



A Summary of the “What, How and Why” Of Leadership Training for Emerging Leaders

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Introduction

Today, organizational structures and leadership practices in all sectors are undergoing immense change and analysis. From the implementation of lessons from “Good to Great” author Jim Collins to the explosion of coaching for executives to a transformational (versus typically transactional) male leader in the White House and a global economy in transition, the call for ‘smart power’ leadership is evident in all sectors.

Now more than ever there is greater involvement of citizens in the public sector. Shared power and collaborations to build community is a constant topic in the non-profit sector. Corporations and non-profits understand more than ever the value of listening to their consumer and a transparent government web site encourages daily engagement.

At a time when organizations need to distinguish themselves with significant, relevant and clear interactions with its stakeholders, leaders are called upon more than ever to be stewards of the people they serve and employ. Stewardship leaders are encouraged to choose partnership over patriarchy/hierarchy, empowerment over dependency and service over self-interest (Block, P. 1993). These words - partnership, empowerment and service - are three characteristics used often when describing women’s funds and the women’s funding movement.

Women’s leadership has proven to be fiscally prudent in for-profit companies. The world is behind the times in recognizing that balanced leadership – with more women on boards and in top management – is better all the way around. When women occupy one-third of the seats at power tables, profits increase as do return-on-investment, sales and productivity (Catalyst 2004). A 2008 research study by Corporate Voices for Working Families shows that having more women in top positions results in a far better record on positive family and work policies. Yet according to 2008 data from Catalyst, we have less than 3% female corporate CEOs in Fortune 500 companies, with just 15% female membership on their boards and decreasing to 3% for women of color.

It is no accident that women’s funds, with their women-led solutions, have been the leaders in the economic security arena and have an opportunity in this new climate to engage a broader audience in their agenda. Now is the perfect time to look across generations and culture to expand the voices of women leaders in the third sector and within the movement- building arena.

Women’s Funding Network Leadership Vision

Women transform their lives, as well as the way the world tackles issues from poverty to global security, through their investments. The Women’s Funding Network is an unmatched global network of women’s funds, donors and community leaders bringing together the money, ideas and action to create lasting change for women and girls, their families and communities.

The Women’s Funding Network has reached a critical juncture in the women’s funding movement during a worldwide window of opportunity. Strategically there is no better time for the Women’s Funding Network to become a major player in directing public thought on pressing issues confronting women and girls and society as a whole. Numerous factors are aligned to support the Women’s Funding Network’s increased impact, strength and influence:

- A global climate exists where the “women effect” is being recognized by world and corporate leaders;
- Poverty re-emerging as a root-cause core issue in the public’s eye, providing an opportunity for women’s funds to capitalize on their decades-long alternative management style and economic justice record; and
- The successful Women Moving Millions campaign has elevated financial strength and visibility of women fund donors.

Through a comprehensive strategy that builds emerging leaders and leaders of color within the women’s funding movement, the Women’s Funding Network has the potential to:

- Elevate women-led solutions so that they are valued and accepted as those leading to long-term positive social change;
- Create a supportive environment that keeps female leaders energized, engaged and active in delivering lasting change throughout the world;
- Build a knowledge base of best practices around engaging and building women’s leadership; and
- Build collective leadership to broaden a shared vision and action for collective impact.

The purpose of the paper is to provide an executive summary on various topics in leadership in the broad sense as well as within the non-profit and women’s funding arena – a scan of the potential of pursuing leadership initiatives for the Women’s Funding Network. As the Women’s Funding Network brings together its resources to scale-up and optimize its network of member funds, the support of emerging leaders, utilization of cross cultural and generational conversations and effective leadership development program are all at the forefront.

For the purposes of this paper, next generation and emerging leaders are defined as those who have demonstrated commitment to the nonprofit sector and are actively developing their skills and leadership capabilities to hold management positions of all kinds (Cornelius, M., Corvington, P. & Ruesga, A. 2008).

Non-Profit Leadership and the Next Generation Workforce

The aging of the baby boomer population will greatly impact leadership in nonprofit organizations. An Annie E. Casey study confirms that executive turnover and transition will be a reality for a majority of nonprofit organizations, regardless of size and scope with 65% of organizations expecting to experience leadership turnover within the next five years (Teegarden P. 2004). Executive transitions can and should be a time for significant organizational growth, reflection, and capacity building (Adams, T. 2004). Capturing the power of leadership change by recruiting, training, and energizing the next generation of leaders is critical given these turnover projections. Even more critical is preparing new leaders to leverage women-led solutions to a higher vantage point which is now more accepted than ever in many areas around the globe.

