

Journal

For Services to Children and Families

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The AASCF Journal for Services to Children and Families (the Journal) is published two times a year by AASCF; a membership based provincial organization of child and family service agencies. The AASCF works to strengthen member agencies and promotes attitudes, practices and conditions that contribute to quality services for vulnerable children and families. Articles are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AASCF.

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Aims and Scope

This AASCF Journal for Services to Children and Families (Journal) will provide an environment for the child, youth and family service sector and other professionals to reflect on policy, practice, training and research in the sector. This Journal will maintain a practice focus using research. It is intended to focus on local and Canadian content. We want to promote best practice in areas that people are working in, and provide room for critical inquiry into some of the promising programs, practice and research that is occurring in the community.

This Journal particularly encourages papers from people who are working in the field, students who are doing some interesting research and as often as we can we would like to hear from children, youth and families that have experienced a particular program, a challenge or great success and feel that it is worth sharing with the sector in order for all of us to learn from.

At this time we are planning on having the AASCF Journal for Services to Children and Families published two times per year. We ask for your help in this effort. We have brought together a group of academics and practitioners to be our Editorial Committee. As the Editorial Committee reviews articles we are looking for academically sound work that is well written and relevant to our sector. We welcome contributions in the form of research and practice papers, case studies, brief communications and correspondence from readers. Guidelines have been developed that the editorial board follows and those are available to anyone who wishes to contribute to this Journal. Authors should follow guidelines as outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition). Authors should not simultaneously submit a paper to more than one publication. The editors will edit papers for length, clarity and consistency. The Journal editorial committee reserves the right to alter the format of all articles to ensure that they are formatted consistently within the Journal. More complete guidelines can be requested from Rhonda Barraclough at RBarraclough@aascf.com. Articles are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AASCF.



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Value Based Leadership

Editorial

In this edition leadership is a pivotal topic. As I think about leadership in the context of the work we all do I become conscious that leadership must be rooted in who you are and what matters most to you. When you truly know yourself and what you stand for, it is much easier to know what to do in any situation. It always comes down to doing the right thing and doing the best you can. The same rings true for caring organizations

Great organizations are a collection of great people doing great things. More and more research focuses on principle based leadership. As I ponder this notion I seem to revert to my innate need for fairness, respect and the truth. In the current environment there are many competing priorities but these keep popping up as the root values needed to be successful.

This may sound simple, but it's hardly simplistic. Doing the right thing is a lifelong challenge for all of us. Kraemer (2011) outlines these four guiding principles that provide some framework to this topic:

1. *Self-reflection*: You must have the ability to identify and reflect on what you stand for, what your values are, and what matters most to you. To be a values-based leader, you must be willing to look within yourself through regular self-reflection and strive for greater self-awareness. After all, if you aren't self-reflective, how can you truly know yourself? If you don't know yourself, how can you lead yourself? If you can't lead yourself, how can you lead others?
2. *Balance*, which means the ability to see situations from multiple perspectives and differing viewpoints to gain a much fuller understanding. Balance means that you consider all sides and opinions with an open mind.
3. *True self-confidence*, accepting yourself as you are. You recognize your strengths and your weaknesses and strive for continuous improvement. With true self-confidence you know that there will always be people who are more gifted, accomplished, successful and so on than you, but you're OK with who you are.
4. *Genuine humility*. Never forget who you are or where you came from. Genuine humility keeps life in perspective, particularly as you experience success in your career. In addition, it helps you value each person you encounter and treat everyone respectfully



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The beauty of these four principles is that they can be applied by anyone or any organization. As we look at organizations' leadership and learning organizations we see the need for these principles in all aspects of our human service work from the support worker to the researcher. Clearly, you can always apply the principles of value based leadership. It is never too early or too late to become a value based leader in value based organizations.

Rhonda Barraclough, BSW, MEd, RSW
Executive Director, AASCF

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Kraemer, H. (2011). *The only true leadership is values-based leadership*. 04.26.11 in [www.Forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com) retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/2011/04/26/values-based-leadership_2.html.



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Understanding Running Away Through the Lived Experience of Youth in Care

Daniela Navia, Jennifer Newman, Megan Kontrimas

Background

Running away is a common practice among youth in care (Biehal & Wade, 2000; Courtney & Barth, 1996; Fasulo, Cross, Mossley & Leavey, 2002; MacLean, Embry & Cause, 1999; Nesmith, 2002; Wade, Biehal, Clayden & Stein, 1998). Due to its complexity, it is also poorly understood. Discussions of running away often frame running as a risky or dangerous activity and highlight the potential for negative consequences to youth, communities and mental health care systems. The dangers associated with running away have been well-documented, including negative short term and long term outcomes affecting the physical and emotional wellbeing of youth (Biehal & Wade, 1999; Herman, Susser & Struening, 1994; Keogel, Melamid & Burnham, 1995; McIntosh, Lyons, Weiner & Jordan, 2010; Nesmith, 2002; Tyler, Hoyt, Whitbeck & Cause, 2001). Outcomes however, have been shown to vary extensively among youth depending on the contextual factors including type of placement, motivations for running, length of time spent away and associated activities (Biehal & Wade, 1999). Courtney, Skyles, Miranda, Zinn, Howard and George also point out that the negative consequences that youth face while running away are often similar to those they encounter while not running (2005). Other negative consequences of running away that have been emphasized include reduced success and efficacy of mental health services (McIntosh et al, 2010; Guest, Baker & Storaasli, 2008), negative consequences for staff and to the child welfare system as a whole such as costly efforts to find missing children and youth (Abbey, Nicholas & Bieber, 1997; Wade et al, 1998).

The inclusion of the perspectives of youth regarding the meaning of running away is crucial to understand their running behaviors and address safety concerns (Peled & Cohavi, 2009). A review of the literature was conducted specifically on the topic of youth and running away in care, with a particular emphasis on the meaning of those experiences for youth. Only a few studies were identified exploring the diverse narratives of youth running away within care (Biehal & Wade, 1999,2000; Courtney et al., 2005; Finkelstein, Wamsley, Currey & Miranda, 2004; Pergamit & Ernst, 2011). These studies showcase how youth in care often perceive running away as a coping mechanism, a way to reinforce connections with families, caseworkers and peer groups, and suggest that running away is often driven by a pursuit for autonomy and normalcy. Therefore, running away is often motivated by developmentally normative desires such as independence, bonding with peer groups, and exploration of new environments and experiences and also facilitated by a care context where youth may feel restrained, disconnected or limited in working through past and current trauma. Courtney et al. (2005) and Finkelstein et al. (2004) also highlight the issues regarding the use of institutional jargon to describe running away, and how the terms “running away” or “Absent Without Leave (AWOL)” did not always fit with youth's perceptions of their actions. Overall, there is a lack of focus in research done with youth that delves deeper into how youth conceptualize running away and how they account for their past histories.



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Overall, this project sought to explore youths' experiences with running away in residential and foster care through their perspectives. In particular, we explored the meaning of running away for youth and their relationship with running away from care with their previous histories.

Development of the research project

This study was qualitative in nature, and consisted of semi-structured interviews with eight youth who have histories running away in care. A critical research approach that included the voices of youth was undertaken in order to ensure that participants felt empowered by their contribution to the project and to minimize the hierarchy that often results between the researcher and participant. The researchers that conducted the interviews encouraged informal discussion of issues as well as mutual sharing of information, particularly at the beginning of the interview to support building rapport.

