Leaders for social change

Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs
This publication forms part of the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program, organised by ESADE’s Institute for Social Innovation and the PricewaterhouseCoopers Foundation. It is a joint initiative aimed at generating and spreading knowledge about leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations, as well as creating an area where social leaders can reflect and exchange experiences.

The program’s objectives are:

► To generate knowledge on leadership in the NGO and non-profit organisations sector.
► To help develop leadership capacities in Spanish non-profit organisations.
► To spread the knowledge generated to all organisations in the sector.
► To help reinforce the credibility of the organisations in the third sector.

In order to achieve this, the program combines the following elements:

► Leadership Forums: Working and exchange sessions with the managers participating in the program
► Research
► The creation of case studies
► Annual publication with results
► Public engagements
► Regular diffusion.
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It is a great honour to present the book *Leaders for Social Change*, written within the framework of the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program. This is a joint initiative by ESADE’s Institute for Social Innovation and the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Foundation, aimed at generating and spreading knowledge about leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations.

The program began in September 2008. Its objective was to increase and diffuse knowledge about social leadership, an area that still requires a great deal of study, particularly in the specific case of Spain. The aim was to offer answers to questions such as: What characteristics do leaders of the non-profit sector share? How can they be developed? How does the type of leadership style adopted in the social sector differ from the styles found in other areas? How can we train leaders who will promote social change?

Thus, ESADE’s Institute for Social Innovation and the PricewaterhouseCoopers Foundation decided to launch a program that would create an area where leaders of the non-profit sector could reflect and exchange experiences. They also wanted to generate knowledge and resources on this area, so as develop leadership skills in the third sector.

So as to facilitate this exchange, around thirty senior managers from some of the main NGOs and other non-profit organisations were invited to take part in the program. In this first course, they were asked to participate in two forums on leadership; face-to-face meetings at which people reflected on the characteristics and competencies of the leaders of this sector. Moreover, some of these participants were also interviewed for the research that was carried out within the framework of the same program. A summary of these interviews is included in this publication.

This book was written to describe the work carried out within the program and to spread the knowledge and experience gleaned both from the meetings with some of the social leaders in Spain and from the re-
search carried out. The text is divided into three sections. The first part consists of a general approach to the concept of social leadership and the characteristics that define the leaders of the non-profit sector. In the second part, the results of the research carried out in this first course are presented. In them, the differential competencies of these leaders are identified, thanks to a theoretical approach combined with the analysis of the interviews with the program participants. The third part includes a directory of resources on social leadership and other information of interest to those who wish to learn more about this area.

This publication was made possible thanks to the collaboration of a large number of individuals and institutions. Therefore, the Institute for Social Innovation and the PwC Foundation would like to thank the institutions that have supported us, ESADE and PricewaterhouseCoopers, respectively. Both have shown a considerable interest in helping to reinforce NGOs and other civil society organisations working in the field of social transformation.

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We hope that you will enjoy reading this publication and that it will provide you with interesting concepts, ideas and experiences, which allow you to learn more about the characteristics and the competencies of leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations. Moreover, we hope it will be useful for all those who want our world to be a fairer and more sustainable place and work tirelessly to achieve this goal.

May 2009

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PART 1

Characteristics of social leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations

Ignasi Carreras
Summary

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Leadership is an issue that is once again stimulating debate throughout society. Its increasing importance was forecast during the last few decades of accelerated change – in which existing social structures were broken down and replaced by others, while globalisation, immigration, climate change, terrorism and AIDS all created new challenges. Recently, however, these changes have accelerated still further. The current financial and economic crisis in combination with these social and environmental problems, is having a great affect on this increasingly interdependent world that we live in.

In this context characterised by growing difficulties and increased uncertainty, and also by the need to tackle the great, exciting challenges we are faced with, there is a constant search for referents that can provide us with vision and inspiration. Leadership is seen as one of the key elements for the generation of the positive changes we aspire to.

The study of leadership is also attracting an increasing amount of attention in the world of academia. A large number of authors have studied leadership definitions, characteristics and styles etc. And they have done this both in terms of the generic concept and for the peculiarities of political, business, trade union, intellectual and military leadership, etc. However, the specific area of what we call “social leadership” has been studied in less detail.

The concept of social leadership is associated with the development of those individuals who are the driving forces behind civil society organisations and who are working to bring about social change. From the outset, it is important to note that this concept is still relatively new. It is basically defined by the area in which it is used and not by its own characteristics or differential elements.

The variety of the Third Sector, in which social leadership is carried out, means that this type of leadership takes on different nuances of meaning and specialities that give each one its own individual aspect. We can identify several different areas in which social leadership occurs:

1) The first area is that of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This
Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs

includes foundations, associations and all those civil society organisations that have a legal precept, which are structured in a permanent manner and defend a specific cause and/or work with certain groups of people.

We are referring to large, well-known organisations with a great capacity for action and influence, such as Amnesty International, which has 5,000 local groups across 100 countries and a million members, or Intermón Oxfam, which, within the Oxfam International confederation, has almost 2.5 million members who provide it with a budget of 650 million euros that can be used to carry out its development cooperation work in over 100 countries.

This area also includes other NGOs that are much smaller but equally important in the state or local context in which they work. They are involved in a wide variety of areas such as social aid for socially excluded people and groups, support for disabled people, international cooperation, human rights and the environment.

2) A second area is that of the grassroots groups, which society also considers to be part of the NGO sector, but that generally lack a legal entity or formal organisation. As their name indicates, they are the most basic expression of civil society organisation, whether it be a neighbourhood group that fights for fundamental rights, a group of peasants who unite to improve their working conditions or a group of young people who share ideals and join together to carve out their future.

Nowadays, these are more common in Latin America, Africa and Asia than in Europe, where many of them have over time turned back into small NGOs. Their objective is to carry out their work with the minimum organisational structure, whilst relying on a great deal of help from volunteers.

3) Another area is that of social movements, whether they be local, international or global. Some of them have a long lifespan whilst others are short-lived. Their composition is very varied and sometimes rather diffuse. They are grouped around a cause related to social change and, without a very formalised organisational structure, they can link together
grassroots groups, NGOs and individuals. Sometimes they can also include trade unions and certain political parties.

What usually happens is that when a social movement fighting for a given cause gradually runs out of steam this leads to the creation of - and transfer of duties to - another social movement that defends a different cause, but one that is equally important to its supporters.

One example from the past ten years that we might highlight is the social movement generated by the World Social Forum. The WSF’s first meeting was held in Porto Alegre and its motto “Another world is possible” is now famous. It is a movement with a global component that is greatly catalysed by the use of the Internet and interrelated with the regional and local forums that have been created.

Examples from Spain include different social movements such as Nunca Más [Never Again], which appeared as a result of the ecological disaster created by the sinking of the petrol carrier, Prestige, off the coasts of Galicia, or the Plataform en Defensa de l’Ebre [Platform for the Defence of the River Ebro], which is against the policy of transferring water and promotes a new water culture. Another example is the movement linked to the Zero Poverty campaign, which is promoted by development NGOs and other interested groups.

4) A fourth area that should be borne in mind is that of other non-profit organisations, which make up what is known as the Third Sector. These are organisations of a very different nature, ranging from study and reflection centres – such as the Fundació Jaume Bofill or the Fundación Luis Vives – to foundations that provide assistance in the health sector, like the Fundació Institut Guttmann, devoted to the full rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injuries and acquired brain damage. This area also includes all the organisations devoted to leisure-time education.

We could also include social enterprises in this sector. These are non-profit organisations (they are sometimes considered “social” companies), which are able to generate social and economic values simultaneously. One example is the La Fageda non-profit cooperative in La Garrotxa Re-
Who are social leaders? Examples quoted by journalists

In a meeting with a group of Catalan journalists for a radio program in Mozambique, there was a discussion about the importance of leadership. When the journalists were asked who they considered to be social leaders, the first question that emerged was: “What does social leader mean?”

The journalists had no clear idea of the concept, since it is a term that can be interpreted in various ways. However, they suggested several names: Nelson Mandela, Graça Machel, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Rigoberta Menchú, Mary Robinson, Muhammad Yunus, Vandana Shiva, Susan George and Al Gore.

All of the above are international leaders who have become social leaders thanks to their appearance in the media. They generate a current of social change and are widely known and acknowledged.

And what about Spain? Don’t we have any social leaders here? After this second question, the journalists - making a little more effort - produced a list of names of people considered to be social leaders. The list included individuals such as Casaldáliga, Vicente Ferrer, Arcadi Oliveres, Mayor Zaragoza and even José María Mendiluce, who used to be a social leader but now focuses more on other issues.
One of the characteristics of a social leader is that they do not realise that they are one. We can find examples of people who, despite holding positions of the highest authority in NGOs that are of great importance at a state level, or are model organisations in their sector at an international level, do not consider themselves to be leaders.

In part, this can be explained by the fact that in the sector of NGOs and other non-profit organisations, leadership viewed as a group of people carrying out the organisation’s work is more important than the contribution of one specific leader. This fact has positive implications, since it makes it easier for many organisations to develop and carry out work that can go far beyond the scope of a single person occupying the position of director or president of the organisation.

In other words, social leadership avoids creating excessive dependence on the person who is the leader at any given moment. However, this does not justify such a defensive or even contrary position adopted by this sector with regard to what leadership constitutes and what it can contribute.
However, there is a certain amount of consensus within the social sector regarding the evaluation of small leaderships, the so-called grassroots leaderships. We are referring to the large number of people who have a particular task to carry out in their communities and, without whom, our world would no doubt be a very different place. They do not appear in the media and are not known outside of their circle of influence, which is generally small.
But, wherever they are, these people are essential and relevant to the people with whom they collaborate and for the ideals and causes they defend. Likewise, these are people who play a key role in inspiring others who also, over time, have become social leaders. They are clear models for all those who are close to them and listen to them: “we must follow this person”, “we’ve got to work with them”, “this person creates teams”, “the cause they defend is worthwhile”, etc. However, they are not the referent we have of a social leader, which is often identified in accordance with their level of presence in the media or on virtual social networks.
Example of grassroots leadership: Doña Bartola

When we use the term leadership, we might be speaking about leadership teams or leadership competencies, to give two examples, but in all cases we are referring to people. We are speaking about individuals who are good at leading, often without even being aware of the fact.

One example of this is Doña Bartola from Guatemala. In 1990, Doña Bartola lived in an area where there was constant conflict between the army and guerrilla forces. In the rural Guatemalan communities, there were periods in which the inhabitants’ lives were dominated by the guerrilla forces and others when they were dominated by the army, a situation that had dramatic consequences. When the army arrived, all the old men and those young men who had not left their community were accused of collaborating with the guerrilla forces.

This woman, Doña Bartola watched as her husband and sons were killed before her very eyes in the village square. The pain that this loss caused was so great that she was totally lost in her grief for two years: she became a person with no direction, she would walk about her community and her town, living off things that others gave her, a desperate figure, drowning her sorrows in drink.

However, over time she became aware of the situation her nieces and nephews were in and she wanted a better future for them and for her community. She joined forces with other women (in these towns almost all the inhabitants were widows and children), and, within a few months she had become a community leader. This happened quite by accident: above all, she had the conviction, determination and courage to lead the way. She knew that it was worth working hard and making a big effort in order to help the community progress.

With the help of a cooperation and development NGO, small projects were organised, involving family fruit and vegetable gardens and domestic cattle rearing in order to generate new sources of income and improve the children’s diet. They also launched a program to raise literacy levels and to improve the local people’s health. In a few years, the changes increased in size and a community development process was consolidated. Doña Bartola played a major role in this positive social transformation of her rural community.
2. Elements typical of social leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations

2.1. Studies carried out

To date, a lot less research has been carried out on the elements typical of social leadership, especially if it is compared with the amount of studies carried out on political, economic, business, military and other types of leadership.

The few existing publications on social leadership analyse different experiences, mainly from the United States and Great Britain. They also deal with situations that occur in specific contexts in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is what can be deduced from a recent review of the literature published on this area, drawn up by John Hailey\(^{(3)}\), of INTRAC\(^{(4)}\) (International NGO Training and Research Centre) in Great Britain. For example, simply using the virtual bookshop, Amazon (www.amazon.com), as a source, it can be seen that of all the publications related to the non-profit sector, only 10% are related in some way to leadership. These are normally publications characterised by their analysis of the North American non-profit sector and, more specifically, their governing bodies.

So, this is an area that needs to be studied in greater depth. The lack of research to date no doubt corresponds to the limitations facing social leaders as they try to accomplish their tasks. Most social leaders work long hours, with very few resources, in uncertain circumstances, to help the most underprivileged people in their communities. These situations can also arise in other types of leadership, in other types of context. However, they occur far more frequently in the case of social leadership.

The lack of resources is a reality in the non-profit organisation sector. As we mentioned earlier, there are several very powerful organisations that everyone knows, which have millions of members and an enormous capacity to make a local and, above all, global impact. These are bodies with a certain type of power, “soft power” or the power of conviction, as defined by Joseph Nye, the former dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. NGOs and the social sector do not have formal power. However, they have this power of influence that, in a globalised world, takes on great importance.
Nevertheless, even within these large organisations, people who are not in the central departments, who are leading groups of volunteers or working in rural areas, usually do so with a notable lack of resources. Logically, these limitations are more significant in the cases of smaller organisations. Most of the social leaders who work in these organisations experience on a daily basis the powerlessness that comes with a lack of resources and, sometimes, a lack of the skills required to carry out their mission.

2.2. Characteristics of Social Leadership

In order to analyse the characteristics typical of social leadership, we shall use the definition of leadership set out by Peter Northouse\(^5\) in his publication *Leadership: Theory and Practice*:

«Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal».

The following figure reflects the four elements that are extracted from this definition. They are analysed separately and in reverse order, in the following sections, in order to identify the characteristic features of social leadership in NGOs and in other non-profit organisations.
Figure 1. Definition of leadership

«Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.»

Leadership is...
* ... a process ...
* ... that involves influence,
* ... that is carried out in a group context
* ... and that aims to achieve a common goal.


2.2.1. Common goal

In order to make an impact, this type of leadership must be sufficiently unifying and inclusive. It must promote causes and social issues – human rights, the environment, fight against poverty, AIDS, the homeless, development cooperation, etc. – aiming to unite a large number of people who can help champion these causes. Although these are indeed topics with a strong ideological dimension, when they are tackled with an approach that excludes a plurality of considerations and ideologies, the impact achieved is limited.

On the other hand, a more plural and crosscutting approach enables a majority sector of the population to be united around a given cause, beyond any kind of partisan or economic interests. Social leaders have the challenge of grouping together individuals with plural ideologies, who are prepared to become mobilised and work together for the same cause. In order to do this, they use the unifying power of their organisation’s mission and values.

Therefore, an inspirational leadership knows how to make use of the motivational capacity of a shared mission: an organisation’s raison d’être and the whys and wherefores of its actions, whether they be to eliminate child labour, fight against climate change or to promote access to the job market for individuals suffering social and labour exclusion.
Likewise, it is a type of leadership that promotes an organisation’s values, both those most closely related to its mission – social justice, solidarity or the respect for fundamental rights – and those related to the organisation’s individual features and the way it works. We are referring to values such as political and economic independence, teamwork and the spirit of service, rigour and the quality of its actions or the desire to collaborate with other organisations, which catalyse cohesion in large, diverse groups. The mission and values are fundamental elements in the configuration of a common cause, which, as can be seen in the following graph, constitutes one of the sides of the virtuous leadership triangle.

*Source: Adapted from A. Castiñeira and JMª Lozano*
2.2.2. Group context

Leadership is always carried out in a group context, which, in the case of NGOs and other non-profit organisations, comprises three dimensions:

1) Firstly, the group’s own internal dimension that makes up the organisation in which the leadership is carried out.

2) Secondly, the area covered by the other organisations in the sector with which they carry out joint actions, whether this be through coordinators and second-level platforms or specific alliances and coalitions.

3) Finally, the most public component of social leadership, focused on interacting with potential donors, the media, public administrations, companies and society in general.

This triple dimension means that the internal component of the leadership of NGOs and other non-profit organisations must be as strong as the external one. Due to the different skills that both require and the high levels of dedication they demand, they are not always easy to combine.

Focusing on the internal dimension of the context in which social leadership occurs, we must remember that the people who make up the NGO teams usually have their own visions of reality, very much based on ideals and on the fact that some of them adopt relatively purist positions, which are however combined with other more pragmatic approaches.

Another aspect that characterises the group context is its eminently affiliative character. There is strong mutual support between those that make up the group, but not everyone that wants to join is accepted. One needs to have a certain social curriculum and act and behave in line with the dominant organisational culture. In some cases, there are considerable differences between those that are in the group and those who, de facto, remain second-category components.

One constant feature of this sector is the high demand for coherence in
the leaders. They are expected to display a background that backs up their legitimacy to lead. Moreover, they are asked to display great human qualities with no inconsistencies between their personal values and those of the organisation, and are expected to be not only honest – this is taken for granted – but also reliable. Leaders are expected to practise what they preach and to be and act as solid referents for their teams.

Social leaders are also expected to have a high degree of political independence. Although social leadership and political leadership have very permeable boundaries, it has to be said that it is easier for a social leader to become a political leader than vice versa. When a political leader wants to carry out an action involving leadership in the NGO sector, they come up against problems because they are not seen as being politically independent. This aspect seriously undermines their personal capacities and those of the NGO they represent, limiting their ability to carry out public work with all political parties equally.

Finally, it should be stressed that only some of the NGOs are associations where the members choose the board of directors, which in turn nominates the executive management. More common is the system with a foundation in which the governing body is designated by the founders, and in the subsequent stages it is renewed via a co-option system. Both in the case of foundations and that of associations with a limited number of members with a right to vote, the board of trustees or the governing body designates the executive management that is responsible for most of the organisation’s internal and external leadership.

