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VIEWS ON LEADERSHIP BY YOUTH AND STAFF AT THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT CENTRE, NYERI, KENYA

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Abstract

Former Zambian presidential candidate, Elias Chipimo, charges mediocre leadership in key-decision making positions of government as the cause of many Sub-Saharan African countries' continual underdevelopment despite their resources and potential. He notes that when people lose their civic responsibility, they begin to accept 'abnormal' characteristics, such as corruption and greed, as 'normal' expectations from government officials; these accepted norms perpetuate the cycle of mediocrity in leadership positions.

The objective of this research was to gain Kenyan indigenous knowledge on both quality and poor leadership, and what comprises each, in order to have a better understanding of an African perspective on leadership and whether it supports or negates the validity of Chipimo's argument. In order to achieve this objective I interviewed 17 children and staff from the Children and Youth Empowerment Centre (CYEC) in Nyeri, Kenya. The CYEC serves street-dwelling children in Nyeri and its surrounding areas, creating a holistic and sustainable approach to caring for the children and eventually reintegrating them back into Kenyan society.

Among other themes, the interviews revealed that while Kenyans could quickly identify examples of good leadership, it was harder for many of those interviewed, particularly the children, to provide examples of poor leadership. Although the majority of those interviews could provide characteristics and traits of bad leaders, they could not identify them. I concluded that this supports Chipimo's argument of the acceptance of 'abnormal' leadership characteristics as 'normal', thus the acceptance of and inability to identify mediocre leadership.

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I. Introduction

Leadership is an ambiguous term. In his book entitled *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Dr. Peter Northouse generally defines the term as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2003, p. 3). However, many theories and concepts exist on leadership; its definition, characteristics, and components vary between people and across cultures. Since there is no standard, set criterion for leadership, it is difficult to explicitly decipher what constitutes good leadership versus bad leadership and the characteristics or traits that comprise each. Elias Chipimo, a former presidential candidate for the country of Zambia, charges mediocre leadership at pertinent levels of governance as one of the primary reasons Zambia in particular, but many Sub Saharan African countries, remain to be underdeveloped despite their abundance of resources and potential (Chipimo Jr., 2011). I chose to research a Kenyan perspective of leadership in an attempt to better understand how Kenyan people view good leadership versus poor leadership and if these views influence an acceptance of mediocrity in leaders.

I traveled to the Children and Youth Empowerment Centre (CYEC) in Nyeri, Kenya which is home to approximately 140 street children from Nyeri and its surrounding areas. I interviewed both staff members and children at the centre on their perspective of leadership. My research question is: how do youth and staff at the CYEC view leadership, its traits, characteristics and importance? The following pages will explain the conceptual framework behind the research project, the methods used in retrieving data, the process of analysis, the results of the project and offer guidance and perspective in moving forward.

I. Conceptual Framework

A Lack of Quality Leadership in Africa

I chose to research the issue of leadership after listening to a lecture from former Zambian presidential candidate, Elias C. Chipimo Jr. In his book, *Unequal to the Task?*, Chipimo argues that on an individual and collective national level, Zambians have lost their sense of civic responsibility; this results in the acceptance of mediocrity, corruption, greed and other ‘abnormal’ things as ‘normal’ expectations from government officials (Chipimo Jr., 2011). These accepted norms perpetuate the mediocrity of leadership within the country, particularly in key-decision making positions of government, and creates disconnect between the potential of the country and its continual underdevelopment (Chipimo Jr., 2011). This cycle, which Chipimo explains as “mediocre environment breeding mediocre leadership”, fosters an intractable problem in which breaking the cycle becomes an extremely difficult task based on innate societal beliefs and norms that perpetuate low expectations and mediocrity in governance (Chipimo Jr., 2011, p. 69).

Furthermore, Chipimo notes that rather than simply looking at successful political leadership in other countries as an example to replicate, it is necessary to also understand and take into consideration the uniqueness of the population being governed (Chipimo Jr., 2011). Successful leadership must be catered specifically to the context in which it is practiced; for example, leadership that may work in one country may easily not pertain to Zambia, at least without carefully-constructed modifications. Therefore while many contend the problems of Africa center around issues of economics, foreign aid, or poverty among others, Chipimo argues the primary issue is and always has been the quality of leadership. Chipimo defines truly great leadership as:

Inspiring others while minimizing one's own relevance in the leadership of institutions and people. This is more than just developing a successor; it involves building within an enterprise, organization, or nation, a culture of harmonious continuity and responsible development without dependence on personality. This is a culture in which those that follow are consciously inspired to strive to learn from, build upon and go beyond the achievements of their predecessors seeking in turn to play the same role in developing others (Chipimo Jr., 2011, p. 73).

Paradoxically, this focus on developing systems and processes that foster teamwork and the development of future leaders, rather than individual personalities, is difficult since many political leaders rely on or emerge from strong personal attributes or charisma to attract the electorate (Chipimo Jr., 2011). The prevalence and acceptance of mediocrity and neglect throughout Africa perpetuate mediocre leadership and the economic, social, and political implications which accompany such leadership.

Street Children and the CYEC in Kenya

I chose to interview street children and staff at the CYEC, many of which are former street children, because they are an often overlooked and silenced population; this research project enabled them an outlet to be heard and share their thoughts and opinions on leadership. Experts estimated in 2007 that there were 250,000-300,000 children living and working on the streets across Kenya, with more than 60,000 of them concentrated in the capital city of Nairobi (“KENYA: Nairobi’s Street Children: Hope for Kenya’s future generation,” 2007). The United Nations defines ‘street children’ in vague terms to include “any boy or girl... for whom the street in the widest sense of the word ... has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults”(“KENYA: Nairobi’s Street Children: Hope for Kenya’s future generation,” 2007, p. 2) It is important to understand that there are different types of street children that exist today.

UNICEF divides them into three broad categories: children *on*-the-street, children *of*-the-street, and children who have been abandoned (Ayuku, Kaplan, Baars, & de Vries, 2004).

According to (Ayuku et al., 2004) the majority of street children fall under the children *on*-the-street category. Although these children spend their time on the streets selling various items or begging, they maintain strong family ties, have a sense of belonging to a household, and typically return to their homes at night to sleep. Therefore they're usually on the street to earn money for their families; in some studies these children generated almost 70% of their total family income (Ayuku et al., 2004). On the other hand, children *of*-the-street fully participate in street life, both economically and socially (Ayuku et al., 2004). These children range from having loose family ties to severing all contact with family members. Children *of*-the-street are typically on their own, save for those who find peer or gang support; they often beg, steal, work in the informal sector and abuse drugs (Ayuku et al., 2004). They are confronted with the grim reality of street life every day, often exploited by older street children or adults. Finally the third category, abandoned children, have no home to go to even if they wished to do so; either they are orphaned and their extended family is not available to care for them, their parents are unable to provide for them, or they have simply been rejected by their family (Ayuku et al., 2004).

The capital city of Nairobi has the largest number of street children in the country; however, street children have become a growing problem in almost every town in Kenya (Ayuku et al., 2004). The majority of street children in Kenya are male age 5-16 years old, although the number of female street children is increasing as well (Ahlberg, Kaime-Atterhög, Lindmark, & Persson, 2007). Male street children are much more visible than female street children. Most of these street children come from poor families where the parents are either landless or

unemployed and engaging in unreliable income earning methods including, but not limited to, prostitution, casual labor, or selling illegal alcohol (Ahlberg et al., 2007).

Many children *of-the-street* join street groups or gangs in response to broadening complications of life on the streets. In one respect, these gangs serve as ‘pseudo-families’, providing the functions of a family including economic support, protection, and emotional relationships. However, gangs often supplement bad behavior including gambling, smoking, sniffing glue, and even prostitution (Ahlberg et al., 2007).

