

transformations in leadership

The Journal of the East-West Center Leadership Certificate Program



Volume 1 / Number 3, Spring 2009

THE EAST-WEST CENTER is an education and research organization established by the United States Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. The Center contributes to a peaceful, prosperous, and just Asia Pacific community by serving as a vigorous hub for cooperative research, education, and dialogue on critical issues of common concern to the Asia Pacific region and the United States. Funding for the Center comes from the United States government, with additional support provided by private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and the governments of the region.

THE EAST-WEST CENTER LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAM is a two-year, interdisciplinary program which enhances the East-West Center experience by bringing together student fellows to learn how to lead and navigate change as engaged citizens in the Asia Pacific region. It helps East-West Center students achieve the following goals:

- Learn about the servant leadership model and civic engagement and apply this knowledge through action plans, community service work, and internships.
- Develop in-depth knowledge of historical leaders, classical leadership theories, and diverse models of indigenous leadership in the Asia Pacific through international film and literature.
- Develop personal leadership skills and capacity by designing case studies and profiles of contemporary leaders in the Asia Pacific.
- Meet and interact with local leaders, including through the Asia Pacific Leadership Program's Distinguished Leaders Lecture Series.
- Integrate leadership studies into the personal and professional lives of students, including their educational goals at the East-West Center, as engaged citizens and agents of change in the Asia Pacific region.

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Spring 2009

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Special thanks to:

Hawai'i and Pacific Islands Campus Compact
East-West Center Publications Office



Published by the East-West Center Leadership Certificate Program

A PDF file and information about this publication can be found on the East-West Center Leadership Certificate website at:

www.EastWestCenter.org/leadershipcertificate

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Cover photos courtesy of Michael Bosack.

This material is based upon work supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service under Learn and Serve America: Higher Education Grant No. 06LHHHI001. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Corporation or the Learn and Serve America Program.

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A Note from the Editors

It is our pleasure to present you with the third issue of *Transformations in Leadership*. This journal features articles and reflections by the students of the East-West Center Leadership Certificate Program. Over the course of two years in this program, these students explored different forms of leadership and practiced service-learning. A key exercise for the students was to profile a leader of their choosing. They had a chance to interview leaders in different fields from across the globe. Some of the articles in this journal are based on that research.

The leaders profiled within this journal are truly remarkable. Notably, their power to lead comes not simply from charisma or force, but through knowledge, passion, and relationship-building. Throughout these profiles in leadership, two key themes emerge: humble origins and empowering others to lead. Though individual circumstances differ based on time and

So often, it seems, that is the definition of true leadership: empowering common people to achieve uncommon feats

setting, each of these leaders emerged from an ordinary background to achieve extraordinary accomplishments. Barbara Stocking of Oxfam has motivated her staff with a rigor that transformed an already established organization and took it to a higher stage. Siegfried Ramler's visions have led to programs in international education that benefit both students and teachers alike. Kul Chandra Gautam's inspiring story tells of how he rose from a humble village to succeed in becoming the assistant secretary general of the United Nations. Mahabir Pun is a social entrepreneur who took immeasurable risk for an unusual cause—providing wireless Internet to rural villages and transforming the villagers by giving them the power of information. Of course, not all leadership is moral or just, and the analysis of leaders like Che Guevara show the consequences of negative command and coercion. Nevertheless, good or bad, important lessons on leadership are available in each of these articles.

As evidenced in the articles, engagement and relationship building are the primary steps in leadership. Transformational leaders build upon relationships and empower followers to break traditional power structures and make that quantum leap forward to lasting personal and team accomplishment. Practicing good leadership skills is not an esoteric art. On the contrary, the themes of good leadership are open to any and all individuals. Leadership need not be associated with prestigious position, and it is not an innately inherited quality. Anyone can rise up to connect with followers, to establish a relationship with them, and enable them to transform themselves and their surroundings. So often, it seems, that is the definition of true leadership: empowering common people to achieve uncommon feats.

Working for this journal has been an invigorating exercise of overcoming challenges and working together as a team, but it has been a labor of love. We are indebted to all those who contributed to this journal. Our special thanks extend to Stuart Coleman, Carol Wong, Ken Banks, and Mike Duda.

The publication of this journal also coincides with the graduation of many students from both the Leadership Certificate and their individual degree programs. As the students bid farewell to embark on separate journeys, we believe that the experience from the Leadership program will guide them and enable them to become better leaders in whatever endeavors they undertake. We also hope that the Leadership Certificate will continue to provide a platform for exploring leadership and that the graduates will contribute to the transformation of a better world for all.

Happy reading!

Asheshwor Man Shrestha and Mike Bosack

Introduction

The journey to become a leader is a difficult one, full of roadblocks, detours and distractions, but it begins with the simple desire to help people and guide them toward a common vision and destination. Reflecting on the East-West Center's Leadership Certificate Program, I am amazed how far we have come in the last few years. Creating the *Transformations in Leadership* Journal, participating in the ropes course and organizing the Spring Leadership Symposium were just a few of the highlights. Reading the Journal, I'm inspired by how much I have learned from my students, the leaders they admire and the leaders they aspire to become.

In one of the essays, Jahangir Alam profiles Larry Smith, a former EWC fellow and administrator who directed the Education Program for many years and helped create a new field of study called English as an International Language. He started the Leadership Program in the early 90s with the Asian Development Bank and then passed the reins to Dr. Nick Barker, who then brought me on board. After leaving the Center, Larry went on to create his own leadership consulting company, which focuses on multi-cultural communication. Yet as former President of the Friends of the EWC, he maintains close ties with the Center and works with our class each year to help the students figure out their individual leadership styles. It's fitting that Larry should win this year's Transformational Leadership Award, because he has worked with so many EWC students over the decades and continues to volunteer at several different community organizations like the Kaneohe Rotary Club, the Ann Pearl Nursing Home and the Puohala Elementary School.

This year's Journal includes intriguing profiles of international leaders such as the revolutionary icon Che Guevara, the United Nation's Kul Chandra Gautam and Oxfam's Barbara Stocking. But there are also local leaders like Aulani Wilhelm, UH Professor Amarjit Singh and the EWC's own Sig Ramler. In Peggy Britton's essay, she portrays Che as an extremely popular but generally misunderstood leader who was more of a cruel Machiavellian Prince than a compassionate freedom fighter. This timely essay coincides with the recent release of Steven Soderburgh's film about Che's life.

Likewise, Laura Viana's profile of Sig Ramler coincides with the publication of his new memoir *Nuremberg and Beyond*. In her essay, Laura portrays Sig's incredible journey from his native Austria to Britain during World War Two and then back to Germany to fight against the Nazis. After the war, Sig served as an interpreter during the Nuremberg trials, where he helped pioneer the practice of simultaneous translation, which is now used at the U.N. and throughout the world. He also helped create Punahou School's Wo International Center; so it was a smooth transition for him to become a fellow at the East-West Center, where he now works as a Senior Fellow in the Education 2020 Program.

In his essay, Denjam Khadka portrays John Woods' life-changing journey to the Himalayas and how this business entrepreneur at Microsoft was transformed into a social entrepreneur dedicated to international education and literacy. His non-profit Room to Read has brought millions of books to young people throughout the Asia Pacific region and has helped build schools and libraries around the world. Denjam was so inspired by his story that he convinced the class to do a book drive for the organization. In the end, this symposium and the Journal are a celebration of knowledge, learning and leadership. And the leaders we honor today have all used that passion for knowledge to help and empower others.

One of the most memorable moments of this year's Leadership Certificate Program took place at the ropes course at Camp Erdman on the North Shore. Suspended thirty feet in the air, we all had to walk across the shaky wires and depend on each other for stability, guidance and support. At times, it didn't seem as if we could make it, but in the end we worked together and pulled each other along to complete each task. As this year's class prepares to graduate and return to their home countries, I too will be leaving the Center to pursue other opportunities. But I will never forget the moments I have shared together with the EWC's students and staff over the past few years. Though wobbly at times, it has been an exciting and memorable journey, and I appreciate all your vision, guidance and support. And though time and distance may keep us apart, we will always be connected together through the EWC network

Stuart H. Coleman

Coordinator

Leadership Certificate Program

East-West Center



Stuart Coleman and students from the EWC's Leadership Program atop the ropes at Camp Erdman in Spring 2009

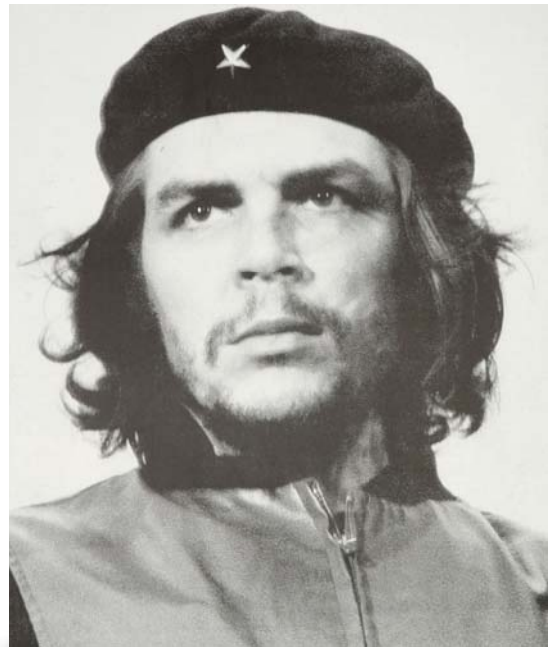
The South American “Prince”: Examining Che Guevara’s Leadership

by Peggy Britton

“¡No lo vamos a olvidar! ¡No lo vamos a olvidar!” exclaimed the agitated masses parading through the streets of Buenos Aires in July 2003. A lone American, I struggled to understand what the demonstration was about, and in particular, who was the man whose pictures adorned every sign and banner of this protest. His face, arguably Christ-like, was brazenly displayed on every chest. This man, whom the Argentinean workers and youth proclaimed they would never forget, was Ernesto Che Guevara Lynch de la Serna, or simply Che. As they marched through the streets, they championed the spirit of this man—this leader. Perhaps one of the most ubiquitous symbols of revolutionary struggle, Che Guevara is a paradox. As I learned then, the people of South America adore Che. Worldwide his image is resurrected long after his 1967 execution. But does the present day generation who venerates Che Guevara *truly* understand his ideology? Do the people fully comprehend his life beyond the popularized *Motorcycle Diaries*? To fully comprehend Che is a life-long study into the complexities and duality of a hero and totalitarian, a martyr and megalomaniac... one that lived during a tumultuous political backdrop of corruption and foreign interference. While today’s generations are enamored with the commercialized, poetic rebel Che, it is poignantly clear that Che Guevara’s extraordinary and bloody history smacks of Machiavellian principle and his leadership, while revolutionary, was both ineffective and unethical.

Che Guevara has come to symbolize the values of resisting injustice and rejecting worldly excess. Many derive this significance from his rather idyllic youth and Jack Kerouac-like road to self-discovery. Che was born on June 14, 1928, in Rosario, Argentina, to a middle-class, liberal family. He was the eldest of five children, and suffered from severe asthma. Che deftly earned his medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires in 1953. Most notably, during his leave from school, he traveled throughout South America. First, in 1951, he made a 4,000 mile long journey through Northern Argentina alone on a moped, encountering many indigenous tribes and experiencing first-hand the impoverished condition of their lives. Similarly, the young Che embarked on a motorcycle tour with his close friend,

Alberto Granado, who ran a dispensary at the leper colony of San Francisco del Chanar near Cordoba, Argentina. In these travels (1951-1952), Che met the lepers in Cordoba and then headed west into Chile and north to Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela. He attempted to enter Miami but was turned back by U.S. immigrations. These travels are later described in his book *Motorcycle Diaries* and the highly-romanticized movie *The Motorcycle Diaries*, directed by Robert Redford in 2004. Accord-



Che Guevara's iconic photo portrait

Source:
<http://www.s-gjm.kr.edus.si/projekti/sodelovanje/geo/kubanci1/Marusa>

ing to the movie, it was during his time in Peru when he worked in the San Pablo leprosarium that he began to formulate his early political thoughts based on his experiences with the ill and poor. He became convinced that true equality could only be achieved through a socialist society. His observations during these trips led him to conclude that the region’s inequalities were the direct fallout of capitalism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism, with the only remedy being world revolution.¹ I can fully comprehend why today’s youth affiliate with a young Guevara; however, Che was not a stagnant

character and his ideology was far more complex than depicted in Redford's cinematic snapshot.

After his graduation from medical school in 1953, Che Guevara walked and hitchhiked his way throughout South America and Central America. In December 1953, he arrived in Guatemala, which was governed by the reformist administration of Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. Arbenz, a democratically-elected leader, was attempting to end Guatemala's *latifundia* system through land reform and other initiatives. In June of 1954, however, the Guatemalan government was overthrown by a CIA-backed coup d'état. The CIA's involvement included the compilation of lists of individuals to be eliminated, imprisoned or deported following the coup. The coup reaffirmed Che's view of the United States as an imperialist empire, indifferent to the needs of Latin America.² In a letter home, Che asserted, "Along the way, I had the opportunity to pass through the dominions of the United Fruit Company, convincing me once again of just how terrible these capitalist octopuses are. I have sworn before a picture of the old and mourned comrade Stalin that I won't rest until I see these capitalist octopuses annihilated."³ As early as 1953, the roots of revolution were roused in the young Guevara as he witnessed the marginalization of the Latino proletariat. Che fled to Mexico in September of 1954, and for the first time met the Cuban Revolutionary, Fidel Castro.

In Mexico, Castro formed the 26th of July Revolutionary Movement (after a failed overthrow of the Batista regime on July 26, 1953). Che Guevara eagerly joined the group as a medic and trained with them in guerilla warfare techniques. By the end of their course, Colonel Alberto Bayo would call him "the best guerilla of them all."⁴ The rebel group of eighty-two would commence their campaign with an attack on Cuban soil. They sailed for Cuba on the *Granma*, a dilapidated cabin cruiser, and landed on the marshy coast of the Oriente province. Immediately, they were bogged down by Batista's soldiers. Almost all were killed or executed upon capture. Only twelve soldiers, including Guevara, Castro and Castro's brother would survive and flee to the Sierra Maestra Mountains to regroup. From there, they would launch guerilla attacks against the regime and grow to an estimated 3,000 men. During this period, Guevara cast aside his role as medic and decided to take up arms. Consequently, Che became Castro's chief lieutenant and distinguished himself as a resourceful and ruthless tactician. As the August 1960 issue of *Time* magazine purported, Castro was the

heart, and Che was the brain of the revolution. Although deeply concerned for the welfare of his troops, Che emerged as a Machiavellian *comandante*, ordering the execution of traitors, deserters and disbelievers alike.⁵ In November of 1959, Che led the guerilla advance from Oriente Province through government lines to central Las Villas Province. Guevara's column took the strategic provincial capital of Santa Clara, in the center of Cuba, on December 28th, and cleared the road to Havana. Shortly thereafter, the Batista regime fled the country on New Year's Day. Castro's 3,000 guerillas defeated a 30,000-strong professional army (financially backed by the U.S.) Castro assumed the position of prime minister in early February 1959, and Guevara was declared Cuban-born and appointed as the highest prosecuting authority for war criminals.⁶ Under Guevara's blood-stained hands, the *means* of the revolution *justified the ends*. In Cuba, Che emerged as the quintessential Machiavellian prince.

Machiavellian Leadership

In *Warrior Politics*, Robert Kaplan emphasized the pagan ethos as essential to leadership in the Machiavellian form, or "virtuous" leadership. "In an imperfect world, Machiavelli says, good men bent on doing good must know how to be bad... virtue has little to do with individual perfection and everything to do with political result. Thus... a policy is defined not by its excellence but by its outcome: if it isn't effective, it can't be virtuous."⁷ Che Guevara was inarguably effective in toppling the Batista regime (and therefore virtuous by the latter definition). What's more, the accounts of his leadership are smattered with calloused cruelty. In *The Prince*, one of Machiavelli's basic tenets is that men are wicked, so leaders have to learn to be "not good." In Cuba, Che learned how to be bad. Che was well-respected by his men; concurrently, he was notoriously violent. In 1957, as his diary from the Sierra Maestra indicates, Guevara shot Eutimio Guerra because he suspected him of passing on information to Batista's army: "I ended the problem with a .32 caliber pistol, in the right side of his brain... His belongings were now mine."⁸ Deserters were punished as traitors, and Guevara was known to send execution squads to hunt down those seeking to escape. Che became feared for his brutality and ruthlessness.⁹

Machiavelli avowed, "A prince ought not to be troubled by the stigma of cruelty, acquired in keep-

ing his subjects united and faithful. By giving a very few examples of cruelty he can be more truly compassionate than those who through too much compassion allow disturbances to continue...lawless acts are injurious to a large group, but the executions ordered by the prince injure a single person."¹⁰ On numerous occasions, Guevara executed "single persons" to maintain the discipline of his large guerilla force. He deliberately and pitilessly set the example. Che was quick to demonstrate cruelty when he shot Aristidio, a peasant who expressed the desire to leave as the rebels pressed on. "I carried out a very summary inquiry and then the peasant Aristidio was executed...It is not possible to tolerate even the suspicion of treason." While he wondered whether this particular victim "was really guilty enough to deserve death," he had no qualms about ordering his death.¹¹ After all, he was the leader of a rebel force with a momentous political calling, and he forcibly maintained the order of his men. Similarly, Che executed Echevarria, a brother of one of his comrades, because of unspecified crimes: "He had to pay the price."¹² Guevara's incipient hunger for control manifested itself not only in the treatment of his own troops during the overthrow of the Batista regime, but also in the merciless execution of the opposition. Jaime Costa Vazquez, a former commander in the revolutionary army, maintained that many of the executions attributed to Ramiro Valdes, a future interior minister of Cuba, were Guevara's direct responsibility because Valdes was under his command in the mountains. "If in doubt, kill him" were Che's instructions. On the eve of victory, Che ordered the execution of several dozen people in Santa Clara. Among those executed were many *casquitos*, peasants who had joined the Batista army simply to escape unemployment. Even here, Guevara did not waiver. After all, the Prince held that, "it is much more secure to be feared than to be loved, if one of them must be given up."¹³

An artful tactician, Che not only realized the value of fear and intimidation in governing, he recognized the vast importance of perceptions. Upon reaching the Sierra Maestra, Che began aggressively recruiting the peasants to the revolutionary army. In guerrilla-controlled areas, he started land reform and socialization. In fact, land reform became the slogan, "the banner and primary spearhead of our movement" as Guevara explained in an interview, enticing peasants to participate in the armed struggle.¹⁴ Machiavelli declared the importance of appearing virtuous, and Che inherently comprehended this princi-

ple. Regarding the Prince, "To those who see and hear him he should seem all compassion, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion...Everybody sees what you appear to be; few make out what you really are."¹⁵ To the peasantry, Che appeared to be for the common man. He seemed to champion pure socialist ideals. By perpetuating these notions, Guevara bolstered his guerilla army and elevated himself to the upper-most echelons of the post-Batista government. In reality, the peasants gained very little under the Castro regime. Even today, the mass majority of Cubans suffer from Guevara's ineffectual leadership and legacy as both the Governor of the National Bank (1959) and Minister for Industry (1961). In actuality, under Che, land reform took land away from the rich, but gave it to the bureaucrats, not the peasants.¹⁶ Machiavelli intrinsically understood that, "It is not necessary, then, for a prince really to have all the virtues mentioned above, but it is very necessary to *seem* to have them."¹⁷ As a mechanism for solidifying his persona, Guevara created the clandestine radio station *Radio Rebelde* in February 1958. The station broadcasted news to the Cuban people and statements by the 26th of July movement. In Guatemala, Che had observed firsthand the efficacy of CIA-supplied radio in ousting Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán's democratic government.¹⁸ His calculated use of the radio and control of information in Cuba allowed Guevara to be a Machiavellian ace of appearances.

Furthermore, there can be no greater testimony to Che's mastery of perception than the longevity of his popularity. "Che was an enemy of freedom, and yet he has been erected into a symbol of freedom. He helped establish an unjust social system in Cuba and has been erected into a symbol of social justice. He stood for the ancient rigidities of Latin-American thought, in a Marxist-Leninist version, and he has been celebrated as a free-thinker and a rebel."¹⁹ Without question, Guevara brilliantly painted an image of a larger-than-life hero, leader, and revolutionary—a man of the people and for the people. Otherwise, his vestige would not be quite so omnipresent in today's society.

Ineffective Leadership

Not only was Che Guevara an archetypical Machiavellian Prince, overwhelming evidence suggests that he was an ineffective and unethical leader as well, as defined by Barbara Kellerman in *Bad Leadership*. While Che was successful in lead-



Niccolò Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*

Source:
http://graphics.musicme.com/wp/fr/34594/Santi_di_Tito_-_Niccolo_Machiavelli%27s_portrait.jpg

ing the guerilla forces that toppled the Batista regime in early 1959, he was grossly ineffectual in a governmental capacity under Castro. Second only to Castro, Che was appointed to multiple key positions: Governor of the National Bank, head of the Department of Industry, head of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform and finally, Minister of Industry. The great revolutionary had a chance to put into practice his economic vision for Cuba; however, during the period when Guevara was in charge, the Cuban economy “saw the near-collapse of sugar production, the failure of industrialization, and the introduction of rationing—all this in what had been one of Latin America’s foremost economically successful countries.”²⁰ As Kellerman articulates, “Ineffective leadership fails to produce the desired change.”²¹ Cuba’s economy changed, but for the worse. On the thirtieth anniversary of his death, in 1997, Cubans were dieting on a ration of 5 lbs of rice and 1 lb of beans per month; 4 oz of meat twice a year; 4 oz of soybean paste per week; and 4 eggs per month. Furthermore, land reform was woefully mismanaged under Che’s leadership. In the name of diversification, he reduced the cultivated land and redirected manpower toward other economic activities. As a result, between 1961 and 1963, the harvest was down by half, to a mere 3.8 million metric tons. Under Guevara’s leadership, Cuba had no raw materials for heavy industry, and as a consequence of the

revolutionary redistribution, it had no hard currency with which to buy them, nor basic goods for that matter. By 1963, all hopes of industrializing Cuba were abandoned, and the revolution accepted its role as a colonial provider of sugar to the Soviet bloc in exchange for oil to cover its needs and to re-sell to other countries. For the next three decades, Cuba survived on a Soviet subsidy of somewhere between \$65 billion and \$100 billion.²² Guevara failed miserably as a hero of social justice largely because he was incompetent, rigid and intemperate, the three cornerstones of ineffective leadership.²³

Not only was Guevara ineffective in his economic aims, Che failed miserably to create a wave of political change in Latin America. Immediately after the Cuban rebellion, Guevara organized guerilla armies in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Haiti; all of which were crushed. In 1964, just when democracy had been restored to Argentina, Che sent the Argentine revolutionary Jorge Ricardo Masetti to his death by persuading him to mount an attack on his native country from Bolivia. In Latin American countries from Argentina to Peru, Che-inspired revolutions had the practical result of reinforcing brutal militarism for many years.²⁴ Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* offers explanation as to why Che’s efforts in Central and South America were wholly ineffective. Guevara staunchly believed that the road to socialism and political equality was through violent armed conflict. His uncompromising, unrealistic style of struggle, and his ethical absolutism were crippling characteristics. Sun Tzu asserted, “To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”²⁵ However, Guevara’s tactics were always violent. In 1999, *Time* magazine named Guevara one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th Century: “Back in the 60s, we presumed that his self-immolation would be commemorated by social action, the downtrodden rising against the system and creating—to use Che’s words—two, three, many Vietnams. Thousands of luminous young men... followed his example into the hills and were slaughtered there or tortured to death in sad city cellars, never knowing that their dreams of total liberation, like those of Che, would not come true.”²⁶ In fact, he succeeded in inspiring tens of thousands of middle class Latin Americans to exit the universities and organize guerilla insurgencies of their

own. These insurgencies accomplished nothing, except to bring about the death of hundreds of thousands, and to set back the cause of Latin-American democracy, a tragedy on the hugest scale.²⁷ Sun Tzu most-assuredly would have argued for better tactics and well-thought strategy to make lasting revolutionary change. Highly ineffective in achieving Latin American revolution, Che Guevara is what Kellerman defines simply as a “bad leader.”