Research occurred at Wood's Homes, a large non-profit children's mental health centre based in Calgary which delivers services that aim to promote and assist the development and well-being of at-risk children, youth and their families. Running away while in care has been monitored at Wood's Homes for more than 10 years and is currently tracked through an electronic database. Running has been highlighted for this project as an issue of interest due to its prevalence within the agency and impact on treatment.

Youth currently in foster care or residential placements who had the highest number of running away incidents (5 or more) lasting more than four hours were identified for the purpose of being invited to participate in the project. These clients were chosen because they would have a wide range of experiences to discuss. After the project was approved by the internal Wood's Homes Ethics Board, recruitment occurred through collaboration between Team Leaders and the Research Department team. Youth were offered a \$10 gift card for their participation.

Data Collection

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants over the months of July and August 2012. Minors, and particularly those in distress, have been identified as particularly vulnerable to exploitation in research contexts (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988; Peled & Cohavi, 2009; Peled & Leichtenritt, 2002). Therefore interview procedures placed emphasis on making sure the youth felt as comfortable as possible during the interview process, and were aware that they should not feel pressured to share information or experiences. Interviews were conducted by two trained interviewers, who collaborated with other Research Team members to create a research protocol for conducting interviews with youth who had run away from care, established ways to create a safe and confidential interview space, and discussed appropriate responses in escalating or crisis situations. Participants were interviewed at locations of their choosing, and interviews lasted between roughly 45 minutes-3 hours.



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Each interview began with a detailed explanation about the research project and an informed consent procedure. Once the participant's questions about the project were answered, participants signed a consent form. An interview protocol was used as a guide throughout the interview, which sought to explore client's perceptions of running before entering care and after entering care, running experiences that were significant to them, their perceptions of risk and safety in relation to running and their perceptions of how staff, police and their loved ones have responded when they ran away. This protocol was adapted from an interview guide used by Courtney et al. (2005). The protocol addressed the same key areas but many questions were reworded to be more open-ended and have a broader scope (e.g. "tell me about the last time you ran away" was modified to "tell me about a time when you ran away that is memorable"). Youth were also guided to share as many experiences as they wanted. With the participant's permission, interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

A grounded theory approach was utilized to analyze the data, characterized by reflexivity, collaboration and constant comparison between academic and youth perspectives (Thornberg, 2012). Transcripts were read from beginning to end by members of the Research Team to determine the overall theme of the interview and reflect on the interview process. An appreciative or empathic approach was utilized, seeking to hear the voices of youth and understand the meaning of their experiences from their point of view (Corradi, 1991). Thematic analysis was an iterative process, by comparing the main themes within each interview across readers and establishing commonalities and differences between each interview. A larger list of themes was condensed to determine which were most salient throughout the interviews.

Characteristics of Participants

Invitations were offered to twelve potential participants and eight youth agreed to participate in an interview. The final sample consisted of five male and three female youth between the ages of thirteen to eighteen. From this group, seven youth were involved in running in residential care and two youth had experience running away in foster care. Seven of the youth spoke English as a primary language and were born in Canada. Five youth were Aboriginal, two were Caucasian and one was from Trinidad and Tobago. Six youth presented with running away as a major concern upon intake to Wood's Homes. All seven youth had been at their program for at least the last thirty days since their last running away incident. With the exception of the young person who was now living in a semi-independent living program, all youth were currently in residential care.

The Meaning of Running Away for Youth

An important distinction made among youth in regard to terminology was the differentiation between running away before or after entering care. Youth often framed running away prior to entering care as leaving without permission. Most of the youth interviewed had left without permission prior to entering care, except two youth who entered care at a very young age. Typically they portrayed leaving without permission before entering care as something that was normal within their household and not a



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violation of caregiver expectations and would therefore call it “leaving”, “walking out” or “not coming home” and not “running away”. For example, the youth below summarize the freedom that he experienced before entering care:

“I never ran away I just didn't come home”.

“I was allowed to walk out. I didn't need permission to leave. I was always allowed to go anywhere... I didn't get grounded. Until I came here.”

The entry point into care marked a transition for youth where they faced drastically different expectations than those of their caregivers. Running away while in care was typically referred to as “AWOL” as this was a term they were taught by staff and caseworkers to describe their behaviors. The following youth explains the process of learning about the term:

“I didn't even know what AWOLing was. It took me like hours to understand what it was. I was like “what's AWOLing?”, they're like “When you run”, I was like “when you're on the run?” and they were like “yeah, I guess.” And I was like “what?! Why do you call it AWOL?”, I didn't understand. I just thought like Wood's Homes says it. I think...”

Reducing and Eliminating Running Away

Most youth identified that they ran away with less frequency or no longer ran away at all which brought about interesting discussions about why they no longer ran. These typically fit into a combination of two narratives: 1) no longer running to escape negative consequences; and 2) no longer running to facilitate their own personal growth.

In our interviews with youth, it became clear that although some might still want to engage in running away, they stopped or reduced this behavior to avoid negative consequences. In particular, youth reduced and eventually eliminated their running behaviors in programs to avoid arrest, and to be able to transition out of the program. Therefore, complying with program rules for a short time would allow for more freedom in the long term. The following quotes from youth illustrate how not running anymore was a pragmatic decision:

“I was getting threatened by [staff]. I was gonna get kicked off campus 'cuz I was always unsupervised and I kept on AWOLing, they said this is the last time you're AWOLing. And I never AWOLed ever since. I didn't want to live homeless on the street with a record 'cuz they,'cuz I can get that record fixed...”

Accompanying this narrative were mechanisms to showcase defiance and subversion (Ewick & Silbey, 2003; MacFarland, 2004). In other words, youth often spoke about obeying rules at a surface level but



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also navigating around them whenever possible. For the youth quoted below, running was often an opportunity to obtain and consume substances. Eventually, in response to threats of jail time, she found ways to obtain substances without running:

“So now I just like, if I want weed or something I just call somebody and they deliver it. I’ll just pay them back or somehow.”

Another youth who was living in a residential placement for youth transitioning into the community outlined how rather than leaving the program without telling staff, he now tells them that he is leaving, often under false pretenses, to avoid staff disapproval or punishment.

“I’ll convince them that I am coming back, like I make up such intricate excuses too... like sometimes I say that like you know, “this program’s too much for me to handle. Anxiety attack!” But I don’t have anxiety attack, but they don’t know that.”

A secondary narrative employed by a number of the youth interviewed was one that framed running as a coping strategy that they needed to overcome due to its negative consequences. This was a narrative linked to the idea of self improvement through treatment. The youth quoted below talked about no longer running as intrinsically tied to overcoming her struggles with addiction and the constant temptation to regress:

“Sometimes if I think about a little bit of stuff in my head, I still don’t AWOL. I stand by the gates for like twenty minutes and I’m like “No, I’m not doing it”, I know what I’ll do if I go out there... When I was in CYI realized, I can’t be doing this no more. I don’t wanna come here ever again. I think that’s when I started changing my life around and I was like “let’s do treatment work. I wanna change.”