Day to day survival is the principal objective of all street children. These children earn their income in a number of different activities ranging from begging, to guarding cars, to pick-pocketing and selling drugs; the majority of their day-to-day activities is in some way considered illegal (Ahlberg et al., 2007).

In their article, *Public perceptions of, and reactions to, street children*, Le Roux and Smith indicate that many street children have been subject to abuse by public law enforcers, including detention and imprisonment, intimidated or brutalized while in police custody (**le Roux & Smith, 1998a**). In some cases the children are simply taken off the streets and dumped in an isolated spot in an attempt to “clean up the streets” (**le Roux & Smith, 1998a**). Le Roux and Smith suggest that street children develop a fear of police as well as the belief that police are not there to protect them, but rather to punish them (**le Roux & Smith, 1998a**).

In another article entitled, *Psychological characteristics of South African street children*, Le Roux and Smith note one of the most important characteristics of street children is their resilience. The researchers explain that although these children have experienced such immense hardships, both mentally and physically, they have the capacity to heal rather than be

overwhelmed by their psychological trauma, given the opportunity (**le Roux & Smith, 1998b**). However, this capacity to recover often depends on the quality of the environment after the post-trauma phase. Resilient children exhibit few intellectual or emotional handicaps which are usually affiliated with their circumstances. Since street children are at such a vulnerable age, traumatic events will scar the psyche and follow them into adulthood; however cognitive limitations implies that children are unable to fully grasp the implications of traumatic events and therefore moderates its impact on the child (**le Roux & Smith, 1998b**).

Street children highly value freedom and it's typically their main goal; this results in their development of autonomy and self-reliance (**le Roux & Smith, 1998b**). Additional characteristics of street children include, "drug abuse (e.g. solvents), high impulsivity, distrust and manipulation of adults, fleeing rather than facing problems, internal locus of control, low self-esteem, high value on personal freedom, adherence to conventional mortality, and reluctance to disclose true life story" (**le Roux & Smith, 1998b, p. 895**).

The Children and Youth Empowerment Center (CYEC) is located in the outskirts of Nyeri, Kenya. Nyeri is situated between Mount Kenya and the Aberdares, just east of the Aberdare Mountains and approximately 175 kilometers north of Nairobi, the capital and largest city in Kenya ("CYEC Kenya," 2011). In response to the rapidly increasing number of Kenyan street children in the 1990s, the CYEC "is an initiative of the national program for street dwelling persons and is intended to play a central role in the innovation of holistic and sustainable solutions for the population of street dwelling young people in Kenya" ("CYEC Kenya," 2011, para. 2) The centre targets street children, children at risk of living on the street, and the children of Nyeri and surrounding areas, promoting youth empowerment and

psychosocial reintegration into Kenyan society. The centre took in its first group of street children in 2006 and has since rapidly grown to serving approximately 140 street children (“CYEC Kenya,” 2011).

The CYEC has provided leadership opportunities for many of the former street dwelling children who are now employed by the centre or provided resources and space from the centre to explore their entrepreneurial skills. The former street children act as leaders and role models for the younger children, living examples of success despite their life circumstances; proof that given the right resources and support, anyone can be a leader.

II. Methods

Participants

The participants for this international research study were youth and staff, ages 13-25, at the Children and Youth Empowerment Centre (CYEC) in Nyeri, Kenya. The criterion for inclusion in the study was participants had to be able to speak English, which did not exclude any child as it is one of the official languages of Kenya. I focused on youth over the age of 12 as children any younger may not have been able to articulate their thoughts on these topics with any level of complexity that would provide useful information for the study. All the adults were over 18 years of age and the only inclusion criteria was that they be a staff member at the CYEC. Overall, I completed seventeen interviews; six were with youth 13-15 years old, six were with young adults 16-20 years old, and five were with staff members. Since there were children under the age of consent involved in the study, the director of the CYEC, Mr. Paul Maina, provided consent for all the children as they are legally under his guardianship.

I recruited the youth for the interviews on leadership through an announcement at their dinner meal when all the children were present. With the help of the CYEC staff, I described the study and asked for volunteers to sign up. I had six slots for each age group and it was on a first come, first served basis. Adults were recruited in the same manner, but at a staff meeting which they hold at the beginning of each week. Again, I described the study and asked volunteers to sign up, there were five spots available on the sign-up sheet and it was on a first come, first served basis.

In terms of participant consent/assent, Mr. Paul Maina, the director of the CYEC was provided with the consent form which he read and signed within 24 hours of our arrival at the CYEC. It was a blanket consent for all children over the age of 12 as at that point we had not recruited anyone for the interviews yet. Prior to each child interview, that is, at the time of the interview but before it has commenced, I clearly read the assent form to the each child and obtained a verbal consent. Then the witness, a CYEC staff member, signed and verified that the child assented and that I had read the assent form verbatim. Prior to each staff member interview, that is, at the time of the interview but before it has commenced, I provided the consent form to the staff person who read it and provided a verbal assent.

Ethical Considerations

The research did not involve any greater than minimal risk, if any risk at all. The topic of leadership was an easy and fun topic for the participants to discuss and participating in the interview about leadership caused no distress or cause for concern among any of the targeted participants. Faculty from Penn State University involved in this research project had a three year history working with the CYEC and I worked closely with staff at the CYEC to ensure no

child felt pressured to be involved. The interviews were purely on a volunteer basis, names were not used and participants could choose not to answer any question and/or withdrawal from the study at any moment. The interviews took place in a quiet and comfortable location where privacy was strictly maintained. We received consent both from Mr. Maina, the legal guardian of the children, as well as verbal consent from each child and staff member prior to each interview. Finally, the research project was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pennsylvania State University prior to traveling to Kenya.

Preparations

Prior to traveling to Kenya, I researched and wrote a literature review on street children to have a better understanding of the targeted population. I also prepared interview questions for both the adult and child samples which are provided in the results section. In addition, I completed a practice interview with a local youth.

Data Collection

After the participants were recruited, individual interviews took place in a quiet and comfortable location where privacy was maintained. These were in-person, semi-structured interviews with mostly open ended questions, which are subsequently described. The interviews were audio and video recorded using Flip video cameras and a tripod. The interviews took, on average, approximately 15 minutes. After the interviews, the footage was then stored on a password protected lap top to which only members of the research team had access. I labeled each recording video using a numbering system. For example, to designate the first leadership video of a staff member, I labeled it S-1-L meaning staff, video one, leadership.

Data Analysis

The process for analysis began by transcribing each interview recording, under the supervision of Linda Caldwell, my thesis supervisor. To organize the transcriptions, I had three separate word documents for each group (youth 13-15 years old, youth 16-20 years old, and staff members). First I listed all the interview questions in each word document. Next, I would list each of the subject's answer in that specific group below each question. For instance, the first question and answers for the staff interviews looked like this:

1. What do you think leadership is? What does it mean to be a leader?
 - a. S-1-L:
 - b. S-2-L:
 - c. S-3-L:
 - d. S-4-L:
 - e. S-5-L:

After every interview was transcribed in the appropriate word document, I reduced the side margins to create space along the sides and printed out the entirety of the document for each of the three groups. I pulled out important words or phrases from each of the answers to the questions, marking them in the margins along the sides of the document. I then color coded the data, for instance circling all the characteristics or traits of a good leader with red marker, while circling all the traits or characteristics of a bad leader with blue marker. Once all the data was color coded, I separated them into columns on a different sheet of paper. For instance, I listed all characteristics or traits of a good leader in the first column and all the characteristics or traits of a bad leader in the next column. If any words or ideas were repeated by more than one person in that group, I put a tick on the left side of that word or idea in the column for each person who spoke of the word or idea. I also kept track of how many times a word or idea was mentioned throughout the interviews, not necessarily by more than one person, but how often it came up; I

did this by putting a check on the right side of the word or idea for every time it was mentioned, regardless of whether it was by more than one person or not. All words or ideas that were mentioned by more than one person, I recorded on a separate sheet to find themes within each group. Finally, I looked for themes across all 3 groups, comparing all the words or ideas that were mentioned by more than one person in each group.

