

THE LEADER



The official newsletter of the African Nutrition Leadership Programme

A newbie's guide to ethics

Capacity development & Leadership

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Foreword

BY CHRISTINE TALJAARD

At the recent Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) congress in Cape Town, I had the opportunity to meet up with a number of ANLP-alumni. The ANLP concept that ‘every person can lead from where they stand’ is often discussed, with the implication that this requires action today.

It is not something to be put-away and kept until we have reached the top of our career. Neither is it something that is activated and de-activated as circumstances change. It is not a light bulb that we can choose to turn off now then turn on again in a few years. No, we firmly believe it is for today.

The true power of this core concept (for which we shamelessly campaign) is found within the realisation that we do not stand alone. Wayne Towers, our invited writer for this issue, states that “the only way we can move forward is if we move together as one”. Leading from where we stand becomes an empty concept if one stands in isolation.

This year the ANLP reached new heights with the acclaimed SUNLEAD project being just one of our achievements. Never has it been truer that the ANLP success is a result of the ANLP team, with each person leading to their full capacity from where they stand, today.





Capacity development and leadership

BY JOHANN JERLING

Introduction

There are many views of how we should define the concept of *capacity development*. In some cases the debate around a common definition is very important and in others it serves only to confuse and prevent us from taking action in a meaningful way – which actually defeats the purpose of capacity development.

There are many definitions of “capacity” and “capacity development”. Capacity is simply the ability to act and capacity development is the process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain this ability to act.

There are also a number of capacity development frameworks that can be used to focus on the issue for clearer understanding. For the purposes of this document the framework adopted by the FAO is used.

Dimensions of capacity

Capacities exist across three dimensions – the individual, the organisation and the enabling environment.^{1, 2}

The **individual dimension** relates to the people involved in terms of knowledge, technical skills, management skills, values (trustworthiness being the most important), attitudes, motivation, interest, and experience that allow each person to perform.

Included in this dimension are leadership capabilities such as self-awareness, ability to balance conflicting demands, ability to learn, leadership values, ability to build and maintain relationships, ability to build effective work groups, communication skills (many kinds – sharing results, convincing others, oral competence, the capacity to understand and talk the specific language of various sectors and stakeholders etc.), ability to develop others, management skills, ability to think and act strategically by aligning and committing people to end goals, ability to think creatively, ability to initiate and implement change, advocacy skills, and lastly the ability to embed values that engender multisectoral collaboration.

Some of these **Individual** skills and abilities are acquired formally through education, facilitation, training and competency development, while others come informally, through doing, observing and gaining experience. Access to resources and experiences that can develop individual capacity are largely shaped by organizational and environmental factors, which in turn are influenced by the extent of capacity development in each individual.



Figure 1: FAO Capacity Development Framework (2010)

The **organizational** dimension relates to public and private organizations, civil society organizations, and networks of organizations in terms of: a) its organizational culture, strategic management functions, values, ethics, mission, transparency, conflicts of interest, structures and relationships; b) operational capacity (processes, systems, procedures, sanctions, incentives and values, role clarity); c) human, natural, technological and financial resources (policies, deployment and performance); d) knowledge and information resources; and e) infrastructure that enables an organization to operate and to achieve its goals.

The dimension of **enabling environment** relates to the broad social systems culture and climate within which people and organizations function and includes the establishment of partnerships, cooperation, advocacy, rules, laws, political commitment and vision; policy, legal and economic frameworks; national public sector budget allocations and processes;

governance and power structures; incentives and social norms that govern civic engagement. It is the enabling environment (the enabling culture and climate) that sets the overall scope for capacity development.

These dimensions are interrelated and interactive and capacity in one influences the capacities in the other dimensions (See Figure 1).

A few examples:

1. Building the capacity to be aware of your own strengths and growth areas enables an individual to actively grow and improve their own competence which will have an impact on their organisation's effectiveness.
2. Developing a financial management system (also a form of capacity) in an organisation helps save resources and helps individuals keep track of income and expenditure. It could create an effective and more enjoyable working environment (climate) while at the same time assist the organisation in achieving its mandate (organizational efficiency and effectiveness).
3. Developing a regional economic co-operation agreement (capacity) could improve individuals' livelihoods and have an impact on how governments assist citizens.
4. Building the capacity to lead change in an individual has an impact at an individual level, group/team level and organisational level as well as an impact on the enabling environment.