Just as Guevara’s inspired revolutions were fruitless, he personally failed in two coup d’état efforts: in Congo and Bolivia. Che viewed the Democratic Congo as the embodiment of Western interference and imperialism. In 1965, however, Guevara’s Congo rebellion was massively disastrous. Che sided with two rebels: Pierre Mulele in the west and Laurent Kabila in the east. Together, they fought against the corrupt Congolese government, which was supported by the U.S., South Africa, and exiled Cuban mercenaries. Guevara spent most of 1965 helping the rebels in the east before shamefully fleeing the country.²⁸ Shortly thereafter, Mobutu rose to power and installed a decades-long tyranny.

Similarly, Che’s bad leadership was painfully exhibited in Bolivia. In November of 1966, Che led a group of guerillas through southeastern Bolivia, hoping to inspire the peasants and workers into a revolutionary movement that would spread all throughout Latin America, sparking off “twenty new Vietnams.”²⁹ In his manual, *Guerilla Warfare*, Guevara had stressed that the guerilla fighter needed the full support of the people of the area, but Guevara

failed to win the loyalty of the peasants.³⁰ Simply stated, he misread the local situation. There had been an agrarian reform years before; the government had respected many of the peasant communities’ institutions; and the army was close to the United States despite its nationalism.³¹ Guevara’s group was surrounded near Vallegrande by American-trained Bolivian troops. Sun Tzu’s tenet, *know your enemy as you know yourself*, readily explains Che’s failure.³² Guevara was captured by Bolivian forces and he was executed on October 9, 1967, with four gunshots to the chest. Guevara’s ineffective leadership in Bolivia would be his demise.

Unethical Leadership

Arguably more dangerous than ineffective leadership is what Barbara Kellerman defines as unethical leadership. An unethical leader is one who is callous, corrupt, insular, or evil.³³ Che Guevara is a diabolical combination of these qualities. For one so commonly revered (perhaps due to ignorance), Che is a frighteningly unethical man. Certainly, one could argue that ethics are only culturally or religiously relevant; however, sanctity of life is a universally held value, and one which Guevara failed to acknowledge. Che ruthlessly transformed Cuba into a bastion of totalitarianism. In his ‘Message to the Tricontinental,’ Che wrote a number of chilling phrases: “Hatred is an element of struggle; unbending hatred for the enemy, which pushes a human being beyond his natural limitations, making him into an effective, violent, selective, and cold-blooded killing machine. This is what our soldiers must become.”³⁴ Che would never err on the side of caution. In fact, he instructed his men to let their hatred be their guide and kill first. During the guerilla rebellion and later in the establishment of the Cuban government, Guevara acted on the premise that it was better to be feared, than loved; better to act with hatred, than compassion. Che was one of the central masterminds of the security apparatus that was set up to subjugate six and a half million Cubans. In early 1959, a series of secret planning meetings took place in Tarara, near Havana, wherein the top leaders (including Castro) designed the Cuban police state. Rimor Valdes, Che’s subordinate during the guerilla war, was



Che Guevara after his capture by Bolivian Forces
Source: http://www.argentour.com/images/che_guevara_prisionero.jpg

placed in charge of the G-2, a body modeled on the Cheka. Guevara took charge of G-6, the body tasked with the ideological indoctrination of the armed forces. The U.S.-backed invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 became the perfect opportunity to consolidate the new police state, with the rounding up of tens of thousands of Cubans and a new series of executions. As Che told the Soviet Ambassador, the counterrevolutionaries were never “to raise their head again.”³⁵ Counterrevolutionary became synonymous with heretic in Cuba’s Communist political landscape. Hundreds were executed by the police for no viable reason under the guise of “counterrevolution.” Kellerman would dub this behavior as callous leadership, that is, “The leader and at least some of the followers are caring or unkind. Ignored or discounted are the needs, wants and wishes of most members of the group...especially subordinates.”³⁶ Certainly, Castro and Guevara did not consider the desires of the majority of Cubans; rather, their chief aim was the creation of a ruthless enforcement arm to control the masses.

Similarly, Guevara vividly demonstrated Kellerman’s notion of insular and corrupt leadership in the formation of the Cuban labor camp system. A corrupt leader lies, cheats, and steals, putting self-interest ahead of public interest.³⁷ Tragically reminiscent of the preceding Spanish concentration camps, Che formed a system of Cuban labor camps. At first, the revolution mobilized volunteers to build schools and work in ports, plantations, and factories, “all exquisite photo ops for Che the stevedore, Che the cane-cutter, Che the clothmaker.”³⁸ Guevara was a master of perceptions, for later, the “volunteer” work became much less voluntary. Indeed, Che lied to the populace. The first forced labor camp, Guanahacabibes, was established at the end of 1960 in Western Cuba. The labor camp system, however, was eventually employed to incarcerate homosexuals, dissidents, Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Afro-Cuban priests, and AIDS victims. The “unfit” would be herded into buses and trucks and transported to concentration camps at gunpoint.³⁹ Che rationalized confinement, stating “[We] only send to Guanahacabibes those doubtful cases where we are not sure people should go to jail...people who have committed crimes against revolutionary morals, to a lesser or greater degree...It is hard labor, not brute labor, rather the working conditions there are hard.”⁴⁰ In this single example, Guevara is the epitome of an insular leader, completely disregarding the health and welfare of “the other.”⁴¹ Guevara became so

infatuated with his vision of Cuba as a socialist state that he failed to recognize the human costs of his political policies. Many Cubans never returned from these concentration camps; others were raped, beaten, or mutilated, as depicted in Nestor Almendros’ documentary *Improper Conduct*. Che, exhibiting the basest forms of corruption and insular leadership, is unmistakably unethical.

Even further, Che Guevara personified evil, as the cold-blooded killer behind the executions at La Cabaña prison in the first half of 1959, one of the darkest periods of Cuban history. “Evil leadership [exists when] the leader and at least some of the followers commit atrocities. They use pain as an instrument of power. The harm done to men, women, and children is severe rather than slight. The harm can be physical, psychological or both.”⁴² Guevara’s actions at La Cabaña fit the mold perfectly. After the overthrow of the Batista regime, Castro carefully selected Che to carry out the trials of all war criminals, the Batistianos. Che was in charge of the Comision Depuradora, a military court charged with purging the Batista army and consolidating victory by exacting “revolutionary justice” against traitors, *chivatos*, and Batista’s war criminals. However, all those brought before the court were deemed treasonous murderers.⁴³ Executions took place Monday to Friday, in the middle of the night, just after the sentence was given and automatically confirmed by the appellate body.⁴⁴ Che led the firing squad, earning the name “The Butcher” by some convicts. In only a few months at La Cabaña, Che directed from 200-700 executions, depending on the source. Many innocent victims perished for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In March 2005, legendary jazz musician Paquito D’Rivera chided Carlos Santana for wearing a Che T-shirt at the Oscars, explaining, “One of those Cubans [at La Cabaña] was my cousin Bebo, who was imprisoned there precisely for being a Christian. He recounts to me with infinite bitterness how he could hear from his cell in the early hours of dawn the executions, without trial or process of law, of the many who died shouting, ‘Long live Christ the King!’”⁴⁵ Many vividly recount Guevara’s evil leadership less than fifty years ago.

Should it be a statement of the moral callousness of today’s generations that Che Guevara is so widely celebrated? Che was clearly a Machiavelian prince for the last century, and an ineffective and unethical leader for Cuba and abroad. Yet,

Guevara's mystique is unparalleled. The discovery of his skeletal remains in 1997 and the publication of a slew of books helped to reignite a popular wave of pro-Che sentiment, underscored by increased capitalist demand for Che-goods worldwide. Guevara's image is used by everyone from politically subversive rock bands to advertisers seeking credibility. In Cuba and many parts of Latin America, Che is spoken of with Christ-like reverence.⁴⁶ Admirable men such as Nelson Mandela referred to Che as "an inspiration for every human being who loves freedom," while Jean-Paul Sartre described him as "not only an intellectual but also the most complete human being of our age."⁴⁷ In my professional travels to fourteen Latin American nations, Guevara's image was all-pervading, and I witnessed firsthand the symbolism of Che's persona, particularly in that Argentinean protest of 2003. To this day, the Cuban government actively cultivates a "Che mythos," exploiting the nostalgia for the good old revolutionary days. Every day, schoolchildren in Cuba pledge, "We will be like Che." Despite his ruthless tactics and oftentimes ineffective leadership, Guevara represents an ideal. He inspires the common man to fight injustice, oppression and racism, much like other civic revolutionaries of the era who were assassinated, all at age 39. His image conjures courage to face a larger enemy. Why shouldn't a young Latin American celebrate the image of a man who stood up to 50 years of U.S. meddling and violence? Why shouldn't today's youth derive inspiration from a man who saw inequality and fought to end it? Perhaps Machiavelli had it right all along. Perhaps the means really *do* justify the ends. Ernesto Che Guevara, despite his bloody history, offers political impetus to new generations seeking governmental or economic reform and, paradoxically, greater democratic freedom in the 21st Century.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_Guevara.

² *Heroes & Killers of the 20th Century*, <http://www.moreorless.au.com/heroes/guevara.html>.

³ <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/guevar.htm>.

⁴ J. L. Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 194.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 269-270.

⁶ <http://www.moreorless.au.com/heroes/guevara.html>.

⁷ R. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 53.

⁸ A. Vargas Llosa, *The Killing Machine: Che Guevara from Communist Firebrand to Capitalist Brand*, (2005), 3.

⁹ J. G. Castañeda, *Che Guevara: Companero* (New York: Random House, 1998), 105, 119.

¹⁰ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces, 1997), 1585.

¹¹ <http://www.moreorless.au.com/heroes/guevara.html>.

¹² Vargas, 4.

¹³ Machiavelli, 1585.

¹⁴ <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/guevar.htm>.

¹⁵ Machiavelli, 1588.

¹⁶ Vargas, 6.

¹⁷ Machiavelli, 1588.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_Guevara, 5.

¹⁹ P. Berman, *The Cult of Che- Don't Applaud the Motorcycle Diaries*, (2004), 2.

²⁰ Vargas, 6.

²¹ B. Kellerman, *Bad Leadership* (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 33.

²² <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/guevar.htm>.

²³ Kellerman, 38.

²⁴ Vargas, 7.

²⁵ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), 23.

²⁶ A. Dorfman, *Che Guevara*, TIME Magazine (1999), 3.

²⁷ Berman, 1.

²⁸ Vargas, 7.

²⁹ http://www.popsubculture.com/pop/bio_project/ernesto_che_guevara.html.

³⁰ <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/guevar.htm>.

³¹ Vargas, 7.

³² Sun Tzu, 8.

³³ Kellerman, 38.

³⁴ Berman, 1.

³⁵ Vargas, 5.

³⁶ Kellerman, 43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁸ Vargas, 5.

³⁹ Berman, 1.

⁴⁰ Anderson, 507.

⁴¹ Kellerman, 45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴³ Anderson, 376.

⁴⁴ Vargas, 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁶ http://www.popsubculture.com/pop/bio_project/ernesto_che_guevara.html.

⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_Guevara, 13.

Medium as the Message: Mahabir Pun as a Leader and Social Entrepreneur

by Asheshwor Man Shrestha

The medium is the message
- Marshall McLuhan

Globalization has done wonders for cultural and financial exchanges among the citizens of the world. Never before in the history of mankind have we been more connected to each other. However, the frequency and the medium of exchanges are heavily biased towards developed nations. This is especially noticeable in developing regions, where the disparity is appallingly high between cities and villages. The world has seen many revolutions in terms of communication. The telegraph, telephone, television and Internet have revolutionized our way of interacting with each other and they have become essential parts of our lives. Nevertheless, in many developing regions like Nepal, a nation with a population of about 29 million, access to telephone and Internet is limited to those who can afford it and available in major cities only. The telephone is the most common personal mode of communication in today's world, but many villages only have a single telephone line.

The advent of the Internet in the 80s opened a whole new dimension for knowledge sharing and communication. While in cities, the Internet had become the main information medium among the intelligentsia, those in the hinterlands lacked the infrastructure for such communication—or at least that is what was once thought.

That all changed with the dream and dedication of one man. He has taken the lead in establishing efficient communication networks by innovative use of wireless technology supported by donated equipment and operated by local management. This work has revolutionized communication in the villages of Nepal, while at the same time redefining technological development in developing countries. Since 2003, wireless Internet networks have been established in the rural areas of central Nepal. Wi-Fi for farmers and peasants may seem like a farfetched idea, but this has been tested in

the villages around Nangi for about six years. The man who started the wireless dream is Mahabir Pun. He is the leader of the Nepalwireless team, which aims to provide, among other services, efficient wireless access to rural Nepal.

If Marshall McLuhan's belief that "the medium is the message" is correct, then the medium of communication used in the villages of Nepal should act as an indicator of what information technology (IT) development can mean. There is a huge difference between receiving a handwritten letter or a telephone call or an email through a wireless connection. The individual medium tells a lot about the well-being and the background of a place. Nangi is an example of how leadership and technology can benefit the denizens of rural areas and transform an entire region.

A School Teacher from a Village in Nepal

Mahabir Pun is a simple man from the outside, but his visionary ideas and dedication have been awarded countless times. In 2007, he was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award, often referred to as the Nobel Prize of Asia, whose trustees described him as "both self-effacing and charismatic."¹ In spite of this distinction, Mahabir² carries himself



Mahabir Pun framed by the terraced landscape of a Nepali village

Source: <http://picasaweb.google.com/jrforster42/0808IndiaNepalHighlights#5269325122437674242>

humbly—a soft-spoken man in his fifties, dressing unassumingly and walking with no air of authority. As he hikes across hills and mountains to the thatch huts that serve as computer labs, he blends in with well the villagers.

Born in the village of Myagdi on January 22, 1955, in the foothills of the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri range of the Himalayas, Mahabir lead a simple life working in the farms as most people around him did. He attended a school run by the villagers through grade seven. The classroom was without paper and pencils. Wooden planks substituted the blackboard, and soft marble stone, the chalk. On top of that, he was responsible for helping his family raise cattle and assisting on the farms. Despite his humble origin, he continually pursued studies and his dedication won him a scholarship to earn a bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 1989.

After graduating in 1992, he returned to his village with a mission to help Nepal develop. The setting in which Mahabir grew up seems to have stayed with him always, but it was during his studies at the University, that he encountered something he had never touched before: computers. In 1996, he returned to Nebraska to earn his master's degree in education, and it was during this visit that he learned to use the Internet. The introduction of this new technology in his life was important in his return to Nepal. Upon returning to his home country, he started working as a school teacher. However, communication was a challenge in the village. A community school had received donated PCs, but there was no phone line in the village for dial-up Internet connection. Mahabir sought help from politicians and the Telecom Company, but he could not get any positive response and decided to look for solutions elsewhere. He ended up writing a letter to the BBC explaining his cause, and many people from around the world volunteered to help.

The initial plan started with wireless connectivity from the village to the sub-metropolitan city of Pokhara, 22 miles from the village. At the onset of the project, the network worked for only two hours per day as Mahabir's team could not supply power for more than that. Now, however, the network has expanded to more than ten villages, and new technologies like tele-medicine, VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and electronic transactions are being tested.³ The project successfully established Wi-Fi networks that have been used by the villages to communicate and exchange information vital to local businesses. Local farmers use locally developed computer applications to send messages about their products. Yak herdsman are loaned laptops to take to the pastures, which are many miles away from the village, and the network is the only connec-

tion for them to civilization for days and weeks at a time. The network has even been an envy to those living in the capital city of Kathmandu, as Internet connectivity there is not as good as in the village of Nangi.

Overcoming Challenges

As is the case for so many others, success for Mahabir did not come easy. The first challenge was finding the right technology. Most of the equipment was donated for the project and all operations were initially conducted under the radar without any support from the government. Of course, overcoming challenges is a key to successful leadership. Kouzes and Posner have outlined five practices of exemplary leadership that are applicable to the exploration of the leadership vision within Mahabir Pun's own practices. "Challenging the process" is an important leadership practice because entrepreneurs and leaders always look for new ideas. As Kouzes and Posner write, leaders "search [for] opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow and improve."⁴ This holds true for Mahabir, who stumbled upon wireless technology while seeking alternatives. He intimates, "I tried everything to get a telephone line in the village. For a while, we got a radiophone for the village, but it did not work well... I tried to find ways to get a satellite phone connection in the village; however, the cost was beyond our means. I knocked at the doors of the political leaders and officers of Nepal Telecom for help, but nothing happened."⁵ The mountainous terrain only made the task more difficult for the team, as Wi-Fi was not designed for cross-mountain signals. The team had to modify the equipment in order to enhance relay and reception capabilities. Wi-Fi technology was cutting-edge at that time, especially for Nepal, and Mahabir's search for alternatives to telephone lines resulted in the construction of this advanced Wi-Fi network for villagers.

The second challenge was a more common one among many development projects: lack of finances. Not many organizations would listen to the requests of a school teacher, especially one whose ideas were new and untested. Help eventually trickled in, albeit slowly. As Mahabir describes, "We had to ask our friends to donate the equipment. Fortunately, we also got some small supports from some organizations to start the project."

The third challenge could be regarded as the true test of leadership. The fact that all of the wireless equipment that Mahabir brought (or rather, smuggled in) for the network prior to September 2006⁶ was "illegal" (in Mahabir's words) portrays the magnitude of the risk that he took for the project. The risk was amplified by the ongoing con-

flict⁷ in Nepal at that time. Capture by either government forces or the Maoists would have proved fatal. Mahabir showed his leadership quality in risking huge sacrifice and standing by his goal. Writer and engineer K. R. Joshi has portrayed Mahabir Pun as a visionary leader. Joshi writes, “If Pun had waited for the ‘proper’ procedures to be set in place and for the full cooperation of the government and its agencies, he probably would still be waiting endlessly, and the villages in Myagdi would still be as isolated from the worldwide web and the global village.”⁸ Kouzes and Posner assert that “challenging the process” is an important leadership practice: “Leaders venture out... ‘Luck’ or ‘being in the right place at the right time’ may play a role in the specific opportunities leaders embrace, but those who lead others to greatness seek and accept challenge.”⁹ In addition to the difficulties of smuggling in the equipment, the villagers did not want to participate for fear of being arrested by either the government or the Maoists. As Mahabir says, “The villagers were scared very much when we first started to use the technology in the villages. It was because they thought that Maoists and government soldiers might come and arrest them for using the illegal equipment.”¹⁰ However, the technology itself rescued the project when villagers found that they could make phone calls using the network. The villages were not under mobile coverage and no landline phones existed, so the network was the only connection for the villagers to the outside world.



Positioning a satellite receiver

Source: <http://www.nepalwireless.net>

The technological boom after the 80s and the internet revolution of the 90s inspired a flood of IT-facilitated development projects, but few have managed to reach their stated goals. Phrases like “Information Highway,” “e-governance,” “online learning,” and “e-library” became buzzwords. While computers and the Internet promised a better future for all of us, it is unfortunate that many such projects have been deemed unsuccessful upon evaluation of their operation. According to World Bank technology specialist Robert Schware, about 85 percent of all such electronic governance projects in developing countries have failed in some respect. Schware explains, “Of those, 35 percent failed completely. Only 15 percent can be fully seen as successful. The statistics in the United States and Europe are just as grim. In some countries, politicians speed up e-governance projects just before elections to win votes, but end up harming the projects.”¹¹ It is conceivable that the success of a project is not only reliant upon technology and budget, but a larger factor is skilled leadership. In the case of Nangi, the primary reason for the success of this project is the diligent leadership of Mahabir Pun, who was able to coordinate the efforts of available skilled villagers and volunteers from abroad. In one article, Ruth and Giri have presented Mahabir’s example as a successful IT-facilitated development project and, based on their research, have outlined the five fundamentals for a project to be successful. One of these elements is “skilled leadership by homegrown talent.” They further write, “Every project needs a Mahabir Pun, a person who understands the region but also has the wider vision to integrate technology, political savvy, and a carefully coordinated plan for a successful implementation. All the volunteers, dentists, nurses, college students, etc., were particularly careful not to try to “take over.” Instead, they were able to stimulate the village experts to be more independent in their use of the training and to spread the knowledge extensively.”¹² Mahabir grew up in the area and understood the place better than any development agency, and ultimately, he could inspire the villagers to work towards implementing the technology. Thanks to Mahabir’s dedication to the cause and innovative leadership skill, the project to empower the villagers with Internet access went against the trends and proved successful.

The term social entrepreneurship implies social organizations’ adoption of management and business practices from the corporate world to become more efficient and responsible. According to Bill Shore in *The Cathedral Within*, non-profit organizations must operate with the vigor and professionalism of private businesses and focus on

acting upon their expertise. Mahabir's vision of using an innovative and businesslike solution for a social cause is easily describable as social entrepreneurship. This type of solution was especially logical in this case, because besides serving as a communication hub, the network was a platform for an exchange of information about livestock and crops. Soon, villagers engaged in the program because it could provide them commercial as well as social benefits. In a setting where information was hand-carried, receiving online updates on the price of livestock in a neighboring village was truly ahead of its time. But, that is what entrepreneurs do. Of course, as Shore clarifies, "'Entrepreneur' is a very polite word, because what it really means is 'rule breaker.' ... They do things their way, a new way, or whatever way necessary, rather than the defined way."¹³

According to Goleman et. al., personal competence and social competence are important elements of the Emotional Intelligence Domain for resonant leadership. Self-awareness is required to understand the values, goals and aspirations by the leader. Additionally, intuition plays a key role in a leader's decision-making. It is intuition that helps leaders decide on visionary goals. Another large contributor to the success of Mahabir's project is the sustainability of the network. There is no cost associated with cabling and most of the equipment has been donated. The electricity is generated in the village by either solar panels or water turbines, and most interestingly, the network is managed by the villagers themselves. Mahabir Pun has shown the adaptability of technology to suit the local environment.

Leadership is not necessarily about being clever alone. Shore explains, "Leaders are smart, but a leader need not be smarter than the people being led. In fact, that is rarely the case. Likewise, a leader need not be richer or have more resources. It is often said that leadership requires courage, vision and strength and that is probably true... A compass is a leader's most valuable tool."¹⁴ Hence, leaders need not be the most educated in the field, but they are the ones with the most dedication and aspiration for the goal. While many Nepalis knew about wireless technology, they did not venture to apply it to their local villages. Some of them may even have been experts in this technology, but it takes more than mere knowledge for leadership to prevail. As a teacher, Mahabir Pun was not an expert; rather, he learned about Wi-Fi when he was looking for solutions to connect the computers that were donated to a community school to the Internet. In this case, he bolstered the knowledge he possessed with a catalyzing drive to achieve his goal.

Recently, in another example of social entrepreneurship, Mahabir Pun has been lobbying for support from all Nepalis over the world for US\$1-a-month donation for similar Wi-Fi projects in villages throughout Nepal. With the help of Nepalis living abroad and their willingness to help their motherland, Mahabir hopes to expand his network to many more villages. Additionally, since many organizations, even the government, have pitched in to help, the villages of Nepal are on the verge of witnessing a national wireless revolution kindled



Making information access a reality across Nepal

Source: <http://www.nepalwireless.net>



A Wi-Fi receiver for a highland Nepali Village

Source: <http://www.nepalwireless.net>

by Mahabir Pun. It is not hard to imagine that soon, every village school in Nepal will be able to enjoy the benefits of wireless networks. Of course, in the style of a true social entrepreneur, Mahabir makes it clear that he is not working for awards. Even after learning that he had received the Ramon Magsaysay Award, he intimates that he simply went about doing his normal work.