Nevertheless, irrespective of the legal entity adopted by each NGO, the goal of the executive team, made up of the volunteers and paid staff, is for the organisation to establish participatory mechanisms in order to define its operative and strategic challenges and decisions. A working methodology based on the power of the hierarchy that is not very open to dialogue or more horizontal forms of communication is also rejected. Ranks and impositions are of little use in the social sector. In the political sector, those in power can say, “I was voted in, and I lead”. In the social sector, not all positions are recognised as leaders, and every day you need to earn the right to lead.
2.2.3. Influence

A third aspect of the definition of leadership is that it involves influence. There are all kinds of NGOs, ranging from those that provide assistance to those that bring about political change. However, in all of them social leadership can and should be a transformational leadership. Although a given NGO’s mission may be to help groups living in extreme poverty or suffering discrimination, injustice or the violation of human rights, at the same time, it should help fight against the causes of these situations. If the work to support the individuals living in a precarious situation is not complemented by a fight to eliminate the factors that cause this situation, the leadership loses a great deal of its capacity for social transformation.

**Figure 3. Virtuous circle for social transformation**

- Increased impact with political changes
- Greater influence and credibility
- Alliances and collaborations

- Need and justification for structural changes
- Legitimacy and motivation
- Social and economic support

*Source: Adapted from McLeod and Cruthfield*
One of the difficulties the sector comes up against when it tries to play this transformational role is that the majority of their organisations’ missions set themselves overambitious goals, bearing in mind the resources and capacities they have to attain them. Their general objectives are usually too broad and do not always prioritise the specific objectives of their action plans sufficiently. It is not unusual for a member of an NGO, when asked what they want to achieve, to reply, “to change the world”. “Fine, great”, you continue, “but can you be a little more specific?” The reply continues to be “to change the world”, with somewhat vague and non-specific aspirations.

In order for an NGO to carry out a task that contributes to social transformation, they need a focused transformational leadership. Many NGOs lack focus. They need to know how to identify - within the framework of their values and mission - the area of action that will allow them to move from major objectives to specific actions, from which the transformation puzzle can gradually become reality. In fact, it is symptomatic that many NGOs have not defined their vision; this fundamental piece of the strategic design that defines what you want to be as an organisation, and which also contains a long-term, major institutional goal. In the area of social leadership, in order to make an effective impact, it is necessary to have the capacity to channel many aspirations, ideas and energies in the organisation, in line with a focused vision, which is, at the same time, sufficiently transformational.

The importance of vision: The Migra-Studium\textsuperscript{(6)} case

Migra-Studium is a relatively new NGO, which works with the immigrant population in the historic centre of Barcelona. It has a wonderful mission with great added value: “To try to create a unified society, with fluid intercultural relations between inhabitants who come from different places of origin and the original population”.

In practice, however, its everyday work did not fully match the mission statement. An organisation’s aims (what they want to do) do not always coincide with reality (what can be done). There are certain activities that the organisations can only carry out if they have the capacity (what they know how to do) and the necessary resources and funding to tackle them.

With the best intentions and quite good criteria, what this organisation did was to offer Catalan and Spanish courses for immigrants, in order to support them in their social and labour inclusion processes. Although this type of ac-
tivity is indeed very useful for the people it is aimed at, it is also clear that
with these actions alone it is hard to achieve substantial results that corre-
spond to the mission of promoting a more unified society within the context
of a large growth in the immigrant population, with all that this entails.

During a process of strategic reflection, it was decided that it was necessary
to define more clearly the contribution the organisation could make. Previ-
ously, there were debates about whether it was necessary to change the mis-
sion and establish its scope in accordance with the NGO’s capacities. It was
agreed that the organisation should maintain the aspects of its identity in-
cluding its mission, but that, on the other hand, it was necessary to define
and decide what its vision should be.

**Mission: “To try to create a unified society, with fluid intercultural relations
between the inhabitants that come from different places of origin and the
original population”**

**Vision: “The Migra-Studium Foundation aims to be – mainly in Catalonia –
one of the reference organisations for ensuring that the population of foreign
origin and the original population achieve the necessary transformations to
achieve a united society.”**

We shall do this through:

- The creation of meeting places for people of different origins
- The creation of training programs for immigrants and the public in general
- The generation and diffusion of reflections in the social, intercultural and
  inter-religious areas

We want all our programs and activities to be carried out:

- Through actions that reinforce one another
- By establishing relations of equality between the different populations”

The definition of this vision within the framework of the strategic thought
process generated a change in the NGO’s type of actions. Making use of the
experience accumulated and the potential of some members of the team, the
new actions will focus on two areas: interculturality and the inter-religious
phenomenon. Moreover, meeting and debate areas were set up, as well as
training activities in which both immigrants and the city’s original inhabitants
took part.

One area that is still pending is that of deciding how to transfer their most
innovative experiences to other organisations in order to generate social co-
hesion on a small scale, so that they can spread out like a pool of oil and
have an increasingly large impact on society.

www.migrastudium.org
2.2.4. Process

Finally, leadership is also a process. In NGOs, the direction they are going in is normally clear, as are the general aims that they want to achieve. However, there are great difficulties in checking whether these are reached, especially in terms of measuring the results of the social impact.

One of the great barriers experienced by people who come to the social sector from the world of business is, precisely, the complexity involved in measuring the NGO’s results, and the difficulties involved in determining whether reliable results are being attained, in line with the mission. In a company, the directors are used to setting far more specific and quantifiable objectives and to measuring the results mainly using the profit and loss statement.

In an NGO on the other hand, some indicators of quantitative results such as resources obtained, the number of members or the financial year’s profits (or losses), provide us with valuable information about the organisation’s means, but they are not sufficient to know whether it is progressing in accordance with its mission. What does allow us to know whether an NGO is working well is knowing precisely the extent to which it achieves the aims in its mission; in other words, by measuring its social impact. For many NGOs, this is a challenge that has still rarely been tackled and even less frequently resolved.

The stumbling block of measuring an NGO’s results makes the leadership process complex. On the one hand, it makes organisational learning difficult, since it is based more on qualitative appreciations than on objective data. On the other, it limits the profit and loss statement, which is a great tool used by leaders to acknowledge a job well done and all the support received to carry it out successfully. Tangible quantified results are also essential for attracting loyal collaborators.

Individuals who collaborate with NGOs, whether this be as volunteers or paid staff, do so with the conviction that it is worthwhile devoting body and mind to working for the cause that unites them. It is a group that be-
comes intensely involved in the cause with a motivation, which must be encouraged and nurtured by the organisation. For this reason, the leaders must be able to demonstrate that progress is being made towards achieving the mission’s goals and they need to provide specific results. This is one of the best ways of keeping the team motivated over the course of the long journey, in which there are many times when people may feel defeated, thinking that there is little reward for so much effort. When a victory can be demonstrated, for example improvements in the lives of people they are trying to help or the cause that they are defending, this goes a long way towards strengthening the team’s motivation.

What is a successful NGO?

- One in which the mission achieves a high level of results. One that has an impact on society.
- One that provides a great deal of lasting value to those it aims to help.
- One that is efficient, transparent and whose management is accountable.
- One that gains an increasing amount of support from society and institutions. One that has a great deal of credibility.
- One that is considered the “ideal” organisation to work in and to collaborate with (by staff, volunteers, members, etc...).

Source: The authors

Thus, social leadership has several elements that set it apart from political, business, trade union, religious or intellectual leadership. It is a type of leadership that transforms reality, requires a proper focus and is carried out via a complex process, in which the driving forces are its values, and where the right to lead has to be earned each day.
3. The evolution of social leadership

3.1 Strong leaders

We usually associate the term ‘social leader’ with people who are pioneers of social causes and founders of organisations. These are men and women who strive for social transformation and who fight hard for a long time and with great determination and conviction in order to support a specific mission. They are very charismatic and great communicators, and this allows them to inspire, attract and mobilise increasing numbers of people. These are the social leaders who correspond to what is described as a strong leader.

Example of a strong leader: Eknath Awad and the defence of the rights of the Dalits (untouchables) in India

Eknath Awad is one of the leaders of the Dalits – the untouchables, members of the lowest caste - in a rural area in the State of Maharashtra in India.

Eknath’s personal story is extraordinary. He is the founder and leader of the Rural Development Center (RDC), an Indian organisation that has collaborated with Intermón Oxfam for years. The hope that Eknath transmits is based on his own life. The son of slave workers and members of a Dalit family, from very early on in his life he had the strength and firm determination to fight to bring about change. He found the strength to work and study, liberated his parents, studied law and, once qualified, drove the RDC on to promote the Dalits’ rights and opportunities.

There are moments and contexts in which hope appears impossible. This occurs with the Adivasis (tribal communities) and the Dalits (untouchables) in India, who suffer extreme conditions of poverty, injustice and discrimination. Even so, the conviction and efforts made by many people who work to change these situations are encouraging and they keep hope alive that everyone can and should live in a dignified manner.

Eknath’s determination and the RDC’s work have improved the Dalits’ living conditions with regards organisation, social conscience, education and training, access to fertile land, irrigation and credits. Likewise, the RDC has campaigned intensely at a national level to ensure education is recognised as a fundamental human right in the Indian Constitution and, therefore, can be demanded of the government.
This kind of social leader is a very special type of individual, without whom many social causes would not have been adopted and the organisations that drive them would not have been created or progressed very far. These are people who ensure that NGOs have a successful initial launching and development stage.

However, there is another side to strong leadership. One of the less positive aspects of these strong leaders is that they often dominate the organisations excessively and generate a dependence syndrome in the NGO due to their high profile and the number of actions they undertake. They find it very hard to delegate and share the leadership. They feel very possessive about the organisation, often attempting to justify this by the fact that they were the founder, and this does not help them be transparent or accountable to their management.

They find it very hard to adapt to changes in the external or internal context in which they carry out their work, and they have a very patriarchal or matriarchal style of leadership, based on affinity in personal relations. Their teams are usually very loyal, or at least some of them are. However, at the same time, they take criticism badly and do not always accept proposals that differ from their own ideas. They base themselves on hierarchical structures and management systems. The most negative characteristic of this type of leadership, although it is the most exceptional and least frequent, is the abuse of power and personal appropriation of the organisation’s aims.

Fortunately, this type of strong leadership is far less common nowadays. It was more frequent in the history of organisations and social movements in past decades, but the situation has changed now.
3.2 Leaders and managers

**Leadership and management**

- Management is a science. Leadership is an art.
- Leaders generate change. Managers achieve predictable results.
- We lead people and manage resources.

A second aspect to highlight in the evolution of leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations is the link between leadership and management. Beyond the fact that in the sector both aspects are continually confused and the concepts interchanged, as organisations have grown over the course of the years, there has been an increase in the managerial capacity that has not been accompanied by the same growth in the capacity for leadership.

**Characteristics of leaders and managers**

**Managers**

- Interested in what should be done and how it should be done
- Focused on the everyday running of an organisation, they seek results and efficiency
- They prefer a stable and predictable context
- They stand out due to their capacity for solving problems
- They make decisions based on data and diagnoses

**Leaders**

- They are interested in the long term (as well as everyday matters)
- They prefer flexibility and change to stability and control
- Their thoughts are mainly divergent
- They look for opportunities and external alliances
- They are more intuitive and visionary

*Source: The authors*

The figure below shows a matrix with managerial and leadership capacity axes. Individuals with managerial capacities in NGOs and other non-profit organisations can be situated in the different quadrants in accordance with the levels they display in both capacity types.
Leaders for social change

Figure 4. Leadership vs. managerial capacities matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership capacity</th>
<th>Management capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The authors

Based on the parameters of this matrix, we can distinguish four NGO managerial profiles:

a. Neither leaders, nor managers

In the bottom left-hand part of this matrix, we can situate the managers who have no leadership or managerial capacities. In the social sector, there are NGOs and other non-profit organisations that can appear independent, but which in practice are controlled or overseen by another organisation (a religious organisation, a trade union, a political party, a coalition of donors, a firm, etc.).

In these NGOs, the mother organisations sometimes want to place someone at the front of their subsidiary organisation whose main purpose is to maintain the founder’s wishes. In this respect, it is not uncommon that, when it comes to selecting the managers, priority is given to “loyal” people, even if they do not have the leadership and managerial capacities required for the position. Fortunately, this situation is becoming increasingly rare.

b. Leaders who lack sufficient managerial skills

In the bottom right-hand box we can situate the cases of managers with a great deal of leadership capacity but little managerial capacity. This is also an increasingly uncommon situation in the sector.
Most of the people with this profile were founders or promoters of an NGO. They are leaders who have been decisive in the initial stages but who, as the organisations have grown and become more complex, have experienced more difficulties carrying out the executive tasks due to a lack of managerial skills. The problem is that this type of person is not always interested in developing their managerial skills, which limits their potential for managerial development.

It is also the case of the type of strong leader we mentioned earlier, who stands out due to their leadership capacity, when it is positive, but who in certain cases lacks sufficient managerial skills. Some of these people leave the executive responsibilities and go on to carry out work that is more focused on public representation and other actions that match their skills and their notable accumulated experience, which are equally important for an NGO.

c. Managers who are not yet leaders

In the top left-hand part of the matrix, we have a profile that is increasingly frequently found in NGOs and is expected to become even more common in the future. It corresponds to people with a great capacity for management but who are not yet leaders. As organisations grow, they need more specialised people, who are more competent from a technical point of view and who have greater experience in the functional areas of action. They are good managers with managerial competencies that are well developed in planning, efficient execution and achieving results. They provide order and criteria for tackling mission programs and for progressing in the organisational development. They are people who, to a large extent, respond to the frequently formulated aspiration: “this NGO needs to become more professional”. A professionalisation carried out both by the paid staff and the volunteers.

Nevertheless, with all the positive elements this managerial profile provides, it is a shame that some of these people remain mere managers and do not contribute more to the leadership of their NGO. Good leadership is one of the keys to an NGO’s success and, as we mentioned earlier, it consists of far more than just the contribution of a good leader. There is no leadership without the existence of
some people who act as main leaders and catalyse a team that leads actively, influencing the organisation at different levels and in different areas.

Experience tells us that some of these people have the potential – albeit still insufficiently developed – to contribute to the leadership of their organisations. The most important thing is that they should want to develop this skill. It is a question of offering them opportunities and the necessary support.

### Managerial profiles for NGOs

- Motivation (confirmed)
- Human quality (recognition by the team)
- Institutional values (ideology and attitudes)
- Specific competencies for the challenges presented by the position
- Managerial competencies for the NGO
- Managerial potential in line with the long-term institutional challenges
- Enjoy developing their responsibilities

### d. Leaders and managers

The number of managers in NGOs and other non-profit organisations who correspond to this profile, situated in the top right-hand part of the matrix, is still limited, but everything indicates that it will increase in the next few years. These are people who have progressed both in their leadership and their managerial skills and know how to combine them properly. Both are necessary for running NGOs and, when administered well, they reinforce one another.

These are people with values and passion for the causes they support, who act as a source of inspiration and motivation for their teams. They provide future vision and move with the times, driving on the necessary changes at each stage. They are not satisfied with the status quo and are great catalysts for social transformation. They stand out thanks to their ability to unite and develop the members of their NGO. They are positive referents who are absolutely essential to their organisations.
### Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs

#### Figure 5. Evolution in the form of leadership (and management) of NGOs (I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Few leaders, at the top, and many managers and technicians</td>
<td>- Leaders at all levels. Leadership community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leadership through control of the different functional areas</td>
<td>- Leadership through vision. Long-term orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improvement of the quality and control of costs of consolidated initiatives</td>
<td>- Generation of distinctive competencies and competitive advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reactive attitude and adaptation to change</td>
<td>- Anticipatory attitude. Generator of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Design of hierarchical organisational structures</td>
<td>- Design of flat, collaborative organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Nanus and Dobbs

#### Figure 6. Evolution in the form of leadership (and management) of NGOs (II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lead and supervise collaborators (staff and volunteers. Train good managers</td>
<td>- Inspire and empower people. Facilitate teamwork. Create future leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Restrict information to those who make decisions only</td>
<td>- Share information internally and externally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Act like a boss, control attitudes and processes</td>
<td>- Act as a coach and mentor, create learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Juggle the different internal and external demands</td>
<td>- Promote change, creating an agenda for this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maintain the organisational culture</td>
<td>- Make the organisational culture evolve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Nanus and Dobbs
3.3 Shared leadership

Indeed, one of the contributions that these managers have made, which corresponds to the profile of both leaders and managers, is progress in shared leadership NGOs. They have understood that the strong leader stage had to give way to another, more horizontal and inclusive type of leadership, and that they could and should promote others in order to generate a community of leaders in the different parts of the organisation.

This type of leadership matches the NGO’s institutional values to which its members aspire far better than the traditional kind – concentrated in one, two or very few individuals and with a pronounced hierarchical dynamic. It is also more effective for tackling the different challenges that derive from the complex context in which these individuals have to carry out their work. According to L. R. Crutchfield and H. McLeod Grant, authors of the book, Forces for Good, quoting a study by Betsy Hubbard on leadership in NGOs: “A more collective orientation of leadership is often the most appropriate for complex and undetermined situations in which there is a lack, not only of lucid answers but also of clearly defined problems”.

Moreover, shared leadership is ideal in order to cover the different roles that, as we describe further on, should be played by those who take on the maximum responsibility in an NGO. It is practically impossible for a single person to tackle with sufficient solvency such specific leadership roles as that of visionary strategist, the organisation builder, the entrepreneur and the social politician. A united and well-steered group of leaders can provide the organisation with the skills and experiences necessary to tackle all these aspects of leadership.

An example of shared leadership Greenpeace España

The organisation

Greenpeace España was founded in 1984 as the Spanish national headquarters of Greenpeace International. Its mission is “to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace”, by addressing and exposing environmental crimes and intervening in different parts of the world where nature is under threat. Greenpeace is convinced that public pressure, direct non-
violent action and political intervention can produce the changes required to safeguard our environment. Political and financial independence are two of its most characteristic values, along with non-violence, rigour, participation and transparency.

Today, Greenpeace España has become the referent environmental organisation in Spain, endorsed by its 25 years of experience in the country and its international and global character. It collaborates with other Spanish environmental organisations such as WWF Adena, Amigos de la Tierra [Friends of the Earth], Sociedad Española de Ornitología [Spanish Ornithology Association] and Ecologistas en Acción [Ecologists in Action], in joint projects.