As we move into the era of the Sustainable Development Goals we would do well to ask ourselves what we could do differently to achieve more with what we have. Within the Scaling Up Nutrition movement the same question is being asked –why, despite all our capacity development efforts, have we not achieved as much as we expected in nutrition?

One of the things we should do differently is change our focus from structure, systems and high-level commitment to concentrate on developing and nurturing those capacities at an individual level in order to make these structures and systems work. At the individual dimension we focus on technical skills but very little, if any, capacity development attention has been given to the ability to effectively lead change for example, or the ability to build effective working teams, or to gain stakeholder commitment, or formulate a shared purpose beyond self-interest and rally a group around that.

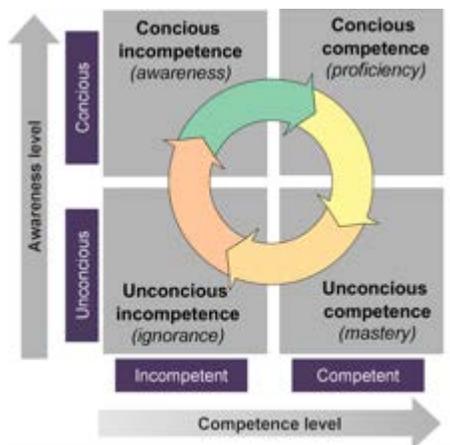


Figure 2: Competence awareness model

We have not given any attention to how to network effectively, how to build lasting collaborative relationships, or how to embed shared values. Is it possible that many of us are completely ignorant (not knowing that we do not know) or is it a question of not knowing how to develop the capacities?

Maybe the most important thing we should do is to create an awareness of what we need to develop (discovering what we do not know) throughout the whole system. We need to help individuals discover things that they might not even be aware of and how that could change the way they work and help them respond more effectively to the challenges that we face in Africa today (Figure 2). Once we have moved from ignorance to awareness we can start focusing on developing the capacity and becoming proficient and eventually mastering it.

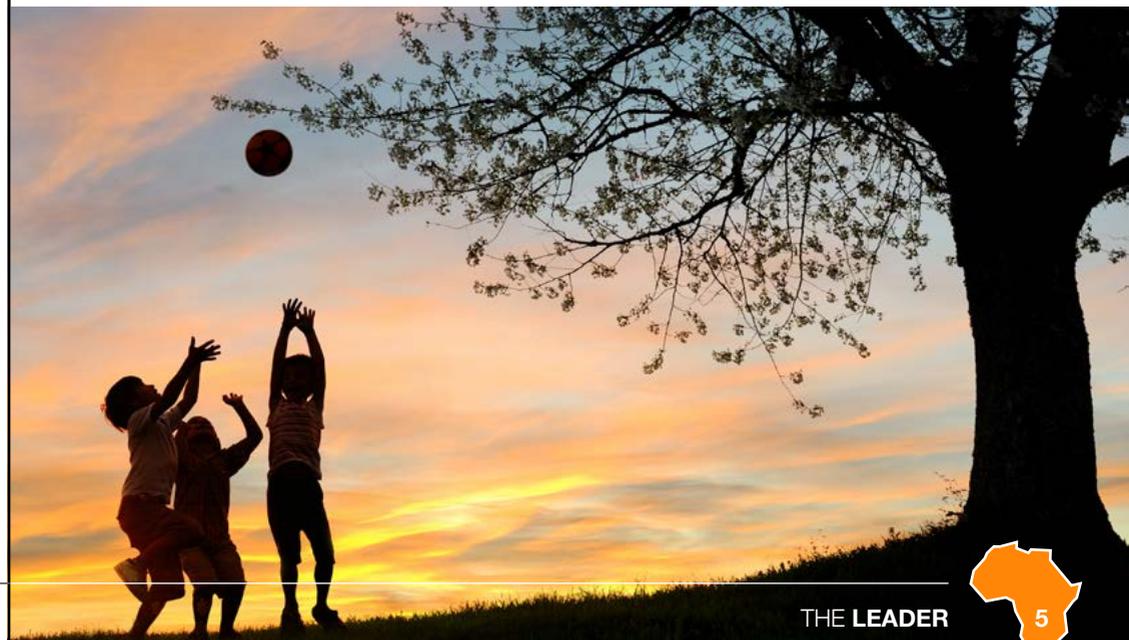
Effective leaders are capacity developers. Effective leaders create environments (cul-