Vision for the Future

Mahabir believes in the power of information: “[W]e make the information accessible through the Internet and make villagers more aware of their rights, they will for sure use that information to talk to their representatives to the parliament or district government or local government and take right initiatives.”¹⁵ Internet access for villages not only acts as a tool for education, but as a means to make their voices heard by policy makers. Still, access to information technology is a necessary but insufficient condition for modern democracy. As Mahabir says, “[T]echnology itself can’t do anything even if we connect all the villages or cities to the wireless network. There must be contents [*sic*] for e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-commerce, etc., available in local language that ordinary people can understand. Wireless network without useful contents [*sic*] will be of not much help for the people.”¹⁶ Traditionally, information was not regarded as a human necessity, but in modern democratic practices, information has been valued as a basic need. As for Nepal’s future, Mahabir’s dream is not yet over. He hopes to expand the wireless network to all villages of Nepal. Though he does not himself wield any direct political power, Mahabir is striving to give his fellow countrymen access to this information, and in doing so, has made invaluable contributions towards empowering his nation—more than most political leaders.

Through his efforts, Mahabir has shown the amazing power of leadership. Even in the time of heightened conflict, Mahabir managed to establish an innovative and practical wireless network for villages that did not even have telephone lines. He did this without significant support from the government, but views the recent liberal IT policies positively and hopes that the government will soon join his cause. As Internet is no longer a dream in some villages, Mahabir’s organization Wirelessnepal has come a long way since the days of two-hour-per-day connectivity. As stability and peace are being reestablished in the foothills of the Himalayas, the seminal work started by Mahabir is bound to scale new heights.

¹ “Citation for Mahabir Pun, (2007),” *Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation*, Accessed 5 Oct 2008 [Internet]

<http://www.rmaf.org.ph/Awardees/Citation/CitationPunMah.htm>; D. Goleman, R. Bovatzis, & A. Mckee, *Primal Leadership*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

² First name is used in this article as it is the convention in Nepal.

³ Based on the report from nepalwireless.net (nepalwireless.net, 2008).

⁴ J.M. Kouzes & B.Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

⁵ nepalwireless.net. Accessed 10 Oct 2008 [Internet] <http://www.nepalwireless.net/story01.php/>.

⁶ This was after the restoration of democracy in April 2006.

⁷ The conflict between the Nepalese Government and Maoist rebels continued for a decade (1996-2005) with a truce in 2001.

⁸ K.R. Joshi, (2008, 08-11), *Kantipur Online News*, Accessed 10 Oct 2008 [Internet] <http://www.kantipuronline.com/kornews.php?&nid=118842>.

⁹ Kouzes and Posner.

¹⁰ Based on an e-mail interview with Mahabir Pun conducted in October 2008.

¹¹ “World Bank Official: EGovernance Failures Abound,” *World Bank*, Accessed 20 Oct 2008 [Internet] http://www.noticias.info/Archivo/2004/20041109/20041109_39362.shtm.

¹² S. Ruth & J. Giri, “Defying the Odds: A Success Story from the Mountains of Nepal,” Accessed 10 Oct 2008 [Internet] www.iimahd.ernet.in/egov/ifp/nov2007/stephen-ruth.htm.

¹³ B. Shore, *The Cathedral Within* (Random House, 2001).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Based on an e-mail interview with Mahabir Pun conducted in October 2008.

¹⁶ Shore.

Transforming through Innovation: Barbara Stocking's Leadership through Oxfam

by Dzung Tri Nguyen

Leaders are truly transformational when they increase awareness of what is right, good, important, and beautiful; when they help to elevate followers' needs for achievement and self-actualization

- Bernard Bass

One of the most crucial issues in our globalizing world concerns the persistence of poverty and inequality in developing countries. For example, more than three billion people still live on less than US\$2 a day, while by the turn of the millennium, the richest 1 per cent of the world's people received as much income each year as the poorest 57 percent (OECD, 2006). The need to reduce such disparities has become an increasingly important part of the overall strategy of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on questions of development. In Britain, Oxfam is one of the most innovative of such NGOs, being creatively led by Barbara Stocking, its Executive Director.

Known as the "organization transforming architect," Barbara Stocking is the first female director of Oxfam and runs on a warm whirlwind of energy and enthusiasm for getting things done. She has led Oxfam's team to recognize and "define public values that embrace the supreme and enduring principles of a people."¹ Having worked with and interviewed Barbara, I believe she is a transformational leader in the field of international development and civic advancement. Looking at her leadership profile, I will seek to identify transformational leadership traits and styles through her aspirations, beliefs, ideas, actions, devotion and achievements, which have transformed Oxfam into a

leading agency in fighting against poverty and inequality across the world.

What is Oxfam?

Oxfam Great Britain (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) was founded in 1942 by a group of prestigious Oxford professors in the UK. Their primary purpose was to persuade the British government to allow food relief through the Allied blockade for the starving citizens of Nazi-occupied Greece. In the context of World War II, this action it was not popular with the Churchill government.

After the Germans occupied Greece, the British Royal Navy blocked shipping lanes. Food and medicines couldn't get through to civilians, resulting in famine. "Lifting the blockade might have helped the starving, but the British government wondered whether food meant for the hungry wouldn't end up in the bellies of German troops instead, and gazed with some disdain on the new lobbyists."² However, Oxfam was very courageous to challenge the British government to open a lane and to carry out the famine relief mission to Greece. Oxfam became a symbol of courage that is ready to help people in crisis, regardless of race, gender, religious orientation or political dif-

ferences. Since then, Oxfam has expanded its operation with multiple purposes in the development sector that include emergency relief, campaigning and lobbying for policy changes, and fostering civil society. Today, Oxfam Great Britain operates in more than 70 countries, with an annual budget of about GBP300 million.

Barbara Stocking's Life and Her Way to Become a Transformational Leader

Born in 1951 in Rugby, in the Warwickshire West Midlands of England, Barbara Stocking was an only child of working-class parents, whom she



Barbara Stocking

Source:
http://www.odi.org.uk/events/MDGs_2005/meeting_9feb/Photos/Barbara3.gif

surprised by going first to Cambridge University and then to the University of Wisconsin in America. She was very bright in school and wanted to be a teacher. Coming from a working-class background, Barbara had assumed that it was the only career to aspire to. However, by the time Barbara was 17, she dreamed to change the world because of the unfairness and poverty that she experienced herself. In 1972, Barbara graduated in Natural Sciences from Cambridge University, and two years later acquired a master's degree in Reproductive Physiology from the University of Wisconsin. After working as a Staff Associate at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington D.C., and later as a Research Fellow at Sussex University, Barbara went on to work for the World Health Organization in West Africa in 1979. Witnessing the miserable circumstances and unjust situations of people from different parts of the world, Barbara found a new determination to do something meaningful for the community and to work for positive impacts on the lives of people living in poverty.

Barbara ascribes many of her characteristics to the nature of her upbringing, which influenced her professional orientation afterward. "My parents had a lot of trouble having children and my mother experienced 10 years of miscarriages. I was born as a girl, but I am grateful to my parents for raising me without the gender bias. They made me believe that boys and girls are absolutely equal, and that it is possible for me to do anything, but they were never protective of me; that was part of the working-class background." Barbara said in the interview with Andrew Davidson. "So, like some only children, she learned young how to get out and make friends quickly, and was unburdened by the self-consciousness that siblings can squash into you."³ She was also organized and good at fitting in. "I lived in other people's houses. I knew how to become part of things," Barbara added. She applied to Cambridge only because other girls in her class were going. When she got in, her parents were shocked. "It was beyond their level of aspiration, I was the first in the family to go to university. My father had worked

at St John's Oxford as a trainee chef and was worried I would work myself to death. But they were incredibly supportive." she said. Barbara was also lucky in having a husband, now a prison doctor, who always supported her and took care of the family. They had two boys, and for Barbara, balance between life and work was a key for her successes.

By the mid 1980s, Barbara Stocking became director of the King's Fund Centre for Health Services Development, a renowned health care charity. Her achievements in the post included the establishment of Nursing Development Units across the UK and the setting up of innovative schemes to provide services for people from ethnic minorities. She successfully launched a career in the National Health Service (NHS), and by the late 1990s, Barbara had become the NHS's Regional Director for the South East Region and was responsible for the overall management of health care for 8.5 million people. She then was appointed as director of the NHS Modernization Agency—a member of the top management team of the UK NHS. Barbara received a series of honors for her outstanding contributions to health care, culminating with the award of the Commander of the British Empire in 2000 Millennium Honors List, the highest order for contribution to the development of community in the United Kingdom.

In 2001, Barbara became the Executive Director of Oxfam, an organization with projects in 75 countries. With an already distinguished career in



Children at Kakolo School in Zambia, where Oxfam provided equipment, training, and additional construction on the school building

Source: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam_in_action/what_we_do/development_slideshow.html



Young girls shelling pine cones in Afghanistan. Stocking and Oxfam have worked extensively in relieving humanitarian crises in countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan.

Source: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam_in_action/where_we_work/afghanistan/unheard-voices-gallery.html

the National Health Service behind her, Barbara was now bringing her talents to bear on the interface between welfare and development. She brings to the development world a pro-active, impassioned and multi-dimensional imagination. With an analytical perspective and a “can-do” take on leadership, Barbara believes in the importance of bringing out the resourcefulness and capacities of people who often live on the edge, materially and socially. During the last seven years, Barbara has led Oxfam’s response to humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, for the Tsunami in Southeast Asia and the earthquake in Pakistan. She has strengthened Oxfam’s campaigning and pushed for Oxfam’s scale up of development works.

Short, smiling, unmade-up, Barbara Stocking has the look of a senior librarian and the warmth of an experienced personnel manager. In her check suit and white shirt, she looks smart, but not expensively dressed. Heading a not-for-profit group, she is a model in terms of the do’s and don’ts of lifestyle choices. Barbara Stocking took a pay cut of about a third to accept the Oxfam job (advertised at a salary of GBP75,000) but she says it was hardly a tough call. “This is my dream job. I wanted it,” she replied

to the curious question of how she decided on a lower-pay position in Oxfam compared to the offer for top position in the NHS. She has always been like that, getting out, getting things done, having a hundred things to do. In that, she says, she takes after her father, who worked as a postman but also poured himself into community work. “He did a lot through the Methodist church and was also chair of the local Post Office Veterans Association; he would help widows with their wills and stuff like that. My parents thought it was their moral duty to do all that and I think that’s what they taught me.” Barbara shared this private story with her staff during a trip to Vietnam.

Barbara also carries a weighty ambition: she wants to change things through her job at Oxfam. She has run Oxfam, the world-famous international charity that campaigns to end poverty for nearly seven years since she decided to leave the top slot at the NHS. Although she was paid much less than she previously earned to take on one of the tougher management tasks around, she enjoyed leading a “super charity” packed with a committed, passionate workforce. Barbara is very bright, but has developed the knack of communicating simply and

unthreateningly that comes from working decades in big organizations. If you have had the chance to meet Barbara, you would not think she started in academia. Although watching her bustle round, juggling meetings and disguising orders as requests, you might just guess that long ago she was the head girl of her grammar school. And all the time, she is pushing on, often before you have had a chance to speak.⁴

Barbara revealed in our recent interview that, the person she most admires is Kofi Annan. “I admire him because he had a difficult job to which he brought dignity and was committed. Kofi Annan was also very visionary, forward-looking and capable of transforming,” Barbara said. From her position as a CEO in Oxfam, Barbara has met Kofi Annan many times in different world forums. His leadership style has impressed Barbara and left an enormous influence on her professional life. Barbara also shared that Kofi Annan had inspired her to build her own communication style where she found that “enthusiasm and energy” are the key tips when she communicates with people. “Listen very hard to what people are asking you,” Barbara said.

Another aspect of Barbara’s transformational leadership style is her being flexible and adaptable to the context and working conditions. In her varied work environment, flexible engagement is a key resource. For example, at one moment, she will be engaged in a detailed discussion with the Director of the International Monetary Fund and 24 hours later, Barbara will be in the middle of a field in a West African country being followed by a group of smiling, curious children who are wondering what this foreign visitor is looking for.⁵

How Barbara has Transformed Oxfam

Under Barbara’s leadership, Oxfam Great Britain has significantly changed to be effective in its programs supporting people around the world. Furthermore, Barbara and her team sought to shape Oxfam into a noble human symbol of dignity with its tireless efforts to create equal opportunities to everyone. The public supported this effort, and the number of Oxfam supporters and volunteers has doubled since Barbara joined the office. Her intellect and energy shaped bold, and often uncompromising, responses to the challenges and crises around the world that Oxfam is committed to dealing with. Oxfam officials have gone from charity into government work and helped make the new Labor Party the most charitable administration ever. “Tony Blair and Gordon

Brown were the ‘Lennon and McCartney’ of poverty reduction.”⁶ The most impressive achievement for Oxfam was in 2005, when Blair and Brown pushed for the G8 nations to agree to an extraordinary program of debt relief and subsidies for Africa. “It was a time that people recognized that we are part of the global world,” Barbara remembered.



Above all, Barbara is a success in “mobilizing people for participation in the process of change, encouraging a sense of collective identity and collective efficacy, which in turn brings stronger feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy.”⁷ The real challenge for Oxfam, as Barbara said, “is channeling that passion, setting priorities from the wealth of choices in front of it, making sure people do not go off at tangents, getting the right messages out.” Many staff inside the organization say Barbara has instigated a change of style at the top. “She is very good at listening,” says one of her team members, “and that is important, because a lot of people doing the work don’t get paid as much as they would in the private sector and need to feel involved. She has thought a lot about how we value and listen to staff, especially those doing the work on the front line, and involved them in discussing strategy. But she is also more of a serious manager than we have had before, quite tough.”

Responding to an interview question about what events motivated her to promote sustainable development and equality, Barbara revealed that she was offered work on a study of American hospitals. She loved this work, and it could have made her life there, but she eventually decided she should do something for the unfortunate people. “I did not like the lack of community and lack of

concern for others.” She then took a job with the World Health Organization in West Africa, where her heart was really touched by the fates of poor women there. At that time, Barbara learned that seventy percent of the world’s poor were women or girls. “We have to understand that being female affects women in poverty,” Barbara said in the interview. She considers herself successful in her job at Oxfam, “but I have had hard times, mainly due to male chauvinism. There was a macho style at the National Health Services, with people questioning if a women could deliver hard targets.” Barbara also understands that struggle for equal opportunity for everyone is difficult, but changing people’s beliefs and ideas about human dignity is much more difficult. However, she was determined to get into international development and confident in her ability to convince others to work for a common sense of equality. That’s why Barbara says her tip for getting on at work is “Commitment. I have got on because people trust me.”

Barbara also claimed that working with others to multiply the impacts of Oxfam’s work is a crucial factor for success, but it is also a challenge to her role as a leader in the organization. She believes that “extreme poverty can be ended, but it will only happen when we all stand together. It is fantastic feeling, though, when you do stand up for this, to know there are people all around the world, especially in the South, standing with you.”

Consistent learning and setting a clear vision for important decisions are the strategies Barbara Stocking applied to lead an ambitious organization like Oxfam for internal integrity and external adaptation. Barbara revealed these principles in her message delivered in the “Make Poverty History” campaign that “Oxfam takes what it learns from people in poverty and delivers those messages either through lobby meetings or research reports. But ultimately, for change to last, it must be supported in the hearts and minds of people. That is why we launched initiatives such as the Big Noise petition to Make Trade Fair, which has been signed by six million people worldwide. A major campaigning organization cannot choose between direct lobbying on the ‘inside’ and activism ‘outside’; each is essential.” One of the things she really loves about her job in Oxfam is the opportunity to travel, and particularly the chance to learn about new peoples and new cultures. “All the visits I do produce a whole new load of interests for me. I start reading up about everything and about

what the places are like, just wonderful,” she said in my recent interview.⁸

Barbara has a wide scope for Oxfam. The organization is currently running projects across the globe. Because of these, it has key links to global leaders ranging from the United Nations to Downing Street. The clout of the organization—getting people to listen, getting things done, getting into areas other cannot—should not be underestimated. The projects are chosen to fit in with Oxfam’s principle objectives “to relieve poverty, distress and suffering in any part of the world” and “to educate the public concerning the nature, causes and effects of poverty.” Those objectives were updated in 1998 with five key aims determined before Stocking joined: sustainable livelihoods; quality education and healthcare; protection from disasters and violence; the right to be heard; and the right to equity. Can Barbara shift the focus? “Only,” says Barbara, “if there is good reason. We are not moving off the five key aims. I am committed to the implementation of them. But while we are trying to do that, the world may have moved on, so we now do a stock-take every year: what issues are missing, what is relevant. For instance, the issue of world security and fear of terror.” Thus, Barbara has set the priorities within the framework. She is pushing Oxfam to highlight the arms trade, and she was not shy about bringing Oxfam out against the war in Iraq, a stance that was popular with the organization’s staff at all levels. “We said we didn’t think the war was justified because of the humanitarian consequences.”

Stocking’s Transformational Leadership

Oxfam has experienced many positive changes under Barbara Stocking’s leadership. One such change was the establishment of real motivation for Oxfam’s staff to work toward a more equitable and just world that strongly linked the field offices in all countries where Oxfam is present. This would not happen without Barbara’s leadership and her qualifications. With passion, commitment and strong will, she is ready to work for human dignity and advancement, especially in poor countries where corruption, red tape, internal conflicts and extreme poverty are rampant. Over the past seven years, her transformational leadership qualities have been recognized and proven through five tough issues summarized as her achievements in leading Oxfam’s transformational process. These include: (1) Channeling the passion within the Ox-

fam organization; (2) Ensuring that staff uphold the values of the organization in places that are remote and difficult to work in, and making sure that they understand what Oxfam is trying to do, and in turn feel that their views are being heard; (3) Protecting staff in an increasingly violent world; (4) Finding a way of continuing Oxfam's work in countries where it is now associated with western or anti-Muslim interests; and (5) Getting a message across to people that will make them think hard about how the world works, and how that might be changed to help eradicate poverty. These were vivid evidence for her leadership, which Burns writes “is not only a descriptive term but a prescriptive one, embracing a moral, even a passionate, dimension.”⁹ Barbara has engaged with people who are sharing with her the values of life and who elect to struggle for equality among people, “in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.”¹⁰ Maybe this is the reason why more than 6,000 Oxfam staff members around the world have admired Barbara Stocking for her leadership style.

The world is changing and the future seems more unstable than ever. Climate change, economic downturns, poverty problems and shortages of food, clean water and medicines are not uncommon. The recent financial crisis will negatively affect the income resources of Oxfam and that will automatically put pressures on Oxfam's responses to the problems that the world is facing. Barbara will have to make tough decisions either to scale down Oxfam's operation or to try to keep Oxfam on the same scale, and programs might have to be adjusted and cut. These issues will have to be seriously considered, so that Oxfam can continue its commitments to help eradicate poverty. The world needs strong leadership from different sectors, public, governments, private (companies) and people (civil society). Oxfam's objective to “to relieve poverty, distress and suffering in any part of the world” is now harder to achieve as the whole world undergoes economic recession.

In this critical time, Barbara then has to identify a handful of potential leaders like herself within the organization, inspire them and train them to gradually take over parts of her work, make them confident and proactive in responding to the problems that are happening daily in the world, such as food crises, disasters, conflicts, illegal arms trade, hunger, etc. That will help Barbara have a lean and efficient team to continue Oxfam's vision, which commits to

replicating good lessons learned from its worldwide struggle against poverty and inequality.

Besides, the world needs a different way to deal with its problems. Traditional ways applied by many organizations, such as provision of financial supports and community development programs will not be enough. It needs a creative strategy in which all parties in the society sit together to discuss and plan for a holistic approach for dealing with poverty and injustice. Then, Barbara and her team will have to be very proactive and efficient to be one of the propulsive components of the team that could help the world get out of the troubles ahead. With that in mind, Oxfam, under the leadership of Barbara, will gain an important position in the alliance with the governments, civic organizations, intergovernmental agencies, individuals and companies to join force and share the work. Only with that can Oxfam stay strong in changing circumstances.

I have been inspired to profile an eminent person like Barbara Stocking. She is a profound example of a transformational leader with the qualifications and traits that reflect in all her deeds. The principal lessons learned from Barbara's transformational leaderships include: (1) building a new team of leaders within Oxfam to take over Barbara's work; (2) joining forces with the other sectors of the society (public, private, people) for synergy and efficiency; and (3) localizing the country offices for sustainability. The works of leaders like Barbara will help make the world a fairer place.

¹ James MacGregor Burns, *Transforming Leadership*, (New York: Grove Press, 1978).

² Nick Cohen, “Timeout with Nick Cohen: Barbara Stocking,” *New Statesman*, (28 May 2007).

³ Andrew Davidson, “The Management Today Interview: Barbara Stocking,” (2004).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ David Slater, “Presentation at the Honorary Graduation at the Degree Ceremony,” (15 December 2003).

⁶ Cohen.

⁷ Burns.

⁸ Dzung Nguyen, interview with Barbara Stocking (Sep 2008).

⁹ Burns.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The Man Behind Millennium Development: A Profile of Kul Chandra Gautam

by Keshav Bidari

I wish we would have a system where governments of the world would be graded in terms of what kind of progress they have made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

- Kul Chandra Gautam

Introduction

For many governments in developing countries, modern facilities such as airports, huge hospitals and modern buildings have been a focus. People measure development in terms of such infrastructure. However, in the eyes of Kul Chandra Gautam, a former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, the way we can change the world is by focusing on development work for the poor and oppressed. My recent interview with him and his life stories reveal that this man is a transformational leader. He believes we can transform the world only through empowering the one billion at the bottom. According to him, an egalitarian way of carrying out international development work is the most effective for raising the living standard of poor people and eliminating absolute poverty. For him, children's survival and nurturing is at the cutting edge of human rights and human development issues. According to him, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations are the best ways to judge the development of any nation in the world. The Millennium Development Goals are the commitments and targets that were ratified by 147 heads-of-state and governments and 191 nations in order to promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health, gender equality, and aim at combating child mortality, AIDS and other diseases. The origin of MDGs of the UN Millennium Summit 2000 can be traced back to the goals of the Declaration and Plan of Action originally set by the World Summit for Children in 1990, which was masterminded and drafted by Kul during his tenure as an UNICEF senior.

As Assistant Secretary General, Kul Chandra Gautam is the highest-ranking Nepalese serving in the UN, and the first to reach that level of government with a rustic background. His untiring hard work, creativity and persistence are much appreciated, along with his contributions to child and human rights and international development. He is well



Kul Chandra Gautam
Source: © UNICEF/ HQ04-0823/
NicoleToutounji

known for his passion for childcare. Priorities of his tenure included persuading leaders to adopt life-saving services at minimal financial cost and helping them to revitalize health services by giving unprecedented political visibility and subjecting their performance to public accountability.

Upbringing and Early Career

Kul Chandra Gautam was born in 1949 in Amarpur of Gulmi District, a remote village in Nepal. When he grew up, there were no schools, roads, electricity or health posts in his village. Illiteracy was widespread. Education was not valued. Getting an education was a huge challenge. He and most of his friends were village boys who tended their cattle. However, his grandfather wanted him to be a *pandit*.¹ He learned alphabets from his grandfather, who was barely literate. In order to realize the dream of education, his family sent him to a *gurukul*.² Lack of gurus in his village compelled his parents to send him to a neighboring village. At the age of seven, he was sent to *gurukul* where he studied Sanskrit and some Hindu scriptures. When he was ten years old, he went to Banaras, India, a city known as a city of learning, where he studied Sanskrit and Theology.

Later, when one of his uncles insisted that his family should permit him to obtain a modern edu-

cation, he was brought back to Nepal. He obtained his School-Leaving Certificate (SLC) in first division, ranking as one of the top students nationwide. Intermingling with Peace Corps volunteers in Nepal, he discovered an opportunity in the United States for further study. When he applied, he received a full scholarship at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. He was originally refused a visa and only got one after two years. Why he was rejected for the visa is still a mystery, especially after he was awarded a scholarship from a prestigious university in the United States. Maybe it was the elites' and rulers' attempt to prevent ordinary people from receiving education and exposure to the outer world. After four years, he received a bachelor of arts in International Relations from Dartmouth. Later, he graduated from Princeton University in 1973 with a master's degree in Public Administration and Economic Development.

