonal communication
- Public communication
- Event planning
- Emotional intelligence
- Stress management
- Conflict management
- Fund-raising

The workshops are usually two-hours long and incorporate highly experiential learning techniques with very little lecture. In the workshops the students are asked to use the skills in leadership focused activities immediately after the skills have been introduced. For example, in the workshop on planning, the students are shown how to use a GANTT chart to plan and manage an event. Then in the same workshop they plan the “Leader of the Year Award” project that they will begin the following week. There is very little theory or research presented in the workshops. They are not classes. There are no tests to take or papers to write. There are no grades. These leadership skill building workshops are very similar to those offered to working professionals.

*Speaker-discussion series* - Through the speaker-discussion series, students are able to interact with different types of leaders from the President of AUI to Morocco’s leading disabled triathlete.

Culturally in Morocco, speakers usually talk for the whole time allotted taking a few questions and answering them all at once at the end. And students sit passively and listen to the “lecture”. Through the LDI speaker-discussion series, the speaker only makes some opening remarks to frame the discussion to follow, then the students ask questions and engage the speaker and other students in a discussion of leadership. Through such interactions, students are able not only to gain insight into what real leaders do and what they struggle with, but also insight into what they as students can do to meet the needs in the world around them.

*Mentoring* - The LDI mentoring program allows further leadership development for students who have completed the one-year LDI program. Mentors are LDI alumni who are still on campus, who meet regularly with current LDIs to discuss how to apply the skills learned in the workshops to their leadership opportunities in student clubs, service or class projects. Again this is an interactive program. The mentor shares experience and perspective from having already been through it, but both explore ways they can use the skills to be more effective leaders. More senior student leaders mentoring and developing more junior student leaders is one of the best practices identified in high quality student leadership programs (Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt, 1999). And it helps implement the “leaders developing leaders” component to the LDI model.

*Service and experience* - LDI students are expected to be involved in leadership opportunities on campus and in the community. Such opportunities include involvement in student clubs, involvement in the university’s service requirement, involvement in class projects, and involvement in student government. Through these opportunities, students are expected to apply and practice the skills from the LDI so that they become more effective leaders. Additionally, the LDI conducts a “Leader of the Year Award” (LOTY) to identify outstanding leaders in local associations in the surrounding community. This project involves students in recruiting nominations, selecting awardees, presenting the award and fundraising for the award. It is an opportunity for each LDI student to practice all of the skills learned. Also it provides service to the community by raising the visibility of effective leadership in the community.

*Student involvement* - Finally, LDI students have several opportunities to participate in the administration and development of the program. Two student representatives to the LDI Advisory Board are elected each year along with one representative of LDI alumni. The LDIs run the Leader of the Year Award project and are consulted regularly on program development and implementation.

The LDI incorporates transformational, social change, servant, and leaders-developing-leaders models of leadership in its program and through the following objectives.

- Seek to transform the students from narrowly focused to broader community and humanity focused, where the needs of others, and of those who suffer most are central in action and life purpose
- Seek to motivate and inspire students, through modeling behavior as well as words, to use their privilege to the advantage of those who have little privilege.
- Seek to build the skills and values and confidence that are needed for students to make positive change in their community, country and world.

- Seek to consistently exemplify the highest integrity and ethical standards in the development and administration of the program, thus serve as a role model in developing students into leaders.

### Leadership class

Though several courses at AUI touch on leadership (e.g. Organizational Behavior, Social and Organizational Psychology) there is only one course offered on leadership – Leadership and Management. As the main curricular component of our leadership development efforts, the Leadership and Management course focuses primarily on leadership (versus management for which there are several courses offered). This course takes the view that leadership and management are not the same, but are complementary. Confusing leadership with management is common in the literature and in leadership education but does not help students learn leadership. Leaders have followers who are largely free not to follow. Managers have employees who are not so free. This distinction creates a different dynamic where leaders must motivate through inspiration, articulating an effective vision, being a respected role-model, and other means, rather than the more coercive means available to managers. All of this is introduced at the beginning of the course and various theories of leadership are examined in subsequent weeks. However, this course also has a significant service learning component.

*Service learning* - Since learning to be an effective leader cannot be accomplished from lectures and books alone, the students in this course are required to initiate and complete a 45 hour service project in the community. Students contact local associations that might need some help. From these discussions, the students identify the needs and develop projects they can do to help meet those needs. The students are expected to complete three hours of service every week for the 15 weeks of the semester. Projects for this class often involve teaching language, or computer classes but may include projects like providing administrative skills training for association staff and boards. A key requirement is that students have “followers”, colleagues in the associations or clients in the community whose cooperation students must gain and maintain in order to complete the project. And the students have no power or authority over anyone beyond their social status as AUI students. The students are volunteers and their followers are volunteers, thus are free not to follow. Leadership is learned and practiced through gaining the cooperation of others in working together to accomplish the group’s goals.

To help drive learning from the service project, students are required to write a weekly journal where they reflect on the application of the more theoretical material discussed in class with their experience in their service project. The idea here is that “theory” should help us understand our experience and experience help us to understand, modify or develop our theory. The journals ask students to use one to better understand the other – and thus learn leadership in a deeper way.

### **Abstract/Summary**

This paper calls for student leadership development programs in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region to help meet the development needs such as poverty, illiteracy, and poor sanitation. It reviews best practices in university leadership development programs, largely from the U.S. To answer the question of what kind of leaders to develop, this paper reviews models of student leadership development, and culturally influenced notions of what leaders do and what they should



be. Finally, to illustrate how models developed in the U.S. can be adapted to cultures in the MENA region, the leadership program at Al Akhawayn University in Morocco is presented.

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