

HOW CAN DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP BE SUPPORTED?

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The **Developmental Leadership Program** (DLP) is an international research collaboration supported by the Australian Government.

DLP investigates the crucial role that leaders, networks and coalitions play in achieving development outcomes.

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PREFACE

Over the past 10 years, the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) has explored the vital role of leadership in making change happen. Our key findings are summarised in [‘Inside the Black Box of Political Will: Ten Years of findings from the Developmental Leadership Program’](#). In it, we argue leadership relies on three interconnected processes:

- First, on motivated and strategic individuals with the incentives, values, interests and opportunity to push for change.
- Second, on these motivated individuals overcoming barriers to cooperation and forming coalitions with power, legitimacy and influence.
- Third, coalitions effectively contest the ideas underpinning the status-quo and legitimise an alternative set that can promote change.

Together, these findings form a working theory of change on developmental leadership, and a set of testable assumptions about how leaders emerge, how they work collectively to create change, and how this process can be supported.

The next phase of research will examine these assumptions. It will focus on four research questions that emerged out of the synthesis of DLP’s earlier work.

As part of the process of planning the next phase, DLP has produced a series of Foundational Papers to provide a conceptual foundation and guide our empirical approach to addressing each of the questions above. DLP’s Foundational Papers aim to interrogate both the theoretical grounding and wider evidentiary basis for DLP’s assumptions about how change happens. They start from what we think we already know, but aim to challenge our thinking and ground future research in interdisciplinary theory and cutting-edge debates.

Each paper aims to situate DLP’s key findings in the wider state of knowledge on this topic, review key themes from the best existing research on our questions of interest, and suggest key theories and bodies of literature that can be harnessed to address them. Together, the papers will form an intellectual road map for our continuing work on developmental leadership, helping us to build a coherent intellectual agenda around our core interests.

DLP’S RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: **How is leadership understood in different contexts?**

RQ2: **Where do leaders come from?**

RQ3: **How do leaders collectively influence institutions?**

RQ4: **How can developmental leadership be supported?**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If we know that leadership is important to developmental change, but programs to support it are not clear about what leadership is or how supporting it contributes to achieving change, then they may be missing important opportunities or simply be taking the wrong approach.

Development agencies have important resources at their disposal that can be used to support developmental leadership – although the impact of such support varies considerably. All too often the support from development organisations does not match what we know about how developmental leaders emerge and how collective action takes place. Moreover, development organisations are often not set up to provide support in ways that are most effective. At the same time, there is much to be learnt from existing programs that have successfully supported developmental leadership. As a framing paper for a pillar of research under DLP III, this paper aims to capture what is known, and what the gaps in our knowledge are, in relation to this issue.

Drawing from the literature, we explore the generic attributes or features of programs that seek to support developmental leadership, the features of particularly successful examples of such programs, as well as some of the systemic challenges agencies and the sector more broadly face in working in these ways. From this we set out a range of potential research avenues to guide this area of research under DLP III. These include exploring:

- how individual and collective leadership support might be combined more strategically;
- how programming might focus on shifts in the wider enabling environment in order to support the emergence of developmental leadership;
- what mix of support might be required to augment the multiple resources that leaders can develop and strategically deploy in different contexts, and for different groups or issues;

- how leadership support might need to differ when supporting prototypical, as opposed to atypical, leaders;
- what leadership support can learn from the political leadership of women's organisation, coalitions and Disabled People's Organisations as well as intersectional initiatives, particularly regarding non-elite leadership pathways, and how multi-level, cross-sectoral leadership functions and is best supported;
- an extension of the Gender and Politics in practice research to explore how successful programs have navigated and adapted business practices, HR policies, contract management and MEL processes to effectively support programs seeking to promote developmental leadership;
- the strategy and practice of leadership in development agencies, and the degree to which this enhances their effectiveness to support developmental leadership.

It is suggested that this long list can be used to a) initiate further discussion with DFAT about potential areas of focus, and b) as a 'menu' for potential case studies which emerge under the other research questions to select from.

Finally, we suggest that there are a number of disciplinary lenses which might be usefully considered in this area: new and feminist institutionalism; elements of management/ organisational theory such as contingency theory; and complexity thinking.

The general lack of specification about what is meant by 'leadership' means that we must trace the implied understandings in order to tease out the assumptions underlying much leadership support.

INTRODUCTION

The first three Foundational Papers developed under the third phase of the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) have sketched out a nuanced, and at times complex, picture of how leadership is understood and practiced. They ask how leadership is understood in different contexts; what influences leaders and the choices and paths they take; and how leaders collectively influence institutions and achieve collective action outcomes. The papers offer a rich basis for further research under the third phase of the DLP into these matters. For development organisations – both official donors and non-government organisations (NGOs) – however, a lingering question remains: given this complex picture, what role can they play in supporting developmental leadership? This fourth and final Foundational Paper seeks to provide a framing for answering this question and to propose potential research avenues for phase three of the research program.

Development agencies have important resources at their disposal that can be used to support developmental leadership. From financial support, to training, to educational or professional opportunities, networking, diplomacy and policy dialogue, development agencies have resources and influence that can assist developmental leaders to strengthen their skills or networks, or more effectively leverage their skills to achieve change. In addition to directly supporting potential leaders, development partners can also contribute to creating an enabling environment for developmental leadership to emerge. Yet the quality of this support varies dramatically: from support that astutely enables local leaders to achieve developmental change; to support that more modestly improves knowledge or skills; to support that results in little sustainable change. Part of the problem is that all too often the support from development organisations does not match what we know about how developmental leaders emerge and how collective action takes place (see, for instance, Lyne de Ver and Kennedy 2011). Moreover, as

we discuss in the final section of the paper, development organisations are often not set up to provide support in ways that are most effective. As a framing paper for a pillar of research under DLP III this paper aims to capture what is known and what the gaps in our knowledge are in relation to this issue.

The paper begins first by asking how development organisations think about and support leaders and coalitions, setting out the range of strategies relied upon to support leaders and coalitions and what this can tell us about how leadership is framed and understood. We use the three levels of individual, collective and societal leadership developed in the DLP (phase two) synthesis paper to tease out how these forms of support might contribute to changes at these levels (DLP, 2018). Second, the paper explores what these ways of thinking about and supporting leadership require of development agencies. In this section, the paper highlights the implications for how agencies might effectively support developmental leadership, revealing internal organisational practices as themselves an important focus of study. In the third section we explore some of the systemic issues and challenges that development agencies face in working in ways that support developmental leadership. Finally, section four sets out a range of potential research avenues to guide this area of research under DLP III, which essentially asks the ‘so what’ questions about the role of development organisations in supporting developmental leadership, and which will therefore be central to all the research projects which will be established.

PART ONE: HOW DO ORGANISATIONS THINK ABOUT AND SUPPORT LEADERS AND COALITIONS?

It is commonly recognised by development organisations that for developmental change to occur, leadership is needed. The 2017 Australian Foreign Policy White Paper notes that emerging leaders in the Indo-Pacific must be ‘supported to enable those countries to address their development challenges’ (2017: 99) and ‘to prepare them for the challenges of modern governance’ (2017: 103). The World Bank argues that to achieve its goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity, ‘it is essential that we collaborate by pooling our knowledge and efforts in many areas, including the support of leadership in countries’ (2016: v). And Oxfam supports transformational leadership to address inequality and give greater voice to marginalised groups such as women (2013). Indeed, the number of development programs supporting leadership has mushroomed in the last twenty years (Lyne de Ver and Kennedy 2011: 1). Yet as Lyne de Ver and Kennedy (2011: 6) note in their synthesis of 67 development organisation programs that focus on supporting leadership (and which remains one of the most comprehensive overviews of the topic), what precisely is meant by leadership varies and has historically been rarely defined. Moreover, few of the 67 programs reviewed had an explicit theory of change, explaining how the support provided by the development organisation led to the impacts they claimed to be contributing to (Ibid.). Indeed, Lyne de Ver and Kennedy’s headline finding is that it is not clear whether many leadership development programs in fact deliver developmental benefits.