tures and organizational climates) within which others can perform and within which their teams can be successful. Effective leaders empower others, they continuously improve their own capacity and that of others, and they focus on creating more leaders (leadership capacity) throughout the whole system.

I would like to acknowledge Abi Masefield, Charlotte Dufour, Johanna Jelen-sperger, Leon Coetsee, Nicholas Bidault, Patrick Kolsteren, Sergio Teixeira, and Tania Goossens who contributed in various ways to the content of this piece.

¹FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development, 2010. PC 104/3.

²K Wignaraja. UNDP Primer report on Capacity Building, 2009. 64p.



Emotions, beliefs and life satisfaction

BY LEON COETZEE

The story about the wise grandfather teaching his grandson about the conflicting emotions that all of us experience, is worthwhile repeating:

"My son the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all.

One is EVIL. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

The other is GOOD. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old man simply replied, "The one you feed"

The lesson is: We can decide what we feel and how to behave!

In the literature on the so called Positive Psychology, research is often quoted substantiating the notion that it is not as usual for happy and satisfied people to be thankful, as it is for thankful people to be happy

and more satisfied. This underlines the role which positive emotions and feelings such as being thankful, showing gratitude and having hope, play in our mental health and life satisfaction. In contrast "evil" emotions such as self-pity, jealousy and envy are toxic feelings which lead to blaming and complaining behaviour indicative of dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

One of the reasons why some people will choose negative emotions above positive emotions is because positive emotions tend to require more than merely "feeling it", it requires "doing and living it" – "believing in it and practising it", thus "being and doing" gratitude/ hopefulness/ compassion.

The psychologist MK Mueller proposes a very helpful formula, which she calls "FGH", to experience and live positive emotions. These positive emotions then have significant influences on our happiness and satisfaction. Applying this formula can be seen as a process of **making peace** with the past, the present and the future because all our thoughts and beliefs are either about the past, present or future.

The past: Practise **F**orgiveness - making peace with your past. Forgive not only other people but especially yourself. Forgiveness is releasing regret, resentment and the

desire for revenge. The Aramaic root for the word revenge is "to let go". Forgiveness is thus a choice, a proactive decision to take your power back and not to live in the past. It is a skill one can learn, a process of: **Facing it -- Feeling it -- FORGIVING IT**

The present: Practise **G**ratITUDE. Make peace with life. Start each day with adding three new things (no duplications) to a gratitude list:

One gratitude from the past: "I'm so grateful that I received/experienced ..."

One gratitude from the present: "I'm so grateful right now for ..."

One gratitude for the future: "I'm so grateful now for ..."

Mueller says: "The main entrée of a happy, healthy fulfilled life is choosing thoughts that feel good, and there is no easier way than being grateful".

It is thus a life giving choice to develop a gratitude attitude!

The future: Practise Hope. Make peace with the things you cannot change and trust your feelings that things will change for the better. Hope gives meaning to life and keeps us alive and is closely linked to the belief of yet having something significant to do in the future. There is no future without hope.

We all have a strong tendency to become what we think. Beliefs linked to negative emotions hold us hostage, but the application of the FGH formula is a powerful way to change our beliefs about ourselves, other people and the world. Because beliefs are more than just ideas, it follows that if and when we shift emotions and beliefs, it shifts the way in which we actually experience ourselves and our lives

According to Talmudic teaching, we do not see things as they are. We see them as we are. From this it logically follows what an unknown person has so eloquently said:

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it."