Journey to the UN

Kul Chandra Gautam was always interested in literature. Because of his enthusiasm for literature, he had read much of the published classics of Nepali literature by the time he was sixteen. He had thought that he would be a literary figure in the future. However, when he went to college in the U.S., which was at the height of the Vietnam War and anti-war movement in late 60s and early 70s, he became interested in what was happening in the world.

He recalls his memories of the turning point in his life:

I became so fascinated particularly with Vietnam and how Vietnam, a relatively small and poor country, could take on the world super-power like America. I became very interested in international affairs, and it was a switch from my original wish to study literature to study international relations.

Most American universities at that time dealt primarily with east-west relations (Soviet Bloc versus Western/American Bloc), whereas he was mainly interested in the North-South relationship between the rich countries and poor countries. He could not

navigate that angle in international relations and political studies so he switched to development studies and economics. It not only changed his academic and professional career, but a passion for humanity emerged in him due to this new focus. Later, he searched for something that would enable him to work for humanity on a massive scale and discovered the United Nations. He saw that the UN was the one of the only organizations that dealt with the problems of the poor and oppressed in the economics and social development areas, not necessarily in the political area.

When Kul finished his studies at Princeton, in 1973, he responded to a recruitment announcement in UNICEF, where he was appointed as program officer in Cambodia.

Later he served as a program officer in Indonesia. Acknowledging his hard work, devotion and

astounding performance, he was promoted as UNICEF Country Representative in Laos. It was the happiest moment in his life when he became the youngest UNICEF country representative, at the age of 28. He also served in Haiti and India as country representative. In mid 80s he became the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. He also served as Chief Director for Planning for Latin America and the Caribbean. He



Kul Chandra Gautam with Nelson Mandela
Source: www.kulgautam.org

reached the level of Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF in 1988, which is equivalent to the rank of the Assistant-Secretary General of the United Nations.

Mr. Gautam had a major responsibility in developing and overseeing policy and program strategies for UNICEF cooperation in developing countries in the early 1990s. He was the key senior UNICEF officer responsible for drafting the Declaration and Plan of Action of the 1990 World Summit for Children, the largest gathering of world leaders in history at that time. In May 2002, he led the organization of another major United Nations conference, the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, attended by 70 world leaders and thousands of child rights activists and civil

society leaders, including celebrities and Nobel Prize Laureates (UNICEF, 2003).

His Leadership Style

Primarily, three kinds of style are reflected in Kul's leadership. First, he cautiously detaches himself from the world of power that takes human dignity away from people. Second, Kel demonstrates dedication to the people's empowerment. Finally, he has a democratic approach to the development of the people he works for. The following explanations of theories of leadership explain Kul's philosophical acquaintance with power, transformation and democratic practice.

Power and Leadership

James MacGregor Burns defines a leader as one who "recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower...[and] looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower."³ At the same time, he says, "Power wielders draw from their power bases resources relevant to their own motives and the motives and resources of others upon whom they exercise the power."⁴

One must distinguish between power and leadership, although they are interrelated. The way one utilizes power and wisdom demonstrates whether he is a good leader or not. Kul Chandra Gautam was sensitive to power and leadership from the beginning of his professional career. As an American university graduate, *cum laude*, in 1970s, he had many options in choosing his career. However, his passion to contribute something to the poor and oppressed attracted him to the institutions in international development. The United Nations and the World Bank were the significant players that existed at that time. He identified the philosophical variation of these two different players.

In response to my question as to why he chose the UN between the two major organizations in international development, he says:

I felt closer to the United Nations because the United Nations is an organization of member states. Although, the World Bank helps in poverty eradication, it is much more dominated by the rich and powerful countries and tends to follow a model of development that is not as human rights oriented, equality oriented, but much more growth oriented. It was my conviction that while economic growth was necessary, and that we needed to promote growth, a more egalitarian way of development that goes

together with human rights should be sought. I looked to the United Nations as a champion of human rights, not only of economic growth. [The] UN was one such organization that tried to deal with the problems of the poor and oppressed in the economic and social development areas, not necessarily in the political area.

Transformational Leadership

Burns links transformational leadership to the process of empowerment of the followers whom the leaders are working with and working for. He saw four categories of transformational leadership: intellectual, reform, revolutionary, and heroic (charismatic). He elaborates:

The concept of intellectual leadership brings in the role of conscious purpose drawn from values. Reform Leadership movements require participation of a large number of allies with various reforms, which means dealing with endless divisions in the ranks, and a collective that is anti-leadership. Reform leadership by definition implies moral leadership, which means an attention to matching the means to the ends. Revolutionary leadership demands commitment, persistence, courage, perhaps selflessness and even self-abnegation (the ultimate sacrifice for solip-sistic leadership).⁵

The heroic, for Burns, was just one of four categories although it is referred to as transformational leadership sometimes.

Therefore, the transformational leaders are the ones, as Burns mentions above, who try to be useful for others. They expand their knowledge, share it and aim to transform the followers and reform society and ultimately, the world.

Interestingly, David Boje has presented a leader model in X and Y dimensions to distinguish transformational leaders. According to him, transformational leaders are determined to serve others and have enthusiasm for new ends. They try to find ways to transform the world.

Sean Hepburn Ferrer⁶ described Kul this way:

The more I looked, the more I searched, the more I found the same theme: A humble man just trying to be useful—to make the most of it for others—there was no 'drive'—just the desire to learn...and there was no 'master' plan—just the natural next step to go where he was needed, to where he could be useful. Like a mythical tree that forever guards the most tender part of our youth...while we

built our lives, our careers, made our plans and grew our families, Kul has stood sentinel to our humanity and held those of us who were growing up less fortunate—simply because of the circumstances in which they were born.⁷

As Ferrer mentions, Kul always tried to make the most of himself in order to help others. His passion for children, the poor and the oppressed in every corner of the world has resulted in a shared vision for the revolution of the development world, making him a visionary leader. Enthusiasm to find new ends for international development and humanitarian domain, innovative ways of thinking and challenges to reform the ongoing process of international development are the typical characteristics that make him what Burns and Boje call a “Hero.”

He never grew tired of searching for knowledge and exploring innovative ideas. Richard Jolly, former Executive Director of UNICEF, says that Kul’s contributions to children in every region of the world have already set many records for creativity, energy and persistence. They stand as an inspiration to us all. Even according to Jim Grant, the Executive Director of the UNICEF from 1980 to 1995, Kul was demonstrating the vision and commitment that many of them later learned from him. When Jim came on the scene in 1980, he provided vision and leadership for UNICEF as a whole, and Kul became one of the members of his inner circle of allies and leaders, carrying his messages through the organization for children everywhere. His creativity in drafting the plan of action for the World Summit for children in 1990 and in keeping alive the goals and commitments afterwards, right up to the present, remains examples of his great achievements, perhaps the greatest, excepting only his personal example. Richard believes Kul was the one who never let the vision of UNICEF get blurred or compromised and who steadily defended UNICEF’s ideas and commitments.

Kul’s deeper thought and skillful drafting of the plan of action of the World Summit, as Richard mentions, has shown the world how important it is to address the needs of children at the grassroots level. Kul believed that the current development paradigm could not transform the world. High priorities on megacities and large infrastructure, capitalistic concepts of socio-economic development and its trickle-down expectations make the deprivation circle much bigger. He thought the way governments and leaders are being judged by their followers was wrong. People asked for shining buildings, big hospitals and

urban infrastructure. We paid less attention to the problems of the deprived in rural areas and urban slums. According to him, development must mean growth and prosperity with equality. We should have dual goals of increasing incomes and increasing well-being, but in a manner that does not further exacerbate the disparities between the rich and the poor. In human society, there will always be inequality between richer and poorer people, more educated and less educated. The relative poverty always exists. However, abject poverty, absolute poverty, degrading poverty that is below human dignity, should not be tolerated anywhere, whether it is in a rich country or a poor country. It is necessary to pursue development strategies so that inequalities do not grow, but shrink, and equality of opportunity is guaranteed. Market forces do not necessarily target poverty reduction or reduction of inequality; however, the government should. Specifically, children are most likely the victims in this disparity. Historically, most governments have been so focused on increasing the pie, increasing overall gross national income, that inequality and disparity has not been dealt with in our planning systems. By focusing on the millennium development goals, we move towards a more egalitarian society, and will build a better foundation for development, so that when there is economic growth, that growth will benefit not just a few, but many. In the end, this brings about more sustainable development and greater equality.

Participatory Approach

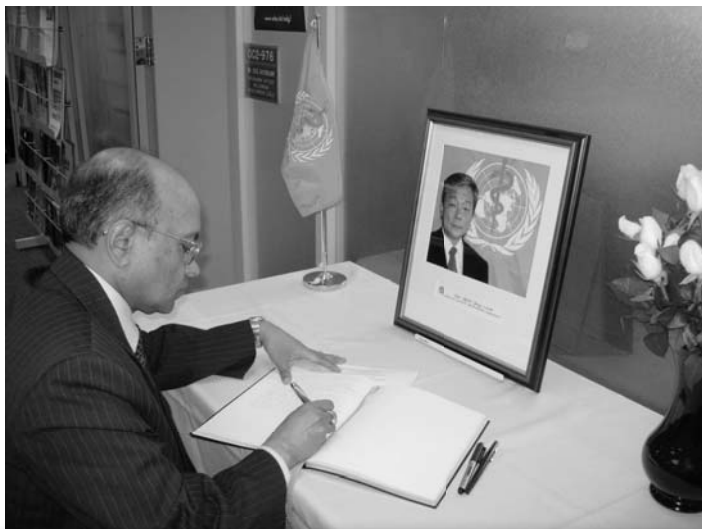
Kul practiced a democratic approach that helps people to participate and sometimes accept his ideas. According to him, three techniques are effective in participatory practice. First, you must convey the ideas in a way that you put yourself in the other person’s shoes. Second, you can present ideas that are the group’s own. Finally, you may present ideas in a way that there will be no loser and everybody will be a winner.

In response to my question, “How do you get poor people and their leaders to accept your ideas?” he says:

Do not go with your brilliant ideas, listen to their ideas first, often you will be surprised how wise and prudent poor people are. If you listen to them, they come up with lot of common sense ideas and proposals, and you combine your good ideas with them that become a win-win proposition. What you should not do is present ideas that involve

such a shift of power that you will end being a loser, no matter the idea is good and benefits them a lot.

He recalls an example from when he was at UNICEF. His department was trying to get leaders on all levels throughout the world to promote child immunizations. Many leaders from Asia and Africa asked him why they should bother to immunize children with other ongoing major problems of economic prosperity and large-scale development. These leaders kept saying they needed an airport, a road or a hospital in their villages. Immunization was not important to them. He was able to convince many of those leaders that they could not provide a hospital, airport or a university, as they were unaffordable. At the same time, he presented the idea of immunization that would reach and respond to the needs of all people. As a result, both people and the leaders would win. The leaders would get the votes



Kul, preparing for a UNICEF meeting

Source: <http://kulgautam.org/website/index.php/photogallery?func=viewcategory&catid=8>

and people get the service. In developing countries, it is rare that ordinary people benefit from huge development projects. Kul believes that protecting our young and vulnerable citizens is the very essence of human life and human civilization, and he inspired the leaders to implement the ideas in such a way that they would also benefit politically from an immunization program.

Leadership Characteristics and Practices

Kul has a combination of leadership characteristics such as being forward-looking, listening to the masters, possessing intelligence, competence and innovation.

Kul believes the way we can change the world is by seeing the actions that are inspiring and positive. His childhood upbringing taught him many things. To grow up in a humble family and a humble village was a source of inspiration for him, although it presented him many challenges.

I am so happy as I grew up in that humble village without the facilities that many well-to-do children do have. Because I feel that that has made me appreciate of what it is to grow up in poverty, what it is to grow up with deprivation, what it is to grow up in a remote area. Later on as I thought, when I served in the poorest countries in Africa and elsewhere, we were dealing with the children like myself, my childhood.

His early life always inspired him to do something for the oppressed and poor people on a massive scale. He had an opportunity to fulfill his vision of taking care of children of the world when he got the responsibility of organizing the World Summit for Children in 1990, the largest gathering of the World's leaders. His hand-crafted Declaration and Plan of the Action of the Summit has become one of the best-known and most effective instruments of international advocacy and action for the well-being of the world's children. It was widely approved and ratified quickly by 191 countries. That was his most exhilarating moment in a long career at the UN. The declaration was later adopted for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In 2002, he led the organization of another major United Nations conference, the aforementioned Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, an especially significant event given its attending members.

He dreams:

I wish we would have a system where governments of the world would be graded in terms of what kind of progress they have made in achieving the millennium development goals. Unfortunately, so far in many countries that concept is not a reality yet. Political leaders win or lose elections not based on what results they achieve in terms of MDGs. My dream, my hope one day would be that governments of the world would be judged by their electorates, by the voters in terms of goals like the millennium development goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond



Kul at a conference in Nepal

Source:
<http://kulgautam.org/website/index.php/photogallery?func=viewcategory&catid=6nepal>

to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The Millennium Development goals Kul always advocates include the following eight goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Because of implementation of Millennium Development Goals, there has been tremendous change in the development paradigm of the world. MDG Report 2008 states that the most important success to MDG is the unprecedented breadth and depth of the commitment to the goals, which is a global collective effort that is unsurpassed in 50 years of development experience. Kul is very happy to see the progress.

He has had many role models, both in individuals and ideas. The most inspiring among them is Jim Grant, former head of UNICEF. Grant was a man with tremendous vision and amazing persuasive power. Kul's school headmaster in Nepal, Jagat Ba-

hadur Joshi, is his other source of inspiration. He was very humane, caring and inspirational. Kul also admires the late Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme, who stood against US policies in Vietnam at the time of the Vietnam War and Madame Quinki Vinh who came from a very rich family but later abandoned everything, fighting as a Guerilla and later becoming the leader of the Vietcong. After the Vietnam War, she became the vice president of Vietnam. Kul sees her life as one of tremendous sacrifice. On the community level, he was amazed by the work of 50,000 community volunteers in Nepal during the vitamin A campaign last year. Many of them are illiterate, many of them are grandmothers, but they provided help to the children in such a tender, loving, and caring manner. In two days, 3.5 million children were served with Vitamin A. These women work without any salary. If people did not bring their kids into the clinic, they would go to their home and help them. Nonetheless, he believes ideas are more important than the models. He says:

More than leaders it is the ideas that inspire you. If you believe in well being of children and the poor, whether it is Mother Teresa or a political leader, you can find inspirations where you look for them.

Kul never tired of his hard work. He feels that he is lucky as he did not have to see many failures in his career with UN. He remembers one frustration in his life when working in the countries ruled by authoritarian leaders. They did not care for the people, in spite of tremendous problems that their countries faced. For example, Haiti under Duvalier was poorly governed. The government did not care for its people. Other examples include Cambodia and Laos. The well-being of people was not a priority for the governments of these countries. With stronger government participation, he could have achieved a lot more than he did in his mission.

He has revealed five principles that made his career successful.⁸

Find a Silver Lining in Every Dark Cloud

According to Kul, the world is so full of misery, injustice and hatred that it is easy to be discouraged. Whether it is genocide in Rwanda, the medieval barbarism in the Taliban-led Afghanistan, the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the failed state syndrome of Somalia, the catastrophe of HIV/AIDS that is decimating sub-Saharan Africa... the list goes on and on. Nevertheless, in all such horren-

dous situations, we can always find some glimmer of hope, a few brave people, making their mark, against all odds. Every dark cloud has a silver lining. Positive thinking not only helps keep one's sanity but also can actually energize you.

Take a Long-term View of Life

In the day-to-day life of a person or an institution or a nation, there are always things that go wrong and upset you. Do not let that weigh you down. If you persist and persevere, even against great odds, chances are that things will work out for the better. Similarly, do not be impatient or tempted to take advantage of opportunities for short-term gains or instant gratification. Go for things that are of lasting value that you will feel proud of over the long haul.

Do the Unexpected

Kul has found that doing unexpected things is both personally and professionally rewarding. We all tend to do things that our family, society, colleagues expect us to do, and we do them well. Nevertheless, if you want to shine and be noticed, sometimes it is good to do things that people do not expect you to do. For example, Kul studied the French language when most other Nepalese who would not have considered it necessary. His French became an added advantage to work in many French-speaking countries. He could communicate with leaders directly in their own language, and he felt much more effective in his advocacy role. Inspired by this experience, he learned Spanish and served in Latin America. As a result, he got to know a completely new part of the world and enjoyed it thoroughly. That ultimately helped in his career advancement. Many great people being recognized now are doing things that are out of the ordinary. Kul encourages the younger generation to take the risk of trying new ideals and innovative thoughts:

We are entering an era of tremendous opportunities for our younger generation. Instead of following conventional approaches of problem solving, you should try ideals and innovative thoughts in your life. People who try, try and try and do not give up, would make their dream true one day.

Always Go Beyond the Call of Duty

To be seen as a high performer, sometimes we need to do something beyond what we are supposed to do. We should often volunteer to do things that are not in the normal job description but may be necessary. We need to try to contribute ideas in areas beyond the scope of departments, or going 'beyond the call

of duty. This is difficult sometimes; however, doing the extra work, not out of any compulsion, but voluntarily and joyfully, makes you enjoy it and find a sense of fulfillment.

Never Forget Where You Came From

When one acquires a good name and fame and certain prosperity, one tends to get spoiled and begins to take such privileges for granted. We complain so often about little inconveniences and discomfort. Whenever we feel discouraged, we should remind ourselves how lucky we are compared to people who endure hardships in the place I come from and in so many other countries of the world. You should feel you owe God and the people of your birthplace an enormous debt of gratitude. You should feel you have been so lucky because of their blessings and good wishes.

Changes Kul Would Like to See at the UN

According to Kul, the UN has become an indispensable organization for humanity. It is not biased and provides its help in a fair manner for clusters where poverty, malnutrition and disease exist. No better institution than the UN exists now that can have multilateral solutions to the world's problems, whether they are environmental problems, global warming, poverty reduction or health issues. However, as a retired UN leader, he wishes to see two changes at UN:

- The system of the Security Council is undemocratic. Understandably, in 1945 five countries had veto power that still prevails. This needs to be changed according to requirements of the times. The Security Council needs to practice democracy in the UN itself.
- The UN gets bogged down with relatively small issues championed aggressively by a few countries, while other issues do not get attention. For example, a resolution passed by the Security Council on Israel and Palestine got more attention and overshadowing the other major problems of the world. The conflict in Israel and Palestine is important because people are suffering. At the same time, there are many other places where people are suffering, like Burma and Zimbabwe, under injustice and oppression that do not get attention. Therefore, there is an imbalance on the kinds of issues which the UN addresses. Some of this is politically motivated. For a large number of Arab Muslim countries, the Palestine issue may be more important than anything else in the world. However, for the

United Nations the majority of the world's problems should be important. It is necessary that the UN be a bigger and more influential player than bilateral donors and international financial institutions. It should represent all members of its body.

Conclusion

A journey of a rural man to the level beyond the imagination of many Nepalese is impressive. It was Kul's hard work, devotion and forward-looking characteristics that took him there. His empathy toward the downtrodden, oppressed and poor children and for humanity as a whole is unusual. His inspiration from his humble village background and the wisdom he gained from it could be a lesson for many youngsters from developing nations. Kul Chandra Gautam is an example for those who blame their career advancements on a lack of favorable conditions, such as good schools and modern facilities. We all can learn that results in one's life depend on will-power, hard work and sacrifice. Kul will be known for engineering the Declaration and Plan for Actions for the Children's Summit and the later Millennium Development Goals. His participatory approach, transformational thoughts and actions, and rejection of elite over egalitarian development and leadership make him a true contemporary leader.

¹ 'Pandit' refers to a Hindu, almost always a Brahmin, who has memorized a substantial portion of the Vedas, along with the corresponding rhythms and melodies for chanting or singing them. Pandits are hired to chant Vedic verses at *yagyas* and other events, both public and private. The chanting is meant to be listened to with a quiet mind for the purpose of spiritual development for the listener as well as enlivening of the atmosphere at an event. Most pandits are vegetarians for spiritual reasons. They are supposed to maintain purity of body and mind. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandit>)

² *Gurukul* (Guru) refers to teacher and Kula refers to his domain) is a type of ancient Hindu school that is residential in nature with the students and the teacher living in proximity or same house. The *Gurukul* is the place where the students reside together as equals, irrespective of their social standing. The students learn from the guru and help him in his day-to-day life, including the carrying out of mundane chores such as washing clothes, cooking.

(Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurukul>)

³ J.M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc., 1979).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Sean Hepburn Ferrer is son of legendary actress and humanitarian Audrey Hepburn.

⁷ Audrey Hepburn Humanitarian Award 2008. (n.d.). *Sean Hepburn Ferrer's Introduction of Kul Chandra gautam's Acceptance Speech*. Retrieved November 16, 2008, from <http://audreyhepburn.com/html/childrensfund.kul.html>

⁸ The principles and experiences in the explanation are those practiced by Kul Chandra Gautam.

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Room to Lead: John Wood's Social Entrepreneurship

by Denjam Khadka

It is hard to believe that a person could walk away from a lucrative job with US\$150,000 annual salary to start a non profit organization whose future is uncertain. But that is what John wood did when he left Microsoft to start the non profit Room to Read. With the belief that education is an empowering, lifelong gift, and the broad goal of helping 10 million children to read, John Wood has proven himself to be a true social entrepreneur, exemplifying how transformational leaders first transform themselves and later transform the whole society. Social entrepreneurs are those people who work for the benefit of society rather than their own personal or organizational benefit. David Bornstein in his book *How to Change the World* defines social entrepreneurship as “a transformative force; people with new ideas to address major problems who are relentless in the pursuit of visions, people who simply will not take ‘no’ for an answer, who will not give up until they have spread their ideas as far as they possibly can.”¹

In his book, *Transforming Leadership*, James Mc Gregor Burns says, “To transform is to cause a metamorphosis in the form or structure, a change in the very condition or nature of thing, a change into another substance, a radical change in outward form or inner character, as when a frog is transformed into a prince or a carriage maker into an auto factory.”² Transformational leadership does not mean quantitative change; rather, it indicates a significant change in quality. In contrast, transactional leaders deal with daily managerial details, focus on short-term goals and results and don't want to take risks; they accept the status quo, maintain order and hierarchy and work as a bureaucracy. Transformational leaders focus on long-term goals, champion and empower the followers, serve to change the status quo and are flexible in learning from experience. Likewise, social entrepreneurs break the rules to achieve the results which are highly beneficial for the society, rather than themselves. John wood was more of a transactional leader while he was at Microsoft, but he later became more of a transformational leader after he quit and started a non-profit organization. He is now the CEO of Room to Read, which is

working in developing countries with the mission of educating 10 million children worldwide.

Early Life, Education and Career

John has brown hair, thick eyebrows and a smiling face, which give him a pleasant demeanor. He grew up in Pennsylvania and was surrounded by teachers, amazing books and parents who valued the importance of education. He used to bring home the books from the nearby public library because he had passion for reading. The library had an eight book limit, but he managed to convince the librarian to increase the number for him, and it was a secret between them! John described how his father ‘Woody’ worked with a typical engineer’s precision and recorded work in proper order. Woody was always one for details. John’s mother used to read him bedtime stories from colorful children books when he was a child and also used to entertain him with cartoons from kids section of the Sunday magazine.

John used to get good grades in schools, and his parents never complained about his study habits. After completing a BS in finance from the University of Colorado, he went to earn a masters in business administration from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. Later, he would earn an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from the University of San Francisco for his work to fight illiteracy in the developing world.