The Women's Funding Network is proactively examining the best environment for building and elevating emerging leaders. In discussions with more than 20 seasoned and emerging leaders on succession planning and the training of emerging leaders, all interviewees responded with intense excitement that this Women's Funding Network project was underway.

"This is important to be proactive in the development of emerging leaders. There is a void in this area. Utilizing current successful leaders as mentors will support new leaders as they gain experiences. This the time to really shape leaders to enjoy a great profession and benefit from the corrections others has realized."

Executive Director of Women's Fund

Current research on intergenerational leadership in the non-profit sector and transition suggests that potential young leaders may be stifled in their current positions. Emerging young leaders have reported that they often feel invisible or underappreciated by the older leaders in the sector (Kunruether, F. 2005). This research also demonstrates that Generation X and the "Millennials" are highly motivated and are just as committed to their work as older generations, but they appear to be more concerned about balancing the competing demands of work and family (Kunreuther, F. 2005).

A study conducted by the Building Movement Project recently found that in 2000, three out of four graduates entering the nonprofit sector had educational debt at a higher percentage of total income than those who entered the public or private sector (Ballard, A. 2005). Additionally, these nonprofit employees were typically paid less than their colleagues who entered one of the other sectors: 21.5% less than the private sector and 10.9% less than the public sector (Ballard, A. 2005). Nonprofit employees were also found to pay down their debt much more slowly than government or private sector employees (Ballard, A. 2005). The study concluded that "several indicators suggest that low pay and flat organizational structures lower the overall satisfaction rates for graduates entering the nonprofit sector and may contribute to higher turnover" (Ballard, A. 2005).

Based on numerous reports from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Annie E. Casey Foundation that examined the larger arena of nonprofits and requests of several members working in women's funds, it is clear that stakeholders are asking for balance in work/life and a 'new way' to be an executive

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director. Depending on the size of the nonprofit organization there are several solutions that may serve to build a 'recruiting, retaining and mentoring' atmosphere for an organization. Professionalizing and engaging team members in strategy conversations, engaging senior staff in human resource training, and/or utilizing external resources such as consultants are best practices to borrow from the private sector. There is clearly a desire for deeper and more frequent conversations on diversity, time management, leadership, and mentoring/coaching across generations (Cornelius, M., Corvington, P. & Ruesga, A. 2008).

Other strategies used to recruit and build talent include examining current organizational salaries and benefits, organizational culture, job definitions, professional development opportunities, and performance management systems. Organizations need to plan for departures, hires, and vacancies as a constant organizational reality and minimize the impact of vacancies by budgeting for turnover and initiating a process of succession planning (Ban, C. Drahnak, A. & Towers, M. 2003).

Collaborative Leadership

"Leaders who see themselves struggling to create fundamental social change for economic and political justice will have different perspectives, goals and visions. These are the leaders who are working to change the system. They are the "hearts" of advocacy initiatives. Thus for an activist organization that strives to enhance internal and external legitimacy and foster a significant social movement, leadership development that focuses on the leaders as decision maker is critical." (Russell, D. 2008).

In order to build collaborative leaders, one must first discuss and dissect a conversation on power. A successful leader has the ability to energize workers who already have mostly full work 'plates', to do more. Power can and should be re-defined as the ability to get things done rather than control over others (Avery, C. 1999).

Instead of depending on the traditional and familiar power of authority, the 'power over', or 'the power of exchange', a new collaborative leader will continue to succeed within a framework of integrative power otherwise known as 'love' or 'power with' (Gouldings, K. 1989). This integrative power can be unlimited in its ability to enable collaborations and energize people, but only if it is used well and with a sense of balanced focus on the 'what' and the 'why' of a 'business' decision. To use integrative power well, one must continue to ask "How can I use 'power with' alongside 'power over'?"

Repeated references in the leadership development literature refer to "holistic conceptions of leadership", "leadership with purpose and respect for dignity", "spiritually guided leadership" and leadership that is "highly idealistic AND highly profitable." There is also much to be said about diversity and inclusion of the strengths of all people in decision-making and planning. Leadership in a complex world seeks the alignment of interests and action required to achieve collective purpose while at the same time maintaining people's visions of the common good and the health of their private lives.