The SUNLEAD project – My experience

BY MARYSE UMUGWANEZA,

The Master Trainer Team (MATT) training held in Potchefstroom South Africa, from May 26th to June 4th 2015, was attended by 19 selected delegates from 10 African countries. This event launched the activities of the Scaling Up Nutrition Leadership (SUNLEAD Africa) project. SUNLEAD Africa was designed and implemented by the African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP) in collaboration with UNICEF.

Being one of the delegates that attended the MATT training, I would like to take this opportunity to share my enriching experiences from SUNLEAD, with a focus on the MATT training, and to reflect upon its relevance to nutrition in Africa.

The SUNLEAD project was developed in response to one of the recommendations from the Global Nutrition Report (2014) for Governments, international partners, and businesses “to invest strategically, systematically, and in a sustained manner in nutrition leadership programs to scale up the numbers and reach of nutrition champions (the African Nutrition Leadership Programme is a good example of a program that has the potential for scale-up).”

The MATT training aimed at creating transformational leadership capacity building

teams to support multi-sectoral nutrition programming.

I have learned early on in my leadership journey that leadership is not about who you are or what position you have, but rather it’s about how you create a vision, what you do to inspire others, and how together we make a worthwhile change.

Leadership skills are needed at all levels of nutrition programme implementation -from policy makers to frontline implementers- and the good news is these skills can be learned.

Transformational leadership competencies in country (and district) multi-sectoral frontline teams are essential for scaling up nutrition. Considering the need for multi-sectoral nutrition programmes,

leadership skills, including networking skills, conflict management, communication and negotiation skills are all indeed needed.

Recognising that the African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP) sets the foundations of nutrition leadership by introducing the key skills and competencies required to be an effective leader, MATT delegates were recruited amongst ANLP Alumni. The aim is to continuously empower them to lead the change that is crucial if we are to win the battle against malnutrition.

The MATT training encompassed highly practical leadership skills, including but not limited to, the use of the ‘nine principles of change’ model for change management, organising a workshop from A to Z, communication and how to handle adult learning. The use of tools such as Metaplan, Polarity mapping, the decision making matrix, etc... were also part of the training.

Individual development was further built on reflection and feedback sessions. A coaching programme was set at the end of the MATT training for mentorship and continuous improvement and support.

At the end of the master training, participants committed to facilitate at least two workshops and share and/or apply what they had learned in the MATT training.

Looking back at the MATT training five months later, its effectiveness in conveying leadership skills, confidence and enthusiasm is evidenced by the high number of delegates who facilitated events in their real work and life situations.

Between June and August 2015, delegates hosted workshops on leadership skills applications, problem solving, managing dilemmas, leading elements of change interventions, etc.



MATT training, Potchefstroom, South Africa

Now the biggest challenge I see for master trainers, is making sure that daily life and work don’t take over the enthusiasm to empower and grow the various professionals within their reach in order to strengthen the fight against malnutrition. More master trainers should also be trained to create a critical mass of human resource with leadership

and facilitation capacity.

These elements were organised in an intensive and interactive manner consisting of group discussions, role playing, lectures, presentations, group and individual assign-

My own leadership journey started earlier this year with attending ANLP. The MATT training and the opportunity to co-facilitate in the SUNLEAD workshop for district teams

in Rwanda have allowed me to deepen and expand my leadership skills.



Christine Mukantwali, Johann Jerling, Agnes Mukamana and Maryse Umugwaneza, SUNLEAD workshop, Rwanda

I have benefited significantly from both ANLP and SUNLEAD. I have learned how important it is to know yourself; your strengths

and weaknesses, your values, and what you care about; and to be ready to push your limits and grow. Most importantly I have learned that inspiring and enabling others is a significant part of leadership.

Today I know, by empowering other nutrition champions in Rwanda and elsewhere we can make an impact to change the nutrition landscape by leading from where we stand. The knowledge and practical skills I have gained from MATT will no doubt help me throughout my future career as a nutrition scientist.

In conclusion, I would like to express my heart-felt thanks to the people who have made SUNLEAD MATT possible and to those who have shared their experiences during the training.

A newbie's guide to ethics

BY WAYNE TOWERS

I recently made a huge career change. It completely caught me off guard and I think many of my friends and colleagues as well. Whereas I had been an avowed laboratory-based human geneticist my entire life, I was given a wonderful opportunity, a year ago to become an academic advisor within my university's Ethics Office.

