



Emergency Capacity Building Project 'Case study of good practice'

Standard Case study

CARE – Global Leadership Program: Leading with Impact

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1. Introduction

Working with communities in approximately 70 countries, CARE has 12,000 employees, 96% of whom are national staff working in their home countries. CARE's diversity and geographical spread creates challenges regarding the development of leadership skills focused around a sense of shared vision and the ability to create community across the organization.

A 2000 strategic plan adopting a rights-based approach and focus on advocacy heightened the urgency to address issues of leadership capacity. At the same time, scrutiny at Board level of the approach to succession management prompted questions as to the strength and availability of leadership capability within the organization.

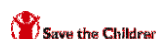
In responding to these challenges CARE aimed to develop a program that would lead to sustainable changes in capabilities linked to organizational needs, whilst also cultivating global community. The goal was to develop individual talent *and* shape organizational culture and values through those individuals.

2. About Leading With Impact (LWI)

Launched in November 2003, the program aims to:

- Accelerate the ability of CARE to effect the changes needed to enact the vision
- Build leadership and organizational capabilities of key change agents within CARE
- Align personal leadership development with organizational values and strategy.

The program draws on competency profiling work that incorporates characteristics specific to CARE's work and organizational priorities, and is also aligned with current research in the field of leadership. The LWI focuses on four leadership capabilities, namely leading





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from within; creating the future; managing complexity; and building human and knowledge capital. A 360° leadership assessment tool has been developed around these capabilities.

LWI uses a blend of classroom and peer consultation teams to integrate key concepts with actual practice. The first phase of 6 – 8 weeks involves personal assessments and pre-program preparation, where a participant asks direct reports, peers and the manager for feedback on a 50 item 360 leadership questionnaire, developed by CARE. This is followed by a private coaching conversation with an external coach who assists the participant in identifying a focus area for their classroom experience at the Leading With Impact program. The five day program emphasizes adaptive leadership thinking, reflective practice, peer to peer consultation, authentic one-to-one communications and individual wellbeing awareness. The final phase takes place over a period of about 6 months and involves a second private coaching session with an external coach to refine a personal development plan; practical application of the tools and learnings in the work context; and a second round of follow up feedback against a few specific behavioral items from the original 360 Leadership questionnaire. At the conclusion of nine months the participant can assess progress against their leadership development goals.

"The peer to peer learning experiences were invaluable," said participant Daniel Sinnathamby, Assistant Country Director, CARE India. "The LWI team was passionate, and genuinely wanted participants to really learn, connect and have fun in doing so."

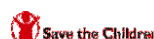
Throughout the program the emphasis is on personal reflection and transformation, and key themes which inform the design of the six-day module are:

- Who am I as leader?
- How do I want to shape my leadership?
- How do I look at the world?
- How do I take responsibility for the impact of my conversations?
- What are the adaptive challenges facing CARE?

In addition, CARE enlists the help of previous LWI "graduates" as Peer-to-Peer Consultation coaches. The returning internal coaches participate in a mini workshop concerning the LWI content and methodology and receive instruction on their role as a coach. "This experience expanded my knowledge of my role to be more reflective," said Dawn Wadlow, Assistant Country Director, CARE Ethiopia. "I understand better the dynamics of getting others to reflect and observe. Being a coach also helped me realize how I can help people make connections with each other."

The internal coaches selected for this experience are nominated by their Senior Vice President for this career enhancing opportunity and are viewed by their peers as having demonstrated positive leadership influence in their jobs.

3. Background





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LWI took approximately 10 months to develop in partnership with the external vendor, Duke Corporate Education (DCE), who were also involved in the first delivery launched in 2003. CARE has subsequently brought LWI in-house and it is now delivered by the CARE Academy.

DCE having waived the design work for LWI, costs associated with delivering the program were approximately USD 450,000 in total for the initial group of 44 participants, with expenditure currently USD 200,000 per group. By the end of 2006, 120 leaders and emerging leaders have so far completed the program, which now runs twice each year.

A 5-month planning schedule is required for each delivery, principally to identify and contract faculty, re-design content, communicate with and track participants, gather and report on 360° data, and organize on-site logistics. Planning involves a program manager at 50% time per delivery, program coordinator (25%) and design support person (25%). The five-day classroom component requires a total of 12 people providing coaching, learning and logistics support, in addition to faculty.

The LWI is underpinned by the premise that strategic leadership development is principally concerned with refining and cultivating community and citizenship. As well as developing individual talent, it builds the organization, strengthens creative participation, and fosters the capacity for change.

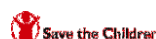
Championed by the Executive team, the program is implemented at all levels regardless of position or location.

4. Evaluation of success

The LWI provides a clear, strategically-aligned route for developing current leaders and staff with potential. This has made succession planning much more possible and realistic, while giving staff genuine options for career development.

Feedback gathered at the end of each program indicates that the content is consistently well-received by participants. One commented, "The most valuable part of the program was [how] the various sessions challenged my current assumptions about leadership [and to] explore new ways to improve my leadership abilities." Reflecting 18 months after the LWI, another manager observed, "...this notion of the leader being out in front and others following....was the understanding I had of leadership. But participating in LWI shattered that paradigm. What this allowed me to do, though, was to build a new paradigm."¹

The value of LWI is also demonstrated in the actions that have continued after the program ends. Further data shows that participants continue to reflect on and transfer





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their learning to others in the workplace. One manager reported: "...I learned that some of my unit members think I have a tendency to micro manage. This led me to change how I structure my interactions with them... I now try to ensure that I give them enough room to breathe, make mistakes, learn and grow." Another commented: "Something that I really benefited from, that I learned, was if you really want to facilitate change you need to push those people who authorize you into a zone of discomfort. You need to keep them there without pushing them outside their limit, and keep them there until they come up with new ideas and ways to approach things."¹

5. Conclusion

Implementation of the LWI has given CARE the ability to equip its current and emerging leaders with the capabilities necessary to achieve the organization's vision and move it forward. A highly engaging program using approaches that empower individuals and liberate talent, the LWI is extending the breadth and depth of leadership capability within the organization. With its focus on building mission critical skills and applying learning to adaptive challenges, CARE has enhanced its capacity to operate effectively now and in the future.

"Leading With Impact is only the beginning in creating a culture that is flexible and adaptive to change at CARE," says Patrick Solomon, Senior Vice President of Human Resources. "We want all staff to have every opportunity to strengthen their leadership potential and become fully involved in our fight against poverty. This requires new ways of thinking at all levels and an openness to new ideas as we tackle complex challenges."



This case study originated from [Care International](http://www.careinternational.org) and has been prepared by People In Aid in partnership with the Emergency Capacity Building Project (www.ecbproject.org).

¹ Dr Mohammed Musa, LWI participant November 2003