This narrative was also connected to a desire to overcome the stigma and disapproval attached to their previous behaviors, particularly with staff. The following youth compared his progress in relation to others in his program and focused on the difficult process of proving to staff that he had truly changed:

“I don’t really get involved in the AWOLs. I don’t wanna be. ‘Cuz I’m the one longest one that stopped AWOLing out of the AWOLers at our cottage... We’re in the top-ten AWOLing AWOLers. [staff] told us, he said you guys are in the top ten. Yah, he said that I’m the highest, higher than [youth] and [youth]. ‘Cuz I started AWOLing before them. It’s sad. I don’t want to be in the top ten. I still am now... I’m just the one that’s been here the longest and knows all the rules.”



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Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Preliminary findings from interviews done with youth, in residential treatment and foster care, showcase how running away from care fits into youth's life narratives of being in and out of care. For those who ran before entering care, running was normalized by their caregivers and therefore perceived differently than when they entered care. As youth navigated the process of being in care they typically curtailed their running behaviors for pragmatic reasons or because they genuinely believed following program expectations would help them in the long term. Research on running away has typically been framed by a focus on negative consequences and how to prevent youth from running, which does not take into account the context and meaning of running away for youth. This study contributes to the limited qualitative explorations of youth running away in care and fits with previous research focusing on running as a coping strategy and a consequence of care environments that do not fully align with youth's expectations. This study also highlights how youth navigate and subvert treatment contexts to preserve their autonomy, comply with expectations and achieve their personal goals. Future research should explore youth's perception of the risk associated with their behaviors in relation to how they conceptualize running and whether or not they decide to no longer run. It would also be beneficial to compare staff perceptions of running away with youth's experiences in order to engage in a balanced dialogue within care systems of how running affects youth, families, and agencies.

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Megan Kontrimas is a data analyst in the Wood's Homes research department. Previously, she was working directly with clients of Eagle Moon Lodge as a youth counselor. Megan is a graduate of the Bachelor of Psychology Program at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario and received Post Graduate certification in Addiction: Treatment and Prevention from Georgian College in Orillia, Ontario.



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She has been involved in published research validating the 2D:4D digit ratio as a predictor of prenatal testosterone exposure, aggression and competition. Her experience in intensive treatment has guided her current research interests in the wellbeing of children and youth in care and measuring outcomes for success as well as workplace wellbeing in social work settings.

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The Leadership Deficit in the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector

Diane Dutton, PhD, Mandie Abrams BA, MPA

Introduction

Much research has focused on the topic of leadership in the nonprofit sector over the last ten years due to a combination of factors that has served to bring this subject to the forefront. Not only are a significant number of nonprofit leaders of retirement age, but the sector must also get ready for what Halpern (2006) terms, “the subsequent intergenerational leadership change in ways that reflect the increased diversity of communities” (p. 3).

This paper is intended to serve as a review of selected literature that examines the projected nonprofit leadership deficit, and explores how leadership development as a response to this potential crisis could benefit organizations in several ways. The challenges in developing nonprofit leaders are also examined, and some of the more prominent issues will be highlighted, along with those more specific to an Alberta context. The new realities of a diverse and inclusive workforce that could mediate the projected crisis will be discussed, along with the nuances of the relatively recent generational leadership shift.

Finally, it is of value to consider the context of a learning organization and how it might relate to leadership development in the nonprofit sector. There is no doubt that both the concept and practice of leadership development would be highly valued in an organization that prizes learning.

The Nature of the Nonprofit Leadership Deficit

The prospects of a leadership crisis or deficit in the nonprofit sector has been well documented by articles and research conducted by several different organizations. The first Daring to Lead report in 2001 (Peters & Wolfred, 2001) expanded on CompassPoint's 1999 report, Leadership Lost: A Study of Executive Director Tenure and Experience, which looked at the professional experience, compensation, tenure trends, and executive training and support of nonprofit leaders, and ways in which executive retention and the quality of nonprofit leadership in the sector might be supported. By 2006 the next Daring to Lead report (Bell et al, 2006) found that almost three-quarters of the executive directors (ED) surveyed were planning on not being in their jobs five years hence, while almost 10% were actively in the process of leaving.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has produced a series of studies and documents that highlight leadership change and executive transitions such as a study on Nonprofit Executive Leadership and Transitions (Teegarden, 2004) which found that 23% of ED's planned to leave their jobs in the next two years, while another 65% planned to leave by 2009. This study also suggested that the baby boomers who were planning to retire would do so in two waves: the first group (almost 57%) by 2010 and the second wave (over 43%) would retire by the time they reached the age of 62, with most of these transitions expected



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to happen by 2020 (p. 5). Perhaps Adams (2006) put it best when he said “Given the growing number of aging Baby Boom leaders at the head of today's nonprofits, there is a good chance that your organization will face a leadership transition of its executive or management team during the next several years (p. 2).

In 2006 the Bridgespan Group conducted a study of the projected leadership requirements of nonprofits with revenues greater than \$250,000 (excluding hospitals and post-secondary institutions), and projected that the sector in the U.S. will need between 333,000 and 640,000 new senior managers over the next decade, or 80,000 managers every year by 2016 (Tierney, 2006). According to this report, the projected leadership deficit will result from both limited supply and increasing demand, citing critical factors such as the increasing numbers of nonprofit organizations, baby-boomer retirements, current nonprofit managers/leaders moving into different roles within or outside the sector, and the growth in the size and number of nonprofit organizations.

CompassPoint's 2006 *Daring to Lead* report on cited exactly the same numbers of leaders (75%) who planned to leave within five years in 2006 as there had been in their original study in 2001, yet clearly there has been no reports of a 75% turnover in leadership to date (Bell et al, 2006). As a follow-up, the latest *Daring to Lead* study conducted in 2011 reported new numbers that stated 7% of EDs have given notice and 67% anticipate leaving within five years (Cornelius et al, 2011). The study also points out that within that 67% there is 10% who are actively considering leaving even though they have not yet given notice. In the Canadian context, a recent study done by the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (2012) found that over 50% of executive directors said they will leave their current position within four years. So while no massive turnover in nonprofit leaders has been experienced as of yet, there is still cause for concern.

This could become a crisis for nonprofit organizations, not only in terms of being able to source out individuals for leadership positions but also because replacing leaders can be a costly experience for organizations, both financially and with respect to achievement of their mission. Some research has found that leadership transitions in a crisis or non-routine situation can represent almost 70% of all such transitions which, if not well-managed, can cost organizations in terms of repeated turnover, underperformance and even the inability to stay afloat (Association of Small Foundations, 2008).

The most recent study done by the Bridgespan Group (2011) surveyed over 150 leadership development teams and found that leadership development and succession planning for senior leader positions was rated as the single greatest organizational weakness faced by nonprofits. While preliminary, their results suggest that good leadership development and succession planning should look like a set of linked processes that are intended to build on the human resource function within an organization. These processes are (1) engage senior leaders; (2) understand future needs; (3) develop future leaders; (4) hire leaders externally as needed; (5) measure and improve practices; and (6) build culture that supports development. In their view, “The most successful succession planning is not a periodic event triggered



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by an executive's departure. Instead, it is a proactive and systematic investment in building a pipeline of leaders within an organization, so that when transitions are necessary, leaders at all levels are ready to act" (p. 2).

Reframing the Leadership Crisis

Although a substantial turnover in nonprofit leadership has not materialized to date, statistics from the 2011 Daring to Lead study suggest that while it may have been delayed such a turnover is still on the horizon. However, no matter whether the lack of nonprofit leadership will reach crisis proportions or not, the current research suggests that those involved with the nonprofit sector had reason to be concerned.

