



**AKEPT** HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

**15<sup>th</sup> University Administrators Conference 2010**

A Three-Days Conference On  
University Leadership : Energizing Innovative And Creative Minds

20-23 December 2010  
**Pan Pacific Hotel KLIA**

The conference is designed for participants to learn the challenges in University administrators roles, the infusion of quality innovative, creative and collegiality cultures and various styles of leadership in managing higher learning institutions

**PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS**  
Six important papers will be deliberated at the conference:

**TOPICS**

- Strategies in Developing Future Transformational Leadership among University Administrators
- Administrator Roles in Managing Changes in Institution of Higher Education
- The Challenges of Women Leaders for the Next Millennium 2057
- Leader Leading Transformation
- Global Leadership for World Class University
- Rebranding of Future Leader

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND**

- University Administrators from IPTS and ASEAN countries
- Academicians, Post-Graduate Students, Researchers
- Government officers from local public agencies

# WORKING PAPERS

- 1. *HAJAH HALIZA MAHAYUDDIN* – TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: Turning University Vision into Reality**
- 2. *ABDELLAH AARAB* – THE MAKING OF GOOD LEADERS**
- 3. *SAZLYRA BINTI MOHD ARSHAD, et.al* – PERSONAL VALUES AND DECISION MAKING STYLES OF ADMINISTRATORS IN MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES**
- 4. *KHASIAH ZAKARIA* – LEADERSHIP IN LIBRARIANSHIP**
- 5. *JONA HIDAYATI QAMARUZZAMAN* – THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON LEARNING ORGANISATION AMONG NON-ACADEMIC STAFF IN UiTM MELAKA**

## ***THE MAKING OF GOOD LEADERS***

**Abdellah Aarab**

### ***1- Introduction***

We find that we usually make the distinction between good and bad leaders by how they make decisions and control those that follow them. A good leader makes good decisions and controls the public, religious body or whoever else in a positive manor and a bad leader the opposite. That is always how we do it. The problem with this is that the basis of good and bad leadership is based on control, which is usually a breeding ground for trouble. Why do we assume leaders are those that make decisions for other people? That's the consensus we see in politics. We want to 'vote' or choose someone to be our leader that will make great decisions for us. Is it so we don't have to? Is it so we have someone to blame when things go wrong? We are starting to wonder if leadership in Malaysia is to look drastically different then what we see elsewhere and usually from what we want.

A leader is one who leads not by making decisions that affects everyone whether they like it or not but one who lives a life that people follow. One position gives power and the other one gives responsibility. One position says that the leader can affect everyone and anyone by their decisions and the other one let's their decisions speak for themselves. This could be a problem with our concepts of democracy. Really we are choosing someone to make decisions and change the world for us for a four year term. We aren't looking for someone to model a right and worthy life. We'd rather them tell us what to do.

This is the kind of leader that I'd love to see in Government. Not a leader who is voted into power and then gets to make decisions and steer the ship whatever way he likes. Not a leader who is so concerned with losing power that they have to fight to keep it. Not a leader who insists on his authority because people are starting to doubt him. Instead, a leader that simply lives like our prophet Mohammed and people follow them because of it. A leader who leads by influence and not authority. A leader who doesn't try to control all those around them but instead love them, be himself/herself and allow them to decide on their own if they will follow.

## **2- Good leadership vs. Bad Leadership**

1. Passionate about one's job vs. It is just a job
2. Values one's team vs. Has employees
3. Knows one's team vs. Should not be personal at work
4. Takes time to develop their strengths vs. Focuses on their weakness
5. Gives people a chance to fail vs. Controls every decision
6. Takes time to reward good work vs. It is their job
7. Leads team to believe they are the heart of the organization vs. Only the boss matters
8. Spends time learning how to be a better leader vs. Got it all figured out
9. Creates a fun working environment vs. All work no play
10. Secure vs. Insecure
11. Admits mistakes vs. Blames the employees or organization
12. Confrontational vs. Ignore problems hoping they will go away

## **3- Increasing cases of bad leadership in today's world**

These are just a few things that come to mind when considering Good leadership vs. Bad Leadership. Unfortunately, bad leadership is much more common today in most organizations.

Is leadership good or bad? Most contemporary leadership resources simply assume that leadership is good. As a result of this, they fail to recognize the reality of bad leadership.