After graduation, John worked at Microsoft from 1991 to 1999 as Director of Marketing for the Asia-Pacific Division, then as Director of Marketing for Microsoft Australia, and finally as Director of Business Development for the greater China region. During those days, John was following a transactional leadership style, which was not a surprise since Microsoft was booming and there was stern competition with other companies like IBM. When John arranged for an interview of Bill Gates with a Chinese CCTV reporter, it was a perfect example of his transactional leadership style. Transactional leaders focus on profit and short term goals rather than the benefit of general people. Wood also wanted to cash in on Bill Gates’s visit as an advertising campaign for Microsoft China because he knew that Chinese public would listen to Gates, since it was his first visit to China. John prepared the possible questions



John Wood and his book delivery vehicle of choice

Source: http://assets.goodmagazine.com/uploaded/images/masthead_image/23658/john_mh.jpg

and answers in the favor of Microsoft to help Gates make a good impression on the Chinese audience. He did so because he believed that one would not get a second chance to make a first impression. Wood was responsible for Bill Gates's visit, but the CEO did not answer in the way John had prepared him and therefore lost the chance to change the image of himself or Microsoft.

Turning Point from a Business Entrepreneur to Social Entrepreneur

John went from being a business entrepreneur to becoming a social entrepreneur after trekking for 18 days on the Annapurna Circuit in April 1998 in the Himalayas of Nepal. He visited a local school in Bahundanda in the Lamjung district with an educational resource person named Pashupati, whom he met in a local tea shop. The headmaster of the school showed the classrooms and library. The classrooms were lacking desks, and children were balancing notebooks on their bony little knees. The condition of the library was even

worse. There were no desks, shelves, or books, except the "Library" sign on the door. A few books were locked in one cabinet and when one of the teachers opened that cabinet, the books were hard to access physically and intellectually by the small children. There were 450 students, but there were no appropriate books for the children in the library. The headmaster requested he bring back some books during his next visit.

He remembered his own childhood and how excited he was when his parents brought him a new storybook and imagined these kids would do the same if they got one. John imagined returning to this school with a yak loaded with books. He promised the headmaster that he would meet him again and left the school. As a child, he was so involved with reading, learning and exploring the new world of books from his childhood that he couldn't imagine a childhood without books. John was thankful that he had been surrounded by great teachers, public libraries and parents who appreciated the value of educating the children. In the belief that education is a

ticket to get out of the vicious cycle of poverty, he was determined to help these children in Nepal. As a business executive in Microsoft, John made more money than he ever imagined he would make at the age of thirty-five. Education had transformed John's life, and now he wanted to transform the lives of those children in Bahundanda who were less fortunate than him. While he was returning back home, he emailed his friends from Kathmandu asking them to send books to his parents' home in Colorado so that he could donate them to those needy children.

He went back to Australia and after some time he got a letter from his father saying that the book drive was a wild success. They had already received 3,000 books. John went back to Colorado and thanked his parents for the work they were doing to fulfill his dream project and returned to Australia. When they were thinking how to deliver those books in Nepal, his father Woody found the solution. Woody was a member of local Lions Club, and he wrote to the Lion's Club of Kath-



A Room to Read project school under construction in Nepal

Source: <http://i.i.com.com/cnwk.1d//ne/p/2007/School-nepal-bet-550x356.jpg>

mandu, Nepal, and a member of that club offered them help. John and Woody went back to Nepal in 1999 and delivered the books to the eager kids of the Bahundanda schools.

He loved the looks on the faces of the young children seeing a brightly colored children's book for the first time, and he thought nothing could be closer to nirvana for him! Nirvana is a Sanskrit word that means "to cease blowing" or "extin-

guishing" as when a candle flame ceases to flicker (the flame symbolizing uncontrolled passions). Buddha described Nirvana as the perfect peace and a state of mind that is free from craving, anger and other afflictive states. In *Transforming Leadership*, Burns says, "I would call for the protection and nourishing of happiness, for extending the opportunity to pursue happiness for all people, as the core agenda of transforming leadership."³ John's idea about helping children and getting nearer to nirvana shows that he became a transformational leader who empowered and nourished happiness among the children of developing countries like Nepal.

Transition Period/Challenges

John returned to Beijing from Nepal, where he was just about to start another assignment from Microsoft. He was not happy when he was transferred from Sydney, and he had inner turmoil in his heart. His transfer from Sydney to Beijing was one of the challenges for him. He felt like a stranger in a city of twelve million strangers and also suffered from severe

throat infections. John was working at Microsoft 24/7 and never took a vacation except the trip to Nepal in 1998. With seventy five people reporting to him, he had to work insane hours. Work was so intense that he had to miss his friends' weddings, and he could not remember when he was last home with family for his Christmas! John was frustrated because Gates had not taken his suggestions about how to answer the interview questions during a TV interview. He also differed in opinion about how to spend funds allocated by Microsoft for charity.

His colleagues wanted to spend the money to pick up a few students whom they could fund for study in very good schools, so that they would become the users of computers and software, but John wanted to help poor students from rural China.

In the book, *The Cathedral Within*, Bill Shore says, "First, a leader will encounter resistance, some of it fierce at times."⁴ John's fate was not different

than explained by Shore. Shore assumes that social entrepreneurs are those leaders who do not spend time and energy to advocate only for their own interests or those of a corporation self-centered desires and start working for the larger public interest. At this stage, John found that he had to make a choice between the two. The first choice was to work as a transactional leader in Microsoft. The alternative way was to follow his passion and help those kids who were less fortunate. He chose the arduous second path. Because of his dream to work in the developing countries, John also suffered in his personal relationship. In his book, *Leaving Microsoft to Change the World*, he wrote that he had to leave to follow his calling.

There is one personal story from John's childhood important in his development. After school, John had to play football with older boys. His father asked him whether he needed to sign any form to get permission from Junior Varsity Football. John replied that all the boys were bigger than him and he didn't want to play with them. John's visions of the Darwinian playground convinced him that it's better to stick with books as after school activities. Woody replied that if you don't want to play, then don't play. John was reminded by his father that the only person who can satisfy him is himself. Woody further told him not to do anything to try to please them but instead just do what John thought was right. John followed his passion and did same thing that he always liked. In such a crucial time, John decided that he would work for a non-profit and help children from developing countries to get a better education, rather than working for Microsoft. He wanted to transform the lives of those children's who did not have ability to educate themselves.

In the Path of Transformation Leadership/ Social Entrepreneurship

John was able to overcome the early challenges before entering into social entrepreneurship. Those situations or challenges shaped John Wood as a transformational leader and social entrepreneur. John was so passionate about his work to help the children of the developing world that he was determined to work for a non-profit during the day and work anywhere at night to cover his living expenses.

In December 1999, he formally entered into his new entrepreneurship by starting a nonprofit named "Books for Nepal," which was later

changed to "Room to Read" in late 2001 as the organization expanded to Vietnam also. Social entrepreneurship is an arduous path, and people face so many challenges and they may not achieve the desired results if they blindly follow all the rules and regulations. Sometimes they have to go beyond the rules to achieve some goal and obviously they will be at risk when they break rules. Bill Shore once said, "Entrepreneurs break rules by taking risks which others would not take, by exposing themselves to greater potential loss than others or perhaps, than common sense dictates."⁵ After leaving Microsoft, John exposed himself to greater financial risks and the risk of losing his executive identity. Even his friends were skeptical about leaving Microsoft. John was also worried and he had nothing but passion and the network of his friends and families with him. In business language, John exposed himself to greater risk by starting a nonprofit which had no brand recognition and "zero values." Nevertheless, he had bigger values than money could ever buy.

What John Learned from his Admired Leaders

It is no surprise that philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) is one of the leaders John admires because John is also building libraries and classrooms in the developing world, just as Carnegie did in North America.

The son of immigrants, Carnegie established Carnegie Steel Company and became the second richest man in the world at that time. Carnegie built around 3,000 public libraries in America, and he believed that he had to return his good fortune to millions of others who were less fortunate. Before 1919, when he died, he had already given away US\$350,695,653 (approximately US\$4.3 billion, adjusted to 2005 figures) of his wealth. At his death, his last US\$30,000,000 was given to foundations, charities, and to pensioners.

The lesson John learned from Carnegie can be reflected from the work John is doing. John learned to empower the people from his good fortune who are less fortunate. John depleted his bank balance which he earned while working in Microsoft each year until Room to Read became a sustainable nonprofit. At one point, John was scared to lose his savings, but he rationalized that it would be worthless if his savings would not work to fulfill his dreams.

Books for Nepal and John's Journey as a Social Entrepreneur

One day in late 1999, John went to the office of the American Himalayan Foundation in San Francisco for some help and guidance, since they were building schools and libraries in Nepal. He was dismayed by the behavior of one of their employees who was working there. She harshly said that there were number of organizations doing small things and they were just one of them and could not produce a profound impact on the society. She did not respond to John's request, even though she had promised to put him in touch with the officer in charge of the school program in Nepal. While he was still disappointed, he got an email from Dinesh Shrestha (previous Country Director of Room to Read, Nepal). Dinesh had attached some photos of the parents who were helping by clearing the land, digging the foundation, and carrying the bricks to the construction site. John's heart was full of enthusiasm and he determined that he wouldn't let the naysayers get him down.

In *The Cathedral Within*, Bill Shore says, "Entrepreneurs rearrange resources and use them in ways they never were used before."⁶ John did not have large amounts of funds to invest in the education of children. But his resources were a network of good friends and the skills he learned from business school and Microsoft. John was not thinking that he would apply for IRS 501(c) (3) status. But an old college friend warned him that he wouldn't get potential donors if their work were not tax deductible. This friend challenged John, suggesting that if he would get tax deductible status, they would give him a check for \$10,000. John hired a lawyer and got the tax deductible status. His friends from the Kellogg School of Management made the introduction to the Draper Richards Foundation's (DRF) executive director, who gave Books for Nepal US\$100,000 per year fund without any conditions. DRF funded the organization on a very small scale, and they called it seed funding. After some time, another old friend from Microsoft endowed a school in Nepal to honor her father. John was able to get these fellowships and funds from his huge networks of friends. Bill Shore was right when he said, "Entrepreneurs bring experience and learning from one sector and apply them to another."⁷ One of the major challenges and most difficult parts of the any non-profit is fundraising. John's sales skills and other

managerial skills he learned from the school and Microsoft helped him to manage the organization's resources. John had a big vision of educating the 10 million children worldwide, and it became the vision of Room to Read. He says that there was a saying in Microsoft, "Go big or go home."

Further in the Path of Social Entrepreneurship

Bill Shore says that there are three stages in the development of a non-profit organization: the Light bulb phase, the low hanging fruit phase and the twin challenge phase.⁸ The light bulb phase is the initial phase when the founders have the idea and they have to convert that idea into reality, such as start the organization, rent the office, make the board of directors and get the IRS tax exempt status. The second phase occurs when the idea is presented to a larger audience (probably hundreds or thousands) and distributed to the press and public. These organizations seek to get funded so they can operate and expand.

After, these ideas would become old and people and organizations have already heard them or helped them. Now the organization enters a crucial third phase in which it has to deal with twin challenges. These twin challenges are expansion and long-term sustainability. Organizations should be cautious in this stage because if they spent a lot of money as overhead they would run out of money and if they invest less, it wouldn't produce good results. John thought about this-long term sustainability from day one. He adopted the "challenge grant model" for building schools and libraries in the developing world, instead of the traditional way of building projects. In this model, parents have to contribute in terms of bringing material to the site and providing land to build schools or providing a teacher who would be trained as a librarian.

By adapting this model, the overhead would be low and most of the money would go to the actual work. John also established partnerships with local people to find out what best suited their needs. This is why he started building schools in Nepal and establishing computer labs in Vietnam in those early days of Room to Read.

In *Transforming Leadership*, Burns says, "By pursuing transformational change, people can transform themselves."⁹ Transformational leaders empower and encourage followers to rise above their narrow interests and work together for transcending goals. When people help build the schools and libraries themselves, they will feel ownership and will be proud of the work they did. After the construc-

tion, they will take care of that property since everybody had spent their share of labor and sweat on that project. This is one of the key elements of long term sustainability. If villagers of one place built the school, other villagers will also want to build schools from challenge grant models in their community. John borrows a saying from Michael Porter from Harvard Business School who once said, “In the history of the travel industry, nobody has ever washed a rental car, if they don’t feel ownership, they won’t do any long term maintenance.”¹⁰

Beyond Nepal, Room to Read started working in countries throughout the world, in Vietnam (2001), Cambodia (2002), India (2003), Sri Lanka (2004), Laos (2004), South Africa, and Zambia (2007). Recently they established a country office in Bangladesh and planned to start work in Bangladesh from 2009. They have programs for school rooms, computer rooms, local language publishing and a ‘Room to Grow’ girls’ scholarship program.

The ‘Room to Grow’ girls’ scholarship program is a good program for those countries in which female literacy is low because of cultural bias or lack of education among parents. Educating a girl is always beneficial for the society because a mother is the first teacher of the child.

John borrows a saying from his friend who runs education program in Nepal: “When you educate a boy, you educate just the boy. But when you educate the girl, you educate the whole family, and the next generation.”¹¹ John started this model to help the girl stay in school till she graduates. This in turn will result in improved maternal health and lower rate of infant mortality. Bill Shore says that, “My own definition of leadership is: getting people to a place they would not get their own.”¹² John’s work through “Room to Grow” girls’ scholarship program is an example of this quote. Helping girls to study until they complete high school is a lifelong gift of education.

John describes one heart-touching story which reminded him about the importance of education for girls in the developing world. He met a woman when he went to San Diego to make a speech in software conference. A woman refilling his water glass said to him, “I wish we had been able to have Room to Read in the town where I grew up.”¹³ She said that as a 12-year-old girl, she lived with her family in Sonora, northern Mexico, and loved to

go school. She had to drop out of school and had to work to support her parents. She started working 10 hours a day in a neighboring farm receiving 8 cents each hour for her labor. When she was at the age of 16, she had been smuggled across the border of El Norte (U.S. border) and worked as a dishwasher. After that, she never got an opportunity to resume her education. She said that if John had been there, maybe she could have stayed in school. John compared his age with her; she was about his age. He thought that the only difference between them was that he was born in a middle-class family in the U.S. and she was born into the family of a poor farmer. At a young age, their fates were decided by the situation. This is another example of how situation changes lives of people. Even though she could not get the opportunity to finish her school, she was proud when she said that she had two daughters and was sending them to good schools.



John Wood distributing books to eager schoolchildren

Source: http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/kwo/spr02/images/Room_to_Read.jpg

She further said that they would get the opportunity which she missed because of lack of education. She thanked John for the work he is doing through Room to Grow Girls program and added that there are many girls out there who are in the same situation as she was in her little village, and they are waiting someone like John.

What Motivates John to Work So Hard

In my interview with John, he explained that the glow and smile on children’s faces is so meaningful for him that he feels that nothing is closer to “nirvana” than these moments. He also says that he wants to establish schools or libraries with the compassion of Mother Teresa and with the scalability of Starbucks to fight with this global problem of illiteracy.

John Wood was profiled by the Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBS) as one of “America’s Great Leaders” and *Time* magazine’s “Asian Heroes” Award, recognizing “20 People under 40 who have done something brave, bold, or remarkable” (the only non-Asian ever chosen for this honor). He has received the Skoll Foundation’s award for Social Innovation and the Draper Richards Fellowship twice and many other awards. His work has been featured on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, *CNN*, *CNN Headline News*, *PBS Frontline*, and many national and international television channels and newspapers.

In spite of the media attention and awards, his real inspirations are the people who are helping Room to Read to achieve its goals to educate millions of children. John describes how a young girl, who was only eight years old, saved her pocket money and raised US\$8,000 to build a school for other less privileged children in Nepal. He felt great for the little girl and her parents, who encouraged her to spend for a noble cause, and she provided an example of basic human kindness.

Sometimes it can be inferred that he is more focused on fund raising. John and his organization Room to Read raised \$21 million in 2007 for funding development activities. But they may have to change their programs and adapt new programs like the Room to Grow girl’s fellowship and other types of programs according to the requirements of the community. Otherwise, donors might feel the repetition of the same program and might not be as interested as they were previously.

John seems to be fairly impressed by Buddhist and Hindu philosophy and believes that giving to someone who doesn’t have resources makes him happy. At some point in his career, John questioned himself whether it really matters how many more copies of the new Microsoft Office software they sold in Taiwan when there are millions of children without books. He also explained that someone has to have a good karma to do the right things to become successful.

According to a report of UNICEF, there are still 130 million children who have never been to school and also 872 million adults who cannot get out of poverty because of their lack of basic skills of reading and writing. This problem of illiteracy is so urgent and intense that it needs to be addressed immediately. The importance and significance of John Wood can be inferred from the fact that within ten years, Room to Read has impacted 1.7

million children by building 442 schools, establishing 5,160 libraries, publishing 226 local language children’s books, funding 4,036 long-term girl’s scholarships and establishing 155 computer and language labs in developing regions. John Wood became a transformational leader and a social entrepreneur because of his efforts to change the lives of millions of children in the developing world.

¹ David Bornstein, *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

² James M. Burns, *Transforming Leadership*. (New York: Grove Press, 2004).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bill Shore, *The Cathedral Within* (New York: Random House, 1997).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Burns.

¹⁰ John Wood, *Leaving Microsoft to Change the World: An Entrepreneur’s Odyssey to Educate the World’s Children* (Harper Collins Publishers, 2006).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Shore.

¹³ Wood.

The Language of Leadership: A Profile of Siegfried Ramler

by Laura Viana

*To change is to substitute one thing for another, to give and take, to exchange places, to pass from one place to another...But to transform something cuts more profoundly. It is to cause a metamorphosis in form or structure, a change in the very condition or nature of a thing, a change into another substance, a radical change in outward form or inner character, as when a frog is transformed into a prince or a carriage maker into an auto factory. It is change of this breadth and depth that is fostered by transforming leadership.*¹

- John MacGregor Burns,
Transforming Leadership

*His power comes from two things: his vision, and his commitment to stay true to that vision no matter how naïve it may seem or how uncomfortable it may make others at times.*²

- Bill Shore, *The Cathedral Within*

Introduction

Siegfried Ramler is an Austrian linguist, interpreter, teacher and educational administrator, currently serving as an adjunct fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu. Born and raised in Vienna, Ramler is credited with being part of the team that developed the technique of simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg Trials, where he was chief of the Interpreting Branch. A devoted foreign language educator at Punahou School for four decades, he pioneered educational exchange programs between Hawai'i and the Asia Pacific region. Among his pioneering efforts in international education, he founded the Wo International Center at Punahou and was responsible for successfully establishing the first educational exchange programs with Japan, as well as the first ever educational trip between the United States and China since the normalization of diplomatic relations. He is the quintessential transformational leader and social entrepreneur.

In his book *Leadership*, James MacGregor Burns states that “the transforming leader seeks to satisfy higher needs and engages the full person of the follower.”³ In his later book *Transformational Leadership*, he states that “instead of exercising power over people, transforming leaders champion and inspire followers.”⁴ Furthermore, if leaders seek the greater good by working towards a social goal,

as evidenced by Ramler’s efforts and achievements, they are also social entrepreneurs. Ramler is a transformational leader and social entrepreneur because he uses his vision and passion to elevate and empower individuals while creating social change.



Siegfried Ramler's childhood passport

Source: http://www.sigramler.com/images/passport_2.jpg

Early life: Vienna and London

Siegfried Ramler was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1924, into a family of partly Jewish ancestry. He was a student at Sperlgymsnasium Secondary School when he experienced the *Anschluss* (the German annexation of Austria) and *Kristallnacht* (literally “Crystal Night”—an anti-Jewish pogrom on 9-10 November 1938). Because of his partly Jewish roots, his parents urged him get out of Austria. To that end, in 1938 he joined the *Kindertransport*, the transport of children in a sealed train to England, where he had relatives. Young Siegfried started a new life, cut off from his parents, at age 14. He resumed his studies in London, quickly mastering the English language. When World War II broke out, he was unable to join the army because he was too young, so he volunteered as a firewatcher, witnessing the London Blitz from a rooftop. As the Germans bombarded London, he survived by hiding in his building’s basement. These early experiences had an impact on Siegfried and began to shape him into the leader he would later become.



Sig Ramler (second row, second from right) as an interpreter at the Nuremberg war trials

Source: http://www.sigramler.com/images/nuremberg_sig.jpg

Nuremberg

As the war ended and the tide had turned in favor of the allies, the need for German and English speaking linguists became urgent. Help was needed to advance into Germany and aid in the disarmament. By then fully bilingual, Ramler seized the opportunity and quickly joined the U.S. Air Force Battalion, helping the soldiers navigate through German villages. As a soldier, he showed some of the basic ingredients of leadership, such as being curious and daring. This move got him closer to Nuremberg.

Ramler heard rumors that the war had ended and that Nazi leaders would be tried in Nuremberg, located only 30 minutes away from where he was stationed. Curious to see what was happening, he took a Jeep to Nuremberg and introduced himself at the Palace of Justice. He was immediately offered a position as a linguist. His initial job was to translate in the pre-trial interrogations of Hermann Goring, Albert Speer, Rudolf Hess, and other Nazi leaders. Soon after, his duties with the Battalion terminated, and he was ordered to return to England. He was assigned a driver who was to take him to Frankfurt, where he would fly back to London. This was a crucial point in Ramler's life. He realized that if he followed orders, he would never be able to return to his position, given the chaotic times and complexity of the circumstances. He literally made the decision not to follow his commander's order, lost the driver, and hitchhiked back to Nuremberg. He challenged the process and took risks. He was immediately given civil service status, no questions asked, and put to

work. Later on, the military police noticed he hadn't left the country and went looking for him. But with the Nuremberg trials being a top priority, his status was cleared and he was officially assigned to the court.

By the time World War II had come to an end, many atrocities had occurred: the holocaust, crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity. All these things had been going on and the world needed to know about them. There was the question of how to conduct the trial. There were the two main diplomatic languages, English and French, but Russian was also important, and, of course, German played a key role, since it was the language of the defendants and the witnesses of the country. Conducting a trial in consecutive translations was practically impossible. It was then that the idea of simultaneous interpreting emerged.

This allowed almost instantaneous communication among the speakers of the four languages. Ramler was involved in the development of this technique from the beginning. His contributions included the development of the technological aspect of interpretation, such as language channels and ear-phones. By then, Ramler was chief of the Interpreting Branch, and he became the longest-serving staff member, from the pre-trial proceedings through the international trial and subsequent proceedings, for a total of four years. Simultaneous interpreting is now common practice in the United Nations and at most international conferences.

Hawai'i

After the trial was over and his duties at Nuremberg had come to an end, Ramler settled in Hawai'i in 1949, after marrying a local woman who served in Nuremberg as a court reporter. He obtained a graduate degree at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. It was a time when schools in the United States were beginning to teach German again. He was soon offered a part-time teaching position at Punahou School. He was later invited to teach French also, and his job quickly evolved into a full-time position teaching foreign languages. This jump-started a remarkable career in education, which would become the driving force throughout his life.

Ramler found his passion and calling in education. During our interview, he said that he enjoyed "the contact with young people: the atmosphere in

schooling and education, the school life and the students.”⁵ This was “not just merely in terms of language, but also the developmental aspect of working with young people.”⁶ He became very involved with Punahou and spearheaded extracurricular activities. One of his first endeavors was serving as an advisor to the debate club. He involved his students in contests, in which they successfully participated, putting them on the national scene in Washington, D.C.

As chair of the Foreign Languages Department, he revitalized the curriculum. Some of his achievements include increasing the foreign language sequence from two to six years, and expanding the language offerings to include Asian languages. At one point, Punahou became the school with the largest number of students of Japanese and Chinese descent in the United States. He also introduced the teaching of Russian. He clearly aligns with Kouzes and Posner’s Ten Commitments of Leadership “by seeking innovative ways to change, grow and improve.”⁷ His advancement led him to the position of Director of Instructional Services and Coordinator of Curriculum. His leadership responsibilities and involvement with Punahou continued to grow. Later on, he would go above and beyond, launching Punahou into the international arena.