III. Results

This chapter will present the research questions and data generated from the research study. I had similar, yet separate interview questions for the child and adult samples that I believe better catered to each specific age group. The following interview questions were used for the adult sample:

1. What do you think leadership is? What does it mean to be a leader?
2. Please think about someone you know, or know of, who is a leader.
 - a. Who is this person? Why do you think they are a leader? Identify traits and characteristics of a leader.
3. Have you ever been in a leadership role? Please describe this and what you did as a leader.
4. How do you think people become leaders?
5. Do you think everyone has the capacity or ability to become a leader? Why or why not?
 - a. What about the opportunity to become a leader?
6. Please react to the statement: Leadership is something you are born with, it cannot be developed or taught. Do you agree or disagree and why?
7. What is the difference between good and bad leadership?
8. Do you know any leaders who you think are bad leaders? Who and why do you think this way?
9. What do you think power is?
10. Do you think power and leadership is the same thing? Please explain your answer.
11. Do you think you can have power without leadership or leadership without power? Or are they one in the same?
12. How important is communication between his leaders and his followers?
13. Where do you learn about leadership?

The following interview questions were used for both youth samples, group A and B:

1. Please think about someone you know, or know of, who is a leader. Who is this person? Why do you think they are a leader?
2. What do you think leadership is? What does it mean to be a leader?
3. Have you ever been in a leadership role? Please describe what you did and why you think you were a leader.
4. How do you think people become leaders? Do they need to be a famous person?
5. Do you think everyone has the capacity or ability to become a leader? Why or why not? What about the opportunity to become a leader?
6. If you wanted to become a leader, what do you think you would have to do to prepare yourself?
7. What is the difference between good and bad leadership?
8. Do you know any leaders who you think are bad leaders? Who, and what about them or what have they done that makes them a bad leader?
9. What do you think power is? Do you think power and leadership is the same thing? Please explain your answer.
10. If you were in a leadership role, what kind of leader would you be? What would you do?
11. Do you think communication with his or her followers is necessary for a leader? What about fairness?

During the analysis process, I separated the data into a number of sections. The following are the main sections: traits and characteristics of a good leader, traits and characteristics of a bad leader, role/actions of a good leader, role/actions of a bad leader, power, and how one becomes a leader. The following pages and tables will present the results, themes, and similarities between answers on leadership from the youth and staff at the CYEC in Kenya.

It should be noted that the staff's English was, for the most part, clear and understandable and they had little, if any, trouble understanding the questions and articulating their thoughts and opinions. Group B (youth ages 16-20 years old), for the most part, had relatively little trouble articulating their thoughts and providing answers to the majority of questions. However, group A (youth ages 13-15 years old) had difficulty articulating their thoughts and opinions even when they understood the interview questions. While they were able to provide answers for most of the

questions, they typically had fewer, less in depth answers to the questions. One of the children in group A did not answer any of the interview questions asked.

Traits and Characteristics of a Good Leader

The staff at the CYEC answered the questions on traits and characteristics of good leaders with seemingly little trouble. There were a number of traits and characteristics listed. The main ones are provided in table 1.1. These include the traits and characteristics that were mentioned by more than one person in that age group. The table also displays the number of times the trait or characteristic was mentioned by the number of people who mentioned it during the interviews.

Table 1.1: Staff answers to traits and characteristics of a good leader

Traits/Characteristics	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Good Communication/Articulate	5 of 5	5
Has a vision/objective	3 of 5	4
Good listener	3 of 5	3
Personal ethic/Integrity	3 of 5	3
Committed (to goals)	3 of 5	3
Patient	2 of 5	5
Obedient	2 of 5	4
Ambitious	2 of 5	3
Not easily influenced/no corruption	2 of 5	3
Not arrogant	2 of 5	2
Courage	2 of 5	2
Equal	2 of 5	2

As table 1.1 portrays, the most significant traits and characteristics of a good leader were: good communication/articulate, has a vision/objective, good listener, personal ethic/integrity, and committed to goals. These were all mentioned by at least three of the five staff members interviewed. Other traits and characteristics that were mentioned, but by no more than one

person, include: not egotistic, non-discriminate, transparent, passionate, representative, neutral, open, confident, responsible, direct/corrects, example/role model, strait-minded, hard-worker, and motivating.

Youth ages 16-20 years of age, Group B, were, for the most part, able to understand all the questions and articulate their answers well. Their answers are found in table 1.2. These are traits and characteristics that were mentioned by more than one person during all six of group B's interviews.

Table 1.2: Group B (Youth ages 16-20 years old) answers to traits and characteristics of a good leader

Traits/Characteristics	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Communicative	6 of 6	6
Good example	4 of 6	4
Honest/Truthful	3 of 6	8
Obedient	3 of 6	3
Equal/Does not favor	3 of 6	3
Trustworthy	3 of 6	3
Known/visible	3 of 6	3
Disciplinary	3 of 6	3
Good time management	2 of 6	3
Capable	2 of 6	3
Knowledgeable	2 of 6	3
Christian/Godliness	2 of 6	3
Respected	2 of 6	2
Reflective	2 of 6	2
Sociable	2 of 6	2

As shown in table 1.2 the most significant traits and characteristics of a good leader according to the youth ages 16-20 years of age at the CYEC are: communicative, a good example, honest/truthful, obedient, equal/does not favor, trustworthy, known/visible, and disciplinary. These are traits that were mentioned by at least three of the six youth interviewed in this age

group. There were a number of other traits and characteristics that were mentioned, but by only one person, these include: non violent, kind, patient, confident, cooperative, respectful, careful, creative, fair to God, hard worker, literate, organized, unselfish, non-discriminate, counsel, and understanding.

Group B seemed to place great value on communication which was mentioned by all six youth interviewed in this age group. The importance of Christianity or religious beliefs in leadership was also mentioned by this group of youth more so than in the staff interviews.

Group A, youth ages 13-15 years old, had a little more difficulty understanding the questions and articulating their thoughts and opinions in English; this is reflected in the fewer amount of traits and characteristics of a good leader mentioned and displayed in table 1.3. The table includes all traits and characteristics that were mentioned by more than one child during the six interviews of this age group.

Table 1.3: Group A (Youth ages 13-15 years old) answers to traits and characteristics of a good leader

Traits/Characteristics	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Honest	2 of 6	3
Faithful	2 of 6	2
Kind	2 of 6	2
Communicative	2 of 6	2

As table 1.3 displays, the most one trait was mentioned was by two of six children interviewed. Therefore, there was no trait that was mentioned by at least half of the group. A number of other traits and characteristics were mentioned, but by no more than one child, including: good character, quiet, encouraging, loving, respected, just, allegiance, patient, self-control, articulate, proud, obedient, responsible, chosen, confident, and respectful. One characteristic that I found particular interesting was quiet.

Table 1.4 is the cross comparison of traits and characteristics across all three groups (Staff, Group A, and Group B). These are traits and characteristics that were mentioned during interviews in at least two of the three groups. The table displays the trait or characteristic and what two or more groups mentioned it.

Table 1.4: Cross Comparison of Traits and Characteristics of a Good Leader

Trait or Characteristic	All 3 Groups	Staff and Group A	Staff and Group B	Group A and B
Non Discriminate			x	
Obedient	x			
Patient	x			
Communicative	x			
Articulate		x		
Integrity/good character		x		
confident	x			
Responsible		x		
Good example			x	
Hard worker			x	
Disciplinary/corrects			x	
Motivating/Encouraging		x		
Equal/just	x			
Faithful/Christian/Godliness				x
Respected				x
Allegiance/Committed		x		
Respectful				x

As table 1.4 displays, all three groups found the following traits and characteristics important in a good leader: obedient, patient, communicative, confident, and equal/just. The following are extracts from staff, group A, and group B interviews that exemplify some of the traits and characteristics of good leaders that all three groups deemed important.