The bases of the organisation’s culture are action, campaigns, confrontation, risks and rigour, all in a framework of non-violence, transparency and teamwork. For this reason, although there is no single profile that characterises the individuals who work in Greenpeace, one thing they do have in common is that they all identify with the organisation’s mission and values and share some of the qualities essential for working in this environment: dedication and commitment, the capacity to work in a team, good time management, flexibility, the conviction that things can be changed and the ability to grow stronger in adversity.

The management

Juan López de Uralde has been the executive director since 2001. After the initial stage of Greenpeace España’s development, in which the organisation was led by its founder and underwent notable growth, there was an internal reorganisation. This change corresponded to the need to reorganise the internal structure in line with the evolution in the organisation. The previous managerial style suited the initial stage of an organisation in its infancy, which requires a strong leadership in order to grow and become established. However, Greenpeace España evolved and the needs at the beginning of this decade it became clear that it required a different style of leadership, one which allowed for greater coordination and internal participation, as well as the strong cohesion of a team that had grown considerably.

With the new executive director, Juan López de Uralde, Greenpeace España adopted a style of shared leadership. Within the organisation, different executive positions assume responsibility for their own areas and are entitled to decide either on the core areas in their departments or to have a debate on the topics with the board of directors. It is a leadership style that promotes transparency, teamwork and participation at different levels, creating an atmosphere of trust and involvement.

This managerial and leadership style matches the reality of Greenpeace España, due to the fact that the size and impact of the organisation makes it hard for it to be led by a single person and to maintain the motivation and involvement of the whole team. At the same time, the nature of the organisation’s activity means that, on some occasions, decisions have to be made quickly and effectively, for example when responding rapidly to an environmental crisis or accident. The distribution of tasks and responsibilities allows Greenpeace to act more effectively and efficiently in these cases.
Leaders for social change

Generating a community of leaders in the different parts of the NGO is not something that is achieved quickly or by good will alone. It demands the institution’s commitment to this philosophy, and relies on people who can represent it and provide the means - from the processes of developing competencies to offering leadership opportunities - to carry it out. Neither are there many consolidated experiences from which to learn, so the path taken must be laid down as the process evolves and by experimentation.

The sector’s opinion on Shared Leadership

At the Leaders Forum in the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program the participants were asked about shared leadership:

Is shared leadership really the dominant type of leadership in the sector?

It is considered that shared leadership is not totally widespread, and is lacking in particular in some small organisations with charismatic, personalist leaders. It is more common in larger organisations.

When is it not used?

Shared leadership is particularly uncommon in decision-making that affects people (“it is important to be alone when making these decisions”).

In your experience, how do you think one can make the best possible use of shared leadership?

Shared leadership does not entail reaching a consensus on all decisions. It involves clearly defining the different areas of participation at the different levels, formal and informal.

In any case, an initial requisite is that the organisation has well-established governing and executive management bodies that work properly. As can be seen in the attached figure, several elements in this structure can facilitate this: an excellent tandem between the presidency and the board of directors and the executive management of the NGO: a good coordination committee in the board of directors; a united and efficient management committee, led by the director of the organisation. If these essential components of the leadership team work well, it is more viable to extend this desire for shared leadership to other levels and areas of the NGO.
The governing bodies in NGOs: much room for improvement

There is a direct relationship between an NGO’s good governance and its social impact. In general, the governing bodies could work far better than they do. Part of the problem is their composition. There are many cases of people, with a great deal of social recognition, who are invited to take part in different boards of trustees of foundations or boards of directors of associations. This means that on top of their daily professional activity, a single person participates voluntarily in several different governing bodies, with the meetings and dedication that this entails. As a result, it is hard for these members to become very closely involved.

The McKinsey management consulting firm carried out a study\(^9\) in the USA, analysing 32 of the 100 non-profit organisations considered to be the most successful in that country. The survey targeted a sample of members of the governing bodies and the executive directors of these organisations. The results revealed that only 17% of those interviewed considered that the governing body of their organisation worked properly. The main shortcomings identified were the unsuitable composition of the board of directors, the lack of clear and consensual guidance regarding what the organisation wanted to be and insufficient consistency and efficiency in the processes for making strategic decisions and controlling the organisation’s results.
Thus, from the study it could be deduced that many boards of directors are still trying to solve basic issues such as how to recruit new members and manage meetings properly. In this respect, it was observed that the existence of a committee for recruiting new members to the board was fundamental in order to achieve the suitable composition.

46% of those interviewed considered that within their boards there was insufficient consensus with regards the mission, and a lack of capacity to provide vision. Many battles over strategy corresponded to disagreements about what the organisation was trying to achieve. This generated many repetitive debates. In fact, only 42% of those interviewed had participated in meetings set up to reflect upon and clarify the mission, vision and strategy of their organisation. It was also observed that these discussions were more effective when the members of the board had learnt about or had first hand experience of the action programs themselves.

A final noteworthy remark about the study is that only 40% of the organisations analysed carried out a proper assessment of their results, executed systematically, tackling the strategic challenges, without resorting to micromanagement issues. Very few had attempted to measure the impact their results actually made. And, in all cases, this was despite the fact that these governing bodies had been working for many years.
4. Competencies of the NGO leaders

4.1 Emotional intelligence competencies

D. Goleman, R. Boyatzis and A. McKee, authors of the book, *Primal leadership; realizing the power of emotional intelligence,* indicate that a leader’s success does not depend so much on what they do, as on the way that they do it. In this respect, they stress the fact that if a leader lacks the capacity to channel emotions properly, nothing he/she does will work as it should.

On the contrary, when leaders channel emotions in a positive direction, they motivate people better and bring about an effect that the above-mentioned authors call “resonance” (which comes from the verb “to resonate”: reinforcing a sound through reflection, or more specifically, through a synchronous vibration). This is what occurs between two people when they are on the same emotional wavelength, in other words, when they feel they are in tune with one another. These authors conclude that the key to leadership lies in the leaders’ emotional intelligence competencies, in other words the way in which they manage the relation between themselves and others.

**Characteristic of resonant leaders in NGOs**

1. **Personal competency**
   - **Self-awareness** (emotional self-knowledge, proper self-assessment, self-confidence)
   - **Self-management** (emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, optimism, one’s own source of motivation, tolerance of frustration)

2. **Social competency**
   - **Social awareness** (empathy, awareness of the organisation, service)
   - **Relationship management** (inspiration-vision-motivation, communication and influence, developing other people’s competencies, catalysing change, conflict management, creating bonds, teamwork and collaboration)

3. **Cognitive competency**
   - (Analytic thinking, conceptual thinking, knowledge and experience)

*Source: Boyatzis, Goleman and McKee*
The competencies that Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee discuss with regard to resonant leaders (see above box) have a clear application - albeit with a few nuances - in the NGO sector. As we mentioned earlier, NGO leadership is double-sided: there is an internal side, within the organisation, and an external aspect with the different players in society. Both aspects are crucial and this means that the different capacities this set of competencies involves, and especially those related to the social area, must be sufficiently developed in order to fulfil this dual function satisfactorily.

With regard to the competencies grouped in the personal area, and more specifically those related to self-awareness, we should note one risk faced by all NGO leaders. The high level of self-discipline and activism that characterises them, with the resulting accumulated exhaustion, can mean that they do not have the predisposition or the time required to work permanently on aspects such as self-knowledge, the appropriate self-assessment and self-confidence. If a minimum amount of free time is not set aside for personal regeneration, important aspects of this area of personal competency, which are vital to the individual for the effective leadership of their teams, might be lost.

The individuals who make up the NGOs usually stand out thanks to their human qualities, but they are also more demanding in this respect of members of their organisation and, in particular, of the directors, compared to those of other types of organisation. This means that competencies such as emotional self-control, transparency, empathy, the spirit of service and collaboration are vital for social leaders. For example, with regards emotional self-control, it is not unusual that if the director of an NGO loses his/her temper and treats another person without due respect - even if it is a one-off occurrence - he/she has to make a great effort to win back the team’s trust. The margin for error and extent to which the trust of their team allows them to correct their mistake is limited, given that they have undermined a fundamental element in the group members’ scale of values.

In the social sector there are three emotional competencies that are more crucial to leadership than in other sectors. The first is empathy, in other words the capacity to feel others’ emotions, to understand their
points of view and to be actively interested in their concerns. Empathy is a basic requirement for all kinds of human and group relations, and even more so in NGOs. Given that in NGOs the teams of paid staff and volunteers are mainly made up of women, empathy is even more present than in other types of organisation. In general, however, those who occupy positions of responsibility are still expected to have a high level of empathy.

Social leaders not only have to be self-motivated, they also have to act as a channel that motivates and inspires others, from volunteers to paid staff and donors. One of their roles is to ensure that the values, mission and all the causes and ideals the team works for, are present in the everyday running of the organisation. They must provide areas in which these values and aspirations can be promoted, in order to prevent the daily goings-on and routine of everyday activities from sweeping away the NGO members’ ideals and motivation.

Social sector leaders must have their own source of motivation beyond that which can find in the causes themselves and the people with whom they work. Thus, it is extremely important that they devote quality time to looking after this source of motivation and avoid it running out, in order to be able to continue to act as a source of personal regeneration for others. Finally, one absolutely essential emotional competency both for leadership, and for all kinds of lengthy collaboration within NGOs in general, is the ability to tolerate frustration. This is particularly important for team members involved in complex, critical situations, involving the suffering of others where it is very apparent and where there are no easy or immediate solutions to the factors causing them.
Legitimacy to lead

As we mentioned, legitimacy is a fundamental requirement in NGOs in order to earn the right to lead. Experience tells us that there is a relation between the set of competencies an NGO member possesses and their legitimacy to lead, but there is yet another implicit element that needs to be borne in mind. The social sector legitimises people with values, with a clear personal ethic, and consistency between what they say, do and think. In other words, people with a well-known background, highly valued by the sector, are entitled to lead. However, where a person did not previously work in the NGO sector, their personal and professional backgrounds are not always as well regarded – at least not *a priori*.

One example of this can be seen in the selection process. Here, the candidates are often asked if they have done any kind of voluntary work. This element can be used as an indicator to assess the person’s previous social commitment, but overly strict clichés should be avoided. It is important to bear in mind that certain personal or family circumstances can influence an individual’s personal path, for example the loss of a parent at an early age. Such a situation may have made it impossible for a candidate who has many qualities and has proven them in various aspects they have had to cope with in their life, to work as a volunteer in an NGO.

At the same time, a background in sectors other than NGOs can constitute an important social component. For example, in the cases of a technical or managerial position in an NGO, candidates with a business background in which they have promoted their social responsibility, or people with a managerial background in public administration, etc. If the social sector is too restrictive with regards the diversity of the origins of their future managers and does not consider all types of profile, it may miss some potentially effective social leaders.
4.2 What characterises NGO leaders? The sector’s opinion

The following two figures show the results of the opinions of technical experts and managers of Spanish non-profit organisations, who have participated in at least one of the two training programs (Leadership and Management in Non-Governmental Organisations and Leadership and Social Innovation), that ESADE has been running in collaboration with the Fundació La Caixa for the past ten years.

The answers to two questions have been grouped together and organised:

In your personal experience, what are the personal characteristics of the best NGO leaders?
What do they know how to do and how do they act?

The results indicate that there is a group of characteristics that appear in the responses of most participants, in different programs and different years, and that there is therefore a high level of consensus. For example, the characteristics that the sector itself considers most common in good social leaders include competencies and skills such as communication, empathy, modesty and generosity. This shows that a good NGO leader needs to be able to express himself/herself very well and use this skill to inspire and motivate. However, they also need to know how to listen and understand other people’s positions and opinions, using a quality that is the complete opposite of arrogance.

Moreover, it also indicates that NGO leaders need to provide a clear, convincing vision, especially in the current climate of uncertainly and change. This competency is even more appreciated when the leader knows how to catalyse the team’s capacity to generate and design this future vision for the organisation.

According to the sector itself, a good leader must act in a manner that is consistent with the organisation’s objectives and values. This gives him/her the legitimacy to lead, and also demonstrates his/her commitment and enthusiasm, which, as mentioned earlier, motivates the rest of the team.
The most representative skills, as well as those linked to the characteristics mentioned earlier, include the good leader’s ability to work with his/her teams. The leader is expected to have a shared leadership style and be committed to developing the capacities of the members of the organisation.

Likewise, the NGO leader must know how to create and manage alliances with other NGOs and other types of organisation. This is a key aspect for achieving a greater social impact. Other characteristics, however, were mentioned more sporadically, and appear in the bottom box in each of the following figures.

Figure 8: What are the best NGO leaders like? Characteristics

Source: Results of working sessions with NGO managers
With regards the leadership styles used in the sector, taking the six styles that appear in the following figure as a basis, we see that the NGO directors combine several styles with ease, including the affiliative and the democratic styles. Both fully correspond to the NGOs’ values and organisational culture, and constitute the basis of the form of leadership in normal circumstances. A third style, although less frequent than the previous two, is the visionary style, seen above all in those NGOs that tackle new challenges and know how to guide through the changes that these entail.

On the other hand, the coaching style, which is very important for any kind of organisation that wants to develop its collaborators and, therefore also for NGOs that want to progress towards a more shared leadership, is less frequent in NGOs than the affiliative, democratic and visionary styles. Finally, the pace-setting and commanding styles are rarely used in NGOs and are far less frequently present than in firms and other types of organisation.
**Leaders for social change**

**Figure 10: Emotional leadership styles and competencies**

- **Visionary:** Projects a shared vision, which motivates people and drives them forward.
- **Coaching:** Helps team members find their strengths and weaknesses and develop professionally.
- **Affiliative:** Creates people connections and a positive, harmonious atmosphere in the team.
- **Democratic:** Promotes input and commitment via participation.
- **Pace-setting:** Sets challenging, exciting goals and encourages people to achieve them.
- **Commanding:** Defines a path to follow and makes sure that people follow it.

*Source: The authors*
Leadership is more of an art than a science and the way to approach it depends to a great extent on the situations that need to be dealt with. Each NGO, in accordance with its internal circumstances — often related to the stage the organisation has reached in its evolution — and also the challenges presented by the environment - requires a particular leadership style. However, there is a series of leadership roles or functions that must be carried out satisfactorily in all circumstances if the successful development of any NGO is to be achieved.

Each leadership role requires particular competencies and skills, which are hard for a single person to provide. This is why shared leadership is important, since it enables a greater number of people with the necessary - innate or acquired - competencies to be incorporated, in order to carry out the different leadership roles.

We have selected the four leadership roles that we consider the most important for NGOs: the visionary-strategist, the organisation builder, the entrepreneur and the political-social roles.

Figure 11: Leadership roles in NGOs

Source: The authors
5.1. Visionary-strategist role

The main aim of the visionary-strategist role is to define and develop the organisation’s values and mission and to generate a clear, suitable vision and strategy for its future actions. In line with the challenges the organisation faces at each of its stages, the leader plans the NGO’s approach in order to provide the maximum value to its collaborators and the cause it supports.

It is a leadership role that goes far beyond defining what the organisation should be like and how it should act in the future. It promotes values, inspires and motivates all the NGO’s team members, as well as other members and collaborators, in order to ensure that they “fall in love” with what the organisation is doing and do their utmost to fulfil its mission. Leaders who carry out this visionary-strategist role satisfactorily are good at driving forward great causes and getting other people to join them in this.

Figure 12: Characteristics of the Visionary-strategist role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visionary-Strategist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political -social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Defines and develops the mission
- Reinforces the organisation’s values
- Inspires, motivates and moves people forward
- Promotes and drives forward important causes

Skills and competencies
- Analysis of the external and internal context
- Design of the mission and the vision
- Communication and motivation
- Definition and promotion of the organisation’s values and culture
- Planning and strategic execution. Action policies
- Decision-making
- Financial and budgetary management

Source: The authors
This is a role that was commonly found in the leadership of NGOs in the past, especially in the 1980s and 1990s when a large number of organisations were created and developed, becoming referents for the sector. However, this role is now less important, due to the increase in the management of the everyday running of the organisations and the urgent need to find funding. As some organisations have commented, it is precisely the burden of everyday activities and the pressure of associated urgent matters, which weaken the visionary-strategist role.

Example: Fundació Jaume Bofill [Jaume Bofill Foundation](10)

The Jaume Bofill Foundation is an organisation devoted to study and research, as well as other activities involving reflection and spreading information, which may contribute to social transformation. Its main field of work is education and its goal is to ensure that primary and secondary education is of the highest possible quality and that the education system is more just. The Foundation’s aim is for education to become a catalyst for the relevant changes required to advance towards a freer, fairer and more united society.

Faced with such a challenging mission, one might question whether the activities or tasks carried out by the Jaume Bofill Foundation are sufficient to achieve the desired impact, and whether the organisation should study possible alternative means of increasing it. For example, they could consider additional activities such as campaigns and political pressure, or complement the research and the generation of opinion with specific examples to demonstrate that the studies carried out by the Foundation are meaningful and have a specific impact on the reality of specific individuals.
5.2. Organisation builder role

A second leadership role, which is very commonly found in NGOs that manage to create successful leaderships, is that of the organisation builder. Leaders in the social sector have to achieve both long-lasting organisation and good results, irrespective of who is in charge of the organisation. Sometimes a "good leadership" stage, created by a good team, is followed by a less positive period of lower quality from the point of view of the organisation’s mission and its development.

This is an indicator that the "good leadership" had not prepared the ground sufficiently to enable the NGO to renew itself continuously and gradually acquire a greater capacity to cope with future challenges, with new leaders and a strong, dynamic and a united operative team working to fulfil their mission. Leaders who build the organisation need to know how to generate social capital, placing the emphasis on attracting and keeping talented individuals, remembering that the salary is not the most decisive element in the case of NGO managerial teams. It is well known that financial compensation in this area is far lower than the job market average.
Organisation builder leaders have to offer an attractive project that corresponds to the institution’s cause and matches the team members’ ideals and aspirations. They must demonstrate reliable results that convince the team members, other members and collaborators that it is worthwhile to do their utmost for the cause they are supporting. Likewise, they have to nurture the atmosphere within the organisation and promote strong bonds and commitment.

