

Integrating Leadership Roles within an Advocacy Movement for Social Change: An OD Practice.

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Abstract - Leaders who make up the leadership taxonomy each bring to the movements they serve a special skill set. Visionaries raise our view of the possible. Statespersons elevate the cause in the minds of both the public and decision-makers. Strategists chart our road maps to victory. Communicators deploy the rhetoric to inflame and direct public passion toward the movement's objectives. Inside Advocates understand how to turn power structures and established rules and procedures to advantage. Movement Builders are generators of optimism and goodwill, with the ability to infect others with dedication to the common good. The happy confluence of each of these leadership roles is the hallmark of a successful movement.

Key Words - Leadership Roles, Advocacy Movement, OD Practice, Social Change, Human Rights, Justice.

INTRODUCTION:

There is no question that achieving social justice in any situation requires people to work together toward a common vision of society. Moses Coady called this group action. In more general terms, group action is an expression of solidarity,

What are the fundamental ingredients for a movement to succeed? We can identify at least four;

1. A widespread dissatisfaction with the way things are among a significant number of people. The people involved can be the public at large, or it can be a specific group such as farmers, landless laborers, youth, etc.
2. A basic awareness among the leaders and a significant number of the people of the causes of the problems. A movement that endures will include some adult education which helps people to describe the reality which oppresses or exploits them. It will at the same time build confidence in their capacity to change a situation.
3. A general feeling that something can be done about tire problem. This can arise from the awareness among people themselves as a result of education, but it also implies that the leaders and the people have an analysis of the situation and that the conjuncture of events provides the social and political space for beneficial change to occur.
4. Leadership. Any movement requires leaders, and very often a movement will be initiated and sustained by one or two charismatic leaders. Often such a leader has decided to make significant personal sacrifices and meets with considerable family and/or institutional opposition to the work s/he is doing to build the movement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Movements develop in particular historical situations and different conditions. Thus, at tire height of industrialization in the West, a very strong labor movement arose which struggled for improved wages and working conditions. The Antigonish Movement and the co-operatives came into being because of the predatory activities of middlemen and larger companies in the buying and selling of primary and consumer goods. Many of the same issues exist today, but are more complex and require somewhat different approaches.

Many movements today have the following characteristics:

1. They are multi-dimensional.

Although a movement may start with a single issue, usually the movement will quickly expand to a set of related issues. For example, the building of a dam which will displace people in several villages may quickly expand to take in other related concerns. Some of these interrelated concerns are obvious and have been part of struggles in the past; other concerns are more recent. These concerns could include:

- i. **Economic concerns/injustices;** Almost every movement has a concern for the economic well-being of its members. This was true of the Antagonism Movement in the 1930s, as it is of SEWA in India today.
- ii. **Environment and Ecology:** A thread running through almost all movements today is that of justice to the environment for the sake of future generations. The construction of a large dam will not only displace people, it may also reduce the base of biological diversity people depend on to maintain their life and culture. Deforestation as a consequence of population increases, or commercial timber cutting can raise the same kind of concerns.
- iii. **Gender:** The relations between men and women, and the division of labor in the household, the community, and the society are today understood to be unjust in many situations.
- iv. **Human rights:** This is especially the rights of minorities and aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal or indigenous peoples are often the “poorest of the poor” in any society. There are significant movements among them to recover their basic human rights. The uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, is a manifestation of a movement which felt it had to resort to armed action to achieve its aims.

2. They reject “development.”

Western patterns of development are rejected as inappropriate and dependency creating. This does not necessarily mean a total rejection of all things Western, but rather a critical acceptance of only those aspects which are appropriate to the local tradition and culture.

3. They try to “recover the commons.”

Western patterns of development are based on a significant level of individualism and an assertion of individual and private property rights. What some movements are emphasizing is a recovery, reassertion and adaptation of traditional communal knowledge and ritual, and common systems of property holding and management.

4. They assert religious or spiritual values as the basis for justice. Many movements today are using or reinterpreting the religious traditions of their own societies as the basis for their movements, and as a means to motivate people to the sacrifice which is necessary to improve the lives of everyone. An example of this would be the Sarvodaya – which is a Self-Help movement in Sri Lanka.