This raises the problem outlined above: if leadership is important we need to be clearer about *what* it is, and *how* supporting it contributes to achieving developmental change. By unpacking the kinds of support that development organisations commonly provide to contribute to developmental leadership, we can tease out the ways that development organisations think about and understand leadership. That is, we can clarify what their implicit understandings of leadership are and their theories of change, whether stated or unstated. This then provides us with a basis to determine the extent to which this thinking connects with what we know about how leaders emerge, operate and cooperate to achieve developmental change.

COMMON FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP AND COALITIONS

From a review of project descriptions of a number of development organisations and drawing on the secondary literature, a range of strategies emerge as commonly relied upon to support developmental leadership or coalitions. As there are different ways of studying leadership (see Jack Corbett’s Foundational Paper in this series), so too are there different ways of supporting it. While there is significant variation in terms of the aims and forms of many leadership support programs, and of course many programs combine multiple strategies, in the table adjacent we aim to capture some of the most common forms of support. Furthermore, we recognise that these forms of support can be directly, or indirectly, targeted at changes at the individual, collective or societal levels as described in the DLP synthesis paper (DLP, 2018) and therefore map program strategies against these levels. The table is, of course, a neatening of reality and – in practice – many programs incorporate different forms of support and a range of levels. However, on the whole, the table assists in highlighting that the majority of development organisation support falls at the individual, or perhaps collective levels – with little focused at the societal level.

WHAT THESE FORMS OF SUPPORT IMPLY ABOUT UNDERSTANDINGS OF LEADERSHIP AND COALITIONS

While the specific understandings of leadership vary from program to program, some general impressions emerge across programs. Moreover, the general lack of specification about what is meant by ‘leadership’ means that we must trace the implied understandings in order to tease out the assumptions underlying much leadership support. This provides us with a basis to then consider how these assumptions fit with existing knowledge about leaders, how they emerge and cooperate to achieve change.

TABLE ONE: FORMS OF SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUAL, COLLECTIVE AND SOCIETAL LEADERSHIP

FORM OF SUPPORT	INDIVIDUAL	COLLECTIVE	SOCIETAL
Scholarships	Promotion of individual knowledge, skills and experience through educational opportunities either domestically or internationally e.g. Australia Awards.	Support to the building of and access to networks that can be crucial to future networks or coalitions for change e.g. Women's Leadership Initiative, Alumni networks.	Contributing to the emergence of elites or a middle class with particular values and ways of working that are developmental.
Training	Individual classroom-based teaching focused on skills and qualities associated with effective management or leadership. e.g. PNG Training Precinct.	Workshops and events designed to provide organisations, coalitions, networks or alliance with the skills, knowledge and networking to promote developmental leadership e.g. Pacific Leadership Program's (PLP) adaptive leadership work in the Pacific.	Institutional reform to reposition the skills system to align with employment demands, to integrate them into national structures and attempt to shift public ideas and beliefs about the value of vocational training vs. university qualifications e.g. Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Australia Pacific Training Coalition.
TA/mentoring/ coaching	Formal technical assistance to support things like legislative drafting. Mentoring and advice to identified leaders on navigating reform processes e.g.: The Asia Foundation in the Philippines & Timor-Leste.	Ongoing support to organisations, coalitions, alliances etc. in building and maintaining their collective resources and capacities to promote change e.g.: The Asia Foundation in The Philippines and Timor-Leste.	Shifting attitudes towards, and legitimacy of, particular groups or issues in the eyes of the broader public.
Exchange and learning	Promoting individual events, study visits or exchanges designed to enhance personal leadership skills.	Convening events and creating spaces to bring together potential allies and partners to develop ideas and networks. Twinning arrangements between communities, institutions, industries.	Exposure to different ideas, norms and values as a means to extend the options for what might be deemed possible in a given situation.
Financial support	Financial support for individual training, mentoring and coaching.	Financial support (often core) to civil society organisations and coalitions; support for events; cross-sector dialogue; policy fora etc. e.g. PLP, the Indonesia Development Forum.	Financial support for social or mass-media, popular campaigns designed to shift norms and values on leadership.
Demand side work: awareness campaigns, triggering demand	Building skills of community/civil society leaders, researchers and advocates to collect data, engage service providers, government etc. and advocate for change e.g. Indonesia Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI).	Building knowledge and capacities of communities and civil society organisations to form and maintain coalitions and alliances to engage service providers, government etc. e.g. Empowering Indonesian Women for Poverty Reduction (MAMPU), various social accountability initiatives.	Building demand for evidence and recognition of civil society voice as important and legitimate in the policy process. Promoting human rights which can be 'drawn down' by civil society groups.
Supporting an enabling environment	Building skills of policy makers to engage with research and evidence, as well as their ability to engage in dialogue with civil society, private sector, development agencies etc. e.g. KSI.	Creating an enabling environment in which civil space, contestation, leadership etc. is possible. Creating institutional environment in which leaders are held to account etc. e.g. policy dialogue around establishment of anti-corruption commissions; public service standards; laws protecting civil society space, media development etc.	Promotion of norms which value negotiation, dialogue and inclusion as opposed to conflict, and exclusion. Influencing channels (i.e. formal and social media) through which perceptions of leadership are shaped.

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS OR COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP?

Much support by development organisations treats leadership as an individual skill or quality, rather than a group process (i.e. it focuses on the first column in table overleaf). In the literature, this is often talked about as the difference between focusing on 'leaders' and on 'leadership' (Corbett 2019). In Lyne de Ver and Kennedy's study, 'over a third of the programmes surveyed concentrate on developing the personal skills of individual leaders, study "heroic leadership figures" (O'Connor & Day, 2007: 70), and place an emphasis on leadership styles or traits' (2011: 4).

Training, mentoring or scholarship programs, for instance, generally select promising individuals who are deemed to demonstrate leadership qualities, or take a cohort performing particular functions in the public service, parliament or other institution, and focus on improving their own skill set through the achievement of qualifications or exposure to personal development processes. These individuals are then inserted back into their local context with newfound knowledge or improved skills, strategies and qualities that are assumed to increase their likelihood and quality of leadership. This approach tends to see leadership in highly individualised forms (the idea of there being 'great leaders' who push forward change, for instance), unless there is also an emphasis on the skills needed to foster collective leadership. This is in contrast to approaches to leadership