Group B (B-2-L): *“To be a leader you have to be honesty, to be kind, patient, you have to socialize with people and to guide them”*

Group A(A-6-L): *“They choose someone who is obedient and who is responsibility”*

Group B (B-5-L): *“You manage your time well...you be a Christian or show others people to be God-like”*

Staff (S-2-L): *“He has passion, he has visions, he is not very egotistic”*

Staff (S-1-L): *“Committed, also has transparency in his work”*

Group A (A-2-L): *“...They know how to talk to people”*

Staff (S-5-L): *“Every decision a leader should be able to make should be through the communication of his followers and of his juniors...to make sure maybe because you have a blind part of it. Maybe somebody else can see into that blindness and they can perfect your idea. If you give them the chance to perfect you blind areas, your idea becomes perfect”*

Group B (B-3-L): *“Because you need to take the opinions for you to lead them and to know what they want and what they don’t want”*

Traits and Characteristics of a Bad Leader

Overall, there were less traits and characteristics mentioned for bad leaders than good leaders by all three groups. The staff provided the most answers for this question, while the youth aged 13-15 years old had difficulty either articulating their thoughts and opinions or simply did not know what characteristics or traits would be attributed to bad leaders. Table 2.1 displays the staff answers to traits and characteristics of a bad leader. These are traits and characteristics that were mentioned by more than one person during the five staff interviews.

Table 2.1: Staff Answers to Traits and Characteristics of a Bad Leader

Traits/Characteristics	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Selfish/Self-interest	4 of 5	6
violent	4 of 5	4
Forceful	3 of 5	3
Corrupt	3 of 5	3

Greedy	2 of 5	4
Arrogant	2 of 5	3
Inhumane	2 of 5	2

As table 2.1 shows, the most significant characteristics and traits of a bad leader mentioned by staff were: selfish/self interested, violent, forceful, and corrupt. These were all mentioned by at least three of the five staff members interviewed. Other traits and characteristics mentioned, but by no more than one person, include: bully, disobedient, does not listen, discriminate, and ego-centric.

Group B, youth ages 16-20 years old, did not seem to have difficulty understanding or articulating their thoughts in English. However, like the staff, they provided fewer traits and characteristics of a bad leader than a good leader. Table 2.2 displays their answers to traits and characteristics of a bad leader. These are traits and characteristics that were mentioned by more than one person during the six interviews for this age group.

Table 2.2: Group B (Youth ages 16-20 years old) answers to Traits and Characteristics of a Bad Leader

Traits/Characteristics	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Corrupt	4 of 6	4
Bad example/Behavior	3 of 6	3
Ignore/Don't care	2 of 6	2
Selfish/Self Interested	2 of 6	2

As table 2.2 displays, the only traits or characteristics mentioned by at least half of the group were: corrupt and bad example/behavior. Other traits and characteristics that were mentioned, but by no more than one person, include: uncooperative, lazy, poor time management, untruthful, and disrespectful.

Group A, youth ages 13-15 years old, had the most difficulty providing traits and characteristics attributed to a bad leader. None of their answers were repeated by more than one person interviewed. Therefore, table 2.3 only lists characteristics that were mentioned at all by group A.

Table 2.3: Group A (Youth ages 13-15 years old) answers to Traits and Characteristics of a Bad Leader

Traits/Characteristics	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Trouble maker	1 of 6	1
Abusive	1 of 6	1
Bad Example	1 of 6	1

As table 2.3 shows, group A did not provide many traits or characteristics attributed to bad leaders, nor were any of the answers mentioned by more than one person or more than one time.

Table 2.4 is the cross comparison of traits and characteristics of a bad leader across all three groups (Staff, Group A, and Group B). These are traits and characteristics that were mentioned during interviews in at least two of the three groups. The table displays the trait or characteristic and what two or more groups mentioned it; as the table shows, no trait or characteristic was mentioned by all three groups.

Table 2.4: Cross Comparison of Traits and Characteristics of a Bad Leader

Traits/Characteristic	All Three	Staff and Group A	Staff and Group B	Group A and B
Selfish/Self-interested			x	
Corrupt			x	
Violent/Abusive		x		
Bad Example				x

In general, all three groups provided less traits and characteristics for bad leaders than for good leaders. The youngest group, group A, provided the least amount of answers, while the staff provided the most. In general, all the traits and characteristics mentioned had negative

connotations associated with them and many related to violence or abusiveness. The following are extracts from interviews in all three groups that exemplify the traits and characteristics they associated with bad leaders.

Group B (B-2-L): *“Bad leadership, they always do corruptions, some kill, some abuse the other ones”*

Group A (A-1-1): *“Bad leaders? Like in my school we have a leader but now that leader is not a good leader. He is almost bad. He beat us in class. Because sometime he use a drug abuse he is a bad leader”*

Staff (S-5-L): *“You are at the top, but you have no time to listen to the lower people...or when violence is involved to achieve what you want as a leader. Like a lot of people maybe in Kenya you will find maybe in politics, they use violence to stick onto their political seats. Such violence breaks a lot of families, breaks a lot of peoples’ plans or ideas, they break a lot of people’s way of living...somebody who has accumulated several properties as he goes up in leadership. Then he forgets about his former self, forgets about his former living, and he starts a kind of living that is harmful. Even like a lot of people will start sexual relations with small girls”*

Staff (S-1-L): *“Very corrupt...then you have schools or streets that are not yet developed. He [the leader]is out to make himself more rich”*

Role/Action of a Good Leader

This section presents the staff and youth answers to the appropriate role or actions of a good leader. All three groups had numerous answers to the interview questions that addressed this particular topic. The staff answers are displayed in table 3.1. Again, those listed in the table

are roles or actions of good leaders that were mentioned by more than one staff member during the five interviews.

Table 3.1: Staff answers to role/actions of a good leader

Role/Action	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Good communication	5 of 5	5
Works for the benefit/represents others	3 of 5	5
Listens to people's views	3 of 5	5
Guides/leads/shows the way	3 of 5	4
Interacts with different people	2 of 5	3
Smart decisions/forethought	2 of 5	3
Corrects faults	2 of 5	2
Encourages equality	2 of 5	2
Give direction/coordinate	2 of 5	2

As shown in table 3.1 the main role/actions of a good leader are: good communication, works for the benefit/represents others, listens to people’s views, and guides/leads people. These were all mentioned by at least three of the five staff members interviewed. Other role/actions that were mentioned, but by no more than one staff member, include: represents others, able to mobilize, reaches out to the world, allow people to make their own decisions, investigates/understands conflict, does not have a big ego, needs a vision, needs to possess the ‘right’ characteristics, stability, manages, learns from history, improves living standards and delegates/distributes responsibilities.

Table 3.2 shows group B, youth ages 16-20 years old, answers to the role/actions of a good leader. Group B had numerous thoughts and opinions on this question and provided a long list of answers. Table 3.2 displays those answers that were mentioned by more than one person during the six interviews.