**Figure 14: Characteristics of the organisation builder role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unpaid compensations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attractive mission. Mission results. Life experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality of the human team. Interpersonal relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Belonging to the steering committee. Leading the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Institutional representation beyond its functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional and personal development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible working hours, job stability, bearable pressure for results...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Skills and competencies**

- Selection and recruitment
- Building and leading teams
- Developing collaborators
- Conflict resolution
- Organisational and process design
- Change management
- Performance measurement and balanced scorecard. Accountability
- Organisational learning

**Source:** The authors
Leaders for social change

One of the challenges that leaders are faced with, in accordance with the role of the organisation builder, is related to performance measurement. They need to be able to design and manage institutional balanced scorecards, which reflect the NGO’s results and health in three areas:

1. Activities carried out (what we have done and how it was done);
2. Impact achieved (based on those activities carried out, what results achieved regarding improving the situation of the people supported and the progress made with the causes supported);
3. Capacity, in other words the means to carry out the activity (team members, social base, financial resources, etc.).

The suitable management of the balanced scorecard allows the leaders who build the organisation to link what they want to achieve in institutional terms with what has to be done in the NGO. In order to achieve this, it is essential that performance measurement is focused on institutional priorities and includes a set of important goal indicators that can be managed, from the point of view of data collection and analysis, using the organisation’s available capacities and resources.

Figure 15: Diagram of an NGO’s balanced scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES</th>
<th>Mission objectives</th>
<th>Organ. dev. objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity indicators</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity indicators</td>
<td>Y Y Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social impact indicators</td>
<td>Z Z Z</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance measurement should focus on the institutional priorities

Source: The authors
5.3. Entrepreneur role

The entrepreneur role is becoming increasingly important in NGO leadership. We often associate it with an activity that was only necessary during the organisation’s initial stages, in which the entrepreneurial vitality of the founder(s) was invaluable. On the other hand, it is only when the entrepreneurial spirit continues to be present in the organisation’s daily activity that the NGO can take advantage of the opportunities that allow it to advance in accordance with its mission and to evolve properly.

Entrepreneurial organisations focus on seeking opportunities rather than on the conservative administration of their resources. Entrepreneur leaders know how to identify and prioritise both the ideas and initiatives generated by the organisation itself and those proposed by others, and decide which are worth adopting. These are initiatives that correspond to a need or demand linked to the NGO’s values, mission, vision and strategy, which allow it to increase its social impact and/or strengthen the organisation, and can continue to be funded or can generate its own resources in the future.
In order for the entrepreneurial spirit to become rooted in the different areas of the organisation, it is not enough for a leader alone to be the referent of an entrepreneurial initiative. He/she has to create an organisational culture, which uses entrepreneurial vigour and supports the team members allowing them to experiment and run with it. It is a culture that facilitates teamwork and the open generation of ideas, but above all one that promotes the implementation of new initiatives in a context where errors are tolerated and learnt from. Another step in this direction is taken when the organisation revitalises innovation as a systematic means of obtaining better results and of promoting increasingly appropriate change.

In general, innovation is not often found in NGOs. There are several reasons for its absence, including the lack of resources in this sector, as this means insufficient space and means are generated for innovation. The fact that up to now the funders – both private and public - have wanted to receive financial reports listing what has been done with the resources but not wanted detailed information on the social impact achieved in ac-

**Figure 17: Characteristics of the entrepreneur role**

- Detects opportunities and makes them reality
- Links mission and self-funding
- Innovates and assumes risks
- Tolerates and learns from mistakes

**Skills and competencies**
- Detecting and making the most of opportunities
- Entrepreneurial initiative
- Change generation and capacity to adapt
- Creativity and innovation
- Risk analysis and assumption
- Obtaining donors and resources and making them loyal
- Frustration tolerance
- Results-oriented
ordance with the mission, has also had an impact. There is no external pressure to innovate.

Entrepreneurial leadership provides a breeding ground more suitable for producing new elements and making the working models evolve. It helps the organisation become more innovative. Indeed, lack of innovation is being recognised by NGOs as one of the weaknesses of this sector.

Example: Fundación Pro Vivienda Social [Pro Social Housing Foundation]

The Fundación Pro Vivienda Social is an Argentinean foundation led by Raúl Zavalía. This is a good example of an organisation that knows how to identify opportunities, make them reality and, at the same time, knows how to learn from “failures”.

The Fundación Pro Vivienda Social has worked in the metropolitan districts of Buenos Aires for around ten years. For the first five of six years after its creation, this NGO’s main task was to promote access to decent housing, granting microcredits to families in the districts that wanted to provide better living conditions.

As a result of the economic crisis that affected Argentina during the period 2000-2001, when it was impossible to withdraw cash from bank accounts during the “corralito” (economic measures taken in Argentina to stop a bank run, which led to bank accounts being frozen, etc.), The Fundación Pro Vivienda Social found that the beneficiaries of this housing could not repay the microcredits and this swamped the Foundation’s finances. They had to weather the storm by introducing different measures, including suspending the granting of new microcredits. This cancelled the expansion of their program that provided access to improved housing.

For a time, because there was at the time much new and urgent need among the populations in the districts they worked in, the NGO obtained donations to carry out projects in community allotments and other initiatives aimed at ensuring that the population’s basic needs were covered. This economic aid also enabled the NGO to continue. Nevertheless, a process of reflection was started to determine the direction the organisation should go in the future. They tried to identify new opportunities, based on the fact that this NGO’s mission was to ensure that individuals living in precarious areas could access basic rights and services such as housing, etc. and that its intervention strategy was carried out by organising and revitalising the community.

One of the problems experienced by the inhabitants of these districts was the high cost of butane. Winters are quite cold in this area and butane heaters were the most popular form of heating. Moreover, they also used butane canisters for cooking and the monthly payments were too high for the families...
5.4. Political-social role

Finally, the fourth leadership role that is of transcendental importance for NGOs is the political-social role. Up until a few years ago, this was an aspect that was only developed by the leaders of organisations dedicated to the defence of human rights or the environment, such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, SOS Racismo, etc., NGOs that mainly act through public pressure and campaigns. Today, this type of action has been incorporated into the working model of many NGOs. The political-social role properly combined with the more traditional action programs to support specific individuals, allows organisations to increase their social impact substantially.
The leaders who make this kind of contribution ensure that many people adopt the causes supported by their organisations, have an effective influence on the circles of power and build alliances for social transformation. One of the strong points is their capacity to generate a clear, convincing and mobilising argument in favour of the cause they defend and to gain allies to drive it forward. They know how to relate and negotiate with different interest groups and to influence them with a steely determination. They are usually referents for the media and their organisations stand out due to their use of new technologies to generate social mobilisation.

Attributes and skills for political-social leadership

- A personal background of dedication to the cause, which gives them legitimacy
- Ability to organise the political positioning and strategy of the cause
- Rigour and credibility in studies and proposals
- Ability to communicate, pressure and negotiate with different actors
- Knowledge of how to work with the media and the Internet
- Ability to establish and manage alliances and coalitions
In practice, the political-social role is less established in NGOs than is desirable and necessary. Despite being aware of its importance, the organisations in the sector put forward the lack of resources as justification for the relative rarity of this type of action. Actions with a political impact require time and a source of finance to be achieved. Many NGOs depend on public aid, which cannot be used for this type of action. Others have the profile of donors who are interested in traditional action programs and are not yet open to this type of activity.

In any case, one essential requirement for the effective fulfilment of this social and political leadership role is the establishment and management of alliances with other organisations. As can be seen in the following box, alliances, coalitions and networking provide the NGO with many advantages when it comes to campaigns and political pressure. Nevertheless, not all organisations are well disposed towards this kind of collaboration, nor have all the programs that they have carried out produced good results.

At this moment in time, there is a clear desire within the sector to intensify the work done as part of alliances, coalitions and networks, in the face of some resistance that has always been latent and has now become more explicit. One of the factors that causes this resistance is the fact that some NGOs have been suffering from the ‘hyper-collaboration with other organisations’ syndrome, which, when carried out without order or criteria, constitutes a notable effort without producing sufficient added value, with the wear and tear that this process entails. In the sector, NGOs do not always base decisions about which alliances, coalitions and networks they should join, on what is most strategic for the organisation, and they therefore fail to prioritise properly.
Why is it worth collaborating with other NGOs? (in campaigns and political pressure)

- NGOs’ identity and mandate: Collaboration with others
- Joining forces to tackle ambitious challenges
- Greater representation and legitimacy
- To multiply the capacity for social mobilisation and public influence
- To complement different specialities and necessary capacities
- To ensure the long-term economic sustainability of the actions
- Mutual enrichment and learning. Professional development
- To avoid the dispersal of different campaigns with virtually identical objectives
- To achieve a greater, lasting social impact
Within the framework of the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program, on 19 January 2009 the first Leadership Forum\(^{(11)}\) was held, bringing together the executive directors of 30 NGOs and non-profit organisations. In a working session, the participants analysed to what extent the four leadership roles described in the previous chapter were established in their organisations.

Firstly, they noticed that there was a consensus among the Forum participants on the decisive role played by these four roles for leadership in NGOs. When it came to determining which of them were sufficiently established in their organisations, opinions were more divided. A majority group of executive directors who participated in the Form considered that the weakest roles were the political-social one and the entrepreneur. They justified this weakness, as mentioned earlier, by the fact that daily pressures make it hard to carry out activities and develop capacities that go beyond the organisation’s main activity.

This opinion was shared by the medium-sized and small organisations, especially those whose sphere of action was more local, which make up the majority group in the third sector. However, the vision proposed by the large organisations, and mainly by those with an international dimension, presents the opposite perspective. In their opinion, the weaknesses in their organisations are found in the visionary-strategist and organisation builder roles. On the other hand, they considered that their organisations made a great impact on social transformation (political-social role), and also believed that they were enterprising and innovative organisations.
How can the weakest aspects of the sector be developed? How can the less developed roles be reinforced?

The leaders and managers of the Spanish non-profit organisations themselves\(^{(11)}\) pointed out mechanisms for boosting some of the weakest roles:

- Working with **alliances**, through platforms, especially to develop the political and social role, making a joint political impact. The joint work allows or facilitates:
  - A reduction in the dependence on the Administration (the costs are shared)
  - The indirect defence of issues (for example, certain causes are not always supported by the organisation’s members)
  - Experiences and skills can be combined for the transfer of knowledge: awareness-raising, campaigns, etc.

- **Joint areas of reflection** can be created
- Including the influential activity in the strategic plans, in order to reactivate or recover this task.
- The organisations should “empower themselves”, be aware and **recognise the capacity** that they can develop from their position and the impact that they can generate.
- Improving the area of **human resources** on a general level within the sector, one of the weakest areas currently and with the greatest need for improvement.
- Developing teams through **specific actions**, such as for example specific courses aimed at NGO managers.

One of the main challenges related to social leadership of NGOs is to ensure that the leadership is considered a critical issue that should be given priority. NGOs should value the importance of issues related to leadership and include them in their managerial training agenda. Although it is true that in the sector there is a consensus on the relation between the good leadership of organisations and their social impact, there are still certain barriers that prevent the development of the leadership capacities from receiving enough attention.

These barriers to the development of leadership are not only related to the lack of resources available for investing in this area, but also to the lack of knowledge about how to do this. This is an area in which we trust great progress will be made over the next few years and one that the
ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program aims to contribute to, by generating and spreading knowledge and creating areas for reflection and training.

Fortunately, in NGOs there are many potential leaders. It is a matter of giving them the means, space and opportunity essential to develop their capacities. This is one of the keys to NGOs managing to progress significantly in line with the social transformation objectives that they wish to attain.

**Successful leadership in NGOs**

- The ability to achieve significant results over time
- Managing to attract and retain the participants (collaborators, members, etc.) required in order to act in line with the mission
- Through an atmosphere that generates trust, empowers team members and promotes commitment to the project
- Identifying and developing real or potential leaders in the different areas of the organisation

*Source: Adapted from R. Serlavós. ESADE*
(1) Susan George

Susan George (1934) was born in the United States, and obtained French citizenship in 1994. She is president of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam (www.tni.org/), a philosopher and a political analyst. Between 1999 and the end of 2006 she was vice-president of ATTAC France (www.attac.org).

Her academic qualifications include that of Doctorate in Political Studies (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, University of Paris), undergraduate degrees in Government Studies and French (B.A. Smith College, USA) and Philosophy (Licence ès Philosophie, Sorbonne, Paris).

From 1990-95, she served on the board of Greenpeace International committee (www.greenpeace.org/international), and of Greenpeace France. She is a member of the Lisbon group/group against the Lisbon Treaty, patron of Jubileo 2000 and has acted as a consultant for several specialised United Nations agencies (FAO, UNESCO, Unicef, etc.). Her books include The Lugano Report On Preserving Capitalism in the 21st Century (Pluto Press, 1999); Faith and Credit: The World Bank’s Secular Empire (with Fabrizio Sabelli, Penguin, 1994); The Debt Boomerang (Pluto Press, 1992); Ill Fares the Land (Penguin, 1990); etc. Susan George is also the author of dozens of prefaces, journal and magazine articles, conference and seminar contributions, chapters in edited volumes etc. Her work has been widely translated; part or all exists in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Estonian, Japanese, Korean, Bengali, etc.

(Source: Wikipedia)

(2) Carles Campuzano

Born on 12 July 1964 in Barcelona. Member of the Spanish Parliament in the VI, VII and VIII terms of office (since 1996).


(Source: www.congreso.es)
(3) John Hailey

John Hailey is an independent consultant and visiting professor at City University’s Cass Business School in London. He has extensive international experience and has undertaken numerous commissions and consultancies for a wide range of clients, including NGOs, donors, governments and other institutions in over 35 countries.

Hailey was one of the founders of INTRAC and was involved in establishing INTRAC’s Praxis Program, which was set up to spread information about the development of new approaches to capacity building and managing change. His research has focused on leadership and management of NGOs and non-profit organisations, and strategic issues facing development agencies. He has published extensively, and is the co-author, along with Ian Smillie, of "Managing For Change", based on research into the success and growth of NGOs in South Asia.

(Source: www.intrac.org)

(4) INTRAC

INTRAC is a non-profit organisation working in the international development sector. It supports non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) around the world by helping to explore policy issues, and by strengthening management and organisational effectiveness.

INTRAC was founded in 1991. The original board consisted of Peter Baas, Robert Chambers, Paddy Coulter, Ian Davis, Margaret Hardiman, Malcolm Harper, Michael Harris and Elizabeth Stamp. Brian Pratt has remained the Executive Director throughout.

Vision: INTRAC seeks to increase the effectiveness of civil society organisations (CSOs) that are committed to international human development, including gender equity, the participation of the socially excluded, social justice, security and peace, all over the world.

Mission: INTRAC works in partnership with other CSOs, State, corporate and multilateral actors, to influence policy and programs working towards sustainable livelihoods in just societies.

INTRAC carries out its work through training programs, consultancy and in public events.

(Source: www.intrac.org)
(5) Peter Northouse

Peter Northouse is a professor of communication at Western Michigan University. Northouse’s original definition of Leadership appears in Leadership: Theory and practice (1997) and its subsequent editions until the fourth in 2006. The original definition is:

(Leadership is) "... a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal."

(6) Migra-Studium: www.migrastudium.org

(7) Fundación Pro Vivienda Social [Pro Social Housing Foundation]: www.fpvs.org/home.php

(8) Raúl Zavalía: Director of the Fundación Pro Vivienda Social [Pro Social Housing Foundation] and President of the Red Argentina de Instituciones de Microcrédito [Argentinean Network of Microcredit Institutions].

(9) Study carried out by McKinsey

The report entitled, The Dynamic Board: Lessons from High-Performing Nonprofits includes the results of the study carried out in 2003 by interviewing the directors or board chairs of 32 of the 100 non-profit organisations named as North America’s top performers by Worth Magazine in 2001.

The report can be consulted here:


The study is also referred to in the article, The dynamic nonprofit board, by Paul J. Jansen and Andrea R. Kilpatrick, published in the magazine The McKinsey Quarterly (2004 Number 2).

(10) Fundació Jaume Bofill [Jaume Bofill Foundation]: www.fbofill.cat

(11) Leadership forum 19/01/09

The results of the working session of the Leadership Forum of 19 January 2009, included in the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program, in which over 30 directors of the main Spanish non-profit organisations took part.
Leaders for social change
PART 2

The competencies of the leaders of Spanish NGOs

Research Results

By Amy Leaverton

With Steven Guest, Georgina Berrow and Maria Sureda collaboration
Presentation

This article summarizes the results of the research project entitled “The skills of leaders in Spanish NGOs”. This survey, part of the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership program, focused on research into leadership and the skills of the leaders of not-for-profit organizations. The working group that carried out this research complemented the information gleaned from secondary information sources by analyzing literature related to the data gathered during field work entailing interviews of 14 board members of Spanish NGOs taking part in the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership program.

See Appendix 1 for detailed information about the methodology and procedure of this research.

“I see leadership today as a question that changes the world, an action able to transform an organization, the butterfly effect. Sometimes leadership is silence. Leadership means understanding reality, working with people, collaborating with people and changing finite reality, infinite reality; close reality and virtual reality. That’s leadership.”

Excerpt of participant’s interview
1. Introduction

1.1. What is Good Leadership?

As anyone who has ever studied or taught leadership would admit, reaching consensus on the definition of “good leadership” is an ambitious, if not impossible task. The concept of leadership is highly complex; it is contingent upon other concepts which in themselves are equally difficult to define. For example, in defining “good leadership”, we also need to define “good followership”, as well as the more existential question of whether or not ethical behavior – viewed as the coherent link between the values laid out in the mission and vision of the organization, and the leader’s own personal values – is necessary for “good leadership”, and, if so, we would also need to define the parameters of an “ethical” personal value system to close the loop with certain credibility. In other words, trying to define good leadership makes about as much sense as trying to define friendship, freedom, love, spirit or soul. In this light, striving to provide guidelines on “what to do” and “competencies to have” in order to be a “good leader” at best trivialize the concept of leadership, and at worst can even go so far as to permanently demotivate individuals who learn that they fall short of key “requirements” on the proverbial “leadership competency list”, particularly if this list includes – as several of them do – supposed “characteristic leadership personality traits”, deemed by many as genetic and therefore “immutable”.