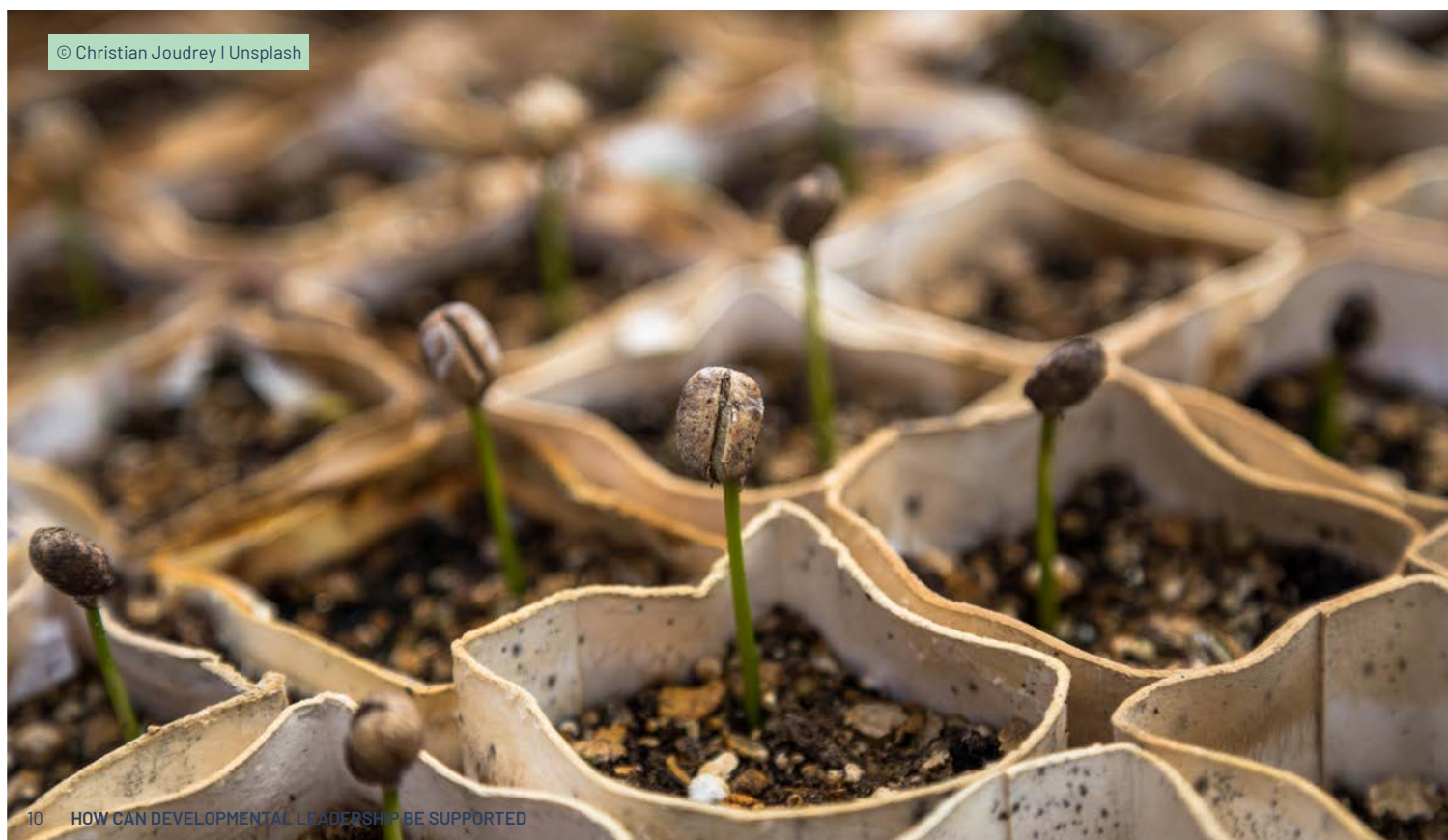
that view it as a much more negotiated or collective process (see column two, on the previous page), focused on the relationship between leaders, wider coalitions and followers. Lyne de Ver and Kennedy (2011: 7; 8) explain this as the difference between training leaders by enhancing the knowledge and skills, confidence and personal development of individual "leaders" versus:

bring[ing] together a group of people from the same context who will continue to connect, interact, relate to, and work with one another in their real lives, in order to create 'leadership' within that group and in their context.

This characterisation of support as focusing more strongly on individual rather than collective leadership appears to be less true in relation to gender and disability. In these fields, we find more support is focused on building advocacy networks and coalitions, rather than on pinpointing and investing in individual promising leaders. Potential reasons for this difference are discussed below.

Potential research avenues: What can other leadership programs learn from women's empowerment efforts, or disability initiatives in terms of moving beyond an individualised approach? What kind of combination of individual and collective support might be required in different contexts, and on different issues?

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AGENCY OR STRUCTURE

Connected to the above, support to leadership often emphasises agency (i.e. the role that individuals or organisations can play in promoting change), but downplays structure (i.e. the political, economic or societal forces or constraints which inhibit agency). Programs thus focus on the potential of individuals or groups of individuals to overcome structural constraints to change. In part, this reflects the belief of most development assistance in the ability of people to achieve change. As Corbett notes in his Foundational Paper, the first phase of DLP's research was premised on the view that 'development theory had paid too much attention to structure and not enough attention to agency' (Corbett, 2019: 10). Yet this emphasis can risk assuming away the obstacles that make change difficult to achieve. This includes structural constraints within the wider society (for example, patriarchy or patrimonialism that inhibit gender equality or accountable governance from taking hold) but also the effectiveness of the institutions within which potential leaders work and live (Lyne de Ver and Kennedy 2011: iv), including development agencies themselves. Leaders are not islands. They exist within institutional and cultural contexts that shape them and what it is possible to achieve. A sophisticated and highly skilled potential 'leader' sitting within a ministry beset by corruption, under-resourcing and weak political clout will struggle to achieve change even with the best organisational management skills, without also understanding these structural constraints and having skills and strategies to navigate them. Understanding the potential of agents within these structural constraints is important to supporting them with the right strategies, skills and networks to achieve change within their particular context.

At the same time, a range of programming options do exist that seek to support a wider enabling environment in which developmental leadership can emerge. Yet this programming is rarely explicit about developmental leadership as an aim. This is an area that may warrant greater exploration. Furthermore, as Corbett points out in his Foundational Paper (Where do leaders come from?), taking an approach which seeks to discover and compare how leaders perceive the constraints they face, and how and why they make different choices than others as a result, potentially allows us to not only overcome some of the limitations of a structure versus agency conceptualisation, but also undertake more comparative analysis (Corbett, 2019).

Potential research avenues: How does programming that takes into account, or focuses on, the wider enabling environment contribute to supporting the emergence of developmental leadership? How do programs that support individual and collective leadership contribute to overcoming structural constraints and therefore broader societal change?

We find more support is focused on building advocacy networks and coalitions, rather than on pinpointing and investing in individual promising leaders.

ARE LEADERS BORN OR MADE?

Most of the leadership programs that development organisations support seem to be premised on the implicit assumption that, at least to some degree, leaders can be made through supporting them with skills, education, networks, resources and other opportunities. Yet subtle distinctions in approach are still apparent with some programs focused on ‘teaching’ leadership to those that might not otherwise possess those skills or resources, and programs that aim to facilitate existing leadership potential. As Lyne de Ver and Kennedy explain, if a leadership program:

conceives of leadership largely as a set of skills, knowledge and capacities possessed by individuals or groups of people, learned through education and practice, such as public speaking ability, management techniques, and the ability to process complex ideas, then these are all skills that can be taught. Such a programme will, therefore, likely have a large classroom component involving skills training, knowledge development, and capacity building ... If, on the other hand, ...[it] conceives of leadership as being derived from experience; as being a process rather than a skill; or as something that cannot be directly taught but can be ‘brought-out’ in potential leaders, then the process of leadership-learning is less straightforward.

The nature of support provided by development organisations would thus be different, depending on whether they view leadership as innate or learned. However, as Jack Corbett notes in his Foundational Paper (Where do Leaders Come From?), this distinction is arguably false in that all leaders are made up of ‘a unique

combination of attributes and resources they were born with, and the experiences and choices they have made to maximise them’ (Corbett, 2019: 18). As such he argues that future research should focus on how leaders accumulate and leverage existing resources and capacities, including education and technical skills and political or relational capital, as well as the strategies they employ to maximise these resources relative to opponents, and the outcomes of their choices. If this was better understood then this might provide development agencies with a more nuanced picture of how they might augment these different types of capital or resources.