Pauahi Hall at the Punahou School campus

Source: <http://www.coolchecks.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/pauahi-hall.jpg>

International Outreach

Siegfried Ramler believed that language should not be taught “in isolation, as an artificial exercise”⁸ that does not transcend the walls of a classroom. In-

stead, he felt that “to give color and enthusiasm to the teaching and learning of languages, it needed to be reinforced in the community.”⁹ He also felt that Punahou should not merely be concerned about educating its own students, but instead be an outward-looking institution. He envisioned giving youngsters an opportunity to study abroad and also have an international presence on the school campus. To that end, he challenged the process of traditional language studies and pioneered a series of international outreach efforts, which have flourished greatly since their inception.

Ramler pioneered the efforts to connect his French class to Tahiti, Hawai‘i’s Polynesian cousin, and establish an educational exchange program there. As his interest in the Pacific Asia region increased, he established connections with Japan and China. This was an unprecedented milestone. His first connection in Japan was with the Keio University and the local school system. This university was the first outward-looking educational institution, which opened Japan up culturally to the world. He developed a program through which Keio students would come to Hawai‘i and, at the same time, Punahou students would go to Japan. Another milestone was connecting with China. Ramler spearheaded the first ever educational trip between the United States and China since the normalization of diplomatic relations. Other endeavors included founding the Hawai‘i Chapter of the Alliance Francaise and bringing French Theatre to Hawai‘i.

Leadership Challenges

In spite of Ramler’s innovative projects and initiatives, his ideas were not always welcome. The traditional trustees of Punahou School felt it was not their mission to engage in these types of international and intercultural educational endeavors. They felt very strongly that Punahou should be concerned only about educating its own student body. Also, they were concerned about potential legal problems, especially regarding the liability of having young students staying in foreign countries with different cultures and languages. Ramler did not give up. Instead, he established the Foundation for Study in Hawai‘i and Abroad, the precursor to what would later become the Wo International Center. In order to minimize

opposition, he invited the Punahou trustees to be board members of the newly created foundation. By doing that, he gave them ownership. This is in line with Burns' idea of transformational leadership,



Sig Ramler at the Punahou School

Source: <http://mail.live.com/default.aspx?wa=wsignin1.0>

which is participatory and democratic or, as Ramler calls it, inclusive. "When you think of putting ideas into practice that are innovative, that break away from the traditional and the tried, maybe open up new paradigms of education [...], it is natural to have opposition. You are moving away from the comfort zone. That produces opposition, especially among people who have a vested interest in the status quo."¹⁰ Ramler goes on to explain how to act in such a situation, in which it is important "to reach out and not to be adversarial, so when something that is innovative is being proposed, [the idea is to] bring people into that zone and give them ownership [...]. For example, with the trustees being opposed, make them trustees so they own that situation [and] become part of an international approach that hadn't existed before [...]. Work *with* people rather than *against* people."¹¹ Ramler managed to inspire a shared vision among the traditional trustees, and in a sense, *transform* them by empowering them. He clearly demonstrates that, as Burns claims, "by pursuing transformational change, people can transform themselves."¹²

Legacy

Out of the chaos of war, Siegfried Ramler helped develop the technique of simultaneous interpreting during the Nuremberg trials that is now common practice in the United Nations and most

international conferences. Interpreting is now taught at universities and technical schools worldwide.

Within the field of education, Ramler was able to overcome the establishment and successfully work with Punahou School in order to create a variety of long-range programs of international reach. His programs continue to this day, and many have expanded to the inclusion of international professional development programs for faculty. Thanks to his vision and efforts, the Wo International Center for international study and exchange was created, and it still stands as a physical testament to his leadership and dedication to international education. A self-sustained program, the Wo International Center has benefited many generations of students and will benefit many more generations to come. The Center embodies the change he brought about as a transformational leader and social entrepreneur.

Quantifying Ramler's legacy is an impossible task. The impacts he has made on the lives of many youth locally, nationally, and internationally are perennial and beyond measure. Siegfried Ramler's biography is a clear testament to his role as a transformational leader and social entrepreneur. His vision and passion led him to successfully implement a long-term, self-sustainable international educational program, benefiting students around the world and empowering students and teachers alike. He is a true transformational leader and social entrepreneur, seeking the greater good while creating social change.

¹ James M. Burns, *Transforming Leadership*. (New York: Grove Press, 2003).

² Bill Shore, *The Cathedral Within* (New York: Random House, 1997).

³ Burns.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Siegfried Ramler, Personal interview with author, October 2008.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

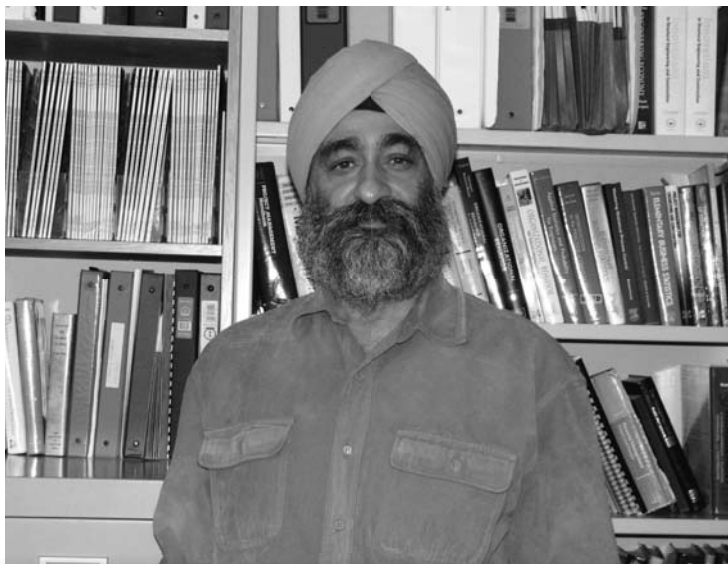
¹² Burns.

Bridging the Gap: Examining the Personal Leadership Experiences of Dr. Amarjit Singh

by Gempo Jampel

My first job as an electrical engineer in one of the pioneer corporations in Bhutan was a great challenge in my early career. I learned skills to deal with technical issues in my undergraduate program, but was never exposed to managerial concepts and leadership qualities to lead the team in the right direction. During my first six years of service in Bhutan Power Corporation Limited, I realized that a technical manager without leadership qualities is unable to foresee all challenges ahead and lacks appropriate skills for facing adversity and making effective decisions quickly. This greatly influenced me to change my professional outlook from a purely technical background to one that contained managerial knowledge. After completing my MBA program at the University of Hawai'i (UH), Mānoa, my goal is to be an effective organizational leader/manager with sound knowledge in both technical and managerial professions.

Generally, it is rare to find a technically skilled individual with sound managerial abilities. Technical professionals are usually well trained to produce scaled design and precision results under directed supervision and are usually not exposed to lessons in leadership. However, I was highly impressed that Dr. Amarjit Singh, an associate professor for the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) Department at UH, Mānoa, employs both skills equally. With more than twelve years of experience in the construction industries of five different countries, Dr. Singh gained cultural and multiple intelligence leadership skills. Dr. Singh's leadership style is based on the principle of balancing the spiritual and physical needs of his team. In changing his profession from construction manager to academic writer and professor with a vision to train and empower young engineers in leadership learning at schools, Dr. Singh demonstrates his transformational leadership style. A transformational leader is, by definition, "the leader who is able to energize, align, and excite followers by providing a compelling vision of the future."¹



Dr. Amarjit Singh, in his office

Source: Author

As a student taking his Project Management course during the Fall 2008 semester, I personally found that Dr. Singh's leadership skills are highly integrated with his technical expertise. His technical and managerial concepts taught in the class focused on developing the requisite skills for young engineers to act in leadership roles. His own leadership style maintains a high concern for both the employees and the profit of the organization. In class, he teaches young engineers how to be a highly effective manager while stressing the importance of strong managerial skills for technical professionals. Dr. Singh frequently relates examples of organizational culture existing in different countries during classroom discussions. This gives students a broad cultural exposure, which is an important consideration in management.

A tall, gentle man in his early fifties with a turban covering the upper half of his head and thick beard shrouding the entire lower part of face, Dr. Singh comes from a diverse educational background. Born in New Delhi, the capital of India, Dr. Singh began his college education in his hometown, earning his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology

(IIT), Delhi in 1976. IIT New Delhi is one of the best technical institutes in India, as well as in the Asian region. He later graduated from Texas A&M University with a master's degree specializing in Construction Engineering Management in 1987, while also earning a post graduate diploma from the Delhi Productivity Council in Construction Management the same year through distance education. Dr. Singh obtained his Ph.D. from Indiana's Purdue University, West Lafayette, in Construction Engineering Management in 1990.² Through this education, Dr. Singh has amassed broad knowledge in his technical profession, management skills, writings and publications, consultancy services, and academic fields.³

Immediately after earning his bachelor's degree, Dr. Singh began his career as an assistant engineer at the Central Government Organization at New Delhi in September 1976. He worked as a supervisor on prefabricated housing works at Hindustan Prefab, Limited. As a construction supervisor, he was able to build strong relationships amongst the team members in completing the work on schedule without compromising the output quality. Dr. Singh moved up the company ladder soon after beginning his career and eventually worked as a construction engineer at Gammon India Limited from 1976 until 1979. It was the largest construction firm in India with many operations outside the country. During this period, he gained exposure to a wide range of leadership roles serving at different posts. He fulfilled various roles, including junior engineer, section engineer, site engineer, and manager for con-

struction operation, among others. His major responsibilities included liaising with clients, providing logistical management, handling labor and labor unions, ensuring quality control management, carrying out planning tasks, and implementing large river bridge projects such as Paonta Sahib Bridge on the Himmachal Pradesh—Uttar Pradesh border and Hooghly bridge in Kolkata, India.⁴

Being a highly responsible manager in handling more than 400 construction employees at different levels within the organization, Dr. Singh was able to apply the 9, 9 Managerial Style (the most ideal style) in the Managerial Grid, "where a high concern for production, 9, is coupled with a 9 of high concern for people."⁵ The result was that actual progress under his direct supervision was far beyond the initial target set by upper management. He carried this scope of operations with him and extended his influence to four major states of India—namely, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and West Bengal—and also to locations outside of the country. For instance, Dr. Singh successfully executed an Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded work for the East-West Highway project in Nepal, which involved construction of bridges across the Narayani and Rapti rivers. Later, Dr. Singh became a bridge construction specialist, equipped with sound technical, as well as leadership, skills while overseeing large projects.

When I questioned him about what qualities helped him handle such huge tasks with little field experience and qualification, he simply said, it is very important that one has to learn and apply the concept of situational leadership style. Situational leadership, according to Dr. Singh, is about analyzing the needs of followers and then applying different leadership styles in different situations. He further mentioned that any leadership challenge can be overcome if one knows how to apply "different strokes for different folks" effectively, meaning that leaders have to understand how to adapt leadership styles to specific subordinates within an organizational environment.⁶ This reflects Dr. Singh's efficacy as a leader in handling tasks at the various levels of construction management.

Dr. Singh was exposed to an entirely new environment when he was assigned to management and project control roles in Kuwait from 1980 to 1986. There he en-



Hooghly Bridge in Kolkata, India

Source: <http://www.traveldestinationsofindia.com/photo-india/kolkata-howrah-bridge.jpg>

countered multiple cultural environments while handling people of myriad ranks and backgrounds across the region. However, his array of managerial skills helped him to implement his situational leadership style successfully. For instance, he served as project planning engineer on an expressway project of over \$70 million with M.A. Kharafi Construction Corporation, the largest construction company in Kuwait at the time. He worked as an estimating engineer for determining tenders and bids for petrochemical, industrial and commercial projects (calculating budgets of over \$70 million for a military hospital project and \$50 million for airport extensions).⁷ It is well known that any efficient project management office requires highly effective managers with multiple intelligence qualities to monitor time, resources and people effectively. In the article, “Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Intelligence of Transformational Leaders,” Bernard Bass describes multiple intelligence as “the sum total of all the qualities (may include abilities, aptitudes, and physical attributes in the integrated brew) that makes one person distinct from another.”⁸ With his multiple intelligence skills, Dr. Singh was able to retain enough profit with high quality of workmanship through effective estimations, direction and control, while completing the work ahead of schedule to the benefit of the organization. Both the clients and employees were able to attain full satisfaction from the result of his work supervision.

In explaining this success, Dr. Singh commented:

In every organization I served, I made a substantial savings through initiative efforts such as increased scheduling, effective planning, gathering ideas (feedback) from employees, minimizing the conflicts, etc. Being a leader/manager in an organization, one has to balance between the spiritual and physical needs of both organization and employees. Many leaders fall down sharply as soon as they climb to the top because they are too concerned for production, the desire to maximize profit, thus causing stress to employees beyond their tolerance limits.⁹

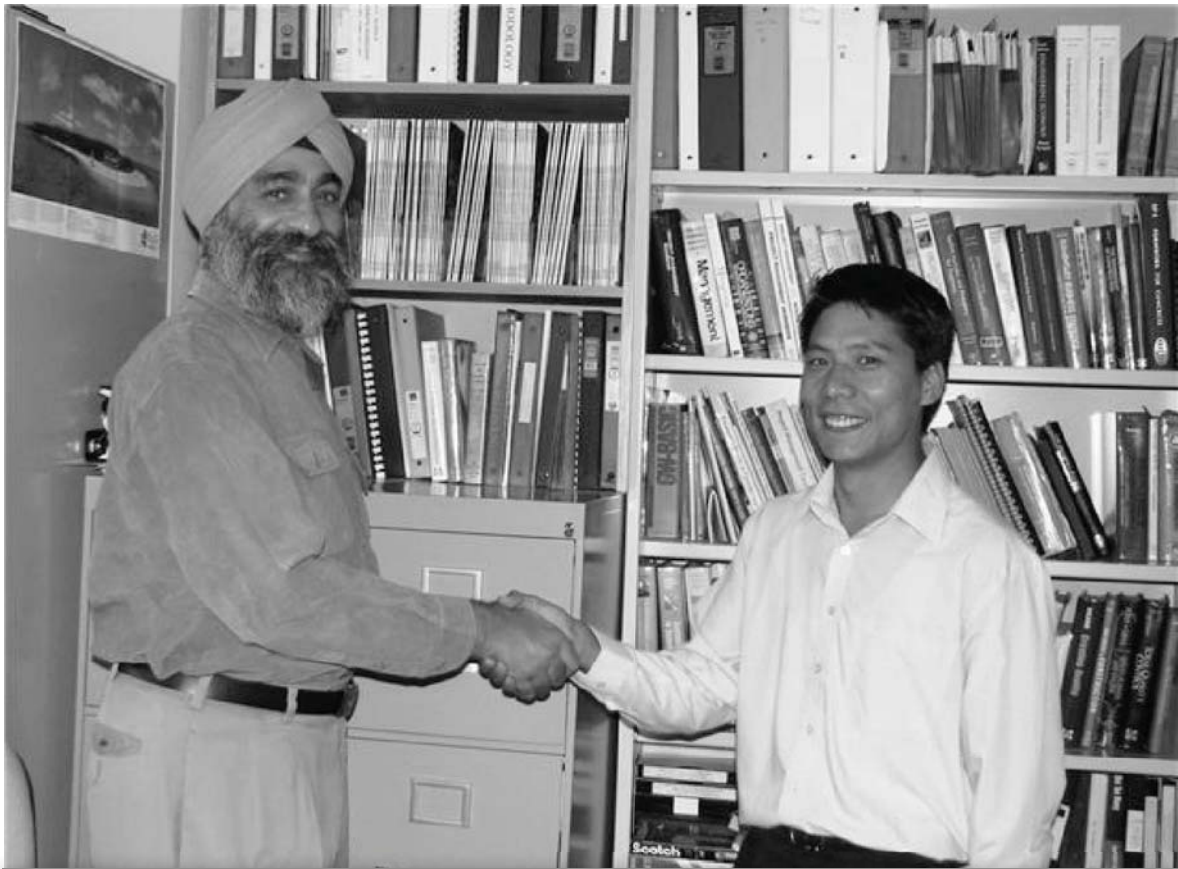
He also highlighted the importance of balancing spiritual and physical needs for the long-term sustainability of any organization and its leadership. He said, “These days, everything is in [the] material world with [the] idea of only self concern, resulting in global warming, increased poverty level, population explosion, over production, etc.”¹⁰ Therefore,

his basic concept of leadership is something that has long-term sustainability and benefits the public through initiatives and collective efforts. When relating the characteristics of different leadership styles, it is clear that Dr. Singh’s ideas match those characterized in transformational leadership.¹¹

When questioned about the importance of technical skills over managerial skills, Dr. Singh said, “Technical skills are bound by rules and formulas which can only be taught and learned in the classroom. Without learning basic theories and concepts, no one can be a technical expert. On the other hand, leadership skills can be gained and adapted by observing ways of doing things when exposed to different environments.”¹² He elaborated that individuals have their own ways of doing things, and unlike technical skills, there is no applied formula in leadership management. However, for Dr. Singh, leadership qualities are highly essential to every technical person because of the requisite application of leadership in carrying out assigned tasks within the technical field to create an efficient system. Therefore, as Dr. Singh described, both technical expertise and management skill should always go together in order to create an efficient project manager.

In addition to his focus on the balance between technical and leadership skills, Dr. Singh has traveled to over twenty-five countries and gained cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence is the “ability to successfully function in environments where individuals have been experienced to different programming.”¹³ Dr. Singh’s own ideas reinforce these concepts, as he emphasizes that every country has its own unique culture and core values from which one may adopt certain elements in creating the best practices in life. He said, “Being exposed to different cultures and relating [their] positive implications in a leadership role is one of the qualities of a great leader.”¹⁴ While some have difficulty operating outside of their own culture, Dr. Singh’s ability to manage individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds in a culture different from his own establishes a good example of the importance of cultural intelligence in leadership.

Based on the interview and subsequent discussions, it is evident that Dr. Singh employed transformational leadership, cultural intelligence, and balanced technical and leadership skills to make substantial contributions to the socio-economic development of the various nations within which he worked. His contributions such as the Paonta



Dr. Amarjit Singh with the author

Source: Author

Sahib Bridge in Uttar Pradesh, East-West Highway in Nepal, and city expressway in Kuwait are still visible to the public, serving the greatest of benefits to the different societies since their respective constructions. Dr. Singh says, “I started my career by building bridges, and I have sought ever since then to build communication bridges everywhere. Building communication bridges helps a great deal in managing people on projects.”¹⁵ Subsequently, Dr. Singh became active in dispute resolution and is now editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Legal Affairs and Dispute Resolution in Engineering and Construction*. He has also been the North American editor for *Construction Management and Economics* and specialty editor of contracting in the *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*. Quite appropriately, he currently serves as the associate editor of *Leadership and Management in Engineering*, a journal publication of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

In the process of his contributions, Dr. Singh was able to implement some of the morals of the five best practices and ten commitments of leader-

ship described in the book, *The Leadership Challenge*, by James Kouzes and Barry Posner.¹⁶ For instance, Dr. Singh was able to “inspire a shared vision” of socio-economic development through project identification and effective cost estimations. He also “encouraged the heart” of employees in an organization through his concern for people as well as production. He “enabled employees to act” through motivation and delegation of power. He was able to set examples in front of others by aligning actions with shared values, and in return, he gained the support of others with high quality work output.

After 12 years of construction experience, Dr. Singh obtained his master’s degree from Texas A&M University in 1987, followed by a Ph.D. in Construction Engineering Management from Purdue University in 1990. Dr. Singh worked as a Construction Consultant at the Foundation Company of Canada, Limited from 1990 to 1991, and also served as a Principal Consultant and Director at CEMCARG, Toronto, Canada in 1991. In spite of this success, Dr. Singh changed his profession,

choosing to become an academic professor with a goal to learn more himself while also imparting his own technical expertise and leadership skills to the young engineers in college. Dr. Singh initially served as Assistant Professor of Construction Management Engineering at Dakota State University, from 1991 to 1993. In explaining his move to academia, Dr. Singh states, “Working in the construction industry was bound by too many rules...After a time there is diminished opportunity of learning new techniques of doing things.”¹⁷ He further said, “Unlike in the construction industry, academics have a broader scope of learning, sharing one’s expertise, and gaining international recognition.”¹⁸

Dr. Singh had a far-reaching vision in implementing and teaching programs that empower young engineers to apply theory directly to practice. Dr. Singh exercised a leadership role and developed new courses in the CEE Department at UH Mānoa. These new courses included Project Management Systems, Construction Risk Analysis, Value Engineering, Construction Scheduling and Claims, Cost Engineering and Quality Control, and Construction Productivity Improvement, among others.¹⁹ Further, to suit the best needs of young engineers in the field, Dr. Singh made major modifications to existing courses offered at the CEE Department at UH Mānoa. Applied Probability and Statistics, Construction Materials, Engineering Economy, Construction Management, and Cost Estimating were some of his modified programs.²⁰ His contributions made to the program are milestones for empowering the present and future engineers graduating from the CEE department. Ultimately, his technical and transformational leadership skills have highly benefited students, management organizations, construction companies and society as a whole.

At the University, Dr. Singh focuses on leadership and management programs. For him, leadership quality is important in every technical profession. He asserts, “Technical expertise coupled with sound leadership and management skills, would be an ideal way to shine in the construction industry and I wanted our young engineers to fit in that category.”²¹ Besides teaching technical courses, Dr. Singh is an instructor for Project Management Systems, an intensive management course for graduate students. These actions all reflect his perception of the importance of teaching management courses in engineering colleges, and for any who have encountered challenges in managerial posts, especially within technical career fields, the tenet of balancing techni-

cal and leadership skills that Dr. Singh champions truly becomes an important area of study.

Of course, his role in academia is not solely as an instructor, as Dr. Singh was able to develop his own multiple intelligence and transformational leadership skills through continuous publication of journals and research reports in numerous fields. So far, he has published more than sixty journal articles, over fifty articles on conference proceedings, and numerous research and technical reports on real-time organization, teamwork and motivation, conflict management, and leadership roles.²² These are significant resources for operational engineers throughout the world, but today, his journal articles and research reports are also valuable reading for the students at the CEE department, shaping the students’ careers towards acquisition of better leadership skills. Thus, Dr. Singh’s continued development of engineering leadership theory is important in not only the furtherance of his own skills, but that of his pupils as well.

Ultimately, Dr. Singh has a dream for young engineers to be the leaders who can contribute to and shape society, and his advice to young students is simple but with far-sighted vision that can shape careers and influence societal development. He says, “My advice to the young leaders is one should always keep learning on a daily basis.” He adds, “To shine in one’s life, one has to set achievable goals, plan accordingly and work with full determination.”²³ He totally agrees with the saying that “failures are the pillars of success” if one learns lessons from past mistakes. For Dr. Singh, balancing the physical well-being of employees and concern for production in an organization is the key role of an efficient manager/leader. He concludes, “The best way to overcome leadership challenge is learning how to apply the situational leadership style in one’s life.”²⁴ His long-term strategic visions center on empowering young engineers in the field of technical expertise and management skills, continuous publication of periodic journals for the benefit of technical societies, and changes made to organizational behavior through research and consultancy services.

Prior to my study at graduate school, I gained only technical skills, totally focused on doing things in a certain way. I always assumed that everything can be done in a specific way, without any deviance from the standard. As a technical person, I acquired many skills from Dr. Singh, especially in the area of organizational management. I learned

from Dr. Singh the ways to deal with the world's complicated networks and to solve problems by using different leadership styles. I now fully recognize the importance of leadership roles in technical fields through the study of Dr. Singh's leadership qualities, his Project Management class, and writing a journal paper on "Leadership Flexibility Space" with him. During the course of our interaction, Dr. Singh gave me advice and direction on the possible roles and opportunities in my own career. Through his expertise and his ability to help students from various backgrounds, his guidance and tutelage motivated me to pursue transformation from the technically-minded manager that I once was to the culturally intelligent, compassionate leader that I hope to become.