With respect to our research, this is a very important point to clarify: we did not set out to define “good leadership”, but rather attempted to gather data in a methodical, qualitative way in order to gain insight into what these leaders have done, what they have learned from their experience, and how this has influenced their roles as leaders and their opinions on good leadership practices.

Due to the relative newness of research on leadership in non-profit organizations, the lack of a solid database allows us to do little more than infer, with limited support, about the nature of non-profit leadership competencies. Most research on leadership to date has examined for-profit business leaders. As a result, NGO researchers often use these data as scaffolding for their research designs. This approach has advan-
Advantages and disadvantages: one advantage is that by contrasting the two kinds of leadership, we can broaden our perspective and acquire a clearer view of what does not comprise NGO leadership.

As a point of departure, this approach is pragmatic since, simply put, one cannot see black if one has never seen white. Furthermore, non-profit leadership and for-profit leadership are in many ways complementary: for-profit leadership teaches us another set of management skills, such as performance measurement, strategy alignment, new systems implementation, and other key tactical and operational skills; skills that non-profit leaders confess to lack and need. By contrast, non-profit leaders teach us a different set of skills, such as charismatic determination, “walking the talk” and a valuable insight into what it really feels like to be passionate about a vision, and how transmitting it passionately becomes a matter of course.

One would not question the usefulness of these two very different knowledge areas for the benefit of both types of leadership. However, a clear disadvantage to this approach is that until we manage to widen our database, comparative studies like these will continue to be the norm, and although they have been invaluable in laying down the foundation for research on leadership competencies, they are also distancing us from the unbiased freshness of inductive, qualitative research. In this light, the aim of our study is to explore what NGO leadership is about rather than what it is not about.
2. Literature review

2.1. Effective Leadership: What is it and where does it come from?

Over the last four decades, our understanding of leadership has been shaped and influenced by the needs and demands of a changing society. Initial research on leadership was designed with the undisputed assumption that leaders were born, and that a certain genetic predisposition enabled these individuals to effectively and charismatically lead others. Consequently, a great deal of research centered on personality traits, in particular, the genetic predisposition to “charisma” and its link to what came to be known as “transformational leadership”. This, as its name suggests, is a style of leadership in which the leader’s focus is on “transforming” employees to help and encourage each other, and care for the organization as a whole in a selfless way. It is characterized by a highly charged motivating skill, which gains the moral support and consequent superior performance of the individuals being led. In the last decade, however, the belief in innate leadership qualities has been seriously questioned. Allan Kaplan, for example, suggests that leaders are not born but developed, and that it is experience and the ability to reflect on experience, which is vital for leadership development.

In their research on personal-best leadership experiences, Kouzes and Posner discovered that ordinary people who lead others through pioneering journeys all follow similar paths. They also conclude that leadership is more about practice than personality. In their book Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, they suggest a model for leadership consisting of 5 key areas: modeling the way, inspire a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encourage the heart. They comment:
Similarly, Jim Collins, in his book *From Good to Great*, which recounts the results of a five-year study on what distinguishes “great” organizations from simply “good” ones, claims that leadership is the key. He describes a “Level Five” leader as someone who “builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will.” Although he doesn’t claim to have the answer to how to become a great leader, he does suggest that it is probably not completely tied to genetics.

Another very influential factor in changing attitudes to effective leadership is the popularization of Emotional Intelligence (EI). Ever since the publication of Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has gradually earned the respect of the academic and scientific community. With increasingly more sophisticated and precise measurement tools, mounting quantitative evidence is pointing towards the acquisition of EI competencies rather than resignedly ‘writing them off’ as immutable components of one’s genetic make-up.

With this new and more hopeful perspective, characteristics such as “charisma” are now taking on a broader, more inclusive definition. Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee point out that the evidence now available to show competencies can be cultivated and learned has also significantly

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2 Collins, J. *From Good to Great*.
changed the way Leadership Development Programs are designed\(^2\). With respect to development, Henry Mintzberg concludes that the future of leadership lies in thoughtful, humble leaders who have the ability of “engaging others”. This concept of “engaging”, in other words, seems to be no more than “charisma” wearing a slightly different hat, and is now best explained by emotional intelligence rather than one’s genetic inheritance.

This new perspective has led to what is now referred to as the “competency approach” to leadership. Its approach reflects a desire to identify and harness leadership competencies and management skills (Mintzberg, 2006; Hailey, 2006), which we will now turn to in the following section.

### 2.2. Leadership Competencies

Certain themes have repeatedly surfaced in relation to effective leadership. These include the clusters (or groupings of related skills) of vision and goal-setting, interpersonal skills, self-knowledge, and technical competence (Thach and Thompson 2007, Bennis 1987, Trinka 2004). Indeed, recent studies have validated this – especially in the first two areas. Trinka (2004) in a review of 1,000 managers in a large government agency, and the Corporate Leadership Council’s Learning & Development Roundtable (2003) working with responses from 8,500 employees and managers from for-profit organizations, found that emphasis on developing others and communication (interpersonal cluster) and performance management (vision and goal-setting cluster) can help organizations outperform their competitors. Recent studies converge in their findings of four competency clusters related to leadership. Common competencies encased in these clusters include: integrity/honesty, developing others, technical competence, communication, diversity consciousness, political

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savvy, strategic/visionary thinking, customer focus, interpersonal skills, team leadership, results-orientation, change management, problem-solving, decision-making, influence skills, and conflict management (Trinka, 2004; Spencer and Spencer, 1993). More recently, emotional intelligence has appeared as a major figure in leadership research, with findings clearly indicating the importance of emotional intelligence competencies in order to lead in an inspirational and “resonating” way (Boyatzis, McKee, Goleman, Kets de Vries, Hailey).

Thach and Thompson’s research⁴ shows that differences between non- and for-profit sectors are a preliminary indication that organizational typology might influence the types of leadership competencies important for driving results. Their findings are based on structured interviews with 300 leaders; 142 from non-profit and governmental organizations and 158 from for-profit industry organizations. The participants were asked to choose the leadership competency they thought would drive positive results in the organization, as well as describing the key factors that would help them achieve these results. Analysis of the data revealed a “quite remarkable” degree of similarity between non-profit and for-profit leaders on what skills they viewed as being critical. The top three competencies chosen by all leaders in the sample were honesty and integrity, being collaborative, and developing others. Broadly speaking, they suggest that there is a set of common leadership competencies that are appropriate for any type of organization, whether it be for-profit, non-profit, or governmental. However, there is still room for development in the competency categories, especially in the realm of organization or culture-specific competencies.

Shameem Siddiqi gives an account of research of first and second-line leaders in NGOs in the UK and Bangladesh, with the purpose of providing data to help leadership development of second-line leaders⁵. The bulk of data is gleaned from interviews with first and second-line leaders, and this reveals two perspectives: characteristics of NGO leaders as seen by

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⁴ THACH; THOMPSON (2007) “Trading places – examining Leadership competencies between for profit vs. public and non-profit leaders”.

themselves, and how leaders are seen by others. The results for leaders as seen by themselves are as follows. They are consultative and builders of vision through the involving of others, effective communicators, and upholders and promoters of the organization, rather than of themselves. They are open-minded to (and implementers of) change, and committed to quality. Democratic and learning-oriented, they are largely accepted by others, and have the know-how to approach policy level. They think and network globally, but act locally. They are motivators, listeners, tolerant, receptive to the views of others, while not waiting eternally to act if they feel sure of what to do. The results for leaders as seen by other staff revealed the following. They are not only seen as leaders but also professional managers. They are risk takers, listeners, learners, innovators, patient, flexible and do not dominate. As good communicators and diplomats, motivators and guides, while being friendly, caring and supportive with staff, they have a lot of confidence in themselves. They encourage and are open-minded to criticism. They respect and value others, especially frontline staff and the underprivileged. They have a strong sense of ownership of the organization and maintain a good balance between “hard” and “soft” styles of management.

Canadian NGO veteran of 30 years, Bruce Hardy, describes the evolution of the NGO sector in the following way. He emphasizes that non-profits are no longer small outfits and are in fact major job employers for the Canadian population. In addition, cutbacks on financial support, as well as scandals regarding accountability, have driven agencies to look at new ways to survive. As such, non-profits have been forced to sharpen their business skills as organizations get increasingly more complex. He describes trends such as: more collaboration with the for-profit sector; more formalized and sophisticated fund raising; more focus on the fiscal bottom line; more diversity in services, service delivery and staffing; and boards of directors looking more closely at organizational leadership. He has witnessed the evolution of a new leadership skill set which consists of vision and strategic planning, a desire to innovate, a willingness to take considered risks, the ability to create and sustain growth, to delegate and collaborate, excellent communication skills, and risk management and crisis intervention skills.
With respect to development aims, human resource specialists within organizations are placing more effort on measuring, monitoring, appraising and comparing core competencies, and as a result, a wide range of competency frameworks now exist to identify the blend of skills and competencies needed by leaders (Hailey 2006). This effort may be explained by three different trends: changes in non-profit organizations, changes in the way they are led, and changes in the available learning technologies6. Arriving at similar conclusions, Michael Edwards states:

"In the past, NGOs have been insulated from the costs of non-learning by a loyal but relatively uninformed donor base and by their ideological popularity with government funding agencies. But in a future dominated by increasing competition, demands from donors for ‘results’, closer scrutiny of the NGO world by its critics, more transparency and greater accountability, this is unlikely to continue."

2.3. Emotional Intelligence Competencies and Leadership Development

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to one’s natural ability to sense, understand and learn from one’s own and others’ emotions. Individuals with a highly developed emotional intelligence are often inspirational because they have an ability to motivate people through certain behaviors typically associated with emotional intelligence. These behaviors, or “indicators”, are linked to self-awareness, self-confidence, self-management, and social awareness, the latter of which facilitates managing diversity.

Daniel Goleman’s research on competency models from 188 companies clearly showed that individuals considered as the organization’s most outstanding managers demonstrated highly developed emotional intelligence, and that emotional intelligence proved to be twice as important

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7 EDWARDS, M. "Organizational Learning in Non-governmental Organizations: What Have We Learned?", The Earthscan reader on NGO Management., p. 331-344; p.332.
as cognitive intelligence in predicting excellent performance. John Hailey, when referring to EI suggests the same trend in NGO leaders:

"NGO leaders seem to be more naturally predisposed to emotional intelligence or at least have some advantage in acquiring it, and that this ability separates them out from leaders in other sectors who do not display this skill as universally."

Until very recently emotional intelligence has been difficult to measure and therefore hard to prove as influential in leadership, but owing to the rigorous work of researchers such as, Richard Boyatzis and Daniel Goleman, among others, this is no longer the case, and we now have measurement tools readily available to us in the form of 360 questionnaires and other psychometric inventories.

Although there is still some disagreement on the precise definition of emotional intelligence, there seems to be an overall consensus on core characteristics. Here we offer some well-accepted definitions:

1) Salovey and Mayer define emotional intelligence as:

“... the ability to understand feelings in the self and others, and to use these feelings as informational guides for thinking and action.”

2) Daniel Goleman says:

“... the essence of emotional intelligence is the knowing and managing well all of our emotional peaks and valleys, which in turn stimulates empathy and allows positive, authentic communication flows with others”

The work of competencies has revolutionized the way companies hire, train, and evaluate performance in their employees. It originated from the seminal work of Harvard professor, David McClelland, in the 1970s, which challenged the widespread belief that success in management depended on superior cognitive skills, and therefore the idea that hiring individuals with high IQs is a guarantee of superior performance.

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8 See GOLEMAN, D. What Makes a Leader? HBR.
Through McClelland’s research, this belief was gradually dismantled as it was proven repeatedly that high IQs did not correlate with high performance. By contrast, what did seem to matter for success was what was termed interpersonal skills, now referred to by many as emotional intelligence competencies.

By drawing on David McClelland’s work and carrying out their own research, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee claim that emotional intelligence is a critical component of effective leadership because it helps leaders to motivate their teams better, and this can have a transformational influence on the team members, enabling them to perform effectively. Since the publication of Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* many other researchers, scholars, human resource practitioners and related professionals have joined the ranks and contributed significantly to our current knowledge of emotional intelligence and its relationship to leadership. Other researchers have elaborated on previous studies and have come up with newer and more refined EI frameworks. For example, Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) developed a model for emotional intelligence which was a further revision of their initial 1999 model. The original hypothesis was extended to include the idea that some components of emotional intelligence could be developed through training and experience. The overall result was that emotional intelligence, or at least parts of it, could be developed by training over a period of time.

When asked in an interview how he identified successful leaders, Manfred Kets de Vries, Professor of Leadership at Insead University and seasoned psychoanalyst of CEOs, responded:

*"The first thing I look for is emotional intelligence –basically, how selfreflective is the person? Of course, emotional intelligence involves a lot more than just being introspective... In general, emotionally intelligent leaders make better team players, and are more effective at motivating themselves and others.*“


Henry Mintzberg, world renowned leadership scholar and author, speaks of emotional intelligence as a “participative, inclusive and engaging endeavor”. He comments:

"Effective leadership is engaged leadership: the person engages him or herself and in doing so engages others. Such people are deeply involved. They commit to their industry, its people-seriously, quietly. They stay around to live the consequences of their actions."  

Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee help us to understand this same concept in their book *Resonant Leadership*. In this book, they meticulously outline four domains of emotional intelligence which they claim are related to inspirational leadership, or as they call it, "resonating with others". The domains are the following: **Self-awareness, self-management, social conscience and relationship management.**

Their findings reveal an intertwining connection between the four domains and the emotional intelligence competencies that comprise them. In their words:

" … our research has highlighted the relationship between all the different skills, a relationship that we could sum up by saying that self-awareness enables empathy and self-management and that a balanced combination of the two makes effective relationship management possible."  

Reviewing the literature, it would therefore appear that there is a strong emotional intelligence component involved in leadership (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003; Goleman, 1995; Boyatzis and Goleman 1998; etc.) although it seems to be more prevalent among non-profit leaders than their private sector counterparts (Hailey).

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3. Methodology

The purpose of our study was to create a preliminary code which could be used to identify Leadership skills relevant to non-profit Leadership Development Programs. The data collection consisted of two separate techniques: the Critical Incident Interview (CII) and Thematic Coding of Qualitative Data. The first technique, the Critical Incident Interview, is a journalistic-like technique used to identify behaviors related to specific experiences. It comprises a 45 to 60 minute interview in which the interviewee is asked to recount with examples and actual experiences where they felt both effective and ineffective in their performance. The second technique, Thematic Coding of Qualitative Data, consists of methodically extracting themes from transcribed interviews with the final aim of developing a code. An added qualitative component based on opinions of the leaders on questions pertinent to leadership in the NGO sector is also added to embellish the results of the coding component.

It is important to emphasize that the current study is intended as a preliminary study, with view to carrying out a larger study (300 interviewees) in the near future. The reasons for this are the following: first, a larger sample gives us a larger database and therefore the code based on this database is more detailed, more reliable, and more resistant to change. Second, although laborious and time-consuming, qualitative coding is the most rigorous method used to create a code since it is based on non-static data gleaned from Critical Incidents, i.e. what was actually done (hence ‘behaviors’) rather than what was said to have been done, as one might encounter in data extracted from questionnaires. Third, due to the labor intensive nature of these techniques, a pilot study is a pragmatic first step since it allows for refinement of the coding and overall design for the larger study to follow. Our next challenge is to expand our current code into a definitive one with the hope that it will be a useful, practical tool for future Leadership Development Programs in non-profit organizations.
3.1. Critical Incidents

Critical Incident interviews (CII) were used as the methodology to access information about the type of leadership displayed by the interviewees. We used semi-structured CII developed from methodology used to generate qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1982, McClelland, Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, and Flanagan, 1954). The interviewees were asked to describe 3 aspects or skills-related characteristics of their leadership that they regarded as important for their professional careers. Interviewees were then asked to explain two specific events related to the aforementioned leadership skills that allowed them to develop the skill in question. Specifically, they were invited to explain what they did during the incident and what happened. As noted in Boyatzis in *Transforming Qualitative Information* (1998), the interviewer is acting as a journalist. The 45-to-60 minute interview was recorded digitally and then a written transcript was generated to help with the analysis. Interviewees were given a privacy contract to sign, guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity. The interviewer was particularly interested in finding examples of behaviors related to skills in question and the motivations for these behaviors. The analysis of the transcripts was aimed at identifying themes that could help explain the skill sets used by leaders in the NGO sector. The coding process is essentially a “sifting through” process in which qualitative data – in this case 14 interview transcripts – is reviewed by two or more individuals who trained in coding Critical Incidents and whose aim it is to...
create a code. This involves reaching a consensus on four sequential steps: first, an initial sift through the data for common themes; second, going through data again to find sets of behaviors “indicators” related to this theme; third, sifting through data again to cluster these behaviors into identifiable skills or “competencies”; and finally, sifting through the data a final time to verify that the code is applicable, making adjustments where necessary (For a full detailed description of the coding technique used in this study, refer to Transforming Qualitative Information, (Boyatzis 1998).
4. Results and Discussion

This section begins with an overview of the most commonly identified competencies in the leadership literature and how this matches with our research results. It is followed by a detailed discussion of the competencies identified in our sample, which we clustered into four leadership-related themes. As mentioned, these themes or "clusters" are made up of indicators, i.e. a composite of behaviors that, when found together, indicate the presence of a particular competency. Most documented competencies consist of two to four behavioral indicators. The competencies identified in our research follow the same rule.

Following our discussion of competencies, we then address the qualitative results of leaders’ opinions concerning two questions. The questions posed were the following:

- What have you learned about leadership from experience?
- What are the three most important competencies for a leader?