Furthermore, as argued in the first Foundational Paper (How is Leadership Understood in Different Contexts?) leadership is also a process shaped by the interaction between leaders and followers (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019). It is in this sense distinctly relational. Being clearer about this would assist development organisations in tailoring their support to leadership to better deliver developmental outcomes. In particular, it would recognise those aspects of leadership support which might be provided by teaching and training (i.e. more analytical or cognitive processes), and those skills and capacities that can only be developed through practice and feedback (i.e. relational skills).

Potential research avenues: Given the multiple resources that leaders can develop and strategically deploy to achieve their goals, what is the mix of support which might be required to enhance these resources in different contexts, and for different groups?

BIAS TOWARDS WESTERN LEADERSHIP STYLES

Training curricula tend to be based on leadership and management skills found to be important in Western institutions. While some of these skills and values may well be transferrable, as Lyne de Ver and Kennedy note, they also 'overlook the importance of learning about networks and coalitions and are universalist rather than specific to the context of the participants' (2011: vi). Similarly, study visits and twinning arrangements are frequently based on the implicit assumption that institutions in developed country settings have practices or arrangements that are relevant to developing countries – although there is an increasing recognition that more relevant learning is likely to come from middle income settings, or countries with similar political, economic or cultural histories, than from high income donor countries. At the same time, much leadership research is based on a Western-centric, and gendered understanding of leadership (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019).

This Western-centric bias has been critiqued as highly normative (Storberg-Walker, 2017). That is, leadership is understood in the context of values-based beliefs about what is, or seems to be, effective in western organisations and societies. This has seen the emergence of values-based subjects like 'leadership integrity,' or 'ethical leadership' (Waddock 2007). It is suggested that this is probably connected to the problems or challenges which leadership support is often deployed to address – such as corruption and lack of accountability. Drawing on values such as integrity, ethics and accountability can thus be seen as a way to ensure leaders that emerge have the kind of normative bent that development organisations believe to be necessary for developmental change. The problem is, as a number of DLP case studies have noted (see for instance Denney and McLaren, 2016; Rousseau and Kenneth, 2018), not that these values are not appropriate in developing country contexts – the West does not have a monopoly on integrity! But the way that these values are presented, explained, and assumed to operate are not necessarily culturally attuned.

More non-prescriptive approaches to leadership recognise that different value systems exist and that notions of good leadership may differ from place-to-place. As Lyne de Ver and Kennedy (2011: 9) note:

This does not necessarily mean that such programmes ignore morality, values and ethics altogether. Instead these kinds of programmes might encourage discussion of these concepts but tend to emphasise the need for a better understanding and representation of one's own values in the practice of leadership without attempting to teach or set out a particular normative vision of leadership.

As Foundational Paper One, *Where Do Leaders Come From?* illustrates, however, there may be consistent patterns of 'prototypical' leadership – that is, common ways that communities in different contexts value leaders who reflect the identity and characteristics of the group. Furthermore, this suggests that this identity also provides a buffer against failure, as well as providing leaders with more space to promote change. On the other hand, non-prototypical leaders seem to face a glass ceiling in terms of how far their success can build perceptions of their trustworthiness and capability. In this sense, what leadership *means* in any given setting is an empirical rather than a normative question (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019).

Potential avenues of research might therefore include further work on how leadership support may need to be different when supporting prototypical leadership (as opposed to atypical leadership), and in particular exploring what kind of support might enable such leaders to go against the group's interests while retaining their legitimacy and support base. This in turn might provide useful clues as to what kinds of non-western conceptualisations of leadership development and support might look like, as well as how they might be harnessed for developmental ends.

LEADERSHIP AS MANAGERIAL, RATHER THAN POLITICAL, CROSS-SECTORAL AND MULTI-LEVEL

While the ultimate goal of development organisations supporting leadership is to improve development outcomes, the nature of their support is often projectised into improving managerial skills or organisational development. In part, this derives from the fact that most leadership training and literature is rooted in Western business management, prioritising performance and efficiency. As Lyne de Ver and Kennedy (2011: 8) note: 'In the past 'leadership' and 'management' were often seen as virtually indistinguishable, and leadership was thus largely seen in non-normative terms.' This approach emphasises the bureaucratic and managerial aspects of leadership, which are of course important. But it overlooks the political nature of leadership, which is increasingly recognised as a key component of achieving change, often through forming networks and shaping coalitions which can bring different leadership contributions together (Andrews et al, 2017: 226), as well as bargaining with potential allies and rivals (DLP, 2018). The risk is that development organisations provide support that equips those they work with to support with strengthened technical managerial skills, but not with the political skills required to make change happen in difficult contexts.

Furthermore, an important element of what has been termed 'adaptive leadership' is increasingly seen as an ability and willingness to disrupt the status quo, rather than manage the implementation of existing strategies or policies (Heifetz et al, 2009). This approach recognises that there will always be vested interests in existing practices which represent obstacles to change, and which need to be challenged, whilst new approaches are tested and institutionalised. This requires political as much as managerial skills, as well as different types of support.

Support focused on women's leadership and disability initiatives appears to be ahead of the curve in this regard. Lyne de Ver and Kennedy for example found that, compared with the other leadership development programs they studied, those 'aimed at women's leadership show greater understanding of leadership as political process, are more often based around concrete objectives, and work together more frequently as a movement' (Lyne de Ver and Kennedy 2011: 19). This is perhaps due to the long-standing recognition that achieving advancements in gender equality or disability rights in all countries requires overcoming significant resistance from incumbent

leadership, as well as entrenched societal norms.

Therefore, collective approaches to change that are focused on navigating the politics of change are viewed as more effective and sustainable than supporting individual leaders with managerial or organisational skills (see for example Derbyshire et al, 2018). It is often also the case the women and disabled people's organisations insist on a more collective approach to leadership. Focusing on women's organisations or disabled people's organisations therefore has the potential to deepen our understanding of the politics of informal leadership. Nazneen also suggests that that 'a key gap in the literature is a systematic and comparative analysis of what role intersectionality plays in influencing the ability of the marginalised groups to act collectively, and when and how intersectionality can be a source for legitimacy.' (Nazneen, 2019).

Finally, there seems to be a gap in our understanding of cross-boundary leadership, particularly at the 'meso-level'. The focus of much research – including in the second phase of DLP – tends to be on formal leadership roles (i.e. following reasonably determined paths through higher education, political leadership) or on community or coalition level leadership (women's groups and coalitions, etc.) working in particular sectors, with little in between. What remains underexplored is: a) alternative non-elite leadership pathways (e.g. through technical colleges, local/provincial government, small businesses); b) how leadership across local, national and international levels functions; and c) how cross-sectoral and cross-group leadership addresses 'wicked problems' like climate change or migration.

Potential avenues of research might look at how development organisations can assist potential leaders (or groups of leaders) in maintaining collective action and navigating the politics of reform processes, with potential learning from successful leaders/reform processes. This might include an exploration of what can be learnt from the political leadership of women's organisations, coalitions and disabled people's organisations, as well as intersectional initiatives, and what this might tell us about non-elite leadership pathways, and how multi-level, cross-sectoral leadership functions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

Development organisation support for leadership is based on particular ideas about how change happens. Often, change is viewed as occurring ‘transformationally,’ by a leader appealing to the higher conscious or ideals of supporters and acting as a role model who inspires change. While this reflects how change happens in some cases, it is increasingly accepted that developmental change frequently occurs in a much more transactional manner (Booth 2015; Laws 2010; Parks and Cole, 2010 etc.). That is, leaders bargain and negotiate, making compromises and incremental progress. The difference is important because it changes the way that leadership is supported. A training program that understands leadership as supporting transformational change will likely focus on different skills and strategies from one that understands leadership as pursuing transactional change, where negotiation, bargaining and working in politically smart ways is more important.