In Bad Leadership, author Linda Kellerman opposes the widely held view “that it is good to be a leader because to be a leader is, ipso facto, to be good”. Kellerman dramatically makes her point by drawing attention to a problem she labels “Hitler’s ghost”. “Not only was his impact on twentieth-century history arguably greater than anyone else’s, but also he was brilliantly skilled at inspiring, mobilizing, and directing followers. His use of coercion notwithstanding, if this is not leadership, what is?” Hitler was a skilled leader – clear, effective, and highly influential – but was he good? The answer is obvious.

Leadership, in and of itself, is not necessarily good. There is such a thing as bad leadership. In order to truly develop a philosophy of leadership, this must be recognized: “To deny bad leadership equivalence in the conversation and curriculum [of the

leadership industry] is misguided, tantamount to a medical school that would claim to teach health while ignoring disease.”

It is the phenomenon of bad leadership that Kellerman analyzes in her book. She summarizes her contribution: “I describe how we exercise power, authority, and influence in ways that do harm. This harm is not necessarily deliberate. It can be the result of carelessness or neglect. But this does not make it less injurious, and in some cases calamitous”. Her ultimate intention is to better answer the question: “What is to be done to maximize good leadership and minimize bad leadership?”

#### **4- Example of good leader vs. bad leader; Dr.Mo**

When it comes to leadership rating, Africa fares the worst, with the entire continent virtually ruled by dictators or leaders who tolerate democratic principles only when such principles keep them in power. However, one man, Dr. Mohamed "Mo" Ibrahim, a Sudanese native set to change all that by instituting prize in real time cash rewards to recognize good African leadership qualities and encourage good governance.

Under the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, an elected African head of state who transforms the country to prosperity and transfers power democratically is eligible for the prize. The prize consists of a whopping five million US dollars dished out over ten year period and an extra 200,000 US dollars, paid annually for life. This is unprecedented in its scope, given that the Nobel Peace Prize, considered to be the world's largest prize, pays less.

Many renowned world leaders back the Mo Ibrahim initiative. Mo Ibrahim calls it an African initiative by Africans using African money to solve African problems. Nelson Mandela believes the initiative will “stimulate public debate and challenge the continent’s leaders to set the global benchmark” for good leadership. Kofi Annan, who is a member of the Board of Mo Ibrahim Foundation, expects the initiative to “contribute to the growing movement to build honest and enlightened African leadership.” Bill Clinton sees “Africa helping itself” in this Mo Ibrahim initiative. And, Tony Blair supports the initiative because it “encourages exemplary leadership.” All these claims are yet to be seen.

As for Mo Ibrahim, he is not new in making audacious efforts that could have significant impact. His quest to exert impact started in his native Sudan, when at one point, as a youngster he was intrigued by radio communication operated by the taxi driver. Out of curiosity, Ibrahim asked the taxi driver, “how does the signal reach the car without direct line of sight?” This curiosity becomes the central focus of Ibrahim education where the man ended up earning several degrees to the level of Ph.D. in pursuit of his curiosity.

By late 1980s, Ibrahim left a successful career with the British Telecommunications and established his own consulting firm, the Mobile Systems International (MSI). MSI was later renamed, Celtel, becoming the first mobile phone operator to ever penetrate the African market. Against all the advice that Africa is not a good place for investment, Ibrahim went ahead with his company and established traction in Africa. He is credited for the mobile phone revolution in Africa, the Dark Continent of Henry Morton Stanley and Dr. David Livingstone. When Mo Ibrahim started his company, there were only two million mobile phones in the continent and by the time he sold his company, the number of mobile phones reached 100 million. To date, the continent remains to be the only place where mobile phones out-number landline phones. In Britain, Ibrahim is honored among the top blacks of significant influence with a personal wealth valued at five billion US dollars.

These days, Ibrahim is turning his business successes into political effort to bring about positive changes on a large scale. However, it seems he veered into more treacherous territory than the one he has been successful in. It is great that Ibrahim launched his initiative at the regional level. Overshadowing his effort though, just in his own native country of Sudan, the country is not only ruled by dictator, but the population is dying of war, diseases, and starvation. His reward for the already wealthy head of states, (by the African standard), would have some significant impact on the population that needs the most, had he directed the money to target the needy. The rewarded amount that he is cashing out to the already wealthy retired African heads of state would have afforded to build schools and health facilities as well as hire personnel to manage those infrastructures. As one African observer puts it, Mo Ibrahim initiative “doesn’t read Africa’s problems correctly. Those who keep governments accountable are ordinary people and that accountability needs to be strengthened. That’s where he should have put his money. Or into the Parliaments that could hold leaders accountable.” The observer

goes on to conclude that the initiative “reaffirms the principle of the big man,” meaning, rich people rewarding themselves with their wealth.