Table 3.2: Group B (youth ages 16-20 years old) answers to role/actions of a good leader

Role/Action	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Communicates/Listens to input	6 of 6	9
Chosen	6 of 6	10
Guide/Lead a people or country	5 of 6	13
Works for the benefit of/helps/provides for people	4 of 6	7
Keeps order	4 of 6	4
Corrects/Disciplines	3 of 6	5
Cooperative/Mutual Respect	3 of 6	5
Forethought/No rash decisions	3 of 6	3
Promotes peace	3 of 6	3
Advises/Manages/Rules the people	2 of 6	5
Organizes	2 of 6	2

As shown by table 3.2, the three most mentioned roles or actions of a good leader by the most people in group B were: communicates/listens to input, is chosen, and guides or leads a country or people. Other main roles or actions that were mentioned by at least half of those interviewed in group B include: works for the benefit of/helps/provides for people, keeps order, corrects/disciplines, cooperative/mutual respect, forethought, and promotes peace. In addition to those in table 3.2, group B provided a number of other answers, but that were mentioned by no more than one person; these include: have power/authority, recommended or elected by the people, takes a duty, liked by the people, proves capabilities, learns from history, sets goals, rules and maintains the people, ensures security, ensures stability, discusses and solves problems, advances and develops, and is equal.

Group A, youth ages 13-15 years old, offered a number of answers for the role and action of a good leader as well. Table 3.3 displays those answers that were mentioned by more than one child in group A.

Table 3.3: Group A (youth ages 13-15 years old) answers to role/actions of a good leader

Role/Action	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Keeps peace and order	5 of 6	5
Communicates	4 of 6	5
Assists/Provides/Takes care of others	3 of 6	7
Directs/controls others	3 of 6	6
Works on behalf of others	3 of 6	4
Equal/Does not favor	3 of 6	3
Told their duties	2 of 6	2

The most significant roles/actions of a good leader mentioned by at least half of the six youth in group A include: keeps peace and order, communicates, assists/provides/takes care of others, directs or controls others, works on behalf of others, and is equal/does not favor. Other answers from group A that were mentioned by no more than one person during the group A interviews were: good example, educated, shares, possesses power, has followers, in charge, neat and clean, voted in, ensures stability, ensures security, manages, and told their mistakes.

Table 3.4 is the cross comparison of role/actions of a good leader across all three groups (Staff, Group A, and Group B). These are roles or actions that were mentioned during interviews in at least two of the three groups. Table 3.4 displays the role/actions and which two or more groups mentioned it.

3.4: Cross-Comparison of Roles and Actions of a good leader

Role/Action	All Three	Staff and Group A	Staff and Group B	Group A and B
Guides/Leads/Has followers	x			
Works for the benefits of others	x			
Corrects			x	
Helps/Provides resources				x
Communicates	x			

Listens/Input from others			x	
Mobilizes/Advances			x	
Encourages equality	x			
Forethought			x	
Learns from history			x	
Ensures stability	x			
Manages	x			
Delegates/Allocates/Distributes			x	
Has power				x
Chosen/voted in				x
Promotes peace				x
Has a vision/Sets goals			x	
Ensures security				x
In charge/rules				x

As table 3.4 shows, there was a lot of overlay in answers between the three groups. The most significant role/actions of a good leader, those that were mentioned by all three groups, include: guides/leads/has followers, works for the benefit of others, communicates, encourages equality, ensures stability, and manages. In general, all three groups had a lot of thoughts and opinions about this topic and had little, if any, trouble providing a variety of answers on the subject matter. Staff and group B had the most answers in common, while staff and group A had only those answers that overlapped in all three groups in common. The following extracts from interviews of all three groups illustrate the roles and actions of a good leader that all the groups found important.

Staff (S-5-L): *“Leadership is the way somebody can be able to lead people or guide people on their way of living to their benefits, but not to the benefits of the person leading or guiding them”*

Staff (S-2-L): *“You need to be intelligent in making your decisions. You don’t just make a decision out of the blue. You have to investigate and understand what has happened, what is going on, and what are the factors surrounding this conflict”*

Group B (B-3-L): *“Help people...people without somewhere to live, he going to give one. And people without food, he going to give them food”*

Group B (B-1-L): *“And to give others peace, to give people peace”*

Group B (B-4-L): *“Good [leaders] maintain the people you lead. For example, you make sure security is tight. Secondly, you make sure the people you are leading they all live with peace...good leadership shall sit down to discuss the problem and solve it.”*

Group A (A-1-L): *“Good is someone who don’t favor anyone”*

Group A (A-6-L): *“Helps us to give us food, also give us shelter when we go to sleep”*

Role and Action of a Bad Leader

This section provides staff and youth answers on the role and actions of a bad leader. In general, the youth had much fewer responses for this question than they had for a good leader. Staff had relatively the same amount of answers as they did for role and actions of a good leader. Table 4.1 displays staff responses that were mentioned by more than one staff member during the five interviews.

4.1: Staff answers to role or actions of a bad leader

Role/Action	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Murder	4 of 5	4
Use force/violence	4 of 5	4
Corruption	3 of 5	4
Misuses Power/Leadership	3 of 5	3
No Communication/Forces own ideas	2 of 5	4
Not voted in/overthrew gov't	2 of 5	3

The most significant role or actions of a bad leader, those mentioned by at least three of the five staff members interviewed, were: murder, use of force/violence, corruption, and misuse of power/leadership. Other answers that were mentioned, but by no more than one staff member during the interviews, include: tribalism, nepotism, drug affiliation, promotes conflict, economic crisis, and social breakdowns, no stability, no compromises, breaks up families and way of life, sexually assaults, depends on military for power, and feels vulnerable when delegating power.

Group B, youth ages 16-20 years old, had much fewer answers for role or actions of bad leaders compared to their number of answers for good leaders. The main role or actions are listed in table 4.2. These are roles or actions that were mentioned by more than one person during the six interviews for group B.

4.2: Group B (youth ages 16-20 years old) answers to role or actions of a bad leader

Role/Action	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Corruption	4 of 6	4
Abuse/Violence	2 of 6	3

As the table shows, only two actions were mentioned by more than one person in group B: corruption and abuse/violence. Corruption was the only action that more than half the group spoke of. In addition, the following roles and actions were mentioned, but by no more than one person in group B: murder, no re-election, stealing, bad roads, street boys and girls, doesn't manage, instigates and enables fights, abuses power, drugs, and favors certain people.

Group A, youth ages 13-15 years old, had difficulty providing roles or actions of bad leaders, particularly compared to the long list of answers they provided for good leaders. Table 4.3 displays the only answer mentioned by more than one youth from group A.

4.3: Group A answers to role or actions of a bad leader

Role/Action	Number of People who Mentioned	Number of Times Mentioned
Beats people/Abusive	3 of 6	3

‘Beats and abuses people’ was mentioned by half of group A. In addition to this answer, they also provided a few other answers during the interview, each only mentioned by one person: trouble maker, focuses on wrong things, encourages stealing, talks to bad people, favors friends, and abuses drugs.

Table 4.4 is the cross comparison of the role and actions of a bad leader across all three groups (Staff, Group A, and Group B). These are roles or actions that were mentioned during interviews in at least two of the three groups. Table 4.4 displays the role/actions and which two or more groups mentioned it.

4.4: Cross Comparison of role or actions of a bad leader

Role/Action	All Three	Staff and Group A	Staff and Group B	Group A and B
Nepotism/Favors certain people	x			
Corruption			x	
Drugs	x			
Instigates conflict/fights			x	
Social Breakdowns			x	
Misuse/Abuse power	x			
Murder			x	
Not voted in/no reelection			x	
Abuse				x
Steal				x

As Table 4.4, the most significant role or actions of a bad leader, those mentioned in all three groups, were: nepotism/favoritism, drug abuse, and the misuse or abuse of power. In general, all the actions were negative, with the staff and group B having the most answers in common.

The following extracts from interviews of the three groups exemplify some of the main roles and actions of bad leaders that were expressed by the three groups.