Some in the field suggest differing perspectives on what should concern the sector at the present time. Kunreuther and Corvington (2007) suggest that it is the sector that is in crisis, and that concerns about leadership only reinforce existing issues and don't necessarily force the sector to take a good look at the broader issues. In this way, thinking about leadership issues as a crisis affects how the sector frames what may be appropriate solutions or approaches to dealing with these issues, especially in light of potential for multigenerational leadership shifts.

This perspective suggests that three main themes may predominate current thinking when looking at solutions to a potential leadership crisis. The first of these are the current organizational structures in the sector that are operating in an environment that is quite different from when the organizations first originated. While most organizations may have adapted to the current economic realities, their traditional structures are not as attractive to next generation leaders as alternative models like shared leadership might be.

In addition, the current role of the executive director that is long on hours and short on compensation is not favoured by emerging leaders as well as many current ones. Perhaps these senior jobs don't have the same draw or reputation they once had, but whatever the reason, it is suggested that the way those positions are presently structured may in fact be partially responsible for a leadership gap.

Finally, it is necessary for current and often older leaders to support and develop leadership in their own organizations. While some research proffers a vision of a home-grown leadership solution in nonprofit succession planning (Teegarden, 2004), current data suggests that nonprofits fill only 30 to 40 % of their senior positions internally, as compared to for-profit companies who average closer to 65% (Tierney, 2006). Current realities also suggest that most organizations are too small and too flat to use this approach, as illustrated by the Teegarden study where only half of the organizations in largest size category had a deputy or associate director who might be eligible for internal leadership development (Johnson, 2009). In addition, some emerging leaders feel almost invisible to the Baby Boomer generation, valued perhaps for their technical expertise but not necessarily for their other abilities like strategic or big picture thinking. They feel their experience and education is ignored or dismissed, leading to frustration when given responsibility but not authority. As a more diverse body than ever seen



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before, emerging leaders have different experiences and backgrounds than current leaders, and may even be considered to pose a threat to existing structures and operations.

Still others like Johnson (2009) believe that while a shortage of leadership in the nonprofit sector is legitimate, she does not think there is as much cause for concern as much of the current literature touts. As pointed out earlier, no dramatic turnover in leadership has occurred, and some of the research does not account for transitions into, rather than out of, the sector from other sectors or from baby boomers working longer into their retirement years than they had originally expected.

Johnson also suggests that using a simple economic supply and demand model points out several mitigating factors that are likely to affect the market for nonprofit leadership. These include an increasing participation in the work force by baby boomers due to good health or financial need, accelerated skill acquisition by younger workers (primarily through an increasing number of educational programs), and recruitment from other areas like the for-profit or government sectors. She further suggests that the merger and consolidation of organizations, an increase in using the management and/or professional skills of volunteers and part-time consultants, and the expanding use of venture philanthropy will also be mitigating factors in the leadership crisis.

A survey conducted by the Young Nonprofit Professional Network (YNPN) focused on respondents who were considered to have shown interest in a long-term career in the nonprofit sector and were seen as prime candidates for senior leadership roles (Solomon & Sandahl, 2007). This survey suggested that even though many are concerned about the flight of potential leaders from the sector, these departures may be less critical in the long-term than first thought. Research (e.g. Armour, 2005) suggests that Generations X and Y (born between 1965 and 2000) are very comfortable with frequently changing careers and positions along the way to achieving their career goals. Given this tendency, their absence from the sector may very well be temporary, as 33 % of survey respondents who wanted to leave said they considered themselves highly likely to return to the sector in the future, and stated their preference to become an executive director at that time. This is important because it points to the need for there to be both incentives and opportunities for people to want to return to the sector, otherwise the sector may well be the loser in today's war for talent. Teegarden (2004) suggests that as a short-term strategy the sector should make their intentions explicit about finding leadership positions for emerging leaders so they don't choose to leave the sector when they perceive there are not many senior positions available to them.

Whether the perspective on the leadership deficit is that the situation is overstated, or seen as real and imminent, there are challenges in developing emerging leaders that need to be addressed in some form to ensure that leadership for the sector is willing, available and trained.



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Leadership Development as an Organizational Strategy

According to the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector, it has become evident that there is a need for a skills development strategy for the nonprofit sector to combat both demographic pressures from an aging workforce and a low national birth rate (Statistics Canada, 2006). With this in mind, leadership development can be an important organizational strategy for many reasons. It can be part of a recruitment and retention strategy for finding and keeping talented people, it can make an organization a more desirable place to work, and it can assist the staff of an organization to be better equipped to successfully carry out its mission.

Several authors espouse leadership development as a way to develop organizational capacity and enhance the activities of the organization. Developing future leaders is an action that shows an organization is strategic thinking and future-oriented, and is interested in moving in the right direction (Yukl, 2006). Further to that, a leader is critical in influencing the direction and attitude of an organization, and leadership development can be an excellent way to shape the future direction of an organization (Gale, 2002).

Leadership development can also help with the recruitment and retention of talent. Noe (2002) points out that the factors that may influence employees into staying with an organization include good colleagues, challenging assignments and the opportunity to develop and grow a career. A recent study in Alberta found that for those employed in the nonprofit sector for less than two years the opportunity for professional development was what they sought most, second only to being valued for their contributions in the workplace (Alberta Nonprofit Workforce Council, 2012).

Some of the common benefits of training and development include more productive and motivated staff that are better able to achieve the mission of the organization as well as meet the challenges that change may bring. Other positive results can be maintaining a pool of people who may be able to replace employees who leave, and acting as a recruitment and retention strategy (HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector, 2012).

The Challenges in Developing Nonprofit Leaders

While there is no doubt that a broader leadership development effort across the sector and within individual organizations would be welcome in both concept and implementation, there are some specific areas that would benefit from more attention. Recent research has indicated that those in the sector feel there is a need for more guidance and mentoring for emerging leaders, as well as for more performance management in general and specifically improved performance feedback. Also of note is a generational and demographic shift in how leaders are viewed and developed, outdated hierarchical organizational structures, and time and funding for leadership.



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Guidance and mentoring.

Frustration with the lack of guidance and mentorship for emerging leaders is often mentioned as an issue in developing nonprofit leaders. As an YNPN survey participant remarked, “I would be more likely to take on a leadership role in an organization with internal structures in place to support new leadership, as well as opportunities to network and be part of a community of other new leaders” (Solomon and Sandahl, 2007, p. 5). Other respondents in the same study felt that senior leaders might see them as a threat rather than trying to mentor them, and might even be preventing them from moving forward.

Developing new networks and entry into existing networks was highly significant for emerging leaders. In a study of nonprofit employees, only 4% of respondents were being developed to become the next senior leader, with women being developed at a rate lower than that of men (Cornelius et al, 2008). Respondents also stated they were highly interested in further developing their external connections and networks (46%) as well as their technical and management skills (45%) in preparation for being a leader.

Others have noted that executives often do not come into their roles with adequate preparation and support, perhaps due to an apparent lack of succession and transition planning (Fischer & Beimers, 2009) that causes less importance to be placed on developing the leaders within an organization. While executive coaching can assist in developing current executives, there is a case to be made for guiding and mentoring emerging leaders before they are put in the potentially isolated job at the top of a nonprofit organization. For those in the top job, they have reported being less effective at the tasks involved in leading others than they were at those necessary to lead themselves. The tasks involved in leading others were typically those of human resource management, usually hiring and firing, giving and receiving effective feedback, and working to maintain the alignment and high performance of a whole team. While 81% said they worked with someone they trusted in making important organizational decisions, only 31% said they explicitly mentored another (Cornelius et al, 2011).