To construct a leadership development program that encompasses and builds upon all of these characteristics is a task worth undertaking for the women's funding movement.

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Recognizing good leadership and an effective organization often happens when one 'feels' it. The office has a positive energy, there is creative sharing of ideas, there is transparency in the business workings and the passion seeps in and around the 'clients' and employees. Many studies have revealed that emerging leaders in the nonprofit sector want to create a future with a vibrant and healthy work-setting that maintains a focus on working effectively on behalf of the organization's constituents and mission (Linnell, D. 2008).

Leadership Development Training for Women in Nonprofits

Several "fellowship" type programs (i.e. Kellogg Foundation Fellows, Rockwood Leadership, Emerging Leaders Program at the College of Management of University of Massachusetts Boston) have sought to immerse a variety of individuals in a long term cohort setting to discuss a broad range of leadership issues while they continue to work in their non-profit jobs. Other programs in college settings (i.e. Babson College, Rutgers University, Mills College, University of Delaware) allow women to spend a week or five days on site to engage in an 'executive' leadership or leadership 'training' setting to learn a broad range of professional and personal leadership skills.

For women in the private sector, numerous leadership programs are available for executive training and networking. For example, the Institute for Women's Leadership, the Center for Creative Leadership and several institutional (Harvard, Stanford) settings have weeklong sessions to build upon leadership skills for professional growth. These executive management certifications and sessions are seen as standard professional development for senior management leaders in the private sector.

Finally, there are numerous organizations seeking to build the pipeline of women seeking to enter the arena of public service, development, and politics. Vital Voices Global Partnership, The Centre for Development and Population Activities, the Women and Politics Institute at American University School of Public Affairs, and Emily's List and numerous other institutes cater to women from a variety of backgrounds to engage in public sector 'training'.

There are also several programs addressing issues related to the pipeline of employees and leaders that will be needed in the future. American Humanics, in Kansas City, Missouri, is working with colleges and universities to steer graduates into nonprofit careers by forming a coalition of nonprofit organizations and leaders to explore new recruitment strategies. Public Allies, which links many people of color to jobs in the sector, is offering professional support and training to its program participants. Finally, the field of public affairs and non-profit management has grown over the past decade with degree programs at more than 157 universities in the United States alone.

Recommendations for Engaging Emerging Leaders

During this time of immense opportunity in the non-profit sector, there is a critical need to evaluate how organizations are run, the structure of governance and staff, and the efficiencies and "space" in which work is performed. These may be difficult conversations but they are necessary to determine survival in an increasingly changing economic and diverse global market. At the same time, to insure success, it is

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increasingly important to be able to look at the work culture and determine if it is welcoming a broad audience. Within the women's funding movement and non-profit arena, the next generation of leadership is eager to step in and join these conversations.

The recently published book, *Working Across Generations: Defining the Future of Nonprofit Leadership*, by Frances Kunreuther, Helen Kim and Robby Rodriguez, presents ideas and gives practical advice on how to approach generational changes in leadership so that the contributions of long-time leaders are valued, new and younger leaders' talent is recognized, and groups are better prepared to work across generational divides.

The authors suggest five immediate steps to cultivate, train, and encourage Gen X and Gen Y leaders:

“1. Build clear steps for advancement in your organization. Newer generations recognize that they need to create pathways within the sector for moving up in their organizations or to positions of leadership elsewhere. Make skills-building trainings available to staff as they both prepare for and begin new positions within an organization. For smaller organizations without room for growth, consider ways that younger staff can be a part of decision-making or use their skills in other organizations in the sector.

2. Remember it's more than technology. We often hear Boomer leaders talk about the benefit of younger staff members' technological savvy. Then we hear from newer leaders that they are valued for skills but not their ideas. Remember that Generations X and Millennials may (or may not) have great skills for developing web sites to social networking, but they also want to contribute their ideas.

3. Provide mentoring opportunities. Mentors and networks provide Generation Xers and Millennials with information about jobs, the connections they need to get their foot in the door, and the legitimacy they need with others. Offer connections to trusted colleagues in the field who can provide staff with a sense of perspective and history, advice, contacts and influence. And mentoring is rarely one way; older leaders gain insight and information by listening to their younger colleagues.