4.1. Similarities

How do these results compare to earlier research on competencies? First of all, consistent with results from previous studies (Hailey, Hardy, Thach and Thompson, Smiley and Hailey, 2001; Bolton and Abdy, 2003; Bilimoria and Godwin, 2005), our leaders displayed an unusually broad range of competencies typically associated with leaders in non-profit organizations (Bolton and Abdy, 2003). These included:

- integrity/honesty
- developing others
- political savvy
- strategic/visionary thinking
- interpersonal skills
- business skills
- team leadership
- results-orientation
- change management
- problem-solving
- decision-making
- influence skills
- conflict management coherency
- Empathy
- self-confidence
- skilled networking
- organizational awareness
- commitment to quality and rigor (determination)
- delegation skills,
- flexibility
- a desire to innovate
- and emotional resilience
Secondly, it is also interesting to note that our leaders also displayed a seemingly natural ability to balance internal management and external influencing skills. Thirdly, consistent with characteristics of most NGO leaders reported in research literature, our leaders also stood out from leaders in for-profit and government organizations in emotional intelligence, i.e., they consistently and clearly manifested empathy, encouraging meaningful dialogue, adeptness at inspiring and convincing the sceptical, and an exceptional ability to listen, (Smiley and Hailey, 2001). This final quality is essential for a participatory or “distributed” leadership style, in that this style requires both sharp listening skills and an ability to respond to what is being said (Hailey). Figure 1 provides an overview of the four competency clusters, the competencies contained in these clusters, and the behavioral indicators comprising these competencies as gleaned from critical incident interviews.

**Figure 1: Competencies clusters**

**Cluster 1: Inspirational Leadership:** The ability to inspire others through determination, self-confidence, articulate communication, and steadfast adherence to mission, vision and values of the organization.

1) **Articulate Communication:** Precision and Elegance in Language Expression
   - Use metaphors or analogies to explain facts or give information.
   - Systemic Thinking – See the relationships between different events, distinguish between cause and effect and explain them in a simple but attractive way.

2) **Self-Confidence:** To be sure of one’s worth and abilities
   - Expresses oneself in a confident and decided manner
   - Bold expression of true, authentic self; admits to flaws and vulnerability yet determined to overcome obstacles

3) **Coherency:** Fierce Adherence in transmission of Vision and Values:
   - Persistent, intentional reference to mission, values and vision through verbal means and written communication
   - Walks the talk
Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs

4) **Self-awareness:** Understand one’s own emotions and be aware of their impact. Understand individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Is aware of how feelings and behavior affect the individual and others
- Is aware of strengths and weaknesses

5) **Empathy:** Understand others’ emotions and viewpoints, and take a genuine interest in their concerns.
- Offer help based on an understanding of others’ needs and feelings
- Listen carefully.
- Let others work their own way without imposing your style

Cluster 2: **Emotional Intelligence:** The ability to perceive and manage one’s own and others’ emotions

Cluster 3: **Business Acumen:** the ability to make well-balanced, appropriate decisions based on experience, information, and analytical reasoning.

7) **Business Acumen:**
- Good knowledge of how all aspects of the organization work
- Be up to date as regards possible changes in policies, practices, trends and other information that affects the organization
- Understand how strategies and tactics work in the market and how they affect the organization.

8) **Systemic thinking:**
- See the relationships between different events, distinguish between cause and effect and explain them in a simple but attractive way

9) **Pattern Recognition:**
- Explain new situations by analyzing old situations of a different type

Cluster 4: **Shared Leadership and Building and sustaining motivated, autonomous teams:** Developing others through recognition, constructive criticism, accurate identification of strengths and weaknesses, and the delegation of tasks to encourage self-confidence and autonomy.

10) **Develop others:** Promote the skills of others
- Acknowledge successes; make them think about failure so they learn
- Pinpoint and acknowledge others’ strengths and assign profiles based on them
- At first, spend a lot of time with the new team with plenty of meetings to listen and create trust
Leaders for social change

4.1.1. Cluster One: Inspirational Leadership

According to Bilimoria and Godwin (2005) current research on leadership emphasizes the importance of inspiring passion in others. Some of the characteristics that leaders embody to stimulate this passion are: a positive vision, inspiring core values, emotional intelligence, courage, and an engaging and inclusive leadership style.

Articulate Communication

When coding the transcripts, this competency was clearly the most frequent, with a total of 14 leaders verbalizing this view, as well as exemplifying it through critical incidents. This ability to inspire others through methodical, articulate, and value driven communication is a hallmark of effective leadership. With few exceptions, our leaders were extremely precise with language in all ways. Particularly effective as an influential technique is the constant use of metaphors. Our leaders used metaphors regularly to make a point, to provide the interviewer with a ‘feel’ for things, or to flash an image across the mind, thus making their stories more memorable. The use of the metaphor is legendary from the most prominent speeches of ancient Greek philosophers to the most powerful and influential leaders of today. Metaphors captivate, convince, illustrate, and project colorful, memorable images on the minds of the listeners, and our leaders were all masterful in this technique.

11) Team work and co-operation: Co-operate and create a team spirit

- Collaborate by sharing plans, information and resources. Create an identity and team spirit.
- Create an identity and team spirit
- Delegate confidently
Systems Thinking and Pattern Recognition in Articulate Communication

Both Systems Thinking and Pattern Recognition are cognitive skills believed to be necessary for effective leadership (Boyatzis). Systems thinking stems from the belief that understanding a part is best approached by viewing it in connection with the workings of the whole. Holistic medicine is a good example of the operational manifestation of this belief. A complex engine is also systemic: it has many separate components performing different functions, but as the parts are all in contact with each other, the engine gains higher sensitivity. In the management arena, it is logical to conclude that sound strategic decisions would be impossible to make without Systems Thinking. It is this systemic perspective that enable leaders to select, connect, organize, summarize, and succinctly express complex, multi-faceted data into a meaningful, free flowing whole. Similarly, systemic thinking lays the groundwork for managing the vast network of policy makers, donors, volunteers, and other satellite entities in connection with the larger, global political context of non-profits.

Pattern recognition is the act of taking in raw data and taking an action based on the category of the data. Politicians, economists, philosophers, and literary intellectuals use this skill when identifying trends. Our leaders, in addition to the above-mentioned use of the metaphor, (in itself a recognizable pattern and highly effective for influential communication, as mentioned previously) often drew on general historical events as analogies to recount the history of some significant aspect of the organization, usually a strategic change of some sort.

Self-Confidence

When individuals express themselves authentically and confidently, it has a magnetizing effect on others. The ability to inspire through unflattering precision in speech is a clear indication of firmly grounded self-confidence. When such individuals transmit messages to their teams, it is usually accompanied by lucid transparency on all matters, but this is particularly the case when referring to their own personal strengths and weaknesses. Since there is a collective - albeit often subconscious - awareness of the wisdom gained from confronting one’s frailties, candid-
ness about vulnerability can often be a sign of a compelling inner strength, of an ability to manage conflict and doubt and demonstrates a bold approach toward the self, the organization, and the global environment at large. In addition, those who believe themselves worthy of respect transmit a calm, genuine and perceptive regard for others. By seeking honest feedback, knowing exactly what they can and cannot do, they don’t get themselves in too far over their heads and so do not run the risk of being absorbed in unconstructive self-criticism. As a consequence, mental space is freed up for constructive thinking and the collective benefit of all, i.e. they make use of their reflective spaces for inclusion rather than exclusion. Our leaders all showed this deep self-awareness in a positive and constructive way, an awareness they believed to have gained from self-reflection, trial and error, and the hard lessons learned from failure. This vulnerable authenticity is a powerful way to transmit the vision and values of the organization, through a genuine sense of purpose.

**Coherency and walking the talk**

Our leaders were all very coherent, displaying a steadfast adherence to the mission, vision and values of the organization, and consistently emphasized the importance of transmitting this message to their teams both verbally and by leading by example. This ‘walking the talk’ seem to be a matter of standard practice to our leaders When coding the transcripts, this competency was clearly the most frequent; virtually all of our leaders verbalized this view and exemplified it frequently through critical incidents.

**4.1.2. Cluster Two: Emotional Intelligence**

**Self Awareness**

“At some point then, in spite of a stubborn desire to protect myself from scrutiny, in spite of the periodic impulse to abandon the entire project, what has found its way onto these pages is a record of a personal journey – a boy’s search for his father, and through that search a workable meaning for his life as a black American.”

*Obama, 2007, pg. xvi*
It has been mentioned previously that emotional intelligence sets NGO leaders apart from first and second sector leaders, giving them that visionary quality so characteristic of non-profit leaders. This of course begs the question, “Which competencies can be developed and which cannot?” There is no clear-cut answer to this question. However, research does suggest that most competencies can be developed through behavior modification, although some, like drive, perseverance, and emotional resistance - all evidenced in our leaders - are less amenable to change since they are believed to be personality traits. Nevertheless, we support and uphold the view that self-awareness is the single most generative competency in connection with effective leadership and we observed this with unmasked clarity in our leaders. The term “generative” refers to engendering something, encouraging it, planting the seed for more growth. In this respect, “generativity” applied to competencies, refers to the high probability that heightened self-awareness, for example, leads to empathy, which in turn leads to developing others, which in turn leads to inspirational leadership, and so on and so forth. Simply put, Self-Awareness is the river’s flow; without it, growth stagnates and the rivers die. For organizations, this translates into unmotivated lethargic teams who are resistant to change and have little or no personal involvement in their organization. For non-profit organizations, where alignment with values is the main motivational thrust, absence of personal involvement is simply not an option. In other words, personal commitment is the very essence of the NGO organization; without it, meaningful and mindful intent cease to exist and the organization spirals down with the maelstrom. As far as training is concerned, it is not realistic to expect a Leadership Development Program by itself to transform and endow an organization with experienced leadership talent in a matter of days, weeks or even months. It is not, however, unrealistic for self-awareness to be improved in this period.

Self awareness, not surprisingly, goes hand in hand with emotional self control, since if one knows oneself, one knows his or her limits and therefore steers clear of situations which involve walking the emotional tightrope. And although the EI competency of self-control was not captured in our research, we suspect that our leaders all have it as a by-product of their self-awareness. When referring to emotional intelligence
competency of self-control, Richard Boyatzis, Professor and Chair of Organizational Psychology at Case Western University and well-known scholar on leadership and emotional intelligence, suggests that emotional intelligence has a contagious effect on people:

“People who are in control of their feelings and impulses are able to create environments of trust and fairness. Also, Emotional Self-Control has a trickle down effect: no-one wants to be known as a hothead when the boss isn’t. Also, fewer bad moods at the top mean fewer throughout the organization. ESC is contagious in a good way! Politics and infighting decrease and performance rises. Talent flocks to these kinds of organizations, by the same token, organizations that don’t have it, lose this talent.”

Our leaders all transmitted this very same calm and exemplified it in the critical incident interviews. It was particularly common to hear them say that they knew they had to “relinquish efficiency for empathy”, meaning that they had to hold back from displaying impatience with the excruciating snail’s pace that others seemed to be working. All of our leaders admitted that this was initially a very real problem, but that they knew that making an effort to rise above this frustration would somehow pay off, even though they couldn’t explain why. From a research perspective, this cannot be considered an indicator of the competency of self-control, but it can be offered as food for thought.

Empathy

Our leaders were and are very good, empathetic listeners. They mostly attributed these skills to “the practical acquisition of a need” but confessed that it takes discipline to resist the urgent need for “quick efficiency” so as to reach the comfort zone of genuine, non-judgmental listening. In the well-known book *Difficult Conversations*, authors Stone, Patton and Heen (2000) comment that listening is only powerful when it is authentic and that authenticity stems from being genuinely curious about what you are listening to. This of course begs the question, “So how do you become curious if you just simply are *not*? The authors suggest that before authentic listening can occur, we need to pay close attention to our inner voice. By doing this we become aware of our thought patterns and thus enable ourselves to manage our inner voice. It is only then that we can put it aside and focus 100% on the speaker. To kindle
our curiosity we can approach our listening as a learning exercise. Another way to become genuinely curious is to keep focused on the purpose of the conversation, always having it at close aim. These techniques don’t always work, for example, they will not work if you are besieged by intense emotions, such as betrayal or rage; love or euphoria. They conclude that managing our internal voice is no easy task but that it is the first step towards authentic, empathetic listening. The word “empathy” which means “to feel with” is the root of all compassion, a stirring of the soul. Through empathy we help ourselves and others to learn; we peel away false layers and let others in. Empathy is indispensable in holding relationships and communities together; without empathy, fear and suspicion flourish and love wanes.

Returning to the often asked question of if these skills can be learned, Richard Boyatzis gives evidence - gleaned from a 10-year longitudinal of MBA students who had gone through a leadership training program containing development of emotional intelligence competencies - that clearly demonstrates that they can be developed. Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis in their book *Primal Leadership* (1998) give further evidence of our ability to develop emotional intelligence.

### 4.1.3. Cluster Three: Business Acumen

Business acumen might be defined as making cost effective decisions while at the same time adding value, maintaining motivational levels, keeping sight of the company’s strategic objectives, and ensuring that high standards of quality are maintained. Actions such as accepting accountability for results, setting measurable standards of achievement, providing regular indicators of these achievements, and mobilizing strengths of individuals for a common goal, all require business acumen. All of our leaders exemplified these actions in different ways through critical incidents. It would seem quite reasonable to infer that the orchestration of the complex array of indicators involved in business acumen necessitate both management and leadership experience.
Pattern Recognition

The myriad ever-changing factors all simultaneously involved in running a business are like the fine workings of the chain-of-command movements in our bodies, all the way from our brains to our limbs. For example, if we had to perform the colossal mental task of consciously thinking of every single movement necessary to write the letters ‘F’, then little would ever get written (certainly not this paper), but fortunately this does not happen to us; instead we gradually acquire habits which help us to streamline our actions, which is what makes our lives, as well as our businesses, easier to manage. Business acumen is just an example of the practical application of our natural born adaptive devices which are engineered to make our lives more efficient, easier, safer, and more reliable.

Concerning training, in order to respond to new stimulus in a real business dilemma -such as those that occur in any business on any given day- and then make a decision based on that stimulus, one cannot rely on training alone; training, although useful for grasping the conceptual backdrop for business acumen -i.e. cost systems, strategy, performance measures, mobilizing talent- does not provide enough challenging, real-time events for us to experientially establish a pattern in our minds. Without patterns, we would always have to go back to step one. Fortunately, the human mind is not that inefficient. We mentioned previously that pattern recognition is the act of taking in raw data and taking an action based on the category of the data. Pattern recognition is part of our hard-wiring; it is the roadwork for habits, which in themselves are automatic, cognitively energy efficient responses. Thanks to habits, there is always mental capacity freed up for newer, more energy consuming learning.

Systemic Thinking

In the realms of management, it is logical to conclude that it would be impossible to take well-founded, strategic decisions without the aid of systemic thinking. It is precisely the systemic viewpoint of leaders that enables them to select, link up, organize, summarize and succinctly ex-
press complex, many-sided information as a significant, free-flowing whole. Similarly, systemic thinking enables the groundwork needed to manage the enormous network of politicians, donors, volunteers and other satellite entities within the wider, global political context of not-for-profit organizations. All our leaders clearly demonstrated this skill in both communication and their strategic organization.

4.1.4. Cluster Four: Shared Leadership and Building motivated, autonomous teams

Some of the more recent literature on leadership in non-profit and public organizations has focused on participative management as a way for leaders to improve organizational performance and employee satisfaction (Kim, 2002). Similarly, other researchers support the relational or team-based approach to leadership in which there is a shared sense of purpose and ownership of issues at all levels of the organization. In this regard, our leaders would more than likely agree with Henry Mintzberg when he speaks of “just enough leadership”. In a recent article where he addresses the future of leadership, Mintzberg questions the feasibility of our current “one-man-only” leadership model. He comments:

"Enough Leadership, the assumption is that every organization with a problem needs new leadership, more leadership. I believe many of them have too much leadership. They need less leadership, maybe just enough leadership. Some years ago (1977), Fortune magazine reported that "In four years, Gerstner has added more than $40 billion to IBM’s share value". All by himself! Of course leadership matters. And of course leadership can make a difference. But how often does this get magnified into a tautology: show us a successful organization and we will show you a great leader. So much easier than trying to find out what really went on. Where leadership does matter, as it probably did in Gerstner’s case, what kind of leadership is that? Is it the heroic leadership so commonly portrayed in the press? Gary Hamel’s account in the Harvard Business Review ("Waking Up IBM", July-August, 2000) about how Gerstner really did it—at least with respect to the company’s entry into e-business—tells a different story. A programmer with an idea joined up with an open-minded staff manager who had more insight than budget; together they assembled a group that drove IBM into e-business. And what role did Gerstner play? When he finally heard about the initiative, he encouraged it. That’s all. Instead of setting direction, he supported the direction setting of others. He provided less leadership, but appropriate leadership. Just enough leadership.”

Mintzberg, 1999
Pearce and Conger, in Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership (2003) reiterate this same view and offer the following their own definition of leadership:

"... a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both... Leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals instead of centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts in the role of a superior."

They raise an interesting point of confusing leaders with leadership and suggest that by emphasizing the individual in leadership, we inadvertently conclude that everyone else is a "follower". In their own words, "The intention of leadership may be to empower other people, but its effect is often to disempower them." According to Pearce and Conger, this disempowerment can be undermining to organizations and communities and the authors invite us to reframe the entire concept of leadership to what they call "distributed leadership", where leadership roles are shared as conditions and capabilities change. In essence, they encourage us to rethink our organizations as "collective communities", since the "community" is effectively a collective social process and one in natural harmony with the tides of change.

Developing others: identifying strengths and allocating jobs accordingly (delegating)

All our leaders were used to acknowledging the success of their team members and making them think about their failures in order to learn from them. Another of their common practices was to spend a great deal of time getting to know each team member personally in order to pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses. Something else our leaders often did was to hold frequent meetings at regular intervals in order to consolidate and motivate the team and bond with it.

Building motivated, autonomous teams

In line with shared leadership, all our leaders shared information and resources extensively and sought ideas about plans and strategy. To mo-
tivate their teams, they emphasized the need to create an identity of their own, and often managed to do so by writing some sort of document together, emphasizing the organization’s values and mission, thereby creating both a verbal and written team spirit.