Transformational leadership has an inherent appeal and is often viewed as ‘good’ leadership, while transactional leadership is judged to be ‘bad’. Transformational leadership tends to be portrayed as heroic, or visionary, while transactional leadership is seen more as ‘managerial’, or even clientelistic’ (Lyne de Ver and Kennedy 2011: 10). Yet this view is not necessarily in keeping with the reality of how change happens and closes off important avenues to achieving change. Each leadership style may be appropriate in different contexts and at different times. By focusing on one form of leadership over others, development organisations might be missing potential change strategies and would be better served by keeping an open mind about how change happens in the different contexts they work in.

As Grebe and Woermann (2011) note, transformational leadership may be appropriate at critical junctures where more profound or systemic change is possible (such as when conflict ends, or political transition takes place) but ‘these junctures are few and far between.’ However, when these transformational moments or opportunities do not exist, transactional leadership may be the more

realistic way that sustained change happens. Similarly, Nazneen notes in her Foundational Paper, collective action processes often have distinct stages: a) collective formation, i.e., leadership involves forming collectives and maintaining group cohesion; b) legitimization, i.e., leadership involves framing and justifying demands and strengthening the collective position to make claims; c) securing institutional change, i.e., leadership involves using different strategies to negotiate an outcome. It may be interesting to explore how different types of leadership map onto these different stages as part of Nazneen’s suggestion of the need to look at how are different ways of working (such as transformationally or transactionally) are associated with different points in the life cycle of reform (Nazneen, 2019).

Finally, there is long standing view in broader sociological literature (Bourdieu, 1990; Elias, 1998), as well as that related to complexity thinking and development organisations (Stacey, 2007; Mowles, 2008) about the ‘transformative nature of everyday experience [based on]...one of the central insights from complexity theories, namely, that global patterns emerge only as a consequence of the interactions of local agents’ (Mowles, 2008: 810). This underlines the potential importance of day-to-day relationships that might be deemed transactional, as a key part of more transformational processes. From a leadership perspective this addresses the structure-agency debate raised by Corbett in his Foundational Paper (Corbett 2019: 9) by recognising the recursive relationships between the everyday interactions between leaders and their constituencies, and how this both shapes and is shaped by broader economic, political, social and organisational factors.

Potential avenues of research might therefore include an exploration of how leadership support might vary by taking account of different types, styles and levels of leadership, the opportunities available for change, the stages of collective action, and how the interaction of leaders and local agents creates new patterns of behaviour more broadly.

PART TWO: WHAT MIGHT THIS REQUIRE OF DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES?

The earlier section, and the other Foundational Papers indicate that there a number of forms of leadership support which development agencies might undertake. This includes direct support to individual leaders or collective leadership in the form of coalitions or alliances, or more indirect and oblique engagement in shaping the processes, policies or environment which facilitate the emergence of developmental leadership. But the literature also suggests there are a number of attributes or features of programs that have successfully supported developmental leadership, and which can also help determine what specific interventions might be more or less effective in particular contexts.

The emerging body of literature on 'Doing Development Differently' and 'Thinking and Working Politically, (TWP)' as well as DLP's back catalogue of research consistently suggests a number of common features of programs that are deemed to effectively support developmental leadership. Table two below captures some of these common features, building on a review done by Julian Barbara (Barbara 2019) and including, in particular, work undertaken by DLP and specifically the Gender and Politics in Practice Research Program, as well as research undertaken by the TWP Community of Practice (Laws and Marquette, 2017), Dan Honig (2018), and the Overseas Development Institute.

But in so doing – and in ways consistent with the DLP synthesis framework used above (see Table One) – we also try and tease out how these features of successful programs might play out at different levels: program level, organisational and the sectoral or systemic level (i.e. at the level of ideas and constraints related to the political economy of the development sector). The latter two levels are particularly important given the finding of the TWP community of practice research that there was a need to develop 'a more complete picture of the ways in which TWP faces a set of systemic bureaucratic and political obstacles' (Laws and Marquette, 2018: 31). These levels basically cover the 'proximate' and 'distal' contexts referred to in the first Foundational Paper (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019). These levels also, in some ways, mirror the levels of individual, collective and societal used in Table One. Clearly identifying these constraints is the first step in hopefully identifying where and how they have been – or can be – overcome.

As such the table and the analysis which follows seeks to tease out not just the implications for projects or programs working in ways which support developmental leadership, but also to suggest organisational and sector wide implications. We believe this is helpful in not only bringing together findings from the literature which are often focused on separate levels, but also in outlining possible areas of future research which take this more holistic analysis into account.



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TABLE TWO: IMPLICATIONS AT PROGRAM, ORGANISATIONAL AND SECTOR LEVELS

	PROGRAM LEVEL	ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL	SECTOR/SYSTEMIC LEVEL
Contextual understanding and relationships	Strong political economy analysis including analysis of power relations, which improves understanding of how leaders/coalitions emerge, their relationship with followers and how they operate to achieve change, as well as the building of effective local networks which provide a range of perspectives on the context.	Providing incentives for local staff to be developing and maintaining their contextual knowledge and relationships. Recognising the risk of rapid staff turn-over. Developing cross-cultural agility.	Tendency for the analysis and relationships of expatriate staff and external consultants (both of whom are usually short term) and western leadership perspectives to be privileged.
Locally-led problem solving	Identifying and supporting local leadership and coalitions in the processes of problem identification, the testing of 'solutions', and appropriate adjustment.	Ensuring that program designs and implementer contracts do not encourage externally led problem and solution identification.	Predominance of principal-agent notions of accountability, rather than peer, social or political forms of accountability.
Expanding and nurturing the space(s) for change	Building and expanding spaces which foster: acceptance of change; authority to change and introduce or liberate the abilities or capacities to achieve change.	Developing program policy which recognises leadership interventions should focus on creating 'change space' as much as identifying and supporting individual leaders.	Preference for more engineered and theoretically more predictable processes than less certain emergent ones.
Convening and brokering relationships	Use of convening power and relationships to support local and multi-level leadership and coalitions in their problem-solving.	Valuing and rewarding the difficult to measure processes of relationship development and brokering. Recognising the risk of putting money on the table.	Pressures to spend and meet pre-determined and easily communicable, tangible targets.
Learning, adaptation and M&E	Establishing effective learning and review processes which provide effective feedback on both the changing context and program outcomes to front line staff and partners, as well as meeting other accountability requirements, which is then used to adapt programs and strategies.	Providing front-line staff and partners with the ability and discretion to 'navigate by judgement'; seize opportunities and to adjust programs as a result.	Risk-averse, compliance culture which seeks a high level of 'control'. Discomfort with uncertainty and unpredictability.
Authorising Environment	Trust of, and support from, individuals who 'get' this way of working and are prepared to 'push back' on organisational systems to protect programs for which they have responsibility.	Trust of, and support from, individuals who 'get' this way of working and are prepared to work the system to protect programs for which they have responsibility.	The political space for development agencies is highly constrained and public attitudes to aid are ill-informed and not politically salient.

Source: Adapted from Barbara 2019, Andrews et al. 2012; Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice 2013; Booth and Unsworth 2014; The Doing Development Differently Manifesto 2014, DLP synthesis 2018; Derbyshire et al 2018, Honig 2018, Hudson and Mccloughlin 2019

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Most cases of programs which effectively support developmental leadership point to the importance of having a nuanced understanding of the political environment, including a grasp of national, local or sectoral political settlements (Laws and Marquette, 2017) as well as an effective understanding of processes of disempowerment and marginalisation (Derbyshire et al, 2018). In the first Foundational Paper in this series a strong argument is also made for adopting a cultural perspective to understanding the leadership context, as well as the channels by which perceptions of leadership are formed (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019). This is particularly important in understanding potential barriers for women taking up leadership roles. Some go further to recognise the importance of actually being part of a broader knowledge 'eco-system', given the diversity of perspectives on 'what is really going on', and the fact that this understanding can evolve rapidly as circumstances change. Mariz Tadros, for example, notes the importance of local and international staff having 'developed previous local relationships and networks across a long period of time, amounting to a repertoire of social and political capital'. As such she argues these relationships are not just important in improving contextual understanding, they also help build effective relationships and trust (Tadros, 2011). The challenge for development agencies is that staff turn-over can be too high for relationships to mature, and too often it is the contextual analysis of expatriate, rather than local staff, that is valued. In addition, where the knowledge of local staff is valued, there can be a tendency to rely on a small number of 'known quantities' without interrogating their own biases and seeking broader views. This invests a large amount of power in a small group of, often elite individuals.