As a matter of fact, the richest person in Africa is not a tycoon, but a head of state. Most African heads of state are richer than Mo Ibrahim, therefore, making his prize just a peanut for them. President Yuweri Museveni of Uganda pokes fun at Ibrahim initiative deriding that “if you are used to poor leaders, I am not one of them. You better come and visit me. I don’t need money to leave power.” Obviously, African greedy leaders don’t need to be bribed with a peanut for them to transform power democratically if they already do have their ways. President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya negotiated his retirement package before accepting to leave office. Today, he lives as a rich old man and the Mo Ibrahim initiative would not have granted him his riches. This is not to mention those African heads of state who decides to cling on to power to retain all the wealth the state can get. Such leaders include Teodoro Mbasogo, the president of Equatorial Guinea whose personal wealth is worth billions. Another one of such leaders is President Muammar Gaddafi of Libya to whom the wealth of the country belongs and his family members. And the list is endless, including in the native country of Mo Ibrahim, the Sudan—the troubled country which today is the focus of the concerned world.

It is then clear that Ibrahim, for all intents and purposes, is giving the money to the people who already have money and are well-off. According to Ibrahim, the initiative is not about the money itself, it is to tell the other side of African success story, and perhaps stir more debate on democracy and governance in Africa. Nonetheless, telling the other side of African story may neither require dishing lump sums of money to those who already have nor is such initiative an effective way for change. Changes can occur by empowering those who can challenge the system, the people at the bottom. Barack Obama's would say, “Change must start from the bottom up, not top down.” No wonder Obama popularity is surging and African leaders, despite their money, remain unpopular in their own countries. Perhaps Ibrahim should start investing in African education. That will be where the debates for good governance will originate and the process for wealth generation will take deeper roots.

## **5 - List of some great leaders**

**Nelson Mandela** was the first black president of South Africa and a legendary figure of the African National Congress, or ANC. From 1964 to 1990, Mandela was imprisoned for opposing South Africa's white minority government and its policy of racial separation, known as apartheid. Instead of disappearing from view, Mandela became a martyr and worldwide symbol of resistance to racism. In 1993 Mandela and the president who released him, F.W. de Klerk, shared the Nobel Peace Prize. Mandela was elected the country's president in 1994. He served until 1999, when he was succeeded by his deputy Thabo Mbeki.

**Princess Diana** of Wales - a woman who could have stayed behind the walls of a palace and lived the high-life, but instead chose to go see suffering peoples around the world and try to help them.

**Sam Walton** - a man who truly started out poor and worked his way up to being the richest man in the world through hard work.

**Mother Teresa** - a woman who gave up everything to give to others.

## **6 -List of some bad current leaders**

**Robert Mugabe:** Ruler of Zimbabwe since its founding in 1980 with the ousting of the white-minority ruled Rhodesian government. Mugabe has overseen the complete decimation of what was once one of Africa's strongest economies and is regularly criticized for human rights abuses, especially during the 2008 presidential campaign when his goons oversaw an intimidation campaign of torture and murder against supporters of Morgan Tsvangirai.

**Muammar al-Qaddafi:** Ruler of Libya since 1969 when he led a military coup, Qaddafi has maintained power with an iron fist, handing out life sentences for sedition and dissent and often being accused of torture, among other human rights abuses.

**Silvio Berlusconi:** On-and-off Prime Minister of Italy since 1994 and the third richest man in the country, Berlusconi frequents the international news media with various scandals that are usually centered around women. Berlusconi is currently going through a very public divorce from his wife Veronica Lario over his attendance to an 18-year-old

girl's birthday party (he is 73), among other things. Among and endless selection of gaffes, Berlusconi once complimented Barack Obama on his "suntan".

## 7- Conclusion

Leadership is about setting the right example and making a difference in people's lives. You do not have to do great things to make a difference. The small choices and decisions we make one hundred times a day add up to determining the kind of family, workplace and community we live in. The examples of good and bad leadership are important learning lessons for all of us. Their lessons, at the very least, should make every leader pause, reflect, and ask: "What message am I sending? What environment am I creating? What example am I setting?"

## References

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