Improved performance feedback.

Emerging leaders also say the culture at their current organization does not encourage performance management or possess the mechanisms to allow open and frank feedback on their performance (Simms, 2009). They identify a disconnection between the nonprofit culture that does not lend itself to continuous development and the importance of feedback to support development. According to the latest Daring to Lead Study (Cornelius et al, 2011), 45% of executives did not have a performance evaluation in the last year, and of those who did have one, only 32% reported it as being very useful.



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Generational and demographic shifts.

As the demographics of the workforce change, generational differences are often mentioned (for both older and younger generations) as being a key stumbling block to leadership development efforts. Different styles of working across generations has been the subject of many studies, articles and books across every sector, such as the world-wide PricewaterhouseCoopers 2011 study on millennia's. An American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) paper on leading a multigenerational workforce noted a study that found more that 60% of employers had experienced intergenerational conflict. This report also suggests organizations that support an “age-neutral” workplace will see a positive impact on their bottom line in terms of corporate culture, recruitment, employee engagement, retention and customer service (Murphy, 2007).

Organizational structure.

Outdated hierarchical organizational structures also appear to be unattractive to emerging leaders and would benefit by being replaced with a less traditional structure where everyone is responsible for contributing to the achievement of the mission (Cornelius et al, 2008). However, this in turn might lead to flatter organizations, where often there is often no path or system to career advancement, one of the stated concerns about leadership development in smaller organizations. This might call for exploring a different model of leadership such as shared leadership, which could be attractive to those who are interested in the current incarnation of the organization but may not feel they have all the skills or the time necessary to be its only leader.

A greater proportion of potential younger leaders who are interested in becoming an ED are apprehensive about taking on the role as it is presently structured. Currently they see high stress levels, long hours and negligible work-life balance in existing executives. As one YNPN survey participant noted, “It's very important for me to be able to have a happy, healthy, and fulfilling personal life in addition to my career. The climate I have observed in many nonprofits does not support this ... [there is an expectation] that leaders, especially EDs, will take on challenging, stressful schedules with relatively low pay because they believe in 'the cause'”, (Solomon and Sandahl, 2007, p. 3). As a study on next generation leaders states, “The job of an executive director is notoriously marked by poor work-life balance—and it is not going unnoticed by those considering the position” (Cornelius, 2008, p. 16). This can be compounded for those who either have or want to start a family as well as have a leadership position in the sector.

Work-life balance can be a concern even for those aged fifty and over. One study (Cornelius et al, 2008) specifically looked at respondents aged fifty and older who might be interested in becoming an ED. They echoed the concerns about the sacrifice of work-life balance and the fundraising responsibilities that they felt were part and parcel of an ED's job (p. 15).



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Time and funding for leadership development.

While many organizations feel they do not have the budget to promote leadership development, individuals often feel they don't have the time and possibly the support to follow up on training and development opportunities. Organizations that support leadership development need to find time for emerging leaders to participate in development opportunities, whether they are formal courses and programs, or informal peer networks.

Part of the problem relates to a funding model that doesn't necessarily designate funds for “overhead” costs like leadership training. One study found that only 15% of organizations in the U.S. commented that they had received any funding for leadership development (Dobin & Tchume, 2011).

In Canada, Toupin (as quoted in Saunders, 2004) explains:

Fewer organizations now have access to core funding and project funding tends to be short-term. Short-term funding limits organizations' ability to offer anything more than short-term contractual employment. Chronic uncertainty about funding makes it more difficult to attract and keep employees. Over time, employees wanting stability and job security will gravitate to jobs with more stable non-profits or they will go entirely outside the sector. (p. 2)

Funders should be encouraged to support organizations in succession and transition planning, as well as leadership development and training, through direct support or through such means as a scholarship program (e.g. Cornelius et al, 2008; Solomon & Sandahl, 2007). This can also help current executives, as for many leaders the challenge of obtaining organizational financial capital was the leading cause of burnout, while an aversion to fundraising was one of the reasons that future leaders did not desire to be executives (Bell et al, 2006). In addition this type of investment by funders and others helps improve morale within an organization and demonstrates a commitment to developing staff that will encourage those interested in leadership roles to stay in the sector. Investing in leadership development also encourages those in an organization to take a long-term view in terms of the organization's sustainability.

The Alberta Context

Like other locations in Canada and the U.S., Alberta's non-profit sector is facing a considerable number of challenges specifically involving labour and workforce strategies which, along with other sectors, are under an increasing strain due to Alberta's booming economy. Alberta's significant economic growth starting in the year 2000 fuelled labour and skill shortages in all sectors in Alberta, with an unemployment rate of only 3.9% in 2005, the lowest in Canada. Industry leaders felt that without a coordinated response to this situation future growth would be impacted (HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector, 2009). While these trends brought skilled labour shortages to all sectors, the challenges for the non-profit sector were particularly significant.



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In Alberta the aging workforce at the senior and middle management levels in the sector and a lack of middle management staff have left many nonprofit organizations unprepared for any large turnover in leadership in the next five years (Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, 2010). Some of the challenges include dependency on external funding, an increasing demand for services, and increasing competition between more organizations. Specific workforce challenges include increasing competition for workers in the province from all sectors, stressful working conditions, a combination of low job security and high turnover (specifically in entry level positions), a lack of professional development opportunities, and increased difficulty recruiting volunteers whenever the economy was booming.

While staff recruitment has improved somewhat due to the soft employment market in other sectors, there are still human resource challenges ahead as the economy improves. Research indicates that 42% of nonprofits in Alberta had difficulty recruiting and retaining staff in the last three years. Organizations say they have worked hard to enhance the appeal of their workplaces, employing such tactics as “competitive wages; improved benefits; offering permanent positions rather than contracts; positive and collegial work environments; effective leadership; better hiring procedures; staff training and development opportunities; increased flexibility; and increased employee involvement and autonomy” (Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, 2010, p. 8). The same survey also indicated that 77% of Alberta nonprofits provided employees with development opportunities, although these were primarily on-the-job and work-related courses, seminars, and workshops. So while these numbers are very encouraging, these particular opportunities appear to relate specifically to the functional job content rather than leadership development opportunities.

Developing and Encouraging Emerging Leaders

Emerging leaders are not just a post-baby boomer generation that may be waiting in the wings to enter onto the leadership stage. They can be anyone in the organization or sector who could be a potential leader, which may require some rethinking of what an inclusive workforce might look like. In fact, one study specifically examined a smaller but still significant section of respondents aged fifty and older (Cornelius et al, 2008), where one in five said they wanted to be an ED, and one in four said they were ready now (p. 15). Excluding this group was noted as possibly ignoring what could be a noteworthy source of leadership talent. AARP comments that since workers aged 55-64 are now the fastest growing section of the workforce, recruitment aimed at people in that age bracket can give organizations a competitive advantage (Murphy, 2007).