While tools like political economy analysis, conflict analysis, political settlements analysis – and so on – can help, they are ultimately only as good as the information fed into them and are no substitute for deep contextual knowledge and relationships. Such knowledge is key to understanding whose leadership to support, in what ways that will have local value, and with what resources.

LOCALLY-LED PROBLEM SOLVING

Whilst it has been recognised for a long time that development processes need to be 'locally-owned' and 'locally-led' (Paris Declaration 2005; Accra Agenda for Action 2008; Busan Partnership Agreement 2011), it has also been noted that the very identity of the international development sector has historically been premised on solving problems, filling gaps and overcoming local weaknesses often using 'solutions' developed elsewhere (Baser and Morgan, 2008; Denney, Mallett and Benson, 2017). Furthermore, there can also be a reluctance on the part of donors to support 'small' interventions, despite the fact that they can create high energy processes which build confidence and awareness and ignite self-organisation that can cascade out in unexpected ways (Baser and Morgan, 2008). As noted in the first Foundational Paper, leadership development programs which do not take account of local cultures, values and ideas are likely to be less effective. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest leadership development programs are more locally owned where they are aligned with culturally relevant perceptions of leadership (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019; see also Rhodes, 2014). The successful cases identified in the literature seem to have overcome these tendencies and been genuinely open to locally led problem identification and experimentation, not least by focusing on local actors and their relationships as much as on 'the project' and the money, and recognising this in project designs and contracts with implementers (Derbyshire et al, 2018).

Leadership development programs which do not take account of local cultures, values and ideas are likely to be less effective.

EXPANDING AND NURTURING THE SPACE(S) FOR CHANGE

At the same time, in line with ideas around development as leadership-led change (Andrews, 2010) there is recognition that donors can play a role in not just ‘picking winners’ or champions, and going beyond supplying ‘political will’, but in helping to shape the environment which allows local leadership to emerge and thrive. This might include: helping to build acceptance or buy-in amongst elites, or other donors, for different ways of doing things (for instance, promoting gender equality and women’s leadership through hosting high level regional meetings); protecting civil society space as a forum for leaders to emerge; supporting authorising or accountability structures, which for example might provide more voice to marginalised groups; or enhancing the abilities of coalitions to overcome internal differences and develop appropriate strategies and alliances. The first Foundational Paper in this series also notes the importance of the media – and increasingly social media – as spaces within which perceptions of leadership are shaped (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019). Such approaches require a degree of comfort with uncertainty, and more oblique change strategies, which are often at odds with risk averse and overly prescriptive program designs. Yet such approaches offer the best opportunities for working on the ‘structure’ side of leadership and shaping the broader environment in ways that enable developmental leadership to emerge.

CONVENING AND BROKERING RELATIONSHIPS

Several successful cases of developmental leadership point to the challenges of initiating and, in particular, maintaining collective action. They note the hard work and commitment that needs to go into negotiating agendas and interests, developing the range of expertise, skills and political networks required to successfully promote reform, and in adjusting leadership styles and ways of working according to the context and stage in the life cycle of a given reform process (Faustino and Booth 2014; Denney and McLaren 2016). As the first Foundational Paper suggests this demands that leaders have the ‘cultural agility’ to work across different interest groups in order to build common ground (Hudson and McLoughlin, 2019). In these cases, donors have played important roles in: providing the resources and space for these internal processes (Rousseau, 2018); and ensuring that their calls for funding, demands, and reporting do not inadvertently undermine the cohesion of coalitions or exacerbate competition amongst its members (Denney and McLaren, 2016).

Successful cases of leadership support commonly note the importance a supportive internal and external institutional environment, has an appropriate appetite for risk; and provides adequate space for reflection and learning.

(Booth and Unsworth 2014; Denney and Domingo 2014).

LEARNING, ADAPTATION AND MONITORING & EVALUATION

One of the major challenges which has been repeatedly raised in the field of adaptive programming is *how* to undertake effective monitoring, learning, adaptation and evaluation that serves multiple purposes, and different levels of decision-making. Successful cases seem to have recognised the existence of different purposes (accountability, learning, and so on), as well as recognising the politics involved in these processes. This has resulted in:

- a range of efforts designed to incentivise, promote, and reserve time and space for, gathering and processing data and feedback to actually use this to enable adaptation and adjustment (Ramalingam et al, 2019a);
- experimenting with a number of tools and methods, such as strategy testing (Ladner, 2015), outcome harvesting (Abboud), social network analysis (Hoppe and Reinelt, 2010), action-research (O’Keefe et al, 2014) and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Zeng, 2013) which hold promise for program design and which gather data in ways that are robust but also more consistent with the messy reality of leadership and political reform;
- a recognition of the need to bring ‘big data’ and ‘thick data’ together (Ang 2019), and to be clearer about how ‘generalisable’ and locally generated evidence are combined in different circumstances (Oliver et al 2018);
- the recognition of the importance of M&E and the communication of program success in ways that enhance the political capital of initiatives and which in turn expand their space for further experimentation and adaptation (Barbara, 2019).

There are two issues here: what might we want to learn, monitor and evaluate; and, how best this is done. The first three Foundational papers suggest a number of generic areas which might be potentially important in any MEL process associated with leadership programs, these include:

- How contextual – and in particular political and cultural – factors shape perceptions of leadership, and the opportunity structures for leadership to be exercised;
- The diverse resources and forms of ‘capital’ that different kinds of leaders can deploy and how this shapes the choices they make as well as their legitimacy, and how this changes over time;
- Understanding not just the outcomes of leadership development but also the active processes by which leaders, individually and collectively cultivate their identity and engage with their ‘followers’, as well as across diverse interest groups;
- Exploring how different levels and types of leadership, and leadership support, combine to address complex challenges in direct or less direct ways.

FLEXIBILITY

A wide body of DLP and other research has found that greater flexibility in aid programs leads to better outcomes because such an approach enables better understanding of, and adaptation to, local context, as well as allowing for greater responsiveness (see Tadros, 2011 on women’s movements in Egypt and Jordan; Denney and McLaren, 2016 and Fletcher et al, 2016 on reform coalitions in the Pacific; and Hodes, 2011 on women’s coalitions in South Africa, as well as Faustino and Booth, 2014; Carothers and de Gramont, 2013). This is supported by a long tradition of scholarship which has explored how the organisation of international aid matters for development outcomes (Hirschman, 1967; Tandler, 1975; Honig & Gulrajani, 2018). More recently, Dan Honig’s empirical work has used a wide range of quantitative data, as well as comparative qualitative analysis, to provide clear evidence that when field staff in agencies are given greater space to ‘navigate by judgement’ then this leads to better project outcomes. This is particularly the case in volatile, unpredictable contexts, and for complex programs, whereas in more stable environments and ‘externally verifiable’ projects i.e. projects where the link between quantifiable outputs and goals is clear and tight, more traditional approaches may be more suitable (Honig, 2018: 106).