Staff (S-1-L): *“There is also nepotism-so if you own a company instead of taking someone who is a good character you take someone from your family. That could lead the company to corruption”*

Staff (S-2-L): *“Bad leadership leads to a bunch of conflict, economic crisis, social breakdowns, those kinds of things”*

Staff (S-3-L): *“Of course a bad leader is somebody who force his ideas or her ideas. Not ready to negotiate with the people”*

“So the person who causes people to lose their life, is not somebody who is ready to listen”

Group B (B-5-L): *“Some will take money to use in their own way to help them”*

Group B (B-2-L): *“Leaders who they always abuse the small kids, they always beat the others, and they always abuse, everywhere they abuse”*

Group A (A-5-L): *“Bad leadership is to...you like beat people without any excuse”*

Group A (A-1-L): *“Because sometime he use a drug abuse he is a bad leader”*

Power

This section on power is broken up into two parts based on the interview questions and answers from staff and youth. The first part is how the three different groups define power, while the second part explains how each group compares power and leadership.

The staff answers had two common themes when defining power: that power is control over something or a people and that it can be used for good or bad. The following are extracts from staff answers on the definition of power that illustrate these two themes:

S-1-L: *“Power is the effect you have on people and you can also lead them”*

S-1-2: *“Power is just some ability to be over the others...you can have power, but not use it in a good way. You can use it to oppress others.”*

S-3-L: *“Power is you have the opportunity or authority to do something the way you want. But you know power, you can either do good things or bad things the way you want.”*

S-4-L: *“You know you have different types of power: power of God, power of practitioners, witchcrafts. Power is something which can do...some people can have powers through the devils or through evil spirit”*

S-5-L: *“Power is the ability to dictate on things that surround you”.*

While one staff member interpreted power as a more spiritual force, the majority defined it as having some sort of control over a population or country and stressed it could be used for good or bad.

Group B also had a number of explanations and definitions of power. The common theme found in Group B's responses was: power is the authority or responsibility to do something. The following extracts illustrate their interpretation of power.

B-1-L: *“Power is if you have been given something. Like now, we have our president he has been given the part to manage our country. That is power”*

B-2-L: *“Power is the authority you are given to do something...good or bad depending on how you use your power”*

B-4-L: *“There are so many types of power. But power is God who give you power”*

B-5-L: *“Power is when you are given permission or when you are selected to be a leader you are given a power to behave that group or peoples”*

B-6-L: *“The power to talk and say if this is what is or not going to happen...you have the power to say anything you want”*

Group A had difficulty articulating their understanding of power. While they had few responses to the questions on power, the following extracts illustrate some of their thoughts and opinions on the subject:

A-1-L: *“...power is like a magician...power is to control the emotion of the people and to take care, like our president, to take care of the country”*

A-3-L: *“Ability to do something”*

A-5-L: *“Power is like energy”*

There was little, if any, overlay in group A’s responses, other than they explained and interpreted power in more of a mystical or physical sense.

The second part of this section is the staff and youth responses to the differences and similarities of power and leadership and whether or not you can have one without the other. The following tables compare the similarities and/or differences between power and leadership for each group. Table 5.4 shows the staff responses to power versus leadership.

Table 5.4: Staff Responses to Power vs. Leadership

Staff Responses	
Power	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power is the ability to be over others-not necessarily serving them • Power is authority • Power is ability to dictate things around you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is to serve • Leadership is to do good things • Leadership prospers things around you, bringing them up

The common theme found in the staff’s comparison of power and leadership is that power is the authority or ability to dictate or control, while leadership serves, develops, and prospers those

people and things around it. All five staff members found power and leadership to be different things, but that a leader needs power and the two usually go hand in hand.

Group B, youth ages 16-20 years old, provided a few differences between leadership and power. Their responses can be found in table 5.5.

5.5 Group B, youth ages 16-20 years old, Responses to Power vs. Leadership

Group B (youth ages 16-20 years old)	
Power	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can have power and not be a leader • The power to do something • God-given • Power can change rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader needs power • When you lead people somewhere • People-given • Leaders need to follow rules

A common theme found in the responses from group B was that a leader needs power, but that you can have power and not necessarily be a leader. While 4/6 of the youth interviewed in group B thought that leadership and power were different things, 2/6 of the youth said that they were sometimes the same thing or that they were unsure whether they were the same thing.

Group A, youth ages 13-15 years old, did not provide answers on the differences or similarities of power and leadership. However, 2/6 of the youth in group A believed they are different things and that you cannot be a leader without power. Another 2/6 thought that power and leadership is the same thing but did not expand on their thought.

When examining the responses of the three groups on their comparison of leadership and power, the common theme was that a leader needs power, but that you do not necessarily need to be a leader to have power. Furthermore, aside from group A which did not provide too much information on the matter, the majority of each group thought power and leadership were two separate things.

How one becomes a leader

This section covers the youth and staff thoughts on how people become leaders. The staff had little, if any, difficulty answering this question in detail. However, the question proved more challenging for the youth to answer, particularly the youngest group (group A). The main question asked was whether leaders were born or made.

The staff was almost evenly split on their opinions; three of the five interviewed thought that leaders are made or developed, while the other two believed leaders are born leaders. Of those that thought leaders were made or developed, they attributed leadership to experience, interactions with others, the environment one lives in, and the home or parents' influence. The following extracts from staff interviews illustrate these ideas:

S-2-L: *“There is no gene in humans called leadership. No gene at all, so the biological aspect of leadership does not apply. It is something that is created”*

“Leadership starts from home and the environment one lives in...then there's some that become leaders from experience, you experience a terrible thing, then suddenly you begin to change, then you are changed”

S-4-L: *“People are not born to be a leader. That's like saying you are born to be a thief. Leaders are made. Made from people”*

S-5-L: *“So if you have an objective you want to achieve, along the way you have not been so good, then you have to develop some characters that can suit you objective and what you want to achieve...as you grow up you meet several people and see different scenarios then you start seeing life differently, so you can develop from there”*

The two staff members that thought leaders are born stated that leaders need the “right” characteristics, it’s a gift that inside you, and not everyone can be a leader. The following extracts illustrate this opposing view.

S-3-L: “Leadership is a gift; it is something which must be in you. So if you have that gift and then you practice it, then at the end you can become a national leader or international leader. It’s just a gift, not everybody can be a leader. Not everybody can make a good leadership”

“It is not just something you can just say I want to be a leader and then you become a leader. Unless now you have the characteristics for a leader which someone is born with”

S-1-L: “It is something you are born with and you can’t be taught it”

The two staff members who believed you are born a leader felt that you are born with certain characteristics needed to be a leader and if you do not have those characteristics you cannot be a leader, while the other three staff members believe you develop the appropriate leadership characteristics as you grow up.

Group B, youth ages 16-20 years old, also felt you needed the right characteristics to be a leader. In addition to that common theme in their responses, they also cited you needed to be chosen by the people to be a leader and four of the six interviewed thought you needed to be famous to be a leader. The following extracts from interviews with group B exemplify some of their opinions and thoughts on how one becomes a leader.

B-1-L: “Few people can become a leader...just one person can be a leader, you can be chosen by people”

B-2-L: *“Your characters will show whether you are going to be a leader or not, because you can have bad characters, bad behavior, and then you can’t be a leader”*

B-3-L: *“You need to be famous there are people who choose you and they must choose you because they do know you”*

B-6-L: *“A leader can be chosen by the others, you chosen by the others to be a leader because of your characters”*

Group A, youth ages 13-15 years old, had difficulty either understanding the question or articulating their thoughts and opinions on how one becomes a leader. While two of the six thought you needed to be famous another two thought that anyone can be a leader. The following extracts illustrate some of their opinions on how people become leaders:

A-1-L: *“Everybody like to be a leader. They have to be a good example, yes they need to be famous.*

A-2-L: *“They know how to talk to people”*

A-3-L: *“Anyone can be a leader...by their behavior”*

Overall, there was no unanimous conclusion on whether leaders are born or made. The overriding theme on those that believed leaders are born was that leaders needed to be born with inherent, specific characteristics that make them a good leader. Those who believed leaders are made argued that it is through their experiences, interactions, and environment that leaders develop the appropriate characteristics to become a leader.