Risks in Movement Formation

Not every movement is just. There are a number of possible integrated risks associated with movement formation and with the expansion of the movement as stated below:

1. **Co-optation.** A movement can be taken over and manipulated by corrupt leaders or politicians. This is particularly true for nationalist movements where there is a deliberate attempt to take on formal or national political power. A movement may start well, with the best of intentions on the part of the leaders, but as it gains credibility and expresses the wishes of people, and particularly if it is able to improve the lives of people, there is a risk that those in power will try to divert it to the self-interest of

elected or unelected politicians. Avoiding this is sometimes difficult when the movement is dependent on the vision of one leader. A key question to ask is whether the movement is democratic in choosing its leaders, especially at the local level. It is also important to ask if the process of governance is transparent.

Transparency is particularly important with respect to money. Do participants understand where money is coming from and how it is spent? Is there some process, of accountability in the movement? Achieving democratic governance and transparency is often difficult in the early stages of movement building. Unless the leaders are committed to implementing these values, there is a real risk that the movement could become repressive later on.

2. Exclusiveness: Some movements will not be open to talking with those who may disagree with them on some positions. Others, who are struggling for change and against powerful interests that keep people in a situation of poverty and exploitation, are more open to incorporating people who may not have the same direct interest, but are open to supporting the movement. An exclusive attitude would be one where such support would be rejected simply because the person wishing to express support is from the "wrong" class, gender, religion, organization, etc. If a farmer's movement takes the attitude that all urban dwellers are untrustworthy, then they are being exclusive. Ultimately movements that have such an exclusive attitude will run into difficulty.

- I. **Fanaticism;** Fanaticism is an extreme form of exclusiveness. This is a particular risk with movements that appeal to religious tradition. In North America, especially in the United States, there is now a strong Christian fundamentalist movement whose adherents say that if you do not agree with them you are disloyal, even a traitor. There are similar movements in India which link Hinduism with nationalism and tend to define Muslims as disloyal. In other countries, there are similar fanatical Islamic movements. Many of these movements are built on historical injustices that have simmered for too long in the minds of followers. As a result, many of these movements ultimately turn to violence. This can lead to condemnation from both the national and international community that may have been providing support for the movement.

THE PROCESS FOR SOCIAL ACTION

There are eight stages of the Social Action Process:

- 1. A critical social problem exists which assents that:**
 - i. Violates widely held beliefs
 - ii. Power holders support the problem through real policies that are inconsistent with values, even if official policies may be in line with these values
 - iii. The public is unaware of the problem
 - iv. The policies which create/support the problems are not a public issue.

- 2. Prove the failure of official institutions to resolve the problem that:**
 - i. Organize local opposition groups
 - ii. Become experts in the problem, do research
 - iii. Document the failure of official institutions such as courts, government offices,' boards of directors, etc. to resolve the problem

3. Rise in public awareness that:

- i. Recognizes the problem and its victims grow
- ii. The public sees the faces of the victims
- iii. Creates more active local groups
- iv. Involves existing institutions and groups in the movement
- v. A situation exists where 20-30% of the public oppose power holder policies

4. Initial event:

- i. Dramatic non-violent action
- ii. Actions show the public that general conditions violate widely held values Non-violent actions repeated around the country
- iii. Problems becomes a public issue
- iv. New social movement rapidly grows
- v. A situation exists where 40-50% of the public oppose power holder policies

5. Feeling of failure

- i. Focus on goals that were not achieved
- ii. Focus on power holders that were not influenced
- iii. Note decline in number of demonstrations
- iv. Often find despair, hopelessness and burnout; it may seem movement has ended Emergence of negative rebels

6. Public opinion

- i. Majority opposes present conditions and power holder policies Show how the problem and policies affect all sectors of society Involve mainstream citizens and institutions in addressing the problem... Problem is put on the political agenda Promote possible solutions/alternatives to tire problem Counter each new power holder strategy
- ii. “Demonology” is used by tire power holders to feed and promote the public’s fear of alternative solutions to tire problem
- iii. Promote basic, fundamental changes, not adaptations or “cosmetic” changes