AUTHORISING ENVIRONMENT

Successful cases of leadership support commonly note the importance a supportive internal and external institutional environment, which provides long-term support, allows for the recruitment of people with good contextual knowledge and experience; has an appropriate appetite for risk; and provides adequate space for reflection and learning (Booth and Unsworth 2014; Denney and Domingo 2014). Some also suggest that the establishment of high levels of trust and mutual understanding between implementing agencies and donor staff is particularly important including this being sufficient for implementing agencies to ‘push back’ on donors if when they feel their demands are undermining the programs commitment to locally led, politically informed ways of working (Eyben et al 2015, Derbyshire et al 2018). What is perhaps less clear in these accounts is the degree to which this authorising environment emerges from the day-to-day interactions of individuals and teams, as opposed to the institutional policies and procedures of both implementation agencies and/or donors. There is some evidence to suggest that the former is an important part of the mix, but often underplayed.

Potential research avenues: Building on the Gender and Politics in Practice Research to explore how successful programs have navigated and adapted business practices, HR policies, contract management and MEL in ways that effectively support programs seeking to promote developmental leadership. Similar to ongoing research efforts to understand and support the work of DFID’s Better Delivery Unit and USAID’s Collaborating Learning and Adapting (CLA) framework, research in the Australian context could explore opportunities within DFAT for organisational-wide efforts to enable such ways of working.



PART THREE: THE CHALLENGE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Beyond encouraging leadership support by development agencies to support the program features set out in part two to improve effectiveness, it is also important to reflect on what changes might be needed within development agency systems and ways of working that would enable better support to developmental leaders. In the same way that there are indirect means to support the emergence of developmental leadership by seeking to promote shifts in the operating environment, we also need to consider the indirect means by which the operating environment of development agencies might better enable them to support locally led process of change, and the emergence of developmental leaders.

So, what would it take for the lessons about organisational and sectoral constraints to be translated into shifts in the institutional and sector-wide assumptions, policies and practices (laid out in columns three and four in Table Two)? The work from the Doing Development Differently and Thinking and Working Politically movements, as well as DLP's back catalogue of research all strongly suggest that if development agencies are going to be in a position to more effectively and consistently enable locally led, politically informed development, then there are a number of systemic changes that need to be made.

DLP's Gender and Politics in Practice Research, on programs that have successfully supported gender sensitive and politically informed processes, points to the need to consider changes to: human resource and recruitment policies; funding and contracting mechanisms; monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems; governance arrangements; and oversight and accountability relationships (Derbyshire et al 2018). Research on achieving change in the fields of justice and security has found similar reforms are required to improve the quality of programming (Denney and Domingo, 2014).

However, it is also the case that a body of recent research and literature has suggested that the kinds of changes that good development practice seem to require, and which are outlined above, are difficult – if not impossible – to implement once the political economy of the international development sector is properly factored in. Pablo Yanguas, for example, suggests that international aid is often used as a political football in domestic political battles. As such, policy positions are taken more to provide signals to ideological supporters, than to improve the long-term quality of development programs (Yanguas, 2018). Jack Corbett's analysis of 'Australia's foreign aid dilemma' argues that shallow levels of public support for aid and high levels of executive discretion, have led to a form of 'court politics' in which the 'manoeuvring and strategising' about aid policy is conducted by a relatively small group of ministers and senior public servants (Corbett, 2017: 5). In addition, he posits that this produces a constant attempt to balance policy, technical and administrative legitimacy that has been unsuccessful, with different priorities winning out at different moments. The result in his words being an aid program that is 'hostage to political fortunes' (Corbett, 2017: 209).

It is these kinds of structural explanations of why development agencies behave as they do, that leads some authors to describe progress in adopting new practices or ways of working as 'partial and in many ways tentative' (Carothers and de Gramont, 2013: 255). Although these arguments also focus on the fact that the political interests of development agencies – and the foreign affairs ministries they are increasingly located in – trump those of aid effectiveness, they also note more traditional bureaucratic obstacles such as a narrow focus on 'results management' and overly rigid project planning which constrain flexibility and favour more technocratic approaches to development problems (Carothers and de Gramont, 2013: 272; Natsios, 2010).

As Katsutoshi Fushimi has recently noted, the continued utilisation of these kinds of ‘blueprint’ methods and tools, despite their well known disadvantages, is somewhat puzzling (see also Natsios, 2010). Using the lens of sociological new institutional theory he argues that a combination of ‘rationalist institutional myths’ (prioritizing legitimacy to domestic stakeholders even if adopted methods hinder effective programming abroad); decoupling (whilst a log-frame might exist to satisfy accountability requirements, project staff are not held to it in practice); and institutional mimicry (a mix of coercive pressures from funders simply copying others, and normative pressures from professional experts) help explain this puzzle (Fushimi, 2019: 10-12). Fushimi goes on to argue that these processes suggest that whilst there is a degree of external pressure which explains this, there is also a key role for ‘distributed agency’ across organisations – or indeed one might argue distributed leadership – which helps explain these processes of institutionalisation, rather than this simply being down to ‘institutional champions’ or ‘entrepreneurs’ or broader structural political economy concerns (Fushimi, 2019: 14).

In a similar vein, Honig and Gulrajani argue that development organisations will only be able to accomplish their desired macro-level organisational transformations

(i.e. – equitable development outcomes) by focusing on linked micro-level organisational behaviours’ (i.e. – how the organisation works on a day-to-day basis) (Honig & Gulrajani, 2018:69). As such, they argue that it is by examining the role played by the ‘agent-level factors’ of motivation, autonomy and trust which might promote ‘contingent’ ways of working. That is, ways of working tailored to context. These factors would recognise: the value of freedom and discretion; that staff who are connected to their work are more effective; and the need to expand notions of accountability. The kinds of macro-level outcomes that development organisations seek are thus fundamentally connected to the bureaucratic, day-to-day workings of their staff.

Furthermore, they submit that whilst political authorising environments are a constraint on the autonomy of aid agencies, as Yanguas and Corbett suggest, there is more scope to shift internal ways of working than is commonly acknowledged. However, they also question whether institutional change can be achieved through small incremental changes which are limited to specific domains such as DFID’s Smart Rules or USAID’s Local Systems Framework, without more holistic attempts to shift incentives.

TABLE THREE: ADVANCING CONTINGENT WAYS OF WORKING THROUGH A FOCUS ON AGENTS

CONCEPT	CONTINGENT WAYS OF WORKING		
	Contextual knowledge	Adaptability	Flexibility
Autonomy	Giving agents the ability to make use of local knowledge encourages its gathering.	Allows for adaptation to local contexts based on better knowledge of context.	Less rigid hierarchy allows agents to respond to observable but unverifiable features of context.
Motivation	Only motivated agents can and will gather contextual knowledge when their efforts cannot be monitored.	Where context can be assessed only by field agents, motivated agents will be able to adapt programmes appropriately.	Motivated agents will work harder to ensure projects are flexible to changing needs and circumstances.
Trust	Contextual knowledge derives from trusting staff when monitoring staff is not possible.	Trust required for field staff to lead adaptation, where relevant features of context not transmittable to HQ.	Agents who feel trust by organisation, and organisations that are trusted by authorisers, more likely to have and use available flexibility.

Source: Honig and Gulrajani (2018:74)

All of which arguably bring us to questions about the leadership of individual development agencies, as well as of the development sector more broadly. Arguably, if we are to understand how developmental leadership is to be best supported by development agencies then we can apply a similar set of questions about the practice of leadership *in* development agencies that we have asked of developmental leaders themselves, notably:

- What kind of mix of individual and collective leadership is required and what are the different ways this might be supported?
- How might indirect attempts to shift the operating environment enhance the emergence of effective leadership?
- How might attempts to shift micro-level staff relationships and behaviour create new practices and behaviours?