Thus began my incredible and challenging journey in the field of research ethics, which forced me into a world that I knew very little about and which filled my little reductionist heart with dread i.e. one wherein I had to deal with other people. What a challenge this seemed to me as a card-carrying introvert, whose longest conversation with others involved troubleshooting a pesky reaction that would not work. However, I soon realised, what an enriching and exciting world it actually was, which has allowed me to grow not only as a scientist but also as a human being.

It has not been a simple process, though. I truly felt like the proverbial "fish out of water". I had to take the limited knowledge I had about ethics and, under the tutelage and leadership of my incredible supervisor, had to implement it into a workable system which would protect our research participants, our researchers and the University itself. No mean task for an individual who had very little experience with the finer nu-

ances of academic management and leadership. The first lesson I learnt though, as any good adventurer knows, was to, "Find the best and learn from them". I was thus extremely fortunate in finding an incredible mentor who truly took me under her wing and has guided me through the numerous pitfalls, traps and dead-ends in traversing the murky waters of implementing research ethics into an academic environment.

The second lesson I learnt from her though was to, "Arm yourself with the weapon of knowledge," because how can you possibly overcome the obstacles and challenges that arise if you do not have the necessary information to develop a solution? As such I found myself enrolling at the ripe (old?) age of 35 years for a post-graduate diploma in health ethics research, which meant I was back to studying for exams like a first-year undergraduate student.

All I can say, though, is that a vista opened up for me when I realised a) the importance of ethics in our everyday lives and b) the sheer diversity of its application. I suddenly became a philosopher who had to implement subjective concepts such as "right" and "wrong" into, what I always assumed, was the objective world of science.

I had to start asking questions such as, "Is my research truly going to benefit my



participants? Am I excluding those that are at greatest risk due to my own convenience? Am I sure that they understand the concepts that I am talking about when I know that my fourth-year students are struggling with the same concepts? Do my participants have a voice in the type of research I am asking them to take part in?" These were questions that completely blew my mind as they forced me to re-evaluate my world view as a researcher.

I could not, in good faith, carry on with my paternalistic view that I was somehow the expert, who would sweep in and fix, what I thought were my participants' problems. I had to realise that the fact that I was given

the opportunity to become a researcher, as well as the privilege I was granted because of that, actually meant that I had a great responsibility to serve the community that made that opportunity available to me.

And so I learnt my third lesson, which was, "Don't do it alone," and this is in fact my call-to-arms, dear reader. It is too great a responsibility for just one person to carry and so I beg of you to be the change in your institutions, research entities, governmental departments and communities. Be proponents of beneficence, autonomy and justice. Undertake research that truly serves your communities. Realise the great gift we have received in the form of our education and how it should lead to a life of service and not one of power. Realise that the only way we can move forward is if we move together as one. It is only in this manner that we can change "being ethical" from something we *do* to being something we *are*.



Contributors



CHRISTINE TALJAARD - EDITOR

Postdoctoral Research Fellow &
RSA Registered dietician
Centre of Excellence for Nutrition, North
West University, Potchefstroom Campus
christine.taljaard@nwu.ac.za



LEON COETSEE – LEADERSHIP ARTICLE

Extraordinary professor,
Centre of Excellence for Nutrition, North
West University, Potchefstroom Campus
Leon11@vodamail.co.za



JOHANN JERLING – ARTICLE WRITING

Director Centre of Excellence for Nutrition,
North West University, Potchefstroom
Campus
Johann.Jerling@nwu.ac.za



**MARYSE UMUGWANEZA – INVITED
WRITER**

PhD student , Centre of Excellence for Nutri-
tion, North West University, Potchefstroom
Campus
maryse.umugwaneza@gmail.com



WAYNE TOWERS – INVITED WRITER

Vice chairperson of the Health Research
Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health
Science Ethics Office, North West University,
Potchefstroom campus
Wayne.Towers@nwu.ac.za

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Please send any correspondence or initiatives to Christine Taljaard
(africanutritionleadership@gmail.com).

DESIGN BY GRAPHIKOS: graphikos@nwu.ac.za, 018 299 4224