In addition, the suggestions around talent development from organizations representing next generation leaders can often be applied to any emerging leader. For example, YNPN (Solomon & Sandahl, 2007) suggests providing mentoring and giving more leadership responsibility to those considered to be the next generation of nonprofit leaders, a suggestion echoed by those queried in about leadership development in Alberta (Abrams & Rabinovitz, 2012). They suggest that current senior



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leadership mentor their successors by helping them take on the responsibilities of leadership now rather than waiting until after the senior leaders are gone. Providing an opportunity for more management experience could go a long way towards encouraging them to stay in the sector. Not only does this provide training for emerging leaders, it shows others in the organization that there may well be support for them to become emerging leaders themselves.

Other suggestions include the creation of a “talent bank” of young nonprofit professionals on a regional or sectoral level, connecting them to each other and to potential leadership opportunities, overcoming the disadvantages felt by many belonging to small and/or flat organizations. As this study notes, “Nonprofits already collaborate through joint funding proposals and program initiatives. Why not partner on training and retaining future leaders?” (Solomon & Sandahl, 2007, p. 7).

They also suggest that funders consider funding career path and leadership development in the sector. The results of their study show that it does a disservice to both organizations and the sector as a whole when there is a failure or inability to fund local talent development. Not only does providing funds to support talent development emphasize the importance of succession planning, it also encourages potential leaders to stay in the sector because their organizations have made a commitment to investing in their careers. Further to that, developing more senior staff and emerging leaders is not only an investment in the quality of organizational programs, but in the future and sustainability of the organization itself.

Finally, YNPN suggests that all those in the nonprofit sector could work on their image, thinking about how the sector looks as a potential employer to talented potential leaders. As they put it, there is a need to educate future leaders “... about what it means to have a career in the nonprofit sector, about their own responsibilities in making these jobs sustainable, and about the very different challenges and opportunities each organization will present leaders” (p. 7).

Adams (2006) suggests that a powerful approach is to create a strategic leader development succession plan, which can focus on developing staff at all levels of the organization by giving them increased responsibility, and which can also help organizations identify and nurture those who may be emerging leaders. For organizations that are not big enough to have two people with sufficient talent for the most senior position present at the same time, they could consider thinking about leadership development “in terms of “communities of practice,” groups in and around the organization, in the “broader ecology,” which might serve as potent sources of new leaders (p. 6).

Another YNPN survey sought to explore whether the recommendations about developing emerging leaders they kept seeing over and over again in the current literature were the right ones (Dobin & Tchume, 2011). When over 1100 young nonprofit professionals were surveyed, they validated the recommendations seen in the many of the prevailing studies as being the right ones. Over 94% believed



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that the first two recommendations, offering more competitive compensation and making an investment in building “bench strength” (internal candidates) could have a high impact. Over 88% thought engaging in inclusive succession planning was critical, while 75% said that the prioritization of diversity and inclusivity was important. Changes in the structures of nonprofit organizations and the ED job were rated by 52% of respondents as having a large impact.

The Daring to Lead 2011 study (Cornelius et al, 2011) examined what strategies were considered to be most important and effective in terms of developing leaders. Current executives reported that executive coaching, peer networks and leadership programs were very effective, all of which contained the chance for skilled executives to reflect on their role in the organization and their own leadership practices. Formal and informal peer networks seemed to be quite effective at decreasing feelings of isolation and helping executives share what might be some of the normal day-to-day trials and tribulations they faced.

A Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

Just like other sectors in Canada, the nonprofit sector has its share of recruitment challenges, which may mean looking to a workforce that does not look the same as it did in the past. There will need to be a greater reliance on those from other countries, First Nations, retired workers, and those with disabilities, which of course has connotations for leadership development in the sector (HR Council for Nonprofit Sector, 2011).

Bormann & Woods (1999) define the terms diversity and inclusion this way:

diversity describes the spectrum of human similarities and differences. Inclusion, on the other hand, describes the way an organization configures opportunity, interaction, communication, information and decision-making to utilize the potential of diversity” \ (p. 4).

Utilizing the potential of diversity, however, is not without its challenges. Holmgren (2011) points out that immigration will help revitalize our workforce but will also add to the complexity of the work environment by adding cultural influences, expectations, and increasing incidences of prejudice that often go hand-in-hand with increasing diversity. He adds that generational differences will only serve to expand and intensify this complexity (p. 33).

Building an inclusive workforce could assist an organization in developing its leaders, as well as for the sector overall. In making a business case for an inclusive workplace, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (2011) stated that being inclusive and supporting a variety of workers from different backgrounds and ways of life can position an organization as an employer of choice among all those that are competing for the same talent.



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Shifting demographic boundaries.

Today the shift in demographics means working across generations and also working across cultures. For nonprofits it can also mean learning how to share leadership across those boundaries in a way that reflects the diversity of the organization and the diversity of the community served (Gowdy et al, 2009; Halpern, 2006).

The shift in generational leadership is a very specific form of diverse workforce. For the first time there are four generations in the workplace, with the Millennials or Generation Y (born 1980-2000), Generation X (born 1965-1980), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), and the World War II generation (born before 1945). There are great differences between the generations in how they conceptualize their personal and professional lives and work-life balance in particular. When Generation X'ers are writing policies that will affect the work lives of baby boomers, and boomers are trying to find something in common with a younger colleague who has only a college practicum for experience - the footing of these relationships can be on rocky ground.

Research has found that leadership qualities are generally viewed the same from one generation to the next, with differences possibly related to where the leaders are in their own life cycle, with senior leaders focusing more on their own leadership qualities while younger leaders tending to focus more on the new leadership needed to build their organizations (Kunreuther, 2005). Vision, communication skills, collaborative style and a concern about staff were all seen as critical components of leadership across all ages and positions for organizations involved in social change (p. 12). There was a difference seen between older leaders who were founders and those who were not. The founders focused more on what values and skills their successors would need to lead the organization, whereas the other senior leaders focused more on leadership as a way to look at the qualities they brought to their work. Some of these latter findings were verified in a small local qualitative study where executives saw themselves as the organizational “glue” that holds everything together, and as the ones who shaped the culture of their organizations (Stewart, 2011).

Kunreuther & Corvington (2007) point out that the traditional structures of most organizations may not be as attractive to next generation leaders as different models like shared leadership might be. In addition, the current role of the executive director does not look appealing to emerging leaders and quite possibly to current ones. Both personal and professional reasons seem to influence emerging leaders' lack of interest in following in the footsteps of current executive directors. A study of generation change and leadership found that it was common for younger managers to be reluctant to take on the ED role. In their words, it was “a thankless position that precludes a happy and well-balanced life” (Kunreuther, 2005, p. 12).

Several studies have found that a great proportion of skilled and experienced respondents plan to leave the sector, although many intend to return, but seldom to their current organization (e.g. Solomon &



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Sandahl, 2007; Cornelius et al, 2008). However, research also suggests that Generations X and Y are very comfortable about frequently changing professional positions and sectors in order to achieve their career goals and ambitions. So while many intend to leave the sector, their absence may be only temporary, and this may have to be accepted as the “new normal”.

The most different generation.

More has been written about the Millennial Generation than either the baby boomers or the Gen Xs. This could be because they are so different from the boomers who are in leadership positions right now, but also because those born at the beginning of the Millennial period are now in a position to embark on leadership positions in every sector. A recent newspaper article about the generation gap stated, “Understanding the changing values of the Millennials and adjusting to meet their requirements should be on the agenda for Canadian ... companies” (Sankey, 2012).