Possible research avenues: exploring the strategy and practice of leadership in development agencies, and the degree to which this enhances their effectiveness to support developmental leadership. What do development practitioners have to navigate or overcome to implement effective programs? What does this tell us about what changes that may be needed within development organisations to better support effective developmental leadership?

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PART FOUR: FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper has suggested a long list of potential research avenues that might be explored in phase three of DLP. These are summarised below.

Potential research avenues identified in Part one:

1. What can leadership programs learn (from women's empowerment efforts, or disability initiatives, in particular) about moving beyond an individualised approach? What kind of combination of individual and collective support might be required in different contexts, and on different issues?
2. How does programming that takes into account, or focuses on, the wider enabling environment contribute to supporting the emergence of developmental leadership? How do programs that support individual and collective leadership contribute to overcoming structural constraints and therefore broader societal change?
3. Given the multiple resources that leaders can develop and strategically deploy to achieve their goals, what is the mix of support that might be required to enhance these resources in different contexts, and for different groups or issues?
4. Further work on how leadership support may need to differ when supporting prototypical leadership (as opposed to atypical leadership), and in particular exploring what kind of support might enable such leaders to go against the group's interests while retaining their legitimacy and support base. This in turn might provide useful clues as to what kinds of non-western conceptualisations of leadership development and support might look like, as well as how they might be harnessed for developmental ends.
5. How development organisations can assist potential leaders (or groups of leaders) in maintaining collective action and navigating the politics of reform processes, with potential learning from successful leaders/reform processes. This might include an exploration of what can be learnt from the political leadership of women's organisations, coalitions and disabled people's organisations, as well as intersectional initiatives, and what this might tell us about non-elite leadership pathways, and how multi-level, cross-sectoral leadership functions.

6. Potential avenues of research might therefore include an exploration of how leadership support might vary by taking account of different types, styles and levels of leadership, the opportunities available for change, the stages of collective action, and how the interaction of leaders and local agents creates new patterns of behaviour more broadly.

Potential research avenues identified in Parts two and three:

7. Building on the Gender and Politics in Practice Research to explore how successful programs have navigated and adapted business practices, HR policies, contract management and MEL in ways that effectively support programs seeking to promote developmental leadership. Similar to ongoing research efforts to understand and support the work of DFID's Better Delivery Unit and USAID's Collaborating Learning and Adapting (CLA) framework, research in the Australian context could explore opportunities within DFAT for organisational-wide efforts to enable such ways of working.
8. Exploring the strategy and practice of leadership in development agencies, and the degree to which this enhances their effectiveness to support developmental leadership. What do development practitioners have to do in order to navigate or overcome barriers to the implementation of effective programs? What does this tell us about what changes that may be needed within development organisations to better support effective developmental leadership?
9. Finally, it is striking that we have not been able to locate a more up to date review of leadership development programs in international development than the de Ver and Kennedy study of 2011. This suggests a strong argument for repeating that exercise to explore if the landscape has, or has not changed in the last 8 years.

This long list can be used to a) initiate further discussion with DFAT about potential areas of focus, and b) as a 'menu' for potential case studies which emerge under the other research questions to select from. For example, it is likely that some of the above will lend themselves better to programs focused on individual leadership rather than collective leadership.

As far as disciplinary lenses and methods are concerned, there are a number of approaches that might be fruitful. In particular, it would seem that the following offer interesting avenues to explore:

- **new and feminist institutionalism**, as Sohela Nazneen notes such approaches help to unpack the informal processes that translate human interactions and power relations into structures and rules and rules and how this relates to performance and change (Nazneen, 2019);
- **elements of management/organisational theory** such as contingency theory, as effectively used by Honig and Gulrajani to explore alternatives to top-down decision making in development agencies in order 'to widen the menu of options at the disposal of donors when searching for organisational solutions' Honig and Gulrajani, 2018: 69);
- **complexity thinking**, as suggested by Chris Mowles and other authors who have noted that the concepts of non-linearity, emergence, tipping points, feedback, adaptation and self-organisation are salient not only to development processes but development management (Mowles, 2008; Ramalingam, 2013; Boulton, 2015);
- **action research** within development agencies or with particular programs is also a useful way to open up research on the systemic constraints and opportunities, as well as experiences of leaders and leadership within those organisations. Furthermore, such approaches can assist in filling some of the gaps that traditional monitoring and evaluation systems tend to miss (O'Keefe et al, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

This final Foundational Paper has sought to explore the role of development organisations in supporting developmental leadership, and to propose potential research avenues for how their role might be strengthened under phase three of DLP.

In the first section of the paper we summarised a range of literature, including part of the DLP back catalogue, in order to describe the main strategies development agencies use to directly and indirectly support leadership. We used the three levels of individual, collective and societal leadership developed in the DLP synthesis paper to tease out how these forms of support might contribute to change across these levels (DLP, 2018). We then distilled from this a number of issues that indicate the various ways that leadership is understood and supported, and the implicit theories of change that this suggests. This indicates a greater focus on individual leadership based on more managerial and Western-centric notions of leadership, than collective leadership, or more indirect and oblique engagement in shaping the processes, policies or environment that facilitate the emergence of leadership.

The second section of the paper explored what we have learned about ways of working that enable better leadership support by development agencies, based on the secondary literature reviewing a range of program experiences. This pointed to a range of ways of working that a growing body of evidence suggests are important for improved outcomes. In the third section, we described some of the systemic challenges that agencies and the sector more broadly face in working in these ways. This latter point opens up the workings and political economy of development agencies themselves as an important area of research.

Finally, part four sets out a range of potential research avenues to guide this area of research under DLP III. These include exploring:

- how individual and collective leadership support might be combined more strategically;
- how programming might focus on shifts in the wider enabling environment in order to support the emergence of developmental leadership;
- what mix of support might be required to augment the multiple resources that leaders can develop and strategically deploy in different contexts, and for different groups or issues;
- to test and explore how prototypical leaders can go against their group's interests while retaining their legitimacy and support base;
- what can be learnt from the political leadership of women's organisation, coalitions and Disabled People's Organisations as well as intersectional initiatives, and what this might tell us about non-elite leadership pathways, and how multi-level, cross-sectoral leadership functions.
- an extension of the Gender and Politics in practice research to explore how successful programs have navigated and adapted business practices, HR policies, contract management and MEL processes to effectively support programs seeking to promote developmental leadership.
- the strategies and practices of leadership in development agencies, and the degree to which this enhances their effectiveness to support developmental leadership.

It is suggested that this long list can be used to a) initiate further discussion with DFAT about potential areas of focus, and b) as a 'menu' for potential case studies which emerge under the other research questions to select from.

Finally, we suggest that there are a number of disciplinary lenses that might be usefully considered in this area notably: new and feminist institutionalism; elements of management/organisational theory such as contingency theory, and complexity thinking.

The investigations pursued under this area of DLP III research will help better connect what we are learning about how leaders achieve developmental change with how development agencies support these leadership processes. This, in turn, will contribute to the growing evidence base on what program features and ways of working are important in enabling more successful programs. Finally, and at the more macro level, the systemic constraints within development agencies and their wider operating environment will themselves be opened up for critique – exploring how 'leaders' or coalitions operate internally within development agencies to support more effective ways of working; and how challenging political and bureaucratic environments are navigated. Such research will build on, and extend, DLP's existing catalogue of research in ways that improve its relevance for programs, development agencies and the staff that seek to make both operate in ways that support developmental change.

■

This paper indicates a greater focus on individual leadership based on more managerial and Western-centric notions of leadership, than collective leadership, or more indirect and oblique engagement in shaping the processes, policies or environment that facilitate the emergence of leadership.

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