4. Create room for more voices. Newer generations looking for more voice in organizations have led to a revival of interest in more inclusive decision-making models. Examine how decisions are currently made and consider ways to institute places where decision-making can be open to more voices. Consider reducing the amount of time spent discussing decisions and instead distribute leadership throughout the organization, giving staff members more authority and responsibility for running their own programs.

5. Lead together. Younger leaders are often more interested in sharing leadership, building more on the experiences of some of the movement organizations of the 1960s and 1970s than on current business operations. Whereas boomer leadership-sharing often resulted in power struggles, Generation Xers and Millennials are frequently recognized for their comfort with

working in teams. Boards should consider phasing in co-directors, leadership teams, or other variations of sharing the top responsibility in your organization”

This advice appears to be a good summary of what approaches are supported by the literature.

Leadership Development Themes and Recommendations for Women’s Funding Network and its Member Funds

Several key themes come forward when reviewing the various high-quality leadership development models:

- It is important to have a conscious selection of the leaders who will be in the training.
- Training needs to offer time and space for reflection and digestion.
- Leaders need to bring a willingness to look at personal influences and motivators, and agree that the personal and spiritual dimensions are important components of experience.
- Diverse social, economic and cultural experiences provide key perspectives.
- Commitment to trust and honesty, a commitment to learning and interacting in a group within a cohort setting is required.
- Leaders thrive when they have mentors to guide, counsel and exchange with them.
- Opportunity for greater financial reward can inspire emerging leaders to remain in the field.

With regard to the Women’s Funding Network and its member funds, there are key questions for each organization to address and navigate as the movement grows and many executive directors who have served the movement from inception will transition in the next decade or two;

- What is the organizational structure of the women’s fund, governance and staff, and does it offer inclusive, robust and broad leadership opportunities?
- Are there goals or challenges the organization (or Network) can make of its ‘seasoned’ leaders to integrate younger leaders, both Board and staff, in strategy and vision setting conversations?
- How can current executive directors demonstrate the positive parts of their roles and invite suggestions for how to restructure their positions toward a new leadership paradigm?
- What innovative private sector management models can be embraced?
- How is knowledge transferred from current executive directors to emerging leaders and through what type of learning opportunities?
- Is the current salary and benefits structure of the organization appropriate and how and when can this topic be elevated to a higher priority by Board leadership?
- How does one elevate and respect experiential differences across generations as well as race gender, and location?
- Are funds offering a safe space for the inclusion of all ideas and considerations regardless of age, gender, title and/or culture?

The following are specific suggestions for the Women's Funding Network Emerging Leader trainings based on more than 20 qualitative conversations with staff leaders and an online survey reflecting the opinions of 98 respondents from the women's funding field.

Specific Emerging Leader Training Content suggestions:

- Orient the training program from a place of "inner" work with intent to explore personal meanings of power, resources, voice and relationship.
- Bring forth the 'practice' of leadership as ongoing ownership of mistakes and celebration of successes and learning.
- Flush out conversations on work/life balance and how self care and use of time intersects.
- As part of the application process and an integral component of training, address 'being a leader' in the context of current roles in women's funds and the women's funding movement.
- Focus on case study learning to build strategic thinking and planning (75% of respondents), collaborative strategies and movement building (63% of respondents), relationship building and conflict management (52% of respondents), business and finance acumen (50% of respondents), and change and adaptability management (46% of respondents).
- Discuss traditional gender/care giving roles of women in relationship to delegation and time management as prerequisites for mission expansion.

Specific Emerging Leader Training Design suggestions:

- Deliver and discuss case studies and templates within the training.
- Provide a tool kit of quick, effective ways to assess how work in a fund and work among team members is progressing.
- Create ongoing dialogue and support in applying the concepts presented in the trainings.
- Provide voices, lessons and stories of seasoned leaders.
- Offer personalized assignments and practices to bridge learning between sessions.
- Offer learning of and practical application of coaching skills between seasoned leaders and emerging leaders.
- Build in exercises for exploration and enhancement of intuition, creativity, listening, decision making and public speaking 'voice'.
- Consider a rotating 'captain' role for the convening of cohorts to keep members engaged over time.
- Utilize personalized coaching (73% of respondents), mentoring (60% of respondents), peer network trainings (57% of respondents), and leadership skills training (55% of respondents) as formats for training.

Selected Books, Articles, Publications and Research

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