After my graduation, I have a goal to practice all the "Five Best Practices and Ten Commitments of Leadership" described by Kouzes and Posner in *Leadership Challenge*.²⁵ Like Dr. Singh, I am looking forward to employing strong management and leadership skills in leading my future organization in the right direction with great concern for people (employee benefits) while meeting and exceeding goals (organization profit). After studying his leadership qualities and technical proficiencies in depth, I consider Dr. Singh an exemplary leadership model for me. My concepts of leadership and managerial skills have broadened greatly from his tutelage, personal interactions and study of his leadership style. No doubt, he is a man with sound knowledge in both the technical and management fields, and a great contributor to society.

1 Oxford University Press. *Principles of Organizational behavior 4e: Glossary* <<http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199253975/01student/glossary/glossary.htm#T>>.

2 Dr. Amarjit Singh. "Homepage" <<http://myprofile.cos.com/singh171>>.

3 Dr. Amarjit Singh. "Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa." *Faculty and staff*. <<http://www.cee.hawaii.edu/persons/singh/singh.htm>>.

4 Resume, Dr. Amarjit Singh, September 2008.

⁵ Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton. *The Managerial Grid: Key Orientation for Achieving Production Through People* (Texas: Gulf Publishing Co., Houston, 1964), 142

6 Kenneth Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi and Drea Zigarmi, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing Effectiveness Through Situational Leadership* (New York: Morrow & Company, 1985), 19-45.

⁷ With Al Hamra Kuwait Co., a branch of the Al Hamra Group of Companies that was a top 250 ENR International Construction Company.

8 Bernard M. Bass, *Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Intelligence of Transformational Leaders, Multiple Intelligences and leadership*, Ronald E. Riggio eds. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 106.

9 Dr. Amarjit Singh, Interview by Gempo Jampel, 6 October 2008, Interview, Contemporary Leadership roles, Homes Hall 383, UH Mānoa, HI.

10 Ibid.

11 Bernard M. Bass, *Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Intelligence of Transformational Leaders, Multiple Intelligences and leadership*, Ronald E. Riggio eds. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 105-117.

12 Dr. Amarjit Singh, Interview by Gempo Jampel, 9 October 2008, Interview, Contemporary Leadership roles, Homes Hall 383, UH Mānoa, HI.

13 Lynn R. Offermann and Ly U. Phan, *Culturally Intelligent Leadership for a Diverse World, Multiple Intelligences and leadership*, Ronald E. Riggio eds. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 188.

14 Dr. Amarjit Singh, Interview by Gempo Jampel, 9 October 2008 Interview, Leadership roles, Homes Hall 383, UH Mānoa, HI.

15 Ibid.

16 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Leadership Challenge*, 3rd ed. (Jossey Bass: A Wiley Imprint, 2002), 13-22.

17 Dr. Amarjit Singh, Interview by Gempo Jampel, 9 October 2008 Interview, Leadership roles, Homes Hall 383, UH Mānoa, HI.

18 Ibid.

19 Resume, Dr. Amarjit Singh, September 2008.

20 Resume, Dr. Amarjit Singh, September 2008.

21 Dr. Amarjit Singh, Interview by Gempo Jampel, 13 October 2008, Interview, Contemporary Leadership roles, Homes Hall 383, UH Mānoa, HI.

22 Resume, Dr. Amarjit Singh, September 2008.

23 Dr. Amarjit Singh, Interview by Gempo Jampel, 13 October 2008, Interview, Contemporary Leadership roles, Homes Hall 383, UH Mānoa, HI.

24 Ibid.

25 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Leadership Challenge*, 3rd ed. (Jossey Bass: A Wiley Imprint, 2002), 13-22.

Overthrowing Pol Pot: A Profile of Hun Sen

by Sreang Heak

For the nearly three decades from 1968 to 1997, Cambodia suffered greatly from civil war. For much of its history, Cambodia remained a peaceful country within the region, but a great deal of destruction crossed its borders with the outbreak of the United States (U.S.) war against Vietnam. Cambodia also suffered from US bombings, and thousands of people died.¹ The turmoil of this period ushered in a new era of violence in Cambodia, during which nearly two million innocent people were either killed or starved to death during the Pol Pot Regime from 1975 to 1979.² Although the Khmer Rouge army and guerillas continued to fight back for over 17 years until Pol Pot's death in 1998, the overthrow of his regime returned political power to a Cambodian government that could attempt to rebuild a free and prosperous nation.

Prime Minister (PM) Hun Sen grew up in the violent Khmer Rouge era. His life experiences transformed him, and this man of humble origins who misguidedly fought alongside the Khmer Rouge in his youth became the leader and patriot that eventually overthrew the cruel Pol Pot regime and ended the reign of terror that consumed the lives of almost two million Cambodians. He succeeded because of his leadership style—one marked by tenacity, risk-taking, and an ability to rally those around him. Of course, his leadership and vision were not innate, as the events of his life shaped his perspective, will, and desires. It was through these experiences that Hun Sen discovered himself and his role in leading Cambodia into a period of peace.

Background

Childhood and Education

Prime Minister Hun Sen was born on Tuesday, August 5, 1952 into a family without wealth or power. At the time of his birth, his parents were living in Kampong Cham Province. Cambodian people believe that he must be a very stubborn person because he was born in the year of dragon and on a Tuesday, which is traditionally believed to be a “tough” day.

His father, Hun Neang, was a soldier and later became a chief of the self-defense forces in his

commune. His mother, who could not read or write, came from a wealthy family, but this was taken away. Knowing of her family's wealth, kidnapers abducted Hun Sen's mother and held her for ransom. Hun Sen's grandfather had to sell all of his property in order to pay off the kidnapers. Though reunited with their mother, Hun Sen's family, left with nothing after the ransom payment, fell into great poverty.



Prime Minister Hun Sen
Source: http://www.pressocm.gov.kh/photos/IMG_0046.JPG

Although living in poverty as a young boy, Hun Sen managed to finish his studies in Peam Koh Snar Primary School in his village. After finishing his primary school at the age of thirteen, he moved to the city of Phnom Penh for a high school education unavailable in the provinces. On the day he left his province, his parents had only twelve riels to put into his pocket, an amount worth only about thirty-four U.S. cents.

Hun Sen studied at Lycée Indra Dhevi from 1965 to 1969. Though the outbreak of war in Cambodia would prevent him from completing his education, Hun Sen nevertheless capitalized on his opportunities to learn while he could. As a student, he enjoyed independent studying by reading a variety of books and Cambodian literature. During his school days, he lived in Naga Vann Pagoda with thirteen other pagoda boys, because his parents could not afford to rent a room for him.

Life at the pagoda was very tough for the young Hun Sen. He had to get up at five o'clock in

the morning every day. First, he had to cook rice porridge for monks. Sometimes, he had to read his textbooks while stirring the porridge, as time was tight. After this, he had to sweep the compound of the pagoda. He then walked to school because he did not have money to pay for transportation. Even then, he would have to leave school early in order to go door-to-door to collect food for the monks. Sometimes, he was punished because he could not bring food on time (before noon). Moreover, he could eat only the food that was left over from the monks.

After lunch, it was time to return to school. In the afternoon, he had to fetch water for the pagoda. By the time the work was done, it was seven o'clock in the evening. At night before going to sleep, he had to chant Buddhist prayers, and then search for some place to lay, as there was no room in pagoda. Sometimes, he would lie awake at night because of the rain leaking into the place where he slept. When he was cold, he slept under the monks' beds to keep warm. Still, under these conditions, Hun Sen pressed on with his education until other events changed the course of his life.

Deep inside the Marquis Forest

On March 18, 1970, the U.S.-backed Prime Minister Lon Nol staged a coup to overthrow King Sihanouk. Because of this coup, Hun Sen sensed that the country would enter into prolonged war. When he was eighteen, he abandoned his studies and went into the jungle in response to the appeal by the king. The event transformed the young pagoda boy into a guerrilla in the forest. At that time, Hun Sen's only wish was to bring King Sihanouk back to power.

On April 14, 1970, he joined as a member of the "Marquis in the Forest," meaning he became a guerrilla fighter. Upon doing so, he changed his name to Hun Samrach.³ He worked hard, trained hard, and rapidly climbed in rank. During that time, Cambodians came to be divided into five different groups: Khmer Rouge or Red Khmer, Blue Khmer, White Khmer, Pink Khmer, and Khmer in Power. "Amongst all of these groups, I hated the Khmer Rouge the most," Hun Sen said, "But Sihanouk supported the Khmer Rouge."⁴ At the time, he did not know that Pol Pot was the leader of Khmer Rouge,



Khmer Rouge soldiers

Source: <http://www.baksiden.net/bilder/murder.jpg>

and during his five years as a member of the Marquis, he never met the infamous man.

In 1974, Hun Sen met his future wife, Bun Rany, a nurse who joined the Marquis Forest. Still, though they were deeply in love, the Khmer Rouge regime did not allow the two to remain together because of Hun Sen's military responsibilities. On April 16, 1975, he was wounded in the left eye and blinded by shrapnel from an artillery shell. He was sent to the hospital in Kampong Cham Province, where doctors could not do anything but implant an artificial eye for him. Still, the break from the battlefield afforded Hun Sen the opportunity to marry Bun Rany. This bittersweet incident changed Hun Sen's perspective of the world, not only because he could now only see the world with one eye, but also because he then saw it as someone who possessed the responsibility of a husband, and later, a father.

Soon after the wedding, he was transferred to a new headquarters while his wife, though pregnant, was sent to other places to work very hard. Unfortunately, overwork and malnutrition led to a miscarriage. Still, the Khmer Rouge did not allow Hun Sen to see or comfort his wife immediately after the incident. Worse, they did not afford either of them the opportunity to mourn their loss. Hun Sen suffered a great deal when he was forced to stay apart from his wife and was unable to observe the traditional burial rights for his unborn child.

After some time, Hun Sen managed to get permission from the Khmer Rouge to bring his wife to live with him. This gesture was nevertheless too little, too late, as the loss of their first child made both Hun Sen and his wife realize that the Khmer Rouge regime was inhuman and completely different from what they had been promised. Moreover, other events exacerbated their concerns, as their lives soon came in danger during this time. The Khmer Rouge classified Hun Sen's father as a person with old political loyalties and killed more than ten of his uncles and nephews. With this, Hun Sen made up his mind to quit this genocidal regime.

Escape to Vietnam

In June 1977, Hun Sen had to leave his wife again when she was pregnant for a second time. He was forced to undertake an attack on Vietnam with the intention to move border posts. He knew that Pol Pot's regime wanted him dead for his family's alleged political connections, so this became an opportunity for him to flee to Vietnam and escape with his soldiers.

He and his four trusted soldiers were arrested by Vietnamese troops who interrogated him many times

over because they were afraid that he was sent into Vietnam as a spy. He was detained in Vietnam as a prisoner for 22 days. Later, the Vietnamese troops learned the truth and sent him to meet with General Van Tieng Dung, the chief of the Vietnamese general staff. There, Hun Sen requested Vietnamese assistance in liberating Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge, but General Dung, lacking faith in the benefits to Vietnam, did not agree.

A golden opportunity for liberation appeared when Pol Pot attacked Vietnam in 1977. Pol Pot had closer relations with China, which was a threat to the Vietnamese. Hun Sen parlayed this into receiving support from Vietnam to overthrow the Khmer Rouge. With the aid of the Vietnamese, Hun Sen recruited armed forces from amongst the Cambodian refugees who had fled to Vietnam, to fight for liberation of their home country.

Toppling of Pol Pot Regime

Hun Sen developed a five-year plan to liberate the country from the Khmer Rouge within a political organization called the United Front for Salvation, Solidarity, and Liberation of Cambodia. In December 1977 and early 1978, Hun Sen invited some of



A reminder of the Pol Pot regime outside of Phnom Penh

Source: <http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/staticfiles/NGS/Shared/StaticFiles/Photography/Images/POD/r/rusted-gun-281124-lw.jpg>



Prime Minister Hun Sen with fellow Cambodians

Source: <http://media-2.web.britannica.com/eb-media/38/65638-004-F925B50F.jpg>

the top Khmer Rouge commanders to leave Pol Pot's regime and join the United Front, and gradually, he built up his forces of anti-Khmer Rouge nationalists as Pol Pot's forces continued to decrease. Hun Sen's five-year plan was accelerated when Pol Pot initiated a large-scale assault on Vietnam. This military action forced the Vietnamese to counterattack swiftly. On December 25, 1978, Vietnamese troops, backed by the troops of the United Front, launched a massive attack on the Khmer Rouge. By January 1979, Vietnamese troops and Cambodian forces had captured the city of Phnom Penh, effectively bringing about the collapse of Khmer Rouge regime.

Leadership Style

Throughout his life, Hun Sen found himself in many situations requiring the exercise of his leadership, and like the man himself, its characteristics and abilities matured over time. Hun Sen became a resilient man who had risen out of crippling poverty to topple a genocidal regime and become the antithesis of the most terrible leader in Cambodian history. Once accustomed to following orders, even under the harshest of conditions, Hun Sen developed his own personal strength that carried over to those around him. He struggled very hard, strategically transforming himself from a pagoda boy to a soldier, to a diplomat, to a battlefield leader, until he eventually became the prime minister of the newly liberated Cambodian nation.

In their book, *Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner write that leaders engage in five

elements of leadership practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.⁵ Hun Sen clearly embodied these five qualities of leadership in his efforts to overthrow the Pol Pot regime. His willingness to oppose the current regime, as well as his tenacity and ability to serve in battle, modeled the way for others and fostered support from those around him. This quality was particularly evident when Vietnamese General Dung rejected his appeal for assistance and Hun Sen simply

replied, "[J]ust give me some weapons, and I will go back to Cambodia and die with my people."⁶ It was this sort of commitment to liberating the country that served as an example for others to follow.

Hun Sen also inspired a shared vision by helping to create the political organization known as the United Front. Through this, he fostered a joint vision of a prosperous Cambodia free from subjugation and violence. Using the United Front, he passed this vision on to others, most importantly the Khmer Rouge commanders he convinced to join his cause, and the Cambodian refugees living in Vietnam. This vision inspired these fellow expatriates to join the armed forces and fight against Pol Pot. The number of participants in the United Front grew tremendously within a short period. The success of the United Front and the vision of a free and prosperous Cambodia prevails even today, as the political organization still exists as the Cambodian Political Party. During the latest general election in 2008, the Cambodian Political Party received almost 60 percent of overall ballots.⁷

In an ultimate act of challenging the process, Hun Sen escaped the Khmer Rouge to lead others to remove the oppressive regime and restore a peaceful Cambodia. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, desertion from military forces and unauthorized movement out of the country were offenses punishable by death. Nevertheless, Hun Sen decided to flee to Vietnam with other soldiers in order to escape the terrible regime and gain support in their revolutionary cause. While he could have

continued on as a Khmer Rouge soldier, he chose to change his fate, even at great risk and with little chance for success. According to Kouzes and Posner, “Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve.”⁸ Hun Sen could not know what would happen when he attempted his escape to Vietnam. The possibilities of death were numerable, even in the simple act of crossing a battlefield full of landmines to Vietnam. Nevertheless, Hun Sen stepped into the unknown and believed that he could survive and that good deeds always bring good results.

His own defiance against the regime was simply a stepping stone to his larger goal of enabling others to follow suit. After creating the United Front, Hun Sen developed a five-year action plan to rescue the country from Pol Pot’s genocidal regime. He recruited supporters, both military and political, and prepared for the campaign ahead. Through his action and leadership, he enabled refugees to become revolutionaries, and lukewarm neighbors to become allies. With support from Vietnamese troops, he finally succeeded with his plan faster than expected.

The devastation wrought under the Pol Pot regime created a setting of violence and fear, and the ability to encourage the heart was a requisite for anybody who could help lead Cambodia out of the carnage. Knowing that any action against the Pol Pot regime was an instant death-warrant, his compatriots easily became discouraged and wanted to give up. Nevertheless, Hun Sen, through his personal actions and the organization of his United Front, encouraged his followers to carry on. Hun Sen and the United Front contributed to the downfall of one of the most devastating regimes in human history. His leadership and encouragement did not end with military victory in 1979, however, as the Cambodian government had to negotiate the troubled setting with remnants of Khmer Rouge fighters plaguing the country. The government succeeded in overcoming these obstacles to peace and Hun Sen continues to lead and inspire as Prime Minister of the Cambodian nation.

Conclusion

Hun Sen’s life has been one of much change and turmoil, but it is under these conditions that he exercised his ability to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Much of what PM Hun Sen has done offers a model of leadership for other Cambodian people to learn from and follow. The

important mantra of his life is that good deeds always bring good results. Hun Sen was a great risk-taker who challenged the deadly Khmer Rouge with clear strategies to bring liberation for Cambodia. The decades of turmoil under the Pol Pot regime have finally passed, and PM Hun Sen, a former pagoda boy, soldier of the Khmer Rouge, leader of the United Front, and diplomat, is now the prime minister of a peaceful Cambodia.

¹ Harish C. Mehta and Juliee B. Mehta, *Hun Sen Strongman of Cambodia* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1999).

² Refer to http://www.unitedhumanrights.org/Genocide/pol_pot.htm

³ His parents named him Hun Bunall because his father wanted to have a close relationship to his own father’s name: Hun Neang. When he left home for his study in the city, he changed his name to Hun Sen because it is literally translated as “something like power.” When he joined the guerrilla militia, he changed his name for a third time to Hun Samrach, meaning “a decisive person” or “decision-making.” Later, he changed back to Hun Sen because of the negative events and memories attached to the Samrach name.

⁴ Mehta and Mehta, 28.

⁵ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

⁶ Mehta and Mehta, 62.

⁷ Retrieved March 31, 2009, from <http://www.cambodia.org/election/>

⁸ Kouzes and Posner, 496.

Leading Others, Leading Ourselves: Profiling Larry Eugene Smith

by Md. Jahangir Alam

Who am I?; Why am I here?; Where am I going?; and What time is it?

- Larry E. Smith

While interviewing Larry Eugene Smith, an important question regarding leadership was brought to my attention—what makes a good leader? At the same time, I was fascinated with some pivotal questions about becoming a “good” leader. Leadership involves doing something extraordinary, no matter how big or small the contribution is. Leadership begins with a vision, but in order to implement that vision, one must take the “leadership challenge.”¹ This paper deals with the leadership style and challenges of Larry E. Smith, with special emphasis on the motivating events that shaped his life and career.

Profiling Larry Eugene Smith



Larry Smith

Source: <http://www.csaworks.com/>

Larry E. Smith is the president of Christopher, Smith and Associates, LLC, and his expertise is cross-cultural communication. After working at the East-West Center (EWC) for much of his career, he has been working in the private sector for many years. He is currently

working with many organizations, including the Global Challenge Program and International Association for World Englishes. His mission is “to equip, empower and inspire leaders for the 21st Century.” The fundamental paradigm and leadership ideology of Smith is “self-leadership” and “dealing with the difference.”

Smith was born in Osceola, Arkansas on June 19, 1941. He is the only son of his parents, along with four other sisters. Smith was brought up on a cotton farm in rural northeast Arkansas. This upbringing gave him the scope to understand the reali-

ties of life and the nature of interpersonal relationships. Smith was educated in different distinguished educational institutions in the U.S. He earned his high school diploma from Mississippi County High School and later received a bachelor of science in Social Science and English from Arkansas State University. His primary focus soon became Socio-linguistics, and he earned an MA at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa in the subject.

Smith’s present position includes a variety of deferential and responsible positions as the president of Christopher, Smith and Associates, LLC (CSA), a leadership consultant firm. CSA works to develop effective diversity management, strategic planning, team building, conflict management, competencies for cross-cultural communication, recruitment, training & development of new staff, leadership and ethics. CSA also works with individuals who are at a defining moment in their lives as they plan for a more productive future. He is also an affiliate graduate faculty member at the Japan-American Institute of Management Science (JAIMS) in Hawai‘i. JAIMS educates people in the core qualities essential for success in the international arena: cross-cultural sensitivity, language and information technology skills, and a solid understanding of global business issues. It trains international business people and one of their most recent modules was teaching Leadership and Ethics to participants in the East-West knowledge leaders programs. He is serving as Executive Director of the Global Challenge Program and International Association of World Englishes, Inc (IAWE). IAWE is a non-profit corporation that aims to establish links among those who are involved with any aspect of World Englishes in research or teaching. The association focuses on global issues relating to three major aspects of World Englishes—language, literature, and pedagogy. Moreover, Smith is a Co-Founding Editor and Advisor of *World Englishes*, a journal of English as an international and intranational language. The journal deals with making academic issues related to language and culture for businessman, leaders and other staff. It is also an international journal committed to theoretical research on meth-

odological and empirical study of English in global, social, cultural and linguistic contexts.

Before working in his present position, Smith had been performing as the Dean and Director of Program on Education and Training at East-West Center. He was also the interim Director of the Institute of Culture and Education at the East-West Center from 1991 to 1992. During his service at the East-West Center from 1971 to 1999, he spent the majority of his time (from 1971 to 1991) in the position of Research Fellow in Cross Cultural Communication. During this period, he had been involved in research of multi-cultural issues. As he spent a proportionately long time of his life at the EWC and had the scope to work in an environment and people of different races, ethnicities, and regions, he eventually shaped his career around the dedication to the field of cross-cultural interaction. He gained substantial experience as a researcher. This long-time engagement in research activities with multi-disciplinary people, nations and communities gave him the necessary perspective to be able to examine issues impacting society in local and global contexts from cross-cultural and international perspectives. It also gave him a unique opportunity to internalize indigenous cultural knowledge. Eventually, this cross-cultural experience motivated him to enter into his current field, especially as this field began to expand at the EWC.

Smith's fundamental expertise in cross-cultural communication is evident, but he has since become greatly involved in self-leadership and leadership training. He has made a great contribution through writing for leadership training. His research works include empirical studies developing and designing curriculum for language studies and programs for leadership training.

Smith is a renowned author of innumerable books and journal articles. His first book, *Developing Fluency in English*, was published in 1974. Prior to this, his first journal article, "Don't Teach ... Let Them Learn," was published in 1971. His most recent book is *Culture, Context and World Englishes*, published in 2008. This book is about the global means of communication in numerous dialects, and also the movement towards an international standard for the language. He has written a good number of books regarding leaders and leadership. Among these compositions, the most famous are *Leadership Training Through Gaming: Power, People and Problem Solving* (1987, translated into Spanish in 1989), *Negotiation Training Through Gaming: Strategies,*

Tactics and Manoeuvres (1991, Spanish edition in 1992), *Leadership Training: A Source Book of Activities* (1993), and *Managing Recruitment Training and Development: A Source Book of Activities* (1994). The overall objectives of all these books concern leadership development. Fundamentally, these books discuss the requisite knowledge for developing leadership ideas and techniques. They posit that knowledge of content and process is important in providing ongoing skills, supporting and addressing staff roles, and helping to indicate effective performance within leadership roles that result in business process improvement and enhancement of organizational performance. Though each explains concepts like these in different ways, the unified focus of these publications is discovering new techniques and ideas for leadership training.

Smith has also been involved in numerous other publications. He edited numerous books, including his most recent, *Transitional Asia Pacific: Gender, Culture and the Public Sphere* (1999). Smith's research has also been utilized in several book chapters and journals. In addition, he has written many encyclopedia entries. All of these publications are scholarly contributions that give a fresh perspective for information seekers who seek new direction for leadership style and training.