Millennials are looking for different things from the workplace than any of their predecessors. Training and development programs offered by an employer are highly valued, with a personal learning and development plan being the first choice of benefits from an employer even over flexible hours. Career progression is so important that it is prized ahead of competitive salaries (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Millennials also have different expectations about what comprises effective training, typically a mix of classroom instruction, self-directed study, coaching, and group learning, with a focus on a range of “digital” learning styles. Since they are used to learning in teams and by doing this could cause learning that is based solely in the classroom to be ineffective.

For Millennials the nonprofit sector may not seem like the optimal place to pursue a career. While they can easily find meaning working for a nonprofit, there are barriers to having things that are important to them like career progression as well as training and development. Other barriers that might arise are a lack of opportunity to develop management experience to burnout, and job stress in a job and organizational structure that makes no sense. Whatever the differences, an accepting and inclusive workplace could be one of the key factors in recruiting and retaining talent in the nonprofit sector. Developing the leadership capabilities in that talent will only serve to strengthen the sector as well.

Leadership Development in the Context of a Learning Organization

Organizations that are interested in developing emerging and current leaders may also be interested in exploring the concept of learning organizations as they relate to this process. There is a bewildering array of definitions of a learning organization, although Garvin (2000) suggests that a clear definition has proven to be hard to pin down. These definitions can be relatively simple, such as Braham's definition that "A learning organization is an organization that prioritizes learning" (p. 4). A more complex definition is that of Watkins and Marsick (1992), who said, “Learning organizations are characterized by total employee involvement in a process of collaboratively conducted, collectively accountable change directed towards shared values or principle (p. 118). Or that of Garvin (2000) himself, who states "A



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learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring, and retaining knowledge, and at purposeful modifying behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights" (p. 11).

Probably the most well known definition is that of Senge, who coined the term in 1990 with his book *The Fifth Discipline*, which focused on the learning organization and the five disciplines of personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. He sees learning organizations as "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together (1990, p. 3).

There are many reasons to become a learning organization, several of which dovetail with reasons to invest in leadership development. These include encouraging superior performance, improving quality, increasing competitive advantage, managing change and energizing the workforce (Senge et al, 1994, pp 9-11). Senge also notes that one reason to invest energy into becoming a learning organization is "because the times demand it", his commentary on how much cutting-edge technological change there is in everyday life. More specifically he says, "People in learning organizations will be able to look forward to creating, rather than merely reacting to, the new world that emerges" (p. 12).

Kerka (1995) suggests that being able to conceptualize a learning organization appears to be based on the assumption that 'learning is valuable, continuous, and most effective when shared and that every experience is an opportunity to learn' (as quoted in Smith, 2001), hinting that taking acceptable risks can be an important part of both learning and a learning organization. Further, she puts forward that the more popular characteristics of a learning organization appearing in some form in the literature are the following: (1) provide continuous learning opportunities; (2) use learning to reach their goals; (3) link individual performance with organizational performance; (4) foster inquiry and dialogue, making it safe for people to share openly and take risks; (5) embrace creative tension as a source of energy and renewal; and (6) [be] continuously aware of and interact with their environment (Kerka, 1995).

Watkins and Marsick (1993) share their view that the principles of a learning organization are: (1) creates continuous learning opportunities, (2) promotes inquiry and dialogue, (3) encourages collaboration and team learning, (4) establishes systems to capture and share learning, (5) empowers people toward collective vision, and (6) connects the organization to its environment (as quoted in Fenwick, 1998).

Regardless of what the qualities of learning organizations are said to be, the most important ones need to be relevant to an organization. Applying this concept will be much more helpful if it means that the newly minted learning organization can achieve a state that values and promotes learning and development.



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Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to illustrate the nature of the projected leadership crisis in the nonprofit sector and examine what ramifications this has for developing emerging leaders in today's economic climate. While the leadership deficit might not be as all-encompassing as it was originally thought to be, it still raises many issues that need to be addressed.

While there are currently barriers to developing leaders in the nonprofit sector, an awareness of them can be the first step in dealing with them. Much recent research has illustrated areas where leadership development efforts might be best concentrated, and gives examples of how successes can best be achieved in Alberta and elsewhere. Part of the solution may be embracing the concept of a diverse and inclusive workforce, which cuts across generational and cultural boundaries in differing ways.

As an organizational strategy, leadership development can accomplish much more than just develop leadership talents. It can enhance the achievement of the organizational mission, it can help recruit and retain staff and future leaders, and it can demonstrate that both individual organizations and the sector are committed to developing the leadership abilities that lie within the sector. When combined with the potential of embracing learning as an important part of how the mission is achieved, a future is definitely emerging in leadership development.

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Book Review

Mindful Leadership, The 9 ways to Self-Awareness, Transforming Yourself, and Inspiring Others

by Maria Gonzalez 's

Kathy Archer CPCC, ACC

I not only read this book, once, but twice and find myself referring back to it in my own growth as a leader as well as utilize it when I train in organizations. Contemplating the extent to which I refer back to the book, I realized that I must share it with more people. I was moved in a way that I had not been before as I went through chapter after chapter of Maria Gonzalez', *Mindful Leadership, The 9 Ways to Self-Awareness, Transforming Yourself, and Inspiring Others*. If you are someone who is ready to awaken from within as a leader do read on.

Gonzalez wrote this book as a guide to leaders. Her goal was to have leaders become more self-aware, thus effectively inspiring and empowering those they lead, especially in the face of constant change in organizations and in the world. Gonzalez first walks the reader through what makes a great leader. She then discusses the compelling need to grow great leaders in the world. Describing mindful leaders, she explains they are “present, aware, calm, focused, clear, equanimous, positive, compassionate and impeccable” (Gonzalez, 2012, p 6 – 7). Pulling the reader into this description, she has one feel the impact that this type of leader could have on individuals and in organizations. At the same time, Gonzalez is clear that mindful leaders are in balance in their own lives. She has the reader eager to embody the essence of this type of leader.

In the world of management and leadership, one is often afraid to bring the word meditation or spirituality into conversation for fear of being looked at by peers as being too out there! Yet research results consistently shows that leaders who are more self-aware and who continue to do inner work are the most impactful (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2001). Gonzalez moves beyond the fear of bringing “woo woo” (the derogatory way unconventional methods of personal growth are often labeled by skeptics) into the workplace by carefully weaving facts, research and experience together. In doing this, she demonstrates the need for leaders to be more mindful and self-aware and encourages leaders to use meditation as a vehicle to get there. Mindfulness, Gonzalez defines as “simply noticing things the way they are” (2012, p. 13). For example, in a meeting noticing might look like this: *I'm noticing I am getting anxious. I feel it in my stomach. I notice when I get anxious I have a tendency to just agree rather than speak what I really want to say. I'm going to take a deep breath before I speak and allow my body to settle down a bit so that I can choose how I want to respond.*

Interestingly, Gonzalez, a Canadian from the corporate financial world, turned to mindful meditation in her own life and now teaches it not only to spiritually minded individuals, but also to corporations



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through her company Argonauta Strategic Alliances Consulting Inc. In the book she draws from her teaching, transformation of organizations, and her own experience of leading. Gonzalez demonstrates how slowing down our thoughts and reactions to events, allows us to become more effective leaders by responding rather than reacting. Her techniques include conscious breathing and body relaxation that can easily be done at the office. Teaching a variety of meditation techniques and practices throughout the book, Gonzalez demonstrates their effectiveness through her easy to read stories from leaders in sports, to the leaders of the icons in the technical world.