IV. Discussion

When comparing the three groups, it was evident that, while some ideas and opinions on leadership transcended age, many did not. Overall, the youngest group, youth ages 13-15 years old, had the least in common with the oldest group, the staff members. As was expected, the older participants, including staff members and some of the older youth in group B, were able to articulate their thoughts and opinions better as well as expand on topics more thoroughly than the younger participants; this is likely attributed to the fact many of the older participants had more years of schooling than the younger participants.

The findings indicate that while the three age groups' perspectives of leadership differ in many aspects, there were many similarities as well. Overall, the three groups found good leaders to be communicative, patient, confident, and obedient to the people. They agreed that good leaders guide others, work for the benefit of others, foster equality and manage or ensure stability. In contrast, all three groups agreed that bad leaders favor certain people, misuse their power, and abuse drugs. These are all answers that overlapped between all three age groups.

Staff versus Youth Responses

When comparing the differences between staff and youth perspectives on leadership, the results showed that the youth associated more traditional parent-like characteristics with good leaders. They put emphasis on honesty, trustworthiness, and kindness and expected good leaders to provide them with food, shelter, and/or to take care of them. They also placed more importance on leaders promoting peace, security, order and discipline. This suggests that the youth looked for more of a stable, parental figure in a good leader; based on their life circumstances and being street children, it is understandable that they would look to leaders for

resources, stability, and security that were likely not provided to them by their parents. Ayuku et al. (2004) studied the structure of social networks of street children and how their psychosocial needs were fulfilled. The researchers note that, “the psychosocial needs fulfillment (affective needs, need for connection, need for stability, and need for material and instrumental resources) from the parent is mainly determined by the frequency of contact” (Ayuku et al., 2004, p. 308). They found that street based youth have occasional to no contact with their parents; in particular, of-the street children grow up without any parental guidance and completely depend on their peers for day-to-day living (Ayuku et al., 2004). Although the majority of street children are resilient, adaptive, and cope through creating strong bonds and caring relationships with peers, this lack of adult guidance is one of the biggest risks to street children, emotionally (Ayuku et al., 2004).

While the staff did highlight integrity and personal ethic as important traits, they placed more emphasis on a good leader being able to move a country forward than the younger participants did, using phrases such as being goal-oriented, committed to his or her vision, and working with and listening to the people. This difference in interpreting the role and responsibilities of a good leader could be attributed to age as well as the emotional vulnerability of the street children and their experiences. Le Roux & Smith (1998b) note that while traumatic events during childhood can scare the psyche, street children are resilient and have the capacity to overcome their traumatic experiences within the right environment; this could explain why the older youth and staff members, many of which were former street children, required less resources and emotional support from leaders.

In general, all three groups had less to say about bad leadership than good leadership; however, the youth provided much fewer answers about bad leadership than good leadership

compared to the staff. While the language barrier could be partially responsible for this, in contrast the youth were able to provide a significant amount of responses about good leadership. When describing traits and characteristics of a bad leader, the youth tended to speak generally stating “trouble maker” or “bad example”, while the staff used more aggressive language such as “violent”, “inhumane”, and “forceful”. While even the youngest group noted bad leaders were “abusive”, group B did not note any violent or forceful traits and characteristics.

When discussing the roles and actions of a bad leader, all three groups used aggressive terms such as murder, violence, force, abuse and corruption. However, when I asked the youth to provide an example of a bad leader, only one out of the six children in group A could name an example; the rest of the children said they did not know any bad leaders or even examples of a bad leader. Out of the youth in group B, only half could provide an example of a bad leader right away; the other half had to be probed to think of any bad leaders they knew even from school before they could provide an example.

On the contrary, all five staff members were able to provide examples of bad leaders, two of them making reference to infamously bad historical examples. The staff members interviewed were generally more educated, with more than half of them either finished or currently enrolled in university. Their ability to quickly reference examples of bad leadership, including both historic and international examples, is a reflection of how schooling can influence your understanding of and ability to identify bad leadership. It was clear throughout the study that the staff understood and could articulate their thoughts and opinions on leadership much easier than the youth at the centre. This suggests the advantage of education, particularly learning about history, politics, and current events to help form more intricate opinions and thoughts on both successful and poor leadership.

According to Kilbride, Suda, & Njeru (2001) many street children are forced to leave school due to poverty; although they aspire to return and often regret leaving, due to poor, unsupportive home environments, these children are often “pushed out” of school. The less educated participants not only had trouble articulating and less to say about leadership, they tended to feel unconfident in their answers demonstrated by their giggling or saying “I don’t know” before answering. Kenya declared free primary education for all children in 2002, however despite these commitments; many children in Kenya are still out of school. According to the United Nation’s Children Fund, although the free education program has increased enrollment by over 90% nationally, only 1 out of 10 children from poor households complete their basic education (UNICEF, 2012). Furthermore, dropout rates are increasing, particularly in areas affected by drought (UNICEF, 2012).

When discussing how one becomes a leader, the theme that repeatedly showed itself was an emphasis on having the “right” or necessary characteristics to be a leader, whether they were born with them or developed them overtime. This suggests one of the biggest determinates of a good leader is based on the characteristics or traits he or she possesses.

How the Kenyan perspective relates to Chipimo’s ideas of leadership

Elias Chipimo Jr., the former presidential candidate for Zambia, charges mediocre leadership in key decision-making positions as the cause for continual underdevelopment in Africa despite its abundance of resources and potential (Chipimo Jr., 2011). He defines quality leadership as a person who can establish goals and strategic plans in which to achieve them, by building on existing capacities rather than diminishing them; someone who can foster the development of future leaders and possess the ability to minimize themselves in order to build up

others (Chipimo Jr., 2011). Furthermore, a leader should be reflexive and have a heightened self awareness; understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses and how those may benefit or impact certain situations. A quality leader should support and encourage those they lead to reach their full potential, possessing humility, service, sacrifice, and self-control (Chipimo Jr., 2011). Finally, he or she should preserve basic human needs, dignity, and rights as well as develop a social consciousness in people (Chipimo Jr., 2011).

Chipimo places great emphasis on a good leader's ability to "inspire others while minimizing one's own relevance...developing successful teamwork around systems and processes rather than personalities"(Chipimo Jr., 2011, p. 73). A leader's ability to focus on continuing quality leadership by building others capacity to lead ensures that good leaders are not an exception but the rule. Instead he finds, "the reality in Africa is that instead of inspiring others through humility and quiet influence, many seek kudos and never-ending opportunities for personal wealth creation at any cost "(Chipimo Jr., 2011, p. 74). Chipimo also noted that Africans do not take criticism or opposition well, which hinders the quality of their leadership; they tend to carry resentment with them when criticized or questioned (Chipimo Jr., 2011).

In comparison to Chipimo's view of quality leadership, the staff and youth placed little emphasis on traits or qualities of good leaders that empower others or actions that inspire and promote the *continuity* of good leadership. When discussing leadership, the trend in the majority of the interviews was that leaders need to possess the "right" characteristics, whether they are born with them or develop them over time. This emphasis on the personality or charisma of the individual leader rather than their ability to build the capacity for good leadership in others underscores the lack of understanding that good leaders need to minimize their own significance while inspiring others.

This is not to say that none of the youth and staff answers supported Chipimo's idea of good leadership; in fact a number of traits and actions mentioned from all three age groups support his idea of quality leadership. These include: has a vision/objective, committed to goals, motivating, self control, works for the benefits of others, can be told their mistakes, provides basic human needs (food, shelter), reflective, and sets goals. Most notable was a response from a child in group A that was completely aligned with Chipimo's views. The extract from the interview is as follows:

A-3-L: "He [the leader] is quiet. He don't make any trouble. He shares everything he have, like clothes"

The extract exemplifies this youth's understanding that a leader is humble and sacrifices things for those that follow him or her, forming a strong social consciousness. These are all examples of youth and staff responses that coincided with Chipimo's idea of necessary qualities in good leadership.