What I Value in Smith's Leadership

After conducting the interview and evaluating his life profile, I have explored the leadership models that he applies. The styles he applies in leadership development are decisive and self-assured. He always has a great drive for his own ideas and purposes. He has an ability to organize a job and carry it through, with or without help. He believes that one can lead others more effectively if one has keen self-awareness and self-control with skills in social awareness and relationship management. According to Smith, "Self is more than the individual, so as to include relationships as well as memberships in work groups and teams." Self-awareness is knowing one's self, one's own personality, and leadership styles. It comes from what one knows about oneself as well as what he or she learns about himself or herself from others. One must know one's strengths and weaknesses to be able to identify opportunities for growth. Self-control means the power or authority one has over oneself or over something. It is mastery over one's desires and impulses. Social

awareness refers to empathy and service orientation. It is a skill at sensing other people's emotions, understanding their perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns. Relationship management refers the ability to guide the emotional tone of a group. It is a guiding and motivating principle with a compelling vision. It enables one to interact in ways that discovers the common ground between people in order to share this vision.

This theoretical notion is completely related to Goleman's "neuroanatomy of leadership" which explains about emotional intelligence and the personal competence or capabilities that determine how we manage ourselves. Goleman's theory is also concerned with self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management that determine a leader's emotional self-awareness, sense of identity, self-control, ability to sense and understand other's emotions, and capacity for maintaining relationships in resolving conflict.² So, first of all, Smith's theory is associated with Goleman's leadership theory, particularly with the idea of emotional intelligence.

Secondly, as a leadership consultant, Smith works to equip, empower and inspire leaders for the 21st century. He defines a leader simply as someone with followers. He also recognizes that a leader is only one component of leadership, but an essential one. Leadership is more than "the capacity or ability to lead. It is not a person or a position but a process of influence involving a leader with followers in a particular situation toward a determined goal." As Goleman has stated, coaching leaders helps people identify their unique strengths and weaknesses and works best with followers who show initiative and want more professional development, so, this notion is synonymous with the coaching leadership style of Goleman. Coaching leaders help the followers improve performance by building long-term capabilities.³

Dealing with Difference

Smith and his associates train executives and administrators to make them more effective as leaders of people who come from different social and cultural backgrounds. This training deals with difference. Differences include race, religion, gender, age, ethnicity, economic level, professional background, political affiliation, philosophy or any combination thereof. He believes that one can lead others more effectively if he/she understands and respects differences and diversity. In order to create distinguished

leaders, Smith and his associates frequently work for diversity management, strategic planning, team building, conflict management, competencies for cross-cultural communication, recruitment, training and development of new staff. They also support the individuals who want to create a more productive future.⁴

Motivation and the Ideal Leader

Leadership motivation depends on a combination of desire and endeavors to achieve a particular goal. A person can be motivated by certain needs, values, interests, beliefs, environment or sometimes pressure of others.⁵ Smith was motivated to come into this field of leadership empowerment by an academic and also by the time and situation.

While working at the East-West Center, he had an opportunity to interact with diverse people of various races, religions, ethnicities and cultures. He mentioned that his work in the East-West Center motivated him to be an agent of change in the arena of leadership development. Professor Ruth Crymes, who was a leader in the National Council of Teachers of English, President of Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL), and past editor of the TESOL Quarterly, shaped his life when he came in this field. Ruth Crymes died in a plane crash in 1979, but her devotion for the advancement of the study of language and learning lives on with her students and colleagues.

Facing and Overcoming Challenges

Why is challenge involved with leadership? What are the best strategies to overcome challenges? These questions necessitate looking at skills and expertise of leaders for problem solving and working effectively.⁶ As Kouzes and Posner argue, challenges are obvious as leaders work in different cultures and circumstances, we can learn some important lessons from personal experience in overcoming challenges.⁷ Smith's practice in dealing with challenges is unique. He considers it a challenge when people disagree with his judgment in the group interaction. For overcoming challenges, he follows the technique of shared vision and discussion. Every individual is distinct and apart from others. So, they have their personal based experiences. However, when they work in a group environment, they need to care about sharing and consensus in order to be transparent about their vision. That is an inevitable quality for overcoming challenges.⁸

However, according to Smith, “The leadership challenge is leading a team of people I respected who disagreed with my judgment. I must admit to ‘solve the challenge’ is a difficult thing. I spent quite a bit of time talking with those involved and then reflecting on the situation.”

Smith considers animosity among leaders and followers as leadership challenge while leading a team. He also believes that challenge resolving is not an easy matter. He follows shared vision as a technique of facing and overcoming the challenge. He also discusses with the concerned parties when disagreement arises and brings the situation up for discussing the reality, so that a common ground is reached.

Vision

An aspiring leader has a vision. Leadership vision is powerful because it is manifested in the actions and goals of the leaders and followers.⁹ So, the very essence of leadership is that a leader must have a vision. Only with vision we can guess rationally what could be, what we are doing and why we are doing that.¹⁰ Smith is also a visionary leader. His vision is to empower the future leaders. He believes that a leader should have the ability to think beyond the present problem. He expects upcoming leaders to be specific about their target and strengths. As he mentioned, “Leaders of upcoming generations should be clear about their strengths, their goals, their ethics, and their support system.”

Best Contribution in the Field of Leadership

Smith’s research has been in the area of the intelligibility of English in cross-cultural (multi-national) communication. He is the author of several books in the field of leadership. He has been working successfully with newly recruited staff to equip and empower. He is the first to introduce the terms “intelligibility,” “comprehensibility,” and “interpretability” as dimensions of understanding. These terms are now used quite commonly among researchers in socio-linguistics.

Developing Leadership Style Test Exercise

Christopher, Smith and Associates, LLC (CSA), has developed an exercise examining leadership styles. This test helps leaders to recognize the leadership styles they prefer to use with the followers. At the same time, it is also the same one the followers prefer their leaders to use while leading a team. However, it is clear that since the leaders and followers have many different leadership styles, people need to

know how to work successfully with all leadership styles. This leadership style test is used globally to help examine the CSA leadership style for both leaders and followers.

Conclusion

Smith is an expert in cross-cultural communication. He is a renowned author, researcher and academician. The basic notion of his scholarly writings focuses on developing techniques and ideas of leadership development and training. His mission is to build up a strong leadership structure in the upcoming days, dealing with the differences in background or opinion, and enhancing self-leadership. By being an academic, philologist, trainer, coach, and visionary leader, he has the potential power to work in multi-cultural environment. By all counts, it can be believed that his leadership dynamics will be able to enhance the likelihood of creating good leaders for upcoming generations.

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1. Paul Njoroge, “Emerging Leadership,” *Leadership Online* [Internet] Accessed 12 Feb 2009, Available from <http://www.leadershiponlinewkkf.org/emerging/profile/njoroge.asp>.
 2. Daniel Goleman, Richard E. Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004).
 3. Ibid.
 4. Christopher, Smith and Associates, 2008. Leadership Consultant, [Internet] Accessed 13 Nov 2008, Available from <http://www.csaworks.com/index.html>
 5. Don Clark, “Motivation and Leadership,” [Internet] Accessed 10 Feb 2009, Available from <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadmot.html>
 6. Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (New York, Basic Books, 2003); Andre Martin, “The Changing Nature of Leadership, A CCL Research White Paper,” [Internet] Accessed 12 Nov 2008, Available from <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/research/NatureLeadership.pdf>.
 7. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Leadership Challenge*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).
 8. Ibid.
 9. Susan M. Heathfield, “Human Resources, Leadership Vision” [Internet] Accessed 13 Feb 2009, Available from http://humanresources.about.com/od/leadership/a/leader_vision.htm
 10. Kouzes and Posner.

Giving Birth to Papahānaumokuākea: Aulani Wilhelm, Transformational Leader

by Jiw Nath Ghimire

I really don't want to be the leader that stays too long and ends up making it difficult for others and for the place or the organization to achieve what it really needs to achieve, and...I am also conscious that what gives me pleasure is the start, is the building of things. I am an architect and engineer. I am not so much of a manager of operations.

– T. Aulani Wilhelm

T. Aulani Wilhelm is Superintendent for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, the largest single conservation area under U.S. flag and the world's largest protected marine area. During my interview with her on October 21, 2008, I noticed that she is confident in her talk, respectful to her duty and bold in her voice. Aulani uses highly symbolic and optimistic language, yet she can be skeptical. Because of her skeptical nature, Aulani thinks from diverse perspectives before making any decisions. She is workaholic and likes to start new things rather than perpetuating the status quo. Aulani always learns from experience and focuses on accomplishments. Furthermore, she has a deep sense of cultural and emotional intelligence. Recognizing her own weaknesses and strengths, she values her own culture, yet respects cultural differences. Aulani likes to create social networks to work together during hard times.



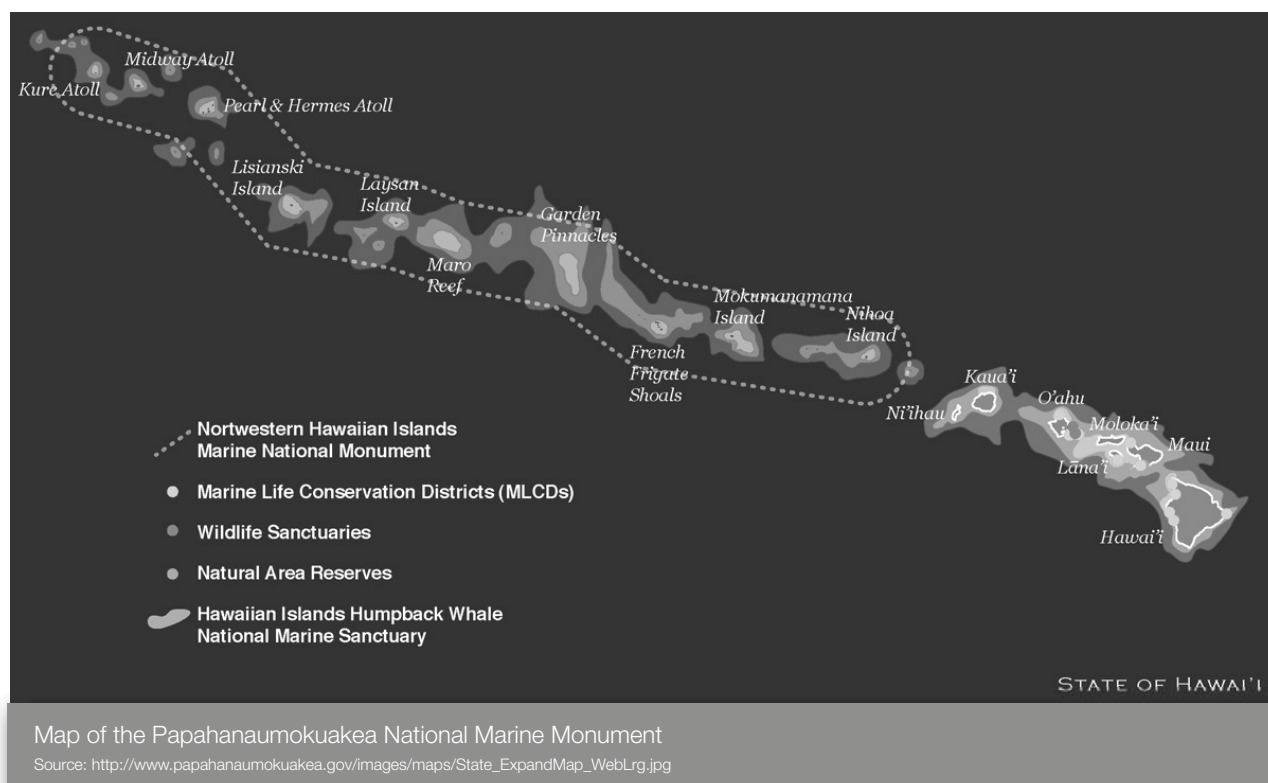
Aulani Wilhelm

Source: <http://www.hawaii.edu/elp/news/spring2004/Wilhelm.jpg>

Being Hawaiian and American, Aulani Wilhelm believes that establishing the national monument benefited her culture and her nation. She says her cultural values reflect the relationship of the Hawaiian people to the land, water and environment. These cultural values inspired her to establish this monument. As Riggio, Murphy & Pirozolo have written, "Culture hides much more than it reveals, and, strangely, it hides itself most effectively from its own participants. The real job is not to understand foreign cultures, but to understand one's own."¹ Wilhelm understood her own culture and did something for it. Based on these characteristics in her personality and working style, she is a transformational leader with cultural and emotional intelligence.

Aulani's mother is native Hawaiian, and her father is from Switzerland. Aulani is originally from Maui but spent lots of her time in the island of Oahu. Although she has mixed ancestry, she was raised culturally as a native Hawaiian. But she is also connected to her family in Europe and spent some time over there. Being grounded and rooted in Hawai'i and having strong physical, cultural and spiritual affinity to it, she uses the same principles and values as her ancestors. Under this principle, if somebody wants to go forward to the future, she needs to understand her roots, genealogy, and ancestry. Her roots are grounded in Hawai'i, and she believes that she will rest in this place after her life, because this is the place where her Hawaiian ancestors were rested. Therefore, she thinks that she is doing her duty as a part of a long *lei* of Hawaiian ancestry. She is doing her part, her ancestors did their part, and there are future generations who will do their part. Because of these cultural values and spiritual connections, she ended up in government service. Although she intended to do civic or community service, she knew she wanted to serve. "People with strong self-awareness are realistic—neither overly self-critical nor naively hopeful and self-aware leaders understand their values, goals, and dreams."²

She passed her childhood in Hawai'i, and she went to California for her higher education. She completed her bachelor's degree at the University



Map of the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument

Source: http://www.papahānaumokuākea.gov/images/maps/State_ExpandMap_WebLrg.jpg

of Southern California in the Honors Seminar Program. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a double major in political science/philosophy and communication Arts/Sciences and a minor in public policy. She is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Mortar Board Honor Society. Founder of the USC Student Campaign for Academic Excellence, she was also member of USC Softball Team. After getting her bachelor's degree, she went to law school, but she could not complete the degree. Her parents were sick at that time, so she came back to Hawai'i to look after them.

After taking care of her parents, Aulani wanted to go some place where she could try new things, test new skills and create a new vision for change. She chose to move to Washington, D.C., and lived there for six years. The experience in Washington taught her how the U.S. government works and what the implications are for Hawai'i as a state and for native Hawaiians as a community.

When she returned to Hawai'i with work experience, Aulani started to work on a project to pass legislation to enhance community service at the national level. She believes that when chance and fate come together, a person can get direction in life. That program was called AmeriCorps, and she helped bring it to Hawai'i. While working on that project, she met the director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and he invited

her to join to his department. Aulani accepted the offer because she wanted to work in that agency to protect her environment and culture. She also knew the controversial issue of land ownership in Hawai'i. Ancient Hawaiians never believed in the privatization of land. Instead, they believed in the *Ahupua'a* system of land use, which is communally based and environmentally friendly. The *Ahupua'a* is an ancient land division that runs from the top of the mountain to the sea.³ Hawaiians think that their land has been taken away by outsiders. That is why Aulani decided to join to DLNR—because she wanted to do something to protect the environment.

Joining the DLNR was a risky decision for Aulani because she would be engaging very controversial land issues. She cut her teeth on lots of hard issues while working in the DLNR, but she was successful in creating a big network. During her tenure, she also got a chance to visit Papahānaumokuākea, the largest natural marine reserve on the earth. In the course of her visit, she got a chance to go Kure, which is the last island in western part of the monument. While managing a team on the island, she felt that she was grasped by a spiritual hand on her back. She looked up and she fell down on her knees. Aulani was overwhelmed by the magnitude, beauty, and spiritual forces of the island. She felt that the place was not new for



her, like visiting her grandmother's house. That visit would change her career path. After 30 days, she did not feel sad while leaving Kure because she was feeling that she would come to that place again and again. This shows her cultural and spiritual grounding as a native Hawaiian.

Six months after her return from that trip, Aulani received an offer to work as the Assistant Reserve Coordinator for Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Ecosystem Coral Reef Reserve (Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, at present), which was established December 7, 2000. She was the second person to join in the project. They started their work by creating a proposal to establish the area as national marine sanctuary. She is proud to have been the second person to start the process of creating the protected area by going through the state and federal legislatures. With her experiences in the DLNR and in Washington D.C., she felt that she was right person with the right skills for that position. While elaborating the challenges to accomplishing that work, she said, "I had people I could call and ask for help when I did not know which way to go." This type of relationship management is one of the qualities of emotionally intelligent leadership.⁴

Yet in the course of designating the Northwest Hawaiian Islands as a marine national monument, Aulani faced a challenge of leadership. The manager retired in the middle of the process. She had two options at that time: transfer to the post of manager or train the next person to be her manager. She chose the first option. Her experience gave her confidence for it. Then she became Reserve Coordinator of Ecosystem Reserve.

While talking about her career, Aulani said that she joined government service because she wanted to do meaningful work, work that is for the future and that supports her community and her values. By working in government service at that time, she could work to protect this cultural and spiritual place for native Hawaiians. In her work, she demonstrated emotional intelligence, which includes abilities, feelings and principles that give rise to indi-

vidual differences in traits such as inner direction, moral sense, idealism, persistence, determination, vitality, hardness, honesty, and integrity.⁵ In this regard she says,

I intended to do civic service, community service, and wanted to have meaningful work, work that is for the future that supports the community that I care about and values [that] I care about. And [I wanted] to contribute [in this process] recognizing that I am a part of a longer genealogy. So I was never really attracted to other fields that were about certain products or money-making or any of those things. I think it's strongly because my recognition has always been part of a larger whole. So that is probably how I ended up in government.⁶

This demonstrates her self-understanding, which is an important part of emotionally intelligent leadership.⁷ But her community has some conflicts with the federal government related to preservation of the land and ocean. That is why when she was first offered the job to work in the federal government, she was nervous about whether she could maintain her individual and cultural integrity. This shows her quality towards the cultural intelligence, which is one of the important characteristics of leaders in a multicultural setting. In the same way, this quality is also challenging the situation of status quo of her community which is one quality of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is leadership which can bring qualitative change in the society. James MacGregor Burns writes, "The issue is the nature of change and not merely the degree, as when the

temperature in a pot of water is gradually raised to produce a transformation, boiling. Timing can be crucial.”⁸ Aulani has brought about qualitative change by working to establish this national monument. Therefore, she is transformational leader.

Aulani is good at team building and understands the feelings of her followers. This is also a characteristic of transformational leadership. While talking about her present team she said,

We built this team. So we pretty much hand-picked everybody who has been in this office. I did not inherit an office that I have to transform. We built this office, started on a folding table ... with laptop computers in my living room. That was our first Honolulu office. Then we moved to a temporary space, and then we built this office and staff groups from 2 of us in 2001 and about four of us in 2003 to now we are almost 40.⁹

While working with the federal government, Aulani says that she has not yet been put in a situation whereby holding her ground, she had to make a compromising choice. She has been well supported by her followers and her seniors in the NOAA. She thinks that everybody in her organization is pleased with her work and her results. Therefore, they have given her space and not put her in a situation where she has to compromise her values or the legacy of her Hawaiian community. As Burns says, “As leaders encourage followers to rise above narrow interests and work together for transcending goals, leaders can come into conflict with followers’ rising sense of efficacy and purpose. Followers might outstrip leaders. They might become leaders themselves. That is what makes transforming leadership participatory and democratic.”¹⁰ She has encouraged her followers to achieve the goals with team building and empowerment.

While talking about her strengths and weaknesses, she said that it is a regular process for her to evaluate herself. She regularly assesses whether she is the right leader for that position or not. She thinks it is also necessary for her organization because her organization is very dynamic. She was confident in her leadership when there was “hand to hand” combat for the monument. But she evaluates herself from time to time, asking whether that kind of leadership is necessary for the group or not; whether her leadership can bring the institution to maturity or not. Nevertheless, she is confident that she is contributing for the growth of the organization, but she does not want to stay in a leadership position at the

institution for a long time. It means if a leader stays in a group without contributing to its development that will create more harm to the group and team work. Therefore, she always likes to work in the transition. She further says,

I have been always working on a transition plan. From the day I started, I worked on what is my transition plan because we are dynamic. It is always on the forefront of my mind who and what the successor is. This is my life’s work. I was always engaged in Pa-pahanaumokuakea, no matter what, not necessarily in this room and I really don’t want to be the leader that stays too long and ends up making it difficult for others and for the place or the organization to achieve what it really needs to achieve.¹¹

Aulani’s nature is not to stay in one position for a long time. She is conscious that what gives her pleasure is to start new things, building new things. She thinks that she is not suitable for being a manager. She knows about herself and she believes that opportunity, faith and chance will combine again at some point and take her life in a new direction. She is feeling that the time is coming for that. This is also another quality of transformational leadership. Burns (1978) has said that transformational leaders are visionaries with a high level of trust in their organizations, and so she trusts her organization and will stay there until she has achieved her vision for it.

Although she never had one single role model, Aulani has met people with qualities she likes. While giving examples of these people, she said that she will pick these people as her personal board of directors who will guide her life. These people may not be the most popular, but they are not afraid to stand up and fight for their beliefs. She likes people who connect the pieces and do not see their work as an end but as a process that involves other players, locally, globally, individually and at the community level, people who are grounded in their cultural values. Furthermore, she thinks that honesty, competence, inspiration and values are the essential qualities for a good leader. These are the same values presented by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner in their book, *Leadership Challenge*, based on survey conducted among hundreds of thousands of people on leadership qualities from different countries of the world.¹²

Aulani has two main memorable events in her life. The first one is the incident in Kure. She can-

not forget that event when she felt the grasp of her back by a spiritual hand. The second memorable event is being by the side of her parents when they were passing away. When her mother passed away, she gave Aulani her last breath. In Hawaiian culture, when somebody passed, they shared their last breath or “HA” with the next generation. Her mother gave her last breath to Aulani. She thinks the last gift of her parents was to bring her back home from the mainland United States. She could have been in Washington, D.C. for a long time, but her parents’ illnesses called her back home. When she saw her mother’s transition to the next life, it made her more fearless in her life. It lessened her fear of mortality. She became more strong and bold. While talking about the best moments in her life, she was happiest when she gave birth to her three children. She has two children, and she thinks of the Papahānaumokuākea Monument as her third child. The naming ceremony of Papahānaumokuākea occurred when she was in the naming ceremony of her own child across the street. Therefore, she thinks of Papahānaumokuākea as her third child, and the national marine monument will be her greatest legacy as a transformational leader.

¹ Ronald Riggio, Susan E. Murphy, and Francis J Pirozolo, *Multiple Intelligences and Leadership* (New Jersey: Learenece Erlbaum Associates Publisher, 2002), 194-6.

² Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 40.

³ David Blane and Christopher Chung, “The *Ahupua’a* as a Traditional Hawaiian Resource Management Model for a Sustainable Coastal Environment,” Honolulu Dept. of Business Economic Development and Tourism (Hawaii, 2002).

⁴ Goleman, et al, 39.

⁵ Riggio, et al, 110.

⁶ Aulani T. Wilhelm. Personal Interview with Author, 24 Oct 2008.

⁷ Goleman, et al, 39.

⁸ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper Collins, 1978), 24.

⁹ Wilhelm, Personal Interview.

¹⁰ Burns, 26.

¹¹ Wilhelm, Personal Interview.

¹² James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Leadership Challenge*, 3rd Edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).



Reef fish located within the conservation area

Source: <http://www.papahānaumokuākea.gov/imagery/images/reeffish.jpg>

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Sreang earned a bachelor's degree in economic development from the Royal University of Law and Economics in Cambodia. After graduation, he worked on various social research projects such as child labor, human trafficking, migration, rural development and poverty reduction in Cambodia. Then he worked for international organizations: Norwegian People's Aid and United Nations Development Program on landmine and HIV/AIDS issues in Cambodia. In the future, he wants to contribute to the improvement of the educational system in Cambodia, while also being involved in conflict resolution therapy.

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Gempo received his bachelor's degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the University of Madras in India in 2001. Initially, he worked as an Assistant Engineer for the Department of Power in Bhutan and later worked as a manager for Bhutan Power Corporation Limited for six years. He is pursuing his MBA and has a great interest in the field of social entrepreneurship.

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Stuart Coleman (front row, left) and East-West Center Leadership Certificate Program students at Camp Erdman (Hawaii) during a leadership retreat

Photo courtesy of Mike Bosack



*“Sunward I’ve climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of.”*

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.