Another of our leaders’ characteristic features was to place great emphasis on the ability to delegate leadership. They admitted that they had acquired this skill mainly through experience. Out of all the shared leadership competencies, delegation is one of the most exemplary of the generative dynamics of clustered emotional intelligence competencies. If we examine delegation, we see that it requires:

- self-confidence (in the event that someone outperforms you yet you manage not to perceive this as a threat)
- self-control (in the event that the performance is not what you expected so you find yourself in the position of having to loop back with constructive feedback rather than pushing forward with accomplished tasks)
- empathy (to get a feel for what the person enjoys, needs, or wants to learn)
- and listening skills (to gather data and then weigh this data against your own perceptions about the capacities needed to carry out a specific task and determining if a person in question does in fact have those capacities).

Delegation is a true test of leadership resistance, where self-confidence and self-control are key players. When leaders delegate they face the possibility that a person may exceed them in their skillfulness and thus threaten their legitimacy, but they also face the possibility that the job will not be done well, and they will then have to find a solution. In both situations, a highly developed emotional intelligence is necessary to navigate through these waters. If a person has sharpened emotional intelligence, they are equipped to perceive, manage, and channel their own as well as others’ emotions. In this light, when it comes to developing a team through empowering its members, knowing who to empower and why to empower them, requires constant application of the competencies mentioned here.
4.2. Differences

Where our leaders seem to differ was in risk management and innovation skills. On only one occasion did anyone explicitly mention the importance of these competencies in NGO leadership, and virtually none of them included examples of it in their critical incidents. With respect to risk, we suggest that a possible explanation could be that our leaders do in fact have these skills but due to the nature of the interview questions, the opportunity may not have arisen for a description of “risk” since “risking” might have implied a “problem to solve”, thus “efficacy or inefficacy” may not have been the first thoughts that came to mind when they were asked to report an “event” or “incident” where they felt “effective” or “ineffective”. Another possibility is that risk taking and innovation are so much a part of the job of NGO leaders that these skills did and do not stand out as being unique but rather matter of course and second nature to the job. Finally, another explanation could be that it was a result of the shared leadership style which most of our leaders displayed, commonly recognizable by the constant referral to “we” instead of “I”.

This use of “we” is a well-known drawback of the critical incident technique and the interviewers were fully aware of this and well-prepared with ‘journalistic’ techniques, euphemistically referring to getting direct or ‘pushy’ if need be in order to get a first-person account of the event as opposed to the typically offered plural account. Despite this, it was not always possible for the interviewers to get a first person account. (This point is further discussed in the Limitations to the Research section of this paper.) Another possible explanation could be that the terms “Innovation” and “Risk-Taking”, by definition, seem more applicable to for-profit organizations, where competition for market share rests primarily on a company’s ability to surpass their rivals in launching creative, path finding solutions. As we saw in the previous section when Pearce and Conger invite us to reframe leadership as “distributed leadership”, the whole business vernacular circulating around non-profits seems to be on loan of sorts from the for-profit and government sectors. In this sense, the search for precise terminology to capture the essence of NGO leadership is still learning how to walk, and the current terminology is often a temporary, stop-gap measure until NGOs can create their
own language and stand their own ground as well-run business organizations. This language factor cannot be overlooked. Language is a powerful vehicle and influences us in ways we do not often realize. Any given written or spoken word carries with it a distinct meaning, one that has been uniquely shaped by history. Like the forces of nature, language naturally evolves of its own accord and adapts to incorporate new meanings or add new appendages to the old meanings. The sole purpose of this constant evolution is to keep us in sync with change. In non-profit organizations, competition, as for-profits know and understand, is not an issue; rather innovation or risk-taking are more aptly defined as “change” and “initiative”, since in NGOs there is an unquestionable need for constant evolution, but not competition. This is more like it, and is preferable to these borrowed terms that don’t quite capture the essence; like poetry that loses something in translation.

**Intuition as pattern recognition**

"Intuition is the oldest, most vital part of human intelligence. It is in daily use and accounts for human survival as well as for the secret of most successes"

*Daniel Cappon, R&D Innovator, vol. 2, num. 2, February 1993*

Intuition is a form of Pattern Recognition. According to Cooper and Sawaf, sifting through the vast quantity of experiences that lie just below the level of consciousness can enhance accuracy in the decision making process, thus making it more efficient. They describe this sifting as “as if” loops, where the mind goes over scenarios, and depending on the outcome, either rejects and looks for other alternatives, or perseveres to obtain beneficial outcomes.

"In truth all of the experiences you’ve acquired in your life and work are not sterile facts stacked on shelves, but emotionally laden memories that are stored in the brain. The sum total of your experiences, your life wisdom, doesn’t as instantaneous hunches, as the sum total of gut feelings.”

*Cooper, Sawaf, 1997*

In the for-profit sector, it has become a trend to espouse the pearls of wisdom hidden in intuition: management journals regularly invite us to read about CEOs with vast repositories of experiential knowledge, who
enthusiastically encourage young-to-be leaders to embrace the pragmatic value of intuition, and do so with the same chilly aplomb they would its counterpart: reason. However, scientific literature on intuition is rarely linked to leadership, but rather to the cognitive processes involved in decision making and the role of both the intuitive and the rational mind in this process. Peter Senge, in *The Fifth Discipline*, argues strongly that “People with high levels of personal mastery do not set out to integrate reason and intuition. Rather, they achieve it naturally—as a by-product of their commitment to using all the resources at their disposal. They cannot afford to choose between reason and intuition, or head and heart, any more than they would choose to walk on one leg or see with one eye.” Our research does not pretend to expand the scientific database on intuition, but we do feel it is relevant to mention that all of our leaders had a long history of involvement in NGO organizations, most of them starting out as volunteers as early as childhood in youth shelters in Catalunya, the Balearic Islands and Valencia, and in civic centers called “esplais” which specialize in recreational activities. In addition to the invaluable educational experience of volunteerism in such organizations at an early age, something must also be said about the patterns etched on our leaders’ minds as a result of these “accumulated experiences held just below the conscious level”. In this light, we believe that our leaders have subconsciously stored a vast wealth of experiences and have categorized, catalogued, classified, and measured them far longer than they would give themselves credit for, and that this vast subliminal knowledge, masked as intuition, is nothing more than myriad youthful experiences fondly imprinted on their minds and the true driver behind their passion and resolve to lead.

In this regard, we agree with John Hailey when he says that the "emphasis on measurement and ranking may be at the cost of valuing less tangible leadership behaviors such as intuition or good judgment.”. Intuition is still largely a mystery among scientific circles and, not surprisingly, receives short shrift in the management scene because of this. In a fascinating account of a first-hand experience of a stroke, brain neurologist Jill Bolte, describes the gradual shutting down of the left side of her brain and what she experienced while it was happening. This unique experience, and the fact that she had survived to talk about it, left such
a deep mark on Jill Bolte’s entire life that she decided to share her story with the rest of the world in hopes of educating them on the virtues of giving intuition a chance. Indeed, by listening to her passionate and moving story, one truly does come to understand the functions of the left and right hemispheres; the rational (left) and intuitive (right) functions of the brain.

In line with Jill Bolte in campaigning for equal status of both lateral brains, physician Edith Jurka, M.D. suggests that “intuitive persons have a sense of more ultimate control and advantages in life because intuition and right brain functioning add creativity, humor, and the ability to solve problems, to reach goals and to manage people more effectively”. However, despite efforts from experts like these aimed at the public, business decisions are still to this day thought to be best taken with a prudent measure of rationale and calculated risk; likewise, outright intuitive ones are shunned with suspicious disdain. This may be because, in business, tangible proof in the form of hard-factual data is simply more convincing than unfounded hunches, and intuition is still far from our tangible grasp.

Addressing this same topic, Henry Mintzberg maintains that it isn't possible to assess the use of intuition by using purely logical processes: He states: “It is a subconscious process (intuition), which no one really understands, except by certain of its characteristics (such as the speed with which it can sometimes produce answers.) Thus the dismissal of intuition as an irrational process is itself irrational, just as embracing it as a process superior to formal logic is itself illogical.” But, returning to the status of intuition in the management scene, Michael Ray, professor of the course Personal Creativity in Business in Stanford’s MBA program for more than a decade, proposes that there are five truths about intuition, truths he’s found that the business world still largely rejects. These five truths are:

1. Intuition must be developed. Each of us has intuition within us, but we must accept the responsibility for our individual style of intuition and its development.

2. Intuition and reason are complements. It is the combination of reason, experience, information and intuition that is so powerful.
Leaders for social change

3. Intuition is unemotional. It is paying attention clearly to the most appropriate alternative that comes from the creative Essence.

4. Intuition requires action. Follow-through is key to successful use of intuition in business. It requires timely hard work.

5. Intuition is mistake free. There will always be "rational" reasons to support intuitive leaps. Beyond this we must have absolute faith that the intuitive part of us does not make mistakes.

Dr. Lynn B. Robinson, emeritus professor of Marketing in the University of South Alabama, asserts that, "Intuition is the birthright of each of us. It's hardwired as a function or our humanity. To use intuition to its fullest requires attention to its growth and development." Despite this, regarding leadership development, a clear bias towards supposed left-brain superiority is evidenced in leadership training, for example, it is not uncommon to see programs heavily loaded with cognitive management skills i.e. finance, accounting, strategy –and interpersonal skills relegated to a second-class status, skills such as empathy, developing others and team building, all of which are clear examples of competencies where intuition has a firm and solid hold. It seems then that the old fashioned savvy of "I feel it in my bones" has only changed in name but not in meaning, and if we take a look at all the competency models currently being developed in organizations and the consequent performance measures based on these models, it is not unreasonable to reach this conclusion.

4.3. Opinions of our leaders

3 characteristics of a good leader

When we asked our leaders to describe 3 characteristics of good leaders, they coincided on the following three:

- **Clear ideas** in order to convey one’s vision confidently and passionately.
- **Leadership by setting an example.**
- **Manage teams** to make them autonomous and bring out their best.

To a certain extent this differs from findings in the literature where honesty and integrity, being collaborative, and developing others were
viewed as more important by leaders, but it is consistent with the concept of “Inspirational Leadership”, also known as “transformational leadership”, “Level Five Leadership”, and “Shared Leadership”. We were not surprised to learn of these opinions when we took into consideration the emotional intelligence displayed by our leaders. All three of these characteristics can be defined in the emotional intelligence context: the first, conceptual clarity allowing for clear transmission of the vision in a self-assured passionate way, is not possible without the EI competencies of Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness; the second, walking the talk, is not possible without the EI competency of Coherency, and finally, the third, creating autonomous teams and bringing out the best of each individual member of that team, is not possible without the EI competencies of Developing Others and Empathy.

Surprisingly, none of our leaders mentioned organizational awareness as key to leadership, although virtually all of them demonstrated this competency. From this we infer that organizational awareness comes as second nature to them. We support this view with the fact that the majority of our leaders have a long history of community involvement, usually having started out as adolescents in volunteer positions. We feel that this 20 to 40 year stretch of experience is significant enough to support our claim.

What our leaders learned from experience

When we asked our leaders to describe 3 things they had learned about leadership from experience, they coincided on the following three:

- Listen and show empathy
- Position each person where they are most useful to the project
- Be more objective

It was surprising for us as interviewers to listen to real life accounts of the natural evolution of the development of these three skills, knowing that there is widespread reluctance to accept that these skills can be learned. All of our leaders were strikingly similar in their explanations on the progression of this learning and the landmarks which lead them there. The majority of our leaders confessed to being “quick-tempered”
by nature and prone to doing things themselves, either to save time and be more efficient, or simply because they did not have the patience to teach someone else how to do something properly.

It was mentioned in the first section that empathy and identifying strengths were demonstrated as competencies among our leaders. They also confessed to these being skills that they had learned from experience. With the exception of a few leaders, the presence in their lives of some sort of mentor or role model seemed to be influential in opening their minds to this learning. In a sense, their personal experiences as recipients of the fruits of these skills were proof enough of their usefulness. The only thing they needed to do in order to develop these skills was to tame certain personality traits, such as a predisposition to precipitated action, or a regimented inside-the-box meticulousness. A hallmark of leadership is opening the doors wide and letting freedom in, but freedom is nothing but freedom until it is understood and, ironically, controlled. The only way to do this is simply to do it, and then learn from it. This seemed to be the process that all of our leaders experienced deep inside themselves, which eventually resulted in their ability to rise above themselves.
5. Limitations to the study

The sample

In reference to our sample, there are a few issues that became evident. First, given that our sample was representative of small, medium, and large organizations, more attention could have been given to distinguishing the differences in competency needs depending on the size of an organization. In addition, the size of our sample was small and not sufficient enough to firmly support our findings. However, it should also be pointed out that our research set out to gather preliminary results only, with the intent of amplifying the database with a second, larger study in the near future. Gender may also have had some effect on value preferences and the manifestation of these values, in that men are known to be more agentic whereas women seem to endorse more communal values (Di Dio, Saragovi, Koestner, Aubé, 1996).

Methodology

The use of the plural ‘we’ instead of the singular ‘I’ is admittedly a drawback to the critical incident technique, in particular for third sector research where shared leadership practices emphasize the collective effort over the individual. This did occur on occasion, although very seldom. Nevertheless, the critical incident interview is still believed to be the best technique for gathering qualitative data for coding behavior, and if the interviewer is exceptionally skilled, this drawback can be overcome with few exceptions.

Research Design

Cultural considerations when researching leadership are becoming increasingly relevant to the impact of culture on perceptions of what constitutes “effective leadership”, as well as the distinguishing behavioral that can possibly be attributed to cultural differences. In this regard, our data only applied to a single national culture (the Spanish) and therefore lacks an international perspective. Having said this however, most of our leaders had vast international experience as a result of having lived and worked abroad for an extended period of time. And although this does
not qualify them as multi-cultural, it does give them an advantage in the ability to assimilate cultural diversity.

Hailey and James (2004) pointed out that any understanding of the role and performance of NGO leaders must incorporate the environment and is fundamental for understanding leadership in NGOs. This is a very relevant issue and cannot be overlooked. It was not within the scope of our research to address this aspect of leadership, but we strongly encourage anyone who cares to delve deeper into the leadership question to do so.
In the last two decades, training in the field of management has made considerable progress in the development of programs which foster successful working relationships, most notably among team members. While many have benefited from such programs, the positive effects of the training are often short in duration, a phenomenon known as the “honeymoon” effect, in which team members and their leaders experience the euphoria of improved working relationships temporarily, only to resume the more habitual irritations of the relationship dynamics a few months later. There are several reasons for this, but by and large the lack of “glue” is caused by a failure on part of the team members to acquire deep understanding features underlying behaviors. This riding on the crest of superficiality has its inevitable decline and plunges into “business as usual”. With respect to training, it is unrealistic to expect that an LDP program can single-handedly transform and outfit an entire organization with skilled leadership talent in a matter of days, weeks or even months. Mintzberg argues strongly in this regard: “Courses that claim to create leaders add to the problem. No leader can be created in a classroom. Leadership grows in context, where it gains its most important characteristic: legitimacy. We can work with people who are leaders and managers, to help them learn from their own experience, as we do in several of our programs. In other words, we can enhance their capabilities, but not create them” (Mintzberg, 2008).
In view of these statements, any leadership program can, at the very most, merely pave the way for developing leadership via self-awareness. Nevertheless, leadership training programs are still among the most awe generating programs. The reason being that they usually leave the participant with a great deal to think about; searching questions about values, meaning and one’s purpose in life. This emphasis on self awareness is a necessary point of departure for any leadership program. A second and equally necessary step is awareness of others, since emotional self awareness and awareness of others’ emotions, or emotional intelligence, seems to be the one thing that distinguishes truly good leaders from average ones. Having arrived here, we support and uphold the view that self-awareness prompted by emotional intelligence is the single most generative competency in connection to effective leadership.

Up until now no specific mention has been made of the importance of reflection in leadership but we feel it is relevant here, particularly since it is keystone to self-awareness. Not only did most of our leaders admit to reflection being a rich source of self learning but many of them even encouraged their teams to engage in reflection as a matter of course. One of our leaders even went so far as to program “reflective time” into the working day for everyone. Indeed, there is something to be said about the value of reflection. If we look to learning and more specifically learning styles, Alan Mumford’s classification of learning styles includes the activist, the reflector, the theorist, and the pragmatist. If we examine these styles from an organizational perspective, out of the four it is the reflector who is the least represented in managing directors but,ironically perhaps, also the most needed by them.

Reflectors pass progressively through five stages which lead them to focused, clearer decision making. Clutterbuck and Megginson describe the phases as follows:
In the light of these definitions, it is interesting to note that our leaders revealed competencies that clearly aligned with the Reflector style. Perhaps this explains why our NGO leaders transmitted a decided air of authenticity and seem to have legitimized their leadership, since they all placed heavy emphasis on the need for reflection; as much for themselves as for emerging leaders holding key positions in their teams.

Our research cannot answer the question of whether or not leaders are made or born, and to our knowledge no research to date has been able to single-handedly answer this question. Even Jim Collins in his ground-breaking 5-year study on what makes a company great as opposed to just good, in which he identifies 5 levels of leadership - level 5 being “what’s inside the black box” to make a company great, could not answer this question; rather he humbly speculated that it is the inner development of the person that gives them that unique capacity to reach level 5. However, despite the absence of hard factual data, the overarching opinion by well-known experts on leadership, as well as leaders themselves, is that leaders are largely made, and that experience and inner development are the key ingredients. Our leaders also attributed many of their leadership skills to experience and their ability to reflect on that experi-

1) **Disaggregation**: where the emphasis is on pondering over what needs to be done and how it needs to be done as opposed to why; and the urgent rather than the important;

2) **Acknowledgement** or framing: where structure, definition and boundaries are defined;

3) **Implication analysis**: which addresses the consequences of various modes of action;

4) **Insight**: where a deeper understanding is sought, possibly about behavior, personality, or motivation or perceptions of patterns and structures that had previously not been apparent;

5) **Reframing**: where the individual re-evaluates the issue within the framework of new insight gained.

*Clutterbuck y Megginson, 2000, Mentoring Executives and Directors, pp. 8-9.*
ence that guided them to self-awareness and inner development. By spending time with these leaders and listening to their stories, we believe beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they are right.