In addition, both groups (youth and staff) were able to identify actions and traits or characteristics that made someone a bad leader, but the youth generally had immense difficulty providing examples or identifying bad leaders, despite the plethora of examples that surround them. There was disconnect in their ability to understand what comprises a bad leader and their ability to identify bad leaders. As these are street children who have most likely been in and out of school throughout childhood, this could suggest that they have simply not learned about historical or current corrupt, violent leaders or it could suggest that the youth have an innate acceptance of "mediocre" leadership and therefore an inability to identify it. As Chipimo's ideas suggests, perhaps these street children do not have sense of civic responsibility and therefore

accept mediocrity, corruption, greed and other ‘abnormal’ things as ‘normal’ expectations from government officials and other leaders. The staff members were able to identify bad leaders and why they were bad, but this accompanied education and experience.

Religion

The staff generally did not place emphasis on religion, Christianity, or godliness in good leadership, while the youth did; even making reference to God giving good leaders the power to lead. This could also be a result of the staff being more educated; more education often leads to more secular thoughts and perhaps it somewhat decreased the importance of religion or godliness in a leader for the staff.

Female versus Male participants

In general, the majority of participants that volunteered were male. Female participants made up approximately 20% of those interviewed. The females that I did interview were timid and did not offer much of their opinions or thoughts on the matter; they often giggled and stated they did not know the answer. One young girl in group A did not answer any of the interview questions asked. This suggests a lack of confidence in the female participants who perhaps felt they do not know much about leadership or are not leaders themselves.

Prior Leadership Experience

Those who volunteered to be participants all had leadership experience they could discuss and reflect upon. These included: being a class prefect, which acts as the liaison between students and their teachers, a head boy or girl, or being a captain of a sports team. This suggests those who volunteered to participate in the study on leadership were themselves leaders, exemplified by their initiative to take part in the study.

Potential solution to breaking the cycle of poor leadership

As was exemplified, the staff and youth generally had much less to say about poor leadership than good leadership. There seemed to be a lack of ability for the youth to identify poor leadership despite the fact they could provide traits and characteristics of bad leaders; the more educated and experienced staff members were able to provide examples. Furthermore, the staff and youth placed little, if any, emphasis on good leaders minimizing themselves while promoting others and, more importantly, ensuring the *continuity* of good leadership by building the capacities of others. In conjunction with Elias Chipimo's views on leadership, a potential solution to breaking the cycle of continual acceptance of mediocre leadership in Africa is more, quality education; this would provide a better understanding of what good leadership should constitute and through the study of history and current events, the ability to identify mediocre or bad leadership.

Limitations

As is common in qualitative research, this study is based on a small number of participants and since it was on a first come, first serve volunteer basis does not adequately represent the population defined as street children (current and former) in Kenya.

The language barrier was an enormous limitation, particularly with the youngest age group, children ages 13-15 years old. While English is one of two national languages in Kenya, many of these street children have been in and out of school throughout their childhood. Although many of them understood the questions I asked in English, they had trouble articulating their answers or knowing the English word to explain their thoughts and opinions on the subject matter.

In correlation with previous limitation, many of participants, specifically the younger ones, found my English accent to be difficult to understand; perhaps having a translator or even a

Kenyan present during the interviews to speak in English would be easier for the children to both understand the questions and articulate their responses.

Recommendations

For any continual research or work on a similar subject matter, I would recommend working to reduce the language barrier; this can be done either by conducting the interviews in a dialect (Swahili or native tribal language) that the youth can fully understand and respond with or have a translator present who can assist the youth in articulating their thought and opinions in English.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to understand the perspectives on leadership of those who do not consider themselves “leaders” as well as get more perspective from female Kenyans. Understanding the differences and similarities between Kenyan female and male perspectives of leadership could shed light on the role gender has in forming opinions and thoughts on effective leadership. In addition, getting the perspective of those who would not consider themselves leaders would provide a “follower” perspective on quality versus poor leadership.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study enabled a better understanding of an African perspective of leadership and what constitutes good versus bad leadership. Interviewing current and former Kenyan street children enabled the voices of a silenced population to be heard. Understanding a Kenyan indigenous perspective on leadership opens the opportunity to explore if, as former Zambian presidential candidate Elias Chipimo Jr. advocates, there is an underlying issue of a mediocre environment breeding mediocre leadership in Africa; whether the expectations of

leadership are skewed to the point that abnormal characteristics become normal for leaders, in particular those in key decision-making positions in Africa.

As the finding showed, the children and staff at the CYEC provided a number of traits and roles of good leadership that coincided with Elias Chipimo's views on quality leadership. However, two of his main thoughts: leaders need to minimize their personality to inspire others as well as ensure the continuity of good leadership by building the capacities of others, were not emphasized by the staff and children at the CYEC. In general both the youth and staff had much less to say about bad leadership than good leadership. Furthermore, the youth's inability to identify bad leadership, despite their ability to provide traits and characteristics of bad leaders, underscores Chipimo's notion that many Africans have low expectations for leaders and that mediocre leaders' abnormal traits have become normal.

As Chipimo states, "all leadership springs from an environment in which the conditions are suitable for its emergence"(Chipimo Jr., 2011, p. 69). If, in fact, the main cause of Sub-Saharan African countries' continual underdevelopment can be attributed to mediocre leadership in key decision-making positions of government and other leadership positions, then understanding how the local people (even those at the bottom of the societal hierarchy, such as street children) interpret leadership can shed light on the current local thought as well as how to improve Kenyan's expectations of leaders.

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Academic Vita

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EDUCATION:

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park **Graduation May 2012**
Schreyer Honors College
Bachelor of Science in Community, Environment, and Development
International Development Option
Minor in Sociology

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:

Year Up New York, New York, NY June 2011-August 2011
Academic and Development Intern

- Created lesson plans for professional development courses
- Sharpened administrative office skills and constructed weekly schedules for staff
- Collaborated with team members to carry out professional development workshops with corporate partners
- Worked one-on-one with students to improve time management and study habits

Independent Study Work: Life Skills Curriculum, Nyeri, Kenya September 2010-May 2011
Research-Assistant in U.S.; Teacher in Kenya

- Collaborated with local residents to adapt a “life skills” curriculum for street children in Kenya
- Traveled to Kenya in May 2011 and received funding to defray some of the costs
- Taught forty five Kenyan street children, ages 13-15 years old, the life skills curriculum, including lessons on self awareness, understanding their emotions, and leadership among other topics

Honors Thesis Project, Nyeri, Kenya April 2011-Present
Researcher

- Interviewed different age groups of Kenyans on their perspective of leadership
- Plan to analyze interviews and record trends to understand Kenyan indigenous knowledge of leadership.

My Garden Dreams Inc., Wilkinsburg, PA Summer 2009
Volunteer

- Gained insight on urban gardening as a means of rejuvenating underserved neighborhoods

Community Environment and Development club, State College, PA Fall 2010-Present
Treasurer and Special Projects Coordinator

- Project head of our “Adopt a Classroom” initiative to mentor 8th grade students in California who would be the first in their family to attend college
- Responsible for budgeting club’s funds and managing the bank account

EmpowerU, State College, PA May 2011-Present
Mentor

- Mentor an incoming freshman throughout the academic school year
- Responsible for setting up meetings and assisting the freshman with her transition into college

PUBLICATIONS:

CED Undergraduate Research Journal April 2011
Civic Engagement in Higher Education

ACTIVITIES:

The CED Undergraduate Research Journal, associate editor August 2011-present
Penn State Dance Marathon (THON), committee member 2008-present
Global Connections, Speaking Partner 2009-2010

HONORS:

Gamma Sigma Delta-Honors Society of Agriculture Fall 2009-Present