For me, one of the most intriguing concepts that Gonzalez speaks to is the gap between an event and our reaction to it. She asserts that awareness of that gap is where great leaders are born. Rather than immediately reacting to an event, which is what our bodies and minds tend to do, Gonzalez suggests if we paused for a moment, consider our actions, our intent, our values and our desired impact before we consciously chose how we were going to respond we can have a more powerful impact as leaders. Can you image a word of leaders who thought before they reacted?

Conscious leadership is possible and as Gonzalez points out “no chanting or patchouli require”. What it does require is for leaders to become more aware. More aware of what is going on inside of them, what they feel, hear and see in their own mind and body as well as what is going on in front of them.

As our long-term leaders start to retire, organizations are tasked with creating strong leaders. We must develop leaders who are empowered to meet their own physical, emotional and spiritual needs at the same time as they lead teams and organizations to achieve the results both the leaders and the organizations are longing for. Gonzalez shows us how to do this.

I strongly recommend this book for anyone who wants to grow as a leader, not so much in the technical competencies but in growing the internal awareness that will allow you to then exercise those technical competencies to their fullest. If this describes you, a leader who wants to grow your internal awareness, this relaxed, easy to follow guide is directed right at you. As Gonzalez says “This book will help you learn how to use mindfulness to transform your life and your business”. It has already transformed mine. Its your turn now.

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The Leaders We Need Are Already Here: Now What Do We Do? **Workshop Overview**

Mandie Abrams BA, MPA

Summary

Some of the greatest frustrations of leaders these days are knowing what to do, but having neither the time nor resources to do those things. Even when we want to take a long-term perspective and develop others to be leaders, we get caught in the whirlpool of tasks and crises that keep us from those development activities. Fortunately, there's a simple way out of these frustrations: creating time to think together.

– Margaret Wheatley

On October 3, 2012, 200 people arrived for a full day workshop with Margaret Wheatley (Meg), renowned thinker, writer, speaker, and teacher about leadership development and learning centred organizations. Groans were heard from participants as they entered the room and saw 200 chairs set up lecture style. They openly worried about the lack of tables and wondered about how they were going to last all day with this uncomfortable seating arrangement.

When I began working with Meg to plan this event, I also expressed reservations regarding her wish to remove all tables from the room. I too noted how uncomfortable spending a whole day like that would be. Meg enthusiastically agreed and told me that that was the point. She wanted people to feel a little off balance, to jolt them out of the safety of a table to hide behind and static group of eight friends to spend the day with. In working with her it soon became clear that this was not your ordinary workshop!

The Leaders We Need Are Already Here: Now What Do We Do? was planned and organized by a collaboration of nonprofit leaders working together to support the development of emerging leaders in the nonprofit sector. The workshop was the official launch of the Developing Emerging Leaders: An Organizational Approach Strategic Framework. The Framework approached leadership development through an organizational lens and was designed to:

- Build the **infrastructure** that will allow the nonprofit sector to address Leadership
- Development in a structured and targeted manner.
- Develop a **common understanding** of leadership development
- Establish a **common language** when discussion, strategizing and collaborating for leadership development.
- Approach leadership development through an organizational lens and identify the **organizational practices** that effectively support the development of leaders.



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The Framework identifies the principles and practices necessary for organizational success in supporting and cultivating leadership. An important nuance of the Framework is that it is situated within the context of a learning organization. David Garven defines a learning centred organization as “An organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.” (1993, p.) As a result, organizations who demonstrate the principles and engage in the practices identified in the Framework will likely also demonstrate the characteristics of learning centred organizations.

Our intention in inviting Meg Wheatley to the launch of the Developing Emerging Leaders Framework was to inspire and excite nonprofit leaders into rethinking leadership development within their own organizations and within the sector.

Meg began her presentation by framing beliefs about leaders. She noted that historically the approach to leadership development saw people as problems to be solved or deficits to be corrected. Our solution to solving these “problems” was training and or imposed improvement efforts. Meg argued that in reality the leaders we need are already here, but that we need to create time and space for them to flourish.

Leadership development is not simply a matter of up-skilling an individual she observed, rather leadership emerges from a complex set of factors including: present conditions and circumstances (what's going on); organizational culture (patterns & behaviours); personal characteristics and skills; and meaningful opportunities where individual caring and organizational needs connect.

We reviewed the challenges that leadership and leadership development faces today and, at that point, Meg directed participants to get out of their chairs, and find a small group of no more than five people to consider how these challenges showed up in their leadership. The straight rows of chairs quickly became a jumble as participants turned their chairs about and shared their thoughts.

Upon coming back together as a large group, we were challenged to consider what effective leadership is at this time and how people's inherent creativity, caring, and intelligence could be evoked? Illustrating how she has seen leaders accomplish this through stories and anecdotes, Meg highlighted that human beings have a natural affinity to creating relationships and interpersonal connections. She noted that rather than being a function of efficiency or effectiveness, interrelatedness is in fact a biological imperative connected to our very survival as a species.

Moving the discussion from the personal to the organizational, she asked us to consider the linear organizational chart by which most of our organizations are structured. Remarking that they are not true representations of the important linkages and relationships that drive successes within an organization, Meg had us break out again into new groups to consider the relationships within our organizations, its culture and patterns.



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Through stories and real life examples Meg demonstrated how organizations nurture those critical relationships and linkages by creating environments that allow for both personal and group learning. This learning cannot happen unless space and permission are given for thinking, reflection and sharing. Meg highlighted the necessity of abandoning urgency and creating time and space to think, for it is through strengthening relationships and linkages that learning organizations are created.

Meg reasoned that in the current environment the ability to create and nurture learning organizations is demanded of effective leaders. Organizations that learn together have people with the confidence to handle tough problems and the willingness to experiment and take risks to overcome challenges. They have increased intelligence and work with a “we’re all in this together” attitude, creating safety and trust to explore. Finally, co-workers exhibit greater compassion, forgiveness and generosity towards one another which reduces stress, loneliness and the sense of feeling overwhelmed.

With the room in disarray and people seated in clumps, far from the people they came with, Meg closed the day with a message of inspiration. She reminded us that the work we do is important, that we come from a long lineage of people who have persevered and that deeply ingrained within each of us is the knowledge and instinct to overcome obstacles and create success. Finally she reminded us and that we owe it to ourselves to find ways that “refill the cup” we must:

- Pay exquisite attention to relationships and be vigilant to avoid the polarizing dynamics & blaming of this time
- Notice when we might need to walk out
- Remember why we do our work
- Find time for personal reflection to see the big picture
- Identify what is our practice for finding peace?

Feedback from this workshop was overwhelmingly positive. Participants noted that they felt inspired by Meg, valued her stories as well as the opportunity to talk and share with peers.

Meg's messages of honoring reflection and nurturing strong relationships that allow for thinking and learning together are important elements of effective leadership development in today's evolving environment. They align with the principles and practice within the Developing Emerging Leaders: An Organizational Approach Strategic Framework, which aspires to support organizations to develop leaders with the knowledge, skill and ability to lead our organizations into the future.

For more information about the Developing Emerging Leaders Strategic Framework, and to access a copy of Meg Wheatley's presentation please go to www.developleaders.ca



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