“To grow more mature is to separate more distinctly, to connect more closely.”

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, poet and dramatist
Introduction and phases

The research project in the first course of the ESADE – PwC Social Leadership program focused on analyzing the management skills of leaders in social organizations. The intention was, therefore, to identify these skills and, particularly, the distinguishing features of the leaders in this sector in comparison with other realms such as the company or public sector. The outcome of this research was also to be the basis for the ensuing task of drawing up proposals for developing leadership skills and competences in social organizations on the basis of this previous identification.

Research was conducted from September 2008 to March 2009 in the following phases:

1. Design research methodology
2. Gather and analyze data
3. Design field work:
   - Write interview outline
   - Select sample
4. Conduct field work
5. Analyze gathered information
6. Submit draft of results
7. Write final report

Methodology

Research consisted of field work based on 14 individual interviews of directors and managers of the NGOs taking part in the ESADE – PwC Social leadership program (see the list in Appendix 1). The sample was chosen from all participants taking into account its representativeness as regards realm of action, size of the organization and geographic location. The entities were distributed as follows in the final sample:
The aim of the field work was to pinpoint leaders’ skills by means of critical incident interviews. This interview technique consists of asking interviewees about specific cases or experiences in their career in which critical incidents related to the subject under study have occurred. The information about each example or situation described in depth by interviewees needed for the subsequent analysis is: what happened, who was involved (and how, in each instance), and what the person did, felt and said (see the interview outline in Appendix 2).

The 14 interviews were all conducted in person during visits to the offices of the different entities in October and November 2008. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis.

After field work on the entire sample was completed, the information collected was analyzed. A list of the basic, distinguishing skills of social leaders was compiled from the interviews, differentiating between those associated with each individual’s personal traits (innate skills) and those developed in their private life and career in different areas and posts (acquired skills).

**Research team**

This study, directed by Amy Leaverton, lecturer in the ESADE Department of Human Resource Management, was conducted by a research team that carried out the interviews and data analysis with the assistance of program coordinators who arranged and managed the interviews.
Research team:
Study director: Amy Leaverton.
Coordination: Maria Sureda and Luz Monsalve.
Program director: Ignasi Carreras.

Appendix 1. List of interviews conducted:
1. Paloma Escudero UNICEF Comité Español
2. Juan López de Uralde Greenpeace
3. Luis Arancibia Entreculturas
4. Rosa Balaguer Bueno Casal dels Infants
5. Ignasi de Juan Creix Educación Sin Fronteras
6. JMª Medina Prosalus
7. Pep Gassó Fundación Esplai
8. Josep Oriol Pujol Fundació Pere Tarrés
9. Juan Carlos Torrijos Aldeas Infantiles SOS
10. Gema Gallardo EAPN Madrid
11. Teresa Rodríguez Hervás Fundación Balia por la Infancia
12. Toni Bruel Cruz Roja Española
13. Emilio López Salas Asociación Proyecto Hombre
14. Juan Carlos del Olmo WWF-Adena

Appendix 2. Interview outline
Information gathered beforehand:
• Time in the entity
• Time in current post
• Previous related experience
• Education and training

The leadership concept:
What comes to mind when we talk about social leadership? How would you define it or what do you associate it with? In your opinion, what is social leadership?

Critical incident interview:
- Please define 2 or 3 essential features of your leadership that you have acquired during your career.
- Could you describe any experience or specific event that helped you develop each of these features?
  • What did you do?
  • What happened?
  • What did you learn?
Leaders for social change
PART 3

Resources on Social Leadership

By Maria Sureda
The following is a list and description of some of the centres dealing either with the area of social leadership, leadership in the third or non-profit sector or community leadership. It also includes several references to institutions that are devoted to leadership in a general sense, but which have a specific line of activity related to the social sector. The list contains several Internet portals, which provide information and interesting resources on this subject.

The aim of this selection of centres is to offer readers additional information on possible sources that they can consult if they wish to learn more about this sector. Please note that although this list is an introduction to centres at an international level and that it provides examples of interesting initiatives for training in the sector as well as offering valuable resources and tools, it cannot be considered an exhaustive study of all the institutions currently working in this area.

The selection has been divided into two parts, the first of which lists centres and portals that work more intensively in the area of social leadership. More detailed information has been included and a final table gives a summary of the activities carried out. These are divided up into: training; resource centres; specific Internet portals (Intranet); newsletter; consultancy services; public events and seminars; the publication of books, documents and reports; and the issue of periodical publications (magazines), etc. This is followed by a further summary of other centres that work in this area.
Centres and institutions that work in the area of social leadership

1. Center for Social Leadership

**Type:** Centre and Internet portal  
**Website:** [www.socialleaders.org](http://www.socialleaders.org)  
**Contact:**  
1050 – 17th Street NW, Suite 520  
Washington, DC 20036  
United States  
email: info@socialleaders.org  
Tel: (202) 223-7627

**Links:**
The *Center for Social Leadership* represents the area of social leadership and the non-profit sector within the *Executive Leadership Institute*, an institute specialised in leadership in general.

**Mission:**
The centre’s mission is two-fold:  
To build the leadership and managerial capacity of non-profit organisations;  
To teach youth from low-income backgrounds the necessary career-building leadership skills to design their own strategies to exit poverty.

**Activities:**
- Occasional workshops and seminars on specific issues related to leadership  
- Leadership training programs  
- Young leaders program  
- Consultancy services  
- Resource centre (online)

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2. The Center for Social Leadership (CSL)

**Type:** Centre and Internet portal  
**Website:** [www.thesocialleader.com](http://www.thesocialleader.com)
Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs

Contact: 6340 S 3000 E
          Suite 270
          Salt Lake City, UT 84121
          Tel: (435) 587-2036

Mission:
The Center for Social Leadership (CSL) is a think tank and an action organisation whose mission is to improve society, preserve freedom and ensure peace and prosperity for humanity.

Description:
This recently set up centre is the product of the initiative and interest of its four founders: Oliver DeMille, Shanon Brooks, Carl Woolston and Stephen Palmer. The centre focuses on and offers resources on social leadership based on a three-pronged approach that varies depending on the target group involved: society in general (individuals/families); organisations; and related professionals.

They have created a document that presents their concept of social leadership, A Fresh Vision for Old Problems. This publication is available on their website, which also lists several recommended resources.

Activities:
- Organisation of seminars
- Diffusion of interesting articles and documents
- Creation of a network of people and institutions
- Directory of and links to resources related to social leadership: books, films, specific leaders, networks, speeches, etc.

Classification of activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Resource centre</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Specific Internet portal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Events/seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Research Center for Leadership in Action (RCLA)

Type: Centre
Website: http://wagner.nyu.edu/leadership/

Contact: Research Center for Leadership in Action
          Robert F. Wagner Grad. School of Public Services
          New York University – The Puck Building
          295 Lafayette Street, 2nd Floor
          New York, NY 10012-9604
          Tel: 212-992-9880
          Email: wagner.leadership@nyu.edu

Part 3
Links:
The centre is located in the NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. It was launched in 2003 with funding from the Ford Foundation.

Description:
The Research Center for Leadership in Action (RCLA) creates collaborative learning environments in order to set up networks and connections that yield new, practical insights and strategies. The centre engages the leadership of a diverse spectrum of public service organisations, from government agencies to non-profit organisations of different sizes all over the world.

Activities:
- Experimental, customised leadership programs (training)
- Rigorous social science research using participatory methodologies

Other:
The centre works in collaboration with different institutions including the Ford Foundation-Rockefeller Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the AVINA Foundation, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Center for Creative Leadership, the Center for Action Research in Professional Practice, Accenture, and a broad network of leaders in the field. For example, in partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Communities and the Ford Foundation they deliver the Leadership for a Changing World Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of activities:</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Resource centre</th>
<th>Specific Internet portal</th>
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<td>Newsletter</td>
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<td>Publications</td>
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<td>Periodicals</td>
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4. Executive Leadership Institute

Type: Centre and Internet portal
Website: [www.execleaders.com](http://www.execleaders.com)
Contact: 1050 – 17th Street NW, Suite 520
          Washington, DC 20036
          email: [info@execleaders.com](mailto:info@execleaders.com)
          Tel: (202) 223-7627

Mission:
The Executive Leadership Institute’s mission it to facilitate leadership conferences and workshops that enable committed executives to lead their companies and organisations more effectively.
Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs

Description:
The Executive Leadership Institute is a centre specialised in leadership, although not specifically in the non-profit sector, which is characterised by the use of a participatory methodology to encourage executives to share their experiences and best practices with other leaders. In order to do this, part of its activity focuses on the programming of a large number of workshop on different subjects and tools mainly linked to leadership and the management and development of organisations.

Activities:
- Workshops
- Leadership resource centre
- Consultancy services
- Social responsibility area

Classification of activities:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Resource centre</th>
<th>Consultancy</th>
<th>Events/seminars</th>
<th>Specific Internet portal</th>
<th>Other</th>
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5. Alliance for Nonprofit Management

Type: Centre and Internet portal
Website: www.allianceonline.org
Contact: 1899 L Street, NW, 7th Floor
          Washington, DC 20036
          Tel: 202-955-8406
          email: info@allianceonline.org

Description:
The Alliance for Nonprofit Management is a professional association of individuals and organisations committed to improving the management and governance capacity of non-profit organisations to help these non-profits fulfil their mission. The alliance is made up of individuals and organisations linked to the non-profit sector (NPO directors, consultants, organisations, foundations, funding bodies and associations providing technical support to the sector, etc.). Members of this alliance share knowledge on, and learn about, sustainable means of improving the success and impact of the sector. In partnership with the Center for Social Leadership, the alliance was responsible for starting the Executive Certification Program in Nonprofit Leadership (ECPNL).

Activities:
- Annual conference
- Member network (discounts)
- Periodical meetings for members
6. Community Leadership Center

Type: Internet resources portal
Website: www.ourcommunity.com.au/leadership
Contact: 51 Stanley St, West Melbourne
         Victoria 3003 Australia
         (PO Box 354 North Melbourne 3051 Victoria)
         Tel: (03) 9320 6800
         email: service@ourcommunity.com.au

Links:
In the Our Community Pty Ltd portal at www.ourcommunity.com.au

Description:
The Community Leadership Centre is an Australian Internet portal, which offers different resources and information on community leadership. The portal is aimed at current and potential leaders and community groups and offers resources to help them develop leadership skills in their chosen area. This specific leadership portal is included on the Our Community website, an Australian organisation that offers information, resources and tools to 700,000 community groups and schools, as well as promoting links between the community sector, the general public, the business world and the public sector. The organisation’s website offers resources on various topics and areas, and also has departments devoted to some of the areas connected to local communities (corporate social responsibility, donations and grants, etc.).

Activities:
- Resource centre
- Examples of leaders (interviews, speeches, etc.)
- Information on awards (Alcoa Foundation)
- Search function for leadership courses

Classification of activities:

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Other related organisations or institutions

**Center for Creative Leadership**

*Website:* [www.ccl.org/leadership](http://www.ccl.org/leadership)

*Location:* Headquarters in the USA and international delegations

*Description of the centre:* The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) is a top-ranked, global provider of executive education on leadership. It was founded in 1970 and, since then, has been helping its clients all over the world develop ‘creative’ leadership. Its mission is to advance the understanding, practice and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide. In order to do this, it complements the courses it offers with research.

*Activities:*
- Training programs on leadership (open)
- Customised organisational solutions
- Assessment instruments and feedback services
- Coaching
- Publications and online resources

**National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)**

*Website:* [www.nvpc.org.sg](http://www.nvpc.org.sg)

*Location:* Singapore

*Description of the centre:* The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation that was created in 1999. It promotes and develops volunteerism and philanthropy in Singapore, acting as a catalyst and creating networks in all sectors. It works in partnership with non-profit organisations, companies and public administrations through networking platforms, volunteer management training and fundraising, and is also actively involved in grants, research and publishing. It has created a specific training program to develop social leaders, in partnership with professors from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

*Activities:*
- The creation of multisector networks (the Internet portal eMatch, which matches volunteers with requests from organisations working in their preferred area and which are in need of help, and Board Match, for government bodies)
- Training programs (for volunteers and government bodies)
- Research and publications
- Periodicals
- NGO directory
- Awards and grants
Leaders for social change

- Conferences
- Volunteer events
- Etc.

LASPAU (Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas)

Website: www.laspau.harvard.edu
Location: Cambridge, USA

Description of the centre:
LASPAU is a non-profit organisation affiliated to Harvard University and governed by an independent, inter-American board of trustees. LASPAU designs, develops and implements academic and professional programs. Its mission is to ‘provide access to global educational opportunities, stimulate knowledge generation and transfer, and promote intercultural understanding in America’. LASPAU associates and collaborates with individuals and institutions to develop and administer grants in addition to academic and professional exchange programs.

Activities:
It carries out the following programs related to social leadership:
- Seminars on Social Leadership
- Social Leadership Strengthening Program
- Afro-Colombian Leadership Training Program
- Leadership Fellowship Program
- Master’s Program in Sustainable Community Development
- Leadership Program

CReDO (Central de Resurse pentru Drepturile Omului - Resource Centre for Human Rights)

Website: www.credo.md
Location: Moldova

Description of the centre:
CReDO is a non-profit organisation based in the Republic of Moldova, which aims to promote democratic change and contribute to Moldova’s alignment in Europe, offering solutions and policies for social welfare and organisational sustainability. It offers consultancy service and educational programs in the area of non-profit-organisation management and advocacy/social change. It works at a national level for the global network, WANGO (World Association of Non-Governmental Organisations), promoting, for example, compliance with an ethical code of conduct and principles of organisational transparency and accountability for NGOs. In collaboration with other institutions and partners, the CReDO team is currently contributing to the creation of a new gen-
eration of social leaders, through actions such as its Civic Leadership Program.

Activities:
- Consultancy services
- Training programs
- Resource centre/e-library
- Publications and electronic notice board

Institute for Sustainable Communities
Website: www.iscvt.org
Location: Washington DC, USA

Description of the centre:
The Institute for Sustainable Communities’ mission is to ‘help communities around the world address environmental, economic and social challenges to build a better future shaped and shared by all’. It has an internal approach, which ensures that solutions emerge from within the community, rather than being imposed from outside. In order to achieve these solutions, the institute combines technical expertise and leadership training with strategic investments in local organisations. The Institute for Sustainable Communities combines best practices from the public and private sector and uses creative, flexible training and mentoring to help communities produce breakthrough results. To date, ISC has managed 70 projects in 19 countries.

Benevolent Society
Website: www.bensoc.org.au
Location: Australia

Description of the centre:
The Benevolent Society is an independent, non-profit, non-religious organisation, established in 1813, which works to promote social change in response to the needs of communities in Australia. It has 800 staff and 900 volunteers who help connect communities through support groups, volunteer visiting programs and community projects. In addition to direct social action, the Benevolent Society influences policies through research and evaluation. These actions include investing in social leadership programs designed to create a network of committed individuals who can promote social change.
BoardSource
Website: www.boardsource.org
Location: USA
Description of the centre:
BoardSource is a centre specialised in the governing bodies (boards) of non-profit organisations. It aims to advance the public good by building excellent and inspirational non-profit boards in social organisations. It supports and promotes excellence in board management in this sector, offering ideas and resources as well as being committed to developing future generations of board leaders.

Activities:
- Workshops and training for NGO leaders
- Consultancy tools
- Internet portal with resources
- Specialised consultants’ program
- Selection of publications and materials on NGO governance
- Annual conference
Magazines, journals and periodicals

Here is a list of academic periodicals and journals that include various articles and documents on leadership in the non-governmental sector:

- International Working Paper Series from the Centre for Civil Society
- Stanford Social Innovation Review
- Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly Online
- Non-profit management and leadership
- International Journal of Public Administration
- Leadership & Organization Development Journal
- The Non-Profit Times
- RETS, Revista española del Tercer Sector [Spanish Third Sector Magazine]

Books, articles and documents

We have compiled a recommended reading list of publications on social leadership/leadership in non-profit organisations and related issues. In this selection, we have included the publications and quotes used to produce this book:

- The entries that make up the bibliography of the first part of this publication, the article by Ignasi Carreras, “Characteristics of social leadership in NGOs and other non-profit organisations”, have been marked with the note “[P1]”.

- The references used during the research and quoted in the article summarising the results “The competencies of the leaders of Spanish NGOs – Research Results” by Amy Leaverton have been marked with the note “[P2]”.

- Other references have not been used directly in either of these two articles.


Characteristics and competencies of leadership in NGOs


HARDY, B. (2007) "Leadership in NGOs: is it all that different than the for-profit sector?", *Canadian Manager*, Spring 2007, 32, 1. [P2]


HODES, B. (2008) "Are your Nonprofit leaders super? CPAs can make sure leaders are leading", *Pennsylvania CPA Journal*; Winter 2008; 78, 4; p. 36.


Leaders for social change


Leaders for social change


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Director of the Institute and lecturer in ESADE’s Department of Business Policy. He specialises in strategy and management change in organisations. He is an industrial engineer (UPC) and has a postgraduate degree in executive development (Senior Executive Program, ESADE). He has also taken postgraduate courses at Harvard, Stanford, Babson and EAE. He does voluntary work for several NGOs and foundations and is a member of their boards of trustees. Moreover he a member of the international board of the Global Reporting Institute and a former director general of Intermón Oxfam.

Amy Leaverton
Lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Management
She has a degree in Modern Languages and Psychology from the University of Illinois, a Master’s Degree in Linguistics from the University of Illinois and is a PhD candidate in Personality Psychology at Universitat Ramon Llull. She specialises in leadership development, emotional intelligence and competency development, etc. She has worked as a consultant and executive coach, and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Management at ESADE. She collaborates with the Institute of Social Innovation, training managers of non-profit organisations.

Maria Sureda
Coordinator of the ESADE-PwC Social Leadership Program
She took the Combined Undergraduate and Master in Management Program at ESADE-Universitat Ramon Llull. She is a collaborator at the Institute of Social Innovation in research projects on corporate social responsibility and leadership in NGOs. She has participated in different research projects on the non-profit sector within the framework of the Third Sector Observatory.