7. Success

- i. Large majority opposes
- ii. Power holders change policies
- iii. End game process: either power holders change policies because it has become more costly to continue than to change, or power holders are voted out of office ® New laws and policies are passed
- iv. Power holders try to make minimal reforms while the social movement demands real social change

8. Continuation of the Movement

- i. Extended successes
- ii. Opponents attempt backlash
- iii. Promote basic changes
- iv. Focus on sub-issues
- v. Recognize and celebrate successes to date
- vi. Focus on sub-goals
- vii. Initiate a new social movement

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS:

The current version of the leadership taxonomy includes Visionaries, Strategists, Statespersons, Experts, Outside Sparkplugs, Inside Advocates, Strategic Communicators and Movement Builders.

Leaders who make up the leadership taxonomy each bring to the movements they serve a special skill set. Visionaries raise our view of the possible. Statespersons elevate the cause in the minds of both the public and decision-makers. Strategists chart our road maps to victory. Communicators deploy the rhetoric to inflame and direct public passion toward the movement's objectives. Inside Advocates understand how to turn power structures and established rules and procedures to advantage. Movement Builders are generators of optimism and good will, with the ability to infect others with dedication to the common good. The happy confluence of each of these leadership roles is the hallmark of a successful movement as shown here below:

- **Visionaries.** Movements take flight through visionaries. Visionaries lift the horizons of others, setting goals that have never before been imagined or seen as realistic.

Visionaries challenge the conventional view of the possible, aim high, take risks, and rethink priorities.

- **Strategists.** Strategists sort out that part of tire vision that is realistically attainable, and develop a road map to get there. Strategists anticipate obstacles, including those laid by unruly coalition members, and provide guidance to insure that tire movement remains headed in the right direction.
- **Statespersons.** Statespersons carry tire movement flag. They are the "larger than life" public figures that embody authority and trust. Statespersons radiate credibility for tire movement far beyond its core supporters.
- **Experts.** Experts ensure that all new discoveries and public policy positions are well reasoned and grounded in facts. They possess special skills and knowledge that lend credibility to and back up tire positions.
- **Outside Sparkplugs.** Sparkplugs are agitators: unabashed tellers of truth to power. They operate outside of conventional, political (or other) establishments, free of the ties that bind "inside" players, and capable of holding our governments and other established organizations up to their own rhetoric of mission and commitment. Sparkplugs can kick-start a movement, coalition, or organization, and keep energy flowing through it. A community may be concerned, even outraged, but it may not be moved to action without a fiery goad. Sparkplugs are often irritating and difficult, but they churn up our collective conscience and annoy us into action.
- **Inside Advocates.** Inside Advocates are wise in tire ways of the political process, they are skilled negotiators, and positioned to influence key policy makers. Inside Advocates occupy seats of power or establish an open door to them, intuit tire approaches and arguments that resonate with policy makers, and press them in ways that are not easily dismissed.
- **Strategic Communicators.** Strategic Communicators are public teachers, masters of tire "sound bite" as tire concentrated encapsulation of potent messages. They translate complex scientific data, complex

public policy, and basic concepts of truth and justice into accurate, powerful metaphorical messages, the significance of which can be instantly grasped by tire broad public.

- **Movement Builders.** The quiet heroes of any successful movement, Movement Builders reach out to draw in new allies; they recruit new activists and make them feel welcome, valued, and heeded. They do the same for longtime movement members as well. They know that a movement is weakest when it shuns diversity and seeks only a narrow, homogeneous base. Builders bridge generations, link local with national, even international advocacy, create space for the knowledge gained through experience to be passed on, and initiate new approaches to participation so diverse voices are heard and their demands heeded. Builders also heal. They circumvent organizational turf hurdles, they convene and facilitate, seek to explore differences through civil discourse and debate, and eschew rancorous division.

Conclusion:

Movements today are seeking a society based on social justice values rather than those dominant in the global market place (liberal values). Social justice values are understood differently in different cultural contexts, and with different emphases, and it is this very diversity which is encouraging and hopeful.

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